

The Mountain Messenger

A CHRISTIAN VOICE FROM THE MOUNTAIN STATE AND BEYOND

THE JOY OF LEADERSHIP, PART 2

**JESUS AND THE OLD TESTAMENT:
CANON, INSPIRATION, AND HISTORY**

DOES IT MATTER WHAT CHURCH I BELONG TO?

Along with other great articles by...
David R. Kenney, Clista Heintzman, and more...

“...The churches of Christ greet you” (Romans 16:16).

Editor's Note

Several years ago, I became a hobbyist beekeeper. The more time I spend around honeybees, the more impressed I become with the wisdom of their Creator. A single honeybee seems insignificant. By itself, it is small, fragile, and often unnoticed. Yet every bee serves a purpose larger than itself. It gathers nectar, pollinates flowers, helps sustain the hive, and contributes to something that will outlive its brief lifespan. A healthy hive depends upon thousands of individual acts of faithful labor.

As Christians, we should find that principle familiar. The Lord has never asked every Christian to do the exact same works, but He has called every Christian to be faithful in the work given to them. Some teach, some lead, some encourage, some give, and the list could continue. Yet all labor together for the glory of God and the growth of His kingdom.

As you read this issue of *The Mountain Messenger*, notice how often this theme appears. Josh Hall reminds us that Christ established one church and calls us to belong to it faithfully. Deborah Amos highlights the remarkable design of the human body and the wisdom of our Creator. David Kenney challenges us to think beyond our own lifetime and consider the legacy our stewardship may leave behind. Clista Heintzman shows us that God is able to restore broken lives and grant a "take two" through His grace. Mark Day demonstrates that Jesus viewed the Old Testament as the inspired and authoritative Word of God. Douglas Pell continues his study on the joy of leadership, reminding us that faithful service carries eternal significance. Andrew Walls points us to Rahab, whose faith allowed God to use her in ways she could never have imagined.

None of these articles focus on self. Instead, they direct our attention to God's purposes, God's truth, and God's kingdom. The honeybee on this month's cover serves as a fitting reminder. A bee does not work for applause. It does not seek recognition. It simply fulfills the purpose for which it was created. Christians are called to do the same. Paul wrote, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor 15:58 NKJV).

May this issue encourage each of us to continue our work in the Lord's vineyard. Whether our labor seems large or small, public or private, God sees it. When faithful Christians labor together, the fruit reaches far beyond what any one of us could accomplish alone. *The Mountain Messenger* exists because many Christians have chosen to labor together in that spirit. Authors contribute their time, editors volunteer their talents, congregations distribute copies, and readers share the publication with friends, family, and neighbors. Like the work of a hive, each contribution may seem small by itself, but together they allow the gospel to travel through the hills of West Virginia and far beyond.

If you have been encouraged by this work and would like to help us continue providing *The Mountain Messenger* free of charge, we would be grateful for your partnership. Support may be provided through AddedtotheChurch.com or by mailing contributions to:

Added to the Church, LLC
4788 Stillwell Road
Davisville, WV 26142

Contents

4

Does It Matter What Church I Belong To?
Josh Hall

6

God Protects Me: Olfaction
Deborah Amos

8

Planned Estate Giving for the Church
David R. Kenney

Philemon

Kaleb Cochran

9

10

Take Two
Clista Heintzman

At His Feet Not in a Frenzy
Cheyenne Blizzard

11

12

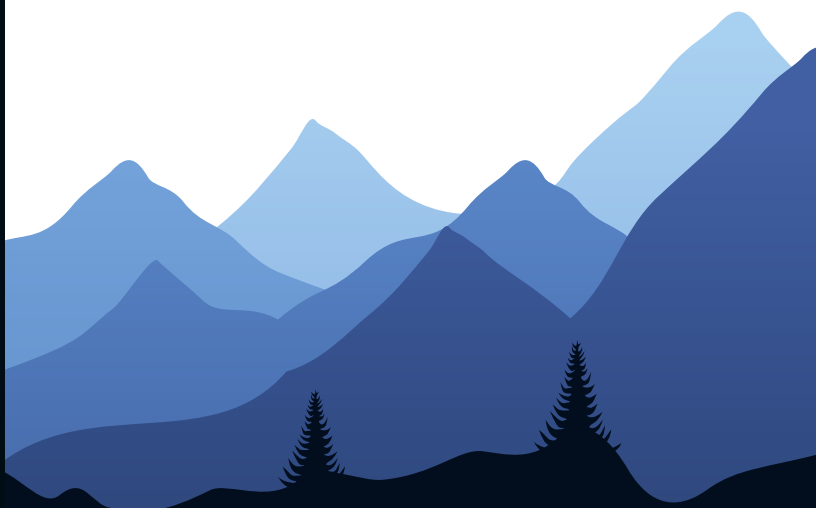
Jesus and the Old Testament: Canon,
Inspiration, History
Mark Day

14

The Joy of Leadership: Part 2
Douglas Pell

16

By Faith Rahab
Andrew Walls



Thank you for reading *The Mountain Messenger* and for your continued prayers, encouragement, and support. May we all continue to abound in the work of the Lord.

In Christian service,

Daniel P. Curry, Jr.
Executive Editor

Contents, cont.

Advertisements, Youth Camp Dates **17**

18 House to House, Heart to Heart

20 Other Publications

Resources **21**

Back
Cover

So Much From So Little
Jon Hescht

The Mountain Messenger

Volume 3, Issue 2 — June 2026

© Added to the Church 2026

Executive Editor — Daniel P. Curry, Jr. “DJ”

Assistant Editor — Jon Hescht

Graphic Editors — Andrew J. Robison V, Kaylynn Robison

Cover Photography — Angela Kuhns

Articles in *The Mountain Messenger* may be copied and distributed for use in Bible studies and other such uses without any changes or edits to the text. In any instance of usage, copyright credit must be given to *The Mountain Messenger* a publication by Added to the Church and must include the author's name and volume/issue information cited.

www.addedtothechurch.com

Office@AddedtotheChurch.com

f “Added to the Church”

Receive *The Mountain Messenger* publication for free via e-mail every other month. View the digital version with your chosen device as a digital flipbook and enjoy the extras not available in the printed version.

OR

Receive a free copy of *The Mountain Messenger* shipped to you or your congregation every other month as funding permits. This version is excellent for those uncomfortable with electronics or who prefer larger print.



SUBSCRIBE



Does It Matter What Church I Belong To?

Josh Hall

There are many “churches” around today. A quick drive through any town or city will reveal several different churches that go by different names and, more importantly, practice many different doctrines. How is that possible? The Bible is one book with one message that teaches one doctrine, yet the religious landscape of our world today does not reflect that fact. It begs the question: **Does it matter what church I belong to?**

Jesus promised to build His church (Matt 16:18). His church would be built upon the rock-solid confession made by Peter, that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt 16:16 NKJV). This means that the church belongs to Christ. He said, “I will build My church.” Jesus purchased His church with His blood

(Acts 20:28). The apostle Paul clearly stated by inspiration, “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling” (Eph 4:4). Earlier in the Ephesian letter Paul defined this body: “And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body” (Eph 1:22–23). The Bible makes it clear that Jesus established,



Does It Matter What Church I Belong To? • Josh Hall

died for, and purchased one church.

On the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 we have recorded the establishment of this church. When Peter concluded his sermon, the crowd was “cut to the heart,” and they asked the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). Peter told them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). Luke records that “about three thousand souls” obeyed the gospel that day (Acts 2:41). The Bible then states, “And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47). Acts 2 makes it clear that those who are in the church are those who are saved, and those who are saved are those who obey the gospel. Paul wrote, “Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body” (Eph 5:23).

The church described in the New Testament is still in existence today (Matt 16:18). In order to identify the church of Christ, we must return to the Bible. The church we read about in Scripture has identifiable characteristics. First, it was established by Christ (Matt 16; Acts 1–2).

Second, Christians gathered on the first day of the week for the purpose of taking the Lord’s Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2).

Third, they sang psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to

God using only their voices (1 Cor 14:15; Eph 5:19; Col 3:16).

Fourth, they taught and preached from the Word of God (Acts 17:11; Acts 15:35; 1 Tim 4:13).

Fifth, they offered prayers to God through Christ (1 Tim 2:8; Phil 4:6–7; Col 4:2).

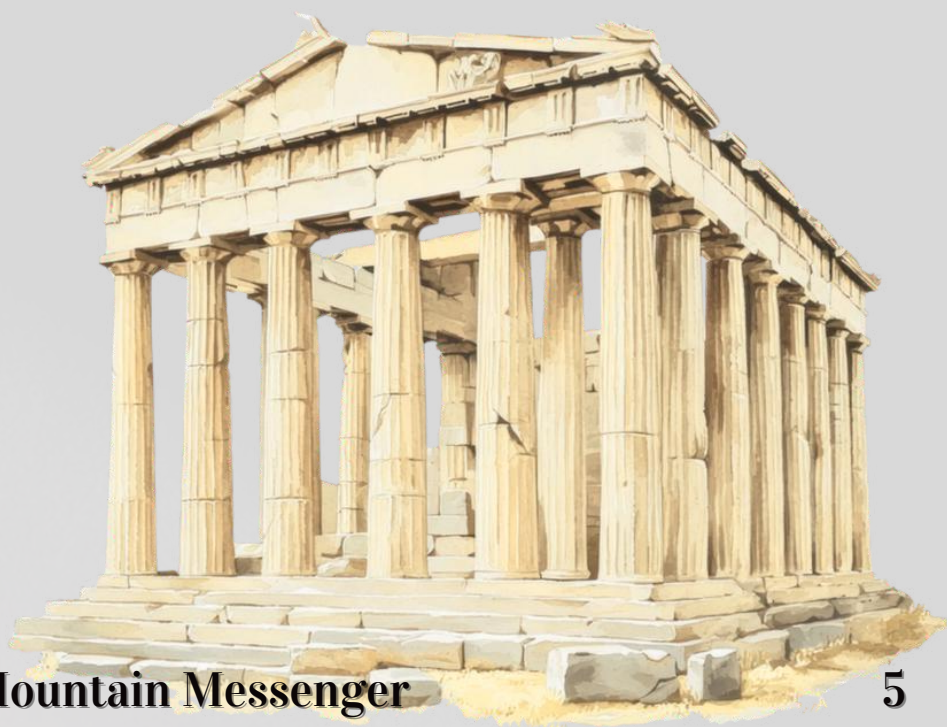
Sixth, they gave on the first day of the week willingly and cheerfully (1 Cor 16:1–2; 2 Cor 9:7).

Seventh, they practiced baptism by immersion in water by the authority of Christ for the forgiveness of sins as necessary for salvation (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Gal 3:27; Rom 6:3–4; Acts 8:36–38; 1 Pet 3:21).

Eighth, the church had no earthly head but recognized Christ as the head of the church (Eph 5:23).

Finally, each congregation was autonomous, governed by the Word of God and overseen by a plurality of elders, also called bishops or pastors (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Tim 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9).

The Bible clearly lays out the pattern for the church of Christ and warns those who depart from it (Gal 1:6–9; 2 Pet 2:1; 1 Tim 6:3–5; 2 John 9). Therefore, it is important for every person to compare what the church they attend teaches and practices with the words of Christ. Each of us must ensure that we are part of a body that abides in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9). ▲



GOD PROTECTS ME:

Olfaction

Deborah Amos (PhD- Biomedical Sciences)



In our last article, we touched on the broad and interesting aspects of our respiratory system. Now we are going to take a deeper dive into one specific and vital role: olfaction. Olfaction is a fancy term for the sense of smell. Just as the term isn't super simple, neither is the process that is

completed for us to be able to determine the difference between the odor of rotten eggs vs. the sweet smell of homemade bread.

How are we able to detect the scent of different foods, materials, people, etc? We can because everything around us releases odorants, volatile (gaseous) substances that can be sniffed into our noses. Yes, that means when you sniff both pizza and poop, tiny molecules of each have gone inside your nose!!! Odorants travel through the nostrils, around the meatuses (passageways), between the nasal conchae (bones) in the nasal cavity, where they reach a region above the superior nasal concha called the olfactory epithelium. There, odorants bind to olfactory receptor cells, which detect them and become activated. These cells then send signals through nerve fibers that pass through the olfactory foramina (tiny holes in the cribriform plate) to the brain. From here, we can finally

determine what the odorants are coming from by processing that occurs in certain regions of the temporal lobe of the brain. There are over 400 different types of receptors (chemoreceptors) that allow us to sense the different chemicals that make up a specific material.

The area where we finalize a smell (Ex, a slice of pizza) is found close to where memories are stored, and that's why (it is believed) scents are apt to bring back strong memories. For example, the smell of freshly baked cookies may make you think of baking cookies with your grandmother. Unfortunately, in cases with smelling fresh-baked bread, fresh-cut flowers, or maybe the smell of rain, the sensation doesn't last long. Our sense of smell drops by about 50% in only a few minutes.

You may think the sense of smell isn't as vital of a role as breathing. This is true in most cases, but think

God Protects Me: Olfaction

• Deborah Amos (PhD- Biomedical Sciences) •

It seems evident God gave us the ability to smell for a number of reasons: for protection, pleasure, and practicality. Smell is even mentioned in the Bible. Things that are good are commonly stated to be a sweet smelling savor. Foul smells are commonly referencing disobedience to God's commands. Here are a few examples:

1. In the book of Genesis (Genesis 8:21), the Lord smelled a pleasing aroma coming from Noah's sacrifice post-flood.
2. In the book of Leviticus, a "pleasing aroma" is mentioned multiple times.
3. In the Song of Solomon, spices are said to be a sweet smell (Song of Solomon 1:12 and 4:10).
4. 2 Corinthians 2:15 refers to Christians being the fragrance of Christ.
5. Isaac smelled Jacob's clothing in Genesis 27:27.
6. In a negative light, Isaiah 3:24 mentions a stench vs. perfume, discussing the judgement of God.
7. God was not willing to accept the "smell of the sanctuaries" as a result of the people's disobedience in Leviticus 26:31.

As we can see, in some cases, smell was depicted in the Bible as being good, and in other cases, bad. For us, in a literal sense, it can be indicative of the same thing and is a highly protective instinct. God has equipped us with many ways to determine what is good for the body vs. what is bad for the body, because He loves us. With the body, He created us with 5 main senses. With the world, He gives us the Bible to help us determine what is right or wrong to have the most pleasant life possible where Satan's darts are constantly thrown (Eph 6:16).

If you'd like to study more of how the Bible can make your life so much better and lead to an eternal life of paradise, please reach out to the editor, any of the authors of this magazine, or an elder. If you're curious how else God gives our bodies a natural and amazing ability to sense our world, check out our next article on taste! ▲

about when you tasted something and found the food or drink was not suitable for consumption due to a foul smell, even though it appeared to be ok to eat. Furthermore, have you heard of someone being able to smell the odor of a dangerous gas that was undetectable by sight or unknown because the individual was sleeping?

PLANNED ESTATE GIVING FOR THE CHURCH

David R. Kenney

Toward the end of the year, my email boxes (I have more than one) have been full of solicitations for year-end donations from nonprofits (for profits too). It is also not uncommon to receive appeals for consideration to be included as part of my personal estate planning. There is certainly nothing wrong with asking for support, provided such is done honorably and legally. I do not look down on organizations that seek support, and I may be inclined to do so based on shared values. But I wonder if we ever consider the church as one of the nonprofits we could support through our estate planning? I do not recall ever being asked to consider the church as a beneficiary as part of my estate, but I certainly would not expect such either. Still, one can make a major impact for the Lord's work in this manner.

R. W. Comer loved churches of Christ. He was a successful businessman, preacher, and served as an elder. He organized the "R. W. Comer & Sons Trust" to help congregations throughout Kentucky and Tennessee after his death. Though he passed away in 1944, his sons continued the trust fund for about 75 years until the day came to distribute the proceeds, a fund of approximately \$35 million. It was estimated that each congregation would receive approximately \$17,500 (this was in 2019). I remember all the "buzz" going around about the money and potential good that it might accomplish. Some suggested that some congregations might turn around with the infusion of capital. Churches of Christ may not solicit money, as fund raisers do, but they sure do need money to operate! Regardless of what became of the money, how do you think the Lord views R. W. Comer in terms of his dedicated stewardship? It is a question worth thinking about in terms of our own stewardship. Sometimes we think that is a story about "rich people," but being rich is not required to do something like this.

I preached for a congregation that was struggling in just about every metric other than faithfulness. I had to raise funds to be able to work with this congregation, which I was willing to do since it was my first full-time work in ministry. It was not easy. We had a large building which included quite a burden on repair, maintenance, utilities, etc. The challenge was not just financial but also human capital. A couple who worshipped with that congregation for years before I began there decided to structure their estate into a trust fund that included the congregation. It was a sad day for the church when they had both passed. I had known them for many years prior to locating there. This couple was not rich, but they lived frugal lives, saved, and invested. The money they were able to bequeath to the church where they worshipped kept the congregation solvent for an extended period (and that church still meets to this day). Though they are now both dead, their influence lived on though their stewardship. In addition, this was a powerful reinforcement to the other heirs of the estate, their children and grandchildren, that the Lord and His church mattered to them! How do you think the Lord views their dedication and stewardship? The nice thing is that you do not even need to know who this sweet couple was, the valuation of their estate, or any other matters of curiosity. But the Lord knows it all, and that is what really matters!

I have been reading *And Then, Whose Shall These Things Be? — A Christian and His Estate*



Planned Estate Giving for the Church • David R. Kenney

by William Tucker who works in Advancement at Freed-Hardeman University. It is an excellent book on stewardship over ownership. Incidentally, R. W. Comer and family have made significant contributions to Freed-Hardeman College (now University) over the years which have been documented, e.g., the Gospel Advocate. Of course, there are all types of foundations, endowments, and institutions willing to write to you to encourage you to consider them in your estate, trust, or will. All I am suggesting is you remember the Lord and His church in this respect too. ▲

Scott Harp. "Robert Wickliffe Comer 1860-1944." therestorationmovement.com/_states/tennessee/comer.htm.

Bobby J. Ross, Jr. "Exclusive: Trust to distribute \$35 million to Churches of Christ in Tennessee, Kentucky." Christian Chronicle Online. 24 October 2019.

William Tucker. *And Then, Whose Shall These Things Be? – The Christian and His Estate*. Henderson, TN: Freed-Hardeman University, 2021.

Philemon

Kaleb Cochran

Imagine receiving a letter that could change the fate of a man's life forever. This is exactly what the encouraging letter/book of Philemon can do. It's about forgiveness. It's about love. It's about equality in Christ.

The book of Philemon was written by Paul to a guy named Philemon and also to Apphia, Archippus, and the church. Paul describes himself as a prisoner of Christ Jesus and describes Philemon as a friend and fellow laborer. He describes Apphia and Archippus as fellow soldiers. Paul is in a prison in Rome, while Philemon is in

Colossae at this time, around AD 61. Paul is writing to Philemon as a plea for Onesimus, who became a Christian under Paul's influence. Onesimus was Philemon's slave who, because he stole from Philemon, ran away. In prison is where Paul met Onesimus. But he is now sending him back to Philemon, begging for him to receive him as a brother in Christ. Because Paul lovingly expressed, "Forgive him," instead of saying, "Punish him," it most likely changed the whole course of his life.

Although this book was mainly written to Philemon, it is for all Christians, to help encourage us to forgive and to remind us of the importance of forgiveness and equality. Forgiving flawed, faulty people is not an easy thing to do. Obviously, there are people who have wronged others, but remember to forgive, as Christ forgave all. ▲



Youth Group
Christian
Author



Clista Heintzman



Is it, really, possible for a person to start a new life—to forget the past and completely change her ways? Is true forgiveness possible for past mistakes, and if so, can she then live a life that glorifies God and blesses others regardless of those past sins?

Meet Rahab. Rahab

lived in Jericho, one of the wicked cities of Canaan and the first city to be destroyed by God through Joshua and the Israelites. Two spies were, secretly, sent into Jericho to spy out the city before its destruction. The two spies who were sent, lodged in the house of a woman named Rahab. The Bible says that Rahab was a harlot, which should not surprise us since the Scriptures say the people of Canaan were so defiled that the land would “vomit out its inhabitants” (Lev 18:25). We do not know whether Rahab had “fully embraced her culture’s debauchery or had been more of a victim of her circumstances.”¹ Whatever the case, Rahab had lived a sinful life. Interestingly, when the two spies entered Rahab’s house, they found that Rahab had heard of God’s people and the

awesome things God had done for them and expressed faith in the one, true God (Josh 2:11). Her heart had, evidently, been in a state of transition for some time and was, now, ready to embrace the God of Israel. What about her sinful past? What about her Gentile lineage? Rahab was ready to separate herself from the wicked Canaanites and their lifestyle. She had professed her faith in the God of Israel and acted on that faith by hiding the spies from the king of Jericho. Because of this, Joshua protected her and delivered her and her family from destruction when they surrounded and burned Jericho. What, then, did she need to do to become part of God’s people? She had to reject the false gods and religion common in her home country, keep the law of Moses and worship the true and living God.² Evidently, Rahab embraced all God wanted her to do. She was justified by her faith (Heb 11:31) and by her works (Jas 2:25). Were there scars from her past? Of course there were scars. Rahab had been a broken woman, but God was able to “piece her back together.” Her scars served to remind her of what she overcame. Consider the Japanese art of *kintsugi*. It is the process of repairing broken ceramic pieces. A broken vessel is repaired by filling the cracks with powdered gold or silver. *Kintsugi*, literally, means “join with gold.” The gold enhances the scars rather than hiding them, a reminder of the beauty in broken things (kintsugivillage.org). Jim Gardner, a professor at Freed Hardeman University, stated, “Faults can mar us, but we can come out lovelier, more noble and more precious when we allow God to restore us.” Although Rahab had at onetime been a prostitute, her past did not define her. She was given the chance to “take-two”—a chance for God to redefine her life.

The Old Testament story of Rahab reminds me of a New Testament story. In I Corinthians 6:9–11, Paul reminded the Christians at Corinth of their broken past. He then declared how God had, in a sense, put them back together with the blood of Christ by forgiving them, washing them and making them whole. Although Rahab lived before baptism in the blood of Christ was available, she, too, was forgiven of past mistakes. “God did not have to wait for the actual, historical occurrence of the cross on Earth

Take Two • Clista Heintzman

to forgive pre-cross saints. Like Christians today, when they lived a life of obedient faith, walking in the light, and acknowledging their sins and seeking forgiveness, they could be assured of their salvation.”³

Rahab went on to become the wife of Salmon and the mother of Boaz, contributing to the lineage of Christ. Praise be to God, the Giver of second chances! ▲

¹ Eric Lyons, *Defending the Faith Study Bible*; “Did God Approve of Rahab’s Lie” (Apologetics Press Inc. Montgomery, AL), 431–432.

² Apologetics Press Staff, *Discovery Magazine*, Vol. 26:02, Accessed: 5/19/26, (Apologetics Press Inc. Montgomery, AL) Feb. 2015. <https://apologeticspress.org/proselytes-and-hellenists-5107/>.

³ Dave Miller, Ph.D., “God, Remission of Sin, and the Timing of Jesus’ Death,” *R&R*, Vol. 46 No. 3 (Apologetics Press Inc. Montgomery, AL,) March 2026.

At His Feet **Not in A Frenzy** Cheyenne Blizzard

Distractions are everywhere. When you’re driving down the highway, exit signs constantly try to pull you off course. Life works the same way; countless distractions compete for our attention, pulling us away from what truly matters.

In the Gospel of Luke 10:38–42, we see this clearly in the story of Mary and Martha. Jesus enters their home, and while Martha is busy with preparations, Mary chooses something different; she sits at Jesus’s feet and listens to Him. Martha, overwhelmed and frustrated, asks Jesus to tell Mary to help her. But His response is striking: “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:41–42 NKJV).

Martha wasn’t doing something wrong; she was serving. But even good things can become distractions when they pull us away from the most important thing, being with Jesus and listening to His voice. Mary understood that. She chose presence over productivity, focus over frenzy.

We often live like Martha, busy, overwhelmed, constantly moving from one task to the next. We fill our lives with responsibilities, worries, and noise, until we

barely have time to pause. In doing so, we risk missing what matters most. The “good part” isn’t found in how much we accomplish, but in how closely we stay connected to Him.

Jesus reinforces this in the Gospel of Matthew 6:25–34, where He tells us not to worry about our lives,

what we will eat, drink, or wear, because God already knows our needs and promises to provide. Worry and busyness often go hand in hand, but both can distract us from trusting Him.

The truth is simple, but not easy: we have to choose the better part. We have to look past the “exit signs” of distraction and fix our focus on Jesus. When life feels overwhelming, when everything demands our attention, and when we’re tempted to drift off course, we need to return to Him, sit at His feet, listen to His words, and trust His promises.

Because in the end, everything else can wait. The good part cannot. ▲



Jesus and the Old Testament: Canon Inspiration History

Mark Day



How did our Lord view the Bible? Did He regard it as the written oracles of God? Since Jesus is our example, we should allow His approach to Scripture to influence our approach.

Jesus recognized the true Old Testament canon. The word canon refers to a measuring rod;

those books that are considered canonical are those which “measure up” to the characteristics of inspired writing. They prove to be inspired by their intrinsic qualities, not by any declaration of a council centuries later. Our Old Testament today is comprised of 39 books. While some other books were circulated among the Jews, most frequently referred to as today as the Apocrypha, that some religious groups include in their Bibles, Jesus only recognized the material that comprises our 39 books as part of the canon. In Luke 11:51, He said, in essence, from the beginning to end of the Old Testament, all the blood of the righteous would be required of that generation; thus, He delineated the ends of the Old Testament referring to Abel, the first martyr recorded in

Genesis, to Zechariah, the last martyr mentioned in 2 Chronicles (the last book in the Jewish order of the Old Testament). Thus, books like Maccabees while recording the deaths of martyrs were not regarded by Jesus as part of the canon.

Jesus viewed the Old Testament as inspired and historically accurate. He did not regard the first eleven chapters of Genesis as a fable, nor did He reinterpret the creation account to fit billions of years between creation and the coming of man. Jesus said, “from the beginning of creation God made them male and female” (Mark 10:6 KJV). He considered the devil to be real, referring to him as a “murderer from the beginning” and a “liar” (John 8:44). The account of the days of Noah in Genesis 6 was a reality that He likened to the time when He would come (Luke 17:26–27). Abraham (John 8:56), Isaac and Jacob (Matt 8:11) were historical figures in His mind. The demise of Lot’s wife in the destruction of Sodom, while laughed at by some today, was considered by our Lord a real story with a sobering lesson (Luke 17:28–32). Jesus believed that God really spoke to Moses through a burning bush (Mark 12:26), that Moses made the bronze serpent and lifted it up for Israel to be cured (John 3:14), and that Moses received God’s commands and wrote the law (Matt 8:4; Mark 10:3; Luke 24:44; John 5:46; et. al.); should we not believe the same?

Jesus and the Old Testament: Canon, Inspiration, and History

• Mark Day •



Christ not only believed in the inspiration of the Law, but the other portions of the Old Testament as well. Jesus used David's actions recorded in 1 Samuel 21 as inspired proof in His argument with the Pharisees over the Sabbath (Matt 12:4). On another occasion, He quoted David's words from Psalm 110, saying, "David himself said by the Holy Ghost" (Mark 12:36); thus, Jesus believed David was inspired. Jesus often referred to the prophets as part of God's inspired word (Matt 5:17; 7:12; 11:13; 22:40). He recognized God's prophets of the Old Testament were persecuted because they spoke the truth (Matt 5:12; 23:34) while the false prophets were lauded (Luke 6:26). Jesus even considered the preaching of Jonah and his sojourn in the belly of a great fish to be just as historically accurate as His own death and resurrection; He even placed it aside the historical account of the Queen of Sheba visiting Solomon (Matt 12:39–42). While legendary materials can be used to make a point, it is hard to interpret Jesus' use of Jonah as anything other than the use of historical material to make His point.

Space, not material, forbids us going on. Suffice it to say that those portions of the Old Testament that have been dismissed by some today as mythical or composed by uninspired men, Jesus considered historical and inspired. Jesus is the truth (John 14:6). We should side with Him. ▲

The Joy of Leadership

Part Two

Douglas Pell

In the previous issue of The Mountain Messenger, we considered several ways leadership in the Lord's church can be understood as a joy:

- The Joy of Servant Identity
- The Joy of Accountability
- The Joy of Living Room Leadership
- The Joy of Setting Things in Order

In this article, we continue with five additional perspectives—less obvious, but no less essential—to understanding the joy of leadership in Christ's church.

The Joy of Paradox

Leadership in the Lord's church is built upon truths that often run contrary to human instinct. The Greek *paradoxos* denotes something beyond or contrary to common opinion. Jesus redefined leadership when He said, "the leader [must become] like the servant" (Luke 22:26 NASB95). This pattern appears throughout Scripture:

- Strength through weakness (2 Cor 12:9–10).
- Being exalted through humility (1 Pet 5:6).
- Gaining life by losing it (Matt 16:25).

The elder who resists this paradox will struggle under the weight of leadership. The one who embraces it will find joy.

Leadership becomes lighter when we stop striving for control and begin cooperating with Christ.

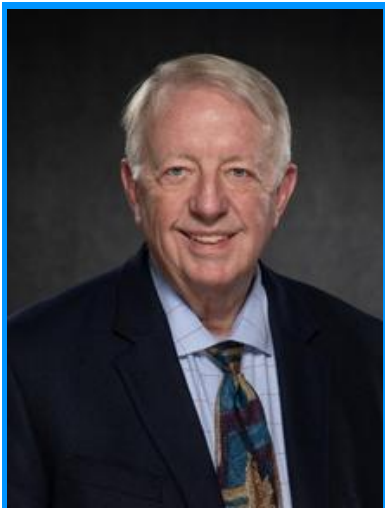
Joy is found not in being recognized, but in being faithful; not in leading from above, but in serving from among. What appears contradictory to the world is perfectly aligned with God's design.

The Joy of Self-Renewal

Leadership joy cannot endure without renewal. Paul commands, "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom 12:2). This applies first to those who lead. Paul warned the Ephesian elders, "from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things" (Acts 20:30). The danger is not only external—it is internal drift. Where there is no self-examination, there is no renewal. Where there is no renewal, there is no joy. The church at Ephesus labored diligently, yet Christ said, "you have left your first love" (Rev 2:4). Activity had replaced devotion. Truth was defended, but love had faded. Renewal restores joy. When elders return to prayer, Scripture, and honest self-examination (2 Cor 13:5), their leadership regains clarity and warmth. The work has not changed—but the heart has. And when the heart is right, joy returns.

The Joy Hidden in the Burden

Elders bear a serious responsibility: "they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account" (Heb 13:17). This burden is real—but it is not joyless. Paul described his work as "sorrowful yet always rejoicing" (2 Cor 6:10). Leadership in the church carries both realities



The Joy of Leadership • Douglas Pell

at once. Why does joy exist alongside the burden? Because the work is eternal. Every visit, every prayer, every difficult conversation involves souls that will live forever. When elders focus on people rather than processes, the burden becomes meaningful. Jesus said, “I know My own and My own know Me” (John 10:14). As trust grows between shepherd and sheep, the weight is shared. The burden does not disappear—it is transformed. Joy is found in carrying something that matters.

The Joy That Endures

There is a quiet, enduring joy that develops through faithful leadership. It is not dependent on immediate results or visible success. Paul reminds us, “your toil is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor 15:58). This joy lives in unseen places:

- a prayer offered in private
- a struggling soul strengthened over time
- a relationship restored without recognition

It is steady, not loud; lasting, not fleeting. Peter directs elders to the ultimate source of this endurance: “when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory” (1 Pet 5:4). Leadership is not evaluated by temporary outcomes, but by eternal faithfulness. This future hope gives present joy.

The Joy of Completion in Christ

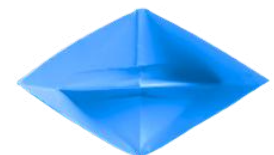
All leadership in the church aims at one goal: spiritual completeness. Paul writes, “we rejoice... that you be made complete” (2 Cor 13:9). This completeness [Gr. *katartisis*] is not produced by men—it is the work of God. Elders participate in that work. Paul explains the mission clearly: “We proclaim Him... so that we may present every man complete in Christ” (Col 1:28). Every act of leadership—teaching, correcting, encouraging—serves this purpose. And here is the source of joy: God is the One who completes the work. “He who began a good work in you will perfect it” (Phil 1:6). “I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth” (1 Cor 3:6). The elder is not the finisher—he is a servant in the process. When we understand this, we are freed from the burden of results and invited into the joy of participation.

Conclusion: The Quiet Gladness of Faithful Leadership

The joy of leadership in the Lord’s church is not found in recognition or control. It is found in:

- embracing God’s paradox
- renewing the heart continually
- carrying eternal burdens with purpose
- enduring in faithful service
- and watching God bring souls to completion.

It is the quiet gladness of walking with Christ while helping others do the same. And in the end, the greatest joy is not what we accomplished, but what the Lord accomplished through us. “Well done, good and faithful slave” (Matt 25:21). ▲



By Faith Rahab

Andrew Walls

In the second chapter of the book of Joshua, two spies are sent into Canaan to gather information about the land and “especially Jericho” (Jos 2:1). While in the city the spies come to the house of Rahab, who is described as a harlot (NKJV) or prostitute (ESV).

From the verses that follow we can surmise that the two men were not particularly adept operatives, as news of their presence in Jericho soon reaches the king who sends men to the house of Rahab to apprehend the spies. However, Rahab provides false information to the king’s men and hides the spies on her rooftop among the stalks of flax. Rahab not only aides two foreign spies and lies to the authorities but tells the spies that “all the land is fainthearted because of you” (Jos 2:9 NKJV). After the discussion recorded in this chapter, she then tells the spies the best way to escape the city and surrounding country. Had the king’s men known what Rahab had done, she most certainly would have been arrested along with the spies, but instead she chose to aide God’s people.

While telling the spies of the city and adjoining country, Rahab makes one of the greatest statements of faith we find in Scripture. “...the LORD your God, He is

and the conquering of the two kings of the Amorites, who were “utterly destroyed.” Word of the people of Israel and their God had gone throughout the land and as a result Rahab tells the spies “As soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you...” (Jos 2:11).

God could have delivered the two spies in any way, but he chose to deliver these two men through the actions of Rahab, a Gentile prostitute. While only God knows the heart of an individual and the account does not say, one could argue that God, through His divine providence, led the spies to Rahab. Before the men left, Rahab requested the spies swear to not only spare her, but also her kindred, from the destruction that awaited the city and its inhabitants. Rahab’s belief wasn’t only lip service, she knew who could save them. It’s because of her great demonstration of faith, we later find Rahab’s name among the ancestors of not only the kings of Israel, but the King of Kings.

If God can use a Gentile prostitute to deliver the promised land, what can he do with us if only we have faith? “By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe...” (Heb 11:31). ▲



God in heaven above and on earth beneath” (Jos 2:11). Rahab makes this great confession not after seeing a miracle or great deed, but because rumor had reached her of all the children of Israel had done since leaving Egypt. She specifically cites the crossing of the Red Sea



WVAH TV 11.4
Dish 290-36
You Tube TV & Sling TV



Sunday
9:30 AM



Sunday
9:00 AM

Let us help
your local
work...call us!

Download the IGH APP...listen at your podcast platform
Watch us on our YouTube channel...follow us on Social Media!

A MULTIMEDIA MINISTRY
V W O L L I W E D I V W I N I S T R Y



www.internationalgospelhour.com

855-444-6988

West Virginia Christian Youth Camp

WHERE THE TRUTH AND YOUTH COME TOGETHER

Senior Week (ages 14 - 19): June 28 - July 3

Intermediate Week (ages 11 - 14): July 5 - 10

Junior Week (ages 7 - 11): July 12 - 17

All-Age Week (ages 8 - 18): July 19 - 24

Singing Emphasis Week (ages 12 - 21): July 26 - 31

REGISTER NOW!
WVCYC.COM/2026

SEEING GOD

A BIG PICTURE Study of the Bible

Free Live Online Study
One Story. One Savior. One Plan.



House to House
Heart to Heart

**What if you didn't just attend a Bible study
... but learned one you could lead?**

This January through June, we're hosting a weekly online Bible study every Tuesday night, designed especially for non-Christians who are reading our magazine.

But this invitation is for you.

We're encouraging Christians to join us—not just to learn, but to

prepare. Sit in. Take notes. Learn the flow. Ask questions. Then during July through December, you can open your living room, kitchen table, or coffee shop and confidently walk friends, neighbors, or family through the same study.

You don't need a Bible degree to lead friends and family to the

cross—just a clear way to share what you already know with those around you.

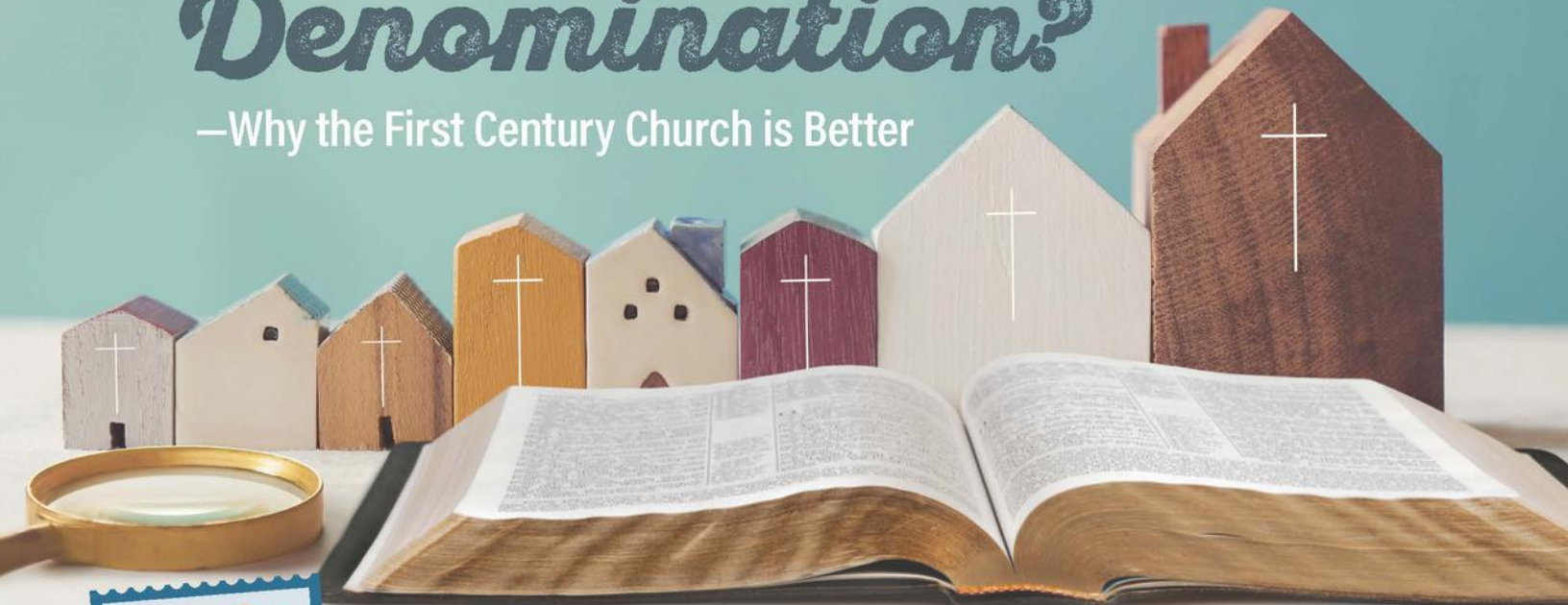
If you've ever thought, "I wish I knew how to study the Bible with someone," this is for you. Join us January through June. Teach it July through December.

Scan the QR code to register and start your journey through the Bible's big picture!
housetohouse.com/study



DO WE HAVE TO JOIN A *Denomination?*

—Why the First Century Church is Better



House to House Heart to Heart

One HUGE mailing. Three million homes.

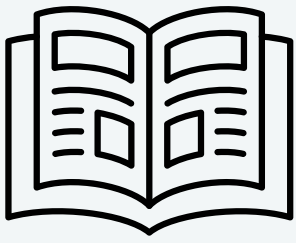
HTH is inviting every church of Christ in the country to mail *House to House/Heart to Heart* this July. This theme will be "Do We Have to Join a Denomination? —Why the First Century Church is Better." Reach homes in your community with a customized magazine for just 50 cents (which pays for customizing, printing, and mailing it for you). You pray and plan the follow up, and we take care of everything else. People are looking for truth. Let's help them find it. Please respond by May 25.

Call Matt Wallin toll-free at **1-877-338-3397** or email **matt@housetohouse.com**.

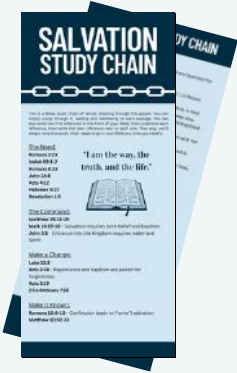


GET.HOUSEDHOUSE.COM

House to House / Heart to Heart is a work of the East Ridge church of Christ.



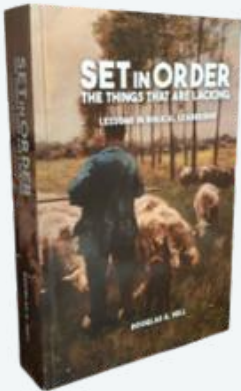
Other Publications



Salvation Study Cards

Study chain reference and evangelism cards that take you step-by-step through the bible and what it says about salvation.

Available at bit.ly/study-card



Set In Order The Things That Are Lacking

A new work by Douglas Pell discussing the eldership and leadership in the Lord's church.

Available at Sain Publications



New Testament Expositor

A digital publication of scholarly articles on biblical topics.

Edited by Scott Judge and Ron Thomas.

Included with a digital subscription to *The Mountain Messenger*.



Resources

General Resources



Added to the Church - Publisher of *The Mountain Messenger* & New Testament Expositor - addedtothechurch.com



Our Authors - Meet the authors of *The Mountain Messenger*!
addedtothechurch.com/christian-authors/



West Virginia School of Preaching - 2-year program of classes taught by sound Christians - wvsop.com



Sharp Five Media - Affordable church websites and media by a member of the church - sharp-five.com



Bible Call - Access Bible information recordings online or by phone. - biblecallonline.com

Songs & Hymns



Teaching and Admonishing - Free to listen and use original hymns by members of the church - churchofchristsongs.com



WVCYC "Pressing On" CD - Contact Andy Robison to order your CD or Thumb Drive!
andycd2020@gmail.com

Podcasts



The Religious Coffee Hour - Podcast hosted by Hunter Melott found wherever you listen to podcasts.



Authentic Christian - Podcast produced by GBN, hosted by Aaron Gallagher and Scott Ingram gbntv.org/the-authentic-christian/

Deepen Your Knowledge



Apologetics Press - Articles, videos, books, etc. focused on the defense of New Testament Christianity - apologeticspress.org



Gospel Broadcasting Network - Provides Bible-based and unbiased resources from the Word of God - gbntv.org



Focus Press - Provides podcasts, articles, videos, books, and daily devotionals. - focuspress.org



World Video Bible School - Videos and free study courses on Biblical topics - wvbs.org



Through the Scriptures - Study through the entirety of the Scriptures - throughthescriptures.com



Families of Faith - Bible materials for families & churches. - familiesoffaith.store



Salvation Study Chain Cards - Order these tract-like evangelism tools for your congregation. - bit.ly/study-card

Fun and Games



Birble - Bible version of Wordle. Guess the five-letter word from the KJV Bible! - ajrv.us/birble



Memoria - Bible verse memorization tool. Removes 1 word at a time as you practice. - ajrv.us/bible/memoria



4788 Stillwell Road
Davisville, WV 26142

So Much From So Little

Jon Hescht

In considering the honeybee, its job is fairly straightforward—to produce honey. They produce it to provide a long-lasting food source for the hive. In many homes today, that honey is also a regular food staple. Most grocery stores carry multiple varieties in many different sizes. Almost every Farmer's Market will have at least one booth selling honey. Any person reading this probably has at least one friend (maybe even a preacher/editor...) who either keeps honeybees or has before.

With it being so readily available, it can be easy to assume that every single honeybee produces a great volume of honey in its lifetime. Therefore, it might come as a surprise to find out that a single worker honeybee will only produce about one-twelfth of a teaspoon of honey in her five-to-six-week lifetime! Now, compound that with the fact that to make just one pound of honey, bees usually visit roughly two million flowers and fly a distance equaling three times around the earth!

In the grand scheme of things, this can make the effort of one small honeybee seem small and insignificant—but the truth is, in fact, quite the opposite. Each and every bee is part of the hive. It works while it can before its short time on earth is over. If, instead of functioning together as a hive, one little bee were to decide not to produce and then one more followed suit and then another and then another, the losses that the hive would suffer would grow

exponentially to the point of more loss than gain, and the hive would quickly die for lack of food. An entire hive can die in a matter of days or even hours without a store of honey. Instead, every honeybee worker continues contributing to the welfare and survival of the hive to produce a sustaining food that, because of its chemical makeup, basically never expires.

The one body that is the Lord's church (Eph 4:4; Rom 12:5) works in a similar fashion. The work of one single Christian might seem small or insignificant, but the only way the collective body survives is by the seemingly small efforts of every individual member. No one should ever discount their contribution to the work of furthering the church based on a (perceived or self-perceived) notion of it being too small to count. A warm smile and greeting to every guest at services can plant the same seed as any mission trip, or lesson preached—the seed of the Word of God (Luke 8:11)—and He will give the increase (1 Cor 3:6–7).

Each deed is a deed done, whether it be one-twelfth of a teaspoon of honey, a cup of cold water (Matt 25:35–40), or giving the last two mites (Mark 12:41–44). Each deed done is a work of faith done in love for Christ (John 13:34–35), and obedience to His commands (John 14:15).

Each life of a baptized Christian lived in faith and obedience to God results in a wealth of spiritual food that leads to eternal life in the Lord. Glory be to God that so much can come from so little! ▲



SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

WWW.ADDEDTOTHECHURCH.COM

