

April 12, 2020

CHURCH of CHRIST

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Public services are temporarily cancelled during the *Corona Virus* restrictions.

IN OUR PRAYERS: Jerry & Erma Endly, Cathy Jackson, Gary & Debbie Jones, Tina Keith, Kathy Mayo and Flavil Miller.

SHUT-INS: Audrey Burns, Jack Mitchell and Shirley Patterson.

FAMILY AND FRIENDS: Nellie Richard, Weston Boulet, (great-grandson of Shirley Patterson), Dan Doudna (Wilma Roe's relative), Bob & Patty Eddy, Carmie Green (Flavil Miller's sister), Herb Hamilton (friend of the Starrett's), Bob & Donna Henthorn (Laura Jamiel's parents), Collene Keister, (Mo Smith's sister), Linda Potts (Joyce Starrett's sister-in-law), Erica Rich, Shirley Roe, Mona Stoffer (Flavil Miller's daughter), Mitch Vick, Bob & Marge Watson and remember to pray for **one another**.

- **Richard Lambert's** PET Scan revealed no additional cancer.
- **Linda Potts** (Joyce Starrett's sister-in-law) will be having surgery on the 13th to remove a tumor with the hope of restoring sight in her left eye and preventing it from affecting her right eye.
- As a reminder, God willing, I will be delivering lessons on my *Facebook* page each Sunday evening at 6:30 and Wednesday evening at 7. For those who do not have *Facebook*, **Jared Jamiel** will be uploading the lessons to the church website: <http://cambridgechurchofchrist.com/video-lessons/>

Greetings, brethren and friends,

I pray you all are doing well and finding constructive and productive ways to occupy your minds and pass the time during this crisis and isolation. Somebody said this situation reminds them of being six-teen again: gasoline is cheap, and they are grounded—I get it!

I know that several of you have been reaching out to others and this is a great source of comfort; Tina and I are especially thankful for the cards and calls we've received.

I urge you to continue following the recommendations from the CDC and our governor regarding the necessary precautions to avoid and limit exposure to this "monster" virus. A hospital staff member said to me in a text, that if you and I could see, "how incredibly sick some of these patients were, they would stay home!!!" That's all I needed to know.

Please continue to be in prayer for all those affected and working hard to stem the spread of Corona, and that this will soon be over, and we may get back to something like "normal". We love you all—JK.

DID GOD MEAN WHAT HE DID NOT SAY?

The Bible has been the subject of much debate between those who hold to it strictly and those who view it with a more elastic approach. Two Questions need to be asked at this point: Which view is correct? And, does it matter?

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Basically, there exists two classes of interpretation: strict and loose. Those who hold to a loose interpretation assume that the Bible is a book of broad principles and good moral maxims that is to guide men in a general way. Does this line up with God told Moses to tell the Israelites (cf. Dt. 5:32-33)? Very often they say things like, “God knows my heart, and so it doesn’t matter if I do exactly what God says”. Is sincerity a proper substitute for obedience? Isaac sincerely thought he was blessing Esau, when in fact, he blessed Jacob (Gen. 27). *Loose constructionists* will allege that, “We must interpret the Bible in light of our 21st century culture”. Further we are told by these liberal leaning folks that, “We are allowed to do things just as long as the Bible does not explicitly forbid it”— This allegation is the crux of the subject today and will be discussed in some detail later in this lesson.

Those who insist on a strict interpretation of the Bible are often ridiculed by those with a broad interpretation. They are often called, “legalistic”, “Pharisaic”, “holier-than-thou”, etc. I am not talking about those who make laws that God never made and then try to bind them upon everyone else. I am simply referring to those who take the Bible in general, and the New Testament in particular, for what it says, and does their best to obey it. These one’s make a clear distinction between God’s word and man’s; “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 Thes. 2:13). Note that it was a praiseworthy thing to receive God’s word as God’s, and not man’s. God’s word is the very essence of truth; man cannot make that claim about his word (cf. John 17:17). These strict interpreters believe God’s word is not to be altered or played with (cf. Dt. 4:1-2; Pro. 30:5-6; Rev. 22:18-19). How would god have us interpret his word—strictly, or loosely?

We look at the case of David and the Ark of the Covenant and we see what happens when God’s commands are interpreted using a loose construction. Very specific requirements were in place regarding the Ark of Covenant. We learn that the ark equipped with rings into which staves, or poles were placed for carrying the ark. In fact, these staves were not to be removed (Exo. 25:14-15). When it was time for the ark to be moved it was the responsibility of Levites to bear the ark upon their shoulders by use of the poles (Num. 4:2; Dt. 10:8; 1 Chr. 15:15). In addition to these specifics, no one was allowed to touch any holy thing—including the ark (Num. 4:15).

On one occasion, however, when it was decided to move the ark from the house of Abinadab, the Bible says, “And they carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab: and Uzza and Ahio drave the cart” (1 Chr. 13:7). At some point, one of the oxen that was pulling the cart stumbled. Uzza, fearing the ark would fall, reached out and placed his hand on the ark to steady the it. As a result, the anger of Jehovah was aroused, and He killed Uzza (1 Chr. 13:9-10).

Why did this happen? God didn’t say, ‘Don’t carry the ark on a cart’. But what did God say? “And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of the LORD” (1 Chr. 15:15). God never specifically told Uzza not to touch the ark”. But God did say that, “they shall not touch *any* holy thing, lest they die” (Num. 4:15). Bottom line: They ignored God’s command about carrying the ark and this caused Uzza to violate God’s command about touching the ark—and he died

So, what should be our response to God’s word? In first place it would serve us well to, “give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip” (Heb. 2:1). We are told to, “walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7). We may want to walk the way we see things, but we need to walk in faith that God’s way for us is the right way. This supports what Paul wrote the church at Rome; “for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin’ (Rom. 14:23). The way of faith is found in God’s word. Jesus said, “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Mt. 4:4).

God loved us and therefore, He has given us His expectations in His inspired word. We are not left to guess what He wants of us. He has told us the results of obedience—Heaven; the results of disobedience—Hell. Only when we do what and all that God has commanded and authorized, can we be sure that Heaven will be our home. Have you done what the Lord requires to become a Christian as defined in Holy Scripture? – JK.