

What About Your Parents or Other Loved Ones?

Do you hesitate to be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) or even to admit that the scriptures teach that you should be baptized to be saved (Mark 16:16) because your parents or some other loved ones have failed to do so and because you are concerned about their spiritual welfare? If so, you may be risking your eternal salvation while doing nothing to enhance their eternal destiny.

It is natural for you to be concerned about the spiritual welfare of your parents or other loved ones. You must realize, however, that your obedience can neither save your loved ones nor condemn them to hell. God will fairly judge each person according to their own works and according to His word (2Corinthians 5:10; John 12:48). Hence, Paul said, "For every man shall bear his own burden" (Galatians 6:5).

What does love, honesty, and true devotion to God demand when you learn truths that are different from what you once believed and from what your family and close friends believe and practice? If you learn "the way of God more perfectly," that is, learn more about God's will than you knew before, does not honesty and true devotion demand that you change and obey the Word of the Lord just as Apollos did when he was taught "the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18:26)? And would not parents or loved ones who are honest and truly devoted to God expect a loved one who has learned "the way of God more perfectly" to obey the commands of God - even the command of baptism? To suggest otherwise would cast reflection upon and question the honesty and devotion of your loved ones.

You have no opportunity to teach "the way of God more perfectly" to loved ones who are dead. They will meet the Lord as they were when they died, however honest and just they were, and with the choices they made while on earth. Your obedience or disobedience will not change their eternal destiny, only yours. Do not be so concerned with judging the dead that you fail to walk wherein you have attained (Philippians 3:16) or fail to preach the gospel to the living.

If your parents or loved ones are still alive, you may still have opportunity to teach them "the way of God more perfectly." If they are truly devoted to the Lord, they want all of the truth (Matthew 4:4). It is very unlikely you will ever teach them "the way of God more perfectly" if you do not admit truth and obey it yourself.

You must remember, also, that while you love your parents and/or others here on earth, you must love Christ more and put Him first, or you cannot be His disciple (Luke 14:26; Matthew 6:33). You will be judging yourself "unworthy of everlasting life" (Acts 13:46) if you allow your love for others to keep you from obeying God.

Love God with all of your heart, soul, and mind (Matthew 22:37) and obey Him at all costs; do not be ashamed of His gospel, but share it with those whom you love. By doing so, you will save yourself, cause no loved one to be lost, and save those loved ones who will "hear" you (1Timothy 4:16). Do not wait; be baptized for the remission of sins to be saved!

- by Harold Hancock

"Tell It Not In Gath"

As the prophet Micah was foretelling God's impending judgment upon His people, he says "Tell it not in Gath..." (Micah 1:10). That sounds like an unusual thing for the prophet to say. Why should it matter whether Gath knew about Judah's troubles?

Gath was a Philistine city and the Philistines were enemies of God's people. (Gath was the home of Goliath.) David used these same words when he learned of Saul and Jonathan's deaths: "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon" (2 Samuel 1:20). He did not want Israel's enemies rejoicing over the defeat of God's people.

So, Micah uses the expression as he describes the judgment that was coming upon Judah because of her sins. Their enemies would have an opportunity to rejoice because God's own people had brought trouble upon themselves.

There is a lesson here for us. We should never give the enemies of Christ a reason to rejoice over our failures. The world is watching us. When a Christian is dishonest, immoral, unkind, or hypocritical, people notice. Worse yet, they may use our failures as an excuse to criticize the

church and the faith we profess. Paul said that we must be careful “that our ministry be not blamed” (2 Corinthians 6:3).

Every Christian should ask: “Does my life help or hurt the cause of Christ?” Our behavior at home, at work, in business, on social media, and in our daily dealings with others is a reflection upon the Lord whom we claim to serve. Let us “walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing” (Colossians 1:10).

“Tell it not in Gath.” Give the world no reason to rejoice over the failures of God's people. Instead, let our lives cause others to “glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

- by Greg Gwin