

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**
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Athens, Alabama 35612
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Volume VI

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No. 27

Finding Contentment In God's Grace

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) 232-3312
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
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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

All too easily forgotten in our longing for the love of God are the words of Proverbs 3:12: "For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives." As a consequence we can feel decidedly betrayed when we are called upon to suffer, sometimes quite painfully, because we are God's children. We may even begin to wish that God did not love us quite so much. But obviously pain has an important part to play in God's loving purpose for His children, and there is much to learn from the life and writings of Paul about how to deal with suffering, not just with patience but with thanksgiving and joy.

Suffering was largely foreign to Paul's early life as a zealous Pharisee. A staunch defender of the faith of his father's he was revered and respected, and on a fast track to becoming one of ancient Judaism's most celebrated rabbis (Galatians 1:14; Philippians 3:4-6). Yet, as a Christian, pain and suffering of every sort dogged him relentlessly until his physically and materially wretched life (2 Corinthians 11:23-27) was ended by Caesar's sword (2 Timothy 4:6). Such is hardly the kind of life, and death, that we as Christians would choose. Hardly the sort of life we would call a model of God's marvelous grace at work. Yet, that is exactly how Paul saw it. And in Paul's view of suffering for the reason he was able to endure so much inward pain and outward conflict undaunted and without the remotest bit of self-pity or regret.

Second Corinthians is known for being the most open hearted of all Paul's epistles. In this letter he speaks openly and often of his suffering, It stuns us a bit to read these catalogues of adversity (chapters 1,4,6,11,12) because they are so uncharacteristic. Ordinarily, Paul found it both uncomfortable and unprofitable to speak about what he had suffered as an apostle of Christ. We might be made to wonder if too many battles have taken their toll on an old warrior but a careful reading of 2 Corinthians will show that the very opposite is true. The truth is that he saw his tribulations as expressions of the grace of God, and he wanted the Corinthians to see that it was not only true for him but for themselves as

well. "And our hope for you is steadfast...that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation" (1:7).

Paul's overwhelming burdens in Asia, that made him despair even of life, were seen blessings in all directions. They taught him to trust God and not in himself (1:9). They comforted him because they were "the sufferings of Christ" (1:5). They prepared him to be a comfort to others who were also going through the fire (1:4). And isn't it remarkable that it was amidst such suffering that he was able to say quite joyfully, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort" (1:3).

In chapter four (vv.7-11) Paul sees his outwardly pathetic state as graphic evidence that the power of the gospel was in the message, not the messenger. He viewed his patient endurance of hardships and privation as a means of proving his selfless love for those he taught (6:3-10) and his suffering and distress as evidence that he was a true servant and apostle of Christ (11:23-33). He was, he said, suffering and dying with Christ so that he might live with Him (2 Corinthians 4:10-11; Galatians 2:20) and he rejoiced in it!

It is near the end of his letter that Paul reveals an early experience that in all likelihood shaped his remarkable response to a lifetime of suffering (12:1-10). Fourteen years before, likely during his retreat in Tarsus (Acts 9:30), he has been caught up into paradise to hear wonderful things that he was forbidden to utter. But from those exhilarating heights Satan had brought him down by some unidentified but very painful "thorn in the flesh." He evidently saw his infirmity as a deterrent to his apostolic calling and earnestly besought the Lord three times to draw it out; and three times he was refused. The Lord's answer was: "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Satan's aim was certainly malevolent but God's was gracious, to prevent in Paul an overweening pride.

Ever since, Paul wrote, he had rejoiced "in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distress, for Christ's sake" because it was in his weakness that he was made strong (2 Corinthians 12:10). Paul realized, as we all must, that until we are emptied of ourselves God cannot fill us, and until we know our own inadequacy, His great power cannot work to transform and make us a blessing to others. We have at last to realize that God's grace is sufficient for us even when suffering

comes that we do not understand and that He does not take away. Trusting in God's goodness and the love of His Son we can know as Paul did in the midst of pain that "all things will work together for good" (Romans 8:28) and that our light and momentary afflictions are working for us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:17).

-via *Thinking On These Things*; Texarkana, Arkansas.

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Some Personal Contributions

Dee Bowman

Just the mention of contributions conjures up the business of making a financial donation of some sort. The Christian will likely think about his obligation to make a weekly contribution to the work of the Lord (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). Those kinds of contributions are certainly necessary and, in the case of the latter, commanded. But there are some contributions that while they are not financial, are as necessary and are likewise commanded.

The contribution of a concerned heart. A lack of concern plagues the cause of Christ today. The reason? Disinterested people. Truth can fall into the streets amid the rubble of humanism, materialism, nihilism, human philosophy and people walk by unconcerned. Fellowship is breached, brotherly love crucified on the altar of individual rights and people see no reason for alarm. Souls in jeopardy look out from sunken eyes and hurting hearts asking for a kind word and a helping gospel and people, rather than showing pathos, turn away, repulsed by the sight.

The lack of concern is reflected in the distaste for evangelistic endeavor. Lost souls are everywhere and people choose not to get involved. When Jesus saw the multitudes in their lost condition, like sheep gone astray, the narrative says "*he was moved with compassion*" (Matthew 9:36-37). No matter that they may not have realized they were lost; He did. Paul said of his own lost countrymen, "*I have great heaviness and continual*

sorrow in my heart" (Romans 9:13). They might not admit to being lost; but he knew and cared. Why is there no such concern, no such compassion among brethren today?

The contribution of a willing mind. Folks very often see what needs to be done, even realize their obligation to get it done, but are yet derelict in getting at it. Excused by procrastination, palliated by their good intentions, and with consciences softened by distant goals, they excuse themselves from getting active in the business of serving God, at least not today. After all, if you intend to sometime, does that not count for anything? Does that not argue a willing mind? Not necessarily.

The willing mind not only concedes the need, but looks for opportunities for involvement. It not only observes the necessity, but is anxious to alleviate it as soon as possible. A truly willing mind and a quick performance are inseparably connected. Solomon was admonished that he "*serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind...for if thou seek him, he will be found of thee*" (1 Chronicles 28:9). The service and the will to do so are bound to one another.

Nearly everyone intends to sooner or later. Such intentions count for little.

The contribution of an active faith. An active faith is a dedicated faith, one that is set apart to some special consideration, in this case, one set apart to work of the Lord. It is the natural result of both the concerned heart and the willing mind. Paul admonishes that we "*walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called*" (Eph.4:1). An active faith seeks expression; it is a faith that cannot rest until it has performed some function to authenticate it. "*Faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone,*" James says (2:17). Actually, this is accommodative language; there is no such thing as a dead faith. A dead faith has no identity; a dead faith does not exist at all.

Hebrews 11 is filled with illustrations of men with active, dedicated faith. Verse 4 - by faith Abel offered a more acceptable sacrifice. Verse 7 - By faith Noah prepared an ark to the saving of his house. By faith Abraham offered Isaac (vs. 17). the list goes on and on. The faith that saves is the faith that tries. The faith that saves is the faith that keeps on trying and never quits.

This kind of faith is for those who are not afraid

(vs., 24-25). It is for those who will seek to honor the word of Him by believing without doubt that He is able to do what He has promised (vs. 30). It is for those willing to endure whatever is necessary in order to prove it (vss. 32-40).

These are not contributions of the rich and famous. They require no special talent, no uncommon amount of money, no special set of circumstances. The concerned heart is not the product of some inherited biological gift, some great ability, but the desire to make all things right with God. The willing heart is not accomplished by doing some great deed, but by the continual, day-by-day giving of one's thoughts to the word of God.

-via *College View Columns*; Florence, Alabama

News & Notes

THE SICK:

Mary Glenna Currier	Ross Melvin
Fay Ferguson	Joe Hinkle
Lona Killen	Jeanette Weir
Ruth Legg	Crutcher Harbin
Gilbert Hardy	Robert Beasley
Gwen Bullock	Dianna Felker Ritter
Charlotte Kellum	Ruth Lawson
Gene Carpenter	Dorothy Casteel
Ava Brooke Campbell	Alex Reed
Elizabeth Howard	David Holt
Joey Hinkle	Charles Burns
Phillip Harwell	Una King Currier
Eli Williams	Elizabeth Kate Miller

In The Hospital:

Mot Beasley; Forsyth Medical Ctr.; Winston-Salem, N.C.

Matt Poff; Vanderbilt Hospital; Nashville, Tenn.

Michael Vaughn; Kindred Hosp. - Rehab; Webster, Texas

Athens Rehabilitation & Senior Care:

Nelva Reed, rm. 75 Grady Tomerlin, rm. 102

Dorothy Draper, rm. 97 Mattye Murray, rm. 2

Mable Crafts, rm. 100 Gayle Mills, rm. 15

Robert Johnson, rm. 18 Mildred Frantz, rm. 31

Judith Groce, rm. 63

Limestone Health Facility:

Albert Norton, rm. 36 Geneva Davis, rm. 14-E

Limestone Lodge:

Yvonne Sherbert, rm. 11

Limestone Manor:

Mary Ruth Gardner, rm. 86

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

Ruby Jean Tinnon, at home

SYMPATHY: We want to extend our deepest sympathy to **Larry Mitchell** and *all the family*, in the passing of Larry's uncle, **Sam Mitchell**. He passed away Thursday, June 26th. His funeral was on Tuesday morning.

OUT OF TOWN: **The Wulfekubls:** *Russ, Lisa and Ali* are on camping this week... **The McLemores:** *Alvis and Ann* are on vacation this weekend in the mountains... **The Williams:** *Todd, Julie, Matthew & Philip* are in Sulligent this weekend.

RESOURCE LIBRARY: As announced last week, on the church's website we now have a resource room from Truth Books there. We will be uploading materials that we have here on the Resource Library as well. This is a great Bible study tool. If you want a login, please give me your email address on a member's card so I can get this set up.

CONFESSION: **Gladys Johnson** this past week confessed that in her life there were times when she had not lived the life that a Christian should. She asked for prayers for her forgiveness and strength. We appreciate sister Johnson for her good heart and her desire to please God. May the Lord continue to bless sister Johnson and may we all encourage her as she has and will encourage us.

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 June 22nd*

Sunday: Bible Classes..... 146
Morning Worship 187
Evening Worship..... 135

Wednesday: Bible Classes..... 121

Men Privileged To Serve:

Sunday, July 6th:

Morning Worship

Announcements Dwaine Allfrey
Song Leader Stefan Fudge
Prayer Norman Brown
Preaching David Cox
Lord's Supper
Presiding Jerry McGlocklin
Assisting Terry Andrews
Serving Delmer Carter James Johnson
..... Marvin Putman Heath Dollar
Closing Prayer Larry Mitchell

Evening Worship

Announcements Dwaine Allfrey
Song Leader Hunter Cox
Prayer Ross Melvin
Preaching Jordan Lovell
Lord's Supper Jerry McGlocklin
Closing Prayer Kenneth Adams

Other Assignments for Sunday, July 6th:

Usher Ronnie Locke
Work Sound System Landon Adams

Wednesday, July 9th:

Song Leader Tommy Burns
Bible Reading..... Mark 15:33-41
..... Dan Reed
Prayer Marty Adams
Invitation Jordan Lovell
Closing Prayer Tommy Coblentz

Sunday, July 13th:

Morning Worship

Announcements Marcus Morris
Song Leader Joel Hamm
Prayer Terry Andrews
Preaching David Cox
Lord's Supper
Presiding Larry Mitchell
Assisting Tommy Coblentz
Serving Steve Usery Bill Claxton
..... Bart Brown Hunter Cox
Closing Prayer Mot Dollar

Evening Worship

Announcements Marcus Morris
Song Leader Stefan Fudge
Prayer Kenneth Smith
Preaching David Cox
Lord's Supper Larry Mitchell
Closing Prayer Keith Hinkle

Other Assignments for Sunday, July 13th:

Usher Delmer Carter
Work Sound System Marty Adams