

*Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. - 1<sup>st</sup> Peter*

*3:15*

## What I Believe and Why I Believe It

As I pondered upon what I believe the Lord would have me write on the topic of What I Believe and Why I Believe It; I felt I should begin by naming just a few things each and every one of us have in common from the very moment we are first conceived.

1. Every since Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3:1-24 each of us were born of the flesh (sinful nature) as mentioned to Nicodemus in John Chapter 3. Romans 5:19 speaking of Adam puts it this way, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners."

2. Adam and Eve had everything they needed including a right relationship with God while in the Garden of Eden until the forbidden fruit was tasted. As a result we now face the consequences due to their selfish pride. As soon as we are born we begin seeking a right relationship with someone who will meet our every need. We long to be clothed, fed and nourished in ways that are beyond our control. As we become more aware of our existence we begin to sense even more areas of our lives that want (whether we need it or not) attention and many other accommodations to fill our selfish desires.

3. Did you know it is a proven fact that 10 out of every 10 people will face death? Unless you happen to be someone who is raptured out of here at the last trumpet mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52 during the 7 years of Tribulation.

4. Everyone faces an eternal destiny.

In Exodus 20:1-17 God used Moses to introduce The 10 Commandments (The Law, God's Moral Standard) to the people. Can you name any of the 10 Commandments? I will name three for you.

1. The first commandment states that, "you shall have no other Gods before me." In other words Matthew 22:37 says, "you should love the Lord your God with all of your heart, with all of your soul, and with all of your mind."

2. The sixth commandment tells us that “you shall not murder”. 1 John 3:15 says, “But he who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.”
3. The seventh commandment is “you shall not commit adultery.” Matthew 5:27, 28 tells us “You have heard it said that it was said “to those of old”, You shall not commit adultery. But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

Remember there are seven more commandments left. God’s standards are much higher than ours. His ways are above our ways. Now that you have been confronted with his standards do you think you are guilty or innocent of obeying his commands? Would you go to heaven or hell?

In civil law we only have to break one law to go to jail or even worse. James 2:10 tells us “For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.” Think about it.....every sin mentioned in the Bible points to at least one of the Ten Commandments. The root of all sin points back to the pride in the hearts of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. This is how we become guilty before a just and holy God. He will be our judge on Judgment Day (Revelation 20:11-15). The following chapter of Revelation tells us, “the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.”

Let’s go back to civil law. You stand before the judge and you tell him you are sorry for what you have done. You tell him you know he is a good judge and that because he is a good judge you think he should let you go. If the judge is a good judge he is not going to let murderers, rapists and various other lawbreakers go. He is going to let the law do its work.

If you have read this far and have found yourself to be guilty in the eyes of the Lord by breaking His moral law then there is some great news I would like to share with you. John 3:16, 17 tells us, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.” Romans 5:8 puts it this way, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. “ In other words; Jesus paid for a debt that neither you nor I could afford.

Now may be the time to repent and tell the Lord you are sorry for the sins you have committed against him. The definition of Godly sorrow and repentance is in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 7:10 when we are told, "For Godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted: but the sorrow of the world produces death." Ask him for forgiveness. He sent his one and only Son for you to come before Him today with a humble heart. Romans 5:19 states that, "by one Mans obedience many will be made righteous." Ask Him to lead and guide you as you seek His will for your life so that you will be made righteous on the Day of Judgment.

I believe and am fully convinced after studying The Way of the Master Evangelism materials that we are to preach the full counsel of the Lord. We are to preach the law to the proud and grace to the humble. It is not until a sinner sees the full consequences of his guilt that He will come clinging to the cross for salvation. He will not fully appreciate the price Jesus paid for his redemption otherwise. Paul said in Romans 7:7, "he had not known sin, except by the law." He also said in Galatians 3:24, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."

I also believe preaching the full counsel of God is the only way we will ever see true revival. Some people think this form of Evangelism is legalism. Legalism would be to tell someone, "do not touch, do not taste, do not handle" as described in Colossians 2:21. It was not meant to be used as a way of looking down on people who may seem to be less spiritual. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 6:9,11 instructs us, "not to be deceived because we were all at one time in the world living as fornicators, idolaters, homosexuals, sodomites, adulterers, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners with no inheritance in the Kingdom of Heaven. As Christians we need to simply use the law to show the sinner that we are all on the same path of destruction without the blood of Jesus to wash away our sins.

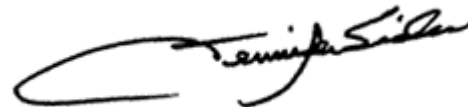
You may not know what your purpose is in life. Let me assure you we have all been graced with a God-given purpose. I believe as a Christian the number one calling of everyone who claims the name of Jesus is mentioned in Matthew 28:16-20 where he tells the disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you." They began to do just that all through the book of Acts. Jesus also told the disciples in Matthew 4:19, "to follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." The book of Jude goes as far as to tell us, but save others with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh. Paul said in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9:16, "Woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!"

Matthew 7:16 gives an example of the behavior a true disciple of Christ must possess by telling us, "you shall know them by their fruits." What are fruits? Galatians 5:22,23 reveals these characteristics to us by saying, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." The same chapter in just a few verses before mentions the same characteristics which showed us we were lawbreakers and headed to hell.

Don't be like the false converts in Titus 1:16 who profess to know God, but in works deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work. I can't stress enough how important it is to strive for righteousness while using the law as the means by which to bring lost souls to the Savior. Jesus described the difference of following either of these two paths in Matthew 5:19, 20 when he said, "Whoever therefore breaks one of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Today is the day of salvation. (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 6:2) Won't you please make your calling and election sure? (2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:10) I hope what I believe in and why I believe it has spoken to your heart in such a way that you embrace a faith in Jesus like never before!

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis Silva". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "D" and a long, horizontal flourish extending to the left.