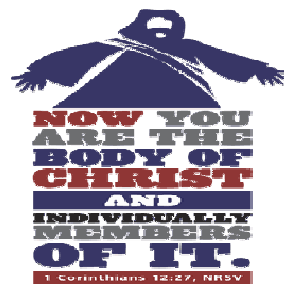


There are 30 books of the Bible hidden in these paragraphs. Can you find them (AFTER CHURCH)?

This is a most remarkable puzzle. Someone found it in an airplane seat pocket on a flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu, keeping him occupied for hours. He enjoyed it so much, he passed it on to some friends. One friend from Illinois worked on this while fishing from his john boat. Another friend studied it while playing his banjo. Elaine Taylor, a columnist friend, was so intrigued by it she mentioned it in her weekly newspaper column. Another friend judges the job of solving this puzzle so involving, she brews a cup of tea to help her nerves. There will be some names that are really easy to spot. That's a fact. Some people, however, will soon find themselves in a jam, especially since the book names are not necessarily capitalized. Truthfully, from answers we get, we are forced to admit it usually takes a minister or a scholar to see some of them at the worst. Research has shown that something in our genes is responsible for the difficulty we have in seeing the books in this paragraph. During a recent fund raising event, which featured this puzzle, the Alpha Delta Phi lemonade booth set a new record. The local paper, The Chronicle, surveyed over 200 patrons who reported that this puzzle was one of the most difficult they had ever seen. As Daniel Humana humbly puts it, "The books are all right here in plain view hidden from sight." Those able to find all of them will hear great lamentations from those who have to be shown. One revelation that may help is that books like Timothy and Samuel may occur without their numbers. Also, keep in mind, that punctuation and spaces in the middle are normal. A chipper attitude will help you compete really well against those who claim to know the answers. Remember, there is no need for a mad exodus; there really are 30 books of the Bible lurking somewhere in this paragraph waiting to be found. God bless you!

(For the answers, see Cindy.)



Black Creek Church of Christ

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Worship Schedule

Sunday Morning:
Bible Class: 10:00 AM
Worship: 11:00 AM

Sunday Evening:
Worship: 6:00 PM

MIDWEEK BIBLE CLASS
7:00 PM

Visit our website at:
www.blackcreekchurchofchrist.org

FAITH + SHARING = EVANGELISM

- ◆ Bible Call
- ◆ Georgia Mission (Soperton Church of Christ, Soperton, GA)
- ◆ Bible Correspondance Courses & Tracts (By Request)

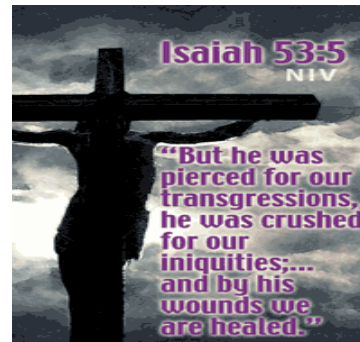
Works of Benevolence:

- ◆ Hospital Benevolence Basket (Orange Park Medical Center)
- ◆ Raintree Village Children's Home (Valdosta, GA)

Works of Edification:

- ◆ The Black Creek Courier
- ◆ Black Creek Christian School
- ◆ Visitation Program
- ◆ Vacation Bible School
- ◆ Bible Classes For All Ages
- ◆ Keenagers Group (Over -50)

THE LORD IS GOOD TO ALL, HE HAS COMPASSION ON ALL HE HAS MADE.



The Black Creek Courier

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"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Luke 9:23

April 26, 2009

Enemies of the Cross

"Brethren, be ye imitators together of me, and mark them that so walk even as ye have us for an ensample. For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is perdition, whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven: whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:17-20).

I am sure that no one reading this would want to be an "enemy of the cross of Christ." Yet, just as it was in the day of the apostle Paul, there are some in the church of the Lord today who are actually enemies of the cross of Christ. One does not have to be a murderer, a thief, an adulterer, a liar, or otherwise immoral to be an enemy of the cross of Christ. Let us see, in this article, what characterizes some of these enemies of the cross.

"Love Not the World"

The apostle John wrote, *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of their flesh and the lust of the eyes and the*

vain glory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (1 John 2:15-17). The "world" of which this apostle writes is the world of sin - note: *"The lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life."* There is both good and bad in the world, and John is here discussing the bad. The apostle Paul wrote of Demas, a formerly faithful companion and co-worker for the Lord, *"Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (2 Tim. 4:10).*

The Scripture says, *"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21).* Those practices belong to that "world" which must be avoided in our lives. *"Love not the world"* means that we turn from those things that are wrong.

"They Mind Earthly Things"

One does not have to commit murder, steal, or lie to *"mind earthly things."* When preachers talk about "worldliness" and minding earthly things, the lesson is often lost because people think that one must be guilty of terrible immorality before such lessons apply to them. Jesus spoke of *"a certain rich man"* (Luke 16) who *"fared sumptuously"* while ignoring the sad plight of those around him. And there was another rich man who *"pulled down his barns to build greater barns"* (Luke 12). As far as we know, neither of these rich men were immoral.

But the Lord was clear about the fact that these men were *"minding earthly things"* instead of seeking the things of God.

God is the Creator of *"the heaven and the earth, and all that is in them"* (Ex. 20:11). So, the earth and what is in it is not evil in itself. So, the good things of this earth - mountains, rivers, oceans, blue sky, etc. - are part of God's creation. And the things He has given us for our use in this life - such as food, clothing, shelter, etc. - can lead us away from the Lord. Sometimes a man can allow a perfectly honorable business to take up all his time, so that he has no time for God and the church. To do so is to *"mind earthly things."* And that means forsaking the Lord.



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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the Gospel (Matthew 7:24-27; Romans 10:14,17) → Believe the Gospel (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6) → Repent of My Sins (Luke 13:3,5; Acts 17:30) → Confess Christ (Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10) → Be Baptized (Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21) → Be Faithful Unto Death (Matthew 10:22; Revelation 2:10).

How Do We "Mind Earthly Things?"

First, to admire, to look longingly on, the earthly things is to take the first step away from God. Eve, mother of the race, looked upon the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3). When she saw that it was good, she took of it. Her first step was to look upon it, to admire it. Then she wanted it. Achan, started in the wrong direction when he looked upon the devoted goods (Josh. 7). He looked, then he coveted, then he took. Had he kept his mind where it belonged, he would never have "minded earthly things."

The next step is to think much about, devote a lot of time thinking of, earthly things. The Psalmist wrote, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night" (Psa. 1:1-2). What we use to fill our hearts will determine the kind of persons we are: "For as he thinketh within himself, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). If we constantly meditate upon immorality, then we will easily become immoral. As the Bible says, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Jehovah, my Rock, and my Redeemer" (Psa. 19:14).

The next step is to desire earthly things, which are wrong in themselves. We are told clearly, "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:1-3). Achan looked, and lusted. He entertained that desire in his heart until it mastered him. "They that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof" (Gal. 5:24). The only way to master wrong desires is to crucify them. If you entertain them, they become your master and lead you into sin.

Why Not Mind Earthly Things?

Jesus said, "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24). You just cannot "mind earthly things" and keep your focus on Jesus Christ. To "mind earthly things" is to let them become your master, to love them, to desire them and labor for them. Asked about the "the great commandment", Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. 22:37). If we get wrapped up in the things of this world, we lose our focus on the things of God.

Jesus said that God cares for us, and that He provides the necessities of life - food, clothing, etc. (Matt. 6:19-32). But then the Lord adds, "Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). That must be our first priority. We become partakers of the nature of the things we love. The man whose heart is to get and enjoy all of this world he possibly can, is influenced by these things in the building of his character. He becomes hard, unsympathetic, and selfish in his attitude toward other people. In other words, to "mind earthly things" is to lead one directly away from God.

We should not "mind earthly things" because they are, at best, uncertain and unsatisfying. Solomon wrote, "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings, Like an eagle that flieth toward heaven" (Prov. 23:5).

The apostle Paul warns us not to be, "Highminded, nor have your hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Tim. 6:17). The rich fool thought he had riches enough laid up for all his needs and desires (Luke 12). But he was wrong. The Bible says, "All things are full of weariness; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing" (Ecc. 1:8).

As our text points out, when we "mind earthly things" we become enemies of the cross of Christ. No one can afford to become an enemy of the cross of Christ, for to be such is to be a helper of Satan. There is no middle ground. You are either on the Lord's side or you are with the devil and his crowd. There is no third choice. And the Bible says clearly, "If you live after the flesh, ye must die...For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life" (Rom. 8:13; Gal. 6:8).

Doing It The Lord's Way

If we are going to refuse to be "enemies of the cross," we must first renounce the world and its claims upon us. We must turn our backs upon earthly things and face resolutely toward God and things spiritual. Self-denial and determination are indispensable to such a course. Second, we must put material things in their proper place. "Minding earthly things" is most often just allowing the material things to take first place in our lives.

Actually, these "earthly things" are the gifts from God that make life here on earth possible. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17). But we must use these "earthly things" to make them contribute to our good, and to the good of others, rather than allowing them to become our masters. We must use the material things of life for the glory of God, rather than let them become our god.

Third, to keep from minding earthly things, we must cultivate an appreciation of our relationship with Christ and the blessings to be gained by that. Such appreciation does not come just because one has been baptized into Christ. It is gained through conscious cultivation of our focus on the spiritual things, to which Christ gives emphasis in our lives.

Focus On the Cross of Christ

We are, by nature, inclined to love the world and worldly things. Satan sees to that. So, even without any effort on our part, we fall into the trap the devil has set for us. He makes the things of the world so attractive, just to attract our attention and desire is directed toward Him. As we focus on the cross, we are brought closer to Him who was nailed there. We put our trust in Christ, and are baptized into Him: "Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead...If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 2:12; 3:1-3).

You see, it is all centered in the cross of Christ. He died there in order that we might live forever with Him. Being baptized "into Christ" is a commitment to live for Him, as we read in the Scriptures: "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism unto death: that like Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3-4). When we are baptized into Christ, we become new creatures. As such, we must always seek Him and His will for our lives. May God help us do that.

~ Clem Thurman

Black Creek... This Week

Servants For the Month of April

	A.M.	P.M.
Announcements	Larry Russell	Larry Russell
Scripture Reading	Gorden Richau	Gorden Richau
Song Leader	Steve Atnip, Jr.	Sam Sipper
Opening Prayer	Gary Evans	Billy Smith
Lord's Table	Stan Posey	Stan Posey
Assistant	Don Shaw	
Assistant	Floyd Grace	
Assistant	Dick Morgan	
Assistant	Ted Copeland	
Sermon	Steve Atnip, Sr.	Steve Atnip, Sr.
Closing Prayer	Don Miller	Floyd Grace
Prepare Communion (For Apr.)	Darren & Dakota	(May) Glenda Smith
Cleaning the Building (For Apr.)	Gay Atnip	(May) Glenda Smith



Black Creek Family:

Posey family, Eula Morgan, Dasher family, Shaw family, Sonny Best, Ann Grace, John Moore, the Dennard family, Wanda Cheek, Herbert & Marie Dix, Kay Van Horn, O'Conner Vaughn, Blair family, Thompson family, Scriven family, Sheila Evans and Ann Maloy.

Away:

Evan Chapman (5 yr. old who was just diagnosed with Leukemia), Baxter & Mary Louis Forrester (members of High Springs church of Christ, have health issues), Dwayne Seaman and family, Cindy Anderson, James Smith, Kay Taylor, Dorothy Wilson, Eileen Lacy, Donald Petteway, Robert Vaughn, Gerri West, Terry Thompson, Gary Bartlett, Sloan Hunter, Bob Melson, and Catherine Moon.



We are so happy that you have chosen to worship with us today. If you are visiting with us, please remain a bit after services so we can become acquainted and let you know how special you are to us. Also, if you have any questions concerning anything you saw in our services today, please ask any one of us here today. We will be more than happy to answer any of your questions.



Ladies Bible Class: Come join the fun, learning and fellowship with Gay and the rest of the class. Our next class will be on April 28.

Finger Food Fellowship: This evening after the evening services. Please come join us in this time of food, fun & fellowship. We will also be celebrating those with April birthdays and anniversaries.

Spring Gospel Sing: At Lake City Church of Christ on May 1st at 7:00 PM. Refreshments will be served.

79th Annual Homecoming and Gospel Revival Celebration: At Westside Church of Christ May 16th-24th. The theme this year is **Let Your Life Shine in 2009**. For more information, see the bulletin board.

Spring Gospel Meeting: At Chaffee Road Church of Christ May 17th-20th. The speaker will be Larry Acuff from Lithia Springs, GA. For more information, see the bulletin board.

Volunteers Needed: Our VBS is coming up on June 22-26 from 7-9 PM. If you can volunteer your services for this year or have questions, see one of the ladies on the planning committee.

Calling All Tents: We are looking for anyone who may have a tent that will fit 7-8 small children sitting down. We need 3-4 of these tents for VBS. If you have one and would let us use one, please let one of the ladies that are on the VBS committee know.



Darren Shaw. I missed another birthday on the calendar. Sorry, Darren, for making this mistake. Happy Birthday.