

Sunday, March 12, 2006 am

THE IMPORTANCE OF A GODLY ATTITUDE

This morning for a few moments I would like to address a subject that I need right now, and it is one I suspect all of us need to give consideration to and remind ourselves of. I want to talk about having a godly attitude.

There are two common false concepts that we need to guard against as we strive to serve God with a proper attitude. One is to be legalistic to the point that attitude is meaningless (consider the example of the Pharisees who lived their lives doing and binding things - but with an impure heart, some of the tenets of Catholicism such as infant baptism, masses in Latin, etc.). The other concept is to stress attitude to the neglect of truth (such as describes the one who says it doesn't matter what we believe as long as we are sincere). The truth of the matter is we need BOTH to be pleasing to God.

I. The Importance of a Godly Attitude

- a. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 – the importance of love is stressed
- b. Philippians 2:1-5 – after speaking of proper unity, Paul says, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus our Lord...”
- c. Matthew 23:23 - the weightier matters of the law – justice, mercy and faith
- d. Hebrews 11:6 – Without faith it is impossible to please Him
- e. Matthew 5:3-10 – the beatitudes are a list of attitudes that Christians need if they are to be pleasing in God's sight.

II. What a Godly Attitude Can Do

a. *Prepare our hearts for obedience* -

Ezra 7:10 – Ezra, the priest prepared his heart to seek the Lord. The idea of seeking the Lord involves obedience (cf. 1 John 2:3 – we know Him by keeping His commandments).

Acts 10:33 – Cornelius immediately sent for Peter to hear the message of God's word. He was ready not just to listen, but to obey.

It is truly sad today how so many today really don't intend to obey God. They approach His word with an agenda or preconceived ideas. Some have little or no real conviction.

Others have closed minds. Such is a description of many of the Jewish leaders who looked upon Jesus, and later His apostles with disdain. It mattered not what Jesus said or did, they had their minds made up about Him and nothing would change it. Jesus cast out demons, they said He did by Beelzebub (Luke 11:14-15).

b. *Keep us obedient* -

It is one thing to prepare for obedience and begin the walk. But it is another thing to keep going. A proper attitude can help sustain our obedience – Matthew 28:19-20 – the disciples of Christ were to learn to “observe all things I have commanded...” NOTE: Observe is a present tense verb meaning ongoing action.

c. *Bring us back in line when we wander away* -

In the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:10-32), we are told after spending his livelihood with riotous living that “he came to himself.” (vs. 17). This means in the past he had to have been taught something about what was good and right. Sometimes a proper attitude either keeps us where we need to be, OR it can bring us back to where we were (James 5:19-20).

d. *Encourage proper worship*

John 4:24 speaks of worshipping God with both truth and a proper attitude. We have stressed the importance of worship and will continue to do so. Every act of worship involves not only, following God's pattern, but it involves a proper heart as well (cf. Ephesians 5:19, 1 Corinthians 14:15, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, etc.)

Psalms 122:1 also notes that the opportunity to worship God is something we ought to look forward to as well. It should NOT be a weariness (Mal. 1:13).

It is a proper attitude that ALSO keeps us worshipping God HIS way!

e. *Curb improper attitudes*

There are many attitudes about the way we are to treat each other as brethren that are clearly condemned in

God's word. Murmurings and complaining (Phil. 2:14-15), excessive criticism (Jude 16), envies (Romans 13:13, James 3:14-16), strife (1 Cor. 3:1-3).

The only way to overcome these attitudes is WITH A PROPER attitude. NOTE how Ephesians 4:31 says we ought to put such attitudes away.

Generally, we can CHOOSE the type of attitude we will have toward others, whether it be our brethren, our neighbors, our enemies or even God. It is a matter of making up our minds how we are going to think – Colossians 3:2, 2 Corinthians 10:4-5.

f. *Guard against apostasy*

2 Timothy 4:3-4 warns of those whose improper attitudes (itching ears) led to fables instead of the truth.

2 Thessalonians 2:9-11 speaks of those who did not receive the love of the truth being deceived.

A godly attitude will be determined to accept the truth at all times, even when it is unpleasant or means change.

A godly attitude says, "I must keep searching" to make sure I am right (1 Cor. 9:27, Acts 17:11, etc.)

A godly attitude will stand up to false doctrine and expose those teaching such. When needed it will reprove, rebuke and exhort (2 Tim. 4:1-2).

g. *Keep our hearts looking toward heaven*

Philippians 3:13-14 – Paul pressed toward the goal. Philippians 3:20 notes that our citizenship is in heaven. We realize that this world is only temporary (cf. Hebrews 11:13-16).

Hebrews 12:1-3 – running the race of life, we constantly are looking toward Jesus at the finish line.

A godly attitude lives each day with the realization, "If I miss heaven, I have missed all there is!"

III. What is a Godly Attitude?

a. There are many more passages that describe the godly attitude, but I want to focus upon the foundation of ALL of them.

b. It is what Jesus prayed in the Garden – Matthew 26:39, "He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."

c. It is what Peter said to Jesus when He instructed Him to launch out into the deep. "But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." (Luke 5:5-6)

d. It is the attitude of Paul when struck blind on the road to Damascus, "So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" (Acts 9:6)

e. It is the attitude of Cornelius when Peter first spoke with him, "So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God." (Acts 10:33)

f. It is what Samuel said when the Lord spoke to him as a child, "And Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant hears." (1 Sam 3:10)

g. It is what Abraham had when the Lord told him to offer his son Isaac, "So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. (Gen 22:3-4)

h. It is the words of Solomon at the conclusion of Ecclesiastes, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all." (Eccl 12:13)

Brethren, if we let this attitude be the foundation of all we say, think and do we are well on our way to a home in heaven. As one brother said, "Attitude isn't everything...but it means plenty!!"

HOW IS YOUR ATTITUDE?