

Washington church of Christ

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The Washington Messenger

Volume 1 – Number 2

September 9, 2012

Order of Services

Sunday, September 9, 2012

Song Leader	Cameron Wydro
Prayer	Pete Ferencze
Preaching	Bob James
Lord's Supper	
Prayer for the Bread	David Osinski
Prayer for the Cup	Bob Wydro
Prayer for the Collection	Brian Jeffries
Assisting at the Table	Gennaro Ruggiero
Closing Prayer	Lee Redd
Announcements	Ralph Ruggiero

Sunday, September 16, 2012

Song Leader	David Osinski
Prayer	Bob Celentano
Preaching	Pete Ferencze
Lord's Supper	
Prayer for the Bread	Bill Duryea
Prayer for the Cup	Scott Thomas
Prayer for the Collection	Derald Sanchez
Assisting at the Table	Bob Celentano Jr.
Closing Prayer	Brian Jeffries
Announcements	Ralph Ruggiero

Schedule of Weekly Services

Sunday Morning Bible Classes	9:30 am
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 am
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Classes	7:30 pm

Good Christians ... Good Works...

Let's put our passage for this week in context ... when this letter was written Nero was emperor, and he was a persecutor of Christians. Paul had just been released from prison yet he showed no negative feelings towards the rulers or authorities. Jesus and the apostles had taught by precept and example that Christians should submit to civil rulers except when they require something that was contrary to the Will of God (Acts 5:27-29).

Paul now, through this letter to Titus, exhorts the Christians in Crete to follow this rule of submission. And, while Titus 3:1-7 is commonly said to focus on our relationship to rulers and authorities, the basic principles of the text provides worthwhile applications relative to Good Works that are applicable to all Christians.

The New Testament has many mentions of "good works". Among them are ...

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10 NKJV)

"looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works." (Titus 2:13-14 NKJV)

"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works", (Hebrews 10:24 NKJV)

Our faith in God must produce good works on a regular basis. This requires intentional effort on our part. We must be careful when we say that good works are a product of God's kindness and love at work within us. For good works don't just happen as though we were passive bystanders watching God work through us. It requires diligent labor.

We often surmise that doing good works makes us good people ... and I won't argue long that this is not true. But we must be careful of how we judge our "good works."

Most would say that Paul was a good man by all reasonable human standards. He himself extols some of his perceived virtues prior to his conversion to Christ ...

"though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." (Philippians 3:4-6 NKJV)

Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. (Titus 3:1-2)

Note that he called himself blameless concerning the righteousness which is in the law (Philippians 3:6) in one breath and then admits to this list of sins seemingly in the next...

For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. (Titus 3:3 NKJV)

How can this be? One answer could be the way he identified sin ... externally. Paul's careful observance of the legal ordinances of the law had raised him to the stature in the eyes of his contemporaries as one in whom no fault could be found. We tend to measure sin and unrighteousness that way ... primarily in terms of outward acts.

Sin, however, is not necessarily a matter of destructive or unacceptable outward behavior. It is also a matter of inner attitude and maturation. Notice what Jesus spoke to the "good" people of His day...

For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts ... All these evils come from inside and make a man "unclean." (Mark 7:21-23 NIV)

... and at greater length in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus dealt with this fundamental aspect of sin (Matthew 5-7).

As long as we major on the outward aspects of sin, we'll never understand the real nature of sin. There is nothing in Paul's list here that is always expressed or measured in gross outward behavior. For example, one might serve "*various lusts and pleasures*" with little to no outward manifestation. While we tend to think of such a phrase in sexual terms, Paul's words from the Greek describe desires and pleasures that are not necessarily to be regarded as such, but as the thorns that "choke the word" and render it unfruitful (Mark 4:19).

The same holds for "*being hateful*" and for "*hating one another*." Hate is not always expressed in violent behavior or words. We talk a great deal these days about child and spousal abuse. We are quick to declare physical abuse as criminal. We also recognize to a lesser degree the unacceptable nature of verbal abuse. However, we may readily overlook and ignore the expression of hate through withdrawal of, or the withholding of love. This may well be the most common and devastating form of hate, all the more malicious because it can even be done under the pretext of righteousness.

We are to do good works because God is good. Our good works are not done in order to earn God's favor or salvation. They are the products of God's kindness and love at work within us through the Holy Spirit.

It's been said that a great deal of life is learning the differences between what is useful and what is useless. And that's not easy. The price tags are all mixed up. Useless things are promoted and are often quite costly, while useful things go ignored and are undervalued. God through His Word helps us sort things out so that we can base our lives on what is genuinely worthwhile and enduring ... going on to do Good Works.

This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men. (Titus 3:8 NKJV)

Prayer, Care & Attention...

On Our Sick List...

- ✧ Mary Calentano received good news from her recent tests, and continues to recover from her medical condition.
- ✧ Georgia DeLorenzo continues to deal with her health issues.
- ✧ Gerry Sandusky's son Scott continues to recover from a partial leg amputation due to a work related accident.
- ✧ Glenn Montgomery's father continues to have complications from cancer surgery.
- ✧ Phyllis Smith is scheduled for knee surgery later this week.
- ✧ Linda Davis, a member of West Point church, continues to recover from chemo treatment complications.

Those Traveling...

- ✧ Bill and Sue Duryea
- ✧ June Prince

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him." (1 John 5:14-15 NIV)

Noteworthy Items...

Annie and I are excited to be working with the church here at Washington. We look forward to getting to know every member of the congregation. While we will continue to have our home in New Jersey, over the next few weeks we will be working to furnish the church's residence such that we can host families, hold studies, and in general have a place for us to meet with members of the congregation. Please pray for us all as we strive to do the things that please our Lord.

There are still openings on the schedule for *Building Preparation*. Those desiring to assist can check the Bulletin Board in the foyer and sign-up.

Over the coming weeks the men will be discussing the teaching program for the congregation. All members are encouraged to submit any ideas relating to topics, program changes, or improvements. Please submit your suggestions and ideas to any of the men.

Our Gospel Meeting with Gerry Sandusky is fast approaching. Our meeting dates are October 5th – 7th. As we plan for this event let us all pray daily that our efforts will be pleasing to the Lord such that He might bless our actions.