

The Old Paths

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“Relevant” Faith

Jarrod Jacobs

On Triplett St., a certain “church” sign has not escaped my notice. It is the sign for the “Relevant Faith Church” just north of the hospital. As many times as I have driven past that sign, I can’t help but wonder if some in town have balked at that sign for its “legalistic” and “judgmental” nature? (You see, in calling themselves a “relevant” faith church, are they not also implying that some have “irrelevant” faith?) I bring this up in the beginning because some of our own brethren balk at the use of the term “church of Christ” (Rom. 16:16), claiming that folks in the community think this is judgmental, and narrow. I wonder what they would think of the sign advertising the “relevant” faith church?

This sign also got my thoughts stirred about people’s attitude toward the Bible and religion in general. Evidently, these people thought it necessary to let folks in this community know that they offered “relevant” faith in times when others were offering “irrelevant” faith. In addition to this, is it not true that many in the world consider the Bible itself irrelevant, having no bearing on the “real lives” of people in the “real world” today? Certainly, folks have this attitude today. Could this not be one of the reasons why those folks chose to call

themselves a “relevant” faith church?

The sad thing is that the attitude which says that the Bible is irrelevant, or that being a Christian is irrelevant is 180 degrees out of phase with reality. In fact, the Bible is relevant, and it is useful in our daily lives IF we APPLY God’s word to our lives!

Is The Religion Of Christ “Relevant”?

As we begin this study, let us define the word “relevant.” Relevant means, “bearing upon or connected with the matter in hand ... pertinent” It is synonymous with being “applicable ... appropriate, suitable, or fitting” (Webster’s). Therefore, when we speak of the religion of Christ, we are speaking of a studious, prayerful, and spiritual religion. We are speaking of a religion which is pertinent, suitable, or fitting to us, for it permeates all of our lives. This is made clear when Paul said, “*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him*” (Col. 3:17). “Relevant” faith is what you will have when you “*let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom...*” (Col. 3:16a). When one refuses to do this, whose fault is it for not having “relevant” faith? Is it Christ’s fault? Is it the Bible’s fault? Is the Bible insufficient, or have we been insufficient in applying what the book of God says?

What Can I Do To Have A “Relevant” Faith?

I am convinced that the reason some think that the Bible is not relevant is because they do not spend enough time with the Bible! They spend little or no time in prayer (speaking to God); nor will they spend time in the Bible (God’s word to man). Is it any wonder then, why the majority of the world thinks that God, religious activity, worship, and obedience to God are “irrelevant”? How tragic!

To make your faith relevant, may I suggest the following:

1) **Pray daily!** Paul told the Thessalonians to “*pray without ceasing*” (I Thess. 5:17). Can we afford to do any less? Jesus spent time in prayer (Matt. 14:23, 26:36; Jn. 17:9, 20) and said that men ought always pray and not lose heart (Lk. 18:1). If Jesus prayed, as well as taught folks to pray, what will our life be like if we don’t?

2) **Study daily!** How essential it is that we spend time in God’s book daily. From Old to New Testament days, we see a premium being placed upon reading and studying God’s word. Consider the fact that God through Moses said that fathers need to spend time teaching their children God’s word “*when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up*” (Deut. 6:7). God also expected the kings of His people to read and write God’s word (Deut. 17:18-20). Looking into the New Testament, God’s word is compared to milk and meat (Heb. 5:12-14); and Christians were told to “eat”! (Matt. 5:6; I Pet. 2:2; etc.) So many today are malnourished spiritually because they spend no time in Bible study or prayer!

3) **Make proper decisions daily!** As a result of fervent prayer and study, we can then move forward to make proper decisions before God. John said, *"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city"* (Rev. 22:14). The "blessed ones" are those who do and keep on doing the will of God! Paul recognized this, saying that he had to discipline his body "daily" in order to make sure he was not a cast away or disqualified before God (I Cor. 9:27)! If Paul recognized this truth, why can't we? The quicker we do, the quicker we will realize just how "relevant" God's word is! The Bible is just as relevant and as important today as it was when the ink was put to the scrolls!

Conclusion

How "relevant" do you deem Biblical principles? How "relevant" do you think it is that we follow all that the Bible says in all aspects of life? Is your faith "relevant," or is it something that you think is only necessary on Sunday and special occasions? The facts are that anyone who is not ready to live the life of a Christian will never find any aspect of the Bible or faith "relevant," and as a result will leave the Lord at the first sign of trouble and hardship. Don't be like this, but *"be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord"*

**Facts Do Not Cease
To Exist Just Because
They Are Ignored!**

-Unknown

Some Thoughts On Psalm 64

Jarrold Jacobs

"Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy. Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity: Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words: That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not. They encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them? They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep. But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded. So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away. And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing. The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory." (Ps. 64:1-10)

After reading Psalm 64, please re-read this chapter and note three

key lessons that we can learn and apply:

1) Any person who chooses to follow the Lord can count on having enemies. David took note of those who hated him and spoke spitefully about him. Jesus Himself said, *"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you"* (Jn. 15:19). Paul said a similar thing in II Timothy 3:12.

2) Note the irreverence and utterly selfish nature of the wicked, asking "Who shall see?" The wicked mock at God, thinking He will not see or hear what they do (Ps. 10:11, 59:7). They are greatly mistaken! *"The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good"* (Prov. 15:3)

3) Though other kings might have relied on their army to destroy their enemies, David, the king of Israel, put his faith in God to punish his enemies (also: Ps. 59:9). In the New Testament, Paul said, *"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord"* (Rom. 12:19).

Many other lessons can be drawn from Psalm 64. Read it again. What lessons can you draw from David's psalm?

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