

News & Notes

Sunday, February 19, 2006

Remember in Prayer: M. B. Anthony; Al Alberson; Sandra Albertson; Leanne Bennett; Dorris Billingsly; Debbie Byrd; Carrol Cherry; Diane Cox; Sally Etta Crawford; Lawrence Dawson; Tommy Dawson; Flora Estes; Gloria Fortner; Randy Hobson; Carrol Holmes; Bryson Kennedy; Dot Kethum; Deliah Mann; John Mann; Phillip Miller; Diane Mize; Howard Moody; Jennifer Simpson Olmond; Shirley Ortiz; Janet Rooker; Lillie Mae Shelby; Austin Simpson; Jayme and Trucilla Spence; Calvin and Ollie Ursery; James Williams; Alvie and Louise Williford;

Sympathy is extended to the families of Patrick Denham and Anida Johnson.

Pantry item for the month of February is spaghetti.

The next youth **devotional** will be tonight after services in the dining hall. Jeff and Wendy Roberson will be hosting it. Please see them for what to bring.

Sermon In Preview:

AM: Sin's Slippery Slope (Matthew 14:1-13)
PM: "I Am..."

For the Record (February 12, 2005):

Attendance: 63 Contribution: \$1240.00 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)

Destructible Doctrines: Faith Only

Jeremy Northrop

One does not have to watch television very long before he or she will see a commercial about the Wal-Mart chain of stores. They have had several different slogans over the years that seem to somehow get stuck in the minds of the general populace. Wal-Mart's success is evidence that these commercials work and work well. One of the slogans uses the word always. "Always the low prices...always." Over the years, some have tried to apply this 'always' philosophy to various religious matters. Some have tried to say that all pain and suffering is a result of sin. This is true at times but the book of Job shows that it is not true all the time. Some have tried to say that man's salvation depends entirely, solely, and totally on the grace of God. They will further claim there is nothing man can do for his own salvation. They have adopted a grace only philosophy. Paul made it clear in the book of Romans that there is more to salvation than grace (Romans 6:1-2).

One very popular 'only' doctrine in the religious world today is the concept of faith only. Hebrews 11:1 defines faith nicely: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Faith is simply looking at the evidence and accepting the necessary conclusions of that evidence. The Bible also uses the word faith preceded by a definite article as in Acts 6:7, Romans 14:1, 1Corinthians 16:13, Colossians 2:7, 1Timothy 4:1, and a host of other passages. Therefore, faith is also the system of biblical religion which must be obeyed and followed.

The Bible teaches faith to be an important subject of the New Testament. The New Testament produces faith: “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). One need look no further than Hebrews 11 to learn that faith is very important in the New Testament:

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

The writer continues to discuss different heroes and heroines of faith and the different things these men and women did which showed their faith. No doubt, this is proof that faith brings about action. There is no doubt faith is important for the New Testament Christian. But, is it faith only or faith alone? This is a doctrine which gives hope based solely on a belief in God apart from action. There are at least a couple a reasons why faith only cannot be biblical.

First, ‘faith only’ shows a misunderstanding of biblical faith. Faith is more than just a cognitive belief in the existence of God. The devils do that much (James 2:19). Biblical faith works as James said, “But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?” (James 2:20). The people of Hebrews 11 were faithful people but they were faithful because of the things they did. Abel was faithful because he offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain (Hebrews 11:4). Noah was found faithful because he obeyed God in building the ark (Hebrews 11:7). Abraham was faithful in that he obeyed (Hebrews 11:8). Moses was faithful because he heeded the words of God and not the pleasures of men (Hebrews 11:23-25). Biblical faith works and obeys God. Faith — biblical faith — is one that will put forth actions which show faith.

Further, this point is seen in that simply believing God or Christ is clearly not enough to be saved. This is another reason why faith only is not a biblical idea. Jesus made two very clear statements concerning those who believed Him to be the Son of God but did not obey Him. The first one is in Luke 6:46: “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things which I say?” Then in Matthew 7:21, Jesus said, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who

does the will of My Father in heaven.” The point is that saving faith includes believing and acting upon that belief. Jesus Himself said that the work of baptism is one that will save man in Mark 16:16. Peter confirms this in 1Peter 3:21. The words only and alone are big words. If salvation comes by faith only, then grace is excluded. The Bible teaches several things which are necessary to obtain salvation. Man is created for good works (Ephesians 2:10). One might counteract that and quote Ephesians 2:9, “...not of works, lest anyone should boast.” The works which man is not saved by are man’s works. God had created man to accomplish His works.

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 (2Timothy 3:16-17).

Besides all of this, if faith only were a biblical concept then the phrase would be found on the pages of the New Testament. The phrase is found only once and then it is used in a negative way: “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only” (James 2:24). It cannot get much clearer than this.

The biblical solution is balance. Man is saved by grace (Ephesians 2:8). Man is saved by faith (Hebrews 11:6). Biblical faith will bring about good works (James 2:20). All of this can be brought together by looking back at 2Timothy 3:16. How much scripture is inspired of God? All of it. How much of God’s word needs to be considered and heeded? All of it. Peter said, “For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). It is dangerous ground to pick one verse of the Bible and not consider what the Bible says in other places. When one does this, it becomes easy to prove any number of unbiblical doctrines and say that salvation is found in something only. Biblical salvation is obtained by grace, faith, and obedience to the will of God.

He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him (1John 2:4-5).