



PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

July 3, 2016

Offended By the Truth

by Frank Himmel

These days it seems that someone is always being offended by what another person says or does. Offended groups call for apologies, resignations, boycotts, and the like. The mere fact that someone may be offended has become a major concern, so much so that people are increasingly unwilling to declare anything wrong or unacceptable.

This growing concern about offending has affected churches and preachers. Some won't preach the truth about Christianity's uniqueness lest they offend Jews, Muslims, or other groups. Some won't talk about the identity of the New Testament church lest they antagonize those who belong to some other group. Some won't plainly preach the conditions of salvation lest they hurt the feelings of those who haven't complied. Increasing numbers won't take a stand on moral issues lest they upset those who are acting immorally and perhaps "drive them away."

Matthew 15 records an incident we need to consider. Some Pharisees came to Jesus and complained that His disciples did not keep the tradition of the elders by washing their hands. Jesus' response was pointed. He indicted the Pharisees with breaking God's commandments in order to keep their own rules, in practicality nullifying God's word. He called them hypocrites. He said their commitment to God was

mere lip service and was in vain (vv. 3-9). He then called together the crowd who had overheard this exchange and explained the error in the Pharisee's view of the value of washing hands (vv. 10-11).

What happened next? The disciples came to Jesus and said, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?" (v. 12). Perhaps the disciples could see it on their faces. Perhaps some of the Pharisees said something to the disciples.

Jesus was unmoved. He responded, "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit" (vv. 13-14).

In summary, the Lord pointed out three things: 1) the Pharisees were wrong; 2) it mattered that they were wrong; 3) they were going to be lost because they were wrong, despite their claims of rightness with God. Why did Jesus say these things? Because they were true, because the Pharisees needed to hear the truth while they had opportunity to repent, and because the crowds and the disciples needed to be warned that if they followed the Pharisees, they, too, would be lost.

The Bible teaches us to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), and, to the extent we rightly can, to accommodate those we are trying to reach (1 Corinthians 9:20-23). But if people are offended by the truth, so be it. It is nothing new. Jesus did not compromise the truth to appease the disobedient, and neither should His followers. ■

Faith, Hope, and Love

by Frank Himmel

Less than a year after its inception, Paul wrote a letter to the church at Thessalonica. He began, “We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ...” (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3).

Faith, hope, and love are a familiar trio. Here they are coupled with work, labor, and steadfastness. They are motivators. Faith in the Lord prompted the Thessalonians to work. Their love – for the Lord, for truth, for lost souls, for one another, etc. – produced labor (*labor* is a more potent word than *work*; it suggests intense effort). Their hope in Christ made them steadfast, able to endure persecution, disappointments, even internal problems that might arise.

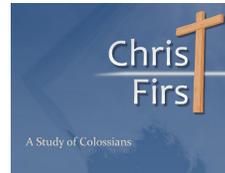
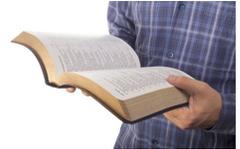
We rightfully preach about the need to obey God (see last week’s *PathLights*). Obligations such as giving, assembling regularly, visiting the sick, and teaching the lost must be stressed. We cannot ignore these things and please God. Nevertheless, after all those sermons are preached, some still do not comply. Why not? In the final analysis, they do not want to.

If you combined all the shame, embarrassment, and browbeating you could possibly heap on someone, along with a heavy dose of motivational speeches and

New Classes

This Sunday begins a new quarter, and that means it’s time for new adult Bible classes.

On Sunday mornings, Gary Hagler will be teaching a class about *personal evangelism*.



On Wednesday evenings, Frank Himmel will be teaching *Christ First*, a study of the book of Colossians.

What could possibly be a better use of your time than to come together with other Christians and study these important, practical Bible lessons? You will learn how to better serve God, and you will be an encouragement to other Christians. Honestly, why would you want to be anywhere else at these times?

presentations by “experts,” the result would still not begin to compare with the moving power of genuine and growing faith, hope, and love.

I will still preach on what we ought to do. I will occasionally try to shame laggards into action. I will give a “can do” lesson once in a while. But what we need most is greater faith, greater hope, and greater love. Think about it.

Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Wednesday Evening
GREETER	Bruce Williams	Chad Brock	Chris Brooks
SONG LEADER	Carlos Garcia	John Baucom	Albert Harrison Sr
OPENING PRAYER	Howard Moore	Adam Gibson	
LORD’S SUPPER			
BREAD	Greg Winget	Greg Winget	
CUP	Chad Brock	Chad Brock	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Josh Baucom		
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Frank Himmel	Adam Gibson
CLOSING PRAYER	Albert Lee Harrison	Kerry Gray	Lee Davenport