



Seek The Old Paths

“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein”
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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WHY JESUS TAUGHT IN PARABLES

Roger D. Campbell

No one ever taught like Jesus did (John 7:46)! When He taught people, He often employed parables. By doing so, He fulfilled Old Testament prophecy (Psalm 78:2; 49:4). Jesus was neither the first nor last person in history to teach via parables, but He used them in an unparalleled, masterful way. Depending on how one classifies the stories told by Jesus, the New Testament records some thirty to forty of His parables. They truly were an important aspect of His teaching. God wants us to be blessed by them.

The main Greek word from which we get our English word “parable” is *parabole*, which means: “a placing of one thing by the side of another, juxtaposition, as of ships in battle... metaphorically a comparing, comparison of one thing with another, likeness, similitude” [*Thayer*; word #385].

A parable was a story, an earthly story. But it was different from a common story in that within the parable/story there was a spiritual meaning. In His parables, the Christ took a well-known or common occurrence, or at least one which could have happened, and placed beside it a spiritual meaning. It is clear, then, that parables were symbolic language. But why?

Why did the Master teach in parables? We are not the first to wonder about that. His disciples once asked Him, “*Why speakest thou unto them in parables*” (Matt. 13:10)?

At times, **Jesus used parables to answer questions.** For instance, one man who tried to justify himself

asked the Christ, “*Who is my neighbor*” (Luke 10:29). In response to that inquiry, Jesus told him a story that we call the *Parable of the Good Samaritan* (Luke 10:30-37). Jesus used that story to open the man’s eyes to the need to love and show compassion to all people.

Jesus spoke in parables to reveal the truth, to make the truth plain to those who really sought to find and follow it. As part of Jesus’ answer to the disciples’ question about why He taught in parables, He told them, “*But blessed [are] your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear: For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous [men] have desired to see [those things] which ye see, and have not seen [them]; and to hear [those things] which ye hear, and have not heard [them.]*” (Matt. 13:16,17). We recall that Jesus taught that one who hungers and thirsts for righteousness will be filled (Matt. 5:6). Jesus plainly set forth the value of God’s kingdom in the *Parable of the Hidden Treasure* and the *Pearl of Great Price* (Matt. 13:44-46).

It is also true that **Jesus used parables in order to conceal the truth from the hard-hearted or those who would abuse it.** When Isaiah proclaimed God’s word, he faced people with a prejudiced/dishonest heart. The same thing happened with the Christ when He taught: “*And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see,*

and shall not perceive: For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and [their] ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with [their] eyes and hear with [their] ears, and should understand with [their] heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Matt. 13:14,15). God wants all to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4), and because of His marvelous love, Jesus came to save the sinful world (Luke 19:10). Yet, the reality is, many people do not have a love for the truth (2 Thess. 2:10-12). Remember that some loved the Christ, but others hated Him and His message. Thus, because of their rebellious spirit, what some possessed would be taken away from them (Matt. 7:6; 13:12).

Furthermore, **Jesus used parables to help His listeners remember the lessons taught.** If they could remember the story, they ought to be able to remember the truth that was taught in it. Who could forget the *Parable of the Lost/Prodigal Son* (Luke 15:11-32)? And, who could forget the *Parable of the Talents* (Matt. 25:14-30)? Stories which painted such a vivid picture could be recalled more easily.

Another practical reason for our Lord’s use of parables was this: **He spoke parables to cause His listeners to understand and admit a truth or principle before they realized how it applied to them.** Parables caused people to admit the

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Jesus Taught in Parables...



Editorial...

STEWARDSHIP AND WILLS

Garland M. Robinson

Do we use what we have to the glory of God or to the glory of ourselves?

In Luke 16:1-16, Jesus relates to his disciples what we call the parable of the unjust steward. Our purpose in this article is not to examine the parable line by line, but to simply learn the lesson that God requires all men to one day stand before Him in judgment and give account of our stewardship.

In this passage, the Lord speaks of a steward who was accused of wasting his master's goods. "And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? **give an account of thy stewardship;** for thou mayest be no longer steward." This is representative of the reality that all humanity will one day stand before the Lord in judgment, one by one, and give account of their life and how they chose to live it while on this earth. This principle is shown in so many other passages as well.

In Matthew 12:35-37 Jesus said, "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. ³⁶But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, **they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.** ³⁷For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

Paul wrote in Romans 14:11-12, "For it is written, [As] I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. ¹²So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

First Peter 4:5 reveals that sinners (and by extension all men) "...shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead."

Matthew 18:23, "Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would **take account of his servants.**"

Second Corinthians 5:10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that **every one may receive the things [done] in [his] body, according to that he hath done, whether [it be] good or bad.**"

We are told in Hebrews 13:7,17 to submit to the rule of elders in the Lord's church because they watch for our souls "...as **they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that [is] unprofitable for you.**"

Ecclesiastes 11:9 speaks of this very sobering truth, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that **for all these [things] God will bring thee into judgment.**"

Every human being is a steward. A steward is one who manages that which is in their care. What has been placed in our care? This involves every facet of our life and literally every choice we make; what we do or don't do, what we say or don't say, how we act or don't act. Colossians 3:17 says, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, [do] all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

It is not possible to avoid the responsibility of that which has been entrusted to us. Our very life is a reality. We did not ask to be born, but we are here just the same. We have to eat, sleep, work, live and die. No one can say "I'm not responsible," "I refuse to choose." Many may try, but they will never be successful.

The focus of this lesson is regarding the stewardship we have in relation to our possessions — the material goods of this life. How we use them or do not use them is of utmost importance. Do we use what we have to the

glory of God or to the glory of ourselves or some other? When we give of our means on the Lord's Day (1 Cor. 16:1-2), do we spend more on a movie, eating out or a new gadget than we put in the collection plate? Such is a terrible commentary on our stewardship if that's the case! Is it good stewardship of the material possessions the Lord has entrusted to us to spend the money we make on ourselves? No! When we do, how are we acting? Selfishly! Selfishness is exactly what it is. Though we certainly cannot buy our way to heaven, the point is, we won't go to heaven if we are like the "steward" in Luke 16. The Lord referred to him as "unjust" (Luke 16:8). Though his action (shrewdness) was commendable in the eyes of men, his unjustness was not praiseworthy in the eye's of God. He was acting as men would do — trying to secure himself favor among men. The proper action would be to seek God's favor. He's the judge. It matters not what men think. God is the one we must please. Paul wrote, "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). "So [is] he that layeth up treasure for himself; and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:21).

Jesus gave eternal counsel in respect to the stewardship of our lives in Matthew 6:19-21, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: ²⁰But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: ²¹For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." In light of the Lord's words, Paul wrote by inspiration, "...seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. ²Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1-2).

In contrast to the sobering words of the Lord to set our mind on things above, things heavenly, Paul warns Timothy, "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; ¹⁸That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; ¹⁹Laying up in store for

themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. 6:17-19). Moses heeded these words when it is said that "...when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;²⁵ Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;²⁶ Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward" (Heb. 11:24-26).

We all have possessions. How are we using them? What is our attitude toward them? Have we considered what will become of our possessions (our estate, property, riches) after we're dead and gone? Concerning all humanity the Holy Spirit wrote, "...we brought nothing into [this] world, [and it is] certain we can carry nothing out" (1 Tim. 6:7). We won't be able to take it with us when we die. It would be of no use to us or anyone else even if we could. So, what will happen to our estate? Where will it go? How will it be distributed? How will it be used? What will it support? Would we approve of how it will be used? Why not consider these things while we're still alive and leave instructions (in our will) where and how we would like portions of it to be used. Will the state get it? Will heathens receive it? Will it be used to support and promote every evil way? It will if the wrong people and/or organization get control of it. Do you want that to happen?

If you know anything about the Bible you know what the Scriptures say about going into all the world and preaching the Gospel to every creature (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16). If the Lord tells us how to live and use what we have to his name's honor and glory in this world, shall we not desire to do the same with our possessions after we're gone from this world? If we are to be good stewards of what we have been entrusted while we're living, shall we not be prudent to do the same when we're gone? Yes, verily. The only way that will be done is if we leave instructions for it to be done.

Shall we let the world decide how to use our money after we're gone? What about heathens? What about the state? Should we let our unfaithful children decide? The Lord's work will not be done if any of these individuals get control of it. Faithful

members of the Lord's church need to think about these things.

Consider what became of that which belonged to Judas Iscariot after his death. Brother Ben F. Vick, Jr. wrote the following words in the 34th Annual Lectureship book (2015) of the Stop 11 Road Church of Christ, in Indianapolis, IN.

"When Judas had seen that Jesus was condemned, he regretted what he had done. Matthew records (27:3-10): ³Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, ⁴Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. ⁵And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. ⁶And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. ⁷And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. ⁸Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. ⁹Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; ¹⁰And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me."

"Judas regretted what he had done, but it was too late. The King James Version uses the word *'repent'*, however, it is from a different Greek word than the one used in Acts 2:38 and elsewhere. The idea is remorse or regret. He went back to the chief priests and elders and confessed his sin of having betrayed innocent blood. But they did not care. They said, 'What is that to us? See thou to that.' So, Judas threw down the thirty pieces of silver in the temple and left. He then went out and hanged himself."

"The hypocritical chief priests and elders could not put that money into the temple treasury. Why, that was blood money! It

was still Judas' money because they could not taint their hands with it, even though they had given it to him. So, what could they do? They used Judas' thirty pieces of silver, the betrayal money, to buy the potter's field, called *Aceldama*, which means 'The field of blood'."

"Luke by inspiration says that Judas purchased the field (Acts 1:18). How did he purchase the field if he was dead? It was his money. Since the chief priests and rulers did not accept the money back, it still belonged to Judas. So, it was purchased with his money after his death. A lesson from this is that one should be careful as to whom or for what he wills his money or estate after his death. Judas had no intentions of buying that field with that money. He threw the money down, but it was used without regard to his will. So, one should be careful about the causes one may end up supporting, even after his departure."

Our estate is ours to do with as we chose because we are stewards of it. The Lord allows us that privilege in this world, but that does not mean we are using it in accordance with His will. That does not mean we're using it wisely. We must make sure we're using it to support and defend the Lord's cause.

The Bible teaches that the Scriptures are to govern our lives. This includes that which is entrusted to our care. Why not therefore consider putting the Lord's work in your will? Have you thought about that? We can preach the Gospel even after death. Able is said to be doing so even now (cf. Heb. 11:4).

It ought to go without saying, but needs to be said just the same. We should take the greatest care to make sure (as much as we are able) that the work(s) we include in our will is faithful to the Lord's word and cause. Just because it has the name "Church of Christ" attached to it does not guarantee it is faithful to the Lord's cause and worthy to be supported. Millions of dollars have been left to churches, missions, schools, periodicals, etc., that are not worthy because they are not sound. We must not support the devil's work! Don't leave money that will be used to destroy everything the

Lord stood for. Be careful not to do that while you're living or even after you're dead. Instead, take great care to make sure the work(s) you leave money to is faithful and sound. These works need our support, both while we're living and after we're dead. What greater way to leave a legacy

behind than to support the Lord's work — the greatest cause that has ever existed on earth. King David once said, "is there not a cause?" (1 Sam. 17:29). Yes, there is a cause, the Lord's work!

The Lord's people are looking for "...an inheritance incorruptible, and

undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:4). Can this be said of you?

Make sure you read the article by Ron Gilbert in the Elders' Column regarding "estate planning" below.

Elder's COLUMN

ESTATE PLANNING

Ronald D. Gilbert

You may read this and say "what estate?" But, believe it or not, you do have an estate and it may be larger than you think! Everything you own is your estate, house, property, cars, checking, savings, retirement, life insurance and personal belongings. No matter how small or large, everyone has an estate. We have all heard for many years, "you can't take it with you" so what will happen to your estate when you die, notice I said "when" and not "if" you die (cf. Heb. 9:27)!

Surely most people would like for their estate to be handled according to their own wishes rather than by the courts. Most would also like for their estate not to be cut down unnecessarily by taxes, legal fees and court costs. As parents of small children, making arrangements as to who would become the legal guardian of them in the event of both parents death is also important. When our children were small, my wife and I talked about this and decided we did not want family members who were not members of the Lord's church or family members who were not faithful Christians getting custody of our children. We prepared the legal documents and selected who would become their guardians in the event of our deaths. If we had failed to do this, the state would have appointed a guardian for our children and may have even paid them from our small estate to do that work.

I am not a lawyer or estate planner, nor have ever played one on TV, but I do suggest that you find one that you can trust and make preparations for your death. If you do not plan your estate, then your "state" has a plan for

you, but it's not going to be what you want! Some states divide your estate equally between your spouse and your children which may not leave enough for your spouse to take care of himself or herself. Stats say that about 55 percent of individuals do not have wills. Do you have one?

I read somewhere what I thought was some good practical advice for all to consider:

1. Make a will.
2. Make a living will.
3. Create a durable power of attorney.
4. Create a letter of instruction, location of your valuable documents, deeds, titles, etc., and give a family member a spare key and security codes and passwords.
5. Create a list of your financial accounts, account numbers, Social Security number and other important numbers.
6. Make a list of names and phone numbers of family members, contacts to make when death occurs.
7. Make arrangements for family members to have access to your safe deposit box.
8. List of all loans and monthly bills, many times only one family member knows about debts.
9. List of all organizations where you have membership, some of them may have death benefits, life insurance company names and policy numbers.
10. Write something down concerning your funeral and where you

want to be buried and what you want done or not done at your funeral.

One other area to consider is your stewardship concerning spiritual matters. The New Testament has much to say about Christians being good stewards. In Luke 16 in dealing with the unjust steward this man was asked in verse 2, "Give an account of thy stewardship." We also one day will be called upon to give an account of our stewardship. Most of us as Christians have tried in life to give as we should and be good stewards of that with which God has blessed us. But why not consider being a good steward, even in your death, by giving part of your estate to the work of the Lord? You should consider making a will and leaving a portion of your estate to a good work such as a Gospel paper, a school of preaching, a mission effort, or to your local congregation for their ongoing works. I am not asking you to consider doing something that I have not already done. Several years ago my wife and I had our wills drawn up and we plan to be good stewards of what we have even in our deaths. By having a will, your funds go where you want them to go and you decide what amounts to give to various works. Some Christians do not have children or may not have faithful children and may want to consider where portions of their estate should go.

Many of you have been good stewards in life, so why not consider being a good steward even in death? What about you and your estate?

3017 Deerhaven Dr. S
Cookeville, TN 38506

UNDERSTANDING GRACE #3

(GRACE EXCLUDES BOASTING)

Bill Boyd

Faith in the book of Romans does not exclude obedience. Romans begins with obedient faith and it ends with obedient faith. Everything it says about grace is in the context of obedient faith. There is a great difference in a doctrine that teaches that salvation is earned through your own proud works and in the doctrine that teaches that salvation is a gift received upon humble obedience to God.

Salvation by the grace of God is one of the great themes of the book of Romans. As you read the following verses, think of grace as “God’s good will toward men.” Romans 3:23-24, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; ²⁴Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” 4:2-5, “For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath [whereof] to glory; but not before God. ³For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. ⁴Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. ⁵But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” 4:14-16, “For if they which are of the law [be] heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: ¹⁵Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, [there is] no transgression. ¹⁶Therefore [it is] of faith, that [it might be] by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all.” 5:1-2, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: ²By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” 5:14-15, “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. ¹⁵But not as the offence, so also [is] the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, [which is] by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.” 5:17, “For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” 5:20-

21, “Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: ²¹That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” 11:5-6, “Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. ⁶And if by grace, then [is it] no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if [it be] of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.”

Romans must be read in the context of the teaching and thinking of the times. Paul is not writing to refute the teachings of the old Law (the Law of Moses), for that was indeed the Law of God given at Mt. Horeb (Deut. 5:1-3). And, Paul is not writing to refute the idea of the law of God itself. Rather, Paul is writing to refute a popular error that many Jews had come to believe about the old Law. They looked to the Law of Moses as a way for them to be justified in God’s sight. Romans 2:17 says, “Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God.”

In their minds they thought that if they could learn to keep the Law of Moses perfectly, then they would be worthy of God’s salvation. If that were so or if that were even possible, there was no need for the blood of Christ or the New Covenant; there would be no need for grace at all; they would be justified by their own works under the Law. It is easy to see how a doctrine like this would lead to the kind of pride and boastfulness that Paul condemns. In contrast, grace excludes boasting. Romans 3:27, “Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.” Grace excludes boasting, but it does not exclude all law. There are two laws in Romans 3:27, the “law of works” and the “law of

faith.” To say we are justified by faith means we are justified by the “law of faith.” The law of works was the doctrine held by the Jews. As we have already written, it was their doctrine (belief) that they could merit their salvation by keeping the Law of Moses. The “law of faith” is the law of God that says we are saved by grace when we believe and obey the Gospel.

There is a great contrast between the Jew’s law of works and God’s law of faith; so also, there is a great difference in a doctrine that teaches that salvation is earned through your own proud works and in the doctrine that teaches that salvation is a gift received upon humble obedience to God.

Grace excludes boasting, but **grace does not exclude obedience.** Every time Paul mentions “faith” in the book of Romans it is in the context of a humble obedient faith. In Romans 1:1 he began his epistle with “obedience to the faith.” In verse 5 he writes, “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, ... by whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name.” Paul worked and preached among the Gentiles, not just so men would believe, but that they would trust and obey — “obedience to the faith.”

In Romans 15:15-19, Paul writes that he was preaching to make the Gentiles obedient. “Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, ¹⁶That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. ¹⁷I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. ¹⁸For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me,

to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, ¹⁹Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.” To fully preach the Gospel of Christ is to preach obedience to Christ.

The last Paul writes of faith in Romans it is concerning “the obedience of faith.” Romans 16:25-26, “Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, ²⁶But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.

Faith in the book of Romans does not exclude obedience. Instead, Romans begins with obedient faith and it ends with obedient faith. Everything it says about grace is in the context of obedient faith. In Romans 1:8 it says, “your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world,” and then says in Romans 16:19, “your obedience is come abroad unto all men.” The Romans did not have a reputation of “faith only.” Their reputation was of “obedient faith.” There is no contrast between faith and obedience in the book of Romans.

Grace excludes boasting, but **grace does not exclude the consequences of disobedience.** Romans not only teaches the necessity of obedience, it also teaches the consequences in store for those who “do not obey the truth.” Romans 2:5-11, “But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; ⁶Who will render to every man according to his deeds: ⁷To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: ⁸But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, ⁹Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; ¹⁰But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: ¹¹For there is no respect of persons with God.”

Grace excludes boasting, but **grace does not exclude calling on the name of the Lord, and neither does**

grace exclude obeying the Gospel.

Paul does not just talk about believing the Gospel; he also talks about obeying the Gospel. I used to hear preachers on the radio talk about believing the Gospel, but only a few would talk about obeying the Gospel. When I heard a preacher talk about “obeying the Gospel” I was pretty sure I was listening to a Gospel preacher, because they were the only ones that talked that way. When they spoke of “obeying the Gospel” they were speaking as “the oracles of God” (1 Peter 4:11).

Romans 10:9-17 says, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. ¹²For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. ¹³For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. ¹⁴How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! ¹⁶But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? ¹⁷So then faith [cometh] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

Notice in the paragraph above that men were to **hear, believe, call on the name of the Lord, and they would be saved.** Paul was not teaching salvation by “faith only” because in verses 13-14 he put “call on the name of the Lord” between “believe” and “saved.” Then in verses 16-17 he put “obeyed the Gospel” between “salvation” and “faith.” So, “call on the name of the Lord” in Romans 10:13 becomes “obeyed the gospel” in Romans 10:16. Either way you say it, neither are excluded by grace.

Grace excludes boasting, but **grace does not exclude obedience from the heart, and neither does grace exclude baptism.** Romans 6:14-18 says, “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. ¹⁵What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law,

but under grace? God forbid. ¹⁶Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? ¹⁷But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. ¹⁸Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.” Notice, they were servants of sin “before” they obeyed; they were servants of righteousness “after” they obeyed; and they were freed from sin “when” they obeyed. Verse 17, “ye have **obeyed** from the heart that **form** of doctrine which was delivered you.” A “form” is a mold that is shaped like the end product. It is used when pouring concrete, or for casting metal in a foundry, or for stamping plastics. The “doctrine” Paul delivered was the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. The “form” of that doctrine is explained in Romans 6:3-4, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Many of us know, intuitively if not otherwise, that religion is no substitute for righteousness, but learn this also, righteous living by itself is not a substitute for obeying the Gospel. If it were, then we could be justified by works, but salvation is not of works because it is of grace.

The book of Romans teaches that grace excludes boasting, but... **Grace Does Not Exclude:**

- the law of faith
- obedience to the faith
- the consequences of disobedience
- obeying the truth
- calling on the name of the Lord
- obeying the gospel
- obeying from the heart that form of doctrine delivered you
- being buried with him in baptism.

Hear it! Grace does not exclude baptism. God saves man by grace, WHEN man obeys God by faith.

647 Finger Bluff Rd.
Morrison, TN 37357

UNITY IN DIVERSITY ERROR

Ivie Powell

Since the introduction of the melodeon at Midway, Kentucky in 1859, false teachers have, “...by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Rom. 16:18). Compromise and tolerance are key factors that are characteristic of those determined to destroy the precious church of our Lord. Slowly, and with great determination, advocates of various errors have worked tirelessly to promote their insidious false doctrines. As the Sadducees and Pharisees (who were bitter enemies), banned together to accomplish their ultimate goal (the death of Christ), so false teachers today from various camps have banned together to digress from the old paths and completely turn the Lord’s church into a denomination.

Brethren, there are more false doctrines being taught today from pulpits of those who wear the name “church of Christ” than at any other time. Some of these false doctrines include: faith only, grace only, the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, false views on marriage, divorce and remarriage, mechanical instruments of music in worship and women elders, deacons and preachers. Shocking as it is, love for Christ and His glorious body, the church, have been replaced with pride, the praise of men, power and money! It is easy to become very discouraged, but we need to remember the words of Paul, “...let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Gal. 6:9). False teachers and those who tolerate their doctrines will reap what they have sown (Gal. 6:7-8)!

The deep, fervent prayer of our Lord for His followers is clearly recorded in John 17:20-21: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” The division in Corinth was strongly condemned by Paul (1 Cor. 1:10). The only reason why unity cannot be achieved in the religious world is because of man-made doctrines!

As long as men are not willing to lay aside their creeds, manuals, disciplines and catechisms, there will never be true, biblical unity! The one and only standard for religious unity both in the Lord’s church as well as the religious world is the inspired word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Peter 4:11; Col. 3:17)!

Of course, there is such a thing as being united in error. However, because people agree to set aside God’s word and work together does not mean God accepts them! On the contrary, He does not! One can shout from the roof top how much they love the Lord, but if they are not willing to follow the Scriptures, it is evident they do not love Him (Matt. 7:21-23; John 14:15)!

As a matter of fact, God does not accept any denominational church as His! That, my friend, is not about

Jesus Taught in Parables...

(Continued from page 17)

truth first, and then they had to consider what it had to do with them personally. The prophet Nathan used such an approach in telling a story to help King David see his guilt in his dealings with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 12:1-6). One clear case in Jesus’ teaching is when He told the *Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers / Husbandmen* (Matt. 21:33-46). After hearing this story, the Jewish leaders properly stated what should be done with the people in that story who had done wrongly. After their admission of that truth (which actually pointed to their own punishment), they had an “Oh, no” moment: “...When the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them” (Matt. 21:45).

Jesus’ parables were amazing. Rather than fear them, let us see their great value in helping us understand the will of God for mankind. Those who study them with an open mind and desire to learn the truth will be blessed immensely.

120 Fawn Dr.
Chattanooga, TN 37412

right, that is absolutely right! While such a frank, bold declaration may offend and go against the grain of many of my soft, compromising, worldly, unconverted, lukewarm brethren, it nevertheless is the truth! Furthermore, this is where I stand, until proved from Scripture, and will not be moved, be it by flesh and blood or close friends!

If there was ever a time when the Lord needs men who truly love Him, it is now!

P.O. Box 92
West Plains, MO 65775

CONTRIBUTIONS

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NOTE: We have replaced our folding machine that was worn out when given to us 15 years ago. Also, an opportunity has arisen to get a like-new printer for less than half price. We have an equipment fund to make repairs and/or purchase new machines as needed. Thanks so much for your prayers and financial support of this great work



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

“The Southside Church of Christ in Cabot, Arkansas, is looking for a preacher. They have about 50-65 in attendance on Sunday morning. If you’re interested or know someone who is, contact Douglas Lankford at (501) 628-7011” ...**Editor**. “We enjoy all your articles. The Dec/15 issue that featured ‘*Political Decisions Can Be Spiritual Decisions*’ by brother Victor Eskew was/is much needed. While I’m at it, it is disheartening when I write one of the well-known preachers commenting on an article and they will ignore your letter. (This does not in anyway refer to brother Eskew.) This makes me wonder if they really believe their own words or lack a full commitment to preaching the word. Thanks” ...**Charles A. Harper, Pearl, MS**. “I do enjoy *Seek The Old Paths*” ...**Lorene Billingsley, Littlefield, TX**. “I have enjoyed reading *Seek The Old Paths* over the years but I see now that I can read them online so I want to be taken off the mailing list to save on postage. Thank you so much for all that you do! I pray you all can continue this great work for many, many years to come. I will continue reading STOP on your web site. God bless!” ...**Jason and Joanie Leger, Pineville, LA**. “Please remove me from your mailing list as I have online access. Thank you” ...**Darlene Tollett, Crossville, TN**. “Thank you and God bless” ...**Joshua Dement, Pocahontas, AR**. “We pray for you and your work” ...**Andrew & Linda Martin, Ramer, TN**. “Thank you” ...**Joshua & Molly McDonald, Mt. Hope, KS**. “Thank you so very much for your stand for the truth and the *Seek The Old Paths* publication. We request that you continue to send us twenty copies each month. May the God of heaven continue to bless your noble efforts” ...**Bob Miller, for the Church of Christ, Hwy 84, Allenhurst, GA**. “Please delete me from your mailing list! Thanks” ...**Thomas Wilson, Dermott, AR**. “Many thanks to you for standing up for the truth. I sure do enjoy reading the copy I get” ...**Gainesboro, TN**. “God bless your efforts” ...**Doug Brazzell, Franklin, KY**. “Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I really enjoy your news letter with its great teaching and instruction. Please change my address” ...**Reginald Clayton McGill, New Hanoverton Correctional Center, Wilmington, NC**. “In addition to information contained in the article about Peter being the first pope (Jan/16), the Bible contains information that makes the claim impossible. In Acts 1:21-22, the replacement of Judas (an apostle) required that he (the one chosen) had to be of their number (with Jesus) from the baptism of John and a witness of the Lord’s resurrection and ascension. Also, in Acts 8:5-17, the fact was established that only the apostles could impart gifts of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands. This ability ended with the apostles’ death. Philip could not do it as is stated in these verses of Scripture” ...**Jack Bryson, Leoma, TN**. “Thanks so much. We find the paper very enjoyable and informative reading” ...**Joe & Lana Hurt, Rockvale, TN**. “Keep on printing the truth. I look forward to receiving *Seek The Old Paths* each month. God bless you” ...**Lorene Wilson, Binger, OK**. “Love the Lord’s word” ...**Tommy Muirhead, Flora, MS**. “Please continue mailing me your newsletter” ...**Gary Haley, McMinnville, TN**. “Please remove me from your e-mail list. I do not wish to receive this any more in any form. Thank you” ...**Dave Richards**. “Remove me from mailing list” ...**Thomas Mapps, Denver CO**. “Please change my address. Thank you. I really enjoy the subscription” ...**Charles Byrd, Cayce, SC**. “Please cancel” ...**David Lanius, Jr., Lawrenceburg, KY**. “Howard Weaver passed away a few years ago. Please remove him from your mailing list. Thank you” ...**Godfrey, IL**. “I really enjoyed finding this site — seektheoldpaths.com. A rare treasure. Thank you for supporting it!” ...**Troy Sain, TN**.

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[NOTE: If you are willing to help teach others the Gospel, I encourage you to get involved with this program. Brother Gilbert is a faithful Gospel preacher. I’ve printed more than one million Gospel tracts for this effort. I heartily endorse this work. — Editor, Garland M. Robinson]

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Editor: **Garland M. Robinson** — seektheoldpaths.com

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