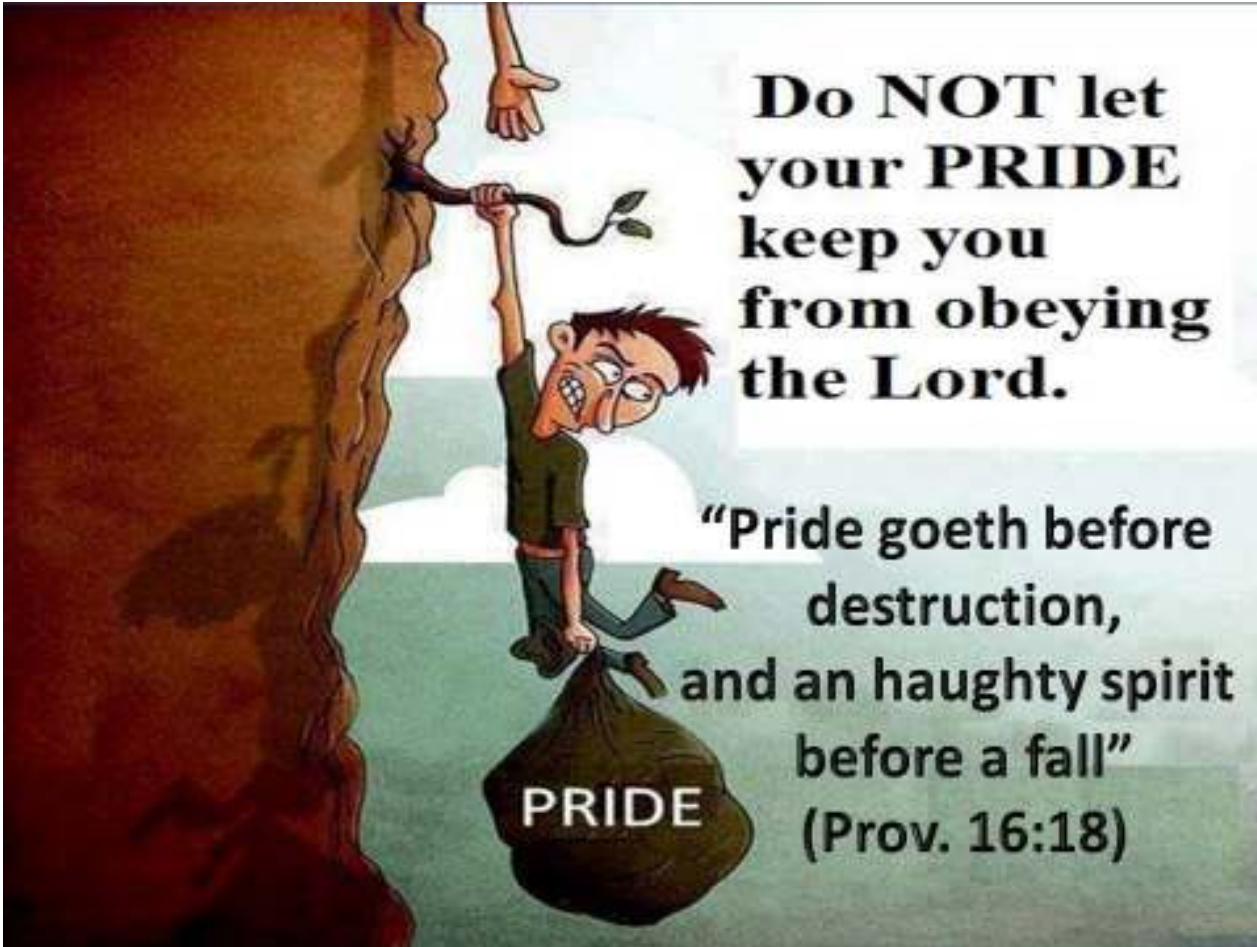


Today's Sermons
 Morning: The Bounds & Limits of Fellowship
 Evening: Q & A

Visit Us At:
www.wjchurchofchrist.org
 For Audio Lessons,
 Past Bulletins, Bible Studies
 & More
Wireless Internet Password:
94615548

FOR THE RECORD

Sunday Bible Study	31
Sunday AM Worship	45
Sunday PM Worship	32
Wed. Bible Study	26
Offering	\$2016



A Weekly Publication of the
West Jefferson Church of Christ
 130 Robert Street
 West Jefferson NC 28694
 Phone: (336) 846-5615 | Email: info@wjchurchofchrist.org
 Volume X January 22, 2017 Number 04

Minister:
Tim Canup
tim@wjchurchofchrist.org

Times of Services:
Sunday
 Bible Study:... 10:00am
 AM Worship...11:00am
 PM Worship:...6:00pm
 2nd Sunday:.....1:30pm

Wednesday
 Bible Study:.....7:00pm

Radio Program
 Sunday:.....7:30am
 “Back to the Bible”
 AM 580 WSKS
 93.5 FM

**We Extend A
 Warm & Cordial
 Welcome
 To All Our
 Visitors!**

When Christ Withdraws His Fellowship
 Wayne Jackson

It is a verse in which we take much comfort – but do we really understand it – *in context*? Jesus once said: “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Mt. 18:20).

The passage is often applied to a regular church assembly, especially when a very small number is present. A well-meaning brother may say: “Let’s not be discouraged; after all, the Lord said, ‘If only two or three are gathered together, I’ll be with you.’” As sincere as the statement is, and, as *true* as that sentiment is, that is not the significance of the verse *in its context*.

Christ had raised the issue of one brother committing a *personal* sin against another. The wronged disciple was told to seek out the offender – with the two of them alone being present; there, he could register his grievance. If the guilty party refused to listen, a second visit was to be made, this time with witnesses – to judge the demeanor of the sinful brother. If all of these together could not prevail upon the offender to repent of his sin, the matter was to be laid before the church as a whole.

Continued Inside

Matthew 18:26 – An Unpayable Debt

Wayne Jackson

If the influence of the entire church could not persuade the transgressor to correct his wrong, he was to be treated as a “Gentile and a publican.” In that society, this meant – sever *social interaction* with him (18:15-17).

In such a serious matter, Christians must be certain they are pursuing the discipline correctly. Therefore, the things to be “bound” upon earth (in the disciplinary procedure), must be so enacted as to be in harmony with what has *already been bound* in heaven (this is the force of the Greek grammar).

Accordingly, if a brother is convicted of impenitent, sinful behavior, with such verified by multiple witnesses, God will authenticate the disciplinary process. The Lord promises that in the assembly that enacts the ultimate penalty, he *will be present*, in effect *validating the procedure!*

Here, then, is the stunning point. When one is disfellowshipped by a faithful church, he also is *disfellowshipped by the Lord Jesus Christ himself!* Fathom that. Note these comments by R.C.H. Lenski.

“Since he [Jesus] is thus in the assembly of the church or present when two or three are convicting a brother of sin, *it is he himself who acts with this church* and its members when they carry out his Word by invoking also his presence and his help” (**Commentary on Matthew**, p. 707; emp. WJ).

It is a terribly serious thing to sin so flagrantly and impenitently that church discipline becomes necessary. It is a sobering thing to reflect upon the fact that even the Savior will withdraw his fellowship from the obstinate rebel who cannot be approached, and upon whom no amount of compassion or persuasion prevails.

It is equally grave when church members will support the transgressor, rather than standing with the church as a whole. In so doing, such misguided members stand aloof from the Savior himself. This appears to have been the case at Corinth where apparently only a “majority” supported Paul’s commands regarding the disfellowship of the fornicator (1 Cor. 5:1ff; cf. 2 Cor. 2:6 – NASB).

In contrast, it is heartwarming when Christians have the courage to do the righteous and loving thing on behalf of the apostate child of God.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Jan 29 – Song Service
- Feb 5 – Men’s Business Meeting & Ladies’ Class
- Please give support money for Chinese orphans to Minnie Kennell

In one of his parables, Jesus told of a certain king, who, examining his financial records, discovered a debtor who owed him the staggering sum of ten thousand talents (Matthew 18:24). According to the footnote in the ASV, a talent was worth about \$1,000, hence, this servant was in debt to the tune of \$10 million. When the servant was called to account for the debt, he promised: “Have patience with me, and I will pay all that I owe.” Was his pledge realistic? In the margin of your Bible, beside Matthew 18:26, write: **See Matthew 20:2**. There, we learn that the daily wage of a working man in Palestine was “a shilling” — about 17 cents (see 18:28 — ASV fn).

Now, how long would it take to pay off a debt of \$10 million, at the rate of 17 cents per day (assuming that one used his entire income with nothing subtracted for rent, chariot payments!, etc.)? It would take about **two hundred thousand years** to liquidate the debt! Add this notation to your margin.

In this parable the king represents God and the indebted servant pictures each of us in the state of sin. We **never** would be able, by our own meritorious labor, to work off the sin-debt to our Creator. Happily, the parable teaches us that the king **forgave** that servant (cf. Ephesians 2:8,9).

This portion of the parable is designed to emphasize our utter helplessness before God. We must not, however, push the parable beyond its intended design and assume that forgiveness is unconditional. That assumption would contradict scores of clear Bible passages (cf. Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Hebrews 5:8,9). Whereas forgiveness is freely extended by our loving God, it must be obediently accepted by the contrite sinner.

.....

“Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?” (1 Corinthians 6:7).