

THE FOREST HILL NEWS

Published weekly by the Forest Hill church of Christ

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Forest Hill Church of Christ

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VISIT US SOON!

Sunday:

Bible Study..... 9:30 A..M.
Morning Worship.....10:30 A.M.
Evening Worship..... 6:00 P.M.

Wednesday:

Bible Study7:00 P.M.

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“WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?”

LUKE 10:25-37

Garland Elkins

[*Editor's Note: Brother Garland Elkins is truly a “prince among men” and a “preacher's preacher.” He is my mentor, confidant, and a very special “Father in the faith.” We are honored that he will speak this Lord's Day at Forest Hill. The following article appeared in the Spiritual Sword about 15 years ago. It not only reflects the marvelous teaching of our Lord but, also, reveals so much about the character of Garland Elkins. Before reading the article, please read Luke 10:25-37.*]

This is one of the most famous, beloved, appreciated, and instructive parables that our Lord ever told. The reason being that it depicts life as it actually exists. The question that was raised by the lawyer, “And who is my neighbor?” was asked not out of a deep sincere desire to know who his neighbor was, but rather because our Lord had answered his first question, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (Luke 10:25). The Lord had answered him perfectly and the lawyer knew it. Not only did he force him to answer his own question but Jesus approved his correct answer saying, “This do and thou shalt live” (Luke 10:28). It is interesting that the lawyer asked the first question in an effort to justify himself. He utterly failed in both efforts!

The Question:

“And who is my neighbor?”

The question was good but the motive of the lawyer was wrong. Jesus told this story in response to the lawyer's second question.

The Jericho road was a very steep road, rugged in some places, and smooth in others. It extended from the city of Jerusalem to Jericho, a distance of almost twenty miles. Let us take a look at the characters in the story.

The Traveler

The robbers do not grant him his liberty to travel the road unmolested. They were motivated by Satan with the view that “might makes right.” They not only do not contribute anything to the life of their fellow man, they rob and beat him, and leave him “half dead.” The robbers type exists in every generation. They not only do not contribute to their fellowmen but they wound and bruise. They rob others of material things, of character, and of a good reputation.

The Priest and Levite

They were religious men but they were representatives of a degenerate religion. They were selfish. Theirs was the silver rule, “What is mine is mine, I will keep it.” They took nothing from the man but they lived for self and self alone. They practiced the very opposite of Paul's inspired injunction, “not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others” (Phil. 2:4). It is true that they did not mistreat the unfortunate man, but it is equally true that they did nothing to help the wounded and abused man. The same class of people exists

THE INDWELLING OF DEITY

Mike Dugger

[Editor's Note: Among our 2005 Memphis School of Preaching graduates is Mike Dugger. He is an exceptional person with outstanding ability and Christ like attitude. The school and the cause of Christ will always be well represented by him. Upon Mike's graduation, he will work with the Nettleton church of Christ in Jonesboro, Arkansas.]

The word "Deity" means, "The Godhead, divine nature." The Bible teaches that God exists in the form of three persons; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Gen. 1:1f; Jn. 1:1-5; 10:30 etc.). While one may not fully understand 'how' such is possible, the fact is, it is the truth simply because God has said so. Some things have not been revealed to mankind (Deut. 29:29) but all we need for life and godliness has been revealed (2 Pet. 1:3).

The Bible also teaches that God dwells in the faithful Christian. John wrote, "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 Jn. 4:16). No one suggests today that God is literally in him, nor one literally in God. God dwells in the Christian's heart by love, through the carrying out of the commands He has given (1 Jn. 5:3).

The Bible also teaches that Jesus dwells in the faithful Christian. Paul wrote, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love"(Eph. 3:17). Once again, Deity dwells by means of His words.

Interestingly, when it comes to God the Holy Spirit, many people ignore how Deity dwells in the instance of the Father, and the Son, and determine to believe that this part of Deity dwells literally and bodily within them. This view becomes a problem only when one determines that the Christian (or non-Christian) must have the help of the Holy Spirit separate and apart from the Word of God in order to live a life that is pleasing to God. Such a view denies the all-sufficiency of the Scripture (2 Pet. 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

How does Paul describe being filled with the Holy Spirit? He writes, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:18-19). This passage has a parallel passage found in Colossians 3:16, where Paul writes, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing

with grace in your hearts in the Lord." Please note that the context is the same for both verses. Notice the two phrases Paul uses, "be filled with the Spirit" and "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you." They are equivalent phrases, one is what occurs ("be filled with the Spirit") and the other is how it occurs ("Let the Word of Christ dwell in you").

When one adopts the view that the Holy Spirit must literally dwell within the Christian (or non-Christian) to enable that person to live a faithful life, he has done three things: (1) He has disrupted the Oneness of Deity, by accepting that 2/3 of Deity dwells through the Word, and 1/3 of Deity dwells literally; (2) he has made the Scriptures dead, (because without that direct operation a Christian supposedly cannot live pleasing to God); and (3) he has supported the Calvinistic doctrine that man is totally depraved and unable on his own to respond to God's Word.

The truth is that Deity is not divided, the Scriptures have power, and the Calvinistic doctrine of total depravity is false (Jn. 10:30; 16:10-13; Eph. 4:6; Heb. 2:9; Ezek. 18). God the Holy Spirit, Deity, is active today in every case of conviction, conversion, and sanctification. But all of His actions take place through His sword, the Word of God (Eph. 6:17; Lk. 8:11; Rom. 1:16; 10:17; Heb. 4:12).

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