
Words of Truth

Which Is Better To You?

By: Brian A. Yeager

Trevor preached at the end of January about not being of the world. He talked about leaving the world behind upon conversion (Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 4:17-32, and Colossians 3:1-17). He talked about how some things are lawful to do and say, but that they are not always expedient (Romans 14:1-23, I Corinthians 8:1-13, and I Corinthians 10:23-33). Then he spent time teaching about how saints should not seek to fit in among the world or seek the approval of the world (Matthew 6:1-6, Luke 6:20-26, and Luke 16:15).

As Trevor's lesson progressed he taught that this world is evil (I John 5:19) and that our [faithful saints] citizenship is not of this world (Matthew 6:19-34, John 14:1-3, and I Peter 1:3-10). During this point in his lesson I was thinking about how even the faithful during Old Testament times appreciated their limited relationship with God more than fitting in among the rest of the world. Consider this: *"Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed. For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee"* (Psalms 84:9-12).

If those under the Law of Moses could have such a mindset, shouldn't we whom have the better and greater promises be stronger in our thinking than they were (Hebrews 11:1-12:3)? We have to be in this wicked world. We have to be good examples in this wicked world (Matthew 5:13-16 and Philippians 2:14-16). However, as Jesus stated when He was praying about His Apostles, we know we should not be "of" this wicked world (John 17:11-17). Jesus died to deliver us from this evil world (Galatians 1:4).

Think about all of that. Aside from the sinfulness that arises from fitting in among the wicked, why would we even want to (Psalms 34:14, Psalms 101:3, Psalms 119:21-22, Romans 12:9, and I John 3:1-10)? We are different (Titus 2:11-14). We don't belong here (Psalms 119:19 and I Peter 2:5-16). We are just passing the time in this life (I Peter 1:17) until we get to where we really belong (II Corinthians 5:1). Is that how you think?

Christ is our foremost example (I Peter 2:21-22). However, other faithful saints are our examples too. Paul is an approved example to follow as long as you can see Christ as the leader of his life (I Corinthians 4:16 and I Corinthians 11:1). So, let's look at his thinking.

Embracing The Mentality Of Paul

Paul appreciated that being a member of the kingdom of Christ was far greater than even being the greatest in things tied to this world. Read the following slowly and question yourself about whether or not you think this way: *“For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.). For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself”* (Philippians 3:3-21).

Conclusion

Is your position at work “but dung” to you? Is your property “but dung” to you? Is your place in society “but dung” to you? On and on we could ask that question about things in this world. Paul’s mentality was that nothing in this world could be compared to what he had in Christ. Whether he suffered or prospered, his focus was on things eternal (Romans 8:17, II Corinthians 4:7-5:15, and Philippians 4:6-13). Can you say that you think in a similar manner? Does something, anything, in this world stand above your focus on things above? Are you able to look at all things earthly as temporary while seeking the greater (Hebrews 13:14)?