

**Family & Friends..... July 14, 2021**

Hope everyone had a great 4th of July weekend! The temperatures were just right for grilling outdoors or just sitting on the front porch. We watched the many boats on the lake making waves and ripples as they traveled on the water, making it fun to watch. The children and adults were having fun in their kayaks and canoes earlier in the day. In the early evening the birds started getting a little fidgety. I noticed a bunch of hawks circling in the air, and occasionally making a plunge into the trees. I had a sinking feeling then with what was going on, but it is all part of nature. I was soon distracted by a pretty Hummingbird that appeared, gained my attention, and put me in a more relaxed mood again. The sky was beginning to be dark and the lightening bugs were on the move all around, making for a fantastic scene. Our neighbor left to walk his dog, but came back suddenly when the fireworks went off. It must have set the tree frogs off, for they started their chorus of sounds. The male frog is the only one that can croak, but some frogs can chirp, peep, whistle, ribbit, and grunt. It's completely dark now and the fireworks are going strong. Our neighborhood cat ran out of the woods in a distressed way, so I am sure it was trying to escape the sound of the fireworks. I had a ring-side seat tonight to observe nature and its beauty. Aah, to enjoy the simple life! To God Be the Glory!

*O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth, who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens. Psalm 8:1*

Those on our prayer list: Robbie Arnold had a kidney biopsy and ablation on Wednesday, July 14th. Keep Robbie and Roger both in your prayers. Andrew Albers is now home recovering from his bypass surgery. Chuck Pippin is now at the Meadows Assisted Living in Bentonville. Donovan Harris asks for prayers in his struggles. Aggie asked for us to pray for her friend, Delphinia who is struggling with health problems. Pray for Jennifer Oxford who is starting a new program at the Mayo Clinic for her cancer. Continue to remember those who have recently lost loved ones. Margaret Wicker will have foot surgery July 21st. Pat Musson needs our prayers as she is suffering with bronchitis and has been put back on chemo because the tumor has grown instead of getting smaller. Continue to remember and pray for Judith Carmical, Lou Hollo, Hilda Jones, Michelle King, Rebecca Hedges, Monica Klingman's father, Bob, the Fanning's daughter, Kim Weller, and the Fanning's 2-year-old neighbor who has leukemia, Mike Lacey, Loisell Tyler, the Hott family, the Duffy family, Robert Horton, Joyce Hurst, Chad Trott, Bob Musson, our missionaries, our military and police force, our country and president.

We are happy to announce new members Logan & Jaime Holthaus and children, Jude & Liam. We give a big welcome to this family!

Items needed for Fair Haven Children's Home: vegetable soup, cornbread mix, spam, chili beans, juice, Kool aid, and toilet bowl cleaner. July Food Pantry: Gluten free products, Tuna and Chicken Helper, Jell-O, puddings, and brownie mixes.

God's glory shines through His creation. 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.....479-640-4943  
Perry Johnson.....913-707-8379  
Ray Reiss.....903-908-0203

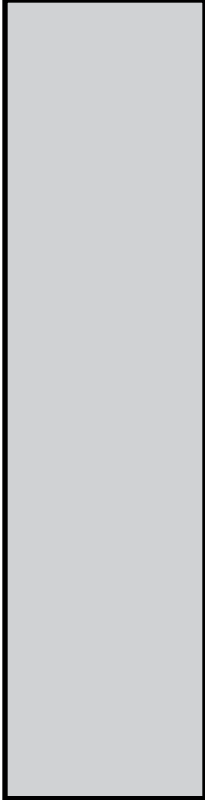
**DEACONS**

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  
Selwyn Nel.....Cape Town, South Africa  
Javier & Helmer Rosero.....Bogota, Colombia

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

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**Bella Vista**

**LIVESTREAMING**

**How Do You Read It?**

*And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." (Luke 10:25-28 ESV)*

As Bible students we may recognize this passage as a lead in to arguably one of the most well known parables of Jesus, The Good Samaritan. It is a wonderful and challenging parable that informs us that we don't get to choose our neighbor. We are called to be neighbors to those around us.

It is not just the parable that we need to think about. There is a question that Jesus asks the lawyer that I think we need to stop and examine. When it comes to the commands of God and how he speaks to us in Scripture, "How do you (and I) read it?" What do we see when we open our Bibles? How do we make use of this book that we hold so dear?

**Do we read it like a rulebook?** As we make our way through the pages of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, there are commands. Some of them are very direct as in what we find in the Ten Commandments. Some are less direct as we see people in Scripture do things that are outside of the will of God and watch as God corrects them. There is no denying that in living a life pleasing to God there are definite dos and don'ts. It is also evident that God expects his people to pay attention to the limits and boundaries that he has set. We see passages like Deuteronomy 28 where God tells Israel of the blessings that are theirs if they will be obedient and the curses that will come upon them if they are disobedient.

*And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you shall only go up and not down, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, being careful to do them, and if you do not turn aside from any of the words that I command you today, to the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them. (Deut. 28:13-14 ESV)*



We certainly want to be found on the right side of God and obedience to his commands is incredibly important. But is viewing the Bible primarily as a rulebook the most effective way?

**Do we read it like a guidebook or like a user manual?** I think this is a good instinct. We read narratives and we see encounters that God has with his people, or that God's people have with others and try to discern how we ought to behave in the various situations that we face. We may think of passages where this method is encouraged and even commanded. One example is at the end of the parable of the Good Samaritan where we hear Jesus say, *"You go, and do likewise."*

Another example is found in John 13:1-11. This contains the narrative of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples. It is a beautiful picture of love and service. Following that action of Jesus we read:

*"When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, 'Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.'" (John 13:12-15 ESV)*

This is a good method and can certainly be helpful. Reading the Bible as a rulebook can also be helpful, as we desire to stay within the will of God. But is either of these the best way? Is there a way that encompasses these two good ways into something even better?

**What if we read the Bible through the lens of Jesus?** Scripture is one of the ways in which God reveals himself to humanity. It is meant to introduce us to God. It is the narrative of God creating us on purpose and for a purpose. It is the account of all that he has done and continues to do in order to reconcile the world to himself. And, at the center of it all is God's ultimate revelation in Jesus. Everything from Genesis to Revelation points to him; the Old Testament points to his coming, the Gospels tell of his arrival, and the letters tell us what happens because of his coming.

I think this is how Jesus taught his disciples to read it. After the resurrection, Jesus makes several appearances to his followers. Luke records two of these in Luke 24. In each of those cases, Jesus demonstrates to these believers how Scripture is to be read and interpreted.

*And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:24-27)*

*Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. (Luke 24:44-47)*

When we read Scripture through the lens of Jesus, through what God has done through Jesus, we get the other two methods included. When we see what God has done, when we see his great love for us, when we see how badly he wants to be with us and for us to be with him, doing what he asks is a much more natural step. When we see God revealed in Jesus and recognize that in Jesus we see what it means to live as fully human, we will look to follow his example as we interact with God and with others. So, how will we read it?



-JEFF GRISHAM

## Legalism

Jesus told the Samaritan lady at Jacob's well, *God seeks true worshippers; those who are willing to worship Him in spirit and in truth.* Some of us are guilty of substituting deeds, works, rituals of the faith, for the *spirit* of Christ within. God wants our spirit, our heart, our motives, to be right also. God-pleasing worship and service must *be true, genuine, in the proper spirit, with right motive;* as well as according to *truth.* Sometimes we are better at keeping rules than we are exhibiting the proper spirit. It's easier to come to church each Sunday than it is to *daily* maintain the mind of Christ within. We can keep the Ten Commandments perfectly, and still have cold hearts. It's possible to be satisfied with our own legalism. But God requests more than rule-keeping. He asks that we remember the *weightier matters* of His law - heart issues like love, grace, mercy, judgment, hope and faith, etc.

Jesus addresses this idea in the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. The beatitudes are heart issues, attitudes-to-be, not laws and rituals to be kept. Jesus said, *These people honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men.* When we place ritual and deeds done above the condition of our heart, we are mixing the doctrine of God with the commandments of men. God is interested in spirit and truth worship, heart and doctrine worship. It takes both to please Him...Amen?

You see, Christianity is more than laws kept, rituals performed. It is a submissive heart, a willingness to forget self and become a servant: *Let this mind be in you that was in Christ.* God loves the heart and the mind of Jesus and he asks us to cultivate such a heart condition. We are to *crucify the old man and take on the nature, the heart, the mind, attitude, temperament, and disposition of Jesus.* God also loved the heart of David, broken and contrite. Folk, genuine repentance is a heart condition. Walking church aisles and saying words is not repentance until there is a change of heart that results in a change of behavior.

It is easy to convince ourselves that we are right and good because we have done all the right things, *kept the rules.* But to do so without regard for the spirit within brings on self-righteousness. We feel right and righteous, so we become harsh, judgmental, and anti-Christ-like in our attitude toward others, inside and outside the church. We demand that all men everywhere think and act as we do on every issue or question. Know this as a fact...*Rigid rule keeping creates a hard heart.*

Jonah is an example of this kind of thinking. His command was *go preach in Nineveh.* The reason Jonah didn't want to go was because he didn't want those people to repent. He had already judged them as unworthy. *He was worthy...Why?* He had kept the rules! The Ninevites were not. Jonah even became angry with God when they repented and He blessed them. Are we guilty of such a heart condition? *Brothers, if a man be overtaken in a fault, you which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering yourself, lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens and thus fulfill the law of Christ.*

Another example is the elder brother of the Prodigal Son. He was Jonah incarnate. He was a legalist. He says, *Father I have served you all these years and you never gave me a calf so I could party with my friends.* In his heart, the elder brother seemed to be thinking, "How could you give this sinner - this adulterer, this pig penner - your mercy, your grace and loving kindness?" *Entitlement!* It is a sin. God does not owe us. God is not in our debt. Church, if the father in this story represents God, then this elder brother represents legalism. It is so sad when we think God deserves us, and then judge others as underserving. The missing heart condition is humility. This is exactly what Jesus was condemning when He said, *Judge not that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; and with what measure you use, it will be measured back to you.*

*God is Spirit and is seeking those willing to worship Him in spirit and in truth.* He is not only concerned with rules kept, but with motive. God is interested in worship and service that springs from a Christ-like heart. Amen?

-RANDALL CASELMAN

From *Lifelines*, July 2007

### SUNDAY SERVANTS: 7/18/21

#### Early Service (8:15 AM)

Welcome, Prayer, & Scripture.....	Dallas Dobbs	Song Leader .....	Alex Thompson
Greeters.....	Mike York & Harold Phillips	Closing Prayer .....	Bill Alumbaugh
Communion Scripture & Prayers .....	Randall Hunt		

#### Second Service (10:30 AM)

Welcome, Prayer, & Scripture.....	Mike Spencer	Song Leader .....	Anthony Christiano
Greeters.....	Curt LaPorte & Chris Johnson	Closing Prayer .....	Don Butcher
Communion Scripture & Prayers .....	Mitchell Whittington		

#### July Worship Coordinators

Worship Coordinator .....	Mike Lunsford	Streaming Coordinator .....	Elijah Johnson
Audio Coordinator .....	Jim Caylor	Video Coordinator .....	Aaron Bagwell