

WHEN RIGHT BECOMES WRONG

Text: Romans 14:14-16

INTRO: Paul speaks of things which are right within themselves that can become wrong under certain circumstances. For the next few minutes, we would like to pursue that line of thinking.

I. RIGHT BECOMES WRONG WHEN THAT WHICH IS SECULAR IS TREATED AS SPIRITUAL.

A. Washing hands. READ MARK 7:1-8.

B. Abstaining from marriage. 1 Timothy 4:1-4

NOTE: I doubt there is a person in this assembly who thinks it is wrong to wash their hands, or wrong for a person to choose to remain celibate. These things are right within themselves, but it is wrong to require them as some sort of religious responsibility.

II. RIGHT BECOMES WRONG WHEN THE OPTIONAL IS TREATED AS ESSENTIAL.

A. Bible class arrangements, or lack thereof.

B. Number of drinking vessels in the Lord's supper.

C. "Prayer partners," etc.

D. Daily Bible reading, door knocking, mid-week studies, etc.

III. RIGHT BECOMES WRONG WHEN THAT WHICH IS SCRIPTURAL IS USED UNSCRIPTURALLY.

A. During the O.T. period, the bronze serpent.

READ NUMBERS 21:4-9

1. The bronze serpent had a use in the time of Moses that was definitely pleasing to God.
2. It is understandable that it might have been kept as a reminder of their sin & of God's mercy.
3. But it became an object of worship--& that was definitely wrong.

[Hezekiah] removed the high places & broke down the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image & broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, & called it Nehushtan [the bronze thing]. (2 Kings 18:4).

B. The O.T. ordinance of circumcision.

1. Required of all male descendants of A., Gen 17:7
2. New covenant replaced the old, but Jews were still allowed, encouraged (but not required) to keep the custom of circumcision.
3. But it was wrong to require that practice, or to teach that it had soul-saving value.

And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." (Acts 15:1).

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything... (Gal. 5:6).

C. In some religious denominations, the Lord's supper is used in wedding ceremonies, funeral rituals, etc. Baptism is made to be nothing more than initiation into a human organization. Prayer at public gatherings is often a farce.

D. The Christians in Corinth were abusing the Lord's supper to the point that Paul said, "I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse" (1 Cor. 11:17).

IV. RIGHT BECOMES WRONG WHEN SOMETHING RIGHT IS DONE WITH THE WRONG MOTIVE.

- A. Alms & prayer to be seen of men, Matt. 6:1-6.
- B. Baptism to please parents, girl friend or boy friend, etc.

C. Some preached Christ from selfish ambition, Phil. 1:16.

V. RIGHT BECOMES WRONG WHEN A LIBERTY BECOMES
A STUMBLING BLOCK.

READ I CORINTHIANS 8:4-13.

He who loves his brother abides in the light, & there is no
cause for stumbling in him. (1 John 2:10).

A. Note that a stumbling block is something which endangers
a brother's soul; it is not just something he doesn't like.

B. This teaching applies only in the realm of liberty. I
cannot give up something that is required.

C. This teaching always involves a "weakness" of under-
standing, thus makes continued study necessary.

CONCLUSION: Some things are wrong & cannot be right. Even
things which are right within themselves can be abused so as to
become wrong. Let us heed the warning of Paul in 1 Corinthians
13:12, "Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."

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