

TIME OF SERVICES

Sunday:

Bible Classes 10:00 a.m.
Worship Service 11:00 a.m.
Worship Service 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday:

Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

Office (870) 933-9134

Elders

Kemuel Camp (870) 930-6970
Scott Stubblefield (870) 351-8420

Deacons

Phillip Cassidy (870) 623-2588
Steve Lands (870) 974-1976
Travis Moody (870) 650-1649

Preacher

John Mundy 870-623-5339

Editor

Dick Blackford 870-919-2266

**THE BIBLE AND THE BIBLE ONLY,
MAKES CHRISTIANS AND CHRISTIANS
ONLY. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS
COMPOSED OF CHRISTIANS WHO HAVE
NOT JOINED A DENOMINATION.**

StoneRidge
Church of Christ

where CHRIST is the chief cornerstone

1 Peter 2:7



Vol. 17, No . 9

September 1, 2024

EAGER TO FORGIVE

The central message of the Bible is forgiveness. We see some marvelous examples of forgiveness in three wonderful characters in the New Testament.

Jesus. There were seven sayings that Jesus uttered from the cross, but the very first thing on His mind, before even praying for himself, was, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Lk 23:34). Since ALL of us have sinned (Rom 3:23), the thing we need most is forgiveness, for "the wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23). Of course, these men were not automatically forgiven, because they hadn't repented of their sins, and that is required for all men everywhere (Acts 17:30,31; 2 Pet 3:9). It is possible and probable that many did repent and were baptized for the remission of their sins on the day of Pentecost.

It may be hard for us to grasp how Jesus could forgive when you consider the hatred, mockery and violent treatment he received. If others were to find themselves in a similar situation they may have eagerly prayed to be delivered out of those circumstances. And they might have prayed for the Father to strike their enemies down. Or they might have prayed that they would receive justice. Jesus prayed for their forgiveness. He prayed for mercy.

Stephen. Stephen was preaching a message that could save his audience in Acts 7, but their hatred for him for exposing their hypocrisy and hardness of heart was so great, and their inability to withstand what he was saying was so frustrating that they became exceedingly angry and violent (which some men do when they can't answer in debate). McGarvey comments on this: "This was a strange way for a court to break up; the whole body of seventy grave rabbis,

whose official duty it was to watch for the faithful and regular proceedings of law, leaving their seats, and rushing with the wild mob, amid hideous outcries and tumultuous rage, to the sudden execution of a prisoner absolutely untried and uncondemned.” (J.W. McGarvey, Commentary on Acts, p. 86, GOSPEL ADVOCATE CO., Nashville TN).

In the process of the horrible treatment he received and of stoning him to death, in his dying breath he prays for their forgiveness. *“And they stoned Stephen, calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge”* (Acts 7:59,60). Stephen had truly grasped the teaching and example of Jesus on forgiveness.

Paul. Paul describes some of the horrible treatment he received at the end of his second letter to Timothy, even naming names. And then he pleads for the forgiveness of those who would not defend him. *“At my first defence no one took my part, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their account”* (2 Tim 4:16). Paul was not present at the cross to hear Jesus plea for the forgiveness of his enemies, **but he was present when Stephen prayed for the forgiveness of his murderers.** *“There was at least one in the audience upon whom we have reason to believe, this impression was deep and lasting. “The young man Saul never forgot it; but long afterward, when bending under the weight of many years, he makes sad mention of the part he took in these dreadful proceedings”* (McGarvey, p. 87). (See Acts 7:59-8:2; 1 Tim 1:1:13).

It's doubtful that any of us has been wronged to the degree that these were, but all three were eager to forgive, leaving us a great example to imitate. They depict the love God has for us and that we should have for each other. There may be some significance that all three of these were near death when their words of forgiveness were uttered. We don't know when our lives may be cut short. We should be eager to forgive those who have sinned against us. **-db**

THE SICK. Sharon Horton and Pat Markle have both been diagnosed with Covid...**Bob Johnson** received an eye injection on Friday...**J.D. McGregor's** mom (**Pat**) is now at home recovering from her injuries...**Joyce Riley** recently received a pacemaker...**Belva Williams** is still recovering from back surgery...**Linda Ladyman** has moved to The Springs, room 313, continues in room 1705 Latourette Dr. She is able to have visitors...**Beverly Allen** is at home and making arrangements to receive physical and occupational therapy... **Suzu Johnson** will be having more tests...**Bob Johnson** has still been having eye problems... **Jean Evans** has recovered from Covid... **Rhea Vines** is still dealing with shoulder issues.....Shut-ins: **Eli Campbell** at home...**Rhea Vines** (at Roger's house)...**Beverly Allen** at home... **Rita Kieffer**, St. Bernard Village, ...**Shirley Coots**, Walnut Ridge Nursing & Rehab... **Karen Livesay** at home...**Joyce Riley** at St. Elizabeth's Place... **Jean Evans** at Monette Manor, Monette AR... ..Pray for these!

EVENING CLASSES. 3rd grade up to the college class, 5 pm today!

GOSPEL MEETINGS

Sept 14 – Singing – StoneRidge!

Oct 6-11 – Different Speakers – StoneRidge!

PODCAST John Mundy – Monday thru Friday, 8 a.m. On Facebook & YouTube.
