

New Caney Church of Christ

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Assembly Times

Sundays
Bible Class 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.
Wednesdays
Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

Retaining The Standard Of Sound Doctrine

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Know Your Bible: Answers

- 1. Diana (or Artemis) (Acts 19:27-28)
2. The ark of the covenant (1 Sam. 5:2-4)
3. Solomon (1 Kings 6)
4. Naaman the Syrian (2 Kings 5:18)



Standing Firm

Take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm Ephesians 6:13

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C-Grade Religion

For I desire goodness, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings (Hosea 6:6).

In school we always had that one class: it featured a subject in which we had little interest, which we perhaps did not understand well, and/or we just did not get into for some reason or another. In that class we would do just enough work to get a passing grade; we would be content with a C as long as we could get out of that course or subject and never have to worry about it again.

This same attitude unfortunately proves pervasive in the world. In so many realms of life people seem more than content to do the least amount possible, to just scrape by, to do just enough to maintain competency or effectiveness but no more. We can consider such things as reflecting C-grade effort: people doing what they do in order to satisfy a requirement, to fulfill a demand, or placate a superior so they can go and do whatever they really want or at least get others off their back.

A C-grade mentality seems to define most of human religion throughout time. It was certainly manifest in Israel. YHWH, through the prophet Hosea, spoke of how He wished to heal His people Israel (Hosea 5:13-6:3). Israel's and Judah's love for YHWH was ephemeral, enduring for a moment and then fading away (Hosea 6:4). YHWH wanted goodness, not sacrifice; knowledge of God more than burnt offerings (Hosea 6:6).

The sacrificial cult in Israel proved a magnet for C-grade religion. Israel understood it needed to offer the sacrifices YHWH expected and to observe the festivals He set forth, and they did so. They were then satisfied: they had done their duty. They performed the bare minimum. YHWH should be content; He should leave them alone to do their thing; He should be there for them when they needed Him.

C-grade religion remains extremely popular to this day. People recognize their need for some religion in life, and so they seek opportunities to satisfy the bare minimum

This Week's Assignments & Events

Sunday Worship

Greeter: Eddie Bowen
Announcements: Ronnie Ramsey
Encouragement Talk: John Franks
Opening Prayer: Billy Lovell
Scripture Reading: Harper Flores
Colossians 1:22-25
Song Leader: Ryan Haarmann
Table Talk: Todd McAdams
Contribution: Eddie Bowen
Helper: Kevin Buckner
Fruit of Vine: John Van Baale
Helper: Lester Mabry
Helper: Chris Beard
Closing Prayer: Jacob McAdams

Sunday Afternoons

June 25 5PM Worship - Harper Flores to preach
July 3 3PM Bible Fundamentals Class
July 9 To Be Announced
July 16 4PM Devotionals
Planned Parent Youth Devotional

Wednesday Evening

Song Leader: Ryan Haarmann
Speaker: Harper Flores

necessary to maintain standing before God. The assembly and its acts prove a magnet for C-grade religion. Not a few believe that as long as they assemble on Sunday morning and perform the five acts, all is well. They have done their duty. They performed the bare minimum. God should be content; He should leave them alone to do their thing; He should be there for them when they need Him.

Hosea displayed the fundamental problem with C-grade religion in Hosea 6:6: it treats YHWH like the pagan gods and thereby fundamentally rejects His true nature and purpose. Israel in Hosea's day was thoroughly paganized; on account of this YHWH was about to bring the Assyrians upon them in judgment (Hosea 4:1-7:16). They believed YHWH was the God of Israel; they also believed that other gods were the gods of the nations, Baal deserved service, and so forth (cf. Hosea 1:2-3:5). People in the ancient Near Eastern and Classical worlds were not expected to love their gods or pattern their lives after them. The gods were supernatural beings who could be benevolent or malevolent; they were to be placated, satisfied, or appealed to, not emulated or necessarily loved. Pagans were content to offer sacrifices to their gods to placate them so they would be left alone to live their lives; if they experienced some distress they expected to be able to provide an extra sacrifice and appeal to cajole the relevant god into helping them. To love any god, or to expect any of the gods to love you, would be a bridge too far.

Yet YHWH expected to have a far different relationship with Israel. YHWH loved Israel and had entered into an exclusive covenant with her (cf. Hosea 1:1-3:5). YHWH set forth instruction to lead Israel in the right way; Israel was to know her God and manifest His character. Such is why YHWH would rather have had mercy and knowledge of Him over sacrifices and burnt offerings: if Israelites really knew who YHWH was, and acted like Him, they would demonstrate the strength of their covenant relationship. To believe that requisite sacrifices were enough to placate YHWH demonstrated a complete lack of real understanding about YHWH and His desires for Israel; Israel acted as if she wanted to go her own way and have YHWH leave

Know Your Bible

Houses of Worship

1. Which goddess had a notorious temple at Ephesus?
2. What holy object taken by the Philistines taken into the temple of Dagon, caused Dagon's image to fall down?
3. Who built the first temple in Jerusalem?
4. What asked Elisha's forgiveness for worshipping in the temple of the god Rimmon?

Answers On Back

Sunday Sermon

Point your phone camera at the square below, then click on the link to hear the sermon. Recordings will change mid-week.



her alone (cf. Hosea 6:7-7:16). YHWH would allow Israel to do so; once YHWH left Israel alone, she could not withstand her enemies, and was overcome.

C-grade religion remains fundamentally pagan in nature. C-grade religion presumes that God is to be placated and satisfied by doing certain things, and so a person should do the bare minimum so God will leave him or her alone to do their thing. C-grade religion really is worldliness masquerading as piety: a person recognizes they have spiritual problems, some kind of spiritual wound, and may sincerely want to do something about it, but they are not willing to fully repent and be conformed to the standards of holiness and righteousness. They want to do just enough to get by and no more. They do not really want to leave the world and its desires; they want to find a way to remain as they are but not feel spiritual guilt or pain.

C-grade religion is a fool's errand, ignorant of the nature of God and His purposes accomplished in Jesus. God does not desire our assembling and service to be placated; God wants us to know Him and be like Him. God sent His Son, the express image of His character, so we could know who He is and what He is like (John 1:1, 14, 18, 14:6). God loves us and desires for us to love Him (John 3:16, 1 John 4:7-21): we have been separated from God by our sin, corrupted in nature, and God wants us to be reconciled to Him so we can learn to be like Him and thus be one with God as God is one within Himself (John 17:20-23, Romans 5:6-21).

If we have truly come to know God as made known in Jesus, we will have no tolerance for C-grade religion. The God Who Is cannot be merely placated and satisfied so as to give people space to go their own way; the God Who Is manifests unity in relationship and desires to have humans made in His image reconciled back to Him in relationship. To know God in Christ is to recognize the imperative of being holy as God is holy, to love God and others as God has loved us (1 Peter 1:13-22). To know God in Christ is to die to self, to be crucified with Christ, so we can turn away from the futile ways of the world and find life indeed in Jesus (Galatians 2:20, Philippians 3:7-14).

Pagans practiced C-grade religion and were condemned (Romans 1:18-32). Israelites practiced C-grade religion, proved to be as pagans, and suffered the fate of pagans (Hosea 6:6ff). C-grade religion remains pagan to this day; it may be tempting, but its end is death. If we wish to find salvation and wholeness we will have to die to self and live to God; we will have to turn aside from the world and our vain imagination and conform to the image of Christ. We will have to know who God is as manifest in Christ and embody His character. Let us find eternal life in Jesus and conform to His image so we may share in relational unity with God!

by Ethan Longhenry