

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

Church of Christ
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VOLUME 8 NO. 52

February 26, 2012

"The Man In The Vest"

By Steve Niemeier

As the members of the congregation here at Greenwood filed into services and then departed from services the man in the vest was there to greet them.

When the teacher of the adult class arrived the podium and the cordless microphone were in place. Also, the public address system was turned on and ready to operate. The man in the vest took care of this.

The coat closet needed to be revamped in order to handle the extra coats of the congregation because of the blessings of growth the Lord has provided us. The man in the vest made sure this was done.

On a cold snowy morning or evening before services the man in the vest made sure salt was put out around the doors. Also, those in need of assistance were helped in by the man in the vest.

The building here at Greenwood has the fingerprints of the man in vest all over it. From walls being erected in the basement—to the renovations upstairs – to the baptismal dressing rooms – to the simplest of things such as the light bulbs – the man in the vest has left his fingerprints.

The "more experienced members" who had a need – the struggling brother or sister who needed encouragement – the young who needed a "high five" – the preacher who needed a hug – the man in the vest was there to provide for all.

The area congregations who needed to be encouraged by a visit from members of another congregation during a gospel meeting– the man in the vest made sure they got that visit from a member from the Greenwood congregation.

The man in the vest along with his wife provided timely brotherly kindness and love to all. James 2:23 states that Abraham was called a friend of God. The man

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in the vest was a friend of God – and he was a brother to us.

We will miss the man in the vest!

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up"

James 4:10

Blessings Of Local Church Membership

By William Beasley

The New Testament clearly sets forth strong reasons for being a member of the Lord's church. In the church one serves under the headship of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18) to give glory to God (Ephesians 3:21). In Christ, His spiritual body the church, we enjoy all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3), where there is no condemnation (Romans 8:1). Each of these, I believe, refers to the church universal, to being a member of the body of Christ. There are duties which cannot be obeyed, blessings which cannot be received, unless and until one is also a member of a local congregation, such as the church in Ephesus (Revelation 2:1), Smyrna (Revelations 1:8), etc.

The New Testament also sets forth strong, clear reasons for being a member of a local congregation. There is no

such thing in the New Testament as a "member at large." Saul of Tarsus **"assayed to join himself to the disciples"** (Acts 9:26). To the immature, nominal ones who "play church" all of the things to be mentioned may not seem like

blessings. To those who truly want to go to heaven, the blessedness will be seen. Consider, with me, some blessing associated with membership in a local congregation.

Fellowship in Worship

When we meet together, as brothers and sisters in Christ, as the spiritual children of the Heavenly Father, to offer worship to God, we can draw strength one from another. Our God recognized this need, and such is shown in our worship. When we are **"making melody with y(our) heart(s) to the Lord"** we are also **"speaking one to another"** (Ephesians 5:19), we are **"teaching and admonishing one another"** (Colossians 3:16). When we partake of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week, we **"proclaim the Lord's death"** (1 Corinthians 11:26). Working alone, worshiping alone, standing alone, and serving alone are

discouraging (see Romans 11:2-3, 4). We ought to recognize the blessing of being able to worship with others.

Fellowship in Work

The basic meaning of "fellowship" is "joint participation." Fellowship in work means that all are working. If you are not working (there is more work to be done than there are willing workers) you are not in this fellowship. Surely it is good, is a real blessing, to be able to share the work (consider 1 Corinthians 12:12f). There are some people whom I cannot reach with the gospel of Jesus Christ, but you can reach them. For this, I thank God, and see a great blessing in having others (you) to work with me.

Being Able to Do Work Afar

Few of us could individually support a gospel preacher . . . but together (in a local church) we can help with the Lord's work in other states, in other nations. Few of us could afford to preach over the radio, through the newspaper, publish a bulletin, etc., but together (as a local congregation of God's people) we can and do. Our little bit, in comparison to the great need, is multiplied and the

work is being done. There is, beloved, much more to do.

.Blessings of Brotherly Love

In times of physical problems, thank God for brethren who care. In times of a spiritual crisis, some care enough to be there. Some love enough to **"reprove, rebuke, exhort"** (2 Timothy 4:1-2), when it is needed. **"Better is open rebuke than love that is hidden"** (Proverbs 27:5). It even helps when one says, "We missed you." When someone is there when we must cry "Help!", we have received a great blessing from God.

Watchful Care of Elders / Brethren

If you are working, serving in a congregation that is fully organized, having qualified elders (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9) who are concerned for your soul, you are enjoying a blessing from God, found only in being a member of a local church of Christ. The work of elders is limited to a local congregation (1 Peter 5:2). Elders must give account for your soul and how they worked for its salvation (Hebrews 13:17). Your obligation is to obey (Hebrews 13:17a); this is done only in the local church. Dear reader, Matthew 11:17

cannot be obeyed except through local church membership. When an elder, as God's appointed shepherd of the flock, comes to you, as one of the lambs entrusted to him, to encourage, to strengthen, to reprove or to rebuke he is a blessing to you. Those people who are determined to live as the world see such as meddlers, busy-bodies; but those who want to go to heaven will see a blessing from God. This blessing is given only through local church membership.

Church Discipline

This, too, is a blessing. So many times when corrective discipline is mentioned someone will say, "It will drive them away." Such is not the purpose. We strive to bring the erring back to God's fold (2 Thessalonians 3:14; 2 Corinthians 2:5-9), thus the blessedness.

Conclusion

We need to be thankful to God for all of his blessings to us. We need to be thankful for the blessings associated with being a child of God, a member of the body of Christ, which is the church of Christ. We also need to be thankful for the blessings associated with being a member of a local congregation. If you have never

obeyed the gospel of Christ, you are not a child of God and are missing all of these blessings God has provided for you.

Spring Gospel Meeting

March 11th - 16th

"Is Jesus Really Real?"

Rob Dispennett