

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)

Matthew 23 (10)

Gabriel Rodriguez

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Jesus ends his admonishment of the Pharisees and scribes with these words: *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord”* (vss. 37-39).

Blindness and **hypocrisy** led to the demise of the Pharisees and scribes. Instead of upholding and caring for God’s true prophets, these had committed great atrocities against them. Because of their false efforts, Jesus stated that their houses would be left desolate, meaning their efforts would account for nothing; namely, on the Day of Judgment. Jesus ended by noting that the next time they would see him would be as judge and executioner (2 Cor. 5:10).

What have we learned in this written series? We’ve learned that God rejects spiritual pride and arrogance. He rejects people that put themselves above God’s sovereignty and truth. He hates those who put inconsequential items before great spiritual ideas and practices. And He despises those that talk a good talk, but whose lives are inundated with sin.

What God seeks for is just the opposite. He desires humility and service, especially from His spiritual leaders (e.g., elders, deacons, and evangelists). He seeks ideas and practice that are relevant to spirituality; ideas and practices that build up the mind and life of man. And God adores those who back up their spiritual talk with true righteous living.

Being fake is an affront to God and to the true understanding of what religion was intended to be. This is what sours the subject of religion, when you have those that lead and act opposite of its message. The problem as Jesus taught was, men desire human glory, rather than honoring and glorifying God. And this is what we wrestle with each day. We fight against men who seek their self-interests at the expenses of others and God. When we do this we destroy lives and malign the true work of God.

The message of Matthew 23 is what is wrong with our religious world today and the reason Christianity is under attack, because just as Jesus had to deal with imposters within the Jewish religion, likewise, Christianity has to deal with imposters today. Men and women who are more concerned about themselves than God. May God be praised!

Competition

Church News and Announcements

CONGREGATION

The men's dinner will be on January 26, while the ladies get-together will be on January 28. Sign up sheets are in the foyer.

The Ladies' Bible class and Men's Training Class is today at 4:00 pm.

Mark your calendars for our 28th Annual Lectures, Feb. 19-21: *The Superiority of the Christian System*. Brochures are in the foyer. Please begin to spread the word and invite family, friends, co-workers, and acquaintances.

YOUTH

The youth devotional will be hosted by the Dorries on February 12th in the annex building at 7:00 pm.

YOUNG ADULT

The young adult devotional is scheduled for February 26th. More details to follow.

AREA NEWS

See Bulletin Board for area wide meetings.

The idea of competition is a noble one, if used appropriately. Competition is the act of engaging in a contest to compete for something, but more so, it is to measure oneself against the efforts of others. Competition can be a good or bad endeavor. It is good when used to inspire us to win the prize against others (1 Cor. 9:24-27). But it is bad when used to arrogantly believe we are superior than others (Phil. 2:3-4).

While life affords us opportunities to showcase our talents, and those talents may elevate us in life, we must always remember several things. First, we are all created beings. This means we all serve a great Creator who possesses all power, wisdom, and glory (1 Cor. 1:25-31). Second, there is always someone bigger, faster, and smarter than you. This is meant to humble us. Also, it is meant to push us. This is the noble aspect of competition. Those with great talents should inspire us to push ourselves and achieve what we normally wouldn't think we could (1 Cor. 11:1). Third, we all must face the great equalizer - death. This means that no matter what someone achieves in life, no one can escape the inevitability of death (Heb. 9:27). So no matter what accolades we receive, someone with a PhD will die beside a non-educated man. So in the end, what good was it to compete in bolstering our ego if all men face the same fate?

The only competition we should be involved in is the race for life eternal (1 Cor. 9:24-27). This means we must compete with others in making sure we're doing

what God has commanded. This is not a competition of wit or strength, but one of resolve, discipline, and persistence.

This competition deals with who can be obedient to God through kindness, generosity, love, graciousness, and care for others (Matt. 25: 31-46). This competition is about serving God first, others second, and us last. So if there is something to strive for in life it is to see who can be more of a servant (Matt. 19:21; 20:16; 22:34-40).

So don't measure yourself with others in looks, wealth, education, and popularity. Measure yourself with others in obedience and service unto God. This is the ultimate way to greatness. Because in the end of life, when all men die and meet their Creator, the discussion will not be about what we accomplished secularly, but what we accomplished spiritually.

Let us push ourselves harder than before to be the man and woman God desires. Let us look at others who are doing the job God desires and use these folks to inspire us to live and be better in life. Just as Paul noted: "*Be imitators of me, just as I am of Christ*" (1 Cor. 11:1). Paul encouraged Christians to look to him for motivation to be who God desired. Paul wasn't arrogantly uplifting himself, rather he knew the potential that every Christian had to achieve the life God expects from His people. Our only competition is to defeat worldly pleasures and live for God. May God be praised!

Bro. 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

Saving Faith

When one visits a doctor, the doctor often prescribes medication. That prescription is then taken to a pharmacist, who follows the doctor's instructions as to dosage amount, frequency of application and so on. But what if the pharmacist said he gave a different medicine and that it made no difference what he gave, since a pill is a pill, and any old pill would do?!

What kind of a pill is taken is important. We don't want a pain killer if we need something for high blood pressure. We don't want something for an infection if we need a blood thinner. We want to be sure we get the right medication for the medical problem we have.

This same principle applies to faith. Any old faith will not save. We know that an unemployed faith will not save (James 2:14), and that a heartless faith is ineffective as well (James 2:16). In addition, we note that fearful faith is inadequate (James 2:19) and, finally, an indecisive faith is actually no faith at all. If we want to please God and be right with Him, it is critical that we develop the right kind of faith. "But my righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul" (Heb. 10:38-39). God wants us to have a faith that does not come up short, but is of a quality that will save our souls. But a saving faith will have several important qualities.

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



January 24

AM WORSHIP

Announcements: *B. Dorries*
 Opening Prayer: *W. Holmes*
 Song Leader: *A. Maldonado*
 Lord's Supper: *N. Esenowo; R. Baltierra Jr.; G. Rodriguez; S. Hernandez*

Scripture: *Mrk. 15:33-39*
 Sermon: *G. Rodriguez*
 Benediction: *J. Mokry*

PM WORSHIP

Announcements: *B. Dorries*
 Opening Prayer: *M. de la Garza*
 Song Leader: *G. Rodriguez*
 Lord's Supper: *T. Mayces; J. Guillen*
 Sermon: *G. Rodriguez*
 Benediction: *E. Hipp*

After Greeter: *J. Guillen*
 Greeter/Usher: *G. Gribble*
 AV Duty: *T. Mayces*
 Elder in charge: *E. Hipp*

REMEMBERING OUR BELOVED

(by writing, calling, and praying)

Wayne Holmes
 Richard Rodriguez
 Rina White
 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)
 Caral O'Banon
 Joe Rendon (brother of Rosemary Rendon) - fighting high blood pressure and needs kidney transplant
 Tomas Guillen (Brother of Joe)

BATTLING CANCER:

Barbara Oakes Johna Dorries
 Abigail Reyes Graciola Anderson
 Lydia Cowan George Jackson
 Briana Nieves Sonny Cary
 Elwyn Hipp Gwen Parker

SHUT-INS:

Dorothy Harper
 Dazel Ball
 Mildred Geest

TRAVELING:

A. Jacob; Courtney Cobb (Japan)

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES JANUARY

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

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 38
PM Sermon:
True Discipleship (2)

WEDNESDAY NIGHT DEVOTIONAL

January 27: *M. de la Garza*
 February 3: *E. Hipp*
 February 10: *J. Guillen*

FOR THE RECORD

January 17

Attendance:
 Sunday Bible Study 45
 Sunday AM Worship 57
 Sunday PM Worship 44
 Wednesday Bible Study 45
 Budget/Offering: **\$2,140.02/ \$1,611.55**

Weekly Bible Readers: 8/27 (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