

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 VII

August 2, 2015

No. 31

Period of the Early Church Unique

George Hutto

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Classes 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship..... 10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship 5:00 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 Coblenz(256) 232-3312
Joel Hamm.....(256) 278-1977
Larry Mitchell(256) 230-0185
Russ Wulfekuhl(256) 683-9396

Evangelists

David A. Cox(256) 233-8910
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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

There are important lessons to be learned from the uniqueness of God's work when the church began. While looking at the early examples, commandments and necessary conclusions in the New Testament, seeing the peculiar elements of the new era is important.

To illustrate, biblical marriage is for life: for social stability among all, for the upbringing of children, for avoiding fornication, etc. Nevertheless, the honeymoon is over relatively soon. A seasoned marriage has its own advantages, but the honeymoon is a unique time in a marriage. So with the early period of the church.

First, the gospel is the good news, the glad tidings, because it was new in the first century church. Of course, it is still a necessary message for sinners today, but it was new for the folks of the first century. The significance of this point is that we were born into a world which takes for granted that Christ came. His birth begins our calendar. The biggest traditional holiday (although not taken from Scripture) centers on His birth.

The world is in need of it as much today as ever, (Matthew 28:18-20) but the excitement of the Messiah's just having come into the world is not meant for today's believers. Excitement over seeing Christ through the eyes of the prophets and the apostles? Yes. Excitement over forgiveness of sins found in the gospel? Yes. Excitement over being part of God's family? Yes. But Christ, the church, the Bible, and God's business come to us as history, not news.

Second, the Holy Spirit worked differently then. The Spirit still works today in the minds and hearts of Christians, but as in the Creation there were miracles, so also in the beginning of the church. Then, there were gifts of the Holy Spirit which brought "signs, wonders and miracles" to prove the Word. (Hebrews 2:4) Today, the work of the Spirit is achieved through the written Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

For that period the gifts of the Holy Spirit had a significant part, but

the abiding things remaining for us are faith, hope, and love (1 Corinthians 13:9-13) Those first Christians sometimes saw the power of God through miraculous feats when the gospel was preached. Today, the power of God is seen in the Word.

Jesus said to those who put too much emphasis on signs, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign" (Mathew 12:39). Surely, if one can see the power of God in the Creation, he can see that God raises the dead. Fulfilled prophecy, the testimony of the apostles, the accuracy of the Bible, and more, accomplish the work of the Spirit today, just as "the Spirit" worked in the simple preaching of Noah long before Christ came in the flesh (1 Peter 3:18-19; 2 Peter 2:5).

Third, the explosion of Christianity was unique. The great expectation of a Messiah, fostered by the Scriptures read in the Roman and Greek cities (Acts 15:21); the miracles performed by the apostles (Mark 16:15,20); the newness of the gospel message (Acts 11:18); and the divine guidance of the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:6-10); all contributed to a revolutionary religious movement.

Paul said in his day that the gospel "was preached to every creature under heaven" (Colossians 1:23) Even taken in context of the Roman world and as a general statement of the impact of Christ, this was a momentous declaration. Within a couple of centuries, Constantine the emperor would claim Christianity as a Roman religion. Judaism was destroyed by it.

Not that any present-day gospel preacher should sneer at a mass baptism, but to expect 3,000 souls to obey the gospel in one day is to disregard the special circumstances of the first century. At first they were "added" to the church by the Lord. (Acts 2:47; 5:14) Then they were "multiplied" (Acts 6:7, 7:17; 9:31). Those were glorious times, and we should seek to emulate them with the preaching of the Word. But let us not get discouraged when multitudes do not respond (2 Peter 3:1-13).

Fourth, the smell of blood was in the air: the blood of the Jewish sacrifices, the blood of Christ, and the blood of martyrs. The beheading of John is a glimpse of the violence which characterized the world into which Christianity was born, along with the slaughter of the innocents, and the gory work of Pilate among the Galileans (Luke 13:1-3).

Lives were sacrificed for a Cause.

The first Christians were thought by Pagans to have more of an abstract religion than a real one, for they did not slaughter animals in their worship rather, they had the Lord's Supper, "the bloodless sacrifice," (Early Christians Speak, p.119.) so much was the change Christ brought into the world. "The blood of bulls and goats" was not in the league with those who gave themselves as "living sacrifices" (Romans 12:1-2).

The resurrection is in focus here. (Acts 17:30-31) The command was "...Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Revelation 2:10) and the gospel message gave them good reason to do so. The martyrs in John's Revelation show the power of not only Christ's sacrifice for our sins, but also the price early Christians paid for the Cause we enjoy.

Fifth, the church was the new dispersion. The Scriptures read among the Gentiles in the Jewish synagogues from the time of Daniel foretold an "everlasting kingdom." In Acts 1 is seen a sample of those believers who came "from every nation under heaven" - from the Jewish dispersion - to celebrate Pentecost. After the resurrection Jerusalem was destroyed, and the gospel of Christ was preached "in all nations." The apostles went into those Jewish synagogues preaching Christ, and the resulting Christians came together in churches, not synagogues.

There was no temple as had been in Jerusalem. Christ never provided for Roman rule or a Vatican. The Scriptures are likewise silent about Salt Lake City and a Quorum of the Twelve.

Headship of the church is found in Christ and His Word (Ephesians 1:20-23) In those early decades, the believers were exhorted to submit to elders in the local churches. (Acts 14:23; Hebrews 13:17) The pattern was set. There would be no church headquarters, but qualified elders were to oversee and shepherd "the flock which is among you" (1 Timothy 3; 1 Peter 5:1-3) Paul sent regards to the Christians at Rome, "The churches of Christ salute you" - those dispersed among the nations (1 Peter 1:1-2).

"Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Lo, here it is' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (Luke 17:20-21, RSV)

-via *Tidings*; Russellville, Alabama.

Healing Sick Marriages

Allen Dvorak

Any marriage which lasts for very long will experience some rough times. If the physical attraction which dominates the engagement period and the beginning of marriage for many couples is not accompanied by an abiding love, the relationship is on shaky ground. The passion which characterized the beginning of the marriage is often cooled by the character flaws which one spouse discovers in the other. It doesn't take long for such a marriage to become "sick," i.e., in danger of dying from its own weakness.

It is a good thing that Americans are not as quick to give up on family members who are physically sick as they seem to be on "sick" marriages. Nursing an ailing marriage back to good health is much harder than just putting it to death by means of a divorce. Divorce is readily attainable and one can put the stress and difficulties of a tempestuous or unfulfilling marriage behind him faster than he can identify the true problems and work to solve them. Divine regulations regarding marriage and divorce are often ignored because they point in a direction which the spouses do not want to go!

Sometimes there is just isn't anything we can do to keep a sick family member from dying. Nevertheless, we will still try whatever treatment is possible or advised, grasping at the smallest hope of recovery. Believe it or not, there is no such thing as a "terminal" marriage, even in cases of adultery! Even "seriously sick" marriages can be healed, but, like serious physical sickness, the recovery process can be long and difficult.

For an ailing marriage to recover, both spouses must be willing to work toward that end. Many marriages die because one or both spouses simply give up on the relationship. It is the definition of frustration and pain for one person to seek to save a marriage while the other spouse is deliberately working to end it. Perhaps the first step in the healing process is for both spouses to decide that the marriage is worth saving.

In order for a doctor to effectively administer treatment to a patient, he must determine the patient's ailment. It is almost impossible to help a troubled marriage without a clear identification of the problem(s). "We just can't get along" is usually not a diagnosis of the

problem, but merely a symptom. Naturally the causes of sick marriages vary, but selfishness is usually at the foundation of most marriage problems. One spouse wants his/her way about something (everything?) and stubbornly refuses to give any ground even in areas in which no moral compromise is involved. Note the company in which the apostle Paul places "selfish ambition": "For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults;" (2 Corinthians 12:20). Describe any marriages you know?

-via *News & Notes*; Madison, Alabama.

News & Notes

THE SICK:

Betty Pepper
Marie Nave
James Abernathy
Jeanette Weir
Irene Inman
Carl Hargrave
Linda Ordonez
Bennie Pepper
Ray Kennedy
Phillip Harwell
Ann Bush
Michael Vaughn
Al Pollard
Anita Willis
Matt Poff
Charles Burns
Analynn Tegg

Lisa Wulfekuhl
Marjorie Dunnivant
Lona Killen
Buddy Pepper
Essie Hardison
Gwen Bullock
Abby Gilbert
Bob Knowlen
Pam Perry
Eli Williams
Ava Brooke Campbell
Ben Hinkle
Elizabeth Kate Miller
Helen Rushing
Una King Carrier
Gene Carpenter

In The Hospital:

Benjy Taylor; Athens-Limestone Hosp., rm. 324

Athens Rehabilitation & Senior Care:

Reba Byram, rm. 73 Grady Tomerlin, rm. 102
Nelva Reed, rm. 111 Dorothy Draper, rm. 97
Helen Trousdale, rm. 43 Evelyn Hogan, rm. 36
Robert Johnson, rm. 18 Mildred Frantz, rm. 31
Gayle Mills, rm. 15 Valeria Dalton, rm. 7
Mable Crafts, rm. 100 Mattye Murray, rm. 2
Judith Groce, rm. 21 Terry Camp, rm. 91

Limestone Health Facility:

Geneva Davis, rm. 14-E
Frances Bowers, rm. 104

Limestone Manor:

Mary Ruth Gardner, rm. 86

Limestone Lodge:

Jerry Gilbert, rm. 20W

Floyd E. "Tut" Fann Veterans Home - Huntsville:

Albert Bowers, rm. 115-C

Shut-In:

Hazel Brooks, at home

Wynell Casteel, at home

Ruby Jean Tinnon, at home

SYMPATHY: We want to extend our deepest sympathy to **Shirley Miller and all the family** in the passing of Shirley's son-in-law, **Dickey Nave**, last Saturday evening. The funeral for Dickey was on Wednesday at Spry Fuenral Home and he was laid to rest in the Wallace Cemetery

NURSING HOME SINGING: Remember the singing at the Athens Rehabilitation and Senior Care on Tuesday evenings at 5:30.

BARBADOS BENEVOLENCE: We are still collecting money for those who would like to help sister **Lorna Sealy**. She lost her house and everything in it due to a fire several weeks ago. The **church at Hindsbury Road** has done what they can to relieve her needs. However, there is no insurance to replace the belongings and her house. Many have already responded, but if you would like to participate in this, please give the money to one of the elders or me.

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.

BAPTISM: We are rejoicing over the decision of **Jim Whitt** to be baptized into Christ this pastweek. Jim was baptized late Tuesday afternoon. We wish a long life for Jim in the services of God. May we all encourage him as he has encouraged us.

THE RECORD: Attendance for the week of July 26th

Sunday: Bible Classes..... 149
Morning Worship 191
Evening Worship..... 143

Wednesday:

Bible Classes..... 123

Remember Our Service This Afternoon at 5:00.

Men Privileged To Serve:

Sunday, August 2nd:

Morning Worship

AnnouncementsJoel Hamm
Song LeaderHunter Cox
Prayer Dan Reed
PreachingDavid Cox
Lord's Supper
Presiding Tony Thomas
Assisting..... Keith Hinkle
Serving..... David Terry Steve Bradley
..... Marvin Putman Bart Brown
Closing Prayer James Johnson

Evening Worship

AnnouncementsJoel Hamm
Song Leader Tyler Cox
Prayer Bonnie Sutton
Preaching Jordan Lovell
Lord's Supper Larry Mitchell
Closing Prayer Kenneth Adams

Other Assignments for Sunday, August 2nd:

Usher Paul Hasting
Work Sound System Nathaniel Adams

Wednesday, August 5th:

Song LeaderStefan Fudge
Bible Reading..... (1 Corinthians 7:35-40)
..... Danny Johnson
Prayer Tommy Coblentz
Invitation Keenon Carrier
Closing Prayer Seth Todd

Sunday, August 9th:

Morning Worship

Announcements Kenneth Smith
Song LeaderStefan Fudge
PrayerJerry McGlocklin
PreachingDavid Cox
Lord's Supper
PresidingJoel Hamm
Assisting..... Mike Ogles
Serving..... Heath Dollar Landon Adams
..... Bill Claxton Jason Conn
Closing Prayer Keenon Carrier

Evening Worship

Announcements Kenneth Smith
Song Leader Tommy Burns
Prayer Russell Melvin
PreachingDavid Cox
Lord's SupperJoel Hamm
Closing Prayer Tommy Coblentz

Other Assignments for Sunday, August 9th:

Usher Ronnie Locke
Work Sound System Nathaniel Adams