

January 22, 2023

The View

"Sirs, 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 five 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 when is passed.
We do not solicit donations from visitors. See page 4 for more information.**

Schedule

The Lord's Day

9:30 AM Bible Classes

Auditorium: "Love Your Bible"

Young Adult Class: "Love, Service & Culture"

10:30 AM: Assembly

Preaching Today

David Posey

"A Bridge Over Troubled Water"

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

5:00 PM @ the Building

Bible Class: "Praying the Psalms" (Auditorium)

High School Class @ 5 PM @ David & Christie Posey's home

Middle school class: monthly (contact David Sanderson (david.r.sanderson@intel.com))

or Seth Reagan (sethreagan@gmail.com)

There are several on-going Bible classes in the homes of members. Check with David Posey or one of the other elders if you would like to join one of those classes.

Wednesday 7 PM @ Building

Bible classes for all ages

Auditorium: Love Your Bible

Room 12: Young Adults Class: "Love, Service & Culture"

THE KING OF PARADOX

“Did not Solomon king of Israel sin regarding these things? Yet among the many nations there was no king like him, and he was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel; nevertheless the foreign women caused even him to sin.”

Nehemiah 13:26

One of the great paradoxes in all the Bible is Solomon. It's hard to figure him out. As the kingdom transfers from his father, David, to him, he seems so dedicated and focused upon the Lord. What stirring words he speaks as the temple is dedicated. Given the choice by God to have wealth, long life or wisdom, Solomon rightly chose wisdom. Wealth followed. Lots of wealth. The temple, built by Solomon was adorned with gold. In many ways, Solomon was on the path to be as noble, righteous and faithful as David was.

Solomon isn't the spoiled rich kid who is selfish and indifferent to others. He seems to walk hand in hand with the Lord. But, then something unbelievable happens. He seems to toss it all away. This man of God becomes a man of idols. Solomon marries and marries, not daughters of Israel as the law said he should, but foreigners. Pagans. Idolaters. He not only married foreign women, but he allowed them to influence him, dilute his faith and convert him to idolatry. He followed them.

This incredibly wise man does something really dumb. His first mistake was bringing pagans into the palace. His second mistake was marrying them. This third mistake was allowing them to have their way. His fourth mistake was participating and joining with them in fellowship of error.

And, right here is this grand paradox. Someone so smart that does something so dumb. Biblical history doesn't tell us if Solomon ever came to his senses and came back fully to the Lord. If Ecclesiastes is his own personal story, then it seems like he does late in life. But what a train wreck he caused. Rather than leading all these wives to the Lord, they led Solomon to the idols. Did he not remember the Temple? Did he not remember his father, David? Did he not remember God's law? Did he not remember God's promises to him? If someone that wise can become such a fool, what about us?

There are lessons for us:

First, it wasn't doctrine that pulled Solomon away. It was trying to please someone at home. Emotions and feelings can be stronger than truth to us. We are not told why Solomon married so many foreign women, but politically, it would ensure peace. It would be hard for a neighboring king to attack Jerusalem, if that king's daughter was in the palace with Solomon. If that was the reason, on paper it

seems good, but in reality it opened the door for disaster. We must not try to out think the Lord. When God stated that he wanted Israel to only marry Israel, God knew what He was talking about. Solomon may have thought an exception would be to keep peace among the nations. He might have believed that he was an exception and he could handle it.

Did not Solomon think about his influence? If the king wasn't obeying God's law, why should the servant, or, the soldier? Inconsistencies, double standards are not faith building. They created doubt, suspicion and anger. If the king could, why couldn't anyone else?

We need to see the parallel to our times. Trying to keep peace at home, the Christian will attend less. He will take his foot off the spiritual accelerator. His giving may drop off. His time spent with other Christians may become more infrequent. The spouse is not a Christian and it's a lot easier to try to keep them happy than it is to take a stand for the Lord. Some go so far as to compromise where they worship. They sell out their convictions just to keep

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peace in the family.

Second, we must not allow feelings, emotions, the pressure from others to top what we know is right. Our views on divorce cannot change because a daughter gets a divorce. Our sympathy for our family cannot be the guideline for how we view the Bible. Wearing rose colored glasses gives everything a “rosy” tint to it. We need to remove those glasses and see clearly.

Where were the priests in Solomon's life? Were they afraid to say anything? Were they so corrupt that they bought into what Solomon was doing?

Third, it is always better to displease others than it is to anger the Lord. We see each other all the time and we may think keeping them happy is the best way to go. It may keep peace, but it's selling our soul at a cost that we cannot afford.

Our verse today, written a long, long time after Solomon, shows us the displeasure God had with him. The foreign wives caused “even him to sin.” When will we take such lessons to heart. Marrying a Christian doesn't mean paradise, nor that one will remain true to God. But when we marry a pagan, aren't we inviting trouble? It's always easier to go downhill than it is uphill. Caused even him to sin...what a profound statement from Heaven! Convictions to the Lord cannot be sold for peace on earth with family.

To God, let us be true and faithful, even if some in the family do not agree and become unhappy.

ROGER SHOUSE

Memories

Thursday night, a few of us went to the Harris Center to see “The Simon & Garfunkel Story.” Two singers who resembled Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel sang many of their hit songs and came tantalizingly close to duplicating S & G’s iconic sound.

I loved it. S & G were and are my favorite singers. I had all of their albums and preferred them to the Beatles and the other rock bands popular at the time. So I thoroughly enjoyed *re*-hearing songs that go back to “BC” (before Christie) and a couple of years after we were married. Their album, “*Bridge Over Troubled Water*,” not only was the best selling album in 1970, which I knew, but also the best selling album in 1971 and 1972 (which I didn’t know).

While I was watching and listening, these songs I knew but have not heard in many years shook loose some memories things I haven’t thought about in years. I couldn’t help but get teary-eyed a bit. From the time I was a kid, I loved music. I had a huge collection of vinyl albums (unfortunately, they were stolen in early 1968). When I was in my car, I would listen to LA radio stations and my favorite albums on 8-track tapes that I played too loudly.

But it’s the memories. Listening to these songs brought back some specific memories, primarily about what was going on in the world at the time (the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam war and protests, “hippies” and “flower children” and all that 1960’s stuff). At the end of the era, there was an engagement and marriage to “my girl.”

But this also spawned some memories in other areas of my life. Alongside the popular music I loved, simultaneously, I was listening to and singing hymns. It was a consistent part of my. Wherever we were living, no matter what was going on in the world or in our personal lives, the one thing that never changed — we were always in a familiar place on Sundays praying, taking the Lord’s Supper and studying the Bible — and singing hymns.

It’s those hymns that stand out to me. Sometimes the pace of the song was too slow or too fast, some singers were flat and some sang too loud, others couldn’t carry a tune in the proverbial bucket — but that didn’t seem to matter. We were in that familiar place on Sundays doing what my parents clearly considered the most important thing we could be doing.

Memories are made of this. And those memories are important memories to me. When our family came along, we did our best to duplicate what our parents did. We wanted to duplicate those memories for our family. So Sundays belonged to God and our worship of God, not to a trip to the mountains or the beach or a baseball game or a concert or anything else.

I have a variety of pleasant memories about a variety of places and things but always with that one constant: on Sundays, we were in a building somewhere with a group of dedicated people, the “salt of the earth,” doing what the Bible told us to do. As a kid, I admit I wasn’t always fond of that. But looking back, I wouldn’t exchange it for anything.

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Word Study: Grace

The word group in Greek, from which we get our translation, “grace,” includes the words “gift” and “joy.” Bauer gives a range of meanings which include graciousness, attractiveness, favor, grace, gracious care or help, goodwill, gracious deeds, gift and benefaction. It can be active, when one volunteers to do something which he is not bound to do, especially the gracious intention of God, or passive, when one experiences favor from another.

In the *Theological Wordbook of the Bible*, N. H. Snaith compares the Greek word *charis*, with Hebrew word *chesed*, (often translated “lovingkindness”) describing them both, essentially, as free and undeserved favor from God, who is under no obligation whatsoever to show His favor to man, but does it anyway. In *God’s Words*, J. I. Packer points out that *charis* corresponds to the Old Testament words for grace (*chen*) and love (*ahabah*) which express God’s favor toward His people, Israel, that He will not let go (see Dt. 7:7; Hos. 11:1-11). The Hebrew verb for love (*ahab*) is translated in the LXX with the Greek word *agape*, a word familiar to most of us.

As you can see, it is important to understand, first of all, that God is not obligated to show favor to anyone. When He does, it is purely out of the goodness of His nature. Secondly, no one can claim favor from God as a right, because no one has legal or moral standing to do so (Rom. 3:10-20, 23). The basic meaning of *chen* is favor from a superior to a suppliant who cannot claim favorable treatment as a right. Thirdly, then, grace is a gift — it is always free. If grace was not free (to the recipient), it would not be grace (cf. Rom. 4:4; 11:6).

Free grace does not mean unconditional grace. Gifts that are offered must be accepted, and virtually all gifts have a condition attached, even if it is only the reaching out and taking of the gift. Such conditions do not make the gift any less “free,” as we all perfectly understand. God’s grace is gratuitous, but conditional. We must appropriate the gift by our trusting submission and absolute obedience to “the God of all grace.” This is nothing like “work” or “repayment.” As a matter of fact, it is rather arrogant to think we could repay or work off God’s gift in the first place. All we can do is thank Him and walk by our faith.

Much of modern day religion has missed this point and have embraced a concept of grace which has cheapened it and even “turned the grace of God into lasciviousness” (Jude 4). I’m afraid that there are people in the church who have embraced the same false concept and have kept one foot in the world, believing that God’s grace will cover them. That can only lead to a home in hell for eternity.

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References

Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Early Christian Literature*, 2d Ed. (1979)
Theological Wordbook of the Bible, Alan Richardson, ed., 1950
J. I. Packer, *God’s Words*, 1981