

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 XI

August 25, 2019

No. 34

God's Plan For Me?

Russ Bowman

When I graduated from high school, I had every intention of becoming a veterinarian. I thought a bit about a medical career, but given that I like animals more than people, I decided in favor of veterinarian medicine. But while in college I was preaching a good bit and was asked by a local preacher to help with such duties in a congregation outside of Tampa. After the better part of a year, I decided that I would probably end up preaching whether or not I became a vet, so I changed my major to something I thought might help me more and determined to give my life to that pursuit. And it is not uncommon when I first meet someone for them to ask me about my decision to preach, often phrasing the question in these terms: "When/How did you get your calling?" I've always found that an interesting question because it belies some concepts and conclusions about how God works. Preaching is not a normal "job" (though some men approach it as such), but rather a life. And many people recognize that and assume that those who would choose to live such a life have received some special sign or inclination or communication from God Himself. And it's somewhat humorous to note the reaction of some folks when I reply, "I didn't receive some call. I simply decided that's what I needed to do with my life." They almost act disappointed that I don't have a good "God moved me" story.

I firmly believe in the power of God, and that He exercises His will upon the universe. I believe that He has, at times, interrupted the normal laws which govern this world and performed supernatural activities – wonders, miracles, signs. The Bible account is full of His power being manifested in order to accomplish some particular goal or in order to confirm His will being revealed (note the exodus account, or the signs offered to confirm the identity of Jesus). I do not believe that He acts in this way in the present age, and I believe that the New Testament affirms this truth (study the purpose of miracles – Mark 16.20; Hebrews 2.3-4 – and the comments of 1 Corinthians 13.8f). But I do believe that He has the power to act in this world through providential means, that is, accomplishing His will without superseding any recognizable law of nature and without violating the free will of anyone. A Being Who is omniscient and omnipotent,

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
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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

knowing beforehand what men will do, has the capacity to bring about His determinations without the need of miraculous intervention. Thus, when we are told to pray to God regarding our daily needs or for deliverance from temptation (Matthew 6:9-13), He can provide for such without the need for bread from stones or exorcisms. But providence is a hard concept to appreciate, because we can never know if God is acting unless He has told us so. Thus, people often draw conclusions that are not in evidence, and then extrapolate theories about God's will and God's ways that are completely un-Biblical.

There is a troubling sentiment that seems to have pervaded the thinking of the general "Christian" world of our day, namely that "God has a plan for me." I've run across the idea repeatedly of late, though it is nothing new to the thinking of the modern evangelical adherent. Many people who believe in Jesus have accepted the idea that, somehow or another, God has mapped out a course for every individual and that such a blueprint accounts for every little activity, decision, and circumstance in one's life. And then every day's events are filtered through the lens that "this is God's will." When good things happen, God is blessing me. When bad things happen, Romans 8:28 is taken out of its context and perverted to affirm that "God has something good that will come of this." I have already affirmed that I do believe in providence and that prayer would be useless without it, but I cannot find any Biblical reference that supports the idea that "God has a plan for me." I do not deny that God has had a plan for some men. He employed men like Abraham and Joseph and Moses and Pharaoh and David and Nebuchadnezzar and John the Baptist and Jesus and Paul in order to advance, fulfill, and reveal His scheme for man's redemption. And such certainly raises the possibility that God might put certain men in certain places in this world with the expectation that they will be an influence in the furthering of His determinations. But the New Testament nowhere affirms that such is the case for every believer. In fact, the idea that God is a puppet master in the life of each supposed follower can have devastating implications. I heard a "preacher" recently raise this question – "What do I do if the life God promised me is not the life God has given me?" Wait a minute. If God promised me a life and then didn't give it, doesn't that make God a liar? And thus unholy? And thus imperfect? And thus not at all the God revealed in scripture?

In truth, there are serious repercussions to the "personal blueprint" concept about God's activity. If I can't find "God's purpose/plan for me" then have I somehow

failed Him? Or maybe He didn't properly reveal it and He has failed me? Perhaps my faith is somehow lacking or defective. Maybe I'm just too weak or ignorant to really serve God because I can't "find my place"? What if the pursuit of "God's plan for me" leaves me confused or frustrated because He's not revealing things or moving me or guiding me or speaking to me. What if I don't get the gifts and signs and tongues and dreams and emotions and feelings that I'm supposed to get? Is it me? Is it Him? Do I quit? Where do I go for my answers? To the televangelist or local pastor who has everyone convinced that God is talking to him (while he rakes in the dough and advances the show)? What do I do when I can't figure out what I'm supposed to do?

The Bible tells us what God's plan is for us. He wants us to put our trust in Jesus (Romans 10:8-13) and sacrifice ourselves to His service (Romans 12:1-2). His plan for me is that I get up every day and live my life as a child of God and disciple of Jesus (Ephesians 4:17f; Colossians 3:1f). He wants us to be holy (1 Peter 1:13f) and godly (Titus 2:11f). Can I be useful to God? Certainly. Can I be a force for good? Without a doubt. Does God hear my prayers and care for me? He says He does (1 Peter 3:10f; 5:5f). I don't know what will come my way in life – joy, pain, tragedy, success. But as a follower of Jesus, I don't have to have God pulling the strings. He died for me and saved me. The faithfulness, service, sacrifice, and gratitude are my privilege. I'll try to deny myself, take up my cross, and follow Him. Wherever that takes me will be fine.

~via *Focus Magazine*, August 5, 2019



Gospel Meeting

September 15-18, 2019

(Sunday through Wednesday)

Schedule of Services

Sunday 9:45 a.m.; 10:30 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.
Monday through Wednesday – 7:00 p.m.

Johnny Felker, Speaking

**MARKET STREET
CHURCH OF CHRIST**

514 WEST MARKET STREET
ATHENS, ALABAMA

Living Stones

Carl McMurray

“And coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected by men, but choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house...” (1 Peter 2:4)

Jesus is presented here as a “living stone.” He is the cornerstone, for a foundation of apostles and prophets that form the basis for a spiritual building. In that building Christians are also “living stones.” A number of reasons come to mind why the Lord chose this particular terminology for His people.

Stones are strong as building materials. Wood warps and rots without proper treatment. The old “soddies” of pioneer days were famous for dropping dirt and insects in the home. Tents and canvases must be constantly repaired and replaced. Stone has always been a preferred building material, and still is (in brick and block) because it resists the storm and the extremes of temperature. No matter what comes along, stones placed with the right mortar just keep doing their job. With all of the Bible’s encouragements to be steadfast, I wonder if the Lord intended for us to do our job like stones, living stones. We need to remain strong.

Stones are pretty useless by themselves. Laying out in a field they are in the way. They will turn the ankle of man or horse or even demand that one walk around them if they are large enough. They will tear up plow or disc, depending on what century you happen to live in. In our age, and I suppose every age, there have been those who try to convince themselves and others that they just don’t need other Christians. They claim to have a relationship with the head, but not the body. How foolish. As part of the Lord’s team we are able to really develop and find ourselves and our talents. Out in the field by ourselves, we are just in the way and become a problem to all concerned.

Stones are missed, when they are gone. I’ve watched the construction of a house down the road from me for 30 years, as long as I’ve been coming to where I now live. The house has been sold to new people and had a pool installed, but it has never been finished. There is one spot, up near the roof on one corner, where the white stones have never been put in and the black material underneath is visible. When stones are missing from a wall, there is a hole there because nothing else will do that job. When Christians are missing they also are

missed. No one can take the place of what you bring to God’s service. God bless His “living stones.”

~via *Southport Bulletin*, Southport, Indiana.

News & Notes

THE SICK:

James Adams	Gayle Ball
Sherry Davis	Kenia Adams
JoAnn Gilbert	Loretta Warner
Doris Lovell	Bobbie Adcock
Ann Bush	Lloyd Adams
Yvonne Strickland	

Those Undergoing Treatments or Chronic Illness:

Donna Wright	Arvid McGuire
Freddie Mae Elmore	Nikki Ogles
Anita Wheeler	Lona Jackson
Janice Cagle	Judy Vaughn
Ella Melvin	Jeanette Weir
Cornelia Pepper	Wayne Wooldridge
Cindy Walker	Kenneth Fisher
Al Pollard	Charles Burns
David Collier	Phillip Harwell
Una King Currier	Matt Poff
Gene Carpenter	Brittany Bates Carter

In The Hospital/Rehabilitation:

Mot Beasley; Athens-Limestone Hospital, ICU
Norman Hamm; Millenium - Huntsville

Athens Health & Rehabilitation:

Alvis McLemore, rm. 107	Flossie Smith, rm. 120
Mattie Murray, rm. 2	Valeria Dalton, rm. 7
Dorothy Draper, rm. 73	Brenda Wilson, rm. 73
Evelyn Hogan, rm. 36	Christine Hudson, rm. 77

Limestone Health Facility:

Robert 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 completed his treatments this week. They will do some test for how the treatments did... **Joy Warner** is at home and is doing better... **Gayle Ball** had surgery on her metatarsal bone this past week and is at home recovering. She is to return to the doctor on Tuesday... **Donna Wright** is nearing the end of her treatments for her cancer.

MEN'S BIBLE CLASS: The *Men's Bible Class*, met this past Monday evening. The next class will be Monday, September 9th at 7:00p.m. in the East Auditorium.

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

AWAY AT SCHOOL: Remember our young people who are continuing their education in college:

- Keenon Currier*, Auburn University
- Clayton Hamm*, University of Alabama-Huntsville
- Griffin Holt*, University of Alabama
- Elizabeth Usery*, Mississippi State University
- Matthew Usery*, University of North Alabama

OUT OF TOWN: *The Ashes:* *Harold and Barb* are in Chattanooga, Tennessee this weekend... *Mike Ogles* has been in Auburn with his work... *The Coxes:* *David and Kerry* are in Arab this morning... *The Curriers:* *Kebyn, Mary Glenna and Keenon* were in Birmingham last weekend... *Mary Cecile Keenon* was in Birmingham last weekend... *The Userys:* *Steve and Allison* were in Florence last Sunday... *Jim Whitt* is in Iowa with his work... *Christian Usery* continues working in Connecticut.

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

THE RECORD: Attendance for the week of August 18th:

Sunday:	Bible Classes	133
	Morning Worship	172
	Evening Worship	127
Wednesday:	Bible Classes	101



Men Privileged To Serve:

Sunday, August 25th:

Morning Worship

Announcements.....	Keith Hinkle
Song Leader	Joel Hamm
Prayer.....	Bonnie Sutton
Preaching.....	
Lord's Supper	
Presiding.....	Harvey Nixon
Assisting	Terry Andrews
Serving	Will Chumbley..... Russ Wulfekuhl
	Nathaniel Adams.. Charles Vaughn
Closing Prayer	Dwaine Allfrey

Evening Worship

Announcements.....	Keith Hinkle
Song Leader	Albert Haraway
Prayer.....	Russell Melvin
Preaching.....	Song Service
Lord's Supper	Harvey Nixon
Closing Prayer	Jerry McGlocklin

Other Assignments for the week of August 25th:

Ushers.....	Steve Bradley/Danny Holt
Work Sound System.....	Marty Adams

Wednesday, August 28th:

Song Leader	Larry Holt
Bible Reading	Roger Hammonds
	Titus 2:11-15
Prayer.....	Dan Reed
Invitation	Russell Melvin
Closing Prayer	Kenneth Smith

Sunday, September 1st:

Morning Worship

Announcements.....	Kenneth Smith
Song Leader	Bob Broadus
Prayer.....	Keith Hinkle
Preaching.....	David Cox
Lord's Supper	
Presiding.....	Tony Thomas
Assisting	Bonnie Sutton
Serving	Bill EdenDavid Terry
	Harold Ash..... Albert Haraway
Closing Prayer	Hunter Cox

Evening Worship

Announcements.....	Kenneth Smith
Song Leader	Tommy Burns
Prayer.....	Kenneth Adams
Preaching.....	Ossafa Gordon
Lord's Supper	Tony Thomas
Closing Prayer	Marion Mitchell

Other Assignments for the week of September 1st:

Ushers.....	Jerry McGlocklin/Tommy Coblentz
Work Sound System.....	Larry Holt