



Vol.12 No.4, April 7, 2024

East Columbus Bulletin

Our Gospel Meeting April 21-25

Charles Willis of New Caney, Texas will be preaching a series of Gospel sermons Sunday April 21-25 for our congregation. What can we do to make it a success? Pray for success. Clear our calendars and attend every service possible. Invite neighbors, friends, and family. Encourage one another. Pray for brother Willis' safety and for his preparation and delivery of his lessons. Encourage him. Be friendly, helpful, and encouraging to our visitors. Pay earnest attention to each lesson. Determine ways we can personally apply what is taught in the sermons and classes. Thank God for opportunities like this to learn and grow in spiritual matters. (EW)

The Highest and Hardest Kind of Honesty (March 7)

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

ALL OF US WANT TO VIEW OURSELVES IN A POSITIVE LIGHT. As a result, we often tell ourselves what we'd like to hear rather than what we need to hear. The human heart is exceedingly "deceitful," as Jeremiah 17:9 says, and it takes an uncommon measure of honesty for us to see when we are lying to ourselves. Think about three areas where self-honesty is both important and very hard:

(1) What does God's word teach? Especially when a text calls for a change that would be difficult to make, we reason our way around it, convincing ourselves of the meaning we prefer the text to have. We tell ourselves that we're "explaining" the passage when all we're really doing is dodging the inconvenience of obeying it.

(2) What kind of relationship do I have with God? Ideally, we should see our relationship with God exactly as it is, neither overestimating nor underestimating it. But rather than look at the facts honestly (2 Corinthians 13:5), we often allow our hearts to lie to us. We define reality in terms of whatever makes us feel good.

(3) What are my true motives, desires, and intentions? Here is the hardest area of all. If the question is What is the real reason why I want to do this? that can be a painful question to answer. It takes peeling off many successive layers of the

Times of Services

Sunday

9:00 a.m. Bible Study
10:00 a.m. Worship

Wednesday

7:00 p.m. Bible Study

Other Study and Worship Opportunities

- The Pines/Cady Hills Bible Study -Sun. & Thurs. at 7:00 p.m.
- Young Bible Scholars – TBA
- Second Tuesdays Lady's Bible Classes – Trinity Care Home@ 11:00 a.m. & Columbus YMCA @ 1:15 p.m.
- First Sunday Benevolent Group A meets directly after worship at the front of the auditorium.
- Monthly Neighborhood Bible Study – April 14, Powell's
- Third Sunday – Trinity Care Home Service - 1:30 p.m.
- Fifth Sunday Singing - TBA
- North Columbus Gospel Meeting – April 16-20
- Our Gospel Meeting – April 21-25

News and Notes

- **Prayer Requests:** Patsy Chunn, Jim Ratcliff, Wade McCrary, Doug Wheeler, Mike Lavender, Mike and Marion Butler, Lee Gallop, the Andy Elliott Family, and Rebecca Powell. Cindy Nutt requests our prayers for her grandchildren and family. Ellen and Dylan Haas ask for prayers for their family. Prayers are requested for John Lavender, Mike and Marilyn's son John has kidney and heart disease issues.
Sick: Jim Ratcliff continues to battle health issues. Janette Clements is recuperating from surgery for her broken arm. Andy Elliott continues to deal with back injury issues. Benny Parker is experiencing health issues. Dylan Haas is undergoing tests to identify the source of his health problems.

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“onion” of our hearts to get down to the real, true desires that are driving our decisions.

Edward White Benson remarked, “How desperately difficult it is to be honest with oneself. It is much easier to be honest with other people.” And yet, this harder kind of honesty is also more important than the easier kind. If we’re not willing to see (1) what God teaches us in the Scriptures, (2) the true status of our relationship with God, and (3) the true motives behind the decisions we make, then no amount of external honesty with other people is going to amount to much. It is God who is our Judge, and He knows “the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). We ought to embrace all of what He knows to be true — even about ourselves. Is it not the truth that will set us free?

“Honesty consists of the unwillingness to lie to others; maturity, which is equally hard to attain, consists of the unwillingness to lie to oneself” (Sydney J. Harris).

Gary Henry, Wordpoints, March 7, 2024

Assurance or apprehension?

"Did I turn off the porch light or did I leave it on? Did I remember to turn off the water? Did I pack my toothbrush?" How often have these nagging questions come to mind as we set off on vacation? Or worse, do they occur to us after already having traveled hundreds of miles from home? Pesky doubts are annoying for sure, but what about doubts of another, deeper, more perplexing kind? Do we sometimes ask ourselves, "Is there really a God? How can I be sure the Bible is really His word? Am I saved?" These are uncertainties of a more significant nature than whether or not you fed the dog before you left and they carry more significant and eternal consequences.

One of the most unsettling things for a Christian to have is doubt about the most fundamental elements of his faith and the devil knows this, using doubt as a most effective tool against us. God's people have dealt with doubt throughout history; even the most courageous of men have wrestled with questions over whether God was there and would help him. David cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning. O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but I have no rest" (Psalm 22:1-2). While this was a foretelling of God's seeming abandonment of the Christ to come, still they were the moans of a tortured man wrestling with deep doubt. Though the sweet singer of Israel could write psalms of celestial praise to God, other times he had to reassure himself in the midst of depression and despair (Psalm 26:1-9; 37:1-ff; 42:5-6).

Sometimes we can identify with the disciples of Jesus being tossed by waves and wind and hear His stinging rebuke, "Why are you afraid, you of little faith?" (Matthew 8:26) Or we hear His gentle reproach "Why did you doubt?" as we sink deeper in the waves of our own despondency and hopelessness (Matthew 14:31).

How do we deal with the persistent, pervading thoughts of doubt and uncertainty? The short answer is "Faith!" The Hebrew writer reminds that "Faith is the

assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." Assurance, conviction, and hope are the things that undergird our faith. They are the substance of what we believe, holding us up under the weight of doubt and our own skepticism. But faith, assurance, conviction, and hope will only be as strong as the one in whom they are placed.

We can know that despite a world that says He doesn't exist, God is there! The very existence of the world is a testimony to the Creator, to the One who makes something from nothing and upholds all things by the power of His word. The reassuring thing is that God is there to His people on a more personal and enduring level: "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). His word, the Bible, is a constant stream of reassurance and promise for those who really want to be His.

"But," you ask, "how can I know the Bible is really from God?" That's a fair question since many religions claim to have books that are inspired from a heavenly source such as the Book of Mormon, or the Koran. The distinction is in the integrity of the book of God. While the religious books mentioned before are replete with mistakes, inaccuracies, and fabrications, the Bible has stood for centuries and has proven to be reliable, accurate and completely trustworthy. Men have tried in various ways to disprove the Bible on many levels and could not. The many evidences for the integrity of the Bible all point to the fact that we have a revelation from God that guides and directs us in everything from assurance to zeal, and sin and doubt.

Perhaps the most wonderful thing about God's word is the confidence it gives to those who truly desire to be His people. Maybe the Holy Spirit had doubters in mind when he inspired John to write, "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. This is the confidence which we have before Him, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us" (1 John 5:13-14).

How does this work on a practical level? We simply live life as best we can, obedient to His word, in trust and faith that He hears and helps us as we trudge through life's storms. One man said, "Every step toward Christ kills a doubt. Every thought, word, and deed for Him carries you away from discouragement" (Culyer). God's word says it like this: "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful..." (Hebrews 10:23).

Doubt will come and attacks even the strongest of us, but there is a doubt-killer! You can be sure that God is there, that He loves you and wants to help you, that His word is sound and true, and that you can be sure you are in His plan! Have faith!

Zeke Flores

*"Blessed assurance, Jesus is Mine,
O what a foretaste of Glory Divine"*

From "Blessed Assurance", Crosby, Fanny J, and Knapp, Phoebe Palmer