

Information and Reminders—

Pray for: Janice White, The Ledgerwoods, Samuel Southall, and others with ongoing health battles or other trials, our brethren who are travelling, and new Christians whom Satan will certainly attack (Matt. 13:20-23).

The men meet on the first Sunday of the month to discuss our work and duties. There is a sign-up sheet at the back for items needing their attention.

Simple opportunities to teach the lost and assist each other.

-- *Summer Bible Series* this week, Monday-Friday at 7PM. Pray for this work and submit to and work with one another in this work (1 Pet. 5:5).

-- No one has volunteered to post various Scriptures on our signboard, out by the road, for July. People read this sign if we give them something to read!

-- Our fall meeting with Wayne Goff has been scheduled for **September 22-27**.

-- Our articles appear in *Arkansas Weekly* July 3, 17, 24, 31 this month. Many past and current articles are available at our website.

-- Future gospel meetings: Brett Hogland (Spring 2014), Ron Halbrook (Fall 2014), Donnie Rader (Spring 2015), Jimmy Stevens (Fall 2015).

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

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The Exhorter

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

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

July 21, 2013

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SEEKING PEARLS

Kyle Pope (<http://olsenpark.com/Bulletins13/FS15.11.pdf>)

All of us have come across an item at some point in our lives, either in a catalog or in a store, and from the moment we first see it we realize that we must have it! Our better judgment may tell us we don't really need it. Our wallet tells us that we can't afford it. Even so, we ignore our better judgment, disregard the bank account, and give in to the overpowering compulsion to make the object our own.

Most of the time this is not the kind of disposition that a Christian should allow to govern his or her behavior, yet Jesus, on one occasion spoke about such an attitude in a very positive light. In Matthew 13:45-46 He told about a merchant, "Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it" (NKJV).

Unless we share this gentleman's passion for pearls we might miss the point of Jesus' statement. It is significant because He began the parable by saying "...the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking pearls" (13:45a). This shows us that Jesus is not really talking about pearls, but about what motivates a person to serve God as a citizen of the kingdom of heaven.

It is amazing to see the energy we often have to devote to various activities in our life. It may be a hobby, a career, or the pursuit of pleasure—there always seems to be an endless supply of enthusiasm for the things that truly interest us. Yet, it may be that when it comes to things that concern our soul we only seem to have a limited amount of time and energy. How many people there must be in this world who go from birth to death without the slightest thought of anything more than the physical. That is not to say that physical things are evil, but why would we choose to spend more time on things that are temporary and no time on things that are eternal?

We often fall victim to what could be called the have tos. That is — “Do I have to study the Bible to go to heaven?” Or perhaps — “Do I have to go to attend every service?” Maybe you have thought to your self — “Do I have to give up (you fill in the blank) to be a Christian?” Or, “Do I have to talk to all of my friends about the gospel?” If we truly exhibited the attitude that Christ taught in this parable all of these questions would be meaningless to us. What would concern us was an all-consuming desire to live pleasing to the Lord!

All of us have many things in our lives that occupy our time and energy that do not involve the cause of Christ. Now these may not be sinful in and of themselves, yet, if they have become more important to us than the cause of Christ, they have become sinful! Perhaps this is why Jesus, in His lesson on our concerns for the things of this life makes the point at the end that we should “...seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matthew 6:33). Only a few verses before that He made the statement, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21). What clear words of truth. We all understand that even though people may claim that something is important to them, if it is not an important element of their lives their claim is false. Let us all pray that when all is said and done the cause of Christ will be both where our treasure is and where our heart is also.

Faithful Sayings Mar 17, 2013

WHY WE CANNOT IGNORE UNFAITHFULNESS TO THE LORD

Mark White

A man who was intent on being unfaithful to the Lord once told me, "I'm not hurting anyone but myself. Leave me alone, and quit bothering me about attending the services."

The Devil has really convinced many irresponsible brethren that they have a right to go to Hell "unbothered" by others who wish to rescue them. Never mind the admonition of Scripture to the faithful that "if a man is over taken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness" (Galatians 6:1). The easy course for the faithful is to ignore the unfaithful. Some churches do this as a matter of policy, in fact. Some brethren want to be a part of a "fellowship" which quickly looks the other way if sin and unfaithfulness is the path a brother or sister is taking. But both brethren and churches who operate in such a fashion have completely missed what the church is all about.

Discipline, both instructive and corrective, is almost defunct in many places. The unfaithful brother walks away into obscurity, wishing to be ignored, forgotten, and left "unbothered." Some churches are all too eager to accommodate his unrighteous desire. You see, it is much easier to remove his name from our directory than it is to roll up our sleeves, go to work on his problem, shed tears over his unfaithfulness, and attempt to save his soul from Hell. The sad fact is that if we ignore the erring brother and give him the quiet exit he wants, we are no better off than he is.

It is a serious thing to ignore our brother's sin. We enable him to be unfaithful by turning our heads. We fail to do what we are expected to do by our Father. In short, we fail to be our "brother's keeper" (Genesis 4:9).

Cain made the mistake of thinking that he was not responsible for the welfare and whereabouts of his brother. The very nature of brotherhood suggests responsibility for those who have come from the same womb. When a child is born into God's family he has mothers, fathers, sisters, and brothers who must now take responsibility for his care. No earthly family would ignore a member walking away from the circle of love which binds a family together. Why then, does it happen so frequently in the family of God?

Let us be reminded that Galatians 6:1 was not just addressed to the elders of the church. Certainly, as shepherds of the flock, they have a responsibility to keep the sheep together and in the fold. Shepherds who are asleep and allow the sheep to be scattered receive scathing rebukes for doing so in Ezekiel 34:1-10. Indeed, they do have a special responsibility to "watch for souls" (Hebrews 13:17). But all members who are "spiritual" are charged with the same responsibility of restoring the erring.

James 5:19-20 says, "Brethren if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins." When you became a part of this local church, you were asking for love, acceptance, care and discipline. It's what makes us a family. Please understand that if you choose to walk away from our fellowship that we cannot ignore your behavior. Our love for you, for your soul, and our concern for your eternal welfare will not allow us to look the other way if you fall headlong into sin.