

Family & Friends will return next week.

Karen is out this week having just had an ablation procedure in Tulsa. We wish her a speedy recovery and pray that she will be return to us soon. In the meantime, please enjoy the following story.

Be Careful Who You Imitate

“A new missionary recruit went to Venezuela for the first time. He was struggling with the language and didn’t understand a whole lot of what was going on. Intending to visit one of the local churches, he got lost, but eventually got back on track and found the place. Having arrived late, the church was already packed. The only pew with a seat open was the one on the front row.

So as not to make a fool of himself, this recruit decided to pick someone out of the crowd to imitate. He chose to follow the man sitting next to him on the front pew. As they sang, the missionary tried to follow along. When the man stood up to pray, the missionary recruit stood up too. When the man sat down, he sat down. When the man took the cup and bread for the Lord’s Supper, he took the cup and bread. During the preaching, the recruit didn’t understand a thing. He just sat there and tried to look just like that man in the front pew.

Then he perceived that the preacher was giving announcements. People clapped, so he looked to see if the man was clapping. He was, and so the recruit clapped too. Then the preacher said some words that he didn’t understand and he saw the man next to him stand up. So he stood up too. Suddenly a hush fell over the entire congregation. A few people gasped. He looked around and saw that nobody else was standing, so he sat down.

After the service ended, the preacher stood at the door shaking the hands of those who were leaving. When the missionary recruit stretched out his hand to greet the preacher, the preacher said, in English: “I take it you don’t speak Spanish.”

The missionary recruit replied: “No I don’t. Is it that obvious?”

“Well yes,” said the preacher, “I announced that the Acosta family had a newborn baby boy and would the proud father please stand up.”

Attributed to Alan Smith

ELDERS

Tracy Bowman.....479-899-3089
John Caylor.....903-520-2131
Perry Johnson.....913-707-8379
Ray Reiss.....903-908-0203
Jerry Snyder.....479-282-5501

DEACONS

Mark Bagwell John Bowman Leo Bratcher Josh Porter Joe Hott Randall Hunt
Stephen Hunt Mike Martin Terry Roberts Aaron Sloan Mike Spencer Tyler White

MINISTERS

Jeff Grisham.....479-531-9135
Parker Willis.....615-587-3208
Cory Spruiell.....501-941-4525

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SUNDAY

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



What We Can Become

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’ (Matthew 7:21-23 ESV)

There are few passages of Scripture that I find more disturbing or down right frightening than this one. As Bible students we are familiar with what is in store for people who live in open rebellion to God. We see the results of refusing to be obedient and submitting to the commandments of God. In this instance, however, Jesus seems to be speaking of people who believe that they have been obedient, who believe they are on the correct side, only to realize that they are not. Is this possible? Jesus seems to think it is. So how do we know? Can we know?

I believe we can. I believe that God wants us to know and to live confidently in the knowledge that we are His people. I believe that knowing and resting in the fact that we belong to Him and have real hope and a real future is part of

SEMILINES



the abundant life that Jesus came to make possible. But this passage from Matthew 7 can still be haunting. Here we see people who claim to have done great things (prophesy, cast out demons, and do many might works), yet are lost. Is there hope for us? Can we be sure?



Jesus gives us the answer to how it is we can be certain. He says it is the one who does the will of the Father who enters the Kingdom. God's will appears to be that we become holy people, fully embracing and living up to His image in which we were created. What God wanted from Adam and Eve was for them to trust Him to take care of them, to follow His lead, and to partner with Him in expanding the Garden (Genesis 1:26-31). What God wanted from Israel was a holy nation to live in such a way as to introduce Him to the nations around them (Exodus 19:1-6). God's will for us is that we come to know Him, trust Him, follow His lead, and become His holy people so that He can be made known to the world around us (Romans 8:18-30). It appears that those to whom Jesus refers in Matthew chapter 7 did some great things, but missed the most important thing.

It's not only about what we do, it is really about what we are becoming. Being found in Jesus, in His Kingdom, is not just about doing great things. It is about who we are becoming along the way. It is about being formed into the image of Jesus in the every day things. It is about looking more like Him. It is about acting and reacting the way He did. It is about being focused on doing the will of the Father the way He was.

We accomplish this by being disciplined and focused on the right things. A little earlier in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus made this statement:

*"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few."
(Matthew 7:13-14 ESV)*

In other words, we will not become the person individually or the church that God desires by accident. Many will enter the wide gate because it is easy. We can find the wide gate without even trying. The narrow gate and the hard way take focus and discipline. It takes our attention to follow the steps of Jesus as we navigate life. It means that we spend consistent time getting to know Jesus. It means that we watch and learn from Him how to interact with all different types of people in various situations. It means that we realize His love and mercy toward us and extend that love and mercy to others so that they may come to know and follow Him with us.

God has made great promises to us. He has demonstrated His desire to be with us over and over, as well as the fact that He can be trusted to keep His promises. He wants us to have an abundant life marked by a deep and abiding trust in Him. We can have this, but not without effort on our part. To have this takes time, discipline, and practice. It takes realizing when we've strayed off the path and running back to Him for help and direction. It takes focus and intentionality to become what He desires that we become. Will we do it?

-JEFF GRISHAM

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SUNDAY SERVANTS April 28, 2024

First Service

Welcome, Prayer & Scripture Tyler White | Song Leader Anthony Christiano
 Greeters Jack Johnson, Roy Barnica, Phil Ward | Communion Scripture & Prayer Doug White
 Closing Prayer Dallas Dobbs
 Nursery Workers Janet Alumbaugh, Angie Christiano

Second Service

Welcome, Prayer & Scripture Greg Woodruff | Song Leader Lee McCain
 Greeters Jack Johnson, Eric Gibson, John Bowman | Communion Scripture & Prayer Jeff Oxford
 Closing Prayer Perry Johnson
 Nursery Workers Andrea Wald, Debbie Martin | Van Driver Mark/Wilma Bagwell

April Worship Coordinators

Worship Coordinator Mike Lunsford | Streaming Coordinator Aaron Sloan
 Audio Coordinator Homer Makinson | Video Coordinator Marquis Elliott