

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 VI

February 23, 2014

No.8

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) 232-3312
Joel Hamm..... (256) 278-1977
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

The Way of Balaam

Jeremy Crump

Three passages in the New Testament warn us not to follow the way of Balaam:

"Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness" (2 Peter 2:15-16).

"Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion" (Jude 1:11).

"But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality" (Revelation 2:14).

What exactly is the way of Balaam? Can we fall into this trap today?

Balaam's Story: We first read of Balaam in the Old Testament in Numbers 22-24. Balak, King of Moab, wants to drive Israel out of the land but knows that he is not strong enough to defeat Israel on his own. So he attempts to hire Balaam, a Syrian prophet, to curse Israel. God appears to Balaam and refuses to let him participate in the plan. At first, Balaam obeys but then Balak sends a second group of messengers offering a greater reward. Balaam is enticed by the prospect of Balak's silver and gold. He agrees to go to Moab even while insisting that he could "not go beyond the command of the Lord my God" (Numbers 22:18).

Most of us know what happens next. God sends an angel of the Lord to stand in his way. Balaam cannot see the angel but his donkey does and tries to stop Balaam from moving forward. Eventually the donkey speaks to him and Balaam's eyes are opened to see the angel of the Lord with a drawn sword in his hand. Balaam falls on his face, confesses sin and says to God, "if it is evil in your sight, I will turn back" (Numbers 22:34). God then allows him to continue on to Moab. Once there, Balaam tries

to curse Israel three times but each time God makes him speak a blessing instead. He leaves without being able to curse Israel.

Balaam's Sin: At first, Balaam does not seem like such a bad guy. He initially refuses Balak's offer. But as the story progresses it is clear that Balaam wanted to go from the beginning even though God had forbidden him.

When the second group of messengers come, he responds: "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the command of the Lord my God to do less or more" (Numbers 22:18). Now, this response seems pious but it is more likely that Balaam is negotiating with them for a higher price. Remember Balaam was the first to say anything about "silver and gold." Also, Balaam goes on to invite the messengers to stay while he inquires of God a second time. Why tell them to stay? Why wait to hear what God will say? God had already given him a clear answer the first time; Balaam just did not like the answer he was given.

It is true that Balaam never told Balak that he would curse Israel. However, he went to Balak even though he knew he could not get the money without disobeying God. Why go to a place of sin if you don't intend to sin?

Once there, Balaam attempted to curse Israel and he would have succeeded if God hadn't prevented him. (Deuteronomy 23:4-5) When he said he could only speak what God had put into his mouth, he wasn't being holy, he was being literal. God controlled his mouth and would not let him speak.

Finally, despite being unable to curse Israel, Balaam succeeded in bringing trouble upon them. Numbers 31:8-16 tell us that Balaam taught the Midianite woman to incite Israel into Baal worship. Because of this grave sin, 24,000 Israelites died!

Balaam's Way: There are a number of lessons that we can learn from Balaam:

(1) *Recognize your tempter.* Just like Balak tempted Balaam with promises of wealth, there will be people today that will try to get us to disobey God's commands. They think that if we're offered just the right amount of persuasion, we will disobey. Recognize these men for who they are and don't listen to them!

(2) *Don't underestimate the power of temptation.* Balaam said that he would not disobey God for all the

silver and gold in Balak's house. Ultimately, he sold out for a much lower price.

(3) *Giving in to our desires brings spiritual blindness and madness.* 2 Peter 2:16 speaks of the "madness" of Balaam. Even a dumb donkey could see what Balaam couldn't: that opposing God is crazy!

(4) *God will not prevent us from sinning if that is what we desire.* He did not stop Balaam from going to Moab and He did not keep Israel from engaging in the idolatry that Balaam brought them. God lets us follow our sinful heart. He will not stand in the way. If we want to be rebellious and separate ourselves from Him, He will give us our heart's desire.

(5) *Sin will be punished by God.* Because of the idolatry that Balaam brought to Israel, Moses had him killed (Numbers 31:8). So he eventually got his comeuppance. However, despite the dreadfulness of that punishment, the fate of eternal separation from God- which is reserved for all unrepentant sinners- is much worse!

-via *What Is True?*; Little Rock, Arkansas.

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Building Spirit

Don Truex

Congregations, like the people who compose them, tend to take on a personality all their own. When a particular congregation is mentioned in the course of the conversation, we immediately envision an image of that group. Words such as "growing", "friendly", "strong" or "sound" may come to mind, or sadly, words like "cold", "dead" or "weak." Obviously the former is our goal; the latter we want to avoid like the plague. That will demand, of course, a certain spirit among us. What type?

A Spirit Of Loyalty. Our first loyalty belongs to God, His Son and His word. Yes, I have loyalty to a variety of individuals and organizations, but my first priority must always be devotion and dedication to my

God. We love Him fully only when He is the center and circumference of our lives, that is, when we are seeking as of first importance, His kingdom rule in our individual and congregational lives (Matthew 6:33).

A Spirit of Joy. Recognizing our blessings as God's children, it should be natural for us to rejoice in the Lord always! (Philippians 4:4). It simply is not becoming for children of the King to adopt a cynical, pessimistic, despairing spirit. No, I am not naive about, not ignorant of the difficulties of living in a fallen world. But I do take a measure of comfort in the fact that Jesus said, "In this world you will have trouble; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). A spirit of joy is easier to maintain when we remember who we are, what has been done on our behalf and what we have to look forward to with confidence.

A Spirit of Enthusiasm. Emerson said, "Nothing worthwhile is accomplished without enthusiasm." The work given us to do and the life given us to live is an important one. God has always blessed those who, "in whatever they do, do it heartily as to the Lord" (Colossians 3:23). Thus we are encouraged to make sure that we are never lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope (Romans 12:11-12). If God is truly in us (as the word "enthusiasm" implies), with us, and for us, then we have every reason to approach His work and our life with a sense of energy.

A Spirit of Friendliness. If we would walk in the "Jesus" style, that natural warmth that exists among and for members of our spiritual family must be extended to those who as yet are not a part of our family. The congregation that is not outwardly and openly receptive to visitors and new members will soon find itself without any. We need to continue to make sure they are made to feel "at home".

-via *The Cornerstone*; Richmond, Virginia.



Remember Our Study Periods

Sunday Mornings at 9:45 a.m.

Wednesday Evenings at 7:00 p.m.

News & Notes

THE SICK:

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Lawinda Keenon | Robert Beasley |
| Marjorie Dunnivant | Gilbert Hardy |
| Gwen Bullock | Joyce & Crutcher Harbin |
| Matt Poff | Hank Atwood |
| Mark Hargrove | Carol Locke |
| Ava Brooke Campbell | Brittney Murrell |
| Jerry Taylor | Una King Currier |
| Phillip Harwell | Elizabeth Kate Miller |
| Charles Burns | Abby Gilbert |
| Elizabeth Howard | Eli Williams |

In The Hospital:

Bennie Pepper, HealthSouth; rm. 324

Athens Rehabilitation & Senior Care:

Louise Hardy, rm. 81-A Grady Tomerlin, rm. 102
 Dorothy Draper, rm. 97 Mattye Murray, rm. 60
 Mable Crafts, rm. 63 Gayle Mills, rm. 15
 Robert Johnson, rm. 18

Limestone Health Facility:

Fay Ferguson, rm. 106 Jack Cannon, rm. 111A
 Albert Norton, rm. 36 Janet Berryhill, rm. 75-B
 Geneva Davis, rm. 14-E Bob Richter, rm. 93
 Billy Abernathy, rm. 109

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

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: Please mark your calendars for our spring Gospel Meeting which will be April 20-24, 2014. *Dee Bowman of Pasadena, Texas* will be preaching... Also, our Vacation Bible School will be June 16-19, 2014.

SYMPATHY: We want extend our deepest sympathy to *Dan Reed* in the passing of his uncle, *Newman Pedersen*. He passed away Monday in Oregon, where he lived, after an extended illness. There were graveside services held at Hermiston Cemetery in Hermiston, Oregon on Wednesday morning.

TEACHER'S MEETING: There is a teachers' meeting scheduled for March 9th at 3:15 p.m. for discussion of the upcoming Vacation Bible School in June. I hope that all of the teachers will plan to be present.

GOSPEL MEETINGS: There is a gospel meeting beginning today at the *Hughes Road/Gooch Lane church* in Madison. The meeting will continue through-Wednesday evening. *Ralph Walker of Tampa, Florida* will be the speaker.

ANNUAL SINGING FRIDAY NIGHT: Remember our 3rd Annual Sing will be this coming Friday, February 28th. *David Deason, Joe Greer and Steve Klein* will be leading the singing. I hope that everyone is making their plans to be present. There are cards on the table for you to take and give to those you invite. Also, for those on Facebook there is an event to share with others and you may invite your friends through that medium. We will need several to help greet, usher and assist with parking. If you would like to be involved in this way, please let me know.

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

THE RECORD: Attendance for the week of Feb. 16th

Sunday: Bible Classes..... 137
 Morning Worship 185
 Evening Worship..... 110
Wednesday: Bible Classes..... 102

Third Annual Singing

February 28, 2014 – 7:00 p.m.

Song Leaders: David Deason, Joe Greer & Steve Klein



MARKET STREET CHURCH OF CHRIST
 514 WEST MARKET STREET
 ATHENS, ALABAMA

Men Privileged To Serve:

Sunday, February 23rd:

Morning Worship

Announcements Keith Hinkle
 Song Leader Joel Hamm
 Prayer Terry Andrews
 Preaching David Cox
 Lord's Supper
 Presiding Tommy Coblentz
 Assisting Dwaine Allfrey
 Serving Heath Dollar Kenneth Adams
 Bart Brown Danny Johnson
 Closing Prayer Landon Adams

Evening Worship

Announcements Keith Hinkle
 Song Leader Todd Williams
 Prayer Norman Brown
 Preaching Song Service
 Lord's Supper Tommy Coblentz
 Closing Prayer Mot Dollar

Other Assignments for Sunday, February 23rd:

Usher Larry Mitchell
 Work Sound System Marty Adams

Wednesday, February 26th:

Song Leader Jerry McGlocklin
 Bible Reading Mark 11:27-33
 Dan Reed
 Prayer Ross Melvin
 Invitation David Cox
 Closing Prayer Tommy Burns

Sunday, March 2nd:

Morning Worship

Announcements Terry Andrews
 Song Leader Hunter Cox
 Prayer Dan Reed
 Preaching David Cox
 Lord's Supper
 Presiding Joel Hamm
 Assisting Larry Mitchell
 Serving Bill Claxton David Terry
 Delmer Carter Landon Adams
 Closing Prayer Bonnie Sutton

Evening Worship

Announcements Terry Andrews
 Song Leader Tommy Burns
 Prayer Marty Adams
 Preaching Jordan Lovell
 Lord's Supper Joel Hamm
 Closing Prayer Tommy Coblentz

Other Assignments for Sunday, March 2nd:

Usher Ronnie Locke
 Work Sound System Nathaniel Adams