

## The sinner's prayer?

Thomas F. Eaves, Sr

Recently my wife and I went into a sandwich shop to eat lunch. On the counter was a stack of booklets titled, "God's Simple Plan of Salvation." Later as I read the material I came across two statements which caught my attention.

On salvation the booklet had,

*"Just pray: Oh God, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus was my substitute when He died on the cross. I believe His shed blood, death, burial and resurrection were for me. I now receive Him as my Savior. Thank you for the forgiveness of my sins and the gift of salvation and everlasting life, because of your merciful grace. Amen."*

It is interesting to note that in the Bible conversions, not one single person was commanded to pray "the sinner's prayer." Simon the sorcerer was commanded to repent and pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:22), but he had already believed and had been baptized (Acts 8:13). Simon was a believer (Christian) who had sinned and was instructed on how he could obtain forgiveness.

The answer to the question of the alien sinner, "What must I do to be saved?" is clearly set forth in Acts 2:22-47:

- ◆ Peter preached Jesus Christ
- ◆ The people were convicted
- ◆ Convinced of their sin, they asked for instructions
- ◆ Peter answered their question
- ◆ They obeyed Peter's instructions
- ◆ God added them to the church

On baptism the booklet mentioned above had,

*"You should be baptized in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ as a public testimony of your salvation, and then unite with a Bible believing church without delay."*

Nowhere in the Bible do you read that people were baptized or told to be baptized "as a public testimony of one's salvation." You do read in the Bible that baptism was,

- ◆ For remission of sins – Acts 2:38
- ◆ To wash away sins – Acts 22:16
- ◆ To put one into Christ – Galatians 3:27
- ◆ To unite the sinner with the death of Jesus Christ –Rom. 6:3-4
- ◆ For salvation – 1 Pet. 3:21; Mark 16:16

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# BULLETIN BRIEFS

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## THEIR LAWS ARE DIVERSE FROM ALL PEOPLE

Freddie Clayton

This is what wicked Haman told King Ahasuerus concerning the Jews (Esther 3:8). A more correct statement could not have been made. Haman considered this to be a part of good reason to destroy Mordecai and his Jewish brethren. The Jews were different. Their distinctive way of doing things separated them from the rest. But were they different, just to be different? No. When they followed the directions that God had given them, **that** made them different.

What about God's people today? Are there folks who say about us, "Their laws are diverse from all people"? If so, it is not because of *our* laws, but "the perfect law of liberty," (James 1:25), that we strive to follow. Without a doubt, when we lose our distinctiveness, we have lost the right to call ourselves the people of God. By its very nature, truth sets apart all those who are determined to follow it. That is one of the history lessons of the Bible. We have only to look around us today and observe that many are not satisfied being "diverse from all people." In their desire to not stick out like a sore thumb they become more and more like the world in which we live. By wanting to blend in, they become more and more like the denominational world they desire to fellowship. When such happens, brethren have become more and more *diverse from* what God's people are demanded to be. May we not be guilty of trying to rub out the line of distinction that should be apparent between God's people and the world in general, and denominationalism in particular. "**For ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people...**" (1 Pet 2:9). Box 206, Dunlap, TN 37327

## THE MACEDONIAN CALL TODAY

Jim E. Waldron

It is said that N.B. Hardeman used to advise preaching students: *when you seek a place to preach “don’t look for a tub of butter.”* Jesus himself said, **“Take heed and beware of covetousness ...” (Luke 12:15).** Again the Spirit testified, **“Therefore put to death...covetousness, which is idolatry”** (Col. 3:5). With the great affluence of churches today affecting the caliber of our preaching we might wonder how some preachers would answer the Macedonian call (Acts 16:9). Sadly the truth is often worse than this faction:

Dear Brothers,

I send you greetings from America. I was much surprised and delighted to receive your call and to know that even in that benighted land you had heard of me. Your invitation was very interesting, but I would like to inquire about a few things before I answer your request. What size is the congregation in Philippi? I am accustomed to working with rather large, well-established congregations and would feel deflated were I to be confined to a pulpit where the crowds are small.

Speaking of pulpits, I feel sure you already know I am a pulpit minister. Do you have other ministers? Like Minister for Youth? Minister of Involvement? Minister of Education? Minister of Music? In this connection, may I ask how large is your total staff? Besides my pulpit work I am accustomed to serving as administrator of a large staff and would simply feel let down if I did not have a significant number of people working under my command.

Please let me ask about your church complex. At the place I presently preach we have a spacious sanctuary with multiple classrooms in which we conduct a vibrant Sunday School from 9:00 to 9:45 each week. We also have a large family life center, complete with gym, sauna, spa and weight room, which is used every night of the week.

Now concerning personal accommodation for me and my family. We have a large house here in the metro area, but I feel we would be able to sacrifice for the cause there with say a medium (2000 square feet or so) sized three bedroom house or as you might put it “villa.” Provided, of course, it were located in the right suburb of Philippi where we could mingle with the proper movers and shakers of Macedonian society.

I must approach the subject of salary. If all the customary benefits were paid such as housing, social security, utilities, car allowance, club fees and the like I believe we could come for as little as \$85,000.00 a year.

Very truly yours, Dr. Hira Ling, B.Th., M.Th, D.D., and DDT.

*P.S. Oh! One more thing.. You may disregard all of the above for my wife just informed me we are not going to a foreign country.*

## SEPARATION?

Andrew M. Connally

**Those who separate violate specific commands of God.** Paul argues, “Let not the wife depart from the husband and let not the husband leave the wife” (1 Cor. 7:10-11). First, let it be noted, this is a direct command: “I give charge” - this is the force of a military order (*International Critical Commentary*, pg. 140). (cf. 1 Thess. 4:11). Paul further emphasizes no higher authority can be found in heaven or on earth – the Lord himself has so “charged” - “That the wife depart not from her husband...; and that the husband leave not his wife.” Brethren, these solemn “charges” are being constantly ignored by preachers who refuse to teach them, and by elders who refuse to enforce them. To separate is to sin. This is God’s rule.

**To separate is to place ungodly temptation before your mate.** Paul argues in 1 Corinthians 7:2-5 “To avoid fornication let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. The wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband: likewise also the husband hath not power over his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other...” To deny your body to your mate is to steal!

Someone is quick to say that Paul said, “but if they depart let them remain unmarried or else be reconciled to their mates,” doesn’t this sanction their separation? Emphatically not! “Let them not depart” - but there are those who refuse to listen so Paul exhorts them not to make it worse by remarrying (hence the implication is do not get a divorce even if you separate). Why? Because the door of reconciliation should always be kept open. Paul says remain unmarried or be reconciled. Any situation is made worse by compounding the sin, and unscriptural divorce after separation and unscriptural marriage after separation make it worse. This further admonition by Paul to “remain unmarried,” meaning do not take a second marriage partner, can in no way be construed to give comfort to one who sins by separation. Brother Jack P. Lewis states: “Paul demands even if there is a separation, the possibility for reconciliation must be kept open. Divorce is forbidden. Paul states his case as a word of the Lord” (*Your Marriage Can Be Great*, pg. 418).

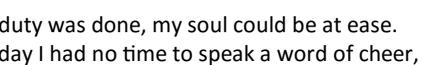
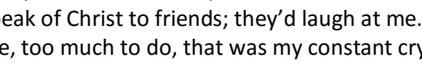
“What God hath joined let not man put asunder,” are Jesus’ words in Matthew 19:6. For anyone to separate and/or divorce, without fornication being the grounds, is to try to put asunder what God has joined together. I charge those who do so with sin, and warn them they shall not escape the wrath of God at the judgment. Preachers, and Christians who tell those who are having problems, “to separate” are giving comfort and abetting the lies of Satan. They, too, shall give account. God “hates putting away” (Mal. 2:14), and fornication is still the only grounds, the only exception, for scriptural divorce and remarriage.

Now what of gross abuse unto death, or fear for your life, or the lives of your children, or the “unequal yoke” (cf. 2 Cor. 6:14-17). This

must be faced and considered. While these would constitute the grounds for separation, they do not constitute grounds for divorce or remarriage. Any yoke of marriage becomes unequal when it is impossible for you to serve God because of your partner’s evil. While you must “come out” of that situation, you cannot divorce or remarry without the single exceptive reason of fornication (Matt. 19:9).

NOTE: The above article is from the book *Separation Is Sin* by Goebel Music. It may be ordered from brother Music at 5114 Montclair, Colleyville, TX 76034 for \$5 postpaid.

## NO TIME

I knelt to pray, but not for long, I had so much to do,  
Must hurry off to work for bills would soon be due,  
And so I said  a hurried  
prayer,  jumped up  
from my  knees;  
My Christian duty was done, my soul could be at ease.  
All through the day I had no time to speak a word of cheer,  
No time to speak of Christ to friends; they’d laugh at me.  
No time, no time, too much to do, that was my constant cry;  
No time to give to those in need, at last ‘twas time to die.  
And before the Lord I came, I stood with downcast eyes,  
Within His hand He held a book, it was the Book of Life.  
He looked into His book and said, “Your name I cannot find  
I would have written it down, but you never had time.



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