

Preachers are asked out to many homes, and when there are small children in the home, we can picture what takes place before we arrive. Mother has prepared her favorite fancy foods plus some new recipe she wants to try on the preacher. She has borrowed a lace table-cloth, with the uneven knobs and swirls; and perhaps some dinner candles, to cast shadows. She gets out her best dishes, the tall stemmed water-glasses, the best silver. The top-heavy water glasses balance precariously on the knotty lace cloth; grape jelly is put in a cut-glass bowl, and one is expected to fish the jelly across that lace cloth with a tiny glass spoon. The gravy bowl is a booby-trap: sometimes it is attached to the plate below, sometimes it is not. Woe is me!!

The children are then washed and polished, and given a little lecture. The preacher is coming to dinner, and I expect you to sit at the table like little ladies and gentlemen. You are to mind your manners: say Yes Sir, Please, and Thank you. Keep your fingers out of the food; and if you get one drop of that grape jelly on the table cloth, if you make one bobble, so help the, Ill skin you alive and send you straight to bed.

The kids may as well take their licking and go on to bed. There is no way they can make it through the meal— she has put them under the curse!!

Would you believe that Paul wrote about this to the Galatians? Well, would you believe this illustrates something about which he wrote?

Gal. 3 :10 reads: For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. He does not blame the law (Rom. 7:12-f), nor can we blame a mother for wanting her children to be perfect. But do. .all has an ominous sound to those who recognize their bent for failure. In a system of law (nothing but law and the penalty for failure) there is no forgiveness — and mother laid do the law with no hint of mercy.

But Christ became a curse for us when he died on the cross (Gal. 3:13-) so that through faith in Him, we who strive but fail may be forgiven. The demand to sit up straight is still there, and a spill is a sin; but our hope is in Him who understands and forgives those who come to Him. Ω

Special Classes and/or Meetings This Week

The drill class will be at 5:30 pm today

Group 4 will meet immediately after services this evening..

Important Information

There will be a men’s business meeting this afternoon at 4:30pm.

We have a lot of brethren on our sick list. We need to be praying for them but we also need to make sure their needs are being met.

Contact Information

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Be Praying For

Kara Hardin	Katie Cotton
Linda Helton	Rebecca Oglesby
Paul Walston	Cecil Hardin
Rita Sanders	Ronell Garrett
Gary Bouler	Travis Harrison

Thanksgiving for the spiritual blessings we have in Christ.

Opportunities to bless others.

“praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints”— Ephesians 6:18

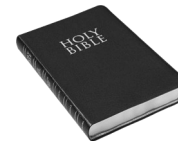
The Oak Grove Messenger

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Sinners Can Change

Written By George Hutto

Scripture for the week

And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots.

.Luke 23:33-34

Daily Bible Reading

Sunday: Luke 4-5
Monday: Luke 6-7
Tuesday: Luke 8
Wednesday: Luke 9-10
Thursday: Luke 11-12
Friday: Luke 13-14
Saturday: Luke 15-17

Schedule of Services

Sundays
Bible Class: 10:00 AM
Worship: 10:50 PM
6:00 PM
Wednesdays
Bible Class: 7:00 PM

There are times to recognize that characters are bad and should be left alone. Jesus said concerning false teachers, "Leave them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind" (Matt. 15:14). Jeremiah said of Judah, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer. 13:23). Although some have given in to evil, the premise of the gospel is that sinners will change -- they have it within them to serve God.

"...Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Lk. 24:46,47). Repentance is a change of behavior brought on by a change of heart, and the gospel is designed to bring these changes about.

The city of Nineveh is a great example of repentance. "The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and , behold, a greater

than Jonah is here" (Lk. 11:32).

When Peter realized that he had sinned by denying the Lord, he "went out and wept bitterly" (Lk. 22:62). He never was guilty of that atrocity again. Afterward, he was arrested, publicly humiliated, and threatened, but he and his fellow apostles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for Jesus (Acts 5:41).

When the Jews on Pentecost were shown their sin, and that the blood of the Christ was on their hands, "they were pricked in the heart," and asked what they could do to make things right. The instruction from the Holy Spirit was to "Repent and be baptized..." They were told to change.

When Jesus healed the infirmed man, He said, "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee" (Jno. 5:14). To the woman taken in adultery, He said, "Go and sin no more" (Jno. 8:11).

"Conversion" is a word used by Jesus and the apostles to explain what happens to sinners when they are exposed to the gospel of love, grace, and opportunity.

It is said that Jesus atoned for our sins, something we cannot do. However, He expects us to change our hearts and our behavior -- something that we can do.

So, the next time you are exposed to the idea that people will sin, that boys will be boys, that folks will be fornicators and adulterers, or that teens are going to drink or smoke dope; remember that they DON'T HAVE TO SIN. The church is not an agency for social Band-Aids, and the Bible is not intended to nurse the wounds of sinners. The goal is to change the hearts of sinners, bringing about a change of behavior so that men and women will be acceptable to God (Isa. 59:1,2; Lk. 13:3,5). Ω

Called By My Name

Written By George Hutto

A search for the usage of the above title as found in the KJV of the Bible, will bring up eleven passages where the term is used, mostly in the Book of Jeremiah. Among them is this verse "But they set their abominations in the house, which is called by My name, to defile it" (Jer. 32:34). From this passage one can see: that God had a house, the Temple; that it might be defiled in some way; that some abomination was brought into the Temple; that His name was associated with the Temple and the goings on there.

Now, if the Temple had been called by some other name, the transgressions (idol worship) would have still been bad, but God's name was attached to the sins, making them even more egregious. That God has great concern for the use of His name is seen in the third commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain" (Exo. 20:7).

In the New Testament no physical temple is provided, but there is a spiritual structure called by God's name. "I will build My church," Christ said, pointing to His followers, called by the gospel, cleansed by His blood, and obedient to His Word. The church is the temple of God: which might be defiled (1 Cor. 3:17) composed of Christians (1 Pet. 2) that by which acceptable group worship is offered (1 Cor. 11:18); and the place where Scriptural oversight is provided (Acts 14:23).

And, the church should be called by His name. It is the "church of God" in several passages, and the "body of Christ" in others. The apostle Paul said, "the churches of Christ salute you," (Rom. 16:16) of the local churches. Christ built the church; is its Foundation (1 Cor. 3:11), is the Head of it (Eph. 5), and purchased it by His blood (Acts 20:28). It therefore should be called by His name.

There has been over the last few years a proliferation of groups with newfangled names, so much so that I have taken to writing them down just for the record. On my list are: Apostolic Tabernacle; Life and Wind Church; Biblewood Chapel; Fellowship of Encouragement, New Beginning Fellowship Church; and Destiny Church, among others. Bless their hearts for having the courage to distance themselves from the mainline denominations, but such monikers do not have the effect of calling the groups by God's name.

Speaking of the mainline denominations, neither do their names set Christ at the center of their founding, but rather call attention to some peculiar doctrine (Baptists), discipline (Methodists), or originator (Lutherans).

One fellow objected that having the name "Hen House" over the door of one of the farm sheds does not guarantee that there will be any chickens inside. True, but such a sign would surely give the observer the right indication about what should be there and what the builder intended.

Perhaps it is good that God's name not be associated with groups that are not careful to worship and work scripturally. Or perhaps the worshippers shrink back from attaching the Lord's name to their work, thinking that a timid approach to serving God is more appropriate. But, alas, God has not offered a place for those who would serve the Lord through "An affiliate, or a A "knock-off." There is a time for boldness in God's work and a time for humility (Jer. 32:33), and those who claim to serve God of heaven must be bold in their approach! (Heb. 10:19,38, 39).

If the work is God's, it should be done with confidence and proof from the Scriptures. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thes. 5:21). And, if the work of God,

it certainly should bear His name. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him" (Col. 3:17).

Orthodox Jews still today avoid using the name of God, lest they mispronounce it or defile it and bring God's wrath upon themselves. On the other extreme we hear even religious people speaking the name of God in a blatantly profane way. Surely God's name should be used but not profaned. The things that are called by His name should be implemented but not defiled.

The Corinthian Christians were told, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. 3:17). The church's worship had been corrupted by turning the communion into a common meal (1 Cor. 11). The church's unity had been shattered by the use of men's names (1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3:3). The church's purity had been defiled by embracing fornicators. (1 Cor. 5). The church's doctrine had been corrupted by false teachers (1 Cor. 15). Wearing the name of Christ constitutes a serious claim, and doing it he work of Christ is a serious job.

Yet, Christians should have the courage to do things in the name of Christ both in word, so that God be glorified, and in deed, so that God be revered. Those who fail in these charges will be branded as those of Jeremiah's day, as those who defile the Lord's service.

The Picnic

Written By Jim King

It was a gorgeous day in May, and a family from church had invited everybody over for a get-together. Carl, who had only been baptized a few months earlier, was looking forward to socializing with the other young people. So, juggling some grocery bags, and with a camera around his neck, he rounded the corner of the house and entered the backyard.

What he saw caught him slightly off guard. At one end of the driveway, on a makeshift basketball court, eight of his brothers in Christ were already heavily into a game. Several had their shirts off, and some in shorts some in tank tops and jeans, were obviously having a great time. A number of the females had also

dressed for the warm weather. In shorts of varying lengths and low cut, breezy tops, they were mingling and talking, some sitting, some standing.

Carl blushed instinctively, and his eyes awkwardly moved away. He was not used to seeing these Christians not fully clothed. And he wasn't sure why it bothered him. Oh, he had heard 1 Timothy 2:8-9 mentioned in passing, about women dressing modestly, and he knew it had something to do with women who claimed to be godly. And he had heard Jesus' statement about looking on a woman to lust (Matthew 5:28). But in his brief Christian life, he could quote neither passage. And besides, what little he had been taught about clothing from the pulpit had generally emphasized that the whole subject was a matter of opinion, and a scruple that mature Christians had outgrown. Still, something didn't seem quite right. Maybe it was the vague remembrance of God having clothed Adam and Eve in the beginning. Maybe it was his own desire to look, or the less-than-pure thoughts fighting their way into his mind. Carl didn't know...all he knew for sure was that looking at some of his sisters in Christ made him uncomfortable.

But everybody seemed to be having such a good time. Carl soon assured himself that he was overreacting, expecting Christians to be too different, and he relaxed. He even took the pictures of his new friends that he had intended to take, to show his parents.

But the next week while showing the pictures, the uneasiness returned. The photos didn't lie. There they were, caught in all sorts of positions; a mixed company of disciples who looked like they'd left their discretion at home. Did these Christians really realize how much of their bodies they were revealing? They were good people. Surely they wouldn't let their mere comfort or the culture override their concern for being a stumbling block to others. Maybe if they saw the pictures, how they really looked, it would make them think. Just how far could they go and still believe the way they dressed was ok? Carl wondered.