

March 2009 Newsletter

Fellowship Presbyterian Church

1105 Old Spartanburg Road ~ Greer, SC 29650

Rev. Martin H. Martin, Pastor

Phone: (864) 877-3267 Fax: (864) 877-0564

Email: office@fellowshippres.org

Website: www.fellowshippres.org

“Sanctified”

by Martin H. Martin



This week I have been reminded of the following verse and what it means we *are* (present tense) as Christians:

“Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.” (1 Corinthians 6:11 NASB)

The above verse followed other comments made by the Apostle Paul as he explains that those who are truly Christian already have been changed from one condition to another. It is not just that we will be delivered from hell one day, we *already are* delivered from sin’s bondage so that we might live differently *now*. If we live no differently than we did before claiming to be Christian (and frankly don’t care whether or not we do) then we are *not* Christian. If we think that Christianity means we can live any way we please, that God will still receive us into heaven one day because we “sealed the deal” some time in our past, and are content to remain distant from Him until it comes time to “board the train” in the future, then we are *not* Christian.

Thirty years ago, when I was a young Christian, much of the teaching in Christian circles was legalistic. A lot of emphasis was given to rules and obedience, but I don’t remember hearing much about God’s grace until years later (maybe it was said and I just didn’t hear it). Today it seems that we have a much stronger emphasis on God’s mercy and grace, but we tend to use that as an excuse to continue in sin; or even worse, we don’t believe that we even *can* turn from sin. As I heard an elder brother of mine once say, “The previous generation tended to be legalistic, but people today never seem to put forth the effort to actually work through their problems.”

All that is to say that we need to remember the *present tense* of our salvation, of what we *are* in Christ *already*. Jesus did not just die to free us from sin’s penalty one day. He died and rose to free us from its bondage now. Paul’s argument in the verses leading up to the one printed above is this – you are not what you were before you were saved. You are different now. You have been cleansed, set apart and declared to be righteous. Life is now a new ball game, so live like it!

Remember that in Christ you have been washed of sin. There is still sin on the inside that regularly boils to the surface. There are things that come from within that are gross, but that’s no excuse to walk out into the barn yard and wallow in the mire! That would be worse! Because Christ has declared us to be clean, and because He is continually cleansing us from the inside out, we should see sin as a filth with which we want as little to do as possible.

But also keep in mind, Christian, that you are sanctified, holy, set apart for God’s glory. Your life no longer belongs to you! Your standard or pattern is no longer the debauchery of this world. I am regularly reminded, whether I flip past “reality” TV (who’s reality?) or the deviant talk show spectacles, that my father would have looked at those things and said, “That’s just common.” By “common” he did not mean normal; he meant vulgar! But in Christ you are not common. You have been set apart for a life that is precious and sacred.

Finally, don’t miss that you have already been declared to be righteous, and that you are to live more and more as what you have already been declared to be in Christ. There is still remaining sin in your heart and life, but you are now able to live righteously in Christ. You can be obedient! You can turn from sin! You can follow Christ!

None of this should be used as an excuse for arrogance or superiority on our part. We are sinners saved and kept by grace, who walk through life as beggars telling other beggars where we found food. But we also need to take seriously as Christians the need, and the enabling, to turn from sin and follow after Christ. We are not helpless victims with no ability to do anything but sin, consigned to its misery and bondage with no improvement ever possible in this life. We have been set apart, from before creation itself, unto love and good deeds so that we might walk in them.

Christian, you aren’t what you were before Christ, and you don’t have to remain miserably stuck where you are now! We are holy, set apart, sanctified saints. Let’s live like it!

~Pastor Marty

MEN’S FELLOWSHIP & PRAYER BREAKFAST:

Saturday, March 21st; 7:00—9:00 AM

Sign-up sheet is in the narthex.



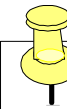
Update: The Building Committee is currently pursuing the necessary permits/ approval to move forward with the project to remodel/ reconfigure (and refurbish!) the sanctuary and fellowship area.

OFFICER TRAINING & DISCIPLESHIP CLASS

(a ten-week class taught by Pastor Martin)

meets Wednesdays, (7:45—8:45 PM),

and is open to all those interested in learning more about the offices, responsibilities, ministry and service within the church.



Church Notes:

The sacrament of the *Lord’s Supper* will be celebrated (and a *Mercy Offering* received) on *Sunday, March 1st*, during evening worship.

WEDNESDAY SUPPER & ACTIVITIES

5:30 PM: **Supper** (catered meal cost: \$3.50/adult, \$2.50/child, \$10 max/family)

3/04: Beef tips in gravy, rice, green beans, rolls, tea & cheesecake with cherries

3/11: Hawaiian chicken, brown & wild rice, broccoli casserole, rolls, tea & red velvet cake

3/18: Country style steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, green beans, rolls, tea & assorted pies

3/25: Fried chicken, macaroni & cheese, mixed vegetables, rolls, tea & strawberry shortcake

6:00 PM: **Choir Rehearsal**

6:40 PM: **Devotional & Prayer Time** (adults); Catechism (children grades k-4 thru 6th)

***PLEASE NOTE: THE KITCHEN SERVES FOOD UNTIL 6:15 PM.**

WEDNESDAY EVENING WORKERS SIGNED-UP FOR MARCH:

CATECHISM TEACHERS:

3/04: N. Willborn, P. Farmer
3/11: D. Lesley

3/18: Martins
3/25: Wortmans

KITCHEN CLEAN-UP:

3/04: Root
3/11: Sarvis

3/18: Macedos
3/25: Richards

Ladies’ Bible Studies:

The Ladies’ Tuesday Morning Precepts Bible Study (an inductive study of the gospel of John) meets Tuesdays, 9:30-11:30 A.M. at the church; nursery is available. Please contact, Wendy Richards (877-3267 or 399-9276) for more information.

The Ladies’ Thursday Evening Bible Study, “I Will Be Your God”, meets each Thursday, 7:00 P.M. at the home of Barbara Wilder. Please contact Barbara Wilder (848-6434 or builder220bellsouth.net) for additional information.

There is a Session Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, March 10th, at 7:00 PM.

The Adult Choir (Jr. Hi & up) will rehearse Wednesdays, 6:00—6:40 PM, Please contact Annette Stubbs (288-3066) for more information.

The March edition of TABLETALK is available (free of charge) to all members and visitors; pick up your copy (in the narthex) today!



Youth Day Event: Saturday, March 21st Roper Mountain Science Center Day Trip; Details TBA

For more information, please contact Breno Macedo (brenopm@gmail.com or 631-3896).

APRIL NEWSLETTER DEADLINE IS MONDAY, MARCH 16th, 2009.

SERVING IN MARCH:

Elder of the Month: Dave Lesley (877-5102); Deacon of the Month: Bill Wilder (848-6434)

Greeters of the Month: Carolyn Root & Margaret Stannard; Ushers: Troy High & Bill Wilder.

Family and Youth Corner:

by Breno Macedo

“The Method of Meditation”

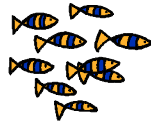
In last month’s article we considered the necessity of meditation as part of the Christian life. We covered some biblical basis for it, but one thing is still lacking: how to exercise meditation? Are there any guidelines that could help us to perform such a duty? The answer is yes and we will briefly cover them here.

The first thing to consider is the frequency. How often should a Christian meditate? The command God gave to Joshua to meditate day and night on His law gives us a hint of the answer. Remember, Joshua was a very busy leader, responsible for the conquest of Canaan, but he was still to be diligent in seeking the face of God, in keeping intimacy with Him and know His revealed will in Scripture. Therefore we should labor every day to invest a portion of our time to this sweet duty which can bring much profit to our soul. But how long should we spend with meditation? The Holy Scriptures do not set a standard concerning that and thus we must use of good sense to solve this issue. One thing is certain; we should employ enough time to properly perform this duty and yet, not neglect our other daily responsibilities.

Now, how should we meditate? Is it possible to find some guidelines that would help us in doing this exercise? Yes, there are! Not straight from Scripture but from godly men in the past who engaged in this endeavor. First, we should start with prayer. We must remember to depend completely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He is the one who “will guide us into all the truth” (John 16:13) and, therefore, we must plead for His presence, guidance and direction. Second, we must meditate upon Scripture! We ought to select passages which deal with our necessities, which are “applicable to our present circumstances.” If you are afraid of something, meditate upon God’s protection. If you are feeling alone, meditate upon God’s presence. If you are being persecuted, meditate upon God’s deliverance. We should also engage in memorizing the bible verses in which you’ve spend time meditating. We should as well identify flaws in our practices and in our character and trace resolutions to (through the power of the Spirit) overcome them. We must search our hearts and ask ourselves what we have done in the past and then how shall we act differently (in accordance to God’s ways) in the future. Always examine the example of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, remembering that He is our highest example of conduct and that in Him alone we find pardon for our sins and strength to walk according to God’s ways. We should then concluded our time of meditation with prayer.

These are just some basic guidelines and quick thoughts of this important subject of our Christian life. There is no doubt of the importance of meditation and of the great benefits of it our lives. There is no doubt as well that, since this is such a great tool of spiritual growth, the enemy of our souls will do everything in his power to distract us during or hinder us from meditation. Let us seek strength in our Lord and persist in seeking a more committed life with Him.

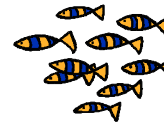
~Breno



MISSIONARY MISSIVE

James & Bonnie Buckner

by Carolyn Root



2009 is the year of the ox, with Chinese New Year celebrations from January 26 through February 9. It looks like it’s going to be a tough year in southern China as well as in the U.S. In Hong Kong 6,000 factories closed down in 2008, and another 3,000 closings are projected for 2009. The mainland government has ordered all Hong Kong-owned factories in mainland China to remain closed until March 1. Three of the Buckners’ good friends are being forced to resign from an aqua business in Yuen Long which never got off the ground due to lack of financial investment. Two of them have found other good jobs, and the third is contemplating opening a noodle shop and later reentering the fishing business. Please pray for the welfare of many as their careers take an unplanned turn.

In January James and Bonnie had good visits with three couples with whom they had done premarital counseling in the past: Brian and Kelly, Raymond and Pauline, and Ken and Alice. They have recently met several new couples: Viktor and Vivian, Robert and Nancy, Mr. and Mrs. Heung, Nina and Wynn, Heidi and Andy, etc. A few of them plan to join the Buckners and the Harrisons for their Wednesday night care group sessions. All of them are friends of friends, who were looking for a Bible study group in Yuen Long.

Please continue to pray for Ruth, for her medication regime, her therapy sessions, and for a suitable part-time job. Ruth does not speak Chinese and can work only a few hours per week, so it is difficult to find work.

Joseph flew to Oakland, CA the end of February and is looking for work and a place to live; Mei Ling continues her schooling at the California School of the Arts. Joseph will be sorely missed – as a brother, tennis partner, and confidant for Ruth; a soccer teammate for James; and a loving and caring son for Bonnie and James.

David, who is missed as well, is now all settled in Boone, NC. He attends Caldwell Community College and hopes to enroll in Appalachian State University in the fall. Please pray that he will find suitable part-time work in the Boone area in order to keep his car repaired and on the road.

Thank you for praying for and supporting the Buckners. You may drop them a line at this snail-mail address or email:

*James and Bonnie Buckner
13 Lotus Road, Fairview Park
Yuen Long, NT Hong Kong
jbuckner@psmail.net*



FELLOWSHIP PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
1105 OLD SPARTANBURG ROAD
GREER, SOUTH CAROLINA 29650

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED