

Of Christ

Those interested in eternal salvation must be of Christ. He is the only one through whom redemption comes (1 Pet. 1:18-19; Jn. 3:16). It is through Him alone that one may go to the Father (Jn. 14:6). So, what is required to be of Christ?

In dealing with problems at Corinth, Paul said, "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.' Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor. 1:12-13). To be of Paul, he had to be crucified for you and you must be baptized in his name. So, to be of Christ, He must be crucified for you and you must be baptized in His name. The former is done. Jesus gave His life for the sins of all men (Jn. 1:29; Heb. 2:9). The latter is up to each one of us. All who are baptized in the name of Christ are His (Acts 2:38). If you are not baptized in the name of Christ, you are not of Christ—you are lost.

- Steven F. Deaton

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PRESSING ON: 2004-2005

Every Christian at the Hebron Lane Church of Christ must resolve to press on. Another year has past, we have entered 2005, and eternity is waiting for us. We have much to do, but the work will be done only if we are always pressing forward.

God guided the Hebrews from Egypt to the promised land by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Ex. 13:21; 40:38). Nothing could stop them from pressing on, but their own failure of faith. After many trials and failures, they entered the land of rest and reward. Heaven is waiting for us: "There remaineth...a rest to the people of God" (Heb. 4:9). Through many trials and failures, we must press on.

Our greatest step forward this year occurred when Steven, Ashlie, Hannah, and Elijah Deaton arrived May 31 to work with us. Andy Alexander and I labored together after my arrival in the summer of 1997. In Sept. 2003, Andy moved to Bowling Green, KY and the elders here began to search for someone to fill this gap. Steven had preached his first sermon in the pulpit of the church in West Columbia, TX the first Sunday of 1995. Most recently, he preached for the Loop church in Lufkin, TX for seven years. Steven is a mature thinking young gospel preacher committed to preaching "the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15). The elders did a good day's work when they brought Steven to help us press forward in proclaiming the gospel of Christ.

During 2004, we had good gospel meetings with Brett Hogland of Lubbock, TX, Steve Curtis of Florence, AL, and John Isaac Edwards of Salem, IN. We heard lessons which were biblical, instructive, and edifying. For 2005, the elders have invited Art Adams of Indianapolis, IN, Jarrod Jacobs of Owensboro, KY, David Halbrook of Baytown, TX, and Larry Hafley of Baytown. We must press on.

In addition to regular Bible classes, we are having eight winter classes on Tuesdays on the theme of the home. In addition to our bulletin, Steven Deaton is

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writing an article for the Wednesday Neighborhood (Bullitt County) section of the *Courier-Journal* newspaper. Gospel literature on a wide range of subjects and sign-up cards for correspondence study are available in the foyer of the building. We must press on in utilizing these study tools to learn and teach.

On 15-20 occasions, saints here confessed sins and asked for our prayers during 2004, and several of us gathered at 1 A.M. for the baptism of Matt Spears of Lawrenceburg, KY one stormy night. Many of us have invited friends, neighbors, and relatives to visit our services or to have Bible studies in the home. Some responded, others did not. Shall we give up or press on in 2005?

We are reaching out to spread the gospel by supporting men at home and abroad. I held eight gospel meetings in addition to other preaching appointments. On three trips I worked with U.S. and Filipino brethren in the Philippines where about 130 were baptized, hundreds of sermons and lessons were taught, dozens of churches were visited, numerous studies with denominational preachers were held, hundreds of Bibles were provided, and other efforts made. It was exhausting work for me and involved many sacrifices by the church here. What shall we do in 2005, cut back or increase our efforts, rest on our laurels or press on as never before?

The answer lies with each one of us! Let us press on to “fight the good fight of faith” until we leave this world or the Lord returns (1 Tim. 6:12).

- Ron Halbrook

What Determines Holiness?

All who believe in God ought to be interested in holiness as He has commanded (1 Pet. 1:15-16). To be holy is to be set apart from the world of sin, dedicated to serving God. Without holiness “no one will see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14). Well, what determines holiness?

Moses was told to take off his sandals because the ground where he stood was holy (Ex. 3:5). Peter referred to the mount of transfiguration as “the holy mountain” (2 Pet. 1:18). Is there sand, dirt, or rock that is inherently holy? May we go to some geographical location and find natural elements that are sanctified before

God? Jesus told the Samaritan woman that there is no specific location that is more holy than any other (Jn. 4:20-24). What made the ground under Moses’ feet holy? What made the mountain where Peter stood holy? The presence of God. The same thing makes us holy.

In order for us to be holy, we must have God dwelling with us. Jesus said, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him and We will come to him and make Our home with him” (Jn. 14:23). Therefore, the way to have God dwelling with you is to accept and submit to His commands. Jesus said He will abide in us when His word abides in us (Jn. 15:4-7). As Paul said, Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, which comes by hearing the word of God (Eph. 3:15; Rom. 10:17). If we do not accept the Lord’s teaching on fornication, adultery, uncleanness, lewdness, or other works of the flesh, we are not holy (Gal. 5:19-21). If we rebel and reject the Spirit’s revelation on husbands and wives, we are not holy (Eph. 5:22-33). If we are factional, we are not holy (Titus 3:10-11).

Congregationally, we are holy only when God is with us. Jesus promised to be with even two or three who gather in His name—by His authority (Matt. 18:20; Col. 3:17). Churches that follow the New Testament pattern in worship, work, and organization are holy. Those that do not, are not. For instance, musical worship in the New Testament consisted of singing, teaching, and admonishing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Those who add instrumental music are not holy because they do not accept the word of God on this point. The same can be said for observing the Lord’s Supper. The Bible pattern is partaking the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine on the first day of the week, as often as that comes (Matt. 26:26-28; Acts 20:7). Many churches do not do this, and are, therefore, unholy. In short, for a congregation to be holy, it must separate itself from false religious doctrines and practices, and follow the will of the Lord (2 Cor. 6:14-16). We this is done, God promised to dwell among them (2 Cor. 6:17-18). “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1).

- Steven F. Deaton

“...as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’”

- 1 Pet. 1:15-16