

Plain Path

Weekly newsletter of the Fry Road church of Christ

Sunday, August 31, 2014

Volume 19, Number 35

“Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path... Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart” (Psalm 27:11-14)

ENVIRONMENTALISTS

by Bob Pulliam

You may not realize it, but there is more than one kind of “environmentalist”. When we use that term, we are usually referring to a person who is very “planet conscious”. But I want us to think about another kind of “environmentalist”. You may not be that former type, but it isn’t difficult to fall into

another environmentalism.

There is a sense in which a person may be said to be a product of his/her environment. Oftentimes sons become their fathers, and daughters become their mothers. No matter how they fight it, they still get around to many of the personality traits that they actually did not like in

their parents.

Unfortunately, we have made this a victim’s philosophy, where wrong-doers are excused because of past experiences. Bad things do happen to innocent children, and the scars can create a burdensome road to travel. But our society has taken these environments, and made them a justification for bad behavior. In so doing, we refuse to realize that behavior involves a series of choices. Choice is one of the hallmarks of being

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Gospel Meeting September 7 - 10

Sunday: 9:30 AM - The New Man
10:30 AM - The Birth of 3,000 Babies
6:00 PM - The Conversion of David
Monday: 7:30 pm - The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus
Tuesday: 10:00 am - The Conversion of Jonah
7:30 pm - The Conversion of Cornelius
Wednesday: 7:30 pm - Forgive Each Other

Our speaker will be Joseph Casimier

One man came out of his house on his way to church on Sunday morning, just as his neighbor came out of his with his golf clubs. The golfer said, “Henry, come play golf with me today.” Henry, with an expression of horror on his face, replied, “This is the Lord’s day, and I go to church. Certainly I won’t play golf with you.” After a moment’s silence, the golfer quietly said, “You know, Henry, I have often wondered about your church, and I have admired your fidelity. You know also that this is the seventh time I have invited you to play golf with me, and you have never invited me to go to church with you.”

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human. But injecting the theory of evolution into psychology has turned us into animals who act only on instinct molded by our environment. Now we find that little Johnny or Suzie are to be pacified in their bad behavior. They cannot help it, because of an adverse environment in their past. And getting closer to home, we do the same thing with the sins we commit.

Let's consider a few Bible characters, and ask ourselves what effect their environment had.

Coming Out of a Tough Time...

Esau was hardly the poster child for righteousness. He married just to spite his parents (Gen

28:8f), and his brother took the birthright (Gen 25:31ff), and his father's blessing (Gen 27:41). But I want you to think about the fact that Esau's former desire to kill his brother softened in the years to come (Gen 33:4ff). He put away the former bitterness, and embraced his brother. How could he do that? He chose to do it by putting away bitterness rooted in selfish desires.

Joseph had a tough time, where his brothers were concerned (Gen 37). And also where others were concerned (Gen 39). Can you imagine going from father's favorite to Egyptian slave at the age of seventeen? And yet Joseph was able to rise above past circumstance (environment), and seek a much higher purpose (Gen 45:8). This is the therapy we should seek when the past burdens us. We must not dwell upon the tragedies inflicted upon us by this world. We must keep all within a context involving God's purposes.

Think about the sufferings of Job. Few have suffered as he and remained righteous. Job had the choice of dwelling on the suffering, or acknowledging that there is a higher purpose that we may not presently understand. Although he did not seem to grasp the specifics, he still left God in supreme control. In the end, he was able to pray for the friends who had tormented him.

And we cannot end this section without a word or two about Jesus. With all that He endured from His persecutors, He was still able to pray, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." (Lk 23:34) I believe that this is the answer to a past that plagues us. Forgiveness.

Coming Out of Life's Advantages...

The perfect advantage was afforded to Adam and Eve. No one had ever yet sinned. There was no precedent. No one had taken advantage of them, or harmed them in any way (physically or emotionally). And although they had their perfect environment, they were able to choose badly (Gen 3). Who could they blame? The woman blamed the Serpent. But wasn't it her own choice? She saw and longed for that which was forbidden. There was no childhood trauma influencing her decision! It was all about choice. Then we turn to the man and find him blaming his wife, but also God... "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me..." (Gen 3:12). What? God made a mistake in giving Adam "the woman"? I hope she never let him live down those words. God certainly didn't. And I want you to notice that in both excuses there is attention given to their environment. Modern psychology evidently didn't invent this practice of blaming one's environment. But this first case of doing so proves how patently erroneous the practice really is!

Think about the advantages enjoyed by Solomon. This son of David was the son of his beloved Bathsheba (II Sam 12:24). He was a prince in the royal household, and had great advantages. God blessed Solomon, lifting him up to rule to the greatest extent of any king in Israel (I Kgs 4:21). His fame spread far and wide (I Kgs 10:1-8). But all of these advantages did not prevent Solomon from making bad choices. In the end, Solomon turned to em-

(Environment, *continued on pg 3...*)

**THIS WEEK'S
DAILY BIBLE
READINGS**

**NEW TESTAMENT
READING**

ROMANS 6 - 10

August 31 - September 2

**OLD TESTAMENT
READING**

JUDGES 6 - 9

September 3 - 6

I TIMOTHY 4:13

FAMILY NEWS & NOTES

*News and Notes of Interest
to Fry Road Members*

Because of the large number of visitors to our services, we would ask those wishing to identify with the congregation to do so by expressing this interest directly to the elders.

Upcoming Meetings & Events:

**Annual Singing
September 6, 2014**

**Gospel Meeting (Joseph Casimier)
September 7 - 10, 2014**

Sick and Shut-Ins

Sections have been removed to preserve members' privacy

Sermons:

Next Sunday:

Our Gospel Meeting Begins
(see page one)

Tonight:

If We Could Rewrite the Bible

An Important Note

A cable blocking the Fry Road entrance will be installed in the near future in order to non-attendee traffic from flowing through the parking lot, endangering children. An exact installation date will be announced.

Grief Stricken

A singing flyer is included in this bulletin for your use. Personally, that you be here; and also for you to give away.

(Environment, *continued from pg 2...*)

brace idolatry (I Kgs 11:1-8), and the kingdom was split by his selfishness (I Kgs 11:9-13).

The prodigal son was a character in a parable, and yet expresses the truth of how an advantaged son can choose selfish pursuits (Lk 15:11ff).

Conclusion...

The beginning never determines the end. The end is determined by the choices we make along the way. And we can wallow in the mire of self pity over our beginning, or we can rise above to become what we are capable of, and all to the glory of God. Isn't that what we are here for? Not to have a perfectly happy life, but to serve God's purpose (Eccl 12:13). When we choose so that God may be glorified, we find the true means of being a joyful people.



FOR THE RECORD

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

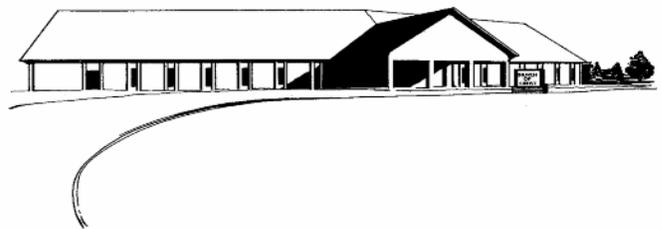
MONTHLY ASSIGNMENTS

Sections have been removed to preserve members' privacy

IN KEEPING WITH OUR LONG STANDING AGREEMENT, THOSE SERVING PUBLICLY ARE REMINDED TO PLEASE DRESS IN A MANNER RESPECTFUL OF THE GOD WHOM WE SERVE.

ELDERS:

Ruben Amador
Matthew Heaton
Donnie Mangrum
Steve Voss



DEACONS:

John Coleman	Ken Dunsmore
David Ellison	Ray Farrell
Aubrey Garner	Steve Geraci
Steve LaGrasta	John Light
Steven Martin	Mike McMurray
Jason Mock	David Stevenson
Glenn Tomblin	

TIMES OF SERVICES

Sunday Bible Classes	9:30 AM
Sunday Morning Assembly	10:30 AM
Sunday Evening Assembly	6:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Classes	7:30 PM

EVANGELIST & EDITOR:

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