

University Heights Messenger

Volume 4--Number 3

January 15, 2012

GOSPEL PLAN OF SALVATION

- Hear the gospel (Romans 10:17)
- Believe Jesus is the Christ (John 3:16)
- Repent from sins (Luke 13:3)
- Confess faith in Jesus (Romans 10:9-10)
- Be baptized for remission of sins (Acts 2:38)
- Live worthy of the calling (Ephesians 4:1)

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Recent Additions:

Paul Ayres (due to significant problems, brother Ayres is likely to need open heart surgery in the near future), **Nilma Covington** (having surgery to remove cancerous polyps), **John Thompson** (his knee replacement surgery must be rescheduled due to pneumonia).

List:

Our members: Jeff Howerton, Glenn Kimberlin, Arlena Poynter

Others: Glen Davis, Charlene Antle, Lala Whitson, Tom Curtis, Rita Pagan, Robin Miller, Vina Krassow, Courtney and Aubrey Reeves, John Bennett, Dennis Brennan, Robert and Sarah Brundige, Donald Dawson, Jean Gartland, Gail Stein, Michael Poynter, Taylor Osterling, CJ Nash, The Shepherd family, Faye Hensley, Mary Wilson, Edith Tirey.

Reminder: If you wish to have someone added to the prayer list please submit his or her name and condition to me *in writing*. Thanks.

WEEKLY READING

Sun: Hos 2-5, Ps 136, 1 Pet 1-2
Mon: Hos 6-9, Ps 137, 1 Pet 3-5
Tue: Hos 10-14, Ps 138, 2 Pet
Wed: Jo 1-3, Ps 139, 1 Jn 1-2
Thu: Am 1-5, Ps 140, 1 Jn 3-5
Fri: Am 6-9, Ps 141, 2 Jn-Jude
Sat: Ob, Jonah, Ps 142, Rev 1

LEADERSHIP

ELDERS

Garry Banks
David Collins
John Thompson

DEACONS

Troy Antle
Richard Brundige
Neal Erickson
Adam Litmer
Bill Morelan
Jim Parsons
Pat Seabolt
Matt Thompson

EVANGELIST

Adam Litmer

SERVICES

Sunday

Bible Study: 9:45 AM
Worship: 10:45 AM; 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Study: 7:30 PM

1st Fri. of Month

Singing: 7:30 PM

3rd Fri. of Month

Bible Study: 7:00 PM
(Ask for location)

There's a lesson here

“As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “It was not

that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.” (John 9:5-7)

Can you imagine the joy this man experienced upon being able to see? He had been blind from birth. Suddenly he could see and match appearances with sounds. The rumble of a cart passing before him no longer was just noise, but now provided a visual experience heretofore never anticipated. The voices of family and friends could now be matched with facial features and all of the nuances of non-verbal communication. Clouds, trees, stars, the swirl created by a dust devil and innumerable other things that can be seen but not heard were now part of his new world. We can easily picture him turning his head from side to side, up and down; turning his body in full circles, first one way and then the other; his eyes never still for even a second as he tried to take in all of the vast visual stimuli.

Wouldn't it be great if the spiritual blindness of folks could be cured as easily as Jesus cured the blindness of this man? What is it that prevents folks from seeing spiritually as God would have them to see? Is it not, in one form or another, their own resistance? If the blind man in the parable had exhibited the kind of resistance to the physical cure that Jesus was able to provide as most spiritually ill people put forth regarding God's spiritual cure, he would not have

“You yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one”

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allowed Jesus to anoint his eyes with the mud. Or else he would have not followed through with washing in the pool of Siloam. His cure was dependent upon his being receptive to the way Jesus wanted to cure him and to trusting Jesus enough to follow through with further instructions. It was only when those factors came together that he came back seeing.

Seeing spiritually as God wants begins with an attitude of desire. It's not going to happen unless one wants it to happen. God is not going to work a miracle and make one accept Him. The miracle is in the message. The power is in the gospel. *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”* (Romans 1:16)

Nowhere in God's word is the desire to see spiritually better expressed in Psalm 119. ¹⁸ *Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.* ³⁷ *Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways.* ¹²³ *My eyes long for your salvation and for the fulfillment of your righteous promise.* ⁶ *Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments.* ¹⁵ *I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways.*

“Therefore do not throw away your confidence”--1

Hebrews 10:32-36 says, *“But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.”*

The Christians addressed by the Hebrew writer had suffered upon their conversion to Christ. Some of them were held up before the public eye and ridiculed. Some were made a spectacle of as they were cast into prison. Some had their property plundered. The ones who may not have experienced these things first hand were so concerned and involved with the saints who were that they could truly be considered partners with them in their suffering.

Few things would be as stressful, particularly from the perspective of a father, as having his home and property confiscated. A father must provide for his family. He works hard to provide a place where his wife and children can feel safe, a place to which they can return each day confident that food, clothing, and shelter will be available to them. He may not be able to present them with an abundance of worldly goods, but love

for his family and His God powerfully motivates him try and make their lives as comfortable as possible. How his faith must be shaken when those things are *plundered* from him!

Or is it? The Hebrew writer reminds those first century saints of a time when they did not just accept such persecution, but they accepted it *joyfully!* “But how can that be?” today's non-Christian *and* worldly-minded Christian ask incredulously? After all, Jesus' statement in Luke 12:15 that *“one's life does not consist in the abundance of His possessions”* just sounds so strange, so *unrealistic*, doesn't it? Yes, if approached from a worldly perspective. There is nothing praiseworthy or commendable in suffering to the one whose vision cannot see beyond his life on earth.

However, early after their conversions the recipients of the Hebrew letter had been able to take a much longer view than that. Even as their houses and property were taken from before their physical eyes, their spiritual eyes were fastened upon a *“better possession and an abiding one.”* They were very much like Moses, of whom the Hebrew writer would remind them just a few verses later. *“By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward”* (Hebrews 11:24-26). One must not gloss over the fact that Moses knew of a reward exceeding that of being called the grandson of the most powerful man on the planet and enjoying all the vice and pleasure associated with it. One must be even further moved in considering that he thought of these sinful pleasures as merely “passing” when he could have indulged in them for the greatest part of a long life. The worldly-minded exclaim, “What a wonderful life this man gave up!” The spiritually minded exclaim, “What a wonderful reward he grasped!” In the beginning, the Hebrew saints kept that reward firmly in mind. What about you and I?

In our next article we will consider the confidence of which the Hebrew writer speaks. AL

Sermons: AM How does God authorize? PM “Concerning spiritual gifts”

Reading: AM (Matthew 22:1-22)

PM (Matthew 22:23-46)