

News & Notes

Sunday, June 4, 2006

Remember in Prayer: Jonathan Alberson; Sandra Alberson; Michelle Bennett; Carrol Cherry; Vikie Cobb; Diane Cox; Sally Etta Crawford; Lawrence Dawson; Tommy Dawson; Flora Estes; Marie Hall; Carrol Holmes; Marilyn Hubbard; Carolyn Jordan; Christine Judge; Dot Ketchum; Tracy Ketchum; James Luna; John and Deliah Mann; Diane Mize; Howard Moody; Shirley Ortiz; Janet Rooker; Ruth Ross; Freddie Shaw; Lillie Mae Shelby; Jayme and Trucilla Spence; Ruby Street; Calvin Ursery; James Williams; Alvie Williford;

Pantry item for the month of June is dish washing soap.

The newest edition **House to House/Heart to Heart** was mailed out this past week. For those not on the mailing route, copies are available in the foyer.

Our **Vacation Bible School** begins tonight and will continue through Wednesday at 6:00 to 8:30 PM.

Sermon In Preview:

AM: Pressing Toward the Upward Call of God: Walking in the Light (1John 1:7)
PM: Vacation Bible School

For the Record (May 28, 2005):

Attendance: 78 Contribution: \$1391.00 Budget: \$1352.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

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

www.ashlandcoc.org

acoc@ashlandcoc.org

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
Light Over Darkness — Allegiance

Jeremy Northrop

Yet once more, the first Sunday of the month is upon us and we are turning our attention to our theme for 2006 — pressing toward the upward call of God — taken from Philippians 3:14. It is noteworthy to mention that this is June meaning that the first half of 2006 is being drawn to a close. It has been a good year so far and a good theme to study. The second half promises to be just as good as the first. Since January was so long ago, it would be good to spend some time reviewing the parts of the theme that have been studied so far. In January, we had an introductory day discussing what pressing toward the upward call of God is, why it is important, and how we intend to do in 2006. Then, starting in February, we began the process of **reaching in** or introspection. We studied *humility* by learning more about the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8, Jesus' command to become like children in Matthew 18 and Paul's command to be humble in the sight of God in 1Peter 5:6. In March we studied the topic of *acceptance* beginning with the idea of accepting the fact that God can forgive all sinners, then looking to the idea that Christians do not need to always ask why but simply do what God says. Finally, in April, we discussed the topic of *spirituality*. We spoke of the story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10, discussed the topic of priorities, and asked if we were spiritual people.

Last month, we shifted the study from **reaching in** to **reaching up**. This involves worship and trying to be pleasing in the sight of God. We began by discussing the topic of *dedication*. This involved proving the Bible's validity and thus showing the

necessity of following the Bible if one is going to be acceptable to God. This month we are brought to the topic of *allegiance*. Included in this idea will be the concept of continually trying to live right in the sight of God and showing our allegiance by living and acting right.

Our study today will not be as involved as the other days we spend dedicated to our theme as we will not be focused on it in our service tonight. Our annual Vacation Bible School begins tonight so our service will be used up in the first night of VBS. I mention that to encourage you to be involved in VBS this week. There are classes for all age groups and we have even invited Tony Brown from the Booneville area to come and teach the adult class. It is sure to be a great week and bound to be better if YOU are here. Come and bring a friend.

As far as our theme study today, as already mentioned we will be focusing on the subject of *allegiance*. Webster defines allegiance as “loyalty or devotion, as to a cause, person, ect.” God demands our allegiance to Him. Jesus said, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me” (Mark 8:34b). The idea of taking up a cross is bearing burdens or hardships. The cross was a symbol in the first century of pain and suffering. Essentially, what Jesus is saying in Mark 8 is that following after Him will require some suffering. It takes allegiance to persevere and keep on keeping on.

Our study concerning our theme today will begin in the Bible class this morning. In Matthew 12:30 the Bible says, “He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.” This passage teaches that either one is following God or one is not following God. Either one has allegiance to God or he or she has allegiance to something else. Broadly, the ‘something else’ that people have allegiance to is the world. Thus, our study in class will be a study of the world. Galatians 5:16 says, “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” The goal for Christians is to be spiritually minded. This will keep one out of the world and focused on Christ. Someone might ask why we want to spend time studying about the world. The reason is that we need to know the enemy. Satan is the ruler of the world and we certainly do not want to be following after Satan (Ephesians 2:2).

1John 1:7 says, “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” One critical point that needs to be learned by people is that there is a difference between a one-time sin and living in sin. John speaks of this difference extensively in 1John. All have sinned and as we are all human and make mistakes; it is safe to say that as long as we are alive, we will have occasional sin in our lives. The person who willingly continues to sin has no hope of grace or salvation. It is possible to fall from grace (Galatians 5:4). The person who is walking in the light is one that will strive with every fiber of his or her being to live righteous after the ordinances and commands of God. This morning in the worship hour, we will dedicate our time to the topic of walking in the light.

One final thought on the idea of allegiance: it will be seen by the fruits that a person produces. A person who has allegiance to God will show such by attending worship services and being actively involved in them (Hebrews 10:25), being involved in personal work so that others can hear and know about Christ (Matthew 28:18-20), living godly in this world even though it is at times difficult (Titus 2:12). A good example of great allegiance might be the loyalty one has to his country. He might go and fight for his country. He might be actively involved in things that will promote his country and help it to grow. A person who does not have loyalty to his or her country would be one that would constantly complain about it but never do anything to make it better. The same concept can be applied to the church.

Of course, in the months ahead we will continue our study of **reaching up** by looking at such topics as *obedience* and *growth*. Then, in the last few months of the year, we will turn our focus to **reaching out**. This will involve such things as *fellowship* (reaching out to others in the church), *servitude* (reaching out to the physical needs of others both in the church and outside of the church), and *evangelism* (reaching out to the greatest need of every man — his own spiritual salvation). Finally, in December, we will have a day of conclusion reviewing the things we have studied over 2006 and discussing how to properly apply them in the years ahead. However, we are not there yet, so let us all sit back and enjoy today as we strive to press toward the upward call of God.