

# University Heights Messenger

Volume 5--Number 29

July 28, 2013

## 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:

**Needing Prayers:** **Louis Harrod** is receiving treatment for his lungs. **Amber Rhoten** gave birth to Tinsley Grace Rhoten early Friday morning. Both mother and daughter, along with two very excited grandparents, are doing well!

**Our members:** Jeff Howerton, Paul Atkisson, Lindsay Morgan, Jim Parsons

**Others:** Lenny Shepperson, Jan Hogen, Barabara Matheny, David Morrow, Debbie Parker, Rita Pagan, Vina Krassow, John Bennett, Robert and Sarah Brundige, Donald Dawson, Jean Gartland, Gail Stein, Sandy Childress, Reese Worley, Doris Baker, Bill Childress, Susie Burton, Fred Dalton, Norma Hurt, Taylor Osterling, Vernon Johnson, Lavon Speer, Whitney Wright, The Dixons, Jacob Profit

<u>WEEKLY READING</u>		<u>LEADERSHIP</u>		<u>SERVICES</u>
<b>Mon</b>	Proverbs 3-5, Romans 10	<u>ELDERS</u>	<u>DEACONS</u>	<u>Sunday</u>
<b>Teu</b>	Proverbs 6-7, Romans 11, Psalm 7	Garry Banks	Troy Antle	Bible Study: 9:45 AM
<b>Wed</b>	Proverbs 8-10, Romans 12, Psalm 144	David Collins	Richard Brundige	Worship: 10:45 AM; 6:00 PM
<b>Thu</b>	Proverbs 11-13, Romans 13, Psalm 8	John Thompson	Matt Thompson	<u>Wednesday</u>
<b>Fri</b>	Proverbs 14-15, Romans 14	<u>EVANGELIST</u>	Adam Litmer	Bible Study: 7:30 PM
		Adam Litmer	Bill Morelan	<u>1st Fri. of Month</u>
			Jim Parsons	Singing: 7:30 PM
			Pat Seabolt	<u>3rd Fri. of Month</u>
			Adam Daniels	Bible Study: 7:00 PM
			Jamie Powell	(Finished for the time being)

### **There's A Lesson Here**

Perhaps the most recognizable part of the American Declaration of Independence are these words: "*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*" While all may not agree on exactly what constitutes a right endowed by the Creator, most folks recognize that a government ought to not deprive its citizens of those three things.

"And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him."  
Luke 8:39b

But let's examine life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness from a spiritual standpoint. Spiritual life is not a right guaranteed to everyone by God, the Creator. However, it is abundantly attainable and promised to those who meet God's conditions. Jesus said, in John 10:9-11, "*I am the door. **If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.***" Jesus had eternal life in mind when He spoke those words. He said, in John 14:6, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: **no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.***" Salvation and eternal life are abundantly available to those who obey. "*And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who **obey him.***" (Hebrews 5:9)

Spiritual liberty and freedom are also blessings promised to the faithful. Liberty is a grand theme running throughout the Bible. Spiritual liberty results when one is forgiven of his or her sins. When one becomes a Christian, the transformation from a worldly focused being to a spiritually minded being is liberating beyond all understanding. "*Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, **there is freedom.***" (2 Corinthians 3:17) "*For freedom **Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.***" (Galatians 5:1) "*For you were called to freedom, brothers.*"

## UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS CHURCH OF CHRIST

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(Galatians 5:13) *“Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.”* (1 Peter 2:16)

The pursuit of happiness seems to consume much of people’s time and energy. Sports, vacations, amusement parks, games, recreation, materialism, city nightlife are just a few of the things that the world declares are essential to one’s happiness. Although those things do provide a modicum of carnal pleasure, that pleasure and its associated happiness last no time at all. Nor are they to be sought after by the godly person. We look to Moses as our example with regard to worldly pleasure because he chose *“rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.”* (Hebrews 11:25) But God provides the means to permanent happiness, happiness that is independent of life’s circumstances. *“Blessed (happy) is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.”* (Psalm 1:1-2) Paul wrote in Philippians 4:11, *“I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.”*

God’s people have life: spiritual life, that is, eternal life. God’s people have liberty: freedom from sin and liberty to live a godly life. God’s people pursue true and lasting happiness by taking God at His word and trusting Him in all of life’s circumstances.

The Elders

### One Man’s Efforts

In Luke’s account we are introduced to a man in a very bad situation. *“When Jesus had stepped out on the land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he wore no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs”* (8:27). Mark tells us that the man could not be bound, cried out both night and day, and cut himself with stones (Mark 5:3-5). What a miserable state!

The demons inhabiting the man recognized Jesus Christ the moment they saw him. They moved the man to cry out and fall down before the Lord. The question was asked, *“What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me”* (8:28). Recognizing their inability to resist the Lord, these demons begged him to send them into a herd of pigs (33). Jesus did and the pigs, either through demonic prompting or through a wild frenzy brought about through demonic possession, ran off a cliff and drowned themselves in the water below (33).

The herdsmen were shocked and fled to the city and other parts of the country to tell everyone what had happened (34). When the people came out to see what all

the commotion was about they noted the formerly demon ravaged man now sitting calmly and lucidly at the feet of Jesus (35-36). Understandably, they were frightened by the incredible series of events. In fact, these people were so overcome with dread that they begged Jesus Christ to leave them (37). How unfortunate a request!

However, the story does not end there. The man who had been released from his demonic captors begged the Lord’s permission to join them on their journeys (38). Jesus had other plans for this man. *“Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you”* (39a).

Let’s think about what Jesus has commanded this man to do. It certainly would not have been an easy task. Undoubtedly the man’s reputation was less than sterling as folks recalled his actions while possessed. Even though Jesus had released him from that, something evident to all, it most likely would not have removed the stigma of having been under demonic control nor erased the memories of what he had done during that period. How many people had he cursed, wounded, and perhaps even killed? I suppose such concerns could have stopped him before he ever began.

It also appears that Jesus intended for this man to engage in this task alone. He did not leave any of his disciples to train him in proper techniques or to engage in the work with him. He simply told him to go back to his home and start declaring how much God had done for him. I suppose the man could have determined that without help and training he could not accomplish anything of significance so there really wasn’t much point getting starting.

Actually, we know *exactly* what this man did. *“And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him”* (39b). How effective could a single man be? Mark 7:31-37 shows us that our Lord’s reception was much more favorable and the people more inclined to hear when he arrived back in the Decapolis region. Clearly the man Jesus released from demonic possession had been busy accomplishing the work assigned to him.

As brother John is fond of writing, there’s a lesson here. Let us worry less about technique and training and more about telling people what God has done for us. “On the job” training is the most effective training. Let’s get to the business of reaching souls. How much has Jesus done for you? AL

**Sermons:** (AM) Fishers of men (PM) What is your life?

**Reading:** (AM) Proverbs 4:1-27 (PM) Proverbs 5:1-23