

The Old Paths

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“The Purpose Of Debating”

Jarrod Jacobs

Lord willing, at the end of the week, this author will be engaged in a debate with Mr. Roger Holland of Lafayette, TN. Some may wonder why debating is necessary and the purpose of debates. For this reason, I want to show some of the reasons for debates; and show that debating is authorized and sanctioned by God. Why debate?

Souls Are At Stake.

Certainly all that we, the Southside church of Christ, do is aimed toward winning souls to Christ. We try to follow in the steps of Jesus who said He came to “seek and save that which was lost” (I Pet. 2:21-22; Lk. 19:10). With so many today lost in sin, we ought to be willing to provide people an opportunity to hear the truth proclaimed. Just like gospel meetings, debates provide people with opportunities to hear the gospel preached in truth and sincerity.

Personally, I do not know of any time in the history of man when his soul’s salvation and eternal life was NOT of intense interest, do you? Truly, precious souls can benefit from our studying together in this fashion. “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matt. 16:26)

Debating Follows The Bible Example.

From Old Testament times, to New Testament times, we see God’s people engaged in debate with those in error. Elijah faced the 450 prophets of Baal, and demanded that they prove to one and all whether or not Baal was truly a god (I Kings 18). At the same time, he showed people that Jehovah was God, and left no doubt in anyone’s mind.

Jeremiah faced the false prophet Hananiah in Jeremiah 28. After Jeremiah had warned Zedekiah of the Babylonians and their taking the people into captivity (Jer. 27); Hananiah came along and said that it would be just a temporary thing, and within two full years, everything would return to the way it was (Jer. 28:2-3). Jeremiah proceeded to declare that it would be good if he was right, but he was not right (Jer. 28:5-9). Jeremiah spoke “in the presence of the priests, and in the presence of the people” and showed in no uncertain terms that Hananiah was a liar, and declared that Hananiah would die within the year for his lie (Jer. 28:15-17). This happened just as Jeremiah had said.

Looking to the New Testament, we see such worthies as John, Christ, Paul, Peter, and others engaged in debates. For instance, we see Jesus engaged in debate in John 8, Matthew 12, and 23. Jesus reasoned with the people on many

occasions, showing where they had strayed from the truth. Finally, the hard-hearted people gave up and refused to ask any more questions of Him (Matt. 22:46). The Bible says Paul engaged in debates every day for two solid years in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9). Yes, many in the New Testament engaged in debates, not merely for the sake of controversy, but to make clear the distinctions between the truth of God and man’s error. That is exactly what this author plans to do on May 27-28, Lord willing.

Brother R.L. Whiteside said: “Jesus and Paul were not contentious, yet they contended earnestly for the truth. They were the greatest fighters of all time. They were moved by two Loves. They loved man so much that they fought with determination anything and everything that would hurt man. They loved the truth so much that they fought everything that was in the way of its progress. And they stirred people as none others ever did” (The Kingdom of Promise and Prophecy, p. 138).

Friends, if Christ is our example, and if the apostles are our examples and ambassadors for Christ; then can we not speak as they spoke and do as they did?? Of course, we can (I Pet. 2:21-22; I Cor. 11:1; II Cor. 5:20; I Pet. 4:11; Phil. 4:8-9)!!

Debating Is A Valuable Teaching Method.

Debates have great value! Rarely are people afforded an opportunity to hear both sides of an issue in the same sitting. Through debating, people get to hear “both sides.” It is not often any more (unfortunately) that people get to hear explanations for why people

believe what they believe and do what they do in contrast with the Scriptures. Truly, the honest seeker will learn a great deal through this debate. Consider Paul in Acts 19: Why would Paul, an inspired man, continue in something of little or no worth every day for two solid years? Truly, he understood the power that debating has to instruct those who are ignorant of God's word! Let us not underestimate what good can be done through debating Bible topics.

Conclusion

Let us make our plans now to attend this two-night debate. I especially solicit your prayers concerning this debate (II Thess. 3:1). Much good will come from this effort, for God promised, "my word ... shall not return unto me void" (Isa. 55:11). Remember, we are each responsible for knowing and doing God's will (Jn. 5:29; Eph. 3:4; Phil. 4:9; Rev. 22:14). One day, we will stand before God in judgment for what we have done, good or bad (II Cor. 5:10; Ecc. 12:13-14; Rom. 2:6-10).

"Bible Ignorance"

Jarrold Jacobs

A news report came out last week stating that children who lack Biblical knowledge are "at a huge educational disadvantage" in school. In an article for the Religion News Service, Helena Andrews said her findings reveal that "students without Bible knowledge take more time to teach." The non-profit group called "Bible Literacy Project" based out of Fairfax, VA did a study in which it was discovered

that children who do not have a basic knowledge of Scriptures are at a significant disadvantage in school. The reason this is so is because classic and modern literature is full of Biblical references. For instance, William Shakespeare's works contain over 1300 Biblical references. Herman Melville's Moby Dick begins with the statement, "Call me Ishmael." The "Bible Literacy Project" is now trying to get schools involved in an academic study of the Bible so that young people will be able to comprehend the many Biblical references that are found within our literature.

When I read this article, I remembered a statement a dear friend of mine made. He said, "You can spend many years in school acquiring degrees, but unless you have a knowledge of the Scriptures, you are not an educated man." This fact was stated by David in Psalm 119:98-100. The apostle made it clear that the Scriptures make one "wise unto salvation" (II Tim. 3:15). Further, we must not be "unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17).

Conclusion

Notice that when people push the Bible out of their lives, it not only affects their souls (Hos. 4:6), but other parts of their lives as well! If you wish to be truly educated, then learn and obey the words that "shall not pass away."



I want the truth, give me book, chapter, and verse!

Come and meet with the church at Southside.
Our address is: 2920 New Hartford Rd. Owensboro, KY 42303.

MEETING TIMES:

Sunday Morning Bible Study _____ **9:30 am**
Sunday Morning Worship _____ **10:20 am**
Sunday Evening Worship _____ **6:00 pm**
Wednesday Evening Bible Study _____ **7:00 pm**

Our call-in radio program is on **WBIO, FM 94.7**, Sunday afternoon from 12:30-1:00 pm. **Call: 683-9246 (WBIO)** with your Bible question.

Preacher/Editor: Jarrod Jacobs
Elders: Paul Dubois & Jeff Lankford
Phone: (270) 683-5386

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

The Debate Is Upon Us!!

Brother Jacobs and Mr. Roger Holland Will Be Engaged In A Debate This Week — May 27-28!

Subject: "Can A Christian Lose His Eternal Reward In Heaven?"

Speakers: Jarrod Jacobs
(Christian)
and
Roger Holland (Baptist)

Place: We will meet in Millwood, KY, at the Millwood Community Center on Hwy 62.

Time: 7:00 p.m. each evening.

Debates can do much good for spreading the truth. Brethren, please pray for our efforts to spread God's word in Grayson county.

Add Our Website To Your "Favorites" List:
www.southside-churchofchrist.com