

December 8, 2019

Olney Church of Christ

220 North Van Street
P.O. Box 683
Olney, IL 62450
217-218-0803
www.olneychurchofchrist.org

Services

Sunday

Bible Study	9:30 am
A.M. Worship	10:20 am
P.M. Worship	2:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Class	7:00 pm
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Elders: Mike Gerber, Travis Hall

Deacons: John Frost, Dave Goff,
Roger Sholders

Visitors are welcome

We offer Bible classes for all ages

We also offer in-home Bible studies

We have Bible lessons on the radio
(92.9 FM) Sundays from 8:00-8:30 a.m.

The Joy of Following Christ

By Michael Hickox

With all that the world has to offer, a question one might ask is, "Why would I want to be a Christian?"

This question may be even more challenging for some when considering the depth of true commitment to Christ.

In **Matthew 16:24**, Jesus said, "***If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.***" Being an obedient Christian involves a lifestyle of submitting to God's will, even when His will is different from what is pleasant and comfortable. It may involve angering family members (**Matt. 10:34-37**), being spoken evil of (**1 Pet. 4:4**), and doing many things that push us out of our "comfort zone."

While these truths make some turn away from obeying the Lord, the one who understands and appreciates God's plan of salvation responds far differently.

As our Creator, God is the original source of all authority (**John 19:11**). He has the authority to instruct us concerning how we must live.

Though mankind has no right to disobey God, the Holy Spirit teaches that "***all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God***" (**Rom. 3:23**). This disobedience separates us from God, leaving us faced with the prospect of eternal death in hell (**Rom. 6:23a**).

The Joy of Following Christ

(Continued)

Sin brings us under bondage, and leaves us owing a debt we cannot pay. Sin leaves us facing the wrath of God.

“But God commends His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). Through Jesus, we can be saved from sin (**Matt. 1:21**) and its consequences (**Rom. 5:9**). Through Jesus, the debt has been paid to allow us release from enslavement to sin (**Eph. 1:7**). Through Jesus, we can return to fellowship with God (**Rom. 5:10**), and have the hope of spending eternity in His presence, instead of facing eternity in hell, ***“where their worm doesn’t die, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:44).***

Through Jesus, we can turn from sin and be received as God’s people, bringing honor to our Creator by living a life that pleases Him. We can fulfill our purpose in life of glorifying God, and fill the “void” that ever exists until one submits to the Lord (cf. **Eccl. 12:13**).

Appreciating truths such as these and obeying God’s will leads to a life of unspeakable joy.

The apostle Paul was full of joy and peace at a time he was imprisoned for the faith (**Phil. 1:13**). He knew that he could glorify God and receive salvation, while helping others do the same (cf. **Phil. 2:17-18; 4:11-13**). This meant far

more to Paul than the sufferings he faced.

The opportunity to be a faithful Christian is available to each one of us (**1 John 2:2**), just as it was to Paul. The chance to glorify God, receive salvation, and help others do the same is available to all. None of us deserve this gift, but God offers it to us through His love and the sacrifice of His Son.

What God offers is far superior to what the world offers. The blessings associated with obedience to God far outweigh great earthly possessions, power, popularity, or prestige.

Christ’s followers live on earth with deep joy, hope, and a peace that surpasses all understanding (**Phil. 4:7**). The hope of Christians is based on the assurance that on the Day of Judgment, *the righteous* will be raised to spend eternity in heaven with God, instead of facing the eternal torment awaiting those who don’t obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (**2 Thes. 1:8-9**).

These things just “scratch the surface” in answering the question “Why would I want to be a Christian?” The value of submitting to Christ far outweighs the “cost” of being His disciple.

May all who desire the blessings Christ offers realize we *can* receive them. May we submit to His will and appreciate what a blessed life it is that He calls us to.

God's Plan for Saving Man

God's Grace	Ephesians 2:8
Christ's Blood	Romans 5:9
The Holy Spirit's Gospel	Romans 1:16
Sinner's Faith	Acts 16:31
Sinner's Repentance	Luke 13:3
Sinner's Confession	Romans 10:10
Sinner's Baptism	1 Peter 3:21
Christian's Work	James 2:24
Christian's Hope	Romans 8:24
Christian's Endurance	Revelation 2:10

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Words to Consider

“Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” – 1 Peter 2:1-5

Prayer List

Holly G
Sandy S
Betty P
Mabel H
Cheryl S
Norma C
Dody G
Joe B
Allen S (Cancer)
Raymond & Maxine
Randy & Kim S
Ken & Chris F
Brandon O's Grandmother (Lung Cancer)
Jeff D
Betty H (Cancer)
June's Niece, Debbie
Roger H (Heart Surgery)
Berlyn & Guyla Y
Colin B

Daily Bible Reading

December 8 – Ezekiel 45-46; 1 John 2
December 9 – Ezekiel 47-48; 1 John 3
December 10 – Daniel 1-2; 1 John 4
December 11 – Daniel 3-4; 1 John 5
December 12 – Daniel 5-7; 2 John
December 13 – Daniel 8-10; 3 John
December 14 – Daniel 11-12; Jude

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.” – 2 Pet. 3:18

Prayer Leaders

Sunday, December 8, 2019

Bible Study: Larry

Worship: Dan H

Evening: Steve

Wednesday, December 11, 2019

Darrell

Clean Building

Paula

Prepare Communion

Paula

Upcoming Reminders

Dec. 28: Ladies' Bible Class @ 9:30 a.m.

Study: The Genealogy (Ruth 4:13-22)

Assignments

Sunday, December 15, 2019

Reading: Steve

Announcements: Harold

Table: Dan H

Serve: Mike

Jim

John

Mark

Wednesday, December 18, 2019

Invitation: Larry

Anniversaries

Birthdays

December 13 – Donna

December 21 – Linda

December 21 – Christie

December 22 – Jailyn

December 22 – Lauren

December 23 – Joe