

LIVING WATER

The Official Newsletter of Southside Church of Christ

LIVING WATER...

by **Brett W. Hogland**

This week marks the beginning of a new effort here at Southside to share God's word through an article that is intended to teach, admonish and encourage honest hearts. Each article is intended to provide a cup of cold water (Matt.10:42) in our daily walk with the Lord. It is striking how prominent "water" is in God's plan of saving us. Jarrod Jacobs recently noted in an article, that Moses was hidden, preserved and rescued by means of water (Ex. 2:1-10). The Israelites were provided a path of salvation through the water of the Red Sea (Ex. 14). Jesus walked on the water as a sign to show his disciples that He was the Son of God (Jn. 6:19). God chose water as a means of the new birth and entrance into His Kingdom in baptism (Jn.3:3-5). There is nothing in God's creation more crucial for our physical life and sustenance than water. So it is a beautiful metaphor that God has used water so often to represent the spiritual sustenance that only He provides. Jeremiah, the prophet, said: "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water (Jer.2:13). This "living water" was offered again by Jesus as he spoke with the Samaritan woman (Jn.4:10, 13-14). God's word provides this living water that our souls crave and need for eternal life. It is this water that we want to flow through these short articles. Several members at Southside will be

contributing articles but they will all be designed to teach, share and provide the living water of God's Word. We will begin a Gospel Meeting next week so I thought it would be good to use this first article to encourage everyone to be fully committed to this effort to teach the lost and edify the saints in this area.

WHILE I WAS BUSY HERE AND THERE

by **Brett W. Hogland**

The 20th chapter of 1 Kings records an interesting story in Ahab's infamous life that was "written for our learning" (Rom.15:4). The context reveals that God had given Ahab the complete and convincing victory over the Syrians and the capture of their tyrannical king – Ben-Hadad (1Ki.20:28-33). Furthermore, Ahab was given the opportunity to execute Ben-Hadad as God had ordained. Ahab chose to spare Ben-Hadad's life and form a treaty with him instead (v.34). A prophet disguised himself as having been wounded in battle and approached Ahab's chariot. The prophet stated that he had been given charge of a prisoner with the liability that he would lose his own life if he allowed the prisoner to escape. The disguised prophet confessed to the King, "while your servant was busy here and there, he was gone" (v.40). Ahab easily recognized and stated that the consequence of this soldier's negligence would be the loss of his own life.

The prophet then revealed himself to Ahab and told him "Thus says the Lord: 'Because you have let slip out of your hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore your life shall go for his life, and your people for his people'" (v.42). By way of clever illustration, God made known to Ahab that the opportunity he wasted was a clear dereliction of duty and it would carry a serious consequence. The very king that Ahab allowed to escape would later rise up against Israel with his Syrian army and take Ahab's life (Chapter 22). Let's observe the following few things from this lesson.

Neglecting God's opportunities carries serious consequences

This fact is clear, both, in revelation and also in the things that we observe in life. God gives the farmer a window of opportunity to plant his crop every year. The farmer who misses the planting season will never again have the opportunity to plant that year's crop, thus missing the harvest and suffering the poverty of his negligence. The wise man said "To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven: A time to be born and a time to die; A time to plant, and a time to pluck what is planted" (Eccl.3:1-2). Young people have a window of opportunity in youth to educate themselves when their minds are more "pliable". Parents have the strategic window of opportunity to "train up a child in the way he should go" when he is young (Prov.22:6). The pliable mind and character of youth can never be regained once it has passed. God gives us the opportunity to hear the gospel (Acts 11:13-14 ; 10:33) and "be saved" (Acts 2:40) from the condemnation of our sins. The Holy Spirit sternly warns us of the consequences of "neglecting so great a salvation" as God has afforded (Heb.2:3). The dereliction of our duty or stewardship in regard to God's opportunities carries eternal consequences (Luke 12:42-48) (Matt.25:31-46). Especially serious, is the failure to warn the lost of their doom (Ezek.3:18) (Acts 20:26-27).

You have an opportunity next week

If the Lord wills, we will have the opportunity next week to work together in a gospel meeting to save men's souls and edify ourselves (Heb.3:13-14 ; 10:24-25) in the assembly of the saints through worship, singing (Col.3:16), and gospel preaching (Acts 20:32) (1 Pet.2:2). Will you seize the opportunity to invite your friends, family and co-workers to hear the gospel as Cornelius did (Ac.10:24,33)? Will you "redeem the time" that you have to save their souls (Col.4:5)? Will you seize the opportunity to be in attendance yourself, to be edified and to be considerate to your brethren, stirring them up to love and good works (Heb.10:24-25)? Will your children be here regardless of their conflicting activity so that they may learn priorities and be built up in the Faith (Prov.22:6)? Or will you tell God that you are "busy here and there" with your kid's school, sports or various activities? Will you be "busy here and there" with your job, family or personal interests? Are you already making plans to be away during the meeting? Will you let this God-given opportunity slip through your hands? The Lord may grant that you live to see other gospel meetings, but this particular opportunity will be lost in just a few days. What will you do with your opportunity?

