

Light and Life

Pure Milk

“Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding... Then he read from it... from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people, and when he opened it, all the people stood up... so they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading” (Neh. 8:2-3, 5-6, 8).

Even among the Lord’s church it seems that sermons contain less scripture, lessons are becoming shorter (not just more concise), and services have even been cut from church schedules post-COVID. A popular reason given for these cuts is often cited: an average 20-minute attention span. I don’t buy it. We don’t have an attention problem. We have a desire problem!

We have no problem giving our attention to a three-hour football game, or a two-hour movie. So why do we perpetuate the claim that a sermon over 20 minutes is too much for an adult brain to handle?

It’s true – we are surrounded by cultural and physical distractions and conduct busy lives! But is our focus and desire on the physical, or the spiritual?

“All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the Lord endures forever. Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you. Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, **desire the pure milk of the word**, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious” (I Pe. 1:24-2:3).

- *Sam Bunyard*

Another Perspective

Mercy Triumphs Over Judgment

“So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment” (Ja 2:12-13).

The law of liberty is James' designation for the law of Christ. Unlike the law of Moses, which could only bring us death (see Romans), the law of Christ offers us freedom and life. This law offers us forgiveness when we really deserve judgment.

So, James challenges us to speak and act as those who have received mercy instead of judgment. Our willingness to allow mercy to triumph over judgment is tested a thousand times a day. When we are frustrated with slow service at a restaurant, we must choose between mercy and judgment. When we have to deal with incompetence at work, we must choose between mercy and judgment. When family members continue to fail us, either through neglect or laziness or even rebellion, we must choose between mercy and judgment.

James is encouraging us to default to mercy, not judgment. This is not the same as excusing sin. The law of Christ doesn't give us license to sin. However, it does offer a second chance. It offers patience and forbearance. That's what people need in life.

Father, remind us of your love and grace toward us. You have been so patient with us. Help us to extend the same mercy to others that you have shown so richly toward us.

- *David Maxson*

ASSEMBLY TIMES

Sunday

Bible Class 9:30
 Morning Assembly 10:30
 Evening Assembly 5:00

Wednesday

Evening Bible Class 6:30

RADIO PROGRAM

The Bible Speaks



Sunday 9:00-9:30a.m.
 KURM 790AM

Downtown Church of Christ

P.O. Box 447
 201 W. Chestnut Street
 Rogers, AR 72757
 479-636-3575
 www.downtowncoc.net



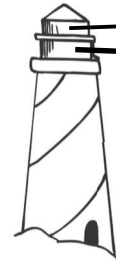
**Give it to God,
 then go to sleep.**

ELDERS:

Otis Hardin
 Perry Johnson
 Ken Parker
 Alan Revier
 GW Walsh

DEACONS:

TJ Burleson
 Scott Hale
 Joel Heiligenthal
 Jason Hill
 Chris Johnson
 Brock McKeel
 Randy Potter
 Tim Roberts
 Randy Shell



DOWNTOWN GOSPEL BEACON

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That's Just Your Opinion

Opinions have always been a thorn in the side of God's people. Everybody has one (or many). And some Christians are very vocal to push their opinions on the rest of the congregation. If we attempted to list all the examples of such behavior, we would still be compiling the list when the Lord returns.

Elders are qualified to 'make the call' on all matters of opinion in a local church (1 Ti 3, Ti 1, He 13:17). They have no authority to alter God's Word – but they have every right to make the countless judgment calls that must be made in a local work. Let us respect them in that.

But more and more we hear the charge that we are pushing our opinions when we simply cite God's Word in a conversation. "Baptism saves you," as we read 1 Peter 3:21 to make the case. "That's just your opinion", comes the reply. "Those who practice homosexuality cannot inherit the kingdom of God", we preach (1 Co 6:9). "That's just your opinion." And on and on it goes.

We can have a conversation about the authority of the Bible. But once that is established, it becomes the standard by which God's people govern their lives – and **that's not just my opinion!**

- *WKing*

FAMILY NEWS

PRAYER LIST –

Preachers we support: Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, Canada, Mexico, Peru, & U.S.
Sick: Fletchers, Swims, J Marshall, S Shell, T Deen, R Starr, S Montgomery
Shut-ins: Betty Jo Young, Billie Pennington, Shirley Cole, Mary Lou Lewis, V Carter
Military: Kyler Sullins, Sean Potter

THANKS! – Countless volunteer hours are devoted every year to contribute to the success of our VBS. **Thanks** to all who help our kids learn the Bible!

CONGRATULATIONS! – We rejoice with Erwin Deen (and his family) at his recent decision to be baptized! Let's encourage all our young people!