



THE FOREST HILL NEWS

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Number 7

Forest Hill Church of Christ

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Haston Handley, Youth
Jonah Wood, Youth

VISIT US SOON!

Sunday:

Bible Study..... 9:30 A.M.
Morning Worship.....10:30 A.M.
Afternoon Worship.... 1:30 P.M.

Wednesday:

Bible Study7:00 P.M.

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Unity Is Possible

Phil Sanders

That God wills for His people to be united is undeniable (John 17:20-23). Paul pleaded with the quarreling church at Corinth, divided behind their favorite personalities, to agree and to “be united in the same mind and the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10-13 ESV).

The very words of the Bible reveal God’s intention that the Word be understood. Moses told Israel that God’s word was “not too hard for you” and not out of reach (Deu. 30:11-14). God commanded the Law to be read to everyone in Israel every seven years (31:9-13). No doubt people from all walks of life, all economic classes and all mindsets heard the same Law from those who read it. God expected the young who did not know it to learn it.

Luke carefully investigated the life of Jesus that Theophilus might “have certainty concerning the things you have been taught” (Luke 1:1-4). Paul wrote no other thing but what the Corinthians could read and understand, and he prayed they would understand it to the end (2 Cor. 1:13). Paul wrote the Ephesians with the expectation that they could understand. He said, “When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ” (Eph. 3:4). John said, “I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth” (1 John 2:21 NASB).

Years ago preachers tackled the subject, “Can We All See the Bible Alike?” They had heard the objection that a passage of Scripture can be interpreted in a multitude of ways; but they believed there was only one correct way to interpret Scripture. They showed examples of large groups hearing a command and obeying it the same way. They were unified in their response to God’s will and instructions.

For instance, the people of Israel followed God’s complicated instructions to Joshua to march for seven days around the walls of Jericho. They did just as they were instructed, and the walls of the city fell flat (Joshua 6:1-21). People can act in unison.

After Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, 3,000 people understood his instructions and obeyed them. “So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41ESV). Among these Jews were people from many countries, of different mindsets, in different generations (note: all old enough to repent); yet they all obeyed Peter’s inspired instructions to repent and be baptized (v. 38). When the Lord gives instructions to all people in all places for all time, one would expect those instructions to be insufficiently simple enough for all to obey.

When the earliest Christians moved out of a Jewish world into a Gentile one, they did not campaign for a reinvented Christianity. Paul didn’t argue for an accommodation to culture. He argued for the world to conform to the gospel teaching. “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom. 12:2 NASB). Paul praised those at Corinth who held “firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you” (1 Cor. 11:2). He explained how important it was for the Corinthians to hold fast to them.

(continued on page 4)

Unity Is Possible (continued from page 1)

The Problem of Division

Some divisions arise from unbalanced priorities. Some see the task as more important while others see the people involved as more important. If the truth be told, both the people and the task are important. Paul and Barnabas had such a “sharp disagreement” over John Mark they parted from each other for separate ministries (Acts 15:36-41). Their disagreement was not about the teaching of the text but about what they thought was best.

Many divisions are the result of selfish ambition and the lust for power. Paul lists “enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissension, divisions” as works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21 ESV). The Holy Spirit revealed through James:

“But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace” (James 3:14-18).

Leaders in the Restoration Movement believed the acceptance of human opinions, creeds, councils, practices and names caused much hostility. They wanted something better—a pure Christianity that returned to the Bible and remained free from human traditions. They knew if they abandoned the human and concentrated on what was from God, they could find a basis for unity. They could have unity through following the truth of God’s Word found in Scriptures. This meant they had to cast off everything human and denominational and return to the Christianity God proposed in the New Testament.

They rejected teachings and practices that cannot be found in God’s Word. They believed they could not require members to believe a doctrine not expressly taught in the New Testament. They said, “We speak where the Bible speaks, and we are silent where the Bible is silent.” They wanted unity in essentials, freedom in matters of opinion, and love in all things.

The Path to Unity

Unity in Christ begins with listening to the voice of Jesus. Hearing and following His words identifies and defines us as His true disciples. The Lord Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” (John 10: 27, cf. v. 16). The Lord’s sheep will not hear other voices (vv. 3-5). When asked if He was a king,

the Lord Jesus answered Pilate, “You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice” (18:37 NASB).

Whether we abide in His words or whether we listen to other voices matters to Jesus. To some Jews who believed, Jesus said, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31-32 ESV). True disciples do not depart from or add to the words of Jesus.

What happens when churches allow a second voice to mix in with the voice of Jesus? For instance, some today are fellowshiping those who were sprinkled as infants the same as if they were immersed as penitent believers. When a second voice enters, teaching something different from the first, confusion and compromise arise. Those who propose such things do so in order to be inclusive, thinking this opens hearts and unifies. A union of confusion, however, never unites in God’s eyes. Jesus’ prayer for unity never contemplated union with error. Many congregations have split because someone thought we should follow a second voice.

There is but one gospel, one body, one faith, one hope, one Lord, one Spirit and one God. There cannot be a second of any of these. Anyone who for the sake of inclusiveness suggests a second body or baptism confuses and divides. They include what the Lord does not include. They give false hope and do not help the lost to come to the Christ. Confusing the gospel means one is not listening to the voice of Jesus.

When people fail to listen, half-heartedly listen, or hear only a little of what the Lord has said, their minds can easily wander from the truth. The Hebrews writer noted, “We must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it” (Heb. 2:1). Active listening demands our close attention and our understanding what the Lord says.

When people filter out what they don’t like and hear Jesus say only what they agree with, they cease to regard Jesus as Lord. Some Jews who did not like what Jesus said withdrew from Him. Jesus asked the 12 if they were going away too. Peter answered, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God” (John 6:68-69). It takes the whole counsel of God to have the words of eternal life. We cannot choose some things and reject others. To reject Jesus’ words at any point is to reject Him altogether (James 2:10-11).

(from Gospel Advocate, Feb. 2016)

(to be continued)

LORD'S TABLE

PRESIDE: Harold Mangrum Marv Sowell
ASSIST: Robert Berch Danny Braddock
 Duke Brown Sean Ellis
 Ty Phillips Cecil Sowell

PRAYERS

A.M. OPENING: Phil Houston
A.M. CLOSING: Jim Woody
P.M. OPENING: John Connell
P.M. CLOSING: Allan Hart

If you are unable to lead prayer or serve at the Lord's table, please contact Cedric Huff or Paul Connell.

RECORD, WEEK OF February 14, 2016

BIBLE STUDY: 235
 A.M. WORSHIP: 305
 P.M. WORSHIP: 215
 CONTRIBUTION: \$17,619.00

OUR SICK

ILL AT HOME: Sherry Brown, Legacy Hanna, Carolyn Jones, Olivia Owens and Avis Terry.

HOMEBOUND

Bessie Berry Albert & Ruth House
 Irby Cole Clarine Justice
 Hazel Eskew Ryan McCullar
 Tommy & Nell Herndon Helen Palazola
 Anita Hopper

INFORMATION LINE: 531-8849

BAPTIZED: Kendall Barnes.

REQUESTED PRAYERS: Jagger House and Connie Streiber.

OUR SYMPATHY IS EXTENDED to the family of Jerry Lee, former Knight Arnold elder, who passed away Friday, February 12.



KIRBY PINES Retirement Community worship service each fourth Sunday 8:00-8:45a.m. conducted by Forest Hill. Our next service will be Sunday, February 28.

LEGACY ESTATES worship service each Sunday afternoon 3:00 p.m. conducted by Forest Hill.



N.B. HARDEMAN LIBRARY
 is open each Sunday afternoon from 12:45-1:15.

NOTE OF APPRECIATION

Dear Forest Hill,
 Thank you so much for all the cards, calls and visits. I especially thank you for all the prayers on my behalf during my recent surgery and recovery.
 John Pope

HEARTS & HANDS

TEAM "A" (Paul Connell) & TEAM "F" (John Connell) will meet Sunday, February 28 after the morning service for a covered dish luncheon.

UPCOMING EVENTS

LADIES' CLASS and MEN'S CLASS meet each Tuesday morning at 10:00 a.m. We will meet for breakfast at Cracker Barrel, Tuesday, February 23 at 8:45.

LADIES' EVENING BIBLE STUDY Tuesday, February 16 at 6:30 in the breakroom. You may bring your dinner.

YOUTH and PARENTS Friday, February 19, 5:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. Set-up for banquet. Food provided.

SILVER HEARTS BANQUET Saturday, February 20 at 5:30 p.m. for our senior adult members, hosted by Forest Hill Youth.

JCs ASSEMBLE Saturday, February 27 at noon in the fellowship hall for a Lego building competition.

HEARTS & HANDS Reorganization Luncheon Sunday, March 13 after the morning service. **Zone 5** is responsible for set-up and clean-up.

YOUTH DAY Saturday, March 26. Theme: *Faithful Love*.

50th MSOP LECTURESHIP March 27-March 31. Theme: *Preach the Word*.

VBS June 6-8.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
 Men are needed to assist as ushers. If you can help, please see Marion Maund.

Last week's solution :
But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23

CORNERSTONE
 Replace each letter of the alphabet with a different letter to reveal the passage of scripture.
 HSF CPNTFJMFI VMT HSF IRNPHVJZ XNVGF ISVNN WF QNVT URJ HSFL; VMT HSF TFIFJH ISVNN JFORPGF, VMT WNRIIRL VI HSF JRIF. PH ISVNN WNRIIRL VWEMTVMHNZ, VMT JFORPGF FDFM CPHS ORZ VMT IPMQPMQ HSF QNRJZ RU NFWVVMRM ISVNN WF QPDFM EMHR PH, HSF FBGFNNFMGZ RU GVJLFN VMT ISVJRM, HSFZ ISVNN IFF HSF QNRJZ RU HSF NRJT, VMT HSF FBGFNNFMGZ RU REJ QRT.
 Clue: N = L Solution next week Clue: Q = G

The Word Stands

John J. Deberry, Jr.

Isaiah wrote, “the grass withereth, the flowers fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand forever” (Isaiah 40:8).

Can you quote any of the words of the great Egyptian Pharaohs or the mighty kings of Ethiopia? Perhaps you are aware of the edicts of the titans of Babylon, the Chaldeans, the Persians? Then let’s search our minds for the powerful speeches of the Greek monarchs, or even the great Caesars of Rome. I venture that all were great, mighty and powerful generations of men who knew not the ultimate impotence of their words. How is that? Because the influence of their words have faded into antiquity. Their kingdoms, thrones and especially their words are but relics of times past with no relevance—just a study of the past.

In contrast, the word of God is inspired and was spoken through lesser renowned men of God. His WORD endures generations after the messengers themselves have been removed from the earth.

Near the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus wanted His disciples to realize that the world as they knew it was about to change. They were warned of destruction, lies and suffering. However, they were not to depend or trust in those things around them, but on the enduring and unchanging WORD of God; “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matthew 24:35).

Too often as brothers and sisters, we allow ourselves to become too dependent on the words of men. This is not the way of the disciples of Christ. We have a peace of God which passeth understanding, which keeps our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7).

God’s word is IMMUTABLE; it is unwavering; it gives us hope. In the midst of all human weakness and infidelity, there is one thing that strengthens and endures, the WORD of God.

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