



BEACON

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Some Thoughts on the Past and the Shape We Are In *Charles Pogue*

Please pardon me for beginning this article with a bit of autobiography. In high school, I preached for a small congregation in a tiny neighboring town where my maternal grandparents lived and were members. When I graduated from high school, I attended one semester at what was then Lubbock Christian College. That was in 1968. There was so much error being taught there, especially by K.C. Moser, that I left after one semester. When I returned home, I preached in another small congregation close to home, where I also had relatives. Some people who lived in this latter town were pre-teens or teenagers. They were always present for worship, and I believed at the time they did and always would stand for the truth and hate error. It is not the same with those individuals today. Some have left the church entirely, while others have embraced false doctrine.

Among the latter group, some have since moved to the Dallas area and have accepted instrumental music, a direct operation of the Holy Spirit, and along moral lines, that it is not wrong to drink just to get drunk.

I cannot help but ask myself some questions. As a very young man, did I see the need for teaching against error as much as I did for teaching what is true? Did the parents of some of those who were then still in high school not teach their children to be faithful to New Testament teachings? Was the problem one of those two things, or

could it be those who were then teenagers and are now in their fifties and sixties have been led astray by false teachers (2 Pet. 2:1; 1 John 4:1)? Or did they not continue to study (2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16-17; 1 Pet. 2:2), that they might grow in the things of the Lord (Eph. 4:15)?

Looking back on it, I do not believe the problem was with my preaching. There could have been some failure on the part of the parents, but for the most part, I am convinced the problem is with the individuals themselves. Some of them married outside of Christ, but that is a separate discussion from the one at the present. The sad condition of these individuals lies in themselves. They never continued to study the Scriptures as they matured into adults. They never proved all things (1 The. 5:21). They have embraced the world's sinful ways and touched the unclean things (2 Cor. 6:17).

We live in a day and time when many have embraced the falsehood that they do not need authority for what they do religiously (Col. 3:17; 2 The. 2:15). They have rejected the very concept of "what saith the scripture" (Gal. 4:30). Some have done as did those in the first century, wrested the Scriptures to their destruction (2 Pet. 3:16). We live in a day when modesty is becoming a thing of the past (Gen. 3:21; 1 Tim. 2:9). People are influenced by culture rather than led by the Word of God.

Two times in the epistle to the Galatians, Paul writes a rebuke that many today need to hear and heed.

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? (Gal. 3:1).

Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? (5:7).

The sad and simple truth is that anyone preaching for several decades can relate to experiences like mine. Some, as can I, can point to a congregation where they preached that was faith-

ful at the time but has since gone entirely off course.

If a preacher fails to preach the whole counsel of God, he will answer for it on the Day of Judgment. But those who fall into error and other sins will be unable to point their finger at him and say, "he did not tell me, therefore excuse me." Everyone will answer to God for himself on that Day of Judgment (Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10). When we look at the error and worldliness inundating the church of our Lord, there is much for which many will answer!

Deceased

"What is the 'Unpardonable Sin'?"

Guy N. Woods

There is really no such thing. Neither the phrase nor the idea it connotes appears in the Sacred Writings. The implication is that one can sin so it is impossible to obtain forgiveness. There is no such situation. Taught repeatedly and with the greatest emphasis throughout the New Testament is the glorious fact that when (a) one genuinely repents of all wrongdoing, (b) ceases the practice thereof, and (c) complies with the conditions applicable, full and complete pardon by our Lord is gladly and graciously bestowed. This, indeed, has been the divine assurance through the ages. In the long-ago Isaiah penned these comforting words:

Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon (Isa. 55:6-7).

Also, God promised through the new covenant, "And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 10:17). With such comforting assurances, the Scriptures abound.

The passage usually, but erroneously, is designated as teaching the doctrine of "unpardonable sin" in 1 John 5:16, where reference is made to the

"sin unto death." However, this is simply a sin a brother will not confess—a fact that the larger context clearly shows. The Lord will forgive every sin a brother confesses (1:9), but there is a sin the Lord will not forgive (5:16). Therefore, the sin the Lord will not forgive is simply a sin that a brother will not confess. The context corroborates this view, and the premises lead logically to this conclusion. If I witness sin on the part of an erring brother or sister and such may be brought to penitence and confession, I not only may, but it is also my duty, to pray for such with the assurance that the Lord will hear and answer the petition made (Jam. 5:16). But if the brother or sister persists in such rebellion, it is a vain and useless exercise to pray for the forgiveness of impenitent persons. The Lord will not hear and answer such a prayer for the brother or sister involved.

The "sin against the Holy Spirit" (Mat. 12:31-32) is, in principle, the rejection of the revelation that the Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, made, first through our Lord and then through His representatives. It is the denial of the Spirit's message initially by direct inspiration and then through the Book, the practical effects of which are the rejection of the deity of our Lord, the repudiation of His sacrificial death, the annul-

ment of the atonement, and the implication that a sacrifice will yet be made. Those who thus do would crucify Christ “afresh” from the allegation that He who died on the cross was an imposter and that the Suffering Saviour must yet appear and suffer. Salvation is denied to those of this category, not because it is not offered to them, but because they have permanently rejected it (Heb. 6:1ff; 10:25-28). The ever-flowing waters of the

Well of Life are always available to those who desire to come and quench their thirst. We should rejoice that

“There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.”

Deceased

“As Was His Custom”

Doug Post

So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read (Luke 4:16).

We are familiar with the question. It is one that I am sure all of us have asked, especially when we were children. However, people of all ages and varying degrees of faith still ask this question: “Do we have to go to church?”

The simple, straightforward answer is “Yes.” The reason we go is that Jesus went to *church*. The Bible tells us that Jesus regularly attended the synagogue, which was the equivalent of the **church** in the Old Testament. Moreover, He did not simply go to church once or twice a year; He went weekly. We could say, “He went all the time,” or “Every time the doors were opened.”

Luke 4:16 states that Jesus went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was His **custom**. *Ethos* means “behavior based on law or tradition, to be accustomed—one’s habit or manner of life.” The *Cambridge Dictionary* defines it as the set of **beliefs, ideas, practices, etc.**, about a person or group’s **social behaviour and relationships**. Quite simply, Luke is telling us that Jesus not only attended church every Sabbath but also valued worshipping God and being with His spiritual family—the **church** (assembly).

Since Jesus went to **church** and is our example for spiritual living, we, too, go to church to wor-

ship God. We go because Jesus went to **church** to worship God. What other reason does one need to go to church? While many understand that Jesus is their example for living, they nonetheless refuse to follow His example by going to church. A generation ago, there was a famous slogan: “What Would Jesus Do?” The question today is, “What Did He do?” He went to church, of course, and so should you!

Jesus placed a high priority on attending church because it was the place where Scripture was read and preaching and teaching took place. He thought it was good for people to study the inspired Word of God, because it was how people could draw closer to God. It was a place to go to speak with God and to share one’s heart with their Creator. It was a time to sing songs of thanksgiving for His grace and mercy. Worship is about sharing love with God and for God—and for one another. How difficult can it be to set aside a mere **hour** each week to go to church and honor God? Did not Jesus set aside His life for you? Is it not reasonable, then, to make going to church a priority? Make His custom your custom and your family’s custom. The first day of the week (Sunday) comes around once a week.

“For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps” (1 Pet. 2:21).

Irving, TX

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Beacon

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Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Linda Worley

Carla Bureson

Bill & Pam Busch

Linda Parks

Please Remember

May 31

Fifth Sunday Dinner after the morning service. Singing and a devotional service at 1:00 pm.

Weekly Services

Sunday

Bible Classes for all ages — 9:00 a.m.

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad