

April 2011

Cornerstone Baptist Church
A Reformed Fellowship

Cornerstone Connection

Thinking Biblically by Bill Moore

Zealous for Good Works

We recognize that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are central and essential to our salvation. Were Christ not made sin in our stead, the wrath of God would justly come upon us (2 Corinthians 5:21). Were Christ not resurrected, we would remain in our sin (1 Corinthians 15:17). The resurrection reveals that the death of Christ was sufficient to satisfy God's wrath.

The death of Christ, though, not only affects our standing with God. It also affects our living in the world. In Titus 2:14, Paul makes this declaration: "[Christ] gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works" [ESV].

Paul writes that Christ "gave himself for us," revealing that his death was "voluntary, exhaustive, and substitutionary," as D. Edmond Hiebert points out. Christ's death was voluntary in that *he lay down his life (John 10:18)*, *exhaustive in that he gave of himself completely (John 6:51)*, and *substitutionary in that he died in the place of believers (Galatians 1:4)*. *Christ came to earth "to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28)*.

Paul presents a two-fold purpose for the death of Christ in Titus 2:14. The first purpose is negative: "to redeem us from all lawlessness." Sinners are enslaved to sin (Romans 6:17), being in rebellion to the law of God. Christ has delivered those who believe in him from that slavery, having freed them to be able to live unto righteousness. Stephen Charnock [1628-1680] maintains, "All our works before repentance are dead works (Hebrews 6:1). And these works have no true beauty in them, with whatsoever gloss they may appear to a natural eye. A dead body may have something of the features and beauty of a living, but it is but the beauty of a carcass, not of a man. . . . Since man, therefore, is spiritually dead, he cannot perform a living service. As a natural death causes incapacity for natural actions, so a spiritual death must incapacitate for spiritual actions."

Paul writes to Titus that the second purpose for the death of Christ is positive: "to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works." Those who are redeemed have been freed from the guilt of sin and are thereby the unique people of Christ. Concerning the Greek word which is translated as *his own possession in the ESV*, William Barclay writes, "It means reserved for; and it was specially used for that part of the spoils of a battle or a campaign which the king who had conquered set apart specially for himself. Through the work of Jesus Christ, the Christian becomes fit to be the special possession of God." *God has saved us primarily for his purpose, not for our pleasure.*

As "his own possession," Christians do not grudgingly perform good works out of a sense of obligation or coercion; they zealously perform good works because they are now God's own possession. Peter understood this distinctive relationship between Christ and believers and between belief and good works: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). Likewise, Paul writes in Ephesians 2:10 that Christians are God's "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).

It is not that we lead godly lives because we are supposed to do so and we grudgingly comply. We have been liberated by the death of Christ from the power of sin and are now able to do what before we could not have done. As followers of our crucified and resurrected Lord, may our lives be characterized as being "zealous for good works."

Monthly projects

United Ministries continues to distribute food to needy families in our community. Cornerstone is asked to provide flour, sugar and peanut butter. Remember to pick-up one or more of these items the next time you are in the grocery store.

Don't forget to save empty inkjet printer cartridges, old cell phones, Campbell Soup and Tyson Chicken labels, and Box Tops for Education found on General Mills products for **Laurens Academy**.

The Laurens Baptist Association helps families in need and in crisis situations. We can help by donating the requested items each month.

Crisis Center needs for April are:
mayonnaise, cooking oil, and shortening

Baskets are outside the church office for collection of monthly project items.

The ladies Bible study group will conclude the current study, *Twelve Extraordinary Women*, on Sunday, April 3, at 4:45 PM. The lesson is Chapter 12, *Lydia: A Hospitable Heart Opened*

All **college students** are invited to lunch on Sunday, April 3, at the home of Dale and Debra Taylor.

Memorials:

*Given in memory of Cora Lee Adcock
(sister of Earlene Duncan)*

*By: Gary and Beth French
George and Nancy Layne
Gerald and Kathy Foster
Jack and Martha Lawson*

Woman on Mission will met on Monday, April 18, at 7:00 PM at the church.

**Annie Armstrong Easter Offering
for North American Missions
Received to date: \$319.00**

Don't forget that the monthly financial reports will be on the table in the narthex on Wednesdays after the first of each month. The reports are also available in the church office at any time.

*All ladies are invited
to a miscellaneous bridal drop-in
for Kayla Winesett, fiancée of Glen Adkins,
on Sunday, April 17,
from 2:30 until 4:00 p.m.*

Family Mission Trip
June 11-17
Park City, Kentucky

Due to the distance of the mission trip this summer, expenses will be greater than the amount allocated in the annual budget. Gifts will be accepted in April, May and through June 5 to help with the cost of the trip. Even if your family cannot make the trip, you can help be a part of the mission work by making a contribution. Received to date: \$1,200.00

Some of the Cornerstone men are cooking breakfast for everyone on Easter, April 24. Breakfast will be served at 9:00 AM.

Please sign-up by April 17.

Bill Moore will lead an abbreviated Bible Study for all ages beginning at 10:00.

Teachers of children and youth can take their group to their classroom or remain with the adults.

Donations are being received to help with the cost of breakfast.

Received to date: \$100.00.

No evening service on Sunday, April 24.

Have you signed up to help with Vacation Bible School? In this year's *Gold Rush*, the children will go on a mining expedition to discover the *Rock of Ages*. Contact Debby Young to register to help or to register your child.



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(Carolina Commentary)