



## Clay's Corner

Knowing that while we are away I would need to work on my sermon for the Sunday after we got back, I have brought most all of my study resources with me, primarily my laptop with Bible program and two of my Bibles. What I have found over the course of the last several days is that I have become so wrapped up in my reading that I have literally spent more time in scripture than I have looking out the windows of the blind for deer.

In my reading Monday afternoon, I came across an interesting passage from 2 Chronicles chapter 30 that just rang a hung bell for me. The background for this passage is Israel's return to God under Hezekiah's rule. The people had strayed far from God under the rule of Ahaz and suffered considerably because of their sins. Hezekiah, a man who feared the Lord, led God's people back; He restored worship to God in Israel. And the time for Passover had come and there was a call throughout the land to come to Jerusalem to observe the Holy Days of Passover. As this was something new for so many of Israel, many who came did not prepare themselves for the rituals of the occasion and as such would have been under normal circumstances unclean and unfit for the observance. But as is always the case with God, He is more interested in the hearts of men than in the details of their ritual worship.

Verses 18-20 read: "For a majority of the people, many of them from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet they ate the Passover otherwise than as prescribed. For Hezekiah had prayed for them, saying, "May the good LORD pardon everyone who sets his heart to seek God, the LORD, the God of his fathers, even though not according to the sanctuary's rules of cleanness." **And the LORD heard Hezekiah and healed the people.**"

Hezekiah knew the spiritual condition of his people and he sought out the Lord's mercy for them because he knew their hearts were right, even if their physical/spiritual condition wasn't. And God had mercy on them and pardoned their uncleanness and He healed the people.

Jesus said this in Matthew 9:13, "Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." And again in Matthew 12:7, "And if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless."

There are so many other things that Jesus said along these lines and so many examples in the Bible where perfected rituals, commanded or not, were not as important to God as the condition of the hearts of those who sought Him. I could speak for days on the instances from scripture where God does something so unlike what we would do and have done in the past.

It's a matter of the heart. It has always been so and it always will be. When Jesus says that we are called to worship in spirit and in truth, I think more and more this is what he had in mind. It's not a matter of my truth. It's a matter of His truth. And His truth requires that we worship Him with our heart. Quoting Jesus once again, Matthew 15:8-9, "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

God Bless you all.

## PRAYER LIST

- **Monty Allen** (Susan Barnick's friend's brother—cancer)
- **Pauline Alvarez** (recovering from knee surgery, 845 S Magnolia, Luling, TX 78648)
- **Lauren Babb** (health)
- **Brooke Bertling** (Haley Ratliff's friend—breast cancer)
- **Terry Boaz** (Haley Ratliff's step-mother—Hendrick League House, Room 104, Abilene)
- **Dawn Clarke** (Shirley Kuchynka's daughter)
- **Betty Cox** (Brent Barnick's sister—homebound, rheumatoid arthritis)
- **Eric Davis and Rose**
- **Joyce Faires** (recovering from knee surgery)
- **Lance Fougerat**
- **Chestly Gobar, Jordyn and Lucy**
- **Herb Hahn** (health)
- **Sandra Jetton** (health)
- **Katy and Family** (Kelly Mason's friends—Katy's sister injured in motorcycle accident)
- **Evlynn Lawrence** (Sweeneys' granddaughter)
- **Justen Lawrence**
- **Guy Lowe** (Clay Mason's friend—health)
- **Leanne Mason** (recovering from surgery)
- **Claudia Morris** (Perry Winegeart's sister—health)
- **Sid Roberts** (Faireses' friend—health)
- **Paris, Lexus & Maelyn Robertson** (Johnsons' friends—Maelyn born 10 weeks premature)
- **Ruth** (Joyce Faires's sister-in-law)
- **Sharon Saint** (Zach Babb's mother—recovering from surgeries)
- **Maria Vasquez** (Joyce Faires's neighbor—health)
- **Lorin Watson** (Victoria Johnson's father—health)

If you have any announcements or prayer requests you wish to have included in the bulletin or to sign up for weekly e-mail updates, please contact Victoria Johnson: 325-518-9205, [victoria@gonzaleschurchofchrist.org](mailto:victoria@gonzaleschurchofchrist.org).

## PRAYER UPDATES

**Monty Allen**, Susan Barnick's friend's brother, is scheduled for surgery on December 23. He has had nine weeks of chemo and the doctors are happy because he has maintained his weight.

**Pauline Alvarez** will likely have to remain in Luling through the end of the month. At her check-up, the doctor determined one of her bones is sitting at an angle and she needs additional therapy to make sure it straightens out so the knee heals properly. **If you are able to assist with picking up Cruz and Rea'Anna for church, please contact Victoria Johnson.**

**Terry Boaz**, Haley Ratliff's step-mother, moved to an apartment at the Hendrick League House. She will be there through the end of January for rehab after her surgery. She goes in daily for an IV, but is otherwise free to move about right now.

**Joyce Faires** had outpatient knee surgery Wednesday. It went well. She is home and doing fine, just a little sore and will use a walker for a few days.

**Herb Hahn** met with the doctor on Tuesday, but his test was rescheduled for February, as he has not been experiencing any new or worsening heart-related symptoms.

**Sid Roberts**, the Faireses' friend, is out of the hospital and now in a nursing home in Wimberley.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Thank You Card for Bus

As most of you know, the congregation recently received a generous donation so that we could purchase our very first bus! There is a thank you card to the donors on the table in the foyer and everyone is encouraged to sign it.

### Pancake Supper with Santa

**Today at 4 p.m.**, as part of Youth Sunday, we are having a Pancake Supper with Santa at in the annex. There will be crafts for the kids, pictures with Santa, hot chocolate, and of course pancakes! Following the pancake supper, we will move to the auditorium for a devotional. Everyone is invited. We hope to see you there!

### Christmas Sacks for ISF

**This Wednesday, Dec. 16**, the youth will fill Christmas sacks for ISF residents during their class time.

### Tuesday Morning Men's Meeting

All men are invited to the annex each Tuesday morning at 6:20 a.m. for a time of breakfast, prayer and fellowship.

## YOUTH ZONE

SUNDAY, DEC. 13  
SOFTBALL

GONZALES SELECT @ HUBER RANCH  
BLUE SANTA TOURNAMENT (SEGUIN)



MONDAY, DEC. 14  
BOYS BASKETBALL

GONZALES 8TH "B" V. NAVARRO, 5 P.M.  
GIRLS BASKETBALL

GONZALES 7TH "B" @ NAVARRO, 5 P.M.  
GONZALES 7TH "A" @ NAVARRO, 6 P.M.

SHINER JUNIOR HIGH V. FLATONIA, 5:30 P.M.

Jacy Chrismon—Shiner Junior High Girls Basketball  
Rea'Anna Flores—Gonzales Select Softball  
Fernando Garcia—Gonzales 8th "B" Boys Basketball

TUESDAY, DEC. 15  
BOYS BASKETBALL

GONZALES VARSITY @ SEALY, 8 P.M.  
FRIDAY, DEC. 18

BOYS BASKETBALL

GONZALES VARSITY @ ATONEMENT ACADEMY  
(SAN ANTONIO), 5:30 P.M.



Tyler Hendershot—Gonzales Varsity Boys Basketball  
Coach Kevin Johnson—Gonzales 7th Girls Basketball