

News & Notes

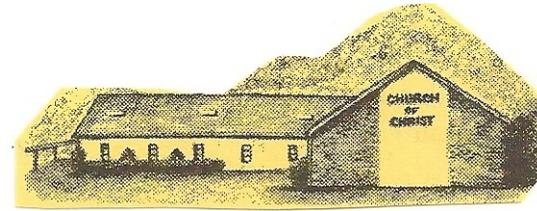
Upcoming events: Every 2nd Sunday of the month we have an afternoon song practice (Today). Ladies' Bible class is held on the 2nd Monday night of every month (Tomorrow: See bulletin board in the foyer for details). The men's Bible class is scheduled for the 4th Sunday of each month.

Pray for the sick: Suzette Stevens, Emilee Ross, and Bob Marschall were out Wednesday evening due to illness. Continue to be mindful of Butch Morgan, Linda James, Brian James (Patti's son), Jimmy Johnson (Member at the Trilacoochee church of Christ), Karen Stanley (Bonnie's daughter), and Paulette Sills.

In-home study: An in-home study for young adults is in the planning stages and looks to start up sometime in the month of March. Please see Colby Sadler and/or Ian Rice if for details if you are interested in joining that work.

Group Meeting: Group (1) meets tonight after worship. We encourage all in this group to please meet and participate in this very important work.

Please remember: Our shut-ins and check on those not accounted for being absent in the announcements.



Lakeland Hills Leader

LAKELAND HILLS CHURCH OF CHRIST
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ELDERS

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Leon Miller (863) 640-6378

EVANGELIST:

Ian Rice (863) 213-9795

SERVICES

Sunday
Bible Study 9:00 A.M.
Morning Services 9:50 A.M.
Evening Services 6:00 P.M.
Wednesday
Bible Study 7:30 P.M.

DEACONS:

Robert Marschall
Michael Sadler
Eric Stevens
Moses Stevens
David Williams

Assignments for Worship Service

Wednesday Night: 2/12/14

Song Leader: Larry Wisdom
Opening Prayer: Jerry Williams
Invitation: Sherman Johnson
Announcements: Leon Miller
Closing Prayer: Kirk Marschall
Parking Lot: Colby Sadler

Sunday Evening: 2/16/14

Song Leader: Charles Rawdon
Opening Prayer: Ben Cunningham
Lord's Table: Keith Marschall
Announcements: Leon Miller
Closing Prayer: James VanDoorn
Parking Lot: Norm Blackburn

Sunday Morning: 2/16/14

Lord's Table: Keith Marschall (B)
Clay Sadler (C)
Serving: Kirk Marschall
Eddie Lawson
Song Leader: Bob Marschall
Opening Prayer: Jerry Williams

Announcements: Leon Miller
Closing Prayer: Eric Stevens
Parking Lot: (9:00) Jim Abram
(9:50) Mike Sadler

“When I Was Baptized”

We do not forget great turning points in their lives. It may be the memory of meeting and falling in love with the one that eventually would become our mate. It could be the loss of a parent whose memory continues to inspire us to serve God and never quit. These and other critical points in our lives should both humble us and inspire us to draw more closely to the God that provides for us beyond what we could ever know **(Rom 8:28)**.

The greatest turning point for any of us is the day that we entered into fellowship with the God of heaven. This was a point of our turning from our sins and finding the forgiveness that makes a relationship with God possible **(Acts 3:19, 26)**.

I often think back to the situations that led me to that decision to turn to Jesus Christ. It is good for me to remember the rejoicing and the new direction that I found in my life. It was like I myself had died and come back to life **(Rom 6:2-5)**. This turning point transformed my life and led me down paths that I never thought I would take. To this very day my life is filled with newness and an awareness that my future paths are determined by a living faith which looks for doors of opportunity that the Lord may place before me.

Why our memory is important

Over time we can drift from our relationship with God to the point that we are caught up in a mindless and heartless “going through the motions.” A living faith must continually be growing, adding, and fighting or it is dead. Peter points out why some fail to add to their faith. “For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins **(2 Peter 1:9)**. What do you remember about your forgiveness?”

A time of darkness and hopelessness

One cannot come to God without first seeing their need. I can remember the masquerade of living in the world and giving the appearance of happiness. The world did provide a series of escapes and highs that left my basic needs unmet. The world’s “purpose” was found in short term pleasure that changed depending upon the desires of the moment **(1 John 2:15-17)**.

The world also had a “carrot and stick” approached to keeping you “in line.” If you were to be accepted by others in the world, then you must accept that there are no real standards and no real “truth.” I learned very quickly that in order to have associations with some people I had to accept their “personal lifestyle” and even become a partaker in it. “In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you” **(1 Peter 4:4)**.

It did not take me very long to realize that a life with no standards is a life with no purpose. Also I came to realize that those in the world who claimed to be my friends, were in fact ruled by the “god of this age”, and were walking in darkness too **(2 Cor 4:4)**. I sadly knew that they would discard me in a moment.

The bright light of a living faith

Within my own heart I knew that God existed and that He ultimately could erase the pain of an aimless life if I could but find Him. I remember praying a simple prayer to God on a beautiful starry night. “God, please let me come to know You.” This was a serious prayer for light. As I would come to know later, our God will always answer such a prayer **(John 7:17, Acts 16:9-10)**.

My search began with a daily reading of the Bible. As I read, I came upon verses that deeply touched me as they attested to the power of a living faith. The optimism of Paul in the face of adversity astounded me.” For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” **(Romans 8:18)**. This was a verse that I read and reread, marveling at how real purpose and joy can be found regardless of outward circumstances. Was it possible that I might one day have such a faith?

The day of my death

As I continued to read the Bible, I came to see how men received Jesus into their lives. My reading of the book of Acts helped me

see how people like me were able to turn from the world to serve a living God. Conversion was no casual process. It was a death! “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” **(Gal 2:20)**.

Without exception I found that men that would come to Christ had to surrender all. Those at Ephesus that became Christians burned their books of magic and gave up the practice of it which had an enormous monetary consequence for them **(Acts 19:19-20)**. Did they complain about this? No, they would speak as the apostle Paul would about the things he gave up for Christ. “Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ” **(Phil 3:8)**.

It was the love of God that showed me that I needed to deal with the issue of my own sin before God. Jesus died on a Roman cross to provide the only possible sacrifice for my sin. It was good news indeed to know that God has provided that which I could never provide on my own. “For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” **(Rom 6:23)**.

How was I to receive this free gift? As I read through the book of Acts I plainly saw the answer. “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins... **(Acts 2:38)**. “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized,

and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord” **(Acts 22:16)**. Every time one came to believe and turn to Christ in the book of Acts, they were baptized immediately **(Acts 8:34-39, 16:30-34)**.

The day of my baptism was the day that I died. It was a day similar to that of the prodigal son who, because of an utter disgust over his aimless life, came back to his father with nothing to offer but his willingness to be a slave. He just wanted to be with the father that loved him! “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants” **(Luke 15:18-19)**. God responded to my death just like the father of the prodigal did, with a full restoration of fellowship and great rejoicing **(Luke 15:20-24)**.

Why I need to remember

What a joy it is to remember the escape from a terrible slavery to a present life in the grace of God! I need to remember both the darkness of the past and the power of a life with God. “For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” **(Rom 5:20-23)**.

What do *you* remember?

- By Larry Rouse