

APATHY: THE ENEMY OF GROWTH

Think about the word “apathy.” It is a composite of two Greek words. First, you have the word “pathos” which carries the idea of feelings. It is more commonly used in reference to pain but describes feelings in general. Then you have the prefix, “a” which is used to negate the word. Apathy literally means “without feeling.” It describes a lack of interest or desire.

Apathy is not to be confused with contentment. Contentment is often contrasted with covetousness. In a context of the love of money, Paul tells us that *“having food and clothing, with these we shall be content”* (1 Tim. 6.8). In Hebrews 13.5, the writer says to *“let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have.”* Writing to Philippi, Paul wrote, *“Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content”* (Phil. 4.11). When I am coveting something that I do not have, it is because I am not satisfied with what I have.

In contrast, apathy is a lack of feeling. It was apathy that compelled Jesus to look at the church in Laodicea with disgust. He told them that *“because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth”* (Rev. 3.16). They had no feelings about their current spiritual condition. They were not passionate (hot) about the Lord (hot) nor were they unfriendly about Jesus (cold). Why did they have no feelings? In the next verse, Jesus said, *“Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’”* (Rev. 3.17). Their apathy came because of a false view of themselves.

We will fail to grow individually and as the church if we have no feelings. We cannot grow if we do not care. Growth occurs when there is a passion for Jesus and His word (1 Pet. 2.2; Ps. 1.2). Growth occurs when there is a passion for good works (Eph. 4.15; Titus 2.14; Isa. 6.8). Growth occurs when we are passionate for the lost (Rom. 9.1,2; 10.1).

In Lamentations, Jeremiah asks, *“Is it nothing to you, all who pass by? Behold and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow”* (Lam. 1.12). Should that not be our question? Are there any feelings in us? Are we excited to serve the Lord and do His work? Are we sorrowful over the sinful condition of those around us and passionate to help them? Or is it all nothing to us? Let’s develop feelings and rid ourselves of apathy! CLP

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JULY 2, 2023

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“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”
-Mark 16.15

July 2, 2023

MEETING TIMES:

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS : 9:00 AM

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP: 9:50 AM

SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP: 6:00 PM

WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE CLASS 7:30 PM

DEPENDENCE DAY

On Tuesday, we celebrate the freedoms that we enjoy as Americans. However, let’s also be reminded of our dependence on God. Pete wrote about our spiritual freedoms in **1 PETER 2.16**: *“as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.”* We are spiritually free from the bondage of sin, but we still need God.

Psalm 23 begins with these words: *“The LORD is my Shepherd, I shall not want.”* In the original Hebrew, the word “LORD” is translated from “Yahweh.” It is the covenant name of God (Ex. 3.13,14). It is a name that means, “I Am.” The idea is that God is self-existing. Jesus said that the Father *“has life in Himself”* (John 5.26). He does not depend on anything or anyone outside Himself to exist. The name of God is so sacred that the Jews refused to speak His name when reading from scripture. When they came upon the name “Yahweh,” they would instead say “Adoney” which was a more generic version of “Lord.”

The One who is self-existing, whose name is not to be uttered, is described as “my Shepherd.” He cares for us and wants to take care of us. As a result, Psalm 23 continues, *“I shall not want.”* Because the Creator of all things wants to take care of me, I shall never be in need. This emphasizes my dependence on Him. CLP

THE GOD THAT PAUL PREACHED

ACTS 17:23

INTRODUCTION:

1. In Acts 17, Paul is in on his secondary missionary journey traveling to three cities. (Acts 17.2,4,5,11)
2. To Paul, Jesus was the enemy. But his view changed on the road to Damascus. (Acts 9.3ff)
3. As Paul comes to the city of Athens, his is compelled to preach about God and the salvation He offers through His Son.

I. WHERE IS PAUL?

- A. Paul is in Athens.
 1. **ACTS 17.16:** “*while Paul waited for them at Athens his spirit was provoked within him...*”
 2. **ACTS 17.17:** “*Therefore he reasoned...*” Paul spoke logically to three groups of people.
 3. **ACTS 17.18:** “*he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.*” It was a message of hope. (cf. Acts 23.6)
- B. Paul is at Mars Hill.
 1. **ACTS 17.19:** “*they...brought him to the Areopagus*”
 2. **ACTS 17.20,21:** They were interested in Paul’s message.

II. WHO WAS THERE WITH PAUL?

- A. The Epicurean philosophers.
 1. **ACTS 17.18:** “*Then certain Epicurean...philosophers*”
 2. The Epicureans were hedonistic deists.
- B. The Stoic philosophers.
 1. **ACTS 17.18:** “*Then certain... Stoic philosophers*”
 2. The Stoics were pantheists.

III. WHAT DID PAUL PREACH?

- A. Paul preached God as the Creator.
 1. God created the universe. (Acts 17.24,25)
 2. God created the nations. (Acts 17.26,27)
 3. God created each individual. (Acts 17.28)
- B. Paul preached God as authoritative.
 1. God is not represented by the material. (Acts 17.29)
 2. We do not create God. God created us. (cf. Rom. 1.23)
- C. Paul preached God as all-loving. (Acts 17.30,31)

CONCLUSION: Jesus is the One who gives hope.

THE WORD OF GOD DOES NOT HELP US

The title seems like an odd thing to claim. Especially in light of what we read in 2 Timothy 3.16,17. That passage says that all scripture is “*profitable...that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*” In spite of this passage, I would suggest that the word of God does not help us.

In Hebrews 4, reference is made to our eternal home in heaven. We are told to “*fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it*” (Heb. 4.1). This was written to Christians. It is possible for one to be a Christian and still be lost. The writer then directs our attention to the Old Testament as an illustration. The children of Israel were not allowed to enter into the land of promise. It then says this in **HEBREWS 4.2:** “*For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them.*” Just as the gospel was preached to us, there was also a good news message preached to them. And just as the word of God did them no good, the gospel does not help us. Why?

If you keep reading, the gospel did not profit them for a very specific reason. Verse 2 goes on to say that “*the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.*” That illustration takes us back to the book of Numbers when God commanded the children of Israel to send spies into the land of Canaan. God told them that this is the land “*which I am giving to the children of Israel*” (Num. 13.2). Yet when the spies returned, they (except Joshua and Caleb) gave a bad report and said, “*We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we*” (Num. 13.31). God gave them a good news message that He would give them the land of Canaan. But that message did not benefit them. Why? Because they did not believe it.

The word of God is “*living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword*” (Heb. 4.12). It is “*profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*” (2 Tim. 3.16). The scriptures give us hope (Rom. 15.4). But it will not do us any good if we do not believe what we read. Why do we ignore what the Bible says and seek help for our problems from social media? We turn to the internet, Youtube, Tiktok, Reddit, and Facebook for solutions and advice, because we don’t think that the Bible can help us. In fact, the Bible cannot help us, because we do not believe what it says. It is only when we read the Bible mixed with faith that it will benefit every area of our lives (2 Pet. 1.3). CLP