

PathLights

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

December 10, 2017

What Have I Done?

by Frank Himmel

God told Jeremiah to ask the men of Judah,

"Do men fall and not get up again?
Does one turn away and not repent?
Why then has this people, Jerusalem,
Turned away in continual apostasy?
They hold fast to deceit,
They refuse to return.
I have listened and heard,
They have spoken what is not right;
No man repented of his wickedness,
Saying, 'What have I done?'"

Jeremiah 8:4-6

How often do we ask ourselves, *What have I done?*, when we have sinned?

What have I done to God? He is my Creator; as such, He knows what is best for me and has every right to demand compliance with His will. He is my sustainer, the giver of every good thing, which He does in great abundance. He is infinitely wise, knowing far better than I what is best, able to see much clearer than I the consequences, both short- and long-term, of various behaviors. He is my shield, offering protection if I will cooperate with Him. He is my refuge and comfort, a place to go unlike any other. When I sin it is always against God, and as such it is an expression of

ingratitude, lack of regard, and lack of faith. He is surely grieved by that (Ephesians 4:30).

What have I done to others? A few transgressions may involve only myself, but that is surely a short list. Some wrongs are actively done hand-in-hand with other people. Most sins adversely affect someone else in one way or another, more or less directly, more or less intensely. My bad attitudes, bad words, and bad conduct may instantly victimize another. At the very least, they are a discouragement to those who are trying to do right, a bad example that may encourage others to follow suit, and a weakening of my influence for good (1 Corinthians 10:32-33).

What have I done to myself? Sin presents itself as an advantage to us. It promises to make things easier or better. It lies! "The way of transgressors is hard" (Proverbs 13:15, KJV). Sin brings guilt and shame if my conscience is at all functional. More often than not, wrong choices have adverse consequences in this life: personal, social, physical, economic, legal, etc. (Ironically, sin may lead me to always blame others, even God, blinding me to the fact that my own sins are the problem!) More importantly, sin separates me from God; if that is not corrected, it will result in eternal punishment.

God graciously offers forgiveness. Let's not think lightly of His grace, however, and never stop and ask ourselves, *What have I done?* ■



Church Unity

by Frank Himmel

It is obvious to all that the multitudes claiming to follow Christ are divided. While there certainly is some commonality, there is as much or more that is different—in doctrine, in worship, in morals, in organization, and so on. We do not even agree on something as fundamental as salvation requirements!

In light of these differences, most authors see Bible passages calling for unity as satisfied by some sort of “organic” oneness, whatever that is. The idea that we should all teach and practice the same things is dismissed as impossible.

The Apostle Paul had a different view. He taught that churches should be in agreement in these particulars. Several references in 1 Corinthians reflect his view that churches should teach and practice the same things.

📖 “For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church” (4:17).

📖 “Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And so I direct in all the churches” (7:17). This instruction was part of Paul’s answer to the Corinthians’

questions about marriage, evidently including one about the propriety and/or necessity of celibacy.

📖 “But if anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God” (10:16). This was said in reference to the Corinthians’ unique practice regarding covering.

📖 “For God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints” (14:33). God has the same requirements governing every assembly of Christians.

📖 “Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only?” (14:36). Paul rhetorically asked these questions with reference to the Corinthians’ assemblies, which were different than others. Did they have some revelation the rest did not which would justify those different practices?

📖 “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also” (16:1).

The New Testament calls for genuine unity, not an artificial “oneness” that ignores fundamental differences. It can be achieved by all of us returning to the New Testament as our standard in all things. ■



Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Wednesday Evening
GREETER	Josh Baucom	Chris Brooks	John Baucom
SONG LEADER	Gary Hagler	Carlos Garcia	Daven Daniel
OPENING PRAYER	Steven Turner	J B Williams	
LORD’S SUPPER			
BREAD	Bruce Hollander	Bruce Hollander	
CUP	Kerry Gray	Kerry Gray	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	David Gray		
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Frank Himmel	Steven Turner
CLOSING PRAYER	Howard Moore	David Gray	Ian Brown