

Northside Church of Christ

“God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”
John 4:24



Putting Our Confidence In God's Perfect, Proven Word

By Mike Riley

Visitors who come to our assemblies are sometimes awestruck by our unwavering focus on the Scriptures for everything we believe, teach, and practice. Then we may hear these same people say, “The Bible is important, but it’s not all there is to a relationship with God.”

It’s true that our relationship with God cannot be limited to simply book knowledge alone. It is necessary that we take what we read in the Scriptures and make those words the foundation and blueprint of an active life in Christ. In fact, the Bible itself says that it is the “implanted word” that is able to save the soul (James 1:21). The doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in the inspired Scriptures are intended to complete us as servants of God, equipping us for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Therefore, discipleship is not merely an educational exercise — it is the process of allowing God’s word to transform us into the likeness of Christ (Romans 12:2-NKJV; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Gal. 2:20). It is infinitely more than studying as though for an academic exam — it is being recreated into a “new man who is renewed in knowledge,” by means of the instruction and direction of God’s word (Colossians 3:10).

Let us consider the words of David, recorded in 2 Samuel 22:31 and its parallel passage in Psalm 18:30:

“As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.”

Who else but God could it be said that “His way is perfect”? We have all learned many valuable things from parents, teachers, and other persons of positive influence, but would we say of any of them that everything they taught was perfect?

Continued on next page...

SUNDAY MORNING

Triple E
Edify, Exhort,
Evangelize
When Shovels Break
8:30 AM

SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY

Thru the Bible in
52 Weeks - 2
Thessalonians
9:30 AM

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Worship Service
10:30 AM

WEDNESDAY NIGHT

Study of the Book of Acts
7:00 PM



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“Study to shew thyself
approved unto God, a
workman that needeth
not to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the word
of truth.”

2 Timothy 2:15

Northside Church of Christ
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Meridian, MS 39301

Place
Stamp
Here

Content To Wear The “No Brand” Name

By Mike Riley

A marketing professor at a well-known university once asked his students to make a side-by-side taste comparison of two soft drinks — Coca-Cola, and Sam’s Choice Cola. Each student was asked to taste both colas and indicate which tasted better. The majority of participants stated that the Coke tasted better to them than the house brand generic, Sam’s Choice.

Imagine the students’ shock when the professor revealed that the soda labeled “Coca-Cola” was Sam’s Choice, poured from the same bottle as the alternative selection! Even though the two drinks given each taster were identical, most imagined that the sample labeled as the Coke “brand,” tasted superior to the product bearing the Wal-Mart “brand.”

Folks, through the advertising medium, we’ve been “brand conditioned.” For many years, the Coca-Cola Company has invested billions of dollars in advertising to convince the world that Coke is “the real thing.” We have learned to associate the name Coca-Cola with quality soft drinks. Thus, it stands to reason that Coke “must” taste better than any other soda. After all, would the Coca-Cola folks ever lie to us as consumers? Therefore, given the choice between the Coke and Wal-Mart brand colas, we have been “brand conditioned” to expect the Coke “brand” to taste better than the Wal-Mart “brand” even if it really doesn’t taste any different.

“Brand conditioning” is one reason that we as New Testament Christians, have a problem in convincing people to embrace simple Bible-based Christianity. Folks, we have no “brand” name to sell. We are of the “generic” faith — the “house brand” of religion. If someone asks us about our faith, and we reply, “I’m just a Christian,” their next question will often be, “Yes, but what kind?”

Denominational churches have long conditioned people to think of religion in terms of “brand” names. Being “just a Christian” is like being “just a cola” — if you have no trademark or “brand” name on your label, your faith can’t possibly be as good as one of the popular “brands.” However, the existence of various “brands” necessitates differentiation.

There’s no value in the Coca-Cola name if every other soda tastes exactly like Coke. However, in the area of religion, differentiation leads to conflicting creeds (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 2 Corinthians 11:1-4; Gal. 1:6-12).

For example, each church needing its own document or set of documents in explaining why it is “different” and better than other “brands” of churches — Roman Catholicism having its catechism — Methodism, their Discipline — Baptists, their Manual. However, the church described in the New Testament, has no such “brand” name document. As Christians, we only have the Bible and nothing else to define our faith. In the eyes of our religious neighbors, we are “generic,” — an entity with no “brand” name — an “off-brand” or “house brand,” if you will.

In the book of Acts, an honest reader will find neither “brand” nor denomination of church simply because they did not exist in the first century. In fact, if we read all of the apostolic letters, we will not find Paul writing to one kind of church or “brand,” Peter writing to another “brand,” and John writing to yet another.

However, it is recorded that the first disciples “continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:42), and were commanded to “speak the same thing,” having “no divisions” among them, and “be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Corinthians 1:10).

They practiced the “no brand” faith — only practicing “the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3).

Folks, the world can keep its labels, creeds and “brand” names. As New Testament Christians, we’ll remain content to wear the “no brand” name of Christ (Acts 4:12; Acts 10:43) — associating ourselves with those who have been added to the Lord’s church (Acts 2:42; cf. Matthew 16:18) — that body of saved individuals (Ephesians 5:23) — with those folks who are just called “Christians” (Acts 11:26; Acts 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16).

This writer is continually grateful for the many vital lessons learned from my father, mother, and grandparents, but they were not always correct. I have benefited from the study of many learned brothers in Christ, both through their preaching and teaching and through their writings, but I have never met a gospel preacher or teacher who was right about everything — including myself! Many times I’ve been compelled to go back to the Bible and restudy some issue, topic or text, once I realized that what I had previously believed and taught on the matter was incorrect.

When we follow God’s word, we can be certain that what He says is so for:

“God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” (Numbers 23:19).

As Moses said:

“He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.” (Deuteronomy 32:4).

Moreover, God’s word has been proven:

“The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.” (Psalm 12:6).

There has never been anyone who ever relied on God’s word in humble faith and right understanding that has ever been disappointed by it. It’s true that many folks have suffered from unreal expectations and false interpretations of the Book, but the true word of God has been tested time after time and has never been found wanting (in fact, God tells us to test it – Romans 12:2 ESV). The Bible withstands every onslaught of skeptics and infidels who have come and gone, while the Book which they assail remains steadfast long after they have turned to dust:

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away” (Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33).

Brethren and friends, we can choose to place our confidence in many things — Our own feelings (which change from moment to moment); The theories, philosophies, and ideas of other people who are as prone to error as we are — or we can put our confidence in God’s perfect, proven word as delivered through His Son (Hebrews 1:2).

Our Lord said:

“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” (John 6:63).

It doesn’t require a great deal of thought to determine which way is wisest and best.

Prayer Requests This Week

- Pray for all those with ongoing health ailments (Maxine Powell)
- All those affected by COVID-19
- Greg Powell (recovering knee surgery)
- Ann Lowe (Keren Thrash mom, stroke)
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Communion Preparation

- Sign up sheet for 2021 is in foyer
- April - Juliano
- May -
- June -

Announcements

- Graduation celebration for Laila McKenzie on Sunday May 2 following worship service. Please see sign up sheet in the foyer for food.

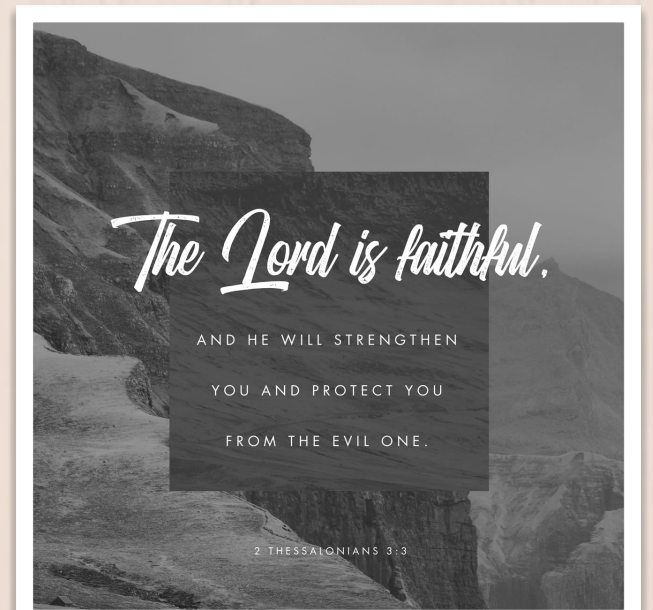
April Birthdays & Anniversary’s

- None

Every Sunday Morning

@ 8:00 AM

on WTOK-TV



Sermon Notes

Men to Serve

Announcements/Opening Prayer - Shay Cooper
 Scripture Reading - 2 Thessalonians 2:13 - 15
 Lead Singing - Chuck Rowell
 Head of Lord’s Table - Don Potts
 Assist on Lord’s Table - Mark Potts
 Scripture Reading - Mark 15:25 - 37
 Closing Prayer - James Johnson

Comcast Cable	6
Comcast Cable	431
Comcast Cable	1011
DirecTV	11
DirecTV	396
Dish Network	11
Over-the-air	11.3