

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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“...we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord,”

—1 Thessalonians 4:17

**Servants during February:**

Songleader: Larry (4), Dwight (11), Stanley (18), Larry (25)

Reading: Larry

Announcements: Marty

Table: Stanley, Marty, Mike M, Larry

Wednesday Lesson: Kris (7), Larry (14), Stanley (21), Kris (28)

Area Meetings: Pepper Road,
2/17-21, Ken McDaniel;
Market Street, 2/23, Singing

Hays Mill church of Christ

21705 Hays Mill Road
 Elkmont, AL 35620

The Bible . Examiner

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

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SACKCLOTH AND ASHES

By Kris Vilander

Every one of us has grieved at the loss of a loved one; it is a natural human emotion that crosses every boundary—national, ethnic, gender, religion... even the borders of time. In the same way that all of every sort die, all of every sort experience similar emotions due to death. How we deal with that emotion can be very different, however; and some of those expressions are cultural.

The earliest Biblical record of mourning is of Abraham, following his wife Sarah’s death, Gen 23:2; not so many years afterward, we find Jacob mourning for Joseph, when he was shown his son’s coat covered with blood, Gen 37:34,35. While not much is said about how Abraham expressed his grief, Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth (a rough garment made of goat hair, uncomfortable to wear), and “mourned for his son many days.”

The Bible records that the ancients would do this not only

while grieving for the dead, but at other times of disaster or tragedy: Job tore his robe, shaved his head, and sat in ashes, having lost everything including his health, Job 1:20; 2:8; Tamar tore her garment and put ashes on her head because she had been raped and left desolate, 2 Sam 13:19; David fasted, neglected personal hygiene, and lay on the ground for a week, pleading with God because his child lay dying, 2 Sam 12:15-20; and all the Jews left in Persia behaved similarly when the plot to destroy them became known, Esth 4:1-3.

Actually, this kind of expression of grief and dismay was found in other nations during ancient time as well; the Moabites would shave their head and beard, and wear sackcloth, Isa 15:3, as would those of the city of Tarshish, Ezek 27:31; the Amorites would wear sackcloth, Jer 49:3; in fact, in response to a call to repentance, the Ninevites called

for a fast and the wearing of sackcloth for both themselves and their livestock, Jonah 3:5-8.

Yet, while the scripture records many instances of God's people behaving in such a way, the Old Covenant Law required none of it—except on the Day of Atonement, when they were to “humble their souls” because of their sin: in other words, they would fast, Lev 16:29-31; 23:27. As to the tearing of garments, sitting in or putting ashes one's head, and neglecting one's appearance—while not required, they became evidence of repentance (sorrow for sin) and seeking God, Dan 9:3; Ezra 8:21.

As with other practices that were common among the people of the time, God regulated this behavior under the Old Covenant, including forbidding things that would have been related to idolatrous worship. God's people were not to harm their bodies or shave their hair as a result of grieving, Lev 19:28; Deut 14:1; although it appears that they resumed the customs of the nations round about them in later times, Jer 16:6; 41:5.


Although this behavior didn't originate with God, He did at times reference it when calling his people to repentance; but it wasn't the act itself that was important to him—it was the heart behind it. God spoke

to Israel, Joel 2:12,13 “Yet even now,’ declares the LORD, ‘Return to Me with all your heart, And with fasting, weeping and mourning; And rend your heart and not your garments.’ Now return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness And relenting of evil.” John the Baptizer warned, “...bear fruit in keeping with repentance,” Mt 3:8. True repentance will show in your behavior, but it doesn't mean simply tearing the neck of your shirt; it means turning away from sin, and toward God. That is what God has always wanted from man: clean hands, and a pure heart, Psa 24:3,4; Jas 4:8.

The things the ancient Hebrews did when they grieved are not typically a part of our culture (though perhaps we should consider fasting on appropriate occasions, Acts 13:2; Mt 6:16). They showed their grief in very different ways than we would, just as we differ from men in other nations today—yet, we have all grieved at the loss of a loved one.

Even so, there is a difference in grief between a child of God, and someone that doesn't know Him: 1 Thess 4:13, “But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.” Christians look forward to a resurrection to Eternal

Life; and while we grieve for the temporary loss of those we love, we have confidence that we will see the

faithful again, in far better circumstances, without fear of another parting, 1 Thess 4:17. 


Today!

by Warren E. Berkley

Jesus said, “Sufficient for the day is its own trouble,” Mt 6:34. The wisdom of this can be taken in two directions.

An unproductive dwelling on the past keeps us from good focus on the work of the day. It will be useful for us to think about what Paul said, “Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,” Phil 3:13. Much time and energy needed for the day is wasted or lost, replaying past events. Often, we re-visit those events mentally but actually do nothing positive with that time.

Working Jesus' words in the other direction, the necessary attention to the current day can be hindered by a worry that tries to look too far ahead and anticipate all that might happen. If you can do something that should be done to prevent trouble tomorrow, by all means, make that part of the duty of the day. But treadmill thinking about all the possible trouble that might happen robs us of the productive attention the day requires.

“Today's trouble is enough for today,” Mt 6:34, NRSV. 

Remember in Prayer

Cathy Mitchell has had a difficult week; **Norman Hice** had his gall bladder removed; and **Ronda's grandson, Oliver**, didn't get braces as had been planned, but will see the orthodontist again in a few weeks.

Remember all those of our near spiritual family that struggle with

illness or chronic issues, including **Mike B; Carolyn; John, Sylvia, and Paige Pollard; and Joyce.**

Pray for the safety and wisdom of those in leadership, as well as candidates, Prov 14:34; 1 Tim 2:1-4. 