

The Better Way

Volume XXXIX, Issue 29

July 14, 2024

SPRING CHURCH OF CHRIST

Physical Address:
1327 Spring Cypress Rd.
Spring, TX 77373

Mailing Address:
25403 Lancewood Dr.
Spring, TX 77373

Office: 281-353-2707

springcoc@gmail.com
www.churchesofchrist.com

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY

Bible Study.....9:00 a.m.
Worship.....10:00 a.m.
Afternoon Worship.....1:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study.....7:30 p.m.
(via Zoom Meetings)

ELDERS

David P. Brown
Ken Cohn
John West

DEACONS

Bret Bailey
J. D. Gunter
Eric Paluka

EVANGELIST

David P. Brown

SECRETARY

Sonya West

DAYS OF ADVERSITY

O. H. Tabor

“In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him” (Ecc. 7:14). There are days when the Lord’s people must go down into the low lands of adversity and there meet with trials, sorrows, and disasters. For a while we may walk the sunshine path where all seems well, then suddenly, without warning, there come frowns of fortune, hard times, blight, calamity and depression. God’s people have seen the black storm clouds gather and have watched them hide the brightest sky and then the ill winds of disaster blow.

Under such pressures of the soul many have gone down to defeat and have broken up against the craggy rocks of disaster. However, others have braved the storms, held their heads high and kept the faith and have many times come through stronger because they trusted God. One has said, “Without disaster a man hardly knows whether he is honest or not.” To a child of God, who faces up to every trial of adversity, he may say truthfully with David, **“It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes”** (Psa. 119:71).

Oftentimes when the going is rough, the gathering clouds appear and we find ourselves in a peck of trouble we become really acquainted with God, ourselves and with others; without hard sledding at times, we hardly know how good God is, how weak we are, and how stable and true are our friends. Mallet said, “He who hath not known ill fortune never knew himself, or his own virtues.” Many Christians can truthfully say that they have not faced an adversity which did not, in the end, prove to be valuable to them.

The Christian soul is somewhat like the palm tree which seems to push upward most under weight, pressure, and burden. It seems, sometimes, that the best people on earth are most tried, troubled, and distressed. The most tragic sight is to see those who when faced with some bitter ordeal will fall from their high estate, go downhill to rack and ruin, make “ship wreck of the faith” and bring a “hornet’s nest about their heads.”

Why do adversities come? is a deep question and cannot be fully answered. Some think that adversity is proof positive of some individual sin and that every person who suffers does so as a direct result of some specific sin. Some say it is a result of fate, and still others try to deny the realities of these ups and downs of life. We know that God is not the author of evil, but we must believe that He permits His children to face adversity. One cannot escape adversity by saying, **“I shall never be in adversity”** (Psa. 10:6). We know God sees the vexed soul and cares (Psa. 31:7). We also know that He gives grace to sustain His people when they are in trouble (2 Cor. 12:9; Heb. 4:16).

It is true that sin in the soul will bring suffering and most of our adversities may be the result of sin, for we often make the wrong choice and thus bring upon ourselves calamity. However, the fact that God permits adversity does not mean that He is the direct author of all sufferings. Some adversities come upon us by reason of the fact that we live in an ordered world where violation of the law brings its penalty. In this ordered world, where law must be obeyed, all who violate it knowingly or unknowingly, must suffer the consequences. **“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap”** (Gal. 6:7). If we lived in a world of chance far more suffering would be the result.

Many times we suffer adversity because of others. **“For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself”** (Rom. 14:7). We are taught not only to rejoice with others but also to suffer with them. Christians belong to the same family and when one member suffers then all members are to suffer with that one who is under a cloud of adverse circumstances. We also bear adversity sometimes because of enemies and they often rejoice over our sufferings (Psa. 3:15).

Yes, God permits our afflictions.

And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city: for God did vex them with all adversity. Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded (2 Chr. 15:6-7).

God sees the vexed souls:

I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities; And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a large room (Psa. 31:7-8).

God delivers His people in days of adversity but many times they do not remember His goodness. In the days of Samuel He said to Israel:

And said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you: And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands(1 Sam. 10:18, 19).

What should be our attitude toward adversity? The Lord said, **“In day of adversity, consider.”** We should consider the source if we can find it, then accept them with submission and with a deep trust in God, believe He will work out the things that are best for us in every case. We need to remember that our experience in contending with hardships and pressures is not an isolated one but such are common to all the race.

The Christian and the unbeliever both experience alike the reverses of life. John Milton knew the deep tragedy of total blindness. He was gifted and brilliant, with educational advantages beyond many of his contemporaries. He became blind at the age of 44 when his people were in the struggle between king and commonwealth. Milton continued his public service for some time but became unable to continue. Instead of bemoaning his cruel “fate” or becoming embittered by the narrow horizons of his life, he brought forth his great masterpieces, *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*.

Someone said of Milton, “A blind man could see Paradise, and has helped countless others to see it down through the generations since his day.” When faced with the downs of life we should remember that these will not last forever for after the clouds the sun will shine again. We must remember it is not always connected with some specific personal sin. We must continue to believe that all of life combined, the good and the bad, to those who love the Lord, He works it out for good and these combine to serve a lofty purpose.

When adversity comes we are told not to faint but press on with prayer and try to find the lesson in it. If we never find the purpose in this life we can believe that eternity will tell the whole story. The tests of life are to make or break us. One has said, “Troubles may demolish a man’s business, but build up his character at the same time.” The blow at the outward man may be the greatest blessing to the inward man. If God then puts or permits anything hard in our lives, be sure that the real peril the real trouble, is that we shall lose if we flinch or rebel. Let us take what comes and with faith endure to the end. One has said, “Suffering overcomes the mind’s inertia, develops thinking powers, opens up a new world, and drives the soul to action.”~

Deceased

“ONCE UPON A TIME”

Danny L. Box

As small children we were all told or read stories that began with the phrase **“Once upon a time.”** This phrase was a catch-all statement that literally meant “this was the way things were back then.” As we look all across the brotherhood and note the numerous problems that are facing the church, we need to take this phrase and make a spiritual application, looking at what made the difference **“Once upon a time.”**

“Once upon a time” the Word of God was respected. People today no longer respect God’s Word as the authority in all things spiritual. Most no longer accept it as “the inspired will of God” that was given to man for **“doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness”** (2 Tim. 3:16). A good example of how people felt about the Word is found in Nehemiah 8:1-12. We see a group of people that desired that the Word be brought and read to them; then while the reading was going on, they were attentive to the reading. As it was being read, they stood and remained standing for the entire reading, they bowed themselves and worshipped the Lord as the Word was read, they understood the reading, and then they went and did as instructed by the Word. Yes, **“Once upon a time,”** we had respect for God’s Word, but now we follow after the doctrines, creeds, and opinions of men.

“Once upon a time” the people had a mind to work. When the walls around Jerusalem were rebuilt by Nehemiah and the people, the job only took fifty-two days. We can read why in Nehemiah 4:6. **“So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof; for the people had a mind to work.”** Our Lord, when He was just twelve years old, knew He had a job to do: **“wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?”** (Luke 2:49). When we do the work of the Lord, the lost will be taught, the erring restored, the hungry fed, the sick visited, the down-trodden lifted up, and the brethren edified. **“Once upon a time”** the brethren had a mind to work, and all of these things were accomplished, and the church was the fastest growing religious organization on the earth.

“Once upon a time” the gospel was all that was preached. Jesus gave the command

to **“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature”** (Mark 16:15). Now, look at what the disciple did in Acts 5:42: **“And daily in the temple and in every house, they ceased not to teach, and preach Jesus Christ”** and in Acts 8:4: **“Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the Word.”** Look at the results:

And the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls (Acts 2:41).

Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand (Acts 4:4).

If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven (Col. 1:23).

Paul told the young man Timothy to **“Preach the word”** (2 Tim. 4:2). But today we see anything but the gospel being preached from the pulpit and taught in our class rooms, and then we wonder why we have problems in the church. Yes, **“Once upon a time”** the gospel was all that was preached to a lost and dying world, and it was this gospel that produced precious fruit in the Lord’s vineyard.

“Once upon a time” Christians did not forsake the assembly. The Psalmist had the right attitude about the assembly when he penned these words, **“I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord”** (Psa. 122:1). Hebrews 10:25 encourages us not to make a willful choice to miss the assembling of ourselves together with brethren of like precious faith. However, we now see congregations with 200 in attendance at Sunday morning Bible study, 600 for the morning worship service and maybe 250 back for the evening worship, and only about half that many for the Wednesday evening service. My question would be, why the difference? Don’t we assemble to worship God? Isn’t it just as important to assemble at all the services designated by the leadership, as it is at only one or at most two a week? If not, why not? Yes, **“Once upon a time,”** Christians were glad to go up to the house of the Lord to worship Him.

“Once upon a time” pleasing God was placed above anything else. In Matthew 6:33 we are given this command, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” Our primary purpose and goal in life is to serve God, and we can only do this if He is in His proper place in our life. But now days we see Christians all across the brotherhood who are trying to serve God, as well as please man and from reading Matthew 6:24 we know this won’t work. We see brethren who love the world and the things of the world more than they love God, and 2 John 2:15 lets us know that if this is the case, the love of the Father is not in us. The whole duty of man is to “fear God and keep His commandments” (Ecc. 12:13), and the only way we can do this, is if we put Him first in our life. “Once upon a time” men were willing to do this, but not any more.

As with every good story that started out “Once upon a time,” most all of them had a phrase that summed the story up that went like this, “And they all lived happily ever after.” If we will do as they did “Once upon a time,” then on the day of judgment we will hear: “Well done thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord”, and when we hear this, we will “Live happily ever after.”~

Deceased

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **CANCELED: July 15th-17th:** VBS at Spring
- **Sunday, July 28th:** Monthly meal & afternoon singing service.
- **Tuesday, July 30th:** Ladies’ Bible Class. Lauren Paluka will be presenting a lesson on the “Joy of Affliction.”
- **Saturday, September 28th:** Fall Fellowship at Walker County Fairgrounds, Huntsville, TX.
- **Saturday, October 26th:** Fish Hatchery Road Lectureship. “James: Practical Christianity Part 3.”
- **Saturday, November (TBA):** Chili Cook-off at Burroughs Park.

THOSE TO SERVE

SUNDAY, JULY 14, 2024

| | |
|--|---|
| Announcements | Bret Bailey |
| Scripture Reading | Andrew Paluka <i>Rev. 18:4-20</i> |
| Song Leader | Jonathan West |
| Prayer | Gary Blasingame/Eric Paluka (AM) Steven Johnson/Andrew Paluka (PM) |
| Speaker | David Brown |
| Lord’s Table (AM) (Matthew 27:15-23) | |
| Jonathan West | Stephen Cohn |
| Joshua West | Eric Paluka |
| Lord’s Table (PM) | |
| J.D. Gunter | Ben Gunter |
| Audio/Video Monitor | Eric Paluka |
| Camera/Door Monitor | Stephen Cohn |

WEDNESDAY, JULY 17, 2024

(via Zoom Meetings)

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| Announcements | Eric Paluka |
| Speaker | J.D. Gunter |
| Bible Class Teacher | David Brown |

FOR JULY

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| Prepare Communion | West |
| Lock Buildings | Bailey |
| Prepare Bulletin Board | N. Cohn |

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Those affected by Hurricane Beryl, Gayle Barnett, April McCain, Zack Nero, Debbie Brannon, Edith Young, Noah & Glenda Hackworth, Cynthia Jackson, Elnora Oxendine, Charles & Ann Nero, Nathaniel Rimmer, Chuck & Nancy Verkist, Freda Smith, Orlinda Chumbley, and Roelf & Janice Ruffner.

TEST YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

Who said: “In your patience possess ye your soul”?

Answer to last week’s question:
Law of Moses; 2 Cor. 3:6