

A Spiritual Self-examination as Suggested by Paul 2 Corinthians 13:5

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”

There are times when a spirit of discontent, unrest, unhappiness, disinterest, even boredom, may overtake the heart of some Christians. In such times, we may be wise to follow the above injunction of the apostle to see just who has changed or moved—us or God. In view of these considerations, let each one do some honest personal soul-searching and self-evaluation.

There are many other areas of thought than those below.

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- I see to it that the Lord always comes first in my life and in my family’s life—always (Mat. 6:33).
- I and my family are faithful in assembling to worship God at all worship services, including Sunday night and Wednesday night worship (Heb. 10:25; 13:17).
- I am very involved every week in some aspect of the mission/evangelism work of the church (Mark 16:15).
- Whenever I learn of a need for some kind of work or help needed in the church, I always volunteer to cooperate according to my ability (Mat. 25:14-30).
- I see to it that I and my family are fed a full and steady diet of God’s Word that we may grow thereby as we worship faithfully in the public gatherings and take time at home to study His Word (1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:12-14; 2 Tim. 2:15).
- I spend time visiting those who are mentioned at church as being in the hospitals (Mat. 25:31-46).
- I can honestly say that I am doing more now for the cause of Christ than I was a year ago. I am more involved than ever in the Lord’s work and in bringing glory to God (1 Cor. 15:57; 2 Cor. 11:23; Rev. 3:1, 16).
- The example that I am now setting is a source of encouragement to others to serve God, and if others followed my example of Christianity, they would assuredly go to heaven (Mat. 5:14-16; Phi. 1:27; 2:14-16; 1 Tim. 4:12).
- When I become unhappy with something or someone in the church, rather than run away, I find that my unhappiness disappears when I start doing something for others, speaking positively for the Lord, and devoting more time to prayer (Eph. 6:18).
- When I disagree with a brother or sister, or when one has sinned against me, rather than tell everyone else about it. I go first, in a humble manner, to the other party in order to solve the problem, disagreement, or misunderstanding (Mat. 18:16-18; 5:21-26).

Author Unknown

BELVEDERE BEACON

“Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14)

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535 Clearwater Road, Belvedere, SC 29841-2574

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Figurative Versus Literal

Many problems have originated with people who do not understand language. The Greek epics, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, both employed a number of figures of speech. Vergil uses a tremendous amount of figurative language in *The Aeneid*. It seems that, according to some, only the Bible must be taken literally at all times. A few legalistic souls insist that the Bible cannot use metaphors, personification, synecdoche, and other normal manners of communication.

Consider what Jesus said: “Take, eat; this is my body” (Mat. 26:26). The Roman Catholic Church decided that the word “is” meant that Jesus’ presence is in the bread—that, when they eat of it, it becomes and is the literal body of Jesus. **Yecch!** Such is grotesque. Even worse would be the fruit of the vine becoming Christ’s blood. If it were somehow mystically transformed into His actual blood, then we could not drink it, for the apostles forbade drinking blood (Acts 15:29).

When Jesus said, “I am the light of the world,” He did not mean that He was a literal ball, of burning gases. When He referred to Himself as the “door of the sheepfold” no one insisted upon a non-figurative interpretation. The unleavened bread **represents** His broken body. He is not in the bread. Jesus used something symbolic of Him. Likewise, the fruit of the vine represents His blood; its very appearance reminds us of the color of the blood that came forth from His side.

But it is **not** His blood. The presence of Christ is not in these elements; His presence is in our minds, as we remember the sacrifice in the way He specified.

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which one thing often stands for another. The **cup**, which Jesus blessed, **stands for** the contents in it, the fruit of the vine (Mat. 26:26-30). This is easily seen in Paul’s statement: “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come” (1 Cor. 11:26). We all know how one drinks the contents of a cup, but—how does one drink the cup? To literally do so would require heating it to its boiling point and swallowing it before it cooled—an absurdity. **The purpose** of these elements is to focus our attention on the sacrifice Jesus offered for our sins. Every one of us needed His body to be broken and His blood to be shed for us. Let us lay aside insistence upon literal applications and honor Him as He intended.

Gary Summers, Winter Park, FL

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 10.00 am.
Morning Worship 11.00 am.
Evening Worship 6.00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 7.00 p.m.

EVANGELIST: Ken Chumbley - Tel. No. (803) -279-8663

www.belvederechurchofchrist.org E-mail church@belvederechurchofchrist.org

Did you hear the story about a man who always ate the most nutritious foods that were available? He always checked to ensure that he did not eat anything that contained too much fat. He always counted his calories to ensure that his health remained perfect. He always took his vitamins every day to ensure that he had his minimum daily requirement. He exercised four times every week to keep in shape. He had an annual physical from his doctor and had never smoked or drank alcohol. He was all set to live to a ripe old age. However, his funeral services were held last Thursday. He made one costly mistake, he left God out of his life and lived as though this world was all that there was and when one died, they were like the old dog Rover, dead all over.

The above is a fictitious account. However there are many who really do live like the man in the story. There are many who live their lives in such a manner as to seek to maintain the peak of physical fitness and to keep themselves from disease but who live their lives are lived without a moments thought as to what is beyond this life. The Bible says, *“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?”* (Mark 8:36).

How are you living your life? Are you just concerned about the physical? Or are you also concerned about the spiritual? Are you concerned about eternity? Jesus teaches: *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”* (Matthew 6:33). Are you seeking first God’s kingdom and righteousness as you live your life each day?

Remember, some day this life is going to be over. The Hebrew writer stated: *“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”* (Hebrews 9:27). Are we ready for the judgment that is to come after this life is over? To be ready for the judgment day, we need to take good care of the spiritual aspect of our lives. We need to partake of the right spiritual food, the Word of God, and we need to exercise ourselves in the study of God’s word. Paul told Timothy that *“bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come”* (I Tim. 4:8). Let us then always seek to exercise ourselves unto godliness (I Tim. 4:7).

If we are seeking to prepare ourselves for the life to come and partake of the necessary spiritual food, we will seek to be present every opportunity we have to worship God and to study His Word. There will be times when our physical health will not allow us to be in attendance. Sadly, there are those who let every little ache or pain or “not feeling well” keep us from attending the services of the church on Sunday or Wednesday evening. However, they seem to have made an amazing recovery by Monday or Thursday mornings for such will not keep them from their employment! Why is work more important, to some, than worshipping God and studying His Word? Remember to keep your priorities right and put first God and His kingdom.

Additionally, let us be true students of the Word who *“search the scriptures”* and give due diligence to finding out the will of God and then applying to our lives. We need the sustenance that comes from a daily partaking of the bread of life as we study the Word of the Lord.

May we always be seen as those who realize that this life is not all that there is but that there is, indeed, a life to come.

Ken Chumbley

NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett and mother, Kathy Treadway’s mother and Bronwen Gibson’s mother (Lavonne McClish) – who has continued health – related issues and who is undergoing pain management therapy, Linda Chumbley is also undergoing pain management therapy; and Rachel Fitzpatrick’s aunt (Eula Baker) who has cancer.

Ethan and Noah were sick and not able to be out Sunday but were better and able to be out Wednesday evening.

Ron Wilson’s mother is doing better at home following her heart attack.

Ron’s cataract surgery was postponed because of his laryngitis until December 11. He is doing better.

The Wilsons were not out Wednesday night as they had gone to Janis’ sister’s home for Thanksgiving.

Our next pot luck fellowship meal will follow the morning worship on December 9, 2007. Plan to stay and eat.

What is Love?

Love may be the most misused word in the English language. We use it to describe cars, boats, games, and other material things. The word should be used as a way to express the emotion of the heart. The biblical word *love* has great and strong meaning. Just read 1 Corinthians 13 and you will see what Paul wrote, by inspiration, concerning love. Let us see just what love is.

1. Love is silent when your words would hurt.
2. It is patience when your brother is hurt.
3. It is deafness when some scandal flows.
4. It is thoughtfulness for another’s woes.
5. It is courage if misfortune comes along.
6. It is hurting as others hurt.
7. It is rejoicing when others have reason to rejoice.
8. It is correction when one has done wrong.
9. It is going the extra mile for those in need.

There certainly are other things that define what love is, but we all know that nothing takes the place of love!

Author Unknown