

## In the Clouds

by Brad Harrub

And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.'

In Acts 1:9-11, the apostle John elaborates: "Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen" (Rev. 1:7).

The apostle Paul had this to say about it: "For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

What an awesome day that will be!! But only if you are ready for that day to come. Because if you aren't ready, the day we all see Christ descending in the clouds will be a terrible day...the most terrible day...for you. Consider this warning given by Paul: "...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his

mighty angels, in flaming fire inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints..." (2 Thess. 1:7-10).

Do you know God? You do if you obey him (1 John 2:3). If you say you know him but do not obey him, you're lying (1 John 2:4).

Have you obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ? Here's what Jesus said about it: "...Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16). God forgives you of your sins and saves you when you believe with all of your heart in his Son and are penitently immersed (Acts 2:38; 8:12, 35-38; 16:30-34; 22:16). When that happens, he adds you to his Son's body, the church of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 12:13; cf. Col. 1:18). He will continue to forgive you of your sins if you walk in the light by holding fast to his Word and penitently confess your sins (1 Cor. 15:1-2; 1 John 1:7-9; 2 Cor. 7:9-11). That's what obeying the gospel is all about.

When Jesus descends in the clouds in the same way he ascended into them all those years ago, will you be ready?

## Our Families Are Broken

by Brad Harrub

Our church families are broken. And as I travel across the nation, what I see rather than efforts to heal and repair, are efforts to conceal and minimize. My interactions with Christian families and elders often peels back layers to reveal:

We have children using drugs and alcohol. We have young people that have already mentally left the church. We have youth who are growing up with a dulled conscience. We have sons and daughters who are embracing a secular worldview. We have children who are committing idolatry through their materialism. We have young people committing fornication. We have youth bullying or using profane language. We have sons and daughters being arrested. We have grandchildren addicted to pornography. We have children who are worldly. We have young people who have no problem lying to their parents. We have sons and daughters experimenting with homosexuality. We have children who do not sing during worship and look bored. We have young people who are on their phones during Bible class and worship.

I could go on, but I think you get the picture. Sadly, these issues do not even include what is going on between the parents. Divorce, materialism, lying, and adultery are rampant—yes, even in the church. I'll say it again: our families are broken.

Yes, these things are going on. But the question that I'm struggling with is: "What are we actually doing about it?" The honest answer is not much. Sure we have activities, VBS, retreats, and even some service projects. But the reality is we aren't addressing the core of the problem—we are not rearing up children with a heart for the Lord. And add to this we have totally forgotten God's command for church discipline.

My observation is that we are trying to "love" our children into the right behavior. As a result we have children that rule the house and have no fear of their parents. (And by default have little to no fear of the Lord.) Yes, we are to love our children—but a part of that love should be to love their souls enough to discipline them.

"Do not withhold correction from a child, for if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with a rod, and deliver his soul from hell" (Proverbs 23:13-14)

Friends, wake up—there are souls at stake here! The souls of our children, grandchildren, and members in our church families.

It's time we stop tip-toeing around and start dealing with some of these issues. It's time the church get into repair business instead of the "program" business. It's time we start addressing the heart. How ironic is it to see young people in a worship assembly wearing youth retreat t-shirts and yet they look bored and refuse to sing. Maybe it's time we stop worrying so much about the design of the t-shirt and instead focus on what's under the shirt—their heart!

It's time we have family forums and Bible classes to help train parents how to raise children using Scripture. It's time we humble ourselves and admit our families are not perfect. It's time we roll up our sleeves and invest the time necessary to repair homes. It's time we teach our children to blush again and weep over sin. It's time we hold fathers responsible to be spiritual leaders. It's time we acknowledge it is the parent's responsibility to train up his or her own children in the Lord. The church should not be a welfare state where parents drop off their children to activities, and expect someone else to make their children faithful.

And finally, it's time elders start addressing these issues among their flock. Yes, the preacher can address some of these issues from the pulpit, but it is not his job to fix it. It's past time we employ church discipline—even to our young people. (If they are old enough to be "accountable," make the decision to follow Christ, and be baptized, then they are old enough to be disciplined when their behavior brings reproach on the church.) If a parent gets upset because members or elders talk to their baptized children then maybe the parents should ask themselves soberly: Are they more concerned about their reputation than they are the child's soul?

If someone in your congregation was in the intensive care unit (ICU) how would you respond? Every congregation I visit has families that, spiritually speaking, are in ICU. Yet, we continue to conceal and minimize. It's time we treat and heal.

# Correspondence/Encouragement

## Inmate Correspondence:

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### **La Poynor Prison Ministry**

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### **WVBS Online School**

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### **Pat Wheat**

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### **Patty Williams**

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## Mission Works

### **Westhill Works**

Benevolence Program

### **Local Works**

Cherokee Children's Home - [www.chc4kids.org](http://www.chc4kids.org)

House to House, Heart to Heart

In Search of the Lord's Way

Preaching Students - Southwest School of Bible Studies

The Truth in Love - [www.ttil.tv](http://www.ttil.tv)

WVBS Online School - [school.wvbs.org](http://school.wvbs.org)

### **Prison Works**

La Poynor Prison Ministry - Steve & Carrie Handley

### **Foreign Works**

Four Seas Bible College, Singapore - Peter & Pooi Fun Chin

New Zealand Harvest Missions - James & Emily Cammock

## Leadership

### **Elders**

Percell Milton - 903.673.1819

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Darwin Thomas - 903.695.0176

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### **Ministers**

Sam Dilbeck - 903.229.8415 (Pulpit)

Cory Myers - 512.627.6672 (Youth & Family)

Tim Cooke - 903.641.5515 (Seniors)

# Prayer List

**Thelma Martin** fell and hit her head last week. She had slight bleeding on her brain and was taken to a hospital in Plano.

**Bryan Bearden** came through his thyroid surgery successfully on Monday and is recovering.

**Brian Hand's** knee surgery went well on Tuesday and he returned home on Friday to recover.

**Phil Pillans** is scheduled to have double knee replacement on Dec. 30.

**Sandra Brunson** has been having knee trouble and will need surgery. She plans to schedule that at the first of the year.

**Bobbie Roberts'** niece, LeAnn Curry, is continuing with treatments to battle her cancer.

**Continue to Remember:** Julie Dilbeck, Meagan Gould, Bud & Barbara Moore, Mary Johnson, Wanda Horner, Chris Garner, Velma McDougald, Beverly Cooke, Bryan Bearden, Cooper Webster

**Service Men:** Clay Bayes, Jason Book, Alston Compton, Robert Johnson, Ryan Payne, Douglas Ramsey, Ryan Stewart

# Announcements

We are excited to share in the joy with the **Jason and Susan Hervey family** for the **arrival** of their healthy baby girl, **Sophia!!!**

**A Prayer Service** is scheduled for Wednesday Evening Service, Dec. 28. All classes will meet in the auditorium.

**Youth Group Lock-In** will be on Friday Dec. 30 at 9:30pm, and will end that Saturday morning at 6:00am.

**WOW Save The Date! WESTHILL LADIES DAY**  
Date: Saturday, January 28, 2017  
Speaker: Donna Drain  
Topic: When Life Gives You Lemons ...

## Birthdays This Week

- December 25 - Velma McDougald & Eugenia Sosa
- December 26 - Keller Southard
- December 27 - Barbara Gould & Jennifer Sosa
- December 28 - Melba Bower
- December 29 - Yvonne Ainsworth, Ellene French, Greg Olsen & London Olsen
- December 30 - Marcus Polk

## Next Week's Adult Class

"The Life of the Apostle Paul"

## Records for December 18, 2016

Bible Class .....	159
AM Worship.....	233
PM Worship.....	110
Wednesday .....	
Special Contribution.....	\$28,047.85

## Privileged to Serve

<b>Song Leader</b>	Zach Drain
<b>Opening Prayer</b>	Greg Olsen
<b>Communion Leader</b>	Scott Barham
<b>Communion Servers</b>	
Jim Haden	Bronny Watson
Bryan Bearden	Wade Braly
Millard Dowdle	Jose, Jr. Sosa
Larry Rowden	David Shastid
Dalton Shastid	Austin Roughton
Eric Olsen	James Horn
Percell Milton	
<b>Closing Prayer</b>	Rusty Owens
<b>Nursery</b>	Dianne Stewart & Acie Mahoney
<b>PM Song Leader</b>	Tyler Baumgartner
<b>PM Opening Prayer</b>	Billy Roughton
<b>PM Closing Prayer</b>	Ken Green
<b>Wed. Song Leader</b>	Prayer Service
<b>Wed. Devotional</b>	Prayer Service
<b>December Contact Elder</b>	Paul Stewart