

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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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

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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

Faith Is Hard Work

Rick Lanning

From the following list what do you suppose takes more work?

1. Faith in God and Christ
2. Repentance of your sins
3. Confession of Christ and of your sins
4. Baptism for the remission of your sins
5. Walking worthy of your calling as a disciple of Christ

I suppose you could make an argument for several on this list. For instance, the passage on repentance in 2 Corinthians 7:10-11 would make a great case for #2. Repentance is surely hard work when you consider that "godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation... what diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication!" That's hard.

Some would likely say that #5 is obviously the hardest, since it would require an entire lifetime to obey. Scriptures like 2 Peter 1:5-7 describes adding to our faith the following graces: "virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love." Jesus finished the great commission with the requirement for a baptized believer to teach them "all things whatsoever I have commanded" (Matthew 28:20). That's a lot to learn and obey.

I would like to suggest that #1 is probably the hardest work regarding my salvation. This will likely surprise many Bible students, and especially those who make the argument that, "we are not saved by works, but by faith." In point of fact, true saving faith is extremely hard work! Consider the following:

Read the book of Acts and underline every time Paul preached to lost souls by using the words "reason" (Acts 23:28; 26:25), "reasoning" (Acts 19:8-9), "reasoned" (Acts 17:2,17; 18:4,19; 24:25), and also note "reasonable" in Romans 12:1. Think about it. Trying to reason out an argument to its full conclusion is an exercise of the mind that will leave you exhausted. Taking all the facts presented, filtering them all to ensure a right conclusion, then drawing a verdict that convinces you "beyond a reasonable doubt," is tough stuff. It takes days, weeks, months and sometimes years to accurately build a case for faith in God and Jesus Christ.

If you were sitting on a jury in a murder trial and had to weigh all the evidence to render a verdict of “guilty” or “innocent,” knowing a person’s life is in the balance, you would know much better the meaning of faith and how much work it takes to decide “beyond a reasonable doubt” (which is how a judge will ask you to think). It takes mind-bending work for your decision to be right. How much more when your soul is on trial, and you are being weighed in the balance, do you want to be sure of your faith? Do you see now why it could be that **faith** is the hardest step in your salvation? It is surely **work**, just as James said (James 2:14-26).

~via *Northwest Bulletin*; New Hope, Minnesota.



You Can't Grow If You're Dead!

Ken Weliever

A lady was picking through the turkeys at her local grocery store, but was frustrated that she couldn't find one big enough for her family. As a stock boy walked by she asked, “Do these turkeys get any bigger?”

The stock boy seriously replied, “No ma'am, they're dead.”

This story reminds me that the reason some people don't grow is that they are dead. Oh, I don't mean physically dead. But their spiritual senses are deadened. The Bible speaks of one being “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1).

Ironically, I've had people say they will obey the gospel once they get their life right. Or a fallen away Christian promises to return to the Lord, once they “make some changes.” That's getting the proverbial “cart before the horse!” One must experience renewal, regeneration, and restoration before change and growth can occur. One must become dead to sin, so they can become alive to Christ (Romans 6:1-17).

Then you can fulfill Peter's command, “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

But growth is a process. It takes time. Requires effort. Demands intentionality. If we are going to grow

spiritually there are three things we should expect in the process.

(1) **Growth Involves Change.** The only constant in life is change! Since our lives are filled with change, accept it. Embrace it! And use it to your advantage. Believe YOU can change! You can grow!

Christian commitment brings changes. A change in relationships. Attitudes. Habits. Lifestyle.

Don't buy into the excuse, “that's just the way I am.” If you do, you won't change or grow.

(2) **Growth Involves Challenges.** Christians still have temptations to overcome. The devil wants us back! And he will throw everything in our path to hinder our Christian walk. The good news is that God is there to help us.

Strengthen us. Empower us. (1 Corinthians 10: 13; 1 Peter 5:7-8).

Christians will encounter the normal problems of living life. We are not exempt from trouble. Trials. And worry. God cares about our problems and will provide peace. Comfort. Hope.

Will we struggle at times to remain faithful? Yes! That's why so many of the New Testament letters were written to encourage us. Edify us. Spur us on.

(3) **Growth Involves Pain.** Athletic participation involves pain. Training. Practice. Exercise. All involve pain. Paul pictures the Christian life with metaphors like a race, a boxing match, and a soldier in warfare. All of these invoke images of painful exercise. In fact the apostle graphically described the process in these terms.

“Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize” (1 Corinthians 9:25-27).

Today, this week, commit to spiritual growth. Yes, it will require change, bring challenges, and cause pain, but the result will be joy! The joy of success! Growth! Victory!

But remember this. You can't grow if you are dead! Accept God's grace. Commit to Christ. Embrace and Obey His Gospel. Become alive again spiritually. Then you can begin to grow!

~via *Family Matters - West Main*; Lewisville, Texas.

Overcoming Obstacles To God's Mercy

David B. Hartsell

Jesus told a story about a servant that owed his master 10,000 talents and could not pay back this massive sum (Matthew 18:21-27). The master forgave him the entire debt. What a tremendous master! Of course, the master represents God and the indebted servant describes us, sinners who can't erase one sin much less all of them. God's loving mercy overwhelms the sinner's ability to understand it. Obstacles exist for those who long for and need God's forgiveness. These hindrances endanger the grace and mercy we long for.

Sin offends God! It destroys man's relationship with the Lord. He grieves over the great chasm of sin that separates all men from him. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). Mankind can regain their close fellowship with God but only through a special type of faith that involves genuine repentance and commitment to The Lord. Without this faith we are lost (Mark 16:15-16 and Luke 13:3-5). The saving message seems simple, and intellectually it is. However, man must be able to see himself as a sinner, hopeless and helpless, without God. Until one does he can't humbly turn to The Lord. Too many proud people try to deny or excuse their sins, only to later confess them in some general way. King Saul demonstrates this pattern perfectly. The Lord instructs Saul to fight and completely destroy the wicked Amalekites with their flocks and herds. Instead, Saul returns with Agag, Amalek's king, and the best of the animals. When confronted by Samuel regarding his disobedience Saul first said he did obey, next he excuses his actions by blaming the people, and finally he says, "I have sinned" (1 Samuel 15:19-30). One of the greatest obstacles to truly turning to God is human pride. Unless and until one can see himself as a sinner he is lost!

Sinful attitudes and activities also obstruct people from becoming true followers of Jesus Christ. Jesus lays down simple but strict requirements for discipleship. "Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23). Two things can prevent us from tasting of God's mercy. The force of habit causes people to do many things without thinking

them through: drinking alcohol, bad language, or inappropriate literature. Habit feels comfortable and easily can sweep us away from our Savior. Habit practiced too long becomes character. Also, pleasure can enslave people. Obviously the works of the flesh often controls one's heart and diverts them away from God's saving mercy (Rom. 1:18-21). Sometimes fleshly sins involve transgressions with our heart and our mouth, these are just as condemning (Galatians 5:19-21 and Ephesians 4:24-29).

Salvation by God's mercy is free but it places great obligations on us. To be children of God means first seeing ourselves for what we are, "sinners." Only then can we humble ourselves to allow our Lord to save us from the evil one (1 Peter 5:8).

~via *It Is Written*; Kerrville, Texas.

News & Notes

THE SICK:

Angie Hinkle	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:

Drew Ogles continues to await on results from his allergy tests that he has had done ... **Angie Hinkle** is scheduled to have an infusion done on Monday ... **Cindy Glass** has not done as well recently with her prolotherapy treatments she takes in Nashville. She will continue them and will take off the remainder of the school year... **Steve Carpenter, Lona Jackson's brother**, had surgery on Friday to remove a tumor. The tumor was benign... **Joyce McGlocklin's sister, Wynell Romine**, is out of the hospital following her surgery last week and is in the Athens Rehabilitation and Sr. Care.

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 Carrier
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
Wynell Romine, rm. 109	

Limestone Health Facility:

Jerry Gilbert, rm. 39

Shut-In or Away From Home:

Robert & Mot Beasley, at Morningside, Decatur
 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 sent out by email the monthly Bible lesson out to everyone that I had recieved info from. If you would like to receive and did not get it, please indicate it on the Member's Card you fill out. I will add you or check the email it was sent to.

OUT OF TOWN: *Steve and Marilyn Bradley* are in Texas to visit with family.

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.

THE RECORD: *Attendance for the week of Dec. 11th*

Sunday:	Bible Classes	134
	Morning Worship	164
	Evening Worship	101
Wednesday:	Bible Classes	93

Men Privileged To Serve:

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
Serving	Tommy 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/Keenon Currier
Work Sound System.....	Marty Adams

Wednesday, December 21st:

Song Leader	Tony Thomas
Bible Reading.....	Ephesians 4:1-6
Danny Johnson
Prayer.....	Dan Reed
Invitation.....	Hunter Cox
Closing Prayer	Kenenth Adams

Sunday, December 25th:

Morning Worship

Announcements.....	Harvey Nixon
Song Leader	Tommy Burns
Prayer.....	Keith Hinkle
Preaching.....	David Cox
Lord's Supper	
Presiding.....	Joel Hamm
Assisting	Jerry McGlcklin
Serving	Steve Usery..... Heath Dollar
Charles Vaughn..... James Johnson
Closing Prayer	Tommy Coblentz

Evening Worship

Announcements.....	Harvey Nixon
Song Leader	Tyler Cox
Prayer.....	Marcus Morris
Preaching.....	Song Service
Lord's Supper	Russell Melvin
Closing Prayer	Mike Ogles

Other Assignments for Sunday, December 25th:

Ushers.....	Terry Andrews/Jason Conn
Work Sound System.....	Nathaniel Adams