
Words of Truth

We Cannot Be More Welcoming Than The Lord Is

By: Brian A. Yeager

I was contacted by a man that was planning a trip to El Paso a few months ago. In our correspondence he told me about the congregation he was a member of. I searched online and found the website that had information concerning that congregation. This statement was on that website then: “We are a fully inclusive church. Everyone participates in leadership, worship, and the life of the church. Men, women, and children all serve together. No matter your background, past, or present, you are welcome at Bering. Please join us this Sunday morning... Everyone is welcome in our body, regardless of background, gender, or identity” (<https://beringfamily.org>). If you are wondering if this means including transgender, you do not have to wonder. They certainly welcome homosexuals. They even have a “LGBTQ+” support group (<https://beringfamily.org/lgbtq-support-group-parents/>).

The quote above is where many “churches of Christ” today are and where most are headed. Sinners are welcomed amongst many proclaiming to be God’s people today. That is NOT the Lord’s doing. The Lord requires people to turn away from sin prior to being called His people (Acts 2:38, Acts 3:19, and Acts 26:18-20). This message began to be taught as John prepared the way for Christ to come. We are going to start our study there.

The Preaching Of John Preparing The Way

When you read the following, notice how that John was not all-welcoming. Notice what was taught concerning repentance. Here is our text: *“Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these*

stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire” (Luke 3:1-9). Jesus continued that message in His work.

The Preaching Of Christ

“From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17). When Jesus was talking to people in sin, He never received them as they were. He demanded repentance (Matthew 9:1-13, Luke 13:1-5, Luke 19:1-10) and them to go and sin no more (John 5:1-14 and John 8:1-11). When Jesus sent out His disciples to preach, prior to His death, the message was the same (Mark 6:7-12). After His death, and the coming of the kingdom, He demanded the same message to be preached by the Apostles.

The Teaching Of The Apostles

After the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ He said that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47). That is exactly what happened (Acts 2:1-47). The whole counsel of God includes preaching repentance (Acts 20:20-21). The goodness of God does not teach acceptance of sin, it teaches repentance from sin (Romans 2:1-4). The fact is, the Lord does NOT accept anyone in sin!

Sin = No Relationship With The Lord

Sin separates man from God (Isaiah 59:1-2 and I Peter 3:12). We cannot sin with a hope that grace will abound (Romans 6:1-23). God forbids those justified by Christ to be found sinners (Galatians 2:17). Throughout the New Testament, the clear message of the Lord is for us to be perfect, sinless, holy, just, etc. (Matthew 5:48, Acts 17:30-31, II Corinthians 6:14-7:1, II Corinthians 13:11, Ephesians 1:3-4, Philippians 2:14-16, Colossians 3:1-17, II Timothy 2:19, Hebrews 12:14, Hebrews 12:22-23, I Peter 1:13-16, II Peter 3:10-14, I John 2:1-6, I John 3:1-10, Revelation 2:1-7, Revelation 2:12-29, Revelation 3:1-6, and Revelation 3:14-22). If a person or group of people choose to ignore the words of our Lord, there is no hope for that person (Hebrews 10:26-31 and Hebrews 12:25-29).

Conclusion

Our Lord is not the all-accepting Savior people portray Him to be. Consider His words, contextually towards religious hypocrites, as our conclusion: “*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation... Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell*” (Matthew 23:14 and Matthew 23:33)?