

THE AUSTRALIAN ANABAPTIST

God's solid foundation stands firm. 2 Tim. 2-19

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Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel,
but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in
the house.

Matthew 5:15

From The Editor's Desk.

“And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book . . . sealed with seven seals” Revelation 5:1.

Throughout the ages men have tried to pry open the secrets of the future as shown in Revelation without success, because it is a sealed Book. John wept because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look thereon. (Rev.5:3-4).

But would to God all men knew that there *is* Someone who is worthy to open the Book!

And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. (Revelation 5:5)

Who is this Worthy One? God in the person of Jesus Christ Himself had to be proved Worthy to open the Book. In the Person of Jesus Christ God became Man, He trod this earth as man and walked among men.

By His holy life, by His moral integrity and supreme spiritual greatness, Jesus Christ proved that He was worthy to open the Book. The Book can be opened by only one Hand, the pierced hand of the Worthy One, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne . . . stood a Lamb as it had been slain. (Revelation 5:6)

Jesus Christ is the supreme Sacrifice for the sin of the world; He is “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!” It is through His death that we are made partakers of His life and can have gifted to us a pure heart, which He says is the condition for seeing God. *And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne. (Revelation 5:7)*

Jesus Christ and He alone is able to satisfy the craving of the human heart as it seeks to be re-united to God possible only through Jesus Christ. In our personal lives Jesus Christ proves Himself to be all this—He is the Lamb to expiate our sins, to lift us out of condemnation and restore our relationship to God.

The time is coming when the Lion of the Tribe of Judah shall reign, and when “the kingdoms of this world” shall become “the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ.”

May we be ready!

MINISTER'S CORNER.**The Attractiveness of Modesty**

From a message by David Danner given at Hopewell Mennonite Church

The Attractiveness of Modesty. It is an interesting way of putting words together here. First of all, I think we need to understand what modesty is.

I) The first definition in the dictionary says that “Modesty is not thinking too highly of one’s self, not vain.” And that is certainly based from Scripture and Scripture would concur with that. In Romans 12:3 it says, “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” And then Philippians 2:3, Paul tells the church at Philippi he says, “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” Modesty is not thinking too highly of one’s self, not being vain.

Now, the Scripture records for us a number of examples in both ways. First we would like to think of just a few examples of those who were immodest in their thinking of themselves. In Daniel 4:29-30 it tells us about king Nebuchadnezzar. “At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. ³⁰The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?”

Not a very modest way of thinking about one’s self, was it? King Nebuchadnezzar thought pretty highly about himself. And he saw himself as being the centre around which the kingdom was built. And he saw himself as the one that was able to control all these things. And we know the story how that God needed to bring him into an understanding as to how much power he had. And as God accomplished that in him, at the end of this chapter we find Nebuchadnezzar saying, “Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase” (verse 37). Well, that is an example of one who thinks too highly of one’s self.

And we expect that to a certain extent from the kingdoms of this world. We do not involve ourselves in politics and that is one of the reasons, among others, that we do not involve ourselves there. Some time ago the

President visited the city of York, PA. and one of our brethren had an opportunity to read a transcript of the speech he made while he was there. He was somewhat disappointed by how much “I . . . and I . . . and this. . . I have done. . .” and so on, was in that. Well, that is part of the kingdoms of this world to be that way and we are not necessarily reflecting upon any one person.

But what we are reflecting on is the fact that when we are talking about modesty and we are talking about what the Scripture calls Christian people to, that kind of attitude is not going to be reflected in us. It is not very attractive, like I say, the brother that read this transcript was somewhat appalled by it because it just does not fit with what we see or understanding of how we ought to reflect upon our abilities and upon God who has given them to us.

Now, we say “That is pretty much out there.” But, you know the Scriptures also tell us about the Pharisee and the publican going up to prayer. And the Pharisee looked over there at the publican and he said, “God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men . . . or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess” (Luke 18:11-12). “I am a much more worthy person than this publican over here.” And we look at that and say, “What went wrong with that man?” Jesus said, “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other” (Luke 18:14). But you know when we come face to face with some of the off-scourings of society it is pretty easy for us to feel pretty much like that Pharisee.

I do not know how many of you have had the privilege of going along to street meetings and when you meet up with somebody there who has had a little too much to drink, and they are not to pleasant to be about just how do you look at that person and how do you feel about them?

I am just simply helping us to understand that modesty has some practical applications for us. And we are what we are by the grace of God. The rich man of Luke 12, Jesus told that story of how this man’s fields brought forth bountifully, and how he built barns to put these things into and how he said, “Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry” (Luke 12:19). This rich man intended to spend all of the resources that God had blessed him with upon himself. This man was proud and arrogant. And in the abundance of affluence in which we live, I wonder just how far we are away from that sometimes.

The Scripture also gives us some direction as far as those who are modest in their thoughts. And I think it stands in contrast to these we have looked at. Jacob said in Genesis 32:10, “I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant.” Jacob spoke these words as he returned to the land of Canaan after he had gone over to his mother’s family and there worked for Laban for a number of years. He returned now with two wives with a number of children and great herds and flocks. And he said this because he said, “For with my staff I passed over this Jordan.” When he went the other direction there was only the thing that he had in his hand was a staff. And now he is returning, he says, “and now I am become two bands.” Jacob says, “I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant.” — Modest he was. He did not expect that he was worthy in any way of all of God’s blessing upon him.

King Saul, when he was little in his own eyes, as the Scripture says in 1 Samuel 9:21. “And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?” He said this at the time when Samuel anointed him to be king over Israel. And God said that while he was small in his own sight (as he was at this point) He could work with him and bless him and use him. But there came a time in Saul’s experience when he no longer felt that way and God could no longer use him.

David also shows humility in 2 Samuel 7:18, “Then went King David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who am I, O Lord GOD? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?” David likewise felt himself small before God and of lacking ability and strength on his part to fill the role of king of God’s people. His son Solomon likewise followed in those footsteps when he says in 1 Kings 3:7, “And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in.”

John the Baptist, Jesus came to him and expressed His need for baptism, His desire to have John baptize him. “But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me” (Matthew 3:14)? The centurion in Matthew 8:8, he told Jesus, “Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.”

And then probably one of the most outstanding ones of humility is the Syrophenician woman who came to Jesus asking for help. And Jesus replied to her that He came to bring salvation to the Jews and “for it is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it unto the dogs” (Mark 7:27). Now talk about someone who had their spirit under control. This woman answered Jesus and she said, “And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.” (Matthew 15:27). There is something striking about the humility of that woman and her understanding of her position before this great man whom she was speaking to and her willingness to remain in that position.

Paul told Timothy, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (1 Timothy 1:15). I suppose there are other ones that we could read or we could show from the Scriptures that would illustrate modesty.

The modest man is one who understands that God made him. And he understands that if he has anything to glory or anything to boast of it is only by the grace of God and through the cross of Jesus Christ. When we share the Gospel with others we are not like the Pharisees. We are one beggar telling another where to find bread just as Paul said that he is chief of sinners. As far as modesty is concerned, there is no “me first” that can ever be allowed. That is the attitude that is found among those who are immodest in their thoughts about themselves.

II) The second definition in the dictionary for modesty is, “to be bashful or shy.” And then to further illustrate that it says, “not bold or not forward.” Being timid is not necessarily modesty because some people in being timid are timid because they are worried about what other people are going to think of them. That is not modesty. Modesty is understanding how much more important it is to consider what God will think of us.

A child who is properly taught modesty will quietly stand by their parent after church. And they will not whine and they will not be tugging on the parent’s arm. But they will, when they are spoken to, look at you and not at the floor and they will answer distinctly and loud enough to be understood even by those who have some trouble with hearing. I believe that that goes along with modesty. That is not being forward. That is not being bold, but simply being respectful.

I think about the little maid in Syria as an example. Remember, that little maid was a long way from home, a long way from her father’s house,

a long time since she had heard her mother's voice. But that little maid in Syria was listening and she heard about her master's problems. She heard about Naaman and his needs and the disease that he now had. And she did not go boldly to Naaman and say, "Well, I have an answer for you." She did not go boldly to Naaman and say, "Well, if you listen to me I will tell you how you can be healed." No, she quietly told her mistress, "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy" (2 Kings 5:3).

Now, the mistress, of course, passed this along to the master. And Naaman went. But I see this maid as an example of modesty, an example to help us understand the attractiveness of it. Had she boldly gone to Naaman I do not know whether Naaman would have listened to her or not, but because of the approach that she took, he did listen and he did go. Of course, we know that his initial response there was not one of modesty, and his initial response just about caused him to lose the blessing that was there for him. But it was after his servants were able to reason with him and cause him to reflect upon his action that he was able to receive the blessing.

Now, there is a false modesty sometimes that we see and that is when one talks degradingly about one's self in an apparent attempt to provoke a flattering response. That is not true modesty. We can excuse ourselves from what we are asked to do and say, "Well, there is somebody over here that can do it better. There is someone over here that is able to do it in a way that we can do." We can give such excuses but that is not the excuse of a modest person. That is a false modesty. God asks us to do the best that we can do and not according to what someone else can do.

Neither is it true modesty when we act humble just to further our cause or to make others think well of us. Modesty is something that comes from a changed heart. Modesty is something that will only be attractive when it comes from a motivation that is from within.

III) The third definition that the dictionary gives on the word modesty is, "not calling attention to one's body." Let us look at 1 Timothy 2:8-9, "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. (9) In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array." It brings out the focus of what we are thinking about here, not drawing attention to one's body. Now, I find it

interesting that verse 9 begins by saying, “In like manner,” referring to the fact that although it seemingly may be more of a temptation for women to appear in a fashion that calls attention to themselves it is also something that men are included in because the women are to be in like manner to what he speaks about here in verse 8. Verse 8 and 9 are tied together.

Much of what is called fashion in today’s world is worn for the express purpose of calling attention to one’s self and especially to one’s body. Many things that are done are done in extremes. Sometimes, for instance, the skirts go up, sometimes the skirts go down. It seems that there is no moderation. But there are extremes that are being used such as the abbreviation of clothes and the resulting exposure of the body. It may be the slits that are used in the side of long dresses. It maybe the tightness of the fit to expose a shape or it may be the tight clothes, or the tight shirt or the tight pants that a brother is wearing. These clothing on brethren are just as unbecoming as they are on sisters.

The baggy and extremely loose fads of our day are often used to expose parts of the body or clothing that is not meant to be exposed but is done so because of the looseness and the bagginess of it. You know, when Adam and Eve took fig leaves to cover themselves God showed them that it was not sufficient. That is calling attention to one’s body.

Modesty is also compromised by bright clothing, extreme contrasts, added fancies and we can think of many things that we see out there in society but let us bring it down home to some of the things that sometimes creep in among us, when the sleeves begin to puff up at the side here and begin to look like side boards on a wagon. You sometimes see that sort of thing among us. And there are large bows that get tied on belts at times. And there are wide belts and then there are some who have trouble sometimes remembering to wear a belt. And on the brethren’s side there are brown belts and there are large belt buckles and there are woven belts and things like that that creep in among us and these things are not an expression of modesty but they are something that are used to draw attention to one’s self and to one’s body. And that is not attractive as far as when we are thinking about the attractiveness of modesty. It can be attractive from a worldly sense of reasoning but it is not going to attract the attention that we are looking for.

That is not the attractiveness of modesty that we are talking about this afternoon.

Hair is another way that some use to get attention. It would appear occasionally that some sisters love see how much they can leave uncovered of their hair rather than how much they can get under the covering. The brethren are often drawn into this matter of following the fads of hair style. And when we follow the fads of the world, it is certainly not something associated with modesty. As a boy, I remember that there were a few boys that came to the congregation where I was that had got what was called a “crew cut.” And then I remember when one young man who was a member of the congregation came with a “flat top.” And there were several who had a real problem with the long hair styles that came along with the influence of the '60's. There were sideburns that went down, then there were sideburns that went up. There was one young man who was a member in the congregation who had left for a time to go to college and he appeared back on a Sunday morning when communion was being served and here he had a moustache. And the bishop did not serve him communion and he wondered why.

Now, it is common for men in our society today to find men who are shaving their heads. One of reasons for people doing things like this is to draw attention to themselves and to their body. Now that man who shaves his head for some reason must think that his head is beautiful, or at least that people want to see it because he constantly keeps it out there in front for everyone to see, not modest.

Now, I am not talking about someone who is bald because God made them that way. I am talking about someone who has made themselves that way. And we do not want to reflect at all on someone who has lost their hair for natural reasons.

IV) Modesty includes our thoughts and actions. That is another point that is made in the dictionary definitions. In fact, that is the fourth definition. And we find a Scriptural basis for that in Titus 2:10 where he says, “Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.” Adorning the doctrine, making attractive the doctrine of God, our Saviour in all things. Modesty includes our thoughts and our actions. The Scriptures tells us to do all. . . “Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Colossians 3:17).

We know that our thoughts will sooner or later motivate us into action. Modesty in thought and activity will adorn or add beauty to the doctrine of God our Saviour.

V) Now, this brings us to the core focus of the message and that is the matter of attractiveness. The attractiveness of modesty.

What is it that is attractive about modesty? What is it that makes modesty attractive?

Well, the dictionary gives with this word two different definitions. And I believe that both of them have an application.

1) The first definition that the dictionary gives about attractiveness is, “to be likeable, pleasant . . .” we like that, likeable, pleasant and charming. Most of us get weary pretty quickly about someone who thinks only about themselves. And we are not very attractive to someone who continually presents themselves either by the way they dress, the way they act as though they think they are somebody. Now none of us are attracted very much to that. We do like be around people who are pleasant, who are able to visit and to talk about things other than themselves and we find that attractive.

2) The second definition of attractiveness is “to draw toward as a magnet, attracts.” As a young boy we had a pair of those things called, “tricky dogs.” and I spent a good deal of effort and time trying to make those dogs go together the wrong way. And it just never could quite happen. But how quick they would twist around and pull together and be attracted together as a magnet. Well, we are thinking about the attractiveness of modesty. And modesty attracts people in much the same way. We are attracted to people who are modest in their demeanour and modest in the way they think about themselves and modest in the way they present themselves.

As we think about the attractiveness of modesty, let us just think about a few contrasts that we ought to be able to see if the church of Jesus Christ is what it ought to be.

1) Contrast number one. In the world we see people who are “painted” and “fixed” up to leave an impression of something they really are not. It really struck home some years ago when we were planning for an early morning sale in our store and one woman was in there looking around, we talked about this early morning sale and she said that if she came at that hour you would see her without any makeup on. And I guess that really was not a big concern to me but it sure was to her. And I had to think about that. What was it that she was so concerned about? What was it that she wore that makeup for? I am not sure what it was that she was trying to hide. But it certainly was not modesty that was her problem.

In this group of people who find themselves needing to paint themselves up we find many people whose faces are hardened by sin. And you watch the smiles that they give and you observe and soon begin to get the feeling that the smiles that they give are more pasted on than real, because there is a sadness underneath that which seems to come out and that there is a general feeling of emptiness.

In the church, in contrast to that, we see people who have lines on their faces from hard work and trouble and sorrow, but from somewhere within there comes a glow, there comes a glow of peace and joy in the Lord. It is pretty hard to put a description on that and exactly say what all it is, but it is there and there is evidence that these people are involved with a general purpose that is not just taking care of “number one” [themselves] like we sometimes hear expressed in our world and society.

Does this add beauty to the Christian? Does this make it attractive? Well, of course it does. It is hard to explain exactly what we see in people like this. It hard to explain it but we know it is real because we can see it. And we know it is there and the desire is to know that person better and to learn what makes them “tick.” What is it that gives them joy and peace and confidence in life?

2) Contrast number two. In the world around us we see people who say they want to be unique. But what is it that they do? Instead of being unique it is very obvious that they are slaves to fashion and slaves to what other people think. They are driven by the latest and what they think is the greatest and if there is a new fad, a new fangled gadget they must have it. It must be. They just cannot do without it. And as you observe them you get the feeling that they are running around in circles looking for something that they are never going to find. There is a lack of obedience to direction. There is even less respect for direction that is given.

In contrast to that you find in the church a group of people who wear the same style of clothing year after year. And they sing the same songs and they preach the same word. There is little difference between age groups. Young people do not mind looking like their parents or their grandpas and their grandmas because they serve the same God. And so there is no real reason why there needs to be a great difference in how they appear. Obedience is held in high esteem and respect for tradition is considered of high value.

Not long ago, a group was at the York hospital to sing for the patients and as we were going through the hallways of the hospital singing as we usually do, I was sort of at one point trailing just a “tad” behind and a woman came out from the side and she stopped me and she said, “I must tell you something. I want to commend you that your boys look like boys should. Whatever you are doing you keep on doing it.”

Now, we need to be modest and acknowledge today that if our boys look like they should it was because of the grace of God working in them and us. But I pondered upon what it was that she meant. I am still not sure that I have all the answer of what she meant when she said that your boys look like boys should. But I did look. I looked around at our boys and I saw they were dressed in what I call traditional clothes — white shirts, suit coats, or sweaters and dress pants and dress shoes. They were dressed that way. I saw them enthusiastically joining in the singing. I saw them respectfully filing down the aisle.

And I looked around and there were some other children present who were running up and down the hall making some commotion and there were some of them dressed in t-shirts and shorts and some of them looked like they wished they were anywhere but where they were. And many of them were making actions or doing things that drew attention to themselves. Something she saw that she appreciated. Something attracted her attention. Something she saw was attractive.

I think also of a brother’s business that I know of that is prospering rather well, and some of his customers come into my store on occasion and they tell that it is a pleasure for them to do business at his place of business. They said, “You can trust them. You know that they will do the best that they can for you, and they just feel comfortable doing business with this brother.” But I know that if I were to speak to the brother, in fact I have at times, then he would in all modesty say that he is only doing what is expected of him. He is only doing what he thinks is the normal way of doing business. But there is something different about the way he is doing business than what many places in society are. And people appreciate that.

And it is the attractiveness of modesty I believe that comes through. It is not that he is out there selling himself, or that he is out there trying to make a name for himself. But he is simply doing business according to the Bible way. And there is attractiveness there about that that just cannot be missed.

3) The third contrast. In the world there are many cases where it appears that a person's body is for sale because they are so freely advertised. In doing so they leave many people with impure thoughts and defiled consciences. In contrast to that we have brethren and sisters in the church with discrete conduct and modest clothing and behaviour that spares us from much of the ravages of sinful and evil society.

I think of one of the occasions that I was along in Boston. I was standing there passing out tracts and a man came up to me and we talked for a length of time. Then, he observed the group who were singing and were giving testimony to the truth of the Gospel in the meeting just a little distance away from us. And he made this comment, "You people are like a breath of fresh air." And I thought "How fitting that is." When you look around at society today and you see all of the immodesty and the way people are trying to direct attention to themselves and you notice the filthy and smoky and polluted air, it certainly seems fitting. That kind of air chokes and eventually kills the user. On the other hand, the breath of fresh air that exudes life and even can be used to extend it perpetually into eternal life — a breath of fresh air. Yes, I think that is a very fitting way to describe the attractiveness of modesty.

Whether it is our clothing, our actions, or our words that we speak many will be attracted by curiosity to our modesty. It will stand out to them like a spring flower in a swamp, in the midst of the cesspools of society in which we live. If we allow God's Spirit to continue to work in and through us, our modesty will attract a few of them like a magnet. And they will likewise desire to be like us and to become like us. May God help us to allow the full beauty of modesty to flower in our lives unhindered by the pride and affluence of the day in which we live.



KINGDOM ECONOMY

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him (1 Corinthians 2:9).

In the gospel of Matthew we find some indications of how the economy of God contradicts or is in opposition to the economy of the world where

people seek or demand material rewards for their efforts.

All us would be familiar with the admonition in Matthew 6:19-20 not to seek after or store up the treasures of this world as many do and we as Christians can fall into that trap as well. Jesus would have us be different, He urges us to lay up treasures in heaven rather than here on earth and He makes the reason obvious. To put it bluntly all of us will leave this world with the same amount of earthly treasures as we entered it. Job 1:21 and Ecclesiastes 5:15 both affirm this state of man's beginning and end in this world.

In these selected passages from the gospel of Matthew we see the carnal nature of man portrayed in his seeking a temporal reward and we see Jesus' response.

Matthew 19:27-30

Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? ²⁸And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. ³⁰But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.

Matthew 20:1-16

For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. ²And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, ⁴And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. ⁵Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. ⁶And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? ⁷They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. ⁸So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. ⁹And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they re-

ceived every man a penny. ¹⁰But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. ¹¹And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, ¹²Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. ¹³But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? ¹⁴Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. ¹⁵Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? ¹⁶So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

These two foregoing passages are a continuous narrative of the words of our Lord as He explained His view of this matter of temporal rewards, we must also remember that this is God the Father's view as well for Jesus Himself said in John 8:26: He that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him. Jesus never spoke of or out of Himself as we often tend to do but only spoke that which was in complete harmony with and from His heavenly Father. John 8:28, 38 and John 12:50 also show this.

We further have in Matthew 6:1-6 the instructions of Jesus in regard to prayer and it is again interesting to note that He also makes a noteworthy reference in there to rewards. Three times in those verses the warning is given that those who do things to seek a reward here in this life that they will be disappointed in the life to come for in His words "they have their reward."

It is true that these particular verses speak of self seeking and desiring the adulation of others by our personal behaviour but I believe it would not be incorrect to draw an application from that in the everyday course of life that to seek reward for the edification and promotion of self is not or should not be a Christian's way. It is realised that we need to earn a living to support ourselves, our families and importantly God's work but we should not do it with the motivation or thought to make ourselves more important or more honoured of men.

In the Old Testament we also have a direction in this matter of seeking a temporal reward and a promise is included especially in verse 21 note the word "inherit" I believe that these verse speak to us of Christ Jesus and that the inheritance it speaks of is the great salvation that He brought through

His shed blood at Calvary. Is that not indeed a substance that will fill our treasures as spoken of in the passages from Matthew quoted earlier?

Proverbs 8:17-21

I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.
¹⁸Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness.
¹⁹My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver. ²⁰I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: ²¹That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures.

In the commerce of this world, we look for the best deal in marketing and purchasing. We may feel slighted if we discover that others found a better price in their selling or buying. Sometimes we are quick to judge something as being unfair. Yet we are touched when we hear of some innocent child with insufficient money approaching a merchant who makes a trade way out of line of value. We call this compassion, and we respect the merchant for his mercy toward the child. The innocent child goes home with benefits far beyond the value of his resources, not realizing the sacrifice the merchant made. May we open our minds to the thought that in the economy of the kingdom our weak efforts bring returns far beyond their value.

While the disciples were with Jesus, they heard many conversations that Jesus had with the people. This led them to inquire further about some of the things Jesus said. They also observed the reactions of the people when they did not understand the answers or direction Jesus gave them. The answer Jesus gave the rich man prompted Peter to make a comparison with himself. It seemed to Peter that the disciples had done as Jesus had instructed the man who asked, "What lack I yet?" Now he wondered what their reward would be. The answer that Jesus gave did not sidestep the question but implied that their work was not completed and that men who leave all for the Lord's sake will not necessarily be as deprived as some would think.

Jesus gave many likenesses relating to the kingdom of heaven. Several times a vineyard was used to exemplify the lesson being taught. This time, however, Jesus taught about payment for service rendered. The reward or payment for the laborers did not necessarily relate to hours worked. It is likely that those who worked less time did not expect as much payment as those who worked all day. But here again is proof that God does not think as man thinks. We can see that the Master was not unfair to any concerning

the agreement, but some received a reward beyond their expectations. Since laborers were recruited at four different times later in the day, we might conclude that there were many who worked with the trust that they would receive whatsoever was right. To men this may seem like a recipe for misunderstanding and trouble, but this example shows that the Lord is more than fair. He does what He promises and more. In His compassion, He gave according to His goodness and not according to services received.

When we think of economy, we think of value received for something that is rendered. Many of our decisions are made according to our assessment of value. We may ask ourselves if the goods offered are worth the price asked or if the wages offered are worth the time and effort that will be expended. We may make a venture not knowing what the returns will be, but if the returns are not reasonably good, the project or venture is soon abandoned. This way of thinking may make good sense to us and is according to the nature of man. The economy of the kingdom of God, however, is of a different nature.

We have no record of payment being discussed when Jesus called the disciples to follow Him. We have reason to believe there was money with which they could satisfy their needs, and we do not read that they lacked anything. When Peter saw the reluctance of the rich man to part with his goods he quickly pointed out that the disciples had forsaken all to follow the Lord. His real question was, "What does it pay?" He may have wondered if the Lord would be fair with them. He may have thought it was about time to receive a reward. The unregenerate mind looks for the present advantage.

The answer Jesus gave speaks of regeneration. When a person has been born of the Holy Spirit, he accepts responsibility for the cause of the Master and His kingdom. He begins to look at the objective and not for the reward. The economy of the kingdom is not in doubt. He knows that the Lord takes care of His own.

Perhaps the marriage bond could serve as an example to help us understand the economy of the kingdom. Typically, when a young lady is asked to become the wife of a young man, payment is not an issue in her decision. She is pleased that she has been chosen. She trusts his judgment and fairness. She loses her identity in that she assumes his name as hers. She promises to love and cherish him in health and sickness, in prosperity and adversity, share with him the joys and sorrows of life, exercise patience,

kindness, and forbearance toward him, and live with him in peace, keeping herself only unto him. This promise is made without hesitation. She undertakes to make a home for him, learning as much as she can of his likes and dislikes. She takes an interest in his pursuits and helps in whatever way she can. She finds great satisfaction in pleasing her husband. She senses his love for her and appreciates all she has received. Many a bride has testified that her union has brought benefits far beyond her expectations. When this sort of love is mutual, there is truly joy in that marriage. This joy is seen by others and is a beauty to behold. What is his is hers and what is hers is his, and they safely trust in one another.

Sad to say, not all marriages share this blessedness due to weakness of commitment, lack of love, or disillusionment. Likewise not all Christians experience the joys and blessings available to them for the same reason. We can be assured that the lack is not on the Lord's part but on ours. Suppose that the first laborers in the vineyard would have considered that additional laborers made the work easier for them. Suppose they would have given the Lord credit for His insight in adding more help, realizing that much more was being accomplished. One may wonder if they had the real purpose in view.

The example in scripture teaches us that it is not wise to compare ourselves with others. When this happens, one tends to think that life is not fair. One begins to evaluate his service or sacrifice and feels that due credit has not been given. Love is tested. Bitterness can set in, and some may live out their days feeling that God is unjust. It may appear that God's favors are upon those who have done far less for the cause of the kingdom. We may forget that the Master took us in when we were idle and without direction in life. We were without purpose and faced condemnation and death without hope. But He chose us, forgave our sins, set us free from condemnation and eternal death, gave us a new name, and made us fellow heirs of the heavenly kingdom. We were included in a fellowship like no other upon this earth. He gave us purpose in life. May we earnestly endeavor to be faithful to this call and purpose.

The earthly man tends to think in terms of "me first" and lives accordingly, but when we are offered to the Lord and His service, our will is last. Through the eye of faith many see and believe that God has a good plan and benefit for those who love and serve Him faithfully. To be approved of God is worth more than to be approved of men and puts one first in the

eyes of God. How beautiful it is when one who has served faithfully and vigorously for the Lord dies with a testimony of love and appreciation for the Lord and all His goodness. What a comfort and encouragement this is to us who share in the faith of the gospel of our Lord.



The Propitiation - Atonement.

Extracts from a message by Robert Shank given at Danskin Mennonite Church..

The word atonement is defined as reconciliation effected by an expiatory sacrifice. Specifically the Atonement is the reconciliation between God and man accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ through His suffering and death on the cross.

Someone has said that the Atonement is the scarlet cord running through every page in the entire Bible and while the word atonement is primarily used in the Old Testament, only once is it used in the New Testament in [Romans 5:11](#). While that is true the doctrine of the Atonement is seen throughout Scripture and reaches from eternity past to eternity future.

Christ is referred to as the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world and Revelation five tells us that redemption by the blood will be the subject of the Song of the redeemed in eternity future.

Atonement is just one of the many scriptural words used in connection with the saving work of Christ and a number of these words we are going to comment on.

Redemption speaks of a ransom price being paid.

[1 Corinthians 6:20](#) says: “For ye are bought with a price.”

The blood of Christ shed on Calvary's cross paid the price for our sins, a ransom price.

Substitution refers to Christ dying so that we might live. Peter says: “He bare our sins in his own body on the tree yet he remained sinless himself.

[1 Peter 2:24](#).

Isaiah 53, “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities.” [Isaiah 53:5](#).

That is the doctrine of substitution.

Propitiation describes the work of Christ in meeting the requirements of God's justice.

In [Romans 3:25-26](#) speaking of Christ, Paul says: “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood,” verse 26 goes on to say that He, God, might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

Isaiah 53 also refers to the fact that God shall see the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. [Isaiah 53:11](#). His death satisfied the justice of God.

Regeneration refers to the change wrought in the believer's heart, the spiritual renewal we call the new birth. That change which is possible only by the work of God, the provision of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit. If any man be in Christ he is a new creature. [2 Corinthians 5:7](#).

That is regeneration.

Reconciliation speaks of a relationship which was once broken, once estranged but now restored.

[2 Corinthians 5:18](#): “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;”

[Ephesians 2:13](#) “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”

That relationship which was broken by sin has now been it has now been made possible that we can be reconciled to the Father again.

Justification speaks of God pardoning the sinner, removing guilt and condemnation and declaring in righteous, for given, cleared, in right standing before Him.

Sanctification speaks of holiness of life which is made possible only by faith in Christ and the appropriation of his resurrection power allowing him to clean us up and helping us to live changed lives, holy lives, sanctified, set apart from him.

The word atonement, the doctrine of the Atonement includes all these aspects of Christ's work and more. I like to think of the Atonement as the sum total of Christ's work on the cross, the Old Testament offerings and sacrifices that foreshadowed it.

Well with our finite minds we cannot fully comprehend all that is that involved in the Atonement but we must by faith fully believe that and accept it and personally appropriate its provision in order to be saved.

The necessity for the Atonement is seen as one ponders the great contrast between the holiness of God on one hand and the sinfulness of the man on the other. Job recognised this need in his lament that there was no daysman to span the gap and to lay his hand on them both, upon Job and upon God, no mediator to plead his cause. [Job 9:33](#).

There are many scriptures that speak of God's holiness; I'll refer to just a few,

[Isaiah 57:15](#): “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place,”

[Psalm 99:9](#) “Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy.”

[Habakkuk 1:13](#) “Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity:”

There would be many other verses that speak of the holiness of God and we see from these that God is entirely apart, entirely separated from all that is evil, from all that defiles both Himself and in relation to His creation. The Scriptures tell us that He is not even able to look upon that which is unholy.

There is absolutely nothing unholy about God. By the holiness of God is meant the consummate holiness, perfection, purity and absolute sanctity of his nature.

The Apostle John declares” God is light and in Him is no darkness at all,” [1 John 1:15](#), no defilement, no sin.

But the scriptures are just as plain in revealing the sinfulness of man and the consequences of sin.

[Isaiah 64:6](#): “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”

[Romans 3:23](#): “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

Since the fall of our first parents every one of us has inherited the sinful nature and our natural bent, our natural inclination is away from God and so man left to himself is doomed. [Romans 6:23](#): “For the wages of sin is death.”

[Ezekiel 18:20](#): “For the soul that sinneth it shall die.”

Too many today take a light and erroneous view of sin. Even among professed Christians sin is too often regarded as an offence against man or a weakness of human nature rather than the rebellion and transgression and

enmity against God that sin is, sin is an affront to God and many by taking a light view of sin are deceived

And so on one hand we see the holiness of God in the holiness in the absolute, one so righteous that Habakkuk says He cannot behold evil or look on iniquity and on the other hand a sinful race, a people whose wickedness is an abomination unto the Lord.

And so the question naturally arises: How could God manifests His mercy without compromising His holiness? How can He grant pardon and forgiveness and justification and still be just and holy?

The only answer of course is by means of the Atonement. Some means of propitiation needed to be provided and God in His love and mercy did that.

God in His foreknowledge knew that man would disobey. He knew the predicament that man would bring upon himself by listening to the suggestions of Satan, the evil one, falling into sin, and the ray of hope that God gave to Adam and Eve in His pronouncing judgement on the serpent in [Genesis 3:15](#) shows that He had a plan, He had a provision. The means of Atonement was decreed by God to be shed blood.

[Leviticus 17:11](#): “For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”

[Hebrews 9:22](#): “...and without shedding of blood is no remission.”

God decreed that blood, shed blood was means of man's atonement and so we have the scarlet thread running all through Scripture beginning with the first blood shed by the hand of God in order to make suitable clothes for our first parents who had sinned, ([Gen.3:21](#)) to the blood of Abel's sacrifice more excellent than Cain's to God because it was a blood sacrifice offered in faith ([Heb.11:4](#)) to the blood of the Passover lamb sprinkled on the doorposts and the lintels of the house in Egypt where God's people dwelt, that blood which made the difference between life and death inside the door, ([Exod.12:7](#)) to the blood taken into the most holy place by the high priest once a year only on the Day of Atonement, we know he could not enter without the blood which he sprinkled on the mercy seat. ([Lev.23:27-28](#))

Second Chronicle seven tells us that on one occasion alone at the dedication of the temple King Solomon offered to sacrifice off 142,000 animals, 22,000 oxen, hundred and 120,000 sheep, rivers of blood and so it continued year after year. ([2 Chron.7:5](#)) Blood, rivers of blood. God planned,

God instituted, God clearly outlined the detailed sacrificial system by which the Old Testament believer could have his sins covered, could get right with God and could experience peace.

Well the provision of the atonement does not stop at the Old Testament Day of Atonement. In the New Testament we see that all of this Old Testament provision foreshadowed and pointed forward to something far better. The Old Testament sacrifices served their God intended place; they helped man to recognise his sinfulness, the guilt and penalty associated with sin and to see the need of the blood sacrifice. They pointed man to something far better to come but they were only for a time, they were only effectual because they were done in faith and obedience as they awaited God's better provision.

We often refer to the book of Hebrews as the book of better things; it reveals God's better provision in contrast to the Old Testament law and sacrifices.

[Hebrews 10:1](#): "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things," (referring to the Old Testament sacrificial laws) and [Hebrews 10:1-4](#): "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."

The sacrifice on the Day of Atonement needed to be repeated over and over. As Hebrews tells us He offered himself once, Christ's offering was once for all. His sacrifice is complete. [Hebrews 9:25 and 28](#):

"Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; ²⁸So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

What has the blood of Christ done for us?

Well first of all it has paid the ransom price for sin.

[Ephesians 1:7](#): "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins."

Again the blood of animals could not do that. All those rivers of blood from the altar never washed away their sin, it merely covered the sin pointing forward to Christ's ultimate sacrifice.

Jesus shed blood makes reconciliation. He has reconciled us to God. Our relationship with God once broken is now restored.

Paul in [2 Corinthians 5:19](#) says: "That God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself."

The effect of the atonement is that it saves us from wrath. It brings forgiveness; we are justified by His blood.

Hebrews 10:31: “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” but the blood of Christ saves us from the wrath to come.

1 John 2:2 and **1 John 4:10** say that Jesus is the propitiation for our sins:

Romans 3:25 tells us He is a propitiation through faith in his blood.

The word *propitiation* is the same word translated *mercy seat* in the Old Testament. The Old Testament mercy seat became the place of propitiation as blood was sprinkled with there and Christ is our propitiation, we can approach the mercy seat through His shed blood, His precious blood which we can apply by faith.

The effect of the atonement is that it clears the conscience. We can have peace with God. **Romans 5:1.**

Hebrews 9:14 speaks of purging our conscience clearing it, it clears the conscience, it removes guilt and condemnation.

The atonement also breaks the power of sin. Sin is a debt yes, but it is also a terminal disease, it binds, it shackles and it finally destroys and the atoning blood breaks sins hold on us it sets us free. Glorious freedom precious blood.

Their blood of atonement also sanctifies it sets us apart to new life.

Hebrews 13:12. “Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.”

1 Peter 1:18 tells us that we are redeemed from the vain conversation of our fathers.

The dead formalism, the self-righteousness, the religion of works as illustrated by the Pharisees of Jesus’ time but we are redeemed from all that.

Redeemed by the precious blood which sets us apart, sanctifies us, sets us apart from the world and to God.

Those of us who have experienced this cleansing know the peace and the joy that comes from having a renewed relationship with God and having guilt and the burden of sin rolled away.



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