



THE MESSENGER

NOVEMBER 12, 2023

NEWS AND NOTES

Congregational Meeting

Today at 5:15

Our Next Gospel Meeting

March 3-8, 2024

Weekly Bible Studies

Thursday at 2 on Zoom

Times of Service

Sunday

Bible study: 9:45 AM

Worship: 10:45 AM; 6 PM

Wednesday

Bible study: 7:30 PM

(Immediately followed by a short worship service)

First Friday of Month

Singing

December 1, 7:30

Address and Contact

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Christ

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CROSSES AND YOKES

Jesus told them to take up their cross and follow him. (Matthew 16:24b) What a statement! It is entirely possible an occupied cross or two was visible to the disciples as they heard Jesus speak those words. He could have been pointing at one as he said it. Crosses and crucifixions were part of life throughout Galilee, Samaria, and Judea. They were grotesque and terrifying. Jesus said to pick one up and follow him.

As they spent more time with Jesus, they would come to learn that his use of that gruesome illustration was to show the need to deny oneself entirely and follow him with full commitment and loyalty. (Matthew 16:24a) Yes, even if the threat of a real cross loomed across the very road they were walking.

Denying oneself, *really* doing it, does not come naturally and is such a hard thing to do consistently. It is a learned attitude of heart and maintained only through practice. According to Jesus, it most often shines forth in our treatment and behavior toward other people. The One who knelt to perform the task of the lowliest servant (John 13:1-11) would have us know this is where true kingdom greatness is found. (John 13:12-17)

He goes further in the judgment scene of Matthew 25:31-46. Heaven is closed to those without the self-denying and loving heart of a servant. Questions of baptism, authority, and proper forms of worship matter. Why would God have added them to His Book otherwise? Even so, I can quote you every baptism verse in Scripture but, if I have not the love that is truly willing to deny self to serve the Lord and others, to borrow Paul's language, *I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal*. (1 Corinthians 13:1)

Members Needing Our Prayers

Jill Harrison, Joyce Bolton, Rick Small, Benny and Arlena Poynter, Janett Brundige, Rhonda Boyd, Cindy Bradbury, Paul Atkisson

Others Needing Prayer

Parker Raley, Maurice Baker, Jeff Padgett, John Thompson, Cheryl Samons, Georgia Patton, Glenda Miller, Michael Edwards, Alyse Nash, Mary Bishop, Helen Thomas, Patty Hill, Eli Kempton, Sophie Brown, Family of Valari Butler-Jones, Charlie Hoy, Janice Parsons, Allison Walker, Mark Nickles, Dwayne Harrod, William Roberts, Paul and Marrian Lyda, Dana and her children, Shane (a relative of Cindi), Ron Harmon, Patty Hill

To Our Guests

Interested in a Bible study? Either let one of us know or mark it on your visitor card.

Visit us on Facebook, YouTube, or our website to watch or listen to sermons.

What makes it so difficult to truly deny self on a consistent basis? Why is it so hard at times to be gracious, compassionate, thoughtful, and kind? Why is it so easy to forget about being a servant altogether? In my case, *I'm* the reason. Sometimes I find too much Adam in Adam and not enough Christ. As easy and light as our Lord's yoke may be considering the extraordinary blessings in taking it, (Matthew 11:28-30) I still find myself occasionally chaffing at it. I see it in moments of selfishness. I see it when I forget to serve. I see it when I refuse to hear thoughts and opinions besides my own. I see it when I withhold compassion and empathy. I *hate* seeing it, but I still do sometimes.

No one can *really* take up their cross unless they have first denied self in favor of Christ. May our God graciously help us to do just that.

Adam Litmer

Elders	Deacons	Evangelist
Troy Antle	Richard Brundige	Adam Litmer
David Collins	Adam Daniels	
Adam Litmer	Marcus Lake	
	Frank Patton	
	Jamie Powell	
	Pat Seabolt	
	James Weatherholt	

