

Light and Life

Christian Encouragement

“When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage” (Ac. 28:15).

This was Paul’s reaction to the presence of his brethren who traveled to meet him as he arrived in Rome. He had just suffered shipwreck and now he was facing great uncertainty surrounding his fate at the hands of his earthly judges. It would have been a worrisome time for Paul, but the care of his spiritual family gave him what was needed to persevere through his trials. This is something that we should consider regarding our responsibility to one another.

The purpose of the assembly is for the edification of the individuals who are gathered (I Cor. 14). But because we are surrounded by a consumer-driven culture, it can be easy for us to fall into a consumer mindset regarding our attendance. It can be tempting to focus on what we ‘get out of it’. This is not an appropriate mindset. Rather, we should be mindful of the encouragement that we might give to others. They, like Paul, may have just suffered a ‘shipwreck’ of their own. They may be facing circumstances of great uncertainty. But through our presence and participation, we can give them the strength to “thank God and take courage”. If we fail to uphold our attendance, we rob our brethren of the encouragement which is our responsibility to give!

But attendance at regularly appointed services isn’t enough. We should know each other well enough to know about each other’s ‘shipwrecks’. And when we are aware of those things, we should put special effort into providing support for one another. People put intentional effort into meeting Paul in Rome because they knew about his troubles. It takes effort to be “distributing to the needs of the saints, pursuing hospitality” (Rm. 12:13).

We must put effort into our attendance on Sundays and Wednesdays and other times – but even daily in the lives of our brethren!

- Sam Bunyard

Another Perspective

Baptism ...Again

I have recently heard of another brother who has ‘changed his thinking’ on the importance of baptism. Most preachers who now advocate that baptism is optional base their belief on the idea that we “are saved by grace and not by works.” Yet, their teaching is a misunderstanding of baptism. The act of immersion in no way is a work that **earns** one’s salvation. Rather, it is a **work of faith** in the sense that one’s faith leads a person to be baptized.

Just what should a person believe so strongly that it would send him to the water to be immersed? Well, the Bible is clear as to **the purpose of baptism**:

1. Baptism is “for the forgiveness of your sins” (Ac 2:38).
2. Baptism “washes away your sins” (Ac 22:16).
3. Baptism puts you “into Christ” (Ro 6:3; Ga 3:27).
4. Baptism is where you are “crucified with Christ” (Ga 2:20, Ro 6:5).
5. Baptism is where you are “born again” (Jn 3:1-7).
6. Baptism is necessary to be “saved” (Mk 16:16).
7. Baptism is essential to be a disciple (Mt 28:19).

If baptism is merely an option, why did Peter tell thousands of people they needed to be baptized (Ac 2:38), and why would a jailer go to the trouble of being baptized after midnight (Ac 16:25,33), and why was an Ethiopian excited to find enough water to be immersed in the desert (Ac 8:36-40)?

The real reason many modern preachers are giving up on baptism is because the denominations and the world refuse to accept it as necessary. So, to gain religious acceptance and to add numbers to the church roll, these men eliminate the need for immersion as a test of fellowship. Let us stay with what the Lord gives us in Scripture rather than give in to the pressure of misguided preachers.

- Guy Orbison, Jr. (edited for space)

ASSEMBLY TIMES

Sunday

Morning 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.
Thursday 11:30a.m.–noon
KURM 790AM

Downtown Church of Christ

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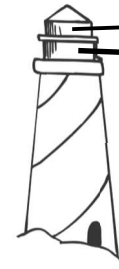
**Your trail of trials can
lead to triumph – if you
travel with God.**

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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Pulling Punches

‘Pulling a punch’ is not a phrase we hear much anymore. It refers to a fighter who refuses to use all of the power at his disposal. He may be showing mercy, or he may be ‘on the take’ – but, when he ‘pulls a punch’, the other guy gets some relief.

And there is a time for a Christian to do just that. The apostle Paul encouraged the Corinthian church to ‘pull a punch’ in their handling of the repentant brother (2 Co 2:6-8). They had rightly inflicted a punishing blow in withdrawing from him; but, upon his repentance, they were instructed to back off and “confirm” their love for him. Such

compassion is a welcome sight to a prodigal-come-home, and we should be swift to offer it.

But Paul had pulled **no** punches in exposing the sins of that brother – and of the church at Corinth – in his first letter to them. He was unapologetic in his rebuke of sin. In fact, the book of First Corinthians might be compared to an unrelenting boxer, landing blow after blow. Paul found no joy in such ‘brutality’ but saw it as a necessary process in bringing them to repentance (2 Co 7:8). It seems a far cry from the pantywaist preaching of many today.

- WKing

FAMILY NEWS

PRAYER LIST –

Preachers we support: Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, Canada, Mexico, Peru, & U.S.
Sick: Fletchers, Swims, Jean Marshall, Rai Starr, Michael Bader
Shut-ins: Billie Pennington, Shirley Cole, Susan Wiese, Virgil Carter, Ann Dosier
Military: Kyler Sullins, Sean Potter

2024 EVENTS – Apr 14-16 (meeting, David Fiddament); Apr 19 (singing, Stevens & Shepard); Jul 21-25 (VBS, PJ Anderson); Aug 2-4 (Ben Hall)

SINGING – Tonight is our regularly scheduled first-of-the-month singing. Leaders come prepared to lead – everyone else, to sing along!