

Sunday School Lesson

By Bessie Wilbon

INTRODUCTION

"Come out from among them, and be ye separated, saith the Lord," (2 Corinthians 6:17). How shall we do that? Shall each of us retire to a solitary hermitage and live alone? Or shall a group of us farm an isolated commune? No, that's no the way. Jesus was so closely involved with ordinary people that He was reproached as a friend of sinners, (Luke 7:34). He does not want His people to be taken out of the world, (John 17:15). We are not to associate with a wicked person who pretends to be a Christian; but we can go to dinner with a heathen, and we need not even ask if the roast beef has been sacrificed to some idol.

How are we to be separate? We are to follow the example of Jesus. He lived among sinners and was called their friend, but then as always He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, (Hebrews 7:26). So we live among sinners, but "cleanse ourselves from filthiness of the flesh and Spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

LESSON BACKGROUND

Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-5 for the background of our text. Paul reminds us that the people of Israel were brought out of Egypt through the Red Sea. With the water on both sides and the cloud covering them above, they were "all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." After that, God supplied them with food and water in the desert. Still they complained and rebelled so much that most of them were not allowed to reach the promised land. Paul compares the Christian life with this wilderness experience of Israel. We have been rescued from sin and baptized into Christ. In our spiritual journey on earth we are fed by God's Word and strengthened by the Holy Spirit. But if we spend our lives in sin and rebellion, we can still be shut out of the promised land, Heaven.

THE LESSON

Now, all of this is an example for us, to warn us not to desire evil things, as they did, nor to worship idols, as some of them did. As Scripture says, "The people sat down to a feast which turned into an orgy of drinking and sex." We must not be guilty of sexual immorality, as some of them were -- and in one day 23,000 of them fell dead. We must not put the Lord to the test as some of them did - and they were killed by snakes. We must not complain, as some of them did - and they were destroyed by the Angel of Death, (1 Corinthians 10:6-10).

Examples may be either good or bad. The people of Israel did some good things on their journey. But they were more noted for grumbling, complaining, disobeying, protesting, and rebelling. In this text Paul focuses on the bad examples they set. We are warned against following them.

The people of Israel often murmured or grumbled about the hardships of their life in the wilderness. A small group of Israelites rebelled openly against leadership of Moses and Aaron. The rebels were destroyed by earthquake and fire, but the whole congregation blamed Moses and Aaron, saying, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord," (V. 41).

"We have sown spiritual seed among you. Is it too much if we reap material benefits from you? If others have the right to expect this from you, don't we have an even greater right? But we haven't made use of this right. Instead, we have endured everything in order not to put any obstacle in the way of the Good News about Christ. Surely you know that the men who work in the Temple get their food from the Temple and that those who offer the sacrifices on the altar get a share of the sacrifices. In the same way, the Lord has ordered that those who preach the gospel should get their living from it," (1 Corinthians 10:11-14).

The history of Israel was written by inspiration of God, and for God's purposes rather than man's. Israel's faults and failures are set forth plainly. Why? So that we can learn from them. So that we can avoid the same faults and failures. If we refuse to learn from the mistakes of others, we shall learn more painfully from our own mistakes. If we are not on guard, we can easily blunder into lust, idolatry, or fornication into tempting God with our complaining and rebellion.

With all the examples of history before us, there really is no excuse for doing wrong. Paul takes issue with the easy excuses that are offered. For example, we often hear it said that this generation faces temptations never known before. Is that so? Paul says "there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man." True, pot was not peddled on every campus in grandfather's day - but opium was available to those who were foolish enough to take it. Cocaine and marijuana are used more widely, not because they are more tempting, but because more people are foolish enough to take it. Lust and fornication, grumbling and rebellion against God - these are almost as old as the human race itself. If they're more prevalent today it is not because former generations were not tempted, but because they resisted the temptation. Or consider another excuse that is often heard: "The temptation was overpowering, irresistible. He couldn't stand against it." Is that so? Paul says, "God will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." God is in control. He sets limits for Satan. He knows how much temptation you can stand, and He will not let any more than that come to you. If you give in to temptation, it is because you are not doing your best. God is faithful in limiting temptation to match our ability; we must be faithful in resisting to the best of our ability. There is always a way of escape, but we must take that way.

Lord, help us to be a good example today. Amen.



Pictured above are members of the Pi Phi Ensemble of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. Front row (left to right) are: John C. Mills, Frederick Ervin, Sterling Woodard, Rufus Spears, Nigel Ayton, Robert Carter, Charles Gillespie, and Percial Thomas. Back row (left

to right) Claude Williams, Daniel McLaurin, Tennyson Johnson Jr., Richard Maxwell, Marshall Smith, Ron Nelson, Adrian Hampton, Harold Shuford, Sidney Smith, and Samuel Davis. (Photo by Peeler's Portrait Studio)

Urban Studies Club

The Urban Studies Club of Johnson C. Smith University is sponsoring a "Census Information Workshop" to be held Saturday, October 26. The workshop will be held on the campus, Rufus P. Perry Science Hall, Room 107, from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m.

The workshop is designed so that participants will learn more about the relationship of census data to neighborhood organizational planning. The workshop will educate the participants on the procedures involved in locating statistical information, the uses of census data in neighborhood planning, and how to prepare a community-neighborhood profile. Information aids and information about other census bureau programs and products will also be available. The fee is \$5 per person, students free, and group rates are available for neighborhood organizations. This fee covers instructions, program materials, coffee breaks, refreshments, and certificate.

The idea for the workshop was developed by Rodney K. Hood, who is a 1983 graduate of Johnson C. Smith University and a former member of the Urban Studies Club. Hood, who is employed by the Bureau of the Census as a geographic clerk, learned of the workshops through the Census Bureau's Information Services staff. The Information Services staff is responsible for presenting the workshop. Mr. Hood felt that a workshop on Census Bureau Programs and Products with a specific focus on neighborhood statistical information would be extremely beneficial to neighborhood organizations, students, and individual citizens.

For more information, contact Rodney K. Hood at 334-1540-home; or Nay M. Howell, Urban Studies staff, Johnson C. Smith University, 378-1170.

UNCC Announces Administrative Appointments

Two administrative appointments have been announced at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC).

Edward S. Perzel, 1126 Lynbrook Dr., Charlotte, has been named associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and Arnold A. Cann Jr., 2300-1 Rocky River Road, Concord, has been appointed chairperson of the Department of Psychology.

Perzel, who has served as head of

the History Department at UNCC since 1980, replaces Schley R. Lyons who is serving as interim dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

A native of Trenton, N.J., Perzel, 47, has taught at UNCC since 1965. He is past faculty president, and in 1978 he received the NCNB Award for Excellence in Teaching. He earned a bachelor's and master's degree from the University of Cincinnati and a doctorate from Rutgers University.

Cann, 36, a member of the UNCC faculty since 1975, replaces Douglas L. Grimsley who returned to full-time teaching. A native of Ipswich, Mass., Cann earned a bachelor's degree at Northwestern University and a doctorate at Indiana University.

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