

## Washington church of Christ

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[washingtonnjchurchofchrist.com](http://washingtonnjchurchofchrist.com)

### Order of Services

#### Sunday, April 21, 2013

Song Leader	Tom Dolan
Prayer	Stan Thompson
Preaching	Bob James
Lord's Supper	
Prayer for the Bread	Lee Redd
Prayer for the Cup	Ralph Ruggiero
Prayer for the Collection	Pete Ferencze
Assisting at the Table	Bob DeGrado
Morning Closing Prayer	Scott Thomas
Evening Opening Prayer	Bill Duryea
Announcements	Matt Grimaldi

### Schedule of Weekly Services

Sunday Morning Bible Classes	9:30 am
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 am
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Classes	7:30 pm
Thursday Morning Bible Study	11:00 am

# The Washington Messenger

Volume 2 – Number 14

**April 21, 2013**

## Jesus Your Friend...

The Apostle Luke records that Jesus was aware that His concern for all humanity had made Him the object of hostile criticism from His enemies.

*The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'* (Luke 7:34 NKJV)

This accusation had come from the leading religionist of that time, who themselves should have been concerned about the lost.

*Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them."* (Luke 15:1-2 NKJV)

Jesus did not deny their charge. In fact, He through His actions, seemed to emphasize everywhere that He was a friend to every man. Hear His invitation...

*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* (Matthew 11:28 NKJV)

Have you ever considered the implications of the desire of Jesus to be your friend? Not a friend from the standards of the world ... one who exploits your confidence or forsakes you when things are not going well. But rather a friend that is "closer than a brother". (Proverbs 18:24) A friend who is present always and who has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5)

This is not "social friendship", for in Jesus we have a friend to whom we can go in every hour of sorrow, heartache, and need. He is the one friend who is always willing to help, and who can, and will, give us strength for every burden we must bear. He reminds us ...

*All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.* (John 6:37 NKJV)

His friendship is not bought with money, so it is available to the poor and the rich alike. It extends beyond time, and abides in eternity. There is no earthly friend who can equal Jesus as a friend and Savior.

As a friend of publicans, who were the most despised persons of His day, Jesus demonstrates that His friendship extends to the socially infamous, and those considered to be outcast. Many of the Jews of Jesus' day considered publicans no better than dogs. It mattered not how morally good they were ... or well they cared for their families or their neighbors ... or obedient they were to the civil law.

Jesus did not then, nor does He today, bestow His love and friendship on the basis of social status and public opinion. When He sees a sincere heart and a crying need, such as with the publicans who came to hear Him, He extends His friendly hand, caring not what the proud or arrogant might say.

The friendship of Jesus extends to the spiritually debased and sinners. Though He had no sin, (1 Peter 2:22), He loved the soul of the sinner, and worked with sinful mankind in order to make them better. Often His love for such men and women would turn them into faithful disciples.

*Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. (Mark 16:9 NKJV)*

This woman, who had been helped by Jesus, was one of only three who stayed by Him as he hung on the cross and died for the sins of the world. (John 19:25). She also came to the sepulcher "very early when it was yet dark" on the morning of His resurrection. (John 20:1). Through befriending her, Jesus brought forth the good which He realized was in all men, no matter how bad their outward actions had been. Her grateful response fully vindicated the ministry of Christ, who taught men about God, served humanity, and did good works to cause men to glorify God. (Acts 10:38)

Men and women needlessly struggle through life in the bondage of sin, when this relationship with Jesus can make them free, and make life more peaceful.

But an effort is required on the part of all who would be friends with Jesus.

*Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. (John 15:13-14 NKJV)*

Webster defines a friend as a person attached to another by respect and affection. Jesus has already declared that "If a man loves Me he will keep My words." (John 14:23) So we see that to be a friend of Jesus we must love and respect Him enough to keep His commandments.

The first of these commands to which man must give attention are the ones which pertain to being made free from sin. These conditions of deliverance begin with believing the gospel, and are consummated when the believer has been baptized for the remission of their sins. (Acts 2:38). Jesus declared;

*He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. (Mark 16:16 NKJV)*

Between these two vital commands, those who would be friends with Jesus must comply with His commands to repent, (Acts 17:30) and to confess Him before men. (Matthew 10:32). That final act of baptism puts one "into Christ", (Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3), where all social distinctions vanish ...

*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28 NKJV)*

How shameful it is that He who was friend to all had so few friends on earth. But can you actually say that you would have been His friend then if you refuse to obey Him and prove that you are His friend now?

Many who have become His friends by obeying the gospel are now indifferent to that relationship. Friends like to be together, but they forsake the assembly where He has promised to be .... they speak often of their close friends, but they never mention Jesus to others ... friends are eager to please each other, but these don't care if their lives please the Lord.

We often sing "What a friend WE have in Jesus" ... but can we truly say that Jesus has a friend in US?

...Bob

## EVENTS AND NOTES

WE WILL HAVE THE THURSDAY MORNING STUDY THIS WEEK STARTING AT 11AM ... ALL ARE WELCOME.

THERE WILL BE A PRAYER MEETING ON SATURDAY, APRIL 27<sup>TH</sup>, @ 5PM AT THE HOME OF DERALD AND SOLVAI SANCHEZ. ALL ARE WELCOME.

THE NEW BIBLE SCHOOL TERM STARTS ON SUNDAY, MAY 5<sup>TH</sup>. .

UPCOMING EVENTS THAT WE ARE AWARE OF ARE ...

- ▲ NORTHEAST FC CAMP, JUNE 30<sup>TH</sup> – JULY 5<sup>TH</sup>.
- ▲ BOB AT WEST POINT ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 28<sup>TH</sup>. STAN WILL DELIVER THE LESSON HERE
- ▲ WASHINGTON LADIES' RETREAT – SEPTEMBER 6<sup>TH</sup> & 7<sup>TH</sup>.
- ▲ OUR FALL GOSPEL MEETING WITH JOE WORKS OF THE FAIR LAWN CONGREGATION ON OCTOBER 11<sup>TH</sup> – 13<sup>TH</sup>.

ANYONE DESIRING A FAMILY OR AN INDIVIDUAL BIBLE STUDY PLEASE CONTACT ME (BOB JAMES).