

### Times of Services

#### Sunday

9:00 a.m. Worship  
10:00 a.m. Bible Study  
11:00 a. m. Worship

#### Wednesday

7:00 p.m. Bible Study

### Other Study and Worship Opportunities

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday 2:00 p.m. Trinity Care Home Worship Service
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday 6:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study—at Ranch House Restaurant, Columbus, MS
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Neighborhood Bible Study – (TBA)
- Sunday Neighborhood Bible Study 6:00 p.m. (TBA)
- Young Bible Scholars monthly meeting (TBA)
- Monthly Ladies Class-.No class in July, next class Aug. 6

### News and Notes

- **Home Bound Members:** Mike Butler, Eula Mae Harless, Joyce Manasco,
- **Limited Health:** Willena Woods, Wade McCrary.
- **Prayer Requests:** Mike Butler is battling lung disease. Jim Ratcliff was hospitalized recently with pneumonia. We are thankful for his recovery. Dan Briggs is dealing with the effects of blood clots in his legs but is improving.
- **Others to remember:** Steve Coburn, Marilyn Lavender, Jim Ratcliff, David Allen Williams, Elbert Logan, Marion Butler, Frank & Joann Butler.
- **Births:** Laney Elizabeth Gilpin was born Tuesday, July 2. She is the granddaughter of Clyde and Janice Hollis, and the newest daughter of Brittney and Andrew Gilpin..

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# East Columbus Bulletin

## Managing Misery

*"For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope ...."*

Rom 8:22-24

In several ways Romans chapter 8 is the center of the New Testament. This letter was written to Christians at the heart of Rome, the empire of men, the great persecuting force, the advocate of fleshly man. (See chpt 1.) In Romans Paul gives the new identity of God's people - not Jews who adhere to the Law, but Christians who serve in the spirit (chpts 1-11). He launches the doctrine of adhering to the laws of the land in chpt 13 from what Christ said about Caesar's things and God's things - "separation of church and state."

But in Chapter 8 the teaching is to mind the things of the spirit rather than the things of the flesh. He says that God's children must be led by the Spirit, the truth from God's Word. From this text is given the biblical world view:

"For the creation was subjected to futility ...." (vss 20-21)

Without God, the spiritual, and hope, the world is futile.

Of course, folks are going to accuse Bible believers of being neurotic, guilt-ridden, devoid of fun, pessimistic, and regressive. But consider the alternative - unbelievers are left with a world destined to burn out and fellow humans who have little power to really help others in their futility. Their misery factor is without solution.

Further, there are world religions which multiply misery with war, the caste system, the glorifying of inflicted pain, or even the unbridling of lust and greed. They might manage misery, but not in a reasonable way.

Some people are born with optimistic personalities - great! Some people want to change the world - great! Without them misery would be multiplied

in the world. It is a "God-forsaken" world. God left men and women to their own devices in the garden.

The passage that says that God so loved the world that He sent Christ into the world to save believers is based on the proposition that the world is lost.

The American Declaration of Independence says that men and women are granted by the Creator "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Why must these things be pursued? Because they very well might not come luckily upon us.

So, for the old, the young, and everybody in between, whatever measure of misery is yours must be managed.

1) Salvation from sin must be at the top of the list for those who believe in Jesus Christ. He says we will be judged with eternal consequences. "... The hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation." (Jn 5:28-29) If a person believes in Christ and the resurrection, he surely will accept the message Jesus brought from Heaven. Freedom from the guilt of sin comes by confession of faith, repenting of sins, and being baptized for forgiveness of sins. (Jn 3)

Salvation is the hope spoken of by Paul - "We are saved in this hope." (Rom 8:24)

2) Of course, we should keep the commandments of Christ. "*Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord, 'and do not the things I say?'*" (Lk 6:46) So many of the great miseries in the world are the result of disobedience: adultery, thievery, abuse, exploitation, murder, hatred, strife, oppression, greed. There is pleasure in sin for a time, but the final outcome of sin is disaster.

*"Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard."* (Prov 13:15)

3) Work and betterment are the mantra of the humanistic approach. Our good-hearted skeptic friends accept the 2nd Greatest Commandment (love neighbor as self), but they do not accept the 1st Greatest Commandment (love God with your all). The reason work and betterment should be third down on our list is that the world cannot be better without being right with God and observing the commandments.

In regards to this point Jesus said, "*For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?'*" (Mt 16:26) Nevertheless, God wants happiness and blessing for His creatures. Industriousness and fruitfulness are good, while idleness and waste are evil.

*"Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has*

*need"* (Eph 4:28)

*"Whoever is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys "* (Prov 18:9)

*"... If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat."* (2 Thes 3:10)

Christians are the real progressives, in that they promote good government (1 Tim 2); the elimination of disease; care for the widow and orphan; good mental health; and peace in every corner. (Gal 6:10)

4) Prayer, calling God to our aid. If God can bring punishments like the Flood of Noah's day on the world, surely He can make wonderfully good things happen also. We should pray for God to bless America and all the world.

Cornelius was a good man who prayed, and God arranged for Peter to come tell him "words by which you must be saved." (Acts 10; 11:14) Salvation first.

There are such things as disease and pain for which the only solution is prayer. (Mk 9:29) From our position of limited understanding, yet believing, surely much misery has been alleviated by the prayers of saints in our day.

Actually, in every generation catastrophe is averted only by the grace of God. (Rom 9:29)

Someone might say, "Why does God allow misery to reign in the world to begin with?" One thing certainly taught by the reality of suffering is that we live in a world where anything can happen. We all indeed are free moral agents, subject to futility. We should ask God to help those in severe pain, oppression, or poverty, so that we ourselves might be partners with God in the cause of good. It seems that Jesus' second occupation was helping the helpless. (Acts 10:38)

We should also observe that God shares in the misery of His creatures. His heart breaks when men, women, boys and girls go the wrong way. (Gen 6:6) Christ came into the world to suffer with us, to die for us in the most agonizing way. As He bore His cross, so are we expected to bear ours, in the hope of being exalted as He has been exalted.

"... Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb 12:2)

George Hutto

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