The Ease of Error

Jesus once said that the path before each of us is laid out in two forms (Matthew 7:13, 14). One is broad and wide, and the other is restricted and narrow. One leads to destruction, the other leads to life. It is readily recognized that the path along the broad and wide way is the easy one to pursue. In any parallel in the physical world one can see the truth of that. Water flowing down a hill will naturally take the open and unimpeded way, and only a small portion will go through some narrow passageway. Spiritually speaking, that principle is an important one to consider.

Did God design a system that was meant to destroy the majority? If He did, He is our problem, not our solution. God’s way has always been open and apparent. Its narrowness is only so because it is opposed by so many perceived routes of ease. Satan knows the hearts of men and is readily willing to make alternate routes appear before us (cf., I Peter 5:8). God’s way, although open to all, is nevertheless a finite reality. It doesn’t open wider to accommodate man’s willful pursuit of multiple options.

God is not willing that any should perish but that all could come to the knowledge of truth (I Timothy 2:4; II Peter 3:9). God’s way is not restricted for the sake of precluding men from finding it, but because truth demands compliance to God’s way. For all who come honestly to His truth, the pathway is seen to be open and cleared of obstacles. For those who ignore God’s invitation, it appears to be limited and uninviting. That is not God’s doing, but our own.

Sin is easy because it takes little thought and effort. It preys on our own desires for self-gratification. To sin, all one has to do is whatever it is we want. To do God’s will means that one has to surrender to His directing force. Such surrender requires correction and commitment. As in all things one attempts in life, it is always easier to make mistakes than to succeed. How easy is it to drive a car off the road? How easy is it to burn something on the stove? (continued)

Lessons from a Tragedy

It was heart-rending to all who watched as the jubilation turned to horror. It was just after midnight on January 4 when the news came that all 13 West Virginia coal miners who had been trapped for some 44 hours had been found alive. Church bells rang, relatives cried and shouted for joy and news media were quick to spread the good news. But, then came the news that the report was false and that all of the men but one had been found dead. This tragedy captured the attention of our nation. Although our hearts go out to those who lost their loved ones, there are some lessons from this tragedy that can be applied to life.

First, the individual who began the story that they had all been found alive sincerely thought he had heard the report of their survival. He had merely overheard a portion of a report. Many today sincerely think they have heard the truth and prematurely “run” with the partial report they have. As with the mining disaster report, we must be sure that we have the complete story of God’s desires (i.e., His plan of salvation) before telling it to others. Millions are wagering their eternity on the words of mere men who sound authoritative, honest and sincere but who, in actuality, are spreading news that is not true. The gospel will save (Romans 1:16), but it must be preached, believed and obeyed completely or else it is powerless (since in such a state it is not really the gospel—Galatians 1:6-8).

Second, the people gathered at the church building that night sincerely believed that their loved ones were alive. They could not have believed it any more sincerely had it actually been true. In actuality, they believed that which was untrue. There are men who fall into this category in the religious world. They honestly and sincerely believe that which they have been told. There’s just one problem with that—what they have been told is not the truth (Matthew 7:21-23). They believe firmly that it is the truth and act on those beliefs. The families of those (continued)
The Ease of Error (continued)
All it takes is a momentary lapse of thought. But to do something right, one has to stay focused to the end. It is the same with one’s soul.

Becoming a Christian is relatively easy, but it requires being willing to let God provide the method. Remaining a Christian then becomes a lifetime effort. God knows that perfection isn’t possible, so we can correct our course along the way. But He does require a constant walk with Him. May we always resist the easy way and be able to ultimately find the ease of heaven.
— Dennis L. Curd

Lessons from a Tragedy (continued)
Miners acted upon their sincere beliefs as well. But, their actions did not coincide with what was actually the case.

There are likely many more lessons that could be noted from this tragedy. No one believes that the originator of this false report that the miners were found alive did it maliciously. However, Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44), and he will maliciously lead you astray through any means necessary (II Corinthians 11:12-15). As Jesus said, “Take heed what you hear” (Mark 4:24). —Eddy

Are You Active?
Are you an active member,
The kind that would be missed,
Or are you just content that
Your name is on the list?

Do you attend our services
And mingle with the crowd,
Or would you rather stay at home
And complain long and loud?

Do you give a little time
And help to make things click,
Or leave the work to just a few
And talk about the “clique”?

There’s quite a program scheduled
To bring glory to God, if done.
And it can be accomplished
With the help of every one.

So, come on to all the services
With your Bible in your hand and
Jesus in your heart.
Don’t just be another member,
But take an active part.

Think it over, member,
Are you right or wrong?
Are you an active member,
Or do you “just belong”?

author unknown

Do NOT Fall Away
Jesus’ words recorded in John 11-16 were spoken to His apostles shortly before His betrayal and His trials before the Jews and Pilate. They are very warm and personal. He is encouraging them and telling them what is going to happen. In the midst of these wonderful words, He says, “These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended” (fall away) (John 16:1).

Can you imagine the apostles falling away? No one was closer to Jesus. No one loved Him more. No one had seen more of His miracles, and no one had heard more of His wonderful lessons; and yet, He was concerned that they not fall away.

In the brotherhood today one of the grave problems facing us is the loss of members who just silently and slowly fall away. The progression is usually gradual. A person begins by missing the worship services—Sunday night and lastly, Sunday morning. It is because of many things: work, children, my mate will not come, sickness, obligations, guests in our home over the weekend, and the list goes on.

In all of the physical things and reasons which keep us from the assembly and communing with Jesus, there is a deterioration of spiritual strengths within us. Our love for the Lord, the church and His Word gradually diminishes. Our zeal for service at church wanes. We don’t help and serve like we used to. Our fellowship with the saints is injured. They don’t know if they should say something to us about missing or not. We may be defensive and show it. If we have been sick, we want them to ask. If we have willfully forsaken the assembly, we don’t want them to ask. SItuations like this cause us to hedge and give uncertain answers.

The word John used in this passage is “skandalon”, which is the Greek word for stumbling or offense. We get our English word “scandal” from it. Those who fall away from following the Lord stumble at something or are offended by something. It could be persecution, indifference or most anything. In fact, when Jesus explained the parable of the sower, He said that some of the seed did not grow because the cares of the world and the delight in riches choked the Word. “Cares” and “delight in riches” are at opposite poles. Some people do become weighed down with the care of making a living. Some have it made and have to spend it.

The other word used in Scripture for falling away is “apostasia”, which meant to stand away from or to fall away from. Our words, “apostate” and “apostacy” come from the Greek word. I know of very few who would say that they are apostates. Most say that they have just quit attending church services, but are still Christians. Jesus’ teachings do not agree. He requires devotion and steadfastness. Have YOU quit?
—Harvey Porter

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoving, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord”—I Corinthians 15:58.
SICK
At home: Mitzi Pettit, Gloria White. Shirley Baker, 518, RMH, recovering from surgery. Kirk Gilpin had his wisdom teeth out on Friday. Joan Neighbors, Glenn’s mom, is recovering from surgery to clear the arteries in her neck. Tom Wood, Evelyn White’s son-in-law, has cancer. Lisa Knott, Glenn’s sister’s friend, does not have BOOP disease; she does have a disease which hardens scar tissue in her lungs; will be on chemotherapy for six months. Continue to remember: Cora Akers, Mary & Lynn Anderson, Bobby & Eugene (LGH, 662, internal bleeding?) Argabright, Norma Biller, Patsy Boyd, Shannon Broce, Betty Buckner, Jim Bush, Marguerite Charles, Sandra Daniels, Jim Dorsett, John Dowdy, Bob (recovering from out-patient surgery) & Sandy Garby, Collin & Luetta Gregory, Patti Gwaltney, Steve Hart, Nettie Hogan, Dan Hudgens, Margaret Kratz, Oliver & Miriam Majors, Donnie Mountcastle, Alvin Murray, Jo Musgrove, Joe Myers, Sandra Neighbors, Becky Phillips, Ruby Riffle, Joanna Rogers (in a Monroe-ville, PA, hospital; complications from emphysema), Murphy Scott, Annette Shadrer, Sarah Snead, Ruth Stanton, Jerry Ulrey (VAMC, Bldg. 2, 319; no more treatments; will have pain management only), Evelyn White, Emmalynn Whitlow, E.V. & Effie Wimmer, W.J. Wood.

SYMPATHY: We extend our love and sympathy to Willard Campbell in the loss of his uncle, to Dorothy Mays in the loss of her Aunt Eva and to Geoff & Marina Rowe and family in the passing of our dear brother, Lacy, who died on 1/21 in Florida.

RESPONSES: David Brown, John Black
MISSIONARIES: the Pearsons, the Staffords and the TZ2000 team.

MILITARY: Ty Stricklin (to be re-deployed soon); John Shannon and Gabriel Hayes who are in Iraq.

OTHER: On-going Bible studies, Restore 2006

THIS WEEK AT WEST SIDE
Today: W.O.W. luncheon following morning services; HtH labeling, 4pm; young men conduct evening services.
Monday: Happy birthday to Fred Altizer! Happy anniversary to Tom & Melissa Rogers!
Wednesday: Bible Study, 7pm.
Thursday: Happy birthday to Hazel Maness & Lori Whitlow!
Saturday, 2/4: Team 1 (Duff), 9am, meet at building, trash pickup; Winter Youth Devo, Christiansburg, 6-7:30pm. Happy birthday to Curtis Oakes & Nathan Pelfrey!
Sunday, 2/5: Elders/Deacons/Preachers’ Meeting, 4pm. Happy birthday to Adam House & Louise Quesenberry!

WEDDING SHOWER
Honoring Kellee Wooddell, bride-elect of Kyle Gilpin, Sunday, February 12, 4pm in the fellowship room. Please pick up a blank recipe card from the table in the foyer and write your favorite recipe for the bride. These will be presented to her at the shower. Kyle & kellee are registered at Target; Bed, Bath & Beyond and Belk. If you have questions, see JoAnn Edwards, Melissa Rogers or Lisa Valentine.

TEAM 1 (DUFF) TRASH PICK-UP
Saturday, 2/4, 9am. Meet at the building. Questions? See Tom Duff.

FELLOWSHIP TEAM 3 (BROWN)
Finger-food fellowship at the Browns’, Saturday, 2/11, 6pm.

FEBRUARY ITEMS—STAFFORDS
Dentyne “Fire” gum, pepperoni

IT’S BEEN CANCELLED!
Due to the overwhelming response (678,394 individual e-mails to NBC) plus thousands of phone calls to local affiliates, “The Book of Daniel” has been cancelled.

NEW DIRECTORY SHEETS
Directory sheets for Sandra Bowen are on the table in the foyer, along with those for the Benefields & Harringtons.

Is The Way of Christ Boring?
I have often heard people speak of certain aspects of Christianity as “boring”. It is true that if Bible teachers, preachers, worship leaders and song leaders get up with a half-hearted, unprepared and mechanical presentation, it not only causes a loss of interest, but it is not pleasing to God, the object (and subject) of our worship.

Worship can, and should, be a vital, challenging and interesting part of our lives as followers of Christ. Not that we try to please ourselves or provide entertainment, but we can seek to have the same sense of awe, reverence, hope, victory and optimism (faith) that the Christians of the first century had. We have the same Christ, the same message, the same challenges and the same worship that they had. If the saving of souls was exciting to them, why can’t it be to us? If their worship was so desirable that they wanted to worship daily, why can’t it be to us? And, if they were inspired and challenged by the messages, and they were uplifted and strengthened by the worship, and they were mutually encouraged by one another, then why should we be bored if we follow their example? Think about it.

via The Edgewood Bulletin Columbus, GA

“I will praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart;
I will show forth all thy marvelous works.
I will be glad and rejoice in thee;
I will sing praise to thy name, O thou Most High.”
Psalm 9:1-2

“I was glad when they said unto me,
let us go into the house of the LORD.”
Psalm 122:1

“Praise ye the LORD:
for it is good to sing praises unto our God;
for it is pleasant;
and praise is comely.”
Psalm 147:1
February 2006

Announcements .......................... Danny Guard
Reader (PM) ............................... Garrett Durham
Preside ................................. Charles Maness
Serve ................................. Tom Duff, Kirk Gilpin, Luke Guard, Tom Rogers
(PM) Mike Durham, Ethan Rogers

Opening Prayer
2/5 .................................. Collin Gregory, (PM) Charlie Gwaltney
2/12 ..................................... Gary Sartain, (PM) Fred Altizer
2/19 ................................... David Brown, (PM) A.C. Janney
2/26 .................................. Jerry Anderson, (PM) Rob Kinney

Closing Prayer
2/5 .................................. Wayne Dixon, (PM) John Hawks
2/12 ..................................... James Cooke, (PM) John Black
2/19 ................................... Roger Mays, (PM) Herbert Baker
2/26 .................................. Ortie Boyd, (PM) Paul Mays

Greeters .................................. Edwards, Mellons

Open/Close Building .................. Jerry Anderson

Care of Communion ..................... N. Benefield, R. Durham; alt. B. Cooke

Song Leaders
Sunday .................................. E. Earnhart, (PM) D. Brown  (Wed.) O. Boyd

Care of Baptismal Garments ............... Patsy Boyd

Ushers ................................. Glenn Hartman, Curtis Oakes

Nursery .................................. Diane Tucker, (PM) Dee House

Alternates .............................. Bob Garby, Adam House

Sermon Outlines ......................... E. Argabright, G. Benefield, M. Brooks, D. Brown

OUR RECORD. ....... 1/18, 22, 2006

Wednesday ................................ 142
Sunday Bible Study  ....................... 168
Sunday Morning Worship ............... 182
Sunday Evening Worship ............... 136

Contribution ........................... $8,089.00

Volume XXVII, Number 5 January 29, 2006

10 New Year's Resolutions
from the Wisest Man Who Ever Lived
(Proverbs 3:1-35).

Resolution 1: Let love and faithfulness never leave you (Vss. 3-4).
Resolution 2: Trust in the Lord with all of your heart (Vss. 5-6).
Resolution 3: Do not be wise in your own eyes (Vss. 7-8).
Resolution 4: Honor the Lord with your wealth (Vss. 9-10).
Resolution 5: Despise not the Lord's discipline (Vss. 11-12).
Resolution 6: Search diligently for wisdom, and find it (Vss. 13-24).
Resolution 7: Have no fear (Vss. 25-26).
Resolution 8: Do not withhold good from those who deserve it (Vss. 27-28).
Resolution 9: Do not plot harm against your neighbor (Vss. 29-30).
Resolution 10: Do not envy a violent man or choose his ways (Vss. 31-32).

Verses 33-35 indicate that what will happen to us in the coming year will be closely related to how well we keep these resolutions: “The curse of the LORD is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just. Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly. The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools.”

via Crieve Hall c/C bulletin