

Mrs. Beasle Wilbon
Sunday School Lesson

INTRODUCTION
Motive is important in regard to many things that we do, but it is especially significant in the realm that we call religious. One of the most despicable motives in the practice of religion is to consider that the performance of religious activities somehow makes up for deliberate ethical and moral misdeeds. This makes religion the cloak of a rascal. Such a practice called for one of God's most scathing denunciations of Israel: "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies," (Amos 5:21).

LESSON BACKGROUND
Specifically, our text deals with fasting, but its basic teaching goes far beyond that to the matter of attitude, motive and purpose in personal worship. More than this, (and this is the heart of the lesson) it makes clear that no religious expression has any validity unless the life of the worshiper is characterized by good deeds.

Religious practice cannot possibly have meaning apart from godly living, (Isaiah 58:5). "When you fast, you make yourselves of grass and spread out sack cloth and ashes to lie on."

Is that what you call fasting? Do you think I will be pleased with that?

At the heart of the people's problem was the fact that even during the time of the fast they were guilty of serious wrong-doing. Isaiah points out that there are two kinds of fast, the wrong kind and the right kind.

These people were quite religious. They sought the Lord daily, affirming an interest in His ways, appearing to be concerned about Godly living, "See, we are fasting," they might say. Their fault lay in the fact that they were merely preserving the outward forms of religions while their lives denied its reality (See 2 Timothy 3:5). "On the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers," Isaiah said.

Picture these people, certain that they were God's favorites, ostensibly fasting, yet all the while doing their own pleasure and oppressing the poor who labored for them. (Read James 5:4, 5 for a description of this kind of behavior.)

(Isaiah 58:6-7) "The kind of fasting I want is this: Remove the chains of oppression and the yoke of injustice, and let the oppressed go free. Share your God with the hungry and open your homes to the homeless poor. Give clothes to those who have nothing to wear, and do not refuse to help your own relatives."

There is nothing wrong with fasting. It can serve a worthy and a worthwhile purpose - not, however, as an end in itself, but as a means to an end. It can be a suppressing of one's physical nature for a season in order to enhance the spiritual. It can be a genuine humbling of the soul and an expression of a penitent spirit. The test of whether or not the fast has meaning is seen in the conduct of the one fasting.

True worship will develop within us, sensitivity to injustice and the desire to correct it wherever it is met. This means that if we do not show love and concern such as our Lord has for the oppressed, we cannot claim to love God, and our fasting, our worship, or "service" will be in vain.

The right fasting will loose the bands of wickedness, or loose the fetters of injustice. "Certainly, if I have been guilty of injustice myself, I will seek to correct the matter, but in addition, I must do what I can to correct the injustice that I see around me and or which I am not personally responsible. Undo the heavy burdens, lighten the loads that have been placed by evil men or by circumstances upon others. "Bear ye one another's burdens" is God's word to those who would worship Him, (Gal. 6:2).

"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God," (Micah 6:8). The text has to do with manner of living more than anything else.

Worship has a part. There is a fast that God accepts and worship that is pleasing to Him, but not because of what it does for Him. Is He any less God if He is deprived of our praise? When we worship God in spirit and in truth, it helps us see things in proper perspective. It sets our thinking straight, and the living will be the result.

We can know if our worship is genuine by the kind of life that follows.



Mrs. Walter Crews
.....The former Miss Audrey M. Love

Love-Crews Vows Spoken

Wedding bells rang for Audrey Maria Love and Walter Crews on Saturday, February 18, at 4 p.m. in St. Paul Baptist Church.

Rev. Dr. Paul W. Drummond officiated at the ceremony as the bride was given in marriage by her father, John W. Love, Sr.

The bride's gown was accented with white pearls and beads along with lacy design contained in her long train and gown. She carried a bouquet of silk flowers.

The matron of honor was the bride's sister, Mrs. Clara K. Witherspoon. Bridesmaids included Mary Kennedy, Lorrie Love of Greensboro, N.C.; Barbara Kennedy of Greensboro, N.C., and Shavette Satterwhite of Durham, N.C. The matron of honor and bridesmaids wore sky blue gowns

with a tailored waist tie belt and puffed sleeves. Melana Moore served as flower girl, and Brandon Alexander served as ring bearer. The best man was Robert Jones, and ushers included John Kennedy, Ezekiel Crews, William Bullock and Eugene Jones.

The bride's mother wore a dusty pink gown with a tailored waistline, V-neck style and complemented by a dusty pink corsage. The bridegroom's mother wore a navy blue gown tailored from the shoulder to breast line and accented with a navy blue belt and complemented with a white mum corsage.



Thomas D. Looney and Cheryl Marie Chisholm Looney were joined in holy matrimony last weekend at the E.C. Cannon Cathedral. The private ceremony, performed by Elder Cannon, was attended by family including the groom's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Looney of Columbus, Ohio, and the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Chisholm of Charlotte.

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