

"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	26
Sunday AM Worship	27
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Offering	\$1177

You Are Cordially Invited to Our

Spring Gospel Meeting

May 7-11, 2023

With Guest Speaker:

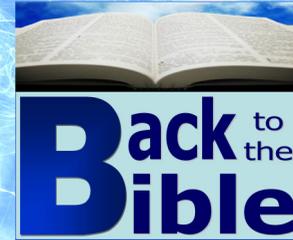
Jeff Johnson

West Jefferson Church of Christ

130 Robert Street; West Jefferson, NC 28694

SUNDAY:.....10:00AM, 11:00AM & 1:30 PM
MONDAY-THURSDAY:.....7:00 PM

NOTE: No Collection Will Be Taken Monday-Thursday!
For More Information: (336) 846-5615 or info@wjchurchofchrist.org



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Minister:

Tim Canup
tim@wjchurchofchrist.org

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!**

**DO WE PLAN TO HAVE "AN ALTAR CALL" DURING
OUR GOSPEL MEETING?**

Roger D. Campbell

Some denominational groups practice what they call "an altar call." That is a time when people, usually at the end of a sermon, are encouraged to come to the front part of the facility in which they are assembled, where there is a literal altar on which a person can kneel. It is at such an altar that many are convinced that they are saved from their sins by praying to Jesus and asking Him into their heart. In days gone by, some folks referred to that as "praying through" for the forgiveness of sins at the altar.

We do not have an altar in our church building, and we do not intend to import one, so, no, we will not be having "an altar call" during our gospel meeting. Beyond that, however, is the truth that we will in no way plead with those that are lost outside of the Christ to pray for forgiveness. Why? The reason is really quite simple: in the New Testament, those that were encouraged to pray for forgiveness are those that were already Christians (Acts 8:13,21,22; 1 John 1:8-10; James 5:16). They already were children of God, but due to sin in their lives, they needed to repent and pray to God to remove their sins. Never do we read in the Bible that sinners who had never before had their sins forgiven, could have their sins washed away through prayer. The Bible just does not teach anything akin to what is often labeled "the Sinner's Prayer."

[Continued Inside]

Several hundred years before Jesus ever came into the world, through the prophet Jeremiah God time and again exhorted the unfaithful Jews of that era to return unto Him, saying, *"Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings"* (Jeremiah 3:22; cf. 4:1). In the New Testament we read that Jesus told the members of His body in Ephesus, *"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works . . ."* (Revelation 2:4,5). Both of these appeals that called for people to repent and come back were addressed to those that were *already* children of God. In the same way, during our gospel meeting we can expect our guest evangelist, brother Wayne Lankford, to exhort members of the church to confess their faults to one another, if, indeed, they have such a need.

But what about inviting sinners to "get saved," will we not be doing that during this meeting? God wants all men to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4), and we do, too. Having a gospel meeting is one phase or portion of our year long, day-in-day-out effort to teach the gospel to lost people. We might slightly modify the wording of Romans 10:1,2 to fit our outlook toward the situation in our area: "Brethren, our hearts' desire and prayer to God for the people of Bradley County, Tennessee is that they might be saved. For we bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge."

If a person has committed sin, but in the past has never received the Lord's forgiveness for that sin, then he/she is spiritually "dead" – dead in sin (Ephesians 2:1). The only God-ordained remedy for sin is the blood of Jesus, and it is only in Jesus that redemption is found (Ephesians 1:7). In order for one to become a child of God and have his/her sins washed away, he/she must do what the Bible calls "obey the gospel" (Romans 10:16). What does that entail? One must hear and understand the gospel (Acts 2:36). A person must believe that Jesus is the Son of God (John 3:16-18). One must repent of his past transgressions (Acts 3:19) and also confess faith in Jesus as the risen Lord (Romans 10:9,10).

In addition, water baptism is also a condition of salvation. On the day when the church of the Christ was established on earth, sinners asked the question, *"Men and brethren, what shall we do?"* (Acts 2:37). They were *not* told, "There is nothing that you can do." They were *not* told, "Just accept Jesus." They also were *not* told, "Confess that you are a sinner and pray to the Lord and ask Him to forgive you." No, no, no. Well, what *were* they told? *"Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost"* (Acts 2:38). That is God's answer, and we can expect brother Wayne to set forth that same message in a very clear fashion this week.

"Praying through," "getting religion," or "asking Jesus into your heart" are simply not God's way of obtaining the forgiveness of sins. Why do we so confidently claim that these are not God's way of salvation? Simply because you don't read them in the Bible! In view of that, no, there will be no "altar call," not during our gospel meeting, and not ever at Union Grove. That is, not ever *as long as* we stay true to the Bible.

Lord willing, throughout this week at the end of each sermon, what we *will* observe is our guest gospel preacher extending the Lord's invitation, calling on those that are burdened with sin and heavy laden to come to the Master (Matthew 11:28). That means, of course, it will be an invitation to come to Him on His terms – those that are already children of God will be encouraged to confess their sins to one another (if there is such a need), and non-Christians will be exhorted to believe and obey the gospel by being baptized into the Christ for the remission of their sins (Romans 6:3,4).

Only the truth of God can set a person free from sin (John 8:32-36), so let us all plan to support the preaching of the truth that will go on this week. Let us all do our best to bring others that they, too, might hear the saving gospel of the Lord.

.....
"And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high"
(Luke 24:44-49).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- May 7 – Preach & Eat & 1:30 Worship Service
- May 7-11 – Gospel Meeting with Jeff Johnson
- May 14 – Men's Business Meeting & Ladies' Bible Class after Evening Worship
- May 28 – Prayer Service
- Please give support money for Chinese orphans to Minnie Kennell