**University Heights Church of Christ**

**445 Columbia Ave., Lexington, KY 40508**

**(859) 255-6257**

[**www.uheightschurch.com**](http://www.uheightschurch.com)

**WORSHIP SERVICES**

**Sunday**

Bible Study: 9:45 AM

Worship: 10:45 AM; 6:00 PM

**Wednesday**

Bible Study: 7:30 PM (This is immediately followed by a short worship period)

**First Friday of Each Month**

Singing: 7:30 PM

**LEADERSHIP**

**Elders**

David Collins

John Thompson

Troy Antle

**Evangelist**

Adam Litmer

**Deacons**

Richard Brundige

Matt Thompson

Adam Litmer

Bill Morelan

Jim Parsons

Pat Seabolt

Adam Daniels

Jamie Powell

**Adam’s Office Hours**

Tuesday-Friday (8:30-4:00)

**Summer Bible Study Series**

This week is our Summer Bible Study Series with brother Don Wright. Brother Wright is a wonderful Bible student and proclaimer of the Word. Let us all make our plans to attend each evening as he shows us God’s instructions on building strong families.

**IN NEED OF PRAYERS**

Luke Ramey (recovering from significant jaw surgery performed Friday), John Thompson, Declan Weatherholt, David Seabolt, Jeff Howerton, Rhonda Boyd (and her sister, Dorothy), Louis Harrod, Paul Atkisson, Sheila Lawson, Keia Burton, Robert Brundige, Susie Burton, Valerie and Barry Boyd, Janett’s mother and stepfather, Sandy Driver, Erlene Young, Larry Sells, Evelyn Damron, Jennifer Dunbar, Jean Gartland, John Blessing, William Roberts, Paul Lyda, Pete Soro, The Smith family, our brethren in southern Philippines, our brethren in Zimbabwe, Jamie Powell’s father, Bruce Feltner, Holly Spartman

**Assorted Thoughts From The Churches--1**

University Heights Messenger

Volume 9‐‐Number 28

June 25, 2017

Adam Litmer

My personal study has recently taken me into Revelation. As I considered our Lord’s words to the seven churches I wrote down a number of thoughts that I wish to share with you over my next few articles. These thoughts are not designed to show the particulars that made each city unique or how Jesus often makes use of the city’s location or claim to fame in His message to the brethren located there. Nor are these articles designed to touch on every aspect of our Lord’s message to the brethren in these cities. As the title of this series of articles suggests, these are just assorted thoughts that came to my mind during the course of my study. I pray that you benefit from them.

The first thought that always strikes me whenever I study Revelation 2 and 3 is that our Lord is intimately and completely aware of the spirit of every congregation of His people. He knows precisely what is occurring among them and He penetrates directly to the prevailing heart of every group. Indeed, I believe the “angel of the church” to whom each of the seven letters is addressed speaks to the general spirit or heart of that church. I say this because at the end of each letter he appeals to the brethren to “hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” Thus, it seems to me that the “angel” of the church is the spirit of the church.

Not all situations among brethren are created equal and Jesus is well aware of that fact. Some of our early brethren lived in ease and wealth while others had to grind from one day to the next. Some brethren gained an impressive degree of acceptance and respectability within their city (though that was not necessarily a good thing) while others were under constant pressure and persecution. Some brethren had sparkling reputations (though reputation and reality do not always match) while others were likely spoken of as “that little poor group that meets over there somewhere.” The point is that Jesus understood their situations better than they did. He did not expect more than a group could give but He did expect them all to give what they could. This is what He expects today.

I am always struck by the honesty and tenderness of our Lord’s love. Where commendation could be offered our Lord gave it joyfully and enthusiastically. In speaking to brethren who were bearing up under persecution His words are filled with encouragement and tenderness. And yet, when a congregation needed a sharp rebuke to get recalibrated He did not hesitate to give it. Perhaps some have difficulty understanding why our Lord felt the need to follow stirring commendations (see Ephesus and Thyatira, 2:2-3, 19) with painful slaps in the face (and even those seem light in comparison to the thundering denunciations sent to Sardis and Laodicea) that begin with the uncomfortable preamble, “But I have this against you…”. If we can learn to view things as our Lord does the answer is not difficult to find: He loved them and was more concerned with their eternal salvation than their momentary comfort. The downward path to condemnation is slippery and has a lake of fire waiting at the end. Some can be rescued with a gentle word and reminder while others must be taken by the scruff of the neck and yanked right out of that fire (Jude 22-23). It is the tender and honest love that is willing to take the painful route for a moment with eternity in view.

Even so, a congregation is made up of individual saints and not all individuals may be caught up in the hypocrisy, spiritual lethargy, or the embracing of error plaguing the many (2:24; 3:4). Indeed, in the midst of two congregations that needed serious and immediate correction, our Lord commends individuals within them who, despite their stumbling brethren, had *not* soiled their garments.

In our day, there seems to be a prevailing inclination among some brethren to “jump ship” the moment an issue arises. In some cases brethren seem to view it as a sign of holiness, as if their quick determination to leave a congregation the moment (or very near the moment) something less than ideal rears its head demonstrates extreme piety on their part. It is profitable to consider the examples that we have here and the apparent willingness of the disciples to stick it out even in less than ideal situations. Less we miss it, note that the situation in Thyatira involved false teaching (2:20, 24). Jesus did not command those brethren to leave that church but to continue to do what they were doing (25). If there is a lesson to take from this perhaps it is the need to exhaust every effort to correct what needs correcting before one decides to leave a congregation. Jesus did not command it and that ought to mean something to all of us. Is this to say that no good reason for leaving a congregation will ever exist? No. It is to say that it should not be the first inclination and every effort should be made to avoid it.

A further thought on doctrinal error entering a congregation. Very few of us have had settled convictions and beliefs change as a result of a single study. For many of us it took several hours of careful study, prayer, thought, and discussion. Should doctrinal impurity enter the church make sure the issue is truly studied, its proponents truly given opportunity to repent (2:21), and those being swayed truly worked with *before* any ultimate decision is made about what *you* need to do for yourself and your family moving forward. Hopefully you will never face the situation described here but if you do think about these things.