


Madison Heights Christian Church 
(Disciples of Christ)
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MADISON HEIGHTS MESSENGER

No. 14

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Shaping Our Faith Today

During a critical moment of the early church the founding work of the Apostle Paul was being challenged in Galatia. There were two types of Christians; the Gentiles who became Christians, and the Jews who became Christians. The Jewish Christians insisted on imposing Jewish laws and customs on the Gentile Christians. The main one being circumcision. This comes from the covenant God made with Abraham. It is recorded in Genesis chapter 17 and the descendants of Abraham took the regulation seriously as a mandatory regulation. Paul's perspective is that physical actions do not make you righteous and he uses Abraham as an example. Abraham was already declared righteous by his faith. Righteousness is not a matter of observance of laws, regulations, and traditions. Righteousness is achieved only through God's grace.

The Lord's crucifixion is one action that is much more important than people observing Jewish laws and traditions. This is because God's promise and fulfillment is through the sacrificial death of Jesus. This marks an end of the old way of observing the law and the covenant into a new way with a new covenant based on love and grace. You are not justified by the law but led by the Spirit to live by the Spirit of God's love. When you live by the Spirit then you are guided by the principles of love and the law observance comes automatically. It is never a question of obedience, because compliance is automatic when you are ruled by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Apostle Paul's perspective is that the observance of customs and traditions of Jewish faith are unnecessary for contemporary Christians.

One day I came across my dad's Hank Williams record collection and I got sentimental. This record collection means a lot to me and brings back some precious memories. When my mom and dad did their estate planning they asked each son "What do you want?" I said "Nothing." They came back to me again and said that they wanted to make sure each one of us got something that we wanted. Again I said "Nothing, I don't want anything." Then I said "I just want to see you in heaven." Later on I thought about my dad's Hank Williams record collection. He had the complete 45 rpm set. He had collected each one as it was released. This was his most admired physical possession. I told him that I would like it for safe keeping.

It is the individual human being that is God's most admired creation. God treasures each and every one as it is released. Out of love and respect to God, we are to take care of God's most treasured possession. Be a person of gentleness; take care of God's treasured creation through love, and compassion. You have the Holy Spirit within you; this is what sets you apart from everyone else. Stand firm in faith, everybody has to face temptation. It is much easier to resist temptation when you are surrounded by good Christian role models that have had their temptations tested. We are to treat others like Jesus treats us. You are to be like Jesus to the world around you. Bear one another's burdens, be a mentor, and a Christian coach. Be a friend that others can confide in. Be a person of love and you will fulfill the law of Christ. Lead others to read and study the Bible. Help them obey the word of God. Be an example for others to follow. Be devoted. Spend adequate time in prayer. Build up your faith to where it is stronger than temptation.

Thank you,

George