

News & Notes

Ladies' Class: Will be tomorrow, December 8th, 7:00pm, at Audrey Davis' home.

Afternoon Singing: We will have an afternoon singing at the building next Sunday afternoon, at 5pm for all who'd like to participate.

Men's Class: Our next men's class will be conducted at the building, 4:30pm, on December 28th.

Prayer Requests: Please continue to pray for our brethren: Kayla Cunningham (Pregnancy), Bonnie Meagher, Martha Smith, and the Groenhof & Ross families (Both families have newborns).

Our friends and family: Ted Penland (Butch Morgan's son-in-law), Heather Tyer (Family friend of Butch Morgan), Janelle Hastings (Diagnosed with cancer), Naydene Fields, Brian James, Hal Lewis, Gary Jones, and Jeff Sprott.

Group Meeting: Group (2) meets tonight after worship.

Out of Town: Out of town are Kirk Marschall, Paula Sullivan, and David & Kyoko Williams.

"And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men"... (Colossians 3:23 NKJV)

Assignments for Worship Service

Wednesday Night: 12/10/14

Song Leader: Nick Ross
Opening Prayer: Clay Sadler
Invitation: Ronnie Henderson
Announcements: Bob Marschall
Closing Prayer: Jeremy Whitehead
Parking Lot: Colby Sadler

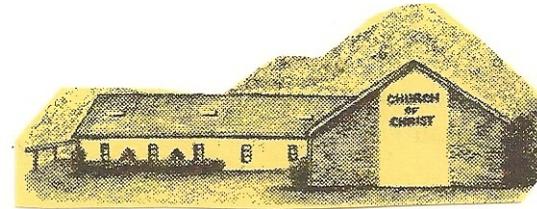
Sunday Evening: 12/14/14

Song Leader: Nick Ross
Opening Prayer: Rodger Robinson
Lord's Table: Mike Sadler
Announcements: Charles Rawdon
Closing Prayer: Clay Sadler
Parking Lot: Leon Miller

Sunday Morning: 12/14/14

Lord's Table: Mike Sadler (B)
Clay Sadler (C)
Serving: Sherman Johnson
Trent Stevens
Song Leader: Larry Wisdom
Opening Prayer: Bucky Day

Announcements: Charles Rawdon
Closing Prayer: Jim Elliot
Parking Lot: (9:00) David Williams
(9:50) Paul Lloyd



Lakeland Hills Leader

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ELDERS

Larry Hicks (863) 899-7405
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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

Gentleness or Sharpness or Both?

When dealing with those in error, it obviously requires a great deal of wisdom to know how we "ought to answer every man." (Cf. Col. 4:6). It is not a matter of one size fits all. Different people and situations require different approaches. Jude wrote, "And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling (snatching - asv) them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." (Jude 22-23 KJV).

I, quite frankly, am becoming a bit weary of some brethren, still a bit wet behind the ears, suggesting that many, if not most, of the problems the church faces now is because of my generation's "harsh" approach toward those in error. If we had **always**, in **every** case, used a more **gentle** approach we would have grown more and had less conflict during the past few decades. The impression is left is that we should have **always** used a soft and gentle tone and **never** used sharpness of speech. It is true that the New Testament is replete with references to the gentle approach – but it also replete with references to a more sharply-worded approach when needed.

For example, Gal. 6:1 tells us to restore one "overtaken" in a fault in the spirit of meekness or gentleness. The word "overtaken" is from a word that means to be caught with an element of surprise in it. It is not talking about the hardened transgressor, but one who is trying to live

right as a Christian and is overtaken, caught, or surprised by a transgression. Such a one needs to be dealt with gently considering ourselves because any of us could be caught or surprised by such a fault at anytime. This person does not need a sharp rebuke because he is struggling to do right and in spite of that he has been caught by this fault and needs to be gently led out of it.

In writing to Titus, Paul commands an approach to a different scenario. "For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true. Wherefore **rebuke them sharply**, that they may be sound in the faith; Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth." (Titus 1:10-14 KJV).

Jesus demonstrated both a gentle and sharp approach during his personal ministry. He could softly and tenderly rebuke his disciples with "O, ye of little faith." Then given a different situation with fellows Jews, the Pharisees, he could direct a series of "Woes," calling them hypocrites and charging them with all manner of sins. He reacted in a way each time that the occasion called for.

To take only those passages that teach the gentle approach and conclude that this is the **only** approach is like taking those passages that speak of salvation by faith and concluding that faith is the only element in our salvation. May we all pray for wisdom to know when the gentle approach is called for and when the sharp approach is needed.

- Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

Instruction or Encouragement?

"Instruction does much, but encouragement does everything."

What do you think about those words seen on a local "church sign"? Do you agree, disagree, or not know what to think about them? I am convinced that the sentiments found in that message represent much that is wrong with our society today, including most calling themselves pastors and evangelists.

Don't get me wrong—everyone needs encouragement at times and most of us would do well to be more like Joses, a man given the name Barnabas or Son of Encouragement by the apostles (Acts 4:36, 37). We need men like Philemon who refreshed the hearts of the saints (Philemon 7, 20). The longer I live the more I see the dangers of negativity. If we allow ourselves to be swallowed up by sorrow, be assured that Satan will take advantage of that and destroy us.

"...you ought to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow....reaffirm your love to him....lest Satan take advantage...." 2 Cor. 2:6-11

What Zig Ziglar terms "stinkin' thinkin'" is all too often the result of a lack of faith. Think back to Num. 13, 14 when the hearts of the Israelites melted and they refused to enter Canaan. Joshua and Caleb diligently sought to encourage their brethren by reminding them of God's promises and power. Are there not many times in our lives when we need to be reminded that God is with us and none can successfully oppose us (Rom. 8:31-39)? Who among us does not occasionally need to be encouraged to count their blessings and rejoice in the Lord always (Phil. 4:4)?

But having said all of that, do we not see the huge mistake that is made when the need for encouragement is allowed to trump the need for sound instruction in God's word? The Lord did not send Nathan to encourage David in 2 Sam. 12, but to rebuke him. On the first Pentecost after the death of Jesus, Peter began with solid instruction intended to persuade his audience that Jesus was the Christ, and then he charged that same audience with having killed the Christ. Once they were convinced that Jesus was Lord and Christ and were convicted of their sin, he provided further instructions as he told them that repentance and baptism would take away the guilt of their sins.

When that day was over 3,000 were encouraged by the knowledge that their sins were forgiven, but that encouragement could only come after being instructed in the word of God and convinced of the need to change their lives to conform to God's teachings. (See Acts 2:14-41).

While all of us should recognize that discouragement is not what we want, let's not get the cart before the horse. God's word is capable of providing us with everything we need (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) and it will encourage us to obey God, to know that we are capable of pleasing God, to rejoice in the Lord and His blessings, and it will encourage us to persevere to the goal. But if we get it backwards and put encouragement before instruction, we will provide people with a false hope that may encourage them to continue in the ways of sin. Learn to appreciate good, sound teaching and preaching that provides invaluable instruction in God's word.

"Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. How sweet are Your words to my taste, Sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way. Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path. The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple. My eyes are awake through the night watches, That I may meditate on Your word." Psalm 119:97, 103-105, 130, 148

- John R. Gibson