

Washington church of Christ

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The Washington Messenger

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September 8, 2013

Order of Services Sunday, September 8, 2013

Song Leader	Tom Dolan
Prayer	Bob Wydro
Preaching	Bob James
Lord's Supper	
Prayer for the Bread	Scott Thomas
Prayer for the Cup	Pete Ferencze
Prayer for the Collection	David Osinski
Assisting at the Table	Matt Grimaldi
Scripture Reading	Patrick Wydro
Morning Closing Prayer	Bob Celentano
Evening Opening Prayer	Arnold Thompson
Announcements	Lee Redd

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
Thursday Morning Bible Study	11:00 am

Keeping the Faith...

Last winter you may have read in the local newspapers of the American Atheists organization plans to unveil a couple of billboards in a Muslim area of Paterson and a Jewish Brooklyn neighborhood which portray Jesus as a myth, and encourage unbelieving Muslim and Jews in the areas to "come out of the closet."

Whenever I read about folks who advocate that there is no God, my first emotion is most often "objection" to those behind the action ... but, this quickly moves to sadness for those who, because of their own rejection of God, will one day experience His righteous judgments...

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ... although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. (Romans 1:18-21 NKJV)

While reading this week of others who advocate that God does not exist I thought of a passage from the Hebrew writer...

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6 NKJV)

God's character is immutable, and His ultimate dealings with people depend on their response to him...

And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: "Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you. (2 Chronicles 15:1-2 NKJV)

In Paul's words to Timothy, he presents the truth that the faithfulness of God to his covenant is not suspended by the breach of that covenant by the unfaithful or in this case the unbelieving ...

This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself. (2 Timothy 2:11-13 NKJV)

In the strict application of the context of Paul's statement, to be faithful is to choose to die with Him and to endure with Him. To die with Him is to live with Him. This is fundamental to the life in Christ.

For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. (Luke 9:24 NKJV)

Paul wrote to the Galatian Christians...

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Galatians 2:20 NKJV)

It really shouldn't surprise us that so many of our strategies for self-fulfillment aren't working. A few years ago a famous social researcher named Daniel Yankelovich authored a book entitled "New Rules". His principal thesis is that in recent years in America we have shifted from "denial-of-self" ethics to "duty-to-self" ethics. He asserts that the belief that we find our lives through service and commitment to others has been replaced with the belief that we must take care of ourselves first. This has been accompanied by an intensive focus upon finding oneself by looking inward. Yankelovich maintains that the "me first" outlook is at the root of the decay and disorder of our day.

Looking again at Paul's admonition to Timothy, not only are we called to die with Him, but also to endure with Him. The Greek word translated "endure" is *hupomonē*. It is translated "patience" in 1 Thessalonians 1:3. It is an active word, going beyond passive thoughts of survival. It is to take that which is painful and transform it into something creative and constructive. Christian discipleship, then, includes taking problems and difficulties and shaping them into something beautiful for God. To endure with Him, in this sense, is to reign with Him. To reign is to be in control. Those who live by *hupomonē* are, through God, truly in control of their lives ... their problems and their hurts.

Denial of God, and being faithless can take many forms. There is overt denial, such as in Peter's actions on that dark night in Gethsemane (Luke 22:54-62). Most of us are never likely to be faced with the martyr's option in which open confession results in imprisonment or death. But it is well for us to remember that we have thousands of brothers and sisters in other parts of the world for whom this is a daily reality. They should be always in our hearts and prayers.

For us, denial takes less overt forms. We must be aware that our lifestyles may be a form of denial of Christ. A life that is not expressing genuine love and care for spouse, children, and friends is a denial of the Jesus who commands us to love one another ... a lifestyle of conspicuous consumption in the midst of a hungry world is a denial of the Jesus who calls us to feed the hungry and show care for the less fortunate. Before we conclude too quickly that we would never deny Him, we might well think about the many forms denial can take.

As we've referenced, Paul also speaks of faithlessness (2Timothy 2:13). The term "faithless" is said to be used in the New Testament both to mean "not believing" and "betraying a trust." The Old King James Version preferred the former... "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful." The New King James translation applies the latter ... "if we are faithless." It has been said that we are a culture in which instant gratification is supreme, and the living out of personal commitments has come on hard times.

The consequence of man's denial of and infidelity to God is His denial of us. While this may rub against the grain of some folk's desire for an indulging God, it is based on the words of Jesus Himself...

"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 10:32-33 NKJV)

... Bob

Our Prayer List...

For Spiritual Responsiveness – Georgia DeLorenzo ... Sondra DeLorenzo ... all of our wayward members

For Physical Healing – John Baxter ... Andrew Montgomery ... Mary Broadwell ... Larry Smith (Sharon Ferencze's brother) ... Rufus Evans (Bob's Uncle)

For Wisdom and Good Judgment – The Leaders of our congregation ... the leaders of our nation

For God's Care and Good Providence – Our young people away at college ... Our young people here at Washington ... our members who are traveling ... the men and women in military service ... our congregation.

EVENTS AND NOTES

UPCOMING EVENTS THAT WE ARE AWARE OF ARE ...

- ⤴ A MEN'S BUSINESS/SPIRITUAL MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR TODAY, SEPTEMBER 8TH STARTING AT 4PM.
- ⤴ THE NEXT THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY WILL BE SEPTEMBER 19TH, AT 11:00AM.
- ⤴ THE PICNIC IN THE PARK SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 15TH HAS BEEN CANCELLED.
- ⤴ THERE WILL BE A FAREWELL POTLUCK FOR LEE AND TERRY REDD AFTER THE MORNING SERVICES ON SEPTEMBER 22ND AT THE WARREN GLEN PAVILION. PLEASE SEE THE BULLETIN BOARD FOR ADDITIONAL DETAILS.
- ⤴ OUR NEXT PRAYER GATHERING WILL BE SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28TH.
- ⤴ OUR FALL GOSPEL MEETING WITH JOE WORKS OF THE FAIR LAWN CONGREGATION IS SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 11TH – 13TH.