

NEWSLINE

Great Smoky Mountains Church of Christ

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April 17, 2016

“God, Be Merciful To Me!”

(Luke 18:9-14)

If we learn anything from the story of the Pharisee and the tax collector it is that coming to God requires a broken heart. Both men went up into the temple. Luke says they went “to pray.” Really, only one went to engage in real prayer. The Pharisee went to announce his good deeds, perhaps hoping others standing there would be impressed with his piety. The tax collector, on the other hand, was so deeply aware of his brokenness and his need for God that he could only cry out, “*God, be merciful to me, a sinner!*”

We all need mercy but none of us deserve it. Not everyone wants mercy. They are, like the Pharisee, very proud of themselves and all they have accomplished. They feel no need for grace. They enter into God’s presence with self-confidence and pride for their positions, titles, or the good they think they have done.

When we come before God we must come with a deep sense of our need. We know He is holy, and we are trying to become like Him. We know we are sinners who come confessing with contrition. Confession without contrition, or deep remorse, is of no value. Admitting our sins is not the same as regretting our sins. It is easy to be deluded when self is elevated and God is brought down to our level. He sits on His royal throne, enshrined in majesty. And, like Isaiah, we fall down before Him confessing our sins (Isa. 6).

God’s mercy is free but not unconditional. Paul said that God’s kindness is meant to lead to repentance (Romans 2:4). Repentance precedes mercy. That’s what the Pharisee didn’t understand. There was no sense of repentance because there was no sense of sin. Sin is deadly. It destroys and condemns. Godly sorrow, or contrition, leads to repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10). When there is no repentance there is no grace.

God wants to forgive. That’s why Jesus came. He longs to receive us back. But only with the right attitude. He didn’t leave us. We left Him and went away into darkness. He dwells in light and He is light. There is no darkness in Him (1 John 1:5). When we confess our sins He will forgive our sins and cleanse us of unrighteousness. Then we can walk in the light with Him.

When we look at the cross we see our sins written all over that cross. Ugly sins. Sins we don’t want to look at. Maybe nobody else will see them. They are painful reminders. So we look away. Not till we look back and drop to our knees do we receive mercy.

___ Al Behel

Other News

Our Thanks to all who came out to help with the deep cleaning yesterday (or earlier in the week). This is a wonderful church family.

Our Thanks to Mark and Cathy for their wonderful work with our youth. The youth fellowship last Sunday was great and we appreciate all you are doing with our younger believers.

From Al: “*Thank you for your thoughts, prayers, emails, texts, and cards this week. While the cardiac ablation surgery was more extensive than expected we are hopeful that all will be well. We love this church family.*”

Ladies Bible Class—First and third Tuesdays at 10 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. Polly Cline is leading a study on “*Hunger in my Soul*”. Next class is April 19.

Food Contact For Month: Linda Goodnight, Back up Tina Yates

Elder Contact for Month: Rick Cliett (865-789-9619)

Sermon Topics: A.M. - “*Walking By Faith-Add Godliness*” (2 Peter 1:3-9)

P.M. - *Our youth will share from their Winter Studies of Exodus*

Interpreter for deaf and hearing impaired available for AM and PM worship

Our Known Sick

-Dez Anderson— still suffering with multiple health issues. Keep praying. God is listening and answering.

-Sheryle Elkins— is continuing chemotherapy on a periodic basis for treatment of lung cancer.

-Bill Valentine is recovering from esophageal cancer surgery. We rejoice with him that all indicators are good.

-Bill Green—suffering from several health issues.

-Jean Compton—is recovering at home.

-Kathy May battling ongoing health issues. She is still in Baxter.

-Pauline Swallow is dealing with cancer. Keep praying for her.

-Jerry and Jeanette Dyer— they face several challenges.

-Larry Barnett started his injections for pain back and hip.

-Madison Barnett still suffering from kidney stones.

-Hazel Gosnell is receiving therapy for speech and feeding.

-Don Mayhall is recovering from knee replacement surgery.

-Sue Mercer is recovering at home from knee replacement surgery

Friends and Family News

-Shannon Barnett, son of Larry and Helen, is recuperating from successful surgery. He is now in Mississippi.

-Lida Cliett, Rick’s aunt, very ill with heart failure complicated by cancer. Her sister is Rick’s stepmother, Billie.

-Joyce Keyser’s cousin, Maegan White, recovering from brain surgery.

-Sue Hayes sister, Joyce, recovering from a fall.

-Sue Hayes’ sister-in-law, Jane Hufford, is suffering with a recurrence of Leukemia. She lives in Nashville.

-Pat Thomas, friend of Linda Valentine and other members here, had bladder cancer surgery recently. Pat lives in Brentwood, TN.

-Brenda Scott’s niece, Nita Watern, -liver cancer and is receiving chemotherapy. She lives in New Madison, Ohio.

-Judy Watkins and husband Jim—continuing health issues. (Rick Cliett’s sister and husband)

-Dee Lewis, friend of the Clietts, stage four cancer (6th occurrence)

-John Devore’s (Linda Goodnight’s husband) **daughter, Chelle Hendershot**, recovering from a severe automobile accident.

-Randy Moore, brother of Tina Yates, is doing better. He is suffering from kidney disease.

-John Devore is recuperating at home following a heart attack while traveling in California.

Special Events

Men’s Prayer Session
Monday mornings at 8:30

Wednesday Night

Danny Cline leading a study—*“They Met the Messiah in Mark”*

Sunday Adult Class

2 Thessalonians—Al Behel

Times of Services

Sunday A.M.

Bible Study 9:30 AM

Worship 10:30 AM

Sunday P.M. 6:00 PM

Wednesday 7:00 PM

Building Fund

Loan balance as of 04/02/16 is **\$1,027,868.60**. Extra contributions to reduce the loan debt are needed and appreciated. Envelopes are available in the pews.

Nursery

Located across main foyer. Closed circuit TV allows viewing and participation in worship.

CDs and DVDs of Sermons are available free at sound booth. Also available on the website at: www.greatsmokymountainschurchofchrist.com.