

## SCHEDULE OF ASSEMBLIES

Sunday morning worship (Bible study) .....	9:30 AM
Sunday morning worship (Preaching) .....	10:30 AM
Sunday afternoon worship (Preaching).....	4:00 PM
Wednesday evening worship (Bible Study).....	7:00 PM

## NEWS AND NOTES

**VISITORS:** If you are visiting with us, we welcome you and ask that you please sign our guest book and fill out a visitor's card and put it in the collection basket or give it to one of the men in the congregation.

**SCHEDULE:** The schedule for September is posted on the bulletin board so the men can see what their responsibilities are for the month.

**GOSPELL MEETINGS:** River bend Sept 24-29 with Greg Chandler weekdays 7:00 pm. Eastside in Athens with Josh Carter Sept 24-26 weekdays 7:00 pm.

**OUT OF TOWN:** Randy Elliott is now in Texas (in the Houston area) helping with the clean-up from Hurricane Harvey. Remember him in your prayers while he is away from us.

**SYMPATHY:** Kenny Mauldin's sister, Elizabeth Ann Cochran, passed away about 3:30 AM Saturday. Remember Kenny and his family in your prayers.

**SICK AND SHUT-INS:** Brenda Elliott is now home from the hospital and will be doing out-patient therapy on her new knee. Sue Mauldin is in The Meadows, (1905 S Adams St, Fulton, MS) room 122. She has her cell phone with her so we can call and talk to her. Remember Helen Sparks has health issues that sometime keeps her from services. Brittney Day continues to have problems with her back and will possibly be having further treatment soon. She also saw her heart doctor this past week. David Tiffin missed services Wednesday evening due to illness, but is feeling some better now.

**PRAYER:** Remember the expectant mothers: Sarah (Bruce and Beulah Tooley's daughter) will be having a "C" section soon to deliver the twins; also remember Lydia (Richard and Beth Hammock's daughter) who is also expecting.

**NOTE:** If you know of someone who should be mentioned, please tell the one who makes the announcements. To have information put in the bulletin please get it to Jerry before Saturday afternoon.

## POINTS TO PONDER

- The gospel of Jesus Christ breaks hard hearts and heals broken hearts.
- People seldom lose their religion by a blowout; usually it's just a slow leak.

# THE EASTSIDE REMINDER

2Pet 1:12-15

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Editor: Jerry L. Henderson: Send comments to: The Editor, 1205 Hwy 24 East; Red Bay, AL 35583  
Phone: 256-333-0017 or 662-542-3170 - email: [jerry@hendersons.net](mailto:jerry@hendersons.net)

## THE TRAGEDY OF FRUITLESSNESS

Lk 13:6-9 is a parable about a barren fig tree. The primary application of this parable has to do with the Jewish nation and the efforts of Jesus to lead them to repentance. However, the basic principles of the story did not pass away with the Jewish nation, but would apply to all members of the body of Christ who are God's people today. So, consider the parable as it applies to Christians today.

Remember this was a "planted" tree in the man's vineyard it didn't just happen to be there, it wasn't a wild tree. We as Christians have been "planted" in the vineyard of the Lord Rom 6:3-5. We have been "raised" together with Christ and are now a part of His vineyard, family, church, or body. Paul said in 1Cor 3:9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. (NKJV)

Verse six of this text says the man who planted the fig tree in his vineyard looked for fruit on the tree and did not find any. As a result of it having no fruit it was absolutely worthless to the owner of the vineyard. This is an apt description of many members of the Lord's church today Matt 5:13; Matt 25:41-46. All members of the Lord's church are expected to bear fruit Jhn 15:8; 2Pet 1:5-9. Most church members are not wicked; not lawbreakers; not violent; revengeful nor hateful; they simply are of no use to the Lord. Our Master, Jesus, does not expect the impossible but he does expect some fruit from every "tree"

Because this tree was not producing fruit instructions were given to "cut it down" (vs. 7). It was in the way - it was not only doing no good, but it was hindering good from being done. The question is asked: "why does it use up the ground?" (NKJV). Many church members are hindrances to the cause of Christ 1Cor 5:6; Matt 18:6. Not only do they fail to do good themselves, but they sometimes keep others from serving the Lord Faithfully. They often discourage some who are trying to bear fruit and cause them to be unfruitful. Sometimes they even hinder others from obeying the gospel because of the evil influence which they have on them Matt 5:13-16.

However, even though this tree had been unfruitful for three years (vs. 8) the dresser of the vineyard asked for more time so he could give the tree special attention, to cultivate around it and fertilize it. He wanted to give it every chance to bear fruit. This illustrates the longsuffering of God toward us 2Pet 3:9. Many in the church today are in need of repentance. They are in need of special attention and care to possibly affect a change in their lives that will allow them to be fruitful in the Lord's vineyard.

But then after time was given for this tree to bear fruit and it remained fruitless it was "cut down" or destroyed (vs. 9). It was useless, in the way and had to be destroyed. Understand, however, it was the "dresser of the vineyard" who cut the tree down, other trees in the vineyard had no authority to say, "cut it down", only the owner of the vineyard had that authority. It is the law of nature that whatever does not reproduce itself must die. This is a universal law whether applied to the vegetable, animal, human or spiritual kingdom. God warns through the Scriptures that unfruitful church members will be eternally punished Jhn 15:5, 6; Matt 7:19. Our Lord expects us to be fruitful. There is no place in the kingdom of Christ for non-producers. The lazy, indolent and indifferent need not entertain hope of reward in this life or that which is to come. We, as a part of the vineyard of the Lord must continue to reproduce ourselves, this is being fruitful, otherwise we will be "cut down"; we will be destroyed.

The question that each of us as members of the Lord's church must continually ask ourselves is: "am I bearing fruit"? However, one must remember that you cannot bear fruit for the Lord unless you are in Christ, that is, in His vineyard Jhn 15:4. If a person is not bearing fruit then they are useless and a hindrance to the cause of Christ. Yes, God is longsuffering - giving you a chance to live for Him and

bear fruit, but He will not wait forever. This life is all the time we have, so when it is over there is no more opportunity for one to bear fruit. Even though we live in homes where there is a Bible in almost every room, many of those who claim to be Christians (trees in God's vineyard) bear no real fruit in the Lord's service. It is not an angry God that condemns us to eternal punishment; we condemn ourselves by our fruitlessness. You see, destruction is the fault of the tree itself. Fruitlessness invites disaster now and in the judgment to come. We must be like the tree in Psa 1:3 "...a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper." (NKJV). (JLH)

## **TAKING THE CROSS**

By Shane Williams

We see the cross today as the jagged, wooden instrument used in putting to death Jesus Christ our Savior. Yet before His followers had even a slight idea that Jesus would die by that manner, Jesus spoke of the cross. As He stood near the Sea of Galilee, He prepared the disciples to teach "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:6). Jesus told them "He who does not take up his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me" (vs. 38).

These men did not connect the cross with Jesus' approaching death but they did know what a cross signified. Crucifixions were a common method of execution. The disciples had a vivid picture of the agony, punishment, and misery that death by crucifixion represented. Taking up a cross meant walking and enduring life's toughest road, especially the road of living the Christian life in such an ungodly world.

So why was Jesus promoting cross-bearing? Because He wanted disciples who were willing to face the difficulties it would take to serve His cause. It would not be long before Jesus would be killed and His disciples would have to carry on His message. To stand against the forces that would seek to put an end to the gospel would take total commitment.

Is not that still our challenge today? Are we willing to take up the cross and serve Christ our Savior in total commitment? The mission is great but it is everlastingly rewarding.