

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



December 19, 2021

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
Worship.....6:00 PM

Wednesday:

Ladies Bible Class N/A
Bible Study.....7:00 PM

Elders:

Gene Bannister..... Mike Bannister

Johnny McCaghren

Deacons:

John Barnum..... Don Smith

Preacher:

Johnny McCaghren

Works We Support:

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

How to Excel in Personal Evangelism

The churches of Christ in America are on a steady decline. Over the past three years, we have lost 225 congregations and 55,334 members. Those who seek RATIONALIZATION minimize our losses by pointing to similar declines among our denominational friends. Those who seek EXPLANATION (should we dare say excuses) cite increased distractions, entertainment, secularization, busyness, and muchness. While all of these things may be true, it does not change the numbers. The only way to address this crisis is by EVANGELIZATION! If churches of Christ are going to survive in America, we MUST return to our roots and once again train the saved to teach the lost.

Unfortunately, at least two generations have risen who know not evangelism. We have children who have grown up in homes and have never seen their parents conduct a personal Bible study. Remaining still is a generation who remembers a time when churches grew. Christians carried around a film projector in the trunk of their car and showed their family, friends, and neighbors the Jewell Miller Bible study series. We "were" the fastest-growing religious body in America. We excelled at soul winning! I believe those days can return if we train the saved. *"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also"* (2 Tim. 2:2). Here are four proven Biblical things we can do to help turn things around.

1. Invite people into our HOME: *"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ"* (Acts 5:42) Have we forgotten that our homes are a tool for bringing souls to Christ. The mat in front of too many Christian doors reads "Come Back Later" instead of "Welcome." Open homes equal open hearts. Our first century brethren had open homes. They were eating together, praying together, and studying together (Acts 2:46; 20:20). We have found that over 90% of those we engage in Bible study from our home obey the Gospel.

2. Extend Christian HOSPITALITY: I am afraid that this Christian attribute is almost lost in modern America. Hospitality is defined as "love of strangers." The Greek word is used in Hebrews 13:2, *"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."* All Christians are commanded to display hospitality, and elders are to be proven in this qualification (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8). Our hospitality to others should never be the reason behind their Gospel obedience, but the lack thereof could be the reason they don't obey.

3. When the lost sit in our homes, HEARKEN: Everyone wants to be heard. James said, *"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath"* (1:19). Spend a lot of time asking about their family, hobbies, past experiences, and things they enjoy. This is a time to find common ground and to develop friendship and trust. As you listen, take mental notes of things that may need to be emphasized during a study. Have they been divorced? Do they have any organized religious background? Do they have family who are devout in any particular religion?

4. When the lost say things for which we disagree, HESITATE: It is very IMPORTANT as you listen to never chase rabbits. This is not the time to refute, reprove, rebuke, or instruct, regardless of what is said. Remember, you are building a

(Continued on page 3)

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

Six Tools to Improve Your Prayer Life

Tool #1: Practice

It is comforting to know that prayer is a learned behavior (Luke 11:1). It is also comforting to know that nobody, save Jesus, is an expert at prayer (Luke 11:2-13). However, Scripture is clear that God expects people to pray (cf. Matt. 6:5; Col. 4:2; Luke 18:1; 1 Thess. 5:17). Thus, if it is something Christians are expected to do, getting in and actually doing it is important! A prayer does not have to be long or eloquent to be effective (Neh. 5:19; Matt. 6:7-8; Luke 18:9-14). Maturing in prayer life will find us developing the discipline of prayer so that we turn to God first in our lives when joys or sorrows or anything prevails (Jas. 5:13; 1 Pet. 5:6-7).

Tool #2: Pattern

Studying the prayer life of Jesus or some of the great heroes of faith like David, Nehemiah, Daniel, or Paul will help in gaining an understanding about the who, what, when, where, why, and how of prayer. Nehemiah, it seems, was skilled in seamlessly weaving prayers into his daily work and calling upon the Lord for His blessing in big and small challenges (Neh. 5:19). Praying while driving, cooking, working, and relaxing are great. So too, praying while withdrawing, reflecting, meditating, and worshipping are part of the pattern of spiritual people.

Tool #3: Posture

Sometimes the standard posture, “let us bow our heads and close our eyes” can be more of a hinderance than it can a help. When the body needs sleep, bowing can quickly become nodding! Sometimes when David prayed, he laid prostrate on the ground (2 Sam. 12:15-16). Some stood, some knelt, while others sat (Dan. 6:10; 1 Kings 19:4; Acts 20:6; Neh. 8:4-6). Jesus often looked up towards heaven (Mark 6:41). With prayer, it may not always be helpful to bow the head and close the eyes to keep the heart focused on petitioning the God of heaven. When praying privately, there is wisdom in considering these other prayer postures.

Tool #4: Planning

Jesus always had time and made time to pray, even when the busyness of life was pressing about Him. In fact, He would often retreat by Himself and spend time with His Father in prayer (Mark 1:35; 14:35; 5:16; 9:18). Daniel made a habit of praying three times a day, so much so, that his enemies knew his prayer life was a constant in his life (Dan. 6:10). For someone wanting to improve his/her prayer life: set an alarm on the phone or on the computer, retreat away from the daily grind, and plan to spend scheduled, meaningful time talking to Our Father in heaven.

Tool #5: Program

What do I pray for? I would pray, but I don’t know what to say! For folks like these, begin with the question Jesus asked blind Bartimaeus, “What do you want Me to do for you?” (Mark 10:51)? What pressing concerns can God address? What weights can God lighten? Bible reading and praying Scripture to God is a great program as well. When the heart is overwhelmed, happy and comforted is the person who can pray Psalm 61 back to God. As a practical note, “Echo” is a free prayer app that a person can list their personal prayer requests and the app will keep those for remembering throughout the day (See Tool #4).

Tool #6: Fasting

Fasting can help focus prayer in a powerful way (cf. Ex. 24:18; 2 Chr. 20:1-ff; Est. 4:16; Mat. 4:1; Acts 13:1-3). Fasting is stopping a daily function of life to devote all attention to petitioning God, attending to the things of God, doing all to the glory of God (see Matt 6:9-13; Jas. 4:8-10; 1 Cor. 10:31). Food is a basic need, however, so is prayer and feeding on the word of God (Matt. 4:1-4). When Christians abstain from food (or any regular activity) for the sole purpose of drawing nearer to God, it will help put a person’s priorities in perspective (cf. Lam. 3:24). Fasting is not so God gives more weight to those prayers, rather, prayers coupled with fasting will remind Christians who is ultimately in control.

Andy Baker (Christian Worker, Dec. 2021)

Television

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

Sunday @ 7:30am on KTAB

Life In The Light (Chris McCurley)

Sunday @ 10:00am 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

video.wvbs.org/access/interactive-bible-reading-plan/

Dec. 19 Obadiah; Proverbs 19

Dec. 20 Jonah; Proverbs 20

Dec. 21 Micah; Proverbs 21

Dec. 22 Nahum; Proverbs 22

Dec. 23 Habakkuk; Proverbs 23

Dec. 24 Zephaniah; Proverbs 24

Dec. 25 Haggai; Proverbs 25

Dec. 26 Zechariah 1-3; Proverbs 26

“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

- ◆ Last week **58** contacts were made.

Announcements

- ◆ As was announced last Sunday, due to continuing health issues and his inability to be engaged with the congregation, Billy Chism is no longer serving as an elder. We are extremely thankful to Billy for all of his years of service and leadership, and wish him the very best. He and Peggy are sorely missed. Billy enjoys visits. He is in room 27 at CARE, Inc.
- ◆ A big “Thank You” to the kids and their helpers who assembled and delivered the fruit baskets last week. You made several peoples day, and more!

Upcoming Events at 4th & Stewart

- ◆ March 13-16—**Spring Gospel Meeting** w/ Jon McCormack.

Upcoming Area Events

- ◆ Feb. 24-27—**Arise** (and evangelize) @ Southwest in Austin.
- ◆ Mar. 3-6—**PTP Spark** @ Round Rock. Info on bulletin board. If you would like to go, it is recommended that you sign up soon.

(Continued from page 1)

relationship. Furthermore, don't answer all their questions. I know this is a strange suggestion and may even seem rude. Believe me, it has taken a long time to understand the power of hesitation. If we truly respect the power of the Word, we must stop telling everyone what we think and how we FEEL and start SHOWING them the truth. The quicker we get someone into the Bible, the sooner God can begin working on their hearts. If someone says, “Why don't you use a piano in worship?” you need to say, “That is a great question, let me SHOW you!” This is an effective way to lead into a Bible study.

We literally have hundreds of thousands of untrained Christians in our pews. We still have enough soldiers to begin growing again. If a doctor found his patient hemorrhaging, he would act immediately to save his life. Congregations are hemorrhaging, and if we don't act now, we may need other countries to send missionaries here to reestablish the Lord's Church in America.

Rob Whitacre (Christian Worker, Dec. 2021)

Do We Love Others Enough to Serve Them?

Today's message from Scripture comes from two passages. First, 1 Corinthians 16:14 reads, “*Let all that you do be done with love.*” Second, Philippians 2:3-4 says, “*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*”

When we go about the activities of everyday living, these two passages should be the litmus test of how we as Christians respond to the Lord and to each other. The love of Christ dwelling in us is to be the prime motive of how we engage others, in what we say and do. Before we say or do anything, we should ask ourselves if it falls under the prime directive of the love of Christ. If this is true, then selfish ambitions and conceit will have no part in our living since we consider others as more important than ourselves and their interests important in our response to them. If we all responded this way to each other, then selfishness would evaporate, and everyone's needs would be met.

However, how often do we do this? Do we put our wants and desires first? Do we give little or no concern how our choices affect others? Do we want what we want to take priority over everyone and everything else? There is no question practicing what the foregoing passages teach can be inconvenient to what we may want, but what if Jesus considered responding to our spiritual needs as too inconvenient to fulfill? What if He had decided the glory of Heaven suited His desires more than becoming human and offering Himself on the cross for our sins? What if He became agitated at having to deal with our weaknesses and having people asking for His help? What if He had acted just like we sometimes do toward each other?

All Jesus did was done in love for us. He took the role of a slave and was crucified so our needs could be met. How do we respond to each other? Scripture needs to change us from the inside out. Do we love others enough to serve them? It's what Christ did and what He expects of us. Have you practiced 1 Corinthians 16:14 and Philippians 2:3-4 today?

Robert Johnson (Gospel Gazette Online, Dec. 2021)

Celebrate

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



Records

	Dec. 5, 2021	Dec. 12, 2021
Bible Class	42	35
AM Worship	47 + [8]	43 + [9]
PM Worship	40 + [6]	32 + [8]
Wednesday PM	28 + [3]	23 + [8]
Contribution	\$1,945	\$1,883

Privileged To Serve

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

	This Week: 12/19/21	Next Week: 12/26/21	December 2021 Make Announcements: Dex Dennard Prepare Communion: Fuller Clean Building: McCaghren January 2022 Make Announcements: John Barnum Prepare Communion: Huckaby Clean Building: Dennard / Settles	
Sunday AM:	Song Leader: James Fuller	Song Leader: Ken Maninger		
Greeters	_____	_____		
Opening Prayer	Ken Maninger	Tom Wilcox		
Communion	Dex Dennard*; Kyle Duaine Daniel Edwards, Tom Wilcox	Don Smith, Ryan Settles Chase Churchwell, Coyce Reed		
Closing Prayer	Randy Huckaby	Rafe Smith		
Attendance Cards	_____	_____		
Sunday PM:	Song Leader: James Fuller	Song Leader: Ken Maninger		
Opening Prayer	John Barnum	Randy Huckaby		
Scripture Reading	_____	_____		
Communion	Dex Dennard	Don Smith		
Closing Prayer	Don Smith	John Barnum		
Wednesday Devotionals:	December 22 Don Smith	December 29 5 th Wednesday Video	January 5 Prayer Night	January 12 James Fuller

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 December 19, 2021

Sunday Class 2 Corinthians 2:8
Wed. Class How to Read the Book: Paragraphs

Mistakes of a Successful Businessman (Luke 12:13-21)

We live in a world that emphasizes the material. Surrounded by this emphasis, we can easily lose sight of true values, as did the rich man in Luke 12:13-21. One day, as Jesus was teaching, a man interrupted Him: "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me" (13). Jesus asked him, "Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?" (14). Looking into the man's heart, Jesus located his problem. He said to him, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses" (15). He then spoke a parable: The Parable of the Rich Fool (16-20). He concluded His lesson by saying, "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (21).

By most standards, this man was a success. Nevertheless, he made several mistakes that damned his soul.

I. Mistake #1 – He Lacked a Sense of Values.

- 1 Timothy 6:9-10.
- The rich man was preoccupied with his possessions.
- The rich man put his trust in that which was temporary.

II. Mistake #2 – He Was Selfish.

- The rich man failed to realize that he already had "barns" into which he could put his surplus: the hands of the suffering, the mouths of the hungry, the backs of the cold, the lives of widows and orphans, etc.
- The rich man thought that his possessions were his, to do with as he desired.

III. Mistake #3 – He Thought He Could Provide for His Soul With Material Things.

- He said, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry" (19).
- 1 Timothy 6:6-8.

IV. Mistake #4 – He Thought He Had a Lease on Life.

- He thought he had "many goods laid up for many years" (19); but God said to him, "This very night your soul will be required of you" (20).
- James 4:13-15.
- We avoid thinking about death, but it is unavoidable, and it can come – and often does – unexpectedly.

While such a man would be praised by men in his death as a great success, the Lord's epitaph for him was, in effect, "Here lies a fool!"

Teaching on Watchfulness and on Impending Tragedy (Lk. 12:35-59)

I. Teaching on Watchfulness (Lk. 12:35-48).

- "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (40).
- The Parable of the Waiting Servants (36-38).
 - "Let your waist be girded..." [Be dressed in readiness, NASB] (35a).
 - "...and your lamps burning" (35b).
 - Once the Master of this parable does come home, there is an odd reversal of roles: "He [the master] will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them" (37b; see Lk. 22:27; Jn. 13:1-17).

C. The Parable of the Thief in the Night (39-40).

D. The Parable of the Wise Steward (42-46).

- Peter asked, "Lord, do You speak this parable only to us, or to all people?" (41).
- Jesus answers by speaking about responsibility.

E. The Parable of the Knowledgeable and Ignorant Servants (47-48). Privilege brings responsibility.

II. Teaching on Impending Tragedy (Lk. 12:49-59).

A. Warning: Trouble is Coming (12:49-53).

- "I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished!"
- Luke 12:51-53 = Matthew 10:34-36.
- The cost for Jesus will be Calvary and all it entails: alienation from the Father, becoming sin for us, rejection by His own people, physical torture, public abuse, etc.
- The cost to the world is both *fire* and *division*.
 - This *fire* almost certainly refers to judgment, but can also include cleansing. That which is not burned by the fire will be purged by it.
 - Jesus will cause *division* within even the most intimate relationships.

B. Warning on Interpreting the Signs of the Times (12:54-59).

- Luke 12:54-56 = Matthew 6:2-3.
- Luke 12:57-59 = Matthew 5:25-26.