

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

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No. 5

The Soldiers and the Cross

Jordan Shouse

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 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
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Market Street church.*

David A. Cox, Editor

The Roman soldiers were professionals in execution. Like thousands before and after Jesus, they marched the Son of God to “the place of the Skull” where He was to suffer a vicious, embarrassing death. The Roman soldiers were instruments of cruelty and pain. It was the Roman soldiers who scourged Jesus (Matthew 27:26). It was the Roman soldiers who put the robe on His back, who fashioned the crown of thorns and beat it into His skull (Matthew 27:28-31). They mocked Him as the “King of the Jews.” They spat upon Him. They treated Jesus like one of their low-life victims.

When we look to the Roman soldiers at the scene of the cross, we see two very different pictures.

On one hand you see the soldiers gambling for Jesus’ possessions. According to tradition, the guards were given the possessions of the condemned. You might expect the spoils to be few from a man who confessed that “foxes have holes, the birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no where to lay His head” (Luke 9:58). No money. No jewelry. No matter. These soldiers will gladly gamble for whatever bounty this crucified King may have (John 19:23-24). Like Caiaphas before them, they are unknowingly playing their role in the fulfillment of prophecy (John 11:49).

In looking at the gambling soldiers, you have to wonder how many today are following in their footsteps? “What’s in it for me?” has become our national cliché. Much of modern religion seems to be built upon the creed that we are happy to be Christians provided the Provider provides. We put some cheap prices on the love of God and the blood of Jesus when we play games at the foot of the cross. “If God loved me...I wouldn’t be sick...I’d have a job...I’d have more money...my family would be happy... and seeing this, the Savior must cry.

How could they? But how can we be so close to the blood of Christ and yet be so preoccupied with our selfish interests? May it never be said of us what one author wrote of these gambling soldiers: “So close to the timber, yet so far from the blood. So close to the cross, but so far from the Christ.”

On the other hand there's the Centurion's confession. On a normal day he would be commanding a hundred of Rome's finest fighting men. On this day he is supervising a four-man death squad. No doubt he had seen men die. He had heard their despair as pain overtook their resolve. He had heard them curse their executioners, their father and mother, and the day they were born. No doubt he had heard them curse God.

But on this day he heard the Son of God. He heard the Savior offer forgiveness to the mob, and hope to a thief. He heard the cry of victory and the prayer of faith. Had the Centurion seen Jesus raise the dead, walk on water, or give sight to the blind? I don't know. But he saw Jesus die. He heard the Victor's cry. He felt the earth quake and stood in awe of the blackness that replaced the noon-day sun. For the Centurion, the evidence was overwhelming and the conclusion was obvious: "Truly this man was the Son of God" (Mark 15:39).

Of all the things in God's creation, it is the cross that cannot be ignored. The cross which exposes the enormity of our sin also demonstrates the depth of God's love for man.

Two groups of soldiers. One was focused on self-gain and possessions, the other on the Lord who was slain.

What do you see when you gaze at the old rugged cross?

~via *Laurel Canyon Bulletin*; Columbus, Ohio.



No Middle Ground

Randy Harshbarger

Jesus Christ is widely misunderstood. Who He is, what He taught, and how He taught are all subjects for discussion and much confusion. Some believe Jesus taught that men are free to believe and do whatever they like and at the same time be pleasing to God. The Lord never said: "Believe what you wish and do as you please." Some say that Jesus is so good that He would never allow anyone to be lost. Yes, Jesus is good, but at the same time, He never told anyone that they could ignore or pervert His word.

Generally, people misunderstand Jesus because they want to misunderstand Him. Consider what Jesus

himself says in Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it." Among other things we learn from this verse that there can be no middle ground to occupy in our service and obedience to the Lord.

For example, we must accept either the invitation of Jesus to be saved or we will be accepting the invitation of Satan to be lost. Jesus and Satan are real (John 1:1-3; Matthew 4:1-11). We either hearken to the Lord or fail to obey Him. Jesus says we must obey (Hebrews 5:8-9). The Lord invites and the Devil seeks our destruction (Matthew 11:28-30; 1 Peter 5:8).

We must accept the truth of Jesus Christ or we will be accepting false doctrine. To refuse to learn and heed the words of the Lord is to embrace something else that is wrong! There is only one body of truth (Ephesians 4:4-6). Only by obeying the Lord and His word can we be saved (Romans 1:16). False doctrine is powerless to save anyone. We cannot occupy middle ground when it comes to believing and obeying the Lord.

There can be no middle ground between the narrow gate and the wide gate. The narrow gate is that by which men leave the world of sin and rebellion and become part of God's family (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:21-23). No person accidentally enters the narrow gate. When we hear, believe, and obey the truth that brings us to Christ. The wide gate is entered when men turn from the Lord to sin. Sin is a violation of God's word (1 John 3:4). You can enter the wide gate in many ways but it leads to spiritual death and ruin.

The straitened way leads to heaven. It is often difficult and you will sometimes be alone. This way involves a commitment to Jesus Christ, truth, and righteousness. And, there are only two destinies awaiting all men. Heaven and hell are the only two possibilities. Every man who enters in at the narrow gate and walks faithfully down the straitened way will have eternal life in heaven with God and Christ. Every man who enters the wide gate and walks down the broad way will be cast into eternal punishment. Hell will be his home forever. No middle ground, no purgatory, no second chance.

Are you occupying middle ground in your service to the Lord? Have you truly dedicated yourself to the proposition of putting the Lord first in all you do? "Ponder the path of thy feet." "The gate stands ajar for you."

~via *Power Talk*; Lexington, Kentucky.

The Importance of Obeying God While You Are Young

Tony Mauch

Many young people today have the attitude that it really isn't important to obey the gospel right now. Young people reach the age of accountability and do not consider their spiritual life as important. Maybe this is partly the fault of parents and our youth-oriented society. Whatever the reasons, young people need to realize that it is very important that they are baptized into Christ while they are young. Several reasons can be given for the necessity of this.

In Ecclesiastes 12:1, the wise writer said, "Remember now the Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." Three reasons for obeying God while we are young are given in this verse alone. First, one should obey because evil days will come. Secondly, the years will draw nigh and thirdly, there will be no pleasure in those days. When one grows old the vibrancy of youth has gone. If one does not obey God when he is young, he will probably have less an inclination to do so when he is old. The infirmities of old age have kept some people from obeying the gospel when they should have obeyed God when they were young.

Secondly, one should obey God while he or she is yet young because when you are young there is less to repent of in your life. The command to repent, Acts 17:30, is a hard command. It simply means to turn from sin unto God. The older a person gets, the more sins he has committed and the more that he needs to repent of in order to serve God acceptably. The longer one waits the harder it becomes to obey.

Thirdly, a person should obey God while he is young because he may die young!! Hebrews 9:27 tells us that "it is appointed unto men once to die." It doesn't say when and if and makes no guarantee that it will be late in life. Many young people have died whether by accident, illness, or suicide. Many have died without a hope of eternal existence with God, because they did not obey God before they died. The newspaper is filled daily with stories of young people who have died and what a tragedy it is. A greater tragedy is for a young person never to obey the gospel and to be baptized for the remission of sins. In conclusion, read Ecclesiastes 11:9-10. When speaking of youth the writer said, "For

all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Today is the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2)!

~via *Russellville Reminders*; Russellville, Alabama.

News & Notes

THE SICK:

Sherry Davis	Kenia Adams
Mary Will Johnston	Cornelia Pepper
Patsy Thomas	Doris Lovell
Cindy Glass	Peggy Pepper
Shelly Scruggs	Linda Jones
Al Bush	Shaun Carruth
Everette "Bud" Dollar	Ann Bush
Wayne Bolton	Wayne Gooch
Ashley Sims	Pamela Simon (Grenada)

Updates:

Ross Melvin had some oral surgery done on Tuesday... **Wynell Romine**, **Joyce McGlocklin's sister**, had surgery on Friday... **Steve Carpenter**, **Lona Jackson's brother**, is scheduled to have surgery on December 16th at Crestwood Hospital.

Those Undergoing Treatments or Chronic Illness:

Joe Leopard	Ella Melvin
Reba Byram	Irene Inman
Gayle Ball	Janice Cagle
Jeanette Weir	Daniel Ogles
Diane Kilpatrick	Linda Ordonez
Wayne Wooldridge	Cindy Walker
Jenny Pickens	Gene Carpenter
Charles Burns	Betty Christopher
Al Pollard	Ava Brooke Campbell
Elizabeth Howard	Matt Poff
Phillip Harwell	Una King Currier
Shayna Tollison	Eli Williams
Anita Willis	Brittany Bates Carter

In The Hospital:

Norman Hamm; Millenium Rehab - Huntsville
Wynell Romine; ECM Hospital - Florence

Athens Rehabilitation & Senior Care:

Nelva Reed, rm. 61	William Thomas, rm. 82
Judith Groce, rm. 10-B	Dorothy Draper, rm. 104
Matty Murray, rm. 2	Helen Trousdale, rm. 43

Valeria Dalton, rm. 7 Grady Tomerlin, rm. 40
 Terry Camp, rm. 82 Mildred Frantz, rm. 31
 Gayle Mills, rm. 15 Evelyn Hogan, rm. 36
 Mable Crafts, rm. 39 Christine Hudson, rm. 77
 Joyce Martin, rm. 73 Sharon Parker, rm. 10

Limestone Health Facility:

Jerry Gilbert, rm. 55

Shut-In or Away From Home:

Robert & Mot Beasley, at Merrill Gardens, Madison
 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

E-MAIL MONTHLY BIBLE LESSONS: I would like to start sending e-mail Bible lessons out to everyone that would like to receive them. If you would want to do this, please indicate it on the Member's Card you fill out. I will start sending the first lesson out this week for December.

SYMPATHY: We want to extend our deepest sympathy to **Danny Holt** and *all the family* in the passing of his uncle, **Thomas Alvin Holt**, last weekend. His funeral was on Monday at Spry Funeral Home. He was laid to rest in the Bottoms Cemetery... Also, we want to express our deepest sympathy to **Keith Hinkle** and *all the family* in the passing of Keith uncle, **Kenneth Hinkle**, this past Wednesday. His funeral was Saturday at Limestone Chapel. He was laid to rest in the Roselawn Cemetery.

OUT OF TOWN: **Harvey & Pat Nixon** are in Arkansas this weekend... **Tyler Cox** has been in Peru working with his schooling.

PLACED MEMBERSHIP: **Jackie Cox** moved to Athens last week and has let it be known that she desires to be a part of the work at Market Street. We are glad she is here and want to extend a warm welcome to her.

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

THE RECORD: Attendance for the week of Dec. 4th

Sunday: Bible Classes 134
 Morning Worship 180
 Evening Worship 115
 Wednesday: Bible Classes 91

Men Privileged To Serve:

Sunday, December 11th:

Morning Worship

Announcements.....Tommy Coblentz
 Song Leader Hunter Cox
 Prayer..... Dwaine Allfrey
 Preaching..... David Cox
 Lord's Supper
 Presiding.....Keith Hinkle
 Assisting..... Marty Adams
 ServingDanny Johnson..... Bonnie Sutton
Matthew Vaughn..... Jason Conn
 Closing Prayer Russell Melvin

Evening Worship

Announcements.....Tommy Coblentz
 Song Leader Tommy Burns
 Prayer..... Tony Thomas
 Preaching..... David Cox
 Lord's Supper Keith Hinkle
 Closing Prayer Marion Mitchell

Other Assignments for Sunday, December 11th:

Ushers..... Larry Mitchell/Heath Dollar
 Work Sound System..... Terry Andrews

Wednesday, December 14th:

Song Leader A. J. Price
 Bible Reading..... Ephesians 3:14-21
 Steve Usery
 Prayer..... Joel Hamm
 Invitation..... Mike Ogles
 Closing Prayer James Johnson

Sunday, December 18th:

Morning Worship

Announcements..... Dwaine Allfrey
 Song Leader Tyler Cox
 Prayer..... A. J. Price
 Preaching..... David Cox
 Lord's Supper
 Presiding..... Russell Melvin
 Assisting..... Marcus Morris
 ServingTommy Burns..... Landon Adams
Marion Mitchell..... Larry Mitchell
 Closing Prayer Kenneth Smith

Evening Worship

Announcements..... Dwaine Allfrey
 Song Leader Joel Hamm
 Prayer..... Terry Andrews
 Preaching..... David Cox
 Lord's Supper Russell Melvin
 Closing Prayer Arvid McGuire

Other Assignments for Sunday, December 18th:

Ushers..... Marvin Putman/Keenan Currier
 Work Sound System..... Marty Adams