

Noteworthy

Prayer Requests: Joe Brown (*cancer*), Marian Church (*neck and back*), Mildred Church (*will remain at Wedgewood Rehab center for at least 2 more weeks*), Jim & Mary Elliot (*taking care of Jim's sister*), Linda James, Paul Lloyd, Neil Miller (*will see specialist for his back next week; on the 16th*), Butch Morgan (*ongoing medical*), and the Rylands.

Our family and friends: Tonya Bryan (*Dottie's Reynold's daughter*), Ned Hicks (*ongoing medical*), Brian James (*cancer*), Jesse Jordan (*Yvonne Jordan's husband*), Ardis Tucker (*ongoing medical*), Bob Waldron (*ongoing medical*), and Charles Woods (*Ed and Terrell's brother-in-law*).

Bible Class Review: The kid's review class has been rescheduled for **next week**, January 15th, shortly after the evening services, in classroom # 7.

Group Meeting: There will be **no group meeting tonight**. Group 1 will meet next week after the evening worship service (*Please check to see what new group you are in*).

Ladies Bible Class: Ladies' Bible class will be held (**tomorrow**) Monday, January 9th at Angela Wisdom's home (*@ 7PM*). In preparation, please study lesson number VII that begins on page # 131 in the book, "Some Do's and Don'ts for the Christian". (*See the sign-up sheet in the foyer*)

Helping with Updates: With the prayer list growing at such a rapid rate recently, as well as people's needs ever-changing, the above list is likely in need of additions/updates/corrections. If you have any information that can help to update the prayer list for this bulletin, please pass it along to Ian Rice (**James 5:13-20**). Thanks to all for your help!

Assignments for Worship Service

Wednesday Night: 1/11/17

Song Leader: Joe Brown
 Opening Prayer: Jordan Stevens
 Invitation: Trent Stevens
 Announcements: Mike Sadler
 Closing Prayer: Eric Stevens
 Recordings: Trent Stevens
 Usher: Leon Miller

Sunday Evening: 1/15/17

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: 1/15/17

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**

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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

Have Convictions – Will Stand

The vast difference between conviction and convenience has rapidly become a misunderstood subject. The search for convenience has perhaps led more Christians to bow their knees to Baal than any other disease. Conviction is lacking, and sin, camouflaged by popularity, continues to take its toll in the church.

A sharp contrast exists between the two attitudes. While conviction will prompt the Christian to stand under every test, the desire for convenience leads to compromise, and thereby spiritual death is the result.

Much preaching needs to be done on the meaning of conviction and its characteristics. An elegant picture of true conviction is found in a quotation from an article by J. W. Evans while he was living in Orlando, Florida. The article was about a sermon he had preached at the Par Avenue church. The title, "Have Convictions-Will Stand" may remind us of one of the popular TV programs; but its content is far removed from TV westerns. After expressing his appreciation for the good reception given to the lesson by the members at Par Avenue, brother Evans adds the following words which are to the point and worthy of serious consideration.

"Again I say that I thank God for members of Par Avenue who are able to make proper discernment on weakness and strength, quantity and quality; who refuse to be swayed from Bible convic-

tions by discouragements that weed out the weaklings. These know the WHY of 'a falling away.' (1 Cor. 11:9) They know that part of our warfare must be fought with 'spiritual wickedness in high places;' that sin and error crouch in camouflaged corners of even the kingdom of God. But it only takes a Gideon's army with broken pitchers of light to flush them from their dark hidings. This army has heard the short, sharp blast of the bugle call - **'Stand, Therefore Stand'** And **'Stand'** - we are entrenched behind the impregnable citadel of Bible convictions. Too soberly convicted to be flushed out by the tear-gas bombs of sentimentalism; too confident by the majority-that-God-makes to be routed by the bombardment of 'multitudes on the other side;' too near the 'Captain of our salvation' to be intimidated by the screaming mischief-missiles of innuendoes, slander, and prejudicial epithets. Yes, we **Have Convictions - Will Stand.**"

Morsels like these, after being masticated and digested, should nourish the strong to more strength and provide the weak with the courage to be loyal to truth under every temptation. Christians are being tried and tested for their love of truth. Many are courageously standing for that which they know to be right, while others, not studying the Bible for themselves, are swept away by the pleasant and fair speeches of teachers and preachers who seek only to scratch itching ears with **"great swelling words, showing respect of persons for the sake of advantage."** (Jude 16)

Convenient Preaching

Myriad of Christians are confusing the difference between convictions and conveniences. They conveniently stand for doctrine which is

most popular, receiving the "praise of men," rather than standing for doctrine of Christ by conviction, being rewarded with the **"praise of God."** (John 12:43) Such an attitude is manifested by the failure to teach against worldliness, looseness and laxity in moral living, and by putting emphasis on number and size rather than spiritual stature. Many seem afraid to condemn anything. but stand ready to praise everything. We have watered down our convictions, sweetened our dispositions, and become so sophisticated with worldly wisdom and intoxicated with our "place under the sun" of prominence in the religious world that we stand powerless in the face of error and evil. It is no uncommon thing to hear brethren plead with preachers to preach the truth in love. Though we would be first to grant that this spirit is necessary in teaching the gospel, their concept of such is simply to preach the truth in a fashion that will offend no one. They have their eyes set on earthly friendships and large memberships, and they wish to displease nobody.

Even though truth must be sacrificed to compromise with error, some would declare, "It is better to have peace and love rather than strife and division." The Bible plainly teaches the sin of strife and division, yet never has the Lord condemned division caused by teaching truth. But brethren have tried using the words "peace" and "love" as handles to introduce any error they should want to practice.

God recognized this type of attitude among his people, the Israelites. In Ezekiel 33:31, the prophet spoke, **"And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before**

thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness." Notice particularly that these came as ones belonging to God, and love flowed from their mouths. But it was not the kind of love God desired, for their **"heart goeth after their covetousness."**

Love Demonstrated

We need only to examine the courageous stand of some of the great servants of God to understand the type of peace and love our Lord desires. **Joseph** had courage to guard against evil by fleeing from Potiphar's wife. (Gen. 39:13) It would have been convenient to have succumbed to her enticements, but not so with this man of God. Even though cast into prison, he knew that compromising with sin would bring a greater condemnation at the hands of a just God.

Stephen spoke to the Jews of the conviction of their patriarchs. The love they demonstrated certainly did not please the people. **"Which of your prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed them that showed before of the coming of the Righteous One."** (Acts 7:52) And Stephen, upon preaching this unpopular sermon that offended the Sanhedrin Council and other Jews, was cast out of the city and stoned. (Acts 7:51-60)

Peter and John manifested the true spirit of love with God when, after being warned not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus, replied, **"Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard."** (Acts 4:18-30)

Proper Love

Example after example could be given of love demonstrated, but enough has been shown for us to know that true peace and love come by simple, unquestionable, courageous obedience to God's holy will. **"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."** (Matt. 7:21) The wrath of God is the only thing that can come about when we follow popular and convenient courses unauthorized by the New Testament.

We should learn the kind of peace and love God wants and then never stray from it. **"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments."** (1 John 5:3) To say nothing against error and thereby compromise with evil is far worse in God's eyes than to displease men by preaching His Word. Jesus taught that silence in the face of error was a denial of Him, **"He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth."** (Matt. 12:30)

So then, may we all:

"be entrenched behind the impregnable citadel of Bible Convictions. Too soberly convicted to be flushed out by the tear-gas bombs of sentimentalism; too confident by the majority-that-God-makes to be routed by the bombardment of 'multitudes on the other side;' too near the 'Captain of our salvation' to be intimidated by the screaming mischief-missiles of innuendoes, slander, and prejudicial epithets."

Yes, may we **"Have Convictions - Will Stand!"**

- Robert Harkrider