

## *A Better Idea*

Joe Slater

Over half a century ago (1968 to be exact) Ford Motor Company began a new advertising campaign using the slogan “Ford has a better idea.” It featured the image of a glowing light bulb and urged listeners and viewers to “see the light!” No doubt Ford’s engineers had some good ideas. Others, not so much. The snarky side of me has gotten quite a bit of mileage mocking the “better idea” of things I found sub-par in the Ford vehicles I’ve owned. In those cases, I obviously think my own ideas are better than Ford’s! You might or might not agree.

Neither you nor I will ever have better ideas than God has. King Saul thought he had a better idea of what to do with the king and livestock of Amalek. God told Saul to utterly destroy them. Saul brought back the king and the best of the livestock, supposedly to sacrifice the animals to the Lord. Wouldn’t just destroying them all be a waste? Wouldn’t sacrificing them be a better idea? The prophet Samuel answered: *“Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice”* (1 Samuel 15:22).

God has graciously provided a way for sinners to be saved. When a lost person puts his confident trust in Jesus as the Son of God, repents of sin, and is immersed in water for the remission of sins, God washes that person’s sins away in the blood of Christ. The book of Acts is replete with examples. According to some, however, there is a better way: Pray the “sinner’s prayer” and invite Jesus into your heart! (Don’t bother looking for Scripture that teaches it!)

Then there’s that thorny subject of baptism. The very word means “immersion,” but people have decided sprinkling and pouring are better ideas.

You can think of other examples. But far and away the best idea is to trust and obey the Lord!

## Skinin’ Cats

I’ve always fancied myself as being a “cat skinner.” Some may not be familiar with this term, so let me explain. In my native Tennessee a common, everyday phrase states that “there’s more than one way to skin a cat.” It’s a colorful way of saying that numerous methods exist either to complete a task or to reach a specific goal. Those embracing this attitude often rise about the rest because of their willingness to roll up their sleeves and get the job done.

When I think about involvement, the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30) comes to mind. In a nutshell, three men were delegated responsibilities by their master, each according to their abilities. Two of the three men took what was entrusted to them and used it wisely. The third man took his and hid it away. When the master returned, he rewarded the two for working and doubling what they had. However, the master punished the third man for not using what he had.

It’s been said that “the world is full of willing people. Some are willing to work; the others are willing to let them.” This should not be the case in God’s kingdom. Our Lord Jesus wants everyone to be involved, as serving others. In Matthew 20:26 He equates service to greatness. The third man was punished for being fearful and lazy. Call it work, service, multi-tasking, or whatever you wish, but the fact remains that Jesus wants His people to use their resources and work! There are cats to be skinned!

And for those concerned... no cats were harmed in the writing of this article.

--Kenny Westmoreland (Celina, TN)

## WOULD YOU ALSO GO AWAY?

*“From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, ‘Do you also want to go away?’ But Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life’”* (John 6:66-68).

Some of the saddest times in the life of Christ were when His disciples, even after he had performed miracles and fed and taught them, rejected Him. Their excuses for not believing in Him were many. Before they walked away on this occasion, their complaint was, *“This is a hard saying; who can understand it?”* (6:60).

Today it is heart-breaking when we see those who, for whatever reason, leave the fellowship of the church and align themselves with unbelievers. They choose to follow their own opinions and feelings. Here is how Jesus described a group of people who were very religious and dedicated, but in error: *“You make the commandments of God of no effect by your tradition. Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying, ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men’* (Matthew 15:6-9).

Jesus made it quite clear that He comes even before family: *“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate (love less) his father and his mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters,, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple”* (Luke 14:26).

Some who desire to be popular allow their lives to be controlled by the majority. Jesus said: *“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. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it”* (Matthew 7:13-14).

Every child of God should consider Peter’s wise response: *“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life”* (John 6:68).

--Cecil Burch (via *Old Paths*)