

The Messenger



“... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:15

A Weekly Publication of the Christians Meeting at
2291 Highway Z, Wentzville, Missouri
Website: westlakechurchofchrist.org

Dedicated to the Proclamation of the Truth in the Spirit of Love (Ephesians 4:15)

Volume 10, Issue 16

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May 3, 2009

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“Making Excuses”

by James Hahn

In Luke 14, Jesus tells of a man making a great supper and inviting many to come. The Bible says *“they all with one consent began to make excuse”* (v. 18). No one likes to admit that he makes excuses, however if each of us would be honest we would all have to plead guilty to making excuses.

Why do people make excuses? Some, when making excuses, say they are “not making excuses”, but just giving “reasons” for their failure. They fail to realize that their “reason” for failure is, in reality, an excuse. Excuses are not made to “explain the facts”. They are made to conceal the facts from others and in all probability, ourselves as well. Men do not make excuses for doing right. It is when we fail to do what we know we should do, that we make excuses.

Some have the idea that so long as we tell the truth, we are not making excuses. The person who believes this is surely deceiving himself. In the parable noted above, there is no indication that the people were lying about buying property, buying oxen or getting married. However, they used these things to conceal the real problem; they simply were not willing to put forth the effort to attend.

The same is true with many today. Some fail to assemble with the saints. When questioned about their failure to attend they reply, “We had company come in” or “We were out of town”. Both statements may be true, but they do not explain the problem. The real problem is lack of dedication and conviction. In the beginning, when God asked Adam if he had *“eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat”*, Adam replied, *“The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat”* (Gen. 3:11-12). What Adam said may have been true, but it did not change the fact that he had eaten of the forbidden fruit. He was still responsible for his own actions.

Someone has said that when you don’t want to do something, one excuse is as good as another. I wonder how many of us have really listened to the excuses we sometimes offer for not doing the things we know we should be doing. It does not make us feel good to be forced to admit that the only reason we are not doing what we should be doing, is that we simply do not have the will and determination to do it. Excuses may soothe our conscience, but they will not make us acceptable in the sight of God.

Excuse making is a poor substitute for obedience. When we fail to obey the Lord, we have no excuse. Each of us can obey the Lord if we want to. When a person determines that he is going to do the Lord’s will, there is nothing more anyone can do to prevent him from doing so. If you have never become a Christian, you may make many excuses. You may try to blame your parents; you may point to “all those hypocrites” in the

church or you may talk about all your personal problems and difficulties, however there is only one reason why you have not obeyed. As of this time, you simply have been unwilling to make the commitment necessary to become a Christian.

Making excuses does not solve any problem. The people Jesus referred to in the parable still did not attend the supper. When you offer excuses for your failure to obey, you still have not obeyed. This is why excuse making is so serious. It may give us a feeling of false security and, of even more importance, keep us from gaining heaven.

How do we overcome excuse making? Some do not want to quit, for in so doing they will be seen as they really are. The only way to overcome excuse making is to start doing the things we have been making excuses for not doing. When we do this, we will be pleasing to the Lord and there will be no need for excuses.

Are you a Christian? Are you faithfully serving the Lord? If not, what is your excuse? You may give one, but the truth is you can be a faithful servant of Christ if you want to. Why not lay aside all excuses and obey Him (Heb. 5:8-9).



Wind-Shaken Reeds

by Wallace Emberton

When a fellow's position on a subject is swayed by public opinion, he really holds no position. He is lacking in conviction who considers consequences before duty. Read profane history: find a hero who went along with the crowd? Study God's truth; the winds of the times were forever in the face of God's chosen ones. They still are. That was what Christ was chiding His listeners about in Luke 7:24, "*What did you go out into the wilderness to behold, a reed shaken by the wind?*" Whatever else may be said about John the Baptist, he was not a "go with the flow" fellow. He was a part of that kingdom not of this earth, which came to call folks out of kingdoms that were, and then destroy those who wouldn't heed the warning. He made the positions of God's truth so clear that it cost him his head. But some folks, in that day and this, who are looking for ways to save their head, or gain worldly prestige or advantage, are taking big chances on losing their soul.

When this text comes up in Bible study, it is usually applied to folks out in the world, who so willingly go along with modern ways. That would be fine if folks who had not been baptized were all who behaved like wind-shaken reeds. But they aren't! And, the world's winds aren't the only ones blowing. A lot of us old fuddy-duddies have been around long enough to see certain "big" preachers; "widely-read" church papers; and "highly esteemed" congregations create gales that swept many sincere folks right along with them. Problem: Such winds don't always blow in the same direction. And we aren't supposed to be reeds anyhow. We are to be like "*a tree planted by a stream of water*" (Psalm 1:3). Meaning? Our roots are to go "way down deep into God's truth, developing a body and limbs that resist the winds of change which sweep the body of Christ in every generation. Winds change; truth does not. There must and should be influential men and congregations in every age to serve as leaders. But there must also be a deep and abiding knowledge and love for truth, which assures that they hold to truth and are therefore worthy of their leadership role.

When our position is based on truth, we are a tree unshakable. When it is based on what brother so-and-so said or wrote, we are a reed shaken by a wind which may not be of God.

P.S. – There are two freedoms: the **false**, where a man is free to do what he wants; the **true**, where a man is free to do what he ought.

News and Notes:

Remember to check the prayer list for those with ongoing spiritual weaknesses and physical illnesses.

"...Pray for one another...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16