

Noteworthy

Prayer Requests: Jo Anderson, Margaret Blackburn, Joe Brown (*cancer*), Marian Church (*neck and back; very thankful for encouragement*), Mildred Church, Jim & Mary Elliot (*taking care of Jim's sister*), Linda James (*ongoing medical*), Yvonne Jordan (*recovering from knee replacement surgery*), Eddie Lawson (*has been sick*), Paul Lloyd, Neil Miller (*back*), Butch Morgan (*ongoing medical*), Dottie Reynolds, Suzette Stevens, and Wayne Ryland.

Family and friends: Tonya Bryan (*Dottie's Reynold's daughter*), Ned Hicks (*ongoing medical*), Plen Hicks (*Larry's brother*), Herb Grannemon (*Bucky Day's uncle*), Brian James (*cancer*), Jesse Jordan (*Yvonne Jordan's husband*), Ardis Tucker (*ongoing medical*), Bob Waldron (*ongoing medical; doing better*), and Charles Woods (*Ed and Terrell's brother-in-law*).

Out of Town: Paula Sullivan will be out of town until February 8th (*Wednesday*).

Men's Meeting: The elders will meet with the men of the congregation this afternoon at 5pm (*in the auditorium*).

Group Meeting: Group 1 will meet NEXT Sunday.

Ladies Bible Class: Next class will be Monday, February 13th (*next week*) at Kaitlyn Sadler's home (*@ 7PM*). In preparation, please study lesson number VIII that begins on page # 137 in the book, "Some Do's and Don'ts for the Christian". (*See the sign-up sheet in the foyer*)

Kids' Review: The next kids' review class will be February 12th (*next Sunday*), shortly after the evening worship service.

Assignments for Worship Service

Wednesday Night: 2/8/17

Song Leader: Trent Stevens
 Opening Prayer: Jim Elliot
 Invitation: Nick Ross
 Announcements: Mike Sadler
 Closing Prayer: Bucky Day
 Recordings: Clay Sadler
 Usher: Larry Hicks

Sunday Evening: 2/12/17

Song Leader: Jeremy Wharton
 Opening Prayer: Bob Marschall
 Lord's Table: Larry Hicks
 Announcements: Leon Miller
 Closing Prayer: Paul Lloyd
 Recordings: Keith Marschall
 Usher: Sherman Johnson

Sunday Morning: 2/12/17

Lord's Table: Larry Hicks (B)
 Bucky Day (C)
 Serving: Clay Sadler
 Ed Lawson
 Song Leader: Larry Wisdom

Opening Prayer: Ronnie Henderson
 Announcements: Leon Miller
 Closing Prayer: Nick Ross
 Recordings: Keith Marschall
 Usher: Sherman Johnson



**Lakeland Hills
 Leader**

LAKELAND HILLS CHURCH OF CHRIST

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

www.lakelandhillchurchofchrist.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
 Michael Sadler
 Moses Stevens
 David Williams

EVANGELIST:

Ian Rice (863) 213-9795

Who is the conflicted man of Romans 7?

We all know what it's like to struggle inside. We understand the conflict of wanting to do what is right on the one hand, and not doing it on the other. Because of how much we all identify with that struggle, we commonly point to Romans 7 as the example of this problem. Even Paul struggled with it. So, what is the issue?

The question has to do with which part of Paul's life he was referencing. The fact that Paul speaks in the present tense through that section (vv. 13-34) does not prove that Paul was speaking of his life as a Christian. This way of speaking (first person, present) is not uncommon as a literary or rhetorical device to make a bigger point. We can back up a little in the context to see how Paul was setting up this section.

Paul argues that he would not have known sin but through the Law (of Moses), but when the Law came, sin become alive and he died (vs. 9). Thus, the Law became the means through which Paul died spiritually, even though the Law itself was good. Even so, through the commandments of the Law, sin was demonstrated to be "utterly sinful" (vs. 13). At this point, Paul launches into the contrast between being "sold into the bondage of sin" and being set free in Christ. However, to get that bigger point, we must read into chapter 8 (the chapter break between 7 and 8 is not ideal).

When we read these chapters together, we find the contrast to be very pointed. That contrast is well stated in 8:2: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death." What Paul is describing in chapter 7 is what happens when someone tries to rely on the "law of sin and death." He describes the indwelling of sin and evil and being under bondage to sin, but these are not descriptions of one who has been set free from that bondage. These describe one who tries to work out the problem of sin on his own, apart from Christ, before being set free in Christ. Perfect law-keeping would be required if that were the case, but the Law couldn't provide complete forgiveness of sin (cf. 8:3), and since all have sinned (3:23), such perfection would not be possible. Forgiveness is needed.

A much fuller comparison and contrast can be done, but what convinces me that chapter 7 is referring to the unregenerate man without Christ is the following comparison:

In 7:17 Paul speaks of "sin which dwells in me." In 7:18 he says that "nothing good dwells in me."

Compare that to 8:9-11, where the Spirit and Christ are said to dwell in the child of God.

How can sin dwell where Christ is? And if "nothing good dwells in me," and Christ and His Spirit also dwell in me, what does this say about Christ and the Spirit? These simply cannot be reconciled as dwelling in the same

place. Therefore, Paul must be speaking about two different circumstances. When one tries to work out sin without Christ, he will fail. "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks, be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom. 7:24-25)

None of this is to say that Christians never struggle with sin or commit sin, but it is to say that we cannot live in sin (cf. 1 John 3:9), and we must never rely solely on our own strength to overcome it. Perhaps we find ourselves in deeper struggles like that described in Romans 7 because we are relying too much on ourselves. In that case, we are following the pattern of the flesh far too much and need to be reminded of what Christ came to do for us. If we set our minds on the flesh, then we cannot please God (8:8). If we set our minds on the "things of the Spirit" (8:5), we will have life and peace (vs. 6). That contrast is clear. Romans 7-8 shows the beauty of the gospel with the marvelous reminder: "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (8:1).

Why is this important? Because it focuses on how we need to be thinking of ourselves as those redeemed by the blood of Christ. We understand the struggle with sin, but rather than see ourselves as those in whom sin dwells, we must see ourselves as those in whom Christ and the Spirit dwell. "However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells

in you" (8:9). This is not a claim to personal perfection, but it is a reminder of our need to reflect the power of God's mercy through living by the Spirit of God.

- Doy Moyer

Getting the Job Done

A fellow preacher showed me the church building in a community of middle income people — the meeting place for 60/80 brethren. Paint was peeling from the trim, the lawn was filled with weeds and needed mowing, shrubbery needed trimming, and trash was blowing about the parking lot. He asked, "If you were preaching here, how would you go about getting the brethren to clean up this place?"

I told him I would begin by bringing my mower up there and cutting the grass. Then, at our next meeting, I would ask if any of the members had an edger, and if so, would they meet me here on Saturday and edge the walk while I clean up the parking lot. I'd thank that person publicly on Sunday, and ask if someone would volunteer to trim the shrubbery. All this should get their attention!!

Then I would ask the elders, or the next business meeting, if there was any objection to scraping off the old paint, and putting on new, I'd have prices for paint on hand — and if they said the "church" couldn't afford it, I'd offer to do it myself, with whatever help anyone would give.

But my friend played devil's advocate. "What if no one offered to help, or even told you that if it took a neat clean building to get people to come to worship they would be coming for the wrong reason." I would counter that people who looked for a show place weren't coming to that little place; and that the clean-up was not to attract new comers, but was the fruit of self-respect on the part of those who regularly worshipped there.

I might suggest a Bible reading of Proverbs 24:30-34. "I went by the field of the sluggard, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, The face thereof was covered with nettles, and the stone wall thereof was broken down..."

In this day of emphasis upon material things this article seems almost archaic. But this was not written to promote clean neat buildings alone. I hoped you would notice that if something needs doing you begin by doing it yourself. Elders and preachers will not increase personal work, contribution, or other desirable traits by "fussing" at the congregation. We should have scriptural authority for our plea, but even this will fail in the absence of example. Most brethren know what is right, but are not motivated to do as well as they know to do. For the bottom line, it is this mutual edification, encouragement, prompting and correcting that gives meaning to congregational fellowship.

- Robert F. Turner