

The Better Way

Volume XXXIX, Issue 42

October 13, 2024

SPRING CHURCH OF CHRIST

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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

THE UNSHAKEN LIFE

Gus Nichols

Having prophesied of the affliction that awaited him, Paul said, **“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God”** (Acts 20:24). Neither the prospect of persecutions nor death could move Paul from his well established purpose of life. His life was an unshaken life. Nothing could by any means move him. He was **“set for the defense of the gospel”** (Phi. 1:17). When once set, “he could not be moved.” He saw the risen Lord one day on his way to Damascus about noon (Acts 9). He gave up his purpose to persecute Christians, and decided to become one himself. He accepted the fact that Jesus is the Son of God and alive from the dead. He committed himself to the irresistible conclusion which was that Christianity is true, and that Judaism, his own religion, was no longer in force. He committed himself to Christ without consulting with flesh and blood (Acts 26:9-23). He took a position and gave his life for his conviction and faith.

Paul was willing to pay the cost. The world is flooded with those who are out to cheat and defraud. Largely speaking, the masses want something for nothing. We read of people who do not even count the cost (Luke 14:26-33). One man said, “I would give my life to be the kind of man Paul was.” Well, that is exactly what it would cost anyone to be like Paul. If Christianity be worth a straw, it is worth dying for. If Christianity be true, in the very nature of the case, nothing else can matter much. Christianity is a way of life which cannot be properly lived without strong convictions. Paul had convictions, strong as steel, which he would not compromise under any circumstances. He was ready to live and die for his religion. In the final analysis, it would be a far less sacrifice to die for one’s religion than to live for it. Many people will do almost anything for their religion and their convictions except to live for them.

In becoming a Christian one exchanges the old life for a new one. A man must give himself away in order to be a Christian. We sometimes sing the song, “Here Lord, I give myself away, ‘tis all that I can do.” This means that the old life must be renounced, and that the new life must be accepted without restraint or reservations. If Christ means anything to us, he must mean everything in the world to us. In our eyes nothing else must have any more weight than a feather in a cyclone. Jesus must be all the world to us, or he will be nothing. He said, **“Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple”** (Luke 14:33). Paul says:

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered

the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phi. 3:7-14).

Perhaps everyone of us should stop here, reread these verses over again and again, and give them a chance to soak into our hard and calloused hearts. No man can live like Paul nor be a Christian unless he can say these things. If need be, one must suffer the loss of everything he possesses in order to be a Christian: his relatives, his friends, his job, and his very life (Luke 14:26, 27; Mat. 16:24-26). Everything opposed to Christ and this wonderful way of life must be esteemed as no more than “refuse” in our sight. The **“one thing”** which all must do to be true Christians is to forget those things left behind, look ahead, and so run as to win the crown of eternal life.

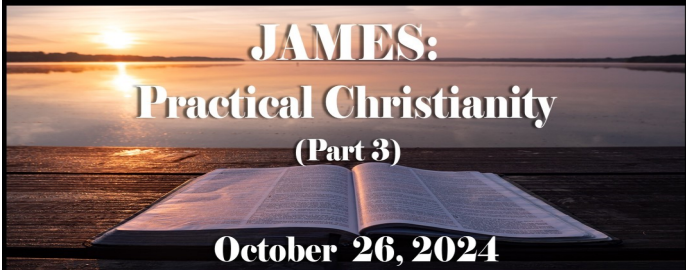
Like Paul, we should allow nothing to move us away from our all-consuming purpose to implicitly follow Jesus. Paul said, **“Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord”** (1 Cor. 15:58). A fruit tree cannot bear fruit, and will even die if constantly moved about from place to place. The character of many fickle church members would be established forever if they would get **“rooted and grounded in love,”** and become fixed and unmoved from the habits of regular spiritual worship, daily study of the word of the Lord, and true devotion for Christ and His cause for a period of even a few years. Even twelve months of positive Christian living would thoroughly plant the average member of the church and establish him in this way of life. Halfhearted efforts are dangerous and fix many in the sinful habit of fickleness and

weakness. We must not be moved away from our good resolutions before the purposes of our heart become a fixed and established habit. David said, **“My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed”** (Psa. 57:7). Speaking of the righteous, David said, **“His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. His heart is established”** (Psa. 112:7, 8). Stability of character is required of all of us. Paul tells us that God will present us holy and unblameable in His sight if we **“continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel”** (Col. 1:22, 23).

In a reasonable time all members of the church should **“be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might”** (Eph. 6:10; 1 Cor. 16:13). Many are so weak and fickle as to be shaken by every wind of doctrine. Jesus asked the multitudes concerning John, the baptizer, **“What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?”** (Mat. 11:7). John was not to be shaken by wicked influences round about him, but was a man of strong convictions. He charged the king with the awful crime of adultery when it cost him his life to be true to his message (Mat. 14). Likewise, Daniel was unmoved by the threats of civil authorities who were against him and his God. (Dan. 6). So likewise, let us be steadfast and unmovable. Let each of us develop an iron will and a spiritual character which cannot be bent by the forces of evil round about us.

Let us say, like Paul, **“None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself.”**~

Deceased



JAMES:
Practical Christianity
(Part 3)
October 26, 2024

Fish Hatchery Road Church Of Christ
1380 Fish Hatchery Road, Huntsville, Texas
Phone: 936-581-4346 Email: bruce1@netzero.com

9:00 am: *Don't Leave God Out Of Your Plans* (4:13-17) ~ Jose Gamez
10:00 am: *The Misuse Of Riches* (5:1-6) ~ Eric Paluka
11:00 am: *Patient Endurance* (5:7-12) ~ David Brown
1:30 pm: *The Prayer Of Faith* (5:13-18) ~ Jack Stephens
2:30 pm: *Saving A Soul From Death* (5:19-20) ~ John West
3:30 pm: *Question & Answer Session*

“THE PREACHING THAT I BID THEE”

B. C. Goodpasture

God does not commission men to preach without telling them what to say. He does not leave them free to select anything which a passing whim might suggest. Men, in the light of their own limited wisdom, are incapable of formulating a system of dependable teaching. **“O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps”** (Jer. 10:23). Men, apart from the leadership of divine revelation, have ever gone farther and farther into the meshes of sin and paganism.

When the Lord sent Jonah, the son of Amitai, to Nineveh, He commanded him to **“preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee”** (Jonah 3:2). The prophet was not left to his own will and resources to originate a message for the Ninevites. His instructions were specific. The Lord did not, in a general, indefinite way, tell him to **“preach”** to Nineveh. Rather, He said specifically, **“preach...the preaching that I bid thee.”** Jonah was limited to what God said. He could, not add; he could not subtract; he could not devitalize his message by “toning it down.” He must thunder into the ears of the Ninevites the severe and startling message: **“Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown”** (Jonah 3:4). This very thing he did on reaching **“that great city.”** His preaching produced results.

The messengers of God, whether human or divine, or both, have always been limited to the will of God. They have had, and have, freedom to speak only within the will of God. Of Jesus, it was written: **“Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God”** (Heb. 10:7). Jesus said: **“I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me”** (John 5:30). Again: **“My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me”** (John 7:16). **“As my Father hath taught me, I speak these things”** (John 8:28). **“I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak”** (John 12:49). These Scriptures show conclusively that Jesus spoke and did only those things which the Father commanded. His

freedom of action to do and teach was limited by God’s will. The Spirit of the Lord was upon Him, because the Lord had anointed Him to preach; but He, even though He was the only begotten Son of God, could preach only the good tidings the Father authorized Him to proclaim. God was the author of His message.

The Holy Spirit is limited in His teaching to the will of the Father. In giving the promise of the coming of the Spirit, Jesus said of Him:

The Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you...He shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come (John 14:26; 16:13).

The Holy Spirit, as a teacher, is limited to the will of God, **“what things soever he shall hear,”** in his instruction. Apostles and angels, likewise, can proclaim only the message of God. **“But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema”** (Gal. 1:8). The curse of God rests upon the angel or man who dares to deviate from the teaching of the gospel.

If God will not permit apostle, or angel, or the Holy Spirit, or even His own Son, to depart from the message He has authorized, it certainly should not be difficult for us to understand that we are not allowed the freedom of setting aside or of perverting the gospel of Christ. God has commissioned us to preach the gospel, and we are not at liberty to preach anything else. We cannot mutilate the gospel, except at the peril of our own souls and of those who hear. This gospel is the faith once for all delivered unto the saints. It is the sound doctrine. It is the only word that is able to build us up and give us the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. It must be faithfully transmitted from one generation to another. **“The things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also”** (2 Tim. 2:2). It must be taught fearlessly and faithfully. **“Speak thou the things which befit the sound doc-**

trine” (Tit. 2:1). “Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me” (2 Tim. 1:13). And, finally:

If any man teacheth a different doctrine, and consenteth not to sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is puffed up, knowing nothing, but doting about questionings and disputes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, wranglings of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, supposing that godliness is a way of gain (1 Tim. 6:3-5).

All faithful and sound preachers proclaim the doctrine, or teaching, of Christ. They are, therefore, doctrinal preachers. Every preacher that God has authorized was a doctrinal preacher—he proclaimed the teaching of God. The time has come when many professed Christians do not relish “doctrinal preaching”—the very kind, and, in fact, the only kind, that is divinely authorized. No one can be a faithful preacher who is not a doctrinal preacher. The kind of preaching that is needed first, last, and all the time is doctrinal preaching—preaching that condemns sin in every form, preaching that sets forth the whole truth, preaching that distinguishes the New Testament church from the various denominational bodies. This kind of preaching will not please worldly-minded church members, but it will please God and save lost men and women. Regardless of circumstances or consequences, we must “**preach...the preaching that I bid thee.**”

A man’s usefulness as a gospel preacher is determined much more by his knowledge of God’s word and his willingness to proclaim it boldly and faithfully than by his academic attainments and his ability to please.~

Deceased

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **Saturday, October 26th:** Fish Hatchery Road Lectureship. “James: Practical Christianity Part 3”
- **Sunday, October 27th:** Monthly meal and afternoon singing service
- **Tuesday, October 29th:** Ladies’ Bible Class (last one for this year)
- **Saturday, November 23rd:** Chili Cook-off at Burroughs Park

THOSE TO SERVE

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2024

Announcements	John West
Scripture Reading	Stephen Cohn <i>Genesis 1:9-19</i>
Song Leader	Bret Bailey
Prayer	Stephen Cohn/Zack Nero (AM) Joshua West/Gary Blasingame (PM)
Speaker	David Brown
Lord’s Table (AM) <i>(Luke 22:47-53)</i>	
Stephen Cohn	Eric Paluka
Bret Bailey	J.D. Gunter
Lord’s Table (PM)	
Steven Johnson	Andrew Paluka
Audio/Video Monitor	Eric Paluka
Camera/Door Monitor	Andrew Paluka

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2024

(via Zoom Meetings)

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

FOR OCTOBER

Prepare Communion	Bailey
Lock Buildings	Gunter
Prepare Bulletin Board	Mercier/Ferguson

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

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

TEST YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

How does the Bible say a man wipes a dish?

Answer to last week’s question:
Hezekiah; 2 Kings 18:4