

ISSUE

20.21

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

May 27,
2018

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Steve Dixon
Ryan Ferguson
Arend Gressley
Ben Hight
Blake McAlister
Walker McAnear
Ryan Matney
Sam Nunn
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott
Justin Smiley
Kevin Wise
Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope



How Does the Church Show Love, Support, and Help? *By Kyle Pope*

Think for a moment about what it means to be a Christian. A sinner becomes a Christian. That means that they are freed from sin, they are saved from hell, they are separated from the world, and they are set apart unto God. Yet, there are still temptations, there are still trials—this child of God must still mature in Christ. A Christian must continue to grow in love, knowledge, strength, self-control, and good works.

Question: *Why has God made the Christian faith something that involves Christians working together with other Christians in a local church?*

Answer: For us! God has ordained this in order to help us grow, overcome trials, and overcome temptations. He mandates this relationship in order to encourage us towards maturity, to help us grow in love, knowledge, strength, self-control, and good works. In a sound congregation of God's people we find a source of support, encouragement, and help. *How will this support, encouragement, and help show itself?* Consider four ways these things will be demonstrated:

I. In the continual preaching, teaching, and study of God's word.

What binds a church together must be the common faith of its members. They are a group of souls who have turned to Christ because of a change that took place in their thinking. It was not just a feeling—although there are emotions and feelings that come from faith. It is not purely knowledge—although there are things that must be learned. It is the conviction that Jesus Christ is now Master of our lives. It is the belief that salvation from sins is found only in Him. It is the duty of those seeking salvation to

give themselves wholly to His guidance through His word. God's people must be the kind of people who love hearing, studying, and meditating on the things of God. They don't see things that have to do with Scripture as a *chore* or a burden, but a privilege because it involves talking about the most precious thing in all the world—the word of God.

II. In displays of compassion and concern.

This may involve expressing concern when a member is away. Or noticing when a brother or sister is downcast. It means we show concern when a member faces hardship or loss. Then we offer help when they are in need (materially or spiritually). We also show compassion by encouraging one another toward more active involvement in the local church. One of the most effective ways that an eldership can aid in the faithfulness of brethren is to get them involved by assigning various tasks. Often it matters little what the task is. People just need to be working to feel a bond to the church. Think about it for a moment—*how do people fall away?* Sometimes it begins right after the person obeys the gospel. They fail to get involved. Before long they lose interest. This leaves them open to temptation. In no time they are drawn into sin. *Can the church help them?* They don't feel a part of the church! They face a trial and find no help in the Lord's church. They look to

the world and find that the world offers lots of help. It doesn't matter that worldly help is generally fleeting, unreliable, and often even sinful, they go where they can get what they feel they need. Sometimes, weak brethren in this condition desperately need help, yet don't get it because they don't ask for it. They drop off in their attendance. In doing so they keep themselves from what could actually help them.

III. In rebuke. When a brother or sister begins to err it is the responsibility of those with whom they have



identified themselves, to point that out to them. This is an act of love. It is an essential element of salvation. If it is neglected souls are lost! It is hard. It takes courage, but it must be done. We don't just rebuke "big sins" (a notion that is totally unscriptural). If we wait to talk to a person until the sin is dramatic and open we may find it is too late. This isn't just the job of a preacher or an elder. It is the responsibility of all of us. If it isn't done, souls will be lost.

IV. In withdrawal. God, in His wisdom, has given both positive and negative motivations towards faithfulness. One good brother where I used to preach in Birmingham developed an illustration of this that I think is very appropriate. A four-wheel drive vehicle has front tires that pull the vehicle along. This could be likened to positive motivation. Yet, the rear tires of a vehicle push it. This could be likened to negative motivation. God motivates us like a four-wheel drive. He has loved us and He wants to save us, but God will punish us if we reject His source of salvation. He is angry with sin and those outside of Christ are His enemies. We must fear the thought of His eternal wrath.

In the church God calls on us to use positive and negative motivations towards our brethren. We are accustomed to this in the home. We teach our children and love our children, but when disobedience occurs we owe it to our children to punish their disobedience. That gives them something to fear that helps them control themselves.

One problem with our world today is that we foolishly think that men and women can guide themselves purely by positive motivations. *Why shouldn't I steal my neighbor's car? Or, why shouldn't I lie to my boss? Why shouldn't I kill someone who is my enemy?* Our world says,

"If a person's needs are satisfied they won't feel like they need to steal!" It says, "If my rights are protected I won't have enemies and thus feel compelled to kill". *Is this reasoning valid?* We live in the richest country in the history of the world. Even the poor among us are kings compared to times in the past. Not only are our material needs met, but we have more time for recreation and entertainment than our ancestors would have ever imagined. *Why then does robbery still go on?* We have the most pleasant work environments imaginable, and yet there is still abuse and dishonesty. We have more rights, and laws to protect those rights than any people in history. *Why is there still murder and violence?* If positive motivations were enough we would live in paradise.

There simply need to be things for us to fear in order to give us boundaries. In the church the same is true. I ought to do what is right out of love, devotion, and appre-



ciation for what God has done for me, but when that isn't enough it is the duty of my brethren to warn me and rebuke me. That is fearful! We don't like to be told we are doing something wrong. Most often rebuke is all that is needed to turn a brother or sister around. The tenderhearted soul will turn. Perhaps my repentance will only be for awhile. If so, then I need my brethren to rebuke me again and turn me around again. If rebuke does not solve

the problem it is the duty and responsibility of my brethren (after warning me and I refuse to follow God's word) to punish me. *How may the church punish the rebellious?* By withdrawing themselves from the rebellious member. This means cutting off social association with the person. This doesn't mean we never talk to them. Yet, when we do we should talk to them about their sin. *What about when a family member is withdrawn from?* There are responsibilities we have to one another as family members that do not end when a congregation is forced to withdraw from a member of our family. That means that withdrawal involves some different things for the family of an unfaithful member, but that doesn't mean we treat them as if everything is right in their relationship with us or with God. That sends the wrong message and will not move them to repentance. When members must withdraw from the unrepentant, it means that we turn away from a rebellious member and view them as one who is no longer one of us. This is painful, but it is a necessary act of love to help protect the faithful and to try to draw the rebellious back to God.



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