



*For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth... in every place.
(1 Thessalonians 1:8)*

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Worship	9:30 AM
Bible Study	10:30 AM
Worship	6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Study	1:30 PM
Bible Study	7:00 PM

Bible Call

(618) 667-9603

www.collinsvillecoc.org

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HAZARDOUS TRAVEL

The winter of 2009-2010 has been a difficult one. It has been a few years since there has been the extreme cold that was experienced around the first of the year. As February overtook us, people were looking for spring. But winter storms have taught us that winter is far from being over. It has been reported that two-thirds of the continental states are snow covered. Forty-nine of the fifty states reported measurable snow on the ground last week. All of this has made travel quite difficult throughout the country. Many hindrances have been dealt with and overcome as people travel toward their destinations.

Life itself is a journey. Every individual is traveling toward eternity and is a sojourner in a strange land (Hebrews 11:13; 1 Peter 2:11). Most are merely going with the flow, traveling the broad pathway that others are following to hell fire and damnation (Matthew 7:13). A few are trying to follow the strait and narrow way that leads to life in the glory of God (Matthew 7:14).

Just as there are many hindrances to travel in the inclement, winter weather, there are hindrances to one's spiritual travel through this life.

Multi-car pile ups have been reported recently in several locations. One can be innocently involved in accidents when the roads are covered with ice and snow. No matter how careful a person is, the drivers around them can cause him to be forced off the road or involved in a crash. So it is with the spiritual journey through life. A person can try very hard to live as he should, worshiping and serving God. Yet, the people around him can pull him down. A Christian can be corrupted by the company he keeps, even if he is careful (1 Corinthians 15:33). Peer pressure can be a great influence. Situations occur when the actions of others can lead the faithful Christian into the ditch along with the rest.

Friend, be watchful of who is around you as you travel through life. They could keep you from reaching your destination. Make friends of God's children, who will encourage and help you (Hebrews 3:12-13).

Snow and ice can be very treacherous. Frequently drivers are warned of the "black ice," which is not seen or recognized until it is too late. Drivers are warned of ramps

and overpasses that freeze over more readily than the rest of the highway. A driver must always be alert for such problem spots along the highway, lest he find himself along the side of the road or smashed into another vehicle. Likewise, Satan is quite crafty (Ephesians 6:11). He sees to it that there will be subtle dangers along the highway of life. The Christian must be aware of his surroundings and of the wiles of the devil. He must always be alert, lest he be carried away with error and be sidetracked on his journey through life (2 Peter 3:17).

Friend, be aware of the pitfalls of sin and temptation. Pray for wisdom and strength that you might always be able to steer through them (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Another problem drivers have on snow covered roads is that it is sometimes difficult to see the edge of the road. Because of the snow, one cannot see the lines on the road. One can easily get too close to the edge and slide off into the ditch. The driver will many times try to drive in the middle of the road for safety. So it is with the Christian's spiritual journey through life. The Christian should be careful to avoid drifting too close to the edge of the strait way and veer off course into the broad pathway of destruction. He is to avoid the path of the wicked (Proverbs 4:14-15) and abstain from every form of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22).

Friend, keep steering away from sin and temptation (2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Corinthians 6:18). Do not make provision to fulfill the fleshly lusts (Romans 13:14).

There are times that the winter storms can be very trying. Due to the ice, the snow, and the winds, someone can be stranded in an airport or a motel for days because of the conditions. Such can try the patience and the resolve of any human being. So it is with the trials of this life as the Christian journeys toward heaven. Such trials can bring the Christian to his knees. One should know, however, that God will be there with His child (Romans 8:28).

Friend, use those trials as stepping stones to growth (James 1:2-4). Overcome and you will receive the crown of life (James 1:12).

TLM

Sincere Self-examination

It is very important for individual Christians to continually examine themselves in light of the Scriptures (2 Corinthians 13:5). The Word of God acts as the mirror into our souls. Through regular Bible study we should be able to see ourselves for who we really are spiritually. We should then be willing to make whatever changes are necessary in order to please God (James 1:22-25).

It is dangerous for a Christian to think that he has reached such a high spiritual level he need no longer examine himself. Paul wrote, "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall (1 Corinthians 10:12)." If the men who are in the eldership are qualified men, they will be spiritually mature (1 Timothy 3:1-7). However, even the elders are told to "take heed" to themselves (Acts 20:28).

Congregational self-examination is just as important as individual self-examination. Congregations of the body of Christ must continually look at themselves in an open and honest manner. We must see ourselves for who we are. We must constructively critique our worship, teaching, and work. If Satan can lull congregations into a sense of complacency he has gained a victory.

When one reads Revelation chapters two and three, it becomes very clear the Lord wants congregations to recognize their faults and correct them. The Lord told the congregations of Asia what they were doing right and what they were doing wrong. Concerning those things that were wrong, Jesus encouraged them to repent (e.g. Revelation 2:5). I have often thought it would be of benefit for us to receive a specific report from the Lord as to how He views the local church. Though we do not expect to receive such a report until the judgment day, we do have the New Testament to give us all the information we need in order to please our Savior.

Elder, deacons, evangelists, and teachers must all be concerned about the spiritual strength and well being of the congregation. We must ask ourselves questions about our evangelistic work, benevolent work, and the work of edification. Are we doing what God wants us to do? When we see weaknesses or failures we must make every effort to correct them. It should be our goal to be found without spot individually and congregationally when the Lord returns (2 Peter 3:14).

We understand full well that there is no such thing as a perfect Christian or a perfect congregation (1 John 1:9, 10). However, perfection must be our goal. Paul said, "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:12-14)." Let us never rest on our laurels. Let us never fall into the sin of complacency. Let us ever press on toward the goal individually and congregationally!

- Kevin Rutherford -
West End church of Christ, 2007

Mabery's Minutes



marked "Haiti Relief," to Larry Astrauskas, Reggie Weaver, or one of the elders.

The special contribution for Haiti relief was quite good, considering the fact that the inclement weather kept our attendance 30% below normal. More than four thousand two-hundred dollars were collected Sunday. However, since so many were hindered because of the weather, we will wait a couple of weeks before forwarding the money to the Estes church. If you want to contribute to this cause, please give your check,