

NEWS

Catherine Moss is scheduled to have her hernia surgery this coming Wednesday, December 19, at the local hospital—**Dorothy Kyle** was sick last Sunday and unable to be in our services but she was back with us Wednesday night—**Pat Marshall** was also sick last Sunday and still was not feeling well Wednesday night—**Luke Arnold** was also sick last Sunday, but he was back in our service Wednesday evening—**Paley Stringer** was sick Wednesday night and she and Alicia were not in the service—**Debbie Johnson** was (continued on page 3)

ELDERS:
Bob Arnold 572-1219
Leon Goff 572-6809
Kendall Johnson 572-9306

DEACONS:
Ron Burns 577-9978
Ricky Davis 572-9428
Ken Ferguson 572-4135
Pat Marshall 572-9347

SERVICES:
Sunday
Bible Study 9:45 AM
Worship 10:30 AM
Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday
Ladies Class 10:00 AM
Bible Study 7:00 PM

PREACHERS:
Ronald Stringer 717-8603
Leon Goff 572-6809

**ASSIGNMENTS FOR:
December 23, 2012**

**Serving The Lord's Supper
Sunday Morning**

Scripture: Kendall Johnson
Ken Ferguson Pat Marshall
Ricky Davis Kevin Kanaley

Sunday Evening
Ken Ferguson Pat Marshall

PRAYERS
Sun. AM—Bob Arnold (Opening)
—Buford Guthrie (Closing)
PM—Kenneth Amerson (Opening)
—Colton Fulmer (Closing)

ANNOUNCEMENTS
A.M.—Leon Goff
P.M.—Paul Chapman

(notify Pat Marshall if unable to serve)

Southside
Church of Christ
P.O. Box 242
Mt. Pleasant, TX 75456

Think It Over—If you were to die today...Where would you spend eternity? To all who love God, and to those who do not, but should, to all who are weary and heavy laden; to all who are lonely and sad; to all who sin and need a Savior, and to whosoever will come a hearty welcome is extended.

Southside Church of Christ

Bulletin

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Saving Faith

By Dan Richardson

“And he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:9). Peter speaks of the conversion of Cornelius and his household. They were the first Gentile converts to Christianity, recipients of salvation in Christ, as the Jews were recorded before Acts 10 (the initial record of the Gentile’s conversion).

Our study focuses on what is involved in saving faith. What do the scriptures say? This topic is of vital importance today. There are diverse opinions as to what kind of faith saves, the most prevalent in modern protestant religions being the notion that man is saved by faith only. Proponents of faith only salvation seek to draw a vivid contrast between faith and works, concluding that man can do nothing in the “works” category to procure his salvation. Again we ask, what does scripture (God’s word) say about this?

In the record of Peter’s speech in Acts 15:7-11, significant points are made regarding this. First, he says the Gentiles heard the “word of the gospel” and believed (vs. 7). It is significant to understand the place of the gospel in man’s salvation. Paul said the gospel is God’s power to save (Rom. 1:16-17), and Peter makes clear that point. Recalling the events of Cornelius’ conversion, he had concluded they were saved by the words he spoke to them (Acts 11:14). When man seeks salvation from some other source than the gospel (i.e., some miraculous intervention by the Holy Spirit, or some other miracle), he isn’t considering the plain statements of God’s truth. It is God’s wisdom for sinners to be saved by their hearing and response to the gospel—”the word of the cross” (1 Cor. 18:21). To this

truth, every account of conversion in Acts bears witness.

But does the gospel require of sinners faith only? Does Peter's statement above suggest that the Gentile's hearts were cleansed by faith only? Or, in the original record of their conversion, when it says that "every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43), does that suggest faith only? Not if we accept all of God's record on it.

Concerning the Gentile's saving faith, Peter by inspiration affirms of them that "God granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18). Repentance requires a change of mind brought about by "godly sorrow" for sins (2 Cor. 7:10-11). It was what Peter initially commanded of the Jews who were privileged to first hear the gospel (Acts 2:38), and what Paul had later commanded of those in Athens and all men everywhere (Acts 17:30). Also, Jesus had taught the necessity of repentance in order for sinners to be saved in Luke 13:3,5. If repentance is involved, it isn't salvation by faith only.

Also, Peter had commanded Cornelius water baptism as an essential response in their salvation: "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48). This corresponds to the same divine instruction he gave the Jews in Acts 2:38, as well as his later teachings in 1 Peter 3:21: "baptism doth also now save you." This too shows

that they were not saved by faith only, and that man's response in his salvation was necessary.

Did God then cleanse their hearts by faith? Most assuredly He did, but the question arises as to what constitutes saving faith? This question must arise when confronted with every Bible verse that attributes man's salvation to faith (i.e., John 3:16; Rom. 5:1, etc.). The sum of God's word constitutes truth on any matter (Psalm 119:160), and we must be willing to see what the Bible says on the subject of saving faith.

The epistle of James clearly shows that saving faith is not "faith only" but faith that trusts in God to obey all He commands (James 2:24). Even the Old Testament example of unbelieving Israel makes synonymous Israel's "unbelief" to their "disobedience" (Heb. 3:18-19; 4:2,6), and therefore we can equate saving belief to obedience to God's word.

The Bible speaks of different kinds of faith. For example, we read where faith only, without obedient works, is said to be a dead faith (James 2:20). We read of some Jews, who had believed on Jesus, were displeasing to God because of their love for man's praise over God's (John 12:42-43). Therefore, not all faith is saving faith, and it behooves us to search the scriptures to understand the difference.

Let us then be very careful not to

be misled by man's opinions and denominational creeds regarding the faith that pleases God. Surely we know that there are kinds of works that do not save—the works of the law of Moses and works of human merit. There's another kind of works which do save - the "good works" which God has commanded us to do (Eph. 2:10). Doing what God commands isn't works of human merit, but the humble response to God's grace, commanded in His word of grace, the gospel (Acts 20:32). To these, we must always obey by faith. That's why Peter could conclude these Gentiles were saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they (Jews, Acts 10:11). We should think nothing less of ourselves.

—Search, Vanduser, MO, 11/12

Address Change

Melita Rivers has moved. Her new address is **110 S. Riddle St. #1, Mt. Pleasant 75455**. Her telephone number has not changed.

Our Annual Singing

Friday Night, January 18, 2013 is the date and **7:30 PM** is the time. **Tim Steven, Dane Shepard and Todd Dennis** are scheduled so far to be the song leaders. We are expecting another full house at our singing. We appreciate very much the

great support we have received the past years. We look forward to another enjoyable evening of worshipping God singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. As in past years, we look forward to having visitors from the local area as well as from over the Ark-La-Tex area. Let's look forward to it.

Our New Building

Is progressing nicely and it looks now like it will be finished sometime in February.

NEWS (continued from back page) also sick Wednesday night—**Alicia Hancock** is still recovering from her recent surgery and she is reported to be doing better. Her son, **Asher**, has also been sick—**Lee Roy Newman**, Marion Shurtleff's brother, remains in the local hospital on the Skilled Nursing Unit floor and he is making good progress—**Gene White**, former member at Southside that many of you know, has a spot on his liver and the doctors are going to check it out. Remember him in your prayers—Continue to remember **Relda Marshall, David Hill, Pat Brown, Deborah Brown Reed, Dana Welch Crawford, Tammy Willeford and Ronald Stringer** in their health struggles—Remember our **Shut-ins: Clayton Bellamy, Loyd Clark, Irma May, Bettye Mitchell, Lelda Thompson and Joan Tosh**.