

Family & Friends..... April 26, 2023

One of the gifts that God has given us all is the gift of joy, laughter, and humor. "A joyful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones." (Proverbs 17:22) Laughter is powerful as a remedy for stress, pain, and conflict. It will lighten our burdens, give us hope, and help us connect to others. The important thing laughter does for us is that it keeps us focused on the positive side of life. God gave us the prescription for humor. He planned ahead. He knew we would be going through difficulties, hardships, and the challenges we would face in a fallen world. Our joy in the Lord as Christians is our strength. God can heal our souls through the simple medicine of laughter and humor. We may feel at times there is nothing to laugh about. We can always go to our Lord in prayer and ask for his help. There is something wonderful about being thankful to God for our many blessings. A grateful spirit will do wonders for our heart and outlook in general. Thank You, Lord for Your goodness!

We love our visitors: Ken Bacon (Tulsa, OK), Barry & Donna Donaldson (Sugar Land, TX), Cliff & Kelsey Parsons (Kansas City, MO), Lee & Paige Moore (Marion, AR), Steve & Denise Baer and Rhett & Taylor Moore (BV).

Those on our prayer list: Our heartfelt sympathies go to Mark Bagwell in the loss of his mother, Dorothy, and to Mike Lunsford in the loss of his sister, Debbie. Please keep these families in your prayers. We also want to pray for the families of the Gravette School teacher, Misty Martin and her daughter Hillary, who were killed in an auto accident. Doug and Monica Klingman as they deal with complications from Doug's recent surgery. Continue to remember and pray for Carolyn Lacey, Susan Duffy, Don Cope, Mike Hale, our missionaries, our military and police force, our leaders and country.

We will be having a Senior Sunday on May 21st for our high school seniors. Congratulations go to James Beaty, Sarah Sloan, Jackson Hodge, and Reese Taylor.

Items needed for the Children's Home: Spam, juice, cereal, pickles, and snacks. Food Pantry: Cereal, mac & cheese, peanut butter, jelly, canned spaghetti/pasta sauce.

A good laugh is sunshine in the house. 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

LORD'S DAY	8:15 AM
Early Worship	9:30 AM
Bible Class (Livestreamed)	10:30 AM
Worship (Livestreamed)	
WEDNESDAY	9:45 AM
Ladies' Class	7:00 PM
Bible Classes (Livestreamed)	

Phone: 479/273-2434

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ELDERS

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

DEACONS

Mark Bagwell John Bowman Chris Johnson Josh Porter Joe Hott Mike Spencer
Randall Hunt Terry Roberts Aaron Sloan Tyler White Mike Martin Jerry Snyder

MINISTERS

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

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WEDNESDAY

Knowing Our Role

He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?' He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, "Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn."'" (Matthew 13:24-30)

The parables of Jesus are masterful teaching tools. These are not just stories used as illustrations, or stories that contain moral principles. They serve as dramas that allow the hearer to enter into the story and find themselves as one of the characters, to present various situations in life, and call for the hearers to make a decision as to the right course of action.

This parable is a judgment parable as seen by the explanation that Jesus gives in Matthew 13:36-43. It focuses on the return of Jesus and the fates of the wicked and the righteous. It reminds us of the enemy that seeks our destruction. It has a lot to tell us about judgment if we will listen.

It reminds us that judgment is certain. This may not be the most popular thing about which to think, but Scripture is crystal clear on this point. Jesus will return and judgment will occur. Jesus spoke of this in many places in the Gospels. The New Testament authors consistently told their readers that the return of Jesus is a guaranteed event. The early church lived in constant expectation of his return.

It makes it clear that judgment belongs to God. Paul writes to the church in Corinth, "For we must all



appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil." (2 Corinthians 5:10) In the picture of judgment painted by Jesus in Matthew 25, we see the Son of Man sitting on his throne in judgment. John in writing his vision of the judgment scene in Revelation 20 sees a "great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them."

The parable of the wheat and the weeds makes this point very clear as we look at the characters simply called "the servants." They represent a very real temptation for all who want to live as good citizens of the Kingdom, and that temptation is to be the arbiters of good and evil. It is a desire that seems to have good motives behind it, but is a dangerous impulse if left unchecked. The desire for that job is what resulted in Adam and Eve being exiled from Eden.

Sometimes good and evil are easily distinguished. Sometimes the difference between right and wrong are so evident that it takes no real effort to make that call. Other times it may be that the difference between the good and evil is not something easily seen.

In this parable it seems that the difference between the wheat and the weeds is a hard distinction to make. As zealous as the servants were to root out the weeds, they may have done a lot of harm in their attempt to do good. The solution given by the Master is, "I will tell the reapers, 'Gather the weeds first and bind them to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'" In other words, God will judge. All judgment belongs to him, which is a good thing. He is the one who has the wisdom and the vision to do it.

That presents us with a challenge. Are we supposed to adopt a "live and let live" philosophy? Should we just stay quiet, make no ethical judgments about what's right or wrong and just let God sort it all out? Of course not! We know the consequences of sin. God has already made the determination of what is right and what is sin. We simply (and lovingly) communicate that message, to warn others and remind ourselves of the consequences of sin and to tell them about the good news of forgiveness available in Jesus.

The parable reminds us that if we attempt to judge what we cannot see, or attempt to serve as servant and judge, we can do a lot of harm. We simply don't have the wisdom and vision required. That resides with God. It reminds us of the seriousness of our role as servants, and that each of us will be subject to the judgment of the Master.

-JEFF GRISHAM

Confidence in His Coming

Here we are at beginning of a new year. What do you feel is the most important thought in mind for this new beginning? I would like to suggest that we return to thinking about "the second coming of Jesus." How many of us have given this promised event any serious thought recently? You see, He has postponed for so long that we have fallen into the trap of taking for granted that all things will go on as they always have... But one day they won't. Peter promises this in Second Peter three. God is only holding back His coming today because of "His patience with us, not willing that any should perish, but that all come to repentance."

If I understand the Bible correctly, the next great event on God's calendar is the second coming of Jesus. You see, there is nothing that needs to happen for Jesus to come. He could come this year, this month, today, before you finish reading this article.

And here is something that we need to keep in mind: What we believe about His return determines the kind of people we are. What we believe about His coming will change our thinking, our conversations, our agenda, priorities and behavior. It certainly did the early primitive church and will us also.

Well, what should our attitude be toward His return?

We must be alert to his coming. The Greek word translated "coming" is parousia. Parousia speaks to us of the eminent, for sure coming of Jesus. Parousia says His coming is a guaranteed event. After all, His return was an angelic promise found in Acts chapter one. Both Peter and Paul tell us that His coming will be as a thief in the night. They admonish us to be alert.

We must be properly dressed at his coming. Jesus gave a parable about a wedding banquet that had been prepared by the king at great expense. The invitations were sent and the banquet hall filled with guests. However, when the king arrived he noticed that some were improperly dressed. Scripture tells us what is proper dress for His coming, "*We are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have put on Christ, have been clothed with Christ.*"

We must be found serving others. Jesus paints a picture of the judgment in Matthew chapter twenty-five. Those found serving their fellowman were invited to enter into the joys of God, those on the left were destined to punishment. "*Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.*"

We must be found encouraging others. Paul writes to the

church at Thessalonica concerning the second coming. Twice he says, "*encourage or comfort one another.*" The Greek word translated encourage or comfort means to call, to invite, to pray, to beseech, to entreat. We are to be evangelistic! We are to be pointing others to Jesus as we wait for His return.

The question becomes, "Are we really looking forward to his coming?"

Some are not simply because they know that they are "not" ready. Remember when the fingers of a man's hand began to write on Belshazzar's wall? At that moment the King's knees begin to knock, his stomach was caught up in his throat. What's the problem? Belshazzar knew that any news from the Lord would be "bad," because he knew what he had done.

If you are not ready, and you know it, do today whatever is needed to become ready for this great event. Get right with the Lord today!! God is patiently giving us time to change, time to repent.

Others are not looking forward to His coming because they are uncertain of their salvation. John wrote, "My little children, I write these things they you may know that you have eternal life." Folk... Don't miss the power that these verses hold for children of God... "*If we confess (acknowledge) our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness... If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, continues to cleanse and purify us from all sin.*"

Perhaps now, more than any time in history, is the time to be confident in, and enjoy the security of, His promised coming... "Amen?"

-RANDALL CASELMAN
From *Lifelines* January 7, 2004

SUNDAY SERVANTS: 4/30/23

First Service

Welcome, Prayer & Scripture Randall Hunt Song Leader Sammy McCain
Greeters.....Chad Dobbs, David Saunders, Gary McCool Communion Scripture & Prayer.....Tyler White
Closing Prayer.....Phillip Strickhausen
Nursery WorkersJerri Dobbs, Tori Hunt

Second Service

Welcome, Prayer & Scripture..... Bob Spaw Song Leader Kyle Dillard
GreetersChad Dobbs, Eric Gibson, Zach Ballard Communion Scripture & Prayer.....Mitch Whittington
Closing Prayer.....Don Butcher
Nursery WorkersMuriel McSweeney, Abby McSweeney Van DriverJim Branstetter

April Worship Coordinators

Worship Coordinator Mike Lunsford Streaming CoordinatorAaron Bagwell
Audio Coordinator Homer Makinson Video CoordinatorMarquis Elliott