

The Messenger

COLDWATER CHURCH OF CHRIST

May 15, 2016



There are many people who consider themselves to be “spiritual, but not religious.” They “experience” God in the gentle breeze, the rolling hills, the majestic mountains, and the love of friends and family. They consider themselves to be Christians, in some sense, but want nothing to do with “organized religion.” They don’t want the church and they don’t want the Bible. They want Jesus and they want spiritual experiences, but that is it. If that describes you or someone you know, allow me to share a few thoughts with you.

God Revealed Through Nature

There are two ways God reveals Himself to mankind. The first is often called, “**general revelation.**” General revelation is what you can know about God by studying ... the things He has created. The apostle Paul said:

“For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made” (Romans 1:20a).

You can learn something of God by standing on a mountaintop and beholding the grandeur of the land stretched out before you, holding

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

1:00 p.m. WORSHIP

Wednesday:

7:00 p.m. Bible Class

We have Bible classes for all ages & fellowship for lunch every Sunday!

P.O. Box 321

2008 Hwy. 306

(1.2 miles east of I-55)

Coldwater, MS 38618

(662) 622-7951

emailus@coldwatercofc.com

www.coldwatercofc.com

ELDERS

Billy Bland

Seth Daniel

Jim Jackson

W. Timothy Wilkes, Sr.

DEACONS

Jason Bayless Jared Brown

Jerry Davis Jeffrey Ferrell

Ron Johnson Andy Ratliff

Joe Owen Tim Wilkes, II

PREACHER

Clifton Angel

a precious newborn baby, or even falling deeply in love with someone. When we experience these natural things, we have an overwhelming sense of “awe,” giving us the general impression that God must be “awesome.”

Additionally, deep down in our hearts, we all seem to have a general sense of morality. Most everyone in the world thinks some things are wrong and some things are right. Though we may disagree on how to go about it, we all believe fairness and justice are good things. This sense of morality gives us the general impression that God must be as upset about suffering, injustice, and cruelty as we are.

The Problem with General Revelation

Therefore, we may assume we know God after coming down from a mountaintop experience or after traveling the world and meeting interesting people. We may assume we understand God’s will after something like becoming a parent or becoming a spouse. But the problem is, all of these assumptions are just that, assumptions. **They are a good place to start, but a horrible place to stop.**

A lot of people believe God approves of their life choices because they think they’ve come to know God through their experiences. I recently met a young man like this. He was living with his girlfriend and believed there was nothing wrong with their fornication because, as he said, “I experience God through my girlfriend’s love.” He was assuming he had learned enough about God through general revelation to conclude there was no such thing as “fornication.”

I gave the young man this example: if you walk into a room and see a man you’ve never met, you can probably reach several conclusions about him based on some general observations. You might say, “That guy seems friendly. He is talking to everyone in the room, he is smiling, and he is laughing.” So you might conclude, “I think he is probably a nice guy and we could be great friends.”

Your impression might be spot on. But even if it is, you would be out of line to say, “I’m pretty sure that guy would be ok with me taking his car keys and taking his car for a spin.” You cannot determine someone’s will by simply getting a general impression of them through simple observation. **If you want to know someone’s will, they have to speak to you.**

General revelation is limited in its nature. There are things you can know about God based on general revelation, **but you cannot know God’s specific thoughts through general revelation.** Those who assume they can know God or know God’s will without “religion,” are sadly mistaken.

God Revealed Through Scripture

The other way God reveals Himself to mankind is through, what is called, "special revelation." In other words, God has, at times, communicated through special "inspired" people (see Hebrews 1:1-2). Concerning this, the apostle Paul wrote, "Who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:11).

In context, Paul is explaining why people should listen to the apostles' teaching. He said the apostles had received "the Spirit who is from God," so they could understand the things freely given them from God (vs. 12). He said the apostles had "the mind of Christ" (vs. 16). The apostles' job was to "impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God" (vs. 7). The Spirit of God revealed to the apostles God's secret thoughts. In turn, the apostles imparted God's thoughts to others through their teaching, preaching, and writing.

So if we want to know the mind of Christ and the thoughts and wisdom of God, we must devote ourselves "to the apostles' teaching" (Acts 2:42). We must receive their word, "not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God" (1 Thessalonians 2:13). These men "were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21) and their words are "trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance" (1 Timothy 4:9).

You cannot know the thoughts of God unless you devote yourself to reading and understanding Scripture (see 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Not Religious, Not Spiritual

It is actually impossible to be spiritual without being religious. Those who are trying to figure God out through the natural world are not being spiritual. They are relying on the physical to teach them about the spiritual. A newborn baby, a warm embrace, a mountaintop experience are all physical experiences; they move us through our physical senses. The only way to spiritually know God is through the religion of Christ.

Bible study, worship, fellowship with the church, and selfless obedience - these are spiritual experiences and expressions. Paul said only the spiritually minded accept the apostles' teaching and become a part of Christ's church, "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Being in the church, accepting the teaching of Scripture, assembling together to worship and study, selflessly giving of yourself - this is true Christian spirituality.

NEWS & NOTES

Please Pray

Jimmy Sowell, hospital visit; **Lara Angel & Baby David**, arrived May 9; **Inez Neyman**; **Tim II & family**, Kenya mission; **Tim Wilkes Sr.**, Samoa mission; **Wiley & Betty Tuggle**; **Jeffrey & Kaiden Ferrell**, routine cancer screenings.

NetCasters
Fishers of Men
Far East Missions

Family & Friends

Bill Fleming, returned to hospital Tues; **Henry Wadsworth**, Russell's father, heart surgery; **Lisa Hogan**, heart problems; **Jeremy & Sandra Hulsey family**, minister and wife killed; **Ava Roten**, young girl with third round of cancer; **Sharol Brown**, Jared's mother; **Karen Shrum**, mother of Ginger's friend Mindy, diagnosed with cancer; **Bob Spurlin family**, brother Spurlin passed on April 7th; **Sharon Brewer**, Chris' sister; **Willie Grady**; **Judy Dowelling**, Joe's mother; **Jenny Kraft**; **Deborah Williams**, Betty Duke's daughter; **Carl Zluticky**; **John Simpson** and family; **Mac Owen**; **Johnny & Joy Angel**, health problems; **Rhonda Cook**; **Wanda Coats**; **Henretta Newsom**; **Tammy Powell**; **Lawton O'Brien**; **Pat Hardison**; **Beverly Whitecotton**; **Peggy Hunt**; **Jason Spencer**; **Elizabeth Baker**; **Janie Brister**; **Amanda Cummings**; **Danielle Key**; **Frankie Burfield**; **James Cooper**; **Renee Loya**; **Eli Williams**; **Ray Maples**; **Martha Hatfield**.

Birthdays

5/6	Dylan Moore	5/16	Russell Wadsworth
5/7	Rebecca Brown	5/24	Anna Johnson
5/9	David Angel	5/25	Davis Johnson
5/15	Andy Ratliff		

Anniversaries

5/15	Jason & Ginger Bayless
5/17	Joe & Leigh Owen
5/19	Seth & Jan Daniel
5/23	Johnny & Stephanie Bayless
5/23	Russell & Jeanna Wadsworth
5/26	Jimmy & Virginia Sowell
5/31	Billy & Terry Bland

Get Involved!

Celebrate Grads: Hannah Davis & Hunter Baker
May 15, money tree for each, \$ for Hannah goes to Jeanna, \$ for Hunter goes to Terry B.

Coldwater Camping Trip — May 19 – 21

Convalescence Center Devo — May 25 — 10 AM

Coldwater Singing Night — May 25 — 7 PM

Looxahoma Gospel Meeting — June 3 – 5

Coldwater VBS — June 12 – 16

Panama Mission Trip — June 17 – 25

SLCC Session 2 — June 19 – 25

Privileged to Serve

Sunday, May 15

Morning

Prayer Before Class	Marc Strickland
Announcements	Jason Bayless
Song Leader	Andy Ratliff
Lord's Supper:	
Preside	Billy Bland
	Ron Johnson
Assist	Jerry Davis
	Geoffrey Dunn
Opening Prayer	Jeffrey Ferrell
Sermon	Clifton Angel
Closing Prayer	Joe Owen

Afternoon

Song Leader	Andy Ratliff
Opening Prayer	Jim Jackson
Sermon	Clifton Angel
Lord's Supper	Ron Johnson
	Jerry Davis
	John Wofford

Wednesday, May 18

Song Leader	Andy Ratliff
Prayer	Jared Brown
Invitation	Clifton Angel
Prayer	Chris Martin