

On The Frontier

“For the glory of God and the furtherance of the Gospel”

Only One Road To Lead Us Home

by Linus A. Mathis III

My wife and I were driving in the car listening to the radio as a celebrated talk show came on. Ordinarily the topics they choose for discussion fail to interest me. But, before I could turn the dial (which I enjoy far more than the programming), the show's guest began to speak. "I've spent my life, he said, in search of spiritual truth and finally I've found it." Well, how could I change the station after he said that? It wasn't long, however, before I knew that he hadn't found anything at all. His "findings" bore no resemblance to truth whatsoever. I will admit that they were spiritual but haplessly involved the wrong spirit. Nevertheless, he reminded me of some things very fundamental to Christianity.

In his "quest" for truth, this man traveled to the east. There he spent years in the tedious study of eastern religions. He sat under numerous teachers, yet he remained unsatisfied. So he returned to the United States still in search of his elusive Nirvana. Many years and much sacrifice had yielded little more for him than a "personalized mantra." Disappointed but undaunted our hero found yet one more teacher. This wise sage presented our weary pilgrim with the words he had long yearned for. He began his teaching, "If you are a Jew, for instance, be the best Jew

you can be. Whatever your religion, be the best . . . *add the denomination of your choice* . . . you can be. It matters little if you are Hindu, Buddhist or Muslim. Whatever your beliefs may be, they will all eventually lead you to the same place." Our man was at long last sated. He could now breath a sigh of relief. He had found his way. Oh man, what a load of malarkey! Sure they all go to the same place, HELL!!! Sorry, but I had to get that off my chest.

Some have said, all roads lead to Chicago. But I learned a long time ago, there's a big difference between going to Chicago and getting saved. The Bible doesn't talk about Chicago, but it does talk about the new birth and eternal life. Now that I think of it, not one of the worlds religions talk about Chicago either. Just a thought, I'm always thinking. Aren't you? Anyway, it's safe to say that our talk show guest has "missed the boat" on the things of God. Consider the following statement:

John 14:6

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

These are the words of the Son of God. Do you think he knew what he was talking about? Is this the absolute truth? Or isn't it? Notice, he said "I am THE way." He used a definite article. He didn't say, "I'm one of several ways." NO, NO, NO!!! THE WAY! He was very specific. There's no other way. Not if you

want to get to God. Now Chicago may be a different story, but we're talking about the Father. You know, now that I think of it, all roads don't lead to Chicago either. I've traveled extensively and I've lived long enough to make this statement. You get on the wrong road and you get lost.

Jesus Christ is the way. The only way. The Greek word used here is *hodos* and it literally means road. We often refer to our roads as highways, though we rarely call them ways any more. You know as well as I if you want to get some where, you had better get on the right road. Once on that road, you will also need to go the right way.

The following passage is breathtaking:

Isaiah 35:1-10

The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, *and* the excellency of our God.

Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.

Say to them *that are* of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come *with* vengeance, *even* God *with* a

recompence; he will come and save you.

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

Then shall the lame *man* leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, *shall be* grass with reeds and rushes.

And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it *shall be* for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err *therein*.

No lion shall be there, nor *any* ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk *there*:

And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Just look at these wonderful promises! I'm especially enthralled by the eighth verse.

And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; [Notice the KJV use of an upper case T in

the phrase; The way of holiness] the unclean shall not pass over it; but it *shall be* for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err *therein*.

The way of holiness is none other that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He is set as the highway wherein the wayfarers may find safe passage. A way where even a fool can not err. I tell you, our God is so good we can't even begin to comprehend it. We haven't the words nor the mental capacity to grasp at such goodness. But, we can believe it. And I do!

Not only did the Lord say that he's the way, but also THE truth and THE life. You see, people may be confused (like the talk show guy) but not the Lord. The "enlightened" may not know who Jesus Christ is, but he knows who he is. Praise God! You know who he is too. And so do I. He's God's only begotten Son, our Lord and soon Returning Saviour, our Master, our brother, our sacrifice, our righteousness, our LIFE and the ONLY way to the Father! He himself said, ". . . no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Acts 4:12

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

When the roll is called up yonder there won't be any, Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Baptists, Roman Catholics, Methodists, etc., only Christians. In other words, only those who are saved, born again of His spirit. You can be the best "whatever" but that won't do it. You'll only succeed at being the "best" unsaved, unredeemed, lost,

child of the flesh ever to return to the dust. Salvation wasn't made available to us because we are the best. But because God and His Son are the best we have deliverance.

Ephesians 2:1-9

And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus:

That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Before I go any further, this in no way means that God's grace should

be used as a license for sin. Stop thinking like that. I'm addressing salvation, which is by grace. Once we're saved we should do our best to be a tribute to our God and to His Christ. Our behavior should be a sort of "before and after" thing. Don't conduct your life now as you did BEFORE you were saved. But now, AFTER you are saved, live a holy life.

Romans 6:1-11

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness of his* resurrection:

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

For he that is dead is freed from sin.

Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Salvation is so simple. Isn't it? Do you know why? It's free too. Do you know why? Because God and His Son did it all. It's simple because Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. The iniquity of us all was laid on him. It's free because it cost God everything, His only begotten Son.

Romans 10:9-11

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

After the flood of Scripture had bathed my heart (initiated by the now infamous once celebrated talk show) I began to reflect on the man behind the statements. I realized why it was that he so readily accepted this "many ways" concept. It made it easy for him to remain complacent. There was nothing to challenge the validity of his beliefs and so he could rest in an undisturbed albeit

unredeemed state. That's so like religion. You can pack any stadium on the globe if you're willing to tell people what they want to hear. It's very political you know. You assuage the masses and agree with what they already believe. They've made up their minds anyway. Why not make the most of their ignorance? Realize your own personal agenda. It's easy. Tell them how right they are and have been all along. Speak soothing words to them and never, no never, upset the "apple cart." Do you think that's what Elijah did? Or Elisha? Moses? Isaiah or Jeremiah? How about Ezekiel or Daniel? Paul? No, of course not. Truth is very confrontational. Sometimes it makes you down right uncomfortable and that's good. Because then you can change and receive deliverance.

Today we're far too concerned about being tolerant. Just how much tolerance are we to tolerate? Dare we sacrifice the truth of God's Word for the sake of acceptance? God forbid! Someone must stand and speak the Truth if men are to be saved. Telling them what they want to hear is simply not good enough.

I Timothy 2:1-5

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men;

For kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

For *there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;*

A number of years ago the following came to me:

A Church was in need of a pastor and solicited applications. One of the deacons, interested in knowing just what kind of a minister they desired, wrote a letter as if he had received it from an applicant and then read it before the pulpit. This is the letter:

Understanding that your pulpit is vacant I should like to apply for the position. I have many qualifications I think you would appreciate. My religious and theological training was received from the best theologians. Academically I made my mark. I preach with power and have had some success as a writer. Some say that I'm a good organizer. I've been a leader in most places where I've gone. I'm nearly 50 years of age, but I've never preached in one place more than three years. In some places I have been driven out of town after my work caused riots and disturbances. I have to admit that I've been in jail three or four times but not because of any real wrong doing. The Churches I have preached in have for the most part been small, though located in several large cities. I have not gotten along too well with the religious leaders in towns where I've preached. In fact some have threatened me and even attacked me physically. I'm not too good at keeping records. I've even been known to forget whom I baptized. However, if you can use me I shall do my best for you even if I have to work to help with my support.

After reading the letter, the deacon asked the committee if they were interested in the applicant. They replied emphatically that he would

never do for their church. They were not interested in any contentious, trouble making, absent-minded, ex-jail bird. In fact they felt insulted that his application had been presented. The committee then asked the name of the applicant whereupon the deacon answered, "The Apostle Paul."

I can't help but think the Apostle Paul wouldn't be welcome in too many of our Churches today. Politics have usurped truth. Nevertheless, one day each of us will be held accountable for our words and deeds. However, greater judgment will be served upon those who set themselves up as teachers. For us who sincerely fill such positions, we must remember to thank God for His never ending mercy! For without question we are in the greatest need of it. May we do our level best to present the Truth regardless of how it's received.

James 3:1 [Darby Version]
Be not many teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive greater judgment.

Student or teacher, only one road leads home to the Father. Even so, come quickly Lord Jesus, come and take us home.

The Counselor's Corner

With Rev. Linus A. Mathis III

Seasons Of Life

I'd like to share a wonderful principle with you. One which has, at the very least, dual value. This tenet is as old as mankind and continues to prove itself as useful today as when God first had Solomon to record it.

Ecclesiastes 3:1

To every *thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:*

Logic and prudence both concur with Scripture in that, "There's a time and a place for everything." I cannot begin to tell you how many times that simple axiom has come to my family's rescue. The understanding conveyed in that magnificent verse can convert an otherwise complicated matter into a simple one. Think about it! How often have you been confronted with a situation you knew was inappropriate but lacked the language to address it? This truth is easy to be understood by young and old alike.

Nowadays it seems that which is seemly is giving space to the unseemly. Indecorous words and deeds are in vogue. The boundaries of decency have been exaggerated beyond belief. Good is being called evil and evil is being called good. The waters between have become muddied. The complexities of being politically correct have most parents in a quandary, especially when it comes to deciphering behavior patterns. In the space of a breath, this simple truth brings the most ambiguous conduct into crystal clarity. Even when you are unsure about the virtue of your child's actions, of this you can be certain, "There's a time and a place for everything." Refuse to allow yourself to be talked out of this precept and the energy of your conviction will spawn triumph.

No age group is exempt from this rule. Parents, grandparents and teachers all need to diligently observe the appropriateness of their practices. Off color language in the

presence of children is never attractive. The right time and place to argue with your spouse would be in private. Even if you feel the need to debate for the rights of your children, you never do it in their presence. To do so would not only be inappropriate but it would be detrimental to your credibility. Your child would forever be pitting mom against dad and vice-versa. It's clear that Ecclesiastes 3:1 speaks to all ages. This maxim is ageless, unbiased and primary.

The second aspect being addressed, however, IS age. We all have seasons in life. The way we think, act and speak greatly differs as we age. You don't have the same tastes and preferences at age 50 as you had at age 10. A good way to test this is ask a varied age group what they put on their hot dogs. Your answers fall into two basic groups. Mustard and ketchup. Most of us start with the sweet stuff and graduate to the spicier. I know that differs, but it's generally true. Besides, you know as well as I that your tastes have changed. There's a time when our little ones will only watch cartoons. But when the cartoons become "dumb and babyish" they're forsaken for live action. So, what's my point? We all have different seasons in life. It isn't strange or unusual, it's normal and needs to be treated as such. Grownups and kids should behave in accordance with their age group. Grandpa and grandma should be allowed to enjoy their golden years without criticism and kids should be allowed to be kids. This is important for at least two reasons; we want age appropriate activities for our kid's and we need to be good examples. As I remind myself of life's seasons, I'm not so taken back by the change of

thought process in my teen. Or in myself for that matter.

Do you remember the song, "Turn Turn Turn?" Written by Pete Seger and performed by the Byrds? Mr. Seger based it on the first eight verses of Ecclesiastes 3. You should read them when you can, they're magnificent. To every thing, turn, turn, turn ... And a time to every purpose under heaven ... A time for peace, I swear it's not too late.

Galatians 6:9

And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

-"The Counselor's Corner" also appears in Alaska Parenting Magazine in an edited version and under a different title"-
