



THE BROOKSVILLE BULLETIN

Brooksville church of Christ
604 W. Fort Dade Avenue, Brooksville, FL

September 12, 2021

A Gouge In A Pew **(Matthew W. Bassford)**

A couple of weeks ago, I attended a friend's funeral in an unfamiliar church building. I took a seat by an aisle and shortly noticed a gouge in the back of the pew support in front of me. The gouge was at knee height. To the left/exterior, it was narrow and shallow; to the right/interior, it broadened and deepened to about a quarter inch. Another fainter horizontal scrape appeared two or three inches above it. None of the other pews around me bore similar markings.

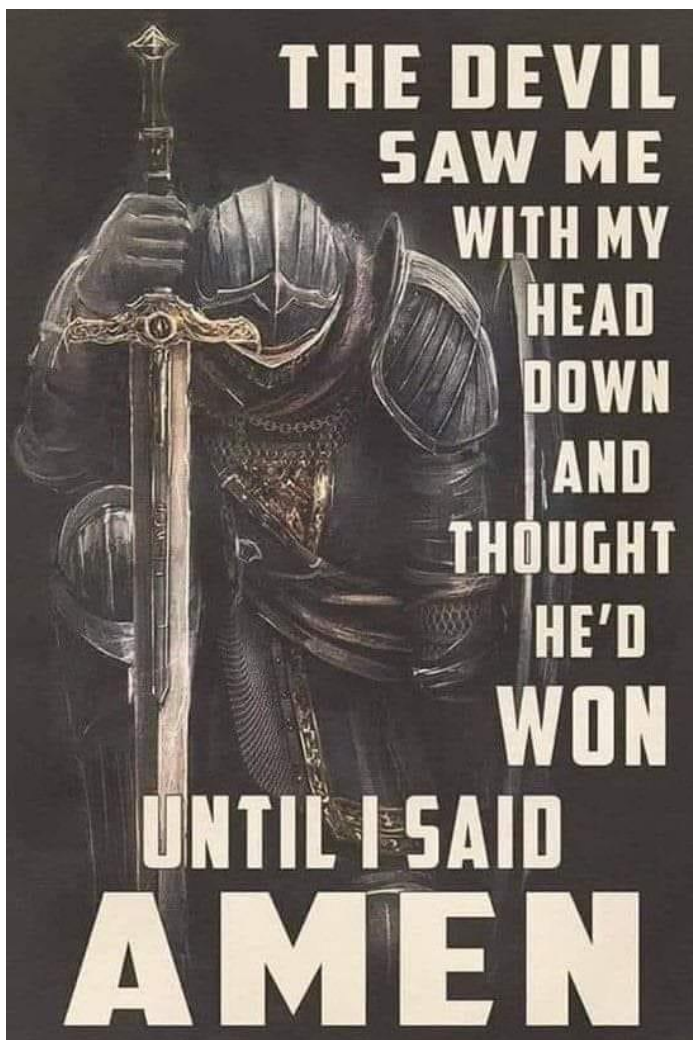
I will never know for sure, but I would guess that the scrapes came from a walker or similar piece of assistive equipment. An older Christian once sat (has sat?) there for years because that was Their Pew. They shuffled into the auditorium on their walker, gingerly lowered themselves to the seat where I sat, folded up their walker, and dragged it into the same row.



As they were doing so, their lack of stability forced them to brace the walker against the pew in front of them. Every time, something (a walker brace? screw heads?) raked across the pew support. Service by service, year by year, those feeble hands wore away the gouge that I saw. That Christian

may well be dead now, but the gouge still bears witness. They assembled.

Sometimes, it is the faith we display in our weaknesses that makes the deepest mark. Lots of strong, healthy Christians strode into that auditorium, worshiped, and departed without leaving a trace. However, the pew support remembers the Christian who probably couldn't drive to church anymore, who couldn't walk unassisted, whose pace was slow and even doddering. They certainly inspired pity, perhaps contempt, perhaps frustration from the custodial crew, but they came. No one would have faulted them for not coming. They came anyway,



and the pew support testifies to their faithful obedience.

So too with the marks we make, and not only on pews. Some of the Christians whose singing I remember most are those who couldn't carry a tune in a bucket. They knew it and sang anyway. Loudly. They were humbled, but God was exalted.

How about the introvert who, with white knuckles and sweaty palms, welcomes a visitor to the assembly? Or the octogenarian who shows up to help a relocated brother unload the moving truck? Or the song leader who can't read a note of music but listens to a new hymn over and over on YouTube until he feels comfortable introducing it to the congregation?

How about the apostle Paul, who struggled with covetousness

but learned from Christ the secret of remaining faithful through poverty and prosperity alike?

We often seek to glorify God through our strengths. This is our wheelhouse. This is the thing we are good at. Look at this wonderful thing we are doing (for God)!

Perhaps, though, He is best glorified through our weaknesses. This is not our wheelhouse. We are terrified. We are a hopeless disaster. We would not be doing this for anybody but God, but He told us to do it, and we are.

The ungodly might be laughing at us, but God isn't laughing. He is pleased. He loves not only the sacrifices that arise from effortless self-confidence but also those offered in weakness, fear, and trembling. Against all worldly wisdom, we surrender our two mites, knowing it can't possibly matter but trusting that it will be enough.

Ever Changing Doctrines of Men

(Phil T. Arnold)

While the truth of God's word does not change, the doctrines of men are ever undergoing evolution to suit the current thinking, adapt to cultural desires, or, in short, make them most appealing (Matthew 5:18; 1 Peter 1:24-25). We certainly should not be surprised by this, for, after all, they

are the doctrines of men and not of Christ. As an example, consider the following two quotations:

1. 'No divorce, except for adultery, shall be regarded by the church as lawful; and no Minister shall solemnize marriage in any case where there is a divorced wife or husband living; but this rule shall not be applied to the innocent party to a divorce for the cause of adultery.'

2. "In view of the seriousness with which the Scriptures and the Church regard divorce, pastors may solemnize the marriage of a divorced person only when they are satisfied by careful counseling, that (1) the divorced person is sufficiently aware of the factors leading to the failure of the previous marriage, (2) the divorced person is sincerely preparing to make the proposed marriage truly Christian, and (3) sufficient time has elapsed between the divorce and the contemplated marriage for adequate preparation and counseling."

Did you note a little difference? Both are quotations from the Methodist Discipline. The difference being that the first quotation is from the 1904 edition, and the last quotation is from the 1972 edition. Neither edition is the true standard for determining faith or practice – only God's word can do that - but at least the 1904 edition far more closely represents

what God's Word says in Matthew 19:9.

Why the change? Because this creed (as with all other creeds) is merely the product of man and the basis of a church of man, and it is not confined to consistency. It can be altered, updated, rewritten, and modified through the years. But it did not lead to salvation in 1904, 1972, or today because it is not the Word of God but the doctrine of men.

“Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 'These people draw near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. and in vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'” (Matthew 15:7-9)

Shipwreck (Author Unknown)

The only survivor of a shipwreck was washed up on a small, uninhabited island.

He prayed feverishly for God to rescue him, and every day he scanned the horizon for help, but none seemed forthcoming.

Exhausted, he eventually managed to build a little hut out of driftwood to protect him from the elements and to store his few possessions.

But then one day, after scavenging for food, he arrived

home to find his little hut in flames, the smoke rolling up to the sky.

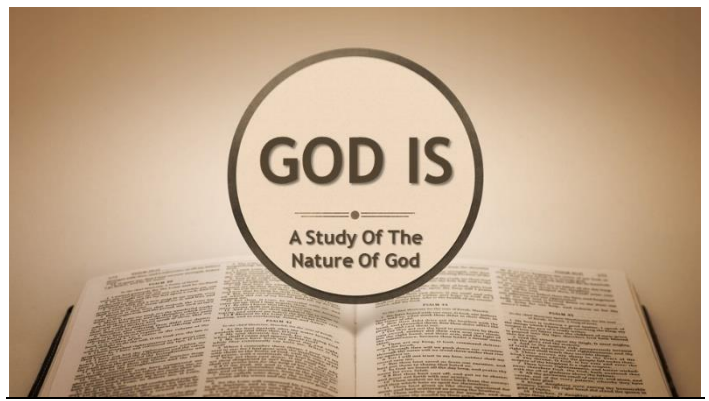
The worst had happened; everything was lost. He was stunned with grief and anger.

“God, how could you do this to me!” he cried.

Early the next day, however, he was awakened by the sound of a ship that was approaching the island. It had come to rescue him. “How did you know I was here?” asked the weary man of his rescuers. “We saw your smoke signal,” they replied.

It is easy to get discouraged when things are going bad. But we shouldn't lose heart because God is at work in our lives, even in the midst of pain and suffering. Remember, next time your little hut is burning to the ground - it just may be a smoke signal that summons the grace of God.

**FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE
GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON!
(JOHN 3:16)**



**Wednesday – September 15
God Is Faithful
(Gene Taylor)**

If you want to get up, step down.
If you want to be seen, get out of
sight.

If you want to be great, forget
yourself.

To belittle is to be little,
To be grateful is to be great.

God has two thrones:
One in highest heaven;
And the other in the lowest heart.

Honor lost – much lost.
Life lost – more lost.
Soul lost – all lost.

Faith sees the INVISIBLE;
Believes the INCREDIBLE;
And receives the IMPOSSIBLE.

Brooksville Church of Christ

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Times of Services

Sunday Bible Class for all ages (10:00am)

Sunday Worship all Welcome (11:00am & 6:00pm)

Wednesday Bible Class for all ages (7:00pm)

Supporting the GOSPEL in other places:

☞ Jamey Hinds, Hollywood, Florida; Roy Fenner, Panama City, Florida

☞ Zeke Flores, Columbus, Texas; The saints in Nicaragua

Contact Kent Heaton (352-283-3889) heatonkent@bellsouth.net