

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:

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, Erlene Young, Lisa Powell’s father

WEEKLY READING		LEADERSHIP		SERVICES
Mon	1 Chronicles 22-25, Romans 5, Psalm 78	ELDERS	DEACONS	Sunday
Tue	1 Kings 1, 1 Chronicles 26-28, Romans 6	Garry Banks	Troy Antle	Bible Study: 9:45 AM
Wed	1 Kings 2, 1 Chronicles 29, Romans 7	David Collins	Richard Brundige	Worship: 10:45 AM; 6:00 PM
Thu	1 Kings 3, 2 Chronicles 1, Romans 8, Psalm 42	John Thompson	Matt Thompson	Wednesday
Fri	1 Kings 4, Proverbs 1-2, Romans 9, Psalm 43	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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Draw Near To God

James 4:8 says “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.”

In the midst of listing the numerous laws contained in the Law of Moses, Deuteronomy 26:15 says, “Look down from your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless your people Israel and the ground that you have given us, as you swore to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.” Heaven is the holy habitation of God. Solomon, when he dedicated the temple, in 1 Kings 8:30 said, “And listen to the plea of your servant and of your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. And listen in heaven your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.” Heaven is God’s dwelling place. Cautioning his readers regarding their speech, the preacher in Ecclesiastes 5:2 wrote, “Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few.”

God dwells in heaven. That is where He is. If we would draw near to Him, then we must have heaven as our goal and be ever striving to get there. All of our time, energy, and our physical resources should be mere tools that help us on the road to heaven. That statement is not made to teach us that we should turn over all of our assets to some sort of central treasury. But it is stated to teach that we will have difficulty drawing near to God in heaven if we hold back from a total commitment to Him.

How do we draw near to God in heaven? We draw near to God through prayer. When Jesus taught his disciples to pray in Matthew 6:9 He began, “Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.” Jesus knew where God, the Father, was and where prayer should be directed. If our prayers are to be an avenue whereby we draw near to God, then we need to direct those prayers to God in heaven. In Psalm 18:6, having been rescued by God from the hand of Saul, David wrote, “In my distress I called upon the LORD; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears.” 1 Peter 3:12 shows how receptive God is to the prayers of the righteous. “For the eyes of the Lord are on the

The next “meet and greet” planning session is scheduled for August 3 at 4:45.

*righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”*

In Jeremiah 29, God sent a letter to the exiles in Babylon instructing them to be good citizens of whatever city they found themselves in during the exile. They were to build houses, rear families, plant gardens, and seek the welfare of the city in which they lived. In this letter God told them that at the end of the seventy years, *“Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord.”* (Jeremiah 29:12-14)

God is on His throne in heaven always attuned to those who pray in an effort to be nearer to Him. *“But for me it is good to be near God; I have made the Lord God my refuge, that I may tell of all your works.”* (Psalm 73:28)      The Elders

### **For in this tent we groan... right?**

In 2 Corinthians 5:1-2 we read, *“For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling.”*

For Paul the destroying, or dissolving, of the earthly tent of his flesh was a very distinct and present possibility throughout much of his life as an apostle. Persecution and threats of death were not uncommon to him (2 Corinthians 1:8-9; 4:7-10; 6:4-10; 11:23-27). Paul, the tentmaker, employs the imagery of a tent partly to remind us of how quickly the tent that is the human body can be dissolved, taken down, removed, *destroyed*. This was especially true for the apostle himself who daily faced perils that threatened his very life.

But Paul would have us know that death does not get the last word. Eventually death caught up to Paul but all it could do was usher him into the next life and the beginning of his reward (Luke 16:22). There was a crown of righteousness waiting for Paul and if the Lord was not going to return before Paul’s death than it was going to *require* his death to gain his reward (2 Timothy 4:6-8). To Paul, death served as a doorway to something far greater. Rather than fearing it, he *embraced* it. It was the expectation of his eternal reward that caused him to groan while in the flesh, longing to put on his heavenly dwelling.

Yet the words of 2 Corinthians 5:1-2 came from a man who lived a very difficult, arduous life. They came from a man who faced significant challenges and persecutions seemingly on a daily basis. Clearly there wasn’t much in this world that wrapped itself around Paul’s heart to distract him from his goal. This was a man who lived as far from the lap of ease as one can get.

But we’re not like that, are we? We come home from work and sit down in our comfortable chairs to relax. We watch television, read the paper, or surf the Internet until dinner is on the table. Maybe we take the family and go out to a restaurant. After that we may get some ice cream or frozen yogurt for dessert. We go to movies and ballgames, take family vacations, shop at the mall, hang out with friends, listen to our music, mess around on Facebook, play games, and then come home to our warm houses and comfortable beds.

Of course, none of these things are wrong in and of themselves. But all of these things together can make this life awfully comfortable, can’t they? All of this together may cause a person to wonder what more they really need? All of this together may even swing a persons allegiance from Christ to the comforts and pleasures of the world (1 John 2:15-17).

It begs the question: how much groaning is actually taking place among us? How often do we find ourselves contemplating the future reward of the faithful so deeply that words fail us to be replaced by “groanings too deep for words”? Why would a Christian groan for a heavenly dwelling when he has become thoroughly content with an earthly one? After all, if I treasure the things this world has to offer than I’m going to have a difficult time getting my heart to rise much higher than my own head (Matthew 6:19-21).

So what do we do? We remember that we’re on a pilgrimage that will last until our deaths (1 Peter 2:11). We make the best use of our time (Ephesians 5:16), which certainly does not forbid enjoying our time here, but *does* require that we enjoy the truly good things in life, always walking in a manner worthy of our calling (Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:1). If we will do this than we will live very happy and fulfilling lives during the days of our sojourn. More importantly, we will never forget that our true home is but a final breath away.      Adam Litmer

**“Sermons:** (AM) “Increase our faith”  
(PM) Matt Thompson will be preaching

**Reading:** (AM) Psalm 44:1-12  
(PM) Psalm 44:13-26

**The Blog:** The blog will be updated tomorrow morning.

