

The Lakeview Lamp

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” – **Psalm 119:105**

Dec 28

2008

Year-End Exam

Troy Nicholson

God commands us to “*examine*” and “*test*” ourselves to see whether we are “*in the faith*” (**2 Corinthians 13:5**). The end of a years serves as a good time for such soul-searching and reflecting on where we are in relation to where we ought to be.

What do you see when you examine yourself? Do you see yourself being closer to God and more spiritually mature than you were at the beginning of the year, or have you suffered some spiritual setbacks? Have you had a positive or a negative impact on your family when it comes to spiritual matters (**Colossians 3:18-21**)? Have you helped the church in its work or been more of a hindrance? Remember, it takes every member doing his or her part for the church to grow and be edified as it should (**Ephesians 4:16**). Once you have examined yourself, it is time to act according to what you have observed (**James 1:22-25**).

Can you say that you have been living in a way that is pleasing to God? If so, great! How are you going to live in the new year? Will you continue to grow closer and closer to God? This was Paul’s attitude. He said, “*Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on,...reaching forward to those things which are ahead...to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind*” (**Philippians 3:12-16**).

Do you need to make some changes and improvements in your life? Then resolve right now to begin making those changes. Don’t wait until the new year, even though it is only a few days away, for it may never come (**James 4:14**). As Joshua exhorts the Israelites, “*Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve,...*” (**Joshua 24:15**). Resolve that, no matter what may happen in the new year, you are going to put God first in your life and trust in Him to take care of the rest (**Matthew 6:33**).

While many consider the end of year a time of rest and relaxation, don’t forget about your year-end exam. A final grade will one day be awarded (**2 Corinthians 5:10**)!

Dinner with Jesus

Rusty Miller

In a recent Bible class, we were discussing one of the many times Luke tells of Jesus sitting down to a meal with someone. In almost every case, Jesus winds up offending some, if not all of the guests and their host. Someone made the comment that whenever you see someone in the newspaper asked about their fantasy dinner party, it often will include Jesus, and he suggested that maybe we wouldn't be too excited with what Jesus might say at our dinner.

As I pondered our discussion alone, it hit me: The point is not what Jesus would have to say to others, but what would He have to say to me? What is it about my life that would have Jesus look sadly at me across the table and tell a parable which would cut me to the heart?

That is, after all, what usually happened. We read the parables of Jesus and, with an air of smug self-righteousness, proclaim the Pharisees, lawyers or scribes who caught the brunt of His teaching to be so poor, so misguided, so desperately in need of His most harsh teaching.

Unfortunately, just as the point of examining Jesus at a fantasy dinner is not what He would say to others, the point of the parables is not necessarily what He had to say to scribes, lawyers and Pharisees. What do the parables say to me?

After all, the scribes, lawyers and Pharisees were the religious people of their day. They never expected to be rebuked by the Messiah, and that is one reason they rejected Him. What of my own life? Am I above rebuke? Am I truly doing my best to serve God, or am I one of those who, seeing my neighbor in desperate straits (without the gospel), pass by on the other side? Do I rejoice in His word, or am I one who makes an excuse not to come to His feast?

The fact is, most of us would be terrified if we had really had to sit across the table from the one who knows hearts, but in truth, does He not read our hearts daily? We must realize that, in many ways, the parables are a rebuke to us (religious people) as much as they were to the Pharisees. It is this recognition which draws us to the prayer of the publican of **Luke 18**, whose only thought was to cry out, eyes cast downward, "*God, be merciful to me, the sinner!*" (:13) .

It might compel us to be better if we were to remember, instead of those who are so easy to condemn, to point the words of Jesus, particularly in His parables, at our own selves. Perhaps one day, one long eternal day, we will sit down to dine with our Savior. But it will take the humility which will cause us to keep examining our own lives in the light of His teaching.

News and Notes

(abbreviated due to early printing)

Members:

- * Linda Bansemer has flue/sinus conditions, maybe pneumonia.
- * Metty Fain remains in Highland Manor Nursing Home; Room B2; 215 Highland Circle Dr; Portland, TN 37148.

Friends and Family:

- * Sandlyn Fultz is scheduled for reconstructive leg surgery on both legs on Dec 31. For details see www.caringbridge.org/visit/nathanandsandlyn
- * Jamison Hodges, **friend of the Berry's**, is suffering from pulmonary hypertension and is in need of a lung transplant.
- * Mary Moore, **John and Ray's mother**, is having a bronchoscopy on the 31st.
- * Ken and Rhonda Hull are the proud grandparents of twin boys, Jude and Paul Venaas. All are doing well.

Absent: Katie Greene (OH), Ken and Rhonda Hull (CA), Melissa Moore (AL), **the Nicholson's** (FL), Lyda Plank (OH).

New Reports: Ron Chaffin (South Africa), Sandro Corazza (Rome), Ed Rangel (Puerto Rico).



“He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes, with the princes of His people. He makes the barren woman abide in the house as a joyful mother of children. Praise the LORD!” – Psalm 113:7-9