

Noteworthy

Prayer Requests: Jo Anderson (*on-going medical*), Joe Brown (*cancer*), Mildred Church (*shut in*), Robyn Day (*sick*), Linda James (*surgery on Feb. 21st*), Paul Lloyd (*rehabilitation in Toledo, Ohio*), Kirk Marschall (*in need of spiritual encouragement*), Ruth Miller (*sudden hearing loss*), Linda McKenzie (*tending to her mother's ailing health*), Butch Morgan (*ongoing medical*), Dottie Reynolds (*back, ongoing medical*), Colby & Colton Sadler (*sick*), Violet Sheffield (*sick*), Suzette Stevens (*ongoing medical*).

Family and friends: Ned Hicks (*Larry Hicks' father, ongoing medical*), Brian James (*cancer*), John Marschall (*Bob's father*), Lindy McReedy (*Cindy Hicks' aunt, cancer*), Cherri Reeves (*The Goodall's daughter; cancer free!*), Wayne Ryland (*recent flu & pneumonia*), Ardis Tucker (*Paula Sullivan's sister-in-law*). Remember and encourage others who are struggling physically and spiritually.

Out of Town: Larry & Cindy Hicks, as well as the Lanning family.

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

Ladies Bible Class: Next class will be January 14th at 7PM in Angela Wisdom's home (*Please see bulletin board in foyer for more details*). In preparation, please do lesson number 11 on page 45 in the book provided for the class (*Woman, Her Blessings and Responsibilities*, by Irene S. Foy).

Kids' Review Class: We will meet immediately following the PM assembly tonight.

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

Fourth Sunday: Bob Marschall will be preaching during the PM assembly tonight.

Assignments for Worship Service

Wednesday Night: 12/26/18

Song Leader: Keith Marschall
 Opening Prayer: Mike Sadler
 Invitation: Jordan Lawson
 Announcements: Bob Marschall
 Closing Prayer: Eric Stevens
 Recordings: Trent Stevens
 Usher: Bob Marschall

Sunday Evening: 12/30/18

Song Leader: Jeff Lanning
 Opening Prayer: Sherman Johnson
 Lord's Table: Joe Brown
 Announcements: Larry Hicks
 Closing Prayer: David Williams
 Recordings: Bob Marschall
 Usher: Gus Johnson

Sunday Morning: 12/30/18

Lord's Table: Joe Brown (B)
 Jordan Lawson (C)
 Serving: Mike Sadler
 David Williams
 Song Leader: Colby Sadler

Opening Prayer: Jim Elliot
 Announcements: Larry Hicks
 Closing Prayer: Jerry Williams
 Recordings: Bob Marschall
 Usher: Gus 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 7:00 P.M.

DEACONS:

Robert Marschall
 Michael Sadler
 Moses Stevens
 David Williams

EVANGELIST:

Ian Rice (863) 213-9795

“A Christian and God's Grace”

I suspect that most readers have heard the age-old question: “How many legs does a dog have?” The obvious answer is “four” – unless one calls the tail a leg – then the answer would be five – or would it? Hardly. Identifying the tail as a leg does not make it so!

It is common practice to identify as “Christians” any who “accept Christ as savior” with great emphasis on the *forgiveness of sin* with very little attention to the *avoidance of sin*. Both the secular and religious media extol certain celebrities for their abilities to balance their “Christianity” with their worldly life-styles. It is not only about celebrities. We see it often in our day by day observation of people in general.

The idea of so many seems to be that since “no one is perfect” that our best efforts to avoid sin are futile. So, we need to just relax, bask in the warmth of God's saving grace, and quit fretting about our sins. If one follows his fleshly lusts, uses bad language, publicly dresses (or undresses) in a shameful manner, rarely attends worship services, or misses the mark in other ways – so what? He is covered by God's redeeming grace! This is not the concept of a Christian and the grace of God taught by the New Testament.

1 John 1:7-10, John tells Christians how to maintain fellowship with God. It is by freely acknowledging and confessing our sins as we walk in the light. Then he says he is writing that we avoid sin (2:1) – but if, despite our efforts to avoid it, we do sin and have access to forgiveness through Christ. All of this is a part of the grace of God.

Grace not only forgives, it teaches: *“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works”.* (Titus 2:11-14)

In Acts 11:23, Barnabas was able to *see* the grace of God at Antioch. How so? He saw a people who had believed and turned to the Lord (v. 12). He could see it in their behavior. It was more than their having access to forgiveness of sin – it was a life-changing grace.

The Hebrew writer warns that by going on sinning wilfully, after receiving a knowledge of the truth, one “insults” the Spirit of grace. (10:26-29 NASB). As long as he continues in that state, he has nothing to look forward to but certain damnation. He cannot look forward to another sacrifice for his sins – the only sacrifice available to him

is Jesus Christ. There will be no other. His only option to avoid eternal punishment is to be forgiven by returning to God’s perfect sacrifice for his sins. But, that sacrifice does not allow him to wilfully continue in sin.

Some seem to have the idea that by trying, to the best of our abilities, to keep all the commands of God in order to go to heaven that we are somehow dishonoring God and His grace. In fact, the opposite is true. By not trying to do our best to obey all his commands, we are flying in the face of the teaching of the grace of God that brings salvation.

As Paul succinctly put it: “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid...” (Romans 6:1-2).

~ Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

“The Church’s Purpose”

What is the purpose of the Lord's church? Is it to eradicate poverty, disease, social injustice, illiteracy from among men? Is it to bring about a cessation of war and conflict? Is it to campaign for a temptation-free society for Christians to live in?

If the church had as one of its great goals the eradication of disease, the Lord could have easily equipped it to accomplish that

goal. Could not the same power that enabled one blind man to see have enabled all blind man to see; that enabled one lame man to walk have enabled all lame people to walk; that cured many people of varied diseases have cured all people of all diseases? And could not this same power have been given to the church in all generations?

If the church has as one of its great goals the eradication of poverty, the Lord could have easily equipped it to accomplish this purpose. After all, He fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes. He similarly fed four thousand on another occasion. Could not He who did these marvelous works have enabled His church in all generations to feed, clothe, and shelter the impoverished masses of the world through miraculous powers?

If the Lord had wanted His church to become a lobbyist group to apply political pressure toward a temptation and persecution free society in which to live, He would have given instructions in that direction. He did not even lead His church into a direct effort to destroy slavery, but taught the Christian slave to be a better slave and the Christian master to treat his slaves as he would have his heavenly Master treat him (Col. 3:22-4:1).

The church's purpose is to save souls and prepare people for eternity- It holds out to the impoverished the hope of some day

walking a street of gold; to the suffering a time when there will be no pain; to the sorrowing a moment when "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." It tells the tempted and persecuted that there is value in these afflictions, that the testing of their faith is "more precious than of gold," and to rejoice - It tells all to live godly lives in whatever environment they find themselves. It seeks to change people through the power of the gospel, not society through the coercion of legislators - Its weapons "are not carnal, but are mighty through God." Its motivating theme: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

When churches become involved in hospital and health clinic work, or when they build schools for the education of their children, or when they see as one of their great missions to provide for the world's poverty, or when they feel obligated to create social upheaval and campaign for human rights, or when they feel called upon to express their views on the government's use of nuclear armaments or whatever, they have a distorted view of the purpose of the church.

~ Bill Hall