

I AM LISTENING

I was sitting in the restaurant this morning, trying to think of an introduction to this article, when I overheard a religious discussion between two young men. With his Bible open, one of the young men zealously quoted scriptures in support of his arguments. His “opponent” finally got a word in edge-wise and questioned one of the points that was made. His question was ignored and our young debater pursued another line of argument. Again he was questioned, and again the question was ignored. The other young man finally asked why his questions were not being answered. The reply, “I have been studying for 11 years and have mastered the Bible,”

Solomon said, *“The way of a fool is right in his own eyes; but he that is wise barkeneth unto counsel”* (Prov 12: 15). He also wrote that one of the purposes of the Proverb was *“that the wise man may hear and increase in learning; and that the wan of understanding may attain unto sound counsels”*¹ (Prov 1:5). Solomon reminds us that our ears can never grow too wise or too experienced for further advice and counsel. We should not become deluded into thinking that we have mastered all of God’s truths.

An elderly teacher once instructed me to say, “I am learning” rather than “I have learned”. Our limited knowledge should always be subject to further investigation. We must never become so close-minded as to think that we have all the facts and could not possibly be wrong on a particular subject. Solomon warns that *“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man: hut the end thereof are the ways of death”* (Prov 14:12). Remember Paul’s exhortation, *“Wherefore, let him who thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall”* (1 Cor 10:12). A constant and careful study of God’s word will serve to either strengthen or change our present concepts. Don’t have the attitude of “I have learned”.

However, this is not the only attitude which will hinder one from coming to a fuller knowledge of the truth. Another hindrance to truth is pride. In James 1:21 we are instructed to *“Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls”* The word MEEKNESS is often associated with HUMILITY. It is the proud man who will not listen to the advice of others. It is the proud man who will not hear the admonitions of concerned brethren. It is the proud man that has the attitude toward God’s truth of “I won’t learn”.

Along with the “I have learned” attitude and pride, a third hindrance to truth is the view of many that “This is the way I am and there is nothing I can do about it.” That is either an excuse for laziness, a cry of self-pity, or a delusion of Satan. It is not the truth! Read the inspired words of Paul in 1 Cor 6:9-11 and note carefully his wording *“...and such were sonic of you.”* Do you have the attitude of “I can’t learn”?

The young man in the restaurant had the attitude of “I have learned.” Many are too proud and say “I won’t learn.” Still others have adopted the false concept that “I can’t learn.” Why not develop the God-pleasing attitude of “I am learning?”

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MEETING TIMES:

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS :	9:00AM
SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP:	9:50AM
SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP:	6:00PM
WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE CLASS	7:30PM

*Worshipping
God “in Spirit
and truth”
(John 4.23)*

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CHRIST: OUR HIGH PRIEST

Under the law of Moses the children of Israel had a special and unique relationship with God. As the covenant people of God, the Israelites enjoyed the fellowship, guidance, and protection of their Divine Father that other nations did not have. However, their relationship with God was limited. They did not approach God directly, but through a mediator, a high priest.

Because the high priest was as human and sinful as the rest, he was not able to simply walk into the presence of God in the Holiest of Holies (the inner sanctuary). There were extensive cleansing rituals he had to first perform before he was eligible to intervene on behalf of the people (Heb. 5.1-3; 9.7).

Today, we have a High Priest that is far more capable. Having been spotless, without sin, Christ was able to offer Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of man and serve as our mediator (Heb. 7.26,27).

As our High Priest of the New Covenant (Heb. 9.15), Christ offers many blessings to those who desire to approach God. And now because of the sacrifice of Christ we can have *“boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus”* (Heb. 10.19).

There is only one way to approach God. Jesus stated that *“no one comes to the Father except through Me”* (John 14.6). Therefore, the only way to approach God is His terms by the path that He has established through His Son. What a blessing to have such a high priest to serve as a mediator between man and God.

CLP

THE PARABLE OF THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS

MATTHEW 25.1-13

INTRODUCTION:

1. Having warned of the destruction of Jerusalem and the eventual final day of judgment, Jesus begins a parable. [Read Text]
2. Those who anticipate the day of judgment fall into two categories: those who are ready, and those who are not.
3. A quick survey of the parable makes the central message obvious: “*Watch therefore, for you do not know...*” (v. 13)

I. THE COMING OF CHRIST IS UNCERTAIN [VERSE 5]

- A. It is not a matter of “if”, but “when” (2 Pet. 3.1-10)
 1. 2 PETER 3.1-4: Some will doubt His return.
 2. 2 Peter 3.5-7: The promise of God is certain.
 3. 2 Peter 3.8-10: The reason for His apparent delay.
- B. The subject of Christ’s return is fraught with misconceptions.
 1. Can we know when He will come by watching the signs? (Matt. 24.6,7,34; 24.42-46; 1 Thes. 5.1-6)
 2. Has Christ already returned? (2 Thes. 2.1,2; 1 Cor. 11.26)

II. SOME WILL NOT BE PREPARED [VERSE 3-12]

- A. The difference between the wise and foolish virgins was not faith, but preparation. (Matt. 25.3-5; 1 Thes. 4.13,14)
 1. Things have a way of sneaking up on us. (Matt. 25.6)
 2. Too many make the mistake of thinking that they have plenty of time. (Matt. 24.48; Acts 22.16)
- B. There will be no second chances. (Matt. 25.7-12)
 1. Salvation is not transferable. (vs. 7-9; Phil. 2.12)
 2. Will I have time to repent? (v. 10; 1 Cor. 15.51,52)
 3. The unprepared will be unknown.(vs. 11,12; Luke 13.25-28)

III. FAITHFUL CHRISTIANS ARE WATCHFUL [Verse 13]

- A. Faithful Christians are wise for they prepare themselves knowing that they do not know. (Matt. 24.13; Luke 12.35-38)
- B. What makes wise Christians watch and be prepared?
 1. They are not distracted by the world. (Luke 21.34)
 2. They engage in regular prayer. (Eph. 6.18; 1 Thes. 5.17)
 3. They grow in knowledge. (2 Pet. 3.14-18)

CONCLUSION: There is a great day coming! Are you ready?

BECAUSE HE CARES FOR YOU

Christianity was never intended to be a lonely journey. Heartaches, disappointments, and the normal daily stress of life can quickly erode one’s faith. However, God has provided valuable resources so that Christians do not have to face the challenges of life alone.

The church has many functions including the preaching of the gospel and worship. However, one of the more neglected areas is the support, encouragement, and edification of its members (Heb. 10.24,25). When Paul addressed the subject of spiritual gifts, he emphasized that such gifts should have the primary function of edification. If one was going to desire spiritual gifts, he should seek the gifts that would best serve the members (1 Cor. 14.12).

The failure of the edification of the members can be attributed to two factors: The members’ lack of interest in the concerns of their brethren, and brethren unwilling to share their concerns and let their brethren help. May we not forget the responsibilities placed upon us by the apostle Paul: “*Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.*” (1 Thes. 5.14).

Perhaps one of the greatest means of receiving strength and comfort is by leaning on the Everlasting Arm. Approaching God in prayer is the single most effective way to alleviate worry and keep oneself from being distracted by the cares of the world. (Phil. 4.6,7). Additionally, one can look to the example of Christ, knowing that He, of all people, understands the difficulties one faces (Heb. 2.17,18; 4.15,16). Therefore Peter writes for Christians to cast “*all your cares on Him, for He cares for you*” (1 Pet. 5.7),.

No one wants us to succeed as much as God. No one is rooting for us to overcome temptation, to not allow ourselves to be distracted, to grow in grace and knowledge as does God. And He has provided all the tool necessary for us to be successful in our spiritual endeavors.

Though Satan has placed stumbling blocks in our path, we can reach the end of our journey and receive the end of our faith (1 Pet. 1.9), if we learn better to trust in Him and utilize the tools that He has provided to aid us on our way. CLP