



# WEST COLUMBIA CHURCH OF CHRIST

“every disciple that is perfect, shall be as his master.” Luke 6:40b

## THE STRUGGLES OF A GOOD HEART

“And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ So I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting’” - Acts 26:14-15.

The gospel is designed only for people with good hearts (Lk. 8:15). Those who do not have good hearts see nothing of value in the gospel and turn away from it (Jn. 6:26, 64-66). However, we often oversimplify this principle and assume that as soon as a good heart encounters the gospel, he is immediately swept away by its beauty and surrenders to his Lord. In reality, conversion is usually not that simple. Even the best of hearts sometime wrestle with the changes that conversion requires.

The story of Saul, the early archenemy of Christianity, is a good example of this. Let’s reconstruct the sequence of events that led to his conversion, and notice how a good heart can sometimes struggle to accept the truth.

Recall Paul’s later statement that he had “lived in all good conscience before God until this day” (Ac. 23:1). His heart was not dominated by selfish interests such as greed, lust, or revenge, but by a desire to please God. “I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men” (Ac. 24:16). Here was a man with a good heart, striving to serve God to the best of his knowledge.

Of course, his knowledge was deficient. Oh, he had heard the truth preached alright, by men like Stephen and others (see Ac. 6:9; 7:58). But that message did not fit into the rigid template of “truth” that had such a tight grip on his mind. So he rejected it outright, without pausing to consider “what if?” Later, Paul would characterize his response as the reaction of “an insolent man” (1 Tim. 1:13)—although he was quick to add that he had reacted “ignorantly in unbelief.” So it is possible for a good heart to be temporarily blinded by the prejudice of long-held convictions.

But Saul had not only heard the gospel preached, he had also seen it practiced, specifically at the stoning of Stephen. To witness a man call for the forgiveness of the ones who at that very moment were stoning him to death must have jarred Saul’s confidence (Ac. 7:58-60). Throughout his furious campaign of terror against the Christians in the years that followed, that image must have been gnawing at Saul’s mind. (Many years later, as Paul neared his own martyrdom, he spoke almost the exact words as Stephen, 2 Tim. 4:16).

- **(continued on page 2)**

## VOLUME 33, NUMBER 47 December 9, 2007

RECORDS 12/2/2007

SERMONS 12/9/2007

Sun 10 AM Bible Study: 52  
Sun 11 AM Assembly: 110  
Sun 6 PM Assembly: 41  
Weds 7 PM Bible Study: 56  
CONTRIBUTION: \$2561

AM: Jerry Manning  
**PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY**  
PM: Jerry Manning  
**MALACHI, GOD’S LAST APPEAL**

*A Warm Welcome awaits you at all our services. Come see!*

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### SERVICES

Sunday 10 AM Bible Study  
Sunday 11 AM, 6 PM Assembly  
Wednesday 7 PM Bible Study  
Office Phone (803) 794-5320  
*Nursery provided*

*Bible Classes for all ages*

### LADIES CLASS

Tuesdays (except 1st) 10 AM

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## “PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER” - James 5:16

- **REMEMBER IN PRAYER:** **Beryl Parks, Nina Ruth Meadows** (Marcella Klieves' mother), **Jack and Elma Berrier, Nathaniel Manning** (Jerry and Lynn's grandson), **Lynn Drago** (Jerry's sister) and **Phyllis Johnson**.
- **Brenda Blanton**, has been studying with our evangelist Jerry Manning at Heartland (room 113, telephone 936-6268). Through her we met **Tom McNamara** who was just baptized. Brenda recently had a leg amputated and now has had her other leg severely injured such that it is threatened also.
- **Jerry** requests prayers for **Lynn Drago**, his sister who is gravely ill with cancer, that she obey the Gospel.
- **Kyle Johnson**, a school friend of **Brian Parks**, has been diagnosed with cancer.
- **Don and Nancy Fields** request prayers for their daughter, **Jennifer Falstidge**, who is still suffering from complications after delivery of her 6th child. Don is taking a new position in Virginia and they are in the process of moving.
- **Mattie Charney, Garland Matthews'** sister, is in ICU in Pennsylvania with a blood clot.
- **Megan Culver** in Illinois, a friend of **Megan Stoyk** had brain surgery postponed.
- **Trina Trammel** is doing better, but **Jimmy Gist** had throat surgery.
- **Eddie Sheppard** continues to have some lung problems.
- **Paula Kennedy** picked up a bad sinus infection and cold.
- Remember all these and brother **Manning** and his bible studies at LCDC and Heartland assisted living center in your prayers.

"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses:  
but we will remember the name of the Lord our God." - Psalms 20:7

## “AND THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY” - Acts 2:42

- **Work Team C** will meet at the Manning home, Sunday at 5 pm.
- **Drop In** at the **Gamble's** home, Friday 12/14, 7-9 pm.
- **Drop In** at the **Kelleher's** home, Friday 12/21, time TBA.
- **Bible Bowl 2008** books are **Esther** and **Amos**, from the New KJV.

"For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love,  
which ye have showed toward his name,  
in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." - Hebrews 6:10

## **THE STRUGGLES OF A GOOD HEART** (continued from page 1)

So when Jesus appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus, He did not have to dangle Saul over the fires of hell to convince him to change. Saul's own good heart had been quietly "kicking against the goads" for some time, struggling with the truth. All it took was one startling image of the resurrected Lord to trigger the conversion.

What's the lesson here? Good hearts sometimes require a long process of contemplation before accepting the truth. We must be patient, and allow them the time to struggle with the implications of that truth in their lives.

- **David King**, elder, Pleasant Valley church of Christ, Wichita, Kansas

## “REJOICE WITH THEM THAT DO REJOICE!” - Romans 12:15

- There were **5** additions to the Lord's body here at West Columbia this past week. Thursday afternoon, 11/30, **Ruth Raines** was baptized into Christ after studying with our evangelist **Jerry Manning** and sister **Elgene Sanders**. The study was initially setup by brother **Keith Carter** who has been doing her yard work. That evening **Jerry** and our brother **Craig Robinson** studied with **Tom McNamara** who was baptized later that evening. This came as a result of brother Manning's studies at Heartland. Then on Tuesday, 12/4, **Dianne Manz** and her son **Joseph** and his wife **Amanda** were baptized into Christ. They had been attending for some time and studying the Searching for Truth DVD on their own and with brother Manning and decided they needed to obey God. Welcome our new brothers and sisters in Christ and pray and thank God for his mercy and love.
- **Trina Freeman**, grand daughter of **Beryl and Trevia Parks**, and her husband **Kevin**, have moved to Columbia from Chapin and are much closer now.
- **Doris Sheppard** and **Jones Gamble** returned safely from travels last week.
- **Billy Carter's** daughter (**Keith's** sister), is recovering nicely from a serious illness.
- **Jones Gamble's** dad is doing very well after his recent heart attack. The family greatly appreciates all the prayers raised on his behalf.

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation  
to every one that believeth;” - Romans 1:16

## “ELDERS ... FEED THE FLOCK OF GOD” - 1 Peter 5:1,2

Little Things Add UP (to heaven!) Heaven isn't something attained by just one action. The rich young ruler asked "What good thing shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?". He had the wrong idea. Do you? Why do you think our life here is "Three score years"? We have to develop, to grow, to be built up. We can't just do one GREAT thing and then quit. The temple of the Jews was made with many stones. So are we. It takes time and effort. Let's not be discouraged; our little efforts will add up. A kind word here, a visit or call there, a mention of the church and the bible to a neighbor. These are good works which will bear fruit.

"To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life." -- Romans 2:7

Speaking of which, we received this nice **Thank You!** from a young family with 2 children that visited this past Sunday morning:

“Brothers and sisters in Christ, thank you for your hospitality this morning. Unfortunately, not all congregations are welcoming of visitors, especially those "dressed-down" with children, but that is not what we found at West Columbia Church of Christ this morning. You not only saw that we were fed spiritually, but physically as well. Thank you again for sharing the love of Christ with our family. If any of you are ever in Fayetteville please come worship with us at the Helen Street Church of Christ.”

- The Simmons Family