

I Beseech You

The title of this article reflects a phrase often used in the New Testament. The word beseech has as possible synonyms the words "implore, desire, exhort, entreat, admonish, beg." It is easy to see how the usage carries with it an earnest plea. This pleading is for the recipients of the plea to engage in conduct becoming disciples of Christ. Let's look at some instances where this plea is found.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). This verse calls for serious action at a high level of dedication. Sacrifices in the Old Testament were said to be given to God. Those sacrifices were acts repeated regularly in different frequencies based on the type of sacrifice. However, the sacrifice in this verse is "a living sacrifice." This implies the idea of something that is consistent and continual. A living sacrifice is given to God for all times. It is not for one hour or even fours a week. It is given on a 24/7 basis. I really believe that all are able to attain such a level of dedication. I have learned, however, that few are willing to extend themselves to achieve it. I hope we all do not waste the opportunity to be a living sacrifice.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10). I was acquainted with a brother (currently out of duty) who often was prone to say that unity among brethren was an impossibility. I always made a point to rebut his assertions. Jesus prayed for such unity (Jn. 17:20-21). Did He not know this was not possible? What about all those other passages that demand such? Are they all for naught? 1 Corinthians 1:10 is one of these passages. This man thought this verse meant that Christians would have to be almost robotic in speech or else it wouldn't work. I did not then and do not now believe that this was the correct explanation of this verse. The problem at Corinth was with major differences of doctrine. To speak the same thing means to hold the same doctrine. It could not be that there is and there isn't going to be a resurrection of the dead. Paul showed in chapter 15 that there would be. This passage means that you need to express the same religious sentiment-and-it better be in tune with God's word. Speaking the same thing is a manifestation of being "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." After all, what we speak is what is in the mind and is a result of our judgment.

"Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me" (1 Cor. 4:16). The church at Corinth was divided into several factions (1 Cor. 1:12). They could eliminate this by following the practice of Paul who was without partisanship. Of course, we hasten to point out that they should follow Paul because he followed Christ (1 Cor. 11:1). Paul also told them that he desired to know nothing "save Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). Think of how this plea and admonition would work today in so many cases. Divisions occur through the misguided adventures of human beings. Someone starts something they ought not, builds a following, and - Wham! - he has given birth to division (Rom. 16:17). Of course, the end to which they are following is not a good one (Phil. 3:18-19). The end of following Jesus is quite different. It leads to life (Matt. 7:14). After considering this, who wouldn't want to follow Paul as he followed Jesus?

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Eph. 4:1). To us a vocation may seem like a job. The word, as it is used here, means more of a calling, especially the idea of an invitation, as to a banquet. This vocation concerns those who have been called out of darkness by the gospel (1 Peter 2:9; 2 Thess. 2:14). These ones who are so called have something expected of them. They are to walk worthy of this calling. This refers to a manner of life. The conduct of disciples is to be worthy of the gospel (Phil. 1:27). The denominational world has lowered the requirements necessary in becoming a Christian. The majority still expects, at least for now, some sort of profession of faith. Accompanying that is a lower level of demands for living godly in this present world. In other words, little is expected of those desiring to be saved and even less is expected of them after that! Nevertheless and notwithstanding, God expects something different. To walk worthy of your calling is to "walk in the light as He is in the light" (1 Jn. 1:7). It is not little that is expected of us; it is that God expects much of us. This particular verse is a splendid example that this can be done if we choose to do so. After all, Paul is not speaking as though this was something extraordinary. He writes as though it is imminently within reach.

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Peter 2:11). A man said in Bible class, "I can't help but sin." Another said in a sermon, "There is this drive in me that leads me to sin." Doesn't seem to be too much abstaining going on out there! Time and again sin is portrayed as inevitable and/or even impossible to avoid. It has been explained in such a way as to seem that to even attempt to avoid sin is somehow ill conceived, if not wrong. However, we see many cases in the Bible where it does seem that it is possible to avoid sin. Jesus told the immoral woman, "Go and sin no more" (Jn. 8:11). Was it possible? John said, "If any man sin," not "When any man sin" (1 Jn. 2:1). Is that right? 1 Peter 2:11 has Peter beseeching disciples to "abstain from fleshly lust." Could they do that? The answer to all three questions is "Apparently". Let's say I have some man in a Bible class or in a sermon imply that sin cannot be avoided. And I have Jesus, John and Peter saying that sin can be avoided. Which do you think I am going to go with on this? Which should you?

I beseech you to consider these things and become what was besought in these verses.

~Terry~

