

# *It Is Written*

*A weekly publication of the  
Junction Highway church of Christ in Kerrville, TX.*

*Vol. 1*

*May 12, 2019*

*No. 19*

## **The First One to Plead His Cause Seems Right**

*By Bryan Matthew Dockens*

“The first one to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbor comes and examines him” (Proverbs 18:17).

Wise Solomon observed the reflexive tendency on the part of man to accept as truth the first version of events presented in a potential controversy.

When gossip circulates through the workplace, the neighborhood, or even the church, the first version of events is usually presumed to be true. This is so because “The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body” (Proverbs 18:8). Just as a well prepared meal will go untouched by a child who has spoiled his dinner with a bag of candy, similarly the truth holds no interest for those willing to accept rumors. The “other side of the story” may never be heard, and even when it is, it is often disregarded as a weak defense against the supposed facts already established in everyone’s minds.

For this reason, it is imperative to refrain from spreading rumors in the first place. “Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; and where there is no talebearer, strife ceases” (Proverbs 26:20).

God commanded, “You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people” (Leviticus 19:16). The behavior of a “busybody” is described as “disorderly” (II Thessalonians 3:11) because “gossips and busybodies” are those who say “things which they ought not” (I Timothy 5:13). And, Paul exposed the wickedness of “whisperings” (Romans 1:29; II Corinthians 12:20) inasmuch as gossip thrives on whispers while the truth demands an open hearing.

When a dispute must be resolved, both accounts deserve fair consideration. The Pharisees opposed Jesus, but Nicodemus correctly asked, “Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?” (John 7:51). The will of God in such cases is plain: “Test all things; hold fast what is good” (I Thessalonians 5:21), for “He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him” (Proverbs 18:13).

## **2 Corinthians 5:17**

*By Jarrod Jacobs*

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

This passage speaks to the blessings that come when we are in a relationship with Christ. “In Christ” there are certain things that are true. A person outside of Christ will never enjoy the blessings of being a new creature, of salvation, or of have a relationship with Christ for example. So long as men stay away from the Lord, they are depriving themselves of the greatest blessing.

It is not stated in this chapter, but the way we can get “in Christ” is by being baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27). When we are “in Christ” we are recipients of many blessings (Eph. 1:3). One of the greatest is that we can become a “new creature.”

“Old things” like living in sin (Col. 3:5), lying (Col. 3:9), cruelty, and everything else the “old man” was so fond of have “passed away”. Mr. Thayer says this means they have “perished”! This harmonizes with what Paul told the Romans as well. They were told the “old man” was crucified and that “we should not serve sin” (Rom. 6:6).

When we are “in Christ” the “old man” is “passed away” and he is to be buried. When this happens, we then put on the “new man” (Col. 3:10). He is a “new creature” with a new beginning. He is a baby (I Pet. 2:2) and will need to mature spiritually “in Christ” (II Pet. 3:15; Heb. 5:12-14).

Are you "in Christ" (Gal. 3:27)? If not, then you are still in your sins and the "old man" of sin rules over you. Don't allow this to continue another day. Become a Christian today by believing on Christ, repenting of your sins, confessing Christ, and being baptized (Jn. 8:24; Lk. 13:3; Rom. 10:10; I Pet. 3:21). You have the opportunity to start anew! Begin again as a new man! All things are new in Christ. You can have your sins washed away (Acts 22:16), and can start afresh and walk the strait and narrow path that leads to life everlasting (Matt. 7:13-14)! Take this opportunity while you can to be a "new creature" (II Cor. 6:2). Tomorrow may be too late!

## Apt To Teach . . .

*By Edward O. Bragwell*

I heard a fellow say one time that the Bible did not say that an elder HAD to teach - just APT to. Such temps one to respond by using Paul's words: "I would not have you, ignorant brethren."

Anyway, there has been much discussion over the years about the need to be sure that elders are apt to teach, rather than just having a "gift of gab." But what about the qualifications of an evangelist or preacher? The phrase "apt to teach" is found only twice in the KJV. In 1 Tim. 3:2 in reference to elders and 2 Tim. 2:24 in reference to an evangelist. In the NKJV, it is rendered, "able to teach." Just as elders have a list of qualifications, so does an evangelist. He must 1) not strive 2) be gentle 3) BE APT TO TEACH 4) patient. The text does not just say apt (able) to SPEAK in either case. There is a big difference. A lot of great speakers can hold an audience spell bound, without teaching them anything. At least it is something to think about.

## LIFE'S COUNTDOWN

*By Shane Williams*

If we live 65 years we have close to 600,000 hours at our disposal. Assuming we are 18 when we complete high school, we have 47 years, or nearly 412,000 hours to live after graduation.

If we spend 8 hours a day sleeping and 8 hours a day working, that only leaves 8 hours a day for everything else. That amounts to 137,240 hours in each category. When we think of the time we have to work and play in terms of hours, it doesn't seem like much. And when seen in the light of eternity, it's but a fleeting moment. How important, therefore, that we spend our waking hours wisely!

The Psalmist wrote: "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Psa. 90:12). I'm not suggesting that we need to start literally counting our days or hours that we have left. However, we need to be aware of the swift passage of time and the need to live with eternity's values in view.

"Be very careful, then, how you live -- not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil." (Eph. 5:15,16).

The hours, days, and years are here and gone, whether we count them or not. So let's be sure to make them count -- for the Lord. We can't afford to just spend our time, we must invest it.