

THE BLIND AND HARDENED HEART (2)

Second, prejudice and bias allows many to continue to cultivate a blind and hardened heart. So very many are guided by their feelings and emotions instead of their logic and reasoning. But the way of man is not in himself (Jer. 10:23), and just because a thing feels right does not make it so (Prov. 14:12)! People are influenced by their environment and by what they are taught. The way they “feel” becomes the standard by which they live. It is difficult, at best, to lay aside all prejudice and bias and be determined to be influenced only by the word of God.

Both those within and without the Lord’s church must strive to have the attitude of the noble Bereans. *“Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of the mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so”* (Acts 17:11 ASV). One’s mind (heart) must be ready to receive the word of God. The gospel was proclaimed to thousands in Acts chapter two, but only those who *“gladly received”* (Acts 2:41) the word were baptized into Christ.

Those who have accepted man’s invitation to salvation (“Just accept Jesus in your heart as your Savior”) while rejecting the gospel’s invitation to salvation (Hearing, Rom. 10:17; Believing, Heb. 11:6; Repentance, Luke 13:3; Confession, Rom. 10:9-10; Immersion for remission of sins, Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:4; Gal. 3:27) need to cast aside bias and prejudice and determine to follow Christ. Those within the Lord’s body who are rejecting a standard of authority and a God-given pattern need to repent and determine to be guided by the word that will judge all mankind in that day (John 12:48).

Third, a heart without strong convictions will become blinded to God’s truths. One’s allegiance will either be to God or to man—to things spiritual or to things material. Jesus said, *“No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and*

mammon” (Matt. 6:24). The Master also said, *“He that is not with me is against me. . .”* (Matt. 12:30). There is no middle ground that is safe and secure.

Strong conviction for God’s Word is woefully lacking among people today. Oh, people have strong convictions but not for the Word of God. The “situation ethics” philosophy and the “end justifies the means” concept is alive and well in the hearts (minds) of many. The response by most people as to whether something is right or wrong is based upon emotion and feeling rather than reason and conviction. Such will always lead to division, confusion and every man doing what is *“right in his own eyes”* (Judges 21:25).

A blind and hardened heart to God’s truths will argue that one church is as good as another and encourage people to attend the church of their choice. Please lay aside your “feelings” for just a moment, and let us reason from the Scriptures. Christ promised to build His church (Matt. 16:18). He purchased His church with His blood (Acts 20:28). He is the head of the church which is His body (Eph. 1:22-23). How many “heads” does a body have? How many “bodies” does a head have? It is no wonder that the Bible affirms that there is *“one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all”* (Eph. 4:4-6 ASV). This is why the Scriptures affirm, *“For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free. . .”* (1 Cor. 12:13). Folks, at least have the integrity to admit that all man-made religious groups wear different names, believe different doctrines, worship and serve in different ways, and have different interpretations of the Holy Scripture. How can people convince themselves that so many diverse beliefs compose the “one body” the above Scriptures mention?

A blind and hardened heart will argue that the Bible does not say “thou shalt not use instrumental music in worship.” Again, please lay aside emotion, feeling and

personal likes and let us reason from the Scriptures. Instead of appealing to what the Scriptures do not say, one must appeal to what they say. Christ, as head of the church, has the right to command. The Bible teaches, *“And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him”* (Col. 3:17 ASV). To do something “in the name of the Lord Jesus” is to do it by His authority! Christ has authorized “singing,” not playing on some instrument (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). One will search in vain for Bible authority of instrumental music! Neither must one forget that he cannot with divine approval add to or take from God’s Holy Word (Deut. 4:2; 2 John 9-11; Rev. 22:18-19).

An ever-growing number today have absolutely no desire to examine the Scriptures to see if their actions meet God’s approval. The worldly desire to please self and satisfy one’s own wishes is so entrenched in today’s society that more and more folks harden their hearts to the word of God. The appeal is made to all to have the conviction to be guided by the Holy Scriptures (Psa. 119:105). The noble Bereans were commended because *“they received the word with all readiness of the mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so”* (Acts 17:11 ASV). Our prayer is that their tribe might increase!

To be pleasing unto God one “must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24 ASV). This means that a person will have the desire to do the right thing in the right way for the right reason. God’s Word reveals what is right to everyone and can be understood by all who do not possess a blind and hardened heart.

Marvin Weir *from* **GospelPreceptor.com**

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”

Matthew 7:21

BIRTHDAY

Bo Marcum, 04-08.

ILL

Sunday: Janice Carter, John Cody Carter (AM).

Wednesday: Gary Cole. Louise Dodson's mother, Glennis Foust, was transferred to Mid-America rehab center in Overland Park on Thursday. Carol Tigner is in Room 207 at Meadowbrook rehab hospital in Gardner.

Those battling cancer: Jamal Abyad, Diane Cannon, David Cole, and Ledgia Campbell. Please remember these in your prayers, as well as: Meredith Greer, Millie Robertson, Allen Scott, and Ralph and Helen Franklin.

HOME BOUND

Bob Adams resides at Room D-4 of the Johnson County Nursing Center in Olathe. Marion Stone is at home. Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

OUT OF TOWN

Robin Brown was out of town on business last Sunday.

MEN'S BUSINESS MEETING

The monthly Men's Business Meeting will be held this Sunday following our AM worship. All men of the congregation are encouraged to attend.

SPRING GOSPEL MEETING

Our Spring Gospel Meeting is scheduled for April 29-May 3, 2007 with Larry Yarber of Mountain Grove, MO. Please take some flyers and invite others to come.

AREA EVENTS

There are several area lectureships and meetings taking place over the next few weeks. Check the bulletin board for dates and details.

ATTENDANCE

Sunday AM, 43; Sunday PM, 43; Wednesday PM, 39.

Those To Serve

April 8, 2007

BUILDING AND COMMUNION.....Cole

MORNING WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS..... Joel Nelson

SONG LEADER..... George Thomas

OPENING PRAYER Jared Nelson

PRESIDE..... Jeff Nemechek

ASSIST..... David Parish

ASSIST..... Allen Scott

CLOSING PRAYER..... Steve Brown

EVENING WORSHIP

OPENING PRAYER John Carter

CLOSING PRAYER..... Gary Cole

LORD'S SUPPER..... Jeff Nemechek

WEDNESDAY 11th

SONG LEADER..... Jeff Nemechek

INVITATION Joel Nelson

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday

Bible Study 9:30 AM

Morning Worship 10:30 AM

Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Ladies Bible Study 10:00 AM

Bible Study 7:00 PM

Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher

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