

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 VIII

July 10, 2016

No. 28

Overcoming Bitterness

Lawrence Kelley

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

Evangelist

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

So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" So he cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree. When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet (Exodus 15:22-25).

God knows the hearts of His people better than they know their hearts themselves. Because our hearts are frequently not in the right place, He puts us in circumstances that reveal our shortcomings to us. When the new nation of Israel came out of Egypt their hearts were bitter and one of the first things God did for them was show them their fault. He did this by leading them for three days through a searing desert with no water only to bring them at last to an oasis with bitter water. God brought bitter people face to face with bitter water. This hard circumstance revealed the hearts of the people. After the people complained, God directed Moses to take a particular tree and cast it into the water which made the waters sweet.

We tend to think that circumstances cause us to become bitter, but this is not the case. Bitterness is not something that happens to us, it is a characteristic we develop. This can be seen easy enough in the lives of two different people faced with similar circumstances. I've known people to go through a lot of trials and hardships and maintain a grateful and gracious spirit throughout. I've seen others face similar trials only to become angry and embittered souls. In both cases the hardship revealed the heart more than it formed the heart. If we are filled with sweetness and something jostles us, then sweetness spills out. If we are filled with bitterness and we get jostled then battery acid goes everywhere.

Sometimes when bitterness spills out, we still don't see it for what it is. So, it may be helpful to point out some of its identifying characteristics.

First, bitterness differs from guilt in that guilt is how we feel when we realize we have wronged others, but bitterness is how we feel when

we believe others have wronged us. Israel believed God and Moses had done them wrong by leading them out into the wilderness to die of thirst. This means our bitter feelings can result from incorrect perceptions as well as real offenses. It also shows us that bitterness can be directed at God as well as man and frequently when we think it is all directed at man it is really directed at God. We need to recognize that God often leads us into very difficult circumstances, as He did with Israel, and that He does so for our good whether we can see the good in it or not.

Second, bitterness is personal. Great sins committed against humanity in Iraq or some other place might appall us but they do not make us bitter. However, small offenses, “he doesn’t pick his socks up off the floor,” make us bitter. It is the nearness not the enormity of the sin that makes us bitter. This is why bitterness is usually felt toward fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, children, roommates, co-workers, business partners, neighbors and brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Third, bitterness is into details and it remembers everything. You have had thousands of conversations in your life, most of which you have forgotten. But this one took place years ago, and you remember every single word, his intonation the inflection of his voice. You know exactly what happened, which means, you are bitter. Why can we remember the details so vividly? Because repetition is the mother of learning. We Review, Review, Review. Then he said “...” so I said to him “...”. These things stay with us because bitterness doesn’t want to go away. It wants to hang around and dominate our thinking till it chokes the life out of us.

The only thing to be done with bitterness is to put it away (Ephesians 4:31). This is because bitterness festers over time. We may be able to suppress it for a while, but sooner or later an opportunity to bring up the past will arise and it will return with renewed vigor. Therefore, the Hebrew writer warns us to be aware lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble (Hebrews 12:5).

When once we recognize that bitterness has crept into our hearts, how can we go about getting rid of it? The first thing is to acknowledge that my bitterness is my sin. I own it. The other person’s sin isn’t the issue. We may not say, “I’ll stop being bitter, when they say they’re sorry.” My repentance cannot be contingent upon the repentance of others.

I’ve known people who were so bitter, that when the other person apologized they still couldn’t let it go. I’ve known people who remained bitter at people who were

dead. The prisons are full of people who murdered the person at whom they were bitter and they are more bitter now than ever. A bitter person will stop being bitter, only when they confess it to God, repent of it and accept His pardon. When this happens it is often surprising how quickly the other person asks your forgiveness and, how easily you will be able to accept them.

The power to put away bitterness is just like the power to eliminate any other sin – it is a power that comes to us by the grace of God Ephesians 4:32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. Here we are told to take what we have been given and extend it to others. We serve a God who doesn’t ladle out forgiveness in a teaspoon, but pours it out in buckets. The true test of our standing in His grace is the measure of grace we extend to those who have wronged us. We don’t ever want to be in the position of the unmerciful servant who having been forgiven an immense debt, couldn’t forgive a trifle.

This means that if we get hit by a hard circumstance and bile begins to bubble up, the first thing we need to do is stop and thank God for revealing to us a reality that had previously escaped our notice. The next thing is to ask Him to cast a tree into our bitter water that will make it sweet. Of course, He has done just that. In the middle of history God placed a tree in the middle of the world and gave His Son to die on that tree in order to take away our bitterness and replace it with the sweetness of Christ who pled that His enemies might be pardoned.

~via *Lost River Bulletin*; Bowling Green, Kentucky.



God’s Grace In Trials

John Humphries

Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 of a painful affliction of some kind, though we are not told just what it was. The “thorn” was in Paul’s flesh, and God permitted it, to keep Paul humble and conscious of his own weaknesses and his dependence upon the Lord. Paul, therefore, could be of greater service to the Lord with this infirmity than without it. He had prayed to God

three times for healing, but the Lord's answer was to refuse to heal Paul, and to remind him that His grace was sufficient to help him to bear up under the pain. It is far better to experience God's grace in sickness than to enjoy good health, but be less useful in the service of the Lord. The Lord was in effect telling Paul it was His will that Paul not be healed, because He knew what was best for Paul under the circumstances; far better than Paul himself (Psalm 139:1-6; James 1:2-4). In the words of James, the testing of Paul's faith worked patience and mature strength.

Please notice how Paul reacted. Did he become despondent and complain to God and everyone around him? Did he begin to find fault with the Lord because He did not answer his prayer for the "thorn" to be removed? Is there any indication Paul was angry because someone (with their head on backwards) upset him by telling him he wasn't healed because he did not have enough faith to be made well? Did Paul make others around him uncomfortable or miserable because of his ill temper or constant complaining? No, there is no indication of any of these things happening. Instead, because of his wisdom and faith, Paul humbly submitted himself to the will of God. If God had chosen to heal Paul, then glory be to the Lord; and if He chose not to heal him, glory be to God anyway! This was Paul's attitude in this painful matter. Note verse ten again, "There I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecution, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong." Paul places the entire matter into the hand of the Lord, and humbly submitted to His will, rather than continue to seek an answer that would gratify his own personal desires. This should be the pattern for each and every sincere child of God that is suffering through a painful trial or experience (Philippians 4:9-13). We need to "take our burden to the Lord and leave it there."

These changes in life, can be an occasion of blessing, as our faith is made stronger as a result of leaning upon the Lord. Remember, a gem cannot be polished without friction, nor faith perfected without the abrasion of trials. The beauty of holiness never is so radiant than when displayed by a humble child of God, who bears up under severe trials and testing, ever leaning upon the mighty hand of God. This is a testimony that speaks with eloquent voice to an unbelieving world, and to a shaken brotherhood of fellow believers alike.

~via *Melrose Memo*; Richardson, Texas.

Remember Our Service This Evening at 5:00.

News & Notes...

THE SICK:

JoAnn Gilbert
Nikki Ogles
Dan Lovell
Patsy Thomas
Doris Lovell
Wayne Gooch
Linda Jones

Cornelia Pepper
Bobbie Adcock
Reba Byram
Irene Inman
Gilbert Hardy
Ann Bush
Shaun Carruth

Those Undergoing Treatments or Chronic Illness:

Ella Melvin
Mot Dollar
Janice Cagle
Gene Carpenter
Linda Ordonez
Gladys Sandlin
Ray Kennedy
Elizabeth Howard
Phillip Harwell
Shayna Tollison
Anita Willis
Diane Kilpatrick

Gayle Ball
Jeanette Weir
Eli Williams
Betty Hamm
Charles Burns
Al Pollard
Ava Brooke Campbell
Matt Poff
Una King Currier
Daniel Ogles
Jenny Pickens
Cindy Walker

In The Hospital:

Glenda Lankford; Athens-Limestone Hospital, rm. 218

Charlie Christopher, Athens-Limestone Hosp., rm. 207

Athens Rehabilitation & Senior Care:

Nelva Reed, rm. 61	William Thomas, rm. 70
Judith Groce, rm. 10-B	Dorothy Draper, rm. 104
Matty Murray, rm. 2	Helen Trousdale, rm. 30
Valeria Dalton, rm. 7	Grady Tomerlin, rm. 38
Terry Camp, rm. 82	Mildred Frantz, rm. 31
Gayle Mills, rm. 15	Evelyn Hogan, rm. 36
Mable Crafts, rm. 39	

Limestone Health Facility:

Jerry Gilbert, rm. 55	Geneva Davis, rm. 14-E
Hazel Brooks, rm. 57	

Shut-In or Away From Home:

Robert & Mot Beasley, at Merrill Gardens, Madison
Hazel Brooks, Nursing Home In Pulaski, Tennessee
Gwen Bullock, at granddaughter's in Huntsville
Wynell Casteel, at home
Marjorie Dunnivant, at Brookdale Farms, Huntsville
Mary Ruth Gardner, at Merrill Gardens, Madison
Carl Hargrave, at granddaughter's home in Hartselle
Essie Hardison, at home

Ruby Jean Tinnon, at home

SYMPATHY: We want to extend our deepest sympathy to *Kenneth Smith and all the family* in the passing of Kenneth's sister, *Carolyn Turner*. She passed away Tuesday. Her visitation was Thursday night and her funeral was on Friday morning at Limestone Chapel. She was laid to rest in the Athens City Cemetery.

GOSPEL MEETINGS/VBS: The *Hillsboro Heights church* in Moulton is beginning a gospel meeting today and it will continue through Friday. *Stacy Crim* will be the speaker in this meeting... The *Parkway church* in Lawrence county is beginning a gospel meeting today and it will continue through Friday. *Colby Junkin* will be the speaker in this meeting... The *Anderson church* in Anderson is beginning a VBS on Monday and it will continue through Friday. *Joe Corley* will be the speaker in the adult class... The *Brookhill church* in Killen is beginning a VBS on Thursday evening and it will continue through Saturday. The times and speakers are as follows: Thursday 7:00 p.m. – *Frank Richey*; Friday 7:00 p.m. – *Don Miller*; Saturday 10:00 a.m. – *Kenny Moorer*; Saturday 11:00 a.m. – *Lowell Sallee*.

OUT OF TOWN: *Nancy Hardison* is in North Carolina... *Glenda Stinnett* has been on an extended trip out west... *Russ Wulfekuhl* is back home now after being on a hiking trip in California.

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

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.

THE RECORD: Attendance for the week of June 26th

Sunday:	Bible Classes	146
	Morning Worship	200
	Evening Worship	128
Wednesday:	Bible Classes	131



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

Men Privileged To Serve:

Sunday, July 10th:

Morning Worship

Announcements.....	Tommy Coblentz
Song Leader	Joel Hamm
Prayer.....	Harvey Nixon
Preaching.....	David Cox
Lord's Supper	
Presiding.....	Russell Melvin
Assisting	Jordan Lovell
Serving	Heath Dollar Matthew Vaughn
 Stefan Fudge..... Mike Ogles
Closing Prayer	Larry Mitchell

Evening Worship

Announcements.....	Tommy Coblentz
Song Leader	Tony Thomas
Prayer.....	Kenneth Smith
Preaching.....	David Cox
Lord's Supper	Russell Melvin
Closing Prayer	Arvid McGuire

Other Assignments for Sunday, July 10th:

Ushers.....	Keenon Currier/Danny Johnson
Work Sound System.....	Terry Andrews

Wednesday, July 13th:

Song Leader	A.J. Price
Bible Reading	2 Corinthians 12:1-10
 Nathaniel Adams
Prayer.....	Marty Adams
Invitation	David Cox
Closing Prayer	Marcus Morris

Sunday, July 17th:

Morning Worship

Announcements.....	Dwaine Allfrey
Song Leader	Hunter Cix
Prayer.....	Joel Hamm
Preaching.....	David Cox
Lord's Supper	
Presiding.....	Terry Andrews
Assisting	Keith Hinkle
Serving	Jason Conn Marion Mitchell
 A. J. Price..... Charles Vaughn
Closing Prayer	Bonnie Sutton

Evening Worship

Announcements.....	Dwaine Allfrey
Song Leader	Stefan Fudge
Prayer.....	Tommy Coblentz
Preaching.....	David Cox
Lord's Supper	Terry Andrews
Closing Prayer	Keenon Currier

Other Assignments for Sunday, July 17th:

Ushers.....	Steve Usery/Russ Wulfekuhl
Work Sound System.....	Landon Adams