

**Schedule of Meeting Times:** *modified until April 30 due to the pandemic.*

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM

*Speaker, Robert Emerson*

Study Sunday **Postponed**

Worship Sunday **Postponed**

Worship Sunday **Postponed**

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

Study Wednesday **Postponed**

*"How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, who seek Him with all their heart."  
—Psalm 119:2*



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**Servants during April and May:**

**Songleader:** Stanley (5/3), Larry (10), David (17), Peter (24), Chandler (31)

**Reading:** David (May)

**Announcements:** Stanley (May)

**Table:** Larry, Chandler, Mike, Marty (May)

**Wednesday Lesson:** Stanley (5/6), Kris (13), Larry (20), Stanley (27)

**Lawn Mowing (week starting):** Larry (4/5), Kris (12), Marty (19), Stanley (26), Robert? (5/3), Larry (10), Kris (17), Marty (24), Stanley (31)

## Hays Mill church of Christ

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Elkmont, AL 35620

# The Bible . Examiner

*"Examine everything carefully..." —1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB*

Volume 3

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Number 1

# The Purpose of the Local Church

*By Bill Hall*

What is the purpose of the Lord's church? Is it to eradicate poverty, disease, social injustice, illiteracy from among men? Is it to bring about a cessation of war and conflict? Is it to campaign for a temptation-free society for Christians to live in?

If the church had as one of its great goals the eradication of disease, the Lord could have easily equipped it to accomplish that goal. Could not the same power that enabled one blind man to see have enabled all blind men to see; that enabled one lame man to walk have enabled all lame people to walk; that cured many people of varied diseases have cured all

people of all diseases? And could not this same power have been given to the church in all generations?


If the church has as one of its great goals the eradication of poverty, the Lord could have easily equipped it to accomplish this purpose. After all, He fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes. He similarly fed four thousand on another occasion. Could not He who did these marvelous works have enabled His church in all generations to feed, clothe, and shelter the impoverished masses of the world through miraculous powers?

If the Lord had wanted His

church to become a lobbyist group to apply political pressure toward a temptation and persecution-free society in which to live, He would have given instructions in that direction. He did not even lead His church into a direct effort to destroy slavery, but taught the Christian slave to be a better slave and the Christian master to treat his slaves as he would have his heavenly Master treat him, Col 3:22-4:1.

The church's purpose is to save souls and prepare people for eternity. It holds out to the impoverished the hope of someday walking a street of gold; to the suffering a time when there will be no pain; to the sorrowing a moment when "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." It tells the tempted and persecuted that there is value in these afflictions, that the testing of their faith is "more precious than of gold," and to rejoice. It tells all to

live godly lives in whatever environment they find themselves. It seeks to change people through the power of the gospel, not society through the coercion of legislators. Its weapons "are not carnal, but are mighty through God." Its motivating theme: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

When local churches become involved in hospital and health clinic work, or when they build schools for the education of their children, or when they see as one of their great missions to provide for the world's poverty, or when they feel obligated to create social upheaval and campaign for human rights, or when they feel called upon to express their views on the government's use of nuclear armaments or whatever, they have a distorted view of the purpose of the church. 

than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you. No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from my Father, I have made known unto you," Jn 15:12-15 ASV.


The commandment is to love one another AS Christ loved us [His example]. He tells us in v13 that we must have the same attitude, willing to lay down our lives for our friends. Spend and be spent for the sake of the gospel of Christ, spending our lives "holding forth word of life" to a lost and dying world. Our urgent

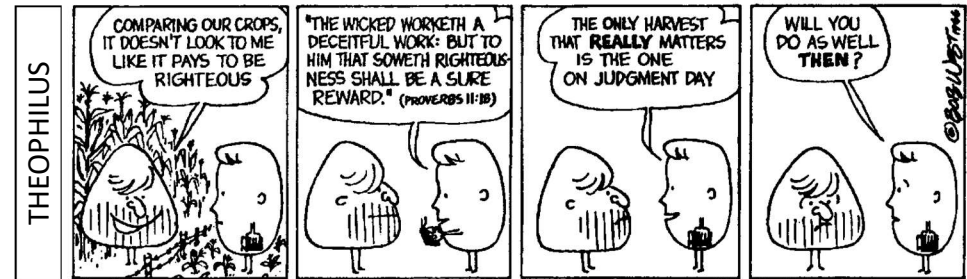
efforts must be more focused on the lost and less on being entertained by the things of this world which is nothing but "grasping for the wind," Eccl 4:16.

What are we willing to spend?

"Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the palsied knees," Heb 12:12 ASV.

"And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the fainthearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all," 1 Thess 5:14 ASV.


How happy are we to be spent reaching the lost? How much time, talent and energy is spent? 



## Remember in Prayer

"I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day..." 2 Tim 1:3.

Robert had a stint put in after a mild (but very serious!) heart attack this past week, and is much better now. Hazel Teeple is not doing well at all; she is well taken care of by Barbara as always, but hospice has

been called in to help as well. And don't forget **Madelene Britnell**; nor **Lois Adams**, **Carolyn Dennis**, **Tim** and **Dot Hice**, as well as **Polly McNatt** when you pray. 

*We will not meet again as a church until after April 30<sup>th</sup>, due to restrictions on all non-work related activities as outlined by the state health officer in response to the coronavirus pandemic. **Let us keep in contact with one another!***

# A Different Point of View

By Dan Gulley


Mark 2:1-5 tells about the unorthodox efforts of four unnamed heroes who used faith and works to get a hurting friend

to Jesus.

"Hearing that Jesus was in a house in Capernaum, four men sought to bring a paralytic to Jesus

for reasons you can't always see or understand. Learn to believe that God is good, even when the unwonderful of life creeps in.

This life is only one stitch in the infinite and intricate fabric of eternity. There is so much wonderful waiting for us in that

forever. Until then, God loves you, and He has a plan for your life. Whatever it is, don't lose faith when wonderful seems miles away. Even when the circumstances of life aren't wonderful, our God still is. 

# Gladly Spend

*By Louis Cook*

“And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved,” 2 Cor 12:15 NKJV.

This is the same attitude Paul expressed about Christ in Philippians 2:1-8. It is an attitude of selflessness. Paul would GLADLY spend this strength, time, energy and all that he had for their souls because he loved them, the same love that Christ demonstrated for us, you and me in His death on the cross. Paul was willing to be spent, worn out in His service for the benefit of others because he loved them and would gladly exhaust himself in service for them.

“...prove yourselves to be blameless and harmless children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation among whom you appear as lights in

the world, holding fast the word of LIFE ... You too, I urge you, rejoice and share my joy with you all,” Phil 2:15,16,18 NASB.

In verse 17 he refers to being poured out as a drink offering in order to service their faith. His actions were in support of their faith, to make their worship and daily life in Christ more spiritual, more pure, and more pleasing to God. Paul is encouraging them to follow his example — “you too!”

Now let's get personal, consider our willingness to spend and be spent in service of the faith of others, take the time for a personal inventory of where we are in “gladly willing to be spent” in serving our brethren!

“This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man


on a bed. Finding the house full of people and their way to Jesus blocked, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith He said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven you.’”

This incident reminds us that faith brings a different point of view in getting lost people to Jesus. Four men who believed Jesus could make a profound difference in the life of their paralyzed friend refused to give up when they found the way to Jesus crowded and impossible to pass. What to do? Faithless, negative thinking would have said nothing could be done and there were simply too many obstacles. But one of them lifted his eyes and expressed a different point of view: “We can get on top of the house, tear the roof off and lower him down to Jesus.” Faith helped them have a different point of view! As a result the paralyzed

man went home with a newly healed body and a freshly cleansed soul.

Many Christians could use a different point of view. The devil has convinced some in the church that our jobs as Christians is to come, sit and listen. But the proper evangelistic mentality is summed up in the words of Acts 5:20— “Go... stand... speak.”

Some insist nobody they know is interested in God, but Jesus calls us to a different point of view. He says, “the harvest truly is plentiful” and “lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest,” Mt 9:37; Jn 4:35.

Could it be many people are being kept from getting to Jesus because negative, faithless thinking is keeping us from getting to them? Faith can help us uncover the roof and see past what we alone can do to what we can do with God's help. Has faith changed your point of view? 

# Some Excellent Advice

*By Bill Hall*

When asked recently, “What steps can we take in upcoming

battles to make sure we are fighting as the Lord would have us

to fight?” we suggested the following:


Avoid being lined up with a party. Preach the truth; encourage others who teach the truth; but don't allow others to dictate to you how or when you do it. Please God.

Be fair. Even when others are not fair; when others are misrepresenting you; when others have lied about you — be fair.

Never resort to carnal [fleshly] weapons yourself.

Don't allow bitterness or anger or hate to rule you and destroy you.

Pray for those who revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for Jesus' sake.

But having said these things, FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT; CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH; BE FAIR BUT BE STRONG, COURAGEOUS, NEVER FEARING TO STAND FOR WHAT IS RIGHT! 

is God in all this?” What does God have to do with the pain and the sorrow in this world? Why, everything.

He sees, He cares, He knows, and, yes, His will reigns supreme. This world is broken. We are broken people. God told us this would be so. He never promised a wonderful life. In fact, He promised hardship. Jesus said the poor will be blessed. But, He didn't say He would end poverty. He said those who mourn will be comforted. But, He never promised that mourning wouldn't be part of our lives.

Life is hard, even when you're a Christian. Even when you try to love God with all your heart, bad things will happen. Terrible things will come. And, this is the danger in telling each other God has a wonderful plan for your life. Because there are just too many moments and hours and days and weeks that don't feel like a wonderful plan. They feel like an awful plan. They feel like a devastating plan. And, in those moments, the wonderful life idea just rings hollow. It makes us mad at God. It makes us resent Him and it leads us to believe that He was lying when He said “I have a wonderful plan for your life.” Only He never said that. We have confused something well-meaning

people have repeated millions of times with something that God actually promised. Yes, someone has been lying to you, but it is not God!

Here's the truth of the matter: If you are a Christian, God has a wonderful plan for your eternity. Jesus promised that He is getting some pretty amazing (dare I say wonderful) stuff ready for you in Heaven. And, He is coming back to Earth to do a whole new wonderful thing someday.

God has a plan for your life on earth, too. But, it's not for a 100% wonderful existence. That was the Garden of Eden. Times have changed. Our lives on earth will be trying, difficult, sometimes tragic, sometimes almost unbearable, often sprinkled with lots of great times, truly amazing and awe-inspiring experiences, and love. And all of these things, good and bad, bring glory to God, can help us know Him more, can bring us to our knees, can take us sailing to heights we've never known before. The human existence is a roller coaster of fear, doubt, happiness, pain, fun, beauty, anger, grace, mercy, anguish, and brokenness. God gives wonderful moments. But, this life isn't always wonderful.

Learn to be okay with that. Learn that God does what He does

# God May **NOT** Have a Wonderful Plan for Your Life...

*By Melissa Edgington*

If I've heard it once, I've heard it a million times: God has a wonderful plan for your life!

Tell this to a grieving mother standing beside a gaping grave dug for her child. Tell it to a man who can't keep the voices away, who longs to be normal but can't will his mind to function properly. Tell it to a woman who was raped. Tell

it to a child while he is being cut into pieces and suctioned from his mother's womb.

I understand the sentiment behind what we are saying when we use this phrase. But, my friends, look around you. A great many people live lives full of sorrow, tragedy, horror, pain, and abuse. The seeker will ask, “Where