

News & Notes

Sunday, April 12, 2009

Remember in Prayer: DezaRay Anderson; Robbie Alberson; Mary Bailey; Christian Burns; Blaire Chapman; Freeman Duncan; J.C. Enlow; Sherry Fewell; Shannon Hastings; Lonnie Hurt; Dot Ketchum; Billy Liming; John and Deliah Mann; Curtis Mauney; Diane Mize; Alva Powell; Ann Ray; Brandon Ray; Toni Smith; Calvin Ursery; Joan Wilkerson; Alvie Williford;

Sympathy is extended to the family of Lettie Mae Hunt.

Pantry item for the month of April is trash bags.

If you would like **audio CDs** of the Ladies day, see Jeff Roberson.

Ashland Events: April 26: Homecoming 2009;

Area Events: April 17-19: Lectureship at the Skyline congregation in Tupelo; April 18: Spring Sing at Booneville; April 19-23: Gospel meeting at the Southaven church of Christ; May 3: Spring bring at the Chapman congregation; May 16: Ladies day at Southaven;

Sermon in Preview:

AM: Adam and Eve—Suitable Compliments (Genesis 2:8-25)

PM: Abram and Sarai—Called by the Lord (Genesis 15:1-21)

For the Record (April 5, 2008):

Attendance: 85 Contribution: \$1441.00 Budget: \$1459.00

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

ASHLAND ANNOUNCER

“Note Those Who So Walk”

Philippians 3:17

2Thessalonians 3:14

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “PROVE ALL THINGS?”

Roger D. Campbell

The familiar message of 1 Thessalonians 5:21,22 is composed of three instructions for all Christians: (1) “*Prove all things*”; (2) “*Hold fast that which is good*”; (3) “*Abstain from all appearance of evil.*” Which of these three commands would you think is important for God’s children to heed? That is correct: *each* of them is essential.

In the expression “*Prove all things,*” what does the word “prove” mean? It means to put to the test. The same Greek word from which “prove” is translated in our text is found in Luke 14:19, where we read that a man said, “*I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them.*” We find the same word in 1 John 4:1, where it is written that Christians are to “*try the spirits whether they are of God*” [all emphasis mine, *rdc*]. Again, this proving points to the idea of putting things or beings to a test.

In the context of 1 Thessalonians 5:21, what would be included in the “*all things*” that are to be proven? In verse 18

“*the will of God*” is mentioned, in verse 19 the message is, “*Quench not the Spirit,*” and verse 20 is, “*Despise not prophesyings.*” So, when it came to the will of God and claims to be led by the Spirit or speak prophetic utterances, the early saints were to “*prove all things.*” Claims of miraculous power were just that – claims. Was there proof in the form of signs to substantiate the claims (Mark 16:19,20)?

What about today? Just as God said they would, true prophecies and all other miraculous manifestations of the Spirit came to an end after the complete revelation of God’s truth to mankind (1 Corinthians 13:8-10). When a modern-day person or group claims to possess miraculous powers, we put their statements to a test by examining the Bible’s message and pointing out the falsehoods of Pentecostal fantasies. In fact, any time that a person teaches a religious message, we need to turn to the Book and test/try the spirits to see if they harmonize with the genuine will of God that is recorded in the New Testament (1 John 4:1).

Let us look further. “*Hold fast that which is good.*” This reminds us of the exhortation to “*cleave to that which is good*” (Romans 12:9). To hold fast or cleave indicates that we grab on to it and do not let go! Again, to what are we to hold fast? Answer: “*that which is good.*” Well, everybody’s got their own opinion about what “good” means, right? That may be true, but the only One whose assessment of good counts is God’s! It is to God’s standard of good that we must hold fast. Just as God told the Israelites to do that which was right and good in His sight (Deuteronomy 6:18), so Christians must turn to the Lord’s true doctrine to find God’s standard of good. In order for you and me to hold fast to that which is good, we must (1) Have an adequate knowledge of

God’s word, (2) Make a decision/commitment to do what we know is right, and (3) Have the courage to carry out the right action. And what is the right action? Answer: doing that which is pleasing in the sight of God.

There is then the third instruction of our text: “*Abstain from all appearance of evil.*” The word “appearance” means form, so we are to stay away from all types of evil. Again, it is God that determines what is evil. It is just as wrong to call something that is permissible “evil” as it is to label a sinful activity as “good.” In Isaiah’s day, God pronounced a “woe” on those that confused good and evil (Isaiah 5:20).

Since sin is the only thing that can separate any of us from God and keep us out of heaven (Isaiah 59:2), does it not make sense for us to strive to stay as far away from evil activities as possible? The Lord calls on us to “*abstain from fleshly lusts*” (1 Peter 2:11), “*depart from iniquity*” (2 Timothy 2:19), and lay aside the sin that easily besets us (Hebrews 12:1).

Participating in that which God labels as evil is no joking matter. Sin is destructive from beginning to end. Surely we are wise enough to accept the truth that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).

Proving all things, holding fast to that which is good, and abstaining from all forms of evil – these are all excellent practices. We know that is an accurate conclusion because God is the One that gave us such instructions. He knows what He is talking about. May we have the courage to humble ourselves before the Lord and devote our hearts to living for Him.