

So...What's New?

There are only four full days left in this year. As most everyone will say, so say I: **Happy New Year!** I would like for us to reflect upon some **new** things in this article. First, we have the privilege to be partakers of a **new** covenant which Jesus established by His blood (Luke 22.20). Thus, we are **new** creatures (II Corinthians 5.17), and as such we have put on a **new** man ("Ephesians 4.24). We live according to a **new** commandment Jesus has given: to love one another (John 13.34), and give preference for each other (Romans 12.10). All this newness comes as we live and walk the **new** and living way (Hebrews 10.20). Our hope and motive for this **new** life is the promise of a **new** Heaven and Earth wherein righteousness dwells (II Peter 3.13).

In view of all this newness, there is a "salad" of let-us that we ought to consider. Our Master enjoins us, that we encourage each other to **let us** draw near to God, **let us** hold fast that which we confess is our hope, and **let us** continue to consider one another to provoke to more and more love and good works this new year (Hebrews 10.22-24). **Let us** also get ready to run anew the race set before us by laying aside those things that might have tripped us up last year (Hebrews 12.1). After all, we are a part of something, a KINGDOM that cannot be shaken. Just so, **let us** show our gratitude and be pleasing to God by serving Him with reverence and awe (Hebrews 12.28). Finally, **let us** continue to worship in spirit and truth by offering to God in the name of Christ sacrifices of praise (worship) and service (Hebrews 13.15,16).

I encourage us all to abound unto every good work, knowing that our God and Father is able to make all grace abound unto us so that we may be sufficient in all things (II Corinthians 9.8). May we cease not to give thanks, and pray for one another this new year (Ephesians 1.16). Let us continue to be filled with the knowledge of the will of God in all spiritual wisdom and understanding (Colossians 1.9). May we all walk worthy of our Lord, pleasing Him in all good works and bear much fruit and grow in His knowledge (Colossians 1.10).

Brethren, be subject to our rulers, be obedient, and ready workers (Titus 3.1)!

ICING ON THE CAKE

In all our preaching and teaching (and writing) we ought always to strive for balance. The Scriptures tell us why: "*A false balance is an abomination to Jehovah*" (Proverbs 11:1). Paul set us the good example in balance by telling the Ephesian elders, "*For I shrank not from declaring unto you **the whole counsel of God***" (Acts 20:27). I should like to apply these points then to the teaching of the Gospel to those who have never heard, and then for those who have heard and must now continue to "*grow in grace and knowledge*" (II Peter 3:18).

Some are willing only to teach the rudiments of the Gospel, then leave all the rest of the New Testament doctrine of Christ untold, thus unheeded. This is dangerous and disobedient. The great commission tells us to teach the Gospel, and also "*all things whatsoever I commanded*" (Matthew 28:20). I would liken this task to baking a cake, an illustration I have used from time to time. Now, those who know how to bake will likely disagree with me at first, but I would like to point out that there are but three steps to baking a cake. These three are parallel to the commission of our Lord. **First**, there is the *commission* itself. One might say, "Go into the kitchen" even as the Lord said "Go ye into all the world." **Second**, there is the *work* to do. The one told to go to the kitchen might then be told "Make a cake" as the Master said "Make disciples." **Third**, there is the *process* of fulfilling this commission. Our baker is told, "Baking and icing it." The Lord said, "Baptizing and teaching them." By this then I suggest that what Jesus told his apostles (and you and me) to do with these disciples is *the icing on the cake* of evangelism. The cake is not complete without the icing, neither is the commission complete without the follow-up teaching.

Now, one may ask, "But how do we baptize those who have not been taught, because you said 'baptizing and teaching them'?" This illustrates the misunderstanding of what it means to make a disciple. This means simply to teach people (all nations) what Christ would have them know. Now, not all that we teach are disciples. Some will not learn. One can be a disciple (a student) without being a Christian, but one cannot be a Christian without being a disciple. How can this be? Consider the twelve *disciples* of Ephesus. We read in Acts 19, "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, **and found certain disciples:** and he said unto them, Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed? And they said unto him, Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given. And he said, Into what then were ye baptized? And they said, Into John's baptism. And Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is, on Jesus. And when they heard this, **they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus**" (v.1-6). These were not yet Christians, though they had been taught by Apollos concerning Christ (Acts 18:24,25), thus the Holy Spirit through Luke called them "certain disciples." We do need to be cautious however in using the term "disciple" with those not yet Christians as many have come to conclude that any one who is a disciple is thus a Christian. This is not necessarily true, since the term "disciple" is sometimes used of those who are not yet Christians (Acts 19:1); sometimes it has reference to those who are (Acts 11:26).

What ingredients are found in this "icing" for our cake? There is to be **growth, grace, and knowledge**. All three depend upon further teaching the Scripture to those who have obeyed. Growth is found when one longs for the Word (I Peter 2:2), and continues therein. Brethren, in our teaching, let us not forget to put the icing on the cake.

RAGER ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES:

SUNDAY MORNING	BIBLE STUDY	9:30 A.M.
	WORSHIP	10:30 A.M.
SUNDAY EVENING	WORSHIP	6:00 P.M.
WEDNESDAY	BIBLE STUDY	7:30 P.M.
Preachers:	Robin W. Haley	614-751-1082
	James Grayson	614-409-0941

December 27, 2009

Weekly Budget: \$1360.00

Wednesday's Wisdom:

"No other teaching can give eternal life except the words of Jesus (John 6.63,68). We know Him by obeying Him, thus we KNOW we have eternal life (I John 2.3)."

Josh Haley

The Josh Haley family will be in Oklahoma this week. Pray that they have a safe and happy trip, and safe return.

Pray for others who may be traveling. At this writing, I am not aware of those who might be away.

Please pick up a copy of the men's business meeting notes for December.