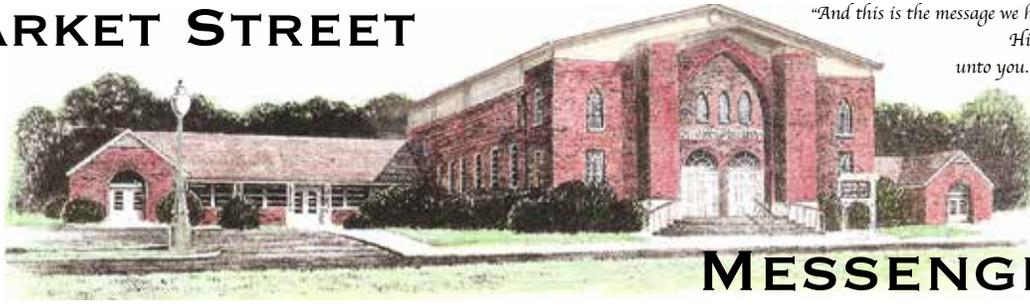


MARKET STREET



“And this is the message we have received of Him, and declare unto you...” (1 John 1:5)

MESSENGER

**Market Street
church of Christ**
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Volume XII

January 26, 2020

No. 4

The Essence of Fellowship with God

Jim Jonas

The essence of fellowship with God is not a slavish compliance with a set of rules and regulations. Yes, obedience to the will of God is fundamental to a fruitful, blessed life, for God’s commands always foster the spiritual, emotional, moral and religious welfare of man. God is our Maker, and He knows what is healthy and good for us, and also what enhances our fellowship with Him. Truly, Christ is the “author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him” (Hebrews 5:9).

But perfunctory obedience is not the essence of fellowship. Rather, the essence or core of fellowship with a living, personal God is establishing a relationship with Him. The things that God has done, the truths He has revealed to us, the blessings He has promised and the warnings He has issued are all for one essential purpose: to win man’s affections and devotion, to bring us to the heights of love for God as our Heavenly Father, to secure a glad submission of our will to His as we learn about and come to trust and depend on Him.

Like any other personal relationship, we must come to know God. This can only be done as God reveals Himself, which He has progressively done in various ways throughout man’s history. This process culminated in the sending of God’s Son into the world in human form – Jesus Christ, Immanuel, God with us (Hebrews 1:1-2; Matthew 1:23). Christians in all ages, but especially today in Western culture, live with the clearest view of God’s nature and will. God painstakingly spent a long time (by man’s reckoning) to gradually bring to light the fullness of His revelation to us. We have every reason possible, yea, no others will be given to mankind before the end of all things, to seek out fellowship with God because of who we know Him to be.

Jeremiah foretold that the knowledge of God would be central to the new covenant to come: “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah – not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to

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

them, says the Lord ... I will put my law in their minds, and write it on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, their sin I will remember no more" (Jeremiah 31:31-34; cited also in Hebrews 8:8-12).

Under the Mosaic covenant people were born into a covenant relationship with God by virtue of their genetic connection to Abraham. But still, God wanted every Israelite to come to know Him by the teaching of parents and priests (Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Leviticus 10:11). Ideally, they would be taught the wonderful character of God which distinguished Him from decadent, powerless gods of their heathen neighbors. They would be reminded of the great works of God in their history and the favored status they held as Abraham's offspring; they would be taught the laws that, if observed, would provide better lives, marriages, families, culture and religion than that of pagans. Unfortunately, Israel failed to keep the knowledge of God alive throughout their generations and rejected Him for idols, despising God and choosing to live as the unbelievers around them.

God did not want mere robotic, mindless compliance from Israel. He wanted them to love and honor Him:

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might" – Deuteronomy 6:4.

"Therefore know that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments" – Deuteronomy 7:9.

"Therefore you shall love the Lord your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always" (Deuteronomy 11:1), and then Moses proceeds to outline the many things God did for them in securing their freedom from Egypt and His promise of prosperity in Canaan (Deuteronomy 11:2-32). This knowledge was to be constantly refreshed from generation to generation so that God would always have faithful men and women who love Him and show that love by their submission to His will.

It should not surprise us, then, that Jesus in explaining the nature of the kingdom spoke in similar terms:

"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him" – John 14:21.

"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him" – John 14:23.

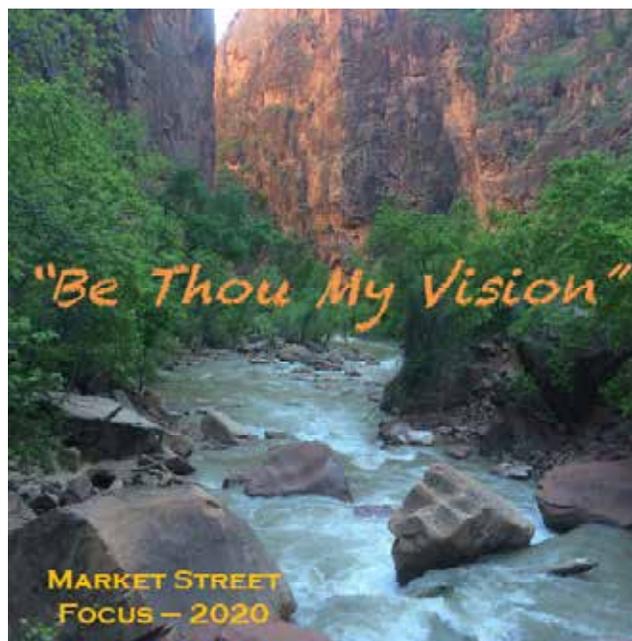
"If you keep my commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love" – John 15:10.

"You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you" – John 15:14-15.

Do you hear in these passages what Jesus wants from us? He is asking us to love Him and be His friend, and show in that relationship honor and trust in Him by obeying His laws and will. No, it is not a meritorious effort, linking confidence and peace of mind with some sort of self-absorbed performance. No one but the Lord Himself can find security and comfort in their own works; only Jesus could stand before God not needing grace.

Under the new covenant sinful men would first come to know God, learn His nature and ways, and then freely enter a covenant relationship with Him. While we teach our children about God and Jesus and Scripture, every child must at some point exercise their own mind to establish fellowship with God for themselves. They do this by internalizing what they have learned about God's love, mercy, grace and generosity and also about God's judgment, wrath and punishment on evildoers. They must have a burning desire to know and serve God. Anything less is empty ritualism.

~via *The Centerville Journal*; Centerville, Virginia.



Everyday Gratitude

Dan Lankford

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

The routines of life can be very healthy for us. Routine exercise strengthens the body, routine communication blesses relationships, routine generosity increases our compassion, and a routine day of worship strengthens our souls.

But even healthy routines always come with an inherent challenge: we are tempted to become accustomed to things and take them for granted.

In daily life, one symptom of this is a lack of gratitude. While the Spirit instructs us to give thanks in all circumstances, sometimes the familiarity of each day deadens our spiritual senses to how grateful we could (and should) be toward God.

But every day is full of gifts from him. It is a gift to be part of a loving family. Moms & dads, our kids are gifts from God. It is a gift to have health enough to be independent. A stable job, a comfortable home, a civilized and safe neighborhood, the ability to learn, the blessing of good food... It can all seem so basic, but it ought to routinely nudge our minds to be grateful to the merciful God who has given it all.

And that's why gratitude makes sense “in all circumstances.” Even small, everyday blessings are good gifts from our Father. And so while there are times when grander things make our gratitude swell, God's people are defined by simple, everyday gratitude for his many blessings.

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

Ninth Annual Singing

February 28, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.

Song Leaders: Jim Deason, Wiley Deason & Johnny Felker



MARKET STREET CHURCH OF CHRIST

514 WEST MARKET STREET
ATHENS, ALABAMA

News & Notes...

THE SICK:

Sherry Davis	Vicki Stringer
Barbara Ash	Mildred Lambert
Tommy Greene	Betty Lovell
Helen Blankenship	Minnie Carter
Beverly Sutton	Bobbie Adcock
Loretta Warner	Doris Lovell
JoAnn Gilbert	Alvis McLemore
Yvonne Strickland	Lloyd Adams
Ann Bush	Angela Lava

Those Undergoing Treatments or Chronic Illness:

Donna Wright	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	Carrie Warner

In The Hospital/Rehabilitation:

Angela Leyva; Vanderbilt Med. Center - Nashville
Norman Hamm; Millenium - Huntsville

Athens Health & Rehabilitation:

Mattie Murray, rm. 2	Dorothy Draper, rm. 73
Valeria Dalton, rm. 7	Johnnie Leigeber, rm. 45
Brenda Wilson, rm. 73	Christine Hudson, rm. 77
Evelyn Hogan, rm. 36	Connie Brock, rm. 62

Limestone Health Facility:

Mot Beasley, rm. 117	Bettye Harrison, rm. 59
Virginia Meyer, rm. 99	Alice Roberson, rm. 49

Shut-In or Away From Home:

Elease Barksdale, Limestone Lodge
Deanie Britton, Limestone Lodge
Frances Bowers, Limestone Manor
Gwen Bullock, at granddaughter's in Huntsville
Mary Ruth Gardner, at Merrill Gardens, Madison
Irene Inman, at home
Stan Stanford, at home
William Thomas, Madison Manor, Madison
Kathleen Wales, Limestone Manor

Updates:

Dwaine Allfrey is at home following his hospital stay

