

Our Gospel Meeting

Brett Hogland (Blue Springs, Missouri) will preach the Word!

Receiving the Word with All Readiness- Sunday, 10AM

Lay Aside Every Weight- Sunday- 10:45AM & 5PM (a two-part lesson)

Moses & the Rock of Stumbling- Monday, 7PM

Calling on the Name of the Lord- Tuesday, 7PM

Live Like You Were Dying- Wednesday, 7PM

Editor's Note: Our article in *Arkansas Weekly* is primarily an invitation for the readers to come to the final two nights of our gospel meeting. If you are some place and without a flyer, then tell someone about the meeting and encourage them to find our article in *Arkansas Weekly* for more information and to read it each week.

Simple opportunities to teach the lost and assist each other.

This week is full of opportunities to be *hospitable to one another without grumbling* (1 Peter 4:9). Beside getting to know Brett, many families are extra busy this week. Some of our parents and/or widows may need help with rides, food, or other needs. Can you extend yourself toward them this week? Don't wait to be asked, but find a need. When you do, Jesus takes it personally (in a good way, Matt. 25:40). We will also have a variety of visitors this week—entertaining [showing hospitality to] strangers can have unusual benefits (Heb. 13:2).

Pray for: Janice White, The Ledgerwoods, Samuel Southall, and others with ongoing trials, our brethren who are travelling, and new Christians among us.

There is a variety of simple work to be done. See the sign-up sheets on the bulletin board at the back.

We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM

Church of Christ—Quail Valley
4104 E. Harrison St.
Batesville, AR 72501
Office- (870) 793-6700

Evangelist:
David Halbrook 569-4491

The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

March 2, 2014

www.qvcoc.com

"WHILE I WAS BUSY HERE AND THERE."

Brett W. Hogland

The 20th chapter of 1Kings records an interesting story in Ahab's infamous life that was "written for our learning" (Ro.15:4). The context reveals that God had given Ahab the complete and convincing victory over the Syrians and the capture of their tyrannical king – Ben-Hadad (vv.28-33). Furthermore, Ahab was given the opportunity to execute Ben-Hadad as God had ordained. Ahab chose to spare Ben-Hadad's life and form a treaty with him instead (v.34). A prophet disguised himself as having been wounded in battle and approached Ahab's chariot. The prophet stated that he had been given charge of a prisoner with the liability that he would lose his own life if he allowed the prisoner to escape. The disguised prophet confessed to the King, "while your servant was busy here and there, he was gone" (v.40). Ahab easily recognized and stated that the consequence of this soldier's negligence would be the loss of his own life. The prophet then revealed himself to Ahab and told him "Thus says the Lord: 'Because you have let slip out of your hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore your life shall go for his life, and your people for his people'" (v.42). By way of clever illustration, God made known to Ahab that the opportunity he wasted was a clear dereliction of duty and it would carry a serious consequence. The very king that Ahab allowed to escape would later rise up against Israel with his Syrian army and take Ahab's life (Chapter 22). Let's observe the following few things from this lesson.

Neglecting God's opportunities carries serious consequences

This fact is clear, both, in revelation and also in the things that we observe in life. God gives the farmer a window of opportunity to plant his crop every year. The farmer who misses the planting season will never again have the opportunity to plant that year's crop, thus missing the harvest and suffering the poverty of his negligence. The wise man said "To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under

heaven: A time to be born and a time to die; A time to plant, and a time to pluck what is planted” (Ecc.3:1-2). Young people have a window of opportunity in youth to educate themselves when their minds are more “pliable”. Parents have the strategic window of opportunity to “train up a child in the way he should go” when he is young (Pr.22:6). The pliable mind and character of youth can never be regained once it has passed. God gives us the opportunity to hear the gospel (Ac.11:13-14 ; 10:33) and “be saved” (Ac.2:40) from the condemnation of our sins. The Holy Spirit sternly warns us of the consequences of “neglecting so great a salvation” as God has afforded (He.2:3). The dereliction of our duty or stewardship in regard to God’s opportunities carries eternal consequences (Lk.12:42-48) (Mt.25:31-46). Especially serious, is the failure to warn the lost of their doom (Ez.3:18) (Ac.20:26-27).

You have an opportunity next week

If the Lord wills, we will have the opportunity next week to work together in a gospel meeting to save men’s souls and edify ourselves (He.3:13-14 ; 10:24-25) in the assembly of the saints through worship, singing (Col.3:16), and gospel preaching (Ac.20:32) (1Pe.2:2). Will you seize the opportunity to invite your friends, family and co-workers to hear the gospel as Cornelius did (Ac.10:24,33)? Will you “redeem the time” that you have to save their souls (Co.4:5)? Will you seize the opportunity to be in attendance yourself, to be edified and to be considerate to your brethren, stirring them up to love and good works (He.10:24-25)? Will your children be here regardless of their conflicting activity so that they may learn priorities and be built up in the Faith (Pr.22:6)? Or will you tell God that you are “busy here and there” with your kid’s school, sports or various activities? Will you be “busy here and there” with your job, family or personal interests? Are you already making plans to be away during the meeting? Will you let this God-given opportunity slip through your hands? The Lord may grant that you live to see other gospel meetings, but this particular opportunity will be lost in just two weeks. What will you do with your opportunity?

Editor’s Note: Though this article was originally written to be read the week before a gospel meeting, let’s apply these words to our work beginning TODAY!

RISE UP AND BUILD OR SIT DOWN AND ROT!

John A. Smith

Nehemiah, by God’s grace, came upon the scene at a time when Israel desperately needed his leadership. He proved himself to be a man who not only recognized the problems that existed, but was willing to seek the solution. Beyond this, Nehemiah was willing to spend himself to help effect the needed solution.

Upon returning to Jerusalem, Nehemiah covertly inspected the crumbled remains of Jerusalem’s defenses. His heart had been deeply hurt by the news of the plight of his brethren. But now that he saw it first hand, he came to understand the urgency of the need. With the simplicity of message and words, he called upon his brethren to motivate themselves to action:

“Then I said to them, ‘You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lies in waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach.’ And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me, and also of the king’s words that he had spoken to me. So they said, ‘Let us rise up and build.’ Then they set their hands to do this good work.”(Nehemiah 2:17-18)

In less than 58 days, the walls had been rebuilt. This was an amazing feat. Surely, we can see the hand of God in their success. But, we need to see something else. God did not come to earth in a physical form to do their work for them. He supplied the encouragement, motivation, and protection. The people had to supply the will and the motivation. They succeeded because they were of a mind to work and rose to build.

Israel could have seen the need and even known the solution, but if they were unwilling to move themselves nothing would have been accomplished. Without their willingness to rise up and build, the walls would have remained a crumbled mass of broken stone, and they would have continued to be the laughing stock of the region.

The need to rise up and build is as great today as it has ever been. While we do not have literal walls to build, we remain in need of defenses. The walls of our heart need to be founded deep in the Word of God. Will we rise up and build or sit down and rot?

The foundation of our faith needs to be constantly strengthened. Unless it is built upon an unwavering confidence in and knowledge of the Word, our walls can easily be crumbled by our spiritual enemies. Strengthening one’s faith requires using it. Have you risen up to build or are you sitting on the sidelines waiting to rot?

Within the Lord’s Church, there is much work to be done. There are weak that need to be strengthened, unfaithful that need to be rebuked, and the ignorant that need to be taught. Do we see the need? Do we see the solution? Are we willing to move ourselves? Will we rise up and build or sit down and rot?

One basic difficulty in rising up to build is motivation. No one can motivate you, but yourself. Others can encourage, provide rewards, or threaten punishment, but ultimately, it is you who will decide what to do. Look around you – do you see things that need to be done? Then why not rise up and meet those needs?