

## News & Notes

Sunday, October 7, 2007

**Remember in Prayer:** Daryl Alberson; Steve Alberson; Tommy Alberson; Mike Carter; Vikie Cobb; Melba Cox; Charles Johnson; Aubrey Huey; Lettie Mae Hunt; Dot Ketchum; Sherry Lawrence; James Luna; John and Deliah Mann; Sue Moody; Diane Mize; Forrest Phelps; Ann Ray; Katherine Shaw; Ruby Tapp; Rural Tapp; Ron Tega; Calvin Ursery; Alvie Williford;

**Sympathy** is extended to the family of Kathy Hester.

**Pantry item** for the month of October is ranch dressing.

We rejoice with **Odie Ray** who was baptized into Christ this past week.

**Ashland Events:** Today: Singing at Briarcrest Extended Care at 4:00 PM; October 14-17: Joint gospel meeting;

**Area events:** Beginning today: Homecoming and gospel meeting at the Theo church of Christ near Corinth, Mississippi;

### Sermon in Preview: Spreading the Good News:

AM: If You are Going to Walk on Water...

PM: Are We Up to the Challenge?

### For the Record (September 30, 2007):

Attendance: 96      Contribution: \$1526.00      Budget: \$1326.00

### *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 5:00 PM

#### Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 PM

#### Shepherds:

Barney King  
Carrol Street



## Spreading the Good News Getting Out of the Comfort Zone — Work Jeremy Northrop

Once again the first Sunday of the month is upon us and as is our tradition, we will focus on our theme for the year — spreading the good news — taken from Matthew 28:18-20. So far, this has been a good study this year and we are confident that it will continue to be such as we have three months left to go (counting today). My, it sure does seem as though the time has flown by. It would be good to review what we have studied so far, look at our plans for the day in some detail and then consider briefly our plans for the rest of the year.

Way back in January, we began our study for the year with some introductory lessons on spreading the good news. We talked about building up the church, why we should want to spread the good news and then discussed the plans that we have for the year. In February, we began the first phase of our study — preparing for evangelism. We began this study by discussing different proofs or evidences for the existence of God. Thus, we realized that one can know truth, science does prove the existence of God and that all alleged problems with the Bible are not real at all. Then, in March we focused on religious authority. We learned how the Bible does authorize and what is and what is not proper religious authority. We moved from there to discuss salvation. It would be wrong of us to try to convince the world of their need for salvation if we ourselves have not been properly saved. Next, we moved to the topic of commitment. Many have the claim of believing the Bible when they do not really practice such in their lives. Finally, we concluded this study by examining the purpose of the church or king-

dom according to the New Testament. One of those purposes is to evangelize.

In July, we began the next phase of our study that we are still presently engaged in — practicing evangelism. We discussed in July the knowledge that is necessary for one to practice evangelism. Many think they do not know enough but if we know enough to save ourselves, then we know enough to teach someone else what they must do in order to be saved. Next, we discussed courage. The last part of the great commission given by Christ is the key to courage: “...and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” If Jesus will go with us and He promised that He would be with us every step of the way, then we have nothing to fear. Further, Jesus promised that people will be resistant to His message and that we should expect people to reject us if we are going to be His servants. Last month, we discussed the concept of our audience. Many times, we find ourselves inviting people to services who are already members of the church and we are not inviting the lost or trying to study the Bible with the lost. No one will be converted if we do not teach those who are lost. This is the example that we have recorded for us in the book of Acts.

This brings us to today. We are going to focus on the concept of work today. God does not want His people being lazy. The apostle Paul had some thing to say about this in Ephesians 5:15-16, “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” Then in Colossians 4:5, “Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.” Paul is encouraging his readers to ‘redeem’ or ‘make good use of’ their time. This is consistent with the example laid out for us in the book of Acts. The reason the church was growing so much was because people got out there and made good use of their time. They practiced evangelism. This meant they had to believe in the message they were wanting to spread and that they put forth a genuine effort to try and get the job done. Brethren, if we are going to win the world for Christ, then we are going to have to get out there and work — work hard — at it! The fact is that it is not going to get done by simply inviting people to services or opening the doors and counting on some ‘vacuum effect’ to bring the lost to us ready for us to baptize them. This is not God’s plan and it will not work.

Since getting out and doing the work is necessary if we are going to be successful in our evangelistic efforts, then today, we will study or focus on the concept of work. In our class this morning, we will study the book of Nehemiah. Obviously, this will be a brief overview but one passage that stands out in the book of Nehemiah is Nehemiah 4:6, “...the people had a mind to work.” Interestingly, the people had to work even though God approved (in fact, commanded) their actions. A lot of times, we get the idea that if God approves of what we are doing then He will do the work for us. This is not the case. Certainly, God approves of evangelism. He commands that such be done by the church today. But this does not mean that God will do the work for us. He expects us to get out and do the work just as He expected the people of Nehemiah’s day to rebuild the temple.

Our sermon this morning will come from the text in Matthew 14:22-33. This is the familiar story to all of us about Jesus and Peter walking on water. Many people will criticize Peter for not having faith like he needed to but I will commend Peter in that he was willing to get out of the boat. Many today show their own lack of faith by not putting their faith to work in their actions. No one in the world will ever be converted if we do not get out and teach the gospel. Not doing so really shows a lack of faith.

Tonight, we are going to discuss the idea that we are in a spiritual war. Paul talked about such in Ephesians 6. We are the soldiers that God has prepared to fight for His cause. Are we up to doing what God wants us to do? In the first century, we find that Christians worked so hard for God that the world was being turned upside down (Acts 17:6). Today we need to step up to the task and do the job that God has set out for us. Just like the people of Nehemiah, Peter, and the first century church, we need to get out and work at it.

In the two months that we will have left for the year, we will focus on living outside the comfort zone (this month will get us out of it and hopefully next month will keep us out of it) or developing a habit of evangelism and then we will bring everything to a close in December by a day of reviewing the things that we have learned for the year. But before we get to that point, let’s sit back and enjoy the day that we have planned today and apply what we learn.