

“I May Never Get to Heaven”

In what would become his 22nd number one song, Conway Twitty released “I May Never Get to Heaven” in 1979. Recently I was checking some stations on my XM radio and ran across the “Roadhouse” channel. It plays country music from the 60s and 70s. On at the time was this song. I listened for a while and then moved on. However, the song title caught my attention. The song speaks of a lost love and the chorus thought in its entirety says, “I may never get to heaven, but I once came mighty close.”

In thinking of this thought in spiritual terms, there will be many individuals who, when they don’t make it to heaven, will one day say, “I once came mighty close.” The unnamed scribe of Mark 12 who asked Jesus, “Which is the first commandment of all?” was later told by Jesus, “Thou art not far from the kingdom of God” (Mk. 12:28-34). We are not informed any further about him, but if he failed to cover that distance needed to be a part of the kingdom of God, he will one day sadly say, “I once came mighty close.”

When presented with the gospel message Felix, the Roman procurator of Judea, “trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee” (Acts 24:25). As far as we know, that “convenient season” never came for Felix. If that is the case he will miss heaven and will one day say, “I once came mighty close.”

When Paul preached the gospel to Agrippa, Agrippa replied, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian” (Acts 26:28). As with Felix, we are not told if Agrippa ever followed up on this matter. If he did not, he will not make it to heaven. And, he will one day realize, “I once came mighty close.”

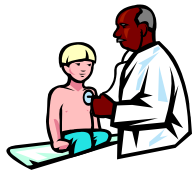
What about you? If your life ended today would you make it to heaven? It is likely that if you are reading this you have heard the gospel plan of salvation many times. If you have heard it and never obeyed it, or if you have obeyed it but turned away from it, you cannot go to heaven (II Thes. 1:8; Rev. 2:10). And, sadly, one day you will say, “But I once came mighty close.” What a tragedy that would be. Why not obey God’s will now while there is still time!

-Eddy

Continue to remember in prayer:

Sick

Margaret Kratz, Miriam Majors, Betty & Walter Jenkins, Jim Dorsett, E.V. Wimmer, Martha Keith, Al Furrow, Marguerite Charles, Jo Musgrove, Evelyn Scott, Ruth Stanton, Lynn Anderson, WJ Wood, Carol Daniels, Andrea Halling, Al Furrow



- Grace Myers is in LGH waiting to see a specialist.
- Collin Gregory spent time in the ER this week. He is home with bronchitis.
- Bill Bryant, Wanda Martin' father, is home. He will be having surgery at a later date.
- Jo Hartman will be having surgery on Feb. 23.
- Al Furrow's medical test have been rescheduled to Feb. 19.

Happy Birthday this week to:

Charles Maness—2/14
Emmalynn Whitlow—2/17
Willard Campbell—2/20



Happy Anniversary:
Bob & Sandy Garby 2/17
Don & Mitzi Pettit 2/18



Military

Jay Martin—Afghanistan
Angela Halling—Vancouver



FEBRUARY ITEMS FOR THE STAFFORDS: Clear packing tape & dry erase markers. (these items are desperately needed) Give your items to Jeanny and she will ship them over!



Upcoming Events:

Have an event in mind? —talk to your leaders!!!!



Teens

February Dates



Feb. 14—Young Men Conduct Services
Feb. 14—TBS
Feb 20—Mock Bible Bowl

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

The Mock Bible Bowl has been rescheduled for Feb. 20th. at noon. It's for ALL youth to pre-test their Bible Bowl knowledge before the actual Bible Bowl on March 6th. Youth & Parents should reserve this date on their calendars now! Pizza will be available.

WOW

The next regular meeting will be on March 9 at 10:30.

Bible Class Broadcast

Ladies- If you are going to be in Jeanny's spring Wednesday night class (beginning March 4), you need to sign up for a book by next Sunday (February 21). The sign up sheet is on the bulletin board.

If you need outlines for the OT Class on Sundays, please sign up on the board by Feb. 24.

All Bible teachers and education workers/ helpers, spouses, and special friends are invited to attend the **Education Appreciation Banquet** on March 13 at 5:45. There is a new sign up sheet for this event so make sure you resign up if you are attending!

Weekly Reminders

For Your Information

EDP MEETING

There will be an EDP Meeting today at 4:00 in the large class room.

TURN, TURN, TURN

There will be a meeting today at 4:30 in the Teachers Workroom for the T3 Planners.

WEDDING RECEPTION

There will be a Wedding Reception tonight after evening services for Matt & Melissa Marshall Yarbro. They were married in TN, and they are residing in Salem. Gift suggestions include: Home Improvement Gift Cards, Walmart/Kroger Gift Cards and Restaurant Gift Cards. Please join us to congratulate this new couple.

AREA WIDE PRECHERS MEETING

The Area Wide Preachers Meeting will be held at the Christiansburg congregation on Feb. 15 at 10:30.

SMOKY MOUNTAIN MARRIAGE RETREAT

You still have time to sign up for this great workshop. February 18-20. See Poster in the hallway for details!

PLAN OF WORKS

The Elders plan to present the 2010 West Side Plan of Works next Sunday evening during services. All members are urged to attend this important presentation.

WEDNESDAY FELLOWSHIP

There will be a Wednesday Fellowship on February 24 at 5:45. Menu includes soup, salad and sandwiches. Sign up and pay your \$5 at the door!

MARCH & APRIL EVENTS

If you have any events scheduled for March or April please get the information to the office by Feb. 24.

LADIES NIGHT OUT

The February Ladies Night Out will be held at Jennifer Laplante's home on Feb. 25 at 6:30. Please sign up on the board if you plan to attend.

SINGING WORKSHOP WITH BURT JONES

There will be a singing workshop on February 27 from 2-4 PM with Burt Jones. He will conduct a Song Leaders Training Class during Sunday Bible School and deliver a sermon during our worship time.

MEN'S RETREAT

The Men's Retreat sponsored by the Lake Drive congregation will be held on March 19 & 20. Registration forms are located in the foyer. Please respond ASAP!

ELIZABETHTON MARRIAGE SEMINAR

The Marriage Seminar in Elizabethton, TN has been rescheduled for April 30—May 1. Eddy & Jeanny are the scheduled speakers.

Prayer List:

Marguerite Charles	Collin Gregory
Lynn Anderson	Evelyn Scott
Martha Keith	Danny White
Miriam Majors	Jo Musgrove
Walter & Betty Jenkins	Ruth Stanton
WJ Wood	Carol Daniels
Margaret Kratz	Jo Hartman
Jim Dorsett	Glenn & Ruth Hartman
E.V. Wimmer	Al Furrow
Charlie Puckett	Sandra Wood
Grace Myers	Bill Bryant

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FEBRUARY 2010

Announcements: Fred Altizer
 Song Leader (AM): Jeff Durham
 Communion: Charlie Maness (preside)
 B. Martin, J. Black, H. Baker, M. Brooks
 Prayer: Ed Mickens (open)
 Glenn Hartman (close)
 Next week prayer: Jerry Anderson (open)
 Marc Laplante (close)

Song Leader (PM): Adam House
 Scripture Reader: Nathan Pelfrey
 Prayer: Eric Earnhart (open)
 George Mellon (close)
 Next week prayer: Glenn Gabbard (open)
 Don Pettit (close)
 Communion: Danny Guard, Sam Valentine

Song leader (Wed): Bob Garby
 Prayer: Bradford Durham
 Next week prayer: Cameron Brown

Open/Close Building: Eric Earnhart
 Greeters: Cooks, Gabbards
 Nursery: Lori Cook (AM)
 Paula Gibson (PM)
 Ushers: David Brown, Curtis Oakes
 Handouts: Cameron Brown, Greg Edwards
 Prepare Communion: Shirley Baker
 Amanda Brown

Attendance 2/7&10/10
 Sunday—one service due to snow—162
 Wednesday—103

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First 100 Days

“Exceptions” to the Rule (9)

Feb. 14 (Romans 13)

- Read Romans 13 three times today
- Pray today
- Memorize contents of Romans 13
 - The Christian and the state (1-7)
 - The law of love (8-10)
 - Spiritual awakening (11-14)
- Memorize Rom. 13:1
- Write a note or card this week
- *Increase your contribution by \$1 today

Feb. 15 (Romans 14)

- Read Romans 14 three times today
- Pray today
- Memorize contents of Romans 14
 - Christian freedom and optional matters
- Memorize Rom. 14:12

Feb. 16 (Romans 15)

- Read Romans 15 three times today
- Pray today
- Memorize contents of Romans 15
 - Mutual concern (1-14)
 - Paul's plans for the future (15-33)
- Memorize Rom. 15:4

Feb. 17 (Romans 16)

- Read Romans 16 three times today
- Pray today
- Memorize contents of Romans 16
 - Greetings to various people (1-16)
 - Dealing with apostasy (17-20)
 - Paul's co-workers and closing words (21-27)
- Memorize Rom. 16:17

Feb. 18 (Romans 1)

- Read Romans 1 three times today
- Pray today
- Memorize contents of Romans 1
 - Gentile world under sin (before the cross)
- Memorize Rom. 1:16

Feb. 19 (Romans 2)

- Read Romans 2 three times today
- Pray today
- Memorize contents of Romans 2
 - Jewish world under sin (before the cross)
- Memorize Rom. 2:11

Feb. 20 (Romans 3)

- Read Romans 3 three times today
- Pray today
- Memorize contents of Romans 3
 - Universality of sin
- Memorize Rom. 3:23

We continue our look at the word “except.” As we have seen, it is used in life or death situations, approval or disapproval situations and in saved or lost situations. Without the “exceptions,” the results would have been devastating to man. With the “exceptions,” man has hope.

In John 6:53 Jesus made the base statement, “Ye have no life in you.” Jesus had miraculously fed the 5000 (Jn. 6:1-13) and had been teaching this audience that He was “the bread of life” (Jn. 6:35), and that “the bread of God...giveth life unto the world” (Jn. 6:33). Previously, He had taught the Samaritan woman that He was the water of life (Jn. 4:14). However, Jesus made an “exception” to the rule that they had no life within. His complete statement reads, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” Thus, they could (and we can) have life, but only through eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ.

But, what did the Lord mean by this statement? Obviously, it was not intended to be literal (the Catholic doctrine of “transubstantiation” to the contrary notwithstanding). If so, each who obeyed His command would be a cannibal. Some have thought that He here refers to the Lord’s Supper. However, that was yet to be established and would have made His speech at this time impossible to be understood by those to whom He spoke. Neither does it fit with the context. His language is figurative (as other such references in the context reveal- i.e. Jn. 6:51), and speaks ultimately of obedience to His will. Only through His sacrifice (the offering of His flesh and blood) could man have spiritual life. And, only through obedience to Him (continual “eating” and “drinking”- cf. Jn. 6:56) can any man obtain that life (Heb. 5:8, 9). Through faith in Him (Jn. 8:24), repentance of sin (Lk. 13:3), confession of His name (Mt. 10:32), baptism for sin remission (Acts 2:38) and continued faithfulness (Rev. 2:10) one appropriates the benefits of His sacrifice and obtains eternal life. “Except” one do these things, he has no life.

(To be continued.)

-Eddy