

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
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Athens, Alabama 35612
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Volume XI

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No. 1

Will He Find Faith?

Russ Bowman

While doing some background study for an upcoming class, I have been re-reading the account of Josephus concerning the siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD. The conflict which ultimately resulted in the complete destruction of the city and the temple was the culmination of roughly four years of intermittent war between the Jews of Judea and the occupying forces of the Roman empire. The period was marked by civil war within Israel that eventually would divide the city of Jerusalem and expose the populace to incredible violence and oppression from their own countrymen. And, though the Romans initially were satisfied to let the Jews weaken themselves through their own in-fighting, Vespasian began an assault upon Judea in 67-68 AD, which he suspended due to civil disturbances in Rome. Leaving Judea to go and claim the role of emperor, he placed his son Titus in charge of the attack upon Jerusalem. After months of preparation and an impressive show of force, Titus besieged the city during the Passover feast of 70 AD. There were perhaps as many as three million people within the city at the time. Some five months later, Jerusalem was razed to the ground. Josephus observes that some 1.1 million died in the siege, whether by famine or violence; that another 11,000 died soon after the fall of the city as a result of the effects of starvation; and that finally another 97,000 were taken captive by the Romans and sold as slaves or else abused in the gladiatorial games which marked the Roman culture.

The details of the siege and fall are disturbing. People who tried to escape the city were crucified in sight of the city walls, sometimes by the hundreds per day. Houses were stacked full of the corpses of those who died in the famine. Opposing forces within the city fought and killed each other and abused the Jews who were trapped by the Roman forces outside the city. Women ate their children. The dead bodies of others who had starved were cast out of the city, filling the valleys which surrounded Jerusalem. In the final conflict, the Romans slaughtered the inhabitants without mercy, the blood flowing so freely as to extinguish fires which were burning the structures within the city.

Many of those who suffered and died in the siege were not citizens of

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

Marty R. Adams..... (256) 503-8843
Tommy Coblentz..... (256) 232-3312
Jerry McGlocklin..... (256) 232-7620
Kenneth Smith..... (256) 777-6737
Bonnie Sutton (256) 232-2081

Deacons

Joel Hamm (256) 278-1977
Danny Holt (256) 206-2746
Larry Mitchell (256) 230-0185
Marcus Morris..... (256) 232-8871
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

Jerusalem itself, but pilgrims who had traveled there to observe the Passover. They must have maintained some devotion to God, or they would not have been there. What must have they thought about the circumstances? Do you suspect that their faith was tested? Did they ever wonder where God was, and why He was not delivering His people, His city, His temple?

It seems quite clear from the comments of Jesus that the reason for the terrible end to Jerusalem was to be found in their rejection of God and His prophets, and of Jesus in particular (Matthew 23:34f; Luke 19:41f). But the point of these thoughts is not so much to entertain why God would allow such misery, as to consider how these events impacted the thinking of those people who suffered the misery. How did their circumstance affect their view of God? Did they still trust Him when they were starving, when those they loved were dying, when they were living amidst violence and disease and oppression?

The popular portrayal of God in modern “Christian” teaching is that of a Being who has every intention of making this life an enjoyable experience. The message of the prevalent pulpit is that of health, wealth, and toleration. “God wants to bless you. God wants you to be happy. God wants you to enjoy life. God wants you to prosper. God loves you as you are.” There is little demand for temperance, patience, sacrifice, or cross-bearing. But the admonitions of scripture are full of such. Jesus Himself noted that the desire to pursue Him as Lord will demand that we deny self, take up our cross, and follow Him (Matthew 16:24). Those requirements do not give the impression that life on this earth for the Christian will be one of great prosperity. And while I am not complaining about the status quo of most Christians in this country (for we are indeed prosperous to a measure that we ourselves do not fully appreciate), I wonder what will happen to the general perception of God in this culture when and if circumstances do become trying. What thoughts captivate the mind of one who has bought into the “health and wealth” drivel when his world falls down around him? When God doesn’t make him rich. When God doesn’t prevent disease or death. When God doesn’t send blue skies and rainbows. Will he trust God then?

In Luke 18, when Jesus offers a parable intended to prompt persistence in prayer, He is considering such circumstances. He has, in the end of the preceding chapter, offered some description of the revelation of the Son of Man. Comparing this passage with the other gospels, it seems apparent that He is noting the

circumstances of the aforementioned destruction of Jerusalem (though some would debate that conclusion). Luke 17:22f is a harrowing description of fearful events. And the parable that He offers addresses the question of God’s oversight. Where is God when life is miserable? Why is He allowing such things to take place? Why should I trust Him when I am the victim of pain, of sorrow, of disappointment, of evil men, of disaster, of disease and death? Jesus advises us to “always...pray, and not lose heart” (18:1), noting that God does watch over His people, and that He “will avenge them speedily” (18:7-8). Such is the consolation of the passage - God knows and God will make everything right (though the general instruction of scripture assures such recompense in the hereafter, rather than in the here). But please note the over-riding concern of Jesus in this parable. His observation that God will avenge is followed by a question. “Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” (18:8). There’s the real issue. God will be faithful to His people. But will His people be faithful to God? Will I trust Him, no matter what? Will my confidence in God be unaffected by the circumstances of my life? If my world is enveloped in evil, violence, pain, and suffering, will it change my view of my Father?

I wonder what those folks in Jerusalem were thinking?

~via *Reflections*; Beaumont, Texas.



“A Faith Strengthened By Doubt”

Gary Henry

“And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren’” (Luke 22:31-32).

Doubt is not necessarily the enemy of faith. When we pass through the wastelands of doubt and our faith falters, or perhaps even fails, it is possible to respond to doubt in such a way that our faith later becomes more vibrant. And a faith that has been invigorated in this way is not only of more value to ourselves; it is of exceedingly

more value to those around us.

Kahlil Gibran, the Syrian-born mystic poet, said, "Doubt is a pain too lonely to know that faith is his twin brother." When we reflect on the matter, we realize that this is true. Both faith and doubt deal with the unseen. They both confront questions that, at least for the time being, have no complete answer. In the face of these questions, faith mellows our doubt with reverence and gratitude, and doubt makes our faith more experienced and mature. It is doubt, properly dealt with, that takes our faith out of the nursery and into the real world.

The person who has never doubted may have a faith that is quite genuine; his or her faith may, in fact, please God. But relatively speaking, that person's faith requires less trust than that of the one who has survived seasons of doubt.

To see this point, compare faith to courage. Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the doing of what is right while one is experiencing fear. While it may be possible to speak of the courage of one who has never faced any significant danger and therefore has never had much reason to be afraid, how much more admirable is the bravery of the person who has really struggled (and not always successfully) against both danger and fear! Similarly, those who know the most about faith are often those who have had the most experience with doubt.

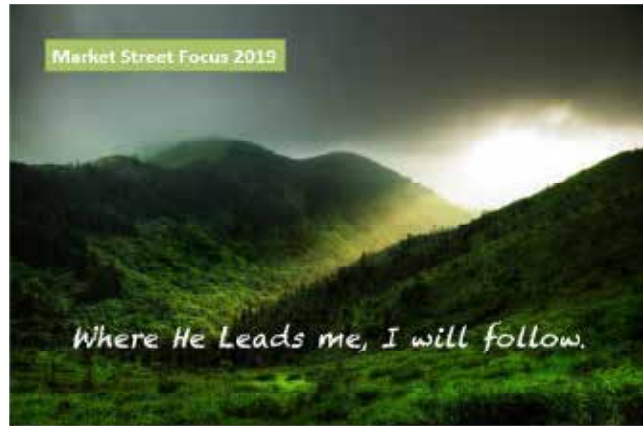
Real faith has no need to pretend or run away from difficulty. Instead, faith embraces doubt with honesty, recognizing that troubling questions are inevitable in a world where our sins have hidden God's face from us. Doubts are what make faith, faith.

"Isolation has led me to reflection, reflection to doubt, doubt to a more sincere and intelligent love of God" (Marie Lenéru).

~via *Spring Warrior Weekly Neweletter*; Perry, Florida.



January Ladies' Bible Study
At Judy Vaughn's house
Monday, January 7th at 6:00p.m.



Where He Leads, I Will Follow

David A. Cox

In the world in which we live, people are moving away from God, people are turning to all kinds of ungodliness to find fulfillment in their lives. As a result, we see a world that is filled with drugs, pornography, broken homes, etc. because people are following the wrong directions for their lives.

This year our focus at Market Street will be on making sure that we are the kind of people God desires us to be. To be people that have God's word undergirding our walk each day and follow as Christ leads us. We will strive to impress upon each of us the impact that Jesus has on our everyday life. We will stress the praise and honor that is due Jesus and how our lives reflect upon our desire to please Him. We will follow Him in love, devotion, doing God's will, and seeking the lost for Jesus.

As we begin this year, let each one of us be reminded each day to follow Jesus where He leads us.

News & Notes

THE SICK:

Jane Meredith	Paul Adcock
Loretta Warner	Bobbie Adcock
Doris Lovell	Ann Bush

Those Undergoing Treatments or Chronic Illness:

Janice Cagle	Jeanette Weir
Patsy Thomas	Ella Melvin
Marvin Putman	Paul Hasting
Cornelia Pepper	Al Pollard
Charles Burns	Ava Brooke Campbell
Cindy Glass	Una King Currier

Susan Cox Gene Carpenter
 Cindy Walker Phillip Harwell
 Wayne Wooldridge Kenneth Fisher

In The Hospital/Rehabilitation:

JoAnn Gilbert; Athens-Limestone, rm 314
Dean Holt; Huntsville Hospital, rm 470
Norman Hamm; Millenium Rehab - Huntsville

Athens Health & Rehabilitation:

Mattie Murray, rm. 2 Christine Hudson, 77
 Evelyn Hogan, 36 Dorothy Draper, 73
 Joyce Martin, 63 Valeria Dalton, 7

Shut-In or Away From Home:

Robert & Mot Beasley, at City Center, Decatur
 Frances Bowers, Limestone Manor
 Gwen Bullock, at granddaughter's in Huntsville
 Mary Ruth Gardner, at Merrill Gardens, Madison
 Carl Hargrave, at granddaughter's home in Hartselle
 Bettye Harrison, Traditions Assisted Living
 Irene Inman, at home
 Virginia Meyer, Traditions Assisted Living
 Stan Stanford, at home
 William Thomas, Madison Manor, Madison
 Kathleen Wales,

Updates:

Dean Holt is hoping to move this week to Athens-Limestone Hospital to the long term acute care unit, *North Alabama Specialty Hospital* ... *Paul Adcock* has fractures in his back and is in a back brace ... *JoAnn Gilbert* is in the Athens-Limestone Hospital due to high levels of calcium..

SYMPATHY: We want to express our deepest sympathy to *Steve Usery and all the family* in the passing of Steve's grandmother, *Mary Usery*, this past Sunday. Her funeral was Thursday afternoon at McConnell Funeral Home... We also want to express our sympathy to all the family of *Wayne Gooch*. Wayne passed away and his funeral was on Wednesday at Limestone Chapel.

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

OUT OF TOWN: *Steve & Marilyn Bradley* have been in Texas for the holidays... *Tim & Cindy Griswold* have been in Japan for Tyler's wedding.

THE RECORD: *Average Attendance for 2018*

Sunday: Bible Classes 135
 Morning Worship 175
 Evening Worship 131
 Wednesday: Bible Classes 103

Men Privileged To Serve:

Sunday, January 6th:

Morning Worship

Announcements.....Keith Hinkle
 Song Leader Albert Haraway
 Prayer..... Joel Hamm
 Preaching..... David Cox
 Lord's Supper
 Presiding..... Larry Mitchell
 Assisting Larry Tucker
 Serving Tim Griswold..... Matthew Vaughn
 Landon Adams..... Clayton Hamm
 Closing Prayer Dwaine Allfrey

Evening Worship

Announcements.....Keith Hinkle
 Song Leader Hunter Cox
 Prayer..... Dan Reed
 Preaching..... David Cox
 Lord's Supper Larry Mitchell
 Closing Prayer Marty Adams

Other Assignments for the week of January 6th:

Ushers..... Christian Usery/Heath Dollar
 Work Sound System..... Larry Holt

Wednesday, January 9th:

Song Leader Bob Broadus
 Bible Reading Joy Warner
 Mark 12:1-12
 Prayer..... Terry Andrews
 Invitation Kenneth Smith
 Closing Prayer Wayne Vaughn

Sunday, January 13th:

Morning Worship

Announcements.....Marcus Morris
 Song Leader Tommy Burns
 Prayer..... Bonnie Sutton
 Preaching..... David Cox
 Lord's Supper
 Presiding..... Harvey Nixon
 Assisting Mike Ogles
 Serving Will Chumbley..... Landon Adams
 Sam Gregory Harold Davis
 Closing Prayer Keenon Currier

Evening Worship

Announcements.....Marcus Morris
 Song Leader Bob Broadus
 Prayer..... Larry Holt
 Preaching David Cox
 Lord's Supper Harvey Nixon
 Closing Prayer Danny Holt

Other Assignments for the week of January 13th:

Ushers..... Larry Mitchell/Marvin Putman
 Work Sound System..... Nathaniel Adams