

News & Notes

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

Young Adult Study: Our 1st study will be on April 18th. If you want to be involved, please see Ian Rice to get your study aid.

Keep in Prayer: Our members: Linda James, Joey Day, & Erica Stevens, & Jim Abram. Family and friends also in special need of prayer: Karen Stanley (Bonnie's daughter), Brian James (Patti's son), Jerry Jordan (Ken's brother), Nadine Fields (Moses' sister), and Jimmy Johnson.

Out of Town: Karen Berry and Paula Sullivan.

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

Assignments for Worship Service

Wednesday Night: 3/26/14

Song Leader: Eddie Lawson
 Opening Prayer: Ian Rice
 Invitation: Butch Morgan
 Announcements: Larry Wisdom
 Closing Prayer: Clay Sadler
 Parking Lot: David Williams

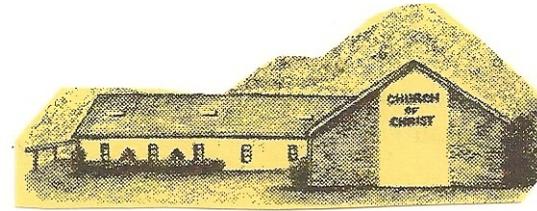
Sunday Evening: 3/30/14

Song Leader: Nick Groenhof
 Opening Prayer: Ronnie Henderson
 Lord's Table: Colby Sadler
 Announcements: Leon Miller
 Closing Prayer: Rodger Robinson
 Parking Lot: Mike Sadler

Sunday Morning: 3/30/14

Lord's Table: Colby Sadler(B)
 Eddie Lawson (C)
 Serving: Kirk Marschall
 Keith Marschall
 Song Leader: Nick Ross
 Opening Prayer: Charles Rawdon

Announcements: Leon Miller
 Closing Prayer: Eric Stevens
 Parking Lot: (9:00) Norm Blackburn
 (9:50) Paul Lloyd



**Lakeland Hills
 Leader**

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ELDERS

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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

“Keeping the Lord’s Commandments”

There are many sincere people in the world today who want to know and serve God more appropriately. My hope is that if you are reading this now; that you will consider earnestly what John 3:16 means for you! “For **God** so loved the world that **He gave His only begotten Son**, that **whoever believes** in Him **should not perish but have everlasting life.**” (John 3:16)

That is a popular verse that gives us hope for eternal life; but consider how Jesus went on to say that our actions should accompany belief. “But **he who does the truth** comes to the light, **that his deeds may be clearly seen**, that they have been **done in God.**” (John 3:21) If you would like to obtain everlasting life, understand that you must accept Jesus and His conditions for salvation. A lot of people preach different things concerning how to obtain the Lord’s favor – But what did Jesus preach?!

Jesus said “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6). Jesus also told His closest followers, **“If you love Me, keep My commandments.”** (John 14:15) We usually tend to **keep** that which we like, and do away with what we do not. We cannot have that mentality with regard to any of the Lord’s commandments!

Consider the following commandments that Jesus gave...

He declared the importance of Hearing God's word.

When proclaiming God's Word to a variety of audiences, Jesus would often cry aloud, **"He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"** (Mt 11:15, Mt 13:9, Mt 13:43, Mk 4:9, Lk 8:8, Lk 14:35). These words were repeated by Jesus for emphasis! Jesus stressed the value of hearing God's word, therefore we must long to hear it for ourselves. That said, we can "hear" God's word as Bible lessons are proclaimed from others, and we can also read it for ourselves today! What a blessing to have God's word preserved for us to learn and grow in!

Jesus declared the importance of believing on Him as the Son of God whom the Father sent because He loved us (Jn 3:16). A sincere belief in who Jesus professed to be as is absolutely vital to our obtaining eternal life. All have sinned and fall short of God's glory (Rom 3:23) and the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom 6:23). That said, Jesus spoke of belief in relation to sin, "Therefore I said to you that **you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.**" (John 8:24). **"... I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"** (John 11:25-26). Belief in who Jesus is and what He did for us is central, but belief is not all that Jesus requires of us.

Repentance is a must!!

The 4th chapter of Matthew informs us of how Jesus began His great Galilean Ministry, and "From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, **"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."** (Matt 4:17). Mark's account lets us know that repentance should accompany belief. "Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. **Repent, and believe in the gospel.**" (Mark 1:14-15). The word repent has been defined in different ways, but it basically means to change one's mind & to feel sorrow for sins committed against God. When some tried to prove some special wrong-doing on the part of others, Jesus rebuked them and said, "I tell you, no; but **unless you repent you will all likewise perish.**" (Luke 13:3 & 5) We should all take to heart our own sins and repent. Expressing remorse for our sins is what the Lord commands.

We must also confess Jesus as both Lord and Christ.

Believing and repenting are both necessary commandments for us to keep, but consider that still; our faith will at times be tested (Mt 5:1-12)! Jesus warned that His followers would be persecuted; yet He also encourages us to remain steadfast in our profession of faith. "Therefore **whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.**" (Matt 10:32-33) Notice that Jesus gives both the positive and negative consequences for our keeping this command. If we deny the Lord before men, we will be denied by Him. That said, *we can* obtain our eternal reward by keeping the command to confess Him before men!! Luke also emphasizes the need to do this in similar fashion **(Luke 12:8-9)**. Confessing Jesus as both Lord of our lives and as the anointed One of God brings about spiritual blessings!! If you love the Lord, then keep His commandments.

Baptism is also commanded of the Lord!

The message of Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and authority would do mankind no good if the message is not being spread. Jesus came to pay the price for sin and to offer mankind the opportunity to accept His terms and be forgiven for sins; but man still has to learn those terms before accepting them. The gospel accounts end with Jesus telling the apostles to go and tell the good news to every person. He made clear that one is made His disciple by hearing and obeying the message that includes water baptism as a requirement for discipleship. "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and **make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you;** and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen." (Matt 28:18-20). Salvation is available if we are willing to become followers of Jesus, and Mark tells us that baptism is a necessary requirement for salvation. "And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. **He who believes and is baptized will be saved;** but he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:15-16). Water baptism is what Jesus commanded His apostles to preach and **is a necessary** requirement for discipleship.

Jesus instructs His followers to live faithfully.

Those who hear the good news and accept the message are saved... But then what?! After becoming a child of God, are we to just continue in our old way of life as if nothing happened? No!! Jesus taught that we must be good stewards of what we've been granted. If we are faithful we can be commended just like the one spoken of in Matthew 25:21, "His lord said to him, **'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful** over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. **Enter into the joy of your lord.**" Great blessings bring great responsibilities... Great spiritual blessings may also require that our faith is tested, but the Lord offered promises to others that we can apply, **"...Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."** (Rev 2:10)!! After becoming a child of God, are we to just continue in our old way of life as if nothing happened? No!! The saved become a part of the kingdom of God, with Christ as our King ruling at the right hand of God! We are to become loyal subjects of Christ, keeping all of His commandments!

Keeping the Lord's commandments & abiding in love...

Some who preach Jesus today will give emphasis to the love of Christ while playing down the need to obey His commands; whereas others can be very assertive in maintaining the need to obey. That said, Jesus preached that obedience and love go together, **"but if you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."** (John 15:10)

Let us all seek to serve the Lord according to His terms! If you have been taught that any one of these commands is not necessary for us to observe today, then I urge you prayerfully study this article with an open Bible. If you have any questions, please contact me so that we may study together.

-By Ian Rice

All Bible Quotations from the New King James Version