

Prayer List of the Sick and Afflicted:

Joni McConnell fell and was in the hospital for a couple of days. Fortunately, she had no broken bones but was bruised badly and in significant pain.
Iris Hash is staying with her daughter, recovering from her hip replacement surgery. She is currently having rehab therapy but is experiencing numbness in her leg.
Ray Sturgill is back home recovering but has been able to attend services.
Floyd Coley is scheduled to have a radiofrequency treatment to burn some nerve endings in his back on Monday in an effort to relieve his back pain.
Delores Hendrickson is still struggling with a bad cough.
Sean Mathews continues to struggle with GI issues and is now on a special diet.
Shirley Cook's brother, Richard Pflaum, has been diagnosed with lupus.
Mike Parnell's sister-in-law, Ethel Parnell, is suffering from dementia.
Jesse Riddle is now off hospice care but is often able to attend Sunday AM service.
Connie Davis is recovering well after surgery to replace her left hip.
Charlie Henard's niece, Brittany Henard, is battling terminal cancer.
Karen Sproles had the nerve stimulator wires removed from her knee but may have a new one inserted in a few months to help with her pain.

Pray For Our Shut-Ins:

Gloria Hale, Karen Sproles, Iris Hash, John & Terry Richardson

Pray For The Mission Works We Are Supporting:

John Grubb (Mission work in Asia), Daniel Goshorn and family (Mission work in Peru). See latest mission reports on the bulletin board in the back of the auditorium.

Benevolence Opportunity:

For the month of August, we are asked to bring in pasta (e.g. spaghetti noodles, elbow macaroni, etc.) red spaghetti sauce and white alfredo sauce. These items will be donated to the Metropolitan School District of Martinsville food pantry.

Men's Business Meeting:

The next men's business meeting will be Wednesday, August 7th at 5:00 PM.

Monthly Pitch-in Dinner:

Our next pitch-in dinner will be Sunday, September 8th, following the AM services. Following the pitch-in, at 1:00 PM, we will conclude our gospel meeting with brother Tom House.

2024 Fall Gospel Meeting:

A fall gospel meeting will be held September 6-8 with brother Tom House of the Plainview Church of Christ in Fulton, MS.

Annual Fish Fry:

We will be having our annual church fish fry on Saturday, October 12th at 5:00 PM.

Radio Program:

Please remember to tune in every Sunday morning at 8:00 AM to WCBK 102.3 FM to hear our radio program which is entitled: "Preparing For Eternity".

God's Plan For Our Salvation

Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
Faithful Christian Living, after the above five steps (I Peter 2:11, 12; Rev. 2:10).

August 11, 2024

MORGAN STREET CHURCH OF CHRIST

**540 E. Morgan Street
Martinsville, IN 46151
(765) 342-6027**



Schedule of Services:

Sunday

Bible Study – 9:30 AM

Worship – 10:30 AM

Evening Service - 6:00

Wednesday

Bible Study – 6:00 PM

Thursday

Ladies' Bible Study – 11:00 AM (March through October)

Radio Program:

"Preparing For Eternity"

Sunday Mornings 8:00 AM, WCBK 102.3 FM

Website:

www.morganstreetchurchofchrist.org

Gospel Preacher – Bob Hawkins

WOLVES IN SHEPHERD'S CLOTHING

James E. Rogers

When “wolves” put on shepherd’s clothing, the congregation is in trouble. Instead of protecting the sheep, the shepherd will be destroying the sheep.

Sometimes “wolves” from one congregation will influence people in another congregation. Before long, some of the false teaching from the “wolf-infested” congregation is being heard at home.

Jesus warned, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves” (Matt. 7:15, ASV unless otherwise noted). Jesus stated these wolves could be detected, though they were in disguise, by the fruits they produced (7:16-20). The disciples of Jesus were to be on guard so they would not be devoured by these false prophets. The “wolves” were there to make prey of the “sheep.”

Paul warned the “elders of the church” (Acts 20:17) at Ephesus about such wolves. He stated, “I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (20:29-30). It was the case that some of these wolves would arise from within the eldership, that is, some of these “wolves” would wear shepherd’s clothing. This would make it easier for them to draw away disciples because the disciples would not suspect error to come from their shepherds. They would have their guard down and the “wolves” would devour many of them before they were aware of what was happening.

These “wolves” are described as “grievous.” They would burden the church with their false teaching. Their manner of operation is the speaking of “perverse” (diastrepho, “turned aside, corrupted...”) things. The intent of these “wolves” is to draw away (apospao, which is used “of drawing away disciples into error”)2 disciples after themselves. They will teach corrupted doctrine and draw away disciples into error.

This same type thing happened among God’s people in the Old Testament. Jeremiah warned Judah that “the shepherds are become brutish, and have not inquired of Jehovah: therefore they have not prospered, and all their flocks are scattered” (Jer. 10:21). He further observed, “Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness” (12:10). Jehovah’s punishment upon these shepherds would be destruction (23:1-4; 25:34-38). Jeremiah wrote, “The wind shall feed all thy shepherds, and thy lovers shall go into captivity: surely then shalt thou be ashamed and confounded for all thy wickedness” (22:22).

As Paul warned the Ephesian elders about disciples being led away by these “wolves” in shepherd’s clothing, so Jeremiah stated concerning Israel: “My people have been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray; they have turned them away on the mountains; they have gone from mountain to hill; they have forgotten their resting-place” (Jer. 50:6).

Instead of feeding the sheep the truth of God’s Word, these shepherds were more concerned with drawing a following to themselves. Ezekiel wrote: “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, even to the shepherds, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Woe unto the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the sheep” (Ezek. 34:2-16)?

Jude warned about false teachers and described them as “they who are hidden rocks in your love-feasts when they feast with you, shepherds that without fear feed themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn leaves without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots” (Jude 12).

These warning signs were sufficient for God’s people to be aware of the nature of false teachers and avoid them. There would be no reason for the “wolves” to have their way with the sheep because the sheep would be on guard and protect themselves.

We are facing serious problems in the church today because “wolves” have put on shepherd’s clothing. Bishops in Crete were to be “holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that [they] may be able both to exhort in the sound doctrine and to convict the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9). The work of elders is important because they defend the congregations where they serve against false doctrine. As they hold to the “faithful (pistos, “to be trusted, reliable”)3 word,” they will protect brethren from the “wolves” who attack. Notice that the elders are to be able (dunatos, “signifies powerful”)4 to exhort and convict. They must know the Word of God so they will recognize error when it arises and know how to convict (elencho, “signifies (a) to convict, confute, refute, usually with the suggestion of putting the convicted person to shame”)5 the gainsayers (antilego, “to contradict, oppose”)6. They are the ones who “watch in behalf of your souls” (Heb. 13:17).

Faithful elders are to “take heed unto [themselves], and to all the flock...to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). They must be aware that “there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers...whose mouths must be stopped; men who overthrow whole houses,

teaching things which they ought not...” (Titus 1:10-11). If they “rule well” they should “be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and in teaching” (1 Tim. 5:17). They are to be men who are known for speaking “the word of God” and as such those whose lives may be imitated (Heb. 13:7). Faithful elders are about the business of tending “the flock of God...exercising the oversight” and making themselves “ensamples to the flock” (1 Peter 5:2-3). These kind of men will deal correctly with a “wolf” who tries to put on shepherd’s clothing.

When “wolves” put on shepherd’s clothing, the congregation is in trouble. Instead of protecting the sheep, the shepherd will be destroying the sheep. This often happens when a man is appointed an elder who does not meet the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. This individual does not know his Bible and when something comes along that is not in harmony with God’s Will, he does not recognize it. This type individual is used and manipulated by the unsound members to promote their liberal agenda in the congregation. Sometimes, one will campaign to be appointed as an elder because he is a “wolf” and wants the shepherd’s clothing to allow him to promote his agenda. He reasons that, if he is an elder, no one will question him as he goes about introducing and promoting error.

When a congregation gets a “wolf” in shepherd’s clothing, often the sound members are not willing to oppose this “wolf-elder,” or may not know how to go about opposing one who is in the eldership. Sometimes, one’s fellow-elders do not want to divide the congregation by opposing this “wolf.” When this “wolf” is finished, the congregation is in shambles. Many times the congregation will divide as sound members leave rather than fight the liberal element. Paul exhorted Timothy to deal with an elder who sins by reproving him “in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear” (1 Tim. 5:20). Charges against elders are not to be received unless they are backed by evidence (1 Tim. 5:19). However, when evidence is presented that there is indeed a “wolf” in shepherd’s clothing, the faithful must take action to protect the sheep. This action may be in the form of confrontation of the “wolf” in the presence of the elders or the congregation. There may have to be a public withdrawal of fellowship if the “wolf” will not repent (2 Thess. 3:14-15).

The warnings of Jeremiah and Ezekiel in the Old Testament and Jesus and Paul in the New Testament are enough to put us on guard. If these things could not happen, there would not have been the warnings. We must be aware of what is happening in the congregation we attend as well as in neighboring congregations. Sometimes “wolves” from one congregation will influence people in another congregation. Before long, some of the false teaching from the “wolf-infested” congregation is being heard at home. This may result in “wolves” being formed within the local congregation. Time may pass and, if there is not the exercise of great care, these “wolves” will be wearing shepherd’s clothing. This will lead to the ruin of the home congregation.

We thank God for sound elders and preachers who are dedicated to fighting the “wolves” among us. They have gone down to the babbling brook of the Word of God and gathered smooth stones of truth. They have loaded their spiritual slings with these stones and are ready and willing to use these stones against the “wolves” who are trying to get the sheep. Of their actions toward these “wolves” it will be said, “to whom we gave place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue...” (Gal. 2:5). They are not hirelings who do not care for the sheep, but shepherds who are willing to lay down their lives for the sheep (John 10:11-13). May we strive to raise up many more to fill the elderships of local congregations. May we work from generation to generation to have trained men to fight the “wolves” who seek the sheep.

Realizing the devil is behind the “wolves,” may we all take heed to the warnings given in the Bible, determine to be led only by God’s revelation and have the courage and wisdom to oppose those who have become “wolves” in shepherd’s clothing. May we never silently sit by and allow the beautiful bride of the Christ to be ravaged and mangled by those who do not comply with Jehovah’s revealed Word! Let us become “strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Eph. 6:10-20).

To those faithful elders who stand, we remind you that “when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Peter 5:4). To every faithful member who stands, the Lord will say, “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matt. 25:21,23).