

NEWS

Kay Oler, Wilma Payne’s daughter passed away last week in Oklahoma City and we express our sympathy to Wilma and her loved ones—**Michael Lovell** learned he had pneumonia week before last and was sick through last weekend. He was not able to be in the services last Sunday—**Lynn and Mike Lovell** have both had the flu and were not in the services last Sunday—**Samantha and Christian Krugh** have both had the flu and Samantha was not here last Sunday—**Vickie Brownlee** has had the stomach virus this past week (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:
February 3, 2013

Serving The Lord’s Supper
Sunday Morning
Scripture: Ron Traugher
Thomas Hockaday Ron Burns
Austin Fulmer Bobby Burns
Sunday Evening
Thomas Hockaday Ron Burns

PRAYERS
Sun. AM—Luke Arnold (Opening)
—Charles Davis (Closing)
PM—Leon Goff (Opening)
—Andrew Arnold (Closing)

ANNOUNCEMENTS
A.M.—Bob Arnold
P.M.—Kendall Johnson
(notify Pat Marshall if unable to serve)

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
P.O. Box 242
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Southside Church of Christ

Bulletin

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The Unthinkable Commandment

By Paul Earnhart

With every advancing sentence in Matthew 5 (v. 21), Jesus has taken an ever larger bite out of the human ego. Every new contrast between the popular Pharisaic perversions and the real demand of kingdom righteousness has served to heighten the moral challenge. What the Lord at last commands in the sixth and last of these antitheses must have stunned His audience (Matthew 5:43-48). He has spoken the inconceivable when He said, “But I say to you, love your enemies” (Matthew 5:44). To many of His listeners, such counsel must have seemed not only unthinkable, but impossible - and contrary to the very concept of justice.

Now for the first time in the sermon, Jesus has spoken the word which best sums up the principle underlying the whole of His message. He has led His hearers up an ascending plane from what love prohibits in the treatment of others (even those who abuse us) to what love demands of us positively. And who among His audience then or now could have anticipated that the journey would not be finished until He had demanded of them the hardest thing of all - to love the very ones we are most drawn to hate — our enemies. Finally, the Lord has left no room for “self” at all.

“Enemy” was hardly a foreign idea to first-century Jews. By Jesus’ time, there was a palpable enmity that had attached itself to the partitioning wall that was the law (Ephesians 2:14-15). The people of Israel had suffered much from a hostile world and often looked with disdain upon the ignorant paganism and egregious immorality of the Gentiles. The Gentiles were not slow to return the favor. The Pharisees, with their separatist fervor, were not ignorant of the law’s demand that the sons of the covenant

were to love their neighbor as themselves (Leviticus 19:18), but they understood that obligation to end at the borders of Israel. There were plenty to hate beyond the pale and many in the nation held that it was not only their privilege, but their obligation to do so. The fact that the Pharisees were aware of the command to love, but floundered on the definition of “neighbor” is evidenced by the conversation with a certain lawyer (Luke 10:25-29). The lawyer knew that formula but was yet to make a proper application.

But how and why did the teachers in Israel come to conclude that the law commanded hatred for the enemy? It might have been the “holy wars” of extermination which God commanded Israel to wage against the Canaanites (Deuteronomy 20:16-18), or the imprecatory psalms “Do not I hate them, O Lord, who hate You? I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies” (Psalm 139:21-22). Note especially Psalm 109. Yet, however difficult and perplexing be the problems which these facts present, the law did not distinguish in the matter of neighbor love between the Israelite and the stranger (Leviticus 19:18 with 19:33-34), and it did not counsel hatred and vengeance for the enemy (Exodus 23:4-5). Even Job, whose times most likely antedate the law, understood the sin of rejoicing over the calamity of an enemy (Job 31:29-30). It has always impressed me that when Paul sought to instruct his brethren in their treatment of enemies, he

felt no need for some new revelation, but drew easily upon the book of Proverbs: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him, if he is thirsty, give him a drink” (Romans 12:20; Proverbs 25:21). There is no portion of the Old Testament which more directly addresses the problem of Israel’s attitude toward her enemies than the book of Jonah. The Assyrians were a brutal people, enemies of God and men, but Jehovah loved them and He intended that His servant Jonah should do the same (Jonah 4:9-11).

Still, if after all this, we find ourselves hard pressed to believe that the law did not counsel enmity toward enemies, we are left to trust the Son of God who rebukes this idea as a misconception of the law and wholly inconsistent with the nature and purpose of God. It was just such teaching as this that made the nation so unprepared for the coming of the peaceable kingdom. Had Jesus told His followers to love their “neighbors,” they might well have continued in the old narrow ways, missing completely this love’s unique nature. But when He teaches them to love their enemies, they may be startled but they will certainly be instructed. As Kierkegaard had observed, the gospel has made it forever impossible for anyone to be mistaken about the identity of his neighbor. If we are to love our enemies, then there will certainly be no member of the human race, however different, however distant, however vile, to which we will not owe the best we can give him.

You Expect Me To Believe That?

> In the beginning there was nothing. And suddenly for no reason nothing exploded and created everything. You expect me to believe that?

> At some point, by chance the right chemicals happened to float together at just the right moment to be struck by an electrical charge and become life. You expect me to believe that?

> Somewhere two non-human mothers each gave birth to a human child. They were born at the same time and in the same place, one was male and one was female. These two new “humans” gave birth to the human race. You expect me to believe that?

> One of the descendants of these first humans was born with a knowledge of right and wrong. No longer driven by instinct, this person suddenly was making decisions based on a morality for which there is no real explanation. You expect me to believe that? I’m sorry. I don’t have that much blind faith. It’s all just too far-fetched to be anything more than a fairy tale. I can’t believe intelligent people claim it is “science” (cf. 1 Timothy 6:20).

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). I can believe that without stretching my imagination into the realm of the impossible. The universe was created by an all-powerful, all-knowing God. That I can believe!

—Phil Gear

Bettye Mitchell

Sister Mitchell passed away last Sunday evening. She had been a faithful Christian for many years and a faithful member of the Southside church for a number of years in these last years of her life. She grew up here in Titus county and spent many years living and working in Ft. Worth, TX. During those years she was a member of the Castleberry and Westside churches of Christ. Bettye was admired for her faithfulness, strength and courage. She buried three husbands and her only daughter and accepted these burdens with grace. Our sincere sympathy is extended to all of her loved ones.

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NEWS (continued from back page)

and was not in the service Wednesday night—**Ben Hancock** has not been doing well and prayers are requested for him—**Dorothy Kyle** continues to struggle with her strength and her health problems—**Lee Roy Newman**, Marion Shurtleff’s brother, has been in the ETMC in Tyler for a couple of weeks and has not been doing well. He has been having blood clots—**Bob and Luke Arnold** were both sick last Sunday and not in our services—Continue to remember **Relda Marshall, David Hill, Pat Brown Deborah Brown Reed, Dana Welch Crawford, Tammy Willeford and Ronald Stringer**—Remember our **Shut-ins: Clayton Bellamy, Loyd Clark, Dee Ellis, Irma May, Lelda Thompson and Joan Tosh.**