

Light and Life

Staring at The Sign

Imagine for a moment that you have planned a trip to the Grand Canyon. You've been waiting your whole life for an opportunity to see it with your own eyes! Finally, after the seventeen-hour road trip, you are getting close! You slow down to read a sign to see where you are. It reads 'Grand Canyon' and has an arrow pointing in the direction you need to go! Excited, you get out of your car to look at the sign and get your picture taken with it. Then you get back in the car, turn around, and drive back to Arkansas. You were so focused on the sign, you completely missed what it was pointing you towards!

Of course, this story is ridiculous – but something similar happened with the signs that Jesus performed in the New Testament! One such sign was when Jesus miraculously fed five thousand people with only five barley loaves and two small fish. The next day, when the crowds found Him again, Jesus rebuked them. “Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him” (Jn 6:26-27).

These people were so busy staring at the sign, they missed the Grand Canyon! Distracted by the unlimited buffet of bread and fish, they missed the Messiah they had been waiting for their whole lives standing right before them!

We do not experience miracles like this today. But do we ever get caught staring at something that is supposed to direct our attention to God, instead of focusing on Him? The social aspects of assembly? The pleasant sound of worship? The beauty of nature? The joy of answered prayer?

Pay close attention – and don't get caught staring at the sign!

- Sam Bunyard

Another Perspective

Making a Difference

A young lady visited a former high school teacher, and it was obvious from the expression on the teacher's face that he did not remember her. “I felt that I had to come back and tell you how thankful I am for you,” she said. And she began to tell her story.

Her stepfather had physically and sexually abused her. Overwhelmed by feelings of guilt and hopelessness – and with her mom and stepfather out of town for a few days – she had planned to take her life. She had made many of the preparations that morning before going to school. But during sixth period, this teacher had handed back a writing assignment. “You are very good at this,” he said. “You should do more of it.” And with this he gave her a pat on the shoulder that said, “I care”.

Just a few kind words and the thought that someone cared was enough to cause the young lady to think life could be worth living. It gave her the courage to go home, call the shelter for abused teens, and to get the help that she needed. The teacher did not even remember the incident; but his kind words and gentle gesture had made a huge difference in the girl's life.

In our lives, too, what we say and do can make a big difference in the lives of others. We never know how much good we can do with a few kind words and loving deeds.



- Harold Hancock (edited for space)

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

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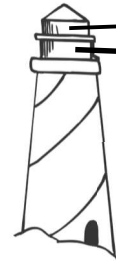
We are never so empty
as when we are
full of ourselves.

ELDERS:

Otis Hardin
Perry Johnson
Ken Parker
Alan Revier
GW Walsh

DEACONS:

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



DOWNTOWN GOSPEL BEACON

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How to Understand the Bible

Some people have a pessimistic attitude about God's Word. "Even scholars cannot agree on what the Bible says", we are told. So, is it even possible for everyday folks to understand God's will? Well, He commands us to understand it (Ep 5:17), so it can be done – but how?

Let God's Word answer: "When you read, you may understand" (Ep 3:4). "Do you understand what you are reading?" He said, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" (Ac 8:30-31). "Consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things" (2 Ti 2:7). "We pray for you... that you might be filled with... spiritual under-

standing" (Col 1:9). "Why do you not understand my speech? Even because you cannot hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do" (Jn 8:43-44).

These passages make it plain. To understand God's will, we must **read** the Bible, we must **ask questions**, we must **meditate** on the scriptures, we must **pray**, and we must maintain a **spiritual mind**.

If we fail – or refuse – to do these things, we should not be surprised that we fail to understand the Bible. It's sorta like understanding calculus – only easier.

- *WKing*

FAMILY NEWS

PRAYER LIST –

Preachers we support: Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, Canada, Mexico, Peru, & U.S.
Sick: Fletchers, Swims, JMarshall, TDeen, RStarr, MiBader, ADosier, ACorder
Shut-ins: Betty Jo Young, Billie Pennington, Shirley Cole, Susan Wiese, V Carter
Military: Kyler Sullins, Sean Potter

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS – Being the last Sunday of the month, tonight will be our monthly Q&A lesson. Thanks to all who contributed questions!

SENTENCE SERMON – If you're a Christian, earth is the only hell you'll ever know; if you're not a Christian, earth is the only heaven you'll ever know.