

WORSHIP *SCHEDULE*

9:00 AM

Song Leader:
Nate Durham

Scripture Reading:
Chevis Webb
1Corinthians 5:1-13

Prayer:
Kevin Hayes

Lesson:
Stacey Durham

Title:
Can a Fallen Christian Be Restored?

Closing Prayer:
Andrew Durham

Wednesday, December 23

Song Leader:
Bailey Steger

Invitation:
Alex Bansemer

Prayer:
Kevin Hayes

Lord's Supper Preparation
December: Fix
January: Durham

11:00 AM

Song Leader:
David Bansemer

Scripture Reading:
Louis Long
Luke 18:15-17

Prayer:
Ron Hunt

Lord's Supper:
Wayne Baker
Al Cotten

Lesson:
Stacey Durham

Title:
The Greatest Gift for a Child

Announcements:
Kevin Hayes

Closing Prayer:
Chris Huffines

Usher for This Week:
Doug Thweatt

Creekview *BULLETIN*

Trust the Bible

There are some who accept the Bible's message about Jesus, but reject its record of creation, the flood, etc. Yet Jesus said, "If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?" (John 3:12) Every part of the Bible is true: let us trust in all of it.

To Our Visitors

We are assembled today for the purpose of worshiping our Father (John 4:24) and edifying one another (Heb. 10:24-25). We hope that you find that we accomplish these goals in our assemblies today.

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SERVICE TIMES

SUNDAYS:

WORSHIP: 9:00 AM
BIBLE STUDY: 10:00 AM
WORSHIP: 11:00 AM

WEDNESDAYS:

BIBLE STUDY: 7:00 PM

Can a Fallen Christian Be Restored?

Before answering this question, let us define the terms. A Christian is a follower of Christ who lives by the Lord's words and imitates His ways (John 8:31-32; 13:15). He has yielded his life to God through faithful obedience to the gospel (Gal. 2:20; Heb. 5:8-9). A fallen Christian is one who has gone back on this commitment. He has turned aside from his pursuit of Christlikeness and resumed a life of sin. The Scripture describes such a brother or sister in Christ as having "fallen away" (Heb. 6:6). Restoration is the process by which a fallen Christian can return to his prior standing in the Lord.

So then, can a fallen Christian be restored? The answer to that question is an emphatic yes, and every Christian should know this. Forgiveness and redemption are hallmarks of the gospel of Christ, and they are not one-time propositions. Just as there is no "once saved, always saved" (Heb. 6:4-6; 2Pet. 2:20-22), there is also no "once fallen, always fallen." A fallen Christian can always come back to the Lord.

How then are we to understand Hebrews 6:6? This verse says that for Christians who "have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame." Is it indeed impossible to renew a fallen Christian to repentance? The answer is yes if he has effectively crucified Christ to himself by rejecting his only Savior. In other words, a Christian who turns against Jesus and refuses to repent has no hope, for there is no other savior. However, if he renews his faith in Christ and turns away from his sin, then his restoration is both possible and certain.

There is an example of such a fallen Christian from the New Testament church at Corinth. A brother there was caught up in a kind of immorality that did not even exist among the Gentiles (1Cor. 5:1). The church had utterly failed to discipline this brother, so Paul took action by divine authority. He ordered the church to disassociate with this man "so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1Cor. 5:6). The purpose of this action was to punish the fallen brother so that he would cease from his sinful ways and be restored to the Lord.

By all appearances, this approach of discipline was effective in restoring the fallen brother. Paul seemed to be referring to this same brother when he wrote 2Corinthians 2:5-8, which says,

⁵But if any has caused sorrow, he has caused sorrow not to me, but in some degree – in order not to say too much – to all of you. ⁶Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the majority, ⁷so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort him, otherwise such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.

⁸Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him.

This brother, who indulged in an extreme form of immorality, was smitten with

godly sorrow and repented of his sin. Therefore, he was to be fully embraced by the church again. He was indeed restored.

If a Christian such as the one in Corinth can be restored, then so can any other. There is no sin that is too sinful for God to forgive under the terms of the gospel. In God's likeness, Christians must also be forgiving of their fallen brothers and sisters who repent and return. The Lord teaches us to forgive a brother "up to seventy times seven" (Matt. 18:22) and "seven times a day" if he repents (Luke 17:4). In other words, we are to forgive a fallen Christian as much and as often as he is willing to repent.

Thus, a fallen Christian can be restored, but it is not easy. Disciplining a sinful brother or sister is a grievous task, and godly sorrow and repentance are always difficult for any sinner. Likewise, complete forgiveness is not always easy for Christians, for they may remember a brother's sin and hold it against him even after he returns. Therefore, everyone must be committed to the process of restoring a sinful Christian in order to "save his soul from death" (Jas. 5:20).

Stacey E. Durham

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news & notes

- Nate Durham and Hannah Steger are engaged to be married. Congratulations to them, and may God bless them.
- Donella Jones' daughter, Mishae Nevils, is now in rehab following brain surgery.
- Please keep the following members in your prayers: Barbara Atkins, Shirley Buchanan, Kay Cook, Donella Jones, Kay Lanius, Laurie Polchek, and Kirk and Jenny Webb. Also remember Ralph Anderson, Jody Baize, Wayne Wright, Dot Long's sister Melissa, and Pat Ridings' brother.

reading plan

Sunday - 3John
Monday - Deut. 29-31
Tuesday - Esther 1-5
Wednesday - Ps. 144-148
Thursday - Song of Sol. 5-6
Friday - Revelation 12-17
Saturday - Acts 25-26

meetings

None to announce