

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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No. 32

A Godly Man in Wicked Surroundings

Bill Hall

Elijah was a man who reached true greatness in the Lord's service. He was always ready to go where God would send him (1 Kings 18:1; 19:15); to pray whenever prayer was needed (1 Kings 17:20, 21; 18:36, 37), and to confront evil whenever confrontation was necessary (1 Kings 18:17-24; 21:17-19). He was translated without seeing death, and he, along with Moses, was chosen to appear with the Lord on the mount of transfiguration.

The remarkable thing about Elijah is that he attained this greatness while living in a wicked and hostile environment. Had he lived in Judah during the righteous reign of Hezekiah or Josiah, we might not be surprised at Elijah's attainments. But he lived instead in Israel during the wicked reign of Ahab. He was subjected to the cruel intents of Jezebel. He was under constant harassment and threat of death. He became so discouraged at one point that he asked to die, but he never denied his God.

In this wicked environment Elijah was able to influence others. The widow of Zarephath was blessed through Elijah (1 Kings 17:8-24). The multitudes on Mount Carmel were led to cry, "The Lord, He is God!" through his courageous efforts (1 Kings 18:39). Elisha, his successor, must have been greatly influenced by him. And even Ahab was brought to humility on one occasion, clothing himself in sackcloth as a result of Elijah's rebuke (1 Kings 21:27-29). The message of Elijah is clear. You can live a godly life and influence others for good in a wicked and hostile environment.

When one hears the excuses people make today, it is obvious that Elijah's message is badly needed in this generation. People excuse their failure to teach others the gospel with, "People are so prejudiced around here they just won't listen"; when the truth is, little effort has been made. If they are approached about their ungodly conduct, they explain that "You just don't know how terrible the people are that I have to work around every day." If their children go astray their explanation is, "Our children are faced with pressures that we didn't have growing up." Such statements,

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

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 MESSENGER

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Market Street church.*

David A. Cox, Editor

repeated often enough, become too many a “license” to do wrong and a salve to soothe their troubled consciences.

We must throw aside our excuses and make up our minds to do right. Elijah could serve God in wicked surroundings. And so can us.

~via *Faith Builder*; Macon, Georgia.



Unforgivable Words

Jim Jonas

As a younger preacher I sometimes read the following admonition: “We do not speak so as to be understood, but so as not to be misunderstood.” I guess that sounded catchy to whoever thought of it and apparently to others who kept repeating it. There was always something that bugged me about that cliché, and then one day it hit me: Not even Jesus could speak so as not to be misunderstood. The gospel records are full of misinterpretations by His audiences, from His use of figurative language to violating conventional wisdom to outright distortions of what He said by His enemies. Jesus expressed Himself perfectly, yet His words were often mangled beyond recognition.

Then it further dawned on me: Communication is a two-way street. Yes, speakers (or writers) have the duty to speak clearly, logically and consistently, but the hearers have a responsibility as well. They must fight mental laziness, resist the tendency to filter everything through their prejudices and not falsely attribute conclusions to the speaker or twist his words into a meaning he did not intend.

Well, here we are in 2020 where words have become weaponized, inadvertent misstatements have become toxic and special interest biases have set linguistic landmines in order to destroy the enemy. We routinely see reputations ruined, careers destroyed, public shaming over an opinion or the use of a term that some grievance group has recently pronounced offensive, bigoted, phobic, demeaning, abusive or hateful. Freedom of

speech is being replaced by fearfulness to speak. This is not accidental.

The “wokeness” movement is not designed to help people become kinder and gentler. It is ideological warfare, the attempt to gain an advantage by silencing the enemy and destroying the cultural landscape that he occupies. The political aspects of this warfare are not our immediate concern; our interest primarily lies in the spiritual threat that such an atmosphere creates for God’s people. Consider the following challenges:

The temptation to speak untruth. With fear of public ostracism and professional reprisal, the temptation is to simply conform to the current standards and adopt the imposed language. There are dangers in this: 1) If you speak the words, how long will it be before you believe the ideas behind them?, and 2) It is demoralizing when you say things you know aren’t true. In either case we lose when we follow the path of least resistance.

Various societal factors can force us into a veritable minefield of moral dilemmas. Most of the “gotcha” issues of the day are based on sexual identity and race, and “virtue signalers” – corporate and individual – are trampling each other to get on the bandwagon first. The result: there is tremendous pressure to speak untruths out of self-preservation.

When His opponents spoke lies, Jesus made their loyalties very plain: “You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it” (John 8:44). We should have a strong revulsion against speaking untruth, for doing so identifies us with the wrong father.

What a pathetic moment it was when the Jewish high priest, flush with self-righteous indignation, demanded of Jesus: “I adjure You by the living God that You tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God” (Matthew 26:63). Jesus knew the implications of His answer, but He refused to deny Himself (cf. 2 Timothy 2:13). Truth had to be told no matter the cost, and speak the truth He did. Yes, speak with love and grace, answer wisely, but do not sell out your faith and integrity by speaking what you know is not true.

The temptation to withhold truth. Perhaps more insidious is the temptation to speak with ambiguity and

lay low until the crisis passes. After all, Solomon says there is “a time to keep silence, and a time to speak” (Ecclesiastes 3:7), and “he who restrains his lips is wise” (Proverbs 10:19). We Christians want peace; we want everyone to get along. But at what price? And is peace that withholds truth really peace, or is it called something else?

Granted, there are occasions and media platforms in which it is wise to restrain one’s words. Social media is proving to be extremely hostile to thoughtful, constructive discussion. An acquaintance recently opined that some don’t yet understand the volatility of Facebook, that comments made on it are being read by scores of people ready to pounce on any perceived politically incorrect language or idea. Further, words can be broadcast far beyond the audience intended, and great damage can be done once an exchange “goes viral.”

Please consider this carefully: Many people fighting the cultural war do not want a reasoned discussion; they just want to silence the opposition any way they can – slander, labeling (bigot, racist, homophobe, etc.) or outright intimidation. While it may be wise to avoid situations where our words will be distorted, when we are personally confronted with a direct challenge to the truth, we must have the courage to speak. That does not mean we must respond to everything we read on social media, but it may mean telling a family member who has “come out” as transgender that we will not speak or act in a way that denies reality.

In a world of lies, distortions, political correctness and humanistic claptrap, telling the truth is the greatest gift we can offer. And while it might create a momentary backlash, it just may save a soul in the long run.

The temptation to adopt the world’s tactics. The current climate in public discourse is ruthless. When someone expresses unapproved words, they are castigated, denounced and publicly humiliated. And even though many grovel and beg for forgiveness for daring to voice their un-PC view, they often lose their job regardless. Once again, mea culpas are fruitless because the enemy isn’t after apologies. The end game is capturing the ideological high ground, and anyone in the way is expendable.

Sometimes saints adopt the standards of society rather than repudiate them. It is easy to conflate the political and the religious and unconsciously parrot the language of our peers. Instead of engaging others in

reasoned discussion, we may employ a scorched earth policy and divide ourselves into “us” and “them” – and then show “them” no mercy. “My brethren, these things ought not to be so” (James 3:10).

~via *The Centerville Journal*; Shelbyville, Tennessee.

News & Notes...

THE SICK:

Joel Taylor	Marcella Coblenz
Mitzi Carruth	JoAnn Gilbert
Loretta Warner	Bobbie Adcock
Doris Lovell	Ann Bush
Tessa Bacci	Judy Whitt

Those Undergoing Treatments or Chronic Illness:

Ross Melvin	Donna Wright
Freddie Mae Elmore	Nikki Ogles
Anita Wheeler	Lona Jackson
Judy Vaughn	Janice Cagle
Jeanette Weir	Cornelia Pepper
Ella Melvin	Wayne Wooldridge
Cindy Walker	Kenneth Fisher
Al Pollard	Charles Burns
David Collier	Phillip Harwell
Una King Currier	Joan Carpenter
Gene Carpenter	Lloyd Adams
Carrie Warner	

In The Hospital/Rehabilitation:

Kennedy Pepper; Memphis, Tennessee
Larry Morris; Druid City Hospital – Tuscaloosa
Norman Hamm; Millenium - Huntsville

Athens Health & Rehabilitation:

Mildred Lambert, rm. 15	Elease Barksdale, rm. 22A
Brenda Wilson, rm. 77	Connie Brock, rm. 62
Evelyn Hogan, rm. 36	Christine Hudson, rm. 77
Valeria Dalton, rm. 7	

Limestone Health Facility:

Bettye Harrison, rm.	Alice Roberson, rm. 49
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Shut-In or Away From Home:

Deanie Britton, Limestone Lodge

Marci Bassett, Limestone Manor
 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

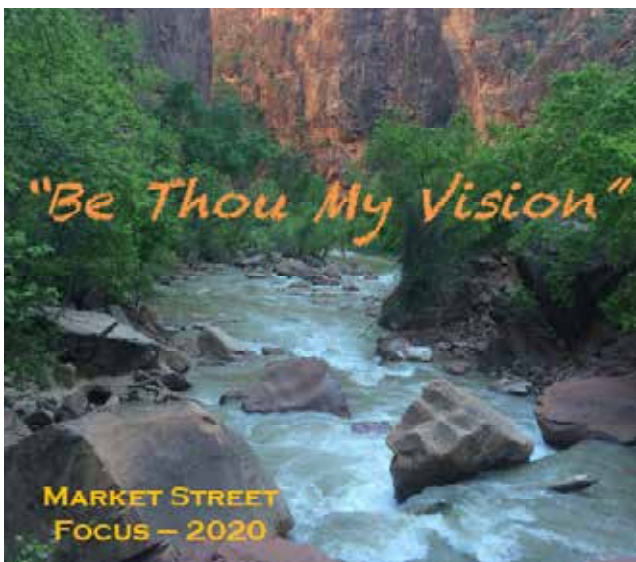
Updates:

Kennedy Pepper

surgery on Thursday and it went well. She continues in the hospital in Memphis awaiting her third surgery... **Ross Melvin** received word that the cancer is in his stomach. He is scheduled to begin a series of treatments this week... **Steve Usery** had his knee surgery on Thursday and it went well and he will begin therapy on Monday... **Louise Melvin** is doing out-patient therapy... **Marcus Morris' brother, Larry Morris**, is in the hospital in Tuscaloosa with the virus... **Betty Bolton and Peggy Mitchell's sister, Judy Whitt**, is scheduled to return home from rehab on Tuesday of this week... **Ross & Louise Melvin's grandson, Luke Davis**, is to have back surgery this month in Boston, Massachusetts.

SYMPATHY: We want to extend our deepest sympathy to **Carol Dean and all the family** in the passing of Carol and Timmy's son-in-law, **Matt Poff**. His memorial service was yesterday afternoon.

OUT OF TOWN: **Clayton Hamm & Matthew Usery** have been in Florida this week... **Joe Hinkle** is in Port St. Lucie, Florida, visiting with family... **The Stiles: Chuck and Benita** are in Vicksburg, Mississippi... **Opal Conn** is in Vicksburg, Mississippi... **Christian Usery** is in Long Beach, California.



Men Privileged To Serve:

Sunday, August 9th:

Morning Worship

Announcements.....Keith Hinkle
 Song Leader Albert Haraway
 Prayer..... Larry Mitchell
 Preaching..... David Cox
 Lord's Supper
 Presiding.....Tommy Coblentz
 Assisting Hunter Cox
 Serving Danny Johnson..... Harold Davis
 Clayton Hamm Heath Dollar
 Closing Prayer Wayne Vaughn

Evening Worship

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

Other Assignments for the week of August 9th:

Ushers.....
 Work Sound System.....

Wednesday, August 12th:

Song Leader
 Bible Reading

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

Sunday, August 16th:

Morning Worship

Announcements..... Terry Andrews
 Song Leader Hunter Cox
 Prayer..... Tommy Coblentz
 Preaching..... David Cox
 Lord's Supper
 Presiding..... Larry Holt
 Assisting Marty Adams
 Serving Sam Gregory Matthew Vaughn
 Charles Vaughn Keenon Currier
 Closing Prayer Harold Ash

Evening Worship

Announcements..... Terry Andrews
 Song Leader Tommy Burns
 Prayer..... Larry Tucker
 Preaching David Cox
 Lord's Supper Larry Holt
 Closing Prayer Kenneth Adams

Other Assignments for the week of August 16th:

Ushers..... Russ Wulfekuhl/Heath Dollar
 Work Sound System..... Landon Adams