

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
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Athens, Alabama 35612
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No. 23

How To Reach The Prodigal

W. Frank Walton

In Jesus' parable of the prodigal son, no one went to the pigpen to reach this lost boy. Yet, there are many erring prodigals today that are struck in the muck of sin, who need someone to go help nudge him or her back to God.

We all can try reaching the erring child of God wandering in the wasteland of sin before it is everlastingly too late: "My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20). All sensitive, faithful Christians should be concerned about their erring brethren, who have been seduced by the glittering bright lights of the far country of sin. It is literally a matter of eternal life or death!

1. Urgency. We must go "save others, snatching them from the fire" (Jude 23). In too many cases, a brother or sister at church becomes erratic in their attendance. This is a warning signal that their faith is faltering. Then, they often stop attending altogether. Then, how long does it take for us to miss them? How long does it take for brethren to go try to reach them? On different occasions, I've had unfaithful Christians tell me that no one else from church has contacted them or tried to persuade them to return to the Lord. We need a sense of urgency to turn a sinner from the error of his way and save a soul from death!

How many elders, who will give account to God for whether they were diligent or negligent in their shepherding of souls (Hebrews 13:17), wait far too long to do anything, if at all, about the erring member? Remember the blistering woes the prophet Ezekiel pronounced on the unconcerned spiritual shepherds of Israel (Ezekiel 34:2-16)?

2. Love and Compassion. The father in Jesus' parable had loving "compassion" (Luke 15:20) for his erring son. Compassion moved God to send His son Jesus to teach lost sinners about the way of salvation (Luke 1:78-79). Love is seeking the highest good of our brother. To ignore their sin is not love but a lack of love for their soul and for the truth!

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

Jerry McGlocklin.....(256) 232-7620
Kenneth Smith.....(256) 233-2050
Bonnie Sutton.....(256) 232-2081

Deacons

Marty R. Adams.....(256) 233-5147
Joel Hamm.....(256) 230-6223
Stuart Wilson.....(256) 233-6291

Evangelist

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MARKET STREET MESSENGER

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Market Street church.*

David A. Cox, Editor

Loves moves us to speak the hard truth, as Jesus did to the rich young ruler, about what they need to change in their lives (Mark 10:21). Tough love is stronger than our fears of rejection.

Sometimes if a person has gone astray for a long time, we might give up on ever reaching them. Periodic contact to admonish them as an erring brother, even after they have been marked and disfellowshipped, shows loving concern for their soul (2 Thessalonians 3:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:14).

3. Wisdom. We all have responsibility, as opportunity and contact permits, to reach wandering brothers mired in the pig pen of sin. Paul says, “Concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another” (Romans 15:14). “Admonish” means to warn and exhort an erring brother to turn from sin. I think most “out of duty” Christians, if their conscience isn’t hardened, appreciate you taking the time to sincerely talk to them about their soul.

Empathize by putting yourself in their shoes (Galatians 6:1-2), to help you use wisdom in “having your speech seasoned with salt” (Colossians 4:3). Some become defensive and try to turn the tables and criticize “how” you approach them. Don’t let their self-justification intimidate you.

A loving Christian will speak “the truth in love” from the goodness” of a kind and tender heart (Ephesians 4:15; Colossians 3:12). We must have “knowledge” of the scriptures to apply it to their situation. Some may have rationalized that their immorality is okay with God. Think of some pertinent verses that speak clearly to their situation and be ready to read them with the erring.

It may be good to ask them, “Have you thought about what will happen to you if you die in sin?” You can try to persuade them by appealing to God’s “goodness” — all a loving Father has done to save us through the gracious sacrifice of his Son (Romans 2:4). When I first began preaching in college, I preached a sermon on Jesus’ crucifixion that shows God’s hatred of sin and his love for the sinner. A brother came forward and was restored to God, after having been unfaithful for over 30 years! The old, old story of God’s grace is ever fresh and powerful to touch and turn the heart!

Those who are more hardened need to be reminded that hell is as real as heaven, and they don’t need to be

lost in hell, but that heaven can be regained (Romans 2:5-11). If they think their sin is worth such impenitent behavior, read with them, as I have, the terrifying description of “the lake of fire” and the fate of the damned (Revelation 20:11-15). Tell them God still loves them. He wants them to come back. Tell them that you still love them and continually pray for their soul’s welfare. Thoughts of eternal separation from God and heaven, as well as the pain of eternal torment, can influence them to repent and return to God.

~via *Biblical Insights*; Vol. 3 No. 7.

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Peering In The Mirror

Aaron Beard

Hanging on the wall in the bathrooms and bedrooms of most Americans is a large mirror. When we wake up in the morning, one of the first things we do is to look into one of these mirrors. This can be a very frightening experience. It can be amazing how much change we undergo in our physical appearance while asleep. Almost immediately, we do something about our “rough” appearance. It would be ridiculous for someone to see his appearance needs attention, but walk away and do nothing about it. While we find this absurd with our physical appearance, we often do the same thing with our “rough” spiritual appearance.

James tells us that it is not enough to just hear the word of God. We have to make its application to our lives. He describes the man who hears and does not apply it as being “like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was” (James 1:23- 24).

The word of God is a perfect mirror for our spiritual lives. God left us His word so his children could look into it and see where they stand before God. James continues to say, “But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does” (James 1:25). When we look into His word and see there are changes that we ought to make,

we cannot just casually walk away. Do not be deceived, just walking away fixes your spiritual appearance just as much as it fixes your physical appearance. This solves none of our problems; they are still there. It takes a sincere and humble heart to admit there are problems and to take action against them.

1 Peter 1:22-23 tells us that we are born again through the word of God which comes to us through His Spirit. It is the Spirit who has revealed God's word, our spiritual mirror, to us. "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Romans 8:16). When we look into God's mirror we measure reflection against that which the Spirit reveals. His Spirit is thus bearing witness with our spirit. When this happens, do we reflect children of God? If so, we are told in verse 17 that we are "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ..."

We need to take a long look into the word of God and see where we are in our quest for becoming spiritually perfect. Do we see a man that needs to be "groomed?" We never reach a state of perfection while here on this earth, but it is certainly the goal toward which we must strive. There will always be something in our spiritual lives on which we need to work. Do we work on those things or do we just walk away, forgetting what kind of person we are?

-via *Perry Hill Road Bulletin*; Montgomery, Alabama

News & Notes

THE SICK:

Russ Wulfekuhl	Kathleen Wales
David Terry	Wynell Casteel
Yvonne Sherbert	Mary Ruth Gardner
David Hartsell	Joan Greenwald
Charles Burns	Betty Faye Holt
Brent Lowman	Ava Brooke Campbell
Faye Cary	Matt Poff
Phillip Harwell	Hailee Walton
Una King Currier	Barbara Ogles
Gladys Sandlin	Leroy Davenport

In The Hospital:

Kenneth Pressnell; Decatur General Hosp. – CCU
Jeffery Miller; UAB Hospital; Birmingham
Eli Williams; St. Jude's Hospital; Memphis, Tenn.

Athens Convalescent Care:

Hazel Toone, rm. 10

Limestone Health Facility:

Janet Berryhill, rm. 75-B Mae Bragg, rm. 57
Albert Norton, rm. 36 Marie Bates, rm. 97
Frances Bowers, rm. 100 J.D. Clanton, rm. 11E
Rosella Pugh, rm. 74

Brookshire Healthcare - Huntsville:

Rachel Grubbs, rm. 112-C

Cogburn Health & Rehab - Huntsville:

David Gardner, rm. 101-B

Shut-In:

Reba Adams, at home

Lola Colwell, at home

Polly Davis, River City Care, Decatur, rm. 74

Ruby Davis, Valley View Health, Madison, rm. 51-A

David/Martha Rice, Atria Regency, Mobile, rm. 17

ED HARRELL AT MARKET STREET: On June 17th, *Ed Harrell* will be here speaking at all three services that Sunday. He will give us a report on the work in India that he has been doing and also a report on the men that the Market Street church support in India and Mymar (Burma).

LADIES BIBLE CLASS BEGINS TUESDAY: On Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. the Ladies Bible Class will begin meeting. The class will begin by studying the topic of teaching children as parents, grandparents, aunts, etc. It will also look at teaching in the classroom setting as well. *Mary Cecile Keenon* will be teaching the class and I know that all the ladies that are able to attend these classes will profit from them. They will be meeting each week on Tuesday mornings.

OUT OF TOWN: *The Coblenz's: Tommy and Marcella* are in Mobile this week ... *The Smiths: Kenneth and Peggy* have been in Gatlinburg, Tennessee this past week... *The Hamms: Joel, Sharma, Clayton and Ragen* are out of town this week on vacation... *The Glass's: Warren and Joan* have been on vacation this past week in Chicago, Illinois.

GOSPEL MEETINGS & VBS: *The Sandlin Road church* in Elkmont is beginning a meeting today and it will continue through Friday. The speaker in this meeting will be Lowell Sallee... *The New Hope church* will begin a Vacation Bible School on Monday night. They will begin at 7:00 p.m. The adult class speakers will be as follows: Monday – *Collier Raley*; Tuesday – *Steve Klein*; Wednesday – *Norm Webb, Sr.*; Thursday – *Greg*

Chandler; Friday – *Jordan Lovell*... **The Pepper Road church** is beginning a meeting today and it will continue through Tuesday. The speaker in this meeting will be *Dennis Allan*... **The Oakland church** is beginning a Vacation Bible School on Monday and it will continue through Friday at 10:00 a.m... **The Weatherly Heights church** will begin a Lectureship on Thursday night. It will continue through next Sunday with *Wilson Adams, Sewell Hall, Guy McDaniel and David Thomley* speaking... The **Lacey's Spring church** in Lacey's Spring is beginning a meeting today and it will continue through Friday. The speaker in this meeting will be *Adam Jones*... The **Persimmon Grove church** near Bremen in Cullman county is beginning a meeting today and it will continue through Thursday. The speaker in this meeting will be *Stephen Russell*.

CONFESSION: This past Sunday morning **Christina Banks** confessed that she had not lived the kind of life that a christian should live. She asked for our prayers on her behalf. May the Lord bless her as she continues to seek to please Him.

SINGING: The *Gathering Place at New Haven* has been reserved for this evening following our evening service for a period of singing. This will be a good time for us to learn some new songs and become more familiar with some older songs that we have not song much. I hope to see you there.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL: It is only two short weeks till our Vacation Bible School. It will be **June 18-21 (Monday through Thursday)** at **10 a.m.** There will be classes for all ages and there will be a speaker each morning in the adult class. I hope everyone that is able will be here in attendance.

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

NURSING HOME SINGING: Remember the singing at the Athens Convalescent on Tuesday at 5:30 p.m.

THE RECORD: *For the Week of May 27th*

Sunday: Bible Classes..... 127
Morning Worship 172
Evening Worship..... 123

Wednesday: Bible Classes..... 102

Remember Our Service This Evening at 5:00.

Men Privileged To Serve:

Sunday, June 3rd:

Morning Worship

Announcements Kenneth Smith
Song Leader Todd Williams
Prayer Jordan Lovell
Preaching David Cox
Lord's Supper
Presiding Marcus Morris
Assisting Dwaine Allfrey
Serving Harold Davis Russ Wulfekuhl
..... Marvin Putman Marion Pepper
Closing Prayer Landon Adams

Evening Worship

Announcements Kenneth Smith
Song Leader Stefan Fudge
Prayer Tommy Coblentz
Preaching David Cox
Lord's Supper Marcus Morris
Closing Prayer Jack Cannon

Other Assignments for Sunday, June 3rd:

Usher Jerry McGlocklin
Work Sound System Marty Adams

Wednesday, June 6th:

Song Leader Todd Williams
Bible Reading..... Isaiah 43:22-28
..... Stuart Wilson
Prayer Dan Reed
Invitation Marty Adams
Closing Prayer Tommy Burns

Sunday, June 10th:

Morning Worship

Announcements Tommy Coblentz
Song Leader Stuart Wilson
Prayer Todd Williams
Preaching David Cox
Lord's Supper
Presiding Larry Mitchell
Assisting Terry Andrews
Serving Paul Hasting Delmer Carter
..... Landon Adams Keenon Currier
Closing Prayer Joel Hamm

Evening Worship

Announcements Tommy Coblentz
Song Leader Hunter Cox
Prayer Marion Mitchell
Preaching Jordan Lovell
Lord's Supper Larry Mitchell
Closing Prayer Marty Adams

Other Assignments for Sunday, June 10th:

Usher Maurice Dollar
Work Sound System Nathaniel Adams