

News & Notes

Sunday, October 4, 2009

Remember in Prayer: Mary Baily; Sue Daniels; Donna Derryberry; Dot Ketchum; Dallas King; John and Deliah Mann; Carl Perkins; Ann Ray; Curtis Ray; Katherine Shaw; Ruby Tapp; Calvin Ursery; Joan Wilkerson; Alvie Williford;

Sympathy is extended the family of Blanch Meeks.

Pantry item for the month of October is pasta.

There will be a **fellowship meal and early afternoon service** next week in conjunction with our joint gospel meeting.

Ashland Events: Today: Periodic singing at Briarcrest Extended Care at 4:00 PM; October 11-14: Joint Gospel Meeting;

Area Events: Beginning today: Gospel meetings at the Antioch, Beech Hill, and Theo congregations; October 10: Youth Rally at the Covington, Tennessee congregation; October 17: Bible bowl at the Coffeerville congregation;

Sermon in Preview:

AM: Apollos – Gently Serving

PM: Titus – A True Son

For the Record (September 27, 2009):

Attendance: 67 Contribution: \$1136.00 Budget: \$1459.00

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

Jeff Roberson

Carrol Street

ASHLAND ANNOUNCER

“Note Those Who So Walk”

Philippians 3:17

2Thessalonians 3:14

“I Want to Help, But How Can I?”

Jeremy Northrop

In John 15:19, Jesus taught an interesting principle: His followers are not of the world but rather called out of the world. Evangelism is the process whereby Christians today call the lost out of the world to an upward call (see Philippians 3:14). Obviously, those who are being converted have a past, a not-so-great-looking past, a past that is marred by sin. Part of the conversion process is to repent of these past sins and strive to live a life that is sin free.

The very need for salvation is because all have sinned (Romans 3:23). Try as they may, Christians are going to stumble and fall from time to time. Speaking to Christians, John wrote it this way:

If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1John 1:6-9).

It, of course, stands to reason that those who are young in the faith and need the milk of the word will fall more often than those mature in the faith. In the process of one being converted, it may be revealed that they have done criminal actions, are addicted to pornography, do not uphold their household responsibilities, are depressed, or a whole host

of other things which the devil uses to tempt mankind. It might be difficult for Christians to know what to do when such is revealed among people they are studying with, whether they are potential converts, new converts, or even long-time Christians who have struggled with such things. Some may say statements like: “I want to help but how can I help?” or “I want to help but do not know what to do.” There are many things the child of God can do and should do to help those who are struggling.

First, the Christian must **do something**. In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus spoke of the day in which He will separate the sheep from the goats. He spoke of the sheep helping Him in time of need and of the goats ignoring His need. The goats responded by asking when they knew He was in need. In verse 45, Jesus said, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.” The point is that when Christians do not help others in times of need or distress, it is the same as not helping Jesus Himself. It is true that some will have problems beyond some Christians’ experience or expertise. There are times when the child of God may not know what to do. It is equally true that ignorance does not excuse the child of God from doing anything. What can a person do?

Next, he can **pray for them**. The words of Paul ring clear: “... pray without ceasing” (1Thessalonians 5:17). More than that, a casual look through the life and letters of Paul in the New Testament confirms that he was a praying man. Prayer should be the first response of the Christian in any situation. If a child of God cannot help in any other way, he or she can help by praying with a young married couple who is struggling, young parents who have a baby with Down’s syndrome, or a teenager involved in gangs. Prayer is a first response backed by action or belief that God will answer the prayer.

Then, the Christian must **accept them**. The natural human response to something that is different is rejection. It is easy to imagine certain rejection statements like “I don’t want to be around that person because he used to be an alcoholic” or “did you know that John Doe cheated on his wife?” Be it clear, the Christian cannot accept the sin. God cannot even look upon sin (Habakkuk 1:13). Christians have a responsibility to deal with the person who knows their sin and refuses to change (1Corinthians 15:33; Ephesians 5:11). Yet, in the end, every person on the planet can relate to sin because all have sinned (Romans 3:23). The great news is the gospel has the power to reform people, to take them out of sin (1Corinthians 6:9-11). Ostracizing a penitent person involved in or tempted by sin is

hypocritical (see Matthew 7:2-5). Further, it is man’s projection of his own thoughts regarding the severity of sin — saying one sin is worse than another — when truthfully all sin will condemn (Romans 6:23).

Also, the Christian can **help them**. Galatians 6:1 says, “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.” The process of evangelism is simply calling one out of the world of darkness. Christians need to help people see accountability and take responsibility for their actions. There are ways to help others to “walk as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8). The faithful can help the erring and the lost to make the move from foolishness to understanding or from dissipation to being filled with the spirit (Ephesians 5:15-21). This passage teaches it is not enough to stop doing wrong but that one must start doing right. In fact, the path from doing wrong is to do right (see Ephesians 4:28). The faithful can help the addict to find meaningful replacement for his actions. The faithful can help the grief-stricken to find purpose in life. The faithful can help the busybody to be busy in the work of the Lord (1Corinthians 15:58).

Finally, the Christian might have to **find help for them**. Not everyone is a counselor. Not everyone is a psychiatrist. And there will be situations which Christians encounter which are beyond their ability. The solution in such cases is to find the services which are available. The Christian can be aware of programs in the area. The Christian needs to find people who can help them through anxiety, violence, relational struggles, or whatever other challenges may be facing them. One person cannot do it all. Cooperation of the whole church is necessary. Maybe the faithful needs to refer the struggling couple to a godly marriage seminar or help them find a good counselor. Paul spoke of such cooperation in converting the lost: “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase” (1Corinthians 3:6). The church needs to work together to help her members grow (Ephesians 2:19-22).

As it turns out, the “I just don’t know what to do” response many make is just an excuse. There is plenty the child of God can do to help the possible convert, new convert, or struggling Christian in their times of need. Christians today need to follow the example of Jesus and help call them out of the world. Christians need to be motivated to rise to the challenge to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). The children of God need to do all they can to “rescue the perishing, care for the dying.”