

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



January 30, 2022

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

The Way to a Man's Heart

I am sure most have heard the old saying, "A way to a man's heart is through his stomach." This is usually repeated in the context of the method in which a woman can attract a man. In many cases, this saying may be true physically speaking. However, Jesus spoke about the true way to a man's spiritual heart and that is through his ears. Matthew 13 records this truth in a convincing way. The Parable of the Sower (Mt. 13:1-23; Mk. 4:1-20; Lk. 8:4-15) helps us to understand the importance of hearing and shows what and how we hear affects our spiritual make-up. The Parable of the Sower was so named by Jesus Himself (Mt. 13:18) and is one of two parables that Jesus interpreted for us (the other was the Parable of the Tares, Mt. 13:24-30; 36-43). What can we learn from the Parable of the Sower?

The Seed

The seed is clearly the Word of God (Lk. 8:11). "Seed" is often used to describe the Word of God on many occasions (1 Pet. 1:23; 1 Jn. 3:9; 1 Cor. 3:6-7). Why is this comparison used? Firstly, seed is alive and has great potential, just like God's Word. God's Word is living (1 Pet. 1:23; Heb. 4:12), is powerful (Rom. 1:16) and produces fruit. It wins souls to Christ (Rom. 1:13), produces the fruit of holiness for those who apply it (Rom. 6:22), produces the fruit of Christian character (Gal. 5:22-23) and produces the fruit of good works (Col. 1:10). Like seed, the Word of God must be planted in the right heart, cultivated, nurtured and protected in order to produce what God expects. One thing is certain, though; God's Word always does what He intends (Isa. 55:10-11).

The Sower

A sower, one who sows the Word of God, is a partner with God. The one who sows is not the one who causes the seed to grow and increase (1 Cor. 3:6), but he is an aid, a partner, in the process (Jn. 4:35-38). We are partners with the greatest One ever known (1 Cor. 3:9). When we sow Christ's Seed, we are joint heirs together with Him (Rom. 8:17). A sower is also patient. "*Behold the farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains*" (Jas. 5:7). We must not get ahead of the process and attempt to harvest too quickly. "*...First the blade, then the ear, after that, the full corn in the ear*" (Mk. 4:28b). Sadly, some sow everything but the Word of God. Some sow to the flesh (Gal. 6:7-8), while others sow discord (Pr. 6:19). However, the faithful understand the mission clearly; sow the Seed!

The Soils

The soils in this wonderful parable represent the human heart. In this teaching, Jesus showed the four types of hearts in which the Seed is sown. There is **the surface soil**, "*...some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up*" (Mt. 13:4b; 19). Foot paths were common in Palestine when Jesus said these words. This "wayside" soil did not permit the seed to ever germinate. This is reminiscent of those who hear the Word of God but do not understand it. For someone to give mental ascent to the Word is vastly different from

(Continued on page 3)

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

Three Things the Churches of Christ Do Well

If you've read focuspress.org for any amount of time, you know I am not one given to constant back-patting of ourselves. If anything, I typically go in the other direction in a desire to push us forward and "excel still more." Still, there are times when it does us good to remember why we do what we do, and that God is pleased when we do right.

As both a minister and a writer it's a big part of my work to read broadly, both staying up on modern ideas and learning those found in church history. In reading more recent books, it's struck me just how well we in the churches of Christ have done to side-step some of the pitfalls that the denominational world can struggle to navigate.

Here are three examples that have come up in my recent reading.

We emphasize participation vs. passivity.

As churches who practice congregational singing and Biblical preaching (see below), if you attend there is an expectation you will engage and participate. Each one typically has their songbook open to participate in the worship of song, and their Bible open to follow along with the preaching.

Where worship in song is performed by a band, there is often no expectation that each attendee would join in by singing. You go to take in the worship they put on. I've argued before that we could do far better in availing ourselves of "what every joint supplies," but the emphasis on every one of us coming together in one voice to glorify God (Romans 15:6) is one area in which we do well.

We emphasize worship rather than entertainment.

Closely related to the previous point, we tend to avoid framing worship as entertainment. More and more commonly, worship becomes something to experience rather than something to offer. A great deal of expertise is applied in creating a setting musically and visually to produce a "worship high" in the audience. Rather than coming to pour out a heart already full of praise, adoration,

and thanks to God, the expectation is that they come to be filled up.

You can see the issue here – experience puts the human at the center of worship and makes us the intended target of it, rather than placing God at the center and making Him the recipient. Churches of Christ do well to bring the spirit of the psalmists into our worship, with each member "entering His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise" (Psalm 100:4).

We emphasize Biblical preaching.

This is not a broad swipe to say "everybody who isn't among us never opens the Bible," nor an insistence that every building with "church of Christ" on the door faithfully bases their sermons in the Bible. However, among our fellowship there's typically an expectation that sermons will be Biblically centered.

Whether by expository, verse-by-verse preaching or lessons filled with B/C/V references (though I recommend the former), most congregations expect their preacher to show them what the Book says and make it the foundation of each week's lesson. This is often not the case in other groups. Even among themselves many of the denominations decry the commonplace practice of slapping a verse or two onto a feel-good motivational speech.

Our people's insistence on food from the Bible, along with elderships' watchful expectation of sound teaching, and preachers trained in the practice of starting with the Bible, leads to an expectation that when you worship with one of our congregations, you're going to hear what God has to say. We aim to build the lesson around the Bible rather than building Bible verses around the lesson, and for that the churches of Christ should be commended.

There will always be room for improvement, and it's never a good idea to rest on our laurels and become proud of ourselves. We are merely humble servants, striving to do what is right. At the same time, it's good to remember that the right is, in fact, right. May we stand firm on that which we do well, and continue to excel still more.

Jack Wilkie (focuspress.org, Jan. 24, 2022)

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/

Jan. 30	Luke 23-24; Psalm 30 (video)
Jan. 31	John 1-2; Psalm 31 (video)
Feb. 1	John 3-4; Psalm 32 (video)
Feb. 2	John 5-6; Psalm 33 (video)
Feb. 3	John 7-8; Psalm 34
Feb. 4	John 9-10; Psalm 35
Feb. 5	John 11-12; Psalm 36
Feb. 6	John 13-14; Psalm 37 (video)

"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 **32** contacts were made.

Announcements

- ◆ There will be **no afternoon service at CARE** until further notice.
- ◆ A big **“thank you”** to **Ryan Smithey** and **Dex Dennard** for filling in for Johnny today.
- ◆ Thank you also to **Justin Hopkins** for giving us an update Wednesday evening on the work he and his family are involved in. It is a great work.
- ◆ Please continue to use precautions with the high Covid numbers.

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.
- ◆ Apr. 3-6—**Gospel Meeting @ Hamilton** w/ Kerry Clark.
- ◆ Apr. 30-May 5—**Focal Point** in San Marcos.

(Continued from page 1)

understanding that Truth. Until the fallow ground of a person's heart is cultivated, seeking the Lord will never happen (cf. Hos. 10:12). There is **the stony soil**, “*Some fell upon the stony places...*” (Mt. 13:5a; 20-21). The soil in and around Palestine was often undergirded by a thick layer of limestone. The soil on top was not deep enough to really support the “root” system of a seed once it started to grow. Without a deep and abiding root system, a germinated seed will quickly perish. The stony soil is seen in the person who quickly obeys the Gospel, but his or her faith never becomes rooted and grounded. This is often more of a purely “emotional” obedience rather than a deep and abiding conviction in the truth of God's message. Sadly, it sometimes takes very little to stop the growth of this type of heart.

There is **the stuffed-out soil**. “*And some fell among thorns and the thorns sprung up and choked them*” (Mt. 13:7; 22). The amazing thing about thorns is that they do not really need to be planted and tended for them to flourish. Those who have garden experience know this truth all too well. Weeds and thorns need almost nothing to grow and choke out our choice plants. This heart is the one who obeys the Gospel, but then as the cares and obligations of this world take root, the Seed, which is God's Word, has little room to mature. Quite possibly this is the most popular soil in the church today. It is not that these hearts are not sincere, but it is just that they are too busy, too tired and too distracted to really serve the Lord as they should. Yet, thankfully, there is **the superior soil**; “*But other fell among good ground, and brought forth fruit...*” (Mt. 13:8; 23). This heart receives the Word (Mk. 4:20) (unlike the surface soil), understands the Word (Mt. 13:23), (unlike the stony soil) and holds fast to that which he or she heard (Lk. 8:15) (unlike the stuffed-out soil). These characteristics all culminate into fruitfulness!

The lessons in the Parable of the Sower are many. A couple take-aways for us to remember are: (1) Satan knows the power and the potential of God's Word and will attempt to snatch that Word out of the human heart any opportunity he has to do so. (2) Sowers must understand that not everyone who hears the Word of God will respond as we hope. (3) Sobriety in hearing is essential to all of us. The way to a man's heart is truly through his ears; “*Take care then how you hear...*” (Lk. 8:18a).

Rodney Nulph (Gospel Gazette Online, Jan. 2022)

Celebrate

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



Records

	Jan. 16, 2022	Jan. 23, 2022
Bible Class	29	31
AM Worship	30 + [13]	38 + [16]
PM Worship	31 + [10]	36 + [10]
Wednesday PM	25 + [5]	29 + [6]
Contribution	\$2.227	\$1,875

Privileged To Serve

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

	This Week: 1/30/22	Next Week: 2/6/22	January 2022 Make Announcements: John Barnum Prepare Communion: Huckaby Clean Building: Dennard / Settles February 2022 Make Announcements: James Fuller Prepare Communion: Maninger Clean Building: Huckaby	
Sunday AM:	Song Leader: Mike Bannister	Song Leader: Mike Bannister		
Greeters	_____	_____		
Opening Prayer	Don Smith	James Fuller		
Communion	Randy Huckaby, James Fuller Dex Dennard, John Barnum	Don Smith, Coyce Reed Chase Churchwell, Dex Dennard		
Closing Prayer	Rafe Smith	Randy Huckaby		
Attendance Cards	_____	_____		
Sunday PM:	Song Leader: Tom Wilcox	Song Leader: Ken Maninger		
Opening Prayer	Ken Maninger	Tom Wilcox		
Scripture Reading	_____	_____		
Communion	Randy Huckaby	Don Smith		
Closing Prayer	Chase Churchwell	John Barnum		
Wednesday Devotionals:	February 2 Don Smith	February 9 Prayer Night	February 16 John Barnum	February 23 Don Smith

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)

<i>Studies for the week of January 30, 2022</i>	<i>Sunday Class</i> Ryan Smithey <i>Wed. Class</i> TBD
<h3>Thank You</h3> <p>It's an interesting fact that the Masai tribe in West Africa has an unusual way of saying, "I thank you." They say literally, "My head is in the dirt." When the Masai express thanks, they literally put their forehead down on the ground. They want to acknowledge gratitude with humility. It is also interesting that members of another African tribe express gratitude by saying, "I sit on the ground before you." When one of them wants to express gratitude to another, he sits in front of the hut of the person to whom he wishes to express gratitude and just sits there in humility for an extended length of time. (Joel Gregory, "The Unlikely Thanker," <i>Preaching Today</i>, Tape No. 110).</p> <p>How do we show our appreciation to those we want to thank? Maybe the best way is by just saying, "Thank you." Thank you is an expression that seems to be rarely spoken today. Yet, next to "I love you," they may be some of the most powerful and thoughtful words we say to one another.</p> <p>The Bible is full of examples of the thankful attitude that we as Christians are to have daily. The following list is just a sample of what the Bible teaches about giving thanks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Thess. 5:18, "In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." • Col. 1:12, "Giving thanks to the Father who has quali- 	<p><i>fied us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Chron. 16:8, "Oh, give thanks to the Lord! Call upon His name; Make known His deeds among the peoples!" • 2 Cor. 1:11, "You also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many." • Eph. 1:16, "Do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers." • Eph. 5:4, "Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks." • Eph. 5:20, "Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." • Col. 3:17, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." • 1 Thess. 1:2, "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers." <p>As we think about giving thanks around the holiday of Thanksgiving, may we be reminded that the Bible tells us as Christians to have the attitude of gratitude every day.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Mark T. Tonkery (Gospel Gazette Online, Jan. 2022)</i></p>