

Baptisms

1. What magician came to be baptized by Philip? Acts 8:12-13
2. Who referred to the Israelites' crossing of the Red Sea as a baptism? 1 Corinthians 10:1-2
3. What tradeswoman was baptized by Paul and Silas? Acts 16:14-15
4. Who baptized Paul? Acts 9:18
5. What Roman official did Peter baptize? Acts 10:23-48
6. What kind of baptism did John promise the Christ would administer? Luke 3:16
7. What foreign dignitary did Philip baptize? Acts 8:38
8. What man of Philippi took Paul and Silas home and was baptized by them? Acts 16:26-33
9. In what city did Crispus, the synagogue ruler, believe Paul's message and submit to baptism? Acts 18:8
10. Where did Paul baptize 12 men who had received the baptism of John? Acts 19:1-7
11. What did John the Baptist tell the tax collectors who came to him for baptism? Luke 3:12-13

Answers. 1. Simon the sorcerer; 2. Paul; 3. Lydia; 4. Ananias; 5. Cornelius; 6. A baptism with the Holy Spirit and with fire; 7. The Ethiopian eunuch; 8. The jailor; 9. Corinth; 10. Ephesus; 11. Not to collect any more than was legal.

Remember in Prayer:

The Sick:

Xenna Gooch is at home being treated with medications for arterial blockages.

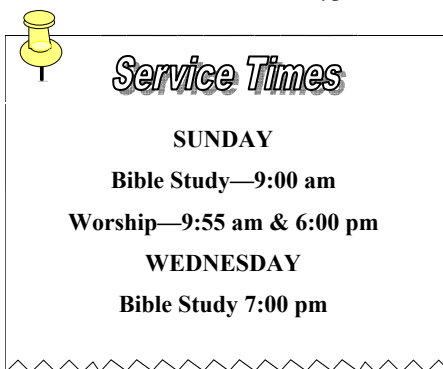
Burton Brown, Bettye's brother who was undergoing treatment for lung cancer, is undergoing radiation treatment for cancer that has metastasized to his brain.

Continue to remember those recovering from sickness, surgery and those dealing with cancer or chronic illness: **Brownie Spicer, Karen Shelton, Cecelia O'Brien, Carolyn Lowder, Neal Smith, Ronald Miller** (Larry Miller's father), **Johnny Adams** (Anita Carman's uncle) and **Ernestine Reed**.

News & Notes:

--**Group 2** will meet today in the Library after the morning service.

ELDERS: Doug Driver
Johnny Felker
DEACONS: Ralph Brown
Mark Claypool



Service Times

SUNDAY
Bible Study—9:00 am
Worship—9:55 am & 6:00 pm

WEDNESDAY
Bible Study 7:00 pm

Perry Heights Weekly Bulletin

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Nashville, TN 37214
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"...let us consider how we may encourage one another"
Heb. 10:24

April 12, 2009

A CHRISTIAN IS A SPIRITUAL OPTIMIST

Do you consider your basic outlook in life as an optimist or a pessimist?

Optimism is defined as: "a disposition or tendency to look on the more favorable side of events or conditions and to expect the most favorable outcome" or "the belief that good ultimately predominates over evil in the world" (Random House Unabridged Dictionary). Pessimism is defined: "the tendency to see, anticipate, or emphasize only bad or undesirable outcome, results, conditions, problems, etc." and also "the belief that the evil and pain in the world are not compensated for by goodness and happiness".

A pessimist will try to justify their pessimism by saying, "I'm just a realist." I counter this by an optimist who is a "constructive realist," who doesn't ignore problems but always sees good potential or possibilities. A pessimist sees more limiting problems than opportunities. I believe the Bible teaches that you cannot be a strong believer in God and be a spiritual pessimist.

The 10 spies that discouraged the Israelites from entering Canaan were spiritual pessimists! They saw obstacles (strong and giant Canaanites with heavily fortified cities) instead of opportunities of faith to trust God's power to take the land (Num 13:28-33). They said, "*We are not able...they are too strong for us!*" Their pessimistic outlook caused them to negatively exaggerate reality and see themselves as tiny, weak grasshoppers. Such negativity breeds pessimistic grumbling and a defeatist attitude among the people (Num 14:2-4). They wanted to "play it safe" and regress, instead of make progress.

Yet, Caleb and Joshua were spiritual optimists! They lifted their outlook to take Almighty God into account! "*We shall surely overcome it...If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us...Do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us*" (Num 13:30; 14:8,9). Spiritual optimism thinks, "The odds don't count if God is on our side! God is greater than any obstacle we face.

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Although we may have different personality types and innate dispositions, our personality traits are molded and uplifted by Biblical faith, hope and love.

1. Optimistic Faith in God. In 1 Samuel 17, young David had optimistic faith in God. He confidently believed he could defeat Goliath, the Philistines' giant champion who dared one Israelite to fight him. *"Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God"* (1 Sam 17:36). Yet, King Saul's army was filled with spiritual pessimists in facing Goliath's challenge. They were "dismayed" and "afraid" to take him on (1 Sam 17:10-11,24). This pall of negativity had Saul telling David, *"You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him"* (1 Sam 17:33). Their pessimism thought Goliath was too big to hit, while David's optimistic faith believed he was too big to miss. Remember, "can't" never accomplished anything.

Yet, we're thrilled to hear of David's optimistic faith in the face of a threatening giant: *"This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD'S and He will give you into our hands"* (1 Sam 17:46-47). The faith of David, who *"became mighty in battle"* (Heb 11:32,34), is enshrined in faith's hall of fame to help motivate us to grow in optimistic faith. David believed the odds don't count if God is on your side.

A spiritual optimist will believe and rely on the Scriptures that encourage us to have unlimited confidence in the power and promises of God. *"With God, all things are possible"* (Matt 19:26). The believer can do great things through God: *"All things are possible to him who believes...I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"* (Mk 9:23; Phil 4:13). We serve the true and living God who has infinite power: *"Nothing shall be impossible with God"* (Lk 1:3). Although there are a multitude of many more such scriptures that would choke the most stubborn pessimist, we can raise our belief level by looking away from our limitations and looking up to Almighty God in optimistic faith!

We all have menacing giants to face, like worldly temptation, religious false doctrine, stubborn problems and discouraging obstacles. Yet, optimistic faith in God confidently believes they can be defeated! We believe God's message of saving souls by preaching the everlasting gospel can work today just as it did in the first century. We believe if Jesus can change our lives for the better, that He can do the same for others. We believe God's plan of reaching the world through autonomous churches of Christ can work. God's plan will work if we will work God's plan.

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2. Optimistic Love for Others. We learn the power of love from our amazing, loving God (1 Jn 4:7-8). Love for others is sacrificial goodwill, to always act in another's best interest. A spiritual optimist will believe that love is the most powerful force in the world. It can change bitter relations into better ones. *"Love...believes all things, bears all things, hopes all things. Love never fails"*(1 Cor 13:7-8). Love for others will believe the best, not the worst. Love will not grow cynical or bitter, but will endure others faults to achieve, in love, a higher good for them.

When Jesus died on the cross, his costly sacrifice seemed to be mostly unappreciated. Yet, His loving sacrifice has drawn sinful men to God through the years, just as He predicted (Jn 12:32). His example will motivate us to act with such optimistic love (1 Jn 3:16-18). Christ-like love can heal relationships. Love can encourage others to do better. Love can turn conflict into a constructive learning experience.

3. Optimistic Hope for the Future. People often commit suicide because they feel, based on current circumstances, that life isn't worth living. In despair, they want to escape overwhelming burdens and the discouraging futility of "hopeless" situations. The optimistic Christian, despite the current outlook in the valley of depression, will hang on to God's vision of hope.

Hope is confident expectation in the future promises of God. Through the gospel of Christ, we are assured that "it is impossible for God to lie" (Heb 6:18). The hope of forgiveness through Christ's sacrifice tells us God has invested a fortune to bring us safely to His eternal home. Hence, "we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast" (Heb 6:19). Hope lifts our outlook past the storms of life with our current problems. Whatever pain or perplexity we face, they will one day pass away in the clear, unclouded day of eternity. Hope anchors us to an eternal perspective. As C.S. Lewis observed, "All that is not connected to eternity is eternally out of date." --W. Frank Walton

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind." James 1:5-6