

The Oak Grove Oracle

(Family News & Views of the Oak Grove Church of Christ)

Meeting Weekly At Our Building Located At:
14 CR 3240, at the intersection of FM 1402 N. (Mailing Address: P.O. Box 523), Mt. Pleasant, Texas 75455, (903) 572-0859
Church Website: www.churchofchristoakgrove.com or, www.ogcoc.net

David A. McCain, Gospel Preacher & Bulletin Editor, (903) 285-1756 (M)

Volume VI Sunday, June 10, 2018 Number 23

Guest Editorial: "Glory In The Things of God"

(Editor's Note: Come Aug. 5-8, *OG* will be involved in our annual **Gospel Meeting**. This year's theme will be, *"What Jesus Taught."* Our special guest speaker for this **Gospel** series will be **Dr. Mike Price**, of Picayune, MS. To whet your interest in talking up our meeting to your friends and neighbors, I've asked **Mike** to share a few bulletin articles with us over the next two months. He is a faithful Gospel preacher and a great speaker.)

Some people love to glory in their shame. They love to tell us about all their accomplishments (the shame of self-righteousness), and others are proud to tell us of the sin they have overcome (the shame of self-centeredness). Both groups think a great deal of themselves. They try to impress the rest of us with their special enlightenment concerning spirituality and their unique relationship with God.

Sadly, Gnosticism (the philosophy of "the enlightened ones") has not died. It is alive and well today in the church. It was Paul, along with John and others, who found such men offensive, self-serving, arrogant and outside of God's will. Paul had to deal with both types of arrogance in his letter to the Philippians. "Only let us hold true to what we have attained. Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things" (Phil. 3:17-19, ESV).

Paul believed the power to save, which brings healing through the abundant life, was found in the gospel (Romans 1:16). He also wrote: "For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if justification were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose" (Gal. 2:18-21).

How can any person who has been crucified with Christ (in baptism by faith) rebuild what God's grace has torn down? We cannot justify ourselves! So why would one, in his pride, count his sinful past as though it was something that gives him a special place in the church to reach and to relate to sinners?

(Continued p. 2)

"Glory In The Things of God"

(Continued)

In light of what God's grace has torn down (our self-righteousness), no one should have the attitude that he is important because of what he has accomplished or overcome. In comparison to Jesus, we have not accomplished much, and what we have accomplished was because of God. "All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18).

Prideful talk about our past accomplishments and the sin that we have overcome is not what needs to come out of the mouth of a Christian. Paul said, "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear" (Eph. 4:29).

No Christian, much less those in roles of influence, should ever engage in glorying in his past. The Word of God teaches us to run the race. In the Greek foot-races to which Paul refers in Scripture, men competing for the prize did not stop at different points during the race and look back with pride and accomplishment on that part of the course they had just run. If so, they would have lost the race and the prize! "Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it" (1 Cor. 9:24). "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1).

A person struggling with temptations and sins such as adultery, pornography or gossip could be defeated by the glorying of men who have overcome these sins. He could say, "What is the use? I could never be what he is" and give up. Still others may be tempted once again by you rehearsing the dynamics involved with such addictive sins. "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown in to the sea" (Mark 9:42).

Dr. Mike Price (edited slightly for space)