

view

April 17, 2005

This Week's Agenda

April 17, 2005

The Lord's Day

8:30AM & 10:15AM

Sermon: David Posey

5pm Sermon: David Posey

5:30pm: Classes for all ages from 18 months and up

Adult Classes

- Auditorium: Sunday - Randy Clark, James
- Room 6: Bible Essentials – Dennis Wade
- Room 11-12: Young Adults, Marriage– David Posey

Wednesday

10 AM Wednesday: OT History, 10 AM here.

7:30 PM - Classes for all ages 18 months and up.

Adult Classes

- Auditorium: Dennis Reagan, Current Issues
- Room 6: Bible Essentials – Dennis Wade
- Room 11-12: Young Adults, Marriage – David Posey

News and Prayer Needs

New Arrival

Cole Travis Sanderson was born on Monday, April 11th. He weighed 8# 12oz and was 22 inches in length. All are doing well. Glory to God!

Prayer Concerns

Continue to pray for Tim Dickey and Carly Cain. Kathy Wilson (Parkinson's disease) and Hank; Jamie Cole, Kristen Sanderson's sister. Others fighting cancer: Dave Fulton's mother, Monica (Monroe, WA); Tom Royston; Ken McClelland; Margaret Everett; Cheryl Wilson; Laurie Ann Reagan; Chris Hamilton (friend of Justin Ivie); Oliver Sasse.

Others to keep in your prayers: Karen Gorden; Sharon Jones; Becky Woolpert. Continue prayers for all the new children born recently and for the remaining expectant moms: Sally Deschler, Melissa Fields, Michelle Caisse and Janelle Thorp.

Christians Serving in Iraq

Jeremy Allen, Philip Cain, Steve Reis, Titus Cain, Philip Cain. Keep these good men in your prayers each day.

Expectant Mothers

Sally Deschler, Melissa Fields, Michelle Caisse, Janelle Thorp. Keep these ladies in your prayers.



Bible Reading This Week

Sunday – Matthew 8-10; Psalm 62

Monday – Matthew 11-13; Psalm 63

Tuesday – Matthew 14-16; Psalm 64

Wednesday– Matthew 17-19; Psalm 65

Thursday – Reflection

Friday – Matthew 20-22; Psalm 66

Saturday – Matthew 23-25; Psalm 67

Out of Town

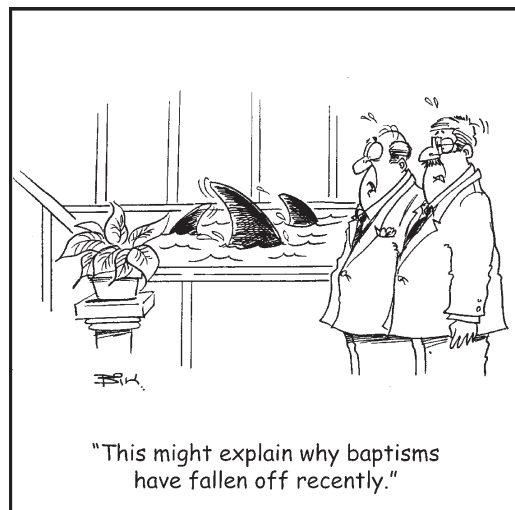
None reported.

Other Classes

The class on Old Testament History continues on Wednesdays here at the building at 10AM. Please see David Posey if you have any questions or need lesson sheets.

Also, there is a class for young mothers that meets every other Thursday. Paula Ladd will be teaching the next class on Thursday April 21st. Please see Christie or Angie Cain for information about the location.

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Building Strong Bible Classes

Connie W. Adams

Bible classes are scripturally authorized under the general command to “teach.” Classes are expedients, or methods to that end. If they are worth having, they are worth developing into effective tools for learning. There is evidence, in a number of places known to me, of greater awareness of the need to improve the quality of this work. Teacher training courses have been offered in many places. There is a wide assortment of good material in print to help in this work. Some congregations have within them skilled and knowledgeable people who have been able to produce their own teaching materials. Whatever produces greater interest and success in teaching the word of God is certainly desirable.

For many years, in far too many places, Bible classes have been poorly conducted. How many times have you been in a class where the teacher, and some students, spend ten minutes trying to decide if they stopped last week at verse 7 or verse 10? I have sat in classes in Job, Daniel, Revelation, Romans, or one of the gospels where the teacher not only did not know what the passage was about, he did not ever suspect what it was about! Or brother A is asked to read a verse and comment on it, to which he replies “Well, I think it pretty well explains itself.” Or, “The next verse explains it.” And that may be so, but genuine Bible study needs to probe a little deeper.

Often, in the rush to make practical applications, and that needs to be done, there is a failure to grasp the context of the passage under study. What did it say in context to the original recipients of the book? Confusion reigns in a study of Revelation unless that principle is observed. Once that is established, then it is time for application.

Much of the indifference toward Bible classes is the fault of the teachers. A class soon learns whether or not a teacher is prepared. Some teachers will lecture for fifteen minutes and then ask, “Are there any questions?” By that time, there will be none. Many in the class will have become glassy-eyed as they have struggled to stay awake. There are times to lecture, but it must be done with careful preparation and in an interesting way.

Sometimes one or two students will dominate all discussion, intimidating the rest. Teachers need to study to learn how to elicit useful response from the students. The late Thomas Hughes, who was an excellent teacher, used to say, “Never tell the class what the

class can tell you.” This is especially true in reviewing. Some teachers will ask a question, then if no one speaks up right away, the teacher then answers his own question. That pregnant pause might be some of the best teaching and learning that takes place during the whole class period.

Questions we should ask about Bible classes

1. Is the Bible being taught? Are we spending more time on the comments of uninspired people than on what the Scripture says? Bible classes have no defense unless the Bible is being taught. “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11).

2. Are workbooks and study aids being abused? I am not opposed to the use of literature unless it teaches error or else becomes such a crutch that Bible study is hindered more than it is helped. I have sat in classes where students have dutifully read off their answers as they have filled in the blanks, or in a true or false section, or told how many times a certain word appeared in a section of three or four chapters, and left wondering how much real Bible study was actually done. Then there are classes where the teacher reads the text of a workbook. Why? Cannot the students do that for themselves at home and free the class period for discussion of the text? Don’t forget that our faith should not stand in the wisdom of men (even good men), but in the power of God.

3. Are small children’s classes geared more to babysitting than to instruction? Of course, their attention spans are short and approaches have to vary. Still, the objective is to teach, on a level they can grasp, what the Bible says.

4. Is the approach so tedious that the student becomes lost in the forest? There is a place for verse by verse study (I enjoy teaching that way), but there must be some sense of progress. When a class spends three years on a book with four chapters, it is easy to become so tedious with long dissertations on every word, that the student can’t see the forest for the trees. It is good to dig out the meat of the word, but unless the class has a sense of forward motion, it will be hard to maintain interest. The other end of that problem is to settle continually for survey type classes where you have to cover several chapters in every class to stay on a schedule. We need survey classes, but not exclusively.

5. Is the “whole counsel of God” being taught? Are there gaps in the teaching program so that needed subjects or books are being overlooked? I worked once with elders who were working out a plan for the next five years of classes. We spread it all out on a board. It was easy to spot areas of weakness that way. We could see if there was a proper balance between Old and New Testaments. Did we offer enough help on evidences? Was there a proper balance between textual study and topical ones to deal with practical issues facing Christians? It was an eye-opening experience.

6. What is the evangelistic thrust of these classes? Are students near or over the age of accountability being taught what to do to be saved and motivated to act? What of visitors who are not saved? Do we not have some responsibility toward them? Often, teachers and/or students make thoughtless comments which close minds before they can be taught. Cutting or sarcastic remarks may get a laugh, but they may also close a mind which might otherwise be taught.

Do we have classes which ignite the fires of evangelism in our young men and women? Are they being made aware of efforts around the world to save the lost? Do classes stimulate students to take the knowledge gained in the classroom into the mainstream of life? Do they move Christians to “teach faithful men who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2)?

7. Are there regularly scheduled teachers’ meetings where elders can monitor what is taking place and where teachers can sharpen their skills? Discussion with teachers in such settings can help elders to spot areas of need, stay on top of situations before they get out of hand, and help them to evaluate the attitudes of teachers toward the Scriptures and toward godly living. It is also a good setting in which to develop new teachers.

I could be mistaken, and hope that I am, but it appears to me that, as a whole, we are not as knowledgeable a people about the word of God as we ought to be. We are not the people of the book we once were. I know the usual excuses but they are no more acceptable now than they have ever been. It is still required that we “search the scriptures daily” (Acts 17:11) and that we “study” to show ourselves “approved unto God, workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2: 15). Both pulpit and classroom must combine in instilling a knowledge of the word of God into the hearts of those who hear us. Eternal issues are at stake.

In the process, let it not be forgotten that God requires “faithful” people to teach others. James said teachers shall receive “the heavier judgment” (Jas. 3:1). Morally weak, half-baked Christians have no business in the pulpit or the classroom in a teaching role. They need to be converted first. Shorts wearers, mixed swimmers (i.e., those who practice *immodesty*, dp), social drinkers, cigarette puffers, profane and vulgar talkers, and other worldlings are mighty poor examples to set before the public. Their students cannot be expected to rise to any higher level than the example of their teachers. Did I hear even a faint, distant “Amen”? Somewhere?

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Services

Sunday Morning Assembly
8:30AM & 10:15AM
Sunday Evening: 5:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Study
7:30 PM
Classes for all ages.
*Private classes arranged at your
convenience.*

For more information,
visit our web site at:

www.folsomchurch.com

In Defense of the BOX

David Diestelkamp

Popular vernacular calls ideas which break with the norm, “thinking outside the box.” Some aspects of considering the abnormal or new can be challenging, even refreshing. It can be an exercise which tests flexibility and open-mindedness.

The Bible is a book for thinkers: “Consider the lilies” (Matt. 6:28); “Meditate on these things” (I Tim. 4: 15); “Think on these things” (Phil. 4: 8). We cannot think our way to heaven, but we *can and must* understand God’s communication as to how to receive His grace (Eph. 3:4). Whether we need to think “outside the box” to be saved depends on what the box is.

“...it is being advocated that truth is not absolute and therefore we should not be bound by any concept or standard.”

If the box is the religion and teaching of men, then we are going to have to break free of it in our thinking and actions. It is usually difficult and painful to see when something we believe or a religion we are part of is not dependent wholly on God’s Word. Our thinking stays inside the box of false religion when we argue based on things like sincerity, good works accomplished, and the number of those who are involved. Jesus, Himself, said there will

be many like these to whom He will say, “I never knew you; depart from Me” (Matt. 7:22-23). Thinking outside the philosophies and theologies of man is healthy and necessary in order to think inside the right box.

The modern concept of “thinking outside the box” is probably asking us to do more than simply be open-minded or to shake off error. I suspect we are being taught not to ever put our thinking into a box. Put another way, it is being advocated that truth is not absolute and therefore we should not be bound by any concept or standard.

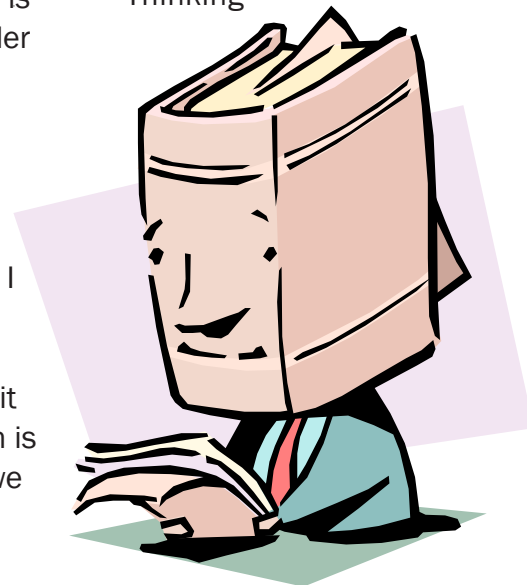
This is precisely why some have become so “open-

minded” that it seems that their brains have fallen out. They accept no standards, no one is wrong, everyone is right, there are no restrictions. It doesn’t matter if you point out that they accept contradicting positions; they are simply viewing things in their own way.

Like it or not, God’s revealed truth is a box. It contains specific understandable information and it is our job to comprehend the original meaning as intended by God. This

information is our standard (2 Tim. 3:16-17), a “box” within which we must live to be pleasing to our God.

Thinking



outside this box usurps God’s position. There is nothing outside of God’s box but speculation, uncertainty, presumption, and error.

Lust for something new, or more, has turned the hearts of many away from God’s ancient word. The challenge is to channel this desire into a search of the “depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God” (Rom. 11:33) as revealed in His word. We haven’t mastered “thinking inside the box” when it comes to God’s word. Why would we think we have any business outside His box?

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