

Noteworthy

Prayer Requests: Reagan Cunningham, Kelly Cochran (*please seek to contact and encourage...*), Kurt Dickey, Betty Eubanks (*Is with us, but in constant need of prayer*), Linda James (*Has been suffering more pain during the assembly, yet still worshipping with us!*), Kirk Marschall, Butch Morgan (*has been advised not to drive lately*), Dottie Reynolds, Wayne Ryland, and Arlene Turner.

Our friends and family: Susan Bebbly (*Bucky Day's sister; diagnosed with cancer*) Joe Brown (*Cancer*), Diane Anderson (*Linda's sister*), Elnora Bennet (*Moses Stevens' sister*), Mildred Church (*shut-in*), Marian Church (*has been sick lately*), Jim Fields (*Keri Rice's dad recovering well*), Brian James (*cancer has reappeared*), Ardis Tucker, Bobbie Walker (*Marian Church's daughter; also, Marian's sister-in-law*).

Ladies' Bible Class: The next ladies' Bible class is going to be tomorrow evening (January 11th) at Christine Ryland's home (at 7PM). In preparation, please study lesson number XII (12) that begins on page # 78 in the book, "Some Do's and Don'ts for the Christian". (See *the sign-up sheet in the foyer*)

Afternoon Singing: Our afternoon singing will be held today at 5pm, in the auditorium.

Kid's Review Class: Also tonight, shortly after the evening worship service, in room # 7.

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

Number Change: Marian Church's phone number has been changed, and she asked that it be included in today's bulletin. It is 863-450-5150.

Gospel Meeting in the Area: The North Boulevard Church of Christ is holding a gospel meeting from January 10th—13th 2016 (starting today), with Adam Willingham. Their meeting times are posted on a flier in the vestibule, on the bulletin board.

Assignments for Worship Service

Wednesday Night: 1/13/16

Song Leader: OPEN
Opening Prayer: David Williams
Invitation: Colby Sadler
Announcements: Bob Marschall
Closing Prayer: Wayne Ryland
Recordings: Eddie Lawson
Usher: Jerry Williams

Sunday Evening: 1/17/16

Song Leader: Eddie Lawson
Opening Prayer: Ronnie Henderson
Lord's Table: Colby Sadler
Announcements: Larry Hicks
Closing Prayer: Trent Stevens
Recordings: Clay Sadler
Usher: Ed Lawson

Sunday Morning: 1/17/16

Lord's Table: Colby Sadler (B)
Eddie Lawson (C)
Serving: Keith Marschall
Trent Stevens
Song Leader: Larry Wisdom

Opening Prayer: Jim Elliot
Announcements: Larry Hicks
Closing Prayer: Sherman Johnson
Recordings: Jim Elliot
Usher: Jerry Williams



Lakeland Hills Leader

LAKELAND HILLS CHURCH OF CHRIST

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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
Charles Rawdon
Michael Sadler
Moses Stevens
David Williams

EVANGELIST:

Ian Rice (863) 213-9795

Divine Authority and the Apostles

Jesus did not come into the world to stay physically. When he offered his blood as a sacrifice for sins, once and for all, his divine mission in the world was finished. In the shadow of the cross, Jesus said in prayer to the Father, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (**John 17:4**). Then he added in verse 11, "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee." Notice that statement "but these are in the world." Jesus had chosen twelve ordinary men to train to do his work when he would no longer be in the world. He had chosen Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James (son of Alphaeus), Thaddeus, Simon, and Judas. Judas later betrayed him and in a moment of remorse, committed suicide. Matthias was chosen to replace him. A few years later, Paul was chosen, out of due season, to serve as an apostle to the Gentiles.

Jesus sent them on a limited commission "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (**Matt 10:6**). This anticipated a much larger task to which they were sent later. In the prayer of Jesus in **John 17**, our Lord said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" (**John 17:17-18**). After his resurrection Jesus said to them, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (**John 20:21**). That brings us to the very meaning of the word "apostle." An apostle is one sent. He is one who goes on the business of the one who sends him. The relation of the apostles to divine authority is seen from several vantage points.

Binding and Loosing

Jesus said to all of the apostles, "*Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven*" (**Matt 18:18**). The New American Standard Version translates the tense of the verbs with great accuracy as follows: "*shall have been bound in heaven*" and "*shall have been loosed in heaven*." This conforms to **Psalms 119:89**: "*Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.*" We cannot escape the force of this. The apostles would be involved in the work of making known the settled will of God in heaven. Their work was of the greatest importance and their word to be respected.

Guided by the Spirit

These men would not be left to their own devices in such an important work. "*It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you*" (**John 16:7**). Earlier Jesus had said "*But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you*" (**John 14:26**). Later Paul said "*But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things yea, the deep things of God . . . Which things we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth . . . But we have the mind of Christ*" (**1 Cor.2:9 - 16**). What the apostles taught as they were guided by the Spirit was not human wisdom. It was the word of God "*settled in heaven.*"

Sins Remitted and Sins Retained

Jesus appeared in the gathering of his apostles who huddled behind closed doors in fear, his first appearance to all of them except Thomas since his resurrection earlier that day. After say-

ing, "*As my Father hath me, even so send I you*". . . he "*breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit: Whose sins ye remit they are remitted unto them; and whose sins ye retain, they are retained*" (**John 20:21-23**). When Jesus "*breathed on them*" and said, "*Receive ye the Holy Spirit,*" he employed a fitting gesture to indicate what would occur when the Spirit would come upon them to lead and guide them into all truth. Inspiration means "God breathed." Jesus "breathed on them." I know he did not then and there impart the Spirit as their guide for later in **Acts 1:8** he said, "*Ye shall receive power after the Holy Spirit is come upon you.*" It was not until Pentecost that they began to speak "*as the Spirit gave them utterance*" (**Acts 2:4**). But what Jesus said to them is urgent. As they would go forth to speak under the direction of the Holy Spirit, they would present the terms on which God would remit sins. He charged them to go and preach the gospel to every creature and said, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved and he that believeth not shall be damned*" (**Mark 16:15-16**). On Pentecost Peter said, "*Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins*" (**Acts 2:38**). The terms of the Great Commission were to be preached in all the world until the end of the age. Upon obedient faith to that message delivered by them, lost men and women would have their sins remitted. But those who refused the message would have their sins retained. They would not be forgiven. What an awesome task these men had.

On Thrones - Judging

To these men Jesus said, "*In the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*" (**Matt 19:28**). First, notice that the time of the "regeneration" is when the Son of man sits upon the throne of his glory. That time is now.

Treasure in Earthen Vessels

Peter announced that he is seated at the right hand of God exalted (**Acts 2:33**). The "regeneration" is the time when people are being regenerated - born again. Jesus said all who enter the kingdom must be "*born of water and the Spirit*" (**John 3:5**). Paul called this "*the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit*" (**Titus 3:5**). They would judge over the "*twelve tribes of Israel,*" the entirety of God people. In the Old Testament the tribes were divided and scattered. But the apostles would have power to declare the terms of divine pardon to the entirety of people who would serve God. Those who speak from thrones speak authoritatively and we ought to listen.

Ambassadors for Christ

Paul said, "*Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God*" (**2 Cor 5:20**). In the same context, where Paul defends his apostolic work, he said that Christ had committed to "*us the ministry of reconciliation*" (**v. 18**) and "*hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation*" (**v. 19**). Those who had the work of reconciliation and who had the word of reconciliation (the service and the word by which lost people could have peace with God), were the same ones who were the "ambassadors for Christ." An ambassador represents the power that sends him forth. He is equipped with the necessary credentials to establish his identity as an authorized representative of those who sent him. Their credentials were the miracles, wonders, and signs they were given to use. Paul said, "*Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds*" (**2 Cor 12:12**). To refuse an ambassador is to insult the power that sent him. Indeed Jesus said, "*He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me*" (**John 13:20**). Refuse the apostles and you have refused Jesus Christ who sent them. Further, to refuse what they said by inspiration is to refuse the Holy Spirit who guided them to say it.

It is in this vein that we must consider what Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 4:7**: "*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*" Please notice the preceding verse. "*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*" (**2 Cor 4:6**). The "earthen vessels" of this context were the apostles, those ordinary men whom Jesus chose for such extraordinary work. The "treasure" placed in those vessels, was the "light" of divine inspiration of verse 6. How did that light get into these vessels? God commanded it to shine out of darkness. The mystery of Old Testament times was finally to be illuminated. As prophecy was said to be a "*light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star appear in your hearts*" (**2 Pet. 1:19**), even so now the divine light of inspiration was shined into the hearts of these vessels of earth to equip them for their work as the Lord's ambassadors. This light was the light of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. It reflected the glory of God "*in the face of Jesus Christ.*" The excellency of the power was not of Paul nor the other apostles, for the light was divine. It was the message of heaven entrusted to these ambassadors.

What they taught by inspiration is just as much the will of Christ as what Jesus said in the sermon on the mount. Hear Paul one more time: "*If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that write unto you are the commandments of the Lord*" (**1 Cor 14:37**). Let's face it folks, if we "major in the gospels and minor in the epistles" we are going to minimize what the Lord Jesus gave his apostles to say through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We must not reject those whom our Lord sent.

- By Connie Adams