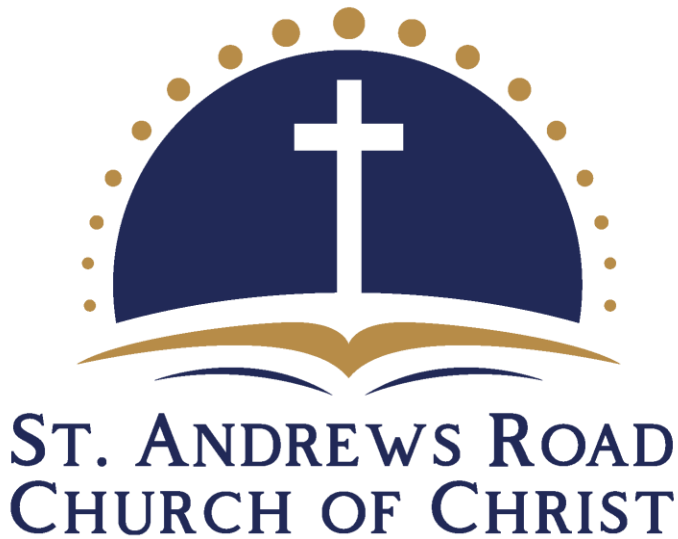


May 21, 2023

Volume 57 Issue 21



Worship Services & Bible Study

SUNDAYS	10:00 AM	Bible Class
SUNDAYS	11:00 AM	Worship
SUNDAYS	6:00 PM	Worship
WEDNESDAYS	7:00 PM	Bible Study

425 Saint Andrews Rd / Columbia, SC, 29210
803-772-0102

YouTube: Church of Christ St Andrews Rd

Mole Traps

Moles are little furry creatures you rarely see because they live underground. You can see the ground rise as they burrow, and place traps over their tunnels to catch them. The thing about mole traps is you can know when a mole is caught, for the trap springs up from the ground. You cannot see the mole, as it is still in the ground, but the sprung trap is evidence of its demise. There may be other moles in the yard, but they are out of sight.

Similarly, Paul told Timothy, **Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later (1 Timothy 5:24 NKJV)**. This statement is in the context of Timothy's appointment of elders in the church (vv. 17-22), as he was not to lay hands on anyone hastily, and thus share in their sins, if indeed they were disqualified. Some sins of others are visible, such as those who have been incarcerated for crimes, or those who get drunk in public. Like the mole trap, you can sometimes see when someone is in sin. However, some sins of others are hidden, and that poses a danger to Christians if we choose to give that person a prominent place in our lives. To be sure, those sins will come to light after they've been ordained as an elder, or after we've married them, or befriended them ("they follow after"), so we must be careful not to "hastily" rush the process of getting to know them. This is not to say that we should not "eat with sinners" as Jesus did in order to bring them to repentance (Luke 5:27-32), nor be unfriendly (Matthew 7:12); but we must guard our souls. Therefore, we must not rely upon first impressions, as Samuel was inclined to do when he went to anoint a king to replace Saul (1 Samuel 16:7). When we appoint men to leadership positions in the church, we take the time to know them beforehand, to see if they are indeed qualified. If they are not, and are appointed anyway by a rushed process, then we are at fault. The Bible says that deacons must **first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless (1 Tim. 3:10)**. Some congregations do the opposite: they appoint men as deacons, hoping they grow spiritually in that position and leave behind their worldliness. But this rarely, if ever, happens. So, the church suffers because it has men in leadership positions who are disqualified and unfaithful.

In addition, we must also be careful with people whom we choose to have close to us. A friend is a great asset if he or she is a Christian but can be a great liability if not. The Hebrews writer tells us to **Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14)**. Then, in our pursuit, he gives this caution: **Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled (v.15)**. The words, "root of bitterness springing up," goes back to the imagery of that which is unseen at first. Likewise, a person should be very careful whom he or she chooses to marry. **For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David (1 Kings 11:4)**. Many Christians have fallen away from the living God because of the influence of a friend or a spouse.

Conversely, the apostle Paul told Timothy, **Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden (1 Tim. 5:25)**. The good news is that although there are sometimes those who disappoint you, there are others who pleasantly surprise you. The good character of these folks will shine through sooner or later, and we can trust them. Therefore, marry a faithful Christian. Befriend a faithful Christian. Appoint faithful Christians to leadership positions in the church. May God give us the wisdom and patience to choose whom we set close to us.

Brotherly,
Jamie

THE DIMENSIONS OF LIFE

A JOT FROM JOHN

“Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours: Whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours. And you are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.” (1 Cor. 3:21-23).

“Life is yours.” Life is a very inclusive term. Think of the vastness of its meaning. It means here, as always, more than existence. Life has its dimensions: length and breadth, and depth and height. It is not enough to count the years that you live if you would measure your life. *“The days of our years are threescore and ten.”* That is simply a line from the cradle to the grave, reaching over seventy years of length. A man may broaden out his life by broadening out his sympathy, his love, by taking into the embrace of his thought and his affection things that are outside the narrow line of self-interest. As he thinks of his neighbor; of a dying soul; of the destitute and the widowed and the orphan and the oppressed; as he thinks of the Kingdom of God in all its out-reachings, the little narrow line of self-interest is crossed, and the territory of life broadens out to cover a vast continent of affection and of thought. When a man begins to cultivate his own nature, when he goes down into the depths of his own soul to find out what is there is sin, and by the grace of God expel it; what there is of weakness, and by the grace of God strengthen it; and what is there of selfishness, and by the grace of God displace it; when he learns, like a man who occupies uncultivated land on a farm, to plow it up, and subsoil it, and enrich the ground, so that he may get out of his own being the utmost possible yield for himself and his family and humanity – that man is discovering the depth that is possible to life. And when he looks beyond the present and the transient and the temporal, when he casts his eyes upward to God, when he reaches up after God, his likeness, his honor, his glory, then he is learning the height that is possible to life.

**Onward Rejoicing,
John B. Daniels, Associate Minister**

Quarterly Planning Meeting

Sunday, June 4
4:00 PM

All Leaders

Father’s Day Dinner

Saturday, June 10 5:00 PM

Palmetto Bible Camp

June 18 – 24
Register Now

Vacation Bible School

July 23 - 26

The Hottest Spot

House to House Heart to Heart 5346

Currently, the hottest pepper is officially the Carolina Reaper, cultivated by “Smokin” Ed Currie in Rock Hill, South Carolina. The official 2017 Guinness World Record heat level was 1,641,183 Scoville Heat Units (SHU).

Is your good influence detectable in a crowd? Jesus spoke of influence in the Sermon on the Mount: “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor . . . It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out” (Matthew 5:13–14).

We are God’s “spice” to influence His world for good. There are two ways that we may influence others: by words and by deeds. People are more affected by what they see than what they hear. What do they see in your life and mine? Do they see devotion to Christ shown by our being at Bible study and worship? Do they see someone truly striving to live like Christ, or do they see someone who is indifferent and compromising? Will God say to us on that final day, “Well done, good and faithful servant,” or will He say, “Depart from Me”? (Matthew 25:21, 41).

—Adapted from Kenneth Davis

