

Noteworthy

Afternoon Singing: Today at 5pm, in the auditorium.

Ladies' Bible Class: Resumes tomorrow evening (Monday Oct. 12th); please see the sign up sheet in the foyer for details.

Kids' Review Class: The children have been doing really well in the review classes lately! Thanks to all the parents, children, and teachers who've made our time so worthwhile! Our next review will be on November 1st.

Prayer Requests: Reagan Cunningham (doing much better), Kelly Cochran (been ill lately with intestinal problems), Betty Eubanks, Linda James, Butch Morgan, Isla Ross (glad to hear good news on her behalf Wednesday), and Wayne Ryland (blood pressure).

Our friends and family: Jim Abram, Joe Brown (bone cancer), Diane Anderson (Linda's sister), Elnora Bennet (Moses Stevens' sister), Mildred Church (shut-in), and Canera Wisdom (Larry Wisdom's mother).

Group Meeting: Group (1) meets tonight after worship.

Area Gospel Meeting: The Trilacoochee Church of Christ will have a meeting next week (October 18-23) with Joshua Creel. Let us be encouraged to support that meeting if/when possible.

Out of Town: Ian Rice will be attending Bible studies this week in Russellville, Alabama; while Ruth Miller and Keri Rice (with children) will be traveling to St. Augustine, Florida.

Follow-up: We will have a follow-up meeting for the teachers next Sunday afternoon to discuss our on-going curriculum.

Assignments for Worship Service

Wednesday Night: 10/14/15

Song Leader: Eddie Lawson
 Opening Prayer: Nick Ross
 Invitation: Keith Marschall
 Announcements: Bob Marschall
 Closing Prayer: Wayne Ryland
 Parking Lot: Larry Hicks

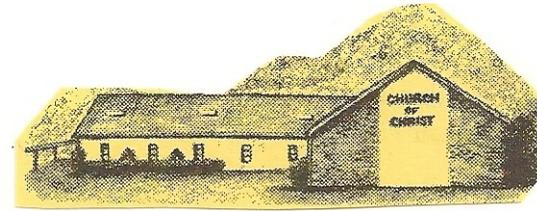
Sunday Evening: 10/18/15

Song Leader: Jeremy Wharton
 Opening Prayer: Jordan Lawson
 Lord's Table: Nick Ross
 Announcements: Larry Wisdom
 Closing Prayer: Mike Sadler
 Parking Lot: Paul Lloyd

Sunday Morning: 10/18/15

Lord's Table: Nick Ross (B)
 Bucky Day (C)
 Serving: Ed Lawson
 Norm Blackburn
 Song Leader: Charles Rawdon
 Opening Prayer: Sherman Johnson

Announcements: Larry Wisdom
 Closing Prayer: Jerry Williams
 Parking Lot: (9:00) Leon Miller
 (9:50) David Williams



**Lakeland Hills
 Leader**

LAKELAND HILLS CHURCH OF CHRIST

2510 Lakeland Hills Boulevard Lakeland Florida 33805 (863) 688-4336

www.lakelandhillschurchofchrist.com

ELDERS

Larry Hicks (863) 899-7405
 Leon Miller (863) 640-6378
 Larry Wisdom (863) 583-4311

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

“You Must go to War to Find Peace”

The simplest description of a Christian is one who is an imitator of God. This transformation of the spirit of a Christian into “the image of His Son” is God’s eternal plan for every man that comes to Him (**Rom 8:29-30**). When we honestly look at the nature of man and then that of God, we must marvel at the great power that God has used to bring about that transformation.

Just as a blacksmith hammers out the lump of metal into a useful instrument, our God uses the fires of conflict, guided by His written word and providential care to mold us into His image (**James 1:2-4; Rom 5:3-5**). Without this process there can be no change.

God Demands that We Know His Character

Jesus plainly showed His followers that all motives and actions on our part must be based on our understanding of how God Himself thinks and acts. How do we deal with an enemy, an angry, bitter man who has hurt us? “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust” (**Mt 5:43-45**).

God Proclaims That He is a God of Peace

We should listen carefully when God describes Himself. Paul twice used peace to describe the Father's basic character to the Romans. "Now the God of peace *be* with you all" (**Romans 15:33**). "And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly" (**Romans 16:20**). Paul wrote other churches describing the blessing of having "the God of peace" be "with you" (**1 Cor 13:11; Phil 4:9**). Later in the New Testament the power of "the God of peace" is displayed by showing His ability to "sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (**1 Thess 5:23**).

What is Peace?

Bible lexicons define the Greek word translated as "peace" as meaning: 1) a state of national tranquility 1a) exemption from the rage and havoc of war 2) peace between individuals, i.e. harmony, concord 3) security, safety, prosperity, felicity, (because peace and harmony make and keep things safe and prosperous) - Thayer's Lexicon. Peace is an absence of conflict, whether it is between warring parties or between the warring thoughts and purposes in our hearts. God has the power to bring real peace!

What kind of Peace is at the Foundation of God's Character?

When Jesus was born into the world, the angels declared His mission to bring "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace,

goodwill toward men! (**Lk 2:14**)" How could Jesus bring peace between sinful men and a holy God? This peace would only come as a result of a bitter war that resulted in the shedding of Jesus' blood on the cross and the resulting crushing of Satan (**Heb 2:14-15; Rom 16:20**). Sinful men needed a savior, one that could provide a perfect sacrifice for sin and provide the great power to mold men into a life of repentance and change (**Heb 4:12-13, Phil 4:9**).

Please understand that peace with God must be placed above any other kind of peace. I must not let the threats of men or even the desire for peace with men cause me to lose peace with God. Satan has always used social relationships to entice the Christian to find "peace" with the world. "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (**John 15:18-19**).

God Expects Us to Find Peace between Christians

Jesus came to set us with war with some and with peace with some. "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household" (**Mt 10:34-36**). When it comes to a relationship with Christians, those who have

found peace with God, God demands that we remove all obstacles that would create conflict among His people (**2 Cor 13:11, James 4:13-18**).

Our War for Peace

The battle for peace begins in the heart. We must have a heart that has been crushed and then healed by God in our conversion. Only then can we become "peacemakers" (**Mt 5:3-9**). Those Christians who are not of this tender, penitent heart cannot be a part of God's peace. On the contrary, they will attack God's way of peace and be responsible for an ongoing turmoil against those who seek to serve the Lord (**James 4:1-6**). Even among the churches of God, there must come a separation between those who repent and seek God and those who Paul described as making their "god ... *their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame — who set their mind on earthly things (**Phil 3:18-19, 1 Cor 11:19**). Are you teachable? If not, then you need to go to war with your own heart to find the repentance that will allow Jesus to be in control. (**Rev 3:20**).

Peace in Local Churches

As God's peacemaker, I must go to war to maintain the right relationships in a local flock. Because we are people, we will constantly be tempted to fight, look down on and discard our brethren. When I become like God, then I will put the needs of others above my own (**Phil 2:3-4**). I will also have a genuine love for every soul "for whom Christ died" (**Rom 14:15**). I will know that the only path to peace will come from that which is pure, that is, God's word received into a pure heart (**2 Tim 2:22, Jas**

1:21). The teaching of God's word must be the means by which we find peace. Please do not depend upon the schemes of men.

Local churches must have brave leaders that will confront and defeat those problems that disrupt peace. When anger and bitterness exist between Christians, then it is urgent that brave men confront this with God's solution (**Mt 5:23-24; 18:15-18, 35**). When false teaching arises, men must be quick to confront it and challenge it (**Titus 1:10-11**). If these and other problems are ignored, then rest assured they will not "go away." How many churches have been turned into a sea of turmoil because of bitterness between two people was allowed to linger and spread? "Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled" (**Hebrews 12:14-15**)

We have a great need today for brave men who will go to war for peace! Rather than seeking a compromise of God's plan of salvation for peace with the denominations, we must fight for God's peace. Rather than sitting on our hands while watching a local church descend into worldliness, bitterness and pride, we must fight for God's peace. If you have found that blessed peace that brings brethren together with God and with one another, then you must fight to keep it! "May the God of peace be with you."

- By Larry Rouse