

## News & Notes

Sunday, October 15, 2006

**Remember in Prayer:** Sandra Alberson; Michelle Allen; Terry Childers; Vikie Cobb; Diane Cox; Sally Etta Crawford; Tommy Dawson; Marylyn Hubbard; Carolyn Jordan; Bill Kelly; Dot Ketchum; Sam Kidd; Ruth Long; John and Deliah Mann; James Miles; Helen Miller; Diane Mize; Janet Rooker; Lillie Mae Shelby; Chris Spence; Calvin Ursery; Alvie Williford;

**Sympathy** is extended to the family of Jimmy Dean Smith.

**Pantry item** for the month of October is juices.

The **lessons from our meeting** were recorded on audio tape. If you would like a copy, please see Barney King. Also, the lessons can be viewed from our website: [www.ashlandcoc.org](http://www.ashlandcoc.org). Click on 'events.'

**Ashland events:** October 21: Hayride at Daisy Roberson's.

**Area events:** October 13-14: North Mississippi Ladies Retreat at Tishomingo State Park.

### Sermon In Preview: Results of Unity:

AM: The Ten Plagues of Israel (Exodus 7-11)

PM: Going to Law with Christians (1Corinthians 6)

### For the Record (October 8, 2005):

Attendance: 162    Contribution: \$1969.00    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)

## "WOE UNTO THEM THAT CALL EVIL GOOD, AND GOOD EVIL"

Roger D. Campbell

These words are recorded in Isaiah 5:20. The entire verse reads: "*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.*" The point is clear, is it not? Just as the physical tongue has a deficiency when it is unable to distinguish the difference between bitter and sweet tastes, and just as the physical eye is not functioning properly when it is not capable of telling the difference between darkness and light, so the spiritual taste and spiritual sight of a person are "off" or malfunctioning when a person in the moral realm identifies evil as "good" or vice versa. As we often say, "Something just isn't right" when a person confuses good for evil or evil for good.

God's message to the people of Isaiah's day was "woe" to the person that did not properly distinguish evil from good. The fact that the Lord would pronounce such a "woe" indicates that it was *possible* for the children of Israel to know the difference between good and evil. Beyond that, it is equally obvious that He *expected* them to know the difference. Yes, they *needed* to know right from wrong.

Would you not agree that today we also live in a time when many people label good things as "evil," and evil matters as "good?" Because this is the case, and because Jehovah declared, "*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil,*" we would do well to take a closer look at this subject. In the matter of distinguishing good from evil, I want to suggest a few things that we need to do.

First, we need to **recognize why some people call evil good, and good evil.** It is surely the case that a great number of people mistakenly call good "evil" or evil "good" simply because they are ignorant of what the Lord has to say about it. In the physical realm, what do we call a person that is unable to tell the difference between light and darkness? We say that such a person is blind. The same is true in the spiritual realm: one that cannot or does not properly distinguish good from evil, is blind. It has always been the case that Jehovah has wanted all people to hate the evil and love the good (Amos 5:15). That, of

course, requires that a person clearly understand what God labels as "evil" and what He labels as "good."

What are some areas in which we see people's ignorance showing through when they speak about good and evil? Some call same-sex marriages "a good thing," but God's terms for marriage show that it is restricted to a man and a woman (Matthew 19:4-6). Some just love the doctrines of men, but the Lord says that rather than help humanity, such commands or doctrines actually turn people away from the truth (Titus 1:14). On the other hand, parents that love their children and properly discipline them are simply imitating the Lord that disciplines those whom He loves (Revelation 3:19). Sadly, many in our society label loving punishment of children as being an "evil" activity.

There are some that deny that there is a set/objective standard by which to determine good and evil. They brush aside anything that the Bible might say, since they are convinced that if something seems good to you, then for you it is good. This idea, however, flies in the face of the message of Jeremiah 10:23, which informs us that "*it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*"

A third group of people that call evil good and good evil are those that have a personal agenda. Perhaps they actually understand the difference between good and evil, but in order to obtain a particular position in society, they are willing to compromise and talk out of both sides of their mouth, as it were. Maybe they want to be promoted at work or be elected to a public office. In order to achieve their goal, they may feel compelled to say whatever certain people want to hear out of them. In a similar scenario, it might be the case that a young man wants to win the favor of a girl (or a young woman the favor of a boy), so he begins to say and do whatever he thinks will make him look good in her eyes. If that means that he has to compromise his convictions and call evil "good," then he may do it in order to win her affection. It happens.

It is also true that there are those who, in an effort to defend or support someone involved in sin, will falsely label good things as being "evil," and evil matters as "good." The Bible says, "*He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD*" (Proverbs 17:15). See if you can imagine any of the following taking place in the church. "It is evil to divorce without scriptural reason and remarry – that is adultery (Matthew 19:9). It is evil, that is, until our daughter does it, then it is a good thing." Or, "It is wrong to dance out in public – the swaying of the body, rubbing, grinding – it is wrong, dead wrong. Wrong, that is, until our grandson does it, then it is a good thing." Friends, our concept of good and evil must not change when someone whom we dearly love does something wrong. Rest assured that *God's* standard does not change!

When it comes to recognizing what is good and evil, we must come to **the right source**. Human thinking is not the right source. A particular path might appear to be a great one, but it just might lead to destruction (Proverbs 16:25). Jehovah charged the children of Israel to do that which was right and good in *His* sight, not their own (Deuteronomy 6:18). When God tells Christians, "*Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good*" (Romans 12:9), He expects us to

accept *His* judgment about what is good and evil. The word of God is the only source to which we can turn to identify properly matters that are good or evil. Jesus said to search the scriptures (John 5:39). Every practice and teaching needs to be put to the test, the scriptural test, by comparing it to what God's Book has to say (1 John 4:1). One that does not come to the Bible to learn God's standard of good and evil will never be able to properly tell the difference between good and evil. Never.

Let us go a step further and emphasize that in the matter of distinguishing good from evil, one must not only come to the right source, but he must come **often** to the right source in order to keep his thinking straight. Happy or blessed is the one that meditates constantly on the message of God's word (Psalm 1:1,2). The Bereans were daily searchers of God's truth (Acts 17:11). We are greatly benefited by coming often to the right source simply because a constant study of the Book reminds us of God's will and helps us not forget what is right in His sight. In addition, coming often to the Bible also reminds us of the consequence of confusing good and evil, as well as the consequence of following good and evil. Jesus will raise all dead people. He will raise the good unto life eternal, and the evil-doers to condemnation (John 5:28,29). These truths should motivate us to "keep up on" what is right and wrong in the Master's sight.

As we come to the right source of instruction (the Bible), and as we endeavor to come often to hear the Lord speak to us through His word, we must also make sure that we come with **the right attitude**. Through Moses and Aaron, God spoke to Pharaoh. The king's foolish reply was, "*Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go*" (Exodus 5:2). It is sad that Pharaoh's attitude toward the Lord's commands has not only been repeated time and again throughout history, but it is actually the norm of our day in many circles. Does God really know what He is talking about? Does He know what He is talking about when He says that only those that do His will can enter the kingdom? (Matthew 7:21-23). Does He know what He is talking about when He says that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom? (1 Corinthians 6:9,10). Of course the Lord knows what He is talking about – on every aspect of every subject! If God says something is "good," then we had better believe it. The same goes for what He labels as "evil" or "wicked." Our challenge is to come to His word with an honest and good heart, because only that type of heart will receive the word and continue to bear fruit for His glory (Luke 8:15).

It may not cause us to be popular, but in addition to coming ourselves to God's word to learn His will about good and evil, we must also point others to the Bible as the only true, reliable standard of authority in all matters pertaining to morals and spiritual activities. Whether people pat us on the back in agreement, or whether they laugh at us or curse us in the face, the Bible's standard of good and evil is not open to compromise. It is right. It always has been and always will be. Let us remain committed to *learning* what the Bible says about good and evil, *accepting* what it reveals, *applying* it in our lives, and boldly *teaching* its message to others. "*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil.*"