

The Old Paths

Volume 11, Issue 49

February 13, 2005

“Attitude”

Jarrod Jacobs

My good friend used to tell me that with most folks, it didn't matter what the facts were, but how they felt about them. I believe there is truth in that statement. With many people, it does not matter how well they know the truth, but whether or not they have the right attitude toward the truth!

Please understand, I am not saying that one's attitude trumps the knowledge of the truth (see: Rom. 10:1-2). What I am saying is that once we are armed with the truth (Eph. 3:4, 5:17), our attitude needs to be right, or the truth we know will not be of any benefit to us at all!

The need for a good attitude toward the truth is not merely some 21st century view. It is seen in the Scriptures. On eight separate occasions, David sang that he was seeking God, obeying Him, and praising God, “with my whole heart” (Ps. 9:1, 111:1, 119:10, 34, 58, 69, 145, 138:1). Other Old Testament faith heroes humbly and gladly followed God and opposed men's opinions even when it meant death (Heb. 11:34-37)! In the New Testament, we see this attitude of obeying God with one's “whole heart” is alive and well. Remember that it was only those who “gladly received” the gospel message that were baptized and saved from sin (Acts 2:38, 41). (Think: What of those who didn't “gladly receive” the word?) Take some time today

and think about those in the Old and New Testaments who displayed humble attitudes and submitted to God's word and contrast them with the proud and haughty who also heard God's word. Study and take note of the differences between Moses and Pharaoh. In addition to this, we also see great differences between Elijah and Ahab, Jeremiah and Jehoiakim, even Paul and Agrippa! Yes, attitude matters!

The question I face daily continues to be: “What is my attitude toward God's word?” My knowledge of God's will is a necessary and wonderful thing. Yet, this knowledge becomes meaningless and impotent in my life when I become haughty, careless, or apathetic toward the word of God!

Think about it: What would cause folks to endure trials, mockery, cruel treatment, sorrow, rejection, and wicked treatment when it would have been so much easier for them to give up? What motivated martyrs like Stephen, James, Antipas, and others? Was it not their attitude and dedication toward God's will? Truly, our attitude motivates us to apply what we know and look to Christ who keeps us strong!

Attitude is an invaluable part of our lives in Christ. Remember that Christ said that those who worship God “must worship him in spirit and in truth” (Jn. 4:24)! “In spirit” has to do with the right attitude. Therefore, true worship demands that we have the right attitude in connection with worshipping according to the true standard! Hav-

ing one or the other is incomplete — we need both! By the way, how is YOUR attitude when it comes to worship? Are we like David who said, “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD” (Ps. 122:1)? Or, are we like the Jews who complained about worship saying, “Behold, what a weariness is it!” (Mal. 1:13)? Are we like the Pharisees whom Christ said worshipped God in vain because their hearts were “far from” God (Matt. 15:8-9)? Or, are we the “true worshippers” God is seeking to worship Him (Jn. 4:23-24)?

Specifically, we need to show the proper attitude in our singing (Col. 3:16), our prayers (Lk. 18:1), our preaching (II Tim. 4:2; Eph. 4:15), in our giving (I Cor. 16:1-2; II Cor. 9:7), and as we partake of the Lord's Supper (I Cor. 11:27-28). Truly, our attitude is of the utmost importance in our relationship with Christ!

Conclusion

The Bible teaches us that there is a need for self-examination (II Cor. 13:5). Why not start with checking our attitude? Upon learning the truth, what is our attitude toward it? Are we going to accept or reject it? Will we try to twist the truth to suit what we want? Let us take our attitudes seriously, not only for what it means to our relationship with God, but also because our attitude effects our relationship with one another (Matt. 5:16)!

The most exercise some folks get is “jumping” to conclusions!

Remember: “The first one to plead his cause seems right, Until his neighbor comes and examines him.” (Prov. 18:17, NKJ)

Excerpt From:

The Gospel X-Ray

(A Book Of Sermons)
J.D. Tant, 1933

“I am called upon to be a fellow soldier, and the very word soldier carries with it the idea of fighting. Remember I am not only to put on the whole armor of God for self protection, but I am to carry the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God to enable me to fight the enemy. That soldier who goes on to the battle field with an unloaded gun, or one who never shoots his gun, or one who is begging all not to shoot as to hit the enemy is a disgrace to the army. Yet I go to many places where many of my brethren claim to be soldiers, but they have not shot a gun at the enemy in ten years, and begin to plead with me as soon as I get there, and beg me to be careful not to shoot any gospel gun toward Baptists or Methodists, or “outsiders,” for if I do and a gospel shot hits one, they claim it will hurt his feelings and make him mad and he won’t come to church again. Many church members are more fearful of hurting the feelings of their sectarian neighbors, and regard their friendship and love far above that of God in whose army they claim to be fighting. Brother, do you belong to this class? Then can you claim you are in fellowship with God, when you refuse to teach the gospel to those who are the Lord’s enemies, who are not only building on the sand, but are spending their time and talent in cultivating the human

plants, or human churches that Christ states shall be rooted up?”

(From: J.D. Tant, *Gospel X-Ray*,
Sermon: “Divine Fellowship,” p. 159)

Editor’s Note:

I wonder how many congregations today could stand a preacher like brother Tant among them? It seems that little changes over the years. The problems he faced are also problems gospel preachers face today. In too many places, we find those who are supposed to be Christians, but they do not have the “stomach” for gospel preaching the way it needs to be (II Tim. 4:2)! (Does this not speak to our attitude, as we studied on page one?) I thank God for brethren I know here at Southside who demand that the gospel be preached in its purity and simplicity, without compromise. This kind of preaching is badly needed today, as it was in brother Tant’s day.

There is no reason for mistreating someone, but when people are lost in sin, it needs to be dealt with, lest these people die in their sin! The greatest injustice one can do to a person is to give them the impression they are saved, when in fact, they are not! Jesus would not simply ignore the sin and error present in the lives of folks. He confronted it, and showed folks what was necessary to make the proper

corrections. Take note also that when the apostles thought Jesus had preached a little “too strong” to the Pharisees in Matthew 15 (v. 12), our Lord’s response was not to find them and apologize for His words, but to say, “Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone...” Let us stand for and proclaim the truth regardless of the consequences. There is a great need today for soldiers of God to be fighting the doctrine of the enemy!

Some Spiritual Thoughts

- ♦ “One cannot learn error and obey truth.”
- ♦ “Nothing can be a substitute for the gospel.”
- ♦ “If the Christian’s faith does not sustain him in moments of ordinary need, of what value would it be in a moment of supreme need?”
- ♦ “Human wisdom seeks to devise plans whereby the Lord’s work is done with a minimum amount of sacrifice.”

-Selected

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“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)