

PRAYERS & ENCOURAGEMENT

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

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 - Judges 7-8; Luke 22

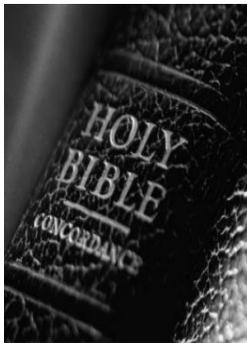
Tuesday - Judges 9-11; Psalm 17; Luke 23

Wednesday - Judges 12-16; Psalm 146; Luke 24

Thursday - Judges 17-18; Psalm 21; Acts 1

Friday - Judges 19-21; Acts 2

***Week #15
Apr. 9 – Apr. 13***



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 ~ 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

April 8, 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

We Once Were



Titus 3:3 "For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another."

Our passage today is an honest look into not only an apostle's past, but ours as well. We've all been there. This is why we came to Christ. The words are powerful: disobedient, deceived, enslaved.

Here are some thoughts:

First, most of us have similar pasts when it comes to sin. We've been there. We've done it. Disobedient, deceived and enslaved. The magnitude, depth and consequences of these sins may vary among us, but we all pretty much can check off these big three: disobedient, deceived and enslaved.

Second, most of us were spending our life in these things. This was our world. Hateful and hating one another sums up why so many are negative, jealous and stuck on a cycle of bad behavior. Spending our life, what an honest statement. In Colossians, the

expression is "living in them." This is life without Christ. The picture isn't pretty. The results are not healthy nor helpful. For some, this is the entirety of their life. I was watching a documentary about crime boss Al Capone the other day. There was a scene from his funeral. His large casket was being carried out to be placed in the hearse. A large cross was on the top of his casket. A cross? Jesus and Capone don't belong in the same sentence. He lived his life and it wasn't being spiritual.

Third, change is possible. That's the point Paul is using here. We were just like you. We were a mess. We were living in these sins. We were disobedient, deceived and enslaved. Yet, they broke free from the enslavement. They learned the truth. They became obedient. How? Jesus Christ. They learned the Gospel, believed it and became followers of Jesus. The following verses in Titus report that they were justified by His grace, saved by His mercy and washed by the Holy Spirit. A person can change. It's never too late as long as there is breath in the body.

Fourth, because we all have a similar past, we can understand, relate and help others. Our specific sins may differ, but disobedience, enslavement and deception are all pretty much standard. What helped you? What turned you around? What opened your eyes? How did you get out of the ditch of sin? Share that with others. Let them know that you understand where they are. Let them know that they can turn. Life can get better. God made us for better things.

Fifth, this honesty is helpful in our fellowship. We tend to think, especially on a Sunday morning, that everyone gathered is perfect. Everyone that is except us. They all have fantastic marriages. The teens always listen to their parents. Everyone is reading the Bible every night. No one yells at each other. Just perfect people. We tend to believe that everyone came from perfect homes. That all of us were taken to Bible classes as children. We all held hands and smiled at one another. Not true. If anything, we held hands and stuck our tongues out at each other. Our elders were once disobedient? Our preacher once was deceived? The Bible class teacher was hooked and enslaved to sin? And, even more honest, each of us still has our battles and struggles today. The fight isn't over. Satan isn't done with us. We have moments that we are not proud of. There are times we still are deceived and disobedient. If that wasn't the case, then we'd never sin again. First John takes care of that. If we say we have no sin, we lie. There are thoughts that are not the best. There are words said that shouldn't be said. There are times the past comes becomes our present. However, through Christ, we seek forgiveness, change and growth. We are not perfect people and the church is not a perfect church. However, we do follow the perfect Jesus. He is what makes us our best.

It's easy for some to think that they are the only one in the entire church building who struggles. They struggle with doubt. Each week it's a battle, do I go to worship or not?

They struggle with sin. They struggle with attitudes. They have a hard time loving some and forgiving those who have hurt them. They look around at all the people in the church building and feel like they are an embarrassment to everyone else. They feel like they are letting everyone else down. They believe they are the only one who is not getting it. Those thoughts magnify the reasons not to come. "I'm not like the rest that go there," is how they feel. But truth be known, they are just like the rest. There are days when even the preacher doesn't feel like preaching. But it's expected and he does it, realizing that he needs the message more than anyone else.

Honesty in our fellowship doesn't hurt us nor hinder us, it actually helps us. We all need Jesus. We all are a work in progress. We all need each other. Putting on masks, and denying the truth about ourselves only makes things worse. This breeds hypocrisy and keeping up an image rather than dealing with reality. This is why "going forward," has been so misused and misunderstood. We should welcome and want to pray for one another. However, when some brave soul walks down the aisle on Sunday morning, immediately folks start thinking, "I wonder what he did wrong?" We've turned it into a walk of shame rather than a powerful and helpful force of help. Others ought to get up and walk with the person. Others ought to say, "We're here for you." The person who seeks prayers feels so ashamed and so unlike everyone else. "No one else is walking down to the front," I must be the only terrible person here. That's not stated, but it certainly can feel that way.

Honesty in our fellowship changes that. We're all in this together. We all need each other. We all need Jesus. There is nothing to be ashamed about. That atmosphere can be created, enhanced and supported by how we view ourselves and others.

For we were once, Paul said. He didn't forget. Even though forgiven, he didn't forget. He knew where he came from and he knew that it was God's grace that has taken him to where he was. Have you forgotten where you came from? Peter said concerning the virtues that he wrote about, "He who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins."

For we were once...

Roger Shouse,, Via Jump Starts Daily #2071

Brief Thought

Keeping the commands of God does not diminish your need for God's grace. But, don't let your need for God's grace diminish your desire to keep His commands.

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