

THE BULLETIN

“AT LEAST, I’M NOT A HYPOCRITE”

Our society is really quite funny, that is, if you can manage to laugh through the tears. It has become one characterized by those, “Who call evil good and good evil; who substitute darkness for light, and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter, (Isaiah 5:20). And if this wasn’t enough, our society has found, what it believes to be perfect justification for any of it’s evil. “At least I’m not a hypocrite.”

How often have you heard that line? How often then have you seen such people strut away in proud self-righteousness, seemingly justified before God and the world-case closed! After all he’s not a hypocrite! It has reached a point where people will justify almost anything with that phrase--murder, adultery, nudity, hate, foul language, homosexuality, etc. Suddenly if you’re not a hypocrite all of these become okay. Hypocrisy or non-hypocrisy suddenly becomes the new god or criteria of right or wrong.

I think it’s time someone said something about this silly rationalization—“HOGWASH!” To intentionally do wrong and justify one’s self with, “at least, I’m not a hypocrite” is the worse kind of hypocrisy, pretending that immorality is innocent, if it is non-hypocritical. It doesn’t justify anything. No sin or sinner will be forgiven because of it. Truthfully, I think I’d almost rather they remain morally hypocritical than pollute my environment with openly immoral influence. Don’t get me wrong! This is no promotion or encouragement for hypocrisy. Jesus unleashed some of His fiercest wrath in words on hypocrites. But Jesus, far from promoting open immorality, was urging them to become genuinely moral and was rebuking them for their sinfulness.

You want to be justified? Genuinely repent and come to Christ for forgiveness. Don’t say, “At least I’m not a hypocrite.”

The Manchester church of Christ

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Our Minister:

Park Linscomb 540-0287

Our Elders:

Barry Fogal 487-2387
Gerry Millette 497-3105
Mike Moser 429-9487

Our Deacons:

Tony Casella- Finance
Fred Hillhouse- Facilities
Doug Paul- Education
Stuart Peacock- Worship
Pete Steffensen- Facilities
David Skerry- Benevolence & Outreach

WHICH DISTURBS YOU MOST

- A soul in hell or a scratch on that new car?
- Church work neglected or housework neglected?
- Your missing worship or missing a days work?
- The church not growing or your garden not growing?
- The children late to Bible class or late to public school?
- The contribution decreasing or your income decreasing?
- Low attendance at a worship or low attendance at a party?
- Your Bible being unopened or your newspaper being unread?

Our Family News

"So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household," Ephesians 2:19, NAS95.

If you're a visitor to our church, welcome! If you have questions, we welcome them; please don't hesitate to ask Park Linscomb our minister (the really tall guy) or any other church member.



The Harding University Spring Break Group is coming Saturday, March 7. **Linda Paul** will oversee feeding them; if you'd like to help with either food or money, please contact Linda.

Teens, you're invited to come sledding with the Harding Students and enjoy a *Sunday afternoon and evening* time of fellowship, devotion, and fun.

Thanks to everyone who came to help with moving Ann Davis yesterday.

Monday Night for the Master is March 2 at 6PM. The dinner will be American chop suey, garlic bread, salad and dessert. Come work with your brothers and sisters to build up the Kingdom.

Pantry help is needed! Shoppers for the pantry are needed. If you can help with this facet of our benevolent work, please get in touch with David Skerry in time for MNFM.

Menu for next Wednesday's dinner is pulled pork, baked beans, tomato soup and dessert.

The church's financial needs continue as usual, despite the Sunday worship cancellations that have been necessary recently. With that in mind, please "make up" your regular contribution, so that we

can continue to meet our financial obligations.

There are a few ladies who'd like to go to the Biddeford Ladies' Day, but haven't transportation. If there are some who are going who have the room, please contact Casey Jones in the office.

A "**bulletin board**" of church area wide events can be found at necentralbulletinboard.wordpress.com. Park oversees the bulletin board, and you can register to get regular updates by email as each announcement is posted. Find out what's going on among the area brethren.

Next Leadership Training: March 21. A special series of monthly classes learn more about leading in the worship. Our focus will be leading the Lord's supper this month. We'll start at 10am and go to 12pm each time—donuts provided. Older brother, invite a younger brother to come with you!

Lifeline Screening will be using our facilities to do some medical screening for our community, and to do that, chairs will need to be moved. Please plan on staying around on March 25 to help move chairs—many hands make light work.

Mark your calendars...

- March 7-14, Harding Spring Break Mission Team
- March 13,14— the New England Church Growth Conference in Manchester CT. (see poster in foyer for details).

• March 14, Ladies' Day in Biddeford ME, see bulletin board for details.

• March 28, Ladies Day in Roxbury MA, see bulletin board for details

- March 27, the church here hosts Lifeline Screening
- April 10-12—the Conway ladies' day
- April 24-26, the Manchester Youth Rally (ours)
- May 1-3, the New England Lectures in Taunton MA
- June 28-July 4, Gander Brook Work and Worship Week

Announcements for the bulletin should come to Park, by email, if possible.

Prayer List:

Evangelism: Bible studies in progress, our website, MNFM, food pantry, Brethren who have forsaken the assembly

The Harding Spring Break Team, coming in March

Health: Anthony Davis, Natalie Cleavitt, Louise Linscomb, Peggy Mailloux, Curtis Winstead, Jean Cadet, Lynn Millette, Mary Jane, Dave Seguin, Barbara Ann, David Lovering, Gary Chase Jr., Linda Tetrault, Jim Kenison, Brian Day, John Matthew, Jamie Hazelton

Struggles: Mark Brown & Emma, Linda Tetrault, Jim Kenison, Darlene Cordaro and staff at the death of a worker, the staff of the Concord Target who lost a co-worker to death

Leadership: Ministers, Elders, Deacons, Teachers, Parents



Our Statistics for the week from February 22, 2015

Sunday morning worship	104 snow
Wednesday evening Bible classes	70
Contribution	\$7800
Budget	\$2300

A Word of Encouragement

"For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it." Hebrews 2:1, NAS95.

FOLLOWING JESUS TO UNEXPECTED PLACES: GENTILE TERRITORY

Of the many unexpected places Jesus went, among the Gentiles had to have been among the more surprising to His apostles and close disciples. So, why did He go to Tyre and Sidon (Matt. 15:21ff and Mark 7:24ff)? Everyone, including Jesus (He was God in human flesh), needs a little rest from the labors of healing, teaching, traveling, arguing (with religious teachers who didn't understand God's will), and mentoring the apostles and disciples that would change the world after His ascension. And the best place to do that would be away from the center of the Jewish world, Judea / Galilee. So, He and His close disciples all went to the region of Tyre and Sidon, non-Jewish cities northwest of Galilee. Here He found a place to stay, hoping to go unrecognized and be able to rest.

But by this point Jesus reputation had spread like wildfire, even among the non-Jews, and those who heard of His presence in Tyre couldn't resist the chance to appeal to this worker of miracles for help. One such person was a desperate woman whose daughter was cruelly demon possessed, who begged Jesus for help.

Surprisingly, Jesus initially tries to ignore her. But this was a woman who wouldn't be easily ignored; she keeps asking. Her persistence is enough to drive the disciples to distraction, and they ask Jesus to make her stop. So, Jesus tells her, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." This all by itself tells us something about the virtue of focus. But still this Syro-Phoenician woman doesn't get the hint and continues to ask, "Lord, help me!"

Interestingly enough Jesus responds with a metaphor, a parable, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." (Matt. 15:26). Now, we're likely to recoil a bit and wonder, *Did Jesus just call her a dog?* The answer is yes, but not in the unkind sense that it sometimes was and is used—it's a parable, not an insult. People food was not prepared for the household animals, but for the family; Jesus' teachings and signs would be offered to the Jews, the people God that had been working with for about 1800 years.

The woman wasn't insulted or deterred; she grabbed on to the parable and pointed out that although dinner was prepared for the family, the pets did get a share, the crumbs accidentally dropped on the floor. And in my imagination, I can picture Jesus breaking out into a smile at the faith, the persistence, and the insight of the woman. She, a Gentile, got it. Surprise! And because she "got it", she got the miracle that she sought at once.

Do we get it? Faith, persistence, and insight.

Faith to come to the Lord with our problems is bigger than it might seem at first, even for Christians. There's just something about being human that pushes us to try to solve our own problems our own way rather than look to the Lord. I can't help but wonder how much burden, heartache, trouble, and worry I might have saved myself over the years by taking my problems to the Lord and did what He commanded—instead of what I actually did and/or said. While God doesn't desire us to be lazy and "helpless", He also doesn't expect us handle it all either. Truth be known, we really don't have the power or even know how to handle most things well—1 Corinthians 1:25 "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." The woman knew where to go with her need; do we?

Persistence is yet another challenge to many of us who do look to the Lord for the solutions to our problems. When we don't get the answer we desire immediately, we sometimes (maybe often) wrongly conclude that a) God isn't interested in us, b) God isn't interested in our problem, or c) we should bother God anymore. Sometimes—sometimes—God's delay (as in the case of this Syro-Phoenician woman) has more to do with testing our faith than with God's indifference to us our our problems. You didn't really think Jesus was indifferent to the woman's problem, did you? Persistence, importunity, not giving up is many times exalted as a virtue in Scripture, as an evidence of real faith. It's not that God is amused by making anyone beg, but rather that He is interested in finding out through our persistence the depth of our faith.

Insight is perhaps the most tricky of the three, since it requires thoughtful reflection based on knowing God. The Syro-Phoenician woman may not have known much about the God of Israel, but she sensed Jesus' kindness and compassion that spanned racial or ethnic boundaries by means of faith. And using Jesus' parable, she found hope that her request might be fulfilled—"Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table feed on the children's crumbs." The point here is that insight, seeing things from God's point of view, looking at things above not below, can lift our spirits, buoy us with joy, and give us hope, when hope might seem useless.

Are there requests that you are making of God? Faith, persistence, and insight. Don't handle it all on your own; turn to the Lord. Don't lose hope when things don't happen within your timeframe, persist and continue. Look at things from God's point of view, and hold on to hope!

Park Linscomb

Our Congregational Calendar for March 1 through March 7

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Worship 9:30 Bible class 11am Conway Youth Rally	2 Monday Night for the Master 6PM	3	4 Bible class 7PM	5	6	7 HUSBM students arrive!
8 Worship 9:30 Bible class 11am HUSBM with our teens	9 HUSBM in Quechee VT	10 HUSBM helping Families in Transition	11 HUSBM helping New Horizons Bible class 7PM	12 HUSBM at GB and Augusta ME	13 HUSBM day off	14 HUSBM students depart!

Bible Reading Schedule for this Week		
Sun	March 1	Matthew 20
Mon	March 2	Exodus 25
Tue	March 3	Exodus 26
Wed	March 4	Exodus 27-28
Thur	March 5	Matthew 21
Fri	March 6	Exodus 29
Sat	March 7	Exodus 30-31

SERVICE	SUNDAY, MARCH 1	WED., MARCH 4
<i>Call to worship</i>	Barry Fogal	
<i>Songleading</i>	Doug Paul	Steve Johnson
<i>Scripture reading</i>	Dave Skerry	
<i>Communion</i>	Gary Diaz	
<i>Devo thought</i>		Fred Hillhouse
<i>Closing prayer</i>	Steve Johnson	
<i>Coordinator</i>	Ken Simon	
<i>Tech</i>	Rich Therrien	



Many are away at Conway this weekend for the youth rally. Please pray for safe travel for them all.

Are you getting excited about the Harding Spring Break Group coming. Philip Baird, Jessica Revelle, Kylie Wood from last year will be among them! And Kenna Daggett is coming up! In this connection, Friday March 6th will be a teen devo at the King's house.

It will start around 6:30. We will be working on a service project for the Harding Students. **ALSO**, there will be sledding on the Sunday they are here. Plan on being here.

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