



Cape Coral Church of Christ

1010 S.W. 20th Avenue

Cape Coral, Florida 33991

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<http://www.thelordsway.com/capecoralfl>

Schedule of Services

Sunday: Bible Study: 9:30 A.M.

Worship: 10:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday: Bible Study: 6:00 P.M.

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Washed in the Blood

Robert the Bruce, King of Scotland, was fleeing from the English soldiers of King Edward. After traveling awhile on the roadway, Bruce decided they would soon overtake him unless he did something different. So he cut through the forest. After several miles, he had pretty well concluded he was safe until he heard the sounds of his own hounds. The soldiers knew they would find their own master by his scent. Up ahead, he saw a mountain stream. He ran to it, jumped in and swam for a time before getting out of the water. When the hounds came to the water they lost the scent. The scent of King Bruce had been washed away in the water. The hounds did not catch their master. He was saved.

There is a stream we need to be cleansed in, too. Sometimes we sing about it: "What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus." The blood of Jesus is God's cleansing agent. It was shed at Calvary so that we could enjoy the forgiveness of our sins (Matthew 26:28; cf., 1 John 1:7). God could then promise, "And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 10:17).

But how can a person today come in contact with that blood? Calvary was just outside Jerusalem almost 2,000 years ago. In the act

of baptism, we can be buried into that death (when the blood was shed) and are, therefore, resurrected to a new life through faith in God (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:10-12). Baptism with trust in God washes sins away (Acts 22:16; Mark 16:16).

Have you been washed in the blood of Jesus?

When Jesus Did Not Answer

“You don’t have to attend every argument to which you are invited.”

The question is, when does this apply? Certainly not on all occasions. Truth needs to be defended. “Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself” (Proverbs 26:4). However, the next verse says, “Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.”

Jesus was one who displayed a perfect balance between the two. Consider the last week of His life on earth. When asked about paying taxes to Caesar, “He said to them, ‘Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s’” (Luke 20:25). When questioned about the existence of an afterlife, He said, “But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. Now he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him” (Luke 20:37-38).

Contrast these with two other occasions when Jesus was questioned. When asked by what authority He taught and acted, he responded with, “Was the baptism of John from heaven or from man?” They claimed they did not know. He then said, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things” (Luke 20:2-8). Furthermore, when on trial before the Jewish leaders, who were attempting to draw up false charges with false witnesses, Jesus never defended Himself but remained silent (Matthew 26:63). It was not until the High Priest put Him under oath that He responded with, “If I tell you, you will not believe and if I ask you, you will not answer. But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God” (Luke 22:67-69).

Knowing when to respond to a question or remain silent can be difficult to determine. Consider when Jesus remained silent: (1) When the Jewish leaders in Luke 20, were no longer honest about

their beliefs, and their question was probably designed to entrap Him legally. (2) When false accusations were made against Him on trial that were so foolish, any honest truth seeker could see their folly.

Before responding to a question, perhaps we should first ask, is responding going to do more harm than good? How will it influence the cause of Christ? Will the truth suffer in remaining silent? Is it the case that some things are not worth arguing over?

In times of conflict, silence is sometimes the best response.

Thoughts on Confessing Sins

“Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working” (James 5:16).

It is said that Nikita Khrushchev and President John F. Kennedy were having a vigorous exchange of strong opinions. Finally, Kennedy asked Khrushchev, “Do you ever admit a mistake?” The Soviet Premier responded, “Certainly I do. In a speech before the Twentieth Party Congress, I admitted all of Stalin’s mistakes.”

It is certainly easier to admit the mistakes of others than our own. I imagine it is much easier to confess the sins of others, rather than our own. However, we are not called to confess someone else’s sins, are we? But our own! James reminds us of this truth as printed above.

Confession of sin of course does involve others, as James indicates. We are to confess to one another – but to confess our own sins to one another. Why? James says so we can pray for one another and so we can be “healed.” Healed? Yes – no doubt of our sin problem. In other words, so we can be forgiven.

When we think of restoring the practice of New Testament Christianity, this seems to me a practice we have largely left behind in the church, at least in the churches I am familiar with. I don’t see much confessing of sin to one another happening any more. I sometimes see us confess the sins and mistakes of others, but not so much our own.

Closeness in Christ with brothers and sisters comes from Biblical practices like this. When was the last time you admitted a struggle to someone you share faith with? When was the last time you confessed sin?

Think about it.

Does God Hear Prayers?

Most of us have prayed and asked God for help with some burden or problem, but it seemed there was no answer. Have you ever wondered if God really heard your prayers? Does an unanswered prayer mean that God doesn't listen to us?

God's word assures us that He does hear the prayers of those who obey Him. Solomon wrote, "The Lord is far from the wicked: but He hears the prayer of the righteous" (Proverbs 15:29). James said, "The effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (James 5:16). Peter quoted from the Psalms, "For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are open to their prayers" (1 Peter 3:12).

Why then does God often not give us those requests for which we ask? Did you know that God did not give Jesus the answer for which He prayed in the garden of Gethsemane? (Matt. 26:39). Nor did Paul get his thorn in his flesh removed, even though he asked three times for God to do that (2 Cor. 12:7-9). Thus, even though God hears our petitions, He has not promised to say "yes" to all for which we ask.

May we never doubt God nor doubt that He hears the prayers of the righteous. But let us remember the responsibility we have to hear and obey His Word. Let us also always pray as Jesus did, "Nevertheless not as I will, but as You (Father) will" (Matt 26:39).

Beatitudes for Friends of the Aged.

Blessed are they who understand my faltering steps and palsied hand.
Blessed are they who know that my ears today must strain to catch the things they say.

Blessed are they who seem to know that my eyes are dim and my wits are slow.

Blessed are they that look away when coffee is spilled at the table today.
Blessed are they with a cheery smile who stop and chat for a little while.
Blessed are they who never say, "You've told that story twice today already."

Blessed are they who make it known that I am loved, respected and that I am not alone.

Blessed are they who know I'm at a loss to find the strength to carry the cross.

Blessed are they who ease the days of my journey Home in loving ways.