

Ministers:  
the congregation

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

Wednesday:  
6:30 PM: Bible Study

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Christ.com](http://gibsoncitychurchofchrist.com)

**This Past Week:**  
Worship—30  
Wednesday—16

**For meditation:**  
**Ecclesiastes 10.5–6**  
Kings, presidents,  
leaders can surround  
themselves with very  
unqualified, foolish  
advisers. Why is that?

**Radio program:**  
**WGCY FM, 106.3**  
Sundays at 8 AM

## *When is prayer unanswerable?*

James 4.2

### **When it's used as a lucky charm.**

Don't pray like the heathen who "think that they will be heard for their many words" (Matt. 6.7). Prayer isn't a technique for manipulating God into giving us what we want. It's not a four-leaf clover that increases our odds of getting from God what we ask Him for. In his *Autobiography*, H.G. Wells tells an anecdote about when he was twelve and taking a bookkeeping examination at school. It wasn't going well and he furiously prayed for God to help him, but no help came. After that disappointment, he told God not to expect him to pray again. God is impervious to our attempts to put Him under obligation to ourself to get what we want.

### **When it's just a formality.**

If we're not careful, "two songs and a prayer" can degenerate into mindless rote where in we pray not to communicate with God but to check off a "box" of worship.

### **When it's done to "be seen of men."**

I've heard public prayers where the one praying would talk differently than he ordinarily did. He would use words like "thou," "thee, and "thine" (this almost never happens nowadays but was common in my youth). He might add the old English present tense "eth" ending to words: thinketh, doeth, etc. His vocabulary, diction, etc. took on a stained-glass quality. The Gr. word translated "to be seen by" men in Matthew 6.1 is our word *theatre*—public worship is not being put on a stage to display your artistic talent.

**When it's done selfishly.** "You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures" (Jas. 4.3).

kenny

# Gibson City church of Christ

Highway 47 South, Gibson City, IL

## *found in my reading . . .*

William Booth was an English Methodist preacher who founded the Salvation Army. Long before Winston Churchill became prime minister of England, but after he was a popular figure in English government, Booth had the chance to meet him.

Churchill was never irreligious, but he was far from being religious. According to Harold Begbie, in his *The Mirrors of Downing Street* (1921), when Booth crossed paths with Churchill he told him that he, "stood in need of conversion." Of all the things Booth could have said to the Churchill—decorated war hero, famous journalist/author, member of the king's government—he chose to tell him the one thing Winston most needed to hear: "you need to be converted."

"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18.3). "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (Jn. 3.3,5).

When Christ says "except," there are no exceptions. Being converted is more than being baptized; it is to move Christ from the margins of our life to the center. When we do, we start living a life that has the fragrance of the heavenly about it, and things once thought impossible (like forgiving as we have been forgiven) will become for us the norm.

We must be converted—no exceptions.

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Sermon: Matthew 5.9

## Warmongering or peacemaking

26 April 2026

## *A great text from Jonah*

***But the LORD said . . . Should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and much livestock?” Jonah 4.11***

Christ repeatedly warned His followers not to think that being the elect made them the elite. He who exalts himself will be humbled, He said. He told them to refuse titles of rank and not to sit in the chief seats. If the world hated Me, it will hate you . . .

God chose Jonah the son of Amittai to be a missionary to Nineveh, and in so doing gave us an unforgettable picture of the ugliness of exclusiveness. God never chooses a man or nation merely for the sake of the man or nation, but that through His chosen He might be put in touch with the lost. “I will bless you . . . and you shall be a blessing” (Gen. 12.2). To be chosen by God is to be chosen to serve. God’s methodology is always to use the few for the salvation of the many.

The book of Jonah pleads the case of Nineveh. No mention is made of Nineveh’s infamy—its military strength, engines of war, unconquered armies. Surprisingly, the book speaks only of Nineveh’s humanity, its nameless masses, its multitudes of obscure people who weren’t politicians, generals, or affluent but just plain, ordinary people trying to put food on the table.

The Jews were sullen and revengeful of the heathens who had trampled them underfoot. They were in no mood to forget their wounds or forgo their hatred (Jon. 4.1). And here comes God, asking His people to “think of Nineveh as a place where masses of poor hard-pressed people live with not much sunshine in their lot. . . . He speaks only of [Nineveh’s] humanity, only of the multitudinous homes of obscure people who have no quarrel with the Jews” (J. A. Hutton, *The Persistent Word of God*, 81). G. A. Smith wrote that for centuries, Christian churches in the Orient so hated their Muslim neighbors that they had no association with them and to try to convert a Muslim was treated as a capital crime (*The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, II, 538).

May we never lose a sense of our common humanity with unbelievers to where a 120,000 of their children could tragically die and we’d not lose any sleep over it.

If Jonah wrote the book of Jonah, I’d like to believe its existence was Jonah’s way of confessing his sin of hating they whom God loved.

kenny

## *Christianity & the scientific method*

Last week I noted that in 1 John 1.1–3, the basis John cites for the truthfulness of Christianity was the *scientific method*. He believed Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, the Son of the living God because of what he had heard, seen, and touched—not what he felt, dreamed, or intuited.

But it wasn’t just John who endorsed this approach. Luke certainly did (Lk. 1.1–4), and Paul clearly based his ministry on the reality of actual historical happenings (1 Cor. 15.12–19).

1 Timothy 1.15 illustrates this.

### **SOMETHING UNDENIABLE**

“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.” Some sayings aren’t always true. “Cheaters never win” and “love means never having to say you’re sorry” should be taken with a grain of salt. But what Paul is about to say “is true, and it can be trusted” (CEV)—here’s some rock on which men can build their lives.

### **SOMETHING UNASSAILABLE**

“Christ Jesus came into the world” is a historical statement that can be verified by historical research. Christianity isn’t a “fable” (1 Tim. 1.4) that sprang from man’s imagination (2 Pet. 1.16). H. G. Wells wasn’t a believer in the deity of Jesus and was often quite critical of Christianity, but in regard to the historicity of the Son of Mary he had to admit that the Gospels “agree in giving us a picture of a very definite personality. One is obliged to say, ‘Here was a man. This could not have been invented’” (*A Short History of the World*).

### **SOMETHING UNCONTESTABLE**

Christ, says Paul, came “to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” These words break into two parts.

Christ came to this world to save sinners. “Call his name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” “The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Christ’s work was redemptive.

Christ came to save every sinner, including the worst—and Paul claims to be the worst. More than being the least of the apostles (1 Cor. 15.9), and less than the least of all saints (Eph. 3.8), he saw himself as the chief of sinners. If the worst can be saved (v 14), we can also (v 16).

To God alone be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

kenny