

News & Notes

Sunday, March 5, 2006

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

Pantry item for the month of March is canned goods.

There will be a **gospel meeting** at the Theo Church of Christ which starts today and goes through Wednesday.

The **monthly singing** at Briarcrest Extended Care will be today at 5:00 PM.

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

AM: But, Why?

PM: Because God Said So!

For the Record (February 12, 2005):

Attendance: 78 Contribution: \$1552.00 Budget: \$1352.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

P. O. Box 25

Ashland, MS 38603-0025

www.ashlandcoc.org

ashlandcoc@juno.com

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

I Am a Sinner — Acceptance

Jeremy Northrop

Once again, the first Sunday of the month is upon us and as is our tradition, we spend every first Sunday dedicated to the theme chosen for the year. The theme this year is taken from Philippians 3:14, "I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." In January, we spent the lessons answering introductory questions like what is pressing toward the upward call of God, why press toward the upward call of God and how to press toward the upward call of God. Last month, we began the process of reaching in or introspection and spent the day centered around the theme of humility. More than a score of scriptures teach the value and necessity of humility. Without humility, one cannot please God (James 4:10, 1John 2:16).

As we move on through the process of introspection, today our studies cause us to focus on another word — acceptance. Webster's dictionary uses words like tolerable, bearing, or consent to define the word acceptance. Once one humbles himself or herself to be obedient to the will of God, then he or she has to accept all the varying parts of that will. Some of them are relatively easy to accept while others pose great difficulties and trials. This article will focus on men and women accepting the fact that they are sinners, people accepting a great God who loves mankind enough to deal with sin's consequences, Christians accepting the message of God and the rules and guidelines it provides for people to live by, saints accepting the righteous

judgment of God and all of the aspects surrounding it, and finally, the saved accepting the hope of Heaven and the reality of Hell.

First, people need to accept the fact that all are sinners. Romans 3:23 is perhaps the most popular verse used to show this point: "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Sin is defined as unrighteousness (1John 5:17), not doing something out of faith (Romans 14:23), and not doing what one knows to be right (James 4:17). Sin is not doing what one is supposed to do and doing what one is not supposed to do. In Matthew 5:27-30, Jesus speaks of a man who has lusted after a woman and says that he has already committed adultery in his heart. This verse has some sobering implications. Many accept the fact that they are sinners but do not believe that God can forgive them because of the sin they have committed. This morning, in Bible class, we will devote our time answering the question: Can God really forgive me? He can and He is willing to forgive anyone who will submit to His will.

This brings us to the next point: Accepting a God who loves mankind enough to deal with sin and its consequences. Romans 6:23 is quoted often to show what sin will do to a person: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." While the first part of the verse is sobering to be sure, the second part of the verse should provide great comfort to anyone who wishes to take care of his or her sin. God's grace is sufficient (2Corinthians 12:9), can cover a multitude of sins (James 5:19-20), and is conditional on man's faith or obedience (Ephesians 2:8). God loves mankind to the point that He sent His only begotten Son so that man would not have to deal with the consequences of sin (John 3:16). In order to receive the grace of God, one must show that he or she loves God by obedience to His will (John 14:15).

One thing which is hard for Christians to accept is the idea that one must either follow all of God's will or there is no sense following any of God's will. It literally is God's way or the highway. Under the old law, one had to work hard to keep all of the commands of God (Leviticus 26:14, Numbers 15:22). In the New Testament, God asks His followers to Love God and their neighbors. Paul explains that loving one's neighbor is the summation of doing good to him or her and following the last six

of the Ten Commandments. Thus, implicitly, to love God is to keep his commands which again is what Jesus said in John 14:15. Some of the commands of God have explanations and reasons given for them. For other commands, the reasons might be obvious. However, for some of the commands of God, the reasons may not be explicitly stated or even vaguely implied. It is these commands that so many people seem to have a hard time keeping. Accepting God's will means doing God's will regardless.

Then, accepting God's will mean believing in the promises of God. Christ is coming again (Matthew 25:1-13). Judgment is coming (Hebrews 9:27). Some question the judgment of God saying that it is unfair or that God just loves everybody and no one will have to suffer eternity in Hell. Such statements or thoughts are not to be found in any passage of scripture. First, the person who says that condemning people to Hell is unfair has not considered the righteous judgment of God or God's justice (2Thessalonians 1:3-6). Further, to say that it is not within the scope of a loving God to chastise or even condemn only shows a lack of understanding of biblical love. Christ will judge all men on the day of judgment and those who have not followed His will in this life will suffer for it in the life to come.

Finally, accepting God's will comes with great blessings as well as sobering thoughts. One of the great blessings is the hope of Heaven. 1Peter 1:3-5 says:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Only when one accepts the will of God can one have the hope of eternity in Heaven.

Today, we plan to look at the why of things. One reason Christians aspire to do the will of God is because God said so but there are other blessings and benefits that come to the one who does the will of God. Hopefully, today will make us ever more determined to accept God and His will for our lives.