

# PULPIT NOTES

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Sunday Morning

## THE OLD TESTAMENT TEACHES VITAL LESSONS FOR LIFE

We have learned in Bible classes that for several decades after the church was established that when scripture was used in private, in public discussion, in writing letters, and in worship, that the scriptures referred to were the scriptures of the Old Testament. In our Bible classes we have learned that Jesus was taught from the Old Testament both to the Jew and to the Greek. We learned that Jesus lived and died under the tenets of the Old Testament and that the Old Testament was sufficient to **develop the righteous character** of all those would follow it in the spirit which God intended. In fact, we found that the Old Testament was profitable for reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. In this lesson we are going to be gleaning **lessons for life from the Old Testament**.

### I. WE SHOULD NOT BASE OUR SALVATION ON WHAT WE HOPE GOD WILL PERMIT, BUT ON WHAT WE KNOW GOD INTENDS.

- Lev 10.*
- A. In Genesis 4, Cain and Able bring their offerings unto the Lord. Able's offering is accepted and Cain's is rejected. We know that they were told the requirements of the sacrifice for Able could not have offered his sacrifice by faith (Hebrews 11:4) had he not first heard the word of the Lord (Romans 10:17). It is noteworthy that Cain did not refuse to worship, but based his worship on what he hoped God would permit rather than on what he knew God intended.
- B. Let's look at what people do today. *Nadar and Abihue*
1. Many have read "repent and be baptized . . . for remission of sins" (Acts 2:38), while hoping they can be saved without baptism.
  2. Many know that baptism means "to immerse," but hope that God will accept sprinkling.
  3. Most understand that in all accounts of salvation in the New Testament people believed before they were baptized, but many hope their infant "baptism" will be all right.

### II. ULTIMATELY, THERE ARE NO DEGREES OF FAITHFULNESS; WE ARE EITHER FAITHFUL OR UNFAITHFUL. WE ARE NOT TO ASK "HOW FAITHFUL AM I GOING TO BE?"

- A. In Genesis 22, Abraham's faith is tried. God commands him to offer his son Isaac. There are only two choices, either he offers Isaac or he does not. Abraham could ask himself if he is going to be faithful, but he cannot ask how faithful he is going to be. In offering his son Isaac there can be no room for degrees of obedience. Abraham either does what God says do or he does not.
- B. Sadly, far too often, when people become Christians they struggle over the question of how faithful they are going to be. The Bible does speak about those who have strong faith and those who have weak faith. In the Bible, those who have weak faith are weak through lack of knowledge and are in need of being taught. In contrast, we often think of those who have little desire. Can you see the difference? Our dedication and desire should never be in question (Matthew 10:38).

**III. WE CANNOT TRUST OUR FEELINGS, FOR EMOTIONS ARE A RESULT OF WHAT WE THINK TO BE TRUE AND NOT NECESSARILY WHAT WE KNOW TO BE TRUE.**

- A. In Genesis 37, Jacob could not be comforted for he sincerely thought his son Joseph to be dead. His tears were real, but Joseph was not dead. In 1 Kings 19, Elijah believed that he was the only one left who had not bowed unto Baal. His distress over this misconception did not make it true. The intensity of his despair was based upon a misjudgment.
- B. We are neither saved nor lost because of our feelings. Though emotions are real, sometimes they are only a result of what we think to be true. The Christian should seek for a "thus saith the Lord." Christians can rejoice or weep without it affecting their salvation. There should be great comfort in knowing that our salvation is not dependant upon our emotions. The question is not "how do I feel?," but "who am I?"

**IV. WHEN GOD GIVES A CONDITIONAL PROMISE, IT IS ALWAYS FOLLOWED BY THE CONDITION THAT MAN MUST MEET.**

- A. In Joshua 6, when God gave Jericho to Joshua, the promise of the city was followed by God's requirements of Joshua. Read the whole context and write down each thing that was done by the Israelites before they received the gift of God.
- B. The Jewish mind understood the basic concept that when God gives a conditional promise, they were to ask what the condition was. This is why in Acts 2, when the Jews finally understood that God was offering them salvation through the one whom they had crucified, they said, "what must we do?"

**V. WE MUST TRUST IN WHAT WE KNOW GOD HAS SAID AND NOT IN WHAT MEN MAY SAY.**

- A. In First Kings 13, a young prophet was sent by God to curse an altar in Bethel. He was told not to eat, drink, or return in the way in which he went there. Because he believed a lie of another prophet who claimed that an angel spoke to him instead of what he knew God had told him, he died.
- B. Today men claim that angels have told them when the Lord will return, even though scripture tells us that this information is not known by angels (Matthew 24:36). Paul made it clear that even if an angel from heaven preach any other gospel than that we have received, we are not to receive it (Galatians 1:6-9).

**VI. IT IS NOT THE SIN WE HAVE COMMITTED THAT ULTIMATELY CONDEMNS US, BUT HOW WE RESPOND TO THE SIN.**

- A. David's sin and return to God in Second Samuel 11 and 12 shows us that even adultery and murder can be forgiven.
- B. The lake of fire will be filled with many who have committed what some think to be lesser sins than adultery and murder (Revelation 21:8) because they have not repented and turned to God. It is not the sin; it is what we do after the sin.

**VII. THE LORD IS NOT CONCERNED ABOUT HOW RIGHTEOUS YOU ONCE WERE, BUT HOW RIGHTEOUS YOU NOW ARE.**

- A. In First Samuel 9-13, we read of "a choice young man, and a goodly" (9:2). Samuel said, "see ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people" (10:24). Saul, however, did not remain faithful.
- B. We, in like manner, cannot rest upon former righteousness. It is true, that as we get older, our talents change and we are not able to do the same kind of work for the Lord, but never let it be said that we have quit serving him.