

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

May 24

2009

The Moment of Truth

From the Spanish bullring, where the cool nerve, grace, and skill of the Matador has long been regarded with national pride, comes the expression, “moment of truth.”

El Torro and the man! The massive beast, nostrils a flare goaded to hot fury, perhaps symbolic of all man’s foe, is ready to drive a cruel horn into his vitals. In previous charges the man has the bull closer and closer with the cape—but always to pass. Now the beast must be brought to ground. Skillfully the sword must be placed so the maddened rush of the bull drives the blade to its destiny. With this savage lunge, the beast dies, or sweeps the Matador aside in a crushing mingle of blood and dust.

The flashing cape, the splendid uniform, the wild cheers of the packed stadium — all glorious, but none kill the bull. Boasts of billboards, expectations of the sports writers — all meaningless now. It is the awful “moment of truth.” The man is truly El Matador — “the killer” — or is swept to ignominious defeat.

As I contemplate this spectacle I realize how surely we all face our “moment of truth.” This generation has scarcely known hardship. Depression is meaningful only to grandparents; and the horrors of war are seen as foreign products, by citizens of a powerful winning nation. How would we face a real disastrous national crisis?

We have posed as Christians. Baptized into Christ, “Attend” church, sing, pray, and partake. We say we love God, and acknowledge that God must come first; but rarely is our dedication to the principle fully tested. What knowledge, what moral fiber have we

developed by which to meet our spiritual “moment of truth?”

When our practice is questioned do we become angry? Is our defense the flimsy garment of tradition? El Torro cuts swiftly though such. Are we artful winners of our own “straw” arguments? One day we must face a genuine foe. Do we judge ourselves by ourselves? One day God will judge us in righteousness, for eternity; and we will face an awesome, irrevocable and final “moment of truth.” Be Ready, Matthew 25:13.

✍️ Robert Turner



Our Sermon

We often hear individuals say that they had rather see a sermon than hear one. The statement lays emphasis upon the value of conduct and performance in the life of one professing to follow Christ. The statement has merit, but we must not overlook the fact that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:17). There is need for verbal declarations as well as godly practice in influencing people to obey the gospel of Christ. Whether we realize it or not, all of us are preaching sermons by the life we are living. When one says I had rather see a sermon than to hear one, he is seeing a sermon every time he beholds himself in the mirror. He sees the image of one, who by his behavior, is preaching a sermon to others. It may be a sermon for good or it may be for evil, but we are preaching a sermon to those who view our lives. Paul probably had this in mind when he wrote to the Corinthians: “*ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men.*” (II Corinthians 4:2). Didn’t Jesus refer to this consideration in His Sermon on the Mount? “*Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*” (Matthew 5:13-16). The use of the words, “salt” and “light” in these verses, emphasizes that by our lives we are preaching sermons. What sermon are we preaching? **By our lives, we may be preaching that:**

Christ Died In Vain. Christ died for us, but we must obey Him to have the benefits of His death. When one refuses to obey the gospel and follow Christ, he is saying that he doesn't need Christ and there was no need for Him to have died for us. Those who truly reverence the death of the Lord are those who obey Him. *"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"* (Luke 6:46). *"And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."* (John 5:40). Refusing to come to Jesus, may be the sermon which some preach who profess to be good moral citizens. Morals have their values, but morals without the atoning death of Jesus, can never save anyone. *"But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him."* (Luke 7:30). Weren't they preaching their sermon of rejecting the counsel of God by not being baptized? What about our lives, are we living a sermon that pleases the Lord and exalts him before others?

It Doesn't Pay To Be A Christian. Unfortunately, there are numbers who have obeyed the gospel and then become unfaithful in living the life of a Christian. They turn from faithfulness to again resume a sinful life. They are living a sermon and it vividly says it doesn't pay to be a Christian! The words of Paul are to the contrary. *"But bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."* (I Timothy 4:8). Unfaithfulness preaches the sermon that being a Christian is not worthwhile, or else we would have been true to our calling. Some unfaithful children of God have been known to be vehement in declaring that they had rather see a sermon than to hear one. Do you suppose they ever think about the sermon which they are preaching and the influence they might have on others in becoming unfaithful? When anyone cries that it doesn't pay to be a Christian, they need to consider the price for not being. *"For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment, delivered unto them."* (II Peter 2:21).

Christ Lives In Them. There are those who are genuine and sincere in serving Christ. People see Christ in their lives and they live a sermon of joy and determination in doing His will. Paul wrote: *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the*

faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20). Christ has not died in vain for them, and they definitely believe that it pays to be a Christian. Many fail the Lord, but there are still those who love Him and are ready to sacrifice for Him as in New Testament days. Their sermon is beautiful and conveys by their lives that following Christ is the most important thing imaginable to human beings. Their lives preach that *"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* (Philippians 1:21). Think about it! What sermon are we preaching in the lives we live?

✍ Bobby K. Thompson



SUMMER BIBLE STUDY

The time (June 8-12, 2009) for our Summer Bible Study is rapidly approaching. We identify the efforts of that week as a "Bible Study" rather than using the term used by many, i.e. "Vacation Bible School." The reason for so doing is the fact that VBS has become nothing more than I week of fun and games in most places and this is what many envision when they hear VBS. The Lord's church is not authorized to provide fun and games but to be the "pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). This we will do in providing a week of Bible study and teaching for all ages. Plan to attend. (JH)

<i>Belleville church of Christ</i>	
<i>5635 S County Rd 200E - Belleville, IN - (317) 539-5258</i>	
www.bellevillechurch.net	
Schedule of Services	Elders
Sun. Bible Study..... 9:30 a.m.	Charles Carpenter.... (317) 839-3873
Sun. Morning Worship... 10:30 a.m.	James Hahn. (317) 745-1507
Sun. Evening Worship. 5:00 p.m.	
Wed. Bible Study..... 7:00 p.m.	
Evangelist	Deacons
James Hahn. (317) 745-1507	Leon Nevins (317) 272-2966
	Don Perry. (765) 676-5825
	Alvin Stanley. (317) 831-3514