

News & Notes

Upcoming events: Every 2nd Sunday of the month we have an afternoon song practice (*Today*), the men’s Bible class is scheduled for the 4th Sunday of each month (*June 22nd*), and our next Young Adult’s study will be on *June 27th*.

The Ladies’ Bible class is on hold until the fall (October).

Keep in Prayer: Linda James is in need of prayer and encouragement as her back pain has limited her ability to worship with the saints. Betty Eubanks (Sandy Rawdon’s mother) is doing well, Karen Stanley (Bonnie Meagher’s daughter) is doing better too. Let’s also be mindful of Paul Lloyd, Neil Miller, and Butch Morgan as they continue to deal with health matters. Please continue to reach out to Jim Abram and Heather Capuana for encouragement also.

Out of Town: Audrey Davis, Bob & Steph Marschall, Keri & her girls, Ruth Miller, Kirk Marschall, Larry Wisdom, the Goodalls, and Ronnie Henderson (preaching for Azalea Park this morning) are out of town.

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

Assignments for Worship Service

Wednesday Night: 6/11/14

Song Leader: Bob Marschall
 Opening Prayer: Ronnie Henderson
 Invitation: James VanDoorn
 Announcements: Mike Sadler
 Closing Prayer: Nick Ross
 Parking Lot: Colby Sadler

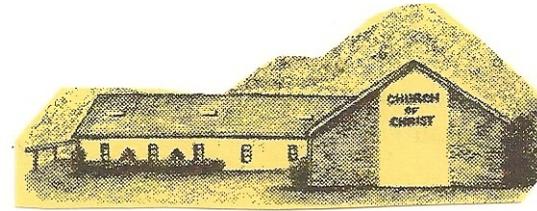
Sunday Evening: 6/15/14

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: 6/15/14

Lord’s Table: (B) Clay Sadler
 (C) Eddie Lawson
 Serving: Jordan Lawson
 Keith Marschall
 Song Leader: Charles Rawdon
 Opening Prayer: Sherman Johnson

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



**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

“Faith in the Working of God”

Must we follow through with God’s commands to receive His grace? Have we “earned” anything when we follow through with God’s commands and therefore obtain salvation? These are earnest questions/concerns that some have, so let us reason some passages concerning the works/grace conversation.

In the fourteenth chapter of Exodus, we read of how God delivered the Israelites from the pursuing Egyptian army. We are familiar with the account. Pharaoh was convinced that he would overtake the Israelites as they camped before Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal Zephon. As the Egyptians drew near, the children of Israel were very afraid and cried out to the Lord. After turning their despair to Moses, he comforted the people by telling them to put their trust in the Lord’s saving power and declared, **“The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.”** (Ex 14:14). Indeed, the Lord delivered the Israelites by dividing the Red Sea, allowing them to pass through on dry ground, and closing the waters onto the Egyptian army. No one questions that God was the One doing this mighty work! He has rightfully been credited with this awesome wonder throughout many other passages as well. **“He rebuked the Red Sea** also, and it dried up; so **He led them** through the depths, as through the wilderness. **He saved them** from the hand of him who hated them, **and redeemed them** from the hand of the enemy.” (Ps 106:9-10). In no way did Moses or the Israelites “earn” anything that day, but what do you suppose

would have happened if Moses neglected to lift up his rod as commanded (Ex 14:16)? If Moses had not stretched out his hand over the sea (Ex 14:21)? What would have happened if the Israelites chose not to cross thru on the dry ground that was before them? Would the Lord save them anyway? Would they have been redeemed? Moses and the Israelites were expected to put their faith in action so as to receive deliverance. That is what the Hebrew writer alluded to when he penned, “**By faith they passed through** the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned.” (Heb 11:29). Through faith in the working of God, Moses and the Israelites did as they were commanded, and thus were saved.

Consider how the walls of Jericho fell during the invasion and conquest. Did the great leader Joshua, or all of the valiant soldiers of Israel, “earn” their victory over Jericho without God? Absolutely not! The Lord Himself took credit for that victory, “**And the Lord said to Joshua: "See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor."**” (Josh 6:2)! No one would suggest that the Israelites “earned” anything by their obedience to God, but what if they had refused to march around the city once a day for six days? What if they decided to use eight priests instead of seven to blow the trumpets as God commanded, neglected to march around the city seven times on the seventh day, refused to blow the trumpet, or shout with a great shout afterward (Josh 6:3-4)? What if they had left

the Ark of the Covenant out of their procession? Would the walls of Jericho have fallen anyway? Could you earnestly say that any of those works “weren’t necessary” in order to receive the promised result? The Hebrew writer references the Israelites’ faith as being active when he wrote, “**By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled** for seven days.” (Hebrews 11:30). Joshua and his fellow soldiers were expected to put their faith in action so as to receive victory! Through faith in the working of God, Joshua and his army did as they were commanded, and thus their enemy was vanquished.

A very simple theme runs throughout the Bible;
Obedience to God = Blessing and reward.
Disobedience to God = Cursing and punishment.

By our obedience to God, there is nothing “earned” on our part. The Apostle Paul wrote to Titus of how one’s salvation must be attributed to God because of their former sinful conduct, “But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, **not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us**, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been **justified by His grace** we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” (Tit 3:4-7). In other words, Christians have done no works by which they can claim to have “earned” eternal life.

No one should brag about anything they’ve ever do to “merit” God’s grace. “For **by grace you have been saved through faith**, and that not of yourselves; **it is the gift of God**, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” (Eph 2:8-9). The Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesian Christians of how God is to be praised for the favor He bestows. He did not, however, contradict himself when he wrote to the Colossians about being, “**buried with Him in baptism**, in which **you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God**, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses**” (Col 2:12-14). Do you see the beauty of what is revealed here in these passages? Paul taught with consistency and never would have contradicted Himself! He was baptized to “wash away” his sins (Acts 9:18, 22:16), had previously taught the Ephesians about baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 19:1-7), wrote of baptism as being what puts an individual “into Christ” (Rom 6:3; Gal 3:27), and he taught that “in Christ” is where one must be to receive “every spiritual blessing” (Eph 1:3). God has commanded baptism, and therefore it is a necessary condition that must be fulfilled in order to have our sins forgiven (Acts 2:38; 22:16, 1Pet 3:21-22). We must put our faith to action if we wish to obtain that which God has promised. **We are to do the work of being baptized, yet it is God who does the work of forgiving our sins!!** Just as when Moses, the Israelites, and Joshua were all required to obey according to God’s instruc-

tion... God was there to do His part. God’s grace is offered to mankind today in similar fashion to the Israelites of old, in that He expects for us to accept His provisions to obtain eternal salvation. Either we can accept His terms in obeying and allowing Him to do the wonderful, or we can question his planning by saying things like, “Why did God make Moses do that? Couldn’t He have rained fire and brimstone on the Egyptians instead?”. Or, “Why march around, have trumpets blown, shout, and then go to battle? Couldn’t God have sent a natural disaster and taken care of Jericho just as easily?” No one who is sincerely religious would want to be accused of asking such questions; but some do just that when asking, “Why hear, believe, repent, confess, be baptized, and live faithfully? Cannot God just save me the way I think best?”

Have we “earned” salvation when we follow through with God’s commands and therefore obtaining salvation? Absolutely not, but we must follow through with obeying His commands in order to receive that which He has promised. “Through faith in the working of God”, we are to do all the Lord has commanded (**Mk 16:16; Col 2:12-14; Heb 5:9**).

-Ian Rice

-All Bible quotations from the New King James Version.