

## News & Notes

Sunday, August 6, 2006

**Remember in Prayer:** Sandra Alberson; Vikie Cobb; Diane Cox; Sally Etta Crawford; Flora Estes; Marie Hall; Carol Holmes; Marilyn Hubbard; Carolyn Jordan; Christine Judge; Dot Ketchum; James Luna; John and Deliah Mann; Diane Mize; Howard Moody; Janet Rooker; Ruth Ross; Freddie Shaw; Morgan Shaw; Lillie Mae Shelby; Caleb Smith; Jayme and Trucilla Spence; Calvin Ursery; James Williams; Alvie Williford; Roger Winstead.

**Sympathy** is extended to the family Caleb Smith.

**Pantry item** for the month of August is dryer sheets.

**Freeman Duncan** responded the Lord's invitation requesting forgiveness and prayers.

**Area events:** Area wide youth devotional at Chapman on August 20 @ 6:00 PM.

Please check the **bulletin boards** in the foyer for other area events.

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

AM: Growing on to Maturity (Hebrews 6:1-2)

PM: Faith—Progressive or Digressive (2Peter 1:5-11)

### For the Record (July 30, 2005):

Attendance: 72    Contribution: \$1146.00    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 From Milk Bottles to Pork Chops — Growth

Jeremy Northrop

Yet once more the beginning of the month is upon us and we will spend our time today focusing on our theme for the year — Pressing Toward the Upward Call of God — taken from Philippians 3:14 where the apostle Paul wrote, "I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." In short, pressing toward the upward call of God is looking, longing, and living for the life to come. Several passages in the New Testament show the real focus of life for the Christian should be the life to come. Matthew 6:19-21 says,

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.

Paul said, "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6).

This morning during our Bible class hour, we will be discussing the topic of *How to Grow in God*. The Bible calls for people to grow. Faith is much more a process than it is a one-time event. We do not expect a new born Christian to preach a gospel sermon or even to lead in public worship. However, we do expect those that have grown to do such things. Peter encouraged his readers to grow when he wrote:

Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because ‘All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, But the word of the Lord endures forever.’ Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you. Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

The way to grow in God is found in 2Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” When a Christian allows the inspired word of God to change his or her life — to teach, reprove, correct, and instruct — then the Christian is growing in God.

Also the writer of the book of Hebrews rebuked the Hebrews for not growing in the Lord in Hebrews 5:12-6:12. In Hebrews 5:12, the writer says, “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.” Then he encourages them to leave the elementary principles of the word and go on the perfection in 6:1. The point is that Christians need to grow in the grace and knowledge of God. The focus of the sermon this morning will be to *Grow on to Maturity* and the text we will study is Hebrews 5:12-6:12. The person who is not better today than he or she was yesterday has rejected the teaching of God.

The word progressive has in recent times carried some baggage and implications which godly men would not want associated with them. Often times, the words progressive and liberal are used interchangeably. In that particular context, one would not want to be progressive as it implies that the person does not have the due

respect for the word of God. No doubt, being progressive in this sense is not biblical. God does not want us adding to or taking away from His word (Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18).

However, there is a sense in which a Christian should be progressive. The sermon tonight will focus on that sense. Faith, by its very nature, is either progressive or digressive. It is either growing or it is dying. God wants people to grow in faith. Peter encourages his reader to add to their faith (2Peter 1:5-11). Stephen, the first martyr for Christianity, was described as a man being full of faith (Acts 6:5, 8). If it is possible to be full of faith, then it is possible to be lacking in faith. A person who is not assuring themselves of truths they know to be true and learning more about God’s word is a person who is dying spiritually. Interestingly, during the period known as the dark ages in history, science did not just stand still, it actually declined. The reason being when a person does not keep themselves involved in the research, they not only stop growing, they begin to diminish. Spiritually, the same thing can happen to the Christian who is not studying, applying, and using the word of God. The goal for us is to strive to be like Stephen, men and women full of faith.

Brothers and sisters, over the years, people who have been Christians for many years have made statements like “I just do not understand the book of Revelation” or “The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is such a complicated concept.” Or, they may make some similar statement concerning another perhaps more complicated idea found in the Bible. We have a command to study such things and come to biblical conclusions on these matters (2Timothy 2:15, Acts 17:11). We have a biblical responsibility to grow in the knowledge of God and we will stand accountable for opportunities to grow that we have neglected. Let us strive to grow on to maturity and leave the milk of the word.

Next month we will begin the third phase of our study — **reaching out**. In the next three months, we will be discussing such topics as fellowship with one another, servitude to those in need, and evangelism or reaching the lost. Finally, in the last month, we will bring the year to a close with some concluding lessons discussing the applications of the things we have learned this year. All of that is to come if the Lord wills. However, today we will sit back and enjoy a day focused on the study of growth.