

Washington church of Christ

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The Washington Messenger

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November 3, 2013

Order of Services Sunday November 3, 2013

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|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Song Leader | Tom Dolan |
| Prayer | Stan Thompson |
| Preaching | Bob James |
| Lord's Supper | |
| Prayer for the Bread | Ralph Ruggiero |
| Prayer for the Cup | Brian Jeffries |
| Prayer for the Collection | Scott Thomas |
| Assisting at the Table | Bob Celentano Jr. |
| Scripture Reading | Arnold Thompson |
| Morning Closing Prayer | Derald Sanchez |
| Evening Opening Prayer | Bob Celentano |
| Announcements | Bill Duryea |

Schedule of Weekly Services

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|---------------------------------|----------|
| Sunday Morning Bible Classes | 9:30 am |
| Sunday Morning Worship | 10:30 am |
| Sunday Evening Worship | 6:00 pm |
| Wednesday Evening Bible Classes | 7:30 pm |
| Thursday Morning Bible Study | 11:00 am |

Does God Mean What He says?

Most religious people would become indignant if it were only slightly insinuated that they doubt the importance of any part of the Word of God. Those associated with religion typically claim a loving attachment to the things God has spoken, and a strict adherence to each command in the Divine Book.

But to merely assert our respect and love for God's Word is not sufficient. Jesus said of those in His day;

This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. (Matthew 15:8 KJV)

Obedience from the heart (Romans 6:17) will evidence our respect and love for the Word of God in the only way He will recognize.

For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist," Says the LORD. "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word. (Isaiah 66:2 NKJV)

Throughout the history of man, a prime fault has been a failure to believe that God means what He says. The first man, Adam, and his wife Eve, had to learn from bitter experience that God meant what He said when He instructed them to refrain from eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17). They allowed the evil one to entice them to doubt God, and to transgress His commandment (Genesis 3:3-6), and their disobedience brought death upon the human family (Romans 5:12). God had told them this would happen, and He meant what He said.

The wife of Lot, though on her way to safety, perished because she failed to believe that God meant what He said. The instructions which Lot and his family received were too plain to be misunderstood...

So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed." (Genesis 19:17 NKJV)

Sadly, in a few verses we read;

But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt. (Genesis 19:26 NKJV)

More than nineteen hundred years after this event, our Lord reminds us...

Remember Lot's wife. (Luke 17:32 NKJV)

She serves as a grim reminder for us that no matter how lightly we may regard our infractions of the law of God, or how unimportant we may consider a command to be, God means what He says always, and no act of disobedience on our part is minor.

We have found these two sad cases of disobedience in the book of Genesis ... but this book also records an account of a man who believed God means what He says.

Noah, "the preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5), was warned by God of the great flood that was to come upon the earth. In Genesis chapter 6 we read that God told Noah the impending flood would destroy life because of man's great wickedness. God warned Noah that he would wipe out men, animals, and birds when a period of 120 years had ended (Genesis 6:1-7). Noah found favor in God's eyes, for "he walked with God" (Genesis 6:8-9). God provided instructions as to how he might be spared (Hebrews 11:7). Noah believed that God meant what He said, for we read ...

Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did. (Genesis 6:22 NKJV)

When the flood came, just as God had said it would, "all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died", (Genesis 7:22 NKJV). This was the verification of all that God had spoken to Noah, and despite human disbelief that God will punish the sinful and disobedient of our day, this is our assurance that it will happen as God has declared. Those who stress only the great love of God in their teachings, and minimize the importance of our obedience of His Will, would do well to ponder the fate of those who perished in the flood. God did not destroy them because He loved them less than us, but because of their evil, disobedient ways (2 Peter 2:5). The Apostle Peter went on to say that God is "not willing that any should perish" (2Peter 3:9), but His justness demands that the disobedient be punished, and this will be done...

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
(Romans 6:23 NKJV)

It has been said that, "Wise men learn from their own mistakes, but wiser men learn from the mistakes of others." These examples cited from God's Word show that He allows no one to violate His law with impunity. The Apostle Paul wrote that these things "were written for our learning", (Romans 15:4), and we should have learned long ago to "fear God and keep His commandments" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

But, in many ways it seems obvious that man consistently fails to heed these warnings in that we seem to constantly challenge the immutability of God's Word.

I once read of a preacher who would forcefully say that God "said what He meant, and meant what He said!", and before the echo of his words ceased he would declare that Jesus did not mean "water" when He said "unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (John 3:5). This is not only a display of inconsistency, but a brutal mishandling of the Word of God, which will prove to be spiritually fatal to all affected by such teaching.

How can anyone read two commandments from the Word of God and state that one is essential, and the other optional? This is saying that God means what He says only a part of the time ... how can we as men tell which time God really meant what He said?

Let's take two statements of Jesus ...

In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. (John 14:2-3 NKJV)

... and ...

He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. (Mark 16:16 NKJV)

Can we accept BOTH statements, as they were spoken by the one Lord? If not, how can we know which one to believe and to take seriously?

Here is another passage that receives shameful human treatment;

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. (Ephesians 4:4-6 NKJV)

In the seven "ones", which should serve as the basis for unity, is another test of our claim to believe that God means what He says. Most all religious people believe in, and teach, four of the seven. Upon what basis, other than to admit that they don't believe God means what He says, do men refuse to accept and teach one body (church), one faith, and one baptism?

Each person is heading for an endless eternity, where we shall learn for certain that God means everything He says, if we have failed to learn this on earth. There will be no unbelievers there, for "every knee shall bow" to God (Romans 14:11).

Recognize that "man shall live by EVERY word that proceeds from God" (Matthew 4:4), and make the preparation which His Word requires.

Our Prayer List...

For Spiritual Responsiveness – Georgia DeLorenzo ... Sondra DeLorenzo ... all of our wayward members

For Physical Healing – John Baxter ... Larry Smith (Sharon Ferencze's brother) ... Frank and Antoinette Salerno (Annie's parents) ... Mary Celentano's sister

For Wisdom and Good Judgment – The Leaders of our congregation ... the leaders of our nation

For God's Care and Good Providence – Our young people away at college ... Our young people here at Washington ... our members who are traveling ... the men and women in military service ... our congregation.

EVENTS AND NOTES

UPCOMING EVENTS THAT WE ARE AWARE OF ARE ...

- ▲ THERE WILL BE A MEN'S BUSINESS MEETING TODAY AT 4PM.
- ▲ THERE WILL BE A LADIES BIBLE CLASS AS WELL TODAY AT 4PM
- ▲ OUR NEXT THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY WILL BE ON NOVEMBER 7TH, AT 11:00AM.
- ▲ THE NEXT MEN'S BIBLE STUDY IS SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH, AT 7:30PM
- ▲ THE PISCATAWAY CHURCH OF CHRIST WILL HOST A FALL BIBLE SERIES ON NOV. 15 -17, 2013 WITH BUDDY PAYNE FROM FLORIDA COLLAGE. A FLYER IS ON THE BULLETIN BOARD WITH TOPICS AND TIMES.