

October 24, 2021

The View

“Sirs, we wish to see Jesus.”—John 12:21

Welcome Visitors!

You are our honored guests and we are pleased that you have chosen to visit us today. Our goal is to do everything according to God’s word, including respecting its silence. This is a church of Christ; we are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church and we have no earthly “headquarters.” The six elders oversee this work and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily aimed at our own members, as we examine Scripture and seek to be built up in our faith in Christ. If you don’t understand something, please do not hesitate to ask one of the elders. We welcome and appreciate your comments and questions on any issue and especially if you see or hear anything that you feel does not correspond to God’s word. We are here to serve; please help us do that.

**Please fill out a visitor’s card and put it in the collection plate located near the entrance.
We do not solicit donations from visitors. See page 4 for more information.**

Schedule

The Lord’s Day

9:30 AM Bible classes for all ages

10:30 AM: Assembly

Preaching Today

David Posey

Series: Jesus on...

Livestream at 10:30 <https://tinyurl.com/5f2cbm3y>

Bible Class @ 1:30 PM in room 15/16 — Hebrews

Bible Class @ 5 PM — A Study of Prayer (Auditorium)

Young People’s Class, 5 PM @ David & Christie Posey’s home

Middle school class: monthly

Contact Dan Stegall at 818- 209-9810)

Wednesday 7 PM @ Building

Bible classes for all ages

Auditorium: A Study of Paul’s Letter to the Philippians

Two Men Attend an Assembly

Two men attend worship services. The first man attends wholly out of a sense of duty. He understands the teaching of Hebrews 10:25: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together," and is determined to obey faithfully that teaching. He will not allow anything within his power to stand in the way of his attending the worship periods of the church.

The second man recognizes his duty in this matter, too, but his primary motivation in attendance is his love for the Lord and his joy in blending his voice and heart with other Christians in praise and adoration to the Lord. He delights in worship and the spiritual strength he derives through worship.

The first man is mentally passive throughout the worship service. If the words of the song happen to catch his attention, he observes and appreciates them; otherwise, he just sings along with little concern for what he is singing. If the sermon is interesting, he listens; otherwise, he just relaxes, and hopes the time won't drag too badly. He does meditate briefly concerning Christ's suffering and death as he partakes of the supper, for somehow the importance of the memorial feast has been impressed upon his mind.

The second man comes mentally prepared to worship. He pays close attention to the words of each song and makes the sentiment of the songs his own sentiment. In fact, he sometimes studies the words of frequently used songs so he will be sure he understands their meaning. Depth of meaning is of greater importance to him than a catchy tune or rhythmic beat. He listens to each phrase of the prayer that is led, and if he can approve the petitions of the prayer, he unites with the one who leads with his "Amen." He discerns the Lord's body as he breaks bread, and he listens carefully to the sermon, volunteering his attention, hiding the word in his heart, that he might not sin against God (Psalm 119:11). If his mind wanders occasionally, he brings it back to the worship. He worships with a consciousness of God as the object of his worship, the One toward whom these expressions of adoration are directed.

The first man reduces his service to a mere code of external rites, while the second man obeys "from the heart," combining the outward with the inward. The first man is more likely to be satisfied with his service to the Lord, for he has accepted the easier standard, but it is the second man who enjoys God's approval. "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).

We ask the reader: "In which of these two men do you see a reflection of yourself?" The need is obvious! We must cast off our laziness and indifference, revitalize our spirits, and bring ourselves to worship God acceptably. There is a considerable difference between mere attendance at a worship service and truly acceptable worship.

Two Men Try to Worship

Worship under the best of conditions can sometimes be difficult. Distractions, human error, and sometimes funny situations can occur to take one's attention away from the Lord. Attitudes, however, can prove to be a major factor in acceptable (or non-acceptable) worship. For instance ...

Two men sincerely try to worship. The first man, though, is frustrated throughout. His frustrations begin with the opening announcements when the man in charge takes ten minutes to say what any normal man could say in three. He is hardly over that when the song leader adds to his frustrations, selecting a song he is sure contains an unscriptural phrase. The man who presides at the table doesn't help when he uses the term "loaf" instead of "bread," and then the man who is called on to "give thanks for the bread" gives thanks for everything but the bread. The preacher makes a major contribution by totally misapplying a passage of scripture ("He probably didn't spend enough time on that one," the man thinks). When the worship period is finally dismissed, he tries to share his frustrations with those around him, but no one seems to care.

The second man observes many of the mistakes the first man observes. In fact, without fanfare he just doesn't sing the questionable phrase in the song and he silently thanks God for the bread when he realizes the leader's failure to do so. But while observing mistakes, he focuses attention on the good sentiments of the songs that are used, and on the death of his Savior during the Lord's Supper. He makes the prayer that is led his own and appreciates the good thoughts presented in the lesson. He has come to worship God. He makes allowances for human frailty on the part of the leaders in worship, appreciates their sincere efforts, and refuses to let their mistakes keep him from his purpose.

The first man is to be pitied. His ability to "worship" is dependent on the ability of the leaders in the worship period, and any half-observant person knows how inept that leadership can be at times. He comes to worship, but spends the hour criticizing. He blames others for that which is really his own problem. Consequently, his problem with worship becomes a problem also with his brethren; but one cannot have a problem with his worship and his brethren without having a problem in his relationship with God.

The second man, by maintaining a positive attitude toward his brethren, even when they make mistakes, is able to worship acceptably and is drawn closer to God by his worship.

We are not condoning sloppily conducted worship periods. Leaders in worship should seek to avoid mistakes and to do their work effectively. But acceptable worship depends far more on the heart and attitude of the worshiper than on the abilities of leaders. Our first man may point the finger of blame at others, but his real need is a total change of attitude within himself.

—Both articles written by Bill Hall

Once spoke to a young lady who stopped by the church building after a Wednesday night class. She said she was on the verge of suicide, and went on to explain how guilty she felt every time she engaged in some immoral activity. She longed for the “perfect life” as she saw it: married to a fine Christian man, going to church services every Sunday, studying the Bible. I suggested that if this is her ideal of the happy life then she ought to begin to live out the particulars of this life. She should stop her immoral activities (which were causing her terrible guilt anyway), begin attending services, and get involved in a Bible class. I offered that my wife and I would be happy to study with her. The “fine Christian man” would come along soon enough if she made herself a “fine Christian woman.”

In return for these common sense suggestions, all I got was blank stare. When she did respond, she complained that church wasn’t “fun,” that Christians were kind of “boring” and that even though she reads her Bible, it didn’t seem to help — she still couldn’t seem to control her immoral propensities. I probably repaid the blank stare and then offered, again, to study the Bible with her but she went on her way and I never heard from her again.

Jesus said that if your right eye offends you, pluck it out, or if your right hand offends you, cut it off (Matthew 5:29-30). Obviously, Jesus didn’t intend for anyone to maim themselves. What he is telling us to do is to quit sinning and to do it now, *abruptly* — “cold turkey,” as the saying goes.

But change is difficult and habits are hard to break. You’ve heard the “true proverb”:

Sow an action, you reap a habit
Sow a habit, you reap a character
Sow a character, you reap a destiny

Paul said it better: “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap” (Galatians 6:7).

Change in character comes only when changes are made in our habits, and bad habits are broken only when we consciously change our actions. That’s obvious, but hard. There is no magic formula, panacea or shortcut. We simply have to change. After all, the first step to the kingdom, as Jesus preached it, is to “repent.” The definition of repent is “to change your mind.”

But where do we find the power to change? We may be intellectually impressed with a need to change. Most biblical sermons make an appeal to the mind by explaining God’s will and admonishing us to change. Or we may be touched emotionally and feel the need to change, and even resolve to do so. But, as important as both of these motives are, they rarely become the engine which supplies the power to change. We are much too clever, intellectually, to simply apply facts when we hear them. We are experts at “seeing it differently” and making intellectual excuses. As for feelings,

well we all know they are as fickle as water. Intentions are one thing, action is another. “*The road to you know where is paved with you know what.*”

If we’re going to make the kind of dramatic changes in our thinking or lifestyle that Jesus demands, we must not only be impressed with the urgency of the matter, but we

must be driven to change by a reformation of the will. Change is produced by desire and love. It is inspired in us by the grace God, who loved us so much and creates within us

the “expulsive power of a new affection,” as someone called. That is, our “affection” (deep love) for someone automatically excludes all would-be competition. If you have the proper kind of love for your spouse, you don’t need the law against adultery to keep you from engaging in it. Likewise, we love God so much that every competing desire is gladly set aside. There is nothing that motivates a person like true love and God, by loving us so deeply motivates us to love him in return. “*We love because he first loved us,*” (I John 4:19).

God, through His grace, has made it possible for us to identify with Christ. We are to shape our character into Christ’s likeness (cf. Romans 8:29-30; Galatians 4:19). It doesn’t happen overnight, but our baptism puts us in the position to make change possible. Christ is our best friend and our advocate before almighty God, who wants us to do well. If your life is truly hidden in Christ (Colossians 3:3) then your close relationship with Him makes you want to change, to be just like Him.

It comes back to grace, then. The appeal of our Lord, so often, is simply to *remember*. Remember the great steps that God has taken, the great pains to which he and his Son have gone, to see us through. God’s plan to save us is based on gratitude — he expects that those with hearts big enough to appreciate his blessings will make any change necessary to realize the fulfillment of the greatest blessing of all: a home in the eternal heavens with the godhead.

The young lady who said she wanted the “perfect life” was not even willing to go for the blessed life that God offers. She was unwilling to change.

Christians are changing all the time, making constant adjustments. It’s gradual but consistent. Standing in God’s grace requires constant attention and change.

Paul said, “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit” (II Corinthians 3:18).

The mercies of God — his amazing grace — makes this transformation possible.

The Most Difficult Thing You’ll Ever Do

By David Posey