

# News & Announcements

## PRAYER REQUESTS

**Daryion Banks** Continue to keep Daryion in your prayers as to his recovery, as well as his spiritual needs.

Continue to keep **Liz Barajas'** dad and family in your prayers. He is doing a lot better.

**Ignacio Reyes** needs our prayers for treatment he will be undergoing in Utah for PTSD for a few weeks. Also, keep Melissa and the children in your prayers while Ignacio goes through these treatments.

**Keep the following on your prayer list who are either shut-in, unable to worship with us, or have on going health concerns,**

**Janette Banks, Dorothy and Furman Barton, Mary and Bob Cress, Beverly Dempsey, Rachel Kidwell, Bobbye Pounders, John Simo, and Fernando Vizcarra, Jr.** in your prayers.

## TRAVELING MEMBERS

**Brenda Mendoza** will be traveling to Australia until sometime in March. Keep Brenda in your prayers for a safe travel and return.

## MILITARY MEMBERS

**Michael Barnes and David Sims** are stationed at Nellis Air Force Base.

“God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” (1 Corinthians 9-10)

# WORD OF FAITH

*Weekly bulletin of the Vegas Drive Church of Christ*

January 10, 2016 • 3824 Vegas Drive • Las Vegas, NV 89108 • (702) 636-4986  
Sunday Bible Class: 9 AM • Sunday Worship: 10 AM & 6 PM • Wednesday Bible Class: 7 PM

[www.vegasdrivechurchofchrist.com](http://www.vegasdrivechurchofchrist.com)

## DO YOU LOVE THE TRUTH?

The wise man in the book of Proverbs admonishes us to "buy the truth, and do not sell it" ([Prov.23:23](#)). Truth is to be a valuable commodity in our lives -- we are to obtain it at all costs and once obtained, never let it slip from our hands. It is the truth that sets us free from the shackles of sin ([John 8:32](#)).

When I started preaching I labored under several false assumptions, one of them was that all people valued the truth in the same way I did. I thought that if you would go out and tell people the truth that they would jump at the chance to go wherever it led. However, some people love darkness more than light, because their deeds are evil ([John 3:19](#)). Not only was I wrong about the world in general hungering for the truth, I was wrong in my assumption that all the people claiming to be Christians were really striving to find out what God required of them -- I'm talking about people who occupied the pews in buildings where I have preached. I've found out that a lot of people want "the truth" as long as it does not disturb them or present any challenges in their lives. What about you? Can you honestly say that you love the truth? When it comes to religious matters, do you want the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? In this article I want to examine how people react to the truth.

**Some People React With Anger.** King Saul was told to utterly destroy the Amalekites ([1 Sam. 15:3](#)). Saul did most of what God had commanded, but he spared king Agag and the best of the sheep and oxen ([1 Sam. 15:8-9](#)). Later, when Saul saw the prophet Samuel walking towards him said, "Blessed are you of the Lord! I have performed the commandment of the Lord" ([1 Sam. 15:13](#)). The truth of the matter is that Saul had not obeyed the voice of God, and Samuel rebuked him for it ([1 Sam. 15:14](#)). Saul protested in anger and Samuel told him to be quiet ([1 Sam. 15:20-23](#)). Samuel then departed from the presence of Saul, never to see him again in this life ([1 Sam. 15:34-35](#)).

Paul preached to a Jewish mob in the [city of Jerusalem](#) ([Acts 22:1-21](#)). He taught the truth about Jesus, but when he mentioned his own mission to the Gentiles, they got angry. "And they listened to him until this word, and then they raised their voices and said, 'Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live!' Then, as they cried out and tore off their clothes and threw dust into the air" ([Acts 22:22-23](#)).

In December of 1987 I had a [public debate with a Baptist preacher](#) in Evansville, Indiana. My opponent had preached in Evansville for many years, and the debate was his idea. We scheduled a four-night debate to discuss baptism and whether or not one could be saved by faith alone. The first night of the debate went well, and I pressed my points as best I could. On the second night my opponent got into the pulpit and announced he was not going to continue with the debate. He then said, "I still believe that men are saved by faith alone -- but I realize you can't prove that from the Bible. But if you don't think my mother is saved, I'll meet you in the parking lot!" Here was a man who knew his position could not be supported by the Bible, but instead of changing his position he offered a fist fight!

**Some People Attack The Messenger.** Ahab, king of Israel, was a very wicked king. He married Jezebel, a woman guilty of murdering God's own prophets. He worshipped and served Baal, and even built an altar and a temple for Baal in Samaria. "Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him" ([1 Kings 16:33](#)). The great prophet [Elijah](#) proclaimed a drought as punishment for the sins of Ahab -- and it lasted three years ([1 Kings 17:1](#); [18:1](#)). One of the most interesting points of the story is the reaction of Ahab when he met Elijah. "Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, 'Is that you, O troubler of Israel?'" ([1 Kings 18:17](#)). Ahab caused the drought in the land of Israel because of his sins, but he blamed the messenger!

[John the Baptist](#) lost his life because of his stand on marriage, divorce and remarriage ([Matt. 14:1-10](#)). John had informed Herod that he was living in sin because he married Herodias, a woman he had no lawful right to marry. At Herod's birthday party he promised the daughter of Herodias that she could have anything she wanted. After being prompted by her mother she requested the head of John the Baptist on a platter. The man who preaches where my parents go to church recently got fired. The circumstances of his firing were rather unusual. I've known the man for several years and have always thought highly of him. He was honorable in conduct and sound in teaching. The problem was not that he taught error, but rather that he taught the truth on moral issues -- and immoral people just don't like that type of preaching. So, instead of repenting of their immoral conduct, a few of the men in the congregation decided it would be easier to fire the preacher!

**Some People Will Lash Out At Others.** Sometimes wicked people lash out at innocent people who just happen to be nearby. Cain took out his anger on his brother Abel. Cain started off bad by offering a bad sacrifice to God ([Gen. 4:3-5](#)). Abel had acted in faith at the direction of God and offered an acceptable sacrifice ([Heb. 11:4](#); [Rom. 10:17](#)). Cain got depressed when God rejected his sacrifice ([Gen. 4:6](#)).

God told Cain that he would feel right when he acted right ([Gen. 4:7](#)). In his depression, Cain killed his own brother ([Gen. 4:8](#)). What had Abel been guilty of? What sin had he committed? As far as I can tell, Abel just happened to be in the wrong place when a wicked man felt the guilt of his own sins and lashed out. "For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous." ([1 John 3:13](#)).

The same thing happens today -- the preacher preaches the truth and someone gets their feelings hurt because it reflects upon them. Instead of repenting of the error of their ways, the guilty party will often lash out at other people. Sometimes they lash out at their husband, wife or children. Weak Christians will often lash out at faithful Christians who happen to be nearby.

This is the same problem the apostle Peter had ([John 21:15-23](#)). Just prior to His ascension back into heaven, Jesus asked the apostle Peter three times if he loved Him. Peter was deeply grieved by the questions and then pointed to John and said, "But Lord, what about this man?" Our Lord responded by telling Peter it was none of his business. Peter had an obligation to follow Jesus regardless of what John did.

**Some People Will Harden Their Heart.** Look at the example of Pharaoh during the time of Moses. God said He would harden Pharaoh's heart ([Exo. 4:21](#); [7:3](#)). But, the Bible also says Pharaoh hardened his own heart ([Exo. 8:15](#), [32](#); [9:34](#)). What happened was this: every one of the plagues made Pharaoh more rebellious against God. It was not God's plan to terrify Pharaoh into submission -- every plague was a warning designed to give him another chance to soften his heart, but Pharaoh refused. In our day, the preaching of the gospel has had on many souls exactly the same effect as the Lord's demand to Pharaoh.

The real question is, "What shall my attitude be towards the commands of God?" Will my heart be hardened or softened by God's appeal to me? Will I deny myself, take up my cross and follow Him ([Matt. 16:24](#))? My attitude and actions will depend upon whether or not I love the truth!

Paul warned the Hebrew Christians about this very thing. They were told to not harden their hearts like their ancestors did in the wilderness ([Heb. 3:7-13](#)). It is possible for us to harden our hearts through the "deceitfulness of sin."

On one occasion Paul had the opportunity to preach to Felix. Luke tells us that as Paul "reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, 'Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you'" ([Acts 24:25](#)). There is no record of Felix ever obeying the gospel of Christ -- he allowed his heart to grow hard.

**Some People Will Allow The Gospel To Change Their Lives!** One of the greatest stories of conversion in the Bible took place in the ancient city of [Nineveh](#). God sent Jonah, a reluctant prophet, to preach to them. "The people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them" ([Jonah 3:5](#)). The people of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah. "Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it" ([Jonah 3:10](#)).

King David sinned against the Lord by committing adultery with Bathsheba ([2 Sam. 11](#)). When Nathan the prophet rebuked him, David confessed, "I have sinned against the Lord" ([2 Sam. 12:13](#)). David then wrote one of the most beautiful Psalms in the Bible. "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight -- that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge." ([Psalms 51:1-4](#)).

Saul of [Tarsus](#) was "a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man" ([1 Tim. 1:13](#)). However, when the Lord appeared to him and challenged his way of life, Saul cried out, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" ([Acts 9:6](#)). Saul, later known as Paul, allowed the gospel to melt his heart and transform his life. The sermon preached by Peter on the day of Pentecost caused many in his audience to be "cut to the heart" ([Acts 2:37](#)). This cutting to the heart caused them to realize the terrible crime they had committed when they put the Son of God to death. Those cut to the heart then cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" ([Acts 2:37](#)). Peter then told them to "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" ([Acts 2:38](#)). That same day about 3,000 people obeyed the gospel of Christ ([Acts 2:41](#)).

**Conclusion.** Do you really love the truth? If you don't love the truth, God will allow you to believe a lie ([2 Thes. 2:10](#)). How do you react to the truth when some preacher points out that your life is not in harmony with the revealed will of God? Do you get angry? Do you want to fire the preacher? Or, like the Prodigal Son, do acknowledge that you have sinned against heaven and beg for God's mercy and forgiveness? How you react to the truth reveals what you are really made of. The gospel is like fire -- it will soften wax and harden clay. What effect will it have on you?

If you are concerned about business interests, worldly affairs and material things rather than things sacred and holy, the result will be that your heart will become hardened. There is a chance you will reach the point where the gospel has lost its power upon you and you are doomed to destruction.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### **God's Plan of Salvation**

HEAR the gospel Rom. 10:17  
BELIEVE the gospel John 3:16  
REPENT of your sins Luke 13:3  
CONFESS Christ Matt. 10:32  
Be BAPTIZED Acts 2:38  
Live FAITHFULLY Rev. 2:10

If you are visiting today, we appreciate your presence and hope to get to know you better. Please fill out a visitor's card so we can have a record of your attendance, and if there is any way we can serve your spiritual needs, please bring this to our attention.

[www.vegasdrivechurchofchrist.com](http://www.vegasdrivechurchofchrist.com)