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South Cullman CHURCH of CHRIST

Sunday 9:00 am
10:00 am
5:00 pm
Wednesday 7:00 pm

April 17, 2016

Looking to Jesus

by: L.A. Stauffer

The focus of a Christian's life is without question—Jesus. Over and over again brethren have heard preachers tell them: “Keep your eyes on Jesus.” That's good advice, not because some preacher said it, but because God said it. The writer of Hebrews wrote to wayward Christians in words of exhortation and encouragement to tell them that they are in a race and that they must run it with steadfastness, “looking unto Jesus” (Heb 12:2).

The day or moment Christians forsake this biblical note of truth and wisdom is the time they begin to wander away. As “Christians” they are devoted to Jesus, the Christ, and focusing on anything other than His life, His example, and His teaching spells spiritual trouble. Taking their eyes off Jesus is not a trivial or incidental refocus of life; it is a major shift in direction which takes them out of the narrow way to life into the broad way that ends in eternal destruction from the face of God and His eternal glory (see Matt 7:13-14; 2 Thess 1:7-9).

This happens to Christians whose focus becomes their jobs. They find themselves devoted to “greed,” or to “power”—to securing that next raise or higher position. When these goals consume their time and thoughts to the neglect of the Lord, worldly pursuits are the prize set before them. The same can be said of women who may have had to work outside the home to meet family needs but are still, though beyond those needs, unwilling to leave the work force and commit themselves to the kingdom business of hospitality, teaching a class of children, and lifting the spirits of the indigent or elderly saints. It is often a choice between God and mammon in which mammon wins (see Matt 6:24).

This is frequently a problem with the elderly who are focused on retirement. What waste of talent and wisdom is found in a fishing boat, on a golf course, or in a travel-trailer. They've done their time. Seniors (and I am there and can testify) have a lot less energy and each year it becomes much easier to occupy a pew and leave the work of the Lord to the next generation. And yet, think of the “seasoned” spirituality and talent that is being wasted by the inactivity of brethren who are tired.

And, of course, the younger generation is caught up in the “pleasures of life” and is having too much fun to focus on regular Bible study and prayer at home, family devotions with the kids, giving themselves to the preparation for teaching a Bible class one quarter a year, and to putting assembling ahead of sporting events. Plenty of time is given to TV, iPads, iPhones, sporting events, but so little to activities that lift the disheartened, offer company to the lonely, and make friends of God's children.

Whether our pursuits are for greed, power, pleasure, leisure, or evil desires, our focus is essentially on ourselves and we are not, as the apostle Paul, “forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things before” us. “Looking to Jesus” means we “press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Php 3:13-14).

Brethren, this is not a shot at anyone in particular, but about the vital, biblical principle of focus that every one of us needs. Is each one of us “looking to Jesus” or are we in one way or another filling our lives with “mammon”—the pursuit of the material world. When brethren seek the things above and put the kingdom of God first, mammon will be an incidental concern in their lives (see Col 3:1-2; Matt 6:33). Their eyes will be focused on Jesus and their lives will then be dominated by the spiritual goals their Lord himself met and set for them.

Prayers for the South Cullman Family:

Ancil Wallace received great news from his doctors. They told him that he is NED (no evidence of disease). He will be talking to a surgeon to determine what will need to be done next. Praise God who is the giver of all good gifts!

Carlene Parris continues to need your prayers.

Rick Cason was able to come home and is recovering.

Margie Marchman is continuing to recover from her upper respiratory issues.

Donnie Rice is at home recovering from having a stint placed after his heart attack.

A Note of Thanks

To all the members at South Cullman church of Christ:

During my recent health crisis, I know that many prayers were lifted up in my behalf. I want each of you to know how much this has meant to me. Thank you for your concern, prayers, calls and texts. -Donnie Rice

Expectant Parents:

Seth and Laura Hayes (May)

Micah and Hannah Rice (Sept)

Tyler and Alisha Loveless (Oct)

Brad and Amy Johnson (Nov)

Homebound and Nursing Homes:

Margie Marchman, Gary Cobb, Lester Daugherty, Lindsey Self

Others To Pray For:

Elmer Simmons, Jason Looney's grandfather, is struggling with prostate cancer.

Connie Allen, Rick Cason's sister, found out that her cancer has returned, but it is contained to one area.

Mike Boland, Missy Swann's father, was put in the ICU at Brookwood Friday morning.

Artena Hunt, Heather Blanks' grandmother, is being treated for cancer.

Hunter Franks, Norma Dukeminier's grandson, found out that he will need heart surgery to correct a heart defect.

Connie Hudson, Bill Patrick's cousin, is struggling with cancer.

Preparing the Lord's Supper:

Apr 17 & Apr 24 - Wynona Campbell, Sandra Hancock

May 1 & May 8 - Kristi Blankenship, Sharyn & Callie Hollingsworth

Food Contacts for April:

Shelia Loveless, Jackie Derrick, Jessica Rice

2016 Spring Gospel Meeting:

Remember our spring gospel meeting begins today, **Apr. 17** and goes **through Wednesday, April 20, with L.A. Stauffer**. We will meet at 3pm this afternoon and 7pm Monday-Wednesday. Make plans to attend and invite others.

Recordings:

We are now posting all the sermons to the website immediately following each service. If you are able/interested you can also download the sermons to your computer.

Check out our website @

southcullmanchurch.com

Group Emails:

Brad Johnson has set up a Google groups email list. This will be used to help get information to the South Cullman family. If you have not received an email yet, provide your email address to Brad or Nick Woods and they will make sure it is added to the list.

Duty Assignments – Sunday, April 17, 2016

	<u>Sunday AM</u>	<u>Sunday 3PM</u>	<u>Wed. (20)</u>
<u>Call To Worship</u>	Jim Deason	Jim Deason	
<u>Read Scripture</u>	Whit Rice	Philip Mullenix	
<u>Lead Singing</u>	Micah Rice	Glenn Blankenship	Jim Deason
<u>Opening Prayer</u>	Randy Parris	Duane Derrick	
<u>L. S. Talk</u>	Jim Deason		
<u>L. S. Prayer</u>	Seth Hayes		
<u>Assisting</u>	Kerry Parris		
	Nick Blanks		
	James Fox		
<u>Sermon</u>	L.A. Stauffer	L.A. Stauffer	L.A. Stauffer
<u>Announcements</u>	Dexter Campbell	Dexter Campbell	Dexter Campbell
<u>Closing Prayer</u>	Donnie Rice	Ronald Parris	Kyle Walker