

## ASSEMBLY TIMES

### Sunday

Bible Class 9:45am  
Morning Assembly 10:35am  
Evening Assembly 6:00pm

### Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00pm

## RADIO PROGRAM

### The Bible Speaks



Sunday 9:00-9:30a.m.  
KURM 790AM

## Downtown Church of Christ

P.O. Box 447  
201 W. Chestnut Street  
Rogers, AR 72757  
479-636-3575  
www.downtowncoc.net



Some Christians are  
like rocking chairs –  
always moving but  
never going anywhere.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

Today  
All Classes  
On Hold

Next Sunday  
All Classes  
On Hold

This info is provided  
to help everyone stay  
in synch during our  
three-year study thru  
the Bible (Sunday AM).

## FAMILY NEWS

### PRAYER LIST –

*Preachers we support:* Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, Canada, Mexico, Peru, & U.S.

*Sick:* Mary Lou Lewis, Kathy Fletcher, Marsha Swim, June Self, Diane Willis,

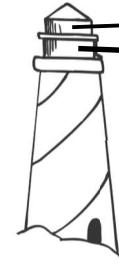
Shirley Cole, Etta Frazelle, & Rai Starr

*Military:* Logan Dickey

*Shut-ins:* Betty Jo Young, Margaret Abel, Erton Usrey, & Billie Pennington

**SCHEDULE** – For the foreseeable future we continue to meet on Sundays at 9am & 11am. FB lessons are held Sundays at 6pm & Wednesdays at 6:30pm.

**SYMPATHY** – Our sympathy is extended to Jerry Shell and his family at the recent passing of his wife (and our sister) Nellie. She will be missed.



## DOWNTOWN GOSPEL BEACON

**PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY THE DOWNTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST  
ROGERS, ARKANSAS**

August 9, 2020

## Persuasion

Persuasion is a fascinating concept. Contrary to popular belief, efforts to persuade are not confined to pulpits and courtrooms. As one philosopher put it, “Life IS persuasion.” I believe he was right.

Social media is full of examples of those who try to persuade others that 1) their children (or grandchildren) are the best, 2) their political views (and candidates) are the best, 3) their cooking skills are, like, awesome — and on and on. And there is certainly nothing inherently wrong with such efforts (especially if, like me, your grandchildren, politics, and cooking skills really are awesome).

We spend our days trying to convince others of our credibility by the way we dress, the way we talk, and even the way we eat. We care what others think about us, and we spend considerable effort in ensuring that what they think is what we want them to think. It’s a part of dating, family life, on-the-job behaviors, and even how we walk down the street.

Religion in particular has been a hotbed of persuasive efforts since Genesis 2, when God first laid down the law to Adam. And Satan wasted no time trying to persuade Adam and Eve that God didn’t know what He was talking about (Ge 3). Jesus was

all about persuasion. From the content of His message, to His appeal to the Old Testament scriptures, and even His miracles — all were designed to persuade His audience that He was, in fact, the Messiah (Jn 5:36-39).

It is exasperating, therefore, to hear religious people adopt a ‘live and let live’ approach to religious discussion. While all other areas of persuasion are fair game, the idea seems to be that ‘truth’ is impossible to find. Thus, all viewpoints are equally valid and it is futile to waste time discussing them. In such an environment, open dialogue is discouraged, and even condemned. “You are being too judgmental”, we are told — and that puts an end to the discussion.

But if Jesus really is the Messiah, if He really did come forth from the grave, and if the Bible really is an inspired message from God, these truths need to be advanced. And part of that advancement will be to expose other doctrines that oppose these truths. It is a persuasive process, and every legitimate persuasive device should be used.

Which raises the question, what is a legitimate persuasive device? Well, grumbling and complaining are decidedly **not** so (Ph 2:14-15). Neither are emotional rants (Ac 19:24-28). Nor should we spread gossip, innuendo, or ‘fake news’ simply because we happen to agree with it (1 Pe 4:15, 2 Th 2:9-12).

Legitimate persuasion is not complicated. It should have its basis in ‘**truth**’ (and yes, there is such a thing — ‘that which comports with reality’ — Jn 18:18, 2 Pe 1:16). Truth can be substantiated with facts and reason, a logical presentation of evidence and witnesses. Persuasion is also enhanced by the **conduct** of those who advance it (1 Pe 2:12). This is why our behavior is so critical — we are lights to the world (Mt 5:16). Even **emotion** when used properly can be persuasive. Heaven and hell are emotional topics, and thinking on them should motivate us to be what we ought to be (2 Co 5:11).

Aristotle called these ‘logos, ethos, and pathos’. But you don’t have to be a Greek philosopher to understand persuasion — or to use it for God’s glory.

- *WKing*

## Faith in Context

Sometimes people don’t accept the God’s Truth. In many ways we try our best to teach a lost soul, or encourage the weak, or guard our own souls from the lies of this world. Sometimes it might not work. Many a time have blood, sweat, and tears been shed over the ineffectiveness of the truth we share. We have all been there, and the struggle is real.

Some have overcome this by simply following the way of man and exchanging the truth of God for a lie (Rom 1<sup>25</sup>) to make their words palatable. If you read but a few denominational creeds, you’ll know what I mean.

Some teach exemption from God’s judgement (Calvinism), or that man’s work is innately valuable to God (Catholicism), or that man himself can ultimately become

equal to God (Mormonism). Sure does sound appealing, right? Many have bought into these mistruths (among many others, 2 Thess 2<sup>11</sup>). Other religions have adopted violent practices (i.e., ‘convert or die’) in order to regulate faith, and over the course of history some ‘Christians’ have done this too.

Unfortunately, these men have decided that God’s truth is not sufficient, and man must intervene. But brethren, God’s truth is the only weapon necessary; it is our spiritual sword (Heb 4<sup>12</sup>). His truth destroys the fortresses of lies (2 Cor 10<sup>4-5</sup>), and most importantly, it sets our souls free (Jno 8<sup>31-32</sup>).

Brethren, be aware: God’s truth is sufficient to save the soul, *but only for those who want it*. Now, what about those who don’t? God’s truth is sufficient to protect you from their deceit (Jude 1<sup>17-23</sup>). Don’t disparage the word of God. Don’t compromise it. It awaits those who are ready for it.

- *WHSmith*