

PRAYERS & ENCOURAGEMENT

Those who are sick or need our prayers — Kaylee Dolan, J Hughes, Linda Reagan, Kay Woodruff, Jay Davis, Pat Espy

Continue to remember in your prayers those who are unable to attend worship services regularly: *Billie Sue Atkins, Freda Dunn, Romona Stokes, and Marjorie Barringer.*

Please pray for those who have forsaken the Lord that they may be reconciled to God.

READING THE OLD & NEW TESTAMENTS IN ONE YEAR

Monday - Numbers 26-29; Luke 2

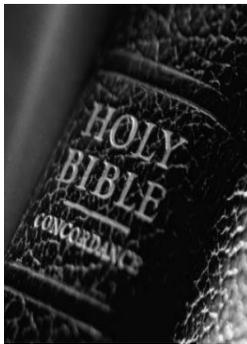
Tuesday - Num 30-33; Psalm 35; Luke 3

Wednesday - Num 34-36; Luke 4

Thursday - Deuteronomy 1-3; Psalm 36; Luke 5

Friday - Deut 4-5; Luke 6

***Week #11
Mar. 12 – Mar. 16***



VISITORS - We would like to get to know you better, and ask that you stay a while after services. We encourage you to visit our website at <http://www.parkhillchurchofchrist.com> where you will find sermons, articles, and daily bible studies to encourage you in your daily walk with God.

QUESTIONS? *We Welcome the opportunity to study God’s word with you any time.*

*All sermons are recorded on CD & DVD -
If you would like a copy, please ask one of the men.*

ELDERS

Carl Dolan.....479.414.1972 ~ Ron Roberts479.452.0347 ~ Randy Sexton.....479.763.4524
Joe Turner....479.459.6023.

DEACONS

Wayne Carson...479.648.1087 ~ Luke Dolan.....479.357.9547 ~ Joe Dugas479.629.4046 ~
David Meek....479.459.0820

PREACHER

Bryan Loughmiller.....479.434.3939

March 11, 2018

THINK ON THESE THINGS

Welcome to the Park Hill Church of Christ

3536 GRINNELL AVENUE FORT SMITH, AR 72908 479.782.2415

It is our desire to worship God in spirit and in truth, and to glorify Him in all we do.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY MORNING
Bible Study.....9:30 am
Worship.....10:15 am

SUNDAY EVENING
Worship..... 5:00pm

WEDNESDAY EVENING
Bible Study.....7:00pm

Who Do You Love?



Loving people is hard. As one author put it, “I don’t hate people, I just feel better when they aren’t around” (Charles Bukowski). After all, people are often needy, hurtful, unreliable, complicated and selfish.

How startling then, is the thought, “God so loved the world” (John 3:16)! If you have a tough time loving someone, consider the experience of God. Every person He created has broken His heart. Most people totally ignore Him. Many people outright reject Him.

Yet, God choses to love *people*. In Jesus, He chose to live among *people*, to save *people*, and be compassionate toward *people*. Jesus knew nothing of the selfish cynicism which says, “I’m not antisocial, I just don’t like people.”

An Appalling Love

However, genuine love is rarely the cuddly creature we wish it to be. Love pushes us out of our places of comfort and knocks us off our pedestals of superiority. That is why genuine love is often scorned.

Jesus' love was so authentic and pervasive it sickened people. He the audacity to forgive a prostitute, touch the sick, teach the outcast, take time for handicapped, and it was offensive to some.

They hurled the accusation, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them" (Luke 15:2). Yes, that is what love does. Now, Jesus never participated in people's sin. He didn't frequent the bars and brothels. But, neither did He run from physical needs, or recoil in disgust from sinners. He helped them and called them to repentance.

Jesus answered their accusation three times. Each answer provides deeper insight into the difficult work of loving people.

A Shepherd's Love

Most preachers love the crowds. Numbers are the sign of success, right? Jesus evaluated things differently. Jesus saw through the shallow faith of the trend seekers and spoke hard truths about discipleship in order to thin out the herd (Luke 14:25-25; John 6:66-69). Then, Jesus devoted His life to the few who willingly stayed (contrast Luke 14:25 with Luke 15:1).

The religious elite looked at this behavior with disgust. "This man receives sinners and eats with them" (Luke 15:2), they cackled. They can't believe Jesus chose awkward sinners over the admiration of the crowds!

So, Jesus told a story about an anxious shepherd who crossed the wilderness in search of one lost sheep. When the sheep was found, the joyful shepherd celebrated with his friends (Luke 15:3-7; Ezekiel 34). Jesus asks us, "If a shepherd loves a sheep so much he is willing to risk life and limb to find it, *how much more* should I love people with eternal souls who are made in the image of God!?"

Jesus invites us to take a practical lesson about evangelism from our domestication of animals (Gen. 1:26-27). We put a lot of time and affection into caring for the pets and creatures who depend upon us. Jesus asks, "Do we love people's souls that much?" That sounds like a silly question, but like the Pharisees many of us care more for our "sheep" than for sinners. What if our hearts broke for lost sinners as much as they do for starving, dying animals? What if we enjoyed the saved as much the family pet? There is a lesson about love in the way we treat those creatures.

A Doctor's Love

The Pharisees also complained about Jesus' love at a dinner party. They grumbled, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" He replied, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick" (Luke 5:30-31). For those in the *country* Jesus illustrated love with a shepherd. But, this illustration is for

city folks. Jesus compassionately loved them like a doctor.

Yes, some doctors ignore or exploit the sick for their own selfish purposes. Such reports anger us. Doctors are supposed to care for people at their most vulnerable moment. Doctors, at their best, are motivated by something more than money or power. They are motivated by the pains and mortality of their patients.

Likewise, Jesus is grieved by the pains and death we experience because of sin (Luke 5:12-26). Jesus came as a doctor, not just of the body, but of the soul, because He loves us.

What an extraordinary way of seeing people...as patients in need of compassion and care, lest they die, eternally. For, beneath the shiny exterior of wealth, strength, charm and beauty lies the cancerous mass of sin that anchors the soul in hell. Physicians are needed!

A Worshipper's Love

Matthew also records the Pharisees' accusation, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" (Matt. 9:11). Jesus says He loves them like a doctor (Matt. 9:12), but then he gives them a little homework, "Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.'" (Matt. 9:13).

Jesus quotes from Hosea, God's love letter to His rebellious people. It seems like the people respond with all the right words. They say, "Come, and let us return to the Lord" (Hosea 6:1). However, God knows their words will float away with the morning mist. What God wants more than confessionals and rituals, are obedient lives. So, He says, "*I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings*" (Hosea 6:6)

God is not setting aside the sacrificial system but identifying its intent. When the knowledge of God fills the mind, it is expressed in merciful actions toward others. Jesus wanted the Pharisees, and us, to learn that loving sinners is the way we worship God.

Yes, life is hard. Many choose to wear bitterness and pessimism like an armor and hide a bunker of isolation. But, it is dark in there. Don't go in. The path out of your cynical seclusion is to love. After all, *you* are that lost sheep, that sick sinner, that inconsistent worshipper who God loves like a Shepherd, a Doctor and as a longsuffering Lord. So, go love others as God loved you (1 John 4:19-21).

"Let all that you do be done in love" (1 Corinthians 16:14)