

News & Notes

Young Adult Bible Study: This Friday (February 20th) at Ian & Keri Rice’s house (7:30PM).

Men’s Class: The next class will be held at the building next Sunday, February 22nd, at 4:30pm.

Kid’s Review Class: Our next one will be on March 1st, shortly after the evening worship service, in Room # 7.

Afternoon Singing: The next afternoon singing will be held in the auditorium on Sunday, March 8th, at 5pm.

Ladies’ Class: Next class will be March 9th at Keri Rice’s home (7PM).

Prayer Requests: *Our brethren:* Kayla Cunningham (Pregnant), Marian Church, Mildred Church, Linda James, Lina McKenzie (Cataract procedure went well!), Bobby Melvin (Louise Mosley’s son) Ruth Miller (Rotator cuff surgery went well last week), Butch Morgan, Dottie Reynolds, Wayne Ryland (His blood pressure has been very high lately), and Jerry Williams.

Our friends and family: Please continue in prayer for Larry Wisdom’s mother (Canera Wisdom), Naydene Fields, Hal Lewis, Gary Jones, DeeAnn Sprott, Pat Dickey, Joan Mott, Heather Tyre, and Waylon Townsend.

Group Meeting: Group (3) meets tonight after worship.

Out of Town: The Day family, and the Ross family, and Kirk Marschall are all out of town this week.

Assignments for Worship Service

Wednesday Night: 2/18/15

Song Leader: Keith Marschall
 Opening Prayer: Eric Stevens
 Invitation: Jordan Lawson
 Announcements: Mike Sadler
 Closing Prayer: OPEN
 Parking Lot: Leon Miller

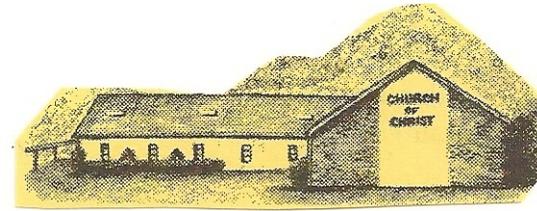
Sunday Evening: 2/22/15

Song Leader: Bob Marschall
 Opening Prayer: Sherman Johnson
 Lord’s Table: Ben Cunningham
 Announcements: Larry Hicks
 Closing Prayer: Butch Morgan
 Parking Lot: Mike Sadler

Sunday Morning: 2/22/15

Lord’s Table: Ben Cunningham (B)
 Jerry Williams (C)
 Serving: Clay Sadler
 Trent Stevens
 Song Leader: Larry Wisdom
 Opening Prayer: Sherman Johnson

Announcements: Larry Hicks
 Closing Prayer: Bucky Day
 Parking Lot: (9:00) Norm Blackburn
 (9:50) Mike Sadler



**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
 Moses Stevens
 David Williams

EVANGELIST:

Ian Rice (863) 213-9795

In last Sunday night’s sermon, I provided a quote from F. Legard Smith’s book entitled “Radical Restoration”, in which Smith accused many older members of the Lord’s church of having, “viewed ourselves as Restorationists almost as much as Christians”. (Radical Restoration; page 35) In that context, Smith goes on to foolishly contend that “Restorationists”, are “reformers, crusaders, and warriors”, “whereas Christians seek sanctification, purity, and spiritual growth” (Page 36). In the book “Radical Restoration” (which has wreaked havoc among the spiritually weak of the church; 2 Peter 3:16), this is only one point of Smith’s contentions that must be addressed. As we noted last week, the apostle Paul stressed many times over the need to grow spiritually (Galatians 5:14-26; Colossians 1:9-12), as well as the need to maintain doctrinal purity (Galatians 1:6-8; Ephesians 4:1-6; 6:10-20).

This past week, Angela Wisdom shared with me a great article on “restoration” that was written by her father, Donald Townsley. I have included it in this bulletin, and ask that you prayerfully consider its contents!

-Ian Rice

“Restoration of New Testament Christianity”

Most members of the church of Christ are familiar with this subject. They may not understand all that is involved, but at least they have heard preachers say that we are endeavoring to restore the church of the New Testament. The church revealed to us in the New Testament is the church Jesus built (Matt. 16:18). This church was directed by His inspired apostles and constitutes the divine pattern by which we are to build today. The great need of the religious world is a complete restoration of the rule of faith (Phil. 3:16) and practice; complete restoration of the organization, worship and mission of the church; and a complete restoration of the conditions of salvation which were characteristic of the church revealed in the New Testament scriptures.

Someone may say, "What is restoration?" To restore is to "return"; "to re-establish"; "to put back into existence or use". Isaac restored the wells his father Abraham had dug in Gerar (Gen. 26: 17 - 18). He put these wells back into use -- restored them just as they were in the beginning. This is what we must do with the Lord's church -- we must restore it as it was in the beginning.

The Lord's church is made up of two elements -- People and Truth. In the absence

of people the church can have only a potential existence. The characteristics of the church are inherent in the seed -- the word of God (Luke 8:11; I Pet. 1:23). This seed, the truth, awaits application in the lives of people. God does not force people to obey Him. We become His people by our own choice of making application of the truth in our lives (Matt. 11:28 - 30; 23:27). God desires our loyalty and has done everything necessary to make our salvation possible, but He has not forced anyone to come to Him. Each individual must will to come to God (John 7:17; Rev. 22:17). After we make the choice to be a child of God he does not force us to remain faithful, but we must choose to continue in His will. God's people may, and many do, deny the Lord who bought them (II Pet. 2: 1 - 2) and depart from the faith (I Tim. 4:1).

God and Christ change not (James 1:17), their word abides forever (I Pet. 1:25; II Tim. 2:13), thus the divine element of the church is fixed and constant. We have seen, however, that the human element of the church is not so stable. Therefore, we must not measure the church by the rule of human action (II Cor. 10:12) because here is a truth we must never forget: God's people can and do change, and He does not force them to remain faithful!

Many times God's people in a given community begin to make changes from the word of God, changes that are made over

a long period of time. The changes begin with concepts and practices that are wrong in principle, but not easily discerned. After a while the "power of tradition" (Matt. 15:2) asserts itself and God's people at that place will justify further wrongs on the basis of things they have done in the past (II Tim. 4:4). These people who have been faithful people of God have now turned from the word of God and changed, but they are still regarded by most people in the community as the "church" and their practices are considered as practices of the "church of Christ". After the change comes about, the general attitude is that all who would differ are heretics and have left the church and the faith completely, but this attitude shows a misunderstanding of restoration. When we stop to consider the human side of the church it is then obvious that restoration is not something that is accomplished once and for all, but is a thing that must be continuous in every generation! Restoration restores nothing that cannot be lost again! This being so, we must never forget that we are the Lord's church only if we walk according to God's divine truth (I John 2:19; I Cor. 11:19). We must constantly check our principles and practices against the unchanging standard, the word of God. This demands objective, prejudice-free study (II Tim. 2:15).

There can be no restoration without the spirit of restoration which is the desire to take the New Testament as the standard of obedience. One cannot have the spirit of restora-

tion without completely laying aside all human creeds, decrees of popes, and religious organizations unknown to the New Testament. Here are some vital facts that we must know and believe about the New Testament if we are to be successful in restoring New Testament Christianity: (1) The New Testament is divine -- from God (II Tim. 3: 16 -17); (2) It is authoritative (John 12:48); (3) It is intelligible (Eph. 3:4; 5:17); (4) It is universal (Mark 16: 15 -16); (5) It needs no revision (James 1:25; I Cor. 13:10); (6) It is sufficient (II Tim. 3: 16 - 17); and (7) It has life and power to bring the church into existence any time men choose to let it have its way in their lives (Luke 8:11; Heb. 4:12).

So I say to you, brother or sister in Christ, are you interested in restoring New Testament Christianity, or do you find yourself blindly following the popular crowd without seriously checking to see whether or not your practice is after the New Testament order? Remember, we are the Lord's church ONLY if we walk according to God's divine truth (I John 2:19; I Cor. 11:19)!

(I am indebted to Robert Turner for some thoughts from his article entitled "When Does the Church Change?")

- Donald Townsley