

Gospel Power



"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation..." (Romans 1:16)

The Gospel Power is published in interest of New Testament Christianity and to enhance the work of the Anderson church.

**Anderson
church of Christ**
5900 Highway 207
Anderson, Alabama

Visit Us On The Web
Anderson-church.org

Men Priviledged To Serve:
Sunday, January 2nd:

Bible Classes

Song Leader
..... Jim Phillips
Bible Reading (Isaiah 52:1-15)
..... Stephen Stewart
Prayer
..... Claus Martel

Morning Worship

Song Leader
..... Jim Phillips
Prayer
..... Rocky Rose
Lord's Supper
Presiding Monroe Pressnell
Assisting Andrew Gatlin
Serving Daniel Clemmons
..... Eddie L. Hammond
..... Mark McCrary
..... Mike Rogers
Closing Prayer
..... Ronnie Phillips

Evening Worship

Song Leader
..... Brian Word
Bible Reading (Isaiah 53:1-12)
..... Curtis Mosley
Prayer
..... Aric Butler
Lord's Supper
..... Monroe Pressnell
..... Andrew Gatlin
Closing Prayer
..... Scootie Goode

Volume XII

January 2, 2005

No. 1

The Cold, Hard Facts

Phillip Mullins

Ecclesiastes is an Old Testament book that asks life's hardest questions. The question of all questions is found in chapter 3 and verses 19-21:

"For what happens to the sons of men also happens to beasts; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so does the other. Surely, they all have one breath, man has no advantage over beasts, for all is vanity. All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust. Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit of the beast, which goes down to the earth?"

I remember one of the saddest, but most insightful days from my childhood was the day my dad and I buried the family dog. She had been a part of the family for years and was loved as much as any pet could be. One day she was struck by a car in the road in front of our house. Mom called dad and he came home from work. We loaded our little dog in my red wagon and wheeled her to the back of the field behind our house. After we buried her, my dad, sensing the tragedy for a seven year old, said some comforting words about "man's best friend." I can still remember how big and steamy the tears were that rolled off my cheeks. That was the end of my dog, and I knew it.

When a human being is lowered into the grave, is that the end for them? This is the question of Ecclesiastes 3:21. After death, is that all? Like an animal that is breathing one minute and struck dead the next, is man's fate any different? Indeed death is terrible, the most terrible experience of all if that is the case. What really matters if we all end up dead and there is nothing beyond that? Is death all

that awaits man?

The Bible says there is more. Hebrews 9:27 says, "...it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment." There is a reckoning beyond death. Ultimate reward awaits those who have been faithful to God while everlasting punishment awaits those who have not believed and obeyed God (1 Thessalonians 4 and 2 Thessalonians 1).

We need to see death. We need to stare it right in the face. Thanks to technology, our society has all but insulated itself from the grim evidence of death. For the most part, hospitals and nursing homes spare us from the scene of death as it creeps over a person. Funeral homes and graveyards are clean, trim, and polished places that mask the ugliest of all human experiences. We ignore death when it is not around, when it approaches we resign it to an out of the way place, and when it occurs we do our best to gloss it over. This is not healthy. We need to see death. I am not advocating a morbid approach to death, just an honest one. We need to see the cold, hard facts of it all.

Why? When we see death, we see the truth about our existence. We see where we are headed and it creates a burning question in our soul - Is there a way to win over it? Death causes us to ache for and search for hope. Death drives us to the only place for deliverance, and that is God.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has the answer. "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live" (John 11:25). God vividly shows us the way out of death by the life, death, and resurrection of His Son. God raised the Son from the dead to prove His identity and to show us all there is a way through the grave to life, a better life. Christ will come one day to raise those who belong to Him to an everlasting life in heaven (John 5:24-29). Jesus Christ offers the only real hope for life beyond death. Some of the most hopeful words ever penned are found in Hebrews 2:14-15 concerning what Christ offers us:

"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Looking anywhere else for deliverance is vain and trying to avoid death is even a greater waste of energy.

We need to see death because it is when we see our mortality that we gain the perspective that we need to live this life properly. Again, Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 says, "...Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether it is good or whether it is evil." We really don't learn how to live until we realize we are going to die.

There are two ways we can see death and learn the needed lessons from it. One is to listen to the words of God in the Bible and look around and see the work of death all around us. That is the easy way. The hard way is to ignore God's warnings and ignore the evidence of death around you until some sickness or accident brings you terrifyingly close to it. Yet, there is a risk in the latter alternative. For death does not always knock before it enters, sometimes it barges in with no warning.

Of death, Wardlaw wrote, "Every man must advance; and every man must advance alone, to single combat; and every man in succession must fall." How true, yet, the Bible tells us that with Christ, the follower of God does not have to walk alone to face the ultimate enemy. Look at life and see death. Look at God's Word and find the hope for life in death. Prepared or not, it is coming.

-via *Messages*; Kingsport, Tennessee..

Remember Our Evening Service at 6:00.

Why Do We Go To Church?

Allen Dvorak

Why do we need “to go to church?” Can we not just worship God in our homes? Do we have to dress up and meet with a group of other people to somehow validate our worship? These questions are sometimes asked by people who want to serve God, but who do not understand the role of the church in God’s plan. Occasionally they have been disillusioned by what they have seen in “organized religion” and would like to separate themselves from what they perceive to be hypocritical or covetous practices.

According to the New Testament scriptures, the church is not a building or some nebulous institution which has authority over Christians. The church can hear and speak (Matthew 18:17); it can fear (Acts 5:11). The church is simply a group of people who have been saved from their sins by the blood of Jesus. Paul reminded the Ephesians elders that the church had been purchased by blood (Acts 20:28). As individual Christians, we have been redeemed, i.e., purchased and liberated, by the precious blood of the unblemished Lamb, Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:19). From these scriptures, we see clearly that the church is composed of all those individual Christians who have had their sins “washed away” (Acts 22:16; Revelation 1:5).

The church is sometimes referred to as the “body” of Christ. Jesus is identified as the head and Savior of that spiritual body of people, the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23). The church does not have the power to save anyone from their sins; only Jesus can do that. The church doesn’t save; it **is** the saved!

When one understands the composition of the church, the question of why one must belong to the Lord’s church is clearly answered. Those who belong to Christ are members of His body, the church. Who wouldn’t want to be a part of

that group of people? Indeed, we all need to be members of the Lord’s church.

All of this is not to say that we can only worship while in the company of other Christians. Surely God will accept worship offered by single individuals, but the Lord also understood the need for mutual support, encouragement and discipline among His disciples. For that reason, disciples in the first century met together in local groups, i.e., congregations, as directed by the apostles of Jesus. The congregation of disciples in Jerusalem met together regularly to remember the Lord’s death through the Lord’s Supper and to pray together (Acts 2:41-42). The author of Hebrews encouraged his readers not to do as some of their brethren had done - forsake the practice of assembling with other brethren for the purpose of mutual worship and encouragement (Hebrews 10:24-25).

We need to meet with other Christians in a local congregation (also referred to as a “church” in the New Testament; see Galatians 1:2 and Revelation 2-3). Together we can worship God and work in His service, submitting to the One who is our Head, Jesus Christ.

-via News & Notes; Madison, Alabama.

News & Notes

THE SICK: *Willie Ridgeway* is in the ECM hospital in Florence with pneumonia ... *Sam Noles* had a stint inserted in his leg on Monday and is at home... *Jean Ray* is in the Glenwood rehabilitation in Florence... *Erin Cooper* has been sick this past week and was unable to be Bible study Wednesday night... *Myrtie Williams* is at home ... *Monroe Pressnell’s aunt, Mildred Pressnell*, is home ... *Tisha Thomas’ mother, Shelia Johnson*, is taking oral chemo for her multiple myeloma ... *Leota Springer’s husband, Bob Springer*, is taking kidney dialysis ... *Helen Stewart’s grandson, Adam Stewart*,

is at home now, and is doing well ... **Curtis Cooper** is taking his chemo treatments ... **Mattie Blanche Word** is at home... Remember **Marcia Cooper's and Brian Word's uncle, Paul McCafferty** is in the Countryside Nursing Home in Lawrenceburg... **James McConnell's mother, Della Mae McConnell**, continues at home... **Jerry Best's nephew, Shannon Johnson**, continues at home ... **Tisba Thomas' grandmother, Nellie Hunter**, is in the Meadow Brook Nursing Home in Pulaski.

COMMUNICATION GROUPS: Tonight is the night for Communication group one to meet. If you are in group one, remember to meet with your group this evening after our service.

SYMPATHY: We want express our deepest sympathy to ... **Johnny Lovell** in the passing of his brother-in-law, **L. W. Weir**, on Saturday. His funeral will be in Athens.

OUT OF TOWN: The Hammonds: Eddie and Willodean left this past Wednesday for Florida. They will be back in a couple of months. ... **The Williams: Ray and Judy** left yesterday for Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and will be there for several weeks.

VOLUME 12: With this issue we begin Voume 12 of the **Gospel Power**. I hope that you have profitted from the bulletin each week. I hear from a good number of the readers of the bulletin and I appreciate the many gracious comments that they make. I trust that this work is helping all of us to grow stronger and that it is helping us in our study of God's word. If you know of someone that would like to receive the bulletin each week by mail, please give me their name and address.

THE RECORD:	<i>Yearly Averages</i>	
Sunday:	<i>2004</i>	<i>2003</i>
Bible Classes	100	88
Morning Worship	118	107
Evening Worship	87	76
Wednesday:		
Bible Classes	84	73

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Classes 9:45 a.m.
 Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
 Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

Elders

Michael Clemmons (256) 247-0836
 Scottie Goode (931) 565-3391
 Monroe Pressnell (256) 232-0780

Deacons

Jimmy Glass (256) 247-0571
 Mark McIntyre (256) 233-1953
 Phil Pressnell (256) 232-8509
 Rocky Rose (256) 247-0011
 Larry White (256) 247-0988
 Brian Word (256) 229-5823

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