

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

August 19

2018

“PAUL AND JESUS BANNED FROM CABLE NETWORK”

Yes, this could very well be the headline in today's newspaper if Jesus and Paul were alive on earth today. Some time ago I read of plans for a new cable network being planned by "mainline" denominations in the United States. You would think that such a network would be delighted to feature the teaching of Jesus and Paul if those two were on earth today. However, such is not the case.

In the article which told of the plans for such a network were the restrictions which would be placed upon those who would appear on this network. One of these restrictions says that no criticism of other religious groups would be allowed on the network. Also, no effort to persuade people to leave one religion and accept another would be allowed. These restrictions would mean that much of the teaching done by Jesus while He was here on earth would not be allowed on this network. In Matthew 23:1-36 Jesus condemned the religious leaders of his day and said that they were not going to enter the kingdom of heaven and that they were also preventing others from entering in. In Matthew 7:21-23 Jesus condemns zealous religious workers by calling them "workers of iniquity" and saying that he never knew them. Much of the religious teaching today is the same as that described by Jesus in these verses. Men teach and practice many things in the name of religion not authorized by Jesus. Jesus says these are to "depart from" Him and that He does not know them. Jesus says these are workers of iniquity. However, the planners of

this new network say that such teaching will not be allowed.

Neither would the apostle Paul qualify as a speaker on this network. Paul was so bold as to say that any man who taught any gospel different from the one he preached should be accursed (Galatians 1:6-12). Do you suppose that someone may call in and demand that this "narrow-minded bigot" be taken off the air for such teaching?

Isn't it strange that those who have so much to say about following Jesus and the apostles have nothing in common with them? Those who truly follow Jesus and the apostles will teach the things they taught and they will oppose the things they opposed. A failure to do so puts one in rebellion to Jesus rather than serving Him.

Friends, don't be deceived by smooth talking religious leaders who are more interested in popularity than in being right with God. Jesus encountered such individuals while He was on earth (John 12:42,43). Yes, if we follow Jesus and are faithful to His teaching we may be unpopular with men and we may even be put out of some places and we may not be allowed to preach on some cable network, but we will gain a home in heaven when this life is over. Which means the most to you? *✍ James Hahn*



Avoid Backbiting

Ladies and gentlemen, we need to beware of and avoid backbiting. To backbite is to, "maliciously talk about someone who is not present." So, to be simply put, backbiting is talking about someone behind their back in a degrading way. You see, when one backbites they are engaging in an evil and cowardly act, they are forsaking the act of love and kindness, and they are putting their soul in danger. However, it is important to note that Paul informs that not only are those who practice backbiting deserving of death, but also those who approve of those who practice such are deserving of death (Romans 1:30-32).

So, knowing that, we need to keep our tongues from evil, and our lips from speaking deceit (Psalm 34:13). We need to always strive to guard our mouths and tongues (Proverbs 21:23). We need to pursue

the things which make for peace, and the things by which we may edify another (Romans 14:19). We need to let no corrupt words proceed out of our mouths, but rather that which is good for necessary edification (Ephesians 4:29). We need to be one who speaks evil of no one (Titus 3:2). We need to lay aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and evil speaking (1 Peter 2:1). We need to be one who always endeavors to let our words, and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in the sight of the Lord (Psalm 19:14), and we need to avoid those who backbite (Proverbs 20:19).

You see, the fact of the matter is, backbiting will not profit anyone anything good, but rather just the opposite. For, the wise man said, *The north wind brings forth rain, And a backbiting tongue an angry countenance*” (Proverbs 25:23). Also, evil typically provokes evil, and in Galatians 5:15, Paul says, *“But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!”* We also need to likewise give attention, and hold onto these inspired words of David, *“Lord who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart; He who does not backbite with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend...”*(Psalm 15:1-3).

My friends, think about those things mentioned above, take them seriously, and always remember, one who backbites will not only be one who will not obtain favor from men, but more importantly they will be one who will not obtain favor from the Lord. So, once more, may we all be one who avoids backbiting, and let’s never forget, *“A fool’s mouth is his destruction, And his lips are the snare of his soul”* (Proverbs 18:7).
✍️ Brad Phillips



Truthful Excuses

An excuse need not be a lie. It is because, factor, or circumstance that frees from blame or releases from obligation. Many excuses are both truthful and legitimate; some are outright lies; while others may be very truthful, yet reveal a most unbecoming character in the maker.

When someone explains his absence from worship with, “We had visitors,” this need not be a lie. It may be truth — which tells us that this

person regards social amenities as being more important than worship.

“No one is perfect!” How very very true. So — there can be no standards, no right or wrong? There can be no ideals to which we can press, nor should we urge such elevated goals upon others? Can’t we see that the imperfection of man is the very reason for recognizing our failures as such, and helping one another to get up and try again?

“Many people do it,” to which we all must agree. Does that make it the will of God? Many people think that man made God in his own image, and accept a situation-ethics standard; but it can not be demonstrated that such a philosophy has ever elevated mankind, or promoted a stable society. This is a poor substitute for faith in God and individual character.

“There are hypocrites in the church,” — and the world has none?? Do you think that using a hypocrite as your excuse makes you a better man? And how is it that one is able to see the truth with reference to hypocrisy in others, and be blinded to the same in themselves? (Matthew 7:1-5)

“But I meant well!” This also may be the truth. It commends, to some extent; but it remains a commendation only as our honest heart leads us to further consider God’s truth, and make corrections accordingly.

A radio commercial of some years back has one man excusing himself (?) from worship with, “Things are so unsettled these days. There is so little time. Why, the whole world may be blown apart at any moment.”

And the reply was, “That’s right!”

✍️ Robert F. Turner

Belleville church of Christ

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Schedule of Services

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| 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

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