

Ministers:  
the congregation

Kenny Chumbley  
217.493.8905

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

Wednesday:  
6:30 PM: Bible Study

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

**This Past Week:**  
Worship-41  
Wednesday-8

**For meditation:**  
**Ecclesiastes 9.16-18**  
As good as wisdom is,  
it is often despised and  
ignored as the ruler  
with the loudest  
mouth leads his people  
to defeat. One sinner  
can destroy much  
good. If you doubt  
this, ask Adam.

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

## *Pure religion, 2*

There was a time when “religion” mainly referred to external forms of religion, but James, following the teaching of Christ, says true religion involves a man’s character. Morality is a better indicator of true religion than ceremony.

**True religion brings a man into a right relationship with God, his fellows (brother, neighbor, enemy), and himself.**

**True religion is within reach of all.** It’s not dependent on attainments available to just a few. For instance, studying Greek or Hebrew are fine pursuits, but a man can live, die, and go to heaven without knowing a single word in either language. Anyone capable of treating others fairly, showing mercy, and being humble (Mic. 6.8) can be a truly religious man.

**True religion is social.** Christ’s second commandment makes this clear (Matt. 22.39). Love can establish and maintain the deepest bond that can exist between two individuals. When Christianity appeared, the world was divided by wars, tribalism, and castes that severed nation from nation, class from class, and man from man. The divisions were so deep as to appear unbridgeable. But to all factions Christianity and its gospel of love proclaimed that in Christ Jesus they could be one (Gal. 3.28).

Because of our ignorance, weaknesses, and arrogance, we sometimes mistake a friend for a foe and treat a brother as if he were an alien and stranger. One of my hopes for heaven is that when we get there, the matters we debated so fervently and argued so hotly in this life will be arbitrated by love to where we’ll enjoy all the blessings of unity we’ve missed out on in this life.

kenny

# Gibson City church of Christ

Highway 47 South, Gibson City, IL

## *Loving the preeminence—a hideous sin*

Churches are sometimes afflicted by members who—by reason of income, education, social or political or business influence, etc.—think they’re entitled to dictate and dominate the deliberations and activities of the congregation. Diotrophes (3 Jn. 9) was such a man.

Invariably, however, those who “love to have the preeminence” lack the spiritual and moral weight to fill the position; they’re too small for that to which they aspire.

Loving the preeminence—pride—is never a good thing, even when present in a good person. Selfishness may look as cute as a puppy early on, but left unchecked, it will grow into a hideous beast (Jas. 1.15) capable of causing untold misery and destruction to any relationship, whether directly or indirectly. Pride grows into anarchy that will put any family, church, nation, or civilization within reach of ruin (Judg. 19-21).

Writing in the mid-1920s, E. Stanley Jones, said that within the past year he had visited thirteen empty palaces scattered around Europe—empty due to the pride and arrogance of those who once occupied them.

“Lord, may our constant desire be to make ourselves of no reputation.”

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Sermon: Matthew 5.5-6

## How to have it all

5 April 2026

## *A great text from Joel*

*I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten.*

*Joel 2.25*

Have you ever gone through a bad stretch in life where some crisis or tragedy robbed you of peace and joy for days, months, or years?

One of the most graphic descriptions symbolizing the waste that can invade our life is the locust plague described by Joel. Not even the utter devastation of an F5 tornado can match the calamity of the divine judgment visited on Judah by a bunch of insects (2.1–11). But offsetting the plague was the promise God made that He would make up for the years they lost due to the devastation of the locusts.

How does God restore to us the lost swaths of life—lost due to addictions, sinfulness, sickness (that of others as well as ourself), loneliness, idleness, broken relationships, misfortune, etc.?

Joseph would tell us God does so by helping us forget the past. Joseph named his first son *Manasseh*—“causing to forget.” Refusing to dwell in the past, living in the present, and anticipating the future can quickly make life *Ephraim*—fruitful.

But even if the years of the locusts aren't restored in this life, remember that life isn't over when we die. As immortal spirits who are citizens of eternity, our life will never be over. In the ages to come, as we grow in knowledge and understanding and better understand the power of love, we might come to see meaning in our past that isn't apparent to us now. It may be that only in eternity will the significance of the years of the locust become clear. We are still in the making; I don't doubt that the day will come when we'll see value in things that now seem only destructive.

As long as God's grace is working in us, nothing is ever finished, and with time, grace can turn our stumbling blocks into stepping stones and our blindness into sight. Read 2 Corinthians 7.8–12 and see how the failures, sins, and disappointments of the past can be used in the present to shape a godly future.

To paraphrase something a mediaeval Englishman said: “The years of the locust will be seen in heaven, not as wounds, but as worship.”

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## *Turning the other cheek*

**Matthew 5.38–39**

“But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.”

1. **Christ is not prohibiting law enforcement or self-defense (Rom. 13.1–4; 1 Peter 2.13–14).** What He meant by “do not resist” is explained in what follows (5.39–42).
2. **To “be slapped on our right cheek” is an idiomatic description of an insult.** For an assailant to slap our right cheek, he must either slap with his left hand or backhand us with his right. Most people are righthanded (Matt. 5.30, 6.3), and a “backhanded” slap, compliment, or criticism has long symbolized an insult. When we are insulted, says Christ, we are not to respond in kind (1 Pet. 3.9).
3. **Not resisting evil is hard.** Because we want justice, often in life, the thing we don't want to do is the very thing the gospel calls us to do.
4. **There are things we only understood after we have done them.** John the Baptist didn't understand why he should baptize Christ (Matt. 3.14,15); had he lived to see the crucifixion and resurrection, I'm sure he would have understood it much better. When you have an opportunity to turn the other cheek, do so without delay and learn from what follows.
5. **Even if the one who slaps us is entirely in the wrong, we have the right to yield our right of retaliation.** Responding to evil with evil doesn't diminish the amount of evil in this world. “Repay no one evil for evil” (Rom. 12.17). We always have the freedom to choose not to retaliate.
6. **To turn the other cheek is to risk the chance of being hurt again.** But most hurt will ensue will likely be more to our pride than our cheek. If our pride is hurt by obeying Christ, it ought to be hurt.
7. **To obey Christ in nonretaliation is to know the joy of giving up, of delivering oneself from oneself, and freeing oneself from self-pity.** It's only when we yield our pride that we become capable of loving an enemy.

kenny