

Blue Ridge Brandmarks

“...I bear on my body the brandmarks of Jesus” - Gal. 6:17

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What Hinders You?

The above question was asked by the man from Ethiopia after Philip had "preached Jesus" to him (Acts 8:35). This man knew he needed to obey the gospel for the salvation of his soul (Romans 1:16). He knew that baptism for the remission of sins was a part of that gospel (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Having been convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, having been convicted of his sins, and seeing his need to obey, he did not want to delay his obedience. Realizing that he must be baptized, he did not want anything to keep him from doing it.

How different his attitude seems to be from that of many I have encountered over the years I have preached. They know the truth. They know they need to obey the truth. They are planning on obeying "some day." But then they always mention something that they "have to take care of first" before they can be baptized. It may be something as generic as "I have to get some things straightened out first"

or as specific as "I am waiting until my mother dies because it would just break her heart if I turned my back on her religion" (Actual quotes made to me). The Ethiopian realized there was nothing more important than obedience to Christ. He knew, as all Christians know, that the only way to "straighten out" your life is by giving it to Jesus Christ and allowing His gospel to mold you and transform you into His image (Romans 12:1-2; Philippians 2:5).

The underlying problem of those who delay obedience is a matter of priority. Giving obedience to Christ has not become of paramount importance to them. As King Agrippa in Acts 26, they are "almost" not "altogether" convinced (vs. 28-29). Their will is still more important to them than the will of God.

How refreshing it is, then, when someone today has that same attitude of the man from Ethiopia -- that they will not allow anything to keep them from

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obeying Christ and from being baptized. No matter the obstacles, no matter the cost, and no matter what others think, they are determined to obey and to do it as soon as possible.

I received a letter the other day from Janis Di Paolo. She and husband Michael were active members of the Centerville Road congregation in Tallahassee for many years. When Michael accepted a new job a couple of years ago, they moved to Fort Worth, Texas. Of no surprise to those who knew them, they are

with a new sister in Christ who repeatedly told me how much the study helped her. She said it filled in all the 'missing pieces' about the work and worship of the church. Just thought I'd let you know that your study book has touched another life!

"I also wanted to tell you a little about this sister. Her story is one that bears repeating, especially to anybody who has reservations about being baptized. This lady's name is Virginia. She is 55 years old and was at one time a Baptist. (It's another long story to tell you how she

"...FINALLY THE DAY CAME WHEN VIRGINIA KNEW SHE NEEDED TO OBEY THE GOSPEL"

still faithful and active in the church there -- Michael serving as a deacon there as he had here.

In her letter, Janis told of the conversion of a woman to Christ and the circumstances surrounding it. Her letter brought a smile to my face, a warmth to my heart and a prayer of thanksgiving to my lips. I would like to share a portion of it with you because I think it will do the same for you. Also, maybe it will serve as an impetus to the one who is allowing something to postpone his/her baptism.

"I want to say thank you again for the copies of the study for new Christians which you wrote. I just finished a class

came in touch with the truth.) Virginia suffers from many serious health problems. She has heart problems, diabetes, circulatory problems, a 100-pound inoperable abdominal tumor, and she's on oxygen 24-hours a day and is wheelchair-bound. Several ladies from our congregation studied with Virginia over several months and finally the day came when Virginia knew she needed to obey the gospel.

"Baptizing Virginia presented a problem since she was physically unable to climb the baptistry steps. Michael and I were asked if our pool could be used since Virginia could be wheeled to the

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edge of the water and then lowered down the steps. So, on a Sunday night after services, several Christians gathered in our backyard while Virginia was baptized.

is hesitant about baptism. She overcame so many physical obstacles in order to be obedient."

Janis' observation that Virginia "came up from the water estatic that she had

"...WE PRAYED AND SANG THE CHORUS TO TRUST AND OBEY ABOUT 20 TIMES TO ENCOURAGE HER..."

Her attending nurse told her that going under the cold water could send her into shock and lead to cardiac arrest. That didn't stop Virginia. She was determined to trust the Lord to help her be obedient. It took three men and two women to help her into the water (with her son holding her portable oxygen tank above the water). She was so scared she was shaking continuously. It took about 30 minutes in the water for her to get the courage to go all the way under (which required momentarily unhooking her oxygen).

"During this time, we all prayed and sang the chorus to 'Trust and Obey' about 20 times (!) to encourage her. When Virginia finally got the courage to put her head under the water, she came up from the water estatic that she had obeyed the Lord. She has been a Christian for several months now and is still 'beaming' about being one of His children. She says she finally has confidence about her salvation. To me she is an inspiration to anyone who

obeyed the Lord" shows how similar her baptism was to that of the Ethiopian who, after being baptized, "went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:39). Such joy is characteristic of all who put on Christ in baptism because they know their sins are forgiven by the blood of our Lord.

If you know you need to be baptized, what hinders you? There is nothing in this life more important for you to do than to give obedience to the gospel and be baptized for the remission of your sins. You should not let anything stand in your way.

Let the man from Ethiopia and Virginia serve as your examples. Experience the joy both of them felt upon knowing their sins had been forgiven and that they had been added to the body of Christ (Acts 2:47). Cast aside anything that hinders your obedience to the Son of God. Obey Jesus Christ and His gospel now.

◀Gene Taylor▶

[SOURCE:
<http://padfield.com/1997/hinder.html>]

JULY 2011 DUTY ROSTER

Weekday	SUN	WED	SUN	WED	SUN	WED	SUN	WED	SUN
Date	7/3	7/6	7/10	7/13	7/17	7/20	7/24	7/27	7/31
Opening Prayer	Ed M.		Jimmy F.		Bill A.		Don H.		Matt M.
Morning Message	Leo R.		Eric B.		Alan M.		Charlie K.		Jimmy F.
Announcements	Don H.	Jimmy F.	Randy F.	David T.	Leo R.	Randy F.	Alan M.	Leo R.	Brad F.
Leading Songs	Alan M.	Randy F.	Brad F.	Matt M.	Eric B.	David T.	Matt M.	Eric B.	David T.
First Prayer	Bill A.	Matt M.	Jerry D.	John M.	Kevin H.	Kevin H.	Ed M.	Randy F.	Jerry D.
Lead at Lord's Table & Contribution	John M.		Charlie K.		Don H.		Jimmy F.		Eric B.
Assist	Eric B.		Kevin H.		James M.		John M.		Ed M.
Assist	Brad F.		Bill A.		Charlie K.		Jerry D.		Bill A.
Assist	Jerry D.		Jeremy P.		Matt M.		Brad F.		Randy F.
Read Scripture	David T.		James M.		Jimmy F.		Jeremy P.		Leo R.
Preaching	Brent P.		Brent P.		Brent P.		Brent P.		Brent P.
Wed. Exhortation		John M.		Leo R.		Alan M.		Charlie K.	
Closing Prayer	Jimmy F.	Leo R.	Jerry D.	James M.	Brad F.	Eric B.	Kevin H.	Ed M.	Kevin H.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Sunday

9:15 - Morning Message
 10:00 - Bible classes for all ages
 11:00 - Worship

Wednesday

7:30 - Bible Classes for all ages

Elders:

Jim Fields, Alan Moeller & Leo Rodrigue

Deacons:

Eric Bridge & John Malloy

Evangelist:

Brent Paschall

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 class material at

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