

TRIUMPH

“Do you know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it” (1 Cor. 9:24)

Taking Personal Responsibility (2)

Gabriel Rodriguez

Inside This Issue:

Life or Death (4)

Shepherd's Corner:

“Never A Man Spake Like This Man” (Jn. 7:46)

Life is filled with choices. When we choose we are deciding for ourselves what direction we want to take in life. This means (ultimately) that we're responsible for what befalls us in life (i.e., health, marriage, etc). Therefore, to blame others or circumstances for misfortunes or sinful conduct is inappropriate.

Returning to Ezekiel 18 from last week's study, let's now look at verses 21-32 to help us understand the aforementioned thought. God makes it very clear that wickedness, just as righteousness, is a personal decision one makes. He says in verse 21: “*But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.*” Consider carefully these words. God notes that sinful conduct, as well as righteous conduct, is due to one's choice. Therefore, sin and righteousness are not thrust upon us, rather as conscious and free moral agents, we are responsible for being wicked and/or righteous. This is why a wicked person has the potential to change and seek after righteousness and live (vs. 23,27-28), and a righteous person has the

potential to turn away from righteousness and commit iniquity (vs. 24,26).

Both, wicked and righteous acts, are **deliberate actions** of men. In other words, no one just stumbles or accidentally engages in either/or, rather **through thoughtful consideration**, choices are made and actions committed. Therefore, everything we do is because we allowed it. From our own mental faculties we make the decision to be moral or immoral. If the decision to be immoral is chosen, is this the end of the road for this person? No. God said, “*Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel*” (vss. 30-31). But if we reject the wisdom of God and choose to follow our own path in life, **stern consequences follow that have long lasting effects for our future**. May we continue to calculate every step we take and make sure decisions we make are in accordance with the will of God. May God be praised!

Church News and Announcements

CONGREGATION

The Ladies' Bible Class and Men's Training Class is today at 4:00 pm. The ladies will be covering lesson 2 in the book, Seasoning Your Words.

The men are studying the Minor Prophets.

The Men's Dinner will be on March 24 (this Tuesday) and the Ladies' Dinner will be on March 26 (this Thursday). There are sign-ups in the foyer.

Our congregational home devotional will be on April 4th and will take place (*tentatively*) at Dellview Park (Basswood Dr and Barbet Dr) at 11:00 pm. The menu is outdoor potluck food. We'll also be having an Egg Hunt for our kids. Please come out and support our efforts.

YOUTH

Our next youth devotional will be hosted by the Baltierra's on March 27th at 7:00 pm. All our youth are encouraged to attend.

YOUNG ADULT

Our next young adult devotional is scheduled for April 24. Time and location to be announced later.

AREA NEWS

The Galena Park church of Christ is hosting a youth meeting/camping trip, April 25-26, for age groups 12-22 at Palmetto State Park. Brother Gabriel Rodriguez will be speaking on the topic: "Going Against the Tide." If anyone is interested in attending, please see Bro. Rodriguez. More information is in the foyer.

Check the bulletin board for area wide meetings and Biblical classes.

Life or Death (4)

So what did Christ come to do for us? While the Scripture says that Christ bore our sins (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 9:28; 1 Pet. 2:24), we're also told that we must save ourselves (Acts 2:40; Phil. 2:12; Rev. 22:12-14). So how do these two thoughts correlate with each other? This is where great perspicuity is needed.

There needs to be a distinction made between personal responsibility and Christ's actions. Also, symbolism and figurative language must be identified and understood. Let's take this slow and methodical so no misunderstanding occurs.

The creation of man was God's highest achievement, being made in His own image (Gen. 1:26). And as such, man was given the tools necessary to conquer and dominate life (Gen. 2:15-18; 4:7; 2 Pet. 1:3). God was so confident in man's spiritual ability that he said that man was made upright (Eccl. 7:29) and could defeat any temptation (1 Cor. 10:13). We see moments of this spiritual brilliance in the examples of Seth, Enoch, Noah, Job, Abraham, Jacob, and David. But we also see moments of disappointment with many of these same individuals. So what did these mean? It didn't mean that man was incapable of sustaining himself in righteous conduct, rather he allowed himself (i.e. *personal responsibility/choice*) to deviate from the path of God (Deut. 30:15-19; Josh. 24:15). What results during these times are minds (leading to actions) that become "*enemies*" of God (Col. 1:21; Jas. 4:4). When this occurs, the mind has been

compromised with pleasure and bad habits, that it is often rendered comatose in sin and wickedness (Eph. 4:17-19), and in need of resuscitation; new life and a new perspective are needed to revive the mind (cf. Rom. 7:5-9; 8:1-15).

The problem with "*dying in sin*" is sin (i.e., our mental state) convinces us that we're unworthy and incapable of living for God, but as we've noted initially, humans were God's greatest creation and He fortified them well for the battle of life. But somewhere down the stream of time, we began to lose mental focus and became inundated with negativity and pessimism, spouting our inability of defeating the woes of life. Solomon said, "*As a man thinks, so is he...*" (Pr. 23:7).

So, what has been hijacked by sin? Our mind! (2 Tim. 2:26) The state of sin convinces us that we're unworthy and we'll never conquer our evil habits of mind and action (cf. Phil. 3:12-14). But interestingly, we see many "*symbolic*" accounts in the Old Testaments which showcased righteousness defeating sin (i.e., David and Goliath, Ezra and Mordecai); this meant that sin was no match for our resolve to do what was right (1 Cor. 10:13). But the Old Testament ended with a despairing look of wicked Israel (Malachi). But this where Christ enters the picture to showcase a life that dominated sin and wickedness! A life which would serve as our example and encouragement, that we as well could do likewise. May God be praised! **GR**

WHAT SAITH THE LORD?

Nearly two thousand years ago an important question was raised before the Apostles after they had delivered the good news of Jesus's life, death, burial, and resurrection (Acts 2:21-36). The hearer's conscience were pricked of sinful conduct (2 Cor. 7: 10-11) and asked: "*Men and brethren, what shall we do* (in order to be saved)? (Acts 2:37). Without hesitation, Peter elevated his voice and proclaimed: "*Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 2:38).

Upon hearing the words of Peter, the people obeyed. This demonstrated their belief in Christ (Jn. 8:24). Hence, they repented of sin and confessed allegiance to the name of Christ (Matt. 10:32-33). Afterwards, the people were baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:41, cf. Mrk. 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21).

The people's submission to the words of salvation granted them a relationship with God the Father by accessing citizenship into the church of Christ (Acts 2:47, cf. Matt. 16:18; Mrk. 9:1; Acts. 2:1-4). As a member of Christ's body (Acts 8:4) the people were then encouraged to live faithful unto death by conquering sin in their lives (Rev. 2:10; Rom. 6: 4-12; 2 Tim. 4: 6-8). We then await for the coming day in which all men shall be judged the word of God (Jn 12:48; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Cor. 5:10). Will we be ready?

SHEPHERD'S CORNER

"Never Man Spake Like This Man" (Jn. 7:46).

Because of the impact which Jesus had in His teaching, the Pharisees and chief priests sent officers to take Him (Jno. 7:32). When these officers returned without him, they were questioned, "Why have ye not brought him?" And the reply was, "Never man spake like this man" (Jno. 7:46). This ended that meeting! But they had admitted that Jesus was no ordinary teacher! When Jesus taught, "the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Mt. 7:28-29). Spies from the Pharisees and Herodians sought to ensnare Him; but led off by stating a well-known truth: "Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth" (Mk. 12:13-14). Reluctantly, they had to admit His purity and honesty, even while trying to trap Him! But Jesus was able to read their minds, and detect their deceptiveness (Lk. 20:19-16), and thus prevented their devious plot against Him!

"That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:12-13).

Bro. Wayne Holmes

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

BISHOPS/SHEPHERDS/ELDERS

(1 Tim. 3: 1-6)

Brother Elwyn Hipp (830) 510-6311,
Brother Wayne Holmes (210) 696-8597

DEACON

(Acts 6: 1-5; 1
Tim. 3: 7-12)

Brother Raul Baltierra
(210) 843-9730

GOSPEL PREACHER

(1 Cor. 9:1-16; 1 Tim.
4:6; 2 Tim. 4: 2-5)

Brother Gabriel Rodriguez
(210)315-4453



March 22

AM WORSHIP

Announcements: *S. Hernandez*
 Opening Prayer: *W. Holmes*
 Song Leader: *A. Maldonado*
 Lord's Supper: *E. Lerma; G. Rodriguez; M. Gibson; S. McCardell*

Scripture: *Jn. 19:17-22*
 Sermon: *G. Rodriguez*
 Benediction: *J. Cardenas*

PM WORSHIP

Announcements: *S. Hernandez*
 Opening Prayer: *B. Dorries*
 Song Leader: *G. Rodriguez*
 Lord's Supper: *E. Hipp; A. Maldonado*

Sermon: *Samuel Rameriz*
 Benediction: *Z. Watkins*

After Greeter: *G & D Gribble*
 Greeter/Usher: *E. Hipp*
 AV Duty: *J. Guillen*
 Elder in charge: *E. Hipp*
 Parking Lot Attendant: *AM, J. Mora; PM, J. Mora*

REMEMBERING OUR BELOVED

(by writing, calling, and praying)

Wayne Holmes
 Juanita Mahan
 Richard Rodriguez
 Rina White
 Argelia (Janie's mother)
 Joe Guillen
 Sarah Cannon
 Roberto Garcia
 Lorenza Bejarano
 Olga (Joe's mother-in-law)
 Anthony Harris Sr
 Ina Dial
 David Sudhoff
 Elijah Sudhoff
 Roy Guajardo (battling Parkinsons)
 Zeke Watkins
 Carolyn Harris
 Bill Dorries' sister-in-law (Rose)
 Gerri Mayces (medical issues)
 Rose Scott (grandmother of Clay and Wes Bond)

BATTLING CANCER:

Barbara Oakes	Johna Dorries
Edna Wilks	Abigail Reyes
Lydia Cowan	George Jackson
Briana Nieves	Margie Hargrove
Sonny Cary	Mary Purkey
Elwyn Hipp	Graciola Anderson

SHUT-INS:

Dorothy Harper
 Mary Louese Hughes
 Dazel Ball
 Mildred Geest

TRAVELING:

A. Jacob; Mayces

DEPLOYED:

James Braun (Nephew of Michael) (Navy).

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES MARCH

Organizing Monthly Luncheon:
Mora

Preparing Lord's Supper:
Holmes

Auditorium Service Duties:
Mora

Wash baptismal garments; clean cry room
Open

Brother in charge of services:
R. Baltierra

AM Theme:
 Contend Earnestly For The Faith
 PM Theme:
 Setting The church In Order

AM Sermon:
Brute Beasts (2)

PM Sermon:
Guest Speaker: Samuel Rameriz

WEDNESDAY NIGHT DEVOTIONAL

March 25: J. Guillen
 April 1: R. Baltierra Jr.
 April 8: T. Mayces

FOR THE RECORD

MARCH 15

Attendance:

Sunday Bible Study	39
Sunday AM Worship	70
Sunday PM Worship	40
Wednesday Bible Study	38
Budget/Offering:	\$2,450.00/ \$4,293.92

Weekly Bible Readers:
 15 out of 24 (Adult Bible class)

SHENANDOAH CHURCH OF CHRIST

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 (210) 696-5532
 Fax: (210) 696-5181

Church email Address:
shenandoah@shenandoahcofc.org

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES:

Sunday: Bible Study at 9:30 am; Worship at 10:30 am;
 Worship at 5:00 pm.
 Wednesday: Bible Study at 7:00 pm