

News & Notes

Sunday, July 31, 2005

Remember in Prayer: Melba Cox; Sally Etta Crawford; Lawrence Dawson; Tommy Dawson; Greg Hopper; Carolyn Jordan; Mary Sue Kidd; Deliah Mann; Izma McDonald; Howard Moody; Janet Rooker; Gabby Rutledge; Caleb Smith; Jamie Spence, father of Edna Ray; Jon Street; Austin Simpson; Ruby Street; Chris Tatum; Calvin and Ollie Ursery; James Willbanks; Alvie and Louise Williford;

Pantry item for the month of July is school supplies.

Gospel meetings begin today at South Ashland, Beech Hill, and Coffeeville. If you would like to attend these meetings, see the bulletin board for times and details.

We will **meet at South Ashland** on Wednesday, August 3, 2005 at 7:00 PM for our mid-week service to help support their meeting.

There will be a **finger-food meal** after services this evening.

Sermon In Preview:

AM: Traits of a Christian (1Thessalonians 1)

PM: 5th Sunday Evening Singing

For the Record (July 24, 2005):

Attendance: 65 Contribution: \$1126.00 Budget: \$1205.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

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

Sunday:

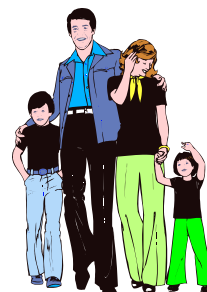
Bible Study 9:30 AM
Worship 10:30 AM
Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 PM

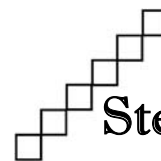
Shepherds:

Barney King
Junior Roberson
Carrol Street



The Ashland Announcer

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



Steps to Salvation: HEAR

Jeremy Northrop

One of the first principles of the Bible is the concept of what man must do to be saved. Members of the church have long been criticized for believing the six steps of salvation. While criticism may come, it does not change the reality that these steps are founded in scripture. The first of the steps of salvation is to hear the word of God. This command of the New Testament has been rejected by men and commissioned to Christians by Christ.

In Acts 2, among other things, Peter delivers the first gospel sermon. He shows the people on that occasion why Jesus was the Christ and how that His death was predicted to happen and in accordance with the will of God. Upon hearing the message of Peter, the listeners there wanted to know what they needed to do. Acts 2:37 says, "Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'" Hearing the message of God is quite obviously the first logical step to obeying. Those present on that occasion heard and were obedient to what Peter told them.

The conflict that exists is that men often times do not like what God has to say. We live in a society where people will

often say things like “I believe such and such” or “I think thus and so.” The problem is that it really does not matter what a person thinks or even believes. What matters most is what God said. This attitude is not anything new. In Matthew 13:13-17, Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah when he predicted that people would not want to hear the message. Jesus makes the practical application to those present on that occasion. In Acts 7:54-60, one reads the story of the stoning of Stephen. He has been called the first martyr for Christianity. The problem was the people did not like the message that Stephen had so they attacked the messenger. Then, in Galatians 1:6-10, Paul rebukes the Christians in Galatia because they were listening to every person who had anything to say about religion. They were not discerning the messages there were being taught. Instead, they were a fickle people who would listen to and apply everything they heard. Paul exhorts them to listen to what God said.

All of these examples and more show a real conflict that exists when it comes to listening or hearing the message of God. Some people do not like what God says. Others like the message of men better than the message of God. Still others have simply turned their hearts from God and would not know the message of God from any other message. People today need to follow the command of Paul: “Test all things; hold fast what is good” (1Thessalonians 5:21).

A final important lesson on the subject of hearing the word of God involves the person who is already a Christian. One will never find an instance after the resurrection of Christ where Jesus personally taught someone. Notice a few examples of conversion and some interesting points that surround them:

In Acts 2 where Peter delivered the gospel sermon after the ascension of Jesus Christ one will see that the Holy Spirit was present on that occasion. In verses 1-4, the Bible says, “When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a

sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” A question has been raised by several people about the Holy Spirit. Why didn’t the Holy Spirit teach the people in Acts 2? He was there and being Deity, he could have removed all doubt of those who were present. The answer is God wanted the apostles to teach on that occasion.

In Acts 9 there is the record of the conversion of the apostle Paul. Again some very interesting events take place. Paul is on the road to Damascus and is blinded by a bright light. A voice asks him why he is persecuting Him. Paul inquires who it is and the person says He is Jesus. Jesus eventually instructs Paul to go into Damascus and wait for Ananias to come and teach him. One might ask why Jesus did not just go ahead and teach Paul on that occasion. He was there and already talking to Paul. Again, the answer is that Jesus wanted His message taught through the agency of man. In this case, the man was Ananias.

Finally, in Acts 8:26-35 an angel appears to Philip and instructs him to go and teach the nobleman. Philip goes to him and teaches from the book of Isaiah. They come to water and Philip baptizes him. Again, the question has been raised why did the angel not go and teach the nobleman himself. He already put forth the effort to go and talk to Philip. And again the answer is that God wants His word spread through the agency of man.

When one considers salvation, hearing is the first and logical step for one to do what God wants him or her to do. It is a simple and straightforward command of God that must be followed. It has been rejected and debated by men over the years but such controversy does not change the will of God. Finally, there is something in this for all Christians in that others will not hear until Christians tell them.