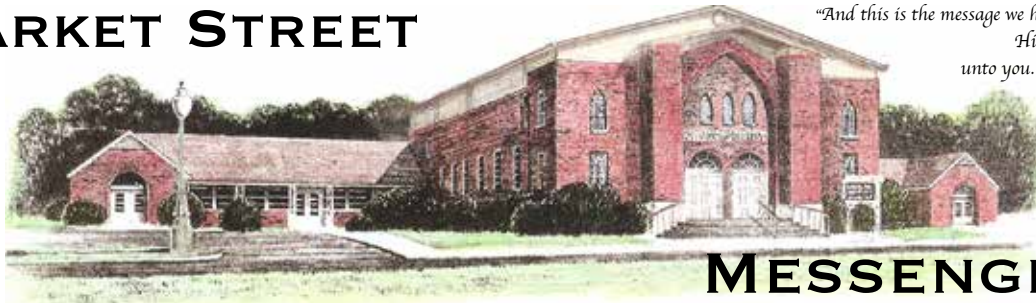


MARKET STREET



"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

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No. 31

Three Gifts You Never Exchange

Andrew Roberts

Confession time: I know I don't always give "the perfect gift" to my loved ones. My family is so gracious, I've probably missed even more often than I realize.

Even with the best of intentions, I've fallen short in creativity or attention to detail. My second-guessing and insecurity about this is heightened during the holidays, so I save receipts. They can always exchange a gift when it is the wrong color, wrong size, or otherwise unwanted. And there are no hard feelings about it. I've chosen to exchange gifts myself. Haven't we all?

But God is not this sort of gift-giver. Rather, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning" (James 1:17). Our good Father gives us exactly what we need when we need it (Matthew 7:11). There are no genuine exchanges for something better. Better gifts do not exist! In fact, only deception, foolishness, or selfishness would move people to exchange God's good gifts for the devil's inferior knock-offs. Let's notice three of God's gifts that the Bible warns us never to exchange.

Never Exchange the Truth of God for Lies. The wise man advised his son, "Buy the truth, and do not sell it; also wisdom and instruction and understanding" (Proverbs 23:23). The apostle Paul explained that wicked, idolatrous societies have exchanged the gift of truth for lies and reap the disastrous results. "Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen" (Romans 1:24-25). God's word is truth (John 17:17) and Scripture is the word of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Perhaps we fail to recognize that every word from God is a gift from Him, the gift of truth. The Bible is a good and perfect gift from God.

Never Exchange The Faith for Worldly Philosophies. There is only one faith, one gospel, and one doctrine of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:5; Galatians 1:6-9; 2 John 9-10). Paul exhorted the young minister Timothy to guard the faith and to avoid exchanging it for fashionable worldly phi-

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

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
Cell: (256) 614-3757

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Market Street church.*

David A. Cox, Editor

losophies. “O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge – by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith” (1 Timothy 6:20-21). Likewise, Christians at Colosse were warned, “Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ” (Colossians 2:8). Let’s respect Christianity as it is revealed in Scripture and not attempt to wed it to worldly philosophies or discard it in favor of man-made religions. The faith is a good and perfect gift from God.

Never Exchange Salvation for Sin. The greatest gift that God gives us is salvation in Jesus Christ. “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23). This gift is priceless because it is only obtainable by the precious death of Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:26; 1 Peter 1:18-21). Yet temptation often offers us something in exchange for our salvation. The Hebrew writer warns Christians to view temptation to sin like Moses did—these things are only “passing pleasures” and not worth exchanging our eternal reward (Hebrews 11:24-26). Furthermore, learn from Esau—not to be shortsighted by the selfishness of the flesh and fall into the trap of exchanging our birthright of salvation (Hebrews 12:15-17). Salvation is a good and perfect gift from God (Ephesians 2:8-10).

I don’t always give “the perfect gift” to my loved ones, but God gives only perfect gifts and he doesn’t include gift receipts. The devil tries to fool us into thinking we can make an exchange for something better. But remember that no matter how sin wraps the package, it only contains error, apostasy, and death (James 1:14-15). Never exchange God’s good gifts for that.

~via *Charlestown Road Bulletin*, New Albany, Indiana.

daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). How wonderful it would be if we could get all men today to receive the word with “all readiness of mind” as did these. Let’s note what these individuals did that made it possible for them to be described as more noble than the Jews of Thessalonica.

First, Luke notes that they were receptive to the word. They had not closed their minds to anything that may not be in agreement with what they wanted to believe or already believed. Many today refuse to listen to anything that may be contrary to their previous convictions, however these were eager to hear what Paul had to say. Also, the Bereans wanted to make sure that what they received was in harmony with the truth of God’s word. They searched the scriptures to see whether the things taught were true. I am afraid that many today do not really care whether what they believe is in harmony with the scriptures. They have their minds made up as to what they are going to believe or not believe and have closed their minds to anything that may be contrary to these preconceived beliefs.

The person who closes his mind to the teaching of God’s word or refuses to listen to that which may be contrary to what he already believes is wrong even if what he believes is not. His attitude is not what it should be and he is believing what he believes, not because it is the truth, but because it is what he wants to believe. The lover of truth will always be ready to study and investigate to be sure he is doing that which is pleasing to God. He will never close his mind or refuse to listen to the teaching of God’s word even if it demands a change on his part. What about you? Are you such a lover of truth? Can you say that you will receive the word with “all readiness of mind”?

~via *Belleville Messenger*, Belleville, Indiana.



Readiness of Mind

James Hahn

The Bible tells us that the Bereans were “*more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures*



Fix Your Eyes on Jesus

Frank Himmel

"Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith . . ." (Hebrews 12:1-2).

The Example

Jesus is the author of salvation. The Greek word used here "primarily signifies one who takes a lead in, or provides the first occasion of, anything" (Vine). Some suggest pioneer or trail-blazer is the idea. Jesus opens the way to God because He is the way (Hebrews 10:19-20; John 14:6). Jesus is also the perfecter of faith. In Him faith found its perfect expression. He completed the faith by carrying out God's plan, and He is also able to bring our faith to its complete end.

Other Examples

As we run our race we should rightly be able to look to each other for instructive and encouraging examples. While elders (1 Peter 5:3) and preachers (1 Timothy 4:12) are especially charged with leading by example, every disciple ought to be able to say with Paul, "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). Even the best disciples, however, have their flaws. Never make the mistake of judging the greatness or power or value of Jesus by the weakness of His followers. Fix your eyes on Jesus!

An Illustration

While Jesus, Peter, James, and John were away on a mountain to pray, a man brought his demon-possessed boy to the other apostles to be healed (Mark 9:14-29). The demon was causing seizures and self-destructive behavior. Despite having cast out demons previously (see 6:13), this time the apostles failed. The father was crushed. When Jesus arrived, the father explained the situation to Him and pled, "But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!" (v. 22). Due to the disciples' failure, this man who had come in faith was now not so sure.

Jesus picked up on his "if You can." "And Jesus said to him, 'If you can?' All things are possible to him who believes" (v. 23). The humble, honest, struggling father immediately responded, "I do believe; help my unbelief" (v. 24).

Jesus cast out the demon. The boy was cured at once. The Lord explained to the apostles that they had failed-

due to lack of faith (Matthew 17:20). He urged them to pray more (Mark 9:29). And everyone involved learned the valuable lesson, "fix your eyes on Jesus."

~via *Path Lights*, Bossier City, Louisiana.

News & Notes

THE SICK:

JoAnn Gilbert
Doris Lovell
Ann Bush

Loretta Warner
Bobbie Adcock
Lloyd Adams

Those Undergoing Treatments or Chronic Illness:

Donna Wright
Freddie Mae Elmore
Anita Wheeler
Janice Cagle
Ella Melvin
Cornelia Pepper
Cindy Walker
Al Pollard
David Collier
Una King Currier
Susan Cox
Gene Carpenter

Arvid McGuire
Nikki Ogles
Lona Jackson
Judy Vaughn
Jeanette Weir
Wayne Wooldridge
Kenneth Fisher
Charles Burns
Phillip Harwell
Matt Poff
Brittany Bates Carter

In The Hospital/Rehabilitation:

Bob Broadus; Athens-Limestone Hosp. rm. 312
Joy Warner; Huntsville Hosp. rm. 853
Alvis McLemore; Huntsville Hospl. rm. 392
Norman Hamm; Millenium - Huntsville

Athens Health & Rehabilitation:

Flossie Smith, rm. 120 Mattie Murray, rm. 2
Dorothy Draper, rm. 73 Brenda Wilson, rm. 73
Evelyn Hogan, rm. 36 Christine Hudson, rm. 77
Brenda Myrick, rm. 121 Valeria Dalton, rm. 7

Limestone Health Facility:

Robert Beasley, rm. 110 Mot Beasley, rm. 110

Shut-In or Away From Home:

Deanie Britton, Limestone Lodge
Frances Bowers, Limestone Manor
Gwen Bullock, at granddaughter's in Huntsville
Mary Ruth Gardner, at Merrill Gardens, Madison
Bettye Harrison, Traditions
Irene Inman, at home
Virginia Meyer, Shepherd Living, Madison
Stan Stanford, at home
William Thomas, Madison Manor, Madison
Kathleen Wales, Limestone Manor

Updates:

Ross Melvin had a biopsy done on Tuesday of this past

week and it s to meet with the oncologist on Tuesday... **Helen Blankenship** received word that she has three leaky valves, but they were not to the point of replacing them ... **Donna Wright** continues taking her daily radiation treatments and one weekly chemo treatment in Huntsville ... **Freddie Mae Elmore** went home from rehab on Friday... **Arvid McGuire** is nearing the end of his treatments.

GOSPEL MEETINGS: The **Oakland church** will begin a meeting today and it will continue through Friday. The speaker in the meeting will be **Joe Greer of Asheville, North Carolina.**

PICTURES: We are in the process of making and updating pictures of everyone for the Market Street directory. Pictures will be made in room 20 in the east wing.

MEN'S BIBLE CLASS: After reviewing those that signed-up with interest in the **Men's Bible class**, it has been determined the best time and day is Monday evening. We will plan to begin the class **August 19th at 7:00 p.m.** The class will meet on the third Monday of each month.

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

SYMPATHY: We want to express our deepest sympathy to **Betty Bolton** and **Peggy Mitchell** all the family of **Addie Baker.** Addie was Betty and Peggy's great niece. She died tragically in a four wheeler accident on Wednesday afternoon. Her funeral will be this afternoon at 2:00 at Limestone Chapel.

OUT OF TOWN: **Elizabeth Usery** has been in Savannah, Georgia this past week ... **Kerry Cox** has been in Atlanta, Georgia this week for a conference ... **Jim Whitt** is in Arkansas with his work... **Christian Usery** continues working in Connecticut.

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

THE RECORD: *Attendance for the week of July 28th:*

Sunday:	Bible Classes	136
	Morning Worship	186
	Evening Worship	151
Wednesday:	Bible Classes	108

Remember Our Study Periods

Sunday Mornings at 9:45 a.m.
 Wednesday Evenings at 7:00 p.m.

Men Privileged To Serve:

Sunday, August 4th:

Morning Worship

Announcements.....	Dwaine Allfrey
Song Leader	Tommy Burns
Prayer.....	Larry Mitchell
Preaching.....	David Cox
Lord's Supper	
Presiding.....	Larry Holt
Assisting	Mike Ogles
Serving	Heath Dollar Kenneth Adams
.....	Matthew Vaughn..... Steve Usery
Closing Prayer	Roger Hammonds

Evening Worship

Announcements.....	Dwaine Allfrey
Song Leader	Hunter Cox
Prayer.....	Bonnie Sutton
Preaching.....	David Cox
Lord's Supper	Larry Holt
Closing Prayer	Larry Tucker

Other Assignments for the week of August 4th:

Ushers.....	Kenneth Smith/Marvin Putman
Work Sound System.....	Terry Andrews

Wednesday, August 7th:

Song Leader	Tony Thomas
Bible Reading	Bill Eden
.....	Titus 1:1-9
Prayer.....	Wayne Vaughn
Invitation	David Cox
Closing Prayer	Harold Ash

Sunday, August 11th:

Morning Worship

Announcements.....	Marty Adams
Song Leader	Hunter Cox
Prayer.....	Terry Andrews
Preaching.....	David Cox
Lord's Supper	
Presiding.....	Russell Melvin
Assisting	Marcus Morris
Serving	Clayton Hamm Matthew Usery
.....	David Terry Sam Gregory
Closing Prayer	Steve Usery

Evening Worship

Announcements.....	Marty Adams
Song Leader	Larry Holt
Prayer.....	Joel Hamm
Preaching.....	David Cox
Lord's Supper	Russell Melvin
Closing Prayer	Mike Ogles

Other Assignments for the week of August 11th:

Ushers.....	Larry Mitchell/Danny Holt
Work Sound System.....	Nathaniel Adams