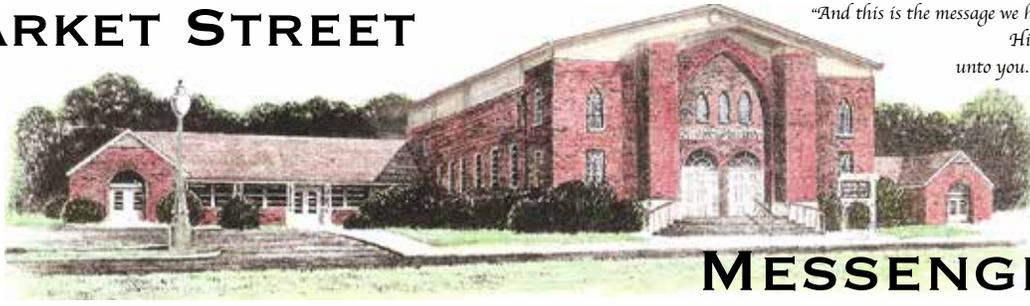


MARKET STREET

"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

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 Coblenz..... (256) 232-3312
Jerry McGlocklin..... (256) 232-7620
Kenneth Smith..... (256) 777-6737

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

Visit Us On The Web

MarketStreet-church.com

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

Volume XII

May 3, 2020

No. 18

The Church in Action

Bubba Garner

When David was younger, he had a joke book he kept in the van. When we would be riding somewhere, he'd pick it up and start reading it out loud. One of the jokes asked, "What is the sharpest tool in the Bible?" The answer? "The axe of the apostles."

Have you ever thought about how much we learn about the church from the Acts of the Apostles? This is the record of the disciples carrying out the Great Commission, taking the gospel into the uttermost parts of the world. Along the way, they preach and baptize and establish churches in the cities. We read how they "appointed elders for them in every church" (Acts 14:23) and that "on the first day of the week, the disciples gathered together to break bread" (Acts 20:7).

But this same book also reveals a people whose work in the kingdom was not restricted to the days where they came together to worship. In other words, the church in Acts was a church in action. And it remains a model for every church of every generation. Like the church we read about in Acts, we must be a church in action.

The church in action practices daily discipleship. "And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people" (Acts 2:46-47). After 3,000 were baptized on the day of Pentecost, they continued "day by day." "Day by day" they were encouraged. "Day by day" they practiced their discipleship.

Action leads to repetition. As a preacher, I hear the comments all the time that "preachers only work one or two days a week." But for some Christians, that appears to be the case. Jesus demands that every disciple "deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23). That takes more than Sunday and Wednesday religion.

The church in action gives their all to every member. "For there

was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales and lay them at the apostles' feet; and they would be distributed to each, as any had need" (Acts 4:34-35). Notice the words "all" and "any." They did not do so for "some" and a "few." There were no distinctions. If they were part of the family and needed something, they were taken care of.

Every member ought to be worthy of whatever you have to give. We would do that for Jesus. Let us practice that same level of service to our brothers and sisters, "even the least of them" (Matthew 25:40). When you do that, you give to Him who gave us all.

The church in action surrounds in times of distress. The people of God are not immune to tragedy or heartbreak. But we are armed with one another to hold together. When Dorcas died, Peter found all the widows weeping, "showing all the tunics and garments that Dorcas used to make while she was with them" (Acts 9:39). While the world retreats, the church in action surrounds.

How could we ever make it through some difficulty without the help of one another? We are charged to "rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15). That means we see what needs there are and try to fulfill them to the best of our ability. We have the arm of the Lord. And we have the embrace of His people to surround us.

The church in action prays and stays together. In Acts 12, Herod "had James the brother of John put to death with a sword" (12:2). While James was not the first martyr for the cause, he was the first of the apostles to be killed. And he was a close friend of Jesus. That could have easily caused the early disciples to abandon the cause altogether. Instead, when they heard that Peter, too, had been imprisoned, "prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God" (12:5). The word "fervent" can also be translated "continuous" or "earnest." They continued to rely upon Him who had overcome death. In earnest.

What will be our next response to tribulation? If the "fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (Jam. 5:16), can you imagine what the prayers of people who pray together can do? No matter the difficulty, we must show our dependence on our Father who hears and cares for us. Such will give us the strength we need to stay and fight together.

What was the result of the church in action? "The word of the Lord continued to grow and to be multiplied" (12:24). When we follow this same pattern, growth is the inevitable reaction.

~via *Southside church of Christ*; Pasadena, Texas.



In Praise of Lament

Drew Nelson

In 1917 the filmmaker Cecil B. DeMille handed over a copy of his film about Joan of Arc to the board of censors who would determine whether any objectionable material needed to be removed before public release. Only one issue was raised: a single line where Joan asks, "my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" In defense of the line DeMille asked whether the censor knew the source he was quoting. She answered that it didn't matter where the line came from; it was irreverent, possibly blasphemous, and definitely inappropriate for audiences.

Let us note the irony of the censor's protest: if voicing that line is blasphemous, then the author of Psalm 22 and Jesus himself were guilty long before DeMille. If it was inappropriate for movie-going audiences in 1917 to hear those words, then it had been inappropriate for Bible-reading audiences for the previous 2,900 years. Apparently, God didn't sufficiently censor himself.

I'm afraid that too often we side with the censor. For many the Bible is nothing more than a reservoir of inspiration—the stuff of cross stitches and reposted Facebook graphics. The Psalter might as well be a placeholder for number 23. Yet if you were to actually read the Psalms from beginning to end, you'd find that the lament of Psalm 22 isn't exceptional—the serenity of Psalm 23 is!

To be impressed with the prevalence of lament one need only survey the Psalms before number 23. You'd hear God's people cry out that they're surrounded by enemies (O Lord, how many are my foes! Many are rising against me, 3:1), that their emotional suffering is taking a toll on their bodies (My eye wastes away because

of grief, 6:7), that it seems like they're the only faithful ones left (The faithful have vanished from among the children of men, 12:1), that God seems nowhere to be found in the predicament (How Long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?, 13:1). The valley of the shadow of death is not a vague metaphor; it's the world described in the rest of the Psalms! When Psalm 23 is arrived at through the door of numbers 1 thru 22 it's not sappy sentiment but a sigh of relief.

Lament is a constant presence in the Psalms and largely foreign to us. Is it the case that we have no need of lament and therefore our neglect is justified? Is the world no longer cruel and broken? Or is it the case that we have neglected this practice because we have grown numb to our lamentable world? Consider three arguments for the use of lament in the Christian's life.

To lament is to be in touch with reality. Lament calls attention to the chasm between the kind of God we serve and the kind of world we inhabit. In his overflowing love, God created a good world full of beauty and sustenance, and created man & woman in his image to inhabit that world. In his immeasurable grace, after humanity rebelled, God launched an operation to redeem the world. Yet that redemption is not yet complete. Psalm 10 sums up all the evil of the world into one man: arrogant, greedy, predatory, lying, violent. And as this wicked man crushes God's people, God seems distant: "Why, O Lord, do you stand far away? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?" (v1). Lament points out the discrepancy between the clearly revealed character of the omnipresent God, the hope He has promised, and the terrible state of the world as it now stands. Lament apprehends the true state of things: that we are living between the ages. Jesus is king, yet Satan still prowls.

To lament is to be faithful. If we were in attendance at a public worship where a prayer along the lines of Psalm 88 was worded, we might be disturbed at the state of offerer's faith. But perhaps we should be just as disturbed to never hear or offer such a lament. Behind every lament in scripture are firm convictions that God is listening, that prayer is worthwhile, that I can be honest with God, and that God is sovereign & merciful. In his book *Rejoicing in Lament*, Todd Billings points out, "It is precisely out of trust that God is sovereign that the psalmist repeatedly brings laments and petitions to the Lord. . . . If the psalmists had already decided the verdict—that God is indeed unfaithful—they would not

continue to offer their complaint." What does it mean to never lament? It may mean that we are indifferent to the pain of the world, that we have accepted the devil's order of the things—the prevalence of evil & suffering, or that we don't think God can or will do anything about it. Going to God in pain is an expression of faith.

To lament is to process. Many Psalms contain entire emotional journeys, where the psalmist's state of mind at the end is completely different than the beginning. Psalm 13, a whole 6 verses, contains such a journey. In vv1-2 he expresses his pain. At one end are unrighteous enemies being exalted over him. At the other is a silent God whose promises of justice still go unfulfilled. The plea comes in vv3-4, a modest request for just a little more strength to endure. The Psalm ends in vv5-6 with a resolution to move forward with a firmer gaze fixed on God's promises and character, which remain sure even in our suffering. Ripped from their context, vv5-6 read like glib platitudes about trusting God and going to church. But the preceding lament shows us the processing of pain, the attempt to reach up from the pit of despair, and the hope that can be found even before the wounds are bound up.

We may be rightly concerned that lament may edge toward irreverence or give way to doubt. But the greater danger may be to neglect lament altogether, to bottle up and keep the grief we should be pouring out to God. To do so is to lose touch with reality, to neglect an expression of faith utilized by the people of God in scripture, and to fail to process our grief in a way that draws us toward God.

~via *Focus Magazine*; March 25, 2020.

News & Notes...

THE SICK:

JoAnn Gilbert
Doris Lovell
Alvis McLemore
Lloyd Adams

Bobbie Adcock
Loretta Warner
Ann Bush
Joyce Tucker

Those Undergoing Treatments or Chronic Illness:

Donna Wright
Nikki Ogles
Lona Jackson

Freddie Mae Elmore
Anita Wheeler
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 Carrier
 Matt Poff Gene Carpenter
 Carrie Warner Kevin Belue

In The Hospital/Rehabilitation:

Norman Hamm; Millenium - Huntsville

Athens Health & Rehabilitation:

Mildred Lambert, rm. 33 Mattie Murray, rm. 2
 Valeria Dalton, rm. 7 Connie Brock, rm. 62
 Brenda Wilson, rm. 77 Christine Hudson, rm. 77
 Evelyn Hogan, rm. 36

Limestone Health Facility:

Virginia Meyer, rm. 69 Bettye Harrison, rm. 59
 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:

Helen Blankenship received a good report on her blood levels this week from her doctor. She will return to the doctor in a couple of weeks ... ***Larry Tucker's mom, Joyce Tucker***, continues at home and is declining. Keep Joyce and all the family in your prayers. ... ***Betty Lovell*** continues her therapy at home and is making good progress.

MEN'S BIBLE CLASS: The *Men's Bible Class* that was scheduled for this past Monday was postponed until Monday, May 18th. We will be studying "Say Thank You" It is episode 66.

OUT OF TOWN: *The Stiles:* *Chuck & Benita* are in Vicksburg, Mississippi with Chuck's work... *Christian Usery* continues his nursing work in Long Beach, California.

Remember Our Facebook Study

Wednesday Evening at 7:00 p.m.
 Market Street Private Group Page

Men Privileged To Serve:

Sunday, May 3rd:

Morning Worship

Announcements.....
 Song Leader Larry Holt
 Prayer..... Larry Mitchell
 Preaching..... David Cox
 Lord's Supper
 Presiding.....
 Assisting.....
 Serving Kenneth Adams..... Clayton Hamm
Heath Dollar Harold Davis
 Closing Prayer Keenon Currier

Evening Worship

Announcements.....
 Song Leader
 Prayer.....
 Preaching.....
 Lord's Supper
 Closing Prayer

Other Assignments for the week of May 3rd:

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

Wednesday, May 6th:

Song Leader
 Bible Reading Hebrews 10:26-31

 Prayer.....
 Invitation.....
 Closing Prayer

Sunday, May 10th:

Morning Worship

Announcements..... Larry Tucker
 Song Leader Albert Haraway
 Prayer..... Marcus Morris
 Preaching..... David Cox
 Lord's Supper
 Presiding..... Joel Hamm
 Assisting..... Larry Mitchell
 Serving Tony Thomas Russ Wulfekuhl
 Sam Gregory Landon Adams
 Closing Prayer Danny Holt

Evening Worship

Announcements..... Larry Tucker
 Song Leader Hunter Cox
 Prayer..... Harvey Nixon
 Preaching..... David Cox
 Lord's Supper Joel Hamm
 Closing Prayer Larry Mitchell

Other Assignments for the week of May 10th:

Ushers..... Terry Andrews/Dwayne Allfrey
 Work Sound System..... Nathaniel Adams