

Ministers:
the congregation

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

Wednesday:
7:00 PM: Bible Study

[gibsoncitychurchof
Christ.com](http://gibsoncitychurchofChrist.com)

This Past Week:
Worship—32
Wednesday—16
Contribution—\$1170

For meditation:
Proverbs 27.3–6
What makes
wrath (anger) so
heavy? How
ought we consid-
er criticisms that
come from a
friend?

Radio program:
WGCY FM, 106.3
Sundays at 8 AM

Censorship

Jeremiah 29 is a collection of correspondence in which Jeremiah addresses various issues of concern. In one of these (vv 24–29), Jeremiah has a message for an apostate by the name of Shemaiah.

You took it on yourself to send letters to all the people in Jerusalem and to the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah and the company of priests. In your letter you told Zephaniah that God set you up as priest replacing priest Jehoiadah. He's put you in charge of God's Temple and made you responsible for locking up any crazy fellow off the street who takes it into his head to be a prophet.

Shemaiah was a false prophet in Babylon, who was encouraging the Jews of Jerusalem to silence the Jeremiah. He wrote a letter to the people of Jerusalem and sent it to the priest Zephaniah, who subsequently read it in the hearing of Jeremiah (v 29). In the letter, Shemaiah claimed authority to order the priest Jehoiadah to lock up anyone crazy enough to claim to be a prophet—like Jeremiah. Shemaiah, not Jeremiah, was the liar (v 31), and God eventually judged him severely (v 32).

Attempts to slander and silence the righteous are nothing new. The ungodly have long tried to paint the godly as being insane. The contemporary bans social media have enacted against truth have always been a tactic of the enemy. In the face of such intimidation, the words of the Lord must be remembered: “Whatever I command you ... speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you ... says the Lord” (1.7,8).

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Gibson City church of Christ

Highway 47 South, Gibson City, IL

Hope

Christian hope isn't centered on man. Christian hope isn't hope in human goodness, human achievement, or human potential. Christian hope is hope in God. His “is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.”

It's easy, when we focus on man, to despair. It's easy in the light of current events to be anxious. It's easy after reading the day's headlines to drift into a fatalistic acceptance of the hopelessness of our situation, or a defeatist resignation that things will never be better.

But with God, there are no hopeless situations (Mk. 9.23), there are only men who have grown hopeless about situations.

A story is told that in the dark days after the capitulation of France, Churchill called a cabinet meeting. As was his custom, he outlined the situation the nation faced in its starkest colors: Britain, quite literally, stood alone. When he finished speaking, there was a silence in the room. On the faces of some was written defeat; several of his advisers were ready to give up the struggle and agree to any terms the enemy demanded. Churchill remained silent for a moment; then looked around his dispirited company and said, “Gentlemen, I find it rather inspiring.”

There is something in Christian hope that nothing can kill, that no menace can quench. “No man is hopeless,” wrote Barclay, “so long as there is such a thing as the grace of Jesus Christ.” And no situation is lost, so long as there is such a thing as the power of God.

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Sermon:

Berlin preaching

3 September 2023

Three tests of discipleship

“Whoever wants to be my disciple,” said Christ in Mark 8.34–38, “must” meet three requirements.

Before King Arthur would admit a knight to the Round Table, he had to swear to certain things: to speak no slander nor listen to it, to live in purest chastity, to ride about redressing wrongs, to honor his word, break the heathen, and uphold Christ.

So too, the King of kings will only admit a man to His fellowship who agrees to three conditions.

DENY SELF

The hardest person in the world to say “No” to is ourself. The gospel certainly teaches us to say no to things such as ungodliness and worldly lusts (Tit. 2.12), but more importantly, it says we must say no to ourselves. Why do we get angry? Because someone has crossed our *self*. Why do we lie? Because we think it will give some advantage to our *self*. Why are we impure? Because we think it will bring some pleasure to our *self*. Why are we jealous and envious? Because we think someone is getting ahead of our *self*. All these outer sins are but symptoms of an inner disease: the deification of us. Quacks treat symptoms; doctors treat diseases. The Great Physician goes for sin’s jugular when He calls for self-denial.

ACCEPT DEATH

“Take up his cross” (v 34) should be connected with what Jesus had just said about His death (v 31). Peter, believing like most of us that “nothing succeeds like success,” objected to Christ’s prediction of His death. But to Peter’s surprise, Christ doubled down. “Not only am I to be crucified, but so must everyone—this rule is not just an Apostles’ rule—who wishes to follow Me.” Our cross isn’t the same as Christ’s, but they are alike in that both signify devotion to the will of God, which inevitably involves death—in our case, death to sin (Rom. 6.6, Gal. 5.24).

FOLLOW CHRIST

The first thing Jesus said to Peter in Mark’s Gospel was “Follow Me” (1.17); the last thing Jesus said to Peter in John’s Gospel was, “Follow Me” (21.22). A Christian is simply one who follows Jesus, even if He leads the follower to a cross. If we’ll catch a glimpse of the joy before us (Heb. 12.2), we’ll gladly endure the cross and despise the shame to be Christ’s follower.

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Impressions of Israel, 15

Some of the places we visited were associated with Old Testament stories. The Harod Spring at the foot of Mt. Gilboa where Gideon reduced his army to three hundred men based on how they drank water was one such place, but another was the stopover we made at Dan.

“From Dan to Beersheba” is a phrase used nine times in the Bible to mean much the same as we mean by the expression “from New York to LA.” A crow would fly about 2500 miles to get from coast to coast in this country, but you could enjoy breakfast on the hill of Dan, then drive south to the wells of Abraham on the desert plain around Beersheba and arrive in plenty of time for lunch.

The Israelite occupation of Dan (the Canaanite town of Laish) is told in Judges 18.27–29. The major source of the Jordan flows from the hill of Dan and is a bubbling, fast-moving stream set in a forest of tall trees that makes the area something of a fairy land.

Visitors to the site will see an impressive and massive rock wall built by the Israelites nearly 4,000 years ago; “Abraham’s Gate,” an arched Canaanite entry from the eighteenth century BC that is still intact; and, most interesting to me, the idolatrous high place built by Jeroboam I around 930 BC, where he placed one of the two gold calves he made after the death of Solomon and the division of the kingdom.

The Old Testament remains at Dan are memorable for their antiquity and setting in one of the prettiest spots in Israel.

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Site of the altar to the golden calf at Dan.

News about us

- Karen is visiting her kids in Chicago, and the Moodys are with family in Kansas.