

MARKET STREET

"And this is the message we have received of Him, and declare unto you..." (1 John 1:5)



MESSENGER

**Market Street
church of Christ**
514 West Market Street
P.O. Box 388
Athens, Alabama 35612
Phone (256) 232-1525

Volume V

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No. 52

The Unthinkable Commandment

Paul Earnhart

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Classes 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship..... 10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

Elders

Jerry McGlocklin..... (256) 232-7620
Kenneth Smith..... (256) 777-6737
Bonnie Sutton..... (256) 232-2081

Deacons

Marty R. Adams..... (256) 233-5147
Tommy Coblentz (256) 232-3212
Joel Hamm..... (256) 230-6223
Larry Mitchell (256) 230-0185
Todd Williams..... (205) 541-8304
Russ Wulfekuhl (256) 683-9396

Evangelists

David A. Cox (256) 233-8910
Cell: (256) 614-3757
Jordan Lovell..... (256) 777-8998

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MARKET STREET MESSENGER

*is published in the interest of New Testament
Christianity and to enhance the work of the
Market Street church.*

David A. Cox, Editor

With every advancing sentence in Matthew 5 (v. 21), Jesus has taken an even larger bite out of the human ego. Every new contrast between the popular Pharisaic perversions and the real demand of kingdom righteousness has served to heighten the moral challenge. What the Lord at last commands in the sixth and last of these antitheses must have stunned His audience (Matthew 5:43-48). He has spoken the inconceivable when He said, "but I say to you, love your enemies" (Matthew 5:44). To many of His listeners, such counsel must have seemed not only unthinkable, but impossible – and contrary to the very concept of justice.

Now for the first time in the sermon, Jesus has spoken the word which best sums up the principle underlying the whole of His message. He has led His hearers up an ascending plane from what love prohibits in the treatment of others (even those who abuse us) to what love demands of us positively. And who among His audience then or now could have anticipated that the journey would not be finished until He had demanded of them the hardest thing of all - to love the very ones we are most drawn to hate – our enemies. Finally, the Lord has left no room for "self" at all.

"Enemy" was hardly a foreign idea to first-century Jews. By Jesus' time, there was a palpable enmity that had attached itself to the partitioning wall that was the law (Ephesians 2:14-15). The people of Israel had suffered much from a hostile world and often looked with disdain upon the ignorant paganism and egregious immorality of the Gentiles. The Gentiles were not slow to return the favor. The Pharisees, with their separatist fervor, were not ignorant of the law's demand that the sons of the covenant were to love their neighbor as themselves (Leviticus 19:18), but they understood the obligation to end at the borders of Israel.

There were plenty to hate beyond the pale and many in the nation held that it was not only their privilege, but their obligation to do so. The fact that the Pharisees were aware of the command to love, but floundered on the definition of "neighbor" is evidenced by the conversation with a

certain lawyer (Luke 10:25-29). The lawyer knew that formula but was yet to make a proper application.

But how and why did the teachers in Israel come to conclude that the law commanded hatred for the enemy? It might have been the “holy wars” of extermination which God commanded Israel to wage against the Canaanites (Deuteronomy 20:16-18), or the imprecatory psalms “Do not I hate them, O Lord, who hate you?... I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies,” Psalms 139:21-22. Note especially Psalms 109. Yet, however difficult and perplexing be the problems which these facts present, the law did not distinguish in the matter of neighbor love between the Israelite and the stranger (Leviticus 19:18 with 19:33-34), and it did not counsel hatred and vengeance for the enemy (Exodus 23:4-5). Even Job, whose times most likely antedate the law, understood the sin of rejoicing over the calamity of an enemy (Job 31:29-30).

It has always impressed me that when Paul sought to instruct his brethren in their treatment of enemies, he felt no need for some new revelation, but drew easily upon the book of Proverbs: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him, if he is thirsty, give him a drink” (Romans 12:20; Proverbs 25:21). There is no portion of the Old Testament which more directly addresses the problem of Israel’s attitude toward her enemies than the book of Jonah. The Assyrians were a brutal people, enemies of God and men, but Jehovah loved them and He intended that His servant Jonah should do the same (Jonah 4:9-11).

Still, if after all this, we find ourselves hard pressed to believe that the law did not counsel enmity toward enemies, we are left to trust the Son of God who rebukes this idea as a misconception of the law and wholly inconsistent with the nature and purpose of God. It was just such teaching as this that made the nation so unprepared for the coming of the peaceable kingdom. Had Jesus told His followers to love their “neighbors,” they might well have continued in the old narrow ways, missing completely this love’s unique nature. But when He teaches them to love their enemies, they may be startled but they will certainly be instructed.

As Kierkegaard has observed, the gospel has made it forever impossible for anyone to be mistaken about the identity of his neighbor. If we are to love our enemies, then there will certainly be no member of the human race, however different, however distant, however vile,

to which we will not owe the best we can give him.

-via *Redeeming The Time*; Athens, Alabama.

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Devoted and Devout

Gary Henry

The English words “devoted” and “devout” both seem to come from the Indo-European language root *wegwh* (“to speak solemnly”). One of their intermediate ancestors is the Latin verb *vovere* (“to vow”). When we say that a person is “devoted,” we mean that he has “spoken solemnly” that he will decline other commitments in order to reserve himself entirely to a certain thing. And when we say that he is “devout,” we mean that a person has a concentrated earnestness about the thing he is “devoted” to.

It is a fine thing to be devoted, and an even finer thing to be devout about our devotedness. There is simply not enough real devotion in the world. I don’t understand all the reasons why, but there is no doubt that our age is one in which apathy has become fashionable. Single-minded people who passionately pursue their causes are not looked up to anymore. Instead, they are often tagged with pejorative labels that express our social disapproval of their fervency. We stigmatize them as radicals, extremists, or fanatics. Uncomfortable as we are with those who care deeply about things, we steer clear of what we have come to call “the lunatic fringe.” And there is hardly a worse sin nowadays than being “dogmatic” about one’s beliefs.

But think about what we lose by this way of thinking. Very many of the nobler things that grace our world are the work of deeply committed people, folks who shook off lethargy and indifference and “devoted” themselves “devoutly” to the betterment of life. If the apathetic, don’t-get-too involved spirit of the age has caused us to avoid such serious commitments, then we have cheated ourselves of the opportunity to make serious contributions to our world. It’s the passion of the

commitment that drives the value of the contribution. Complacent people rarely make much of a difference for good as they pass through life.

Christianity — the real thing, not the things that masquerade as Christianity much of the time — has in it large measures of devotedness and devoutness. Peter the apostle wrote, “Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts” (1 Peter 3:15). A part of what that means is that if we intend to be Christians we must reserve the most special place in our hearts for God. We must let Him be what He is: God! At the practical level, that requires dispensing with any loyalties and activities that compete with the exclusive allegiance that is to be given to Him. Being a Christian means “devoting” ourselves in the ultimate way possible, reserving ourselves entirely to the Lord. And it means being “devout” about the issue, maintaining a serious intensity that is worthy of this highest commitment.

In a culture where too few care deeply about anything, counterfeit brands of Christianity are readily available. If all we want is a little “religion” to make our lifestyles respectable, we can surely find that. Churches like Laodicea (Revelation 3:15-19) are conveniently located in most communities, often in the suburbs. But if we desire to participate in the life and rewards of the genuine faith, we will have to come to terms with the requirement of being devoted and devout. In fact, Jesus Christ calls us to a devotion that elevates the very concept to a higher plane. He declared that we must do more than have a lukewarm, limited love for God: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37). Heaven will not be populated by the lackadaisical. On the contrary, those who come to God must “believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6). If we are too modern and too moderate to diligently seek God, then we will not see His face.

-via *Focus Magazine*; November 1998

Remember Our Study Periods

Sunday Mornings at 9:45 a.m.

Wednesday Evenings at 7:00 p.m.

Come Join Us As We Study Together

Beacon of Truth

Radio Program

Every Sunday Morning

on WVNN

770AM – 92.5 FM

8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

Market Street church of Christ
514 West Market Street
Athens, Alabama

News & Notes

THE SICK:

Majorie Dunnivant	Bonnie Sutton
Jennifer Threet	Rebecca Sims
Fay Ferguson	Gwen Bullock
Gilbert Hardy	Joyce & Crutcher Harbin
Eli Williams	Ava Brooke Campbell
Jerry Taylor	Una King Carrier
Phillip Harwell	Elizabeth Kate Miller
Charles Burns	Mark Hargrove
Abby Gilbert	Lisa Swafford
Brittney Murrell	Colton Carruth

In The Hospital:

Billy Abernathy; Memphis Hosp.

Athens Rehabilitation & Senior Care:

Beulah Pope, rm. 100	Matty Murray, rm. 60
Mable Crafts, rm. 63	Dorothy Draper, rm. 97
Robert Johnson, rm. 18	Grady Tomerlin, rm. 102

Limestone Health Facility:

Janet Berryhill, rm. 75-B	Jack Cannon, rm. 111A
Albert Norton, rm. 36	Geneva Davis, rm. 14-E

Limestone Lodge:

Yvonne Sherbert, rm. 11

Brookshire Healthcare - Huntsville:

Rachel Grubbs, rm. 112-C

Floyd E. “Tut” Fann Veterans Home - Huntsville:

Albert Bowers, rm. 115-C

Shut-In:

Reba Adams, at home

Wynell Casteel, at home

Lola Colwell, at home
 Mary Ruth Gardner, at home
 Betty Hasting, at home
 David Rice, Mobile, Alabama
 Ruby Jean Tinnon, at home

OUT OF TOWN: *The Williams: Todd, Julie, Matthew and Philip* are out of town this weekend.

MILITARY SERVICE: Remember *Mitzi Carruth's* son-in-law, *Joel Smith*, who is in Afghanistan serving the U. S. military. Keep him in your prayers.

NEW QUARTER BEGINS NEXT SUNDAY: The new quarter in our Bible classes will begin next Sunday morning, January 5th. The teachers and classes for this quarter are as follows:

- Toddler:* Lisa Wulfekuhl
- Pre-School:* Sharma Hamm
- Primary:* Julie Williams
- Junior High:* Nathaniel Adams/Hunter Cox
- High School/College:* Joel Hamm
- Ladies Class:* Marcella Coblentz
- Adult:* Jordan Lovell (Sunday)
David Cox (Wednesday)

I want to express my appreciation to all of those who taught during the fall quarter for their work and dedication. We had a very good quarter. I am eagerly looking forward to this quarter and hope all will be present and prepared for our periods of Bible study. There are classes for all ages; come join us.

WORK GROUPS: Work Group Three will be meeting this evening after our evening service. If you are in group three, remember to meet with your group tonight.

THE RECORD: Attendance for the week of Dec. 22nd

Sunday:	Bible Classes.....	133
	Morning Worship	195
	Evening Worship.....	135
Wednesday:	Bible Classes.....	104



**The Market Street
 church of Christ Website at:
 MarketStreet-church.com**

Men Privileged To Serve:

Sunday, December 29th

Morning Worship

- Announcements Dwaine Allfrey
- Song Leader Stefan Fudge
- Prayer Kenneth Smith
- Preaching David Cox
- Lord's Supper
- Presiding Joel Hamm
- Assisting Terry Andrews
- Serving Jonathan Keenon Dan Lovell
- Paul Hasting Kenneth Adams
- Closing Prayer Ross Melvin

Evening Worship

- Announcements Dwaine Allfrey
- Song Leader Hunter Cox
- Prayer Todd Williams
- Preaching Joel Hamm
- Lord's Supper Terry Andrews
- Closing Prayer Nathaniel Adams

Other Assignments for Sunday, December 29th:

- Usher Russ Wulfekuhl
- Work Sound System Marty Adams

Wednesday, January 1st:

- Song Leader Hunter Cox
- Bible Reading..... Mark 9:42-50
- Marcus Morris
- Prayer Ronnie Locke
- Invitation David Cox
- Closing Prayer Tommy Burns

Sunday, January 5th:

Morning Worship

- Announcements Terry Andrews
- Song Leader Todd Williams
- Prayer Larry Mitchell
- Preaching David Cox
- Lord's Supper
- Presiding Dwaine Allfrey
- Assisting Ronnie Locke
- Serving Norman Brown Stefan Fudge
- Delmer Carter Landon Adams
- Closing Prayer Marcus Morris

Evening Worship

- Announcements Terry Andrews
- Song Leader Joel Hamm
- Prayer Kenneth Smith
- Preaching Jordan Lovell
- Lord's Supper Dwaine Allfrey
- Closing Prayer Dan Reed

Other Assignments for Sunday, January 5th:

- Usher Marvin Putman
- Work Sound System Nathaniel Adams