

Noteworthy

Prayer Requests: Joe Brown (*cancer*), Reagan Cunningham, Kelly Cochran, Kurt Dickey, Betty Eubanks, Linda James (*ongoing medical*), Yvonne Jordan, Rowena Lawson, Leon Miller, Butch Morgan, Dottie Reynolds (*had transportation issues Wednesday evening*), the Ross family (*been sick*), Wayne & Christine Ryland (*doing better*), Suzette Stevens, and Ken Turner.

Our family and friends: Susan Bebbly (*Bucky Day's sister; diagnosed with cancer*), Elnora Bennet (*Moses Stevens' sister*), Mildred Church (*Shut-in*), Chet Sheffield (*out of town*), Shelby Sprott, Brian James (*cancer*), Debbie Montgomery (*the Blackburn's daughter*), and Ardis Tucker.

Ladies' Bible Class: The next ladies' Bible class is going to be March 14th, at Stef Marschall's home (*at 7PM*). In preparation, please study the lesson that begins on page number 93 in the book, "Some Do's and Don'ts for the Christian". (*See the sign-up sheet in the foyer*)

Out of town/working: Audrey Davis & Paula Sullivan, and Kevin Winn are out of town. Mike and Clay Sadler are both working.

Afternoon Singing: Our next afternoon singing will be March 13th at 5pm (*next week*), in the auditorium.

Bible Class Review: The kids are all invited to the Bible review class on March 6th (*TONIGHT*) in classroom number 7, shortly after the evening services.

Group Meeting: Group (1) meets tonight after worship.

Gospel Meeting: The Southwest Church of Christ is holding a gospel meeting, starting today and running through Wednesday evening (March 6-9). The meeting times, along with the topics, are posted on the bulletin board in the foyer (See flyer). Let's seek to encourage our brethren at Southwest by attending when possible.

Assignments for Worship Service

Wednesday Night: 3/9/16

Song Leader: Clay Sadler
 Opening Prayer: Joe Brown
 Invitation: Eddie Lawson
 Announcements: Bob Marschall
 Closing Prayer: Sherman Johnson
 Recordings: Keith Marschall
 Usher: Larry Hicks

Sunday Evening: 3/13/16

Song Leader: Bob Marschall
 Opening Prayer: David Williams
 Lord's Table: Colby Sadler
 Announcements: Larry Hicks
 Closing Prayer: Sherman Johnson
 Recordings: Clay Sadler
 Usher: Mike Sadler

Sunday Morning: 3/13/16

Lord's Table: Colby Sadler (B)
 Eddie Lawson (C)
 Serving: Keith Marschall
 Trent Stevens
 Song Leader: Larry Wisdom

Opening Prayer: **OPEN**
 Announcements: Larry Hicks
 Closing Prayer: David Williams
 Recordings: Clay Sadler
 Usher: Mike Sadler



**Lakeland Hills
 Leader**

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ELDERS

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SERVICES

Sunday
 Bible Study 9:00 A.M.
 Morning Services 9:50 A.M.
 Evening Services 6:00 P.M.
 Wednesday
 Bible Study 7:30 P.M.

DEACONS:

Robert Marschall
 Charles Rawdon
 Michael Sadler
 Moses Stevens
 David Williams

EVANGELIST:

Ian Rice (863) 213-9795

Those Who Have No Right to Speak God's Word

We sometimes hear celebrities, politicians, and other godless people quoting (or misquoting) the Bible. They often do so in an attempt to defend an unscriptural position (e.g. support for same-sex "marriage," opposition to the death penalty, etc.). When we hear them, we might think, "What business do they have in speaking about the Bible?" God asked the same type of question in the following text.

"But to the wicked God says, 'What right have you to tell of My statutes and to take My covenant in your mouth? For you hate discipline, and you cast My words behind you. When you see a thief, you are pleased with him, and you associate with adulterers. You let your mouth loose in evil and your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother's son. These things you have done and I kept silence; you thought that I was just like you; I will reprove you and state the case in order before your eyes'" (Psalm 50:16-21). There are certain ones who have no right to speak God's word. Let us notice who was identified in the text.

Those Who Are Wicked

"The wicked" (Psalm 50:16) have no right to speak God's word. This does not mean that God intended for His word to be taught only by those who are sinlessly perfect. Only Jesus would fit this qualification (1 Peter 2:22; Romans 3:23). In speaking of the knowledge revealed by God through the gospel, Paul said, *"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves"* (2 Corinthians 4:7). The "earthen vessels" to which Paul referred are those who would proclaim the gospel. God's design is for fallible human beings to proclaim God's infallible word. However, there is a difference between one who occasionally sins and one who is given to sin.

Some "walk in the darkness" while others "walk in the Light" (1 John 1:6-7). Those in the light should not think that they have not or could not sin (1 John 1:8, 10), but they are to make a diligent and consistent effort to keep from sin (1 John 2:1). This is important because the wickedness of a teacher can discredit the gospel message in the mind of the hearer. This is why Paul sought to give "no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited" (2 Corinthians 6:3). Those who are wicked should not be proclaiming the righteous standard of God's word.

Those Who Hate Discipline

As we noted in the previous point, God's word will be taught by fallible people. At times, any one of us may be guilty of sin or error and in need of correction. Apollos was "mighty in the Scriptures," but Priscilla and Aquila needed to "[take] him aside and [explain] to him the way of God more accurately" (Acts 18:24-26). Peter (Cephas) was an apostle; yet in Antioch, Paul "opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned" (Galatians 2:11). Solomon said, "A wise man in cautious and turns away from evil, but a fool is arrogant and careless" (Proverbs 14:16). Arrogance is a trait of one who continues in sin, even after being shown the truth.

Hating discipline is an indication that one is arrogant – he cannot see or refuses to see his own sin. This is why those who "hate discipline" (Psalm 50:17) are unqualified to teach God's word. God's message is for the teacher just as much as it is for the hearer. This is why Paul wrote, "You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself?" (Romans 2:21). One cannot reprove and rebuke (2 Timothy 4:2) if he is not willing to apply that same standard to himself.

Those Who Cast Aside God's Words

The responsibility of those who will "preach the word" is to do so "in season and out of season" (2 Timothy 4:2). To do this, one needs the attitude of David: "O how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day" (Psalm 119:97). Those who speak God's word must do as Paul did – "declaring...the whole purpose of God" (Acts 20:27).

Sadly, many do not want to hear the gospel in its simplicity and entirety. Paul told Timothy, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths" (2 Timothy 4:3-4). There will be teachers willing to teach what the people want to hear. But those who would "cast [God's] words behind [them]" (Psalm 50:17) in this way are not servants of Christ. Paul wrote, "If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10). "Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God" (1 Peter 4:11). Those who refuse to do this are unfit to claim to speak for God.

Those Who View Sin Favorably

Jesus was "a friend of tax collectors and sinners" (Matthew 11:19), but that is not parallel to those who "associate with adulterers" in the context of this psalm (Psalm 50:18). Jesus ate with "tax collectors and sinners" in order to "call [them] to repentance" (Luke 5:29-32). Jesus did not condone their sin, but tried to lead them out of sin.

Those described in the psalm were not like Jesus. They were "pleased" with the sinful activity of the thieves and adulterers (Psalm 50:18). They condoned and supported sin, which is the opposite of what we should do. Paul wrote, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11, KJV).

Those who view sin favorably have no right to speak God's word.

Those Who Do Not Control Their Speech

There are a few sins of the tongue mentioned in our text – lack of control, deceit, and slander (Psalm 50:19-20). James wrote, "But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison" (James 3:8). When one's speech is corrupt, it is an indication that his heart is corrupt. Jesus said, "But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man..." (Matthew 15:18-20). This is why those who do not control their speech are unfit to speak God's word – their heart is not right.

Those who teach "will incur a stricter judgment" (James 3:1). This is manifested in two ways. First, teachers will receive closer scrutiny by others. Those who oppose the truth will often look for any little thing they can criticize in the teaching that is done by brethren. This is why Paul told Titus, "In all things, show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us" (Titus 2:7-8). Second, those who teach "will incur a stricter judgment" because they have a divine obligation to represent the truth accurately. Peter wrote, "Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God" (1 Peter 4:11). God will judge teachers for their teaching. For these reasons, those who are not careful with their speech can do more harm by teaching than they would by remaining silent.

Those Who Think That God Is Like Them

Finally, those who have no right to speak God's word are those who think that God is "just like"

them (Psalm 50:21). Many presume to know the mind of God based upon what is in their own mind. If something "seems right" (cf. Proverbs 14:12) to them, they assume that God will also see it as right. But we can only know what will please God by what He has revealed in His word. Paul wrote, "Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God" (1 Corinthians 2:11-12). Apostasy comes when men put themselves in the place of God (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4), equating their will with His will.

All of us need to recognize our place before God. Isaiah recorded, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," declares the Lord. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9). Those who teach must trust God's word over their opinions (or the opinions of anyone else). God is not like man (Numbers 23:19) – we should be thankful for this because it gives us hope (Malachi 3:6; 2 Peter 3:9). Those who do not recognize their place before God and cannot see the difference between His word and their word have no right "to tell of [His] statutes" (Psalm 50:16).

Conclusion

The purpose of this article is not simply to condemn celebrities, politicians, and other godless people for misquoting and misapplying Scripture. It is also a call for us to examine ourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5). "You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself?" (Romans 2:21). All of us can (and should) teach in some capacity (1 Peter 3:15). Let us make sure we are qualified to do so.

- By Andy Sochor