

News & Notes

Sunday, April 2, 2006

Remember in Prayer: M. B. Anthony; Sandra Albertson; Carrol Cherry; Diane Cox; Sally Etta Crawford; Lawrence Dawson; Tommy Dawson; Collette Ford; Flora Estes; Marilyn Hubbard; Carolyn Jordan; Christine Judge; Dot Ketchum; James Luna; Deliah Mann; Race Minor; Diane Mize; Howard Moody; Janet Rooker; Freddie Shaw; Lillie Mae Shelby; Jayme and Trucilla Spence; Calvin and Ollie Ursery; Alvie Williford;

Pantry item for the month of April is cleaning supplies.

Please remember the **lunch** after morning services provided by Mrs. Betty and Ms. Mary's Bible class.

The **youth devotional** is next week after evening services in the dining hall. Each youth is asked to bring one package of medium sized plastic eggs and to have two of their favorite verses marked in their Bibles prior to the meeting.

Sermon In Preview: Pressing Toward the Upward Call of God:

AM: Putting First Things First (Mark Blackwelder)

PM: Am I Spiritual? (Mark Blackwelder)

For the Record (March 26, 2005):

Attendance: 83 Contribution: \$1408.00 Budget: \$1352.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

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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

Carrol Street



ASHLAND ANNOUNCER

"I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14)

Pressing Toward the Upward Call of God The Big Picture — Spirituality

Jeremy Northrop

As is our tradition here at the Ashland Church of Christ, we will again dedicate this first Sunday of the month to our theme for the year — pressing toward the upward call of God — taken from Philippians 3:14. For review, the first Sunday in January, we discussed some introductory matters defining what the upward call of God is, showing why it is necessary for Christians to press toward it, and then putting a plan in place that will help all of us as members here to put it into action and to make it a part of our lives.

The first step in pressing toward the upward call of God involves introspection — reaching in. Over the months of February and March, we have looked at this topic focusing on humility and acceptance. Today, we will bring our study of introspection to a close by looking at the topic of spirituality. As you are aware, I am not here today. Brother Mark Blackwelder from Henderson, Tennessee has come to teach and preach in my absence and will still focus on this great topic of spirituality.

There are so many passages in the New Testament which teach us that the spiritual is more important than the physical. In Romans 8:6, Paul said, "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Jesus said it clearly when He proclaimed,

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust

destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also (Matthew 6:19-21).

Jesus also said, “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26). If these passages teach us anything at all, it is that the spiritual side of man is much more important to God than the physical side of man. I am reminded of an article I read one time entitled ‘God Said No’ wherein was the phrase: “I asked God to make my handicap child whole and God said no, He said her spirit and whole and her body is only temporary.” This emphasizes an important biblical point: God looks at eternity.

Further, the biblical focus on the spiritual side of man is seen in the things God did not do for the members of the church in the first century. In Acts 4, Peter and John were arrested for proclaiming the truth. In Acts 7, Stephen is killed becoming the first Christian martyr. In Acts 14, Paul was stoned and left for dead. In Acts 16, Paul and Silas were put into prison. In fact, Paul spent the latter part of the book of Acts working his way through various government officials and having to give a defense of his actions and work for the Lord. If God was concerned about our physical comfort, or assured Christians of a great physical life, would any of these things have come to pass? The fact is God calls men and women to be spiritual. Jesus urges the rich young ruler to give up his blessings because he trusted too much in them (Mark 10). Lazarus received a reward in Abraham’s bosom while the rich man suffered in torments though he had a good life on earth (Luke 16).

Friends, the application for us today is clear. While the world says focus on a career that will bring in a lot of money, God says remember eternity. While the world says raise children that will be popular and active in all kinds of extra-curricular activities, God says, bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). While the world says do whatever you want to please yourself and do what will make you happy, God says exercise self-control (2Peter 1:5-8). The world says a lot of things that will deceive us. Remember, God said, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable

and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2). The world is carnal. God says to be spiritual.

So today, we focus on the topic of spirituality. This morning in class, we will look at the story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38-42. Sometimes, there are things which seem kind and spiritual but in reality they are not. Such was the case with Mary and Martha. Martha was concerned about being a good hostess. That sounds like a lot of us today when we have people into our homes, doesn’t it? In fact, Martha urges Jesus to tell Mary to help her make sure the guests are being seen to properly. The answer Martha got from Jesus was startling for her and may be startling for many of us today. Jesus rebukes Martha and commends Mary saying that Mary has chosen the right thing to do.

This morning’s sermon will be one which focuses on priorities in life. Brethren, we need to make sure that our priorities are right! Too often times, we focus too much on the things of this life and do not concern ourselves enough with the life to come. It is fearful to see parents who say they want to raise faithful children when they themselves are not even faithful. God has demanded first place in all our lives. It is chilling thought to see some people have more dedication to the job and they do to eternity. God comes before family, work, and any other aspect of our lives (Luke 14:26; Mark 1:18; Mark 10:21).

Then tonight, the lesson will ask four questions which can help each of us to determine whether or not we are spiritual. It is good to know what spirituality is and good to know what it is not, but we each need to know if we are spiritual. This lesson will be practical and enlightening as it will help each of us to see where we are in our walk with God.

Starting next month, we will turn our study from reaching in to reaching up focusing on such works like dedication, allegiance, obedience, and growth. Then in September our study will begin to focus on reaching out in fellowship with one another, servitude to others, and evangelizing the world. Finally, in December all of the lessons will be brought to a close with a concluding lesson which focuses on application of everything we have learned. But, before we get too far ahead of ourselves, let’s sit back and enjoy this day as we try to learn more about what it means to be spiritual and to be spiritually minded.