



THE SEVIERVILLE SOWER

Sowing the seed (Luke 8:11) into the hearts of mankind.

Sevierville Church of Christ | 208 Hicks Drive | Sevierville, TN 37862 | (865) 453-8009 | seviervillecoc.org

February 27, 2022

Be Your Best

Robert Johnson

“**I** always do my best to have a clear conscience toward God and men” (Acts 24:16). Such was Paul’s assessment of his life to Felix, in defense of the Gospel by which he lived, for which he was charged by the Jews. The term translated “best” literally means to exert all one’s diligence, study and industry; to endeavor, to strive with all one’s energies. When Paul, then, said he did his best, that’s exactly what he meant; he offered his best to God in seeking to live as God wanted. This is evident in what he said to the Galatians; “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

Paul did such because of the depth of love he had for the God who had offered him the best in everything. The course of Paul’s life, while he thought it was pleasing to God, was not. Christ’s death on the cross was for him as much as for anyone else. God’s grace was as available to Paul as much as for anyone else. The promise of eternal life in Christ was as available to Paul as much as it is for anyone else. Paul understood this great love God had for him, and from love for God, he gave himself to Him, in love, doing his best for Him. Not that Paul would ever reach perfection in the flesh, but he devoted himself completely to God, that God could fulfill His purpose in Paul, which was the salvation of his soul. “For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by God’s grace I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not ineffective. However, I worked more than any of them, yet not I, but God’s grace that was with me” (1 Corinthians 15:9-10).

Does God deserve anything less than the best from us today? Certainly we will not reach perfection in the flesh either, but in view of all God is, all that He has done, is doing and will do for us, does He not deserve

our best? If we understand the price of our salvation in Christ, should not our love for God and His Son prompt us to offer ourselves to seek God, to be what He desires of us, that He might bless us now and eternally? “Brothers, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God’s heavenly call in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13-14). To pursue means to follow or press hard after. Should we do less?

Jesus said, “Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because I tell you, many will try to enter and won’t be able” (Luke 13:24). To “make every effort” conveys the idea of straining every nerve to the uttermost towards the goal, or to do one’s best. How well do we do? *Is what we offer Christ in daily Christian living our best? When one is inconsistent in worship, but not in other pursuits, is that one’s best? When one gives miserly to God, but generously to oneself, is that one’s best? If one has plenty of time for television, but no time for Scripture, is that one’s best? If physical desires always come before spiritual activities, is that one’s best?* We must define our lives by God’s will for us, not by the world around us.

God told the people of Judah, “Cursed be the one who does the LORD’S work negligently” (Jeremiah 48:10). The Hebrew term for “negligence” means a lack of diligence or attention, lazy, inadequate action or work. God offers His best for us every second we live. Why not resolve now to do better in living for Him, doing one’s best for Him and in love for Him? “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (Ephesians 5:15-17).

Prayer Requests & Announcements

Please pray for the Christians in Ukraine. Saints in Kyiv and other cities are safe but taking various precautions. Some brethren in western cities are providing shelter for Christians from other parts of Ukraine.

Remember in prayer our sister Chris Bender who has been having health issues lately. She had a biopsy recently and saw a surgeon on Wednesday to have tumors removed.

Please remember Chris Bender's brother-in-law in prayer. He has cancer and has also been going through rehab after suffering several strokes in December.

Please keep the Sutton and Layman families in prayer after the recent passing of Jerry Sutton's brother-in-law, Darrell Layman, from COVID complications and kidney failure.

Remember in prayer Shirley Yeager's grandson, Doug Walters, who fell from a ladder while trimming a tree. He is recovering from injuries to his shoulder and knees.

Continue to Remember...

Chris Bender, John and Helen Carr, Connie Duncan, Dennis and Marty Danilchuk, Lindsey Johnson, Shirley McKnight, Sue Moore, Lyn Morris, Paul and Ellen Ostrander, Joanne Roark, Shirley Yeager, Becky Duncan (Joe and Connie's daughter-in-law), Belinda Lang (Kevin's aunt), Adam Lane (son-in-law of Vickie Price), Harlie McClung (John and Helen Carr's 12 year-old great-granddaughter), Anita Ogle (Sherry Simms' friend), Casie Rains (friend of the Hansens), Paul Rolan (Mary Kate's brother), Frankie Simms (Scott Simms' father), Wayne Tart (Tammie Fish's brother).

We had a great turnout for our first fellowship night on Friday and encourage all who are able to join us next month for this time of fellowship and growing our bonds in Christ!

Ladies' class Thursdays at 6:15 at the Hansen's house

Monthly afternoon song service: Today

Fellowship lunch: March 6

Fellowship night: March 18, 6:30

Evangelism Materials

Extra supplies for our evangelism work are freely available in the supply room to our members. Instructional books, DVDs, and Bible study materials are available. We also have a variety of cards for our Compassion Card work.

Weekly Assemblies

Sunday: Bible Study 9 a.m.
Worship 10 a.m.
Worship 1 p.m.
Wednesday: Bible Class 7 p.m.

Perilous Times Today

Ralph Clevinger

There are several passages of Scripture that speak to our current situation. These passages are not necessarily prophecies as much as they assure us that evil desires are nothing new. Paul informed Timothy that "evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3:13 NKJV). Demar Elam expresses the reality of the situation in his statement, "Evil circles the globe while truth puts her boots on." Evil holds drawing power due to its acceptance. Once it gains acceptance, evil picks up speed due to its willing accomplices. Listen to Paul's description in 2 Timothy 3:1-5).

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power.

Evil steals all care for others' wellbeing while pleasing the god of self. Whatever seems good to the eyes and pleasurable at the moment drives the willing participant to engage in his or her desires. These activities not only jade the eyes but also harden the heart. The now victim becomes so enamored by evil that he or she is unwilling to accept a worldview apart from sin. Sin rules over one as a king (John 8:34). It promises freedom but enslaves the poor soul to a life of heavy burdens.

How do we keep ourselves from this life of servitude? Paul encouraged Timothy to turn away from such people who engage in those activities (2 Timothy 3:5). He further exhorted Timothy, "But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:14-15). Timothy (as well as we who live today) could find strength in the Scriptures to overcome such evil desire. Notice, knowledge of the Scripture is not enough but the *continuing* in the things he learned sufficed. The *practice* of Scripture helps the reader to change the mind concerning evil desire. Jesus' words possess the truth that brings true freedom (John 8:32). The words of Christ give life to the hearer (John 6:63) and open the eyes of those blinded by sin (John 9:39). Jesus proclaimed, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (John 8:12).

The acceptance of evil does not make it right or good. We have the ability to decide which life we live. We can choose to disregard the goodness found in the Lord and follow evil. We may desire to live carelessly, fulfilling the desires of the flesh. However, we can choose to forsake the evil of the world. We can change our hearts and minds through the knowledge of Jesus. We can choose to live our best lives today! The most difficult truth to accept is that we are given the ability to choose. Let us choose to honor the Lord in life and glorify Him in our death.

Elders

Randy Hansen, Robert Moore, Kevin Ruiz, and Jerry Sutton

Deacon

Lenwood Johnson (finance)

Preacher

Kevin Ruiz