

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

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FOR THE RECORD

Sunday Bible Study	24
Sunday AM Worship	38
Sunday PM Worship	22
Wed. Bible Study	21
Offering	\$1954

Sin's Arithmetic



+ Sin adds to you trouble.
- Subtracts from your energy.
x Multiplies your difficulties.
= And its wages are death.

GOD'S ARITHMETIC & EQUATION FOR SALVATION

Belief + Repentance + Confession + Baptism -

of Sins *of Christ* *immersion in water*

- Salvation
- Forgiveness of sins
- Added to the Church
- Promise of Heaven

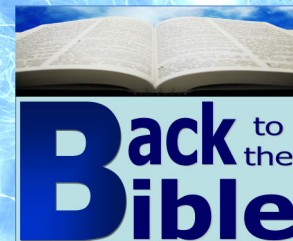
SIN WILL . . .

TAKE ONE FARTHER
THAN YOU WANTED
TO GO.

KEEP HIM LONGER
THAN HE WANTED
TO STAY

COST HIM MORE
THAN HE WANTED
TO PAY

HOW ARE THINGS ADDING UP WITH YOU SPIRITUALLY?



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Minister:

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Times of Services:

Sunday

Bible Study:.... 10:00am
AM Worship:..11:00am
PM Worship:....6:00pm
2nd Sunday:.....1:30pm

Wednesday

Bible Study:.....7:00pm

Radio Program

Sunday:.....7:30am
"Back to the Bible"
AM 580 WSKS
93.5 FM

We Extend A
Warm & Cordial
Welcome
To All Our
Visitors!

"THE VALUE OF THE CHURCH"

GARY W. SUMMERS

A few weeks ago a troubled young lady stopped by the office to talk about some of her problems. As she described her situation, it became evident that the solution to some of her difficulties would be for her to obey the gospel and attend worship.

Like so many people, she did not know how to become a Christian. She repeatedly mentioned not "feeling" close to God, and we examined Proverbs 28:26 and Jeremiah 17:9, which explain that our feelings are not the correct means upon which to decide matters as important as salvation.

In response to her concerns for her children, however, it was evident that being part of the church could help her family. A grimace formed upon her face as she asked: "You mean I'd have to come to church?"

Several responses to this question come to mind, the first of which is that we don't come to church; Christians are the church. She probably would not have understood such a difference--even brethren have a hard time grasping it.

The second thought was: "You don't have to come to worship God; you get to come." But for one never saved by the blood of Christ and added to His precious body (Acts 2:47), the value of the observation could be lost. Why is it that so many people have such a bad taste in their mouths about the word church? Is it that they have some cold ritualistic service in mind? Or is it that they have no worship to bring to God?

[Continued Inside]

The best course to pursue seemed to be to explain the purpose for the church and the subsequent value of it.

1. God did not design salvation so that we could all be hermits. Notice that those being saved from their sins were added to the body of Christ (Acts 2:47).

2. The early church did not then say, "This salvation experience here in Jerusalem has been grand; now let's all go home and get back to our lives."

3. Instead, they "continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). Imagine being part of the long awaited kingdom and being privileged to learn the doctrines of Christianity!

So close to one another were first century brethren that the Scripture says they were ". . . continuing daily with one accord in the temple..." (Acts 2:46). What a great opportunity to learn and grow together. How great was the wisdom of God to design the body this way--that we could encourage and strengthen one another.

Not only were the inspired apostles able to teach the will of God, but evangelistic growth soared. Soon the number of those who believed was five thousand (Acts 4:4). What an encouragement to see more and more obeying the gospel each day!

But being a member of the church involves more than sharing in spiritual triumphs. Moments of sadness and tragedy also occur. When Peter and John were threatened, the church girded itself for spiritual warfare and prayed that they might speak the word with all boldness (Acts 4:29). If there were a cowardly voice protesting that the apostles were making enemies needlessly and that they should therefore "tone it down" or try some other approach to win converts, he was ignored.

Acts 12 describes Herod putting to death James the brother of John; he further intended to kill Peter, also. But the church had met together to pray on his behalf (Acts 12:12). We are brethren not only when things are going our way, but in times of persecution and sorrow as well.

Keeping Christ in View

Though the church enjoyed such a great beginning, perfection seldom lasts. Satan gets busy trying to destroy the great things God has accomplished for man's benefit. God created the Garden of Eden, but Satan introduced sin into it. Jesus shed His blood for the church, but mankind has introduced various ungodly elements into it.

In Corinth, members brought in their own selfishness. Some were bragging about the teacher or preacher they liked best. "Now I say this, that each of you says, 'I am of Paul,' or 'I am of Apollos,' or 'I am of Cephas,' or 'I am of Christ'" (1 Cor. 1:12). This unbiblical attitude was causing them to go to law against their brethren--even before unbelievers (1 Cor. 6:6).

Even the most spiritual things became methods of vaunting self and avenues of

downgrading fellow Christians. Some had miraculous knowledge (see 1 Cor. 12:8), but they were using it as a weapon against their brethren instead of exercising love (1 Cor. 8:1). Others were so enamored by the spiritual gifts they possessed that they just had to use them--even if it meant interrupting someone else's use of one. And if no one could profit by the message because it was spoken in an unknown tongue and no one in the congregation could interpret it, the selfish person did not care (study 1 Cor. 14).

One of the most spiritual aspects of worship is the Lord's Supper, and some were perverting even that (1 Cor. 11:17-34)!! The basic problem was one of selfishness; the cure was to begin practicing LOVE. The many definitions of "love" are not located in 1 Corinthians 13 by accident. Those brethren needed to learn such things as patience and kindness (1 Cor. 13:4). These attitudes can not be taken for granted. The selfish person does not bear with other members (Why doesn't he do what I want him to do--and right now?). Paul calls for patience. Those who cannot disagree with someone without being disagreeable need a huge dose of kindness, too. A person motivated by love does not act rudely (1 Cor. 13:5).

If brethren cannot treat one another kindly, what will they have to offer to the non-Christian? "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another" (John 14:35).

Paul teaches the brethren at Corinth that the members of the body "should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Cor. 12:25-26). [That's certainly better than "biting and devouring one another" (Gal. 5:15).]

The lady who visited the office felt alone, and her children had few friends. The church can fill those needs. Had she obeyed the gospel, she would have had loving brothers and sisters; she would not have needed to feel alone. And her children would have found new friends here. Why? Because that's one of the benefits of the way God designed the church. These are not reasons to become a Christian; the reason for obedience is salvation from sin. But they are certainly good byproducts of faithfulness. How marvelous is God's plan, and how fortunate we are to be part of it (Eph. 4:16).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Feb 26 – Prayer Service
- Mar 5 – Men's Bus. Meeting & Ladies' Bible Class after Evening Worship
- Mar 12 – Preach-N-Eat & 1:30 Worship & Song Service
- Please give support money for Chinese orphans to Minnie Kennell