

January 8, 2023

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 five 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 when is passed.
We do not solicit donations from visitors. See page 4 for more information.**

Schedule

The Lord’s Day

9:30 AM Bible Classes

Auditorium: “Love Your Bible”

Young Adult Class: “Be ready to give an answer” (1 Peter 3:15)

10:30 AM: Assembly

Preaching Today

David Posey

“The Beauty of the Narrow Way”

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

Bible Class @ 5 PM — Praying the Psalms (Auditorium)

High School Class @ 5 PM @ David & Christie Posey’s home

Middle school class: monthly (contact David Sanderson (david.r.sanderson@intel.com))

or Seth Reagan (sethreagan@gmail.com)

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: Love Your Bible

Room 12: Young Adults Class: “Be ready to give an answer” (1 Peter 3:15)

Letter from Pliny the Younger, governor (*legatus Augusti*) of Bythynia (110-112 AD), to Emperor Trajan, on the "problem" of the Christians in the province

It is my practice, my lord, to refer to you all matters concerning which I am in doubt. For who can better give guidance to my hesitation or inform my ignorance? I have never participated in trials of Christians. I therefore do not know what offenses it is the practice to punish or investigate, and to what extent. And I have been not a little hesitant as to whether there should be any distinction on account of age or no difference between the very young and the more ma-

"...in the case of those who were denounced to me as Christians, I have observed the following procedure: I interrogated these as to whether they were Christians; those who confessed I interrogated a second and a third time, threatening them with punishment; those who persisted I ordered executed."

ture; whether pardon is to be granted for repentance, or, if a man has once been a Christian, it does him no good to have ceased to be one; whether the name itself, even without offenses, or only the offenses associated with the name are to be punished.

Meanwhile, in the case of those who were denounced to me as Christians, I have observed the following procedure: I interrogated these as to whether they were Christians; those who confessed I interrogated a second and a third time, threatening them with punishment; those who persisted I ordered executed. For I had no doubt that, whatever the nature of their creed, stubbornness and inflexible obstinacy surely deserve to be punished. There were others possessed of the same folly; but because they were Roman citizens, I signed an order for them to be transferred to Rome.

Soon accusations spread, as usually happens, because of the proceedings going on, and several incidents occurred. An anonymous document was published containing the names of many persons. Those who denied that they were or had been Christians, when they invoked the gods in words dictated by me, offered prayer with incense and wine to your image, which I had ordered to be brought for this purpose together with statues of the gods, and moreover cursed Christ — none of which those who are really Christians, it is said, can be forced to do — these I thought should be discharged. Others named by the informer declared that they were Christians, but then denied it, asserting that they had been but had ceased to be, some three years before, others many years, some as much as twenty-five years. They all worshipped your image and the statues of the gods, and cursed Christ.

They asserted, however, that the sum and substance of their fault or error had been that they were accustomed to meet on a fixed day before dawn and sing responsively a hymn to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves by oath, not to some crime, but not to commit fraud, theft, or adultery, not falsify their trust, nor to refuse to return a trust when called upon to do so. When this was over, it was their custom to depart and to assemble again to partake of food — but ordinary and innocent food. Even this, they affirmed, they had ceased to do after my edict by which, in accordance with your instructions, I had forbidden political associations. Accordingly, I judged it all the more necessary to find out what the truth was by torturing two female slaves who were called deaconesses. But I discovered nothing else but depraved, excessive superstition.

I therefore postponed the investigation and hastened to consult you. For the matter seemed to me to warrant consulting you, especially because of the number involved. For many persons of every age, every rank, and also of both sexes are and will be endangered. For the contagion of this superstition has spread not only to the cities but also to the villages and farms. But it seems possible to check and cure it. It is certainly quite clear that the temples, which had been almost deserted, have begun to be frequented, that the established religious rites, long neglected, are being resumed, and that from everywhere sacrificial animals are coming, for which until now very few purchasers could be found. Hence it is easy to imagine what a multitude of people can be reformed if an opportunity for repentance is afforded.

Emperor Trajan's Response

You observed proper procedure, my dear Pliny, in sifting the cases of those who had been denounced to you as Christians. For it is not possible to lay down any general rule to serve as a kind of fixed standard. They are not to be sought out; if they are denounced and proved guilty, they are to be punished, with this reservation, that whoever denies that he is a Christian and really proves it — that is, by worshiping our gods — even though he was under suspicion in the past, shall obtain pardon through repentance. But anonymously posted accusations ought to have no place in any prosecution. For this is both a dangerous kind of precedent and out of keeping with the spirit of our age.

Epistulae X.97, 112 AD

Epistulae X.96, 112 AD

“THOUGHTS & PRAYERS”

BY DAVID POSEY, JR.

By now I am sure most of you have heard the name Damar Hamlin. If you have not, he is a football player in the NFL for the Buffalo Bills. On Monday night during the game, he made a routine tackle got up from the tackle and then immediately collapsed. This was a Monday night football game. Because it was a crucial game between playoff calibre teams, it watched by 10's of millions of fans.

Hamlin collapsed because he had gone into cardiac arrest. He was given CPR and AED on the field. This is the first time in NFL history that anyone has received CPR on the field during game play. It was a sobering and stunning sight to see players in shock, crying and praying. For men that have played the game for so many years and have seen countless people fall to the ground with injuries everyone knew this was different. Since Monday a few things have happened that made me think about how people generally react to major national events.

Thoughts and prayers, overreaction, and money!

Damar is the son of Nina and Mario Hamlin; he was born when Nina was only 16. She runs a daycare and also an office cleaning business at night, to help make ends meet. When he entered the NFL, Damar had started a GoFundMe to fund a toy drive in his hometown of McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania. He had set a goal of \$2500 dollars at the beginning of 2020. \$2500 seems like nothing for an NFL player but, before Monday night, he had struggled to get to his goal. Now, as of Thursday morning, his GoFundMe account is at 7.1 million dollars.

Without fail we see people contribute large sums of money when something like this happens. 9/11, Sandy Hook, Natural disasters, and other national events bring people together and create the desire to give large sums of money that they otherwise would not even though the need for those less fortunate and suffering always exists.

Why do we wait until something major happens to part with our money? Are funds being given because of the goodness of our hearts or because we want to be part of the group. It interesting that all of the top donors on his site have not kept their identities hidden. It's a who's who list of the NFL.

But there's another issue.

“We must decide if the NFL is a sport, we want to see our children playing where they have a chance of dying.”

The above was said by one commentator of the many who overreacted to such an event. The same people will put their teens in a car at age 16 and send them off without a thought. Look up how many kids die in a car compared to how many die in a football game, a school shooting, COVID — the list is long and so are the over-reactions. There is an overreaction because people are

scared to die or scared to see death. It puts mortality in our face and, without the proper perspective and a relationship with God, we should be scared.

Faithful Christians, however, should not be working harder to stay on this earth than we do to get to heaven. “I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death” John 8:51. “But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.” Philippians 3:20-21.

“Most may not talk about God, but the moment devastation comes, the human instinct within man knows to cry out to its Maker.”

For the first time in my lifetime I saw a sportscaster pray on TV. Dan Orlovsky, an ex-NFL quarterback and NFL analyst on ESPN, decided that he needed to pray on national television during their normal sports broadcast. Honestly it was uplifting, surprising, and hopeful.

If you are on any social media or watch the news you couldn't count how many “thoughts and prayers” have been uttered by everyone (see Matthew 6:5-8). It is no different than every other national crisis or event. I am not sure why this event has caused so much attention to pray compared to some others we have recently gone through. There certainly is a different tone and people don't seem to be worried about being cancelled. It has also been reported that Damar is a Christian and was not afraid to talk about his faith; all his teammates knew what he believed. That's a challenging position to take, especially as a rookie in the NFL just last year. As hopeful and pleasant as it is to hear everyone talk or say a prayer in the national arena, we all know it will be temporary, just like every event in the past.

What I think about is that it is temporary for me as well. Do I fall into the trap of only praying hard — or at all — when in distress, or when I want something or need comfort? It's so easy to look down on those who do it in passing, but what is our pray life like? Do we pray without ceasing, do we pray in the happy moments, do we give God credit for the incredibly blessed lives we live in the US in 2023? Hearing a young man pray on TV was an amazing uplifting moment but do our kids hear those same prayers from us? Paul reminds us: “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people” (*Ephesians 6:18*).