

“Holy Ground”

One day while keeping the sheep of Jethro, his father-in-law, Moses was attracted by an unusual sight; a bush burning but not being “*consumed*.” This, understandably, arrested the curiosity and attention of Moses, so he turned aside to see the bush and why it was “*not burnt*.” It was on this occasion that God addressed Moses, saying, “*put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground,*” Ex. 3:5. How Moses must have felt in a place hallowed with the presence of God and where the stillness of the desert place was stirred by the voice of God! Yes, Moses was standing on “*holy ground!*”

But thanks be to God, Moses was not the last to stand on “*holy ground*.” New Testament Christians yet stand on “*holy ground*,” and share the blessings of God. Please observe:

(1) I stand on “*holy ground*” when I take my stand upon the sacred precepts contained in the word of God. The Scriptures are “*inspired of God*,” **all** of them, 2 Tim. 3:16. Literally, the word “*inspiration*” means “*God-breathed*.” This is the thought expressed when Jesus said to the tempter, “*It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone; but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,*” Matt 4:4. To acknowledge that the “*holy scriptures*” have, as it were, proceeded “*out of the mouth of God*” is to acknowledge that one is standing upon “*holy ground*” when he studies, believes, meditates upon, and obeys the word of God.

(2) I stand upon “*holy ground*” when I meet with others of “*like precious faith*” around the table of the Lord and commune with the Lord in observing the Lord’s supper. Herein, my soul is refreshed and my heart is stirred anew as I contemplate the sacrificial offering of the “*lamb of God*” Who said “*this do in remembrance of me,*” Luke 22:19.

(3) I stand on “*holy ground*” by striving to serve God faithfully as a member of the New Testament church; the body which exists to glorify God, Eph. 3:20, to adhere to the authority of Jesus Christ, Col. 3:17, and to serve as “*an habitation of God through the Spirit,*” Eph., 2:22.

(4) I stand upon “*holy ground*” when I assemble with the church to worship God “*in spirit and in truth,*” John 4:24, and am therein assured of the blessing of God and the presence of Jesus Christ, Matt. 18:20.

(5) I stand upon “*holy ground*” when I present my body unto the Lord as a “*living sacrifice,*” Rom. 12:1, purposing to use the members of my body “*as instruments of righteousness upon God,*” Rom. 6:13.

I read of other ground in the Bible which was **not** called “*holy ground*.” When Korah, Dathan, and Abiram rebelled against Moses, Aaron, and Israel, murmured against God’s plan, and influenced others to do the same, “*the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all that appertained unto Korah, and their goods,*” Num. 16:32. Clearly they stood on unholy ground!

Friend, if the Bible is not your guide (your only guide), if you “skip” the Lord’s supper being observed on the Lord’s day in the assembly of the Lord’s people, thereby failing to perpetuate the memory of Christ in His Own appointed way), if you are not a faithful member of the Lord’s church, if you forsake the worship assemblies, and if you fail to live “*soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world,*” Tit. 2:12, then please answer the following question: **On what kind of ground do you stand?** Don’t wait until it is too late and then wish that you had sought out the “upward way!”

**** —B.Witherington

“Endure Sound Doctrine”

Paul’s final charge to Timothy included the admonition to “*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine,*” 2 Tim. 4:2. He suggested the urgency of this work by stating the following tragic fact: “*For the time will come when they will **not endure** sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables,*” 2 Tim. 4:4.

“*Doctrine*” denotes that which is taught. “*Sound*” doctrine denotes that which is wholesome, healthy, or complete. “*Sound doctrine,*” therefore is wholesome, healthy, complete, or scriptural teaching. Oftentimes men (and women) refuse to “*endure sound doctrine!*” That’s really a sad situation, yet it is a fact for an inspired apostle said that some would not.

The preceding stated fact, surprising as it may seem, is true. “*Sound doctrine*” is the one thing that many choose **not** to hear. But did you notice the implication? There are times when “*sound doctrine*” must be **endured!** An honest patient wants his doctor to give him “*sound*” advice, even if it means giving up smoking, going on a diet, exercising, avoiding over exertion, or other equally as difficult tasks. Likewise, an honest soul wants to hear “*sound*” preaching, even if it condemns former impressions, necessitates repentance, and requires that one bear the cross of Christ. But this kind of preaching, like a much needed spanking, instead of being enjoyed, must be endured.

Far too many have the wrong concept of the preacher and his work. They want to make him an actor, so that they may continue their spectator type “*worship,*” and be able to leave at the most desired minute, saying “*I really enjoyed your sermon.*” It is good to enjoy a good sermon. It is also good to enjoy a nutritious bowl of spinach, but unless a taste has been developed for spinach, it is likely to be more endured than enjoyed. By the same token, there must first be much spiritual development before some sermons can be enjoyed. Meanwhile, **if** “*sound doctrine*” is being preached, **then** such sermons should be appreciated and endured.

Many patients, after having their condition diagnosed and a remedy prescribed, decide to change doctors. Who knows? They may even find a doctor that will “*go along*” with them, take their money, and let them die young without ever setting the record straight as to their true condition. Also, many sinners, after hearing their condition

correctly described by inspired truth, and a biblical remedy presented, decide to change preachers; get the kind that will “go along” with them, receive their money, and let them go to hell without ever setting the record straight as to their true condition. This is what Paul alluded to when he declared that “*after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and be shall be turned unto fables,*” 2 Tim. 4:3,4. Like the “*rebellious children*” of Israel, who said “*to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits,*” Isa 30:10, many today would suggest to the preacher, “tell us how bad other people are and how good we are, condemn their sins, but do not disturb us.” “*Having itching ears,*” they want an ear-scratching preacher, but little do they realize that this kind of itch is awfully hard to scratch!

Paul taught the necessity of enduring “*sound doctrine.*” We have a statement in vogue today which means substantially the same; namely, “if the shoe fits, wear it!” Christianity is not always easy. That is why we are admonished to “*quit you like men, be strong,*” I Cor. 16:11, to “*stand against the wiles of the devil,*” Eph. 6:11, to “*fight the good fight of faith,*” I Tim. 6:12, to “*endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ,*” 2 Tim. 2:3, and to “*be thou faithful unto death,*” Rev. 2:10. Dear reader, if your heart is right before God, you desire the truth far more than you want your ears scratched!

Contrariwise, however, we should never endure **unsound** doctrine. In referring to certain false teachers, Paul wrote: “*To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you,*” Gal. 2:5. This is a problem in the religious world — too many endure **unsound** doctrine (and even sing its praises), but seem unwilling to “*endure sound doctrine.*” They have endurance, but for the wrong thing. Friend, how is your endurance?
