

The Tanner St Church of Christ meets each Lord's Day beginning with Bible classes at **9:30 AM**. We continue with our worship at **10:20 AM** and again at **5:00 PM**. We also meet each Wednesday evening at **7:00 PM** for Bible study and worship. Our meeting place is located about ¾ of a mile from I30 at 1512 Tanner St in Malvern, AR.

If you have questions about what we believe and teach, please visit our website, tannerst.com to listen to sermons or read past articles from our bulletin. Or you can contact us and we will be glad to find a convenient time to study with you.

Phone: (501) 332-8806 Email: preacher@tannerst.com

Consider: Romans 12:1-2

Needed News

Phyllis Jackson is suffering with bronchitis. **Bill & Joyce Venable** both continue to deal with health issues. **Bill** should receive treatment at his appointment in mid February.

Dolline Fain, Conard Harris as well as all our older members need to be remembered in our prayers.

The **Simpson** family is out of town again this weekend.

Several of our families have those who are dealing with sickness and recovery. **Nettie Jackson** is housebound and needs continuous care. **Terryl Wright** is still dealing with blood clot issues. **Carolyn Richmond**, Adene's daughter, is doing very well in her recovery from her recent cancer treatments. **Ronda Gray** has not been doing as well this past week. She is sleeping most of the time.

Don't forget our upcoming meeting, March 29– April 1. Terry Summerlin will be presenting Gospel lessons to help us remain faithful to God in our daily lives. Also remember **Ruben & John** would like your topic suggestions for our Sunday Bible class.

Seeking His Righteousness

"...seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.." Matthew 6:33

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Would We Have Believed Them?

Mark Copeland

If we had been living in the first century would we have been receptive to the preaching of John the Baptist, Peter or Paul? Most would probably say, "Of course, for I receive them now!" But could it be that what they taught has become "socially acceptable?" And perhaps, have their teachings been presented to us in a more "non-offensive manner?"

But how would we have received the truth from them as it was originally presented? If we had been there, would we have believed them? Let us challenge our thinking along these lines.

Would we have believed a "Harsh Hermit?" John the Baptist, after all, did his preaching in the wilderness, forcing people to come out to hear him (Mt. 3:1-2). He dressed himself in camel's hair and a leather girdle, and ate locusts and wild honey (Mt. 3:4). He even called religious people coming to be baptized a "brood of vipers" (Mt. 3:5-7).

I seriously doubt we would IF we balk at having to travel some distance to study God's Word today (e.g., going twice on Sundays, etc.) But Jesus taught in Mt. 12:42, "The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here."

I seriously doubt we could IF we tend to judge people by the clothes they wear! It is easy to be affected by the “Dress For Success” philosophy. But we need to remember God’s perspective – “But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.” (I Sam 16:7)

I seriously doubt we would IF we get upset or offended when a preacher points out our faults! Some would have preachers never preach “negative sermons.” But Jesus also demonstrated that sometimes the occasion calls for strong measures (Mt. 23:13-15).

Or how about the “Hillbilly Hermit?” The Apostle Peter was a man whose ways demonstrated his lack of formal religious training (Acts 4:13). He denied Jesus three times! (Mt. 26:69-75) His hypocrisy on one occasion even split a church! (Gal. 2:11-13)

I seriously doubt we would receive him IF we expect a man to be formerly educated before we would want him as a preacher! In some churches a preacher is required to have a degree to be considered acceptable. But the wrong kind of learning is a dangerous thing (I Cor. 1:18 – 29).

I seriously doubt we would receive him IF we aren’t willing to give others another chance who fail us, especially more than once! If Peter had been treated like we sometimes treat fallen preachers today, would he have remained an apostle? However, the early church took to heart what Jesus taught Peter about forgiveness (Mt. 18:21, 22; Lk. 17:3, 4).

And then, what about the “Vehement Villain?” The Apostle Paul had been a blasphemer, and persecutor of the

church! (I Tim. 1:13) He was not a fluent speaker (I Cor. 2:3, 4), and even his physical appearance was described as “weak”! (II Cor. 10:10)

I doubt we would have kindly received Paul IF we hold a person’s pre-Christian life against them. Some people must not believe in the power of the gospel to transform lives. But consider what it did for the people of Corinth (I Cor. 6:9 – 11).

I doubt if we would have kindly received Paul IF we don’t care to hear preachers whose sermon presentation lacks “polish”! Many people will not go to hear preachers who may be young, inexperienced, or who are not eloquent. Yet “smooth words and flattering speech” can be used to deceive (Rom. 16:17, 18).

I doubt we would have kindly received Paul if we tend to judge people by their physical appearance (size, weight, etc.)! Again, we need to remember God’s perspective on things (I Sam. 16:7).

How we receive people today is a strong indication as to how we would have received such as John the Baptist, Peter, Paul and even Jesus! (Mt. 13:54-58) While we would like to think we would have been quick to listen and believe their message, perhaps we might have acted differently! I hope that we appreciate the importance of looking beyond the messenger and how his message might be presented, to the message itself.

But there is another way to determine if we would have believed them back then: HAVE WE OBEYED THEM TODAY? It may be speculation on our part to say we would have believed these men back in the first century...but one this is sure...if we are unwilling to obey them today, we certainly would not have done it then! How about you...?