

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: Erlene Young and Doris Baker are both recovering from broken arms. Diane Whitehead, a friend of the Thompson’s from Pennsylvania, passed away last week.

Our members: Jeff Howerton, Paul Atkisson, Rhonda Boyd

Others: Mamie Dart, Casey Sparrow, Hope Vinogradov, Barabara Matheny, David Morrow, Debbie Parker, Vina Krassow, John Bennett, Robert 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, Erlene Young, Robert Morgan, Sister Parsons, Bennie’s mother

WEEKLY READING		LEADERSHIP		SERVICES
Mon	Isaiah 7-10, Matthew 26, Psalm 22	ELDERS	DEACONS	Sunday
Tue	Isaiah 11-13, Matthew 27, Psalm 118	Garry Banks	Troy Antle	Bible Study: 9:45 AM
Wed	Isaiah 14-16, Matthew 28	David Collins	Richard Brundige	Worship: 10:45 AM; 6:00 PM
Thu	Isaiah 17-19, 1 Corinthians 1, Psalm 62	John Thompson	Matt Thompson	Wednesday
Fri	Isaiah 20-22, 1 Corinthians 2	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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How Much Groaning Is Going On?

Adam Litmer

“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.” 2 Corinthians 5:1-2

For Paul the destroying, or dissolving, of the earthly tent of his flesh was a very distinct 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 destroyed.

But Paul would have us know that death does not get the last word. Eventually death caught up to him 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 life. Paul faced significant challenges and persecutions seemingly on a daily basis. Clearly there wasn’t much in this world that could 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 stop for ice cream or frozen yogurt. We go to movies and ballgames, take family vacations, shop at the mall, hang out with friends, listen to our music, play games, and then wrap our days up by collapsing into our warm, comfortable beds.

None of these things are wrong. 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 beyond my own surroundings (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 just a door away.

The Urgency of Seeing Jesus

John Thompson

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. (Luke 2:8)

How do you visualize the scene depicted above? I see lots and lots of sheep, some lying down asleep, some still grazing, many simply standing in one place while others are milling about. Nearby are the shepherds, some perhaps sitting around a fire near their hut. Others might be sleeping inside the hut while still others are paying more careful attention to the condition of the herd. The latter group is probably circling the herd, speaking softly to any sheep that might be a bit restless, perhaps even moving amongst the animals to observe things more closely. At least some shepherds would be awake throughout the night because it is at night when the sheep are most vulnerable to predators and it is imperative to the well being of the shepherds and their families that the sheep remain safe. They are the shepherds' highest priority and claim their constant attention. That is, until the night when angels appeared to them.

And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” (Luke 2:9-14)

Forgotten now are the sheep. The visitation of the angels has captured and imprisoned the rapt attention of the shepherds. Never before have they witnessed a spectacle such as this one. In all the nights they have spent carefully watching over their flock under the stars, through all of the storms and mighty forces of nature they have experienced, nothing has even remotely prepared them for what they are now seeing and hearing. Their awe and wonder demand further information. They know beyond a doubt that the message has come to them from God, and their faith drives them to see for themselves the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes in whom lies eternal hope.

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. (Luke 2:15-18)

What a great affect the good news about Jesus had on these shepherds! They had their priorities rightly placed, and it did not take long for that to happen. They didn't spend hours deliberating the message from the angels; they did not keep putting off acting on that message. Rather, they determined immediately to seek out the babe and they went with haste. They did not take time to gather together their sheep and drive them closer to town; they simply left them. And while they may have jeopardized their livelihood and their physical future, they took steps to secure their eternal future. All of us should do likewise.