

## News & Notes

Sunday, December 18, 2005

**Remember in Prayer:** Al Alberson; Sandra Albertson; Melissa Bennett; Sally Etta Crawford; Lawrence Dawson; Tommy Dawson; Flora Estes; Fortner; Kelly Gamblin; Carrol Holmes; Christian Kennedy; Carolyn Jordan; Dot Kethum; Deliah Mann; Howard Moody; Hadie Pickens; Tate Peeler; Leyland Ray; Janet Rooker; Lillie Mae Shelby; Jayme and Trucilla Spence; Ollie Ursery; James Williams; Alvie Williford;

**Pantry item** for the month of December is fruit juices.

The **elders will be meeting** today at 5:00 PM. If you would like to bring anything to their attention, please do so then.

**Special thanks** to the Street's for hosting the Christmas party this past Friday night.

The **ladies night** will be Tuesday, December 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM in the dining hall. It is pot-luck.

### Sermon In Preview:

AM: Does God Care About My Pain and Suffering?

PM: Song of Solomon: The Shulamite Woman's Mother's House (2:8-3:5)

### For the Record (December 11, 2005):

Attendance: 85    Contribution: \$1216.00    Budget: \$1205.00

### The Ashland Church of Christ

P. O. Box 25  
Ashland, MS 38603-0025  
ashlandcoc@juno.com

#### Sunday:

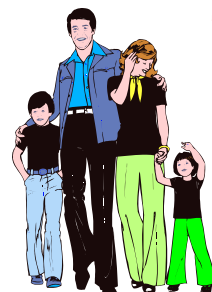
Bible Study 9:30 AM  
Worship 10:30 AM  
Worship 6:00 PM

#### Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 PM

#### Shepherds:

Barney King  
Carrol Street



# The Ashland Announcer

*"Give to the Lord, O families of the peoples,  
Give to the Lord glory and strength" (Psalm 96:7).*

GROWING  
in  
FAITH

## The Reward for Growth

Jeremy Northrop

Peter, in 2Peter 1:5-8, said,

"But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

As the series of articles on growing in faith is brought to a close, it is necessary to consider what kind of good benefits come to those who will grow in faith. Verse 8 of the key text is the matter: "For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

There are several sobering passages concerning those who are not fruitful in the work of the Lord. Jesus said of the lukewarm congregation of the Laodiceans, "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth" (Revelation 3:16). One lengthy passage which needs to be considered in John 15:1-6,

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.  
Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes

away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.”

It is downright scary to think what will happen to the Christian who will not grow. Paul desired to grow closer to God and even be in fellowship with the sufferings of Christ (Philippians 3:10). Peter obviously grew much. He went from denying Christ to being an elder in the early church (John 18:15-18; 1Peter 5:1). Like the Christians of the first century, Christians today need to be growing. The first reason they need to be growing is so they can remain in the grace of God. Jesus was quite clear in the two previously cited passages. He will vomit the lukewarm out of His mouth and He will cut off every branch which does not bear fruit.

Further, it is the desire of God and Christ that Christians everywhere do not stand still. He wants them to grow. He wants Christians to be better tomorrow than they are today. In fact, the writer of the book of Hebrews rebukes them for not growing like they should:

“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Hebrews 5:12-14).

Another one of the reason Christians are to grow is to be able to teach others. First that is seen here in the text cited from Hebrews. Also, Paul exhorted that the older women to teach the younger women (Titus 2:4). Jesus commanded Christians to teach the lost (Matthew 28:18-20). Lois and Eunice taught Timothy (2Timothy 1:5).

Growth occurs by a Christian adding the following things to their faith:

- Virtue — intrinsic moral goodness which is founded in genuine faith.
- Knowledge — growing attainment of new information; in this case, it begins with the fear of the Lord (Psalm 111:10).
- Self-control — choosing to exercise power over one’s actions.
- Perseverance — determination, adherence, and loyalty to the cause of Christ.
- Godliness — literally, God-likeness.
- Brotherly kindness — doing all that you do out of a motivation of love (1Corinthians 16:14).
- Love — unconditional care and concern for the well-being of the individual.

Faith, by its very nature is either growing or dying. It cannot stand still. During the period of the dark ages, the study of science, as a whole, literally digressed because few people, if any, were taking the time to study it and therefore were not even maintaining what they knew to be scientifically true much less obtaining any new information. The faith that the Christian has works much the same way. If a person is going to even maintain the same level of faith, then he or she has to spend time cultivating it. The Bible calls the Christian not just to maintain a level of faith but to grow to new levels. This requires adding to one’s faith

The following questions are personal: Have you added to your faith? Have you grown beyond what you once were? If not, have you resolved now to stretch further and to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord?

“You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen” (2Peter 3:17-18).

Decide now to add to your faith the things Peter says to add to it and grow in God.