

News & Notes

Sunday, September 13, 2009

Remember in Prayer: Mary Baily; Robert Bennett; Melvin Bennett; John L. Clemmer; Jean Foster; James Gilmore; Clifton Holmes; Dot Ketchum; Dallas King; Billy Liming; John and Deliah Mann; Maria Mayes; Abigail Miller; Ann Ray; Curtis Ray; Jimmy Robinson; Gallen Runsick; Katherine Shaw; Josh Shobox; Ruby Tapp; Calvin Ursery; Sharon Walker; Joan Wilkerson; Alvie Williford;

Pantry item for the month of September is dental floss.

Be sure and check the **bulletin boards and tables** in the foyer for additional information and announcements.

Ashland Events: Today: Elder's meeting at 4:00 PM; September 19: Area wide singing; October 11-14: Joint gospel meeting;

Area Events: September 20-25: Gospel meeting at the Grand Junction congregation; September 27-29: Gospel meeting at the Union congregation;

Sermon in Preview:

AM: Samuel—Appointed Before His Time

PM: Lot's Wife—Compulsive Behavior

For the Record (September 6, 2009):

Attendance: 84 Contribution: \$1517.00 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

Paul – Be Followers of Me

Jeremy Northrop

In 1Corinthians 11:1, Paul declared, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (KJV). The New King James translation uses the word 'imitate.' The word 'follow' or 'imitate' comes from the Greek word 'imitos.' Thus, it is understandable why those who compiled the New King James Version would use the word 'imitate.' In more recent times, imitate has come to mean to mimic or act like which could imply the actions are not genuine. Such is certainly not what Paul had in mind. 1Corinthians 11:1 is not the only time Paul instructed people to be like he was. 1Corinthians 4:16 says, "Therefore I urge you, imitate me." In Galatians 4:12, Paul said, "Brethren, I urge you to become like me...."

1Corinthians 11:1 however, sets a standard and the standard is not Paul. The idea is that Christians are to follow after Paul as long as Paul is following after Christ. The implication is that if and when Paul stops following after Christ, Christians are to stop following after him. The standard is Christ. Paul was so confident in his behavior, he exhorted other Christians to follow (imitate) him in his walk with God. To the Philippians, Paul exhorted, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). The emphasis of the exhortation to follow after Paul was not his physical travels (Acts 13-14, 15:36-18:22, 18:23-21:17) but rather his character. Paul allowed Christ to be seen in him (Philippians 1:20) and Christians, then and now, must do the same. Christians need to follow Paul.

From Sincere to Sanctified

The first way Christians need to follow after Paul is the journey of salvation. One of the notable things about Paul's former life was that he

was a sincere person. Beginning in the last verse of Acts 22, Paul stand before the chief priests and council and declares “Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day” (Acts 23:1). He was sincere in his former life of persecuting Christians and attempting to put an end to the Way. He was sincere but wrong. It is even possible to be sincere and religious and still be wrong. In Acts 27:22-34, Paul addresses the people of Athens and comments on their sincerity of religious practice. Yet, he points out they were wrong. The journey Paul made to salvation was not from sincere to religious but rather one *from sincere to sanctified*.

In order to be sanctified, Paul obeyed the gospel plan of salvation. Such events are recorded in Acts 9, 22, and 26. Today, in order to be saved, people must do the very same things. In order to be converted, one must hear the word of God (Romans 10:17), believe it to be true (Hebrews 11:6), repent of their sins (Acts 17:30), confess Jesus to be the Son of God (Acts 8:37), be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), and live faithfully the rest of their days (Acts 14:22). Paul exhorts the readers to follow after him *from sincere to sanctified*.

From the Past to the Present

Another way Christians can follow after Paul is from the past to the present. It is sad many people will allow their former life to prevent them from doing what they know to be right. If people allow the guilt of yesterday to be a part of their lives today, it will take the spiritual life away from them. Life is not about what Christians were but rather about what they can become. It simply does not work and is not productive to live in the past.

Paul never forgot his former life. He told the Jerusalem mob that he “...persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women....” Yet, he later told Timothy:

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life” (1Timothy 1:15-16).

While Paul never forgot his former life, he did not let his former life interfere with his desire to do right. He pressed “toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14).

Christians must follow Paul *from the past to the present*.

From Taught to Teacher

The first several verses of Acts 9 record the conversion of Paul. Acts 9:19 says after his baptism, he spent “some days with the disciples at Damascus.” Interestingly, the very next verse says “Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.” Paul did not waste any time in trying to teach others about the gospel. If people know enough to be converted, they know enough to teach someone else. In fact, Paul admonished people to grow in the faith during his mission journeys (Acts 14:22). 1Corinthians 3:2 says, “I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able.” The exhortation is to grow in the faith.

Many today want to shirk this responsibility saying it belongs to the preacher or the elders. In fact, some will notice 1Timothy 3:2 where it shows one of the qualifications of elders is that they be “able to teach.” 2Timothy 2:24 says servants of the Lord must be “able to teach.” At some point, the journey of faithfulness must take the Christian from one who is taught to one who will teach. Following after Paul is, in part, *from taught to teacher*.

From Here to Heaven

History says that Paul was escorted out of Rome on the Ostian Way and it was there that the ax came down on his neck and he was forced to depart this life for the next one. In the end, he was willing and did die for his Lord. Inspiration says he was prepared to die:

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing (2Timothy 4:7-8).

The previous three journeys bring Paul to this journey. He walked this earth and was even persecuted for the cause of Christ. In the end, he made the journey and Christians must follow him *from here to Heaven*.

“Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ”