

THE FLORAL HEIGHTS INFORMER

www.floralheightschurchofchrist.org

Floral Heights
Church of Christ
1814 Buchanan
Wichita Falls, Texas
76309
(940) 322 - 1650

15 March 2009
VOLUME 9; ISSUE 11

In This Issue:

The Altruistic Christian 1-2
Local News 2
Sermon Outline 3
Clips from Psalms 4

Our Elders:

Mike Chancellor
(322 – 6374)

Tom Witherspoon
(923-6479)

Deacons:

Joe Cronin

Jim Hall

David Witherspoon

Preacher:

John C. Robertson

The Altruistic Christian

Our Bibles identify God's desired character trait of His saints toward other saints. Christians are commanded to be altruistic towards their fellow man. To achieve this objective Christians must be selfless and in tune to others needs. While the need to be comforted, loved, and cared for appears to some to be a weak trait it is none-the-less a large part of our created psychological makeup.

Man's Greatest Needs

Pure religion is defined by James as caring for other's needs and keeping oneself unspotted from the world (James 1:27). It may be said that man's greatest needs in this life are to be forgiven of sins (Col. 2:12-13) and loved (I Pet. 1:22). The book of Job illustrates this very point. Job was a man afflicted by Satan with the loss of his children, property, friends, and to all intense and purpose, his wife (see Job 19 all). Job's friends came to him in his hour of need to "comfort him" (Job 2:11). Job admits that he needs their comfort (Job 10:18-22). Their methods of comforting Job; however, did nothing but make his predicament worse (see Job 21:34). Job concludes that his three friends are "miserable comforters" (Job 16:1-2) because they falsely accuse him of being a sinner and consequentially suffering this legendary experience at the hand of God. While the three friends were wrong about Job's suffering their instructions delivered to Job, in relation to his supposed sin, illustrate man's great need to be forgiven (see Job 22:21-23).

The Bible often uses the Greek word "agape" to identify man's great needs. *Agape* is defined as "love, generosity, kindly concern, devotedness" (Moulton 2). Our English dictionaries define Love as "a strong affection (fond or tender feeling toward) for or attachment to another person based on regard or shared experiences or interests" (AHD 744). This word closely mirrors the meaning of altruism (i.e., "Concern for the welfare of others, selflessness" [AHD 99]). A selfless spirit defined the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus gave himself upon the cross so that all of humanity would have the opportunity of being forgiven of their sins and demanded the same spirit in His disciples (see John 15:12-14). Selflessness is identified by the Apostle Paul at Philippians 2:1-3 where he concludes that Christians are to "count others better than himself."

God's Desire and Provisions to Comfort Man

The Lord cares about man's physical and spiritual well being. Jesus illustrated God's concern for man's spiritual needs at Matt. 9:36. Matthew records, "But when he (Jesus) saw the multitudes, he was moved with

Local News:

Welcome to all our visitors:

We pray that you will be edified by our service and come back at your every opportunity.

Last Sunday we rejoiced over the baptisms of **Crystal and Brandon Brewer and Gary McDonald**. We also greatly rejoiced over the restoration of **Cindy Gray**. Let us get to know and help our new members grow in spirit and truth!

Please keep the following members in your prayers:

Keep **Nell Hulsey** in your prayers as she heals from her recent mastectomy.

Nina Gray saw the neuro-ophthalmologist this past Thursday but did not receive any better news. She will be visiting another eye doctor in Fort Worth March 24th for a final word on whether to have surgery or not. Right now she is leaning on not having it.

Cindy Gray continues to struggle with a damaged nerve in her shoulder. She is currently treating it with rest and medicines; however, she may be looking at future surgery.

Pam Husak has had a set back with the wound that she has battled for a lengthy amount of time. Please continue to keep her in your prayers.

Women's Bible Study:

The next Bible class will be Friday March 27th at 12:30 PM. The class meets at the church building with Kasey Robertson doing the teaching.

Continue to pray for our shut-ins:

Stella Davidson
696-1030 (Home)
Calvin York
692-0489 (Home).

compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd.” Again, Jesus illustrated God’s concern for man’s physical needs at Matthew 6:25-33). The Apostle Peter said that the Lord does “*not wish that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*” (II Pet. 3:9). God has promised man salvation and He stands ready to help man in every way (Heb. 2:18). Let us all, “*rejoice in the hope of the glory of God*” (Rom. 5:1-6).

Man's Part in Obtaining His Needs

All of humanity has or will suffer calamity in this life (see James 1:2ff; I Pet. 1:6ff). Seeing that God has “*appointed*” (I Thess. 3:1-4) and “*granted*” (Phil. 1:29) man the right of suffering it stands to reason that comforting one another during difficult days is the right thing to do. This principle is taught by Jesus in what is commonly referred to as the “golden rule.” The Lord said, “*All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets*” (Matt. 7:12). An April 1997 article in the “New Internationalist” titled, “Born to be good?” explores the idea of Moral actions of empathy being “automatic and instinctive.” The article explains empathy by the fact that it finds itself naturally attached to children who cry when witnessing others in distress. God has created man to be good, love, and have care for people. We fail our divinely ordained nature when we ignore our own spiritual and physical needs and the needs of others.

A lawyer once asked Jesus what the “*great commandment in the law*” was. Jesus replied by quoting to him from Deut. 6:5 regarding loving God with all your heart and mind. The Lord then said that a second great command is to “*love our neighbor as thyself*” (quoted from Lev. 19:18) (cf. Matt. 22:34-40). When Christians exercise a selfless spirit of care, concern, and regard for others they achieve their part of man’s great need to be loved and cared for (Col. 3:12). When the Christian gives heed to God’s instructions their greatest need to be forgiven will be taken care of as well (Acts 2:38).

Let us comfort and encourage one another

We have seen that man’s greatest needs are to be forgiven of sins and to be comforted in times of physical affliction. Our **nature** is truly altruistic (Rom. 2:13-14). When we do not illustrate a care and concern for man’s spiritual and physical well being we thereby sin against God’s divinely ordained plan for us (I Jn. 3:17; 4:17-19). “Crucially, though, neither strong feelings of empathy nor high moral principles guarantee that people will behave well. There is often a gap between moral beliefs and moral action- between how people think and hope they would behave in a situation and how they actually do behave” (ibid.). Sometimes we are selfish rather than being selfless. The Apostle Paul instructs us saying, “*Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another*” (Rom. 12:9-10). Our greatest tool for encouraging, motivating others to be faithful, illustrating a concern for my fellow man’s physical needs, and being selfless is the word of God and its promises (see I Thess. 4:13-18).

The Altruistic Christian

Our Bibles identify God's desired character trait of His saints toward other saints. Christians are commanded to be altruistic towards their fellow man. To achieve this objective Christians must be selfless and in tune to others needs. While the need to be comforted, loved, and cared for appears to some to be a weak trait it is none-the-less a large part of our created psychological makeup. This lesson shall examine Man's greatest needs, God's desire to meet those intrinsic needs, man's part in achieving these needs, and practical applications.

I. Man's Greatest Needs:

- A. Man's need to be cared for and to keep oneself unspotted from the world (James 1:27).
- B. The Book of Job is a case study for the above point.

II. God's Desire and Provisions to Comfort Man:

- A. Jesus illustrates his concern for man's spiritual (Matt. 9:36) and physical needs (Matt. 6:25ff).
- B. All Christians ought to rejoice (Rom. 5:1-6).

III. Man's Part in Obtaining Forgiveness and Comfort:

- A. Man's intrinsic nature to be good and care for others (see Rom. 2:13-14 and article)
- B. We must believe and obey (Jn. 3:16, 36).
- C. We must be selfless (Matt. 22:34-40; Phil. 2:1-3)
- D. We must express empathy for our fellow man (Matt. 7:12).

IV. Practical Application:

- A. God's divinely ordained plan for man is to be spiritually and physically concerned about not only ourselves but others (see I Jn. 3:17; 4:17-19).
- B. Why is it that we do not always prove ourselves altruistic toward others?
- C. The Kitty Genovese Story.
- D. Our problems often center in the area of, "Others are doing it" or "Let others do it" (Matthew 25:31-46).

Conclusion:

Man is often stuck in a vacuum of self pity. We have the tendency, at times, to think only of ourselves. Our self pity may go so far as individuals using their own likes and dislikes as the standard by which others are judged. We find ourselves locked in our own world of problems and hardships. We cannot possibly help others in their time of need because we see that our own needs exceed everyone else's. We become selfish, shortsighted, bitter, and jealous. The word of God; however, cuts through our selfishness and leaves us with shame because we know that we should do better. Let the wicked be identified as those under the title "bystander effect" yet let the Godly practice pure and undefiled religion!

