

TRIUMPH

“Do you know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it” (1 Cor. 9:24)

Figurative Language and Symbolism (4)

Gabriel Rodriguez

Inside This Issue:

“not given to much wine” (5)

Shepherd's Corner:
Jesus Continues to Live!

So how do we know, as we read and study our Bibles, that words/statements it uses should be taken literal or figurative? The Bible should always, whenever possible, be understood literal, but when a statement appears contrary to experience, known fact, or general teaching of truth, then we can expect the use of a figure of speech. Our inability to make this distinction has led to many false ideologies and concepts. Here are several examples: In Exodus 7:14, the Bible says that the Lord “*hardened Pharaoh’s heart,*” yet in Exodus 8:32 the Bible says that “*Pharaoh hardened his heart...*” Also, in Matthew 5:29-30, Jesus instructs his followers to pluck out their right eye or cut off their right hand if it causes them to sin, but were told the mind, which leads the body, is where the influence of sin resides and attacks (Eph. 4:17-19; Col. 1:22). So how do we make sense of these two apparent contradictions.

Once again, we are always to read the Bible literal until what is written and read contradicts experience,

known fact, or general teaching of truth.

So in these two cases, we know the first statements are figurative because what is written contradicts its reality. In the case of God hardening Pharaoh’s heart, the Bible teaches that man is a free moral agent, meaning he is capable of choosing for himself his own attitude and destiny (Deut. 30:15-19; Josh. 24:15; Isa. 7:14-15; Matt. 6:24). Therefore, God merely motivated Pharaoh’s “own stubbornness” through the plagues He cursed Egypt with. Hence, God hardened Pharaoh’s heart *indirectly*. In the case of the alleged mutilation of the body, we know the Bible teaches the mind is what controls the actions of the body (Pr. 4:23; 2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 5:27-28); therefore, Jesus’ point was clear, remove, any and all, influences of wicked thought from your mind, resulting in sinful bodily conduct.

Make sure we are never guilty of calling something literal when it’s figurative and vice-a-versa. May God be praised!

“not given to much wine” (5)

Church News and Announcements

CONGREGATION

Our Sunday luncheon is today after our morning services. Everyone is invited to stay and eat with us, especially our visitors.

The men’s dinner will be on September 22, and the ladies’ get together will be on September 24. Sign up sheets are in the foyer.

The Ladies’ Bible class and Men’s Training class will be at 4:00 pm on Sept. 27. The ladies will cover lesson 8 in their book and the men will discuss the minor prophet Zephaniah.

We need volunteers for the month of October: prepare communion, organize fellowship luncheon, and host youth devotional. If you can serve in any way, see Wayne Holmes.

YOUTH

Our next youth devotional will be hosted by Sister Lucille Neaves on Sept. 18th at 7:00 pm in the annex building. All youth are encouraged to attend.

YOUNG ADULT

Our next young/middle age adult devotional is scheduled September 25. Place and time to be announced later.

AREA NEWS

There are several area meetings for adults and youth in the area. Please check bulletin board in foyer for more information.

Another argument given in support of social drinking is found in Ephesians 5:18, where Paul says, “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.” As we’ve seen already the word for “drunk” is the Greek word *methuo* and is defined as “the beginning process of becoming drunk.” In other words, God condemns *the process* of becoming drunk, and not the state of drunkenness as some have suggested. But folks will continue to make the argument that the phrase “*wherein is excess*,” emphasizes the state of drunkenness and not the process. Let’s investigate.

The Greek word for “excess” is *asotia* and is defined as profligacy, dissolute life, and prodigality. The word suggests living a recklessly extravagant life, or wasteful in our use of resources. This word is suggestive of extreme sinful behavior. But as the question was given last week, what leads to extreme sinful behavior? Extreme sinful behavior doesn’t occur right away, rather through a series of choices and steps we lead ourselves into a vortex of hopelessness and despair. This is why the cry of the Lord for his children is: “*My son, receive my sayings, and the years of thy life shall be many...Enter not into the path of the wicked, go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away*” (Pr. 4:10,14-15). Don’t follow the path of evil men, for in it we begin a process that leads us further into the abyss of habits and extreme behavior (cf., Ps. 1:1,

walk, stands, and sits). Therefore, the thoughts of Paul are cogent and consistent with other Scripture. He begins by saying we are to not begin the process of distorting our minds with the use of alcohol, lest we are led to embrace extreme behaviors, such as: “*lasciviousness* (unbridled and shameless acts), *lusts* (strong desire), *excess of wine* (person engaged in foolish behavior), *revelings* (acting in obscene and gross way), *banquetings* (drinking parties), and *abominable idolatries* (criminal vices).

This concept of extremes is further validated in the book of Ecclesiastes, chapter 7, verses 16-17, “*Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why should you destroy thyself? Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why should you die before thy time?*” Solomon noted the importance of watching our thoughts and actions incessantly, lest we reach a state in which we become *overly* righteous or wicked, both leading to destructive consequences.

Remember, each step we take in life determines our destiny. This is why God commands us to be clear-minded and watchful at all times (1 Pet. 5:8), in order to make good decisions resulting in a good and successful life. When we decide to distort our mental process with the use of alcohol, there is no doubt that poor decisions are not far behind leading us to embrace more wicked habits and behavior. May God be praised! **G. Rodriguez**

WHAT SAITH THE LORD?

Nearly two thousand years ago an important question was raised before the Apostles after they had delivered the good news of Jesus's life, death, burial, and resurrection (Acts 2:21-36). The hearer's conscience were pricked of sinful conduct (2 Cor. 7: 10-11) and asked: "*Men and brethren, what shall we do* (in order to be saved)? (Acts 2:37). Without hesitation, Peter elevated his voice and proclaimed: "*Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 2:38).

Upon hearing the words of Peter, the people obeyed. This demonstrated their belief in Christ (Jn. 8:24). Hence, they repented of sin and confessed allegiance to the name of Christ (Matt. 10:32-33). Afterwards, the people were baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:41, cf. Mrk. 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21).

The people's submission to the words of salvation granted them a relationship with God the Father by accessing citizenship into the church of Christ (Acts 2:47, cf. Matt. 16:18; Mrk. 9:1; Acts. 2:1-4). As a member of Christ's body (Acts 8:4) the people were then encouraged to live faithful unto death by conquering sin in their lives (Rev. 2:10; Rom. 6: 4-12; 2 Tim. 4: 6-8). We then await for the coming day in which all men shall be judged the word of God (Jn 12:48; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Cor. 5:10). Will we be ready?

SHEPHERD'S CORNER

Jesus Continues To Live

Jesus explained His mission in the world in these words: "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk.19:10). Paul later wrote, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15). His ministry, His miracles, His preparation of the apostles, His death on the cross and His resurrection were all to one central purpose: "To save sinners." He willingly went to the cross, and shed His blood, because His blood was necessary to save sinners (Heb. 9:22; 10:4). The apostles wrote of Him, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins" (Eph. 1:7).

A great statement about "the power of the resurrection" is found in Heb. 7:15, "He is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." There is the key: He ever lives! We read, "The word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but to us who are ave saved, it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18). What makes the difference? That a dad man could save anyone was ridiculous. It still is! But the power of the gospel is in the fact that Jesus is not dead. He arose, and He "ever lives." Because He died, and arose, He "draws all Men" to salvation which is in Him (Jno. 12:32; 2 Tim. 2:10). The "word of the cross" is power to the believer, because Jesus gives power to it.

After His resurrection, the Lord commanded His apostles,, go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15). The reason was simple: the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). That gospel is "the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe" (1 Thes. 2:13). The gospel is not a dead letter, but a living message, "Living and active" (Heb. 4:12), because it is energized by the resurrection of Jesus. He gives power to His gospel, because "He ever lives" (Heb. 7:25). He is able to save, through the gospel as His power to save, because "He ever lives."

Bro. W. Holmes

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

BISHOPS/SHEPHERDS/ELDERS

(1 Tim. 3: 1-6)

Brother Elwyn Hipp (830) 510-6311,
Brother Wayne Holmes (210) 696-8597

DEACON

(Acts 6: 1-5; 1
Tim. 3: 7-12)

Brother Raul Baltierra
(210) 843-9730

GOSPEL PREACHER

(1 Cor. 9:1-16; 1 Tim.
4:6; 2 Tim. 4: 2-5)

Brother Gabriel Rodriguez
(210)315-4453



September 13

AM WORSHIP

Announcements: *W. Holmes*
 Opening Prayer: *A. Maldonado*
 Song Leader: *R. Trevino*
 Lord's Supper: *R. Baltierra Jr.; J. Mokry; J. Guillen; B. Dorries*

Scripture: *Isa. 53:10-12*
 Sermon: *G. Rodriguez*
 Benediction: *M. de la Garza*

PM WORSHIP

Announcements: *W. Holmes*
 Opening Prayer: *J. Mora*
 Song Leader: *A. Maldonado*
 Lord's Supper: *M. de la Garza; E. Lerma*

Sermon: *G. Rodriguez*
 Benediction: *Z. Watkins*

After Greeter: *G & I Rodriguez*
 Greeter/Usher: *S Hernandez*
 AV Duty: *M. de la garza*
 Elder in charge: *W. Holmes*

REMEMBERING OUR BELOVED

(by writing, calling, and praying)

Wayne Holmes
 Juanita Mahan
 Richard Rodriguez
 Rina White
 Argelia (Janie's mother)
 Joe Guillen
 Sarah Cannon
 Olga (Joe's mother-in-law)
 Ina Dial
 David Sudhoff
 Elijah Sudhoff
 Roy Guajardo (battling Parkinsons)
 Rose Scott (grandmother of Clay and Wes Bond)

BATTLING CANCER:

Barbara Oakes Johna Dorries
 Abigail Reyes Graciola Anderson
 Lydia Cowan George Jackson
 Briana Nieves Sonny Cary
 Mary Purkey Elwyn Hipp
 Edna Wilks (at home)

SHUT-INS:

Dorothy Harper
 Mary Louese Hughes
 Dazel Ball
 Mildred Geest

TRAVELING:

A. Jacob; Courtney Cobb (Japan);
 Mayces'

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES September

Organizing Monthly Luncheon:
Hernandez
 Preparing Lord's Supper:
Neaves
 Auditorium Service Duties:
Rodriguez
 Wash baptismal garments; clean cry
 room
Rodriguez
 Brother in charge of services:
B. Dorries

AM Theme:
 "Praising God" - A Study in the book of
 Psalms
 PM Theme:
 Setting the Church in Order - A Study in
 the books of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus

AM Sermon:
Psalm 19b

PM Sermon:
Unfeigned Faith

WEDNESDAY NIGHT DEVOTIONAL

September 2: *R. Baltierra Jr*
 September 9: *T. Mayces*
 September 16: *A. Maldonado*

FOR THE RECORD

September 6

Attendance:

Sunday Bible Study 47
 Sunday AM Worship 78
 Sunday PM Worship 48
 Wednesday Bible Study 35
 Budget/Offering: **\$2,450.00/ \$1,634.00**

Weekly Bible Readers: 12/20 (Adult Bible class)

SHENANDOAH CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Church email Address:

shenandoah@shenandoahcofc.org

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES:

Sunday: Bible Study at 9:30 am; Worship at 10:30 am;
 Worship at 5:00 pm.
 Wednesday: Bible Study at 7:00 pm