

Family & Friends..... March 23, 2022

It is officially Spring! There is excitement in the air when Spring is mentioned. Perhaps we are ready for cold weather to be over with and get rid of jackets. Plants and trees have laid dormant for winter and will soon come to life. Daffodils have already started blooming, and before long we will see many different kinds of flowers bloom. The animal world will bring forth new life, and mama birds will be building their nests to hold their babies. I love to hear the birds singing their sweet melodies on a Spring Day. The Hummingbirds will be here before we know it. They were a joy to watch last year. The new baby deer will let you stop and talk to them on the road, until something clicks in their little heads and they're off running. Mother Raccoons are pretty determined as they walk through our backyard, usually two young ones follow her faithfully, and never dare to look in any direction except straight ahead; right behind mama, single file. We are reminded of the innocence and beauty that exists in this world. The Easter Holiday is in a couple of weeks. We remember the death, burial, and resurrection each week when we come together to worship as Christians. Spring is a special season because it represents renewal and refreshing which we always need in our Christian life. Thank you, Lord, for our daily blessings. You are amazing! God is good!

The flowers have already appeared in the land; The time has arrived for pruning the vines, and the voice of the turtledove has been heard in our land. Song of Solomon 2:12

We welcome our visitors each week: Ashley Austin (Henderson, TN), Jan and Tony Ball (Bentonville), David & Sarah Ellison (Fayetteville), Sharilu Brown (Centerton), Bonnie Benton (BV), Parker Spaw (Harrison) and Jane Weiser (Pea Ridge).

Those on our prayer list: Continue to remember Mike Hale as he recovers from a carcinoma he had removed last week. Mary E. Harris and David Reeves are still in Everest Rehab Hospital. Doug Klingman is at home and continues to struggle with his health. Hillary Porter was hospitalized earlier this week due to complications with her pregnancy. Continue to remember and pray for Maggie Wicker, Bob & Pat Musson, Millie Pogue, Bob Douthit, Tim & Susan Duffy, Donna Rowland, Robert Horton, our missionaries, our military and police force, our country and president, and for the people of Ukraine.

Items needed for Children's Home: tea bags, beef & chicken broth, spices, canned chicken, & trash bags. For our Food Pantry: canned vegetables and chicken, soups, peanut butter, applesauce, & cereal.

Receive love. Give love. Repeat. Love you, stay safe.

Karen

Bella Vista Church of Christ

Highway 71 and County Road 40
989 NW McNelly Road
Bentonville, AR 72712

Return Service Requested

ELDERS

Tracy Bowman.....479-899-3089
Don Butcher.....636-548-0458
Dallas Dobbs.....479-640-49439
Pery Johnson.....913-707-8379
Ray Reiss.....903-908-0203

DEACONS

Mark Bagwell John Bowman Chris Johnson Bryan Busbee Joe Hott Robert Horton
Randall Hunt Harold Phillips Terry Roberts Aaron Sloan Mitchell Whittington

MINISTERS

Jeff Grisham.....479-531-9135
Parker Willis.....615-587-3208
Cory Spruiell.....501-941-4525
Javier & Helmer Rosero.....Bogota, Colombia

LORD'S DAY
Early Worship 8:15 AM
Bible Class (Livestreamed) 9:30 AM
Worship (Livestreamed) 10:30 AM

WEDNESDAY
Ladies' Class 9:45 AM
Bible Classes (Livestreamed) 7:00 PM

Phone: 479/273-2434

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It's the Least We Can Do

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:17-20)

Imaging the shock of the crowd that day when Jesus spoke these words. There were those for whom exceeding the righteousness of the Pharisees and teachers would have been seen as an unreachable goal. After all, when it came to the appearance of righteousness, the Pharisees were unmatched. They were great Bible students, focused on keeping the commandments of God. They were great givers, great prayers, and great fasters. How could they possibly be more righteous than the Pharisees were?

Imagine the shock of some of the Pharisees who may have been in the crowd that day. Who could be more righteous than those who had dedicated their lives to following the Law and doing what was commanded? How could anyone be more righteous than they were?

It is clear from the words of Jesus that he didn't come to lower the expectations. He didn't come to do away with all the commandments. He came to show what the commandments were intended to do. The Pharisees seemed to be focused on outwardly keeping the commands. A good instinct to be sure, but that was not the intended goal of the Law. Jesus came to show that

PHARISEES



the Law was intended to transform the lives of God's people. As he continues in Matthew 5 we see that the law was intended to do more than stop murder. It was intended to eliminate the hatred that was its cause. It was not just to stop the act of adultery, but rather to form a people who saw others as people made in the image of God rather than objects to be used.

It seems clear that Jesus is telling us that we need to set our sights higher than just doing what he has commanded; we are to become different people. We are to become like him, like the Father. Instead of looking for the minimum we can do and still be saved, we are to look to be continually transformed into his image.

I know that may sound a little harsh, but how often are we tempted to think about the least we can do and still be considered God's people? Questions may come to mind like, "Can I do _____ and still get to heaven?" We can fill in the blank with many different things, but it boils down to the same attitude of, "How close to the line can I get and still be considered saved?"

Jesus doesn't give us the minimum requirements. Instead he calls us to a higher way, a better way. He calls us to be like God who doesn't operate on bare minimums when dealing with us. God has given all in order that he can be with us. He has worked since the Fall to provide a way for us to be reconciled to him. He called and led Abraham, delivered Israel out of Egypt, came and dwelled among them in the tabernacle and later in the temple. He was patient as they continued to rebel against Him. He disciplined and restored. He came here in the person of Jesus, ministered among us, and displayed what it looks like to follow him completely. He demonstrated his great love for us by sending Jesus to the cross so that we can have fellowship with him. He held nothing back, not even his own son.

What he asks for in return is that we see him for who he really is and devote our lives to following him completely. Certainly there are things we need to do such as worship, study, minister, pray, give, and fast. But these the means by which we are to be shaped and transformed. Not as the ends in themselves. I think, considering what he has done and continues to do for us and in us, it is the least we can do. Amen?

-JEFF GRISHAM

Gates to Proper Behavior

As children of God, we are confronted daily with hundreds of decisions. Some of these have to do with right and wrong attitudes and correct or incorrect behavior. How do we decide? Are there some guidelines, which we can use to help us make proper decisions?

Let me suggest some questions that we can ask ourselves, some gates we can use in our decision making. Try it. Can we get an attitude or behavior through these gates?

Does the Bible say it is wrong? This must be the first and foremost question. If the Bible says something is wrong, there is no way to make it right. King Saul rationalized that it was okay to disobey God if it was to glorify Him. Samuel said, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams." The end never justifies the means. If the Bible condemns a practice, we cannot justify it for any reason.

Will it hurt my body? John tells us that when we obey His commandments that God lives in us, we know this by the Spirit He gave us. Paul says, Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God with your body.

Will it hurt my mind? The Bible not only tells us how to live, it tells us what to think. Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think of these things.

Will this behavior, belief enslave me? Paul writes, Everything is permissible for me, but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible for me, but I will not be mastered, brought under the power of any. God does not want us enslaved to anyone or anything but Him. God must rule as Lord and King of our lives.

Is it good stewardship? By participating in this, am I being a good steward of my body, time, my talent, treasure and energy? Scripture tells us that God requires, as stewards of God's blessings, we are to be found faithful.

Does this practice glorify God? Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to the Father through Him. If an attitude or practice can't be used to help us, in some way, glorify God, then we perhaps we ought to rethink it.

Will it profit and edify me and others? The Hebrews writer says, Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good works. Not one of us is an island. We influence others by the way we think and act.

Is it worth imitating? Ask this question. Do I want my weaker brother or my children doing what I am about to do? Will it enhance their lives and bring them closer to God? Paul says, "Follow me as I follow Christ."

Is it best? For too long we've asked the question, what is wrong with it? This question was never on the mind of a mature child of God in the Old or New Testament. Why? Because it is the wrong question. God is not asking us to do the mediocre or the mundane, but the excellent.

How do we apply these suggestions?

Seek good counsel. Seek out Godly men and women who can help us find ways to help us decide what is right and wrong. Find the most Godly person you know. Don't ask a neighbor, an out of duty church members, or a preacher who can't discipline his own life. Seek out the most Godlike brother or sister you know and ask for their help.

Ask for God's help. God is patient, not willing that any should perish. God is ready to help us do what is right in light of Scripture.

Evaluate the results. After we've practiced what we have decided is right, ask these questions: Are we closer to God because we've taken this attitude and action? Are we having a more positive influence on others? If so, make this action a habit, a life-style.

Remember this: Thoughts determine our actions. Actions determine our habits. Habits determine our life-style. Life-style determines where we spent eternity.

I hope these gates become helpful to us as we strive to become the people and person that God has called us to be.

-RANDALL CASELMAN

SUNDAY SERVANTS: 3/27/22

First Service

Welcome, Prayer & Scripture Roger Arnold Song Leader Marquis Elliott
Greeters Joe Hott, Gary McCool Communion Scripture & Prayer Mark Tucker
Closing Prayer Harold Phillips
Nursery Workers Jerri Dobbs, Tori Hunt

Second Service

Welcome, Prayer & Scripture Steve Kinder Song Leader Mark Bagwell
Greeters John Bowman, Don Cope Communion Scripture & Prayer Stephen Hunt
Closing Prayer Perry Johnson
Nursery Workers Shannon Mitchell, Janis Thompson Van Driver Bryan Busbee

March Worship Coordinators

Worship Coordinator Mike York Streaming Coordinator James Beaty
Audio Coordinator Homer Makinson Video Coordinator Chris Johnson