

We're Good at Saying It

by Linville Dunaway, Corinth Christian church

Matthew 23:1-3, "Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not."

You would think that in two thousand years so many problems that existed in the church would have disappeared by now. Since the early church was made up of people living in the flesh, and so are we, it shouldn't be a surprise that we still have the same problems. Jesus noticed one of the problems in His day that still plagues the believers of today. It is the one where a person says but doesn't do what he says he will do.

Most people will become angry if their word is questioned, and/or they are called a liar. But, when a person says that they will do something and then doesn't do it, time and time again, isn't that lying? If they don't want to do it why not just say, "I won't do it?" When a person comes to the Lord and says that he will follow the Lord and live for Him, he is committing himself to obey Jesus the rest of his life.

That is not a part time commitment, or a sometimes obedience. Yet, it seems that many take it that way and follow when it's convenient.

Jesus told us in his word that we are to love one another. **John 13:34** and **15:12**. There is no question about that, nor any way to misunderstand what he said. The sad truth is that there are many believers who don't show any, or very little, love for others. In **John 13:35** he even said that this would show the world that you are a believer, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." If we love someone we don't look for things to fuss about and look for differences, thinking we are better than them if they are not just like us.

One preacher tried to rebuke me some years ago saying he had heard that people from different churches were coming to a revival that I preached. I told him that they sure did and that we had a great time in the Lord. Then I mentioned that in **Revelation 22:17** the Lord said, "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." I will preach the bible no matter who is there to hear it; if they are unsaved God will show it to them from his word – He is the judge, not you or me.

While there are many doctrines that Jesus taught, so far I have only mentioned one – love. I thought I would change to a new one, but on second thought I've come to

the conclusion that it is still about love. It is caring for, and about, the sick and helpless.

James 1:27 "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." In all my years of ministry I don't know of very many people, except for preachers, who visit the sick and those who are unable to come to church. There are a few who will go see someone but it is usually a small percent of a congregation. A lot of folks will go if it is a relative, or close friend, but not anyone else. Why?

Some will say that they don't know what to say to someone. Is that a reason or an excuse? All a person has to do is to let the sick know that you care about them. That doesn't take a lot of fancy words, it just takes caring about others. Remember that the church is family. I have had home-bound folks say, "At least it looks like they could at least call and let me know that they care about me." I agree with that – if they cared then they would. People are busy with making a living and family, we all understand that, but that doesn't excuse our not doing what the Lord has told us to do. He did not say that caring, visiting, and helping the widows and sick folks was the duty of preachers and their wives only. He meant it for all of his people who say that they believe in and follow him.

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CONCUBINES, THE SAME AS HARLOTS ?NO!

WESTERN CIVILIZATION HAS VIEWED A MAN'S CONCUBINE ON THE SAME LEVEL AS A PROSTITUTE—BUT NOT SO IN EARLY HEBREW SOCIETY! LARGE FAMILIES WERE ESSENTIAL FOR ECONOMICAL SECURITY AND POLYGAMY WAS COMMON. IN THOSE DAYS, A MARRIAGE CONTRACT AFFORDED THE HUSBAND-TO-BE A GENEROUS DOWRY FROM THE BRIDE'S FATHER—BUT THE HEBREW MAIDEN WHOSE FATHER WAS TOO POOR TO GIVE A DOWRY COULD BE A MAN'S WIFE IF HE PAID HER FATHER A SUM OF MONEY, THUS SHE ENTERED HIS HOUSE WITHOUT MARRIAGE CONTRACT AS A SECONDARY WIFE (CONCUBINE), BUT EVEN SO HER RIGHTS WERE PROTECTED BY LAW (DEUT. 21:10-14) AND HER CHILDREN HAD EQUAL RIGHTS WITH THE CHILDREN OF THEIR FATHER'S WIFE BY MARRIAGE!

USUALLY, HEBREW WOMEN EXPOSED THEIR FACES, ONLY HARLOTS VEILED THEIR FACES—SO THEY WOULD NOT BE RECOGNIZED AS THEY PLIED THEIR TRADE!

THE FIRST WIFE RULED THE HOUSEHOLD, ALL OTHER WIVES OR CONCUBINES WERE UNDER HER DOMINION!

NEVERTHELESS, EVEN THE OLD TESTAMENT POINTED TOWARD MONOGAMY. MOSAIC LAW (DEUT. 17:17) FORBIDS A KING "...TO MULTIPLY WIVES". HOSEA PREACHED MONOGAMY, MALACHI ADMIRES A HUSBAND'S LOYALTY TO THE "WIFE OF HIS YOUTH (2:14ff) AND LO, BY NEW TESTAMENT TIMES, A JEWISH HUSBAND USUALLY TOOK BUT ONE WIFE!

NEXT WEEK: LOT'S WIFE—SALT OR NOT?

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