

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS - Week of January 6, 2019**

**THEME: "A New Church"**

**GOD'S WONDERFUL WORKS**

**Sunday .....Read Psalm 9:1-2**

*"I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart: I will show forth all thy marvelous works."*

The psalmist had a heart of praise for all the wonderful things God had done. It is so easy to identify with the psalmist as we reflect on all the things God has done for our local assembly. As we celebrate His marvelous works on this 23<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of Tri-County Bible Church, it is proper that we give glory to God by recalling His marvelous works. Just as the Israelites had a desire to praise God for the wonderful things He had done for them, so we too rejoice in the countless blessings of our God. Although it would be impossible to give all the details, we can certainly honor God by sharing some highlights! David had to be thinking both of the way He had been personally blessed by God in his life of faith in Him as well as the marvelous things God had done for His people at large. As we look back on the blessings of God for our local church, we can be mindful and thankful that we are in a nation which has historically been a land of freedom where we could establish a church without the need to go underground as is true in so many of the nations around the world where Christians suffer persecution. Having said that, Christians in America today are sensitive to the fact that the devil has succeeded in blinding so many Americans, not only to the blessings God has bestowed upon our land, but also to the truth of His infallible truth to the point where public education promotes ideas that are in direct conflict with the Word of God. That trend, however, only inspires us to become increasingly committed to our Savior's command in Matthew 5:14 that we are *"the light of our world."* By looking back, we hope to be encouraged to move ahead as admonished in Philippians 3:13-14: *"Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."*

**A NEW CHURCH**

**Monday .....Read Acts 1:6-15**

*"And when they were come in, they went into a upper room."*

It could be said that the very first local assembly of believers that God used to start a church in Jerusalem began in the room of a residence referenced in our Bible reading for today. On this 23<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the first meeting of the Tri-County Bible Church, that meeting starting the Church at Jerusalem comes to mind in that we had our beginnings in similar fashion: a group of believers meeting in a residence to seek God's direction. Those early believers in Jerusalem had reached a turning point in their lives and were looking for God's direction. You could say our church began the same way, a group of believers in Gilbertsville meeting to share thoughts about God's leading at what they saw to be a turning point in their lives of faith in terms of a place to gather for worship. As did those early believers, the group prayed to seek an agreement as to what they should do. As they did, and as people spoke up in the way that Peter did, the idea of starting a new ministry was put into the discussion. That after many had shared that they had visited various churches here and there, but did not sense the assurance that God wanted them in those places. With the proposal of a new church, the whole group sensed that was God leading them in that direction. It was as if the Holy Spirit had provided them with clear direction! With that, they put a call into the one all felt would be the man to serve as a pastor of this new church!

**A PASTOR**

**Tuesday .....Read Psalm 37:23-29**

*"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord."*

The call was made, and the answer was in the affirmative, because just as God was directing this small band of His people, God has intervened in the personal life of the man they called about serving as a pastor. He was home in Pennsylvania over the Christmas holidays from a church planting ministry in North Carolina. Faced with some issues that seemed to be leading him back to the area, maybe into the field of education in which he had long served, he too was seeking God's direction. He was, however, in a dilemma, because the potential replacement for him as a pastor in North Carolina seemed to be heading in a different direction. But late that Saturday morning, he received a telephone call from North Carolina that the man who had initially turned down the ministry advised them that things had changed

opening the door for him to assume the pastoral position in the church that had been established. God was working in the hearts of those gathering in the home and in the circumstances of the pastor they had called to be available.

**DIRECTION**

**Wednesday.....Read Proverbs 3:5-6**

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy paths."* Many times there are things that come up in the lives of believers that can be perplexing and even discouraging, but they don't have to be. Why? Because God always has a way, and makes a way. What is true in our personal lives is true for the life of a church. Yes, we are to prayerfully plan and try to do things decently and in order, but even then, surprises may come. As so often we see in Scriptures in the dilemma that so many Biblical characters found themselves, we see that God makes a way. What to us may seem like an insurmountable problem is merely a plan of God to build our faith. In the history of our church, we have seen good results from the careful and responsible planning of those whom God called into positions of leadership; but we have also seen God alter some of those plans to keep us on the track of His planning, and most especially when we may have gone in a different direction and surely when we knew not what to do.

**NEEDS**

**Thursday ..... Read Philippians 4:13-19**

*"My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."* It has been so interesting and assuring to see how God meets the needs, both personally and in meeting the needs of the church. Right at the beginning, we saw God wonderfully provide a meeting place, and then another and another as the work progressed. The first public gathering, after a time of worship in a private home to close out 1995, we met in a conference room of a local motel. In two weeks, that was insufficient, and God opened the door to a facility providing sufficient space; that is, until it became overcrowded. But God had a plan, and we could move into a public school building that would soon become the home of a Christian school. But even then, we were limited in the programming because of the need to share with other people. In searching for a home base, it was a joy to see how God took over. A couple of places where we thought it desirable to "settle down" did not pan out because God had a different plan; that being our current home base. He was waiting for the property which would be our church home to go on the market; and miraculously opened the door for us even before a sale of the property became public. When we were advised, it was apparent from a human viewpoint that the price tag was far beyond our ability. We soon found out that nothing is too hard for God, and He took care of the finances in such a way that we in short order became mortgage free. One memorable thing is that after several weeks of prayer before we were to take pledges to meet the need, the offering in which we needed to have \$20,000 in pledges turned into a cash offering of \$20,000. Our Heavenly Father is always true to His promise. He will meet the need according to His riches in glory! Trusting God to do His will is unspeakable joy!

**PERSONNEL**

**Friday ..... Read Romans 12:6-15**

*"Having then gifts deferring according to the grace that is given us..."* Not only has God wondrously met the financial needs, He meets the personnel needs, providing the people who have the talents to carry on the ministry. In the very first meeting, the pianist we had lined up for congregational singing took ill, and we had a void. Even before the meeting started, God had arranged for an accordionist to show up to meet that need, and when we mentioned our need for the future, we found that the Spirit had arranged for a pianist to be there who was seeking a home church. The Bible tells us in today's reading that God has engifted His people with talents, and in I Corinthians we are told that the Spirit places them where God pleases: *"Now God hath set the members everyone of them in the body as it pleases Him."* Starting out as a ministry in which we endeavored to reach people who had no home church, there was a scarcity of men with the experience of church leadership positions. In short order, God brought men searching for a home church who had faithfully served in just such a position in previous churches where they had attended. Christ is indeed the Head of the Church!

**LOVE**

**Saturday..... Read John 13:35-38**

*"By this shall all men know ye are my disciples because of your love one for another."* A most important priority for our local church is to show the love of Christ, with fellow believers and with the lost. As important as are the talents of all the people whom God has placed in this local assembly of believers, none surpasses this vital admonition of our Savior: to show love one for another. I praise God for the many, many times I have had the joy of hearing visitors make the remark that the love demonstrated by our people blessed their hearts. They were made to feel so welcome! Surely, that moved the heart of our Savior watching there from the right hand of God on His throne in heaven. It is our love for each other that is a

major concern for our Lord. By the same token, it is the goal of the enemy to create discord and division, both in homes and in a church family. One big way to keep this atmosphere of love is to be engaged in intercessory prayer for each other. I find it very meaningful in that regard to see that God closes out the passage detailing spiritual armor to fight this spiritual war with a command to pray in Ephesians 6:18: "*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.*" Those prayers will result in actions that honor God!