

From Faith to Faith

Granbury Street Church of Christ

Do Not Look Back

D. J. Stucky

Moving is stressful for any family. Packing a full house into dozens of boxes is a taxing time and consuming process. Life is put on hold to make time for packing and preparation. Worst of all is the realization that all the people and things that you have grown to love must be left behind. We tend to look back at the past with fondness and nostalgia. For some, nothing will compare to the way things used to be. However, if we cannot take our eyes off of the past to focus on the present, then we do ourselves a disservice. Looking back can be dangerous, and Lot knew this danger firsthand because of his experience in Genesis 19:12-29.

After the two angels defended Lot from the wicked men of Sodom (Gen. 19:1-11), they gave him the word that Sodom was going to be destroyed. Lot was told to warn his family. When he warned the men betrothed to his daughters, they thought he was joking (19:12-14). (Some translations say these men had married Lot's daughters. This is due to the binding nature of betrothal in the ancient world). The next morning the angels urged Lot to flee with his wife and daughters. When Lot did not immediately respond, they took him and his family by the hand and led them out of the city (19:15-16). Here they gave Lot and his family a warning, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains lest you be destroyed!" Though Lot does convince the angels to allow him to flee to the small village of Zoar, the command for them not to turn back was still in effect (19:17-22). Lot and his daughters make it to Zoar and are saved from destruction. Lot's wife was not so fortunate. She looked back to the city, and she became a pillar of salt (19:23-26). Salvation was before her, but she could not keep her focus off of the life she left behind.

Some people are so focused on the world that they do not understand the spiritual danger they find themselves in, just like Lot's sons-in-law. Some people leave, but to continue to look back at the life they left behind, just like Lot's wife. This should never describe us. We must leave behind our old lives of sin and commit to fully pleasing God. (Luke 9:62; Phil. 3:13-14). We should not look back fondly on the things that God has deemed sinful, but rejoice that we no longer live under the shackles of sin (Rom. 6:1-2, 6-7). That does not mean leaving will be painless (2 Pet. 4:3-4). Lot's daughters left their husbands-to-be in the city that they fled. However, we must be prepared to leave anything and everything behind to follow Christ (Matt. 10:37), because only He can deliver us from the wrath that is to come (2 Thess. 1:7-10).

Shepherds

Sid Carruth
Jeff Day
Kenneth Helm
Clark Lehtinen
Tim Norman

Deacons

Gary Barger
Ryan Cowan
Vince Grinnell
Justin Hewlett
Bill Hughes
Russ Jones

Minister

Kevin Rhodes

Associate

D. J. Stucky

Sunday

Bible Study
9:00 am

AM Worship
10:00 am

PM Worship
5:00 pm

Wednesday

Ladies Class
10:00 am

Bible Study
7:00 pm

Cleburne,
Texas

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Thirsty Soul

Kevin W. Rhodes

A few years ago I remember talking to Gavin McGilvray while he served in the Marine Corps in southern California. The challenges of the service did not bother him; that was why he enlisted. Future deployment overseas during a war was not on his mind either. Instead, our conversation centered on how far removed he was from the church and being able to worship with his brethren. In fact, some youth had taken it upon themselves to call during worship so he could listen and participate. This became a major motivation that led quickly to live-streaming Bible Class and worship. But during that conversation, certain wording Gavin chose stood out to me. He said, “I’m starving here!” The Marine Corps kept him supplied with regular meals, but they could not supply spiritual nourishment. And this reminded me a great deal of Psalm 42 where the sons of Korah began, saying, “As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?” (Psa. 42:1-2).

The psalmist’s lament depicts a feeling of living and serving in a spiritually desolate area where a relationship with God is undervalued. Rather than having others’ encouragement, the people offer discouragement and doubt (Psa. 42:3), draining the soul rather than nourishing it. Surely many a missionary, isolated and perhaps lonely in an area where Christians are few and encouragement minimal can identify with such a sentiment! It remains a difficult challenge to this day. But what is one to do? The psalmist recalls a time when he

enjoyed the beauty of fellowship with a multitude, when worship was a joy and praise abundant, when the people gathered to do God’s will (Psa. 42:4). Such reflection could be difficult, but the results are powerful. This memory is important in finding assurance that the work is worthwhile and that there is indeed always hope in God (Psa. 42:5). So even while away from large numbers of the faithful and separated by a vast distance from others of like precious faith, we may be far away from others, but we can still be close to God (Psa. 42:6-7). This realization—the power of faith, the power of God’s love, and the power of prayer—helps overcome the sadness and the loneliness because we can bring our concerns and cares before the throne of the Almighty (Psa. 42:8-9). This does not change the circumstances we face—not at all. The godless will still challenge us, our enemies will still mock us (Psa. 42:10). However, this should never be a reason for alarm, nor become a reason to give up. There is still hope, because God is still my God, and He has given us no reason to doubt Him (Psa. 42:11).

Every Christian may one day face some circumstance where he feels cut off—stranded even—in the midst of nowhere spiritually. You might find yourself away from family, away from your home congregation, away from practically everyone, whether due to a decision of your own or one of your employer. You might be a missionary or a marine. It does not matter. But at some point you will feel a great ache deep inside, a thirst for God. It is a hard thing. But if you use it as the psalm describes, you can be stronger—rather than weaker—for it.



News and Notes

Prayer request...

- Pauline Bishop is back home.
- Johnnie Daugherty will see the doctor later this month to see what can be done about the problem with her arm.
- Shirley Elkins got a good report at the doctors this past week.
- Casey Lehtinen is at home until the next chemo about January 12th.
- Kidron Lehtinen will have an MRI in Houston to see if the cyst on his spine has changed.
- Charles Melton had shots in his back at the Surgical Center on Wednesday.

Please keep in your prayers

Darla Dill, Shirley Elkins, Helen Henslee, Betty Lane, Janice Redden, Darla Stubblefield, B. E. and Lois Thompson, Darlene Walker, Una York (Weldon York's mother), and all our shut-ins.

Directory Updates

Billy Bryant new cell phone number is 817-403-1944. He doesn't have the home number.

Charlotte Moulder new home phone number is 817-645-0277.

Baby Shower

The ladies are invited to a baby shower (girl) for Michelle Ledingham on Sunday, January 8th, from 1:30-3:00 in the annex. She is registered at Baby R Us.

Please note...

- Game night will be Tuesday, January 10th, starting at 6:00 in the annex.
- Ladies Bible Class will resume on Wednesday, January 11th, at 10:00 AM in room 107.
- There will be a meeting after the morning services in room 107 on Sunday, January 15th, for those who are interested in the Door Knocking program.

Centurion of Scripture Challenge 2017 (NKJV)

1 Corinthians 9:16

For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!

2 Timothy 4:2

Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

Review scriptures are Genesis 1:1 and Matthew 16:26.

Those who Serve

Lords' Supper: 1/8

Front South

Colton Allen
J. D. Allen
Sid Carruth

Front North

Larry McWilliams
Dale Ash
Gary Barger

Back South

Mark Stubblefield
Gene Threadgill
Ricky Threadgill

Back North

Weldon York
Steve Baze
Britt Bachhofer

Leading prayers:

Sunday AM

Will Cammack

Sunday PM

Bill Hughes

Wednesday PM

Russ Jones

Pat McIntosh

Logan Frasier

Announcements:

Sunday AM-PM:

Doug Jones

Wednesday

Andrew Collins

Song leaders:

Sunday AM

D. J. Stucky

Sunday PM

D. J. Stucky

Wednesday PM

Sid Carruth

Foyer Personnel:

Sunday & Wednesday

Gavin McGilvray

Collection Counting

Justin Hewlett / Wayne Gentry



Sermons for Sunday

AM

The Story of Creation

PM

Looking Ahead
Tim Norman

Calendar of Events



1/21

Elders, deacons, preachers meeting

1/29

5th Sunday

2/4

Caring for the Incarcerated

5/14-17

Gospel Meeting with Mike Bonner



Our Records

Bible Class	124
AM Worship.....	197
PM Worship	127
Wednesday Bible Class	88
Contribution	\$8,108

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