

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 10:9-10)
- Be baptized for remission of sins (Acts 2:38)
- Live worthy of the calling (Ephesians 4:1)

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

List: New: Let us remember Adam Daniels and his family after the passing of his uncle. Our members: Jeff Howerton, Paul Atkisson

Others: Mamie Dart, Casey Sparrow, Hope Vinogradov, Barabara Matheny, David Morrow, Debbie Parker, Vina Krassow, John Bennett, Robert and Sarah Brundige, Donald Dawson, Gail Stein, Sandy Childress, Susie Burton, Jacob Profit, Valarie and Barry Boyd, Leroy Weatherholt, Wilma Lawson, Janett Brundige’s mother and stepfather, Diane Whitehead, Tony Tyree, Sandy Driver, Autumn Fox, Beth Erickson, Dan Byers

WEEKLY READING		LEADERSHIP		SERVICES
Mon	1 Samuel 26-27, 1 Chronicles 8, Acts 18	ELDERS	DEACONS	Sunday
Tue	1 Samuel 28-29, 1 Chronicles 9, Acts 19	Garry Banks	Troy Antle	Bible Study: 9:45 AM
Wed	1 Samuel 30-31, 1 Chronicles 10, Acts 20	David Collins	Richard Brundige	Worship: 10:45 AM; 6:00 PM
Thu	2 Samuel 1-2, 1 Chronicles 11, Acts 21, Psalm 96, 106	John Thompson	Matt Thompson	Wednesday
Fri	2 Samuel 3-5, 1 Chronicles 12, Acts 22, Psalm 122	Adam Litmer	Adam Litmer	Bible Study: 7:30 PM
		EVANGELIST	Bill Morelan	1st Fri. of Month
			Jim Parsons	Singing: 7:30 PM
			Pat Seabolt	3rd Fri. of Month
			Adam Daniels	Bible Study: 7:00 PM
			Jamie Powell	(Finished for the time being)

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Still Pretending?

If you were a book how would you be classified? Would you be considered a work of fiction, or a work of non-fiction? Perhaps a less confusing way to make the point of this article is this: are you really who you present yourself to be, or are you continuing to pretend to be someone else just like you did as a youngster? If you are still pretending, you are little more than a fictional, make-believe, character.

There will be a meeting today at 5 for those who would like to help plan our “meet and greet” on the campus this year. We’ll be meeting in the large classroom upstairs.

When children pretend it is considered to be normal and natural. Many sociologists and teachers see childhood pretending to be essential to normal development and the toy industry succeeds mightily by exploiting the child’s inclination to pretend. But adults are expected to grow up, cease pretending, and deal in reality. But too many Christians continue to pretend. They pretend to be more religious than they really are when it is advantageous, and they pretend to be worldlier than they really are when compromise is convenient.

Suppose Jesus was nothing more than a pretender. For centuries Israel had been looking for an earthly king to restore their former glory. Jesus could have come pretending to be that king. He could have spoken and dressed like an earthly king; he could have sought a following like an earthly king; and he could have treated others like an earthly king. People desperately wanted him for their king, but perceiving “then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.” (John 6:15) Jesus went to his death never having pretended to be anything other than the Son of God, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He told Pilate shortly before he was led away to be crucified, “My kingdom is not of this world.” Where would we be if Jesus had been only a pretender?

Suppose Paul had pretended to be someone other than an apostle and servant of the Christ. One can only wonder how far in Jewish society he would have risen had he combined his Hebrew heritage and his Pharisaic training with well-honed oratorical skills. But he renounced his heritage, considering it as refuse, and he wrote “And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus

Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:1-5) Aren’t you glad that Paul never tried to deceive you by pretending to be the one you should follow rather than the Savior?

Adult pretense is deceptive, dishonest, immature, and hypocritical. Childhood pretending should not produce well-trained adult pretenders. Rather, childhood pretense should train the adult imagination to strive for excellence. If you can imagine something, you have a much better chance of achieving it. So, let’s all imagine ourselves being righteous, godly people and let us do the work necessary to make that imagination real, rather than pretending to be some fictional character that gains the acceptance of the world. The Elders

“The People Around You Should Celebrate Who You Are.”

If one were to anthropomorphize our current culture and give it a t-shirt I have no doubt that the title of this article would be emblazoned across it in big, bright letters. The statement is part of a slightly larger one from Joel Osteen. On the 20th Mr. Osteen sent out the following tweet: “Don’t waste time with people who don’t appreciate what you have to offer. The people around you should celebrate who you are.”

Such sentiments as those expressed in his statement are very popular in our current culture and, as you might expect, were received with great enthusiasm by the majority of those who read them. Let’s consider these sentiments for a few minutes.

If the statement were to refer to New Testament Christians, there would be much to commend in Mr. Osteen’s sentiments. No one has more to offer than saints loyal and committed to Jesus Christ. Of all people, faithful disciples are the one’s spoken of as the salt of the earth, lights unto the world, and cities set on hills (Matthew 5:13-16). The people around faithful saints *should* celebrate them and strive to emulate them, not because of any inherent worth in the saint, but because the saint imitates God (Ephesians 5:1). There even *does* come a time when saints are called upon to distance themselves from those wholly committed to unrighteousness and evil (Matthew 7:6).

Unfortunately, not being a New Testament Christian himself, Mr. Osteen is not speaking of New Testament Christians. This makes his sentiments not just mistaken, but damning to the one who accepts them while living in sin. Mr. Osteen’s sentiments champion the two most spiritually destructive attributes in existence—selfishness and pride.

In stark contrast to Mr. Osteen’s comments, hear the words of the inspired apostle Paul from 2 Corinthians 10:3-6. “*For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have*

divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.” Sinners must be changed, never accommodated. Nothing in sin is praiseworthy, laudable, or deserving of appreciation. The man or woman living in *any* sin is lost and must be informed of their state to know a change needs to be made. They may not agree with it, and may become angry upon hearing it, but they *must* hear it.

Sin does not go away nor does it become acceptable to God by man ignoring it, accepting it, or even celebrating it (Romans 1:32). Woe’s are still upon those who try to champion as wholesome and upright those things God has called sinful (Isaiah 5:20). Should we discover that one among us is living in sin the very last thing we should do is celebrate them. Paul, in Galatians 6:1, said, “*Brother’s, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourselves, lest you too be tempted.*” A person, a *saint*, can be caught in a transgression and need restoring. They do not need accommodating and they especially do not need celebrating. They need *restoring*!

But what of us? Have there been times when a well-meaning brother or sister approached us to point out a potential sin in our lives and were met with a glare? Have we avoided them after the incident? Have we begun to view them in a negative light, desperately seeking some flaw in them so we can pounce with a triumphant “Aha”! Do we harbor a grudge against them, bitter and angry that they would dare approach us about a potential transgression? We could wish that no Christian ever acted this way toward a concerned brother or sister yet we have all likely seen it more times than we can count.

Most of the time brethren are not happy to observe sins in one another. It is unpleasant and painful. It is only love manifesting itself in concern that leads to what is often an uncomfortable and emotional approach. God help us to be mature enough to recognize such efforts at restoration as the acts of love they are and never bear a grudge against the one so selflessly concerned for our soul.

By the way, aren’t you glad that Jesus Christ chose not to live His life based on the sentiments expressed by Mr. Osteen? We’d not be saved if He did. Think about these things. Adam Litmer

Sermons: (AM) The walk of sin (Ephesians 2:1-3, 11-12)

(PM) Biblical evangelism: What it is and what it isn’t

Reading: (AM) Psalm 38:12-22

(PM) Psalm 39

The Blog: The blog will be updated tomorrow morning.