
Words of Truth

The Gulf Between Gets Greater

By: Brian A. Yeager

When I think of a great gulf, the first thing that comes to mind is Jesus' teaching about Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16:19-31). That is a great context to study. It gives us the knowledge of what happens after death, before the resurrection and the Judgment Day. That is not what this study is going to be about.

A gulf is: "(1) a deep inlet of the sea almost surrounded by land, with a narrow mouth. (2) a deep ravine, chasm, or abyss. (3) a large difference or division between two people or groups, or between viewpoints, concepts, or situations: a wide gulf between theory and practice" (New Oxford American Dictionary). It is the third definition of the term "gulf" that we will be talking about in this study. We will be talking about the large difference or division between the converted child of God and any person that is "of the world".

The word of God says that there are two groups of people in existence. There are those whom are children of God and there are those whom are children of the devil. The difference is notable based upon whether or not a person is a sinner (I John 3:1-10). Those of us that were lost and were converted to Christ (Acts 3:19, Acts 26:18-20, Romans 6:1-23, and I Corinthians 6:9-11); are on one side of that great gulf. With us are those whom are innocent because they have never sinned (Matthew 18:1-4). On the other side of that gulf are those whom have sinned, been separated from God, and have not been converted. Those of us familiar with the Parable of the Tares know these individuals are children of the wicked one (Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43).

Jesus says that those who are not with Him are against Him (Matthew 12:30 and Luke 11:23). There is an unmistakable division in place between those whom are of Christ and those whom are of the world (II Corinthians 6:14-18). When you are first converted to Christ, you know that you are no longer part of the world (Ephesians 2:1-10) and people that witness your conversion notice that you are different (I Peter 4:1-5). The world represents wickedness (I John 5:19). Jesus died and made it possible for us to be converted so that we could be delivered from this evil world (Galatians 1:4). That makes you different. That means you are not like the people of the world (Romans 12:1-2). As you continue to grow in Christ, that gulf gets wider. You have less and less in common with those outside of Christ. Understand this, that means you are on the right track.

Jesus Means For There To Be A Division Between You And Them

None of us can escape the fact that we live in this world. We cannot escape the fact that living in this world means we have some contact with people “of the world” (I Corinthians 5:9-13). Jesus told the twelve that the world would hate them as the world hated Him (John 15:18-20). In Jesus’ prayer to the Father, He spoke of how the disciples were not “of the world” even as He was not “of the world”, but He did not desire them to be physically removed from this world (John 17:14-16). They had a task to preach the Gospel to the people of this world (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-20, and Luke 24:44-47). While our task is not the same as they had, we still have work to do such as being lights in this dark world (Matthew 5:14-16 and Philippians 2:14-16). Thus, we know we cannot go hide in some wilderness to not be in this world.

Aside from our work that we must do in this world, we should notice a growing gap between us and those whom are not amongst us. By “us”, I mean those whom are innocent and those whom are in/of Christ (Galatians 3:26-29, I John 2:3-6, and II John 1:9). As you grow in Christ your conversion gains roots (Colossians 2:6-8; 3:1-17). As you grow your hatred of that which is evil should cause a greater gulf between you and people of the world for MANY reasons (i.e. Psalms 97:10, Psalms 101:3, Psalms 119:97-105; 128, Psalms 139:21-22, Romans 12:9, I Corinthians 15:33, Galatians 1:10, Ephesians 5:6-11, and I John 2:15-17).

Over the years as I have taught this lesson in various ways, I get a common question. That question revolves around family members. What does the Lord expect of me regarding my family members? There are multiple answers. If you are talking about a worldly spouse, you are expected to abide with them if they so desire to abide with you (I Corinthians 7:9-16 and I Peter 3:1-7). Any other family relationship is different. Notice what Jesus taught: *“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it”* (Matthew 10:34-39). See also: Luke 9:57-62, Luke 12:49-53, and Luke 14:25-33.

Conclusion

If there is not a growing gulf between yourself and the enemies of Christ, you are going to find yourself on the same side of the great gulf as did the rich man in death. For, your choice in friendship is creating a great gulf between you and the Lord (James 4:4). If you are increasingly divided from those outside of Christ, you are on the right path!