

News & Notes

Sunday, May 23, 2010

Remember in Prayer: Alton Lee Alberson; Jerry Alberson; Robbie Alberson; Tommy Alberson; Mary Baily; Alfred Burton; Sheila Elliot; Colby Hopkins; David Judge; Shirley Judge; Dot Ketchum; Jamie King; John and Deliah Mann; Rhonda Nance; Shane Nance, Wade Nance; Tracy Ortiz; Joe Phillips; Joyce Phillips; Lowell Poff; Ann Ray; Curtis Ray; Edna Ray; Katherine Shaw; Janye Spence; Ashley Wilkerson; Joan Wilkerson; Edsell and Martha Williford;

Pantry item for the month of May is dish soap.

Be sure and check the **bulletin boards** for additional information.

Ashland Events: Today: Elder's meeting at 4:00 PM; Youth devotional following the evening service; June 26: Vacation Bible School;

Area Events: May 29-30: Homecoming at the Terry Street congregation; July 18-21: Vacation Bible School at the Chapman congregation;

Sermon in Preview:

AM: Spiritual Adultery (Hosea 1-3)

PM: What's So Amazing about Grace? (Ephesians 2:1-10)

For the Record (May 16, 2010):

Attendance: 74 Contribution: \$799.00 Budget: \$1388.00

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 6:30 PM

Shepherds:

Barney King

Jeff Roberson

Carrol Street

ASHLAND ANNOUNCER

A YEAR OF REMEMBRANCE

"Remind them of these things..." (2Timothy 2:14)

Can We Really Make a Difference?

Jeremy Northrop

The question which serves as the title to this article is frequently asked by many people. It is often times asked by individuals who seem to think they are relatively insignificant in the world or by particularly small groups. For example, a small congregation might ask the question in light of the big world and the vast amount of wickedness which is present in the world. The question itself is a valid one. Jeremiah had the same concerns when the Lord called him to do the work citing the excuse that he was too young to do the work (Jeremiah 1:6-8). Jonah tried to run from the presence of the Lord when God asked him to go to Tarshish, a place noted for its wickedness (Jonah 1:1-3). Today, people make similar excuses for not doing God's work. Many times, the excuses center around the idea of not being able to make a significant difference in a big world.

Is there something individuals or small congregations can do in a big world of wickedness? In fact, God assured both Jeremiah and Jonah they could do the work He had called them to do. God assures the church today, through His word, they can indeed do the work which He has set before them. Proverbs 14:34 says, "Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a reproach to any people." The concept of this text is illustrated in several different events recorded in the Bible and has a great application for the people of God today.

Genesis 6-8 records the account of the flood. Noah was righteous in a world of wickedness. Some have asked why God

did not destroy the world and allow Noah and his family to go on and be with Him in Heaven. Perhaps part of the answer lies in the idea that “Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a reproach to any people.” Through the righteousness of eight people, the world was spared and repopulated. The world was saved through the righteousness of these eight people. Noah and his family were able to make a difference in the ancient world.

Genesis 18:16-33 records a conversation between the Lord and Abraham. God tells Abraham His intentions to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because of the great wickedness of the residents. Abraham begins to plead with the Lord on behalf of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. First, he asks God if there were 50 righteous people in the cities, would He still destroy them. God agrees if 50 righteous people are found in Sodom and Gomorrah he would not destroy them. Abraham immediately asks the Lord if He would destroy the cities if only 45 were found and the Lord agrees not to do destroy Sodom and Gomorrah if 45 righteous people were found. Eventually, the Lord agreed to spare the cities if only 10 righteous people were found.

The concept of only 10 righteous people being found, which is illustrated in these events, is interesting. Why would God spare the great cities of Sodom and Gomorrah if only 10 righteous people were found? Some might ask: “What can 10 godly people do in the midst of so many wicked people?” In truth, they could have spared the destruction of all the wicked people. This truly illustrates the concept of Proverbs 14:34, “Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a reproach to any people.”

It is equally interesting the Lord called 12 men to accomplish His will on earth. In Acts 1, shortly before His ascension, Jesus commissioned the apostles, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The rest of the book of Acts chronicles some of the efforts of the apostles to teach Jesus to the world. Acts 17:6 describes the actions as turning “the world upside down.” A casual reading through the book of Acts will reveal how the church grew in a great way. Thousands and thousands of people were being saved or added to the church. Nothing was

going to stop the apostles from doing what Jesus had commanded them to do.

Again, the illustration provides proof the small group can make a huge difference in the world. The 12 apostles of Jesus Christ were able to accomplish what Jesus commanded. This may seem odd to the reader at first glance. How can 12 people make a real and lasting difference in a world of such wickedness? The answer lies in the fact that, “Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a reproach to any people.” A little righteousness can make a huge impact.

Jesus, Himself is a great illustration of Proverbs 14:34. It has been a decade since the Y2K (year 2000) concerns. For all practical purposes, Y2K is forgotten. At the time, however, the concerns made a huge impact on the world. Jesus in His birth, life, and death also made an impact. The very way time is measured (B.C. and A.D.) centers around the life of Christ on earth. In a sense, time started over when Christ came into the world. He was born a Jew (a minority of the time), set Himself to be about God’s business (Luke 19:10), and was able to change the world in a significant way.

Here again, some might argue one person or a small group cannot make any significant change in the world. Jesus did. Today, if Christians will set themselves about God’s business (following the example of Christ), they can make a huge difference in the world. Jesus is great proof that, “Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a reproach to any people.”

A brief summary of the illustrations of the article prove the point of Proverbs 14:34. Noah was one man with a godly family who was able to spare the ancient world from total destruction. Abraham interceded on behalf of the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and could have spared the cities if only 10 righteous people were found in the city. The 12 apostles were able to turn the world upside down by presenting God’s will to them. Jesus Himself changed the world through His life, death, and resurrection. Today, God’s people can continue to change the world and make a significant impact if they follow God’s will.

“Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a reproach to any people.”