

FAMILY TALK

Continue to remember and check on our shut-ins: **Bonnie Allgor, Maxine Burnham, Ann Thomas and Francine Davis.** Cards, calls and visits are ALWAYS needed and appreciated.

Pat Buls' surgery went well. However, she had a complication a few days after.

Karen Rhinehart had her cast removed.

Vera Ellis is making progress with her arm. She is continuing with her rehab.

Maxine Burnham is not doing well at all. She is now under Hospice care. Please remember her in your prayers.

Please remember **Bryan** and his family while they are out of town.

Here is the current schedule of services:

Bible Study: 9:30 AM
Services: 10:15 AM
Kids Only: 5:00 PM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Additionally, we are having studies on in Proverbs:

Tuesday: 7:00 PM
Friday: 7:00 PM

Ladies Bible Class:

Next class will be May 12th at 7:00 PM. It will be broadcast on Zoom like our other services.

ABOUT US

Elders

Jack Calvert Rodney Ellis

Deacons

Jon Barry Bill Brittenham
Mike Davis Clay Morris

Evangelist

Bryan Garlock

SERVICE TIMES

Sunday

Bible Study9:30 A.M.
Worship10:15 A.M.
Worship6:00 P.M.

Wednesday

Bible Study7:00 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

Think On These Things

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Issue 20

The People Who Get to Understand

Matthew Bassford

Classical Calvinism teaches that it is impossible for the unregenerate to understand the word of God. We first must be anointed by the Holy Spirit before we can comprehend it and be saved. At first glance, Matthew 13:11 appears to support this doctrine. Here, Jesus says to His disciples, "Because the secrets of the kingdom of heaven have been given for you to know, but it has not been given for them to know." Sounds like the elect versus the reprobate, doesn't it?

However, a study of the context reveals that something very different is going on. In the first eight verses of Matthew 13, Jesus relates the parable of the sower, a description of agricultural events with no apparent spiritual application. In v. 9, He offers an invitation: "Let anyone who has ears, listen." In v. 10, while the multitudes mill around in bafflement, the disciples come to Him and ask Him to explain His

teaching methods. In vs. 18-23, He explains the parable of the sower to them.

In this context, the clear difference between the enlightened disciples and the ignorant multitudes is not the anointing of the Spirit. It's plain and simple want-to. The people who wanted to figure out the meaning of the parable exerted extra effort and got what they wanted. The people who didn't want to bother did nothing extra and remained in the dark.

This same pattern plays out today, even among baptized believers. When it comes to figuring out the Bible, some Christians have want-to. They study their lesson before Bible class. They listen intently. They ask questions. They engage the preacher about his lesson after the sermon is over. They read the Bible daily. And so on. Though such brethren never satisfy their desire for the

truth, they steadily grow in understanding.

On the other hand, there are Christians who don't have that want-to. They do none of the things that their more diligent peers do. However, they are very good at manufacturing excuses for their lack of diligence.

"I'm too busy," is a favorite. "The preacher/teacher is boring," is another. Strangely, they don't find the latest episode of "Tiger King", with its constant parade of ungodly freaks, to be boring, but those who proclaim the word of life are. Perhaps they would be happier if the Bible-class teacher were more like Joe Exotic.

Regardless of excuses, the outcome is the same as it was 2000 years ago. The motivated gain enlightenment; the unmotivated remain ignorant. This is no mere academic difference. Greater understanding of the word increases faith, produces hope, builds character, and protects from temptation. Those who are not growing become more faithless, more hopeless, more useless, and more godless.

Over time, many such brethren fall away, astonishing those who had worshiped with them for years or decades. In reality, their collapse is no more surprising than the collapse of an old, dead tree. On the outside, little change was evident, but within, rot and termites were hard at work.

The risks are too real for any of us to take chances with our salvation. Each one of us needs to return to the word with zeal and Berean love of truth, not because we love academic minutiae, but because we love God and His Son. With such a spirit, we bring joy to the Lord's heart and make

the devil's job that much harder. We have ears to hear. Let's use them.

Temptation: An Opportunity to Transform

David McClister

One of the greatest challenges I've come across in my walk as a Christian, and one I have seen others struggle with as well, is the fear of temptation. We often view every temptation in light of potential eternal damnation. Yes, we have been baptized, but what if we fall away? The author of Hebrews warns Christians that they are in danger of succumbing to temptation just like Israel's wilderness generation, and that the stakes are even higher in the age of the Messiah: "For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries" (Heb. 10:26-27).

With such high stakes, the specter of a difficult temptation can spark nightmares of failure and eternal hellfire. The amount of stress involved spikes through the roof, and it shouldn't be surprising that many Christians live in a state of perpetual anxiety. What if I sin and don't have time to repent before I die? In fact, some people are so anxious in the face of this possibility that they proclaim a doctrine of "once saved, always saved." Admitting even the possibility of eternal damnation is too much to bear, so they find comfort in this doctrine and it's no surprise why they wouldn't want to give it up. Those of us who don't subscribe to this doctrine (because the apostles teach otherwise) are still left in a

state of constant worry when temptation arises.

I would suggest that this mentality, though understandable, is biblically flawed and is ultimately the mindset of losers. Forgive my harshness, but I believe the author of Hebrews would agree with me.

Before coming back to this point, allow me to explain why I believe this is such a common mentality among Christians: we have failed to appreciate the fundamental story of what God is doing with Christians after baptism. We are correct when we emphasize the eternal importance of baptism, but I believe we often focus on it at the expense of the rest of the Christian life.

To illustrate what we've missed, we should look at the paradigmatic story of the birth of the nation of Israel. There are at least three major parts to the story. 1) the creation of Israel by leaving Egypt through the waters of the Red Sea, 2) the transformation of Israel through the fiery trials of the wilderness, and 3) entry into full relationship with God in the Promised Land. These parts of the paradigm do not change from Old Testament to New Testament. Christians are also God's people who are brought to life through the waters, transformed by his leading through trials, and will ultimately rest with Him in the Promised Land.

The reason we have so much anxiety toward temptation is due, in part, to the fact that we have either misunderstood or simply ignored the importance of stage two of the story (the wilderness). What is the purpose of that stage? In one word: transformation. God allows Israel to be tested so that they can be transformed through faith in Him.

We often talk about becoming God's people through baptism (stage one), and we talk about the Promised Land (stage three), but we're often not sure what to do about that part in between (if we even recognize it as a meaningful stage at all). We see it only as an opportunity to lose what happened at our baptism. If this were true, then God would be cruel, tantalizing us with salvation, only to let us die in the wilderness (sound familiar? Ex. 16:3). In fact, this reasoning has led many young Christians to lose their faith. If that were the correct view of God, then I wouldn't blame them for leaving. But the Bible shows us that God is a God of love who cares for his people, so this conclusion is simply wrong. No, the middle section of the story must be meant for our good.

To illustrate the parallel one more way, have you ever wondered why God doesn't take people up into heaven like Enoch immediately after they are baptized? If baptism is the point, and the rest of our lives are only an opportunity to lose that salvation, then why would God leave us here, knowing that we will likely sin again after we become Christians? The answer is the same reason that the Promised Land did not lie directly on the other side of the Red Sea. God could have made the Promised Land right next to Egypt if he wanted to, but his purpose was always to use the space between their baptism and the Promised Land as a means of transformation. So it is with Christians as well. We are not taken up immediately after baptism because God needs us to transform. The process is not complete at baptism. It's only the beginning, and that should be good news to us!

This is where we find the key to changing our anxious, loser mindset: every temptation is not meant to be a means to