

The Messenger

COLDWATER CHURCH OF CHRIST

Jan. 23, 2011



Editor's Note: The primary email address for the Coldwater church has been changed to emailus@coldwatercofc.com.

TWO THINGS WE CANNOT UNDERSTAND

by Clifton Angel

Many "theologians" and "scholars" believe they understand the Scriptures better than anyone else and even carry the attitude at times that those without prestigious degrees simply cannot understand what they understand about the Scriptures. Some believe that only laymen (priests or preachers) can understand the Scriptures. However, the Bible records the very opposite.

Concerning words that came from the mouth of Christ, it is recorded that *the common people heard him gladly* (Mark 12:37). Paul wrote, *Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand* (Eph. 3:4), and "may" means "to have the ability or power." Paul also commanded that his epistles be passed around to other congregations and to be read to **all** of each congregation (Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27). Why should the epistles be **read to all** of each congregation if most of them could not understand what is being read? The Apostle John wrote, *Blessed is he that readeth* (Rev. 1:3). We must be confident in knowing that through diligent studies, we can understand what God has written in His Word. On the contrary, there are some things within the Bible that CANNOT be understood by the human mind.

The first of which we will notice is found in Philippians 4. Paul writes:

*Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And **the peace of God, which passeth all understanding**, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus* (Phil. 4:4-7).

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you... (1 John 1:5).

VISITORS,
WELCOME!

Sunday:

9:30 a.m. Bible Class

10:30 a.m. WORSHIP

5:00 p.m. WORSHIP

Wednesday:

7:00 p.m. Bible Class

We have Bible classes for all ages & Pew Packers on 1st & 3rd Sundays at 4:15 p.m.

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DEACONS

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PREACHER

Clifton Angel

The Peace of God continuously surpasses our understanding. The word “passeth” in this passage means “to have (or hold) over”. The same word can be found in Romans 13:1 translated as “higher” in reference to government authorities: *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.* It is “supreme” in 1 Peter 2:13, “excellency” in Philippians 3:8, and “better than” in Philippians 2:3: *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other **better than** themselves.* The word “understanding” refers to the intellectual part of the mind. It is the *mind* of Romans 12:2: *And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your **mind**.* It is obvious that the Peace of God is “better than” the “intellectual part of our minds”. Although we cannot fully grasp the Peace of God, we can have it. How? First, we must be **prayerful**: *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God* (Phil. 4:6). Next, the context of Paul’s message insists that we be **positive**: *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things* (Phil. 4:8). And third, we need to put the apostles’ doctrine into **practice**: *Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you* (Phil. 4:9).

The second and final thing which we will discuss, concerning things we cannot understand in the Bible, is found in Ephesians 3. The words from Paul read:

*For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know **the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge**, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God* (Eph. 3:14-19).

The Love of Christ, according to the Bible, also continuously surpasses our understanding. The word “passeth” in this passage is different than that of Philippians 4. This is the word that is translated “excelleth” in 2 Corinthians 3:10 and “exceeding” in 2 Corinthians 9:14, Ephesians 1:19, and Ephesians 2:7. The word literally means “to throw over, to transcend, to surpass”. Interestingly, the anglicized Greek word is *hyperballo*, from which we get our English word “hyperbole”. The figure of speech hyperbole is “exaggeration for the sake of emphasis”. Someone may ask, “Do you have anything to do today?” You may reply, “I have 9,122,000 things to do today.” We all know that the number given is not literal, but yet is an exaggeration to emphasize the workload for the day. Notice that the number given is sometimes not attainable. I do not believe Paul is exaggerating the Love of Christ, but rather he is showing that it is on a level that is unattainable. A.T. Robertson says that Paul “dares to scale this peak”. In other words, the Love of Christ is at the peak of a mountain that cannot be scaled, but Paul says, I am going to climb it anyway!

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However, it is Paul's prayer that we *may be able to comprehend* ["bring down"] *with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge* (Eph. 3:18, 19; **emph. added, CA**). When I think about the **breadth** of Christ's love, I think of John 3:16: *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son*. John the Baptizer exclaimed, *Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world* (John 1:29). When I think about the **length** of Christ's love, I think about the glimpse of the glory of Heaven that Isaiah saw when he saw the 2nd Person of the Godhead sitting on a throne (c.f. Isa. 6:1-8). What he saw was so amazing that without hesitation he said, *Here am I; send me* (Isa. 6:8). But the **length** of His love is shown in that He left that glorious abode to be made in the likeness of men and to humble Himself to the point of the death on the cross (c.f. Phil. 2:5-8)! When I think about the **depth** of Christ's love, I think about the depths to which He went that He might show His power over death! He went to the Hadean realm and rose from the dead on the third day, delivering that crushing blow to the head of Satan and to fulfill His statement concerning His church (c.f. Gen. 3:15; Heb. 2:14; Matt. 16:18). When I think about the **height** of Christ's love, I first think about the cross. Jesus said, *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me* (John 12:32). I think about the fact that no nail could hold Him there, but only His love. *Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?* (Matt. 26:53). We sing the beautiful song "Ten Thousand Angels," but the number Jesus gives is up to and perhaps beyond 36,000 angels (It took only 1 to destroy 185,000 Assyrians in one night). Furthermore, in thinking about the **height** of the Love of Christ, I think about the exaltation given by the Father (Phil. 2:9); I think about the ascension to the Father (Acts 1); I think about the fact that He sits on the right hand of the Majesty on High (Heb. 1:3); and that He is reigning over His kingdom with all authority (Matt. 28:18), which kingdom we are blessed to be a part, and which kingdom He will deliver to the Father at the Second Coming of Christ (1 Cor. 15:24).

I encourage you to have confidence that you can understand the Word of God! The two things discussed from the New Testament that we cannot "understand" are not blows to the omnipotence of God but rather benefits of it. Interestingly, *no man can come to the Father but by Christ* (John 14:6). Because of the **Love of Christ**, we able to pray to the Father, so that we might have the **Peace of God!** Therefore, it is our mission to spread the Good News concerning the **Love of Christ** so that others might have the **Peace of God!**

Sermon Review

BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN

(Matthew 5:4)

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

- I. THE BLESSING.
- II. THE MOURNING.
- III. THE COMFORT.

GOD'S HANDS

(1 Peter 5:5-7)

- I. HIS MIGHTY HAND.
 - A. Providing Hand.
 - B. Punishing Hand.
- II. HIS LEFT HAND.
- III. HIS RIGHT HAND.

NEWS & NOTES

Please Pray

Elizabeth Baker is at home and recovering well thus far. **Wiley Tuggle** is doing better. It was great to see him last Sunday.

Andy & Molly Ratliff have been under the weather this past week.

Helen Bowman

Tim II, Rachel, & Titus Wilkes--Tim will begin full-time mission work soon. The Coldwater elders will oversee his work. Tim, Rachel & Titus need our prayers as they get started and seek support for this work.

For the Bible studies and correspondence courses that are on-going, and the students & administrators of the studies.

Tim & Lynn Wilkes are safe in Hawaii and the Fishers of Men classes are going well. Let us pray for their safety and the success of this great work.

Family & Friends

Ruby McGehee--died Wednesday. She was a resident of the community near the building and the mother-in-law of a former co-worker of Caleb Baker.

Ann Embrey--was rushed to hospital Thurs. and had to have a heart cath. but no diagnosis. She is home and on a monitor. She is the mother-in-law of Angie Staten's co-worker and a member at the Senatobia Church of Christ.

Brianna Edwards had a tumor on her brain stem. It was removed and she was doing better, but now she has pneumonia. She is the 12-year daughter of a co-worker of Ginger Bayless.

Joe Culbreath--several serious health issues.

James Angel--His cancer is in remission. He may still have a tumor.

Dunn Family; Steve Angel; Doyce "Doc" Hunt; Dave Leonard, Sr.

Let us not forget to pray for the works being done through Fishers of Men and the Far East Missions.

January Birthdays

1/5 Cash Jackson	1/10 Elizabeth Baker
1/6 Mindy Moore	1/25 Jeffrey Ferrell
1/7 Tucker Johnson	1/30 Stephanie Bayless
1/9 Claire Easley	

Get Involved!

Nesbit Lectureship -- January 28-30

1 Corinthians 1 - 8

Check Bulletin Board for Schedule.

Sunday Night for the Savior

February 6 after PM Services.

Bring Contacts and Finger Foods!

Bible Bowl--February 12

10:30AM at the Looxahoma building.

STUDY Matthew 13-15!

Grief Seminar @ Independence

February 19 & 20 - Keith Mosher, Sr.

Privileged to Serve

Sunday, January 23

Morning

Prayer Before Class

Announcements

Song Leader

Lord's Supper:

Preside

Assist

Opening Prayer

Sermon

Closing Prayer

Evening

Song Leader

Opening Prayer

Sermon

Lord's Supper

Closing Prayer

Wiley Tuggle
Ron Johnson
Caleb Baker

Jared Brown
Adam Sowell
Chris Holmes
Payton Jackson

Jerry Davis
Clifton Angel
Jeffrey Ferrell

Caleb Baker
Andy Ratliff
Clifton Angel
Jared Brown
Payton Jackson
Jeremy Moore

Wednesday, January 26

Song Leader

Prayer

Invitation

Prayer

Caleb Baker
Johnny Bayless
Clifton Angel
Adam Sowell