

News & Notes

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

Keep in Prayer: Our members: Linda James and Charles & Sandy Rawdon. Also many of our family and friends: Karen Stanley (Bonnie's daughter), Brian James (Patti's son), Jerry Jordan (Ken's brother), Nadine Fields (Moses' sister), Jimmy Johnson (An update on Jimmy's condition is in the foyer), Paulette Sills, and Jim Abram (Please try to contact and encourage).

Out of Town: Nick, San, & Claire Groenhof, as well as Larry & Cindy Hicks.

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.

Assignments for Worship Service

Wednesday Night: 3/5/14

Song Leader: Keith Marschall
Opening Prayer: Ronnie Henderson
Invitation: Nick Groenhof
Announcements: Mike Sadler
Closing Prayer: Nick Ross
Parking Lot: Colby Sadler

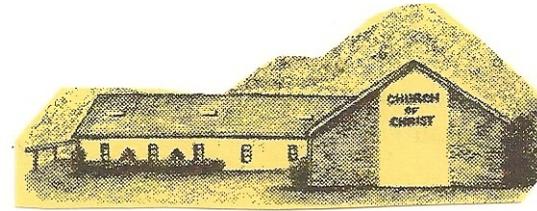
Sunday Evening: 3/9/14

Song Leader: Bob Marschall
Opening Prayer: Ronnie Henderson
Lord's Table: Clay Sadler
Announcements: Larry Hicks
Closing Prayer: Eric Stevens
Parking Lot: David Williams

Sunday Morning: 3/9/14

Lord's Table: Clay Sadler (B)
 James VanDoorn (C)
Serving: Keith Marschall
 Eddie Lawson
Song Leader: Larry Wisdom
Opening Prayer: Sherman Johnson

Announcements: Larry Hicks
Closing Prayer: Jordan Lawson
Parking Lot: (9:00) Norm Blackburn
 (9:50) Ed Lawson



Lakeland Hills Leader

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ELDERS

Larry Hicks (863) 899-7405
Leon Miller (863) 640-6378

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

EVANGELIST:

Ian Rice (863) 213-9795

"Amazing Grace"

Amazing Grace is a good old song. I have sung it from early childhood. If some of the printed matter on "grace" that I have read lately is true, then it must be more amazing than I had thought.

This newly defined grace is a kind of warmed over, but just half-baked, version of the Calvinistic concept of grace imputed righteousness. It allegedly covers some of a Christian's sins unconditionally. Yet, it is not broad enough to cover an alien's sins nor sins wilfully or knowingly done by Christians.

In order to dramatize their point, these brethren talk a lot about a Christian who ignorantly goes over the speed limit (a sin-Rom. 13:1-5). wrecks, and is killed. Will that man be lost? Now, that is nearly as good as the one about the man going to the creek to be baptized, a tree falls on him and kills him on the spot! Will that man be lost?

But back to our unfortunate speedster. Let us just have a big crash while we are at it. While we are just pretending maybe all that will really be hurt will be some foolish notions of brethren. Since these writers do not tell just why the poor fellow was speeding maybe they won't

mind if we supply the reason. He was speeding because he was too busy talking to his passenger to notice the speedometer. You see, his passenger had just learned that Jesus is God's Son and was to be told about repentance and baptism. This poor fellow was killed too. Wait, there is a second car in the wreck. It is driven by a good brother who knows he is going too fast, but he was in a hurry to get to the church building to baptize a man. The second driver was killed too.

Now if I understand this newly defined grace, the first driver is covered by an ignorance clause. His passenger is not covered because, though ignorant and sincere all right enough, he was not yet in Christ. The second driver is not covered because, though he thought he had a good excuse, he knew that he was speeding and that it was wrong. You see, the first driver gets in under the doctrine that the perfect life of Christ is imputed to those in Christ to cover their sins. Christ lived a life perfect enough to cover the sin of the ignorant speeder, but not perfect enough to cover his passenger's (though he was more ignorant than the driver) nor does it cover the willful sin of the second driver. Amazing Grace indeed.

There is a man to whom God does not impute sin (**Rom. 4:8**). The reason that sin is not imputed to him is not some special arrangement for God to overlook sin, but because his sin is forgiven (v. 7). Forgiveness of sin is conditioned on repentance, both for aliens and children of God. The

alien must REPENT and be baptized (**Acts 2:38**). The erring child of God must REPENT and pray (**Acts 8:22; cf. 1 John 1:7-9**). A grace that promises salvation to one child of God without repentance and to another only after repentance is amazing. Sins of ignorance and weaknesses of the flesh are supposedly taken care of by the perfect life of Christ-but not sins known to be sin by the sinner. I wonder what happens to a brother who knowingly sins but is too weak in the flesh to avoid it.

The DEATH of Christ covers our sins, when we meet the terms of pardon (**Matt. 26:28; Rev. 1:5; Acts 22:16; 1 John 1:7-9**). But the Bible simply does not teach that the perfect LIFE of Christ stands before God as a substitute for our imperfect lives. We are made righteous by the redemption of the blood of Christ (**Col. 1:14**). This is how grace covers our sins. It forgives them when we repent and turn from them.

What about sins that we do not know about? David prayed. "Cleanse thou me from secret faults." (**Psa. 19:12**). "Secret faults" were not merely sins done in secret. They are contrasted to presumptuous sins (verse 13). He knew that such sins were against him, so he prayed to be (acquitted - NASB) cleansed of them.

If a Christian's sins through ignorance are simply not taken into account by the Lord, then Paul did brethren a disservice by writing several times: "I would not have you ignorant." Preachers had better stop right in the middle of the Great Commission. They

should teach enough to baptize folks in order to place them under the perfect life of Christ-but stop short of "teaching them all things whatsoever (Jesus) commanded" lest they learn and can no longer be covered by the ignorance clause of this new law of grace.

Brethren, all this talk about God's overlooking sins of ignorance and fleshly weakness is a cover up. It is but a rationale for fellowshiping baptized believers who practice unscriptural works, items of worship and organizations for the church. That is the root of the matter. Let us not forget it. We are not judging anyone's motives, but merely stating what is clearly evident on the surface from the writings of these men.

The ones whom I know that are teaching this new-found brand of grace, to their credit, still teach some conditions of fellowship. One must have been baptized (immersed) for the remission of sins. One must be sincere, just ignorant and fleshly weak. Yet, if we suggest that there are other conditions, we become guilty of setting up ourselves as judges. But, the very area of judgment where one has not the right to pass judgment, the area of motives and attitudes, is where they pass judgment. They try to pass judgment on how much one knows and whether he is sincere or not. One may know what one does and that such is wrong, but only God can know for sure why he does it and if he knows better. If one plans to widen fellowship (and benefits of grace) to include all good honest, sincere, but mistaken brethren-regardless of

how unscriptural their congregations have become-he is going to have to play God a lot. He is going to have to pass judgment on his brethren's heart so he can fellowship the sincere and ignorant ones and cast out the insincere and knowing ones. He has his work cut out for him.

I am thankful for God's grace. With Paul, I can say, "By the grace of God I am what I am" (**1 Cor. 15:10**). I shall continue to sing about it. I plan to pray "without ceasing" that God will continue to extend his grace in the forgiveness of my sins, all my sins, as I repent and strive to know and do better. He is faithful. He will forgive (**1 John 1:7-9**).

I also pray that I will in no way encourage a brother to depend on his sincerity or ignorance to get him by. Of course, we must leave final judgment to God. He knows all the facts. If He wants to save both speedsters and the unbaptized passenger, that's fine with me, but I am not going to be presumptuous and hold out promise to anyone that God will save them from any sin without repentance. I will let God handle such cases, if they exist, and continue to teach what the Bible says that one must do about his sins, whether he be an ignorant or knowledgeable brother or alien sinner. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." (**2 Thess. 3:18**)

- By Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.