

News & Notes

Sunday, May 15, 2005

Remember in Prayer: Enis Autry, client at Briarcrest extended care fell and broke his hip; Francis Bennett has been ill; Sally Etta Crawford; Tommy Dawson has been having heart trouble; Carol Holmes fell and broke her foot; Leon Jackson is in the hospital after an accident; Mary Sue Kidd; Deliah Mann; Howard Moody; Janet Rooker, Tommy Dawson's sister remains in need of prayer; Caleb Smith, nephew of Wendy Roberson had a brain-tumor operation; Jamie Spence, father of Edna Ray, has been diagnosed with cancer; Ruby Street; Calvin and Ollie Urserly; Alvie Williford.

Becky Strickland responded this past Sunday asking to be restored.

The next **youth devotional** will be tonight after services at the home of Becky Strickland.

Cindy Walker is planning a **trip to the Buffalo Park** in Tupelo on June 18, 2005. Please mark your Calendar.

Sermon In Preview:

AM: Preaching Christ: His Birth (Matthew 1:18-25)

PM: 3rd Week Singing

For the Record (May 8, 2005):

Attendance: 86 Contribution: \$1384.00 Budget: \$1205.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

P. O. Box 25
Ashland, MS 38603-0025
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Sunday:

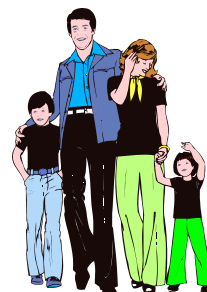
Bible Study 9:30 AM
Worship 10:30 AM
Worship 6:00 PM

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).*

The Folly of Unpreparedness

B. J. Clarke

We must prepare to meet God, because the final Day of Judgment is approaching. The Second Coming of Christ is mentioned in 23 of the 27 books of the New Testament. A total of 370 verses in the New Testament address the vital subject of our Lord's return, an equivalent of one out of every 25 verses. The Scriptures are filled with the promise of His coming. In his sermon to the Athenians on Mars Hill, Paul gave assurance that God *"hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead"* (Acts 17:31). To those scoffers who asked, *"Where is the promise of his coming?"* Peter replied, *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come..."* (2Peter 2:4, 9-10).

The scriptures clearly teach that it is not within the power of man to know when Jesus is coming back. In the first half of Matthew 24, Jesus gave His disciples signs whereby they could know that the destruction of Jerusalem was drawing near. But in speaking of the final day of judgment, Jesus said,

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would have suffered his house to be broken into. Therefore, be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 24:36; 42-44).

The comparison between a thief and his coming and Christ and His coming is used quite often in the Sacred Writings. Christ said He would come as a thief (Revelation 16:15). Concerning the period of the second coming, Paul told the Thessalonians, "*But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night*" (1Thessalonians 5:1-2). Peter used this same imagery in his second epistle, "*But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night...*" (2Peter 3:10). The Hebrew writer, speaking of God, said, "*he is faithful that promised*" (Hebrews 10:23). The promise of the second coming is found at least 370 times in the New Testament. When Christ comes again he will show himself to be fulfilling these promises.

Since we do not know when our Lord will return we must be ready at all times. God wants the lack of information concerning the time of Christ's second coming to motivate us to watch and be ready for whenever He might come. The greatest concern of our life is to be ready for the next life. Whether morning, noon or night we must be ready (Mark 13:34-37). There will be no time to make preparation after the trump has sounded. Jesus told the story of the ten virgins and their preparation for the coming of the bridegroom. Five were wise and made proper preparation. Five were foolish and waited until it was too late. After the door was shut they

begged the Lord to open it for them. But it was too late (Matthew 25:1-13). Whereas the wise virgins were welcomed and secure within the shut door, for the foolish virgins, who were without, there is a sad finality to the phrase, "and the door was shut" (Matthew 25:10). In fact, the Greek tense used in this passage conveys the idea of the door being "shut, to stay shut."

Someone may point out that, in Matthew 7:7, Jesus taught "knock, and it shall be opened to you: for everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matthew 7:7-8). Why, then, did not the foolish virgins receive that for which they asked? The answer is seen in the fact that the time for knocking and asking is not promised to us forever. A time is coming when it will be too late. Such a time came for the foolish virgins when, because of their unpreparedness, the doorkeeper refused to grant them entrance into the marriage feast.

The text does not reveal whether the foolish virgins, in their attempt to buy at such a late hour, were able to locate any oil, but nonetheless, they did make a final, desperate attempt to gain entrance into the wedding feast. They cried, saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us" (Matthew 25:11). However their earnest plea was met by the haunting words, "I know you not." Maclaren aptly concludes:

The wedding bell has become a funeral knell. They were not enemies of the bridegroom, they thought themselves his friends. They let life ebb without securing the one thing needful, and the neglect was irremediable. There is a tragedy underlying many a life outward religiousness and inward emptiness, and a dreadful discovery will flare upon such, when they have to say to themselves, "This might have been once, and we missed it, lost it forever."