

## News & Notes

Sunday, December 7, 2008

**Remember in Prayer:** Daryl Alberson; David Anderson; Arland Anderson; Mary Bailey; Mary Childers; Diana Hayes; Bobby Hopkins; Lettie Mae Hunt; Dot Ketchum; John and Deliah Mann; Diane Mize; Wayne Orman; Ann Ray; Brandon Ray; Verra Roberson; Austin Robinson; Katherine Shaw; Gary Spence; Jamie Spence; Calvin Ursery; Joan Wilkerson; Alvie Williford;

**Pantry item** for the month of December is trash bags.

The **mid-week service** the week of Christmas will be on Tuesday, December 23 at 7:00 PM.

**Ashland Events:** Today: Periodic singing at Briarcrest Extended Care at 4:00 PM; December 12: Ladies outing at Country Inn 2 at 6:30 PM; December 14: Ladies class at 4:00 PM in the dining hall; Elder's meeting at 4:00 PM;

### Sermon in Preview:

AM: Preparing for the Offense (Acts 20:17-38)

PM: Knowing the Truth (John 8:31-36)

### For the Record (November 30, 2008):

Attendance: 79      Contribution: \$1269.00      Budget: \$1452.00

### *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  
Jeff Roberson  
Carrol Street

Romans 11:33

# ASHLAND ANNOUNCER

Increasing in the Knowledge of God



## Increasing in the Knowledge of God Offense — Preparing for the Attack Jeremy Northrop

It is hard to believe that the last month of the year has begun, but indeed it is here. This is the first Sunday in December and, as is our custom, we turn our attention to our theme for the year — *increasing in the knowledge of God* — taken from Romans 11:33. There, the apostle Paul said, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” Many have made comments that this has been a good year and that we have profited greatly from our study. The study, however, is not quite over. We have one more month and we hope to end it on a good note.

As we have in the past, we want to notice the things that we have studied already so that we can appropriately set the stage for the month of study we have planned.

Way back in January (I know that is too far back for most of us), we discussed the ways in which God communicates with mankind. The overwhelming lesson from that study is that God does communicate with us and desires that each and every person be saved (see 1Timothy 2:1-4). In February, the focus was on our relationship with God and that we are His children and His sheep. Thus, it is our responsibility to

do what He desires because we can know that He has our best interests in mind (Psalm 100:3; Matthew 7:21). March, April, and May were dedicated to a study of faith, grace, and works. We noticed the balance that is to be found in them and how they work together in a beautiful way (Ephesians 2:1-10). June was a month in which we discussed biblical balance. Certainly, it is easy to focus solely on certain biblical doctrines. For example, many want to see God's love but not His justice or church benevolence without church discipline. The Bible paints a broader picture of God than that and we need to see the balance.

Starting in July, we began to look at the communication and characteristics of God in a more practical way. While it is true that God communicates with man, it is of little value if man does not listen. It is true that God desires all men to be saved but makes no difference if man does not desire to be saved. In July, we noticed the need for Christians to study (Acts 17:11) and learn more about God's will for their lives. In August, we looked at some of the current issues that are plaguing the church of our Lord and the biblical answers to them. In September, we discussed the arch-enemy of God and Christ. While God desires that all men be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth, Satan is doing everything in his power to prevent everyone he possibly can from going to Heaven (1Peter 5:8). The way to deal with Satan is to focus on Christ which is what we discussed in October (see Hebrews 12:2). Of course, last month, we discussed the idea of being on the defense for Satan and his minions. Our faith is described as precious (2Peter 1:1) and we must do our best to protect our faith.

Christianity is not simply a karate-type life. Most of us know that those who teach karate often emphasize that it is for defense only. While it is true that we need to be on the defense in terms of our Christianity, it is

equally true that there are times that we must be on the offense. The month of December is thus going to be dedicated to the topic of offense.

Paul warned the elders in Ephesus false teachers (people Paul described as 'savage wolves') would come and draw people away from the truth (Acts 20:29). In the very next verse, he warned that some would be from among the flock of God. Peter warned that there would be 'false prophets' among the church in 2Peter 2:1. Jude said it this way:

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 3-4).

The fact is that when we discuss the topic of false teachers and false doctrines, we should be aware that it is not an 'if' topic. People might say thing like if this ever happens, I will do such and such. When we discuss the idea of false teachers, it is a 'when' kind of a discussion. Paul, Peter, and Jude (as well as a host of others) all exhorted that they would come and had come. We must be offensive in order to stand on guard for them. Satan is ever at work trying to prevent us from going to Heaven. He will use many things in his arsenal to do such: False teachers, false doctrines, and the luring speech. We must be prepared.

The year has been a great year. I hope that we each have learned a lot and grown in the faith. Let's discuss this past topic with great zeal and finish this study on a good note.