

**Schedule of Meeting Times:**

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM

*Speaker, Robert Emerson*

Study Sunday 10:00 AM

Worship Sunday 11:00 AM

Worship Sunday 5:00 PM

*Singing every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday evening*

Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

**Preacher / bulletin editor:** Kris Vilander**Phone:** (256) 472-1065**E-mail:** kris@haysmillchurchofchrist.org**Website:** www.haysmillchurchofchrist.orgCome study  
with us!**Servants during April:****Songleader:** Larry (1), David (8), Chandler (15), Dwight (22), Stanley (29)**Reading:** Stanley**Announcements:** Marty**Communion:** Stanley, Marty, David, Lakin**Wednesday Lesson:** Stanley (4), Kris (11),

Mike (18), Larry (25)

**Lawn Mowing (week beginning):**

Kris (8), Billy (15), Marty (25),

Stanley (29), Robert (6)

**Singing:** Buddy and Pam's (29)**Area Meetings:** Gooch Lane (every

Sunday in April at 3pm);

Somerville Rd (15-18); Market

Street (May 20-25)

**Hays Mill church of Christ**

21705 Hays Mill Road

Elkmont, AL 35620

**The Bible .  
Examiner***"Examine everything carefully..." – 1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB**Volume 1**April 15, 2018**Number 5***Why I Left the Baptist Church***By Larry Rouse**(University Church in Auburn)*

In the fall of 1973 I had no intention of leaving the church in which I was raised. On the contrary, I had recently publicly professed my faith in Jesus Christ and was baptized on the same day. I could well be described as "on fire" for the Lord. I was quickly received and surrounded by men and women who wanted with all their hearts to reach others with the gospel. Both in social settings and in door-to-door efforts I was taught and shown by example how to share my faith.

I began studying the Bible on my own for the first time in my life. I was greatly encouraged in this by others in the Baptist church who also expressed great confidence in the Bible as the perfect, complete word of God. They encouraged me to memorize scripture, to quote scripture, and, above all, to follow the scripture, even above what a man or a church might want. I truly had learned the nature of a living faith as expressed by Jesus when He said: "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

There were issues that I began considering as I looked at the current state

of what was broadly called "Christianity." Jesus clearly pointed to a definite, clear path for all of those who trust in Him to follow (Matthew 7:13-14). Our Lord, in the very night He was to be betrayed, prayed to the Father about each of us that would later come to believe in Him. "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me" (John 17:20-21). When I read the Lord's words, uttered in the very shadow of the cross, I became determined that I would not be the one that would cause another to turn away from the Lord. These words plainly show that unity can come only from a complete commitment to the Lord.

Anyone who looks at the religious world can easily see that most of the effort of men in the name of God is done to be seen by men and out of loyalty to men and the denominations they build (Galatians 1:10, Matthew 15:13-14). While my knowledge of the Bible was

limited, I decided to test my own practices and be open to new things by focusing on God's word and not on men. "The Lord will not lead me wrong" was often in my thoughts as I looked at the scriptures. I was not afraid to be challenged by His word!

One Sunday morning, as I was driving from the Baptist College, Samford University, to my parent's house, I heard a lesson from a preacher concerning the Lord's Supper. While I was in the Baptist church, I had never partaken of this memorial of the Lord. The lesson on the radio described passages that I had read, concerning how Jesus instituted His supper and how He wanted every disciple to partake of it (Matthew 26:26-28; I Corinthians 11:23-25). As the preacher continued, he showed the significance of Sunday, the first day of the week, in the regular assemblies of Christians (I Corinthians 16:2). The Holy Spirit recorded how one church partook on the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 10:16). As I drove my car, I also wrote down these and other passages of scripture to examine later. I became convinced that I should partake of the Lord's Supper on every first day of the week.

That very day I faced a dilemma. The Baptist church where I attended was not offering the Lord's Supper that Sunday. How was I going to resolve this situation? Rather than point to inconsistencies of others, or make up some hypothetical situation to justify myself or "my church," I simply tried to obey the Lord. That day I viewed the lunch I ate at my parent's house as a private partaking of this supper of the Lord. I was soon to see that this sincere effort was not the way to follow these instructions of Jesus. It would not be long, however, before I would find a proper way to remember Jesus as He had instructed.

After attending a semester at Samford University, I had enrolled at the University of Alabama and was in the process of visiting several churches. On a Wednesday night I decided to visit the University church of Christ. I sat in the back of the auditorium and heard a class taught by their campus minister, Ron Gholston. This class would plant a seed that would change my life.

Brother Gholston began with the great commission of Jesus as recorded in the book of Mark. "And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16). The teacher likened this verse to a math equation ( $1+1=2$ ). He proceeded to make this point. "Suppose someone decided to be baptized but did not have a personal faith in Jesus. Would he be saved? It is like taking one of the "1's" away from the equation. When that happens then you cannot have the proper result. A person who does not believe but is baptized cannot rightly expect salvation."

I fully agreed with brother Gholston, but was surprised at the next point he made. "What about the person that believes but is not baptized?" He gave the same illustration with the equation ( $1+1=2$ ) but then made a point that I had not considered. Was baptism an essential step in salvation?

Over the course of that class I came to see passages of scripture that I had never considered. The preacher made a similar point with the equation illustration ( $1+1=2$ ) on another passage of scripture. "Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

He began to make the point that whenever you find baptism and salvation (or forgiveness) in the same context, that baptism always precedes salvation (I Peter 3:20-21). This point made a deep impression on me.

As a Baptist, I used the "4 Spiritual Laws" tract. In this tract I taught others to seek the forgiveness found in the blood of Jesus shed on the cross (Romans 3:23; 6:23). I urged them to receive Jesus as their Savior by saying the "sinner's prayer," being a fruit of genuine faith and repentance. This is what I had been taught and this was what I had seen practiced in the Baptist assemblies.


Brother Gholston continued in his class to give the example of the conversion of Paul. After the Lord had struck Paul blind, we find that Paul now came to believe in Jesus and obediently follow His instructions (Acts 9:1-6). I heard many sermons in the Baptist church describing how Paul was saved at that point. I could read in my Bible how Paul in Damascus was fervently praying and fasting before the Lord (Acts 9:7-11). I had considered Paul's prayer as positive proof that he was now saved.

There was one more scripture to be presented in the class that would deeply move me and cause me to reconsider earlier teachings I had received as a Baptist. When Paul, in his own words, describes what Ananias said to him, it became crystal clear to me about the point in time that Paul was saved. "And now

why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Paul had prayed and fasted for three days and still was not forgiven! He needed to be baptized!

The next week I spent a considerable amount of time in Bible Study and reflection. I privately talked to brother Gholston and came to see that there were some real questions about my own baptism. From the Bible I learned that it is possible to be immersed in water for the wrong reason and, as a result, that baptism not be acceptable to God (Acts 19:1-6). Rather than be unsure about my stand, I was baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of my sins (Acts 2:38).

This was just the beginning of my journey with the Lord. I knew that I needed to stand for the undenominational Christianity that the Lord had prayed for (John 17:20). From that point on, I have sought to be a part of local churches that would stand with the Lord in keeping the great commission He gave (Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:18-20).

Since that time I have continued the same process of examination and standing. I since have often thought about Paul and the reasons he left the religion in which he was raised (Philippians 3:4-11). Are you standing in God's righteousness alone? 

(I apologize for the size of font, but I felt that this was an important article to share, and all in one bulletin -KV)

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## Remember in Prayer

It appears that Dwight Pressnell's tests have come out for the best! Let's thank the Lord for this! Please continue to remember Larry's mother, as well as the entire Leopard family...

Also, please pray for those who are unable to meet with us, including: Lois Adams, Ruth Black, Carolyn Dennis, Dot and Tim Hice, Polly McNatt, and Hazel Teeples.