

The Old Paths

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“Progression Or Digression?”

Jarrod Jacobs

On Wednesday, (1/8/03) I heard a news report about some homosexuals at Harvard University, who in the early part of the last century, were maligned, and treated cruelly by others at the university because they were homosexuals. It became so bad that at least two took their own lives. The comment, though, that got my attention was stated after that piece ended. The reporter who did the investigation, and another person asking the questions discussed the terrible way those young people were treated back then. The reporter commented on how bad it was, but then made the comment that things have gotten better since then, seeing that people at Harvard, he said, have become more liberal. He then made the comment, “They have made a lot of progress over the years.”

Please understand, I do not condone treating anyone in a cruel manner, but I could not help but ask myself if it is “progress” Harvard has made over the years, or is this “digression” we are seeing?

To help clear this up, let us understand that the word “progress,” according to Mr. Webster, has to do with movement toward a goal, or advancement in general. In contrast, the word “digress” has to do with deviating, or wandering away from one’s main point or purpose. It carries the idea of turning away, or departing. Therefore, is Harvard, as the reporter said, making “progress”? Or, are they digress-

ing? What is interesting to note is that based on Mr. Webster’s definitions of these words, digression or progression can very well be determined by where the goal is! Therefore, let us ask, “What is our goal?”

If One’s Goal Is To Please The World...

It is “progress” to speak of being “tolerant” toward those who have a sinful lifestyle. This is because the world continues to “advance” or move toward that goal steadily. When we see people proclaim loud and long that truth is relative, that the “god” we worship is relative, that morality is relative, and that no one has the “right” to speak out and say there is such a thing as right and wrong in society, then yes, I imagine that Harvard University is “progressing” right along with the world!

If One’s Goal Is To Please God...

It is digression to accept as righteous and noble those practices which have deviated from God’s will. This principle is stated clearly in Ecclesiastes 7:29: “*Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions* (devices for evil; schemes; etc.).” Is this not what we are witnessing when what once was considered wrong is now accepted by men? Truly this is digression from God’s will. This principle applies to the sin of homosexuality, and all other sin!

Do We Wish To Please God Or Man?

This question must be answered by each one of us. As we examine ourselves, are we “progressing” or “digressing” from God and His will? To answer this, we must ask ourselves, are we living each day trying to please men or God? Jesus said, “*No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon*” (Matt. 6:24; Lk. 16:13). Paul spoke of this when he wrote the Galatians. He told them, “*For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ*” (Gal. 1:10). James made a similar statement when he wrote to the Christians and said, “*Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God*” (Jas. 4:4). I cannot please both God and man. I must make a choice as to whom I will serve. What is your choice, friend?

Conclusion

Again, I do not condone violence, or ill-treatment of any person. However, concerning the acceptance of homosexuality as “normal,” and a “lifestyle choice,” would we say accepting such is progression or digression? When we read the Bible, we see that such is digression from God’s will (Rom. 1:26-27; I Cor. 6:9-11). Many of the so-called “advancements” in our culture’s thoughts, and practices are actually digressions; for they are taking us away from God, and trying to deprive men of the opportunity to be His child. It is done under the guise of saying that living by God’s will is “intolerant,” “bigoted,” “archaic,” etc. Let us not be fooled by Satan’s tactics, but stand strong in the Lord (Eph. 6:10), and serve no other but Him!

Those Outside The Church Of Christ

John Isaac Edwards, Salem IN

A question unsettled in the minds of many is: "Must one be a member of the church of Christ to be saved?" What is the condition of those outside the church?

1) THEY ARE WITHOUT CHRIST.

There is no way you can have Christ without the church. As a builder and building (Matt. 16:18; I Cor. 3:9), husband and wife (Rom. 7:1-4; II Cor. 11:2), head and body (Eph. 1:21-23; Col. 1:18), house and foundation (Heb. 3:6; I Cor. 3:11), Christ and the church go together (Eph. 5:32). You can't be in Christ and not be in the church of Christ, for what puts you in Christ puts you in the church (Gal. 3:27; I Cor. 12:13; Col. 1:24). Thus, anything that is said to be in Christ is not found outside the church of Christ. Some things found in Christ: Redemption (Rom. 3:24), sanctification (I Cor. 1:2), liberty (Gal. 2:4), all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3), an inheritance (Eph. 1:11), reconciliation (Eph. 2:13), the hope and promise of eternal life (II Tim. 1:1; Titus 1:2; I Jn. 5:11), salvation (II Tim. 2:10), and on it goes. If you are outside the church of Christ, then you are without Christ!

2) THEY ARE WITHOUT THE BLOOD.

The blood flows through the body, and the life is in the blood (Lev. 17:11). Cut off the blood supply to any part of the body and it will die! The same is true of the Lord's body, the church (Eph. 1:22-23). Ephesians 2:13 and 16 connect the blood of Christ with the body of Christ. What puts you in Christ and the body brings you

into contact with the blood. Jesus shed His blood in His death (Jn. 19:33-34), and we are "baptized into his death" (Rom. 6:3-4). So it is in the church that we avail ourselves of the benefits of the blood! There are many things made possible by the blood of Christ: Justification (Rom. 5:9), redemption (Eph. 1:7), reconciliation (Eph. 2:13), the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:14), peace (Col. 1:20), sanctification (Heb. 13:12), and much more. If you are outside the church of Christ, then you are without the blood supply!

3) THEY ARE WITHOUT THE SPIRIT.

The church is the temple of God (I Cor. 3:16-17; II Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21), and the Spirit dwells in the temple (I Cor. 3:16). Jesus said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth ..." (Jn. 6:63). To be quickened is to be made alive (Eph. 2:1, 5). Thus, those outside the church of Christ are not alive, but dead! Paul said, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16). Therefore, those outside the church of God are not the children of God. The church is "the household of God" (Eph. 2:19), and all of God's children are in His household! If you are outside the church of Christ, have you realized what you are without?

We plead with you to gladly receive the word and be baptized, that

the Lord may add you to His church (Acts 2:38, 41, 47). Will you do it today?

Editor's Note:

The article above states the truth quite plainly. How we need to remember that there is only one church, and this church was founded, purchased, built, and is shepherded by Christ. In an age when many so-called religious groups encourage people to "come as you are," and not change anything in order to be a part of their body, we need to know that the Lord's body is different. It is not enough for people to come through these doors, sit down and assume that they are right with God.

Until/Unless we surrender to His will, being baptized into Christ for the remission of sins, forsaking all denominational ties, then we are not His children. God accepts no less than our all. Let us be that willing, reverent sacrifice to Him, and not hold back any more. If I am outside of Christ's body, then I have no hope, no spiritual blessings, nothing of any value! If one proclaimed they loved Christ day and night, it would not change their soul's destination until they were ready to obey His will and be a part of His body (Matt. 7:21). You see, it is a "package deal"! To want a relationship with Christ means being in His body, and the Lord only adds those to his church who have been saved (Acts 2:47). Have you been added to the church of (belonging to) Christ? If not, you're not saved!

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Preacher/Editor: Jarrod Jacobs

Phone: (270) 683-5386

Website address: www.southside-churchofchrist.com (Updated weekly!)

"Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." (Jer. 6:16)