

News and Notes

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- Vicki Hightower** - Wife of gospel preacher, Terry Hightower. Stage 4 Cancer.
- David Brown** - Spring, Texas preacher. Serious blood pressure problems and asthma.
- Pam Patrick** - Serious vision and other problems.
- Samuel Otieno** - Magunga preacher student. Fractured leg, but healing.
- Sissy Craig** - Pray for her spiritual and emotional strength.
- Sandy Craig** - Health and other issues.
- Nancy Reed** - Ongoing health problems.
- Charles and Linda Pogue** - Congestive heart failure.
- Nancy Verkist** - Ellensburg, Washington. Suffering from Von Hippel Lindau disease.
- Janice Ruffner** - Pneumonia/ongoing health issues.
- Don Smith** - Faithful brother in Christ persecuted for teaching fellow inmates in an Ohio prison.

FUNERAL - The funeral for Patrick’s father, James Bradford, will be held at the Russell Baptist Church in Greer County, Thursday, Jan. 5, at 2 p.m. with burial in the Russell Cemetery, under the direction of Greer Funeral Home.

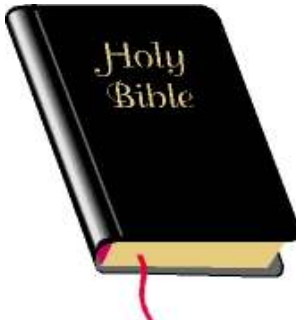
PREACHING JAN. 15 - Patrick will preach at both worship periods on Sunday, Jan. 15. We are thankful for Patrick and Sarah’s safety in travel. They were gone for three weeks to West Virginia to be with his father who passed away.

OUT OF TOWN - Jerry and Sherlene will be gone Sunday morning Jan. 15. They will leave Jan. 11 to visit the Whitlocks in Denison, Texas, then travel to their their daughter’s in Noble, Okla. and attend worship at Lexington Sunday morning. They will be back for afternoon worship with Northeast on the 15th.

KENYA REPORT - Contributing this week to the Kenya Fund was the Parkview church, Odessa, Texas.

ATTENDANCE - Various factors, including illness, travel, and unknown causes, have combined to severely lower our attendance in recent weeks. In fact, by Monday morning, more people had viewed last week’s sermon on You Tube than heard it in person the day before.

<p>Those Who Serve Sunday Morning, Jan. 8, 2017 First Prayer - Patrick King Closing Prayer - Jerry Brewer Communion - Dylan Brewer Offering - Patrick King Sunday Afternoon, Jan. 8, 2017 First Prayer - Earl Reed Closing Prayer - Landry Brewer</p>	<p>Records - Jan. 1 Attendance Bible Class.....10 Morning Worship.....10 Afternoon Worship.....9 Contribution.....\$637.00</p>
<p>Weekly Meeting Times</p>	
<p>Sunday Morning Bible Classes.....9:30 Sunday Morning Worship.....10:30 Sunday Afternoon Worship.....5:00</p>	



Sound Doctrine

“But speak thou the things that become sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1)

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Some Lessons From Beyond The Grave

Jerry C. Brewer

Jesus pulled aside the curtain of eternity, allowing us a glimpse into the next world in the account of the Rich Man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31. That brief look beyond the grave offers some lessons for all men today. Solomon said, “There is no new thing under the sun” (Eccl. 1:9). Every perversion of God’s word was anticipated by God Himself in the Scriptures, and that clearly seen in Jesus’ account of the rich man and Lazarus.

There are a lot of people in our society who believe that death will make everything right with God—that God will give everyone a second chance when they die. But the rich man was offered no comforting promise of a second chance. In fact, when he tried to get relief from his torment, he was refused. He cried to Abraham to, “have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame” (Luke 16:24). But Abraham’s answer offered no second chance for the rich man. In fact, it offered not even a faint glimmer of hope for him. Abraham simply confirmed the man’s hopeless state, saying, “Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented” (Luke 16:25).

Then Abraham told the rich man that none could cross the great gulf that was fixed between paradise and torment (Luke 16:26). No, there will be no second chance after one dies. Judgment will be as death finds us. “It is appointed to man once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27) and the judgment will be according to the deeds done in this body (2 Cor. 5:10). There will be *no* second chance.

Many people also believe that when we die, we lose our identities. But that is also refuted in Jesus’ account in Luke 16. The rich man was still the same person. He had not lost his identity in death. And the rich man lifted up his eyes and *saw Lazarus* in Abraham’s bosom. Lazarus was the same person he had been before he died and the rich man recog-

nized him. He also recognized Abraham and talked with him. Neither Lazarus, Abraham, nor the rich man had lost his identity in death. Had that been so, the rich man would not have recognized either Lazarus or Abraham.

Of his child whose body was yet unburied, the grief stricken David said, “Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me” (2 Sam. 12:23). This statement from the grieving king confirmed that when he should “go to” the child he would be conscious of being in his child’s presence. I will still be me, and you will still be you, after death. Like the rich man, Lazarus, and Abraham, none of us loses his identity when he dies.

The fate of the rich man is also a timely warning to us that this earth’s wealth is not the supreme good. In Matthew 6:33, Jesus taught us to, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” The things to which Jesus referred were the material things necessary to life on earth—food, clothing and shelter.

In our country, we have been blessed beyond measure with all of those things and amid such abundance it is easy to forget their source and look upon them as the sum and substance of our existence. The rich man was abundantly blessed by God with material things and “was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day” (Luke 16:19). But like the rich fool of Luke 12:13-21, this rich man thought his soul could be satisfied with material things and that possessing those things was the meaning of life. He ignored “Moses and the prophets” who wrote, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole of man” (Eccl. 12:13). Material things with which God has blessed us shall perish with the using, and what is not used shall some day be left behind when we take our places in hades with the rich man or Lazarus.

The lives we live today are probationary. This life is our only opportunity to prepare for eternity. There will be no second chances and no opportunities to escape from torment. Jesus Christ died to save us from our sins. In His death, God extended His grace and mercy and now invites all to partake of it. But He forces no one to be saved. The Bible is clear in telling us to believe in God and Christ His Son (Heb. 11:6; John 8:24), to repent of our sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38), confess our faith in Christ (Acts 8:37) and be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38). God has extended His grace in revealing His plan of salvation and now commands all men to repent (Acts 17:30). Let each of us seriously consider these lessons from beyond the grave.

“God Needs To Do More”

Ron Cosby

One of the arguments against belief in the existence of God is to say He doesn’t do enough for the denier to know Him. A young atheist puts his thoughts on paper, saying, “If God exists, why would He hide in this way? Why wouldn’t God just come right out and make it obvious to everyone He exists?” Sometimes this thinking is put into the form of a question such as,

“Why was God so evident in the Bible, and seems so hidden today?” Other deniers are even more specific. To them, it is not enough for God to do more in a general way but, centering their thoughts upon themselves, they think God ought to touch them specifically and directly, saying things like, “Jesus came to the earth once. Why doesn’t He come again and let me see Him?” Remember, God has already demonstrated that this method does not work. He appeared directly to Adam and Eve and they failed.

The desire to see God is not restricted to today or to the hardened of heart. It has been a reoccurring theme for mankind throughout history. In a milder way and without the confrontation attitude of the denier, Zacchaeus “sought to see Jesus” (Luke 19:3). Likewise, Philip expressed his deep but faulty desire to see the Father, saying, “Lord, show us the Father” (John 14:8). Even in the face of amazing eyewitness evidence, Thomas claimed for himself the need to see with his own eyes and touch with his own hands the resurrected Christ (John 20:25). Neither Philip nor Thomas realized that he was an integral part of God’s plan to reveal Himself and salvation unto mankind.

These good men were not the only ones to wonder about God’s methods. Students remember the rich man who refused to help the poor. He suggested that God ought to send the dead “to my father’s house” to “testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.” God answered him, “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.” But the rich man was not satisfied with God’s method. He said, “Nay, father Abraham: but if one go to them from the dead, they will repent.” However, God’s solution still stands today, “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead” (Luke 16:27-31).

Pharisees of Jesus’ day expressed a few demands for God to fulfill. “Teacher, we would see a sign from thee” (Matt. 12:38). And, the Pharisees mockingly shout, “if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross” (Matt. 27:40). God’s answer for both demands was the same. Instead of giving them a sign on the spot, He powerfully raised Jesus from the dead. What a magnificent, and final, sign that is amazing in itself! However, it is even more amazing when students consider the fact that Jesus predicted His resurrection, including the detail of how long He would be in the grave (Matt. 12:39-40). Instead of Jesus coming down from the accursed tree, He arose victoriously from its effects.

Think about what each of these is demanding. Each must personally see God be born, live, be crucified, be buried, and be raised before they agree that God exists. These folks are demanding the impossible. To fulfill these demands for this mindset, God would need, from the beginning of time itself, to be born, live for thirty years, be crucified, and be raised from the dead every thirty years. He would have to do this repeatedly for every country and in every city and in every town. This demand calls for Jesus to live and be crucified over five thousand times every thirty years.

Let’s look at God’s way...well...read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. What a magnificent report! “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?” (Rom. 11:33-34).