

# 4th & Stewart church of Christ

"...upon this rock I will build my church;  
and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."  
~ Matthew 16:18



November 23, 2014

## Contact Us:

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## Meeting Times:

### Sunday:

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

### Wednesday:

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

## Elders:

Gene Bannister..... Billy Chism

## Deacons:

Mike Bannister..... Don Smith

James Thomas

## Preacher:

Johnny McCaghren

## Works We Support:

Cherokee Home for Children  
Gospel Broadcast Network  
Heart of Texas Bible Camp (Bangs)  
House to House, Heart to Heart  
Mission Printing  
Rohan Jones, Africa  
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.

## Are Your Study Habits Killing The Church?

In some ways the Lord's church in America is hurting. It is plagued with a disease – the disease of a lack of knowledge (cf. Hosea 4:6). In many congregations it seems that fewer and fewer members are craving the Word of God (1 Pet. 2:2). At one time, the church of Christ was known for being a people "of the book." Now we are lucky if the world knows about us at all.

What happened? Yes, we got busier. Our culture has changed and our economy has adapted, causing people to work harder and longer hours. Additionally, our children are so much more involved in extracurricular activities than they used to be in generations past. At the end of the day – after running errands and dropping off/picking up the kids – it is difficult not to just collapse on the couch out of exhaustion. Now rinse, repeat.

As a result, we started searching for shortcuts in life. Drive-thru fast-food restaurants, smartphones, Amazon Prime, and 5-hour energy shots are now staples in life. Our addiction to high-speed internet access and quick search results have shortened our attention span and heightened our impatience.

When asked, "Should Christians regularly study their Bibles?" nearly everyone correctly responds, "Of course!" But our commitment to studying God's Word has been pushed to the side. "I'll get around to it when I have more time," we think. Yes, deep down we know this answer is wrong. Yes, we know we shouldn't procrastinate. Yes, we need to start "seeking first the Kingdom" (Matt. 6:33) by making Bible study a priority.

But that's not entirely the problem.

Perhaps the bigger issue is that our dependence on shortcuts has redefined what it means to study. Kevin Rhodes writes, "Our biggest problem is in mistaking so many activities for Bible study that we believe we have studied the Bible, when in fact we have not." ("A Beginner's Guide To Bible Study," Building Blocks [Cleburne, TX: Hopkins Publishing], p. 159). He then gives the following four examples of what is often confused as real Bible study. I have to admit, some of these I have been guilty of.

### 1. Reading the Bible and studying the Bible are two different things.

Kevin writes, "The goals are very different. Bible reading *assumes* understanding while Bible study *seeks* understanding" (159, emp. mine). The Pharisees during Jesus' ministry prided themselves in their knowledge of God's Word, but they did not *study* God's Word with a humble desire to learn the truth. They failed to see that Scripture pointed to Jesus all along (Rom. 10:4). "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about Me, yet you refuse to come to Me that you may have life." (John 5:39-40). **When we read, we are searching God's Word, but when we study, we are allowing God's Word to search us** (Heb. 4:12).

### 2. Reading material someone else wrote does not constitute Bible study.

We are often quick to point out the danger of just "taking the preacher's word for it" without comparing his words to Scripture (cf. Acts 17:11). Yet in principle is this any different than just reading a religious book or article instead of simply studying God's Word? **Many Christians believe that by reading a Christian periodical or blog (like this article) they have fulfilled their obligation to study.**

### 3. Reading the text and simply stating, "it means what it says" is not Bible study.

I've attended congregational Bible "studies" that consist of a teacher reading a verse of the Bible, saying "*it means what it says,*" asking if there are any questions, and then moving on to the next verse. Bible classes like these are usually the result of the teacher either (a) being lazy in his preparation, or (b) not knowing how to teach a Bible class. Yes, the Bible *does* mean what it says, but how can we learn what it says without examining the context and asking how the text applies to our

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"Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation."

1 Peter 2:11,12

# How to Read the New Testament Like It's Meant to be Read

Before you read a book – or a collection of books like the New Testament – you ought to have a sense of what you're reading. If you're reading a novel, you should know that. If you're reading a historical biography, you should know that. In the case of the New Testament, I'm afraid many of us don't understand what we're reading when we read it. So here's a little information that might be helpful.

## Jesus is King

First, we need to understand that Jesus is King. He is the long-awaited descendent of David who was prophesied of throughout the Old Testament. This King or "Anointed One" is referred to as "the Messiah" or "the Christ." And Jesus was much more than just the royal descendent of David, He was also God in human flesh (John 1:14).

Jesus spent several years proving, through His teachings and His miraculous signs, that He was "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). During this time, He gathered to Himself several men – known as His apostles – to whom He gave special instructions. He told them a special gift would be given specifically to them. This gift would be the very Spirit of God, who would guide them "into all truth" (John 16:13).

After Jesus was crucified, buried, and rose from the dead, He declared His kingship in no uncertain terms, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me" (Matthew 28:18). He then told His apostles – after they received the guiding Holy Spirit – to go and tell the whole world about Him and teach people to follow Him.

## The Apostles Were His Ambassadors

When the Holy Spirit came on the apostles, He filled them with the knowledge of the King's will. They served as the King's official ambassadors (an ambassador is someone who speaks on behalf of his King). They went all over the world, teaching the things the King revealed to them through His Holy Spirit.

Paul, the last apostle – or ambassador – to be appointed, said this about the apostles' mission, "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:20).

The people who heard and believed the apostles' royal decree, became followers of the King. They "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching" (Acts 2:42), understanding that the teachings of the apostles were the teachings of the King himself.

## The New Testament is the King's Official Decree

The New Testament is the official written record of the King's teachings, given through His ambassadors and their close associates. The first four books of the New Testament – known as the gospel accounts – tell the story of the King's life, sacrificial death, burial, resurrection, and ascension to the right hand of God in heaven.

The next book, the book of Acts, tells of how the King's ambassadors were given the Holy Spirit and went throughout the world imploring people to be reconciled to God through Jesus the King. The book of Acts tells how the ambassadors (apostles) gathered the new followers of the King into local bodies in towns and communities around the world. These local bodies were known as churches or congregations. They met together regularly to encourage each other, support one another, and worship together. Each local group understood they were just a small part of a much larger kingdom of followers all over the world.

The rest of the New Testament is comprised of messages written to individuals and congregations, giving further instructions about how to live lives that are pleasing to the King. The book of 1 Corinthians, for instance, is a letter written from the King's ambassador Paul to the congregation in the city of Corinth.

## We Are Carrying on the Mission of the King

Today, we carry on the apostles' mission and ministry. We are not ambassadors in the sense that they were, but we have the King's story and the King's message preserved in the pages of the New Testament. As followers of the King have done since the very beginning, we devote ourselves to the apostles' teachings and implore the world to do the same. There is no other way to know about the King and His will for mankind than through the written words of the New Testament.

Jesus is King and one day He will return. He is a merciful and forgiving King. He died that all mankind might have the opportunity to be forgiven. But when He returns, He will return in judgement (2 Thessalonians 1:5-10). He will punish anyone who has not submitted Himself to the Kingship of Jesus Christ.

I encourage you to read the New Testament as the official record of the King's story and the King's will. Read it, knowing that the King invites you into His eternal kingdom, if you will submit and surrender yourself to Him.

*Wes McAdams (via radicallychristian.com)*

### Television

The Truth In Love (Robert Dodson)

Sunday @ 7:00am on KTAB

In Search of the Lord's Way (Phil Sanders)

Sunday @ 7:30am on KTAB

Life In The Light (Chris McCurley)

Sunday @ 10:30am on KTAB

### Radio

Preaching the Word (Michael Light)

Sunday @ 9:00am on KOXE 101.3

### Internet

TheGospelRadioNetwork.org

Gospel Broadcasting Network (Gbnv.org)

### God's Plan for Redeeming Man

**Hear** Learn the saving message of Christ's sacrifice (1 Cor. 1:18; Rom. 10:17).

**Believe** Jesus is the Son of God (John 8:24)

**Confess** Jesus as your Lord, Lawgiver, and King (Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32-33)

**Repent** of your sinful conduct (Luke 13:3,5)

Complete your initial obedience to the gospel by being **baptized** for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)

**Live faithfully** (Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:7-8)

### Bible Reading Schedule

**Nov. 23** Acts 15-16

**Nov. 24** Galatians 1-3

**Nov. 25** Galatians 4-6

**Nov. 26** Acts 17—18:18

**Nov. 27** 1 Thess. 1-5; 2 Thess. 1-3

**Nov. 28** Acts 18:19—19:41

**Nov. 29** 1 Corinthians 1-4

**Nov. 30** 1 Corinthians 5-8

*"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."  
(2 Timothy 2:15)*



### Visitation Meeting

- ◆ Each Sunday night immediately before the evening worship. Last week **29 contacts** were made.

### Special Announcements

- ◆ A big “Thank You” to **Jason Nicholas** for filling in for Johnny today, as well as **Allen Griffith** for leading the discussion on Wednesday night.
- ◆ **No Ladies Bible Class the next two weeks** (11/26 & 12/3) due to holiday.

### In The Area

- ◆ Dec. 6 **Youth Program @ Lake Shore Drive** (Waco) “Ignite: Living Faithfully” Loy Mitchell, Zane Christian, Tommy Haynes, & Mike Bonner

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lives today? **Because so many passages in the Bible are difficult to understand** (cf. 2 Pet. 3:16), a cursory reading of the text is often insufficient.

**4. Sitting in a Bible class at church does not constitute Bible**

### study.

Many suffer from the illusion that one or two weekly 45-minute classes at church qualify as Bible study. When we think of Bible class as anything more than just a supplement to our personal Bible study, we are abusing the class. Many congregations have realized their members are not studying regularly throughout the week, and – instead of challenging people to greater faithfulness – have simply dumbed down their classes to merely what they decide are ‘the basics.’ **Many churches “need milk, and not solid food”** (Heb. 5:12) **because the membership views their congregational Bible classes as the only ‘studies’ they need.**

### Are Your Study Habits Killing The Church?

When we take shortcuts in our study of God’s Word, we become intellectually lazy. Tradition, rather than Scripture, becomes the basis for our doctrine. Our level of discernment becomes dull (cf. Heb. 5:11,14) and we are no longer able to distinguish between truth and error.

No wonder so many congregations of the Lord’s church are beginning to do crazy things. When the church stops studying, God stops leading. As a result, the church starts dying.

Note two of the symptoms:

**1. Tradition is confused with doctrine.** New ideas are dismissed because they “*are not the traditional way of doing things*” rather than because they go against God’s Word. And when *tradition* becomes *doctrine*, then the church of Christ becomes a denomination rather than the Church started on the Day of Pentecost (cf. Acts 2).

**2. Truth is confused with preference.** The church makes decisions based upon whether or not it “feels” like the right thing to do, regardless of what God’s Word teaches. Only when the Bible explicitly says *not* to do something will the church not do it. (And even *that* ceases to be a sure thing when members do not know the Word).

### What Is A Dead Church?

A dead church is not necessarily a church that has been disbanded or dissolved. A dead church is not necessarily a church that has lost its younger members. **A dead church is a church that is no longer faithful to Christ.** Meaning a church that is growing *numerically* can still be a dead church *spiritually*. The world is full of dead mega-churches.

It is possible for a dead church to *appear* to be thriving because it has a membership that is eager to do good works (Rev. 3:1b). It is possible for a dead church to be *committed* to sound doctrine without being committed to Christ (Rev. 2:4). And it is possible for a church to *think* it is healthy when really it has lost its zeal for the Lord (Rev. 3:15-17).

Appearances can be deceiving. What matters is whether each member is committed to the real, diligent, regular, and personal study of God’s Word. It is, after all, Scripture that makes one wise to salvation (2 Tim. 3:15). Let us do our best to become skilled in the word of righteousness (Heb. 5:13) so that we can grow (1 Pet. 2:2).

Ben Giselbach (via plainsimplefaith.com)

## Celebrate

*“Rejoice with those who rejoice...” (Romans 12:15)*

**November Birthdays:** Susan Bridges (1), Linda Jimenez (8), Emilee Evetts (13), Juanita Barnum (15), Terry Teague (17), **Marcia Turnbull (24), Kevin Wilcox (27).**

**November Anniversaries:** Gene & Barbara Bannister (6), Jack & Judie Turner (18).

Mistakes? Left Out? Let Johnny know...



## Records

	Nov. 9, 2014	Nov. 16, 2014
Bible Class	39	41
AM Worship	60	58
PM Worship	45	30
Wednesday PM	40	48
Contribution	\$2,037	\$2,078

	This Week: 11/23/14	Next Week: 11/30/14	November 2014	
<b>Sunday AM:</b>	Song Leader: Mike Bannister	Song Leader: Mike Bannister	<b>Make Announcements:</b> John Barnum	
<b>Greeters</b>	Dennis Family	Gene & Mike Bannister	<b>Prepare Communion:</b> Gene & Barbara Bannister	
<b>Opening Prayer</b>	James Thomas	Joe Dennis	<b>Clean Building:</b> John Barnum Family	
<b>Communion</b>	James Fuller*, Allen Griffith Ken Maninger, Chase Churchwell	Don Smith*, John Barnum Hank Wheeler, Gene Bannister	<b>Keep Grounds:</b> James Fuller	
<b>Closing Prayer</b>	Don Smith	Allen Griffith	<b>December 2014</b>	
<b>Attendance Cards</b>	Chase Churchwell	Caleb Dennis	<b>Make Announcements:</b> James Fuller	
<b>Sunday PM:</b>	Song Leader: Tom Wilcox	Song Leader: Ken Maninger	<b>Prepare Communion:</b> John Barnum Family	
<b>Opening Prayer</b>	Gene Bannister	Tom Wilcox	<b>Clean Building:</b> Cindy Fuller / Jessica Stultz	
<b>Scripture Reading</b>	James Thomas	James Fuller	<b>Keep Grounds:</b> Jack Turner	
<b>Communion</b>	James Fuller	Don Smith		
<b>Closing Prayer</b>	Billy Chism	Mike Bannister		
<b>Wednesday Devotionals:</b>	November 26 Don Smith	December 3 Prayer	December 10 Allen Griffith	December 17 Tom Wilcox

## Search the Scriptures

*Be like the Bereans who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11)*

### Studies for the week of November 23, 2014

Sunday Class ..... Jason Nicholas  
Wednesday Class ..... Personal Evangelism

## When Not To Be A Barnabas

The church needs more people like Barnabas—more “sons of encouragement” (cf. Acts 4:36). We need more people who, like Barnabas, are self-sacrificing (cf. Acts 4:37), are willing to stand up for their brethren (cf. Acts 9:26-27), are encouraging (cf. Acts 11:22-24), and are able to always see the goodness in people (cf. Acts 15:37-39).

You can always spot a Barnabas because they’re always trying to bring out the best in people, they work hard, they don’t need to be praised for their efforts, and they always want peace. We need more Barnabases in the church.

But modern-day Barnabases need to learn from his mistake. **Barnabas was so eager to please everyone that he, at least once, compromised his convictions.**

To make a long story short, Barnabas wanted to satisfy the Judaizers so much that he was willing to withdraw table fellowship from Gentile-Christian converts (Gal. 2:11-14). It seems he separated himself from the very people he was ministering to so enthusiastically, just to try to make everyone happy. **The point is, sometimes it isn’t possible to make everyone happy without seriously compromising the truth.**

There comes a time when we cannot support or embrace someone because of their practice of error. We cannot give people the “everything-is-going-to-be-okay” hug when they are teaching or doing things which contradict the perfect gospel of Christ. **The fact of the matter is this: everything isn’t going to be okay so long as they aren’t “walking in the light” (1 John 1:7).** Sometimes Barnabases need to be more like Paul in recognizing sin as “sin” (Gal.

2:11-14).

**Sometimes people are simply wrong, and Christians cannot wink at error or sin.**

Let’s practically illustrate this point:

- ◆ How many times do preachers avoid controversial issues because they don’t want to upset anyone?
- ◆ How many times do elders avoid protecting the Bride of Christ because they’re afraid someone might leave?
- ◆ How many times do members allow sister So-n-So to gossip because they don’t want to anger her by asking her to stop?
- ◆ How many times do spouses sweep sin under the rug because they want to “preserve the peace” in their home?
- ◆ How many times do parents make compromises so their children can “fit in” with other children?
- ◆ How many times do teens compromise on what is righteous recreation because they don’t want to lose the influence they have on their friends?

Like Barnabas, we need to “strive to excel in building up the church” (1 Cor. 14:12). **But Jesus doesn’t want us to attempt to build up the church at the expense of holiness. When we do that, we’re not actually building up the church—we’re tearing it down.**

**Question: Where do you draw the line between encouraging people and encouraging their sin?**

*Ben Giselbach (via Southaven, MS bulletin)*