

The Sunday School Lesson

By Beattie Wilbon

INTRODUCTION:

Two people were standing at the intersection, one of whom always told the truth, and one of whom always lied. The riddle asks how the travelers could find out which was the correct road. Sometimes staying on the correct road to reach Heaven is just as puzzling. As we travel along we come to places where the path branches. Many people have gone each way, and we must decide which to follow. Spokesmen at the intersection try to persuade us that their way is the correct one, but only one is telling the truth. Which should the Christian believe? Who is the deceiver?

LESSON BACKGROUND:

In today's lesson we will study several of these false teachings and Paul's reply to them.

THE LESSON:

"Since you have accepted Christ, Jesus as Lord, live in union with Him. Keep your roots deep in Him, build your lives on Him, and become stronger in your faith, as you were taught. And be filled with thanksgiving. See to it, then that no one enslaves you by means of the worthless deceit of human wisdom, which comes from the teachings handed down by men and from the ruling spirits of the universe, and not from Christ. For the full content of divine nature lives in Christ, in his humanity, and you have been given full life in union with Him. He is supreme over every spiritual ruler and authority. In union with Christ you were circumcised, not with circumcision that is made by men, but with the circumcision made by Christ, which consists of being freed from the power of this sinful self. For when you were baptized, you were also raised with Christ through your faith in the active power of God, who raised him from death. You were at one time spiritually dead because of your sins and because you were Gentiles without the Law. But God has now brought you to life with Christ. God forgave us all our sins; he cancelled the unfavorable record of our debts with its binding rules and did away with it completely by nailing it to the cross. And on that Cross Christ freed himself from the power of the spiritual rulers and authorities; he made a public spectacle of them by leading them as captives in his victory procession. So let no one make rules about what you eat or drink or about holy days or the New Moon Festival on the Sabbath. All such things are only a shadow of things in the future; the reality is Christ. Do not allow yourselves to be condemned by anyone who claims to be superior because of special visions and who insists on false humility and the worship of angels. For no reason at all, such a person is all puffed up by his human way of thinking and has stopped holding on to Christ who is the head of the body. Under Christ's control the whole body is nourished and held together by its joints and ligaments, and it grows as God wants it to grow." (Colossians 2: 6-19)

Christians do not subscribe to a philosophy or follow a discipline; we receive a person, Christ Jesus, and serve Him as Lord. All that we believe and do centers around Him. Consider these three metaphors as descriptions of our relationship to Christ.

Christians walk -- in Him. This refers to the manner of life. Every word, every thought, and action are subjected to His will. It is as if the Christian takes the hand of Jesus and the two go everywhere together. We should live in constant fellowship with the Lord.

Christians are rooted in Christ. The first stage in the growth of a plant is the establishment of roots. All subsequent growth of the visible part of the plant depends on the nourishment it receives from the roots. If the plant is severed from its roots it will die. The first stage in the growth of a Christian is to be rooted in Christ. This happens when we believe in Jesus and fix our hearts on Him. We must then stay rooted in Christ, for if we forsake Him we will die. We must remain firmly connected to the Lord.

Christians are built up in Him. This refers to construction, the building of life. We build our lives block by block as we cement in our personal selection of beliefs, attitudes, character traits, priorities, goals, and actions. Jesus disciples must see that all these building blocks of life are derived from Him and harmonize with Him. We must incorporate into our lives only those things that come from Christ.

False teachers try to convince Christians that they cannot receive the reward they seek eternal life, unless they accept the false teachings. But accepting the false teaching is what causes a Christian to lose his reward.

Voluntary humility is false humility. It is humility put on public display. One who is truly humble will not call attention to his humility; indeed, he will not even call attention to himself. Yet false teachers are always in the lime light proclaiming their righteousness and meekness. Do not follow such people.

Christians today probably are beleaguered by more false teachers and proponents of the principles of the world than even the Colossians disciples were. World travel has spread every kind of cult to every country. Through the educational system and the media people of all ages are constantly bombarded with the philosophies and vain, ungodly beliefs of the world.

We must be ever wary of this influence. We must constantly evaluate our attitudes and beliefs to see if they really are of God or if we have absorbed them from the world. Our only reliable means of doing this is by comparing what we believe and what others proclaim with the standard of the Bible. The Bible will always point us to God and to His Son Jesus Christ. Lord, help us to learn to live your will. Amen.

POST OBITUARIES

BEASLEY'S FUNERAL HOME

Mr. James Heath, of 3021 Rush Ave. died at his place of residence. Funeral service was held at New Zion Baptist Church. Burial was in Beatties Ford Park.

Survivors are his wife, Mrs. Martha Heath; children, Rev. James Heath, Ms. Rosa Bell Caldwell of Winnsboro, NC, Mrs. Mary Lee Johnson of Chester, SC, Ms. Georgia Brice Spring of Florida, Mr. Willie Matthew, Mr. Joe Arthur Heath of Chester, SC, Mr. Freeman Ulysses Heath of Bartville, CN; 77 grandchildren.

Mr. George Fair, 63, of 200 Penn Ave. died at his place of residence. Funeral service was held at Beasley Chapel. Burial was in Oaklawn Cemetery.

Survivors are his cousins, Ms. Minnie L. Williams, Mr. R.C. Patterson, Mr. Willie Patterson.

Ms. Annie Ruth Neal, of 1601 Brookdale Ave. died Feb. 25, 1989, in Charlotte Memorial Hospital. Funeral service was held at Beasley Chapel. Burial was in Beasley Memorial Garden.

Survivors are her children, Mr.

Michael Neal, Mr. Albert Neal, Mr. Carlton Neal; sister Mrs. Doretha Morris of Harrisburg, NC.

Mr. Ralph Poole, 70, of 2715 Wingate St. died Feb. 28, 1989, at his place of residence. Funeral service was held at Beasley's Chapel. Burial was in Beasley Memorial Garden.

Survivors are his children, Ms. Brenda Thompson of Concord, Ms. Betty Poole, Ms. Gladys Poole, Ms. Cynthia Poole, Mr. Jackie Poole, Mr. Charles Poole all of Charlotte, Mr. Gary Poole of Albermarle, NC, Mr. Kenneth Poole of Charlotte.

Mr. Frank Smith, of 1227 Rollingwood Dr. died Feb. 26, 1989, in Charlotte Memorial Hospital. Funeral service was held at New Bethlehem F.B.H. Church of God. Burial was in Beatties Ford Memorial Park.

Survivors are his wife, Mrs. Martha Smith; children, Ms. Candy Cooper, Ms. Michelle Bardlawens of Greensboro, Mr. Clinton Smith.

Mr. Luther Gill, 81, formerly of Charlotte died March 5, 1989, in Gaston Memorial Hospital. Funeral service will be Feb. 9, at

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Why Saul Did Not Eat For Three Days

By J. M. Little

Saul was led by the men with him into Damascus to Straight Street, to the house of Judas. For three days and nights he didn't eat or drink. In all the sermons I've heard about Saul's conversion, I've never heard a preacher in the religious world tell why Saul didn't eat or drink for these three days.

The reason he didn't eat or drink during this time is because he was under such deep HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTION that his soul desired no food or drink. No two sinners undergo the same degree of HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTION. Saul probably went through the deepest degree of HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTION. Why? The Lord gave him more revelations than any man who ever lived on this earth.

During those three days and nights, the Holy Spirit taught Saul all about himself. Let's look in and see this villain now; "And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am, here, Lord. And the Lord saith unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, BEHOLD, HE PRAYETH." (Acts 9:10-11).

Saul had never prayed before. Of course, he had stood in the synagogues, being a great religious man, and prayed. But the Lord didn't pay any attention to those false prayers of that villain, Saul of Tarsus.

But look at the man now; the Lord, Himself, said of him: "BEHOLD, HE PRAYETH." Let's listen in now as the villain is praying. What is he confessing to the Lord? "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The carnal mind, my mind, is hatred against God. I am in the flesh. I cannot please God. I am carnal, sold under sin. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. I've walked according to the course of this world. I've had my conversation in times past in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of my flesh and of my mind; and by nature I am a child of wrath. I am far off from God, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, a stranger from the covenants of promise. I have no hope, I am without God. A great gulf separates me from God. I have crucified the Lord of Glory."

Yes, all these things Saul was convicted of by the Holy Spirit

and he was confessing it all to the Lord. Now you talk about confessing, if your confession was not saturated with these things Saul was confessing, I would not give you two cents for all your confessions. Now you may ask how I know Saul was confessing all these things. I'll tell you how I know. When the Lord met me that afternoon I had been riding high, also. I was so steeped in pride and self. I always had a high opinion of myself. But when the Lord met me in the way and shined the Light into my heart and let me see I was lost and had never been saved, all my self-esteem began to die and I became a beggar at the feet of the Lord.

Then I first began to pray. I had never prayed before. Of course, I had prayed many prayers when I was leading services in the religious world. But the Lord didn't pay any attention to those prayers of mine when I was in the religious world. Yes, I know that is what Saul was confessing and praying about because the Lord brought me down under the same HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTION. Then again I know it because Paul later said; "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a PATTERN to them, which should hereafter believe on him, to life everlasting." (1 Tim. 1:15-16).

Paul is a pattern of how God saves every sinner who ever gets saved. Can you conceive of a soul being guilty of all these things and not being in Hell already? Yes, the Lord calls attention to His disciple, Ananias, that the old villain of Tarsus was praying. Ananias was afraid to go where Saul was but listen to what the Lord said of Saul; "Go thy way: For he is a chosen vessel unto Me..." (Acts 9:15). This man was chosen by God and given to Christ before the foundation of the world, (Eph. 2:4). But when Saul was down there praying at Judas's house on Straight Street, he didn't know he was a chosen vessel before the foundation of the world.

When the Lord was breaking me down as a lost sinner in the fall of 1971, I didn't know I was a chosen vessel of the Lord. Ananias went on down to see Saul as the Lord had commanded him. He entered the house and said;

(putting his hands on him), "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized." (Acts 9:17-18).

Right here is where Saul was saved. Right here is where Christ was revealed to his heart, and that is salvation. For Paul later said in Gal. 1:15 & 16: "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, TO REVEAL His Son in me..." God called him to reveal Christ to him. He didn't say I accepted Jesus as my Saviour, no he didn't. There is no place in God's plan for the sinner to do anything in his salvation. In the fall of 1971 I know I was coming down for the last time, it was Christ or Hell. I had been going on for years saying I was lost and not saved. It was in the early noon of that Saturday that I was left alone with the Lord. He began to open my heart and let me see what was on the backside.

When the Lord let me view what was there, I nearly choked on the unbelief I saw. I tried to shrink back from it. But He held me right there and opened my heart more and O saw I hated God. I hadn't believed I hated

God before that. But when I saw that in my heart I hated God, I completely despaired; I cried out in my innermost soul; "I hate God." Then I said; "I've done everything I know to be saved, I've read, prayed, listened to messages, but nothing has helped. I'll just go on to Hell where I belong. I'm not going to read anymore, pray anymore, or listen to any more messages. I'll just go on to Hell where I belong." I meant that thing. But just a few minutes later there came a revelation to my heart; "Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb."

I saw Christ has blessed me from eternity to eternity and I could never perish. The burden of sin rolled off my back and the Lord made me rejoice in Him. Right there was where Christ was revealed to my heart. But a short time later I was unutterably sad. I cried out in my heart; Lord, how could I have ever mistrusted You in thinking you weren't going to save me? Friends, I'm talking about how God saved a hell-deserving sinner. This is what I have set before the religious world for over 16 years. My time left to warn men is short.

Continue to listen to our late Pastor, L. R. Shelton, with THE VOICE OF TRUTH BROADCAST, each Sunday morning at 7:30 over WAGI-FM and at 8:00 over WAGL-AM.

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