

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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Athens, Alabama 35612
Phone (256) 232-1525

Volume V

October 13, 2013

No. 41

Beginning Today

Gospel Meeting

October 13-17

(Sunday – Thursday)

Schedule of Services

Sunday – 9:45 a.m.; 10:30 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.

Monday – Thursday – 7:00 p.m.

Evangelist – Gardner Hall

of Port Murray, New Jersey

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) 777-6737
Bonnie Sutton..... (256) 232-2081

Deacons

Marty R. Adams..... (256) 233-5147
Tommy Coblentz (256) 232-3212
Joel Hamm..... (256) 230-6223
Larry Mitchell (256) 230-0185
Todd Williams..... (205) 541-8304
Russ Wulfekuhl (256) 683-9396

Evangelists

David A. Cox (256) 233-8910
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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

MARKET STREET CHURCH OF CHRIST

514 WEST MARKET STREET
ATHENS, ALABAMA

I Can't Overcome My Past

Gardner Hall

"I have felt these tendencies since I was a child," declared some homosexuals. "I could never be anything different."

"Everyone in my family has a hot temper," says a divisive brother. "That's just the way I am."

With similar statements, we excuse our lack of repentance for vices and bad attitudes, presenting ourselves as helpless victims of past experiences. In doing so, we disregard the regenerating power of the gospel to make us new creatures in Christ's image.

My Past May Leave Me With Obstacles and Thorns

The scriptures acknowledge that sin we have committed as well as that committed against us leaves scars, pain and difficult obstacles. Old Testament characters like Leah, Jeptah, Tamar and Hosea must have struggled mightily to overcome rejection and abuse. Paul's persecution of others left him in such deep anguish that he referred to himself as "chief of sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15).

Though we are put off by the growing number of whiners and "victims," Christians must not overreact to such by becoming cynical and harsh towards those who are suffering. Impatiently telling those with spiritual wounds to "fess up" or "snap out of it," is not following Christ's teaching or example (Luke 6:36; James 2:13, etc.). Such severe and unfeeling responses are like those of Job's "friends" and are prevalent in the cults of control like the Boston Movement. Firmness in proclaiming the need for repentance or perseverance, should not be incompatible with gentleness and love.

All Can Be Controlled And Overcome

Though my past can leave me scarred, the good news is that through Christ's death, all can be forgiven. Through His sanctifying Word, old spiritual bugaboos can be controlled and eventually overcome. The New Testament is filled with references to the power of the gospel to change lives.

- The gospel is the "power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16)
- "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power..." (2 Timothy 1:7)
- Paul prayed to Him "who is able to do abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power

that works in us" (Ephesians 3:20).

- Paul was confident that the Colossians would be "strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power" (Colossians 1:11).

New Testament examples abound of those who overcame sinful pasts to become pure and powerful servants of Jesus.

- The apostle Paul was cleansed and forgiven for participating in the persecution and death of faithful Christians.

Murderers of Christians can overcome their past through the grace of God!

- The Thessalonians "turned to God from idols" (1 Thessalonians 1:9).

Pagan idol worshippers can overcome their past!

- Peter overcame his impulsiveness to be a pillar among God's people.

Those who are impulsive can overcome their past!

- Some of the Corinthians had been "fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers and extortioners" but they were washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

Homosexuals, fornicators, drug addicts (drunkards) and others entangled in ungodly lifestyles can overcome their past!

Modern Examples

The gospel of Christ is still powerful today to free from the past those who are willing to turn to Him. The lives of close friends illustrate the point:

"Jane" (not her real name) never knew who her father was. Her mother chased her out of the house telling her that she didn't want her around. Often Jane sorted through garbage to find something to eat. Today Jane is a happy faithful Christian and a dear friend who has blessed hundreds of people.

Matt was a faithful member of a congregation here in the Northeast who moved to another state. Several years ago he wrote an article in "Sentry Magazine," confessing homosexual tendencies that came from a troubled childhood, but relating at the same time about learning to control them by applying Biblical principles in life.

Other close friends have learned to deal with alcoholism, religious error, uncontrollable tempers, despair from death of loved ones and every imaginable blow that Satan could deliver. Their purity and hope in spite of grievous spiritual wounds, both self inflicted and

those delivered by others, reassure us that the gospel is still powerful to free from the past today just as it was in the first century!

With God's grace and power along with our genuine repentance and determination to take responsibility for our lives, even the most vile impulses can be controlled and eventually overcome. The deepest and most painful wounds can begin to heal. The idea that our past cannot be dealt with, is a lie of Satan, designed to keep us enchained to him. All things can become new in Christ and we can be white and pure as snow through Him. Never forget, there's soul cleansing power in the blood of the Lamb!

-via *Christianity Magazine*, March/April 1996.



Does God Want You To Be Happy?

Jim Jonas

It is not uncommon to hear someone rationalize a sinful situation by saying, "Well, I just believe God wants me to be happy." This is a valid sentiment – God does want us to be happy. But it is a whopper of a misapplication.

First, our chief aim in life is to conform our lives to God's will simply because He is God! So the whole process of trying to rationalize our behavior and seek our own "happiness" is suspect from the beginning. "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). "Speak, for Your servant heard" (1 Samuel 3:10).

Second, what is "happiness?" The way it is used above means "what I want to do." Many want to define their own happiness, but the problem is that we are extremely inept at doing this. People do all kinds of things – get drunk, have affairs, swindle others – all because it makes them "happy." "O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

Third, God understands that our happiness is di-

rectly linked to doing His will. Yes, God does want us to be happy, and He has told us exactly what makes us happy! What truly makes us happy is to remain married, honor and serve our mate, grow through problem, endure heartaches and setbacks – not frivolously divorce and remarry. Mountains of statistics can be cited which chronicle the unhappiness of adultery and divorce, yet our society continues to indulge in them under the banner of "I want to be happy" (and God wants me to be happy, too!). "Unless Your law had been my delight, I would then have perished in my affliction. I will never forget Your precepts, for by them You have given me life" (Psalm 119:92-93).

Now, in a vacuum most of us would acknowledge the above principles and say a hearty, "Amen!" But we are challenged when our emotions become inflamed, when perhaps a family member finds himself crossways with the will of God, or when carnal desire overwhelms and drive us to search for a plausible rational to justify sinful satisfaction.

Essentially, this is a trust issue. Do I trust God enough to believe Him when He tells me what will really make me happy?

-via *The Centerville Journal*, Centerville, Virginia

News & Notes

THE SICK:

Irene Mitchell
Mary Hinkle
Mot Dollar
Betty Hastings
Gwen Bullock
Charles Burns
Abby Gilbert
Phillip Harwell
Una King Currier
Lisa Swafford

Buddy Pepper
Doris Claxton
Bobby McGuire
Wynell Casteel
Elizabeth Kate Miller
Morgan Barksdale
Jerry Taylor
Ava Brooke Cambell
Mark Hargrove

In The Hospital:

Arvid McGuire; Huntsville Hospital, rm. 667

