

The Better Way

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SPRING CHURCH OF CHRIST

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY

Bible Study.....9:00 a.m.
Worship.....10:00 a.m.
Afternoon Worship.....1:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study.....7:30 p.m.
(via Zoom Meetings)

ELDERS

David P. Brown
Ken Cohn
John West

DEACONS

Bret Bailey
J. D. Gunter
Eric Paluka

EVANGELIST

David P. Brown

SECRETARY

Sonya West

“SPEAK NOT EVIL ONE OF ANOTHER, BRETHREN”

Danny Douglas

It is a fact that some brethren in the Lord's church of the first century needed this rebuke given by the inspired writer, James. He calls them "brethren," here in James 4:11. Even since the first century there have been, and are, Christians in need of this rebuke. There may be no sin today more prevalent than the sins of the tongue.

In James 4:11, the inspired writer warns: **“Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.”** Brother Guy N. Woods, in his excellent work, *A Commentary on the Epistle of James*, makes the following observation on this verse:

Here, he gives attention to those sins which follow from a lack of love for the brethren. It is, of course, the want of love for each other that prompts us to express adverse judgments regarding others. We are especially prone to make excuses for those whom we appreciate and love; to excuse, justify, and forgive them for their weaknesses; and to criticize, condemn and flay those whom we dislike. Such a disposition is sinful, and vigorously condemned by James in this section. One may speak evil of another by unjustly criticizing his actions, words, life; by taking up evil reports originated by others against a brother and giving them further circulation. All such censorious activity is sinful and wrong.

Among the children of Israel in the wilderness there were many who displayed such a disposition. We can read on various occasions how that they murmured against Moses and Aaron. For example, after God had caused the earth to swallow up Korah and his company who rebelled against the authority of Moses and Aaron, and after God had consumed with fire the two hundred and fifty men who unlawfully offered incense, we read: **“But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD”** (Num. 16:41). This provoked the Lord to anger and He caused a plague to break out among the people. If Aaron had not acted quickly at the command of Moses, more would have died:

And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed (Num. 16:47-48).

Nevertheless, several thousand had already been destroyed: **“Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah”** (Num. 16:49). Centuries later the apostle Paul would refer to such incidents as an example

to us today: **“Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer”** (1 Cor. 10:10). He went on to say: **“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come”** (1 Cor. 10:11).

Today, as in Israel of old, the work and harmony of the local church is disrupted by a tongue out of control. Like those who were destroyed in Numbers chapter fourteen, there are some today who rebel against the authority of the Scriptures. They rebel against the teaching of the Bible in regard to withdrawing from the disorderly (cf. 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 The. 3:6, 14-15); against the Lord’s teaching on marriage, divorce, and remarriage (cf. Mat. 19:4-9); against the command of God to mark false teachers (cf. Rom. 16:17-18; 2 John 9-11; 1 Tim. 6:3-5); and these are only a few examples of what they rebel against.

They also rebel against the authority of the eldership. To rebel against an eldership, which

is doing that which is scriptural, would be in the same category with what Korah, Dathan and Abiram did in Numbers 14. They rebelled against the authority which God had delegated to Moses and Aaron. Likewise, these rebel against the God-given authority of the elders (cf. Heb. 13:17). Let us not take up the railings of those who speak evil of sound brethren in the Lord’s church, who are striving to do God’s will. If we do, then we will be like those who were destroyed for following these rebellious men.

Hopefully, brethren, we will heed the warnings of Paul, and of James, that we be not destroyed for the evil use of the tongue. Let us not speak evil of our brethren in any way. Paul warned, **“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”** (Gal. 5:9). I would not want to be found in the Judgment as one who had sowed evil leaven among the Lord’s people. There will always be people, for whatever reason, who will speak evil of God’s way, and of God’s people. Let us not be found in company with the “Korahs,” “Dathans” and “Abirams” of our day!~

YOU CAN FORFEIT YOUR RIGHTS

Thomas B. Warren

Presently, some in the church are urging others to accept their own (merely human) doctrine that no one can forfeit his (her) right to be married (i.e., to have and live with a husband or wife). These brethren hold that no matter what has happened in the past, that no matter if one divorces unscripturally and marries again unscripturally, he (she) still does not forfeit his (her) “right” to be married. It is true that all people come into this world with certain rights, but it is also true that one may forfeit his (her) rights.

Every person is born—as far as God is concerned—with certain rights. Among these are: the right to *life*, the right to *freedom*, and the right to *marry*. Some people are deprived of these rights because of the ignorance, carelessness, or sin of *other* people. But one can also lose these rights by his *own* actions—i.e., one can forfeit these precious rights.

1. One can forfeit his right to freedom. By committing a crime (such as burglary, stealing, armed robbery, fraud, etc.), one can forfeit his right of freedom (to go and come as he pleases) and thus be put into *prison* for many years—or even for the rest of his earthly life.

2. One can forfeit his right to life. One can commit a crime so heinous that society may rightly *execute* him. When he was on trial before

the Roman governor Festus, the apostle Paul said, **“If then I am a wrongdoer, and have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die ...”** (Acts 25:11). Romans 13:1-5 also makes clear that, in the face of some crimes, the civil government has the God-given authority to use **“the sword”** (i.e., to execute the criminal). Thus, it is clear that, by committing certain crimes, a person may forfeit his right to life.

3. One can forfeit his right to eternal life. To the *believer*, the Lord has given the right to *become* a child of God. (John 1:11-13). One lays hold on that right when he is baptized, in the name of Christ, **“unto the remission of sins”** (Acts 2:28; cf. Gal. 3:26-27; John 3:3-5; Rom. 6:3-5). The child of God is promised eternal life (1 John 2:25). But one can forfeit that right by falling away and hardening his heart (searing his conscience, 1 Tim. 4:1-2) so that it becomes *impossible* for him to repent and return to a life of faithfulness (Heb. 6:4-6).

4. One can forfeit his (her) right to have a wife (husband). Every person begins life with the right (when one reaches a mature age) to have a husband or wife. But this right can be forfeited. Jesus made clear that if one marries, then puts away his (her) companion on *any* ground other than the fornication of his (her)

spouse, then he (she) commits adultery if he (she) marries again (Mat. 19:9; 5:31-32).

However, we are being told by some today that one cannot forfeit his right to life (they hold that all capital punishment is wrong). Others hold that one cannot forfeit his (her) right to eternal life. "Once saved, always saved," they tell us. And still others, many of whom are our own brethren, say that no one can forfeit his (her) right to have a husband or wife. They hold that no matter what one does—no matter that one has *unscripturally* divorced and *unscripturally* married again, one still may continue in the second marriage without any further sin. In other words, they teach that one may marry in violation of plain Bible teaching and still live in that marriage with God's approval. If such is the case, then of what value is the Bible?

It is my earnest prayer that every person will recognize that one's right to life, to freedom, to eternal life, and to marriage may be forfeited. With God's help (1 Cor. 10:13), one *can* live a celibate life (Mat. 19:3-12).

Of course, no matter how terribly one has sinned, he (she) will be saved by the blood of Christ if only he (she) will obey the gospel (law) of Christ, being baptized into Christ. (Cf. Isa. 1:18; Jer. 31:34; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-5.)

But, may it be emphasized, the fact that one has been forgiven does not mean that he (she) can continue in a marriage which violates the law of Christ. To be saved, one must repent, and true repentance demands reformation of life. ~

Deceased

WHY JESUS HAD TO DIE

Roy J. Hearn

The human race had become separated from God by sin and rebellion (Gen. 3; Isa. 59: 1-2). Man needed a means by which he could be reconciled, "to be made friends again," brought back to God. Man could not redeem himself, so Jesus came into the world to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). For this purpose He shed His blood upon the cross (Mat. 26:28). Four reasons why Christ had to die are here suggested:

1. To satisfy the demands of divine justice. God does not ignore transgression of His laws. When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden by eating of the Tree of Knowledge they were expelled, separated from God (Gen. 2:16-17). Violation of God's law demands a penalty. "**The wages of sin is death**" (Rom. 6:23); "The soul that sinneth shall die" (Eze. 18:20). Basically, death means separation, so Adam and Eve died that day. Spiritually they were separated from God. It was necessary to uphold the majesty of God's law. "**Justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne**" (Psa. 89:14).

To illustrate, Zaleucus, king of the Locrians, lived about 500 B.C. In a decree he ordered that all adulterers have both eyes put out. When his own son subjected himself to this penalty, in order to maintain the authority and majesty of his law, and at the same time show mercy on his son, he had one of his own eyes put out and one of his son's, thus his own character as a just and righteous ruler was magnified in the eyes of his subjects.

So for man's sins someone must pay. Animal sacrifice was not sufficient (Heb. 10:3). No hu-

man sacrifice could atone, nor was angel a proper sacrifice. Only the blood of Christ was a fit offering to redeem mankind, thus Christ came into the world to die for man (Heb. 9; 11-13). Since all responsible persons have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23), all are in need of salvation.

Benefits of the blood are conditional. Hebrews 9:13-17 shows that the will of Christ is sealed by His death and blood. To be benefited by a will one must keep the terms of it. For the sinner outside the kingdom of Christ, the Lord has stipulated that one must believe in Him as God's Son (John 8:24; 20:30-31); repent of sins (Acts 17:30; 3: 19); confess Christ as God's Son (Acts 8:37, *KJV*); then obey the command to be immersed in water to be in the likeness of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (Acts 2:38; 10:48; Rom. 6:3-6, 17, 18).

When a child of God sins, the will of Christ contains conditions that provide for that. He is called upon to confess his sins to God, repent of them, and pray that God will forgive him (1 John 1:8-10; Acts 8:22).

2. To change the disposition of the sinner. The injurer becomes the enemy of the injured, as Cain, who murdered his brother (Gen. 4:1-8). Since man is alienated through sin, he must be reconciled. The enmity could not be removed by punishment. Adam and Eve were driven out, but their sin stains were not removed, but a Saviour was promised in the seed of a woman, which referred to the coming of Jesus Christ (Gen. 3:15). The reconciliation was brought about

through the manifestations of God's love (John 3:16; 5:8-9).

3. To show by example how to please God. Abraham, Moses, Joshua, and John the Baptist were great servants of the Lord, but none was perfect, therefore, not suitable sacrifice. Example is strong, and we are inclined to follow whom we admire. Christ is our great example that we should follow in His steps (1 Pet. 2:20-24). Paul said to follow him as he followed Christ (1 Cor.11:1). Certainly he was also an example worthy of imitation. Ephesians 5:1 says: **"Be ye followers of God as dear children. and walk in love, as Christ hath showed us."** Romans 15:3 says that even Christ pleased not Himself.

In this there are some important lessons taught. One is obedience. Our Saviour was always subservient to the Father (John 4:34; 6:38; 8:28,29). Jesus also gave an example as to how to resist temptation in defeating Satan by the use of the word of God (Mat.4:1-11). Personal consecration to God is called for in Titus 2:11-14.

4. To destroy the power of Satan. Hebrews 2:14 says: **"That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil."** The word *destroy* does not mean to annihilate, but the Greek *katargeo* means to "render inactive, deprive of strength, cause to have no more power." The power to defeat Satan is in the blood sealed covenant or law of Christ. First Peter 5:8-9 says: **"Whom resist steadfast in the faith."** Therefore, as long as one obeys the word of God, lives according to its mandates, Satan can not have any influence over him.

For every temptation, God has provided a way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13). One can boldly approach the throne of God through Jesus Christ, our High Priest, and "find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:14). If it were not for the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross, we would be all as the fallen angels mentioned in Jude 6.

Christ died, shed His blood, paid the penalty for man's sins, that he might be saved and reconciled to God through the gospel (2 Cor. 5:18-20). In heaven the tree of life will be restored (Rev. 22:14). The mighty conflict rages. Satan proposes to destroy the souls of men. Christ has died for the purpose of saving our souls. Why not be wise and accept the terms of Christ that are consecrated by His supreme sacrifice?~

Deceased

THOSE TO SERVE

SUNDAY, JULY 21, 2024

Announcements	J.D. Gunter
Scripture Reading	Eric Paluka Rev. 18:21-24
Song Leader	Gary Blasingame
Prayer	Steven Johnson/Andrew Paluka (AM) Bret Bailey/Ken Cohn (PM)
Speaker	David Brown
Lord's Table (AM)	(Matthew 27:24-28)
Jonathan West	Stephen Cohn
Joshua West	Eric Paluka
Lord's Table (PM)	
J.D. Gunter	Ben Gunter
Audio/Video Monitor	Steven Johnson
Camera/Door Monitor	Andrew Paluka

WEDNESDAY, JULY 24, 2024

(via Zoom Meetings)

Announcements	Bret Bailey
Speaker	Jonathan West
Bible Class Teacher	David Brown

FOR JULY

Prepare Communion	West
Lock Buildings	Bailey
Prepare Bulletin Board	N. Cohn

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Those affected by Hurricane Beryl, Gayle Barnett, Zack Nero, April McCain, Tim Orbison, Debbie Brannon, Edith Young, Noah & Glenda Hackworth, Cynthia Jackson, Elnora Oxendine, Charles & Ann Nero, Nathaniel Rimmer, Chuck & Nancy Verkist, Freda Smith, Orlinda Chumbley, and Roelf & Janice Ruffner.

TEST YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

What man was shot with darts after he hung in an oak tree?

Answer to last week's question:
Jesus; Luke 21:19