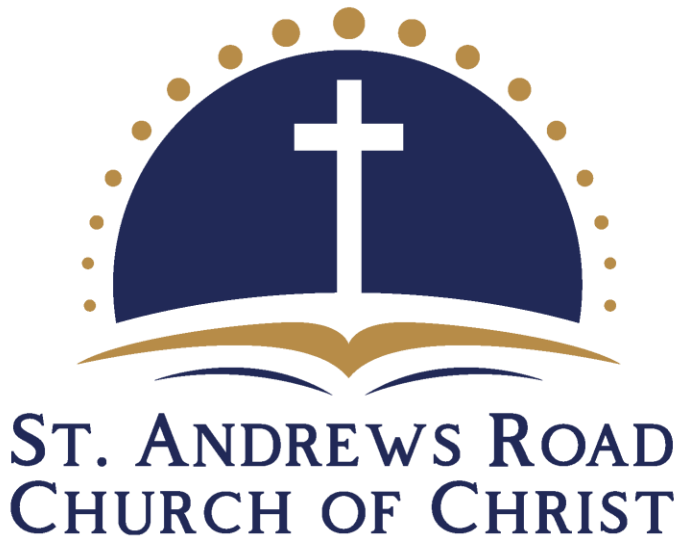


September 3, 2023

Volume 57 Issue 36



Worship Services & Bible Study

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|------------|----------|-------------|
| 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

Doing the Lord's Work

What if someone came to your house early in the morning, accused you of illegalities, and hauled you off to prison without due process, separating you from your family? What if the real reason this happened was because you are a Christian, and you have been teaching others about Jesus? Would you cease and desist your activity, or would this embolden you and your family to continue spreading the gospel of Christ?

This sort of thing actually happened to the church long ago: **As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison (Acts 8:3, NKJV).** "Havoc," according to Thayer's Lexicon, means to treat shamefully or with injury, to ravage, devastate, ruin. Can you imagine the awful scene? Ananias described Saul as a man who had done much harm to the saints in Jerusalem (Acts 9:13). But the saints were not deterred, for Scripture says, **Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word (v. 4).**

My question is, what made the saints in Jerusalem tick? Because I need to be and want to be the same way. Scripture gives us the answer in the context of the apostle Paul's ministry. The man who was formerly known as Saul, was now being persecuted for his work in the name of Christ. In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul stated two things that motivated him. First was the future day of judgment. In speaking of his eventual departure from this world, he says, **Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences (2 Corinthians 5:9-11).** "We must all appear" means you, me, and everyone. That certain, future appointment before the august presence of our holy Lord motivated Paul to "persuade men" to **repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance (Acts 26:20b).** Second, Paul was motivated to work for the Lord because of the love of Christ. **For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).** Love is a great motivator. It was love that urged Paul on in the face of pain, incarceration, and even death. Love will compel you to ignore your fears. For example, recently in Uvalde, Texas, when an active shooter was inside a school building, parents had to be held back from going into the building to confront the shooter because the police were inexplicably delaying their response. The parents ignored the threat to themselves because of the love for their children. The love of Christ will compel us to do the work of the Lord while ignoring the personal cost and fear.

Thankfully, the church in America is not currently undergoing such persecution. But what of the work of the Lord? Is it being prosecuted with the same earnestness as in the first century? Are you and I motivated as those of whom we read about in the book of Acts? Monday, our country will celebrate Labor Day. This would also be a good time to reflect upon our own work for the Lord. Are we satisfied with what we have done thus far, or do we need motivation? The coming day of judgment and the love of Christ motivated the apostle Paul and others to work. If we are mindful of those things, we will be motivated to do the same.

Brotherly,
Jamie

Gospel Meeting With BJ Clarke

How to Live The

Abundant Life

--Here and Hereafter



September 17 - 20

WHERE'S THE FRUIT?

Every few years a commercial comes along that is priceless. It strikes a chord with Americans everywhere. Soon, the jingle or slogan is heard not only from television but from the lips of senior citizens to babes—the commercial becomes a bit of true Americana. One such commercial was Wendy's Hamburgers, "Where's the Beef?" commercial which aired in 1984. The original commercial featured three elderly ladies at the "Home of the Big Bun" examining an exaggeratedly large hamburger bun. Many would chuckle as they dig through their hamburger bun in an attempt to find "the beef" in their 98-cent hamburger. Yet, how many will go through their lives looking for the insignificant beef in their hamburger and fail to ever search for the more weightier spiritual fruit in their lives? Instead of asking "Where's the Beef?" a person needs to examine himself and ask:

Where's The Fruit?

Just as a good hamburger contains plenty of beef, a person acceptable to God bears much fruit. To be "fruitful" means to be productive. A fruitful garden produces much fruit; a fruitful worker is a worker productive in his work. To produce fruit for God means one is working and serving God in the works God would have him do. Paul wrote that we must "*walk in a manner worthy of the Lord to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work...*" (Col. 1:10). The fruit that God expects of men "*consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth*" (Eph. 5:9).

Relationship with Christ

The New Testament uses the phrase "in Christ" to describe those who have a spiritual relationship with Christ. To get "*into Christ*" one must first be obedient to Christ by being "baptized into Christ" (Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:26-27; Col. 2:12-13).

Those outside of Christ cannot bear fruit for Christ. It does not matter how pious, humble, or sincere one becomes there is no producing for the Lord outside of the Lord. Jesus said, "*As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me ... for apart from me you can do nothing*" (John 15:4-5).

Relationship And Service

Christians must recognize that the Christian life does not mean "being" a Christian but rather doing what a Christian does. Jesus spoke of the vine and branches in John 15 to illustrate the Christian life as a relationship to Christ (abiding in Christ) and a service to Christ (bearing fruit). Jesus warned His followers, "*Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away*" (John 15:2). Those branches taken away are cast "*into the fire, and they are burned*" (John 15:6). Jesus explained the twofold purpose of His disciples bearing fruit, "*By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples*" (John 15:8). This brings up once again a question every Christian must ask and examine their lives with, "Where's the Fruit?" The Christian life is to be one of labor not loafing, fruit not foliage. Is your life producing for the Lord or are you just putting off the Lord?

Onward Rejoicing,
John B. Daniels, Associate Minister