

Ministers:
the congregation

Kenny Chumbley
217.493.8905

Sunday:
8:00 AM: WGCY
9:00 AM: Worship

Wednesday:
6:30 PM: Bible Study

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This Past Week:
Worship—21
Wednesday—9

For meditation:
Ecclesiastes 8.4–7
List every statement
Solomon makes
pertaining to our
relationship with
the king (gov't.).

Radio program:
WGCY FM, 106.3
Sundays at 8 AM

The significance of “signs,”² Exodus 4

The first sign God gave Moses before he appeared in Pharaoh’s court involved his rod turning into a snake.

1. A shepherd’s rod/staff served as a support for walking, a weapon for defense, a tool for working the sheep. A staff equipped a shepherd for his work—“Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me” (Ps. 23.4), and miracles equipped a man for the work God had giving him.
2. The fact that the rod became a serpent and not, say, a bunny rabbit, takes us back to Genesis 3 and suggests that miracles would play an important role in fighting the good fight against the work of the devil. Each plague brought on Egypt was an attack against the pantheon of Egyptian gods. The plagues were a key factor in paving the way for the Hebrews to leave Egypt (Heb. 11.27).
3. Miracles carried evidential power. They were concrete proof that the man endowed with supernatural ability came with divine authority (Acts 3.6).
4. Some see a historical significance to this first sign: the rod/the rod thrown on the ground and becoming a snake/the snake becoming a rod again, paralleling the call of Abraham and the patriarchs to the Promised Land/the family of Jacob going to Egypt and into slavery/the Israelites leaving Egypt and returning to the Promised Land.
5. The typical significance of the serpent involved in man’s curse, and Christ becoming a curse for us is worth meditating upon (Jn. 3.14), wherein the curse of sin becomes the antidote for sin (Gen. 3.15).

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Gibson City church of Christ

Highway 47 South, Gibson City, IL

How to handle feelings of guilt

We’ll never have the peace that passes understanding until we’re assured of absolute peace with God. When our relationship with Him is in doubt, guilt comes in and does a number on us. By guilt we perceive the wrath of God, which can trigger shame and the fear that makes life a living hell (1 Jn. 4.18). To handle guilt wrongly means misery and pain, which is not what God wants for His children.

1 John 3.19–20 speaks to this problem by showing that guilt is dealt with by *loving our brother* and *listening to God*.

LOVING OUR BROTHER

1 John 3.16–19—our heart is assured when we love in deed and in truth. “Assure” means to be persuaded, have confidence, be tranquilized (Strong’s). When the devil puts you under a cloud of vague, shadowy guilt, do a loving deed for another! This will restore peace to you more quickly than a prescription for valium or Xanax. Active love is one of the best ways to silence the devil’s accusations against us.

LISTENING TO GOD

1 John 3.20—the devil likes to bludgeon us with our sins, which results in “our heart condemning us.” At such times, are we going to believe the testimony of our feelings or the credibility of God—the God who knows the worst about us, yet offers us rest if we will come to Him (Matt. 11.29)? To have peace, we must believe God more than we believe the devil or ourself.

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Sermon: Hebrews 11.30

The walls came tumbling down

Jesus saw Himself as the beloved Son

Still having one son, his beloved . . .

Mark 12.6

A. B. Bruce noted that in some of Christ's parables, things occur that never happen ordinarily. I've never heard of an employer paying a man who worked one hour the same amount as a man who worked all day. I've never heard of bridesmaids being as silly and negligent as five were in one of our Lord's stories. Nor have I heard of sharecroppers dealing with the owner of the land the way the vinedressers do in Mark 12.1–9. Why, then, did Jesus put people in His parables who violate reason and common sense?

For hyperbole. The best way to illustrate absurdity is by being absurd. In Mark 12, the last act of the drama has begun; the hatred of the Jews for Jesus has reached the boiling point. In the parable of the vinedressers (which answers the ancient question, "Will a man rob God?"), Christ uses irrationality to emphasize the insanity of murdering the *beloved Son of God*.

In regard to men, Jesus saw Himself as *the Son of Man*. But His consciousness Godward was that He was the pleasing, well-beloved Son of the Father. There's a sense in which the term "son of God" applies to angels (Job 1.6) and men (Gen. 6.2, Matt. 6.9), but there was a uniqueness in Christ's relationship to God that has no parallel—"having *one son*." As a lawgiver, Moses had a great calling and achieved worthy things, but he was only a servant in contrast to Him who was the Son (Heb. 3.5,6). "These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (Jn. 20.31). "No one knows the Son except the Father, nor does anyone know the Father except the Son" (Matt. 11.27). The angels know a little of God; the patriarchs knew a little of God; the prophets knew a little of God, but only the Son knew the Father absolutely and perfectly. Note the distinction in pronouns Jesus maintained in this statement to the apostles: "I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God" (Jn. 20.17). In contrast to everyone else, Jesus was singularly the well-pleasing, beloved Son of God.

And there was perfect agreement between Jesus and His Father: "I must be about My Father's business . . . I do always those things that please Him . . . I have finished the work which You have given Me to do." Listen, ***Christ is God!*** To not believe this is to be cut off from the only true and living God. Theists, Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, et al., listen up!

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Why do you believe what you believe?

How easily we convince ourselves that what we believe is "Christian," when, in fact, we hardly ever open a Bible to learn what Christ thought and was really like.

I don't mean to overstate the case, but my suspicion is that most of our beliefs trace back before our earliest memories to when we heard our parents talk and watched how they lived.

Then, if we "grew up in the church," we were exposed to sermons and classes on Sundays and maybe Wednesdays that tweaked the beliefs we inherited from our parents.

Then came school, maybe college, where we further refined our beliefs by listening to professors and reading books they assigned for their course.

And, of course, just living life can greatly reformulate our beliefs, perspective, and worldview in all sorts of ways.

During the time we're formulating a philosophy of life, a Bible was probably within arm's reach. But how often did we pick it up, open it, read it, and think independently about what we were reading? Or were we mainly trying to make the Bible line up with the notions of our parents, church, schooling, etc.?

This doesn't mean everything we learned along the way is wrong. Much, maybe most, of what we learned could be true—but the problem is, we acquired it secondhand.

During Josiah's renovation of the Temple (1 Kgs. 22), a copy of "the Book of the Law" was found. As incredible as it seems, apparently no priest, Levite, Jew, or the king (Deut. 17.18) had a copy of the OT. When a copy was found in the clutter of the Temple, it was read to the king (v 10). At the conclusion of the reading, he was in anguish (v 11) when he realized how sinful he and his people were (v 13). Hearing the Bible firsthand left an impact on Josiah that his secondhand religion had not given him.

If we're a Christian, shouldn't our beliefs come directly from the word of God and the life of Christ rather secondhand from our parents, preacher, teachers, or any one else?

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