

Harmony Newsletter

Web Site: www.harmoniypbchurch.org

HARMONY PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

P.O. Box 351, Donaldson, AR 71941

Pastor: Neil M. Phelan, JR

Phone: 501-337-6456

Email: phelanneil@sbcglobal.net

"Come thou with us, and we will do thee good..."-Numbers 10:29

March 2013

THE FREE THINKER COMES HOME

"And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spar, and I perish with hunger!"- Luke 15:17

The parable of 'The Prodigal Son' is an ageless classic. As every parable goes, it has two meanings: it has a real to life meaning that everyone can identify with. Then it has the spiritual application that God's people are to apply to their own life.

Of course, the spiritual application concerns *forgiveness*. It was directed at the Pharisees who felt they needed no repentance-for they never sinned. It was to demonstrate just how far God's people can err and how the church should receive them back after they repent.

The reason the parable is so loved is because the story is so true to life. Jesus depicts the folly of youth which include: bad choices- bad friends- wanting to get away from parents- wanting freedom-wanting material things at once-wanting to get as far from restrictions as possible-wasting it all on the wrong kind of life- and finally realizing what had happened- being very blessed and not knowing it. That is when the prodigal "came to himself."

That is my favorite verse in the whole story because it is the moment of change- the time of awakening- the realization of being duped by his friends and the world- the moment of regret- a remembrance of a better place- a realization of what he had been given- what he had squandered- and the time of looking back to where he had come from-who he really was: "he came to himself."

There is also a dual fatherhood depicted in the story- an earthly father that loved the boy and restored him back to his original place in the family, and our heavenly Father that providentially gives us many blessings that we sometimes take for granted, who equally forgives and restores.

Yes, this is a common story that we all know about. It is about the folly of youth because this happens all the time. It happens so much that we would think that youth would catch on. But they can't because they always think they know more than their parents and the church. Satan knows it, the world knows it, even the politicians know it. Yes, they have been made to think they are free thinkers but their thinking was really incarcerated by emotional nuances that oppose truth. Some escape. Yes, little by little, in the pig-pen they start to see what has really happened. It is then, that by God's grace, the free thinker finds truth, and also finds their way home. How? They started to really think. -NMP

10 Habits that keep marriages strong

I was recently sitting in a doctor's office when I came across this article in a magazine. I thought they were pretty good so I will share them with you.

1. Not trying to change one another. After all, that is the person you married. Hair in the sink or being laid back is what attracted you in the first place. You probably couldn't get along with a neat freak.

2. Vocalizing your appreciation. We all appreciate things in the one we love. We should tell them.

3. Framing your demands as favors. Sometimes how we ask for something makes all the difference. Rather than demanding, why not ask it as a favor? And be ready for a denial from time to time. It may not always work, but if you have the right attitude, it will make your marriage a happier place. You can always ask again.

4. Focusing on the positive. If you spend your time focusing on your spouse's faults, you may forget your own. Focusing on negative things leads to a depressing day. Why not play on a brighter note. Focus in on the positive things of your relationship. That's the place to build.

5. Taking trips down memory lane-Nothing will keep your love alive more than reliving your first moments together. Go back to your favorite places, songs, experiences and the things you shared when you fell in love. Talk of them often.

6. Never siding with the enemy. Whenever possible, always be in your spouse's court. To take the side of the enemy is likened to a betrayal in a relationship. We all need someone we can count on.

7. Not getting too comfortable. When we get comfortable we let our guard down. We say things we would not say to other people. We don't comb our hair, brush our teeth, or act as if we want to impress our spouse. Perhaps that is what they think.

8. Having rituals of connections. There are plenty of things that separate our time in today's fast-paced society. Negate all of that by having daily rituals that make you spend time together. A walk, folding clothes or preparing a meal are everyday events that can bring people together to share their day.

9. Knowing your partner's needs and calls for attention. Sometimes our spouses are screaming for help and we can't hear them because we are too wrapped up in our jobs, our hobbies, friends or self. Sometimes it is difficult to communicate this need. Be attentive and know when your spouse needs you.

10. Doing little things-Little things make big differences. Be willing to listen-be there when they need you-give a hug- buy them a gift -even a card.

Always remember, even in healthy relationships, you don't have to feel in love all the time.

WHAT IS TRUTH?

"Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all."-John 18:38

Though Pilate didn't believe there was such a thing as truth, he uttered a *true* statement: Jesus had no fault. What we have here is an *oxymoron*. There is no such thing as truth, but it is true that this man has no fault –"at all!" This is a common fault in humanity. People will say that there is no absolute truth, but they will scream their opinions and their world-views all the day long in the newspapers, movies, magazines, television shows, music, and every other venue known to man till they get their way. But how can they be so dogmatic? There is no absolute truth! Or is there?

You may take every philosophical argument that the greatest minds have come up with to argue the point, yet there is one fact that haunts those who are like Pilot. It is simply this- If there is a God in heaven that is sinless, "without fault", then there is such a thing as absolute truth- and He is the One that determines it. If He is not there, then Pilot is right, there is no truth in any regard. But here is Pilot's problem and the problem of those that say there is no absolute truth: if He is not there, then there is nothing wrong with murder, rape, child abuse, or even being mean to animals. That is their enigma. There is no in-between. Either there is a God who is sovereign, Holy, Just, whose word is infallible, whose truth is good for us all individually and for humanity as a whole. Or we should all be able to do anything we want to do without reprobation. Which is true or "What is truth?"-NMP

SELF TEST- HOW FAITHFUL ARE YOU?

Self-tests are very popular today. It seems they have one for almost every aspect of life. There is a self-test to help college students choose a major. There is a self-test to determine how positive we are - how depressed we are- how sensitive we are- how secure we are- if we are afraid of things- if we have the right amount of self-esteem-and to determine if we are ready to take a final exam. But what about the *most important* aspect of our life, our faithfulness to Christ, His church, and His people?

Below you will find a self-help test that will help you take a personal inventory of your faith. These are 20 fundamental areas of Christianity that we all should be interested in if we want a spiritual church and a close walk with Christ. I am sure our Lord is interested in every one of them. Just circle the answer that applies to your faithfulness in the areas provided then add up your score.

Answer accordingly:

1. **Never**
2. **Sometimes**
3. **Most of the time**
4. **All the time**

- 1) I invite People to Church 1 2 3 4
- 2) I introduce myself to visitors 1 2 3 4
- 3) My giving is consistent 1 2 3 4
- 4) My giving is appropriate 1 2 3 4
- 5) My Sunday attendance is faithful 1 2 3 4 (#/Mo)
- 6) I am on time for singing 1 2 3 4
- 7) I pray every day 1 2 3 4
- 8) I minister to others 1 2 3 4
- 9) I read my Bible daily 1 2 3 4
- 10) I share my belief with others 1 2 3 4
- 11) I participate in meals & other fellowships 1 2 3 4
- 12) I attend special meetings 1 2 3 4
- 13) I apply messages to myself 1 2 3 4
- 14) Willing to make Christ honoring changes 1 2 3 4
- 15) I forgive others 1 2 3 4
- 16) I encourage others 1 2 3 4
- 17) I can give scripture for what I believe 1 2 3 4
- 18) I practice what I believe 1 2 3 4
- 19) I am an attentive listener 1 2 3 4
- 20) I know and encourage the young people 1 2 3 4

Your Total Score: _____

72 and above: Faithful

60-72: Faithful most of the time

40-60: Faithful some of the time

Below 40- ???

You may judge yourself on the self-test for that is what they are designed for...self-improvement. Of course, those in the nursing home, those providentially hindered, and those with health issues must take their own personal circumstances into account.

Announcements

- ✓ 1st Sunday: Brother Dan Samons will be speaking
- ✓ 3rd Sunday singing at the Crossing
- ✓ 2nd weekend in April is the time of our annual meeting. It will begin on Friday night, April 12th resume Saturday afternoon at 3:00 with supper and services that night. Communion and feet washing services will be Sunday afternoon after lunch. Elder Dan Hall has promised to be with us. Elder Hall is a wonderful minister. I was with him a lot in the Philippines. Let's begin to pray for this meeting.
- ✓ Clean up day for annual meeting: Saturday, April 13th. Starts between 8:30 and 9 am. Soup and sandwiches.
- ✓ March 10th is the beginning of Daylight Savings Time. Set your clocks forward one hour on Saturday night.
- ✓ Easter Sunday is March 31st
- ✓ Appointments for Elder Randal Cagle: Macedonia Church on March 16th. Supper at 5:30 services following and Sunday morning. Then at Point Remove at Russellville on Wednesday night, March 20th at 6:30.
- ✓ There's a new baby in the house! Wes and Sara Boyce have a new baby boy, Cooper Drake, Born March 4th, at 12:30 P.M.
- ✓ Shower for Aubrey Harvey March 24th. Time TBA.

Prayer Requests

- Point Remove Church
- Murry Draper's Father
- Robin Phelan family
- Ken Whitley's Father