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Who Are You?

We are all familiar with the story of the good Samaritan. The wounded man was robbed and left for dead. The priest passed by on the other side. So did the Levite. Then came the Samaritan. He had compassion on him and helped him.

This story sets forth principles governing each person in the world. Some are like the thieves; some are like the priest and Levite; a few are like the Samaritan. Who are you?

Today a man stumbled and fell into sin. We saw him, but did not help him obtain salvation. Who were we? It seems that we were as the priest and Levite.

Yonder is a kindly old couple. Their lives are not vile at all; however, they have not obeyed the gospel. Thus, they are now wounded and dying. What are you going to do? Who are you? The priest? or the Samaritan?

There stands a fellow I work with. He is a good friend of mine. Yet, he is not a Christian. Who am I? Am I going to let him think that he will eventually go to heaven without obeying God? Or, am I going to be the good Samaritan and teach him what he must do to be saved? Am I the Levite? or the Samaritan?

Soon we shall all stand before Christ, the Judge. He is going to make a separation. Some will be on the left, some on the right. Those on the right are those who have helped "the least of these, my brethren." Those on the left have not. They have passed by on the other side. Which side will you be on in the judgment? Who are you?

- by Forrest D. Moyer

Fellowshipping or Combating Error?

J. W. McGarvey is recognized as one of the outstanding Bible scholars of the restoration movement of the 1800's. He was in the prime of his life (1829-1912) when the controversy over the use of instrumental music in church worship divided brethren in this country. While McGarvey personally opposed instrumental music in church worship, history tells us that he tried to combat it by tolerating its practice. Nearing the end of his life, he gave the following assessment of this approach to dealing with error among brethren to a young preacher. It is worth repeating:

"You are on the right road, and whatever you do, don't let anyone persuade you that you can successfully combat error by fellowshipping it and going along with it. I have tried. I believed at the start that was the only way to do it. I've never held membership in a congregation that used instrumental music. I have, however, accepted invitations to preach without distinctions between churches that used it and churches that didn't. I've gone along with their papers and magazines and things of that sort. During all these years I have taught the truth as the New Testament teaches it to every young preacher who passed through the College of the Bible. Yet, I do not know of more than six of them who are preaching the truth today. It won't work."

The New Testament also teaches us "it won't work." Accommodation with error does not promote unity (Eph. 4:3-6). It promotes compromise, corrupting those who attempt to fellowship error (2 Cor. 6:14-18; 11:2-4). It produces the loss of fellowship with God as it causes one to partake in error (2 Jn. 9-11). Yet, brethren still try to use this approach with error today - the social gospel, divorce and remarriage, evolution, denominationalism and many more. It won't work today, either. Do not bury your head in the sand! Error will not go away! It must be opposed for the sake of truth and the salvation of our souls (Jude 3-4; Gal. 2:4-5)!

- by Joe R. Price

Are There Good People In All Churches?

The statement that "there are good people in all churches" is usually made as a defense of the existence of the many different conflicting denominations. Certainly there are good people in all the churches. There are good people OUT of churches, too. There are good people who are infidels. But the question is not are they GOOD, but are they SAVED?

It is good to be good, but it is not good enough. One cannot save himself by just being good. He must obey the gospel of Christ (2 Thess. 1:7-9) to be saved. Cornelius was a good man but he was a lost man! (Acts 10:1-6; 11:14). The good people in human churches are lost people, not because they are not good moral people, but because they have not obeyed the gospel of God. This is why we appeal to good people to leave their human churches and obey the gospel. There is no other hope for these good folks.

- by Earl Fly

Virtue

Peter instructs us that we must "add to your faith virtue" (2 Peter 1:5). What is this "virtue," and how do we manifest it?

Thayer says that virtue is a word that could be used to describe any kind of excellence in a person or thing. When used of a person, it might denote a quality of body or mind. But, when used in the ethical sense, Thayer says it specifically means "moral goodness or excellence." Another commentator suggests that it is "courage . . . a resolute determination to do what it right . . . steadfast strength of will to choose always the good part." (Caffin)

How do we demonstrate this "moral courage?" What will be the signs that we are "adding to our faith virtue?" Numerous examples can be found in the Word of God. Famous heroes of the faith displayed virtue. Noah did in the matter of living faith-fully in the midst of an entirely wicked world. Abraham did when he left the comforts of home to obey God, and later when he was willing to offer his own son at God's command. Moses did when he chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Hebrews 11:25).

However, most of us will not find ourselves in the momentous situations of a Noah, Abraham or Moses. Instead, we will be faced with the constant challenges of our every day lives. It is interesting that one of the most familiar uses of this terminology is found in application to a woman. In Proverbs 31 the "virtuous woman" is described. Hers was not the work of a soldier in battle, or that of a famous prophet standing up for truth and righteousness. Instead, we read of her faithfully fulfilling her role as a wife and mother. It was her God given job, and she did it well. She was "virtuous."

Christian, will you courageously do what is right regardless of the consequences? Will you show "moral excellence" in how you talk, act, dress, etc.? Will you take your stand -- always -- with those who are faithfully doing the will of God? It will not always be popular or easy, but when you do you will be showing "virtue." Think!

- by Greg Gwin