

February 16, 2009

SERMONS FOR SUNDAY

February 15, 2009

a.m. "*New Commandments*"

Scripture: John 13:31-35

p.m. "*Prayer in Gethsemane*"

Scripture: Mark 14:32-42

The Tree Of The Knowledge Of Good and Evil

Don Hatch

In the garden Adam and Eve had fellowship with God. What they knew is unspecified by scripture but the mental ability of Adam is seen when he named all the animals. Believing the Genesis account that Adam was directed by God refutes atheism because God is the Creator, pantheism because God transcends what He created, polytheism because only one God created all things, materialism because matter began with the word of God, dualism because God is one God, humanism because God is not man and evolution because God the Creator created all things in heaven and on earth. These false philosophical presuppositions express the same belief, there is no God. These entire systems could be called atheistic evolution. Ideas like naturalism, uniformitarianism, deism, agnosticism, determinism, paganism and others could be included. They have affected millions of lives. In opening Genesis it is understood that God does not have to explain Himself for He is sovereign of the universe. It is obvious that those bereft of wisdom from above are called "fools" and they say there is not God (Psm 14:1). The challenges to the Bible come from all quarters but it has weathered all assaults and has been proven to be a Book of great value. It is vitally important that God's majesty and omnipotence be stressed. God did not take existing materials and create. The worlds were framed by the word of His mouth (Rom 4:17; Heb 11:3). Man can form, amalgamate, unite and fashion many things but can neither create nor destroy a single atom. Only God can do such a wonderful thing. The physical universe was spoken into existence. It had no prior existence to the primeval creative act of God. God is eternal and omnipotent so that all things are possible to Him, in accordance with His holy nature. It is impossible to understand God. The alternative is that the self-existing God reveal Himself in comprehensive ways. Thus God spoke (Heb 1:1-5). In God's words He defines restrictions and boundaries for man.

God called Adam's attention to the trees in the Garden of Eden. There was an abundance for him and Eve to eat in the garden. There was a restriction which would prove the love of man for his Creator. True love is based on trust. It was natural for Adam to be grateful to God for all He had done by giving him life, a garden in which to live, a helpmeet and all that was needful for life and the pursuit of happiness. By seeing such love from God it would be natural

to reciprocate with trust and obedience. There should have been no doubt of God's love and that His instructions were the best which could be given. The knowledge supplied by God was from the source of all purity and was the noblest things man could think. There was every reason for Adam to obey and conform to God's commands because of God's manifested love. Yet Adam was a free moral agent able to make choices. Trusting and obeying is a test of fidelity because of God's demonstration of love and faithfulness. Rejection of God was tantamount to losing Paradise. The forbidden tree was of "knowledge of good and evil". Eating of this tree would provide "real knowledge" of evil. Evil is cogently defined as rejection of God's will. Adam already had knowledge of good. All that was seen expressed good. Each time God created various items He said it was good. Adam should have obeyed God as an expression of love. God's clear warning was an expression of love with further incentives by giving details of the cost of disobedience. Since God is the source of life, real life is found only in fellowship with Him. Therefore a breach of fellowship with God ultimately leads to death. The essence of death is a separation from God... "...in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die" (Gen 2:17). In the moment Adam and Eve began to disobey God the principles of death and decay began to operate in their lives. Even though Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years he inextricably moved towards returning to dust.

It is significant that there are many things God wishes to teach. "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard of interpretation, seeing ye are become dull of hearing, for when by reason of time ye ought to be teachers, ye need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not solid food. For every one that partaketh of milk is without experience of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But solid food is for the fullgrown man, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil" (Heb 5:11-14).

Advancing in the ability to discern good from evil is an excellence which can be acquired. Rebuking, exhortation and reproof are parts of this process (2 Tim 4:1-5). Something goes dramatically wrong in the process if there is a lack of interest in knowing the differences between right and wrong. There is a reasonable time for one to reach discernment. The disciple is under obligation to achieve this goal promptly. As a matter of course time should be spent in arriving at the position of being able to teach others (Jas 3:1-12). Being taught again the first principles is like relearning the ABC's. The elementary truth of Christianity is vested in the facts that one learns how to repent before becoming a Christian. Spiritual living is a must in order to become independently responsible. Christians take the sincere milk of the word early but must exercise their senses and move to meat to be spiritually capable of discerning good and evil.

FAMILY CARE

A Message from Our Shepherds

It has been snowing just about every day; I guess that's Russia. I've been really busy trying to stay up with Oleg. He has many meetings, helping different members that come by quite often, some scheduled and some not. Oleg helps them with their questions and their problems. Some of them are teachers who ask for help with their studies and organizing their efforts in teaching about Christ. Oleg teaches special English classes, utilizing the Bible on Wednesday nights (6:30pm), Thursday mornings (11am) and on Sunday mornings (10am) before Bible class. I attended the more advanced class and taught them how to talk

Texan. We all had a good time. On Sunday, Bible classes begin at 11am. Services start at noon and last almost two hours. Then a meal is prepared for the entire congregation. A different family accepts that duty every week. This week it is a family from India; hot spicy food is expected. The rest of the day is filled with singing classes, ladies' devotionals, and fellow shipping in one another's homes. Some travel great distances and stay all day. There is only one corporate worship a week, due to conflicting work schedules and transportation difficulties. The meeting place is utilized about 12 hours a day, Sunday through Friday. I'm amazed of the many hours that most members are together for classes and activities throughout the week. Sunday through Thursday, Oleg starts to the building about 9 or 10am and leaves about 9 or 10pm. After walking and waiting in the snow and wind, we ride a bus about ten minutes to the building and then the same routine on the way home. Normally the bus is full and it's best not to look where the crazy driver is going. Oleg owns a car, but Natasha needs it to take the boys to school, to the doctors and to their various activities. Thursday afternoon, Oleg and Sergey handed out 60 free Bibles to those who passed in front of the building. On Friday's, Oleg prepares his sermon at home and then goes in about 1pm and meets with the men of the church (council members) and then on Friday night, there is always something planned for family night (movie, devotional, singing, etc.). Today is Saturday and Oleg takes that day off to be with his children. We plan to go out to a nice restaurant Monday, a very rare treat for Oleg and Natasha. God has blessed this work for the last twelve years, from Natasha and Oleg meeting in a small apartment to worship, to an attendance of about 100 souls on a building floor of 2,200 sq. ft. The meeting place is the third floor of a four story building. The meeting place was completely renovated by the members. It has its own secured stairway and entrance with office and class rooms, a kitchen with a large eating area, a library, and bathrooms. The worship area (100 seats) has a baptistry, a cry room, an overhead projection and a large automated screen and computer system, and a sound system. We, the Belt Line members, should be very happy and pleased that God has blessed our efforts in St. Petersburg, Russia with Oleg and Natasha Yakimenko. We should continue to pray for the success of the Neva church of Christ. I would like to thank Oleg and his family for being great hosts in opening up their lives to let me be a part of theirs. Have a great week in the Lord. ~ Richard Renfro

SOWING THE SEED OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IN 2009

The Fruit Bearing Christian

“Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, rejoice. Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus...not that I seek for the gift; but I seek for the fruit that increaseth to your account...” (Phil 4: 3-7). The apostle Paul commends the church for her love, courage and support of the work in the vineyard of the Lord. They have found ways and means to provide considerably to Paul over many years. These gifts are life-giving fruit.

Genuine traits of Christian love are manifested in the fruit which are borne. An example of such is “...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law. And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lust thereof. If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk” (Gal 5:22-25). From within the Christian is manifested a deepening

conviction that whatsoever is giving to the Lord and His work constitutes fruitful living. **Time, energy, resources and life** are but a few of those things which constitute fruitful living. The Apostle Paul encourages the church to see how such actions are accumulative in their lives.

God is the ideal from which Christians can draw directions. "He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him give us freely all things" (Rom 8:32). Divine power will grant unto us all things which pertain unto life and godliness by His own glory and virtue (2 Pet 1:1-11). The charge Paul gives is that the church do good, be rich in good works, lay up good foundation against times to come and lay hold on life which is life indeed (1 Tim 6:17-19). Temporary nature of the physical world reminds Christians that the outward man is perishing but the inward is renewed daily and all must seek the things which are not seen, the eternal (2 Cor 4:16-18). Paul reminds Christians that they will one day shuffle off the mortal coil and be swallowed up in an eternal life. They are to have courage to walk by faith and not by sight. Moreover they are to seek to be well-pleasing to the Lord. All must be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ that each may receive the things done in the body, according to what has been done; be it good or bad (1 Cor 5:1-10).

The record of the faithful church in the New Testament describes her loving desire to bear fruit for the Lord. Modern contrivances can never match the Church and her giving. The fruit bearing a Christian's example is one which must be turned to as the wholesome example of love and faith. ~ Don Hatch

GREETER ASSIGNMENTS

Sunday, February 22, 2009

Front foyer: Robert & Cathy Taylor; Max Melton

Back foyer: Jamie & Megan Little

Sunday, February 29, 2009

Front foyer: Nancy Pond; Roberta Price

Back foyer: Ilene Ashworth; Carol Swinney

Family News:

MISSION PRINTING

Mission Printing will meet **Sunday** at 4:00 p.m. in the Jr. Auditorium.

MENS' GATHERING/DEVOTIONAL

The **Monday morning** gathering will meet at 6:00 a.m. in the Annex.

SINGING SESSION

The **Sunday afternoon** singing session will meet at 5:15 p.m. in room #116.

LADIES

Ladies' Bible Class will meet in the Annex on Tuesday, **February 24th** at 9:30 a.m.

39'ers

Don't forget to sign up for the annual Teen breakfast scheduled for **Saturday, March 7th** at 8:00 a.m. The sheet is on the round table in the front foyer.

TEEN WORK DAY

Anyone who needs help with work around your home, please notify Darrell Allen, John Mayer, or Ty Harvey as the Teens are planning a work day for **Saturday, April 4th**.

TEEN INFORMATION

We are planning for the **Summer Youth Series**. Encourage your children to plan on attending each session. We will give you dates, places and times as they are available.

Summer Youth Camp at Lake Cisco always invites our youth to attend. Jr. Camp is set for **July 5-9**; Sr. Camp is for **July 19-24**. Plan now to go.

ADDRESS CHANGE

Lance Corporal Cornish, Jeff
9th ESB 3rd MLG Unit 38430
APO AP 96604-8430

WITH SYMPATHY

James Mayer (John's dad) passed away on Friday. Visitation is from 6pm – 8pm this evening (2/16) at the Lloyd James Funeral Home in Tyler; graveside will be at Tyler Memorial Park on Tuesday at 2:00 p.m.

PRAYER CONCERNS

- Grady Fowler** is ill at home with the flu.
- Billie Gilliam** will undergo 3 more treatments to her back before surgery will be scheduled.
- Richard Renfro** is to return from Russia tomorrow (2/17).
- Mary Lou Tibbetts** is in Baylor/Irving, room #413; she may be released today (2/16).
- Dean Webb** is home recovering.
- Terri Bennett** (Marjorie's daughter-in-law) was released & is recuperating at home.
- Zackery McKeller** (Juanita Melton's 6 mo. old great grandson) is scheduled for brain surgery on 2/25 at Cook's in Ft. Worth.

·**Robert Porter** (Marcella's brother) underwent successful knee-replacement surgery & is doing well.

·**Scott Watson** (Jeanene Heilman's friend) has moved back to LifeCare Rehab.

Continue to remember those who are recuperating or suffering with long-term illnesses, including: Fauna Garrett, Billie Gilliam, Don & Judy Hancock, Garldean Latham, Tom Prince, Thomas West, Brad Anderson (Bill Paschall's friend), Nancy Bauer (mother of Scott Watson), Glen Elmore (elderly father of a friend of Garl Latham), Frank Garrett (Fauna's husband), Percy Henry (Hank's brother), Todd Jonas (Charlene Carroll's grandson), Willie Lawson (Shellie Pearce's dad), Mildred Pennington (the Gilliam's sister-in-law), Chelsea Sutton (the Garrison's granddaughter), Crystal Vaughan (Mary Curtis' daughter), Linda Woodruff (the Webb's neighbor), & our shut-ins.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Be sure and mark your calendar -

- February 22: Mission Printing in the Jr. Auditorium at 4:00 p.m.
- February 22: Singing session in room #116 at 5:15 p.m.
- February 24: Ladies' Bible Class at 9:30 a.m. in the Annex
- March 7: Teen/39er breakfast at 8:00 a.m. in the Annex
- April 4: Teen work day
- April 25: Ladies' ½ Day
- July 5-9: Jr. Youth Camp
- July 19-24: Sr. Youth Camp

NURSERY ATTENDANTS

Sunday morning:

- Shellie Pearce

Sunday evening:

- Julie Roses

LORD'S TABLE/MORNING

Front Table

- Mike Batot
- Thomas Rathbun
- James Gilliam
- Brandon Howard
- Brandon Thomason
- Grady Fowler
- Rob Farmer
- Denzil Myers

Rear Table

- JC Ross
- Robert Taylor
- Max Melton
- Keith Vaughn
- Bobby Bowen
- Jeremy Hardegree
- Virgil LaFerney
- Derroll Allen

SUNDAY P.M. PRAYERS

- Robert Ruckman
- Denzil Myers

P.M. SCRIPTURE READING

- Ty Harvey
- Mark 14:32-42

SUNDAY A.M. PRAYERS

- Richard Renfro
- Marvin Brown
- Jerry Baker

A.M. SCRIPTURE READING

- Garl Latham
- John 13:31-35

A.M. SONG LEADER

- Darrell Allen

P.M. SONG LEADER

- Bill Matthews

LORD'S TABLE/EVENING

- Glen Kelly
- Garl Latham

COMMUNION TO SHUT-INS

- Bill Paschall

FOR THE RECORD: WEEK ENDING ATTENDANCE & BUDGET

	<u>Last Week</u>	<u>This Week</u>	<u>YTD Avg.</u>	<u>Goal</u>
Sun. Class	86	96	94	125
A.M. Worship	158	153	156	210
P.M. Worship	85	90	90	112
Wed. Class	89	88	83	110
Ladies Bible Class	24	20	26	35
Contribution	\$5359	\$4906	\$5774	\$5474

MISSIONS

- Charlie & Mary DiPalma - India
- Willie Gley – Ghana/Togo, Africa
- Roland & Rose Mohsen – France
- Gary & Nadya Workman – Ukraine
- Glen & KuinTattersall – Australia
- Oleg & Natasha Yakimenko - Russia
- Wil & Telanda Sadler – Military Missions
- Christ's Haven Children's Home - Keller, TX
- Foster's Home for Children – Stephenille, TX
- Bitragunta Church of Christ, Bitragunta, India
- Ian & Mabel McPherson – Tasmania Australia
- Wayne Jackson – Christian Courier on the Web
- Ted Lingren - Sisophon Bible School – Cambodia
- Mission Printing Worldwide Literature Distribution
- Terry & Pam Laurence – Bear Valley School of Preaching
- Dennis & Beth Johnson - Chennai Teacher Training School – India