
Words of Truth

Spot Keepers

By: Brian A. Yeager

Think of the following description of some members of local churches of Christ, people who have been “baptized for the remission of their sins” (Acts 2:38). There are those who assemble with brethren that can be depended upon to be at every service. They will not forsake the assembling of the saints (Hebrews 10:25). These people always are prepared for class discussions. They know they are expected to help contribute to the edifying of their brethren (Ephesians 4:16). They contribute weekly as expected of them (I Corinthians 16:1-2). They reverently worship the Lord (Psalms 89:7). They raise their voices to God in songs as expected (Ephesians 5:19). They are attentive to sermons preached. They’ve nailed it, right? Aren’t those the only things that matter when it comes to being a member of the church?

Sadly, the above are the things that will often get you called a “faithful brother” or a “faithful sister”. Being considered “faithful”, in many churches of Christ, is just about what is seen on the first day of the week and during other assemblies. Yet, that is not all there is to being a faithful Christian.

What about commands of God such as those relating to your home life (Ephesians 5:22-6:4)? What about commands of God such as those relating to you obeying civil law (I Peter 2:13-16)? What about commands of God that govern the way we act, speak, and live in this world (Colossians 3:1-4:1)? What about commands of God as it relates to what goes on in our minds (II Corinthians 10:5)? What about commands of God as it relates to our personal Bible study habits (John 5:39, Acts 17:10-11, and II Timothy 2:14-18)? What about commands such as spending social time with brethren away from the assembling times of the local church (I Peter 4:9)? We could go on and on. The point is, there are many more things from Genesis 1:1- Revelation 22:21 that we need to put into practice outside of the normal expectations set by erring churches of Christ. Faithfulness to God comes down to more than just what we can see in others.

Looking The Part Isn't Good Enough

Consider what Jesus said about the scribes and Pharisees: *“Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments”* (Matthew 23:1-5).

In what you just read, you can see that the scribes and Pharisees knew the right words and they knew how to put on the show of faithfulness. Yet, their example was severely lacking once examined. In fact, they sound just like many members of churches of Christ today. Things don't change (Ecclesiastes 1:9). People have always sought to be seen for what they say they are, rather than what they really are (Titus 1:16).

In speaking of the erring Jews in the Old Testament, the Lord said this: *“And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness”* (Ezekiel 33:31). The Lord doesn't want people who say they'll do His will, He wants people who will actually do it (Deuteronomy 5:28-29, Luke 6:46-49, and James 1:21-25).

Have you read something in this article you did not know yet? I doubt it! The Jews and erring Christians have always known that God expects people of faithful action. This is not a new message. It is just a message often ignored. Even to this day, amongst those who proclaim to be Christians, there is a lot of talk without the right walk (1 John 2:3-6). Here is the question for you and I though, will you be a spot keeper in the Lord's body or a faithful working member?

Don't Just Keep A Spot

As we addressed at the start of this study, part of being a faithful Christian includes faithfully assembling with brethren (Hebrews 10:25). However, filling a spot in the assembly is not going to get you to Heaven nor is it going to really help the congregation. Collectively speaking, every member of the local church has to effectively fill a role that includes more than just “showing up” and talking the talk (1 Corinthians 12:14-27, Galatians 6:1-2, Titus 2:1-8, Titus 3:7-8, 1 Thessalonians 5:11-14 and Hebrews 3:13).

Anyone can show up, sing songs, listen to lessons, make comments, give money, etc. Only Christians can live faithfully. Remember, we are to walk and please God (1 Thessalonians 4:1). Putting on a show for people does not constitute walking in a pleasing way to God. Putting on a show just makes a person fake in the sight of God (Matthew 6:1-18).

Conclusion

Now, what if you examine yourself and find that you have just been a spot keeper? You know you have to repent (Luke 13:1-5). Consider this to provoke your thoughts and actions: *“But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him”* (Matthew 21:28-32).