

# Sunday School Lesson

By Dr. Paul Caudill

For Sunday  
Nov. 4, 1945

Topic: "Fellowship in the Church."  
 Printed Text: Romans 12:3-18.  
 To have a proper understanding of this lesson one will need to do more than consider the printed text referred to above. Special attention should be given to Matthew 18:15-20, where Jesus outlines the procedure for disciples in the church and also Acts 2:44-47 and 4:31-37, where one has a bird's eye view of the

early Jerusalem church at work. The modern church could do no better than to restudy its methods and objectives in the light of first century Christianity.

For the study of the printed text of our lesson, may we turn to Romans 20, verses 3-18.

### The Starting Point.

Really this study should begin with an examination of verses 1-3, which constitute the basis or starting point for fellowship in the church. In these opening verses a plea is made for self dedication to God, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. And be not fashioned according to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Fellowship with God is the only tenable basis for fellowship with man. That is why it is so important from the standpoint of world peace that we seek to evangelize the whole world and that right early. As men dedicate their lives to God by faith in Christ his Son, they come to stand upon a sort of common ground and are thereby enabled to deal with their mutual problems in a spirit of Christian charity that otherwise would be impossible.

This dedication of self demands a transformation of the mind and heart. The Christian is not to fashion himself in agreement with the ways of the world. He is not to conform himself outwardly to the pagan way of living and this is to the end that they may "prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." It is not an easy matter for an individual to submit all the powers of his being unto God for the doing of his holy will, but this is what the Christian is commanded to do if he is to live the abundant life. It is indeed a hard saying, but there is no alternative. Apparently first century Christians sought to do just this, however. Their pure lives, austere morality, together with their heroic deaths, challenged the admiration of the Roman world. Their willingness to sacrifice, to suffer, yes, to die, was responsible no doubt for many of the early victories of the Christian

churches.

### Harmony in Diversity.

One of the most apt warnings ever given the Christian church is that directed against self-conceit. "For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but so to think as to think soberly, according as God has dealt to each man a measure of faith. For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office; so we, who are many, are one body in Christ and severally members one of another."

Instead of conceit there should be on the part of every believer a spirit of humility. There should be recognition by each Christian of the limits of his own gifts; the reality of the gifts of others, and the position of the individual as only a part of the great community, as well as the very important fact that gifts, whether many or few, are the sovereign bounty of God.

Whatever gift one possesses comes to him as a measure of God's grace. It is by the grace of God that we are what we are. As Alexander Maclaren has well said, "There is quite as much harm done to Christian character and Christian service by our failure to recognize what is in our power, as by ambitious or ostentatious attempts of what is above our power. We have to be ourselves as God has made us in our natural faculties."

If the individual has been blessed with exceptional talents, let us say, in the realm of music, it is fitting that he the gifted one, and others, his neighbors, consider the gifts as coming from above, even as "a measure of faith" which God has graciously measured unto him. The very fact that God bestows upon his children these marvelous gifts reflects his own faith in us and in our ability to achieve through him his holy purposes. We become his vessels of truth, his instruments of self-expression. What a solemn thought!

Now the Christian church is merely a body of baptized believers banded together for the purposes of Christian fellowship and cooperative endeavor in a common effort to evangelize the world.

In our diversity of gifts lies the secret or, rather, our greatest capacity for harmony. The stringed instruments should teach us this. It is only as all of the parts are blended together in concord of sweet sound that the rapturous melodies are to be enjoyed. It is not our business as Christians to suppress any diversities which may exist in the ranks of God-given abilities; rather, opportunity should be provided for combining these different gifts into the greater harmony of the whole.

### The Necessity For Christian Virtues.

Until Christians come to the point that they can recognize greatness in others, even greatness which they themselves can never lay claim to, they will not have advanced far in the stature of Christian charity.

The closing verses of our lesson (9-18) call our attention in a further way to the necessity for other Christian virtues. "Let love be without hypocrisy." Love is the originating cause of our salvation. It was because of his great love for the world that God gave his only begotten son to be our Saviour. It is by this sign, the sign of love, that men are to know that we are his disciples.

NOTICE OF PUBLICATION  
 North Carolina, Wilkes County,  
 Edna Marie Willey vs. Robert Lee Willey.  
 In the Superior Court  
 The defendant in the above-entitled action will take notice that an action as above entitled has been commenced in the Superior court of Wilkes county, North Carolina, for absolute divorce and the defendant is further notified to appear at the office of the Clerk of Superior Court, in Wilkesboro, Wilkes county, North Carolina, within thirty days and answer or demur to the complaint filed, or the plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief demanded in the complaint.  
 This 15th day of October, 1945.  
 C. C. HAYES,  
 11-8-45T Clerk Superior Court

Plainly, we are enjoined in the Scriptures to love one another. In truth, love is the fountainhead of all Christian virtues. If we abound in love, we are certain to abound in grace.

Moreover, the Christian is to shrink (with horror) from that which is evil. He is to have no part with evil. On the positive side, he is to keep company with (glue himself to) that which is good—the good.

With a heart conditioned by unfeigned love and with a mind and spirit that is properly related to the good, it should not be difficult for the Christian to achieve

### Lespedeza Seed May Be Threshed

Farmers in Wilkes county who have lespedeza seed they want threshed or combined, and do not know of any combine that can be used, are asked to get in touch with the county agent's office. Write a post card or letter, or leave your name and address at the county agent's office and help will be given in securing the services of a combine for you.

### Youth Pleads Guilty To Postoffice Theft

Elkin, Oct. 29.—Henry Louis Denny, 17-year-old negro formerly of Mooreville and North Wilkesboro, who pleaded guilty of robbing the U. S. post office at Elkin recently of more than \$100, in a hearing before U. S. Commissioner M. W. Mackie at Yadkinville, is being held in jail at Albemarle, awaiting trial in Federal court at Winston-Salem November 8.

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From where I sit... by Joe Marsh

### Songs for a Better World

We were sitting around the members of Ed Crumple's barbecue last Saturday night, finishing our beer and hot dogs while Ed strummed the guitar... picking out old, friendly songs.

Soon everyone was singing. The harmony wasn't too good... but the spirit was—a spirit of friendship and good humor.

And it made me think how music—music of the people—overcomes barriers of prejudice and intolerance. A Yankee folk-song or an English carol or a

Southern melody—they all speak a common language of the heart... bind folks together... help us forget our grudges.

From where I sit, music can help to make the whole world kin. Maybe we ought to have a lot more of it... informal sings around the fire, and in the home. And it's sure true that a mellow glass of beer fits into the picture. It just naturally goes with that kind of music.

Joe Marsh

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