

Schedule of Meeting Times:

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM
 Study Sunday 10:00 AM
 Worship Sunday Morn 11:00 AM
 Worship Sunday Eve 5:00 PM
Singing every 2nd Sunday evening
 Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

Preacher / bulletin editor:

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“Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,”

—1 Peter 3:21

**Servants during July:**

Songleader: Stanley (2), Larry (9), Peter (16), Stanley (23), Larry (30)

Reading: Peter

Announcements: Larry

Table: Mike M, Marty, Stanley, Larry

Wednesday Lesson: Stanley (5), Kris (12), Larry (19), Stanley (26)

Lawn Mowing (week starting):

Larry (2), Kris (9), Marty (16), Stanley (23), Larry (30)

Hays Mill church of Christ

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The Bible . Examiner

“Examine everything carefully...” —1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB

Volume 6

July 23, 2023

Number 7

Why I Didn't Leave the Church

by Matthew W. Bassford

The posts appear pretty regularly on my Facebook feed. Some poor soul, simmering with hurt and anger, explains why they left the churches of Christ. The explanations are generally long and filled with accusations of bad behavior by brethren. I get it. Like many preachers, I have suffered at the hands of other Christians too. Far be it from me to insist that disciples can't be jerks!

However, I have never considered leaving my religious tradition behind. I will allow others to explain why they left. I want to discuss why I didn't.

Mostly, I didn't leave because I agree with the core convictions of the churches of Christ about the Bible. These are twofold. First, we believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God. Second (and this one, though much less discussed, is equally important), we believe that ordinary people can read and understand the Bible for themselves.

I find this idea compelling and beautiful. The Bible isn't some

mystical, incomprehensible tome. You don't need a doctorate in divinity to comprehend it. Instead, anyone of ordinary intelligence can sit down with a Bible, figure out what a text means, and figure out what they ought to do about it. This is especially true of groups of ordinary Christians studying the Bible together. Collectively, a village of believers possesses great wisdom!

Admittedly, Bible study is a skill, but all of the churches with which I have been associated have been good at teaching it. Furthermore, these congregations have been willing and able to put their skills to use in learning more about the text.


As a preacher and writer, my blessing and my curse is my unique perspective. I don't spend a lot of time keeping up with the full latest in brotherhood thinking. Rarely do I read books about the Bible. Instead, I read the Bible, meditate on and pray about what I have read, and speak and write accordingly. Frequently, I

have found that my conclusions do not align with those of most brethren.

I have also found, though, that Christians are almost always willing to give me a hearing. This is not necessarily true online, but it is true in person. If I say something they haven't heard before, they'll press me on it. They'll want me to show them the Scriptures. They'll ask me to explain my reasoning so they can test it. However, unless they are emotionally committed to an alternate explanation already, once I have done those things, they are willing to be persuaded.

This is vital. Without such willingness, the work of the Holy

Spirit in revitalizing disciples and churches is impossible. Under a religious veneer, people will do what is right in their own eyes. With it, the work of God can continue. People can become better disciples. Churches can adhere more closely to the example of the first-century church. All of us can grow up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Thus, I'm still here. I'm not here because Christians and churches are perfect or ever will be. The devil certainly has not given up yet! Instead, I continue to labor among my brethren because I believe that they are uniquely open to the one thing that can help them become better. 

The Passover Lamb and Baptism

by Matthew W. Bassford

The story of the first Passover is familiar to most of us. In Exodus 12, Moses instructs the Israelites to take an unblemished male lamb, slaughter it, eat it as part of a ritual meal, and apply its blood to the doorposts and lintels of their houses.

This strange ceremony had a vital purpose. God was going to send a destroying angel throughout the land of Egypt, and he would kill the firstborn of both men and animals in each house. The angel would pass over only the houses that were marked with blood.

There are several elements to this story that are worth noting. The first

is that the coming catastrophe would be universal. God did not single out the firstborn of the Egyptians for doom. Instead, unless some action were taken, every house would be visited by the destroyer.

God did not intend for His people to face this destruction. However, He did not automatically spare them either. Instead, He gave them instructions that, if followed, would turn aside the destroyer. If the Israelites did not follow those instructions, their firstborn would perish along with those of the Egyptians.

Following those instructions had no intrinsic merit. The destroyer did not approach the houses of the Israelites and say, "Wow! I am so impressed with the artistic application of that blood! I could never destroy the firstborn of such gifted people!" The blood was effective for only one reason, because God had decreed that it would be. Even though the Israelites had to act, they still were saved not by their actions, but by His mercy.


All of these things are true of baptism under the covenant of Christ. We too are faced with universal catastrophe. On the Day of Judgment, the condemnation of God will not be limited only to Hitler and the other really, really bad people. Instead, every sinner will face it, and all of us have sinned. Unless we act, all of us are headed to the fires of hell.

God desires not to destroy us but to save us. However, salvation does not come automatically. As He did for the Israelites, He has given us instructions that we must follow. The Scriptures teach that we are forgiven

of our sins when we are immersed in water in the name of Jesus. Unless we are baptized, we will perish.

Like the blood on the doorposts, baptism has no intrinsic merit. It is not a good work that convinces God that we deserve eternal life. Rather, baptism saves only because God has said that it saves. As with belief, repentance, and confession, it is one of the conditions that we must fulfill before God will extend His mercy. We are rescued not by magic water, but by a gracious Creator.

We understand how foolish it would have been for the Israelites to refuse to apply the blood yet loudly proclaim their confidence that God would save them. Sadly, millions today make the same mistake with baptism, and if we follow their example, we will lose our souls.

However, if we act in faith as the Israelites did, we too will be rescued by the mercy of God. How marvelous it is that He has provided so great a salvation for us, and how tragic it would be for any of us to reject it! 

Remember in Prayer

Buddy passed away suddenly the week before last, and a tree has fallen on **Pam's** powerline at the weatherhead, leaving her without electricity. She is staying with **Julie**, who, last Sunday, came back to Christ, and asked for our prayers!

Deborah is doing much better,

but **Mike** appears to have both good and bad days.

Continue to pray for **Will, Emily** and their expected **baby**; and remember also **Betty; Carolyn; Dot; John, Sylvia, and Paige Pollard**; and **Joyce**. 