

House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 17 NUMBER 1

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A publication of the... Churches of Christ

Founder: Christ – Mt. 16:18
Place: Jerusalem – Isa. 2:1-3, Acts 2:5
Time: A.D. 33 – Dan. 2:44, Acts 2
Head: Christ – Eph. 1:22
Organization:
Christ as head – Eph. 5:23
Elders oversee local church –
Heb. 13:17, Titus 1:5
Deacons as servants –
Acts 6:1-6, 1 Tim. 3:8-13
Members compose body –
Col. 1:2

Name (group):
Church of God – Eph. 3:15
Body of Christ – Eph. 1:22-23
Churches of Christ – Rm. 16:16
Bride of Christ – Rm. 7:4

Name (individuals):
Disciples – John 15:8
Saints – Rm. 1:7
Brethren – Lk. 8:21
Children of God – Gal. 4:26
Christian – Acts 11:25-26

Creed: Jesus/Bible – Acts 8:37
Rule of Faith & Practice:
Word of God – 2 Tim. 3:16-17

Worship: Jn. 4:24
Sing – Eph. 5:19
Pray – Acts 2:42; 1 Thes. 5:17
Teach – Acts 5:42
Communion – 1 Cor. 1:23-26
Contribute – 1 Cor. 16:1-2

Mission: Save Souls – 1 Tim. 4:16
Warning: Be Faithful – 2 John 9

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How's Your HEARING?

Allen Webster



The deaf and hard of hearing account for the single largest group of disabled Americans (28 of 49 million). Twenty-eight million is more than all those with heart disease, cancer, multiple sclerosis, blindness, tuberculosis, and kidney disease combined. Approximately 12 percent of the U.S. population suffers from hearing loss. Only 9.7 percent of people over 65 have normal hearing.

The Bible speaks often of ears and hearing. Solomon said, "The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them" (Proverbs 20:12). God wanted Israel to "give ear to his commandments" (Exodus 15:26), and Israel pleaded with God to "give ear" unto their prayers (Psalm 86:6). The Jewish Shema begins, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4).

The Bible also speaks of hearing loss. Jesus healed a deaf man (Mark 7:31-37), but He was unable to help some whose spiritual ears were "dull of hearing" (Matthew 13:15). He did not force them to hear His saving message, but He did encourage them to listen: "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matthew 13:9).

What about us? How is our hearing? The Parable of the Sower is found in the first three Gospel accounts (Matthew 13; Mark 4; Luke 8). It is interesting that each rendition of the parable has the same basic story but each uses a different closing admonition about hearing. Placed together, in summary, the Parable of the Sower suggests three attitudes: "Take heed that you hear (Matthew 13:9), take heed what you hear (Mark 4:24), and take heed how you hear (Luke 8:18)."

TAKE HEED THAT YOU HEAR

Why did God give man ears in the first place? Certainly He had many purposes, but the primary reason that you have ears on the side of your head is so you can hear God's saving message before you die. Your ears will never serve a more important purpose than the day they enable your mind to grasp God's plan of salvation.

Hearing is essential to initial salvation. One cannot be saved without faith in Jesus (John 3:16; Hebrews 11:6) and one cannot gain faith without hearing the gospel. Paul explained, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and

hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17; cf. 1 Corinthians 1:17–18). Hearing is also necessary to remain saved as a Christian (Galatians 5:4; 2 Peter 2:20–22; Revelation 2:7). Paul wrote, “Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain” (Philippians 2:16).

We must take time to put ourselves in contact with God’s Word under favorable learning conditions. A jeweler displays gold necklaces on black velvet. The contrast heightens appreciation, and removes distractions from view. To gain fresh insight from God’s Word, it often helps to see it under favorable circumstances.

Experts call interfering sounds around those hard of hearing white noise. Those with good hearing do not notice the sounds of passing traffic, air conditioners, other conversations, televisions, and beeping elevators, but the hearing-impaired have difficulty separating these background noises from what they want to hear. In our private devotionals, we should remove as much of external noise (TV, children) and internal noise (stress, anticipation of the ball game) as possible. Favorable public conditions would be a sound congregation and knowledgeable teachers. It might also include finding a place in the assembly with as few distractions as possible.

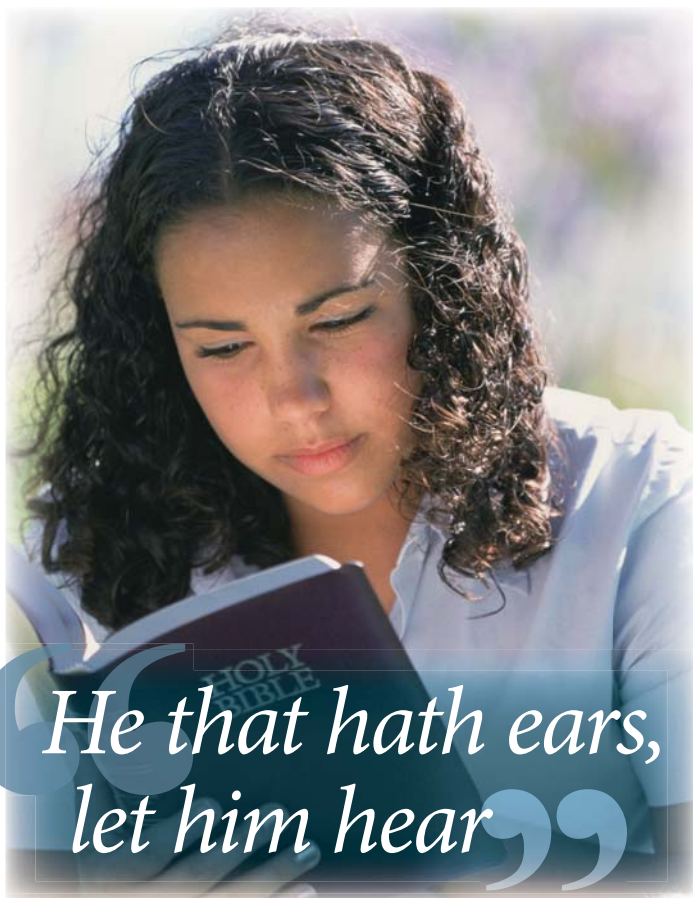
TAKE HEED WHAT YOU HEAR

There are many voices vying for attention in this culture. There is the voice of political correctness, the voice of Hollywood, the voice of the media, the voice of Wall Street, the voice of tolerance, and the voice of academia. There are bits of truth and wisdom in each, to be sure, but the only voice that is always in perfect pitch is God’s.

God speaks today through His Son. He says, simply, “This is my beloved Son: hear him” (Mark 9:7). In the past, God has spoken through a burning bush (Exodus 3:1–4), audible voice (Genesis 22; Acts 8:26–29), a prophet (2 Samuel 12), a donkey (Numbers 22:21–30), visions (Acts 10:9–16; 16:9), and dreams (Daniel 4). “God . . . spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,” but “hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son” (Hebrews 1:1–2).

Jesus speaks today through His Spirit. Before He went back to heaven, He promised to send the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into “all truth” (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13). The Spirit inspired the apostles and prophets to leave the written record of that truth for all succeeding generations (2 Peter 1:20–21). Thus, today the Spirit speaks through His written Word (Ephesians 6:17). Many confuse the inner voice of the conscience with the voice of the Spirit, but the Spirit uses only the objective written Word to guide us today and not subjective promptings (John 12:48; Jude 1:3). Paul taught that the Bible is sufficient for leading us (2 Timothy 3:16–17; cf. 2 Peter 3:1).

We will not learn what God wants us to do in any way other than simply opening up the Holy Bible and listening to what it has to say. In almost all cases, a Christian will help us in understanding and obeying the Bible (Acts 8:30–31; Mark 16:15), but it is God’s Word that saves us. If what you are hearing from your preacher, church, or religious reading material is not what you are reading in your Bible, keep searching for a preacher and church that stands completely—and only—upon the Bible.



TAKE HEED HOW YOU HEAR

One who is hard of hearing—physically and spiritually—can take steps to improve his hearing:

- *Turn and face the speaker.* The design of the ear allows it to catch additional sound vibrations from the front, but hinders catching those from behind. Paul wrote of some who would turn away their ears from the truth (2 Timothy 4:4; cf. Deuteronomy 30:17), but delighted in those who obeyed the truth (2 Corinthians 7:14–16).
- *Focus single attention.* One should put down the newspaper or mute the television and focus on a speaker’s facial expressions, what he looks at, and/or the gestures she makes. We must look “unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2).
- *Reduce distance.* Proximity of hearer to speaker is key. “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you” (James 4:8).

Responsibility shifts from preacher to listener during a sermon. Once we hear it, we become responsible for doing it. James wrote, “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (James 1:22).

A Japanese legend tells of a man touring heaven. He came upon a room with boxes full of what looked like mushrooms. Upon closer examination, he found that they were human ears! He asked an angel why heaven had boxes and boxes of ears. The angel replied, “They listened but did not do, so only their ears were saved.”

“He that hath ears, let him hear.”

Religious Freedom

Speaking to the Constitutional Convention on June 28, 1787, Benjamin Franklin spoke these words: “I have lived, sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth—that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an entire empire can rise without His aid?”

God said: “Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number” (Jeremiah 2:32). We live in an age when more and more voices are being heard on every side in an effort to silence God—to quiet Him and make Him irrelevant to America’s public life.

Far from following the advice of today’s civil libertarians, our founding fathers on many occasions publicly called upon their nation to fall down on bended knees and give thanks to Almighty God.

In America we have been the undeserving recipients of God’s most bountiful hand. Let us not become guilty of a most grievous sin—the sin of ingratitude. James wrote: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17).

Every generation is obligated to learn from the past mistakes of others. In a real sense, the former generations will weigh in on the outcome of their successors. Jesus said, “Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you” (Luke 10:13–14).

Religious freedom, while we still have it, is a privilege that so many people have not yet really learned to appreciate. For the person who is not a Christian, it is a squandered blessing. Some wrongly conclude that religious freedom is the freedom not to become a Christian. Technically, that’s true. But the fact is, the principle of religious freedom is unnecessary if you do not want to become a Christian. You can be a slave and not become a Christian. Religious freedom really shines, however, when such freedom allows you to become a Christian and to become free of the bondage of sin and death (Romans 8:2). That is the true spirit of religious freedom.

Is that kind of freedom really working for you?

—Howell Ferguson, Bells, Tennessee

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

JOHN 8:32

Children Explain Angels

I only know the names of two angels, Hark and Harold.
—Gregory, age 5

Everybody’s got it all wrong. Angels don’t wear halos anymore. I forget why, but scientists are working on it.
—Olive, age 9



Angels work for God and watch over kids when God has to go do something else.
—Mitchell, age 7

Angels don’t eat, but they drink milk from Holy Cows!!! —Jack, age 6

When an angel gets mad, he takes a deep breath and counts to ten. And when he lets out his breath again, somewhere there’s a tornado. —Reagan, age 10

Angels have a lot to do and they keep very busy. If you lose a tooth, an angel comes through your window and leaves money under your pillow. Then when it gets cold, angels go south for the winter. —Sara, age 6

All angels are girls because they gotta wear dresses and boys didn’t go for it.
—Antonio, age 9

“He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.”

PROVERBS 15:15

God’s Plan for Saving Man

God’s Grace	Ephesians 2:8
Christ’s Blood	Romans 5:9
The Holy Spirit’s Gospel	Romans 1:16
Sinner’s Faith	Acts 16:31
Sinner’s Repentance	Luke 13:3
Sinner’s Confession	Romans 10:10
Sinner’s Baptism	1 Peter 3:21
Christian’s Work	James 2:24
Christian’s Hope	Romans 8:24
Christian’s Endurance	Revelation 2:10



Divine Artists

First-graders were asked to draw a picture of God in their Sunday School class. Their finished products contained some interesting theology.

One child depicted God in the form of a brightly colored rainbow. Another presented Him as an old man coming out of the clouds. An intense little boy drew God with a remarkable resemblance to Superman. The best snapshot came from a little girl. She said, "I didn't know what God looked like, so I just drew a picture of my daddy."



"Then was our mouth filled with laughter."

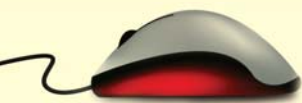
PSALM 126:2

Kid Wisdom

My three year old walked into the kitchen and announced she'd figured it out: "When I get older and have babies, you'll be their grandmother." I was impressed with her deductive reasoning until she went on with a glint in her eye: "...that is if you live long enough."
—Author Unknown

"Rejoice with the wife of thy youth."

PROVERBS 5:18



For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to www.housetohouse.com.

Home Front Crumbling

Douglas MacArthur II (the general's nephew) worked for the government. The Secretary of State once called his home and asked to speak with him. His wife replied, "He's not here. He's where he always is—weekends, nights, Saturdays, Sundays—at the office. You can reach him there."

She had not recognized the Secretary of State's voice or she would not have been so forthright. Nonetheless, the Secretary called MacArthur and sent him home immediately.

His comment was classic. He said, "Your home front is crumbling."¹

Consider the Current Situation.

Many home fronts are crumbling across our land because spouses do not spend enough time together. Between working two or three jobs, keeping children engaged in school, sports, and other activities, and having differing interests, they don't even spend much time in the same room.

A couple can become more like roommates than husband and wife.

God instructs couples to enjoy each other, and to do this, they must continue to build their relationship (Proverbs 5:15–19).

One said, "Marriage is given, not that two people should do one thing together, but that they should do all things together. Marriage is the total union of two personalities."

Consider Two Precepts.

In the Old Testament, we find this unusual commandment: "When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken" (Deuteronomy 24:5).

To get a new marriage off on the right foot in ancient Israel, a husband was forbidden to go to war or be charged with any overnight business.

Matthew Henry commented, "It is of great consequence that love be kept up between husband and wife; that they carefully avoid every thing which might make them strange one to another."

The young man's assignment was to "cheer up" (*samach*, "to brighten up") his new bride.

In the New Testament, Peter wrote, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them..." (1 Peter 3:7). "Dwell with" is from a word (*sunoikeyo*) found only here in the New Testament. It means "to dwell together in domestic association." He also indicates that husbands and wives are "joint-heirs of the grace of life" (*sugkleronomos*). A couple is to avoid unnecessary separation.

Consider an Example.

Aquila and Priscilla traveled together, worked together, and were hospitable together (Acts 18:2).

They took a missionary trip together (Acts 18:18).

They worshipped together and had Bible studies with others together (Acts 18:26).

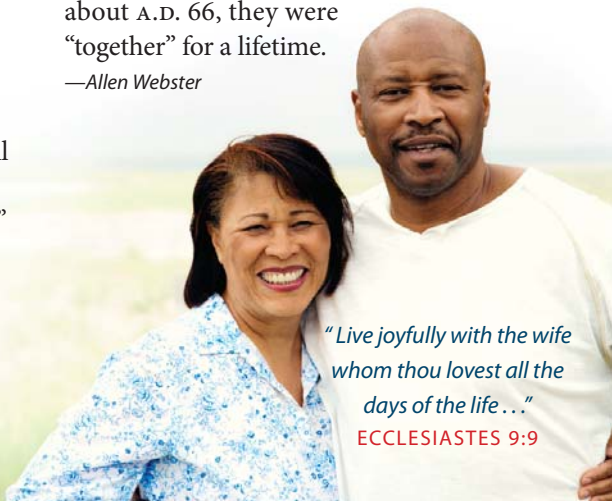
They assisted Paul together, risked their lives together (Romans 16:3–4).

They encouraged other Christians together and had the church in their house together (1 Corinthians 16:19).

They remained faithful through a lifetime together (2 Timothy 4:19).

When we consider that Acts 18 occurred about A. D. 54 and 2 Timothy, as Paul's last book, was written in about A.D. 66, they were "together" for a lifetime.

—Allen Webster



"Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life..."

ECCLESIASTES 9:9

¹ www.bible.org

FEELING SAVED

Q: I believe I'm saved; in fact, I'm sure I am; I feel it deep inside, so why all the fuss about biblical confirmation of it?

A: Just as a computer will produce its output based only on its programming, so we tend to do. Terrorists who are convicted enough to kill innocent victims are still wrong; those who routinely kill unborn babies are still wrong despite feeling justified (Proverbs 6:16–19).

Saul of Tarsus, an extremely devout and well-educated religious man of the first century, was so convicted that Christianity was pagan that he became a Christian-killer, later stating: "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do

many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison . . . and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft . . . and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities" (Acts 26:9–11). He was so "zealous toward God" that he persecuted Christians, "unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women" (Acts 22:3–4; cf. Acts 7:57–8:3).

But his zealotness and convictions were completely contrary to God's will because they were not based on a

knowledge of and obedience to God's truth (Romans 10:1–3; Acts 22:1–16).

What we "think" or "feel" simply will not save us on Judgment Day, if it is not accurately and obediently in accordance with God's Word, which will be the only basis of our judgment (John 12:48).

If we are truly saved, then why not study God's word to simply confirm it? If the study of God's Word alone reveals that we are not, it will surely show us what is lacking so we can correct it. Either way we win! Please contact us today and let's study only what God has to say. —Douglas E. Dingley, Cleveland, Oklahoma
To ask a Bible question or view previously answered questions, go to www.HouseToHouse.com.

**Bible
QUIZ**

Send us your answers (address on front) to receive a FREE Bible bookmark. We'll grade and return your questions and enclose the Psalm 23 bookmark as a way of saying "thanks" for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name: _____
Address: _____
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Questions Taken from the King James Version

Answers to Last Issue: *The First and the Last:* 1. last, last (Matthew 19:30); 2. Jew, Greek (Romans 1:16–17); 3. Jesus (Colossians 1:13–18/1 Corinthians 15:45–47); 4. Thou shalt have no other gods before me, Thou shalt not covet (Exodus 20), 5. Reuben, Benjamin (Genesis 49:3, 27); 6. Water to blood, death of the firstborn (Exodus 7:19–20/11:4–6); 7. Alpha, Omega (Revelation 22:13); 8. Assyria, Babylon (Jeremiah 50:17); 9. God created light and God rested (Genesis 1:3–5/ 2:2); 10. Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone, tell it to the church (Matthew 18:15, 17); 11. Moses, Malachi; 12. Matthew, John (Revelation 1:1). *Name that Place:* 1. The fiery furnace (Daniel 3:10–20); 2. The mountains of Ararat (Genesis 8:3–4); 3. Mount Hor (Numbers 33:39); 4. Jezreel (2 Kings 9:36); 5. Antioch (Acts 11:26); 6. Jacob's well (John 4:6–7).

Bible Facts

Directions: Genesis 5:22/6:9; 8:14–15; 19:18, 26; Exodus 33:17-23; Deuteronomy 34:10; Joshua 10:12; Judges 8:30; I Samuel 13:14/Acts 13:22; 2 Samuel 19:18; 23:1; 2 Kings 2:1, 11; Genesis 5:24; 2 Kings 2:8; 9:32-36; Proverbs 25:11 Nahum 1:3; Matthew 3:4; Mark 3:17; Acts 12:21-23; 17:4-6; 20:9

1. What is called the "dust" of the Lord's feet? _____
2. This man went to sleep and fell out of the window during a long sermon. _____
3. How many sons did Gideon have? _____
4. Which prophet parted the Jordan River with his mantle? _____
5. Which book of the Bible mentions a ferry boat? _____
6. Who was the sweet psalmist of Israel? _____
7. "There arose not a prophet in Israel like unto _____, whom the Lord knew face to face."
8. Of what did John the Baptist's diet consist? _____
9. Who were "the sons of thunder"? _____
10. Who was accused of turning the world upside down? _____
11. To whom did God show his back? _____
12. Who was turned into a pillar of salt? _____
13. What is like apples of gold in pictures of silver? _____
14. Who was a man after God's own heart? _____
15. Name two men who walked with God. _____
16. This king was eaten by worms because he did not give God the glory. _____
17. Name two men who did not die. _____
18. Who commanded the sun to stand still? _____

is your Bible

A preacher once observed in a sermon that every Christian should own a “red” Bible. At least that was what people heard. He actually said, “Every Christian should own a ‘read’ Bible.” Regardless of the color, it should be well-worn by the constant study of its owner. It is amazing how little people know about the Word in this generation, even in a land with full access to the Bible (electronic, apps, websites). Tonight Show host Jay Leno frequently does man-on-the street interviews. One night he collared some young people to ask them questions about the Bible.

“Can you name one of the Ten Commandments?” he asked two college-age women. One replied, “Freedom of speech?”

He said to the other, “Complete this sentence: Let he who is without sin . . .” Her response was, “Have a good time?”

Leno then turned to a young man and asked, “Who, according to the Bible, was eaten by a whale?” The confident answer was, “Pinocchio.”

Such misunderstandings are both humorous and tragic. Make time for Bible study in your life!

“How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?” (Romans 10:14)

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- ▶ Three Books on God’s Reading List —Allen Webster

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- I have a Bible question: _____
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- Reboot Your Cranium
- Watch Out for Bad Apples
- What Must I Do to Be Saved?
- A Lying Tongue
- Finding God’s Treasure
- Can I Change?
- Jesus’ Mother
- Back issues of *House to House/Heart to Heart*

First Friday, then Sunday, and finally Monday

It was on Friday when

- Jesus prayed in Gethsemane.
- Judas betrayed his Friend.
- Jewish officials conspired to arrest Jesus under the cover of darkness.
- Jesus was abandoned by His disciples.
- Jesus was denied by Peter.
- When Jesus was mocked, beaten, stripped of His clothing, and crucified.
- Jesus was buried in a borrowed tomb.

If one were to stop there, he could conclude defeat. But Friday wasn't the end of the story. Sunday came.

And on Sunday

- Jesus rose from the dead.
- He appeared to His disciples.
- There was great joy.

But that was Sunday. I can understand the great joy the disciples must have felt: Utter amazement to be standing in His presence once again. What could possibly stop them?

But now, here's my question. What did those disciples do when they woke up on Monday? The answer is they pursued the kingdom agenda with reckless abandon. They sold their possessions, they spoke of Jesus in the marketplace, and they willingly laid down their lives for Him.

Friends, we live in "Monday." Friday and Sunday have come and gone, and here we are in Monday. Will we allow the events of "Friday" and "Sunday" to shape our "Monday?" Will we with the same reckless abandon serve the Lord at any cost? The hope the resurrection gives us today is the same hope it gave those early disciples, so should we not live our "Monday" with the same excitement and jubilation as did they? Give it some thought.

—Steve Higginbotham, Knoxville, Tennessee

Basic Facts

The Church of Christ

Establishment: Jerusalem/A.D. 33 (Isaiah 2:2–3; Daniel 2:44; Luke 24:46–49; Acts 1:5–8; 2:1–4; Note: Mark 9:1)

Foundation: Christ (Isaiah 28:16; 1 Corinthians 3:11; Matthew 16:18)

Founder: Christ (Matthew 16:16–18)

Members referred to: Various (Acts 9:1–2, 13–14; 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16)

Organization: Structured (Ephesians 1:22–23; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1–12)

Worship: Spirit and Truth (John 4:24; Acts 2:42; Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19; 1 Corinthians 16:1–2)

Law of Pardon: Faith + Obedience = Salvation (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 5: 8–9)

Creed: Christ/New Testament (1 Corinthians 2:2)

Church Name/Description: Various (Romans 16:16; Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:15)

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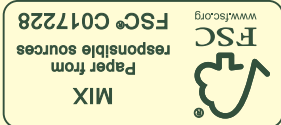
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Thoughts
from the HEART

What I Love about Being a Christian



I love being a child of the King!

Why? *First, Christians have a family.* God designed the physical family in the paradise of Eden (cf. Genesis 2:7; 18). Most of us enjoy that blessing from God. In the New Testament, God gave

us a second family—relationships with other church members. If our physical family fails us, especially, God has given us the substitute of a family in Christ (cf. Mark 10:29–30).

Christians love to sing of this truth:

We're part of the family,
that's been born again,
Part of the family,
whose love knows no end,
For Jesus has saved us,
and made us His own,
Now we're part of the family
that's on its way home!

Second, Christians have a function. Our foremost purpose in life is to bring glory to our Father (cf. Matthew 5:16; 1 Peter 2:12). Therefore, our aim is to do “in word or deed” all we do by the authority of Jesus Christ (cf. Colossians 3:17; Acts 4:7–10). Our speech (Colossians 4:6), attitudes (Philippians 2:1–5), clothing (1 Timothy 2:9–10; 1 Peter 3:3–4), and daily work (Colossians 3:22) should reflect Jesus (1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 2:6).

Third, Christians have a future. Those in Christ have a wonderful future no matter what their situation today. God's Book affirms that the Christian's future is bright (Luke 10:20; 1 Peter 1:1–9; Romans 6:22). Truly, I know not what tomorrow holds, but I know who holds tomorrow!

A family, function, and future—all free.

Jesus is still taking followers! —Rodney Nulph,
Gospel Gazette