

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

January 28

2018

"I'M HAPPY NOW"

This is the thought expressed by a woman who wrote a letter to one of the newspaper advice columns. She stated that she had been very unhappy in the past while attending a particular church where the preacher constantly questioned her about her failure to attend Sunday evening and mid-week assemblies. Her solution? She went to another church where the preacher not only did not question her about her failure to attend all the assemblies but he praised her when she was in attendance.

The thinking of this woman is typical of so many today. They wish to do as they please and they do not wish for anyone to remind them of anything they may be doing wrong or to remind them of things they should be doing but are not now doing. If someone does try to do so the reaction of many is the same as that of this woman; they will simply find someone who will tell them what they wish to hear.

Paul speaks of such individuals when he said, *"For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts"* (2 Timothy 4:3). A person may change churches; he may find a preacher to commend him in his wrong doing; however he cannot change the word of God. If what one is doing is not in harmony with the will of God nothing will make it right short of repentance and obedience to God's will.

This woman's attitude also manifests another problem. Many are

more concerned about "being happy" (which is just another way of saying, "Let me do as I please.") than with being acceptable in the sight of God. Jesus teaches that one who gains the whole world but loses his own soul has gained nothing and has lost everything (Matthew 16:26). Let us seek true "happiness" by seeking *"first his kingdom, and his righteousness"* (Matthew 6:33).

✍ James Hahn



IS A CHOICE NECESSARY?

Some time ago an article appeared in the newspaper where we lived at that time discussing the problem couples in "interfaith marriages" have in rearing their children. Some couples, the article states, *"have chosen to raise their children in both faiths."* The article goes on to discuss the beliefs of some who say the parents need to make a choice as to which *"faith"* the children should be taught.

Most of the article deals with marriages between those of the Jewish faith and those identifying themselves as Christians. The ideas expressed by some show how far some of those who would identify themselves as Christians are from what the New Testament has to say about being a Christian.

One leader in the Catholic church said *"If an interfaith couple chose to give their children religious training in both the Jewish and Catholic faiths, they would be welcomed 'with open arms.'" How could anyone even claim to believe in Christ and make such a statement. Jesus said, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."* (John 8:24). The Jewish religion denies that Jesus is the Christ and Jesus says that those who do not believe that He is shall die in their sins. Jesus also says, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"* (John 14:6). Note, Jesus said **"no man"** could come to the Father but by Him. He is the only way. Those who teach that one can accept the teachings of the Jewish religion and deny Jesus as the Christ and still be pleasing to the Father are deceiving themselves. They are promoting an impossibility.

Also, we need to note that the same thing is true among those who do claim to believe in Jesus as the Christ. The idea is very popular in the religious world that so long as one does believe that Jesus is the Christ it really doesn't matter what else you may believe. But Jesus asked, *"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"* (Luke 6:46). Jesus also said, *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."* (Matthew 7:21-23). Jesus describes people who are religious, who claim to be doing things in His name, but He says they *"work iniquity."* They were acting "without law," without His authority. That is the meaning of the word *"iniquity"*.

It is impossible to be a follower of Christ (a Christian) and teach and practice that which is contrary to His will. To affirm this truth is to subject yourself to the ridicule and accusations of men that you are "narrow-minded" but this does not change the truthfulness of the statement.

I am encountering this spirit of compromise more and more among those who claim to be members of the body of Christ. While away in a meeting a few years ago I asked a member of the church where I was holding the meeting about a friend who had attended with her. I asked, *"Is she a Christian?"* She replied, *"Oh yes, she is a member of the _____ church down the road from here."* The church she identified was a denominational church and the woman had never been a part of any other religious group, but this lady identified her as a "Christian." Friends, we need to recognize that truth is narrow. I cannot believe and teach that which is contrary to truth and still be right. I cannot believe and obey the teachings of a man made denomination and become a Christian. The only way I can be a Christian is to believe and obey the teaching of Christ. To do otherwise is to stand condemned. That's the choice each must make. Do you want to do right or do wrong? Recognizing this fact, we will teach our children the importance of making a choice for that which is right. To teach them that they can believe conflicting teachings and

still be right is foolish on our part and endangering to their soul's welfare. *"Buy the truth, and sell it not"* (Proverbs23:23).

✍ James Hahn



"ONE THING I DO"

In Philippians 3:13,14 Paul says, *"Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."* Paul had but one goal, gain heaven. He realized that if he missed that goal he had missed it all (See 1 Corinthians 15:19). It is so easy for us to become "anxious and troubled about many things" and forget the "one thing" which is needful (See Luke 10:41,42). Without this "single-mindedness" we become "doubleminded" and "unstable" in all our ways (James 1:8). Paul recognized that certain things were necessary for him to gain his goal. He had to forget the things behind; he could not rest on past accomplishments, and he must keep pressing on. We will imitate his example when we make gaining heaven the "one thing" we do.

✍ James Hahn

Belleville church of Christ

5635 S County Rd 200E - Belleville, IN - (317) 539-5258

www.bellevillechurch.net

Schedule of Services

Sunday Bible Study	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship	5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study	7:00 p.m.

Evangelist

James Hahn (317) 745-1507