

Selecting Prospects

By Bill Hall

God chose some lowly shepherds to be the first to hear of the birth of Christ. Jesus chose an immoral Samaritan woman to be the first person to whom He would identify Himself as the Messiah. It was to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils, that He appeared first after His resurrection. God is no respecter of persons. He wants the gospel to be preached to the good and to the bad, to the rich and to the poor, to the mighty and to the lowly, to the religious and to the irreligious, to the red, yellow, black, and white. "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" **(Mark 16:15)**.

We tend to be selective. We look for the one who in our judgment will be most receptive, for the influential person who will be a "help" to the church, for the middle-class man who will fit in socially, for the morally good who won't be a problem to us in the

future. We tend to avoid alcoholics, unwed mothers, homosexuals, hippies, and dope addicts. While we might have looked on Lydia as a good prospect, we would have certainly overlooked Saul of Tarsus or Simon the sorcerer or the Philippian jailer. And in our selectivity, we may be overlooking our very best prospects.

The gospel shines most brightly when it turns the alcoholic to sobriety, the immoral to purity of life, the filthy to cleanliness, and the infidel to faith. "And such were some of you," Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" **(1 Corinthians 6:11)**. Let us not underestimate the power of the gospel to change men.



Classes this Week

College Class and Singing at the Weldon's tonight on "Overcoming Spiritual Sickness"	Men's Class at the Davis' on Monday Night at 7:00	Thursday Acts class at Jillian Petty's at 7 PM
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Sick

Fran Snyder (Mother of Carla Humphrey)	Pam Dial (Laura Weldon's Mother)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Matt Tenold (Toni Herd's Friend)
Adriana Mininno (Haley Chittam's Cousin)	Dave and Betty Bradford
Ed Mort (Friend of Sharon Bailey)	"Grandmama" Odessa Wyatt (Dyle's grandmother)
Blake Whatley (Hunt's neighbor)	Dave Brown (Friend of the Lanier's)
Marty and Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Carrie Chavers (Friend of Sharon Bailey)
Amy Godwin's Father	David Nelson (Erica Seymore's Friend)
Wes Bowen	Chick Wade
Rachel Bragwell	Lori Holloway

April Birthdays

- 3 - Sharon Bailey
- 6 - Bethany Piskorz
- 8 - Hannah Owen
- 8 - Laura Humphrey
- 16 - Carson Fowler
- 18 - Spencer Sullivanne
- 20 - April Jerkins
- 21 - Timothy Jones
- 23 - Anna Miller
- 24 - Bob Simpson
- 25 - Elizabeth Mosley
- 28 - Lynsey Armstrong

News and Notes

- Let's remember our expectant mothers: Laura Weldon, Anna Miller and Nicole Pender.
- Susan Sullivanne had successful knee surgery and is recovering.
- Hanna Marsh's grandmother will have surgery on April 7.
- We begin a new quarter today in our Bible Classes!
- Please look at the lists for our 1st—8th grade classes. We need both hosts and teachers.
- We will have a yard clean-up day here on April 10.
- Terry Benton will be in a meeting at Union Springs April 9-11. Fri and Sat at 7PM
- Caleb Law had successful shoulder surgery and is recovering.

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Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. **(Matthew 5:16)**

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"Enemies of the Cross of Christ"

By John T. Overbey



Jesus Christ is the central figure of world history—every event that antedates his advent points forward to HIM; and every event that has transpired subsequent to his advent points backward to HIM. The cross of Christ is the hope of the world—without Christ's death on the cross, the world would still be groping its way in darkness; therefore, "the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God." **(1 Cor. 1:18)** Every bull, every goat that was offered as a burnt offering under the law of Moses was merely a "shadow" of the supreme sacrifice of the body of Christ upon the cross. **(See Heb. 10:1-18)**

The importance of the cross of Christ is seen in the fact that Paul, when coming into the city of Corinth, determined not to know anything among them save Jesus Christ and him crucified. **(1 Cor. 2:2)** And while others did glory in the flesh, Paul said, "for be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world." **(Gal. 6:14)**

But in spite of the greatness and importance of the cross of Christ, there were those in Paul's day who were enemies—"For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is perdi-

tion, whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." **(Phil. 3:18, 19)**

If there ever was a time in the history of the church when every member should exert his every effort toward the advancement of the knowledge of the cross of Christ, that time is now. The world is sick—sick of the awful, disease of sin. The cross of Christ is the cure for the disease; but like members of the church in Paul's day, there are those who, by their conduct, hinder the proclamation and reception of the gospel, and thereby become the enemies of the cross of Christ.

1) Indifference: There is in the church a class that is indifferent toward the procla-

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Do You Have a Bible Question?
Call (334) 734-2133 or
E-mail:
LarryRouse@aubeacon.com

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

Ask about our home Bible Study Groups!

Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

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mation of the gospel and the living of the Christian life. This class announces to the world that Christ's death upon the cross is of little importance, and that there is no efficacy in his blood. Not realizing the blessings received by virtue of their being freed from sin through Christ's death on the cross, find themselves making little if no contribution at all toward the advancement of the Cause of Christ. These are the ones who are described in the New Testament as being "neither hot nor cold"—only serving (?) Christ when it is convenient. There is no place in the church for this class—and the church would be far better off, would have a greater influence in the world, if this class did not exist. They are enemies of the cross of Christ!

2) **Worldliness:** This characteristic is an actual outgrowth of indifference, for when one becomes indifferent toward his duty as a Christian, it is not long until his thoughts are turned primarily to things of the world. Furthermore, such an attitude is an open violation of the teaching of the New Testament, for the inspired writer says: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. (1 John 2:15) The person who becomes thus minded announces to the world that Christ died in vain—that there is no spiritual value attached to his sacrificial death upon the cross. He is an enemy of the cross of Christ!

However, when our attention is called to this sin, our thoughts usually turn to that catalogue of immoral acts listed in **Gal. 5:19-21** to which we rather haughtily assure ourselves that we are not guilty. But, there is another type of worldliness that is far more dangerous than that described in that text. No righteous person will tolerate an immoral character, but there is the worldly minded person who is galvanized into respectability—that person who is scrupulously opposed to anything that is immoral, but on the other hand, has in mind—his heart—centered on things that are material. The gratification of the flesh, as seen in his interest in those things that make for greater social prestige, his business enterprises, his social life among his friends of the world, putting the church in the background while he is putting forth every effort to "get ahead in the world." It is this type of worldliness that is so devastating to the Cause of Christ. Truly it may be said that the greatest danger confronting the church today is our concern for things purely material in their nature. It is this type of worldliness that has become such an enemy of the

cross of Christ. It is in violation of the command of Jesus to "seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." (**Matt. 6:33**) Those who do otherwise are enemies of the cross of Christ.

3) **Those who cause division:** Division has always plagued the church. Even in the first century, when the church was in her infancy, there were divisions. When Paul wrote to the church at Corinth concerning the divided condition there, he said, "brethren, I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal...for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal, and do ye not walk after the manner of men?" (**1 Cor. 3:1-3**) Hence, carnality is established as the cause of division—a person who is carnal minded will cause division if allowed to have his way; and when division exists the Body of Christ is torn asunder, and the one who is responsible for such is under condemnation, for Paul further said, "If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy." (**1 Cor. 3:17**)

Furthermore, Jesus prayed that believers might be one "that the world may believe that thou didst send me." (**John 17:20, 21**) The nearest thing to an impregnable defense of New Testament Christianity is unity among the followers of Christ. Let us therefore exert every power of our being to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

There are those in the church who, like Hymenaeus and Alexander, will press some doctrine or theory contrary to the teaching of the New Testament even to the division of the Body of Christ. "Such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent." (**Rom. 16:18**)

Then there are those who, like Diotrephes, love to have the pre-eminence. When such a character (he is usually one who has no moral scruples) is given a little power in the church, he will press his wishes to the dividing of the Body of Christ. It seems to make no never mind about the influence he may be having on those who might become followers of Christ—he must have his way. Such a character is an enemy of the cross of Christ!

Our citizenship is in heaven—our manner of life should be such as will reflect the spiritual nature of our calling. Let us therefore conduct ourselves as good soldiers of Christ Jesus, never lending our support to the enemy. AMEN. — Gospel Guardian August 23, 1951



The Power of a Pawn

By Bob West

In the game of Chess, the various pieces have different powers and values. The Pawn, for example, is generally the least valuable and most expendable piece on the board. But this is not always the case. Many a naïve chess player has come up on the losing end because he underestimated the power of a pawn. For as inoffensive and weak as the pawns may seem in the beginning of the game, as they advance on the board, their power and consequent value increases to the point that it can become a Queen, the most powerful piece on the board. Even in the games of the greatest International Grandmasters of Chess, a single advanced pawn may be the difference between victory or defeat.

Chess is not the only human activity in which we tend to neglect and underestimate the potential power of seemingly insignificant things. In the game of life itself, man depreciates his fellowman because of race, education, appearance, or other factors. Yet we know that from the ranks of the under-privileged and oppressed have arisen some of the greatest names in history. This demonstrates how wrong man can be when he fails to consider the value and potential of human Pawns. For as they progress, they can become mighty. Apparent insignificance is not always the opposite of greatness.

Even some "religious" people look down their noses at the "little man." Many a big city church openly caters to the worldly-wise and wealthy.

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Even in our own congregations we witness some of this. If a new family, in the middle or upper-income bracket, visits services, some congregations move heaven and earth to affect an early contact and try to influence them to become members. On the other hand, there are instances when a minority group family attends, or someone visits who obviously makes little money, and only nomi-

nal efforts are made to encourage them. This writer once heard an elder of the church exhort other members to purposely seek out the higher-income prospects in order to bolster a lagging budget!

All of this is in such sharp contrast with the practice of our Lord who circulated freely at all levels of society, but especially among the humble and poor. He said, "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (**Matthew 18:4**). Paul said, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, nor many mighty, nor many noble, are called...." (**1 Corinthians 1:26**).

The neglected pawn of today could well become a faithful Christian, a godly elder, a talented preacher, or the devoted mother of a whole dynasty of Christians, if properly encouraged. May God hasten the day when we can all put aside worldly attitudes and recognize the great value and potential of the most lowly individual.

