

News & Notes

Sunday, May 6, 2007

Remember in Prayer: Alton Lee Alberson; Daryl Alberson; Mary Alberson; Tommy Alberson; Vikie Cobb; Diane Cox; Melba Cox; Sally Etta Crawford; Gwynn Curtis; Dot Ketchum; John and Deliah Mann; Diane Mize; Hadie Pickens; Shirley Rhodes; Adam Shaver; Chris Spence; Jamie Spence; Kevin Steele; Ruby Tapp; Wayne Tapp; Ron Tega; Calvin Ursery;

Sympathy is extended to the families of Bill Kelly and Marvin Beard.

Pantry item for the month of May is oats.

Congratulations to Barney and Betty King, new grandparents of Peyton Greer King.

The new **We Care List** is in the foyer.

We **rejoice with Robert Sides** who was baptized into Christ last week.

Ashland events: Today: Prayer meeting at 4:00 PM;

Sermon in Preview: Spreading the Good News:

AM: Do I Really Believe the Bible When...

PM: "Let Him Deny Himself" (Matthew 16:24)

For the Record (April 29, 2007):

Attendance: 74 Contribution: \$11665.00 Budget: \$1326.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

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Sunday:

Bible Study 9:30 AM

Worship 10:30 AM

Worship 5:00 PM

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 PM

Shepherds:

Barney King

Carrol Street

spreading the Good News Ashland Announcer

"GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS..." (MATTHEW 28:19)

Spreading the Good News

Do I Really Believe? — Commitment

Jeremy Northrop

Where in the world did April go?! It just doesn't seem like it has been another month. But, here we are. May is now here and with another month comes another first-Sunday-of-the-month. As is our tradition, we will use this day to focus on our theme for the year. So, here we go! Way back in January, we began our theme of spreading the good news taken from the great commission in Matthew 28:18-20. In that passage, the Bible says,

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Amen.

This great commission is given by Jesus and centers itself on the theme of evangelism. You and I both know that evangelism is one of the purposes or works of the church.

How much evangelism is taking place today? Many have commented to me about our theme this year saying they are glad that we are focusing on this because they just do not know how to practice evangelism. That should be a great concern to all of us. Christians (members of the church) not knowing how to practice evangelism (one of the works of the church) just simply should not be so. Yet, I am thankful that there are so many members today who are excited about this theme and desire to better themselves

and mature in the faith (See Hebrews 5:12). And thus, it is fitting that we here at the Ashland congregation spend a year trying to better ourselves and enable ourselves to practice evangelism, to spread the good news.

We have been spending the last few months focusing on the idea of preparing ourselves to spread the good news. In fact, next month will be the last month that we focus on this idea and then in July, we will begin the phase of practicing evangelism. We have so far studied such topics as truth, authority, and salvation. Today, we are going to spend some time searching our hearts. We are going to focus on the topic of commitment. In our class this morning, we are going to discuss what commitment is and how we can use it. Then we will be able to answer the question: Are you and I genuinely committed to God and His word? If we are, then why are we not practicing evangelism? Do we really believe the Bible? This will be our topic for our lesson this morning.

The truth is the Bible has some very difficult concepts. They are not difficult in the sense that they are hard to understand. They are difficult in the sense that they are hard to accept. Let me share with you some examples of what I am talking about.

First, consider what Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14,

Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Here is the hard part of this verse: The Bible says that the majority of people are lost. This is why the church must practice evangelism. We do not want our neighbors, friends, and even our families to be lost. Are we committed when we do not share the gospel with those whom the Bible says are lost?

Second, the Bible teaches that denominationalism is wrong. In fact, Jesus said, there is one church (Matthew 16:17-19; Ephesians 4:4-6). Thus, this coincides with Matthew 7:13-14. Unfortunately, those who choose to be involved in denominationalism are not members of the one true church which Christ established. Jesus said He is the way, truth, and life and no one can come to God except through Him (John 14:6). The way that He has set down for people to go to God through Him is through His church (Acts 2:38,

47). Are you and I really committed to God if we tolerate and even praise those who might be involved in denominationalism?

Commitment is a difficult thing but hopefully today, you and I can to some soul-searching and make sure that we are genuinely committed to God.

In our lesson tonight, we will take a different look at the topic of commitment. Our lesson tonight will come from the text in Matthew 16:24, "Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.'" A lot of people have commitment to God and His word but perhaps the motivation behind their commitment is not what it needs to be.

The fact is that the life of the Christian is not about the Christian. This life is not about you or me. If we choose to live our lives for Christ, then this life is about Christ. You and I must take a back seat. This is the point is Jesus said "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself..." There are so many passages in the New Testament which teach humility (James 4:10; 1Peter 5:6). Jesus is calling people to follow Him and one way that we do that is by being humble to His cause.

Second, commitment is seen by the trials that we will endure when living like God wants us to live. Jesus said, "take up his cross." The cross was a symbol of suffering as the Romans literally knew how to take a person to the point of death but still keep him or her alive. Jesus promises that we will suffer persecution. When we endure, we show signs of commitment (John 15:18; 2Timothy 3:12).

Finally, commitment is seen in following Christ. We must keep our eyes on the goal (Philippians 3:14). If we keep our eyes on the goal, we will remain committed in our actions.

Next month, we will focus on the church and the purpose of it. Then we will switch the phase of our study to practicing evangelism. Brother Don Underwood will be flying in from California to hold an evangelism seminar in July. Beginning in July, we will look at some reasons why we should not be afraid to practice evangelism. In fact, we should be afraid if we do not.

But before we get there, let's sit back and focus on commitment. Further, let's all resolve to be committed to God and His word.