

Seek Ye First...

"...the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

A Quarterly Journal of Biblical Studies

Fall 2002

JESUS ADDRESSED ERROR

Tom Moore

There are many of misconceptions and false views in our day as to the kind of person Jesus really was. It is a popular view to consider Jesus as very excepting, tolerant, and non-judgmental. Our Lord is portrayed by many as being very non-confrontational—not wanting to argue with anyone, and accepting just about all men regardless of their conduct, doctrines, and attitudes.

Friends, we must not allow the world to develop our understanding of Jesus. The Bible must be our authority in creating our perception of our Lord. We must be as the noble Bereans, where of them it is said, "Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of the mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11).

One of the attributes of the Father's Son that many have difficulty with is His boldness in addressing and correcting error. Many find it hard to believe that Jesus would actually confront people and tell them they are wrong—and then tell them the correct view. This type of action goes against our current culture. Most of the world has a pluralistic attitude, sometimes referred to as multiculturalism. This is the view that all cultures regardless of their moral and religious views are equally valid. The world, as a whole, believes that Jesus was not judgmental of others' views and practices, and would never embarrass anyone suggesting they had the wrong view on a matter. But this is not the Jesus of the Bible. Jesus corrected error, engaged in debate, and participated in logical argument setting forth truth and countering error.

Let us now consider one biblical example of Jesus confronting error. In Matthew 15, Jesus is confronted by the scribes and Pharisees making accusation against His disciples, "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread" (Matthew 15:2). Notice that the scribes and Pharisees did not accuse the disciples of transgressing God's law, but "the tradition of the elders." They were criticizing Jesus and His disciples for what they believed to be wrong doing.

How did Jesus respond to this accusation? Did Jesus say, "Look fellows, let's not argue—religion is not about arguing. Let me just give you a big hug and we will agree to disagree." This is not the approach that our Lord took in any shape, form, or fashion.

Rather, Jesus comes back at them quickly and boldly, saying, "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" (Matthew 15:3). Jesus says, you are the one transgressing, and you are doing so by placing your traditions above the teachings of God. In the next few verses Jesus will show them where they have violated actual inspired teachings—not just His disciples.

The example Jesus uses is they thought they could use their money for items to the neglect of the parents, and called it a "gift" (Matthew 15:5), or "Corban" (Mark 7:11) - that is, dedicated to God. They thought this exempted them from the caring of their parents. They were violating, though, one of the Ten Commandments, "Honor thy father and thy mother" (Exodus 20:12), by their tradition of "Corban." Jesus is saying, How dare you make up a law that clearly goes against biblical teaching! Our Lord's stern condemnation of their error is clearly seen in the next verses, "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:7-9).

Does this sound like a man who did not want to be judgmental or one who was multicultural in attitude? Not on your life! The examples of Jesus confronting error could be greatly multiplied, but this one example is enough to prove that the view many have toward Jesus (accepting and tolerant of most things) is clearly false.

Friends, doctrine matters to Jesus. The often held view that it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere is foreign to the Bible. Jesus boldly and courageously addressed and corrected error. If we want to be like Jesus we will go and do likewise.

823 N. Main St.
Malvern, AR

Seek Ye First...

Publication Offices

EDITORIAL STAFF :

Michael Light, Business
Bangs Church of Christ
P. O. Box 41
Bangs, TX 76823
(915) 752-6464
E-mail: mclight@bwoodtx.com

Tom Moore, Marketing
North Main Church of Christ
823 North Main Street
Malvern, AR 72104
(501) 332-2273
E-mail: preacher@hsnp.com

J. D. Sweeten, Correspondence
Pearl Street Church of Christ
500 North Pearl Street
Comanche, TX 76442
(915) 356-3411
E-mail: jdsweeten@itexas.net

Our Purpose

The editors of *Seek Ye First* produce this biblical journal to provide scriptural material dealing with the issues that are currently affecting our families, our nation and the world. Our intent is to challenge souls to return to the "old paths" (Jeremiah 6:16) for their sole source of authority in religious matters. Our policy is to speak as the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11), encouraging people to study to show themselves approved unto God, enabling them to rightly divide the word (2 Timothy 2:15). We make every effort to deal boldly with the issues that confront Christianity, with no apology, and strive to do so "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15).

JESUS' ATTITUDE IN CORRECTING ERROR

J. D. Sweeten

No one enjoys being wrong, and therein lies the difficulty in correction. Correction is uncomfortable, humbling, and often painful. However, a Christian, in imitating Christ, will not tolerate sin and, also, feel compelled to do something about it. To claim to love someone, while at the same time allowing them to die eternally in damnable error, is the height of hypocrisy. As we study Jesus' "modus operandi" in correcting error, it is important to stress His attitude. The attitude of the corrector can often determine, sometimes to a large degree, the impact that a particular correction will have upon the one being corrected. While Jesus never shied away from dealing with error, it is a fact that He concerned Himself with constructing His messages and responses in the most beneficial manner. Thus, with some, He spoke gently (John 8:9-11); with others, bluntly (Matthew 23:1ff). Whatever His style or approach, it was always right and we should look to Him as our example (1 Peter 2:21). Several points should be made about the error-correcting attitude of Jesus.

First, one should hate the error, but love those in error. It is hard for many to believe the truth in the fact that Christians should hate; it seems to be such an unhealthy emotion. However, God hates some things (Proverbs 6:16-19), and as God's children, we must "love the LORD, (and) hate evil" (Psalm 97:10). The real struggle is separating the sin from the sinner. All throughout history, we see God's loving longsuffering with ignorance and rebellion. Examples include the world of Noah's day (Genesis 6), the children of Israel (1 Samuel 15), even heathens (Jonah). Peter asserted that God "is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). Jesus exemplified this attitude with the general populace (Matthew 9:36), the Jews (Matthew 23:37), and even His own disciples (John 14:8ff). There was error to be corrected, because error makes life miserable and damns the soul. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). If God so expresses His love to us through Jesus' sacrifice, how can the Christian do less? Jesus didn't withhold His love from sinners; He encouraged the necessary corrections.

Second, we need to recognize that the very notion of error correction is inherently an expression of love. I am not better than you and visa versa. We are both struggling on this rocky road of life, searching for a deeper meaning than the "here and now," and hoping for answers that may escape us until eternity. Our goal is heaven, and our life is crucified with and covered in the blood of the Son of God. The motivating factor in every Christian's life is the hereafter, for "if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Corinthians 15:19). True love for anyone is expressed in real and concrete efforts to extend an arm and lend a hand, to pull the lost soul from the muck and mire of this earthly existence to the hope of a bright and heavenly future. How can we do this without changing our ways? Paul encourages, "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your

mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:1-2). If sin is a transgression of the law of God (1 John 3:4), and we must repent of our sins (Luke 13:3, 5), then pointing out sin functions as a tool for fixing what ails you. Because I happen to know the truth or you happen to know the truth on some topic (John 8:32), it is no reflection on our superiority (maturity perhaps but not superiority). God doesn’t love you more and me less because you have come to a knowledge of and have submitted to some truth, and I have not. It merely affords you an opportunity to help me. If you truly loved me, would you allow me to continue day to day, lost and separated from God, without approaching me in some form or fashion, regardless of the potential for pain? Jesus wouldn’t withhold His love from sinners; He would encourage the necessary corrections.

Third, and finally, Jesus method of error correction was never biased. By biased, what is meant is that Jesus never played favorites. Peter observed, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34-35). “Every nation” means everybody. This universal positive statement is all-inclusive and without exception. In order to truly correct error, the same standard has to be employed for everyone. One cannot make exception for their mother, because she is their mother, and require something of someone else that one does not expect their mother to obey. My attitude must be fair-minded. Jesus corrected the Gentiles (John 4:11ff) with the same even hand with which He corrected the Jews (John 5:17ff); He corrected the common folk (Mark 6:34ff) with the same fairness as He corrected the leaders (John 3:1ff). He corrected strangers (Matthew 15:26) just as He corrected those closest to Him (Matthew 26:34). Jesus never allowed favoritism to cloud His vision. Yet, it is common for the double standard to rear its ugly head in matters religious. We have been so acclimated to such nonsense that men pray in thanksgiving for the “many faiths,” of which we supposedly have the freedom to choose. Where is that taught in the Bible? Jesus didn’t teach it. He taught a universal love that was equitable in its inclusion. He loves everybody. Jesus will never withhold His love from any sinner; He always encourages the necessary corrections.

In application, Jesus’ attitude was contagious. Paul encouraged all, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). Peter stood before Christ’s crucifiers and set the record straight (Acts 2:14ff). Stephen was martyred for standing firm (7:51ff). Philip inquired, “Understandest thou what thou readest?” and preached Jesus (Acts 8:30, 35). Paul asked the Galatians, “Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” (Galatians 4:16). In each of these cases, there were dissimilar disciples (both giving and receiving the correction), assorted approaches (public, private, etc.), and varied responses (positive, negative, and apathetic). However, in each specific case, the attitude of those doing the correcting was the same: [1] hatred of sin, [2] a love for the sinner expressed in loving correction, and [3] an equitable, unbiased love for truth. As Christians today, we do not aspire to some superior status when we point out error; we express a genuine love for the lost. That was Jesus’ attitude; and even today, He encourages the necessary corrections.

500 N. Pearl St.
Comanche, TX

Theme This Issue:

Jesus Addressed Error

Table Of Contents

JESUS ADDRESSED ERROR	1
Tom Moore	
JESUS’ ATTITUDE IN CORRECTING ERROR	2
J. D. Sweeten	
JESUS USED LOGIC NOT EMOTIONALISM	4
Michael Light	
<i>Guest Article...</i>	
JESUS DEALS WITH REBELLIOUS FALSE TEACHERS	5
David Brown	
JESUS AND THE BIBLICALLY IGNORANT	6
Michael Light	
JESUS ACCEPTED REJECTION	7
Tom Moore	
FRIENDS OF SYF	8

Seek Ye First...

Volume 6

Number 4

This work is published quarterly in a joint effort among the editors and those which generously help to support it financially.

If you would like to make a donation to *Seek Ye First*, contact Michael Light.

For information or a presentation concerning *Seek Ye First* or comments concerning our web page, contact Tom Moore.

For changes of address or subscriptions, contact J. D. Sweeten.

All donations towards this work are greatly appreciated. Please note that every contribution, great or small, is beneficial to the paper.

JESUS USED LOGIC NOT EMOTIONALISM

Michael Light

Seldom a week goes by when I don't have a conversation with someone in which their emotionalism doesn't overshadow their logic. In our politically correct society most people are more interested in how they "feel" about something than what the facts are. These folk say things like, "I feel..." "I believe..." "It seems to me..." "I know in my heart..." etc. Each of these statements betray an attitude of subjectivism and emotionalism, truth is secondary to feeling. The New Testament teaches repeatedly that truth, not emotionalism, is what will get us to glory. In John 8:32 Jesus states, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." It is a knowledge of, and obedience to (Luke 6:46; Matthew 7:21-23; Hebrews 5:9) the word of God which is essential to pleasing God.

As we continue our study of Jesus, and his methodology of dealing with people we need to look at His employment of reason and logic. Jesus was the greatest preacher, teacher and debater that ever lived. He often challenged and even trapped His religious opponents by asking questions that when answered, exposed the inconsistency of those to whom He spoke. This method is still quite effective. Hot heads and angry diatribes are not appropriate in religious discussion. Reason should be employed by us, as it was Jesus.

Let us notice a few examples that will help us see how Jesus utilized reason when dealing with false teachers. First we will notice Matthew 15:1-6ff:

Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

The Pharisees and scribes accused Jesus' disciples of breaking the law (their law/custom) by not washing before they ate. Jesus called them hypocrites and accused them of being vain worshippers. He then proved His accusation. The disciples had not broken the Law of God, they had broken a tradition of man. He then pointed out that the Jewish leaders were guilty of the very thing of which they had falsely accused His disciples. They had created a "loophole" to get out of caring for ones parents (Corban,

they called it). In effect they had eliminated part of God's actual Law. Christ here exposed their accusation as being false and then proved their guilt by examining their practices.

Next note John 8. Jesus rather bluntly, accuses the Pharisees of being spiritually illegitimate. Notice:

They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not (John 8:33, 37, 39-45).

They got emotional and threw a fit. But, Christ persisted. They claimed to be the sons of Abraham yet Christ flatly denied it. His entire point stands on His use of implication. **Jesus affirms that Abraham saw His (Jesus') day and was glad.** He then says that they are the sons of Satan. They, of course, deny this. Christ then retorts that they (Jewish leaders) wanted to kill Him, this Abraham did not do. In other words, Jesus affirms that Abraham believed in Me, and his descendants (the faithful of God) believe in Me. But you do not believe in Me. Therefore, you are not faithful and you are not of Abraham or of God, but of Satan.

Friends we are not denying that Christianity is emotional. If we feel no emotion something is terribly wrong with us. But there is a huge difference in being emotional, and getting caught up in emotionalism. Jesus was emotional, but, He was also logical and rational. We need to develop the same type of approach when we deal with people.

P. O. Box 41
Bangs, TX

Guest Article...

JESUS DEALS WITH REBELLIOUS FALSE TEACHERS

David Brown

I wish that people could understand the simple fact that false doctrine does not travel on the wind; it is not contagious as is measles, and mosquitoes don't carry it. Just as surely as the Gospel, when believed and practiced, changes people's lives for the better, people are changed for the worse when they believe and practice false doctrine (Romans 1:16; 2 Corinthians 11:14-15).

Does the Bible teach itself? Does false doctrine propagate itself? Indeed, not. Human beings teach truth or they spread error. Someone's son, wife, father, friend etc. teaches truth or error. Whether you believe and practice truth or error, some person(s) taught it to you. And, if you have believed false teaching pertaining to salvation and die in that condition you will lose your soul (Galatians 1:6-10). Therefore, because persons of every description teach error, our Lord delivered broadside after broadside of withering fire against rebellious false teachers. He did this because he loves the souls of men and does not desire their eternal destruction (John 3:16). Jesus wants all persons to come to the truth, believe it, obey it, and always abide in it. "Take heed that no man deceive you" (Matthew 24:4).

Matthew chapter 23 is a good portion of Scripture to study in order to see how Jesus dealt with rebellious false teachers. We do not see Jesus as the Lamb of God here, but as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, confronting and condemning rebellious false teachers. Please notice that I am not necessarily discussing those persons in error, who are honest and teachable, and will change their ways to comply with the Lord's demands. In this article I am dealing with those who are best described by Paul in 1 Timothy 4:1-3. Let us notice how Christ dealt with them.

In Matthew 23 our Lord boldly addressed the Pharisees, and pronounced a "woe" upon these wicked men. In truth Jesus labeled them hypocrites, for they pretended to be righteous when they knew they were not anything of the kind (v. 13). By their doctrine they prohibited others from serving God. Moreover, they were proud and arrogant (v. 14). By their tireless efforts they made children of hell, not children of God (v. 15).

He told them they were "blind guides" and "fools" (vs 16-22). They made distinctions in their teaching regarding oaths that God did not make. They had no genuine respect for God's Word. Hence, by their bad examples they led the people into the same pit of hell away from which they claimed to be leading them. They were the way they were because they wanted to be that way.

They were "hobby riders" that neglected the "weightier" matters of the Law (v. 23). As they tithed their "mint and anise and cumin," that the Lord says was right for them to do, they neglected "law, judgment, mercy, and faith." The source of all their knowledge of their service to God was Moses' Law. But they ignored it. Thus, they did not have the proper standard on and by which to make proper judgments. Therefore, their faith could not be correct (Romans 10:17; 2 Corinthians 5:7). And, since they were hypocrites to begin with, exhibiting mercy was very far down on their list of things to be and do.

The scribes and Pharisees were so corrupt in their minds and governed by their traditions that they choked on the smallest matters but swallowed with ease the things of which they should have found to be more difficult to administer and practice. These comments are in the same context of verse 23. Jesus told these people that they were corrupt on the inside though they appeared to men pure on the outside (vs. 24-28). They did not have a good and honest heart (Luke 8:15). They were called a generation of vipers—a nest of snakes (v. 33). The serpent has always stood for evil and the father of it (Revelation 12:9; 20:2). These men were religious leaders, but wicked to the core of their being. Jesus said: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

Jesus graphically pointed out to the scribes and Pharisees that they had continued to walk in the wicked paths of their sinful forefathers. As their fathers had killed the faithful prophets of God of long days gone by, so they, though they declared to the contrary, were "partakers with them in the blood of the prophets" (v. 30). These were destined for the "damnation of hell" (v. 33). Thus, our Lord declares the eternal and final end of all rebellious false teachers. As John declared, all liars (and that is what a false prophet is) "shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8).

Let us take to heart what our Lord said to these rebellious false teachers of long ago. Let us determine to follow the truth in all things that we may be well pleasing to our Lord and not suffer the eternal death reserved for all those who love and make a lie.

P. O. Box 39
Spring, TX

JESUS AND THE BIBLICALLY IGNORANT

Michael Light

Have you ever been in a religious conversation and seen that the person to whom you are talking has no earthly idea what the Bible teaches on the subject under discussion? It is amazing to hear them argue for doctrines that do not even exist in the Bible. As frustrating as it is to face this situation, there is nothing new about it. There has always been an abundance of ignorance concerning God's will. Most of the world's population gropes in ignorance relative to God.

Ignorance of God's word has always plagued mankind. Sadly, this ignorance is self-induced. God has revealed Himself to us from the creation, but many still fail to see. As we continue our study of the manner with which Christ dealt with mankind, we will note how He handled the ignorant of the world. We will notice that Jesus seemed to divide the ignorant into two categories: (1) those who were willfully ignorant, and (2) those who were naively ignorant.

Before we look at the manner in which Christ dealt with these two groups, let's make a few preliminary observations. First, it needs to be stressed that regardless as to why one is ignorant, God's word always condemns it. Notice the strong language used by God, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" (Hosea 4:6). God clearly doesn't accept any excuses as to why a person might be ignorant. He simply asserts that ignorance will cause one to be rejected by God. One reason we must continuously teach and preach the truth, is that without it the world is lost, for the Gospel of Christ "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

While it is true that the reason one is ignorant doesn't make one acceptable, it does affect how we deal with them. Jesus was very blunt with those who were willfully ignorant of the truth. As we have already noted in this series of articles, Jesus always tailored His approach to fit the audience to whom He spoke. Contrary to popular belief, standing firm for the truth does not make one hard-hearted and cold.

It is true that Jesus often ripped into the Pharisees and Sadducees for their positions. On several occasions Jesus would say things like, "You do err not knowing (emp. mine) the scriptures....," or "Have ye not read?" and "Have

ye not heard?" or "Know ye not?" All of these statements and questions point to the obvious fact that the religious elite of His day was ignorant of some matters that they should have known. He strongly rebuked them for their ignorance because it was willful. They had read, they had heard, but they didn't care enough to take these matters to heart. They willfully remained ignorant of God's word. When you read Matthew 25 and John 8 and also Matthew 15 you see Jesus really holding His adversaries' feet to the fire. These passages illustrate the attitude and manner Jesus had toward the willfully ignorant.

On the other hand, we see a very patient and gentle approach used by the Messiah when He deals with those who are ignorant, but not willfully so. Often while addressing the masses, Jesus would explain Himself. How many times would He later be asked for an explanation by His disciples? Most of the time He was willing to explain Himself so as to help them better understand what He had meant. He never made excuses for them. He would kindly yet firmly teach them more perfectly the way.

As we study Jesus and the way He dealt with others, we need to be willing to emulate His approach. We need to preach the truth at all times. The apostle Paul said, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Timothy 4:2-3). We must teach it when people want to hear it and preach it when they don't. We shouldn't coddle them or waste time on those who really don't care to learn the truth. We should oppose these people directly and in a straightforward fashion.

Conversely, when we find a person who is ignorant, but seeking the truth, we do everything in our power to gently and gingerly guide them to the Lord. When we come across a good and honest heart we should exhaust every possibility in trying to bring them to the Lord. We need to be very patient and allow time for the truth to sink in. I will close with a suggestion. I would rather err on the side of being too patient than being too brusque with people. Let us imitate Christ in our dealing with the ignorant.

P. O. Box 41
Bangs, TX

JESUS ACCEPTED REJECTION

Tom Moore

A very often overlooked and interesting attribute of Jesus was His willingness to accept rejection. What does this mean? Jesus did not, as many today would have us to believe, bend over backwards, do everything imaginable, or go out of His way to keep people from rejecting Him, or to keep from offending people.

Rather, scripture teaches that in many ways Jesus accommodated rejection. It was not that Jesus wanted to be rejected. As a matter of fact, Jesus wants everyone to be saved. “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). The apostle Paul said that God wants “all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).

In the proclamation of truth, Jesus was not coercive, pushy, nor did He try to force feed truth. He presented truth very “matter-of-factly.” I am sure that at one time or another you have had high-pressure tactics used on you by a salesman—they did whatever they could to get you to buy their product. Jesus was not like this—and He had the best product in the universe to offer people! Again, Jesus presented the truth very “matter-of-factly,” and yet, in a very loving way. But it was up to the recipient to respond in a positive way and accept the Lord’s will—however most rejected our Lord. When this happened, our Lord didn’t run after them pleading and begging them to reconsider. He did not say what can I do to make My message more pleasing to you. No, He accepted rejection.

In Matthew 13:10, there is an interesting question posed by Jesus’ disciples, “Why speakest thou unto them in parables?” This was a great question, and we might expect the answer to be, “to make truth more vivid and easier to understand.” I guess there would be some truth to this, but this was not the answer Jesus gave. Our Lord responded to their question saying, “Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Matthew 13:13-15).

Jesus is saying that He taught in parables because some

people are not really receptive to the truth. Isn’t this a fascinating teaching method of our Lord? Rather than trying to water down truth, or teaching truth in the very simplest form, He made some teaching just difficult enough that those who did not want to understand would not. On the other hand, those who were sincerely desirous of truth would spend the extra effort and energy to investigate, and they would be able to understand. Jesus wasn’t trying to confuse people, He was accommodating their unbelief and rejection.

Another example of Jesus accepting rejection is seen in John 6. In the first part of John 6, Jesus is seen miraculously feeding a great multitude, and then headed by boat to Capernaum. “When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus” (John 6:24). The people were “seeking for Jesus.” But why were they seeking Him? What was their motivation?

The people said they had been seeking Jesus, and wondered when He had arrived (John 6:25). Notice our Lord’s response, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled” (John 6:26). Jesus very plainly states their motivation behind seeking Him—they wanted another free meal. Many today would think that Jesus would gloss over such so that He might retain a large number of followers, but this was not the Jesus of the Bible. In the next verses of our context, Jesus was very direct, and went right to the heart of matter. He confronted their error in a very straightforward manner. As a result, “Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?” ... “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him” (John 6:60, 66). When our Lord’s “disciples” (these were religious people—mind you) realized what it really meant “to seek Jesus” they were no longer willing to follow Him.

What would you expect Jesus to do with this rejection? Would He “back-peddle?” Would He cry saying, I didn’t mean to hurt your feelings? No, Jesus responds, speaking to the twelve, saying “Will ye also go away?” (John 6:67), in other words, “What will your choice be?” Jesus stood by the truth and made no apologies for the truth. Our Lord accepted rejection. And, friends, we’ll have to do the same.

823 N. Main St.
Malvern, AR

Friends of SYF

Church Contributions

- Bangs Church of Christ
Bangs, TX
- Cold Springs Church of Christ
Lancaster, TX
- Eisenhower Church of Christ
Odessa, TX
- Goldthwaite Church of Christ
Goldthwaite, TX
- Hillcrest Church of Christ
Coleman, TX
- Hillcrest Church of Christ
Stephenville, TX
- North Main Church of Christ
Malvern, AR
- McCloud Church of Christ
McCloud, OK
- Port Lavaca Church of Christ
Port Lavaca, TX
- Rising Star Church of Christ
Rising Star, TX
- Zephyr Church of Christ
Zephyr, TX

Individual Contributions

- Mr./Mrs. Ronald Allen—Lake City, FL
- Ed Armstrong—Pecos, TX
- Johnny/Mindy Arnold—Harrison, AR
- Charlotte Banks—Eagle Pass, TX
- Norman/Loma Barnes—McCloud, OK
- Clifford Beal—Coursegold, CA
- James/Jean Berry—Montgomery, AL
- Thomas Botelho—Oklahoma City, OK
- Jessie and Mayne Crow—Burnet, TX
- Manuel/Chelo Guajardo—New Braunfels, TX
- Lloyd/Elsie Haggerty—New Braunfels, TX
- B.D./Sue Harrelson—Lorenzo, TX
- Pauline Hopkins—Bangs, TX
- James/Doris Jacobs—Humble, TX
- Garfiels/Delaine King—Ft. Worth, TX
- Michael/Carrie Light—Bangs, TX
- Ruth Locke—Austin, TX
- Morey/Judy Mast—Waxahachie, TX
- Cynthia McIntyre—Magnolia, AR
- Mr./Mrs. James Meredith—Dixon, MO
- Weldon Miller—Mt. Pleasant, TX
- Tom/Carole Moore—Malvern, AR
- Walter Nelson, Sr.—Oroville, CA
- Eddie/Oleta Pafford—Bangs, TX

- Ruth Price—Temple, TX
- Kenneth/Anna Reed—Bangs, TX
- Brandon/Amanda Renfroe—Birmingham, AL
- Michael Riley—El Paso, TX
- Roelf/Janice Ruffner—Chillicothe, TX
- Mr./Mrs. Billy Smith—Nashville, TN
- Charles/Julienne Sweeten—Camp Wood, TX
- Jeff/Kelly Sweeten—Comanche, TX

In Memory Of

- Tammy Pitman
- Mary Clifton
- Jack McGaughey

Memorials Given By:

- Bangs Church of Christ
- Michael & Carrie Light
- Dub Morris
- Eddie & Oleta Pafford
- Bill/Trevon Davis

Seek Ye First...

500 North Pearl Street
Comanche, TX 76442-3624

Address Correction Requested

U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
PERMIT #150
COMANCHE, TX 76442-2436