

SAMARIA CHURCH OF CHRIST

Water of Life

“...the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” - John 4:14

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“TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?”

DAVID ELDRIDGE

In the final portion of John 6, Jesus had been deserted by many of His followers (vs. 66). Seeing this, He turns to the twelve and asks, “Do you also want to go away?” (vs. 67). Peter, upon hearing this question, begins his response with another question. He asks, “Lord, to whom shall we go?” (vs. 68). This is a question many in the world are asking today, with many replying very differently than Peter. Let us consider the places some go today to find spiritual direction.

SHALL WE GO TO MEN? Many, when faced with this question turn to respected men instead of the Lord. The Bible warns of the danger in this over and over again. In Jeremiah 10:23, the weeping prophet states, “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” Solomon stated the same truth in another way. He said, “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Prov. 14:12). We must realize that, when it comes to determining

what direction our life should take, using the words of man as our source of authority is both wrong and dangerous. However, we are constantly bombarded with names like Martin Luther, John Wesley, John Calvin, Charles Spurgeon, and others who in the eyes of some are infallible. It would do us well to remember the words of Peter to Cornelius. When Cornelius fell down to worship Peter, Peter told him to stand up. Why? Peter said, “I myself am also a man” (Ac. 10:26). Don’t think more highly than you should of any man. Realize the opinion of a fallible man is no place to seek direction for your spiritual well-being. Not being able to go to men, we move on in our search.

SHALL WE GO TO CREEDS? I pose this question in this article for the simple fact that some would rather take what their denomination’s creed book says than what the Bible teaches. The word creed means “I believe.” The way the word creed is used

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“TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?” (CONTINUED)

today is almost always speaking of the articles of some particular denomination which govern its practices. To have an uninspired book govern the way a group of people worship, believe, and obey the God of heaven and earth is objectionable on many points. First, it is written by a man. As we have already noted, men are fallible and likely to error. Secondly, we need nothing more than the Bible to guide our walk before God. Paul told Timothy that *“All scripture is given by the inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”* (2 Tim. 3:16-17). We do not need a discipline, confession, catechism, or manual to guide us, for God’s word and it alone can make us complete. The evangelist Benjamin Franklin wrote: “First, any creed containing more than the Bible is objectionable, because it does contain more than the Bible. Second, any creed containing less than the Bible is objectionable, because it does contain less than the Bible. Third, any creed differing from the Bible is objectionable, because it does differ from the Bible. Forth, any creed precisely like the Bible is useless, because we have the Bible.” To use a creed to govern our faith and practice is to deny the all-sufficiency of the Bible!

SHALL WE GO TO THE LORD? Returning to Peter in John 6:68, his full statement was:

“Lord, to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life.” We must realize, as Peter did, that we cannot turn to ourselves, another man, or some writing of a particular denomination to find the way of life eternal. Only Christ has the words of life, and those words are found only on the pages of inspiration – the Bible. This is why Jesus could boldly say, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father, but by me”* (Jn. 14:6). My friend, do not take something for truth just because some respected man said it, some denomination taught it, or it is the way you think to be best. Take something as being truth because it is what Jesus revealed as truth in His word!

REMEMBER OUR 2009 GOALS

Read Bible Daily

Every One Teach One

Show Love For Others

*“Let your light so shine before men
that they might see your good works
and glorify your Father in Heaven”*

Matthew 5:16

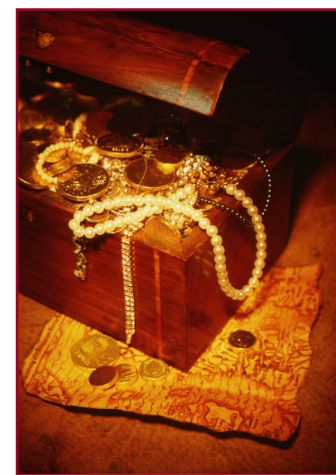
“CASTING YOUR PEARLS BEFORE SWINE”

DAVID ELDRIDGE

In Matthew 7:6, Jesus is recorded as saying, *“Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.”* Dogs are sometimes fierce, and to His Jewish audience swine were unclean. Jesus instructs them not to give them things holy or valuable for they will not profit by it or be appreciative of it. God’s word is holy, precious, and profitable. We need to keep this statement of the Lord in mind when we share His word with others. We must judge an individual’s character by their actions, and act judiciously when teaching God’s word. Consider how we can cast our pearls before swine when talking to others about the Gospel.

WHEN ONE REFUSES TO HEAR. Some, through the hardness of their heart, refuse to hear the good word of God. Paul dealt with this among the Jews in Acts 17:44-46. Some of the Jews in Antioch blasphemed and contradicted God’s word. So, Paul and Barnabas said, *“It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles”* (vs. 46). Though we, through continued teaching, try to soften the hard-

hearted with the word of God, there comes a time when we are wasting our efforts – we must then *“shake off the dust from our feet”*. When one repeatedly refuses to hear, we are casting our pearls before swine (unclean and unappreciative people) and need to refocus our efforts toward those who may listen as Paul and Barnabas determined to do.



WHEN ONE REFUSES TO REPENT. We may encounter those who know better but refuse to do better. The apostle touched on this in Hebrews 6:4-6: *“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened... if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.”* If one knows God’s word and that they are in sin, we have a responsibility to try to

restore them (Gal. 6:1). However, knowing they are in sin, they must make the choice to come back. We may use too much of our time trying to tell the one who knows better to do better. Furthermore, we may be more profitable in telling the one who does not know God’s word about His plan. They might respond and come to the Lord with thanksgiving. Be judicious that you may not *“cast your pearls before swine”* for those who know better but refuse to repent.