

February 6, 2022

The View

“Sirs, we wish to see Jesus.” — John 12:21

Welcome Visitors

Our goal at the Folsom church of Christ is to do everything according to God’s word, including respecting its silence.

We are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church; we have no earthly “headquarters.

“The six elders oversee this church and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily for the benefit of our own members, as we examine Scripture and seek to be built up in our faith in Christ. If you don’t understand something, please do not hesitate to ask the preacher or one of the elders. We welcome and appreciate your comments and questions on any issue and especially if you see or hear anything that you feel does not correspond to God’s word. We are here to serve; please help us do that.

**Please fill out a visitor’s card and put it in the collection plate located near the entrance.
We do not solicit donations from visitors. See page 4 for more information.**

Schedule

The Lord’s Day

9:30 AM Bible Classes

Auditorium: A Study of Paul’s Second & Third Journeys

Room 15/16: Raising Faithful Kids

Room 12: Young Adults Class

10:30 AM: Assembly

Preaching Today: David Posey

Jesus on... the Fabulous Family of God

Livestream at 10:30 <https://tinyurl.com/5f2cbm3y>

Bible Class @ 2:00 PM in room 12 on Judges

Bible Class @ 5 PM — A Study of Prayer in the Psalms (Auditorium)

Young Peoples’ Class, 5 PM @ David & Christie Posey’s home

Middle school class: monthly (contact Dan Stegall at 818-209-9810)

There are several on-going Bible classes in the homes of members. Check with David Posey or one of the other elders if you would like to join one of those classes.

Wednesday 7 PM @ Building

Bible classes for all ages

Auditorium: A Study of Paul’s Second & Third Journeys

Room 15/16: Raising Faithful Kids

Room 12: Young Adults Class

Things to Pray About Before Worship

Lord, fix my heart upon Christ.
Lord, open my mind to your Word.
Lord, remind me of the good news.
Lord, empty me of this world.

Lord, bless those who serve.
Lord, help me to encourage others.
Lord, equip me to respond in grace.
Lord, help me remember I am your child.

The Character of God

By Gabrielle Agee

God does not care, He won't forgive you, he is the ultimate punisher. This is the view of Crispin, the main character of a book called *Crispin: The Cross of Lead*, written by a writer named Avi. Crispin thinks all these things of God when in reality God is nothing like this. God is not unforgiving, unloving, or the ultimate punisher. Instead of this God is the ultimate care giver, the ultimate lover; he is not the ultimate punisher, but the ultimately punished (John 3:16).

God is loving and has loved us from the start. Some Christians think that if they do something really bad God will no longer love them. That's not true because even though we may do so many terrible things there is nothing we can do to make God not love us. Crispin views God in the way that he doesn't love you and he is only there to punish you. Now we may not notice it all the time, but God has expressed his love for us through everything. Sometimes we forget this, but God's love is everlasting and there is no way we can ever not have the love of God in our lives.

Have you ever done something and not been forgiven for it? Well even though you weren't forgiven by the person you did something to, if you confess our sins, God forgives you — he always does. If someone were to ever come up and tell me that God wasn't going to forgive them for what they did I would think that they were crazy. I can't think of a time God didn't forgive me or anyone for that matter. Throughout the Bible all we see is God forgiving people. If you need proof of this you can always look at Psalm 65:3:

When iniquities prevail against me,
you atone for our transgressions.

Some people view God as angry and unforgiving and that if you mess up once God will send you to hell. Whenever you think God doesn't or won't forgive you just think of how many times some of Jesus's disciples messed up. God's forgiveness is not something we need to earn. God has given forgiveness to us as a gift — all we need to do is accept it.

Sometimes we think God is the ultimate punisher and that he will send us to hell when we have done so many bad things, but in reality God is the ultimately punished. God is the ultimately punished because he sent his one and only son to die for us. When God sent his son and saw his son being beaten and punished for things he didn't do God was heartbroken. If we think about it we were the punishers. Humans beat and killed Jesus, but yet somehow God didn't punish us. God could have just killed us in an instant, but that was the purpose of Jesus saving us from our sins not because he wanted to, but Jesus chose to save us because he loves us. There are so many things God could punish us for, but because of Jesus's sacrifice we are free of punishment.

There are many more characteristics of God, but out of all of them I think these were most important. God is loving, he is forgiving, and he is punished. God was and will always be these things to us because he chose to be these

things for us. All of these things are a gift from God that we under any circumstances don't deserve and we will never deserve his gift.

Out of everything there is in the Bible there is nothing that says we did anything to deserve God's gift, but that's the good thing about God that he continues to love and forgive us no matter what. Speaking through Jeremiah, God said to his people who had rebelled against him,

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." *Jeremiah 29:11*

The Sky is Falling!!

Most of us were probably introduced to a character named "Chicken Little" when we were but young children, listening to moral stories adults in our lives read to us. Based on an ancient European folktale called, "Henny Penny," American children have been treated to this version of that ancient story for generations now. The cumulative moral story is about a chicken who believes the world is about to come to an end and runs all over the farmyard announcing, "The sky is falling! The sky is falling!" That phrase has passed into our language as a common idiom which means that some disaster is imminent.

I suppose that people have always had a tendency to look at their times and declare that certain events were signaling the end. When Jesus spoke the words we know as Matthew chapter 24, He addressed common fears Jewish people of His day had about an impending disaster. Of course, there was good reason for their anxiety— Rome was just 40 years away from destroying Jerusalem, and life as that generation knew it.

Today, all sorts of prognosticators see COVID or the threat of another war in Europe as a sign of the end. Premillennial dispensationalists have a field day with threatening world events and are just certain we are about to face "Armageddon" and the destruction of the world order as we know it. "The sky is falling," as far as they are concerned. The Bible, however, does not provide us with such a program for the end. Rather, it warns that when the world does end, all will know it was Christ coming in the clouds for judgment— not an invasion of a European army or a dreaded virus wreaking havoc. God, not man, nor a virus, created the world and He will get credit for destroying it as well (2 Thess. 1:7-9; 2 Pet. 3:10-13, etc.)

Aside from this, we occasionally hear someone predict the demise of the church of the Lord. Again, the only person who can destroy the church of Christ is the One who built it. As long as the Gospel is obeyed, people will be added to the Lord's church by the Lord (Acts 2:47). "The sky IS NOT falling" regarding the Lord's church. Chicken Little, be quiet!

— Mark W. White
Cypress, Texas

The Holy Spirit

Picture this common scene, but with a wrinkle: a preacher is about to baptize a man and says, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and...*uh, uh, uh...*” He can’t remember the rest. Why? Because, in some places, the Holy Spirit hasn’t been seen or heard from since the Day of Pentecost.

Unfortunately, this rings true for too many of us. We believe in the godhead, and we give lip service to the deity and importance of the Holy Spirit, but it rarely goes beyond that. And when it comes to giving thanks for him — do we *ever*? I can’t remember the last time I heard the Holy Spirit mentioned in a prayer and we rarely sing a hymn about him.

Perhaps it’s because we’ve gone overboard in our efforts to refute the charismatic movement’s misplaced emphasis on the Holy Spirit. That error needs to be confronted, but not by ignoring the Spirit. We should have the highest level of appreciation and gratitude for the what the Holy Spirit has done for us and is doing for us.

What is the Holy Spirit’s work?

We received the gift of the Holy Spirit at baptism (Acts 2:38). That gift is the promise of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:39), a gift that assures us that are saved and will spend an eternity with the Father, Son and the *Holy Spirit*. We know that every Christian *has* the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:32; 1 Cor. 6:19; Rom. 8:9). But what does He **do** for (or *in*) us?

The primary work of the Holy Spirit is finished. John chapters 14-16 reveal why the Holy Spirit came to the apostles (see John 14:15-17, 26; 15:26-27; 16:7-11). The “Spirit of truth” revealed God’s will to specially appointed men who then preached that gospel to the world. Paul sums it up in 1 Cor. 2:12-13. The miracles and signs and wonders that were performed by these men through the Holy Spirit were performed for the purpose of getting an audience for the gospel, which is “the power of God for salvation” (Rom. 1:16).

Today, the work of the Holy Spirit continues through that word as the gospel is preached and people respond. Far from being a dead letter that word is “...*living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart*” (Heb. 4:12). For those of us who have been baptized for forgiveness of sins, the Holy Spirit is the source for fulfilling the third part of the Great Commission: “*teach them to observe all that I have commanded you*” (Mt. 28:19).

A critical part of Holy Spirit’s work is *to keep us from sinning*. That might sound simplistic, but think about it: sin is the only thing that can keep us out of heaven. If we have the Holy Spirit, then we have everything we need to prevent that unspeakable consequence. The Spirit’s work is to get us out of the sinning business. Paul says, in Romans 8:1-15, that if we are led by the Spirit, then we will put to death the deeds of the flesh (v. 13).

How do we do that? Everything the Spirit revealed is designed to help us live according to His instruction and direction, to lead us in the way of Christ and to direct us away from a life lived in the flesh. “Those who are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. 8:9). The desires of the flesh and the desires Spirit are opposed to each other (Gal. 5:17).

How do you know if the Holy Spirit is at work in you?

The answer is simple: look at your lifestyle and your choices and compare them with God’s word. It’s as simple as that. Romans 8:16 is instructive: “*The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God...*” If the Spirit is a “feeling better felt than told,” then this verse makes no sense. But if the the Spirit, who is a divine per-

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son, has revealed how one *becomes* and *remains* a child of God, then it makes perfect sense. To find out if you are a child of God in good standing, *read the Scriptures*, “handling accurately the word of truth” (II Tim. 2:15).

The Holy Spirit wants us to quit sinning. Of course, we still sin but he has revealed that we are forgiven through confession [I John 1:9]. He aims to remove our love of sin and our practice of sin. Though we will always fall short of God’s perfection (Rom. 3:23), we can always love the truth and hate sin. No one who retains a love for sin and insists on practicing sin will ever see God (I John 3:9) but if the Spirit is dwelling in us, we will never *practice* sin — we will hate it.

The Holy Spirit guides us in a path that will help us to practice righteousness instead of sin. Paul said, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, “*walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh*” (Gal. 5:16).

Without the Holy Spirit, we would not know the gospel and could not be saved. Without the Holy Spirit, we would not know whether we are children of God or not — we would have no confidence. Without the Holy Spirit, we would not have the word of God, the precious “*lamp to our feet and a light to our way*” (Psalm 119:105).

It’s a shame that we too often forget and neglect the crucial work of the Holy Spirit. Let’s determine, from now on, to include Him in our prayers of thanksgiving and in our conversations with our children and friends and in our sermons and classes. Because, without the Holy Spirit, we would all be lost.

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