

The Bulletin

Meeks St. Church of Christ

1201 Meeks St. Corinth, Ms. 38834

Phone – (662) 808-7777

Visit Our Website at:
MeeksstreetchurchofChrist.com

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“How Christians Handle Controversy” #2

By Brian Meade

Controversy is defined as “The act of arguing a question about which differences of opinions exist; debate; dispute.” (World Book Dictionary). We were discussing last time about why we have controversy in the world today. Here are some more reasons men choose to be disagreeable:

3. The Traditions of Men.

Notice what our Lord said in Mark 7:5, “*Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, “Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?”*”

We can only imagine how this text would have read differently— if it weren’t for the Pharisees’ and scribes’ outrage over the human tradition of eating only after the ceremony of washing hands. There would have been no controversy at all without such traditions!



Someone might ask, what’s wrong with washing their hands before eating? I know we tell our children to wash their hands before every meal, but what they were doing here goes beyond just good, clean hygiene. It was binding this practice of washing hands as a religious service, something the Law of Moses spoke nothing about doing in service to God.

Even more than that, it was the very point they used to condemn Jesus’ disciples, who failed to keep this self-imposed tradition. And this shows us very plainly the need to stay with divine Scripture over any laws bound by mere men. Even though it was claimed to be oral traditions from Moses, it was NOT SCRIPTURE!

This is why the silence of the Scriptures MUST be respected (Acts 15:24; Hebrews 7:14), and this would include making sure we do not add to God’s word in binding where God has not bound (Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:6; Acts 15:1-5; Colossians 3:17; Revelation 22:18-19).

In answer to their questioning of His disciples, Jesus had some of the strongest words against binding human traditions in Matthew 15:3, “*He answered and said to them, “Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?”*” From that statement He proceeded to show them how they had transgressed (Matthew 15:4-7), and even said, “*Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition*” (Matthew 15:6) All of this because they wanted to get around honoring their father and mother in their tradition of “Corbin.” (Mark 7:10-13)

But the strongest words were those that Jesus quoted Isaiah 29:13, and made proper application as He said, “*Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: “These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”*” (Matthew 15:7-9)

This incident is recorded in the New Testament record as a reminder and warning not to bring unnecessary controversy to God’s people today by binding traditions of men. Human traditions are unnecessary because we have been given “*all things that pertain to life and godliness.*” (2 Peter 1:3). Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*” If that is the case, and it is, how can anyone justify binding human traditions?

The only way to get rid of all conflict and controversy in religious matters today is to give up traditions such as: denominational creeds, infant baptism, holy water, humans societies and institutions doing the work of the church, youth ministers, praise teams, solos, choirs, instrumental music, priest and laity systems, gymnasiums, fellowship halls, church sponsored recreation and entertainment, and such like....

We can only imagine that all controversy would cease overnight if we would only stick to a “Thus saith the Lord” in everything we do (Colossians 3:17).

I wish all men could see this point so clearly!

4. The Deception Of False Teaching.

Perhaps one of the greatest ploys of Satan is to deceive many through the error of false teaching. According to the Bible, many have fallen prey to believing error and wrong ways of service to God.

In 2 Peter 2:1-2, Peter warns us of this fact, *“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.”* The saddest part of this prophecy is that many will accept, hold to, and defend their error! This brings so much controversy over doctrines that are not from God at all!

We read in Acts 15:1-2, *“Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.”*

False teaching on the matter of binding circumcision was a major problem that led to much controversy! It caused the church to come together to deal with this issue and set the record straight— Gentiles did not need to be circumcised to be saved. (Acts 15:24;28).

But that controversy would not go away anytime soon, as Paul would write to the Galatians, *“I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!”* (Galatians 1:6-9).

And there would be other controversies arise during the early church’s beginning— Gnostics would teach Christ did not come in the flesh (1 John); Some would teach the resurrection had already past (2 Timothy 2:16-18), and some would *“turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.”* (Jude 4).

Today, we have Calvinism to contend with and is a great source of controversy all over the religious climate. Calvinism teaches that babies are born in sin (Total Depravity), God elects men and woman unconditionally and without their own will (Unconditional election), that Christ did not really die for the whole world, as John 3:16 teaches, but He died for the saved only! (Limited Atonement), that if you are lucky enough to be picked by God, then you have no choice but be saved (Irresistible Grace), and once you are saved, you can never be lost (Perseverance of the Saints).

There are certainly a host of other false teachings that have been circulated and passed down through generations of the churches of men. Jesus was just a man, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one person (Jesus-only doctrine), the 70 AD doctrine that has infected many brethren, false teaching on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage, and many such issues that bring us controversy!

We can only imagine a world where every church teaches the doctrine of Christ! How sad? But it is the prayers Jesus (John 17:20-23) and Paul’s plea to the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians 1:10-13).

5. The Love of Sin.

The main reason for our controversy is because the world has some very different attitudes and desires than those who follow Christ. It is for this reason we find ourselves at odds with those are given over to sin (Ephesians 4:19).

I believe this is a very obvious point because we see men today who will fight for their “right to sin.” It is because of this we see alternative lifestyles of perversion (Romans 1:26-32) and the great conflict of holiness versus righteousness continues (John 3:19-21; 2 Timothy 3:1-5).

We fight against sin, evil, and wickedness every day!



Visit our YouTube Channel:

Meeks Street Church of Christ https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgiXJxZC1oraOugO9qlfBtw?view_as=subscriber

And Our Facebook Page.

For sermon videos, articles, and announcements.

News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, June Lawson (Lisa Busby's Mom), Debbie Keplinger, Janis Johnson, Daniel Holloway, Betty Hurst, Peggy Harville (cancer), Estell Wright, Linda Hunt, David Taylor, Randy Beaty, Sam Johnson, Sherry Doles, Randy Ferrell, J F Dancer, & Earl Mitchell, and Kelcy Whitemore.

LuAnne Parish is recovering at Corner Stone room B15.

Miss Betty Hurst came home from Corner Stone last Thursday.

Those Who Serve:

Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:

Opening Prayer:	Tim Harris Jr.
Preaching:	Brian Meade
Sermon #1:	<i>"Curses, Cursing, And Blessing"</i>
<u>Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:</u>	Jerry Kennemur
	1 Corinthians (Mike Willis)
	<i>Page 84, Question #1</i>

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:

Announcements:	Russell Briggs
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading:	Paul Busby
	<i>Acts 27:27-29</i>
Song Leader:	Jerry Kennemur
Lord's Supper:	Paul Johnson
Assisting:	— —
Preaching:	Brian Meade
Sermon #2:	<i>"Four Anchors For The Christian"</i>
Closing Prayer:	Nathan Meade

Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.

November 17th:

Auditorium Bible Class:	Russell Briggs
	Ecclesiastes & Song of Solomon (Mike Willis)
	<i>Page #54, Question #1</i>
Invitation:	Dan Cottrell
Song Leader:	Brian Meade
Closing Prayer:	Doug George

“Curses, Cursing, And Blessing”

Lesson Text: **James 3:9-10.**

I. What Is It To Be Cursed? **Genesis 3:14, 17;** It is a pronouncement of judgment on those who break covenant, **Deuteronomy 27:15-26 (12).**

“Curse” is usually parallel with “bless.” (Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (Vol. 1, p. 54). **Genesis 12:3; Deuteronomy 11:26-28; Jeremiah 17:5-7.**

II. What Is It To Curse? “denotes an “execration, imprecation, curse,” uttered out of malevolence, **Jas. 3:10;”** (Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (Vol. 2, p. 141).

Malevolence— ”The quality or state of being malevolent; evil disposition toward another; inclination to injure others; ill will.”

Examples: **Numbers 22:6; 1 Samuel 17:43; 2 Samuel 16:5-8.**

— Is It Wrong To Curse Men? **Romans 3:10-14; James 3:10-12.**

III. For What Are We Cursed By God?

- Not Loving The Lord- **1 Corinthians 16:22.**
- Not Serving Others- **Matthew 25:31-41; Proverbs 28:27.**
- Wickedness- **Proverbs 3:33.**
- Departing From God- **2 Peter 2:14.**
- Robbing God- **Malachi 3:8-9.**
- Preaching Another Gospel- **Galatians 1:8-9.**
- Perverting Justice- **Deuteronomy 27:19.**
- Negligence- **Jeremiah 48:10; 1 Kings 20:39-42.**
- Pride and Lawlessness- **Psalms 119:21.**
- Being A Deceiver- **Malachi 1:14; Acts 5:1-4.**
- Trusting In The Works Of The Law- **Galatians 3:10.**
- Not Glorifying God- **Malachi 2:2; Acts 12:21-23.**
- Seeking To Turn People Away From The Faith- **Acts 13:6-12.**

IV. What Do We Do When Cursed By Others?

- If It’s God— Choose The Blessing, Repent, & Live- **Deuteronomy 11:26-28.**
- If It’s Men— Don’t retaliate- **2 Samuel 16:9-14.**
 - Do not curse, but bless- **Luke 6:27-28; Romans 12:14; 1 Corinthians 4:12.**

V. The Sin Curse Has A Remedy.

- **Galatians 3:13-14; Acts 3:26.**

“Four Anchors For The Christian”

Lesson Text: **Acts 27:27-29.**

Anchor #1: The Bible— God’s Word To Man.

A Collection of _____ Books; What we call the _____ of Scripture From God; Each separate book is _____ of God (**2 Timothy 3:16**). It was penned by about _____ men who were moved by the Spirit to write Scripture (**2 Peter 1:20-21**) in a span of approximately _____ years. It was written on _____ Continents and written in _____ Languages. It was written by men of different walks of life in different time periods. Examples: David was a _____. Moses was a _____. Joshua was a _____. Nehemiah was a _____. Amos was a _____. Ezra was a _____. Peter was a _____. Luke was a _____. Paul was a _____. It is the pure word of God (**Proverbs 30:5; 1 Peter 2:2**); It has the answers to all of life’s greatest questions— Where did we come from? What is my purpose in Life? Is there an afterlife? What can I do about the guilt of my sin? What must I do to be saved? It gives comfort to the afflicted; It warns the evil and disobedient to Repent; How to avoid sin and misery; It gives us hope (**Hebrews 6:17-19**). It teaches us how to live a godly and moral life as a Christian; The Love of God (**John 3:16**); The future Reward for the Righteous; The Future Punishment of the wicked; It tells of God’s Grace, Mercy, Forgiveness...
It Anchors Us To God When We Listen and Obey It!

Anchor #2: The Family— By God’s Design.

- What God designed from the Beginning- **Genesis 2:20-25.**
- The Home suffers when there is a lack of following God’s instructions.
- Instructions for Husbands and Wives- **Ephesians 5:23-33.**
- Instructions For Children- **Ephesians 6:1-3.**
- A Godly Home is a Real Blessing & Anchor For Life- **Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 22:6.**

Anchor #3: Prayer— Our Communication To God.

- What are we doing when we pray to God? A.C.T.S.
 - Adoration- **Psalms 117:1-2.**
 - Confession- **Psalms 32:5.**
 - Thanksgiving- **Psalms 116:17**
 - Supplication- **1 Timothy 2:1-3.**
- God Answers Prayer- **James 5:16-18.**
- Prayer is an Anchor in Troubled Times- **Daniel 6:10-13.**

Anchor #4: The Church— God’s Family.

- **1 Timothy 3:14-15. Oikos-** “a household, family,” translated “family” in 1 Tim. 5:4, *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Vol. 2, p. 225).
 - Members Are To Care For One Another- **1 Corinthians 12:25-27.**
 - We Worship God Collectively- **Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:33; 16:1-2.**
 - Our Service Together In The Church- **Ephesians 4:15-16.**
 - It Is Our Anchor To God- **2 Corinthians 1:1-2.**