

Announcements & Prayer Requests

- Let's keep the following in our prayers:
 - Bernida Wolfe and Jimmy Woodall who each recently had close family members pass away
 - John Wolfe: Early lung cancer diagnosis; upcoming scan
 - Kim Self: Stomach ulcers and weekly Chemo treatments
 - Angie Self: Arthritis and Parkinson's
 - Joann Larkin: Advanced dementia
 - Barb Agee's son (James)
 - Rick Parks' parents: Roy has prostate cancer; Helen has dementia
 - Jimmy Woodall's sister: Cancer
 - Dorothy Macon, Sandra Perez's grandmother: Dementia
 - Frank Wineinger, 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

www.hwy70church.com

December 27, 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. 6:1ff
Sermon Topic – God Is Not Mocked

Memory verse:

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. – *Gal. 6:7*

Is Celebrating Christmas Biblical?

By Bill Fix

In this country, we just celebrated another Christmas. If we listen to all the stories, songs, and Christmas traditions, then we would understand that Jesus was born on a snowy December 25 in Bethlehem, surrounded by shepherds, wise men, and a young boy banging a drum. All merely to spread glad tidings of comfort and joy. As a result, many religious groups hold special services on Christmas Eve and/or Christmas Day, some even at midnight, to celebrate this event. But is this Biblical, or primarily human traditions?

If we study the gospel accounts of Jesus' birth in Matthew 1 and Luke 2, there is no mention of the month or date, but the fact that Luke records the shepherds were in the field (Lk. 2:8) indicates almost certainly that his birth was not in winter. Lk. 2:7 tells where Mary laid the newborn Jesus in a manger, but does not say what animals, if any, were nearby. (And it definitely does not say that the ox and lamb kept time while a boy played a drum.) Matthew 2 details the visit of the wise men, but it does not say how many attended or that it was actually at the birth site. It was most likely up to two years later as Mt. 2:11 notes that they visited Mary "in the house," and King Herod then sought to kill all male children two years old and younger.

The purpose of pointing out these distinctions isn't to snow on people's Christmas parades, but when we're looking at Biblical details, it's important to stick to exactly what the Bible says, not adding or subtracting from the text (Deut. 4:2; Rev. 22:18). Most importantly, the New Testament includes no command or instruction to observe a religious celebration of Jesus' birth. The first recorded Christmas celebration wasn't until more than 300 years later, and it was an effort to merge a pagan observance of the winter solstice into Christianity. Similar to how the Israelites in the Old Testament attempted to integrate pagan worship into their own in an effort to be more like the nations around them. My own opinion is that some prefer to observe Christmas because it's easier to think of Jesus as a newborn infant instead of the crucified Savior who died for our sins and will judge mankind, expecting believers to be obedient and repentant of our sins. True belief requires action and change, not just peace, joy, and warm fuzzies.

By writing this article, I do not intend to minimize the miraculous birth of Jesus. The virgin birth was prophesied by Isaiah (7:14) and is an example of a prophecy that was out of Jesus' ability to fulfill (or falsify) on His own. It may be one of the most impressive and awesome miracles and fulfilled prophecies in the New Testament. Yet, we should still refrain from adding to God's inspired word, especially as it pertains to how we worship Him.

Fixating on What's Important: *Lessons from a 7-Year-Old*

By Bill Fix

Two weeks ago, I found some "notes" that my son, Thomas (7 years old), made during the sermon in worship. They did not indicate that he listened during the lesson, but he did at least write about Biblical concepts. Here's what I found:

**"If your friend is hurt, what should you do to help them?
Of course, you need to be nice to them. You need to follow the Golden Rule. You can do this anywhere. You really need to be nice to people."**

Two weeks ago, nothing in my sermon or bulletin articles corresponded to the Golden Rule, so he was not merely reciting or copying what he was hearing or reading. And we had not discussed it recently at home, so I can't claim that he wrote this because of the incredible parenting skills of my wife or myself. (Please read sarcastically.)

But whether through instruction at home, in Bible class, at school, or elsewhere, my son clearly understands that we should be nice to other people. And this lesson is one that adults frequently teach children. Whether it's the *Golden Rule* ("So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them..." Mt. 7:12) or the *Parable of the Good Samaritan* (Lk. 10:25-37), or even on children's programming like *Sesame Street* or *Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood*, we want our children, from the earliest ages, to learn how to treat other people.

But how well do we as adults, or Christians, follow those same principles when we're under fire? Do we always treat people the way we want to be treated when we're driving, dining, shopping, opining, voting, or tweeting? Do we recognize that everyone we see (fellow drivers, wait staff, cashiers, co-workers, Republicans, Democrats, independents, etc.) qualifies as a neighbor, deserving of our courtesy, respect, and love? If a seven-year-old can recognize that, why do we sometimes fail to do so?

At the end of the Good Samaritan parable, Jesus asked the lawyer who was a neighbor to the man who had been robbed. The lawyer answered, "The one who showed him mercy." To which Jesus replied, "You go, and do likewise." Those words still ring true for us today.