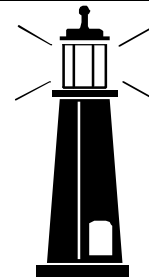


The Berryville church of Christ

Bible Beacon



"Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Psalm 119:105)

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Mercy, Not Sacrifice

Kevin Cauley

Our Lord was no stranger to difficult situations. The Pharisees and Sadducees would often present him with questions regarding various different aspects of the Old Law. Each time, our Lord answered with the utmost wisdom and absolute truth. Perhaps one of the most difficult (if not **the** most difficult) situations into which these enemies of righteousness placed our Lord is recorded for us in John 8:3-11. The scribes and Pharisees had brought a woman taken in adultery and demanded of Jesus that he judge her case and execute the penalty decreed under the Old Law. Lest we forget, the Old Law plainly stated that those who were caught in such circumstances were to be put to death (Leviticus 20:10). Jesus was literally being asked to judge as to whether or not someone should live or die and the scribes and Pharisees were planning on executing upon his advice. Jesus was in a difficult circumstance because on the one hand He was obligated to uphold the Old Law. He came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17). However, on the other hand, Jesus purpose, was not to condemn any man, but to offer mercy, pardon, forgiveness and salvation (John 3:17). The dilemma was real. How could Jesus fulfill the demands of the Old Law in this case, yet at the same time uphold the principles of mercy, pardon, and forgiveness?

The scribes and Pharisees had brought a woman taken in adultery. They had caught her in the very act. Evidently they had a witness or witnesses to this because they were not to make such accusations without at least two witnesses and someone was not to be put to death at the mouth of just one witness (Deuteronomy 17:6). They reminded Jesus that Moses commanded that she should be stoned. This was true provided they had the witnesses (Leviticus 20:10). And then they asked Jesus what He would do. The text also says that their true motives were to

tempt Jesus so that they might be able to accuse him of wrongdoing or at least, poor judgment. At first, it appears that Jesus ignored them. Jesus did not wish to judge this case. There were judges who could hear such things, but Jesus was not one of them (Luke 12:14). So he was not properly the person to whom such matters should be brought. So the text says that he stooped down and wrote in the sand. The scribes and Pharisees, however, were insistent that He judge this case and they would not leave. So Jesus answered them as follows: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

The statement that Jesus made was not designed to suggest (as many today insist) that no one ought to ever be judged for sin unless they have lived a sinless life. The statement actually has its roots in Deuteronomy 17:7. This passage states, "The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you." Here was a catch that the scribes and Pharisees had failed to take into consideration. The witnesses, being the ones to cast the first stones, had to come forward, and a proper examination of their involvement in the whole affair could then be made. Two people rarely witness the sin of adultery unless they are somehow unwittingly privy to that knowledge (unlikely here since they were putting this case to Jesus as a "test"), or they are complicit in the whole affair. If they are complicit in the whole affair of adultery, then they must also be put to death for their participation in such a situation. Hence, Jesus wise answer neither removes His obligations to the Old Law, nor allows those who are guilty themselves to prosecute the offense without self-condemnation. So slowly, one by one, from the oldest to the last, the scribes and Pharisees leave the scene. This leaves only the woman and Jesus. Jesus, no longer having any witnesses to the event He mercifully refuses to condemn the woman to death, but equally as mercifully instructs her to commit no more sin.

We learn many great lessons from this text,

but perhaps the greatest is this. Just because someone is guilty of sin doesn't necessarily mean that we must apply the whole penalty to that sin. Herein is one of the great attributes of God. Psalm 103:8-13 states, "The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep *his anger* for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth *his* children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him." Personally, I am thankful that God doesn't deal with me, as I know that I deserve. However, the lesson that we should learn from this is that neither should we deal with each other this way. It should be our great aim and desire to have as much mercy, compassion, and pity upon those who are involved in sin as much as it is to teach them the truth. Let us learn this great lesson from the life of Jesus for God desires mercy and not sacrifice (Hosea 6:6; Matthew 9:13; Matthew 12:7).

ARE YOU AN "ARMCHAIR CHRISTIAN"?

Keith Olbricht

As with any war America has ever fought, there has arisen an element within our society questioning the right of our involvement. The news abounds with stories of people criticizing President Bush and the decisions he has made regarding America's dominant role in this second war in the Gulf. Moral, ethical, and legal issues raised are being raised by "armchair soldiers" aimed at stopping this effort.

It is possible that some Christians engage in a similar effort to negate our role in the war against sin. The spiritual battlefield is one that cries out for spiritual warriors worthy to take up the fight. Yet the church today seems to abound in "armchair Christians" who would second-guess every move made against the powers of darkness without ever having smelled the gunpowder.

Some would say, "Well, we can't preach against that. We don't want to offend anyone." While the faithful proclaimer of God's Truths

would never seek to use the gospel as a tool to purposefully offend, the manmade controversies of today cannot be avoided on the basis of sensitivity. Jesus Himself said, "*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword*" (Matthew 10:34). Let that sword be used for truth.

Others would say, "Well, we can't go to those people with the gospel. They just don't want to hear it." Brethren, the sad truth is that nobody truly desires to hear that their lives are marred by sin, nobody likes to hear that they are wrong, and nobody likes to admit that change is needed in their lives. Those, however, with an honest and pure heart will joyfully receive the remedy to bring about cleansing.

Still others would say, "Well, we can't try that. We've never done that before." Brethren, it ought to be the church's desire to do whatever can be done to ensure the efficient spread of the borders of the kingdom of God. Anyone can hold a bat like Babe Ruth did, yet how few could hit the ball as well. Adaptation (within the boundaries of God's authority, of course) must be made to individual peculiarities and circumstances to ensure the greatest effectiveness. Just because an idea is new does not mean it is wrong. No, "armchair soldiers" have no place in the kingdom of God. If we find ourselves in that role, or being influenced by those in that role, we must carefully examine our hearts relative to what God expects us to do within His kingdom. Let's get out of those armchairs and into the fray!

Elders: Clay Bozarth, Leon Duncan, Bruce Foster, Bill Fort, Glenn Quigley
Deacons: Ken Smith, Brent Stevens, Rusty Windle.
Preacher: Kevin Cauley 870-423-6707



Our Record

Week of 11/16

Sunday Class.....	63
Sunday A.M.....	79
Sunday P.M.	52
Wednesday.....	63
Contribution.....	\$1950.09
Budget.....	\$1760.00

SERIOUS FAITH!

Carl Hanson

It is easy to have faith when things are going well. The true essence of our faith is revealed when it is tested. This life is filled with serious situations where our faith can be nothing less than serious!

There are several individuals in the pages of Scripture who wow me every time I read of the examples of their faith. It doesn't matter how many times I read the passages, the pictures of their faith really grip me. Perhaps their examples strike me so much because, though I have a lot of faith, I still know I have growing to do. I sometimes feel like the one who exclaimed to Jesus, "I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24)

Abraham was remarkable in his steadfastness trust in God. Paul tells us that "In hope he believed against hope" that God would fulfill His promise to him. (Romans 4:19)

Then there is Job whose faith was evident in the fact he didn't have to continue to be blessed by God in order to believe and trust in Him. Job could even misunderstand God as the source of his trials and still not speak against Him. (Job 1:21-22; Job 2:9-10)

And then there are the impressive friends of Daniel: Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah -- usually remembered by their Babylonian names of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Daniel 1:7) -- whom I read about again this morning. They too had a faith which did not require God to prove anything further. They knew God was able to deliver them from the burning fiery furnace. But the remarkable thing about their faith was that even if God did not deliver them, there was no way they would sin against God by worshipping the golden image set up by King Nebuchadnezzar. (Daniel 3:17-18) They met their serious life and death situation with serious faith in the only true and living God.

What does such a faith do? For one thing it causes others to see that our faith in God is serious because we see Him as undeniably real. It also provides us with the anchor needed to keep us from drifting away from God when this life's storms attempt to toss us about.

We know what God is able to do. The question is, what do we do when He chooses to not do it? We need to bear in mind that God has a larger view of life than we do. His perspective is much broader than ours. His wisdom is beyond our own. These men of faith mentioned above exercised a faith which seemed to say, "I believe GOD KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING and I will keep my unwavering devotion and trust in Him Who is eternal regardless of what life deals me!"

Abraham knew God was able. (Romans 4:21; Hebrews 11:19) Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah knew God was able. (Daniel 3:17) Serious faith for serious situations. How much do we believe GOD KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING? He may already be doing things on our behalf of which we are unaware. He may already have something better planned than what we think we desire or expect.

Paul encouraged...

"(20) Now TO HIM WHO IS ABLE TO DO FAR MORE ABUNDANTLY THAN ALL THAT WE ASK OR THINK, according to the power at work within us, (21) to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen." (Ephesians 3:20-21 ESV)

Do I believe it? Do you? Does our life show it? HE KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING whether we understand it or not! May we continue to strive to maintain such a serious faith in Him.

Have a great day TRULY TRUSTING GOD'S SOVEREIGN CARE!

“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.” (Heb.11:30)

Sunday's Sermons

For November 23rd

Morning.....Brotherly Love

Scripture 1 John 4:7,8

Evening..... Lessons from David

Scripture 1 Sam.16:11-13

Times of Worship and Study

Sunday Morning Bible Class:.....9:30 AM

Sunday Morning Worship:.....10:30 AM

Sunday Evening Worship:6:00 PM

Ladies Bible Class:.....10:30 AM

Wed. Evening Bible Class:7:00 PM

News, Notes and Prayer List



- Our God is alive; let us praise and worship him on this great Lord's day.
- If you are visiting with us, WELCOME!

- Please remember the following in your prayers: Geneva Atchley, Michael Collins, Brian Guess, Cutis and Opal Hull, Chris Pinkley
- Edith Mischler is in the nursing home in Eureka Springs.
- Art Roberts and Mary Patterson are confined to their homes.
- Don't forget that next Sunday afternoon is our quarterly visit to the nursing home to sing. These wonderful people really do look forward to us coming every quarter. When we come to sing, we offer them a unique experience that they don't get with others. So make your plans to be with us next Sunday afternoon at 2:00 PM.
- The truck for the Children's Home will be here on December 1st. They will be taking both clothing and food. If you have either one that you would like to donate, please do so before next Monday morning.
- Of course, Thursday is Thanksgiving day. I would like to wish everyone a happy Thanksgiving. If you don't have any plans for Thanksgiving, please see me and I will make sure you get some!
- Our mission trip to Costa Rica is coming up soon! We have been making the appropriate preparations. If you have anything that you wish to send with us to Costa Rica, I need to have it in my possession by Wednesday night.
- There will be no ladies Bible class this week or next due to the Thanksgiving holidays and the trip to Costa Rica.
- The Pantry Item for this week is pinto beans.



Those to Serve

	<u>Today</u>	<u>Next Week</u>
Sunday Morning:	November 23rd, 2003	November 30th, 2003
Song Leader:	Brent Stevens	Ken Smith
Preacher:	Kevin Cauley	Kevin Cauley
Opening Prayer:	Ray Duncan	John Gass
Scripture:	Sandy Nieves	Leon Duncan
Lord's Table:	Bill Fort	Glenn Williams
	Rusty Windle	Larry Elliott
(assist)	John Gass	Sandy Nieves
	Brent Moore	Jack Gentry
Closing Prayer	Larry Elliott	Bill Fort
Sunday Night:		
Songs:	Rusty Windle	Larry Elliott
Preacher:	Kevin Cauley	Kevin Cauley
Opening Prayer:	Glenn Williams	Hugh Atchley
Scripture:	Sandy Nieves	Dale Pinkley
Lord's Table:	Leon Duncan	Ken Smith
	Dale Pinkley	Brandon Foster
Closing Prayer	Bill Fort	George Eddings
Wednesday		
Songs:	Bruce Foster	Sandy Nieves
Opening Prayer:	John Gass	Kevin Cauley
Invitation:	Matt Bassing	Bill Fort
Closing Prayer:	Larry Elliott	Hugh Atchley
Monthly Assignments		
Announcements	Leon Duncan	
Worship Coordinator	Matt Bassing	
Communion Prep	Pat Quigley	Tiffany Windle
Communion Carry	Bob Moore	Glenn Williams

The "Berryville Bible Beacon" is published by the Berryville church of Christ. Please contact Kevin Cauley at work at (870) 423-3068 or at home at (870) 423-6707 or e-mail bvcc@alltel.net to contribute information.

For questions or comments, please call (870) 423-3068 or write us at:
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