

view

September 4, 2005

This Week's Agenda

September 4, 2005

The Lord's Day

8:30AM & 10:15AM

Sermon: David Posey

5 PM – Singing and Prayer

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

Adult Classes

- Auditorium: Mark – Grant Mulligan, Dan Singleton
- Room 6: Bible Essentials – Dennis Wade
- Room 11-12: 7 Churches of Asia – David Posey, Jr., Jeff Clark

Special Prayer Service Tonight

In lieu of the sermon and classes this evening we will be engaging in an hour of prayer and singing. We feel this is most appropriate at this time, given the difficulties and challenges facing so many of our brethren here and in other places. We also wish to petition God on behalf of all of those who have been devastated by Hurricane Katrina. This service will replace our regular quarterly singing which was scheduled for September 25th. Each of those who have been chosen to pray will be assigned specific people to mention. The men are free, of course, to mention other concerns.

Agenda for Tonight

Participants to be assigned.

- Two songs
- Prayer
- Lord's Supper
- Song
- Announcements and Introduction
- Song
- Prayer
- Prayer
- Song
- Prayer
- Prayer
- Prayer
- Song
- Prayer
- Prayer
- Short Invitation
- Song
- Prayer

Tuesday

7:30 PM – Class on Evidences

Randy Clark's Home

Wednesday

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

Adult Classes

- Auditorium: Mark – Grant Mulligan, Dan Singleton
- Room 6: Bible Essentials – Dennis Wade
- Room 11-12: (Young Adults) Divorce & Remarriage – David Posey, Sr.

A partial list of those needing our prayers:

Cancer: Carly Cain, Nita Sellgren, Monica Fulton, Larry Thompson, Tom Royston, Ken McClelland, Brady Rembleski's grandfather, Justin Ivie's dad, Margaret Everett, Cheryl Wilson, Laurie Ann Reagan, Oliver Sasse.

Recent death in family: the Sterling family, Steve Ries, The Tarrant family.

Other sickness, injuries, health issues: Ben Thorp, Duane Lowe, Charles Davis' mother, Carly Posey, Wes Shamblin's grandmother, Sharon Jones, Becky Woolpert, Kathy Wilson, Hank Wilson, Jamie Cole, LeRoy Posey,

Recovering from Surgery: Bertha Hamilton, Pamela Ludlow, Nolen Woodside, Boots Royston.

All the new babies. The new babes: Terri Zwahlen, Kyle Zwahlen
Expectant families: Janelle Thorp, Carly Posey, Carrie Sadowy, Dani Rembleski, Angie Cain.

Christians serving in Iraq: Jeremy Allen, Philip Cain, Steve Ries, Titus Cain.

Those affected by Hurricane Katrina (including Jeff and Jana Carr)

College students who are away.

Bible Reading

Sunday – Esther 4-7; Psalm 119:25-32

Monday – Esther 8-10; Psalm 119:33-40

Tuesday – 2 Timothy; Psalm 119:41-48

Wednesday – Reflection

Thursday – Job 1-3; Psalm 119:49-56

Friday – Job 4-6; Psalm 119:57-64

Saturday – Job 7-9; Psalm 119:65-72



The Short Sermon

by Jon Gardner

The old man stood before the small congregation to preach what everyone expected to be just another sermon. It was a tiny congregation comprised of only three families in addition to the preacher and his wife. Few in number they were, but they were good, faithful folks every one. The preacher opened his Bible to the eighth chapter of Luke and read verses four through eight.

⁴And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable:

⁵A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

⁶And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

⁷And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

⁸And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

And then to the amazement of all in attendance, he closed the Book and sat down. It was the shortest sermon he had ever delivered, and its brevity left the tiny congregation stunned. As the members shuffled out the door, each one stopped to shake the preacher's hand and compliment him on the sermon for its simplicity, or for its clarity, or even for its brevity – a rarity for the usually long-winded preacher. After exchanging pleasantries, the four families climbed into their respective cars and headed home, all wondering what to do with the extra time they had due to the unusually short sermon.

The Parable of the Sower

After a few uncomfortably quiet moments, the preacher's wife broke the silence.

"What was that all about?" she asked. "Why such a short sermon?"

"That was a sermon just for me," the preacher replied. "It's about a sower, and that's what I am. I sow the word of God day after day and week after week. Sometimes I get a bit discouraged by the indifference that people show – they're like the wayside soil where the seed doesn't even have a chance to germinate be-

fore it gets crushed or brushed aside. And sometimes it's disappointing to see someone accept the Gospel only to lose interest and fall away – like a seed that lands on the rocky soil. And there

are those whose lives are so full of worldly distractions that the preaching and teaching that I do never seems to have a chance to penetrate – like the weed-choked soil. It seems rare to find a good and honest person who will accept the truth of the Gospel and let it flourish in their lives – like a seed that lands in fertile soil. So today's sermon was just for me – to remind me that all I can do is to try to be the best sower that I can be, and not be discouraged or disappointed by the results."

The Parable of the Soil

One of the families began to discuss the odd little sermon on the way home. "What did you make of the unusual sermon today?" asked the husband.

"I thought the sermon was written just for me," replied the wife. "The preacher knows that I am very involved in gardening, so he preached about soil – something that I understand very well."

"Our garden is like an oasis in the middle of a desert. The alley behind the garden is so well traveled that the ground is hard and bare. Nothing can be grown in such hard soil. And our neighbors on either side have no interest in gardening. On one side, the neighbor has a patio paved with stones and bricks so that no living plant can grow there. The other neighbor has a patch of weeds preventing anything attractive from growing."

"I can't do anything about the neighbors' landscaping. But I can make sure that my garden is well tended so that the seeds that I plant will flourish. And I can continue to take fresh flower arrangements from my garden to our neighbors. It might cause them to appreciate living plants and encourage them to grow a garden of their own. By the same token, I can't force my neighbors to allow the Word of God



into their lives. But I can be diligent to make sure that my family is like a spiritual garden, producing fruit of the Spirit for all the neighbors to see. And I can offer them spiritual bouquets of kindness and hospitality to encourage them to see how wonderful it is to live a Godly life.”

“Today’s sermon was without doubt targeted directly at me. It was wonderful.”

The Parable of the Seed

The second family also found the topic of the curious sermon to dominate their conversation as they drove home from the church building.

One of the children offered her opinion of the sermon.

“I never heard a sermon about seeds before. But I understood exactly what he was talking about, because Christians are just like seeds, if you stop and think about it. Seeds are tiny little things that seem so unimportant – except we know that they contain a germ of life inside. Under the right circumstances, the seed opens up and that germ of life comes out and a whole plant emerges and grows. And then it produces even more seeds, and they do the same thing.”

“We’re just ordinary people. We don’t have a *germ* of life, but we do have the *Word* of Life inside us! Under the right circumstances, we can share the word with people around us, and it causes others to become seeds just like us. Sometimes people find themselves in situations where they just can’t find anyone who’s interested in letting the word grow inside them – just like the seeds in the sermon that fell on rocks, or in a weed patch, or on the hardened pathway. All the seed can do is to keep being a seed and hope that it will end up in a little patch of good soil, where it can grow into a plant and spread its influence even more.”

“That’s the same way that God uses Christians. He spreads us around like seeds, so His word can spread into all kinds of different places. But some places where we go aren’t very receptive. We try to open up and let the word grow, but there are some places where we just can’t find any soil that will let a plant spring up. It’s kind of like the town where we live. There aren’t many people who will listen to God’s word. So the sermon was to remind us – since we’re just God’s little seeds – that we shouldn’t be feel bad about it. We just need to keep being seeds in search of some good soil.”

“I felt like the preacher was talking just to me.”

The Parable of the Tiller

The third family discussed the sermon as they rode in their car. The father spoke as he drove.

“I liked the sermon today, because it was about us – you know – farmers – tillers of the ground. And I thought it was very clever the way the preacher talked about farming without ever actually saying the word itself. He talked about sowing, and he talked about seeds, and he talked about soil. Those are all things that are involved in farming. But I felt like he was talking directly to us, because we’re farmers. You see, the most important part of farming is cultivating the land. We have all kinds of soil on our farm, and the crops grow best where the soil has been worked, and turned, and cultivated. Every year, we take a plow and turn the soil and fertilize it. And after the crop is planted, we water it and we go out into the fields and chop down the weeds that try to take root. If we weren’t diligent to work the fields as we do, they wouldn’t be receptive to the seed when planting time comes. And the weeds would choke out the seeds that germinate if we didn’t stay on top of our cultivating.”

“Just think about the acres that we’ve cleared of rocks and tree stumps. Without all of our work on the land, it wouldn’t be suited to grow anything. So the sermon today was to remind us all to be like farmers, and to keep working hard to eliminate the things that prevent the Word of God from spreading. In our world today, that means being active in the community to oppose and weed out things that are sinful. It means being kind to people and always being good examples – never ceasing to take opportunities to “turn the soil” in order to get the people in our neighborhood to be more receptive of the seed that’s being sown – the Word of God.”

“As short as the lesson was, it was one of the best sermons about farming that I’ve ever heard.”

One Parable, or Four?

The preacher never knew how effective his sermon had been. By reading five short verses from a Parable of Jesus, he had delivered four different lessons to his small congregation – a parable of the sower, a parable of the seed, a parable of the soil, and a parable of the tiller. How could it be that each family heard a different message from the same words? And how was it that the listeners heard an illustration that was tailored specifically to their individual lives? *He that has ears to hear, let him hear.*

Think on These Things

Eager to Leave

Anonymous

It was my first time at that church. I had never really wanted to go, but a good friend of mine had finally worn me down enough to give it a try. I had always thought, "That church stuff isn't for me," or, "I'm a good person. What do I need church for?" or, "All church is good for is making you feel guilty and asking you for money." But then, when I finally arrived at the doors, I was greeted by smiling faces and warm welcomes from the regulars. I was expecting more of an attitude of disapproval for an outsider, but no one was like that.

When services finally began, I sat and listened to the people singing. I didn't know any of the songs myself, so I just took it all in. There were several people with beautiful voices, and there were those who hadn't hit one note right from start to finish. Those people sang with even more feeling, though, and all I could do was smile at their obvious love of the songs. There were a few things I didn't understand in the lyrics. After all, I had never really been taught anything about God.

What really got me curious was the sermon, though. The preacher started talking about this Jesus character. I knew who Jesus was supposed to be, but I had never really considered what he had done. The preacher read a lot out of the Bible, using it as his main reference. It surprised me to hear the words he read, telling a somewhat graphic story of this one man's abuse and execution. The sermon went on for a while, but I never once looked at my watch. I was so intent on what the preacher was saying about sin and sacrifice that it only felt like a moment had passed by the time he was getting to the heart of his lesson.

"Now is the time to act," he said passionately. "Now is the time to lay aside your sin and take up the cross and follow Jesus."

He went on and talked about baptism and how it was a step on the way to salvation. It seemed too easy, but he had my attention. I wanted to know more.

"If you are not a Christian yet and we can help you in any way," he started, but as he began to say these words, the people all around me started packing away their things. The rustle of papers and movement of people slipping on their jackets was distracting. The preacher was still talking, inviting anyone who had a need or a desire to learn more, as I did, to come forward and make that need known and they would help and pray for that person. But everyone seemed like they wanted to leave, like they had something important that they couldn't be late for, some pressing appointment that they needed to hurry to as soon as things were done here. They were all getting ready for the next song that they knew was coming, flipping through pages and moving around in their seats.

I didn't want to hold these people up just because I was ignorant of what they already knew, just because I wanted to learn. So when he said, "Come now as we stand and sing," I stayed where I was. I didn't go forward, though I felt the pull strongly. I didn't want to be a hindrance to these people, to keep them here longer just because of me. I stayed put and let the moment pass by.

When the service was over, people started talking and filing out through the doors to go home or go out to get something to eat. A few people stopped to talk to me, but I tried not to keep them. I kept my answers short and let them go on their way. Maybe it wasn't as urgent as the preacher had made it sound. Maybe I didn't need to do anything about this sin he had talked about. I had been fine so far, after all. Life would go on whether I went forward or not.

So that night, when I left and went back home, I went back to the way things were. If the people who always went to church didn't think that responding was that important, then why should I? I didn't really know anything about God anyway. It obviously wasn't that serious.

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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

The View contains news and articles of interest to the members of the Folsom Point church of Christ. Announcing an activity or event does not necessarily imply that we financially sponsor the event or that the elders specifically endorse every component of that event, since it may not fall under the direct oversight of the elders. The church's work and the elders' oversight is limited by Scripture. We will not announce events that are primarily social in nature. However, we do want to publicize those activities that provide an opportunity for you to be a more involved and active member of the body.

Editor