

Noteworthy

Prayer Requests: Jo Anderson (*ongoing medical*), Margaret Blackburn (*pancreas and hip*), Joe Brown (*cancer*), Marian Church (*neck & back*), Mildred Church (*shut in*), Jim Elliot (*sick*), Linda James (*ongoing medical*), Paul Lloyd (*on-going medical*), Linda McKenzie (*medical*), Bonnie Meagher (*medical*), Ahrea and Neil Miller, Butch Morgan (*ongoing medical*), Dottie Reynolds (*back, on-going medical*), Mike Sadler (*neck*), Suzette Stevens (*ongoing medical*), Arlene Turner (*medical*), Jerry Williams (*recovering from surgery on his hand*), Larry Wisdom (*recovering from knee surgery*).

Family and friends: Nell Goodall (*Charles Goodall's aunt, ongoing medical*), Chuck Goodall (*Charles & Vernita's son—cancer*), Ned Hicks (*Larry Hick's father - ongoing medical*), Brian James (*cancer*), Wayne Ryland (*ongoing medical*), Ardis Tucker (*Paula Sullivan's sister in law—ongoing medical*). Remember and encourage others who are struggling.

Group Meeting: Group 1 will meet *tonight* after the evening worship service.

Ladies' Bible Class: Meets January 8th at 7pm, in Angela Wisdom's. In preparation, please do *lesson 3* titled, "Responsibilities of Wifehood" from the book, "Woman, Her Blessings and Responsibilities".

4th Sunday: Jordan Lawson will preach the sermon during this evening's worship service.

5th Sunday: Next Sunday evening we will devote more time to singing during the worship service (*Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19*).

Assignments for Worship Service

Wednesday Night: 12/27/17

Song Leader: Joe Brown
 Opening Prayer: Eric Stevens
 Invitation: Trent Stevens
 Announcements: Larry Hicks
 Closing Prayer: Jerry Williams
 Recordings: Trent Stevens
 Usher: Leon Miller

Sunday Evening: 12/31/17

Song Leader: Colby Sadler
 Opening Prayer: Bob Marschall
 Lord's Table: Larry Hicks
 Announcements: Leon Miller
 Closing Prayer: Jerry Williams
 Recordings: OPEN
 Usher: Gus Johnson

Sunday Morning: 12/31/17

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: Jordan Lawson
 Recordings: Keith Marschall
 Usher: Gus 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

“Amos or Amaziah”

A number of years ago, in a conversation with someone concerning preachers and preaching, the person stated that he thought a preacher needed to have charisma and be entertaining in order to be effective. As I reflect back on that, it causes me to do some thinking about some of the present-day trends.

Perhaps the story of Amos and Amaziah can provide us with some insight concerning present-day attitudes toward preachers and preaching. Amos was a shepherd turned preacher. His “congregation” was made up of high society people in the nation of Israel, including the king himself. He preached to them, but not at their invitation. They did not consider him as being refined and elegant enough for their polite society. They would have fired him if they had the power to do so. But they could not fire him, because they had not hired him.

There was a priest during the days of Amos by the name of Amaziah. He sent word to king Jeroboam that “Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear his words. For thus Amos has said: Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive from their own land. Then Amaziah said to Amos: Go, you seer! Flee to the land of Judah. There eat bread, and there prophesy. But never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary. And it is the royal residence,” Amos 7:10-13.

The expression “the land is not able to bear his words” is much like Paul’s words to Timothy: “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables,” (2 Tim. 4:3-4). Had Amaziah been their preacher, he would have been the kind that preached things the hearers wanted to hear, rather than what they needed to hear. Amaziah ridiculed the idea that judgment was to come upon Israel because of her sins, as Amos had prophesied. The king, no doubt, was pleased to hear Amaziah rebuke Amos for condemning the sins of the nation. It was an attitude much like those described by the prophet Isaiah: “And to the prophets, Do not prophesy to us right things; speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits,” (Isa. 30:10).

The reply that Amos gave to Amaziah was as follows: “I was no prophet, nor was I a son of a prophet, but I was a herdsman and a tender of sycamore fruit. Then the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said to me, Go prophesy to my people Israel,” (Amos 7:14-15). In other words, Amos had not planned to be a prophet and had not gone to the school of the prophets. He was now a prophet because he was told by God to go prophesy. His inspired message was filled with warnings and coming judgment. It can be summarized in one sentence: “Prepare to meet your God, O Israel,” (Amos 4:12).

Those who preach today must heed the words of Paul to Timothy: “Preach the word! Be

ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching,” (2 Tim. 4:2). Paul practiced what he preached, as he stated to the Ephesian elders — “For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God,” (Acts 20:27). But how pleasant it would have been to have a preacher like Amaziah! He would never be so rude as to disturb a congregation by calling attention to their sins, or by calling upon them to repent. All of his sermons would have been entertaining, full of stories and jokes. Never would he have made the mistake of preaching something “negative” or taken a stand against sin. He would have never preached a distinctive message. No one would have ever left a single service without feeling good – they would have never felt any sense of guilt. Instead, they would have been persuaded that whatever they chose to do, or not do, was perfectly right.

On the other hand, think of the possible disturbance, unrest, strong rebukes, and guilt feelings which resulted from the preaching of Amos. It might not always have been pleasant to sit and hear what he had to say as he presented God’s message to them. But the message Amos had for the people was needed! But sadly the message is never received and acted upon properly when people are more interested in their own selfish desires than the will of the Lord, (2 Tim. 4:1-5). Which type of preacher would we prefer today, Amos or Amaziah???

- R. J. Evans

“Designated Sitter”

I once overheard some young men discussing their baseball little league careers. One of the group had been a catcher, another had played second, etc. One was asked, “What did you play?” “Well, I was a designated sitter”, was the terse reply. Not a designated *bitter*, but a designated *sitter*.

Now, you will have to admit that was a clever way to avoid saying, “I was a bench warmer.” Sounds more important too.

Upon reflection, I have concluded that his position was really more important than it sounded. Any good sports coach will tell you that to have a really good team that you need a “strong bench” – that battery of “designated sitters” who avidly support the “starters” and are ever willing to step in and do the job whenever needed. They are essential to the team and are often the real heroes of the game.

In the church, there are certain positions that are more visible than others. Everyone cannot play the same position. (Read 1 Corinthians 12). The strength of the church is too often measured by the perceived strength of the more visible members – the preacher, the elders, the song leaders, class teachers, etc. Oh, these are important positions. They should be filled by those qualified to do the work. As important as they are, the real strength of the church may not be in those who regularly perform these functions. It often lies with the “designated sitters” – those who hold up the hands of the “regulars” and are willing to step in whenever needed to do the best they can in whatever role the occasion calls for. As in a

play, the success of the production often depends as much on the supporting cast, working behind the scenes, as it does on those who are seen on stage.

For several years following World War II, there was a flurry of “missionary” activity around the world. A number of brethren were announcing plans to go to this or that country. They were rightly receiving notoriety as their plans were announced in the various papers published by brethren. I heard one preacher, who was justly proud that two of his sons were among those willing to leave the comforts of home and go into the foreign work, make an appeal for brethren to support all those men who, like his sons, were willing to go. Then someone asked the brother, why he, too, was not planning to join his sons in going, if it were so important. He answered, “Because someone needs to stay at home to help provide and encourage support for those who are going?” I think he was right.

While we must have those who are “on the field” or “at bat”, we also need the strong support of “designated sitters.” Men like Onesiphorus (2 Tim. 1:16), who may not be as visible or as well-known as others, but are always there lending whatever service and support they can to the team effort. When good men are publicly doing their best to promote and uphold truth and carry on the Lord’s work in general, they need words of comfort rather than criticism. When one has to take the lead in teaching and defending the gospel it is comforting, knowing that those “on the bench” are willing to stand up beside them in a show of solidarity.

Thank God for every good “designated sitter.”

- Edward Bragwell