

The Better Way

Volume XXXIX, Issue 38

September 15, 2024

THE FOLLY OF EXCUSES

L. O. Sanderson

Time and opportunity for duties and services pass, never to return again—and when we reflect on our sins of commission and omission, we at once begin to make excuses to soothe our consciences and, in fact, to relegate the orders of the Lord to triviality. Do we not know we must give account, not only for negligence, but also for perversion of divine principles? Excuses never change things of all vain efforts, they are the vainest. Ben Franklin said, “He that is good for making excuses is seldom good for anything else.”

The word *excuse* is from *ex* (out of, without) + *causa* (cause, or reason); hence, without cause, apart from reason. We need only to observe the “excuse” not necessarily the derivation of the word—to recognize that it is so. Perhaps others will not see through the sham of excuse, but the maker can, if he will truly consider it, and certainly God knows the folly of it. And did you know that *excuse* in any form of the word appears only in the New Testament? Could it be true that where grace bounds, more excuses are manufactured? Are our excuses mere tricks to force the goodness of God? If so, they are folly to infinite degree.

Paul declared, “**Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest**” (Rom. 2:1). We are well aware of the context, yet we should know that “judgest” here involves making a decision. If one decides against another, he is without excuse; if he makes some decision regarding himself, when God has not so ordered or has forbidden, he is inexcusable. Does not the Lord have the right to command? And when He commands, is it not wrong to fail or refuse to obey, whatever excuses we may fashion? Since wrath and right have been revealed (Rom. 2:18-20), any who attempt to wriggle out of duty by any opinionated mode will soon work himself into vain imaginations and a foolish, darkened heart (verse 21).

The apostle also revealed that Gentiles had been “**a law unto themselves**” (Rom. 2:14); and then (verse 15) notes that under this circumstance they were either “**accusing or else excusing one another.**” The version used by Moses E. Lard reads, “**accuse or even defend.**” That an excuse is a feeble effort to defend, we cannot deny. The Greek word, *apologeomai*, is that from which we get our word *apologize*. An apology is often an alibi, an attempt at justification. It is folly to try to justify neglect of duty or transgression of law—to know to do right, then not do it, is sin (Jam. 4:17), and transgression of God’s law is sin (1 John 3:4). There is no way to eliminate the guilt but by meeting the terms of divine law. But let us not lose sight of Paul’s aim in this argument: If the Gentiles, who had no law, condemned or defended their actions in harmony with their traditions, why do we not censure ourselves for violation of divine rules to the point of righting our wrongs, or defend what we do, if right, by the divine revelation, rather than be excuses?

SPRING CHURCH OF CHRIST

Physical Address:
1327 Spring Cypress Rd.
Spring, TX 77373

Mailing Address:
25403 Lancewood Dr.
Spring, TX 77373

Office: 281-353-2707

springcoc@gmail.com
www.churchesofchrist.com

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

It is easy, indeed, for us to seek an alibi for doing wrong or failing to do right—we simply cannot bear to entertain the thought of making mistakes, so we first try to excuse them. You are stopped by a patrol officer for a violation and you try to reason that the signs are not plain, the road was slick, the brakes would not work, the light was green, and on and on; you simply do not want to admit that you were guilty of carelessness or lapse of alertness. Check drivers involved in accidents; they will say it was raining, there was fog, the highway was slick, the visibility poor—yet statistics show that 90 per cent of the highway accidents occur apart from these situations. What’s wrong? Nobody wants to accept blame.

And could we make accurate surveys on absenteeism, negligence, and positive wrongs by church members, we would likely find the percentage in mere excuses about the same. One misses a divine appointment of assembling, and he had a farm or business that demanded his presence, some goods or tasks or a job that hindered, or a wife, or husband, and conditions at home forbade attendance, or sickness or company intervened. The psychiatrist will tell you that the majority of problems of mankind

are hidden by some alibi. Somebody blames his parents, his companion, his job, his boss, or most anyone or anything else—yet the excuse is seldom the cause of his difficulty; he has a complex, a physical defect, or it’s his nerves that make him so act. A figment of imagination becomes a fissure of life; a false concept becomes a fast conviction.

Why is it that when we have a headache on Sunday morning, it is sufficient to make us break allegiance with the Lord; but if it occurs on any weekday, we just take an aspirin and go on to work? Why is it that company cannot keep us from watching a favorite TV program, but can keep us away from Bible study? Why is it that rain cannot keep us from the Christmas parade, but can become our excuse for not assembling ourselves together to worship and serve God? Why is it that a man will say he cannot lead a prayer or teach a lesson, when on other occasions he can talk a “blue streak” about the farm, the business, the stock, politics, and many other things? Find the answer, and you will have but a poor excuse, the height of folly.~

Deceased

THE SUPREME FAILURE

G. K. Wallace

The supreme failure of all failures is to be afraid of failing. In 2 Kings 7:3, we have the record of four leprous men who realized that it was a supreme failure to refuse to try. So, in the face of their great difficulty, they said one to another, “**Why sit we here until we die?**” These leprous men were sitting at the entrance of the gate in Samaria during the great famine that had spread over the land and their country was being over-run by the Syrians. The famine was so great during the siege that “**an ass’s head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove’s dung for five pieces of silver**” (2 Kin. 6:25). This famine was so great that the Samaritans were obliged to eat any part of an animal even though it was not prescribed by law. The famine was so severe that they were obliged to purchase a part of the unclean animal at so high a price. It is likely that the reference to “**the fourth part of a cab of dove’s dung**” refers to “a kind of pulse” or a sort of pea to which the Arabs had given the name referred to in 2 Kings 6:25.

These lepers knew that if that sat still and did nothing, they would starve to death. They knew that if they went into the city they might be killed. They realized also that their only chance was to go in search of food. They could have just sat, and deliberated and talked and never made an effort. They knew it was better to make a thousand blunders and to suffer a thousand defeats than to refuse to try. If we simply wait for things to get better, or for all risks to be removed and fears to be resolved, we will certainly neglect our obligations in a serious way.

Paul teaches in Hebrews 2:1-4 that it is impossible to escape if we neglect “**so great salvation.**” **We have** been instructed to take the message of salvation to the whole world (Mat. 28:19-20). God did not instruct us to build meetinghouses. He did not order us to buy fine cards and build expensive homes. We are not saying there is no place for such but the burden of the Great Commission is to preach the gospel. Sometimes when the churches “have arrived,” whatever that is, they neglect placing emphasis

upon preaching the gospel both at home and abroad. How shall we escape if we do not make an effort to save the world? The task may seem impossible and the risks may seem too great but we cannot afford to "sit here until we die." We do not have to become gamblers, drunkards, and bootleggers to be lost. We can neglect our responsibility in preaching the gospel and we will stand in danger at the judgment. We do not need to burn libraries in order to retard mental development. We can simply neglect to read good books and our minds will be dwarfed. This scribe is not a musician and yet he loves music. The reason that he is not a musician is not because he is a wrecker of violins nor a killer of musicians. He has simply let the study of music alone. We cannot become proficient in anything by simply letting it alone.

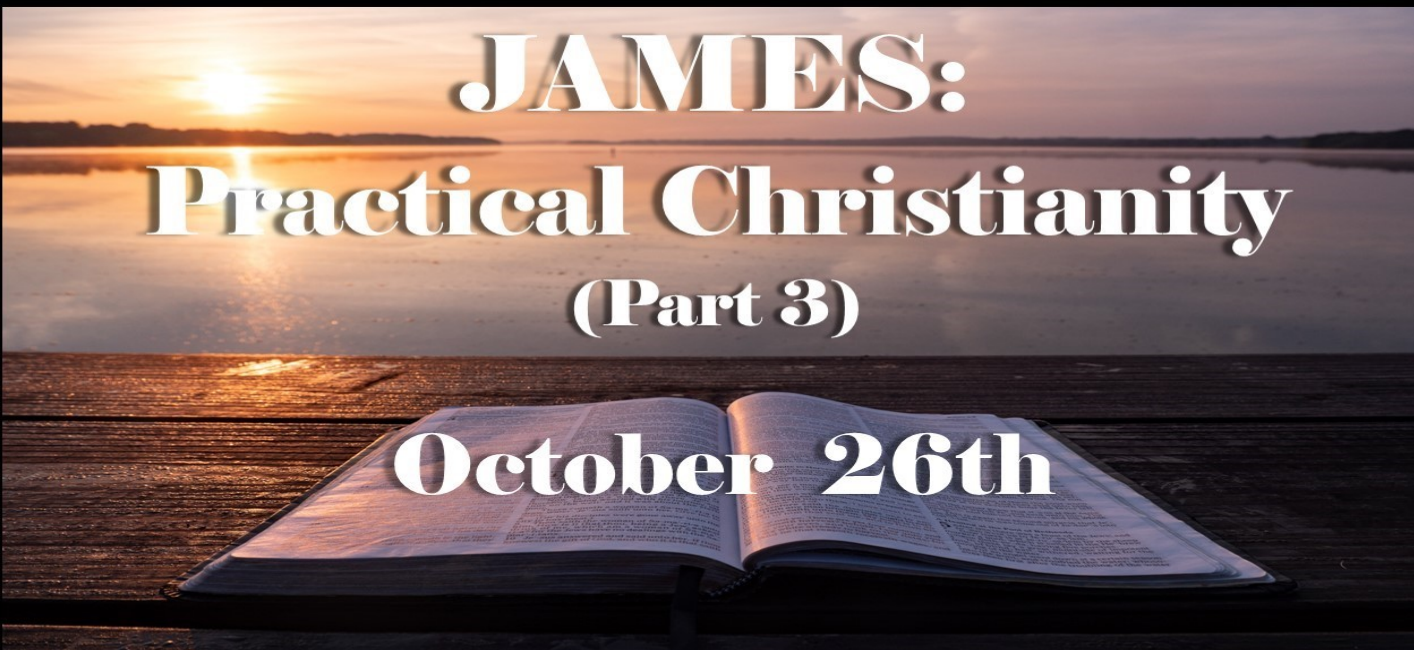
The leprous men, who were sitting at the gate, said to each other, "If we sit here we will die and if we go into the city, we will die." They therefore resolved to fall upon the host of the Syrians and take from them the food that was necessary to sustain their lives. The Lord worked with these desperate men and a miracle was performed that scattered the Syrians and

the lepers came into the camp and found all that they needed. These four desperate men risked all on their faith in God and they knew there was only one course before them and that was the course of complete dedication with a forward step. These lepers, by going forward, found everything for which their hearts yearned. Having found plenty, they told the king's house of their success.

The world may be starving for literal bread but it is starving most of all for the bread of life. God's great "anti-poverty program" is to take the bread of life and the water of life to the lost. We must not neglect preaching this great salvation to the world because there are difficulties that seem to us to be insurmountable. May God give us men with the vision and courage of these outcast lepers. They decided to act and they acted at once. They acted in spite of the odds that were against them.

We have talents that must be used if we are pleasing to God (Mat. 25:25). We cannot develop our talents by letting them alone. To bury our talents is to lose them and the supreme failure of all failures is to fail to try.~

Deceased



JAMIES:
Practical Christianity
(Part 3)
October 26th

Fish Hatchery Road Church Of Christ
1380 Fish Hatchery Road, Huntsville, Texas
Phone: 936-581-4346 Email: bruces_l@netzero.com

Rightly Dividing
The Word Of Truth

Sunday Morning Bible Class David P. Brown

A Study Of
II & III JOHN

Teacher:
David P. Brown

WEDNESDAY NIGHT
BIBLE CLASS VIA ZOOM

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.churchesofchrist.com

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **Tuesday, September 24th:** Ladies' Bible Class.
- **Saturday, September 28th:** Fall Fellowship at Walker County Fairgrounds, Huntsville, TX. Sign-up sheets in kitchen.
- **Sunday, September 29th:** Monthly meal.
- **Saturday, October 26th:** Fish Hatchery Road Lectureship. "James: Practical Christianity Part 3."

THOSE TO SERVE

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2024

Announcements Ken Cohn
 Scripture Reading Gary Blasingame
Revelation 22:1-5

Song Leader Jonathan West
 Prayer Zack Nero/Steven Johnson (AM)
 Gary Blasingame/Eric Paluka (PM)

Speaker David Brown

Lord's Table (AM)
(John 19:28-30)

Stephen Cohn Jonathan West
 Eric Paluka Joshua West

Lord's Table (PM)

J.D. Gunter Bret Bailey

Audio/Video Monitor Joshua West
 Camera/Door Monitor Stephen Cohn

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2024
(via Zoom Meetings)

Announcements Eric Paluka
 Speaker Bret Bailey
 Bible Class Teacher David Brown

FOR SEPTEMBER

Prepare Communion Gunter
 Lock Buildings Gunter
 Prepare Bulletin Board Mercier/Ferguson

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Steve & Kate Baxley, Corey Farmer, Edith Young, Zack Nero, April McCain, Debbie Brannon, Noah & Glenda Hackworth, Cynthia Jackson, Elnora Oxendine, Charles & Ann Nero, Chuck & Nancy Verkist, Freda Smith, Orlinda Chumbley, and Roelf & Janice Ruffner.

TEST YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

Where was the first camping place of Israel after crossing the Jordan?

Answer to last week's question:
 Moses; Numbers 1:3