

University Heights Messenger

Volume 3--Number 21

November 6, 2011

GOSPEL PLAN OF SALVATION

- Hear the gospel (Romans 10:17)
- Believe Jesus is the Christ (John 3:16)
- Repent from sins (Luke 13:3)
- Confess faith in Jesus (Romans 10:19)
- Be baptized for remission of sins (Acts 2:38)
- Live worthy of the calling (Ephesians 4:1)

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Recent Additions:

Taylor Osterling (surgery in new year), **Wayde Miller** (recovering from successful surgery)

Bennie Poynter (pneumonia), **Jackie Litmer** (induction tomorrow morning at 5, if Hannah has not arrived yet), **CJ Nash** (the extremely premature baby of Brian and Alyse)

List:

Our members: Jeff Howerton, Glenn Kimberlin

Others: Edith Tirey, Glen Davis, Charlene Antle, Lala Whitson, Tom Curtis, Rita Pagan, Robin Miller, Vina Krassow, Courtney and Aubrey Reeves, John Bennett, Dennis Brennan, Robert and Sarah Brundige, Donald Dawson, Jean Gartland, Gail Stein, Michael Poynter

Reminder: If you wish to have someone added to the prayer list please submit his or her name and condition to me *in writing*. Thanks.

WEEKLY READING

Sun: Isa 29-30, Ps 90, Acts 14
Mon: Isa 31-33, Ps 91, Acts 15
Tue: Isa 34-36, Ps 92, Acts 16
Wed: Isa 37-38, Ps 93, Acts 17
Thu: Isa 39-41, Ps 94, Acts 18
Fri: Isa 42-43, Ps 95, Acts 19
Sat: Isa 44-45, Ps 96, Acts 20

LEADERSHIP

ELDERS

Garry Banks
David Collins
John Thompson

DEACONS

Troy Antle
Richard Brundige
Neal Erickson
Adam Litmer

EVANGELIST

Adam Litmer

Bill Morelan
Jim Parsons
Pat Seabolt
Matt Thompson

SERVICES

Sunday

Bible Study: 9:45 AM
Worship: 10:45 AM; 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Study: 7:30 PM

1st Fri. of Month

Singing: 7:30 PM

3rd Fri. of Month

Bible Study: 7:00 PM

(Ask for location)

There's A Lesson Here...

Organizations prone to being sued, such as health care institutions, learned several years ago that they could reduce the likelihood of lawsuits if they could manage the risk inherent in the performance of their business. Such organizations put into place mechanisms whereby a designated risk manager would be alerted, early on, about any situation likely to develop into litigation against the organization. The theory behind risk management is that with advance warning and proper collection of information, an organization can head off a lawsuit or greatly reduce the impact should a lawsuit not be avoided.

Life is fraught with risk. Accidents happen all the time and simply cannot always be avoided. However, while risk cannot be eliminated from life, we can live in ways that significantly reduce the risk. One can have an automobile accident while driving to work, but if one doesn't speed, run red lights, fail to stop at stop signs, etc.; one has kept risk to a minimum.

Not only is life risky in a physical sense, it is even more risky in a spiritual sense. Sin is what makes life a spiritually risky business. None of us totally avoids sin. Romans 3:23 says, "*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*" Living a sinful life is equivalent to engaging in daredevil, foolhardy, hazardous, rash, and reckless behavior. Sin has consequences as noted in Romans 6:23: "*For the wages of sin is death....*" Failing to recognize the spiritual risk associated with sinful living is as foolhardy as anything could possibly be. 1 John 1:8 says, "*If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*"

"*But thanks be to God*" we can do more than simply manage the risk of eternal death that accompanies sin, we can eliminate that risk. The caution against deceiving ourselves by saying we have no sin is sandwiched between some very comforting verses. "*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin... If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" (1 John 1:7,9) Sometimes we believe ourselves to be powerless in

**There will be an
elders/deacons meeting
this afternoon.**

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the face of temptation, but 1 Corinthians 10:13 gives us confidence that we can, and must, triumphantly overcome sin. “*No temptation has overtaken you that is not **common to man**. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.*”

Successful Christians are those who daily manage, and even eliminate, spiritual risk in their lives. They constantly increase their knowledge of God’s will through study of His word. Upon recognition of sin in their lives they seek, through confession and prayer, the cleansing blood of Jesus. They are continually humbled by the love of God for a sinful world. “*There is therefore **now no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus.*” (Romans 8:1) “*But **thanks** be to **God**, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (1 Corinthians 15:57) “*Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!*” (2 Corinthians 9:15)

The Elders

Excusing Sin

It seems to me that people seek to dodge responsibility for their sinful behavior more every day by making excuses for it. Not long ago I heard one of the foremost television personalities on behavior essentially excuse the sinful actions of a young adult by outlining a laundry list of people he concluded were responsible for his personal choices. He listed parents, grandparents, teachers, friends, and church members, indicating that it was his learned opinion that their failures all contributed to the actions of the young man under scrutiny. However, he never once mentioned the personal responsibility of that young man himself. I came away half convinced that he thought the young man was simply a robot with no will to choose but only an operating system preprogrammed to take certain actions.

Of course, there is no question that a person is *influenced* by a great many factors. Sinful parents or other family members, ungodly friends, immoral teachers, and hypocritical church members can all negatively influence a person, young or old. Things seen in movies, television shows, on the web, in books and magazines, and heard on the radio all have an influencing agent to them. Yet as true as all this is the apostle Paul through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit said, “*So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil*” (2 Corinthians 5:9-10). It is very true that those who tempt others to sin through their own ungodly influences will have to answer for it (Matthew 18:7). Yet when I stand before the judgment seat of Christ it will not be to discuss the influences that surrounded me in my life. Rather, I will be asked about *my* actions alone.

That tends to make we humans uncomfortable, doesn’t it? It not only hints at personal responsibility, it demands that we embrace it. From time to time we find that it makes

members of the church uncomfortable as well. Excuses sometimes come out in an effort to dodge or lessen the guilt of sins. Let’s consider a couple of them for the remainder of this article.

“Everyone else around me was doing it. It’s not like I was the only one.” Consider the prophet Elijah. “*So Ahab sent to all the people of Israel and gathered the prophets at Mount Carmel. And Elijah came near to all the people and said, ‘How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.’ And the people did not answer him a word. Then Elijah said to the people, ‘I, even I only, am left a prophet of the Lord, but Baal’s prophets are 450 men.’*” (1 Kings 18:20-22). God did not have much of a gathering on Mount Carmel that day. Elijah stood against the prophets of Baal, outnumbered 450-1, receiving no encouragement from an indecisive nation, and in the presence of a very hostile king. I suppose if a person were ever in an “excusable” position to switch from God’s team to another it would have been Elijah. After all, everyone else was doing it. It’s not like he would have been the only one, right? So what? The prophets of Baal were sinning, the nation was sinning, and Ahab was sinning. Joining that team would have made Elijah a sinner regardless of how many were doing it.

“I’m only human, after all.” We all are, aren’t we? I often wonder what this statement is *really* supposed to mean? Does it mean that, as a human, I have faced moments of temptation and been overcome by them? If so than every person who has ever lived (save Christ) would have to agree with it, including the inspired apostles (Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8-10). Does it mean that because I am a human *I have no choice but to sin* and should be excused on the basis of my humanity? Now we have a problem. In the above reference John reminds us that we have all sinned at some point. Yet chapter 2 begins with the statement, “*My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.*” In 3:4 he says, “*No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.*” John knew as well as we do that our own weaknesses cause us to stumble from time to time. He also knew that the God *who made us* made it possible for us to *choose* not to sin. If the fact of my humanity is sufficient to excuse my sin than what charge am I laying at the feet of the One who made me human?

The truth is that there is no excusing personal sin. So let’s not try. Rather let us have the faith, courage, and humility to repent of sin in our life when we find it there. In that direction rests forgiveness and salvation. AL

Sermons: AM (Judas—3) PM (A Child Of Christ)
Scripture Reading : AM (Matthew 13:24-35) PM (Matthew 13:36-46)