

The Bible Really Works!

Acts 11:19-26

Acts 11:19 - "Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. 20 But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. 22 Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. 23 When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. 24 For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. 25 Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. 26 And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch."

The Lord's Way Works In Salvation

- Acts 11:19-20 - “Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, *preaching the word* to no one but the Jews only. 20 But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, *preaching the Lord Jesus.*”

The Lord's Way Works In Salvation

- Is preaching Jesus an option or requirement?
 - 1Cor. 2:1-2 - “And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”
 - Rom. 1:16 - “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”

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- Is preaching Jesus an option or requirement?
 - 1Peter 4:11 - “If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”
 - Jude 3 - “Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”

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- Is preaching Jesus an option or requirement?
 - 1Thes. 1:5-9 - “For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake. 6 And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. 8 For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. 9 For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God”

The Lord's Way Works In Salvation

- Is preaching Jesus an option or requirement?
 - Rom. 6:17-18 - “But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.”

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- Is preaching Jesus an option or requirement?
 - 1Cor. 6:9-11 - “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”

The Lord's Way Works In Salvation

- The results...
 - Acts 11:21 - “And *the hand of the Lord was with them*, and *a great number believed and turned to the Lord.*”

The Lord's Way Works In Salvation

- The preaching of the truth produces faith in the unsaved and the saved
 - Rom. 10:10-21
 - 1John 5:13 - “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”

The Lord's Way Works In Salvation

- But this faith is not enough by itself.
 - Acts 11:21 says that they “TURNED”!
- Works alone will not save
 - Rom. 3:20 - “Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight...”
 - Eph. 2:8-9 - “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

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- But in the absence of works, faith alone cannot save
 - Rom. 2:13 - “For not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified”
 - James 1:25 - “But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.”
 - James 2:14, 17, 19-23, 24, 26

The Lord's Way Works In Salvation

- When the Lord Jesus is preached, faith is produced.
- When this faith works, it produces obedience resulting in salvation.
- Saving, scriptural faith does not exist in the absence of works

The Lord's Way Works In Edification

- Acts 11:22-23 - “Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and *they sent out Barnabas* to go as far as Antioch. 23 When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and *encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord.*”

The Lord's Way Works In Edification

- Obeying the gospel is only the beginning of the new life
 - Matt. 28:19-20 - “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 **teaching them to observe all things** that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”
 - Phil. 1:6 - “Being confident of this very thing, that He who has **begun a good work in you will complete it** until the day of Jesus Christ”

The Lord's Way Works In Edification

- Obeying the gospel is only the beginning of new life
 - 1Thes. 2:9-14
 - 1Thes. 3:7-8 - “Therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith. 8 For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.”

The Lord's Way Works In Edification

- Keep going; never stop growing
 - Rev. 2:8-10 - “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: 9 I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 10 Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.’”
 - 1Cor. 15:58 - “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

The Lord's Way Works In Evangelism

- Acts 11:24 - “For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And *a great many people were added to the Lord.*”
- This is precisely what is supposed to happen when:
 - The Lord Jesus is preached,
 - Hearers believe and turn to the Lord,
 - And with purpose of heart, they continue with the Lord!

The Lord's Way Works In Evangelism

- Acts 2:41 - “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.”
- Acts 6:7 - “Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.”

The Lord's Way Works In Evangelism

- Cute anecdotes and emotional stories told by pulpit entertainers will not produce this effect.
- An endless diet of vitriolic diatribes on issues, weekly attacks on errorists, and constant negativism will not lead to growth

The Lord's Way Works In Evangelism

- Rom. 1:16 - "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."
- The GOSPEL is the power
- We may not understand how it works, or why it works; IT JUST WORKS!
 - Without institutions, cooperative church efforts, fellowship halls, national ad campaigns
 - Without alterations, additions, adjustments, abridgements, compromise, creative critiques, enhancements, et cetera

The Lord's Way Works in the Church

- Bible solutions to problems in the local churches brought growth every time
 - Acts 6 - Trouble over helping the Grecian widows
 - Acts 5 - Ananias and Sapphira disciplined for lying
 - Acts 4 - Peter and John arrested for preaching
 - Acts 8 - The disciples scattered abroad
 - Acts 9 - Saul the persecutor is converted
 - Acts 11 - Controversy over Gentile conversions
 - Acts 12 - Herod killed James and arrested Peter

The Lord's Way Works in the Home

- From the beginning of the Bible to the end, families that did what God said to do and that were organized God's way were the most successful, strongest, and longest lasting on earth.
- Families that chose to organize and act by their own standards of wisdom and morality faced tragedy and endured life long suffering.

The Lord's Way Works in the Home

- Abraham

- When he followed God's instructions, he and his descendents were blessed

- Gen. 18:19 - "For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him."

- When he did things his own way, he and his family suffered hardship and grief

- Genesis 21 and the abandonment of Hagar and Ishmael

The Lord's Way Works in Our Daily Lives

- Joshua 24:14-15 - “Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! 15 And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”
- Joshua 24:31 - “Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the LORD which He had done for Israel.”

The Lord's Way Works in Our Daily Lives

- What effect will your life have on others if lived the Bible way?
 - On your spouse?
 - On your children?
 - On your neighbors?
 - On the local church?
- You have no means of measuring the long term impact for good or ill of your words and works.
 - Choose good words and works, and let God bring the increase.
 - Choose evil words and works, and the Adversary will certainly find a way to ensure that the most people possible will be affected for the longest time possible.

The Lord's Way...

- Works now
- Worked in the past
- Will work forever
 - Heb. 13:8 - “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”
 - Matt. 24:35 - “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.”