

**SUNDAY MORNING**

**Announcements**

Bill Brittenham

**Song Leader**

Daniel Allgor

**Lord's Supper**

Clay Morris      Jack Calvert  
Mark Davis

**Prayers**

Joseph Barry      Job Barry

**SUNDAY EVENING**

**Announcements**

**Scripture Reading**

**Song Leader**

**Lord's Supper**

**Prayers**

**WEDNESDAY EVENING**

**Announcements**

**Song Leader**

**Prayers**

**Wednesday: 7:00 PM**  
**Thursday: 7:00 PM**

*Sunday Kid's Class and Monday, Wednesday and Thursday Classes are via Zoom*

---

**Ladies Bible Class:**  
*Next Class is Feb. 9<sup>th</sup>.*

**ABOUT US**

**Elders**

Jack Calvert      Rodney Ellis

Jon Barry      Bill Brittenham  
Mike Davis      Clay Morris

**Evangelist**

Bryan Garlock

**SERVICE TIMES**

**Sunday**

Bible Study .....9:30 A.M.  
Worship .....10:15 A.M.  
Worship .....6:00 P.M.

**Wednesday**

Bible Study .....7:00 P.M.

**WWW.TXKCHURCH.COM**

**GOD'S PLAN FOR SALVATION**

- Hear** the word of truth ..... Romans 10:13-17
- Believe** the truth..... Hebrews 11:6; John 8:24
- Repent** from all sins .... Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38
- Confess** the name of Christ ... Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10
- Be Baptized** in His name ..... Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Colossians 2:12
- Walk** in newness of life and **be faithful** unto death ..... Romans 6:1-4; Revelation 2:10



**Volume XXVI**

**January 17, 2021**

**Issue 3**

**How To Avoid A Spiritual Failure**

Paul Earnhart

In his final hours in Rome, awaiting an inevitable execution, a very lonely apostle Paul suffered some additional heartbreak. "Demas," he wrote, "hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (2 Timothy 4:10). We are left to speculate as to the particulars—what dread fears or powerful allurements led this faithful friend and co-worker to abandon the kingdom of God and to forsake his burdened brother. It was not as though he had fled the field at the first approach of trouble. During Paul's first imprisonment in Rome Demas had evidently been a steadfast companion (Philemon 24; Colossians 4:14). Now, unexpectedly, this heart—mauling betrayal and desertion. Only those who have had a trusted companion in Christ—one who has proven himself in many a crisis—to suddenly turn from God and run for the world can understand. It can numb the spirit.

What is it that can cause one who has invested so much in the kingdom to suddenly abandon everything? Some fade early because they have little understanding of the calling of God and even less commitment. The first approach of temptation and hardship devastates them (Luke 8:13). Others seem to have a deep commitment to righteousness but not an absolute one. Their price for betrayal is high but they have one nonetheless, and when it gets high enough they run. The wealthy young ruler who came to Jesus was like that. He was willing to give up a lot, but not everything (Matthew 19:16-23). Paul said that Demas "loved this present world." The "world" is many things. John describes it as a way of thinking where lust, materialism and pride abound (1 John 2:15-16). What was it that got to the faithful Demas? Was it fear of death or imprisonment? Or was it

## FAMILY TALK

Continue to remember and check on our shut-ins: **Bonnie Allgor, Maxine Burnham, Ann Thomas** and **Francine Davis..**

**Jean Cronce** passed away Thursday. Her services are pending.

**Laci Morris'** grandmother, **Gayla Young**, passed away Wednesday. Her graveside services will be 2:00 P.M., Sunday at the Saratoga Cemetery.

**Melodie Clemmons** is scheduled for a medical procedure on Monday.

**Chris Stinson** is scheduled for medical tests on Monday.

**Cathy Monaghan** is having tests to check on a potential problem.

**Bryan Garlock's** family are still fighting Covid. His father is now in the hospital with pneumonia in one lung.

**Donna Mobley** continues to recover from her fall.

**Charlotte Hailey** continues recuperating at home.

**Alex** and **Ginger Simpson** (**Phillip** and **Rhene Moore's** daughter) have a new son, **Alexander Grant Simpson**, born Jan. 11.

Here is the current schedule of services:

**Bible Study:** 9:30 AM (and Zoom)  
**Services:** 10:15 AM (and Zoom)  
**Kids Only:** 5:00 PM  
**Monday:** 7:00 PM

something more subtle like a nostalgic longing for the old easy ways free of constant unabating warfare? We are not told which one of these undid Demas but one of them found its mark.

Breaking points can come to us too if we are not very careful. A deep hurt we cannot find it in ourselves to forgive. A disappointing marriage. Failures with our children. Lost health or prosperity. Anything we had never imagined happening to us. And often it's just plain prideful stubbornness. At any rate, don't ever say you'd never do what others have done. You've never been all the places you could be. Peter learned a valuable lesson about that (Matthew 26:31-35), It is far better that we know our own weaknesses and watch and pray that we enter not into temptation (Matthew 26:41). Satan loves an arrogant and self—confident man.

Another lesson to be learned from the failure of others is that those who at last go back, at first look back. Departures of apparent suddenness are really the end of a process. Our Lord warned that those who put their hand to the kingdom plow and look back longingly at the world are not fit for the kingdom of God (Luke 9:62). The disciples who go back are those who first begin to cultivate again the values of the world and like the Israelites in the wilderness grow nostalgic amidst their trials for the fleshpots of Egypt. They forget, of course, the galling bondage that accompanies the life of sin. These are the ones who gradually cease to meditate upon God's word (Psalm 1:1-2), then become prayerless (James 4:1-2) as God and Christ seem far away. First men cease to study, then to pray, and, finally, to care.

Sometimes this all begins as a casual flirtation, a few little compromises dismissed as harmless. Too much time with worldly companions (1 Corinthians 15:33), too much interest in a job (1 Timothy 6:9-10), too much concern with being accepted and making our mark in the world (1 Peter 5:5). Finally, it becomes a passionate love affair that makes us heedless of the injury we do to our Savior, ourselves and others.

Satan is the master of the "short step" method. Slow change is more effective in producing spiritual collapse than sudden departure. The danger of alerting the victim to what is happening is eliminated. We can be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3:12-13). Warning flags need to start flying the moment we feel the slightest ebb in commitment. Beware the spiritual slow leak. The unfailing answer to this kind of spiritual failure is the daily discipline of an uncompromising dedication which admits of no exceptions and makes quick and humble redress for every transgression. Burn all your bridges and press on to the heavenly mark (Philippians 3:7-14). And if, in spite of everything, you happen to stumble badly, don't let despair destroy you. Remember that everyone who has faltered has not ultimately fallen. We can all thank God for that. John Mark's disgraceful desertion in Pamphylia (Acts 13:13) was not the end of him because he didn't allow it to be. Paul sent for him during his last hours (2 Timothy 4:11) and the Holy Spirit chose him to record the gospel story. We don't have to be like Demas. In the mercy of God we have the privilege of being like John Mark or Peter, and, yes, even Paul.

## Steadfast

**1 Cor.15:58** *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.*

None of us want or plan to be spiritual failures. But we do not know what the future holds or what challenges or temptations we may face.

Currently we are living in a time with a new disease that has taken loved ones and made us feel threatened with the new and different challenges to being Christians. We don't see each other as often or freely as in the past. Our assemblies feel different. And the upheaval in our nation has created new friction and mistrust among brethren.

Anxiety threatens to distract us from faith. Fellowship with brethren is limited and hampers the strength we receive from each other. Even as we strive to allow God to be in control, we lose our ability to make personal decisions we have always made in the past.

All this can eat at our faith, question our confidence and trust in God and threaten our spiritual success.

**Psalm 27:14** *Wait for the LORD; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD.*

**Psalm 31:24** *Be strong and let your heart take courage, All you who hope in the LORD.*