
Words of Truth

Whoso Hath This World's Good...

By: Brian A. Yeager

In May I received the following question in an email: “Brother Yeager/ I have a question about helping saints in need. I have a situation. I am a married man with 3 kids. I live faithful to the Lord. I am a member of the Church of Christ in Tennessee. Right now our congregation has members planning graduation parties, summer vacations, buying new cars and all. Meanwhile my family is suffering in need because I was let off of work for a layoff. I am trying to get to the community school to get some training for a different job but I am the only provider because my wife takes care of the kids. Am I really part of a sound church if they will watch me suffer and not help? Should I confront them” (Email; May 23rd, 2015)?

My response was this: “Dear _____: There are Scriptures, such as I John 3:14-18, that come to mind when I read what you wrote. However, it is not that simple. I cannot give you any real help here because I really do not know what is going on. I do not mean this to be a charge against the people you assemble with or yourself, but I cannot answer a matter with only a brief, potentially bias question (Proverbs 18:13). If you are a member of a sound congregation you should be able to bring up this concern to all of the members and find out why they haven't helped you. It may be they just don't realize you even need help. It could also come down to reasons why they may not think you are worthy of such aid (this is not an indictment on you or them, just a possibility). Please, talk to your brethren about this and be prepared to have a Scriptural discussion” (Email Response; May 23rd, 2015).

As I stated in my response to the man asking the question, I cannot speak as to whether or not the congregation he is part of is failing him. I do not know the man or the congregation he is a member of. What this brief email exchange did to me is something I hope is happening to you as you read it. Can you imagine a congregation overlooking the obvious needs of a faithful brother? I can. I have seen it. I have seen congregations that are significantly disconnected. They do not know each other. They do not know the needs of one another. What about us? Let's consider ourselves individually and as a congregation.

What If We Had A Brother In Need Among Us?

What if we had a brother in the congregation, as the sole provider for his family, and he was laid off of work? Now, we know if a man is a member of this congregation he is faithful. A man who is a member of this congregation is not lazy or reckless. Therefore, none of that discussion needs to occur. We would have dealt with those issues long before he were in trouble financially (Matthew 18:15-17, Galatians 6:1, II Thessalonians 3:6, and James 5:19-20). Thus, all things are right.

Would you know if a brother here was in this situation? Whose fault would it be if you did not know? Do we have brethren that don't know each other? Whose fault is that? Do you

know all of the MEMBERS of this congregation well enough to know how they are doing physically and spiritually? We are to bear one another's burdens both physically and spiritually (Acts 20:35, Romans 15:25-27, and Galatians 6:2). How can that be accomplished if we don't know each other? Aren't we members of the same body (I Corinthians 12:14-27)? How could your leg function if it were an unknown member of your body? Would it be a false member in such a case (prosthetic)?

After all of those questions are asked and answered, by each of us individually, we need to then examine how we would step up here? Would you, individually, be willing to help this brother or would you just speak words of false comfort to him (James 2:14-17)? The Scriptures show a principle that teaches us to first use our individual resources in helping really needy saints before using the Lord's money (I Timothy 5:3-16). In fact, one reason we work and earn a living is to be able to help others (Ephesians 4:28). Of course, there are qualifiers to this (i.e. II Thessalonians 3:10). The question, again, is would you step up to help a brother in need? Have you considered that we'll be judged on this matter?

The Judgment Day

Whether or not we help our brethren in times of need will impact our salvation. Notice: *“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal”* (Matthew 25:31-46).

Conclusion

I told the man who wrote the email that I John 3:14-18 came to mind when I read his words. Read those verses. The love of God does not dwell in us if we can overlook a faithful brother or sister in Christ in times of need. This means we have to know each other and truly care about one another (I Peter 3:8). It also means we have to allow our brethren to know us and care about us. The church is a family (Ephesians 3:15). Let's act like it!