



Living By Faith

"The just shall live by faith." Romans 1:17

December 20, 2009

4th & Stewart Church of Christ

Contact Us:

3201 4th Street
Brownwood, TX 76801
325-646-7102
www.4thstreetcoc.org
office@4thstreetcoc.org

Meeting Times:

Sunday:

Bible Study..... 9:45 AM
Worship..... 10:40 AM
Care, Inc. Service..... 2:30 PM
Redstone Service..... 2:30 PM
Worship..... 6:00 PM

Tuesday:

Redstone Class 10:00 AM

Wednesday:

Ladies Bible Class..... 10:00 AM
Bible Study..... 7:00 PM

Elders:

Gene Bannister Billy Chism

Deacons:

Mike Bannister Jim Moore
Don Smith..... James Thomas

Preacher:

Ryan Smithey

Works We Support:

Belize Mission & Kindergarten
Cherokee Home for Children
Eric Henry, SWSBS
Food Pantry
Gospel Broadcast Network
Gospel Chariot Missions
House to House, Heart to Heart
Lake Cisco Camp
Mission Printing
Rohan Jones, BTSP
The Truth in Love
World Bible School

Let us know if you want to study
the Bible to know more about
Christ and His Church.

Things That Are Excellent

by Carl B. Garner

It's not hard to find advice on what to buy, what to eat, what/when to sell, where to go...all we have to do is ask. Christians have a mandate to seek advice from a Source above man, and when that help is found it will guide us into "all truth" (John 8:32; 16:13)—God's Word. That is the only place where we find God's "advice" for "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3).

Paul told his Philippian brethren of his prayer for them in chapter 1:9-10: "This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ."

There, Paul made it clear that they were to seek out the very best things; in fact, to seek out the "excellent" things. That word "excellent" is defined as "of highest quality or standard; of superior merit; remarkably good." Synonyms listed include: "tremendous, outstanding, first-rate superb, exceptional." The Holy Spirit and Paul set high standards for the Philippians - and for all Christians. Our goal is to take the best path in all things, to give our approval to things that are of the highest quality, the very best available.

Christians face many choices every day, and we must determine to choose the best things, the excellent things-not merely those which are on the borderline-but "things that are excellent." In nearly every facet of life we acknowledge that some things are of bad quality, some better, some good-but some are best, some are excellent. In athletics the "great" players are those who make "excellent" plays, do extraordinary things. Then there are the others who are "average." The ones making the "big money" are those who do the "excellent" things in "excellent" ways. Christians will have decisions that are difficult, but in every one we must "approve things that are excellent."

Excellent Ethical Choices

When mother sends daughter or son out into the world she wants them to "approve things that are excellent," not merely to avoid being "caught." In matters of finance, personal relationships, etc., in every area of life, ethical standards for Christians should be—must be—of the highest quality, "excellent." It will never be enough to merely avoid the most wicked behavior; we must find the most excellent way to live every day, then choose, and put our approval on those excellent ways. God set high standards for our own benefit, and we must not only recognize them, but also "approve" them.

The world's standards for humans are often barely above the very lowest. God, however, says: Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. (Phil. 4:8)

Excellent Homes

It is imperative that a Christian's home seeks the excellent ways, the best path for all family members. Our association with each other must be the "excellent" way. By our attitude, by our way of speaking to others, being considerate of the feelings of oth-

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*I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go into the house of the LORD.*

Psalm 122:1

Separating Christmas Fact from Fiction:

by Steve Higginbotham

Personally, I relish Christmas as one of my favorite holidays. The children, presents, decorations, excitement . . . they all combine to make Christmas a special time for my family and me. However, in the midst of all the fun, I can't help but be a bit disturbed by all the biblical ignorance or inaccuracies associated with Christmas. Many cannot separate fact from fiction when it comes to the biblical account of the birth of Jesus. Check your own Bible and see for yourself!

Fact or Fiction:

Answers:

- ◆ We know with some certainty that Jesus was born on December 25. ◆ **FICTION** – Nowhere in scripture are we told the date of Jesus' birth. In fact, the circumstances surrounding His birth imply He was not born in late December.
- ◆ The angel Gabriel appeared to Joseph to inform him concerning Jesus. ◆ **FICTION** – While Gabriel did appear to Mary, and an angel did appear to Joseph, the Bible does not say it was Gabriel.
- ◆ There were three wise men who came to see Jesus. ◆ **FICTION** – The Bible is silent as to how many wise men came to see Jesus. Though three gifts were presented, it doesn't necessarily follow that there were three wise men.
- ◆ The wise men were kings from the orient. ◆ **FICTION** – The Bible doesn't say the wise men were kings.
- ◆ A bright star appeared in the sky and led the wise men to the manger. ◆ **FICTION** – The Bible says the star appeared above the house where Jesus was, not the manger (**Matt 2:9-11**).
- ◆ The wise men visited Jesus at the manger. ◆ **FICTION** – The Bible says the wise men visited Jesus when He was in a house. At the time of their visit, Jesus is called a "child" rather than a "baby" (Greek *paidion* vs *brephos* - **Matt 2:11**). In fact, he may have been as old as two (**Matt 2:7, 16**).
- ◆ A bright star appeared to the shepherds in the field and led them to the manger. ◆ **FICTION** – The Bible says nothing about a star leading the shepherds to the manger.
- ◆ Mary rode a donkey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. ◆ **FICTION** – The Bible makes no mention of a donkey and says nothing concerning how Mary traveled to Bethlehem.

The preceding statements are thought to be fact by many people, but are in reality, fiction. It's surprisingly easy for us to believe as fact, what is in reality fiction. Furthermore, this "fiction" is sometimes propagated by religion. How many church lawns and Christmas plays will portray a nativity scene which inaccurately portrays the biblical account?

Now here's my point: If we can be misinformed by religious leaders, concerning the events surrounding the birth of Christ, what's to make us think we can't be misled regarding other religious matters? Friends, make sure your faith is not based on what others have told you is true, but rather make sure your faith is based on what you know to be true from your own personal study. Let the fiction you see perpetuated on church lawn's and in church "pageants" this holiday season be a reminder and a warning to you to do your own Bible study and not be content with what others say.

"Prove all things; Hold fast what is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Adapted; The Biblical Messenger; December 17, 2009; 9th & Main church of Christ, San Angelo, TX

| Television | God's Plan for Redeeming Man | Bible Reading Schedule |
|---|--|---|
| <p>The Truth In Love (Eddie Parrish) Sunday @ 7:00 am on KTAB</p> <p>In Search of the Lord's Way (Mack Lyon) Sunday @ 7:30 am on KTAB</p> <p>Gospel Broadcasting Network Online: 24/7 @ gbntv.org</p> <p>Good News Today: Sunday @ 6:00 am on Dish: 259, DirectTV: 364, Harris: 208</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Radio</p> <p>Preaching the Word (Michael Light) Sunday @ 9:00am on KOXE 101.3</p> | <p>Hear Learn the saving message of Christ's sacrifice (1 Cor. 1:18; Rom. 10:17).</p> <p>Believe Jesus is the Son of God (John 8:24)</p> <p>Confess Jesus as your Lord, Lawgiver, and King (Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32-33)</p> <p>Repent of your sinful conduct (Luke 13:3,5)</p> <p>Complete your initial obedience to the gospel by being baptized for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)</p> | <p>Sunday .. Micah 1-3; Revelation 11</p> <p>Monday .. Micah 4-5; Revelation 12</p> <p>Tuesday .. Micah 6-7; Revelation 13</p> <p>Wednesday . Nahum 1-3; Revelation 14</p> <p>Thursday .. Habakkuk 1-3; Revelation 15</p> <p>Friday .. Zephaniah 1-3; Revelation 16</p> <p>Saturday .. Haggai 1-2; Revelation 17</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Tim. 2:15)</i></p> |

News & Notes

Ladies Class

Remember the ladies class will not meet this week, December 23rd, or on the 30th. It will resume on Wednesday, January 6.

Mark Your Calendars

- ◆ **January 10-13:** Forth Worth Lectures on the Gospel Accounts held at Brown Trail; see flyer on the bulletin board.
- ◆ **May 2-5:** Spring Gospel Meeting with John Moore, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*; keep this effort in your prayers and on your calendars.

Happy Holidays

I think all had a wonderful time at the holiday party Friday, we appreciate all who planned it and all who came. We pray that you all have a wonderful and safe time with friends and family.

From the Whitsetts...

Priscilla and I enjoyed a visit with Ben and Lu Whitsett last week. As always most of the questions they asked were concerning the welfare of the members here. Lu called later in the week and asked us to express their love for all of you and to solicit your prayers. They are each struggling with health issues and we do ask that you keep them in your prayers and know that they miss being here with us just as we miss them. Their contact information is still on the bulletin board.

Visitation Program

Remember to join us for our **visitation meeting following the evening worship services in the fellowship hall**. Keep reporting your contacts made during the week and turn them in each Sunday morning — last week **36 contacts** were made. Also remember this is the **3rd Sunday** so we hope that you can bring snacks and stay for a time of fellowship following the meeting.

(Continued from page 1)

ers—all of these should reflect our love for them and our determination to choose the "excellent" ways, not just those that are not as bad as some other ways.

Excellent Attitudes toward the Bible

Many congregations have members who are very weak in the faith. Their absence at worship assemblies, and their lack of knowledge of God's excellent way explains their failure to recognize the serious nature of their relationship to Him. Do they seek ways to help those in need? Do they look for ways to improve the reputation of God's people in the eyes of the community? Do they study their Bible? Do they seek out their friends, family, and neighbors to teach them the gospel? Answers to these and other questions will reveal the strength of a congregation. You can mark it down in indelible ink—if those answers continue to be habitually negative for most members, that church will soon lose its relationship to Christ; and any positive impact they may have in their community will vanish.

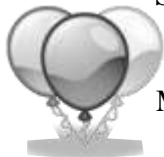
Excellent Relationships With Others

The word "love" is so constant in the Bible that it may be easy to forget it. However, there are some imperatives on that subject as well: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). Yes, that's how the world knows we are God's people. You say, "It's hard to love some people"? Yes, we are all hard to love at times, but that changes nothing. It must be hard for God to love us, but He does; and we must set higher standards for ourselves. Let's begin now seeking the best interests of our brethren—and all others.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY AND ANNIVERSARY TO:

December Birthdays: James Womack (04); Lucille McClung (08); Lloyd Leslie (12); Laverne Thomas (13); Veneta Nolen (17); Kaci Churchwell (18); Priscilla Smithey (18); Linda Griffith (20); Jack Stultz (20); Mia Stroope (22); Joyce Hill (24); Ben Whitsett (28).

December Anniversaries: Linda & Allen Griffith (20); Jo & Ken Maninger (25).



"Rejoice with those who rejoice..." (Romans 12:15)

| | Recent Records | December 06, 2009 | December 13, 2009 |
|--------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Bible Class | | 63 | 63 |
| AM Worship | | 81 | 86 |
| PM Worship | | 52 | 56 |
| Wednesday PM | | 44 | 50 |
| Contribution | | \$1608 | \$1577 |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Privileged to Serve | 12/20/09 - AM | 12/20/09 - PM | 12/27/09 - AM | 12/27/09 - PM |
| Greeters | Jim & Peg Moore | | James & Cindy Fuller | |
| Scripture Reader Scripture Reading | | Garrett Barnum Mark 12:28-31 | | John Barnum |
| Opening Prayer | Allen Griffith | Ken Makuta | Gene Bannister | Billy Chism |
| Wait on Table | Hank Wheeler*, Tom Wilcox Don Smith, John Barnum | Hank Wheeler | Jim Moore*, Michael Bickford James Fuller, Garrett Barnum | Jim Moore |
| Closing Prayer | Michael Bickford | James Fuller | Hank Wheeler | Tom Wilcox |
| Attendance Cards | Chase Churchwell Seth Smithey | | Chase Churchwell Seth Smithey | |
| Wednesday Devotionals | December 23 Allen Griffith | December 30 Jim Moore | January 6 Don Smith | January 13 James Fuller |

Studies For The Week of December 20th:

Sunday Class 1 Corinthians (Chap. 1)

Wednesday Class Daniel 12

And the Child Grew (Luke 2:40)

1) Jesus' Birth

- a) **Miraculous**; born of a virgin (Lk. 1:27, 31, 34, 35, 37).
- b) **Prophesied/Planned** not accidental (Lk. 2:1, 4-6; Gal. 4:4).
- c) **Joyous**; the Christ born into the world (Lk. 2:10-11, 13-14, 25-35, 36-38).
- d) **Foreshadowing** of His humble life (1:32-33, 2:7, 2:8).

2) Jesus' Life

- a) **He grew**, just like us, from a baby to a man of 30 years (Lk. 2:40, 42, 52,; 3:23).
- b) **He did His Father's Will** even from an early age; and expects the same of us (Lk. 2:49; John 6:38, 4:34; Matt. 7:21).
- c) **He instructed** and expects us to heed that teaching (Matt. 5:1-2, 7:28-29; John 12:48; Matt. 7:24-27).
- d) **He Corrected**; He was not afraid to point out error and the need to do what is right (John 2:13-17; Matt. 23; Lk. 13:3).
- e) **He demanded**; He was forceful and makes demands of us (Matt. 28:18; Mark 16:15-16; Matt. 7:21; Lk. 12:51-53).

3) Jesus' Death

- a) He died willingly for our sins (Matt. 26:28, John 10:17-18, 19:30; 1 Pet. 2:22, 24; Lk. 19:10; Matt. 20:28).
- b) It is this event that He commands we commemorate (1 Cor. 11:24-26) – yet many would rather remember Him as a baby, where He is more comfortable!

Such As I Have Give I Thee (Acts 3:1-6)

We may feel like Peter, not much to give; but are we giving what we are able? These are a few examples of things we can all give:

- 1) **Time** – most valuable thing we have; we cannot afford to waste it (John 9:4; Ps. 90:12; Eph. 5:15-16).
- 2) **Money** – may not be rich but most have some means to support the work of the church and help others (Mal. 3:8; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:12; Gal. 6:10).
- 3) **Prayers** – Let our prayers not just be for self but pray for one another, such brings joy to them and us (1 Tim. 2:1-3; Rom. 15:30; 1 Thess. 5:25; James 5:16).
- 4) **Careful, Honest Study of the Bible** – make time to study with the intent to learn more of our duty to God and others; this helps us and others (Psalm 119:105; 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Tim. 4:15-16).
- 5) **Sincere Worship to God** – something that God expects from us (John 4:24; Ps. 111:1, 9) but in turn is beneficial to all (Col. 3:16; Heb. 10:25).
- 6) **Kindness** – we need to be kind to all people; we never know what simple acts of kindness will lead a lost soul to seek the truth and it is a part of the Christian makeup (Eph. 4:32; 2 Pet. 1:7).
- 7) **Godly life** – we cannot underestimate the power of a good example upon the world (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:14-16) therefore show forth a godly life guided by God's Word (Titus 2:11-12; 1 Tim. 2:9-10).

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Return Service Requested