

Privileged to Serve

Morning Worship

Announcements: Sibio Farrington

Song Leader: Chad Futrell

Opening Prayer: Kyle Pool

Lord's Table:
Presiding: Ricardo Alvillar

Assisting: John Patchell
Ben Grant

Sermon: Byran Hatcher

Closing Prayer: Tyler Christian

Those serving Wednesday

Song Leader: Chad Futrell

Opening Prayer: Chad Futrell

Teacher: Chad Futrell

Announcements: Byran Hatcher

Closing Prayer: Phil Byrd

Pantry Item
Canned pasta

Sermon Notes
Saved Like A Thief?

1.

11.

111.

April 16, 2023

Welcome!

Cape Fear
Church of Christ

3808 Village Dr
Fayetteville, NC
28304

Phone:
(910) 425-1108

Website:
capefearcoc.org
Find us on
Facebook!

Service Times

Sunday:
B. C. 9:00am
Worship 10:00am

Wednesday Night:
B. C. 7:00pm

Ladies' Class:
Tuesdays 10:00am

Elders
Wade Hedgepeth
Byran Hatcher

Volume 41 Issue 3

The
Cape Fear Crier

“Cry aloud and shout...for great in the midst of thee is the Holy One of Israel.” Isaiah 12:6

Faith: By Hearing or Direct Operation?

Many people have an idea that Christianity includes some mysterious work of the Holy Spirit to change one's life. The Bible teaches the Spirit operates upon man to create faith, convict one of sin and convert the soul. Every faithful Bible-believing Christian understands this to be true. The question has never been “does the Holy Spirit work in the salvation of man?” But does the Holy Spirit operate *directly* on man or does He work through the word of God?

The Bible states that the “sword of the Spirit” is the word of God (Eph. 6:17). This word is “*quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*” (Heb. 4:12). These two verses highlight an important truth; that the Spirit does not operate directly upon man, but through a means — the agency of the word of God. It is much like a man who went to cut down a tree. Afterward, when asked what he had done earlier in the day he exclaimed, “I was cutting down a tree!” Did the man himself cut down the tree or did the saw he used [as a tool] cut down the tree? Obviously, the man did cut down the tree with his bare hands, but he used a tool to do so, a saw. But when asked what he was doing, he forthrightly said he was cutting down a tree, but there is no dishonesty in not mentioning the tool.

Suppose, for a moment, the Holy Spirit *did* operate directly upon mankind apart from the word of God. What would be the results? God does not want anyone to be lost (2 Peter 3:9). He is also no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). Therefore,

the Spirit would act uniformly on everyone. Since the Holy Spirit is part of the Godhead, He is all powerful. So it should be the case that everyone would be saved. There can be no other outcome when an irresistible force operates directly upon a very moveable object such as man! But Jesus said, *“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven”* (Matt. 7:21). This accounts for the fact that not everyone will be saved though God is no respecter of persons. Not everyone chooses to do the will of God.

If the Spirit operated directly on mankind apart from the word of God, the New Testament would not be needed to convert people from their sinful lives. Conversion would depend entirely on the work of the Holy Spirit. If someone was not converted, the blame would lie at the feet of God. Who would dare charge God with a failure to accomplish His will? The truth was stated long ago: *“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it”* (Isa. 55:11). Preaching God’s word will harden some and soften others. The sun will melt wax but harden clay. Different effects are the result of the differing natures of the materials. So it is with mankind. Some will choose to believe and obey while others will choose not to believe and thus live a life of rebellion to God’s commands leading to their condemnation.

If the Spirit operated directly, why even bother preaching? Here is a very odd occurrence. Those who advocate for a direct operation of the Holy Spirit preach it! Shouldn’t the Spirit have revealed his message directly to each person? Jesus told his apostles, *“ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth”* (Acts 1:8). Without a knowledge of God’s word, one cannot have faith in Jesus Christ since faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). The Bible nowhere states that faith comes by some mysterious, or direct, operation of the Holy Spirit. Is the Holy Spirit involved? Absolutely! There is no question regarding the fact the Holy Spirit is involved in the conversion of the souls of men. But is it “with his bare hands” (directly), or does he have a sword (the Bible) that He uses to accomplish the task?

-BTH

By the Numbers

Attendance 4/9/23

Bible Class: 45

A.M. Worship: 70

Wed. B. C.: 27

Family News and Notes

John Patchell’s niece is struggling with her health. **Barry Hatcher** is doing very well since his procedure. **Solomon Harrington, Geraldine Harrington’s** son, is struggling with some health problems. **Nazreen Sahib**, coworker of **Jennifer Hatcher**, has stage 4 cancer. **John Williams** is slowly recovering from knee surgeries and a broken leg. **Chuck Perkins’** coworker, **Mark Thibeault** is not doing well at this time. **Linda Williams’** mother, **Mary Pipkens** and her brothers, **Wayne** and **Harry**, are in need of prayer because of serious health concerns. **Frances Salaz** is going through chemo. **Linda Hernandez** has a significant heart problem. She will be having surgery this week. Let’s remember one another in prayer.

Pray for our world leaders at this time. Active military: Pray for all active duty military members; they could be called to a conflict area at a moment’s notice. Remember to pray for their families as well. We have 5 active duty members here at Cape Fear.

Also remember: **Margaret Langston, Vicky Carver, Deborah Ross, Sandra Hedgepeth**, and the **Davis** family. Please pray for those in Bible Studies - teachers and students!

Bible Reading Plan

Apr 16	Apr 17	Apr 18	Apr 19	Apr 20	Apr 21	Apr 22
1 Sa 13-16	1 Sa 17-20	1 Sa 21-24	1 Sa 25-27	1 Sa 28-31	2 Sa 1-3	2 Sa 4-6
Ps 106	Ps 107	Ps 108	Ps 109	Ps 110	Ps 111	Ps 112

Events

Silver Linings: This Friday at 11am

See Bulletin board for the latest events! There are a number of gospel meetings in April we want to support.

