

The Lakeview Lamp

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." - Psalm 119:105

June 26, 2005

"They Just Won't Listen"

Dennis Crawford, edited

A man obviously in need of help poked his head into the preacher's study. He looked as if he had been sleeping on a park bench for at least a week. "Come on in," the preacher said. "Reverend, I am all messed up," he said in a blurt. The preacher shook his head as he said, "Not 'reverend,' 'mister' if you will – but don't call me 'reverend.' You see the Bible says, '*...holy and reverend is his name*' in **Psalm 111:9**. Many people in the denominational world call men reverend because they love the title. It was one with no less authority than Jesus who renounced titles when he said, '*And call no man father upon the earth: for one is your father who is in heaven.*'"

The poor man squirmed and cleared his throat. "Well...I.....uh....need some help with myself. See, Pastor, I..." "I'm not a pastor either. No I'm an evangelist, preacher, teacher, or Christian but not a pastor." The preacher didn't realize it, but he had raised his voice to just under pulpit volume. "You see, the New Testament in **Philippians 1:1** says, '*to the overseers and deacons....*' The qualifications of a pastor or overseer – the Greek word *poimen* – are found in **I Timothy 3** and **Titus 1**. Personally," the preacher finished with a wide smile, "I prefer to be called an evangelist."

"I'm sorry, I really am. I didn't know about all that." The man's face twisted as he tried to get back to the reason he had come in. "Listen, I just need to know what to do to join your church. I really believe in Jesus Christ and I want to receive him as my savior. If I can just..." "Just a second." The preacher leveled his gaze into the visitor's eyes as he spoke. "You say you want to join my church? Let me ask you – did I die for the church? Did I promise to build the church? Is the church called by my name?"

"Well, I'm not sure what you—" the man started. He couldn't finish his statement because the preacher was getting into a kind of rhythm. He was unable to stop asking questions. "Did I promise to come back and receive my church? Well I will tell you the answer to each of these questions is an emphatic, No!" He relaxed then and leaned back in his chair. With measure cadence the preacher continued, "No—the church belongs to Christ, not me. Jesus said in **Matthew 16:18**, '*Upon this rock I will build my church.*' **Romans 16:16** says, '*The churches of Christ salute you.*' Don't you see? The church doesn't belong to people. It belongs to the Lord."

The man tried to interrupt, "I'm not sure—" "Furthermore," the preacher said as he looked over the top of his glasses, "you can't join the church, anyway. The Bible is very clear. It points out that penitent believers were added to the church when we are immersed into Christ for the remission of sins." The preacher flipped his large study Bible around so the poor man could look at it. "Here, look up **Acts 2:47** and see for yourself. Look and see. It says, '*The Lord added.*' Read it yourself. The man hadn't any idea where **Acts** was in that big black book. He was embarrassed, frustrated, and angry, all at the same time. What he really wanted to do was pick up the book and throw it at the preacher. But he didn't. Instead he started over – speaking slowly.

“Look, I’m sick. Not my body, but way down inside. I need lotsa help. My mother was a good woman, see? I go to Sunday school with her – O.K.? She tells me about Him – you know – Jesus – well. I – I went way off the path – real bad – but I know where the answer to this mess is – It’s Jesus, right? I hear answers is what he’s got – you know – what he’s all about. So if you could help me, I’d really thank you a lot. I want to know how to receive Christ.”

The preacher rolled his eyes toward heaven as if to ask for a special measure of patience. “Receive Christ. Receive Christ! That sounds just like a Baptist. Was you mother a Baptist? Let’s get this straight. You do not receive Christ. You’re baptized into him.” By now the preacher had assumed his resonant pulpit voice and was looking over the visitor’s head as if he were preaching to the balcony. “Why, the Bible says we are baptized into Christ, don’t you see? Yes, the inspired apostle Paul said in his letter to the Galatian Christians, *‘For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.’*”

The preacher’s voice trailed off when he looked down and noticed the man had left. His office door had just clicked shut. “Just as I thought.” Now he was talking to himself. “How well the Lord said, *‘Having ears they do not hear.’* No, if they won’t hear, I can’t help it. People just don’t want to hear the Gospel anymore.”



“Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. [qv://0/anchor/7](#) Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person” (Colossians 4:6-7).

Family News

Hilda Barker, Sandy Heyboer's mother, had knee surgery two Fridays ago. She is at home and doing well. They did stop therapy because of a problem, but they should start it again very soon.

Metty Fain is scheduled to have cataract surgery this week.

Nell Ferrell remains at NHC in room # 202. She has an infection that they are currently treating. They have had her setting up in a chair this past week.

Overall she is not doing well, but may be getting a little better.

Brenda Fuqua passed away on Tuesday after a difficult struggle with cancer. She was 61 years old. Her funeral was Friday. Remember her family.

Kathy Hollingsworth, Joyce Werner's niece, had a stroke on Monday. She remains in the hospital (in Jackson) but is making slow progress.

Sandra Hunt has high blood pressure, PMR and foot/ankle problems. Her blood pressure medicine has been doubled. They are waiting to see how effective this will be. Overall she has had a bad week.

Alvin "John" Jenkins, Robert's father, has lung cancer. He is about the same.

Richard Jones, the Boyd's neighbor, has cancer that has spread to his bones. He is doing about the same (which is not well).

Remember **Debbie Kelley** who remains at Brandywood in Gallatin.

Allen Malone remains in Vietnam but leaves Thursday night to return home. There is a new report from him in the back.

Pat Martin, a friend of Sandra Boyd, has inoperable lung cancer. She is scheduled to start both radiation and chemotherapy tomorrow.

Jack Reiger was sick but is now doing better.

Joyce Werner has very high blood pressure. They have performed tests and procedures the past two Mondays. They were unable to unblock the arteries going into her kidneys (there was not as much blockage as originally thought). She is feeling a little stronger. She returns to the doctor tomorrow and expects to get results from all of the tests (and a solution to the high blood pressure?).

Ame White is now taking much more potassium and calcium. She returns to the doctor on Thursday to see if this is helping and some other test results.

Robert Wray is about the same.

Out of town, traveling, or visiting: **Ciampas** (FL - return Tuesday); **John Hunt** (preaching at Skyview in AM); **Mildred Lancaster** (FL)

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"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks" (1 Thes 5:16-18).