

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



July 5, 2015

Contact Us:

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Meeting Times:

Sunday:

Bible Study9:45 AM
Worship10:40 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.

Why Won't People Listen To Us?

As you've probably noticed, biblical truths aren't exactly popular these days. Statistics have proven that each passing generation is becoming less religious and more accepting of what the Bible calls immoral, and our attempts to convince people with the truth seem to be getting less effective by the day. It's easy to just throw our hands up and just assume that nobody wants to listen anymore, but A) that would be an incorrect assumption and B) God has called us to keep on preaching the truth anyway.

So why won't they listen? Here are four reasons why it seems like our words fall on deaf ears, along with what we can do to improve our effectiveness.

Because of sin.

In 1 Corinthians 1:18 Paul called the way of the cross "*foolishness*" to those who have never put their faith in Christ. They just aren't going to understand the joy of following Christ and putting trust in His plan for our lives, our homes, and our nation until they grasp the magnitude of their sins and seek Him. We look at those who are so open to sin and wonder why they could believe such terrible lies. Here's what we have to remember: People don't have bad morals because they have bad beliefs. They have bad beliefs because they have bad morals.

You've probably noticed that facts mean little in arguments these days. We can present all the evidence in the world that homosexuality is wrong, God created the earth, or whatever else we're trying to prove, and it rarely changes any minds at all. Why? Because their hearts are hardened toward God. We have to start by getting them to come to grips with the concept of right and wrong and their own personal sins.

Because of our hypocrisy.

It's easy to just blame everything on the world, saying that the only reason they won't listen is because of their sins. While it's a major reason, it's often not the only reason, and we should never end a discussion without looking inwardly. While every person is ultimately responsible for his or her own decision, stumbling blocks will be responsible for the difficulty they cause others in finding God.

When we single out other people's sins and don't deal with our own, we show the world that we aren't serious about sin. Plenty of congregations are now having to make contingency plans for what they'll do if homosexuals ask to be married there or become members, all while cohabiting heterosexual couples are sometimes given a pass. What the world has to see is that we aren't against certain groups of people or certain sins, but rather that we're for what God teaches, which naturally places us against *all* sin.

When we are able to show people that we, too, sin and fall short of the glory of

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"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven..."
Matt. 5:43-45a



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God, we begin to relate to them. It's at that point that we can show them how much we hate our own sins and how Jesus can change the hardest heart and cleanse even the "chief of sinners."

Because we aren't listening.

So much of our focus and literature is still aimed at combating denominationalism. While there's a need for that to a certain extent, we aren't in the 1950s anymore. It's not likely that everyone we meet is in some so-called "Christian" religion or another and needs to be brought out of denominationalism. In fact, today most people don't seem to even recognize many of the terms we use. Instead, there are millions of adherents to today's religion of choice, Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (MTD), where it's our job to just "be good people" and God is someone we can believe in and turn to when we need Him, but otherwise isn't a part of our daily lives.

More Americans than ever are identifying themselves as "nones" when it comes to religious beliefs, meaning they aren't affiliated with churches at all. At least one out of every three millennials claims no religious affiliation. It's really difficult to convince people of the one true church when they don't see the need for any church at all. And, when they don't see the need for church or a daily relationship with God, then they aren't going to adhere to biblical moral standards – not because they simply don't know what it says.

What this should tell us is that we have to reach people where they are, not where they used to be or where we want them to be. It's an incredibly worn out cliché, but it's still true that people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. If we go at them throwing facts, figures, or Scriptures that mean nothing to them, it will tell them that we aren't interested in who they are or what they believe. We have to care enough to listen and build our message based on each individual.

Because we aren't showing them something better.

Of these four reasons, I know I can improve in each area but it's this one that I know I need to work on the most. So many of my discussions (and the discussions I've read between others) seem to leave people with the impression that beliefs are nothing more than an "I say tomato, you say to-mah-to" dis-

agreement of my preference vs. yours. But we are not arguing merely from human reason. We stand on the only hope mankind has. We have life-altering, eternity-changing truth. The more we hold up the beauty, the love, and the goodness of Jesus, the brighter His light will shine in this dark world.

It seems our goal has been to keep homosexuals from being able to claim that they are married in the eyes of the government. What they need isn't really to be kept from "marrying," what they need is for Jesus to guide them out of their sins and show them the truth about marriage and everything else. The biggest concern of the atheist's life isn't just that he doesn't believe God exists, but that He does not know what it means that Jesus died for Him. Our goal can't only be to make people live more moral lives. Our goal has to be introducing them to Jesus. We have to be able to take these discussions out of the arenas of politics, science, or wherever else the culture wants to pick a fight and bring them back to the foundational spiritual truth of God's Word – "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

We must glorify the name of Jesus every chance we get by living out His Word, loving people like He would, and crossing the lines that might make us uncomfortable to reach the souls who are in need. There is no guarantee that they will listen to us, but that doesn't mean we stop telling them what they need to hear with love in our hearts. It's our job to sow the seed and let God reach the hearts who are ready to grow, so let's focus on doing everything we can to get ourselves out of the way and let His message work.

Jack Wilkie (focuspress.org)

Pause before you post

I must admit it hurts me when someone takes aim at the church on social media. Headlines such as "This Is Why We Don't Attend Your Church Anymore," or "People Are Leaving the Church and It's the Church's Fault" seem to make the rounds on Facebook and her brethren.

It's not that I believe we are above criticism, it's not that we should never undergo careful, painful self-examination. Two things bother me about the social media critics, however; first,

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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

July 5 2 Kgs. 12-13; 2 Chr. 24

July 6 2 Kgs. 14; 2 Chr. 25

July 7 Jonah 1-4

July 8 2 Kgs. 15; 2 Chr. 26

July 9 Isaiah 1-4

July 10 Isaiah 5-8

July 11 Amos 1-5

July 12 Amos 6-9

"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)



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I wonder if they express their concerns as outsiders who simply like to be dismissive of others' hard work, or if they are insiders who love the kingdom and have expended heart and sweat, talents and time for its success. Second, I twist in discomfort because these "ecclesiastical analysts" have done it before the world. Paul fretted about this very thing when church members took each other to court, *"and that before unbelievers"* (1 Cor. 6:6).

Watching gleefully on social media are a savage crew of the ungodly, enemies of Christ, the skeptic and the cynic. Perhaps worse, reading these words will shake the faith of the weak, the struggling, young Christians trying to find their feet.

Timothy Dwight's song "I Love Thy Kingdom Lord" expresses it well: *"For her my tears shall fall, for her my prayers ascend; To her my cares and toils be given, till toils and cares shall end. Beyond my highest joy, I prize her heavenly ways; Her sweet communion, solemn vows, her hymns of love and praise."*

Someone will respond: "I have every right to criticize anyone and anything I want."

Obviously I am not in control of what the whole world puts on the Internet. But I would like to ask those of us who love the Lord's people to be thoughtful, compassionate and cautious when taking shots at the church. Often the only winner in all of this is Satan. Surely, I ask myself, that was not the writer's intent?

I love the church. I love her Lord. If the church is not perfect, well, that imperfection probably began with my own flaws. I can begin to improve the church right there, no cheap shots on Twitter needed! Let the enemies of the cross be the ones who take aim at the church. I urge those of us who love it to weep for the church, strive for its growth and provide solutions for its problems.

Anyone can demolish; it takes courage and skill to build.

"Show proper respect to everyone: love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king" (1 Pet. 2:17).

Stan Mitchell (forthright.net)

Celebrate

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

July Birthdays: Alphone Gressett (4), Jason Warman (6), Laura Huckaby (6), Chase Churchwell (11), Cindy Fuller (12), John Barnum (26), Jack Hill (27).

July Anniversaries: Allen & Karen Bland (27).

Mistakes? Left Out? Let Johnny know...



Records

	June 21, 2015	June 28, 2015
Bible Class	47	51
AM Worship	59	61
PM Worship	46	35
Wednesday PM	46	39
Contribution	\$2,183	\$1,928

Privileged To Serve

"...be ready to every good work" (Titus 3:1)

Next Week: 7/5/15		Next Week: 7/12/15		July 2015 Make Announcements: Don Smith Prepare Communion: Ken & Jo Maninger Clean Building: Johnny & Cindy McCaghren Keep Grounds: James Fuller August 2015 Make Announcements: Joe Dennis Prepare Communion: Randy & Laura Huckaby Clean Building: Dennis Family Keep Grounds: Tom Wilcox
Sunday AM:	Song Leader: Ken Maninger	Song Leader: James Fuller		
Greeters	Fuller Family	Mileen & Ashley Kahlich		
Opening Prayer	Joe Dennis	Don Smith		
Communion	James Thomas*, Tom Wilcox Gene Bannister, John Barnum	Ken Maninger*, Chase Churchwell Hank Wheeler, John Barnum		
Closing Prayer	Billy Chism	Randy Huckaby		
Attendance Cards	Caleb Dennis	Jaceton Evetts		
Sunday PM:	Song Leader: Ken Maninger	Song Leader: James Fuller		
Opening Prayer	Allen Griffith	Gene Bannister		
Scripture Reading	Don Smith	Tom Wilcox		
Communion	James Thomas	Ken Maninger		
Closing Prayer	Randy Huckaby	Allen Griffith		
Wednesday Devotionals:	July 8 Joe Dennis	July 15 Allen Griffith	July 22 Tom Wilcox	July 29 5th Wednesday Singing

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 July 5, 2015

Sunday Class Acts 8:39ff
 Wednesday Class Ezekiel 12:21ff

How Are We To Treat Our Enemies? (Mt. 5:43,44)

- I. Why is he my enemy?
- II. You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'
 - A. You shall love your neighbor. (Lev. 19:18)
 1. To love your neighbor was a law of God.
 2. "Neighbor" = "the children of your people" – the nation of Israel.
 - B. And hate your enemy.
 1. The Jews had drawn this conclusion.
 - a. They were not to seek the peace of the Canaanites (Ex. 34:11-16).
 - b. They had many wars at the command of God.
 - c. They had put into their hymns (ex. – Ps. 139:21,22).
 2. They supposed they were to love the fellow Israelite and to hate those who were not Israelites.
- III. But I say to you, love your enemies.
 - A. There are two kinds of love – both involve good-will toward all men.
 1. One is the approving of the conduct of another.
 2. The other is when we wish another person well – but do not approve of that person's conduct.
 - a. This is the love we have toward our enemies.
 - b. We love their soul – but not their conduct (Rom. 12:17,21,18,19).
 - B. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse (Rom 12:14).
 - C. If you love your enemies you do good to them that hate you (Phil. 2:3,4).
 - D. If you love your enemies you will pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you (44).
 - E. Neighbor takes a broader meaning in the NT – one near or in need.
 1. In this sense – a neighbor may be an enemy.
 2. In the Christian sense – Jesus used the Good Samaritan and includes the whole human race (Lk. 10:29-37; Gal. 6:10).
 - F. Biblical examples of this practice – David, Jesus, Stephen.
 - G. The power of love – a different outlook on life.
 1. Love is understanding – exemplified by David (2 Sam. 18:5,33).
 2. Love will keep me from doing harm to a neighbor (Rom. 13:10).
 3. Love will keep me from a life of bitterness and animosity (5:43,44).
 4. Love will cause me to go the second mile (Mt. 5:41).
- IV. Two reasons we should obey the preceding command.
 - A. That you may be sons of your Father in heaven (Mt. 5:45).
 - B. That we may not be like the tax collectors (Mt. 5:46,47).

John 8:1-30

The Woman Taken In Adultery (1-11)

A "floating text" – appearing at different places in ancient manuscripts.
²The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman...caught in adultery. A trap. Adultery was punishable by death (both people) if witnessed by 2 or more.
⁵Now in the Law Moses commanded us.... So what do you say?
⁶Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. What? Why?
⁷Be the first to throw a stone at her. One critical condition: him who is without sin.
¹⁰Has no one condemned you? ¹¹Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more. Jesus offered mercy, not permissiveness. He expected her to do better.

Jesus: The Light of the World (12-20)

After the "floating text" we continue from 7:52. Jesus is still in the temple.
¹²I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. Darkness = ignorance, state of being lost.
¹⁴Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true.
¹⁸I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me. Jesus and the Father are the two witnesses.
¹⁹You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.

Where I Am Going You Cannot Come (21-30)

²¹I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come.
²³You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. Jesus compares the physical and spiritual realms.
²⁴unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins. Not should or might.
 I am he = literally – "unless you believe that I AM" (Ex. 3:14).
²⁵Who are you? They again ask the question which the entire book asks.
²⁶he who sent me is true...I declare to the world what I have heard from him.
²⁸When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he.
Lifted up – The crucifixion, resurrection and all that is involved.
²⁹I always do the things that are pleasing to him." Jesus was obedient – doing things to please the Father.
³⁰many believed in him.