

Announcements & Prayer Requests

- Let's keep the following in our prayers:
 - Kim Self – stomach ulcers and weekly Chemo treatments
 - Angie Self – arthritis and Parkinson's
 - Joann Larkin – advanced dementia
 - Barb Agee's son (James)
 - Bernida Wolfe's father – positive for COVID; also dementia and Parkinson's
 - Rick Parks' parents – Roy has prostate cancer; Helen has dementia
 - Jimmy Woodall's sister – cancer
 - Sandra Perez's grandmother – Lewy body dementia
 - Sandra Perez's uncle – stage 4 cancer

THE GOSPEL PLAN OF SALVATION

- Hear Gospel – Rom. 10:17; Acts 8:30-31
- Believe – Heb. 11:6; Mk. 16:16
- Repent of & Turn from Sins – Acts 2:38; 17:30
- Confess our Faith – Rom. 10:10; Mt. 10:32
- Baptism – Acts 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21
- Live Faithfully – Rev. 2:10

Let us draw near with a **true heart in full assurance of faith [Believe]**, having our **hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience [Repent]** and our **bodies washed with pure water [Baptism]**. Let us **hold fast the confession [Confess]** of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to **stir up love and good works**, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but **exhorting one another**, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. – *Heb. 10:22-25*



CHURCH OF CHRIST

Invitation

'Therefore, go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.' – Mt. 22:9

Address

5080 Highway 70 East
Rockwood, TN 37854

Assembly Times

Sunday Bible Study – 10:00 AM
Sunday Worship – 11:00 AM

Please text/email any announcements, questions, or concerns to Bill Fix, (865) 934-9239 or fix.bill@gmail.com

 <https://www.facebook.com/ChurchofChristRockwoodTN>

September 13, 2020

We extend a warm welcome to all our visitors and members. If you have any questions or need any assistance, please let one of us know.

Adult Bible Class – Eph. 2:11ff

Sermon Topic – Esther – A Story of Divine Providence

Memory verse:

And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.

– *Mk. 12:30*

Did Jesus Laugh?

By Robert F. Turner (PLAIN TALK, Nov. 1980)

Do the scriptures contain humor? Elton Trueblood's book, "The Humor of Christ," raises provocative thoughts on this question. Of course, your answer will depend on your definition of humor, or on your ability to "see" it in familiar texts you never suspected of holding such a thing. Absurdly ridiculous situations make us laugh. Imagine someone trying to hide a donkey underneath his shirt. Or how about someone carefully straining his tea to remove a gnat; then striving to swallow an ungainly, club-footed, two-humped camel that stepped into the same tea?

A child could see humor in that (Mt. 23:24) because his mind is not yet stiff with conventionality. The child cannot classify Jesus' statement as ironic humor, but he can know the Lord is "making fun" of one who would attempt such a thing. Imagine anyone expecting the dead to bury the dead (Lk. 9:60), or putting a lamp under the bed (Mk. 4:21). What is so terrible about recognizing that the Jesus who "came eating and drinking" (Mt. 11:19) also couched some of his lessons in Son-of-man humor?

Though sometimes difficult to do, we must draw an obvious line between the above and "foolish jesting." Our society, and our fallacious judgment, may lead us astray at times. But we are convinced that a "piety" that smothers clean humor is unreal. We should expect the message from God to be in a framework of communication suited to the nature of the intended receiver—man oriented without man's sin—and man is the only animal God made that truly laughs.

What we laugh about is a reasonable measure of our character. We may prove ourselves filthy-minded, unfeeling for the plight of others, or just frivolous. Or, a failure to respond to genuine humor may reveal a pompous person who mistakes self-righteousness for godliness. Samuel Johnson is reported to have quipped, "A man who cannot get to heaven in a green coat, will not find his way thither sooner in a gray one."

Laughter may be the specific remedy for vanity, especially when we can be made to see ourselves in the situation, and laugh at ourselves. It is a humbling experience, which may bring a man one step closer to heaven.

Pity the man who has no appreciation for a sharp wit; who is unable to see communicative value in a play on words or a pungent retort, even if the "joke is on us." I recall the Baptist debater who said, "You strain at a gnat, but swallow A. Campbell." Did he see something I will not see??

Fixating on What's Important: *Providence of God*

By Bill Fix

Two weeks ago, we considered the role God played in the life of Joseph, looking at how God used a sequence of mostly non-miraculous obstacles and events to work out for the benefit of Joseph, his family, and the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham. In today's lesson, we will use a similar approach to consider the life of Esther.

Our physical lives here on earth are full of ups and downs, breakthroughs and disappointments, successes and failures. I can remember times where, despite my best efforts and preparation, the "perfect job" went to someone else even though I did everything right in the application and interview process. Or when a relationship falling apart seemed so painful in the moment, yet saved me so much heartache and misery had it continued. Or when I "settled" for a job that didn't pan out after I had moved to a new state, but that move soon reintroduced me to my future wife.

Sometimes the "choose your own adventure" that is life and/or the hardships we face are the result of our own stubbornness and bad luck, but I'm convinced that God often presents opportunities for us to get our lives back on track if we seek Him first. And seeking after God isn't just a boon to ourselves—it often has successive benefits for others.

Remember what Joseph told his brothers in Gen. 45:5-8: "But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life... And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt."

Consider this the next time life throws you a curveball. Or ponder Mordecai's rhetorical question from Est. 4:14: "Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" An adversity may be a detour out of a worse predicament otherwise or a reminder that "I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps" (Jer. 10:23). And if God can use a chain of good and evil actions in the lives of Joseph and Esther for His glory and preservation of His people, we should have faith that He can do the same for us today.