

Another Crisis Looming?

By Bill Brandstatter

It appears we have become crisis oriented. There is always some big crisis looming. If it is not an oil crisis, it is a health crisis. It could be a crisis in the Middle East. The crisis could be political or social. There seems to be no end. The problem with some of the so-called “crises” is that people stay in a constant state of uncertainty and anxiety over what the future holds. I believe we ought to be Christ-centered, not crisis-centered. Then, we need not worry about the future.

We need to be Christ-centered regarding salvation. Today many will talk about the “Sinner’s Prayer”. Did you know that no one in New Testament times was ever saved just by praying? One man that was praying, Saul of Tarsus, was told to, “Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” (Acts 22:16) Christ stated “He that believes and is baptized will be saved.” (Mark 16:16)

We need to be Christ-centered regarding the church. There are a number of groups today all claiming to be part of the church that we read about in the New Testament. Jesus is the head of the church according to Eph. 1:22, 23. Any church that does not have Christ as its center (head) is not Christ’s church.

We need to be Christ-centered regarding our lives. Paul stated, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.” (Gal. 2:20) When we become Christians we are new creatures. (Rom. 6:4; Cor. 5:17)

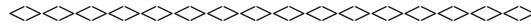
We need to be Christ-centered regarding His second coming. Twice in 2012 individuals were talking about dates for Christ’s second coming or the end of the world. Both predictions were wrong. Whenever man forecasts these events, they will always be wrong. Jesus stated, “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.” (Matt. 24:36 NKJV)

If we are Christ-centered in all the areas mentioned above, the man made “crises” of today will have little or no effect on us since our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20)

Praise the Lord

By Larry Pasley

Today's funny: A preacher trained his horse to go when he said, "Praise the Lord," and to stop when he said, "Amen." The preacher mounted the horse, said, "Praise the Lord" and went for a ride. When he wanted to stop for lunch, he said, "Amen." He took off again, saying, "Praise the Lord." The horse started going toward the edge of a cliff. The preacher got excited and said, "Whoa!" Then he remembered and said, "Amen," and the horse stopped at the edge of the cliff. The preacher was so relieved and grateful that he looked up to heaven and said, "Praise the Lord!"



Stop is an important work in Christianity. We are to stop sinning when we become a Christian. Twice Jesus used the phrase, "Sin no more":

- The paralytic who Jesus healed - John 5:14. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."
- The woman taken in the act of adultery - John 8:11. She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

The apostle Paul points out that we should not continue in sin after we have been baptized into Christ. *Romans 6:1-4* What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

But, Christianity is not just what we have stopped doing. Sometimes we say things like, "I'm a Christian, I don't drink, I don't cuss, I don't smoke, I don't gamble etc. Lots of people who are not Christians don't do those things either.

Christianity doesn't just involve what you have stopped doing but it also involves what you have started doing.

- Are you living a godly life? - Titus 2:11-12. *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,*
- Are you meeting the needs of those around you? - Matthew 25:41-46. *Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; 43 I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' 44 Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' 45 Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' 46 And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'*
- Are you always trying to please God? - Colossians 1:10. *By doing so "you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."*

May we all determine to stop sinning and start living godly lives. Both are necessary.