

The REMINDER

The weekly newsletter of the church of Christ in Bellaire, TX

Volume XXXII

September 8, 2013

Number 36

A RELIGION OF CONVENIENCE OR CONVICTION?

"And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, 'Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.'" (Acts 24:25).

Not only are there multitudes in the world, but also in the church who are looking for a convenient time in which to obey God. Many are looking for a convenient religion. The very terms are contradictory. "Convenient" means "suited to personal comfort or to easy performance." "Religion" is derived from a Latin term (religare) which means "to bind together." Hence, if one be bound, how can it be convenient or suited to one's personal wishes? Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." (Matt. 16:24). That does not sound like a religion of convenience.

True religion is not something one "gets," nor "experiences," nor even that which is only "professed"; but it is that which is practiced. James said, "If any man among you seem to be religious and bridleth not his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (1:26-27). One who practices true religion is one who responds to God's will.

We live in a day of convenience. If we get too warm, we punch a button and the a/c cools us; if we get too cold, we turn on the heater by a button. We have drive-in service at fast food places. We bank by phone and pay bills "on-line". Our clothes are permanently pressed and the ironing board is where we hang them. Our lifestyle is one of ease and comfort. Many want the same thing in religion.

However, the religion of Christ is a religion of conviction. Jesus said, "Enter in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leads to life, and few there be that find it." (Matt. 7:13f). Jesus did not promise a life of ease and comfort, spiritually speaking. Christianity involves a complete surrender to truth (Rom. 12:1-2).

The Bible commands that we obey the gospel (Mk. 16:15f). That includes faith that Jesus is the Son of God, a willingness to repent, and confess before anyone our faith, and then be baptized for the forgiveness of our sins. No one can do this for you. A religion of convenience says, "It is not necessary to obey any commands". God won't condemn any of us because of His great "love". But the Bible teaches personal responsibility (2 Cor. 5:10).

(concluded on back)

Bulletin Board

Sermon
Notes:

AM Lesson - Steve - "Power For Life"
PM Lesson - Jack - "Christ Lives In Me"

Please keep the following members in mind who have difficulty being with us due to prolonged illness: **Dee Boyd, Doris Norman, Billie Glitsch and Don Hurd.**

NEWS AND NOTES: Most of us are doing well. No reports of any "new" sickness. Rebecca delivered her baby on Tues. morning. All went well. On Wed. night they were still running tests to determine any difficulties. Hope for an update today. Continue to remember those with long term problems in your prayers. Check the list Mike sends out for details.

The directory for updating is on the table. We'll probably take it down tonight to revise. Please check your information. (And please don't scribble on it. There is plenty of scrap paper to get pens working.)

Fry Road's singing was yesterday, Their gospel meeting continues. Check the bulletin board for details.

We will have advertisements for our singing/meeting available for you to pass out to folks. Please help so it will be a great event.

Someone described three types of church members: effective, ineffective, and defective.

Convenience or Conviction (continued from front page)

The religion of convenience says, "Oh, just go to the church closest to your home." Many people, in and out of the church accept that, and go to a church (even a "church of Christ) closest to them. But not out of conviction, just because it's convenient. It makes no difference to them what is taught or practiced. Those convicted by the truth do not measure the distance nor mark the time it takes to get from home to a faithful congregation. Solomon said, "But the truth, and sell it not" (Prov. 23:23). Truth must mark our lives.

If one is attending a congregation merely out of convenience and in spite of the error taught and practiced, why not drive to a more appealing denomination that is closer? If truth means nothing, why not open the door to the cults near you? Or religions that don't even believe in Jesus as the Son of God? The Ethiopian eunuch traveled over 1000 miles to Jerusalem in order to worship the one true God. He didn't drive in our comfortable, air-conditioned car on a nice interstate. He lived up to his conviction that truth matters. Determining the truth mattered to him. His first question was about the true meaning of Isaiah's prophecy. What a wonderful example for us. "Buy the truth, and sell it not, yea wisdom and instruction and understanding."

Author unknown

Assignments for today

Sunday, September 8, 2013

Morning Service

Announcements.....Alex Morolez
Hymn Director.....Robert McDonald
Scripture Reading.....Mark 14:23-25
Scripture Reader...Zach Kelsey
Opening Prayer.....Mike Pharris
Closing Prayer.....Alex Morolez

Evening Service

Hymn Director.....Mark Mann
Opening Prayer.....David Davila
Closing Prayer.....Alex Morolez

BELLAIRE church of Christ

8001 South Rice Ave • P.O. Box 1029
Bellaire, Texas 77402
713/668-4810

<http://www.bellairechurchofchrist.org>

Schedule of Services

Sunday:

9:30 AM Worship
11:00 AM Bible study
5:00 PM Worship

Wednesday:

7:30 PM Study and Devotional

Minister and editor

Jack Smith and Steve Garrett

The Reminder is published weekly by the church of Christ in Bellaire