

If I Had But One Sermon....

One Saturday night in the dim past some unknown preacher strove

By Robert F. Turner

desperately for a sermon idea. He tore his hair and beat the desk with his fist, and said, "Oh, if I had but one sermon to preach tomorrow -- if I had...." Then, he "saw the light" and next day he presented a masterful oration on fleeting time and opportunity, on the vital themes that would be preached if this sermon were his last.

And since then, thousands of sermons have sprung from this imagined situation. I have built a few of my own on this theme -- usually emphasizing man's lost condition, the redemption in Christ, and closing with, "If this were your last opportunity to obey, what then?" It will lather!

But in recent years I have re-examined this subject. The great final sermon, from the preacher's point of view, may present a summation of his finest thoughts, emphasizing the very heart of the gospel of Christ, and yet fail to make the application most needed by those who are hearing their last sermon. Now my question becomes, If Have But One Sermon To Preach -- will I strive for a preacher master-

piece, or will I go for the lost souls that are before me?

The finest sermon is not necessarily the most pleasant to hear, or the most complimented. If I am covetous, mistreating my brethren, allowing the cares of this world to overshadow my service to God; the truly great sermon for me is one that makes me see my ungodly ways and brings me to repentance. The preacher has done me no favor if he is content to tickle my ears when he might have saved my soul. Nor has he done the job his noble calling demands of him.

This is not to say browbeating or harangue make the best sermons. The best is that which meets the spiritual and eternal needs of the hearers. Nathan's masterpiece was a simple parable that ended, "Thou art the man" (2 Sam. 12:7).

If you have but one sermon for me, seek me where I am; and find me with a message that touches my heart and causes me to say, "I will arise, and go to my Father... (Lk 15:18).



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|--|---|--|--|
| Lisa Carter (Luke's mother) | Jesse Godwin (Troy's father and Mac's grandfather) | Virginia Box (Sarah Norman's grandmother) | Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother) |
| Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters) | Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier) | David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father) | Jamin Hymel (Chad's son) |
| Buddy Scalf (Ada's uncle) | Artina Hunt (Esther's friend's sister) | Betty Bradford | Hazel Gilliland and Sherry Carroll (Toni's relatives) |
| Ricky Tucker (Tyler's cousin) | Ermogene Laxson (Sara Lail's grandmother) | Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother) | William Smith (Ken Sullivan's brother) |
| Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father) | Bernice Martin (Will Harris' great-grandmother) | Sasha Rozier (Makenzie Reynolds' cousin) | Eva Jean Cavender (Matt's grandmother) |
| Bonnie Rhodes Kirkley (Toni Herd's family) | Howard Vaughan (Mary Ann's Granddad) | Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephew) | Maria Aragon (Liseth's Mother) |

August Birthdays

- 2-Emma Miller
- 6-Allyson Houlton
- 8-Alli Luther
- 9-Elliot Weldon
- 9-Troy Swenson
- 10-David Hartsell
- 11-Walker Davis
- 12-Jon Coleman
- 13-Brendon Kirby
- 13-Ariel Ramsey
- 13-Amanda Bertoldi
- 15-Kalee Reid
- 16-Sharon Edwards
- 19-Brettlyn Currier
- 19-Taylor Lawrence
- 21-Matt Cavender
- 23-Jordan Flatt
- 23-Colton Miller
- 24-Sophie Hall
- 27-Chip Freeman
- 28-Larry Rouse
- 28-Cole Johnson
- 28-Alex Dobbins

News and Notes

- ☒ - Please pray for the family of new students Chase and Lyndsay Sanders, who lost their 24-year-old sister, Katelyn, this weekend unexpectedly.
- ☒ - We welcome our new and returning students! Please be sure to be aware of several upcoming events for our students.
- ☒ - Be sure to have your picture taken (or updated) for the directory in the foyer on Sunday mornings.
- ☒ - The first college devotional and singing is tonight after services at Jeff Jerkins house. Steve Klein will be teaching!
- ☒ - We welcome to the University church Nakia Strickland and her two daughters, Sanaa and Aria!
- ☒ - Those who come early for services are urged to park on the grass when possible.
- ☒ - Please keep those in your prayers who are in the adoption process: Kevin and Jessica Anderson, Craig and Paula Davis
- ☒ - Our Meeting with Steve Klein is this week. Please use the cards and invite people every day!
- ☒ - All audio is immediately posted to www.aubeacon.com

The Auburn Beacon



Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

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Praying with the Confidence of Christ

By Steve Klein



Thoughts to Ponder

"But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

(Luke 22:32)

Elders

Walker Davis
(334) 703-0050

Larry Rouse
(334) 734-2133



SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

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Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

In so many ways I stand in awe of my Lord Jesus Christ. What a challenge it is to attempt to pattern one's life after Him. As a person who overcame every temptation He faced (Hebrews 4:15), who always did the will of His Father (John 8:29) and who loved unworthy humans to the point of making the ultimate sacrifice for them (Romans 5:6-8), Jesus stands without peer. Equally remarkable and unparalleled is the way Jesus communicated with His Father in prayer.

Jesus' prayer life is notable on several counts. First, it was a persistent prayer life. Luke 5:16 says that He "often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed." The gospels record a number of examples of this (Matthew 14:23; 26:36-46; Mark 1:35; Luke 9:18); they also reveal that, at times, Jesus would "continue all night in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12). It is impressive that the only begotten Son of God felt the need to devote so much of His time and energy to prayer. From our perspective we might wonder, "Why would the all-powerful Son

Often through suffering we find the greatest blessing of thankfulness. In weakness and pain it is easy to see ourselves as we truly are, helpless creatures completely dependent upon God. We would do well to have this kind of humility in the midst of our abundance, but it is extraordinarily hard to do so.

of God need to pray at all?" From His perspective there must have been little question that, as God's Son come to earth, reliance upon the Father was imperative.

Second, Jesus prayed passionately. In Hebrews 5:7 the inspired writer indicates that "in the days of His flesh," Jesus "offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears...." His prayers were not memorized speeches, rattled off unthinkingly when it was "time to pray." They were impass-

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sioned pleadings from a heart aflame with righteous needs and desires.

Third, Jesus prayed confidently. There is a tremendous example of this found in **Luke 22:31-32**. There, on the night of His betrayal, the Lord told Simon Peter, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." Do you see the confidence the Lord had in the effectiveness of His prayer? He had prayed that Simon Peter's faith would not fail and He was certain that Peter would return and be in a position to strengthen his brethren.

Later on that same evening, after Peter had tried to defend Jesus by attacking the servant of the high priest with a sword, Jesus told him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?" (**Matthew 26:52-53; cf. John 18:10**). Again, Jesus was certain of what would happen in response to His prayer -- if He prayed for twelve legions of angels the Father would provide them. You see, when Jesus prayed, He knew that His prayers were being heard and answered. His followers knew it too. After her brother Lazarus died Martha said to Jesus, "I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You" (**John 11:22**).

Jesus' disciples were so impressed with His ability to pray effectively that they begged Him, "Lord teach us to pray" (**Luke 11:1**). Don't we also want to be able to pray with the power and confidence of the Christ? By example and doctrine Jesus instructs us how to pray with the assurance that our prayers will be effective.

1. We are to pray in Faith. God is all-powerful and He will help His children. We must believe this. On one occasion recorded in **Matthew 21:19**, Jesus cursed a barren fig tree and it withered away. The disciples were amazed, but Jesus told them, "If you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive" (**Matthew 21:21-22**).

2. We are to pray with concern for God's will. Even facing death, Jesus prayed, "not My will, but Yours, be done" (**Luke 22:42**). The apostle John wrote, "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us" (**1 John 5:14**).

3. We are to pray persistently. The parable Jesus told of the insistent widow in **Luke 18:1-8** was told to make the point that "men always ought to pray and not lose heart."

4. We are to pray with godly fear. The Bible says that Jesus "was heard because of His godly fear" (**Hebrews 5:7**).

5. We are to keep God's commandments and do the things which please Him. Jesus knew the Father was with Him because He always did what was pleasing to the Father (**John 8:29**). Even so, we are assured that, "Whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (**1 John 3:22**).

This is the formula Jesus followed which resulted in such confidence and power in His prayers. As our High Priest, Jesus will help us come confidently before God's throne with our requests. And so, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (**Hebrews 4:16**).



Time is Swift

By Tom Edwards

Can you remember wondering many years ago what the year 2000 would be like and hoping you would live to see it? It's hard to believe that I had thoughts of that nature decades ago, but now--already--the new century has come!

This certainly illustrates the fleeting years of our lives. As James depicts, we are but "a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away...." (**James 4:14**).

In view of this, we need to be sure we are using our time wisely. As Paul writes, "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil" (**Eph. 5:15,16**). And just how are we to be this way? As Paul goes on to say, "So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (**v. 17**).

Peter emphasizes a similar thing in which he cites Christ for our example and a life that is lived in accordance with God's will as our responsibility (**1 Pet. 4:1-6**). So it is not enough to merely know the will of the Lord--we must also be making it a part of our lives by doing it. For to do so is wise; but to not, is most foolish.

Fearing God and keeping His commandments sums up the supreme duty of mankind (**Eccl. 12:13; cf. 1 Pet. 1:17**). No matter what our occupation or avocation, reverencing the Lord and living according to His word is to be the basis for all our activities (**cf. Col. 3:17**).

It is so sad (and ironic) when people, who live each day because the Lord has made it possible for them to have a new day, will turn around and say that they "don't have time for God"--as Felix had implied to Paul (**Acts 24:25**).

And to compound this by realizing that some of the activities that take up people's time can be

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defined with one word--sin--makes it even more outrageous. Yet, we read in **Romans 5:6** that "...at the right time Christ died for the ungodly." What a contrast!: People not having time for God--or a "convenient season"--while, on the other hand, God going extremely "out of His way" for them (**see Phil. 2:5-8**). And let us not forget that one of the reasons why Christ died at the "right time" is so that we might use "time right" in living

a new life unto Him (**cf. 2 Cor. 5:15**).

The great thought of time swiftly passing to the Christian is that every day that passes, we are one day closer to heaven; every week, a week closer; every month, a month closer; and every year, a year closer. To spiritually lethargic saints, Paul writes, "And this do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we [first] believed" (**Rom. 13:11**). No, now is not the time to be indifferent to spiritual matters--nor is it ever--for heaven's (or hell's) eternity continues to draw nearer.

Time is quickly running its course; but it, too, like a wind-up clock, will one day cease. Will you be ready for the Judgment Day when that happens? Using your time now to obey the Lord is something that you will never regret in that great day of reckoning. Remember, Jesus truly took time for you; won't you take time for Him? "for He says, 'At the acceptable time I listened to you, and on the day of salvation I helped you'; behold, now is 'the acceptable time,' behold, now is 'the day of salvation'" (**2 Cor. 6:2**). And for those of us who are Christians, we are each to be teachers of this and other great truths from God's word, as we are carried along the swift current of time to the shore of eternity (**Heb. 5:12**).

