



PLANO CHURCH OF CHRIST

406 Lew Street Plano, IL 60545

Facebook Plano IL Church of Christ

SUNDAY

Bible Study 10:00 am

Worship - 10:50 am

Worship - 4:00 pm

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study - 7:00 pm

Evangelist & Editor:

Bryan Bickford

The Plano Harvest

June 12, 2016

Vol. 4 No. 16

When Men Love Sin and Error

“An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule on their own authority; and my people love to have it so” (Jer 5:30-31).

Unfortunately, this was not the last time that the Lord’s people loved error more than truth. It has happened in these “last days,” too (2 Tim 3:1-5; 4:3, 4). We are not shocked or surprised when ungodly men love fables more than the faith, but we often are stunned to learn that the people of God also *“love to have it so.”*

Note that men do not cease to preach; they do not quit serving and ruling. No, they continue to teach religious principles and to offer sacrifices. This is part of the deceit. None have become atheists; none have said they are rejecting God. On the contrary, they present a form of godliness. They assure us of their honesty and integrity in things divine. **However, their words are not from God. Their works and worship are based upon human authority. They mix the holy with the human, the faith with fables, the sacred with the secular.** Their combined religion appeals to the flesh. Its allurements is that it melds and welds the spiritual and the sensual, allowing men to “have it both ways.”

This spirit is the essence of all human religion. It permeates the traditions of Catholicism and dominates the additions of denominationalism. That does not come as a revelation to children of God, but that such a spirit should infiltrate and penetrate the kingdom of God is indeed “an appalling and horrible thing.” It is made worse when *“my people love to have it so.”* It is so

among us? Are we feeding on the word of God, being led and fed by it? Are we worshipping “in spirit and in truth,” serving God “acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Jn 4:24; Heb 12:28)?

Or, are we flirting with a gospel of convenience, one that winks at “borderline” sins and excuses “slight” departures and changes in our service to God? Do we demand that preaching be conformed to our life style, rather than conforming our lives to the truth? Do we chafe and develop a rash on our hearts when purity and holiness demanded by the word of God contradicts our manner of life? Are we offended by calls for modesty in our attitudes and actions and in our dress and demeanor before the watching world?

Do preachers blunt and dull the edge of the Spirit’s sword? Do elders “back off” from directly and decisively confronting error? **Do preachers and pastors seek peace at the expense of purity? Do they seek harmony at the expense of holiness?** If they do, do we tolerate and condone it? If so, “an appalling and horrible thing has happened,” and we cannot escape the judgment of God!

D. Deuster (<http://claychurchofchrist.com>)

Is This Me?

“I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; 7 which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! 9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!”

10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ" (Gal 1:6-10).

I am also amazed at how many people desert Christ so easily! So many times it is because they do not have the back-bone to stand up for what is right, knowing that their life (which is not theirs) will become harder than what they are willing to give! This after the price that was paid for them! **I am amazed by how many Christians are more interested in pleasing men or themselves more than God!** I have to always ask myself, "Is this me?"

Bryan Bickford

WHAT KIND OF COMPANY ARE YOU KEEPING?

A strong warning is given in *1 Corinthians 15:33* ***Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."*** Those with whom we choose to hang around with will shape the kind of people we become. Why would we think any differently?

Psalm 1:1 says how a blessed man will make his choices: ***"How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,"*** When we choose to keep consistent company with those who do not know God and His Word or we take advice and confide with these people, then we choose a path that will end in disaster. Is it worth it?

"Nor stand in the path of sinners," If we choose to hang out with people who do not care about God and His Word, then we shouldn't be surprised when we begin to act and reason like them. Be careful!

"Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!" Choosing to sit with friends who do not know God or care about God will be the type of people we will eventually become like! This should not surprise anyone!

We don't always see the influence that others have on us, or the influence we can have on others. We can be easily deceived! Notice in *Psalm 1:1*, that ***first we walk, then stand and then sit down with those who are wicked.*** This shows us the deception and danger when we become more comfortable with those things ***that should shock us.*** A real friend will help you to know God and His Word, by his choice of words and his choice of action. Jesus said, ***"You are My friends if you do***

what I command you." (*John 15:14*). The fact is all of us are influencing someone, question is, "Is it for the glory of God, or for the selfishness of man? What kind of company are you keeping?"

Bryan Bickford

What Are You Drinking?

I can't tell you how many times this question has been asked me by all the doctors, and physical therapists over the past two years. Do you drink alcohol? Do you drink soda pop? Do you drink coffee, tea...? What they want to know and what's coming next is do you drink water and how much? Nine times out of ten whatever you reply, the response will be, "You need to drink more water!" I have heard this as I said many times, recently though I was handed this chart:

Natural Health Benefits of Water

Confused about what to quench your thirst with?

Consider the water contents in the body...

Blood – 83% water. Muscle – 75% water

Brain – 75% water. Heart – 75% water

Bones – 22% water. Lungs 86% water

Kidneys – 83% water. Eyes 95% water

Next came a long list of problems our body suffers when we do not drink enough water.

Throughout the Bible, numerous verses (*Jn 4:1-45*) show us God's desire for us to take Him in, to drink of Him as the living water. For example, in *John 7:37-38* we see that God's desire for us to drink of Him is so great, Jesus actually stood up and cried out during a feast, issuing a call for people to come to Him and drink: ***"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. 38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" God provides the water, but we must choose to accept it, and drink it in obedience. *Isaiah 12:3-6* we see **6 ways (bold print below) we can drink Christ as the living water;** ***"Therefore you will draw water with rejoicing From the springs of salvation, And you will say in that day, Give thanks to Jehovah; call upon His name! Make His deeds known among the peoples; Remind them that His name is exalted. Sing psalms to Jehovah, for He has done something majestic! Let it be made known in all the earth! Cry out and give a ringing shout, O inhabitant of Zion, For great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel."******

Bryan Bickford



PLANO CHURCH OF CHRIST

406 Lew Street Plano, IL 60545

Facebook Plano IL Church of Christ

SUNDAY

Bible Study 10:00 am

Worship - 10:50 am

Worship - 4:00 pm

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study - 7:00 pm

Evangelist & Editor:

Bryan Bickford

The Plano Harvest

June 26, 2016

Vol. 4 No. 17

Having Breakfast with Jesus



If you look real close you can see him over in the shadows, crouched down in almost a fetal position. His head is hung in despair and disbelief.

“How could I do such a thing? How did that happen? I love Jesus so much. I promised Him I would never forsake Him; that I was ready to die for Him. I thought I was brave enough to face anything for my Lord. I sure wasn’t brave last night. I denied Jesus three times. I cursed as I denied Him. How could I do such a horrible thing? And now, Jesus is dead. And that look! He looked straight at me. Not with a stare of hatred, disappointment, or even judgment. His was a look of love for someone who denied even knowing Him. And, that constant crowing of the rooster in my head. I can’t get that sound out of my mind. How will I ever get over this?”

Peter could not get the words Jesus had spoken to him out of his mind. *“After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. ³¹Then Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, ‘I WILL STRIKE DOWN THE SHEPHERD, AND THE SHEEP OF THE FLOCK SHALL BE SCATTERED.’ ³²But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.” ³³But Peter said to Him, “Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away.” ³⁴Jesus said to him, “Truly I say to you that this very night, before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” ³⁵Peter said to Him, “Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You.” All the disciples said the same thing too.”*

“I just don’t know how that happened. How can I ever forgive myself? I know what I’ll do. I’ll go fishing.” Peter found the other apostles and said, “I’m going fishing. Does anyone want to join me?” Six of the apostles said they would go with him.

Does this ring home to you? Have you ever denied Jesus in the face of opposition? Have you laughed at an unseemly joke at work with the rest of your co-workers. Have you listened while someone used God’s name in vain without saying anything to them. We are told that we are to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. More than that, we are to be told to go further and *“reprove them.”*

There are a lot of ways to deny Jesus other than the way Peter did. It is also difficult to forgive ourselves when we do it. That is exactly what Satan wants us to do. He wants us to give up, go fishing, and leave our Lord altogether. He wants us to “hang ourselves” as Judas did rather than continue to walk with the Lord, asking His forgiveness and fight Satan harder than before.

If Peter had paid close attention to what Jesus had told him he would not be feeling such despair. *“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; ³²but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”* It’s right there. If we all will listen more closely to what God tells us we can see His love, His forgiveness, and His constant support. *“When once you have returned strengthen your brothers”* Peter listen to what Jesus said. He is telling you, you will get over this with His help and He still has work for you to do in His service.

“So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to

Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My lambs."¹⁶ He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Shepherd My sheep."¹⁷ He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep." (John 21:15-17) Jesus knew what was in Peter's heart and He knew Peter would be one of His greatest servants. He just had to get past this huge failure. But that is true of all of us is it not? All of us have warmed our hands at the fire of the enemy at some time. We all "sin and come short of the glory of God". However, Jesus has work for us to do. We are to examine ourselves and determine what we can do in service to our Lord and get busy doing it.

Some wonder about why Jesus had already prepared a breakfast of fish and bread when the apostles had made such a great catch at the command of Jesus. God even emphasized the point by telling us there were 153, large fish in the catch. I believe it was Jesus' way of telling them all of His forgiveness and to come have fellowship with Him and that He would provide their needs. The fact they caught 153 large fish was to show them what they could do with His help. Peter was taught Jesus had some very important work for him to do and he needed to get busy going about his service to the Lord. **May God help us all to "have breakfast with Jesus" and learn of His great love for us and be diligent in His service.**

Bill White (Hammond IN)

You Can't Flirt With Sin and Win



Proverbs 4:14-15 Do not enter the path of the wicked And do not proceed in the way of evil men.

15 Avoid it, do not pass by it; Turn away from it and pass on.

Too many people including Christians think that they can flirt with sin and win. You can't do it; you should not even try it. Some feel that they can look at women dressed immodestly as long as they don't

lust after her, and/or act on it. Some women feel that they can live with a man that is not her husband as long as they do not have sex, and vice versa.

Some feel that they can go to bars and have a drink as long as they do not get drunk. And some, not all will justify it by saying you cannot show me a passage that says it is wrong. And in most cases there is not a passage that specifically says, "Do this (fill in the blank), and you have sinned!" But there are so many Godly principles taught in Scripture that show that this type of reasoning is not just unwise but sinful! Consider this proverb again, "**Do not enter the path of the wicked And do not proceed in the way of evil men. Avoid it, do not pass by it; Turn away from it and pass on.**"

Signs are important. They point you away from danger! They give you direction to where you are going. Do you know where you are going? Do you intentionally avoid the stop signs, the danger signs because you don't like them? If you start out going the wrong way and ignore the signs, you'll end up lost, and I'm not talking about being lost on vacation!

To purposely enter the "*path of the wicked*" (Proverbs 4:14) shows that you do not fear the LORD! Proverbs 9:10 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.* To purposely "*proceed in the way of evil men,*" (Proverbs 4:14) shows that you not only do not fear Jehovah, but you have no understanding of Him as well!

God gives us 4 signs of direction to keep us on "Highway of Holiness" (Isa 35:8), in Prov 4:15.

(1) "**Avoid it.**" I do not think I need to explain this.

(2) "**Do not pass by it.**" You can't flirt with sin and win!

(3) "**Turn away from it.**" If you did run the Stop sign, and you ignored all the Danger signs that clearly say "Do Not Enter," then turn around! REPENT.

(4) "**And pass on.**" You do not stop and flirt with disaster! It makes no sense for anyone!

You Cannot Flirt With Sin and Win! Satan will eat you alive. God has given you all the signs, but He will never force you to obey them. But know all who ignore His signs will suffer the consequences.

Bryan Bickford