



You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.” Just moments before this rebuke, Jesus has called Peter “blessed” because of his confession of Christ as the Son of God. Also, Jesus names Peter’s confession as the rock upon which He will build His church in the presence of the other disciples, and entrusts Peter with the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven. What do we learn from this account? The Lord will not hesitate, even

for a moment, to rebuke those who stand in the way of His will, no matter the relationship they have with Him. Is our resolve the same with our brethren, those of our spiritual family who are closest to us? Let us not be found lacking in following the Spirit’s teaching: “**Abhor what is evil, cling to what is good**” (Rom. 12:9).

The life of the Son of God as recorded for us in the New Testament is one full of self-less service to mankind and extraordinary acts of kindness and goodwill culminating in the greatest demonstration of love the world will ever know. There are, however, moments in which we see the Lord teaching us something altogether different than what we hear from denominationalists who would warp His message into some kind of new-age spiritual sentimentalism. We see Him openly condemning false doctrine and warning those who lead sinful lives of their coming destruction (Matt. 15:8-9; 7:13). Brethren, let us follow the example of our Lord and never shrink from calling sin, “sin”. Let us be those who “**behold the kindness and SEVERITY of God**” (Rom. 11:22 emphasis mine).



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Welcome Visitors

We are so glad that you joined us today.
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ISSUE

13.1

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

January 2
2011



Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM
10:20 AM
6:00 PM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Kyle Pope

Deacons:

Dean Bowers
Eddie Cook
Bill Davis
Steve Dixon
Pat Goguen
Jack Langley
Neil Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott

Evangelists:

Kyle Pope
Jason Garcia

The Severity of Jesus

By Jason Garcia

When religious people speak of Christ today they almost exclusively mention those traits that make Him most attractive to the universalistic or ecumenical thinker. There is nothing wrong with preaching the love and compassion of Christ, for even the Bible teaches that God draws men to Himself by His loving-kindness (cf. Jer. 31:3). The problem comes when these same people construe His grace, mercy, and loving-kindness as absolute acceptance or complete tolerance for *any* doctrine and *every* kind of lifestyle. They may not word their theology in those terms precisely but, nevertheless, they believe in a God who doesn’t mind the choices people make as long as everyone is having a good time—as if *man’s* wants and desires were His chief concern (cf. Rev. 4:11 KJV).

When you think of the moral character of Jesus, what is the first thing that you think of? Based on your knowledge of the account of His life, and what His apostles were inspired to say about Him, which of His qualities leap to the front of your mind? I suspect most would answer “His love” or “His grace and mercy” and that would be right. No man since the dawn of time has

manifested these qualities more perfectly than the Lord. However, there is another quality that does not receive as much attention and, perhaps due to its unpopularity, may not be as prevalent in the minds of Christians today. What is this virtuous quality in Christ that some folks overlook, and thus fail to imitate?

Though there is an abundance of passages in which we see the Lord as compassionate and tender,



Olsen Park church of Christ

there are numerous places where He sharply rebukes and exposes the sin of those He encounters. In short, during His time on Earth Jesus never hesitated to indict people—call them out on the sins that separated them from God. It didn't matter if you were a Pharisee looking for a fight, or a stranger, or even His disciple; Jesus rebuked sin every time without bias. I fear that this has become a quality of His character that the denominations have overlooked and, sadly, even some in the church seem to forget. How are we to correct this in the minds of our brethren? Let us consider some of the passages that can serve as teaching examples: John 9; John 4; and Matthew 16.

In John chapter 9 we find the story of a blind man fortunate enough to meet the Lord while in Jerusalem who is subsequently healed and receives the gift of sight. The Pharisees, upon learning of the miracle, berate the man in order to save face and try to diminish the power Jesus demonstrated in healing him (cf. John 9:3, 24). After an unsuccessful attempt to persuade the Pharisees that Jesus is from God, the man is cast out of the synagogue and again finds himself in the presence of Jesus whom he confesses and worships. Notice the conversation that follows:

And Jesus said, "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind." And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, "Are we blind also?" Jesus said unto them, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore YOUR SIN REMAINETH" (John 9:39-41 emphasis mine).

This statement is especially striking in light of what we know about the Pharisees—people were afraid of what they thought (cf. John 9:21-23). Any uneducated, common member of the Jewish community who had a disagreement with the Pharisees was cast out of the synagogue or assembly. This fact, however, does nothing to deter Jesus from saying they were wrong and *in sin!* The Lord rebuked their arrogant attitude as He had done consistently with all sectarians. Matthew records a passionate and lengthy discourse in which Jesus labels the Pharisees as "blind", "hypocritical", "self-righteous" and "children of Hell" (cf. Matt. 23). Our Master never shrank from decisively and frankly condemning the sin He saw even in the lives of men recognized in His day as *the* religious authority par excellence. Should we, then, go into spiritual lockdown if a false teacher is spreading man's teaching as doctrine, or blaspheming the name of Christ? Certainly not! (cf. 2 Tim. 2:24-26).

We find yet another example in John chapter 4 as Jesus passed through Samaria and met a woman by a well. Throughout their conversation the Lord is teaching the woman, but in verse 16 there comes a change in His approach. The woman has failed to think in spiritual terms and Jesus—in order to reveal her need of salvation—exposes the sin in her life. Again, notice the conversation that takes place: **"Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come here.' The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said**

is true'" (John 4:16-18). The woman then comes to think of spiritual things because the Lord has called out her sin, and she spreads the news of Christ in her hometown. Do we seek opportunities in our daily conversations to turn people's thoughts to spiritual matters? The Lord tactfully segued from physical, material matters to spiritual things in His discussion with the woman; as we strive to save the souls of the lost, let us look for ways to reveal their need for the Savior (cf. Col. 4:5-6).

Lastly, in the heart of Matthew's gospel we find Jesus predicting for His disciples the manner in which He is to die and be raised from the dead. Upon hearing the revelation, Peter exclaims, **"Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you"** (Matt. 16:22). Jesus, in the following verse, responds this way, **"Get behind me, Satan!**