

Harmony Newsletter

Web Site: www.harmoniypbchurch.org

HARMONY PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

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"Come thou with us, and we will do thee good..."-Numbers 10:29

February 2012

SAVED BUT NOT DELIVERED

I must share a story with you that I heard from a man that I had never met until, one day, by God's kind hand of providence, I shared a brief ride with him to the airport in Chicago.

Though I do not remember his name, his experience touched my heart in a way that I will never forget. He was employed as a security person at the condominium where our son, Ryan, was living when we visited him for his graduation. Rather than hailing a taxi to take us to the airport, Ryan had secured his services. He was a big, jovial black man, and as we made our way to the airport I noticed he had a clergy sticker on the front window of his van. This, of course, encouraged me to visit with him about his ministry. I was writing an article at that time and I wanted to pick his brain and see what I might learn from him. I do not remember who he preached for, but I soon discovered that he loved the Lord, and enjoyed preaching.

Rather than answering my question directly, he said something like this, "That is one of those scriptures that has a lot to it. Rather than trying to explain it, I will just tell you my experience. I grew up in Detroit, Michigan. My mother took me to church every Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night. We lived at church. When the adults were in the kitchen eating, my cousins and I would be in the sanctuary playing church. We would take turns preaching, and practice baptizing one another. When we became teenagers, my cousin became a minister. But I started running with the wrong crowd and got involved in drugs, and alcohol. My cousin would call me and beg me to come to church. Sometimes I would go. Sometimes I would show up drunk. But my cousin continued to call me and invite me. He never gave up on me. My worst problem was gin. I became a gin-head. You know, the gin bottle has these little dimples on the outside of the bottle. It was easy to climb up the outside of the bottle and get in. But the inside of the bottle was slippery, and no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't get out. I just kept sliding back down the inside of the bottle. My cousin and other relatives continued to pray for me. One day I decided to move to Chicago and get away from all the people I knew and just make a fresh start. So I got enough money to purchase a bus ticket to Chicago. When I entered the doorway of my grandmothers' home, I felt like things were going to be different. At night, I could hear my grandmother praying for me from her bedroom. I began to read my Bible and attend her church. I never went back to the bottle again! The Lord delivered me from it. I started holding some meetings and became an ordained minister. Now I have my own congregation."

As I listened to his story, I could hear the cry of a suffering heart that had once been captive to Satan, drugs, and alcohol. He had several family members that had not fared as well as he. They were very poor, and growing up in Detroit was hard. I thought of my childhood, and how blessed I had been.

Of course, he didn't know what we believed concerning God's grace, how a person is born again, or the purpose of the gospel. But I had to ask him a question that kept looming in my mind. So I asked him, "Do you believe you were a born again child of God when you were involved in all of that? Were you a saved person?" I will never forget his answer as he humbly replied, and I quote, "Yes! **I was saved, but not delivered.**"

That was an honest testimony from one of God's children that had been delivered from the bondage of a great sin. I immediately thought about the wild Gadarene, and Mary Magdalene, even myself when I too, believe in God, but was far away from God's house. Sweet deliverance!

I took something away from that man's testimony that I will never forget. It proved, by experience, that our doctrine is right. This man was saved eternally, but not delivered from his bondage down here. That is a part of our job. Jesus called Lazarus to life from the tomb, but the apostles unwound him from his grave clothes. When Jesus called Paul, his commission was for this purpose: "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God..."(Acts 26:18a). His experience proved how graceful our Lord is, but also how Satan can bind the Lord's children. I believe many are like this man was, they desperately want to be delivered, but they just do not know how. They need the prayers of those that love them, and those who may not know them but have caring hearts. It made me wonder how many of the Lord's people are under bridges, living in cardboard boxes, or in worse circumstances. Lord help us to deliver some!

Let us be careful to remember those who have been trapped in Satan's snares, and hold them up before our Lord. Let us never give up on anyone. Also, let us hold Christ, the great deliverer, before their eyes, and pray for their deliverance from the bondage of sin for there are many who are "**saved, but not delivered.**" I believe the fields remain to be: "white unto harvest." -NMP

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

“But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?”- Luke 10:29

The parable of the *Good Samaritan* has been cherished by God’s people for centuries. Among the many lessons contained in the parable, we learn that we, as benefactors of God’s grace, should have a heart to help those less fortunate than ourselves, those who have fallen on hard times. In one sense, we are the person in the parable, and Jesus is the Good Samaritan. He came along and helped us when we were helpless, and dying. That is grace!

You will notice that the priest and the Levite passed by the dying man. Of all the people that should have a heart for others, these men were the ones. Surely, this is not only an indictment against the men, but also against their church.

We tend to limit our personal ministry to our own children, our own families, or our close acquaintances. When the self-righteous Pharisee tried to justify himself, feeling he was doing great by confining his charity to these, Jesus expanded his horizon. That is the thrust of this parable: expand your horizon of grace towards others.

The Samaritans and the Jews were bitter enemies. The Jewish man that had fallen was ignored by his own countrymen but cared for by his enemy. This certainly broadens our horizon. As individuals, and as churches, we have a solemn responsibility help those who have fallen on hard times regardless of where they go to church; or what color their skin may be; or what nationality they are; or which language they speak; or if they were going the right way; or if they have gone the wrong way and deserve their problems. No questions were asked, yet aid was given.

Caring for others has always been one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Christian Church. The office of deacon was instituted for the sole purpose of caring for the poor widows in the church. Paul was admonished by the apostles before him to care for the poor, which, said he, “I also was forward to do.”(Galatians 2:10). Collections were taken up for the poor saints at Jerusalem. Churches, and individuals, sought Paul when he was in prison on several occasions and ministered to his personal needs with food, clothing, and blankets. The church is to do good, especially to “the household of faith”(Galatians 6:10). But, according to Jesus, it should not end there.

Many churches in our modern era have lost this gift of ministering to others by the many helps we have in our government. Medicare, Medicaid and other social programs have carried this weight that the church once enjoyed. We should be careful to never let this ministry escape our churches, and our hearts.

I have asked our church to be pray with me, that God would show us who we can help, and how to do it. There are many ministries out there that are worthwhile, that have helped countless lives. I hope you will pray with me.-NMP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ✓ Men’s game night: Our men’s night in the basement was a great blessing. We enjoyed the largest crowd thus far. The fellowship was wonderful as we enjoyed several visitors from our community. I want to especially thank all of those who did the cooking to make our event possible. We are already looking forward to next time!
- ✓ We have established a time to sing at the Crossing at Malvern. We have several church members who are residents there and are unable to attend church. We are scheduled to sing every third Sunday at 1:30 P.M. That is a Sunday that we have lunch at church so we plan to leave immediately after lunch and make our way to the Crossing. I hope you will come and sing with us there. This is a wonderful way to minister!
- ✓ I have been praying for some helpers in our C.D. ministry, and with our web page. As you know, Jeff and Angela Lindsey took care of those ministries and have recently moved to Texas due to Jeff’s job. Mike and Barbara Harvey have volunteered to take over the C.D. ministry. So, if you get this letter and have been on our mailing list you should be receiving some of our messages very shortly. I appreciate their labor of love for Christ and His cause.
- ✓ Due to the constant explaining over my easy to remember 6666 phone number, I made a trip to the cell phone store and obtained a new one. It is 501-337-6456. Thanks!

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ✓ Sister Brenda Stafford: Due to her diabetes Sister Brenda had to have her foot and lower leg amputated. Please pray for her and her family. It was a special blessing to see her back in God’s house.
- ✓ Sister Louise Beason has had surgery on her leg to open up some arteries to her lower leg. She has also been diagnosed with congestive heart failure.
- ✓ Brother Johnny Shaffer has been hospitalized for fluid on his lungs. He has recently undergone treatment for a heart condition.
- ✓ Sister Lema Clayton is recovering from hip surgery at the Malvern Nursing Home