



# The Country Preacher's Newsletter

"...speaking the truth in love" Ephesians 4:15

## I Am Not Ashamed

By Randall F. Matheny

"I'm not ashamed to own my Lord, nor to defend His cause, maintain the honors of His word, the glory of His cross" is a refrain from a beautiful song in our hymn book. There is no way that anyone can sing the song, with their mind properly attuned (1 Cor. 14:15), without making a probing self-examination. Am I ashamed to own (acknowledge my relationship) my Lord?

I am not ashamed of my Lord, because He is not ashamed of me (Heb. 2:11-13). Being sanctified by Christ means being set aside by Him through obedience of the truth (Jn. 17:17; 1 Pet. 1:22-23) to be with Him; in service, in suffering and in glory, so that He can declare, "Behold I and the children which God hath given me." "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ..." (Rom. 1:16-17), because it is the sole, exclusive means of salvation for people of all nations, and it is the only means by which one may live by faith. Major denominations have agreed that pagan religions are God's way of preparing people for Christianity, but how can

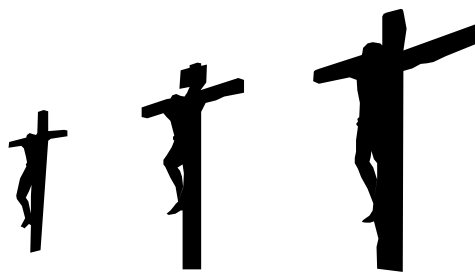
idolatry, animism, astrology, witchcraft, sorcery, which are all strongly condemned by God in the Bible, prepare anyone to accept the Christ of the Bible? Pagan religions do not help man draw closer to God for, historically and biblically, they have hindered him and caused his destruction.

I know that when my heart is filled with God's word I am strong and unashamed (Psm.

faithful service and assembly, even if it means that I am apart from them because they will not assemble with me. And I know that they will be worse off if my example is as a weak, uncommitted, hypocritical Christian, when both I and they know that I am doing something I should not do, or am not doing something that I should. I am not ashamed because I know that Jesus Christ is the only hope that I, and all those I love, have of securing eternal life and escaping the only thing that sinful mankind deserves (Rom. 5:5; 6:23). I am not ashamed of the church of Christ, because

**Jesus Christ is the only hope that I, and all those I love, have of securing eternal life and escaping the only thing that sinful mankind deserves.**

I know that it is Christ's body (Col. 1:18) and that it is not possible to esteem the body of the Lord too highly (2 Cor. 7:14). I am not ashamed because I know there is a better place than this, prepared by God, and I am secure in that knowledge that He is not ashamed of me (Heb. 11:16). I am not ashamed to suffer for Christ's sake, whether it comes from strangers, family or friends, "...for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12). I am not ashamed.



119:80), but when I am ignorant I am weak and hesitant to declare my relationship with Christ. It then becomes easier for me to hide my Christianity, to excuse myself from opportunities for service, to shun the fellowship and company of my brethren and to absent myself from the regular assemblies of the church. I know that my loved ones will be better off if I set a godly example in

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## Peace, Perfect Peace

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Job's lament that, "Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble" (Job 14:1) bears testimony to the turbulent, trying world that we live in. In spite of the repeated efforts of man to create a utopia, or another Eden, he has never come close to being successful. Like the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9), man's greatest achievements are met and countered by new challenges and obstacles. To Adam God said, "Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return." (Gen. 3:17b-19). Paul informed us that, "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). And Peter confirmed that only after we have suffered awhile will we be perfected, established, strengthened, and settled (1 Pet. 5:10).

It is nothing short of marvelous that in the midst of turmoil, strife and trouble God assures the faithful that there can be peace found. Luke reveals that the "Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace." Jesus teaches His disciples that it is through the things that He has

spoken that they may find peace in Him, and that tribulation in the world has not threat for the followers of Him who has overcome the world (Jn. 16:33). So, does having peace mean that everything must go the way we wish it to go? Or that we encounter no trouble in life? Hardly. But it does mean that the Christian has an advantage in coping with the troubles of life and in not being overwhelmed by them so that they can be at peace even in the midst of hardship. They have Jesus who has made peace between them and their God (Eph. 2:14-16; Rom. 5:1). They have prayer through which they may be anxious for nothing, and through Christ may be guarded with "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding" (Phil. 3:6-7). They have peace in the presence of Christian friends and in the goodwill of the church (2 Cor. 7:5-7). They have grace and peace multiplied to them in the knowledge of God and Christ (2 Pet. 1:2). Peace is a precious commodity. It must be sought and pursued (1 Pet. 3:11), but it can be had, and it's worth the effort. "Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin: The blood of Jesus whispers peace within."

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### Suggested Reading



"**The Suicide of Modern Theology,**" by John Warwick Montgomery

Mr. Montgomery, a conservative denominational scholar,

describes and defines the philosophers of the past two centuries who have had weighty influence on current religious thought. This is not light reading, but if you've ever wondered where some of the philosophy which is now troubling the church had its roots, this volume is a good place to start.

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