

The Broadmoor Bulletin

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Our Utilitarian Approach to God

So Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city. There he made himself a shelter and sat under it in the shade, till he might see what would become of the city. And the Lord God prepared a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver him from his misery. So Jonah was very grateful for the plant.

Jonah 4:5, 6

Although we understand the Scriptures to teach that we are God's "vessels," we sometimes look upon Him as a vessel for our own use. We tend to take a utilitarian approach to God, as if He were an instrument that exists to accomplish *our* purposes, rather than vice versa.

The degree to which we delight in God is too often determined by how "useful" He is to us. In our own minds, we have a concept of how we would like our lives to be, and to the extent that God helps us move toward having this sort of life, we are delighted with Him. We look for the "practical" benefits of the spiritual life, and if these are not found, then we tend to become angry with God. Perhaps we reject Him altogether. We might not say it in so many words, but we have little use for a God who doesn't come through for us in the clutch.

In the heat of the blazing Assyrian sun, Jonah was pleased when God prepared a plant that would provide welcome shade and "deliver him from his misery." He was not so pleased the next day when the plant was destroyed and he had no choice but to sit in the sun again. "It is better," he said, "for me to die than to live" (**Jonah 4:8**). Just so, our estimate of how well God is doing often depends on how satisfactorily He is providing what we desire.

Yet if our relationship with God is based upon love, we can ill afford to let self-centered (though we would simply call them "practical") motives enter in. Our enjoyment of God cannot depend on whether some desired payoff is being received from Him. Love does not calculate or bargain for personal benefit; it gives out of the sheer joy of giving to one who is beloved. "The only reward love seeks is someone to love" (Bernard of Clairvaux). And if there is any question of benefit, we exist for *His* benefit: our glory is to accomplish *His* purposes and to show forth *His* goodness.

That which cannot be explained or made useful tends to be rejected as contrary to our purpose. Under those circumstances, we lose the ability to remain instruments of God's will. We would rather inform God of our needs in the hope that he will comply with our conceptions of what life ought to be.

Paul Ciholas

Gary Henry

He has told you, O man, what is good;
And what does the LORD require of you
But to do justice, to love kindness,
And to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 6:8

Unfaithfulness Is Inward

The little book of Hosea teaches a great lesson on the nature of sin. Hosea was told to marry Gomer, who became unfaithful to him and finally left him to live with her "lovers." Later, Hosea was told to buy her back and accept her as his wife, which he did.

Gomer's leaving her husband was a result of inward unfaithfulness. She ceased to love and have confidence in her husband before she left him for others. Her leaving was simply an expression of the inner infidelity that existed.

In this experience, God taught Hosea a valuable lesson about Israel's unfaithfulness to Him. Just as Hosea wanted more than a housekeeper, God wanted more than external forms of service. Just as Gomer ceased to love Hosea before she became an adulteress, Israel had ceased to love God before they turned to idolatry.

There is a valuable lesson in this for us. God desires our love and devotion. If he gets this, He will get our external service. If he does not get this, then our outward forms will be vain. Just as Hosea did not want a "housekeeper," God does not want half-hearted, ritualistic service. If we are faithful in our hearts, our lives will reveal it. The external unfaithfulness manifested by many who claim to be children of God is simply the expression of an inner infidelity.

"My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 23:26; 4:23). When people give their hearts to God, faithfulness is the natural result. Paul said that the Macedonians "first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God" (2 Cor. 8:5). When they "first" gave themselves, the service that followed was rendered cheerfully.

It is a sad thing to see a marriage companion forsake his commitment and commit adultery, but no one ever did that who was not first unfaithful in the heart. It is likewise sad to see those who are married to Christ (Rom. 7:4), become unfaithful in their service to God, but the unfaithfulness that we can see was preceded by an inner infidelity that only God could see.

Frank Jamerson

Guardian of Truth XXVIII: 2, p. 43

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"A son honors his father, and a servant his master. Then if I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is My respect?" says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests who despise My name. But you say, "How have we despised Your name?" You are presenting defiled food upon My altar. But you say, "How have we defiled You?" In that you say, "The table of the LORD is to be despised." "But when you present the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you present the lame and sick, is it not evil? Why not offer it to your governor? Would he be pleased with you? Or would he receive you kindly?" says the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 1:6-8

The Beginning of the Gospel, Acts 2

The fact of the gospel, the good news of the kingdom, was a matter of prophecy. The new order had been foretold in veiled prophetic terms (Isa. 2: 2-3, Jer. 31: 31-34, Joel 2: 28-32). According to these prophecies, the Lord's house (church) would be established, all nations (not just Jews) would "flow unto it," and the "law, and the word of the Lord" would go forth from Zion or Jerusalem (Isa. 2: 2, 3). It would be a time of a "new covenant" and forgiveness of sin could be experienced without a remembrance (Jer. 31: 31-34). It would also be a time when salvation could be enjoyed as never before "by calling on the name of the Lord" (Joel 2: 32). As intimated, the gospel would be associated with the kingdom or God's reign and those over whom God would rule, the church. John the Baptist and Jesus both said the kingdom was "at hand" during their personal preaching (Matt. 3: 2; 4: 17). We are told that Jesus "went about all Galilee...preaching the gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. 4: 23). This gospel being preached by Jesus was both preparatory and anticipatory in nature. The gospel in reality and the kingdom in fact both began in Acts chapter two.

Acts chapter two, the chapter of beginnings. Acts 2 has been styled as the most pivotal chapter in the Bible. Acts 2 is not only pivotal in that the new era is ushered in that allowed all men, Jew and Gentile, access to God's grace and covenant, but the chapter is also a chapter of many beginnings (see addendum).

The stage is set for a great event that would effect revolutionary changes and opportunities for mankind. Jesus a few weeks earlier instructed his apostles to "tarry in Jerusalem" (Luke 24: 49). Jesus explained that beginning in Jerusalem, repentance and remission of sins would be preached in Jesus' name (Luke 24: 47). He also told them that they would be "endued with power from on high" (vs. 49, see Acts 1: 5, 8). We find the apostles waiting in Jerusalem (Acts 1: 4). The baptism of the Holy Spirit is experienced by the apostles, just as Jesus promised (Acts 2: 1-4). Being on the day of Pentecost, a large number of Jews were in Jerusalem. The baptism of the Spirit attracted many people and there was a vast audience from various parts of the known world to whom the apostles could announce the gospel.

Peter had earlier been given the "keys to the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 16: 18, 19). The gospel that Peter preached in Acts 2 constituted the keys or means of entrance into the kingdom. While the other apostles also spoke, it was Peter who was the featured speaker (Acts 2: 7, 14, 37). The sermon presenting the gospel in its fullness for the first time is recorded in Acts 2: 14-36. The audience's response and further instruction is found in verses 37 through 47.

The gospel as proclaimed by Peter can be divided into several sections. Some consider verses 14-21 of Peter's sermon to be the induction, verses 22 through 35 the main body, and verse 36 the application. Let us now briefly consider the three divisions of Peter's presentation of the gospel.

Acts 2: 14-21, the introduction. As we shall see, the introduction with the references to Jewish prophecy should certainly have succeeded in captivating the attention of the Jewish audience.

"14: But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: 15: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. 16: But this is that

which was spoken by the prophet Joel; 17: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 18: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: 19: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: 20: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: 21: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Peter is very pointed and wastes no time in explaining the circumstances they are witnessing. He explained that they (apostles) were not drunk as charged, but that what they were observing was the beginning of the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. Peter then quotes the prophecy (see Joel 2: 28-32). The language regarding the wonders in heaven and signs indicated the extraordinary nature of what was happening before their very eyes (such language as found in Acts 2: 19-20 was apocalyptic and only used for extremely important events, see Ezek. 32: 7; Matt. 24: 29). Not only did Peter explain the matter of the baptism of the Spirit by quoting Joel's prophecy, but he also announced the opportunity spoken of by Joel of "calling on the name of the Lord" (vs. 21). We shall see later how the respondents called on the name of the Lord to be saved.

Acts 2 verses 22 through 35, the main body. In the body of the sermon, Peter calls on them to carefully consider what he is about to tell them and he presents both good and bad news to them. Hear him:

"22: Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: 23: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: 24: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. 25: For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: 26: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: 27: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. 28: Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. 29: Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. 30: Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; 31: He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. 32: This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. 33: Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. 34: For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith

himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, 35: Until I make thy foes thy footstool."

Peter immediately presents to them "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles..." (vs. 22). The Jews never could successfully deny Jesus' miracles (Matt. 12). The good news regarding Jesus is, "Whom God hath raised up" (vs. 24). In Jesus was fulfilled the prophecy made by David of a triumphant resurrection (vs. 25-28, cp. Ps. Ps. 16: 8-11). Also realized in the person of Jesus was the spiritual reign David never accomplished (vs. 30, cp. Ps. 132: 11). Hence, Peter presents Jesus as the resurrected and reigning King. Their Messiah for whom they had longed had come, what wonderful news. The bad news was, "Him...ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (vs. 23).

Acts 2: 36, the application. Inspired preachers were plain in their preaching and they made application of the truths they announced. Consider the application Peter makes of the truths he has just enunciated:

"36: Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Peter's sermon introducing the gospel contained two essential and paramount points: Jesus has been exalted and is Lord and Christ and you Jews murdered this exalted Messiah. As we saw at the outset, the gospel means good news, and, by application, the good news of the kingdom. Jesus began his mediatorial reign in Acts 2 and, as a consequence, his kingdom became a reality (cp. Col. 1: 13). The believing Jews present on the Day of Pentecost should have been elated to hear this good news. However, they were also sad to learn that they had killed their Christ and Lord.

The people's response (Acts 2: 37). The gospel from the very first time it was presented has called for response on the part of the hearers. The people responded thus to the gospel as preached by Peter:

"37: Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

The key word is "do," religious theology to the contrary notwithstanding. James wrote, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1: 22). Since the gospel contains motivating good news and also offers awareness of personal sin in people's lives, there should be the consequent "pricked heart." A "pricked heart" is a heart that is spiritually cut and moved. These people obviously wanted to know what to do to be saved or to have covenant relationship with Jesus and to experience the salvation of which Joel spoke (cp. Acts 16: 30). The question now is, what did Peter tell them to do?

Peter tells them what to do to have a relationship with Jesus the Lord and Christ and how to have the forgiveness of their sins, even their sin of murdering the Messiah (Acts 2: 38).

"38: Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Concerned reader, the gospel being preached in Acts 2 and Peter's answer to the question of "what shall we do?" is just as germane today as it was on this first occasion of it being preached (see vs. 39). The same truths and the precise same plan

of salvation is taught consistently throughout the New Testament, for Jew and Gentile alike (Acts 8, 16, etc.). First of all, appreciate the fact that Peter did not say to these people seeking salvation and wanting to know what to do, "you do not do anything, Jesus has done it all for you!" Also, Peter did not reply by saying, "believe only." The language and instruction of Peter is very simple: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Peter has just enjoined on them the matter of belief (vs. 36). Repentance and baptism are "for the remission of sins," said the inspired apostle Peter. Any doctrine that states baptism is after or "because of" the remission of sins is false. They wanted to know what to do to be saved, not what to do because they are already saved! (See also Acts 22: 16.) The Great Commission, begun in Acts 2, stated, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16: 16).

When we compare "ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" with the parallel verse in which Peter taught the same thing, we find the gift of the Spirit to stand for all the particulars of salvation, "the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3: 19). Peter is not promising all baptized believers the miraculous baptism in the Holy Spirit that they, the apostles, had just experienced or even the miraculous influence of the Spirit, as manifested in such abilities as raising the physically dead (Acts 20: 9, 10).

What the people did when Peter told them to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2: 41).

"41: Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

James wrote, "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1: 21). These penitent sinners did just what the gospel told them, they repented and were baptized for the remission of sins. This is what is conveyed in the language, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized..."

We mentioned earlier that we would see how Joel's prophecy concerning those who called on the name of the Lord would be saved was carried out in Acts 2 (see vs. 21). These people called on the name of the Lord by repenting and being baptized for the remission of sins (see vs. 38-47, King James Translation). Calling on the name of the Lord is not simply prayer alone, but also entails recognition of Jesus' authority by obedience to the commands of the gospel (see Rom. 10: 13-17, Luke 6: 46).

We also mentioned earlier the matter of Jeremiah 31: 31-34, particularly about "I will remember their sin no more" (vs. 34). The "remission of sins" spoken of by Peter and enjoyed by these people when they obeyed the gospel is total remission or a "blotting out" (Acts 3: 19, the Greek word rendered "blotting out" is *exaleipho*, which is made up of "*ek*," out, and "*aleipho*," to wipe or smear completely, W. E. Vines' Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words). This remission of sins is enjoyed by Jesus' precious blood and not the blood of bulls and goats (Matt. 26: 28, Heb. 10: 1-4).

Acts chapter 2 began the prophecy spoken of by Isaiah in that "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains" (2: 2). Beginning with Acts 2 forward,

the church or the house of God is always spoken of as in existence (Acts 5: 11, cp. I Tim. 3: 15). The word of the Lord went out from Jerusalem, Acts 2 (Isa. 2: 3, Acts 2: 8-11, 8: 1, 4).

It is a matter of definite truth that Acts chapter two, the beginning of the gospel, is a great chapter. Through God's providence, we continue to have the same Jerusalem gospel available. This gospel that tells of the reigning Christ and Lord and how man can have the remission of sins must be diligently guarded, lest it become contaminated with the doctrines and commandments of men. Paul wrote thus concerning false teachers in his day and why he exposed them: "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Gal. 2: 5, see vs. 4).

Addendum: Acts 2 contains the beginnings of many important matters. Please consider the following that began in Acts 2:

- (1). The beginning of the good news of the kingdom, the gospel (Acts 2: 14-41).
- (2). The beginning of the "remission of sins" based on Jesus' shed blood (Acts 2: 38, Matt. 26: 28, cp. 3: 19).
- (3). The beginning of "belief," "repentance," "confession of Christ," (inferred from Rom. 10: 9, 10), and water baptism in Jesus' name, all in the setting of the New Testament of Jesus Christ (Acts 2: 36, 38).
- (4). The beginning of the reign of Christ (Acts 2: 30-35).
- (5). The beginning of the Great Commission (Matt. 28: 18 ff., Mark 16: 15, 16, Luke 24: 46-49).
- (6). The beginning of the New Covenant (Heb. 10: 9, 10, 15-22).
- (7). The beginning of the redemptive work of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 16: 7-11).
- (8). The beginning of the Lord's church (Acts 2: 47, KJV).

Don Martin

Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house lies desolate?" Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts, "Consider your ways! You have sown much, but harvest little; you eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied; you drink, but there is not enough to become drunk; you put on clothing, but no one is warm enough; and he who earns, earns wages to put into a purse with holes." Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Consider your ways! Go up to the mountains, bring wood and rebuild the temple, that I may be pleased with it and be glorified," says the LORD. "You look for much, but behold, it comes to little; when you bring it home, I blow it away. Why?" declares the LORD of hosts, "Because of My house which lies desolate, while each of you runs to his own house. Therefore, because of you the sky has withheld its dew and the earth has withheld its produce."

Haggai 1:3-10

Times of Service

Sunday Bible Class	9:00 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship	9:55 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship	5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00 p.m.

Visit us on the web at <http://www.broadmoorchurch.com>

The Lasting Effect of Little Things!

All spring and summer as we have approached the building we have enjoyed the flowers planted near the door. Little by little they continued to grow and flourish. Almost every day I've noticed them as I came into the office; and you have undoubtedly noticed and enjoyed them as you came into the building for worship. Those flowers teach us the value of little things.

The Value of "Little Things"

Every day all throughout life we have the opportunity to do something small that can have lasting impact on others. I fear we often neglect to do them because they are small. We convince ourselves that our little efforts could not make that much difference, that we must do something great for God in order to make a difference. Not so!

When the Jews returned from captivity and rebuilt the temple, there were many Jews who compared it to the glorious temple of Solomon. The present temple seemed so unimpressive in comparison to the former one that they wept in sorrow for their paltry effort (Ezra 3:12). But God had a different view, sending the prophet Zechariah with an encouraging message: "For who has despised the day of small things" (Zech. 4:10). He urged the people to realize that this small beginning was under the watchful eyes of God who would use it for His glory.

Consider some small things that will make a difference today!

Greet a visitor – Recently a visitor commented about the friendliness of the congregation, mentioning that they had been welcomed in the parking lot by one of our members, a small thing that had a great impact.

Ask a question or make a comment in class – Everyone can benefit from the open discussion of the word of God. If you have a question, someone else probably is thinking it too, but is hesitant to ask. When you ask, you may open up a door of learning to someone else. If you have a good comment, make it. You may add something that other need to hear.

Commend someone for a good effort – Every person who makes an effort to serve God deserves a word of appreciation and support. That's what causes a person to keep trying to improve oneself.

Invite someone for a meal - One of the things we all need is more involvement with one another and especially with new Christians and new members. The opportunity to visit over lunch offers all of us a chance to learn more about each other's lives and build bonds of love and appreciation for one another.

Send a card to a newcomer – A number of times I've heard new people who have decided to worship with us indicate that they were encouraged by a card from a member after their first visit, a little thing that had a great impact.

Look for the "little things" you can do!

We thank those who prepared the area near the door for planting and those who took the time to plant a few flowers this spring. We have all enjoyed them all summer, and they have taught us a valuable lesson about little things. Hopefully each of us will look for more "little things" to do.

Johnny Felker