

The Better Way

Volume XXXIX, Issue 45

November 3, 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

TESTING FOR SERVICE

Gus Nichols

It is said that no new model car is put on the market until it is tested and tried under the most exacting circumstances. I am told that the Ford plant at Dearborn, Michigan has four hundred fifty acres set aside for such testing ground. The new model car is first driven over ditches, railroad cross ties, over steel rails, in mud, up and down hills, and under the most rigid conditions of stress and strain before it is offered to the world. In this way, weak parts are made manifest, to be replaced by stronger parts. Flaws are discovered and proper corrections made in time to shield the public from disappointment. This is a blessing, and not a tragedy. The car that stands the test is used as a model, and multiplied thousands of others like it are made and sent out to bless mankind.

TESTING CHARACTER

God does not take us immediately to that "better country" when we become Christians. But all such must first be tested and tried in the church, God's testing field. We are put to the test under most exacting circumstances. In this way, we discover our weaknesses, and are given opportunity to make proper correction and adjustment. Peter never knew how weak he was until he cursed and denied his Lord. He said he was ready to go with Him unto prison and unto death. We often overestimate our strength of character. The chain is no stronger than its weakest link. It is a blessed thing to discover that weak link. But if we stand the test, our character and ability for service are thus advertised.

BIBLE TEACHING

This great principle is not a matter of imagination, but is taught in the word of the Lord. James says: "**My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience**" (Jam. 1:2, 3). Again he says: "**Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried [hath been approved, Revised Version], he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him**" (Jam. 1:12). Peter also says: "**Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try [prove, Revised Version] you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy**" (1 Pet. 4:12, 13). Again Peter says: "**That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ**" (1 Pet. 1:7). David said: "**For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried**" (Psa. 66:10). Job

said: **“When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold”** (Job 23:10).

ADAM FAILED

Adam was tested and found lacking in faith and manliness. He was no example after which to model the rest of the human race. Hence, the promise of one called **“the seed of the woman”** was given (Gen. 3:15). Christ came, and was subjected to the most rigid trials, yet He knew no sin (2 Cor. 5:21). We are now made in His image through His gospel (2 Cor. 3:18; Col. 3:10). Christ had all virtues and is our perfect example (1 Pet. 2:21, 22). Yet there are in many other Bible characters outstanding characteristics.

ENDURANCE TEST

The cars are often tested for their endurance, or ability to stand up under the stress and strain of long trips. They are sometimes driven day and night till worn out or broken down to see how they can be depended upon for service. The Christian life is a life of endurance. **“He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved”** (Mat. 24:13). **“And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years”** (Gen. 5:22). Thousands of church members get tired of doing right and go back in less than *ten years* after their conversion (John 6:66). Most of us would not have to walk with God more than a few more years in order to get to heaven. Let us prepare to finish the course (1 Tim. 4:1-8). Heaven is for those who stand the endurance test.

THE FAITH TEST

Many of the commandments of the Lord bring us through a faith test—they prove our faith, as to its reality and strength. **“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac”** (Heb. 11:17; Gen. 22). He offered his son when to do thus seemed to be against the promise of God to make a great nation of Isaac’s seed. The Lord’s Supper and many other requirements of the gospel are tests of

faith. Here is where many break down and are soon relegated to the junk yard of apostasy.

A PATIENCE TEST

Job passed through a patience test (Jam. 5:11). The word *patience* means to bear up under stress and strain. Job did that. Many members of the church fail at this point. Loss of property, sickness, and reverses of that sort break them down. Their weakness is demonstrated to the world when they “quit the church.” The true worth of those who hang on and do right is manifest to all. Things which draw some closer to God drive others farther away.

TESTS OF OUR LOVE

A young man who said he loved the Lord with all his heart was tested and sifted out when Jesus told him to sell all that he had and give to the poor. He showed his lack of love by clinging to his riches rather than following His Lord (Mat. 19:16). Paul speaks of giving as a “proof” of our love (2 Cor. 8:1-24). All of the commandments of the Lord are likewise a test of our affections (John 14:21; 1 John 5:1-4). It is foolish to claim to love God while refusing to worship and serve Him. We are headed toward the junk yard so long as we are broken on the testing field. Elders are to be men who have stood the test and have proven ability. Preachers must pass through the testing period before they can safely enter larger fields of usefulness. All of us are being sifted for service (Luke 22:30-33). The water test sifted out nearly all of Gideon’s army, (Jud. 7:4-8). Brethren, we are being tested for service, and God cannot use those broken down in the testing field. Let us read, pray, worship, and so live that we may be able to stand up under the strain of the hour. And remember that when Satan is sifting us, Christ is praying for us that we may not fall (Luke 22:30-33). Think of this when being tried.~

Deceased

GOD GRANTS REPENTANCE

J. Roy Vaughan

When the apostles and brethren in Jerusalem heard Peter’s report of his experiences at the house of Cornelius in Caesarea, when the first Gentiles were baptized, **“they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance**

unto life” (Acts 11:18). There is more suggested in this statement than is generally recognized. First of all, it teaches us that the apostles and brethren understood that God would accept the Gentiles into the church. But it also teaches us that **“God granted repentance unto life”**—

not only to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles. God gave them the privilege of repenting of their sins, with the assurance that He would forgive them. Before then the Gentiles were **“alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world”** (Eph. 2:12). But now God will accept repentance from the Gentiles as well as from the Jews.

Too often men think of repentance as a burden placed upon them, a rigid requirement, a law to be obeyed before they can enjoy pardon, when they should consider repentance a privilege and blessings granted to them by the grace of God. Every sin committed yields an evil influence. There is no way to estimate the injury of a single sin, both to God and humanity. Often the innocent suffer for the sins of the guilty. We still suffer the consequences of the transgression of Adam and Eve. We can do little, in most instances, to repair the harm done by our sins. God knows this, and He does not require that we suffer the penalty we rightly merit for our sins. He has granted to us the privilege to repent and be pardoned.

Perhaps we can better appreciate this privilege when we consider man’s attitude toward his fellow man. Many times men do not grant repentance to other men. A personal injury is suffered. The guilty party deeply regrets the sin committed and would gladly and willingly repent, but the injured man does not accept his repentance. He does not grant repentance to him. He demands that the guilty party must suffer for his sin against him and pay the last penny.

The law of Christ to forgive is just as binding as is the law to repent. Christ said:

Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he sin against thee seven times in the day, and seven times turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him (Luke 17:3, 4).

Christ also spoke a parable, in which He struck hard at the man who refuses to grant repentance to his fellow man. He told of a man who owed his master ten thousand talents.

But forasmuch as he had not wherewith to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I

will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, who owed him a hundred shillings: and he laid hold on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest. So his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was due (Mat. 18: 25-30).

Look at this wicked man! He owed his master *twelve million dollars*, a sum he could never possibly pay. Its vastness is somewhat seen when we recall that David provided only three thousand talents of gold and seven thousand talents of silver for the temple. Haman offered ten thousand of silver to the king of Persia for the destruction of the Jews. But when the wicked servant fell down and begged for time to pay, his lord forgave him all the debt. He granted to him pardon. But this wicked servant went out and found his fellow servant who owed him *only seventeen dollars* and demanded him to pay immediately. He took him by the throat, **“saying, Pay what thou owest.”** He, too, fell down and begged for time to pay; but, unlike the good master, the wicked servant would not grant to his fellow servant forgiveness. When we think of God’s goodness and mercy in the light of these stories and realize how often similar experiences take place around us almost every day, we can better appreciate and understand what it means to say: **“God granted repentance unto life.”**

Men have committed crimes for which they have been confined within prison walls. Time and again they have wept with bitter tears and regretted the crime they committed, but it availed them nothing. Men are slow to grant repentance unto their fellow men.

A young wife unfortunately found employment where the association was evil and corrupt. Eventually she was led to commit adultery under this unwholesome influence and bad companionship. When faced by her husband, she begged for forgiveness. But all her pleading, even though she got down on her knees to her husband and begged for pardon, availed nothing. To him, the Bible granted him the right to put her away, and this he did. It seemed never to have dawned upon him that he could have granted repentance to his wife. To have forgiv-

en her would *not* have meant that he condoned her sin, but, that he manifested a good and gracious soul. Someone has said: “It is human to err, but divine to forgive.” It is not a mark of smallness for a man to forgive; rather, it is something big and good—something so big that many men are not capable of doing it. It may sometimes work a hardship on our ego, but it will not lower us in the estimation of God and man. God granted repentance unto the people of Nineveh when Jonah preached to them, and God grants us that privilege also today.

Is it a great privilege? Consider the young wife who sinned and whose husband refused to forgive. Because he refused to grant her repentance, she was forced to give up what had been her home. Every tie of her family was broken. She doubtless still loved her husband, but, now her love and care for him are spurned. She is separated from her own children to whom she gave life. And she must suffer the stigma upon her name forever, both in the eyes of the public and in the eyes of her children and loved ones. The burden she is asked to bear seems more than any human being is able to bear. Nevertheless, her husband refused to grant her repentance. Had he forgiven her, in view of all she must suffer otherwise, would she not value the privilege to repent and receive forgiveness precious and priceless? Certainly she would. But think of what it means to a man who has sinned against God to be granted repentance. Think what he must otherwise suffer. The burden of the young wife whose husband refused to forgive is not to be compared for a moment to the awful consequences that follow our sins without pardon from God. When men are made to realize the privilege of repentance, they will repent. May God bless us to preach repentance, to repent of our sins, and to forgive, even as God forgives us, when men sin against us and repent.~

Deceased

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **Saturday, November 23rd:** Chili Cook-off at Burroughs Park
- **Sunday, November 24th:** Monthly meal and afternoon singing service.
- **Saturday, December 14th:** Holiday Hayride at Ken & Nancy Cohn’s house.

THOSE TO SERVE

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2024

Announcements	Eric Paluka
Scripture Reading	Jonathan West <i>Genesis 2:1-7</i>
Song Leader	Bret Bailey
Prayer	Stephen Cohn/Zack Nero (AM) Steven Johnson/Andrew Paluka (PM)
Speaker	David Brown
Lord’s Table (AM) (Luke 18:28-33)	
Gary Blasingame	Joshua West
Jonathan West	Stephen Cohn
Lord’s Table (PM)	
Eric Paluka	J.D. Gunter
Audio/Video Monitor	Joshua West
Camera/Door Monitor	Stephen Cohn

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2024

(via Zoom Meetings)

Announcements	Eric Paluka
Speaker	Ken Cohn
Bible Class Teacher	David Brown

FOR NOVEMBER

Prepare Communion	Humphrey
Lock Buildings	West
Prepare Bulletin Board	West

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

April McCain, Gayle Barnett, Noah & Glenda Hackworth, Tania Turcios, Robbie Kirby, Edith Young, Zack Nero, Debbie Brannon, Cynthia Jackson, Elnora Oxendine, Charles & Ann Nero, Chuck & Nancy Verkist, Freda Smith, Orinda Chumbley, and Roelf & Janice Ruffner.

TEST YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

Name the five islands mentioned in the New Testament?

Answer to last week’s question:
Greek translation of the Old Testament