

Noteworthy

Prayer Requests: Jo Anderson (*ongoing medical*), Margaret Blackburn (*pancreas and hip*), Joe Brown (*cancer*), Marian Church (*will see neurosurgeon March 14th*), Mildred Church (*shut in*), Linda James (*ongoing medical*), Paul Lloyd (*medical*), Butch Morgan (*ongoing medical*), Caleb Sheffield (*concerns related to his eye*).

Family and friends: Heather Capauana (*pneumonia*), Bucky Day's mother, Nell Goodall (*Charles Goodall's aunt*), Ned Hicks (*ongoing medical*), Brian James (*cancer*), Jeff Sprott (*surgery March 12th*), Lindy McReedy (*Cindy Hicks' aunt, cancer*), family of Erman Owens (*of Gainesville, he passed away last week*), Wayne Ryland (*ongoing medical*), Ardis Tucker (*ongoing medical*). Remember and encourage others who are struggling.

Out of Town: Larry and Cindy Hicks.

Ladies Bible Class: March 12th (**tomorrow night**) at Keri Rice's home. In preparation, please do lesson number 5 titled "Responsibilities of Motherhood" in the book provided for the class (Woman, Her Blessings and Responsibilities, by Irene S. Foy).

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

Children's Review: March 18th (*next week*) immediately following evening worship.

Winter Bible Classes: Tues. Mar. 20th (*next week, 7pm*) at Larry Wisdom's home. (*Lesson 3 of 5 on Church History*)

Men's Training Class: 4th Sunday of each month at 5 pm (*March 25th*).

Note: Jordan Lawson will preach every 3rd Sunday evening of the month, beginning next week!

Gospel Meeting: Our spring meeting with Justin Lewis begins three weeks from today! Please make plans to attend (*April 1st-4th*).

Assignments for Worship Service

Wednesday Night: 3/14/18

Song Leader: Larry Wisdom
Opening Prayer: Jerry Williams
Invitation: Eric Stevens
Announcements: Leon Miller
Closing Prayer: Bucky Day
Recordings: Bob Marschall
Usher: Larry Hicks

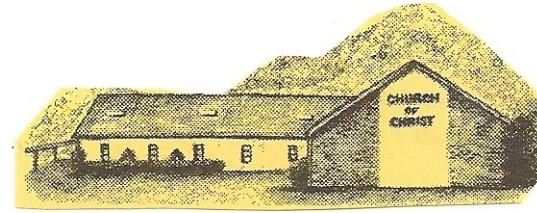
Sunday Evening: 3/18/18

Song Leader: Bob Marschall
Opening Prayer: Ronnie Henderson
Lord's Table: Nick Ross
Announcements: Larry Hicks
Closing Prayer: Eric Stevens
Recordings: Clay Sadler
Usher: Gus Johnson

Sunday Morning: 3/18/18

Lord's Table: Nick Ross (B)
Bucky Day (C)
Serving: Ed Lawson
Jim Abram
Song Leader: Larry Wisdom

Opening Prayer: Jim Elliot
Announcements: Larry Hicks
Closing Prayer: Mike Sadler
Recordings: Trent Stevens
Usher: Gus Johnson



**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
Michael Sadler
Moses Stevens
David Williams

EVANGELIST:

Ian Rice (863) 213-9795

"Gospel or Gimmickry?"

"Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to fables" (2 Timothy 4:2-4).

These verses clearly indicate that there are times when gospel preaching is in season and out of season. History indicates the same. In the first century in most places it was in season; in the middle ages it was out of season. There was a thrilling season for the gospel in middle America in the early nineteenth century, while at the same time it was largely out of season in France and Europe.

In our own lifetime, we have seen the same situation change. This writer remembers days in Chattanooga when non-Christians attended meetings in large numbers for no other reason than to hear the gospel, and ten or twenty baptisms were not uncommon in such a meeting. Simple gospel preaching does not now seem to have such drawing power.

What are we to do when gospel preaching is out of season; when people are more interested in education, entertainment, recreation, and social activities than they are in preaching; when the wisdom of the world has more appeal than the wisdom of God?

Common Answers

"You have to reach people where they are," we are told. "We have to give them what they want to attract attention. Then we can reach them with the gospel." On this basis, all kinds of gimmicks are used to entice the worldly. Many churches have turned into little more than community centers and social clubs. They are more involved with ball teams and scout troops than with Bible teaching. The highways are crowded with their buses taking various age groups to every kind of amusement area in the country. Their advertising reads for all the world like a circus flyer, offering prizes, free gifts, and fun. Often, no promise is made of anything spiritual at all.

Others realizing that the gospel "is the power of God unto salvation" limit their activities more to preaching. But even here, appeal is still to the worldly tastes of our generation. If possible, preachers are obtained who have made a big reputation in sports, in entertainment, or in government. Otherwise, great emphasis is given in advertising to the educational attainments of the speaker or to his gifts as a "dynamic, powerful, eloquent" speaker.

God's Way

The problem of disinterested people is not new. It existed in some places even in the first century. Paul said it existed in Corinth. "For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness" (1 Corinthians 1:22-23).

Paul had the power to offer signs to the Jews and the knowledge to compete with the Greeks in worldly wisdom. The philosophy described

above would have suggested advertisement of a lecture on "The Judicial Philosophy in the Roman World." Obtaining his audience with this, he could then slip in a little about Jesus and the cross. But this was not Paul's approach, as he told us: "For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). Human philosophy and human wisdom had no place in Paul's plan for saving the lost in Corinth.

Preaching only the gospel, of course, Paul could have announced himself as "Dr. Paul, graduate of the University of Gamaliel, noted author, world traveler, inspired and dynamic lecturer." Rather, he says, "And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God ... I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:1, 3-5).

Worldly appeals simply cannot save lost men. And to attach them to the gospel is to cheapen the good news of Jesus Christ. By such appeals we may increase numbers and even "make waves," but such individuals in the local church are liabilities rather than assets. As materials in God's building they are classified as "wood, hay, and straw." Paul warns against building such material into the church: "According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious

stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work" (1 Corinthians 3:10, 12, 13).

- by Sewell Hall

"Three Answers to One Question"

Could one question be given three differing answers, and all answers be correct? Seems unlikely doesn't it? Yet this is the case in the N.T. book of Acts when the question, "What must I do?" (to be saved) is asked.

The expressed answer given to the Philippian jailer was "Believe!" (See Acts 16:25-34 for full account.) Some insist that this expressed reply is complete, and hence salvation is by faith only. However, a consideration of the expressed replies given this question on other occasions will show the fallacy of such reasoning.

When some of the Pentecost multitude asked, "What shall we do?" they were told, "Repent, and be baptized." (See Acts 2:6-38 for details.) And when Saul asked what to do he was directed to Ananias, who told him to "Arise, and be baptized." (See Acts 9:1-18; 22:6-16 for the record.)

If only the expressed reply is to be considered we would have to conclude that the jailer was saved by faith alone, and that those on Pentecost were saved by repentance and baptism (i.e., without any faith) and that Saul was saved by baptism alone -- without either faith or repentance. Of course none of these conclusions are valid.

Why Did The Answers Differ?

Because the questions were asked by people in different circumstances. A man in Burnet, Texas, may ask "how far is it to San Antonio?" and be told, "100 miles." In Marble Falls this question would get a different answer. And in Blanco, the same question would get a third, and different answer. Yet all would be part of one great truth.

There is no indication that the Philippian jailer had either knowledge or faith in the Christian system; so he was told to believe, and then "they spake unto him the word of the Lord." He repented, as indicated by washing their stripes; and he was baptized, as stated in Acts 16:38. Thus he truly believed (vs. 34). But those on Pentecost heard the preaching of Christ before they asked their question. The preaching "pricked their hearts;" i.e., they believed. Then they were told repent and be baptized." And Saul (later called Paul) had already believed, and had spent three days penitently praying, when he was told, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins."

Where Are You?

Your status or condition before God must be considered in answering your question, "What must I do?" The Lord will save "all who will obey" (Heb. 5:9) and has given one gospel to all (Gal. 1:8; Rom. 2:11). Have you proven your faith by full and complete obedience to His will?

- by Robert F. Turner