

Religious Concerns

Faith is Christian only in and to the extent that it has been brought into existence and is ruled by the Word of God. Christian faith originates in and rests upon God's purpose and grace. It is objectively grounded in Jesus, the Son of God, and can be embraced only by accepting and obeying God's will, revealed in and through Him. God's will stands outside and over the wisdom of the world and the subjective experiences of any and all persons. God insists that life be viewed and lived out before the canvas of eternity, and the promises of God, and that it be ruled by reverence and love for God. How many of us are concerned with moving toward God; toward moral and spiritual reality?

What are the actual concerns of the people of this present age? Even at a casual glance it is evident that most people are dominated by personal wants. The "bottom-line" is the ultimate concern of countries, institutions, businesses, and individuals. Prosperity, personal advantage, and creature comforts in the immediate, dominates life. This is evident in the entertainment industry, which cannot be accused of patriotism, moralizing, or of promoting decency. Lamentable, it is accepted that the entertainment industry panders to prurient interests, promotes violence and vulgarity, and that this is its selling point! Yet, the consumers continue to feed at its trough. The modern sit-com with its titillating story-lines, its vulgar and suggestive themes, is admitted to be tawdry, even disgusting, but whole families sit like mindless zombies feeding upon its corruption, with no real thought or concern for moral or spiritual consequences.

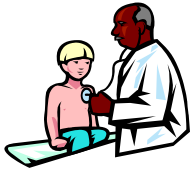
Even in religion the consumer mentality prevails. The ultimate concern, for most religious leaders, has to do with attracting and pleasing the masses—with filling the pews and the coffers. The masses are viewed, not as eternal souls before God, but as "religious customers" who must be drawn-in and satisfied. Leaders desire insight into the demands of the market, and then market their religious outlet as willing to provide the things of immediate interest and enjoyment to their customers.

What resonates when the emphasis of the modern churches are contrasted with the concerns of the Savior, whom they purport to serve? Jesus' primary concern was the moral and spiritual. He did not try to build a popular following, nor did he try to satisfy the demands of the masses. Instead, He opened the way for man to have access to God, access to things holy and eternal. He provided the way to the realm of spiritual life and strength. He provided reconciliation to God. He opened the gate to faith, humility, reverence, and obedience to God. He provided access to that which pertains to life and godliness. He, the light of the world, brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. He called sinners to become disciples, to deny self, to take their cross and follow Him. He required faith which ruled the heart, and repentance which turned lives to righteousness. He exalted worship in spirit and truth, and obedience to the Father. Suffice to say, relig-

Continue to remember in prayer:

Sick

Margaret Kratz, Miriam Majors, Betty Jenkins, Jim Dorsett, E.V. Wimmer, Martha Keith, WJ Wood, Al Furrow, Lyn Anderson, Marguerite Charles, Jo Musgrove, Elizabeth Hovey, Isabelle Simmons, Sandra Wood, Carol & Vernon Daniels



- Sarah Cook will have knee surgery on December 10.
- Ed Argabright had successful surgery on Thursday and will be scheduled for gall bladder surgery next week.

Sympathy is extended to Jim Bush in the death of his brother in Texas.

Happy Birthday this week to:

Caleb Reed—12/11



Happy Anniversary this week to:

Roger & Dorothy Mays—12/8

Myrtle & Virgil Peverall—12/8

Jack & Lori Cook—12/19



Military

Jay Martin—Afghanistan



DECEMBER ITEMS FOR THE STAFFORDS: Poppy Seeds and Instant Swiss Mocha sugar free coffee Give your items to Jeanny and she will ship them over!



Do you know anything about the boxes of stuff in the media room? If so, please let one of the elders or Jo Ann know where they are supposed to go!

Upcoming Events:



The Potters Christmas Wish List is posted on the board in the hallway. See your team leader for details. All gifts must be ready to go by tonight!

We will be having an All Team Holiday Fellowship on December 13 after evening services. Bring your favorite dessert and join us for this time of fellowship. Coffee and punch will be provided.

Teens



December Dates

December 6—TBS

December 20— Cookie Exchange

December 31—New Years Devo

Bible Bowl is set for March 6
Study Guides are available!

WOW

The next regular meeting will be on December 8 at 10:30.

There is a box in the foyer for the WOW Stocking Stuffer gifts. Please have all items in by December 6!
Men's gifts only!!!

Church assignments for 2010 are now being planned. If you have not returned a pink or blue involvement sheet please do so ASAP. If you would like to update your sheet, please see Jo Ann!

Special Thanks to Jackie Dixon for opening her home to a whole bunch of ladies for the Christmas Ladies Night Out. A good time was had by all!



“Exceptions” to the Rule (1)

Announcements	Paul Mays
Song Leader (AM)	Charlie Gwaltney
Opening Prayer (AM)	
12/6	Bobby Martin
12/13	Eric Earnhart
12/20	Jim Harrington
12/27	Fred Altizer
Preside at Communion	David Brown
Serve Table	Josh Whitlow John Black Mitch Jearls Norris Gearhart
Closing Prayer	
12/6	Tom Rogers
12/13	Barry White
12/20	Glenn Gabbard
12/27	Herb Baker
Song Leader (PM)	Jeff Durham
Opening Prayer (PM)	
12/6	Charlie Gwaltney
12/13	Collin Gregory
12/20	Luke Guard
12/27	Kirk Gilpin
Scripture Reader	Jimmy Harrington
Closing Prayer (PM)	
12/6	Glen Hartman
12/13	Jim Bush
12/20	Nathan Pelfrey
12/27	Jeremy White
Serve Table (PM)	Sam Valentine Ben Munsey
Song Leader (Wed)	Eric Earnhart
Prayer (Wed)	
12/2	Bob Garby
12/9	David Brown
12/16	Jerry Anderson
12/23	Greg Edwards
12/30	Mark Brooks
Open/Close Bldg	Jerry Anderson
Greeters	R. White/Bakers
Nursery Attend	Kim Brown Melissa Oldham
Ushers	Bob Garby Curtis Oakes
Handouts	Mitch & Chandler Jearls Marc & Noah Laplante
Prepare communion	Jeanny Gilpin Bonnie Wood
Cards & Pencils	Austin Whitlow

Last weeks attendance 11/29 & 12/2/09

Bible Class— 157 Worship Service—180
 Sunday Eve.— 124 Wednesday Eve.—110
 Contribution—\$6370

We have often heard the statement, “There are always exceptions to the rule.” In the Scriptures, the word “except” (found 74 times in 72 verses- KJV) is pivotal. There are some instances in which there are “exceptions” to the rules that are stated. Let us notice some of these and see just how pivotal the word “except” is in these instances.

When Joseph’s brothers appeared before him, he wittingly accused them of being spies (Gen. 42:9). In order to get them to bring his younger brother, Benjamin, and his father, Jacob, to him, he told them they would not all be able to return to their land until such time as Benjamin was brought before him. His basic statement to them (found in Genesis 42: 15) is: “Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence.” That is the rule as stated on this occasion by Joseph. However, there was an “exception” to that rule. He continued: “except your youngest brother come hither.” Thus, the exception provided them with a means whereby they could actually all be united in their homeland again. Eventually, of course, they were all united in Egypt and the rest, as they say, is history.

Continuing with this same story, after Simeon had been selected to be kept prisoner until the other brothers returned with Benjamin, the others went back to their father and told him of their experiences. Jacob refused to let Benjamin be taken back to Egypt (Gen. 42:29-38). Eventually, however, their supply of food obtained from Egypt dwindled and there was need again (Gen. 43:1, 2). The brothers refused to do go unless Benjamin was allowed to go with them. In the course of their argumentation about the matter, Judah persisted that his father allow Benjamin to be sent under his care. In regards to the timeframe of their journey he made the basic statement: “...surely now we had returned this second time.” However, he preceded this remark with the statement, “Except we had lingered” (Gen. 43:10). The essence of his statement was they should have already returned the second time with a fresh store of food. What prevented their doing so was their lingering in argumentation over whether Benjamin would be sent with them. The word “except” points out the reason why such was not the case.

(To be continued.)

-Eddy