

# Plain Path

Weekly newsletter of the Fry Road church of Christ

Sunday, May 4, 2014

Volume 19, Number 18

“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)

## “HAPPY BIRTHDAY!”

by Bob Pulliam

Reports have come to my attention indicating that some young people (in other places) have taken up a practice of spontaneously shouting “happy birthday” when someone is baptized (as soon as they come up out of the water, as I understand). I can’t prove it, but this probably came straight out of the fluff found in denominational trappings. I know you want to respond to a joyful event, but have you really thought this out? Or are you just mimicking what some people did somewhere else, it sounded good to you, so now you do it?

Should we really put this on the same level as a birthday party where everyone shouts “Happy

Birthday!”? Please think about it. A baptism is not a birthday party. I realize you know that (intellectually), but have you really considered the difference. The new birth being witnessed at a baptism

**“Let us remember the occasion, and understand that we are not cheering spectators, but witnesses.”**

isn’t comparable to the day of physical birth in very many ways. In fact, there is only one

comparison worth mentioning. Both subjects have no sins, once born. After that, the difference is huge. No one was shouting happy birthday when you were born. The process was not a command from the Bible. You did not choose to be born. Your birth was of physical parents. You weren’t in Christ. You weren’t in the church. You may or may not have had brothers or sisters, but

*(Birthday, continued on pg 2...)*

## THE NEW

by Bob Pulliam

## BIRTH

It isn’t anything like the physical birth. I was present for the birth of both my children, and it was a truly unforgettable experience. But when a person is born again, we’re talking about a different level of unforgettable. This moment of “new life” has two deaths attached to it.

The first death is that of Jesus. We are “baptized into His death” at baptism (Rom 6:3). This isn’t like any rite of passage required by fraternities or sororities. It is required of us (Acts 2:38; 10:48; 22:16), but it has a power set in place by Almighty God Himself. It is the means by which we get “into Christ” (Rom 6:3; Gal 3:27). Only *in Christ* do we have access to the spiritual blessings offered by God (Eph 1:3 & 7). And only by baptism to we obtain. Not because we have done something

*(New Birth, continued on pg 2...)*

Church of Christ • 2510 Fry Road • Houston, Texas 77084 - 5817

PHONE (281) 578-1897 • FAX (281) 578-2478 • E-MAIL: church@fryroad.org

WEB SITE: [www.fryroad.org](http://www.fryroad.org)

(Birthday, continued from pg 1...)

you didn't know what you were getting into (couldn't choose your family). Need I go on?

When you think about a baptism, does "Happy Birthday!" really express the reality of what has just happened? In truth, it trivializes it. I know this isn't the intention, but isn't it a step backward? We end up likening it to little Joey's birthday party at the pizza arcade last week. This isn't an anniversary of a day in the past. This is a person who was lost in sin and needed the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. They have been washed in the blood of the Lamb! And now we are shouting "Happy Birthday!"? This is far greater than that! I can understand people in a denomination doing that, because they do not

believe that baptism has anything to do with salvation. But knowing that it does should cause us to pause and contemplate the serious nature of the event that has just taken place. Yes, they have just been born again, but let's not liken it to a birthday in the physical realm. Birthdays come every year, and are not the actual day of birth, but only an anniversary. They are simply a reminder that we've ticked off another year. But a baptism is an event with eternal ramifications. Let's not even leave a hint that a similarity exists!

If you want something to say, then say, "Amen". It expresses your agreement in a reverent fashion that you know to come from God's word. And my favorite

expression is when the song leader chooses an appropriate song, and we all begin to sing as soon as the subject has come up out of the water. And let me bring up a related matter. Applause at a baptism. I realize that there is a desire to express approval at this important event. And while clapping is used for that purpose (e.g. when a politician says something we agree with), is the cacophony really appropriate for a holy occasion? Let us remember the occasion, and understand that we are not cheering spectators, but witnesses (cf. I Tim 6:12). And what we have just witnessed should carry our minds backward to a bloodstained cross, and forward to an eternity with the One who has given us life.



## THIS WEEK'S DAILY BIBLE READINGS

### NEW TESTAMENT READING

I PETER 1 - 5

May 4 - 6

### OLD TESTAMENT READING

LEVITICUS 10 - 16

May 7 - 10

I TIMOTHY 4:13

**“Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”**

(II Corinthians 5:17)

(New Birth, continued from pg 1...)

heroic, but because that is what God ordained.

The second death is that of the one being baptized. They are being "baptized into death" (Rom 6:4). Their own death to sin (vv5f). This isn't just an act of obedience. This is a commitment! The one being baptized is burying the old man of sin, and is putting on Christ Jesus (II Cor 5:17; Col 2:11f).

And now this "new life" is not like any other. Nicodemus thought the new birth might be a "happy birthday" moment (so to speak - Jn 3:4). He imagined that

physical heritage held some key to the blessings of the coming kingdom. But instead it would be something wholly different. A person would die to sin, be buried in water, and rise to walk in newness of life. A life that has been freed from the guilt of former sins. A life that now may look forward with confidence to eternity.

Have you been born again? Have you been baptized into Christ Jesus. If not, isn't it long overdue. "Give Christ Your Broken Life", and "Live for Jesus".



# 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:*

**V.B.S. ("We Would See Jesus")**  
June 23 - 26, 2014

**Gospel Meeting (Rick Moore)**  
July 12 - 13, 2014

**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:**

Saved From What?

### **Tonight:**

Things to Watch



*"Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles..."*  
(I Peter 2:12)

Part of our reading in this week's schedule is First Peter. Like many portions of scripture, this epistle is dominated by the subject of our behavior. That would make a very good focus for your family devotion this week.

When you read this epistle, look for two different kinds of passages and list them. The first, of course, has to do with our behavior. You might divide this into two categories. The way we behave before outsiders ("the Gentiles"), and the way we behave before each other. The second kind of passage is what I would call the "why passages". For example, He has "caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1:3). That's a good reason to keep our behavior excellent, isn't it. There are others, so watch for them as you read.

When you have your family devotion, share your list, and be prepared to discuss the importance and impact of our behavior (both positive and negative).

## *Announcements*

Announcements listed on the left are purged from time to time. Give Bob an update if it is to stay.

# FOR THE RECORD

## WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

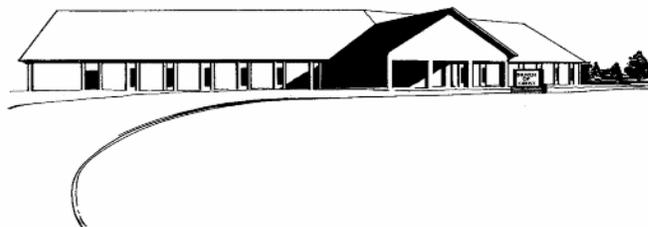
## MONTHLY ASSIGNMENTS

*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:

Bob Pulliam                      bob@fryroad.org