

THE FOREST HILL NEWS



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Ministers:

Barry M. Grider, Pulpit
Matthew Jones, Associate

VISIT US SOON!

Sunday:

Bible Study..... 9:30 A.M.
Morning Worship..... 10:30 A.M.
Evening Worship..... 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday:

Bible Study7:00 P.M.

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Number 2

Resolutions of Faithfulness #2 Faithful in Bible Study

Barry Grider

Last week I mentioned that the beginning of a new year often seems to be a good time for people to make resolutions, determining what changes need to be made to positively affect the future. I am sure that all of us would like to improve our spiritual lives. Perhaps that means we need to become more zealous and determined regarding the Lord's work or maybe we need to let go of some bad habits and replace them with good habits. I pray that these resolutions of faithfulness will be helpful to each one of us.

If we are to grow spiritually we must study and follow the Bible. Peter wrote, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2). However, Bible study does not come easy to many. It takes time and effort to study God's word, yet it is time well spent. Paul wrote, "All scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16,17). Don't you want to engage in something that is profitable? Bible study will profit you now and in the age to come.

By following the Bible we know we are right with God. Again, hear Paul, who said, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15). By adhering to God's commands we can overcome sin. In two closely connected passages, the psalmist records, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word... Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psm. 119:9,11). Through the holy Scriptures we can be saved. James admonished, "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21).

This past Sunday we sang the old hymn, *Hold to God's Unchanging Hand*. We hold to God's unchanging hand by holding to His unchanging word. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Mat. 24:35). Surely from all these passages we realize why we should resolve in our hearts to study the Bible more. It is not just the book of the year, but the book of the ages. How can you become a better Bible student? First, read the Bible daily. Get a daily Bible reading chart that will help you. Second, study with friends, sit in Bible classes, pay close attention during each sermon and engage in regular devotional periods with your family. Third, apply the lessons you learn. Remember studying the Bible is like a great adventure. Everything you explore and find in the Bible is God's truth for you. Resolve in your heart to love and live the Bible. May you say with the psalmist, "O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day" (Psm. 119:97).

Feelings Follow Facts

Eric Lyons

Humans are emotional creatures. We love and hate. We hope and hurt. We dread and rejoice. We cry when we are sad, as well as when we are happy. We shout when we are angry, and we shout when we are thrilled. I have one son who not only smiles when he is happy, he even smiles (seemingly uncontrollably) when he is in trouble (which I have yet to understand). The roller coaster of emotions that occasionally overcomes us can wear us out one day and energize us the next. Like any human, Christians are emotional people. We are emotional because we are human, but we also are stirred with emotions because we are servants of Jesus Christ.

Christians are called to be spiritual people (Galatians 6:1). We are “partakers of...spiritual things” (Romans 15:27). We are to “walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7). We must “worship the Father in spirit” (John 4:23-24). We are building a “spiritual house...to offer up spiritual sacrifices” (1 Peter 2:5). Such spirituality leads us to feel an array of emotions: revenge for the Creator, compassion for the lost, hatred of evil, anticipation of the Lord’s return, etc. Sadly, however, many who call themselves followers of Christ think of Christianity simply as a “feel-good religion.” The mindset among many is, “Feelings first, knowledge later” (if ever). Like the prophets of Baal, they cry out with great emotion and leap around in hysteria (1 Kings 18:20-40). Like the Pharisees, they pray and do charitable deeds to be seen of men (Matthew 6:1-8). Like Cain, they make unacceptable offerings, rather than sacrifices “by faith” (Genesis 4:4-5; Hebrews 11:4; cf. Romans 10:17). The cornerstone of Christianity for such people is emotion rather than Christ (Ephesians 2:20), feelings rather than facts. They think they can be “spiritual” without knowing the Spirit-revealed Truth (John 16:13).

If scripture teaches anything, it teaches that a faithful Christian’s feelings follow the digestion of biblical facts. Unlike Israel who had a “zeal for God, but not according to knowledge” (Romans 10:2), our enthusiasm for the Lord is to be rooted in the knowledge of God’s Word. Prior to becom-

ing Christians, our hearts can be properly “pricked” only **after** we have heard the Gospel (Acts 2:14-37). We can be saved **after** we have “come to the knowledge of the Truth” (1 Timothy 2:4) and “receive with meekness the implanted word” (James 1:21). We can be cleansed and comforted **after** “taking heed” according to God’s Word (Psalm 119:9,50-52). We can go on our way rejoicing **after** receiving the Word (Acts 8:26-39). We can praise God “with uprightness of heart” **after** learning God’s righteous judgments (Psalm 119:7). We can worship in spirit **after** learning the truth (John 4:24; 17:17). We can be spiritual **after** taking hold of “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17) and learning “the fruit of the Spirit” (Galatians 5:16-6:1).

Are we to worship God fervently? Certainly. Are we to be “zealous for good works” (Titus 2:14)? Definitely. Should the soul-saving message of Jesus Christ stir our souls intensely? Indeed. But, Christianity has never been rooted in raw human emotions. Spirituality is not equivalent to excitement. Faith is not a mere feeling. Christianity is grounded in God’s Word. Our salvation, spirituality, worship, work, and overall faithfulness to God are dependent on knowing God’s will. Remember. “[F]aith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17).

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2010 Memphis School of Preaching
Lectureship

March 28 - April 1

“Shadows of Good Things”

A study of types and metaphors in the Bible

From the Preacher

After four months of greatly anticipating the beginning of a new work, I announced this past Sunday that I will remain as your pulpit preacher. This decision came after much struggle on the inside. In the end, I was just not ready to leave this work where I have invested so much of my time and effort. I approached our elders last week and relayed to them these feelings and they graciously agreed for me to stay if that was my desire. Your response to this announcement was somewhat overwhelming to me. I have always known of your love for my family and me, but all the expressions of kindness (words, hugs, etc.) let me know for sure I had made the right decision. Such gave me a renewed sense of zeal and determination to do my best to build up the church at Forest Hill and advance our Lord's cause. God bless all of you and thank you for the opportunity to keep on serving our Lord together in this place.

As our members know, the congregation has assembled for worship in the fellowship hall since early December, because of water damage in the auditorium. I am so thankful that we have such a warm and commodious place to meet until the repairs and renovations are complete. We are still several weeks away from getting back in the auditorium but, once we do, I think everyone will enjoy the fresh carpet and improved lighting. We are confident that all will be in good shape for the 2010 Memphis School of Preaching Lectureship, which begins March 28.

We want to congratulate Chris Pedersen who was baptized into Christ Sunday, January 3, after several personal Bible Studies. Chris moved here from California during the past year and we want him to feel at home. Sara Peacock, daughter of David and Wendy, was baptized this past Sunday, January 10. She is a sweet young lady and we are so proud of her decision to become a Christian.

Barry

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