

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

November 14

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Seek First

In America we have plenty of things to be thankful for. We generally have no worries for our food, our drinking water, our shelter, and crime isn't even a concern compared to other countries. If you think about it, we use clean water in our toilets, when some people around the world don't even have enough water to drink. All of these things are easy to take for granted. We live in the United States, and this is how things are.

It is important, however, for us Christians to remember that while we are Americans, we do have dual citizenship and things are better in Heaven. "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" Philippians 3:20. Paul informed the Christians in Philippi to be waiting eagerly for the Savior to return so they could travel to Heaven with Him.

We are told in Matthew 6:19-21, to be focused on Heaven and not on Earth. Jesus explains how much better Heaven is, because there is no decay or crime. Jesus, also tells us, where we put our treasure, our hearts will be there, too. Jesus is telling us while the possessions we have here on this earth can be nice, they will eventually be gone, but Heaven is eternal.

Jesus is also telling us, this world, the United States, Indiana, they should not be our focus. This world is going to pass away. Jesus wants us to seek first the Kingdom of God. How well are we doing this?

Jesus tells us in Matthew 6:25-31, not to be worried about the struggles or needs of this life, because God will take care of us. Do you believe Him? Faith in God and knowledge of His promises to us should help us to live without worry and stress.

In the United States there are plenty of "First World Problems". I was at the bank a few weeks ago, and the banker asked me in what denominations I wanted my cash withdrawal. She informed me the bank was running low on 100-dollar bills and offered to give me my money in 50s. This is a First World Problem. McDonald's order was wrong? First World Problem. The Crew Carwash line took too long? First World Problem.

As Americans we can get easily distracted on what our real focus should be. Heaven. If we are seeking first the Kingdom of God all these First World Problems should never be an issue for us. If we allow current events or media headlines to blur our focus on Heaven, stress and worry will cause us to lose our hope of Heaven. Are you worried about Murder Hornets? Are you worried about the crime in downtown Indianapolis? Every negative or sad story where every news station makes their money? It is better in Heaven.

Paul, in speaking to the Philippians, told them it was better for him to die. Philippians 1:20-25, "according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless, to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again."

Paul is expressing his desire to join with Christ in Heaven while also wanting to help the brethren in Philippi. Paul is explaining what seeking first the Kingdom of God looks like. We should not be afraid of death because it is gain; but in the meantime, we should be teaching others and edifying Christians.

How are we demonstrating this to other Christians? Are we active in our fellowship with each other? Are we scared of earthly trials? Are we seeking to teach non-believers despite the harassment or persecution which might follow?

As Christians we need to refocus our lives to seek the Kingdom of God first and to avoid all earthly fears and troubles.

✍ Andrew Thomas

Revilers Will Not Inherit The Kingdom Of God

In 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, we learn that revilers will be among those who will not inherit the kingdom of God. However, there are many today who do not even know what a reviler is. So, with that thought in mind, let's first define who a reviler is.

When defined, the word "revile" means "to speak abusively towards and commonly indicates a profane manner of speech toward another individual." To be simply put, a reviler is one who verbally attacks another with abusive, insulting language. You see, revilers are those who speak ill towards others, they have a spirit of dissension, and they are commonly recognized by their bad attitude and disrespect for others.

Now that we understand what a reviler is, it's likewise important to point out that not only will revilers not inherit the kingdom of God, but also, Paul instructs Christians not to even keep company with or eat with anyone named a brother who is a reviler (1 Corinthians 5:11).

I venture to say that we can all see the importance of understanding what a reviler is, and hopefully we can also see why it is important not to be one who speaks with abusive, insulting language towards others. Therefore, hold onto these words of the apostle Paul, "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29).

Simply put, if you can not say anything good, do not say anything at all. For, as Jesus informed, we will give an account on the day of judgment for every idle word we speak, and by our words we will be justified, and by our words we will be condemned (Matthew 12:33-37). Jesus also says, "Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man" (Matthew 15:11).

So, with those words of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in mind, may we all always be mindful to think before we speak, and may we all choose our words wisely. For by doing so, we will certainly keep ourselves from trouble (Proverbs 21:23).

Therefore, I encourage us all to take the consequences of being a reviler seriously. I likewise hope that we all will strive to possess the same attitude which David possessed which we read of in Psalm 19:14, and that we will all make personal application of these inspired words, "Keep your tongue from speaking evil, And your lips from speaking deceit" (Psalm 34:13).

In conclusion, I ask, do you fit the description of a reviler? If you answer yes to this question please repent, and make the much needed necessary changes in your life before it is everlasting too late!

✍ Brad Phillips

Belleville church of Christ

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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

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