

The Vincennes Voice

"...The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight..." (Matt. 3:3)

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IMPORTANT PHRASES IN THE CORINTHIAN LETTERS

Larry R. Ping II

In Paul's letters to the brethren at Corinth, as he is being Divinely guided (II Tim. 3:16-17; I Pet. 1:20-21), he issues several significant phrases. We make a brief study of those in this article.

1) "God is faithful" (I Cor. 1:9). Sometimes, short phrases carry the most impact. In this case, Paul's phrase immensely helps to understand the identity of God. God is trustworthy and dependable in so many ways. He is faithful to *"not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it"* (I Cor. 10:13). He is faithful to keep *"covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments"* (Dte. 7:9). He is faithful to *"forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* upon our confession of the same (I Jn. 1:9). Do you have a relationship with this God?

2) "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God

gave the increase" (I Cor. 3:6). Everything is in the Bible for a reason, believe it! This phrase of Paul helps us appreciate the need to not be overly concerned with growth rates and attendance numbers. These metrics can help in some ways, but in other ways can serve to hurt. Man's duty is to plant and water the *"seed,"* identified as *"the word of God"* (Lk. 8:11). This seed is that by which men are *"born again"* (I Pet. 1:23). I have known over the years preacher relieved of their duties simply and only because the local body was not growing as speedily as the elders or leaders wanted. Please recall: men plant and water the seed, God grants the increase. Will you remember?

3) "And such were some of you" (I Cor. 6:11). These words are preceded by a list of folks who *"shall not inherit the kingdom of God."* But the phrase of this point indicates some had repented of their misdeeds and had been *"washed,"* were *"sanctified,"*

and were *"justified."* Some believe, yea teach, once an individual involves himself in sin, there is no longer any hope of salvation. Such is not true! If today you are entangled in sin, let Paul's words serve as a reminder you can untangle yourself and live righteously!

4) "They which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (I Cor. 9:14). In this context, Paul had been discussing the support of Gospel preachers. He asked, *"Have we not power to eat and to drink"* (I Cor. 9:4)? He also queried, *"Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas"* (I Cor. 9:5)? Adding emphasis to his point he questioned, *"Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock"* (I Cor. 9:7)? The Scriptures affirm, *"Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn"* (I

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Cor. 9:9; Dte. 25:4; I Tim. 5:18). Faithful Gospel preachers, located and otherwise, are worthy of being supported, if they “*preach the word*” (II Tim. 4:2) and they “*watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry*” (II Tim. 4:5). The Lord’s people have been mightily gracious to my family and me, and for this I am tremendously thankful!

5) “The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord” (I Cor. 14:37). This phrase is extremely important to those who are classified as “red-letter” people. They are such who only believe in the Bible words which are red, the words of Jesus. They relegate the words in black as less important, though they are not! Paul completely writes, “*If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.*” We must remember, “*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 perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (II Tim. 3:16-17). Every word in the Bible is God’s, and therefore vitally important!

6) “The God of all comfort” (II Cor. 1:3). There comes a time when we all need to be comforted. God, and His Word can do it! David uttered, “*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me*” (Psa. 23:4). Later the Psalmist uttered, “*Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side*” (Psa. 71:21). Paul made it a point to say of God He comforts “*us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God*” (II Cor. 1:4). Will you rely upon God to provide this comfort for you?

7) “We persuade men” (II Cor. 5:11). It is clearly noted, “*Knowing therefore the*

terror of the Lord, we persuade men.” Friends, we are in the persuasion business! However, we are not attempting to persuade God, but men. You may recall Agrippa’s response to the Gospel call was, “*Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian*” (Acts 26:28). Paul asked the Galatians, “*For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ*” (Gal. 1:10). Who have you lately persuaded to turn to God?

8) “The Simplicity that is in Christ” (II Cor. 11:3). Readers, may we learn that it is down-to-earth, basic teaching which yields results. May I assure you even “meaty” topics of the Bible can be made easy-to-understand. We are called to be “*understanding what the will of the Lord is*” (Eph. 5:17). Let us not make it hard to understand. Some have the mistaken idea harder topics have to be made hard to understand. Not so! Let us “keep it simple” so that all can understand what is taught.

FIRST CITY CHURCH OF CHRIST

MEETING AT HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS

2720 Battery Road, Vincennes, IN 47591

MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box 672
Vincennes, IN 47591

Phone: 317.308.8288

Website: www.firstcitychurchofchrist.com

Email: firstcitychurchofchrist@gmail.com

MEETING TIMES (EST)

SUNDAY

Bible Study – 10:00 am

Worship – 11:00 am & 3:00 pm

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study – 7:00 pm