

March 20, 2022
The View

“Sir, we wish to see Jesus” - John 12:21

Welcome Visitors!

Our goal at the Folsom church of Christ is to do everything according to God's word, including respecting its silence. We are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church; we have no earthly "headquarters." The six elders oversee this church and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily for the benefit of 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 the preacher or 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.

Schedule

The Lord's Day

9:30 AM Bible classes

Auditorium: A Study of Paul's Second & Third Journeys

Room 15/16: Raising Faithful Kids

Room 12: Young Adults Class

10:30 AM Assembly

Preaching Today: Scott Gardner

Sermon: "We Were Made for Times Like These"

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

Bible Class @ 2:00 PM in room 12 on Judges

Bible Class @ 5:00 PM - A Study of Prayer in the Psalms

Young Peoples Class 5 PM @ Ben Woodside's home

Middle school class: monthly (contact Dan Stegall at 818 209 9810)

Wednesday 7PM @ Building

Bible classes for all ages

Auditorium: A Study of Paul's Second & Third Journeys

Room 15/16: Raising Faithful Kids

Room 12: Young Adult's Class

Mark Your Calendar!

Boot Camp: April 29 — May 1

Theme: What a Friend!!

More information to come.

Missed Opportunities

We live in a progressive society where it is easy to get wrapped up in our lives. Sometimes we concentrate on planning for the future along with the possibilities that the future holds. However, it is easy to lose sight of the benefits today can bring. Planning for the future is important, but it can also be dangerous.

It is unfortunate when this mentality invades our spiritual lives. When we focus on the future, it is easy to overlook the opportunities to teach others. Take a moment to think over the past week. How many people did you teach the gospel? How many people did you meet that do not know the gospel? Opportunities are there, but do we see them?

What excuses can you give for not teaching others? Some examples are, “I am teaching others through my example,” or, “That is why we have the Bible.”

People may not come to understand the Gospel by watching the way you live your life. It is important that we set a Christian example. Matthew 5:14-16 describes the Christian as the light of the world, a light that cannot be hidden. There is a problem when Christians rely solely on their example as a curriculum to teach. I find this excuse ironic. There are several Christians who claim to teach others through their example but are not good examples. Your example should be used to emphasize what you teach. Your example can help you or hurt you when teaching others.

The Christian is a soldier involved in spiritual warfare. In Ephesians 6:10-20, Paul describes what we call the armor of God. Among the items mentioned, the word of God is described as the sword of the Spirit. If you were to talk to a soldier, he would tell you the weapon is only as effective as the soldier carrying it. The sword is nothing if no one uses it. In view of that, the word of God loses a great deal of its power when it is taught without a teacher. The Bible is our instrument used to teach others.

God does not expect extraordinary people to teach, He just expects people to teach. When the Gospel was first being taught, after Christ ascended to Heaven, Christ chose ordinary men to spread the Gospel. There was nothing spectacular about the twelve apostles. They were simple and plain men.

I fear, on judgment day, many people will stand condemned before God because they did not teach. I also fear that many people will stand condemned before God because they did not teach others. This reality should not be taken lightly.

If we pray for the opportunity to teach others, the opportunity will present itself. Be cautious that you do not get

carried away merely in the search for opportunities. When you see the opportunity presenting itself, take it.

Clayton Wise

Misplaced Faith

“... The genuineness of your faith, being more precious than gold that perishes,...” - 1 Peter 1:7

The Christian’s faith is too precious to be either destroyed or misdirected. Without it, it is impossible to please God. (Heb. 11:6). We must keep it and try to pass it on to our children (2 Tim. 1:5). Satan, through his agents, works day and night to weaken and destroy it. He abuses various legitimate disciplines of thought — science, philosophy, education and even religion — to try to undermine our confidence in the word of God, the source of our faith.

Many institutions in society (educational, literary, broadcasting, theological, political, etc.), influenced by false philosophies, overtly and covertly attack our faith. This should challenge every saint, be he parent, teacher, preacher, elder or otherwise, to guard his faith and the faith of those under his influence. Only by diligent study and skillful use of the word of God can we counter these flagrant attacks upon our faith. The immeasurable power of the testimony of God, unadorned by human wisdom or fleshly might, is sufficient to create and sustain genuine faith. Paul, knowing this, determined to present the testimony of God in a way so that our faith “should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” Notice 1 Corinthians 2:1-5: “And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness and fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”

He not only warns against corrupting the word itself, he cautions against presenting it in a way that would focus one’s faith on the wisdom of this world, rather than on the intrinsic power of the gospel message. The testimony of God, of itself, even presented by “uneducated and untrained men” (Acts 4:13), is powerful enough to counter all adverse influences of the wise, mighty and noble of this world.

Paul, unlike some of the other apostles, was neither uneducated nor untrained. (cf. Acts 22:3). He possibly had the best education available to a Jewish lad of that day.

When it came to fleshly credentials and attainments, he could hold his own with the best. Read what he wrote in Phil. 3:4-8.

“If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. But indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.”

However, the “excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus” meant more to him than all his fleshly credentials. His preaching and teaching were designed to draw attention to his knowledge of Christ rather than his fleshly wisdom, relationships and attainments. He encouraged others to do the same. He did not cater to those who desired wisdom, though he was capable of doing so had it been appropriate (1 Cor. 1:22). He even concedes that “not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble,” were called by his preaching. (1 Cor. 1:27). The bare testimony of God, without carnal enhancements, just did not appeal to their carnal minds. Yet, he showed no inclination to wrap it in carnal enticements in order to make it more appealing.

If Satan cannot keep us from speaking the testimony of God, he will undermine the effectiveness of the gospel in a more subtle way. He will cause us to promote the truth in a way as to produce a misdirected faith. Carnal incentives are dangled before the public to do just that. It is easy to convince ourselves that such means are justified because of the end we believe they will produce. We tell ourselves that we can not get their attention with just the gospel undorned by fleshly incentives. So, we will draw them in by carnal means, then give them the testimony of God.

Churches use a variety of ways to appeal to carnal interests. Social and recreational activities are featured to impress and draw those who love organized parties and recreation. Well-known “Christian entertainers” are brought in to impress and draw fans of the entertainment world. Outstanding “Christian athletes” are featured to draw and impress sports fans. “Christian scientists” (not members of Christian Science denomination) are used to impress and draw the scientifically minded. They may even feature a “Christian philosopher” to draw and impress those interested in philosophy. Speakers’ high academic credentials are advertised to impress and draw the academically minded.

What is wrong with all of this? Is it wrong for the church to use a speaker or teacher who is also an entertainer, or an athlete, or a scientist, or educator? Should we avoid using one with a bachelor’s, master’s, or doctor’s degree? No, on all counts, if he is a faithful Christian who speaks the “testimony of God”. His message is neither weakened nor strengthened by his fleshly credentials per se. I have good friends who fit into some of the above categories who are outstanding teachers and preachers of the word. It is when such fleshly credentials are displayed before the public in an effort to enhance one’s acceptability as a speaker of the gospel that causes us concern. This produces a subtle shift of emphasis away from faith in the divine revelation to faith in human wisdom.

We are seeing more and more brethren emphasizing the fact that their speakers and teachers are scientists, educators, engineers, politicians, criminologists, sociologists, physicians, psychologists, sports figures, and holders of various academic degrees. Is this not an effort to attract the carnally minded? If it is not then pray tell me why advertise the fleshly credentials of speakers and teachers? It seems not to be enough anymore for one to simply know and be able to speak the truth in love on the subject under study. This has little appeal to carnal minds in and out of the church. One must be academically or technically trained and degreed in some field that the audience can at least remotely (sometimes very remotely) relate to his subject.

A wiser and older preacher gave me some pretty good advise when I was a very young preacher still going to school. He told me to get all the higher education that I had sense enough to use. Then when I went out to preach to forget that I had it and try my best to keep the brethren from finding out. I still like that advice.

If one will hear and accept Biblical truth on any subject from a Ph. D., a scientist, engineer, or an educator when he would not otherwise do so, his faith is misdirected. It stands in the wisdom of the men and not in the testimony and power of God. It stands in the carnal credentials of the messenger rather than the credibility of the message. This is the very thing that Paul sought to avoid in his preaching. Why? “That no flesh should glory in His presence” (1 Cor. 1: 29) and “that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God” (1 Cor. 2:5).

Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.



Read your Bible daily