

Seed Pickers: Paul's Scraps of Learning

Acts 17:16-33

I. Introduction: 2

1. 3 It takes a great deal of courage and determination to stand against the majority.
 - A. Peer pressure is a formidable foe.
 - B. Everybody wants, at some level, to “fit in,” “go with the flow,” “not rock the boat.”
 - C. Especially true in today’s society that has taken the concept of “political correctness” to heights unimaginable even five years ago (e.g., *Mozilla* CEO, Brandon Eich, fired because he supported CA Prop 8 banning SSM, numerous other examples).
2. ** The New Testament records many instances where one showed courage and determination to stand against the majority:
 - A. Jesus vs. the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt. 21, 22, and 23; series of confrontations).
 - B. Peter and John vs. the Sanhedrin (Acts 4 & 5).
 - C. Stephen’s defense before the high priest (Acts 7).
3. ** The focus of our lesson today is found in Acts 17:16-33
4. Athens was no longer an important city politically speaking, but it was like Bloomington a “university town.” It had an intellectual legacy as it had been the home of all the great ancient philosophers: Pericles, Demosthenes, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Sophocles, Aeschylus, and Euripides—men who established patterns of thought that have affected human learning for centuries.
 - A. Imagine yourself as Paul entered this bastion of human reasoning, all alone, outnumbered, intellectually outgunned; with no one to stand beside him, no one to “hold up his hands” as he preached on the “*Areopagus*” (Mar’s Hill).
 - B. 4 He was confronted by a hostile, pagan audience (hostile both philosophically and perhaps even physically; remember Thessalonica in vv. 5-10).
 - C. ** The hostility of the Athenian elite is also evidenced by the terminology they used to describe Paul in 17:18 (“*What does this babbler want to say?*”):

“babbler”	KJV, NKJV, ASV, NIV, NLT, RSV
“idle babbler”	NASV
“chatterer”	Darby Bible
“dreamer”	Living Bible
“rag-picker”	Goodspeed
“seed picker”	YLT, Robertson, Vincent
 - D. Moffat’s NT translation: “*What does this fellow mean with his scraps of learning?*”
 - E. No matter what terminology you use; it is without question the “learned” men of Athens held Paul in low esteem!
 - (1) The Athenian philosophers were pretty stuck on themselves.
 - (2) They met daily to talk of all things they had learned, to express some new idea, and to hear something new.
 - (3) Although their opinion of Paul was low; they had enough curiosity to give him a hearing just in case they might pick up some new “scrap” of information (they were the real “seed pickers”!).

F. 5 They call Paul a “spermologos”:

“a babbler,” is used in Acts 17:18. Primarily an adjective, it came to be used as a noun signifying a crow, or some other bird, picking up seeds (*sperma*, “a seed,” *lego*, “to collect”). Then it seems to have been used of a man accustomed to hang about the streets and markets, picking up scraps which fall from loads; hence a parasite, who lives at the expense of others, a hanger on.

Metaphorically it became used of a man who picks up scraps of information and retails them secondhand, a plagiarist, or of those who make a show, in unscientific style, of knowledge obtained from misunderstanding lectures. Prof. Ramsay points out that there does not seem to be any instance of the classical use of the word as a “babbler” or a mere talker. He finds in the word a piece of Athenian slang, applied to one who was outside any literary circle, an ignorant plagiarist. Other suggestions have been made, but without satisfactory evidence. (from Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

5. 6 When you take this into account you can easily see they thought Paul was far beneath them.
- A. But, you and I know better! We know he was guided by the Holy Spirit and that when he spoke he spoke “*not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches*” (1 Cor. 2:13).
 - B. In fact, we know his “*speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power*” (1 Cor. 2:4) and that what Paul spoke was “*not according to man. For [he] neither received it from man, nor was...taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.*” (Gal. 1:11-12).
 - C. But, unfortunately, people’s perceptions are often quite different than reality.
6. Imagine yourself as Paul’s traveling companion, his fellow laborer in the gospel.
- A. If you had been there would you have been willing to have stood with Paul against the establishment of the day?
 - B. Would you have been willing to have stood up with him and be scorned and ridiculed as a “seed-picker”?
 - C. Willing to stand and be ridiculed as a person peddling mere “*scraps of learning*”? “A person who picks up scraps of information and retails them secondhand, a plagiarist”?
 - D. Would you have had the courage to be in such a demeaning position; standing with the despised minority?
7. 7 Today (morning and evening) I want to consider several “*scraps of learning*” the great apostle taught at the direction of the Holy Spirit and as we do let us all ask ourselves:
- A. ** “Am I willing, regardless of what the world (secular or religious) says to confidently stand with Paul on these matters?”
 - B. ** “Am I willing, regardless of what even my own brethren may think, say, or do to me, and confidently stand with Paul on these matters?”
 - C. ** “Am I willing, regardless of what it may cost me (social standing, familial relationships, financially, reputation, personal privations, etc.), to confidently stand with Paul?”
 - D. ** In other words, am I willing to make a stand for God and His word and in the process let anyone and everyone consider me a “seed-picker,” “a babbler,” a small-minded nobody, a complete nincompoop? A prejudiced, judgmental, narrow-minded, self-righteous bigot?

II. Discussion:

I. 8 Scrap of Learning #1: The Seven Ones: Eph. 4:4-6

- A. “one body”: “body” = “the church” (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18)
- (1) Do you stand with Paul on that? Are you willing to be called a “seed-picker” on that?
 - (2) After all, “one church is as good as another!”
 - (3) Will you stand with the apostle Paul, and the thinnest of minorities, and confidently affirm to the broad body of both secular and religious people who say there are many ways by which one can be saved, that you believe there is but one church which was purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ?
 - (4) In today’s “politically correct” society you will be ridiculed, ostracized, and perhaps even sued for making such an affirmation (I was called a “church bashing, sheep stealer”).
- B. “one Spirit”: Do you stand with Paul on that? Are you willing to be called a “seed-picker” on that?
- C. “one hope”:
- (1) There is but “one hope”! Not two, not five, not a dozen.
 - (2) Do you stand with Paul on that? Are you willing to be called a “seed-picker” on that?
 - (3) There are many people who desire to get into heaven, but their hope is based upon something other than the “one hope” revealed in the word of God.
 - (4) What of the Buddhist’s hope? The Muslim’s hope? The denominationalist’s hope? 70 A.D. adherent’s hope?
 - (5) If you cling to the “one hope” of the Bible get ready for criticism, ostracism, and isolation! And, you’re most likely to receive the worst of from those claiming to be “Christians”!
- D. “one Lord”:
- (1) Do you stand with Paul on that? Are you willing to be called a “seed-picker” on that?
 - (2) What of the Hindu, the Sikh, the Muslim, or the Jew? What about “Christians” who deny the resurrection? (Rom. 1:4; Acts 2:36) Are you excluding them? They believe they’ll be saved, but they certainly don’t believe in the “one Lord” of the Bible.
- E. “one faith”:
- (1) Do what happens when you teach the “one faith” of the Bible: “You biased, bigoted, self-righteous boob! Don’t you know there are many faiths! Don’t you know that even though we may travel on different roads, we are all going to the same place?”
 - (2) Will you stand with Paul on that? Are you willing to be called a “seed-picker” on that?
- F. “one baptism”:
- (1) The world doesn’t believe in baptism...period! Why? No need for the remission of sins! There’s no sin, only “momentary lapses of judgment.”
 - (2) This concept is also way out of step with denominationalism. Many denominations don’t even practice baptism. Or, if they do, it is an “option.” I don’t know of any denomination which practices baptism who practices it scripturally (either wrong mode, wrong subject, or wrong purpose).
 - (3) When you insist on following what the New Testament says concerning baptism you are labeled as a fanatic, a legalistic Pharisee, or you just don’t understand God!

- (4) Do you stand with Paul on that? Are you willing to be called a “seed-picker” on that?
- G. “one God and Father”:
- (1) What about those religions that don’t believe in “*the living and true God*” revealed in the Bible (1 Thess. 1:9); what about those who believe in “Allah” or a multiplicity of “gods”?
- (2) Do you stand with Paul on that? Are you willing to be called a “seed-picker” on that?
- H. How about those seven “*scraps of learning*”? When the rubber meets the road will you stand with Paul?

2. **9 Scrap of Learning #2: One Gospel:** Gal. 1:6-12

- A. Do you accept whole-heartedly and unreservedly the fact that Paul taught as one of his “scraps of learning” that there is but one saving gospel? One, and only one!?
- B. And that if, indeed, one preaches another gospel the Lord said, “*Let that person be accursed.*”
- C. ** Are you strong enough to stand against the established religious order that teaches that one gospel is as good as another?

Quran
Book of Mormon
Pearl of Great Price
Doctrine and Covenants
Science and Health With Key To
The Scriptures

The Methodist Discipline
The Baptist Manual
Catechism of the Catholic Church
You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth

- D. The secular world believes the Bible is a book written by ignorant men (“ignorant Bronze Age womanizers”); filled with myths. Most of the denominational world believes the Bible is a good book, but that it was still written by men; that it’s loaded with the biases and prejudices of bygone ages; and that in this “enlightened time” it is not “*profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*” (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- E. Are you willing to take the opposite view? Swim upstream? Buck the current? Go against the grain? Stand with Paul? Be a “seed-picker”? **To boldly welcome the Bible “*not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.*”? 1 Thess. 2:13

3. **10 Scrap of Learning #3: Prayer Meeting:** Acts 16:11-15

- A. Paul offers us another “scrap of learning” in Acts 16:11-15 (relate the story).
- B. Paul was willing to go meet with others “*where prayer was customarily made*” (v. 13).
- C. A lot of folks don’t believe in gathering together for such a purpose (e.g., drop off in Wed. night attendance vs. Sunday AM attendance).
- D. Some don’t even believe in Sunday AM attendance! Heb. 10:23-31 notwithstanding!
- E. It was not for comfort and ease that we became members of the church. It was not for the things I want to do. “*Come, follow Me.*”

- (1) In the Philippines when crowds gather to hear the gospel many are “SRO”! People stand at the windows of full buildings! They sit on bare boards supported by cinder blocks! No air-conditioning! Dirt floors!
- (2) Philippines: travel many, many miles on dirt roads; many with muddy ruts, etc.
- (3) Philippines: willing to meet all day; 6, 7, 8, 9 hours!
- (4) And some U.S. brethren complain if the sermon goes over 30 minutes in our air-conditioned/heated buildings with padded pews!

F. Total commitment is required for our lives to be well-pleasing to God:

Matt. 16:24-26: *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.”*

Matt. 5:6: *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.”*

Matt. 6:33: *“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”*

4. **11 Scrap of Learning #4: Faith Comes By Hearing:** Rom. 10:17

- A. Majority of the denominational world really doesn’t believe that *“faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”* (Rom. 10:17).
 - (1) Faith to some (Catholics) comes by seeing Mary in a grilled cheese sandwich.
 - (2) The purveyors of the “social gospel” would say “faith” comes by “ministering to the whole man.” Justifies everything from chicken dinners to softball teams to jazzercise, macramé and basket-weaving classes!
- B. But, the Bible unequivocally denies both such concepts and unashamedly teaches the truth of Rom. 10:17!

Luke 8:11-15: v. 11: *“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.”*

Eph. 1:13: *“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation”*

Jas. 1:18: *“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth”* (KJV)

1 Pet. 1:23: *“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”*

Acts 20:32: *“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”*

Rom. 1:16: *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”*

- C. If you spend much time trying to teach people the gospel; you’ll find many, many people who will tell you they know they are saved because they “feel it my heart.” They totally reject the truth of Rom. 10:17 and reject many aspects of truth by replacing “feelings” for truth. No objective standard of truth. They will heap criticism upon criticism on you and accuse you of not knowing God (Jn. 14:23-24: *“If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word ; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. 24 He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.”*).
- D. Do you stand with Paul on that? Are you willing to be called a “seed-picker” on that?

5. **12 Scrap of Learning #5: The Scriptures Are God’s Word:** 1 Thess. 2:13

“For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.”

- A. God's word has been under attack since the beginning (Gen. 3:4: "Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die.'").
- B. People of the world have always hated God and His word, and this generation is no exception:
- 13**"You believe in a book that has talking animals, wizards, witches, demons, sticks turning into snakes, food falling from the sky, people walking on water, and all sorts of magical, absurd and primitive stories, and you say that we are the ones that need help?" Dan Barker, co-president, *Freedom From Religion Foundation*
- ****"When I think of all the harm [the Bible] has done, I despair of ever writing anything to equal it." Oscar Wilde, Irish poet
- ****"The Bible has noble poetry in it... and some good morals and a wealth of obscenity, and upwards of a thousand lies." Mark Twain
- 14**"To be fair, much of the Bible is not systematically evil but just plain weird, as you would expect of a chaotically cobbled-together anthology of disjointed documents, composed, revised, translated, distorted and 'improved' by hundreds of anonymous authors, editors and copyists, unknown to us and mostly unknown to each other, spanning nine centuries." Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*
- ****"Properly read, the Bible is the most potent force for atheism ever conceived." Isaac Asimov, author and professor of biochemistry
- 15**"The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully." Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*
- Bill Maher, comedian and talk show host:
- ****"I always wonder when I talk to religious people, how do you reconcile this idea that it all comes from the Bible, but the Bible is so flawed, it's either full of nonsense or viciousness."
- "No one can blame me when I say this is a stupid country. When 60 percent of the adults in it think the Noah's Ark story is literally true. Which is why I'm already sick of the ads for this floating piece of giraffe crap,"
- "You believe a man, Noah, lived to be 900 years old, that's what the Bible said; and when he was 500, he decided to have three kids just like Clint Eastwood."
- "And when he was 600, he and his three 100-year-old sons built a boat unto which, in one day, they loaded over 3 million animals, all of which were apparently indigenous to within five miles of the boat."
- "But get this, what the Christians who are now protesting this movie are upset about is that it doesn't take the biblical story literally enough. They're mad because this made-up story doesn't stay true to their made-up story."
- "The thing that's really disturbing about Noah isn't the silly, it's that it's immoral. It's about a psychotic mass murderer who gets away with it and his name is God. Genesis says God was so angry with Himself for screwing up when he made mankind so flawed that he sent the flood to kill everyone. Men, women, children, babies, what kind of tyrant punishes everyone just to get back at the few he's mad at? I mean besides Chris Christie."
- "You know conservatives are always going on about how Americans are losing their values and their morality. Well maybe it's because you worship a guy who drowns babies."
- "And then God's genius plan after he kills everyone is to repopulate the world with a new crop of the same a**h**es who p***ed him off the first time with predictable results. He kills millions

more. ******If we were a dog and God owned us, the cops would come and take us away. Why are we getting our morals out of this book? Why are people following any of it?"

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com>

C. **16** The Bible claims to be the product of the "inspiration of God":

2 Tim. 3:16: *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,*

Gal. 1:11-12: *But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. I 2 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

Eph. 3:5: *which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets:*

1 Cor. 2:10: *But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.*

- (1) If the Bible is not what it claims to be, it is the biggest fraud that has ever been foisted upon the human race in all of human history.
- (2) It wouldn't deserve even a moment of our consideration.
- (3) Every copy of it should be destroyed and every effort expended to erase its memory from the annals of history.

D. **17**BUT the Bible has survived at centuries of opposition!

The Anvil of God's Word

"Last eve I paused beside the blacksmith's door,
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
Then looking in, I saw upon the floor,
Old hammers, worn with beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had,' said I,
'To wear and batter all these hammers so?'
'Just one,' said he, and then with twinkling eye,
'The anvil wears the hammers out, you know.'

"And so, I thought, the Anvil of God's Word
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon;
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The Anvil is unharmed, the hammers gone."

—Attributed to John Clifford

- E. Recall what I said earlier: The secular world believes the Bible is a book written by ignorant Bronze Age womanizers; filled with myths. Most of the denominational world believes the Bible is a good book, but that it was still written by men; that it's loaded with the biases and prejudices of bygone ages (deny miracles, deny virgin birth, deny resurrection, etc.).
- F. Are you willing to take the opposite view? Swim upstream? Buck the current? Go against the grain? Stand with Paul? Be a "seed-picker"? To boldly welcome the Bible "*not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.*"? 1 Thess. 2:13
- G. Lord willing, I plan to begin a series of lessons on "Evidences"; including evidences showing the veracity and reliability of the Bible text when the students come back next fall. ******But in the meantime: Isaiah 40:8: "*The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.*"

6. **18 Scrap of Learning #6: Righteousness, Temperance, and the Judgment To Come:**

Acts 24:24-25: Paul's defense before Felix (Drusilla): "...heard him, concerning faith in Christ. 25 Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come..."

A. Very unpopular message today! People don't want a brand of Christianity that "cramps their style"!

(1) Sacrifice?!

Lk. 9:23-24: Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. 24 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it."

Lk. 14:26-27: "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. 27 And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

(2) In today's society one can only rarely tell the difference between a "Christian" and a person of the world (2 Cor. 6:17; talk, places you go, things you do, what you where, what you drink, etc.).

A majority of single Christians are rejecting biblical doctrine by choosing to have sex before they are married. Sixty-one percent of self-identified Christian singles who answered a recent *ChristianMingle* survey said they are willing to have casual sex without being in love, while only 11 percent said they are waiting to have sex until they are married.

- via *The Christian Post*, 2/12/14

(3) "You're going to talk to me about righteousness?" That's a foreign concept to 99% of people. Talking about this is going to get you labeled as a self-righteous bigot.

(4) "It's none of your business what I do!" The idea of temperance (self-control) is a "no-no" in our profligate society.

(5) "How dare you say I'm going to be judged; don't you know the Bible says, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged'?" If there's one scripture the average worldly person knows it's Matt. 7:1.

B. Do you stand with Paul on righteousness, temperance, and the judgment to come? Are you willing to be called a "seed-picker" on that?

7. **19 Scrap of Learning #7: Pointed Preaching:**

A. Jesus preaching:

(1) Didn't mince words: Matt. 15:9, 12, 13-14

(2) Downright excoriated sinners: Matt. 23 ("woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" "Woe to you, blind guides" "Fools and blind!" "you are like whitewashed tombs" "Serpents, brood of vipers!")

B. Apostle's preaching:

(1) Placed blame where blame was due: Acts 2:22-23; 5:30

(2) Boldly defied the establishment: Acts 5:29: "We ought to obey God rather than men."

C. Paul's preaching:

(1) Like other apostles, placed blame where blame was due: Acts 10:39

(2) Called a spade a spade: 1 Cor. 3:3; Gal. 3:1

(3) Named names: 1 Tim. 1:18-20; 2 Tim. 2:13-15

D. One now deceased gospel preacher well-described much of today's preaching as "tip-toe around the Jones's" preaching (explain).

- E. Do you stand with Paul on preaching that is direct and to the point? Preaching “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). Are you willing to be called a “seed-picker” for that?

8. 20 Scrap of Learning #8: Sowing Bountifully:

- A. So far I don’t believe I’ve said anything that anybody present here would not “Amen.” But, now I may step on some toes; mine included!
- B. 2 Cor. 9:6-8; 8:1-5
- C. How do you give?
- (1) Grudgingly and of necessity? Or with a willing heart, bountifully?
 - (2) Liberally or miserly? Beyond your ability? Freely, willingly?
 - (3) Compare with “tithing” under Law of Moses (Lev. 27:30; actually estimated to be ~23%).
- D. We not only must give as we’ve just stated, but there’s much more! In addition to our obligation to the local congregation, we have other obligations:
- (1) Family: 1 Tim. 5:8, 16
 - (2) All men: Matt. 25:31-46
 - (3) Preachers: 1 Cor. 9:14; Gal. 6:6-8: *Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches. 7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.* (Filipino preachers selling breadsticks and making only 3¢/bag).
- E. I worry many Christians will be lost for a failure to meet their benevolent responsibilities (More out of apathy, than downright stinginess. 1 Jn. 3:17: *But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?*; Matt. 25:31-46).
- F. Do you stand with Paul on giving? Are you willing to be called a “seed-picker” for that?

9. 21 Scrap of Learning #9: Self-Control:

- A. 1 Cor. 9:24-27
- B. As we’ve already said, the world and most “Christians” don’t want to hear that message (Matt. 7:1).
- C. But even the great apostle Paul himself was concerned about being “disqualified” (i.e., lost) due to a lack of self-control.
- (1) Self-control is a consistent Bible message! **Eph. 2:1-3:** “*were dead in trespasses and sin, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air...conducted ourselves in the lusts of the flesh...were by nature children of wrath*”; **Col. 3:5ff:** *Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth...*”
 - (2) Christians are “changed” people! 1 Pet. 4:3: We’ve already wasted enough of our lives “*in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in*”...all these fleshly ways.
 - (3) We won’t make it to heaven without the development of self-control (2 Pet. 1:5-11; **3:11:** *Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,*).
- D. The extent and degree of change God requires of us is enormous! **2 Cor. 10:5:** “*bring[ing] every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ*”; **Gal. 2:20:** “*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*”
- E. Do you stand with Paul on self-control? Are you willing to be called a “seed-picker” for that?

10. **22 Scrap of Learning #10: Homosexuality Is a Sin:**

- A. Perhaps **the** issue of the day!
- B. The Bible clearly and unequivocally teaches that homosexual behavior is sinful (Rom. 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-10).
- C. The amount of societal pressure against the truth on this issue is tremendous!
 - (1) The LGBT “community” is determined that society will not just accept their perversions, but will “celebrate” them...or else!
 - (2) ****** Michael Sam is promoted as the next Jackie Robinson and anyone not agreeing with that assessment is vilified, castigated and ostracized.
 - (3) ****** For example, Jason & David Benham had their home improvement program cancelled on HGTV before it even aired its first episode (“*A demonic agenda to suppress the truth.*”)
- D. We need to be very clear: We are not against people (Jn. 3:16; Lk. 19:10), we love the sinner and hate the sin! Rom. 6:23; Ezek. 33
- E. Where will you stand if one Sunday morning our parking lot is filled with protesters denouncing us as prejudiced bigots because we believe and teach that homosexuality is a sin? Are you willing to be called a “seed-picker” for that?

11. **23 Scrap of Learning #11: Marriage is between one man and one woman:**

- A. Paul spoke directly about marriage in 1 Cor. 7.
 - (1) However, we also know that as an apostle Paul was guided “into all truth” (Jn. 16:13) through inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:26; 15:26).
 - (2) In this regard he was able to say “*I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles*” (2 Cor. 11:5).
 - (3) He also said that he declared “*the whole counsel of God*” (Acts 20:27).
 - (4) Therefore, it is an inescapable conclusion that he taught all that Jesus Himself revealed in the gospels (Jn. 14:26).
- B. Thus, whatever Jesus taught concerning marriage, Paul taught concerning marriage. Jesus taught:
Matt. 19:4-6: “*Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ 5 and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? 6 So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.*”
Matt. 19:8-9: *He said to them, “Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.”*
- C. **“One man, for one woman, with only one exception.”**
- D. ****** Since 2010 all 50 states now have “no fault” divorce laws.
No-fault divorce is a divorce in which the dissolution of a marriage does not require a showing of wrongdoing by either party. Laws providing for no-fault divorce allow a family court to grant a divorce in response to a petition by either party of the marriage without requiring the petitioner to provide evidence that the defendant has committed a breach of the marital contract. *Wikipedia*
- E. ****** In 17 states and Washington, D.C. “same-sex marriage” is now legal. ****** How long before it’s legal in all 50 states? ****** Don’t think it’s a problem?! Think again!
“Meanwhile, an American was recently arrested in London, England for preaching against sexual sins, including homosexuality. Tony Miano made it clear that he was discussing all forms of sexual immorality. He also said that he

'loves homosexuals enough to bring them the truth of the Gospel.' Nonetheless, he was booked at the local police station, photographed, and fingerprinted. He spent seven hours in jail, where he read from Acts 1-5 and sang hymns from his jail cell. Just after midnight, he was released. (As a side note, the police station welcomed his offer to donate more Bibles to their jail.)" *Denison Forum on Truth and Culture*

- F. Do you stand with Paul on that? Are you willing to be called a "seed-picker" on that? I would not be surprised someday to receive a call from a "gay couple" requesting that I perform their wedding ceremony. If I don't agree to do so I fully expect to be sued or maybe even arrested for a "hate crime."
- G. When the rubber meets the road will I, will we, stand with Paul? Will we be willing to be called a "seed picker"?!

12. **24** **Scrap of Learning #12: God Created the Universe:**

Gen. 1:1: *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

- A. The apostle Paul was a creationist (refers to the historical "Adam" at least four times in his epistles; Rom. 5:14; 1 Cor. 15:22, 45; 1 Tim. 2:13-14).
- B. ** According to the latest *Gallup Poll* (May 3-6, 2012: In the U.S. 46% believe in Biblical creation, 32% believe in theistic evolution, and 15% believe in evolution without any divine intervention. (reported in the *Huffington Post*)
- C. ** The criticism the "evolution community" heaps on creationists is increasingly bitter, belligerent, and even downright hateful:
25"[creationists] should no longer be taken seriously." From *Denison Forum on Truth and Culture*
**"Well-educated people who are still creationists have lost the plot somewhere along the line." From *Denison Forum on Truth and Culture*
**"I say to the grown-ups, 'If you want to deny evolution and live in your world that's completely inconsistent with everything we've observed in the universe that's fine. But don't make your kids do it.'" Bill Nye "The Science Guy"
26"Lawrence Krauss, a professor at Arizona State University (theoretical physicist, cvt), said teaching creationism is akin to a mild form of child abuse and that it mirrors the tactics of the Taliban." *Huffington Post*

One blogger claiming to have masters and doctoral degrees:

"Remember... You may not be able to 'fix' stupid, but you sure can hit it with a bat until you feel better."

27"Dear Creationists,

You are stupid.

Genuinely stupid.

By every conceivable metric that we can assess intelligence, intellect, mental ability, reasoning and sense, you're stupid. Even the very ability to string words together in coherent ways, you're stupid. You fail at all of this. You are f***ing stupid. There is no way of getting out of this accusation; it is as close to an absolute, proven fact that an honest assessment of the situation can get.

[multiple page self-described "rant"] ending with:

"...In conclusion. F*** you. Go f*** yourself. And may the god you believe in have mercy on your pathetic, idiotic, morally and intellectually bankrupt soul."

- D. To deny the literal account given in Genesis 1 & 2 is to deny Jesus Christ because He is the Creator! Jn. 1:1-3: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. Col. 1:16-17; Matt. 19:4

E. Will we stand with Paul and Jesus on creation? Will we be willing to be called a “seed picker”?!

13. **28 Scrap of Learning #13: The Age of Miracles Has Ceased:**

A. Many denominational churches are “charismatic.”

B. “Charismatic” churches “seek an ecstatic religious experience, sometimes including speaking in tongues and instantaneous healing.” (Dictionary.com)

C. Some go even so far as to believe that if one hasn’t received “Holy Spirit baptism” and is able to speak in tongues they are not saved.

D. Shows a complete misunderstanding of the purpose, duration and nature of miracles.

(1) Purpose of miracles was to “confirm[ing] the word” of those who spoke on behalf of God, e.g., the apostles:

Mark 16:20: *And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.*

Heb. 2:3-4: *how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, 4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?*

(2) Once the word was revealed and confirmed, miracles ceased! Jn. 16:13; Jude 3; 1 Cor. 13:8-13

(3) Those supposedly “speaking in tongues” today don’t even understand what “tongues” were in the NT. Today’s “tongue speakers” speak in gibberish; I’ve even heard them describe it as “a heavenly language.” But such was not so in NT times (Acts 2:5-11).

E. Will we stand with Paul and Jesus on the cessation of miracles? Will we be willing to be called a “seed picker”?!

14. **29 Scrap of Learning #14: There’s a Difference Between the Church and the Individual:**

A. Many of our own brethren say, “Whatever the individual can do, the church can do.”

B. In essence they are saying there is no difference between the church and the individual Christian.

C. Why? They do this so they can “justify” practices that God never authorized the church to engage in (e.g., church support of orphan homes, sponsoring church arrangement).

D. Is there a difference between the church and the individual? Yes! **1 Tim. 5:16:** *If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows. (cf. Jas. 1:27)*

(1) Misplacing the responsibilities of the individual and placing them upon the church is unscriptural.

(2) However, it also is detrimental to the individual Christian! It deceives him/her into believing they have taken care of their responsibilities before God by merely putting their contribution into the basket every Lord’s Day! Explain Matt. 25:31-46 “anti” “orphan hater” “legalist” “Pharisee”

E. Will we stand with Paul and Jesus on the individual vs. the church? Will we be willing to be called a “seed picker”?!

III. Conclusion:

- I. When Paul revealed the one true and living God to that idolatrous and hostile crowd in Athens nearly 2,000 years ago, he boldly stood as a minority against the majority.
 - A. God's people have always been, and always will be, a minority (Matt. 7:13-14).
 - B. You and I stand as a minority against the secular world and against the religious world.
 - C. We even stand as a minority among those who claim to be members of the Lord's church.
 - D. It takes the best that is in mankind to resist the majority, and to stand for the truth of God's word.
 - E. But if, indeed, we are going to be of the number whom God will say, "*Well done, good and faithful servant*" (Matt. 25:23), we are going to have to take that very seldom used fork in the road.
2. As we ponder whether or not to stand with the "seed-pickers" we need to recall the words of Jesus:
Matt. 7:13-14: *"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."*
Rev. 21:8: *"But 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, which is the second death."*

Adapted from a sermon, "Paul's Scraps of Learning," by Floyd Thompson in *Book, Chapter & Verse...* (pp. 34-46).