

July 9, 2023



FLORENCE BOULEVARD CHURCH OF CHRIST

Elders

Steve Clark
Jake VanDyke
Ken Vanhorn
Mark Willingham

Deacons

Greg Allen
Justin Beckman
Kevin Clemons
Jeffrey Cox
Mike Davidson
Kyle Dickson
Gregg Elrod
Nate Fulmer
AJ Gooch
David Gooch
Lee Handley
Will Hodge
Brian McManus
Jamey Medley
Ronnie Putnam
Dave Schmidt
Mark Vanhorn

Minister

Austin Johnson

Youth Minister

John Birdwell

Secretary

Sonya Cox

Lookin' for a Legalist (Psalm 119)

Are you a legalist? We're often called that. What is a legalist? Well, if you ask those who claim to know they'll tell you a legalist is a person who attempts to justify themselves before God with observances, laws, and deeds with a strict almost obsessive conformity. Behind closed doors these same people say that a legalist is mean, close-minded, has no love or compassion for others and are in love with the law and not people. And they insist that legalists do what they do because they love to fight, fear being sent to hell, but relish in telling others that they're going unless they conform to how they think.

Okay. I'll accept that definition, for a moment. But I want you know that in my almost sixty-one years of life (46 as a Christian) I have never met a legalist in the Lord's church. Never. Not one. I look in the mirror each morning and like my faithful brothers and sisters in Christ, recognize the fact that I could not in a thousand lifetimes ever earn my way to heaven. I am a wretched sinner who without the loving grace of God is fit only for the confines of hell. And Christians with this same attitude are the only ones I am familiar with. In fact, I'm really close to putting a legalist in the same category as Big Foot. Plenty of people say they exist but no one has actually produced one! But in all honesty their definition is different than that above. To a Liberal anyone on the other side of the rope of liberalism is, in their minds, a legalist.

And yet I suggest to you that a Liberal is far closer to being a legalist than the people they so angrily point at. After all it was the legalists of Jesus day (the Pharisees) who added to the word of God (Matt. 15:8, 9). It was the Pharisees, the legalists, who acted out in animosity when anyone disagreed with their self-made laws (Luke 7:34). It was the Pharisees, the legalists, that threw the name of Lord around like it was loose change thinking that would be good enough to please God (Matt. 7:21).

The other thing I have learned about liberals is that they desperately need an enemy because their ideology cannot stand on its own merit. And because they need an enemy and because Bible believing, God fearing, people loving Christians don't act like an enemy they redefine them so they can re-categorize them as enemies, as legalists.

For just as climate-change proponents need large corporate entities to demonize; just as bought and paid for scientists need "science deniers" to demagogue; just as the Islamic religion needs Christianity in order to mobilize; just as abortionists need those who want to protect the sanctity of life so that they can solicit; liberals have to have the myth of legalism to survive. They must have an opponent even if it is an imaginary one so that they might invent persecution, manufacture a mission, and pretend they are in the right.

You see I know way too many preachers, shepherds and wanna-be-different-paradoxical church members who are either looking for validation that comes from having an imaginary enemy or who want to be desperately seen as totally tolerant that they think throwing these false teachers a bone might illicit some praise and/or deflect some criticism. They can paint a pretty terrible if not vicious portrait of what they call a legalist. But for the life of me I've never found one soul in any of the congregations I've ever been a part of who are unloving, hate sinners, are cruel to unbelievers, worship water, and are married to the that's-the-way-we've-always-done-it slogan.

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2502 FLORENCE BOULEVARD

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Worship: Sunday 9:00 am & 5:00 pm; Bible Class 10:15 am; Wednesday: 6:30 pm

FOR THE RECORD

Sunday AM: 256 / On Line Views: 207
Sunday School: 203 / On Line Views: N/A
Sunday PM: 156 / On Line Views: 238
Wednesday: 179 / On Line Views: 69
Budget: \$14,620
Contribution: \$ 12,858

JULY MISSIONARY OF THE MONTH

Fred Asare
Village of Hope
PO Box 18169
Accra, Ghana
fredasare@gmail.com

We express our sympathy to the family of Mark McWilliams. Mark was a former member here along with his parents Doug & Joanna McWilliams. Mark and his wife were in a car accident recently and Mark passed away on Monday, July 3rd. He was only 29 years old.
Address for Doug and Joanna McWilliams if anyone wishes to send a sympathy card is: 1806 Maclin Drive, Tuscumbia, AL 35674
Also, Shana (Mark’s wife) is: 336 Randall Court, Florence, AL 35634

(continuation)

I’m not saying that there isn’t a legalist out there somewhere; I’m just saying that they are incredibly few and very far between. In fact, I feel sorry for the faithful in our time. They are attacked from all sides. They are viciously ridiculed by the unrighteous, the self-righteous, and those who have no idea what righteousness really is.

But the Psalmist knew. David, the man after God’s own heart knew. For he said in **Psalm 119:127, 128, 172b** **“Therefore I love Your commandments more than gold, yes, than fine gold! Therefore, all Your precepts concerning all things I consider to be right; I hate every false way. For all your commandments are righteousness.”** Careful David, they just might call you a legalist.

Gregg Elrod

CHURCH WIDE MISSION TRIP

July 22nd-July 29th in Eastpoint, Florida. If you are interested in going, please sign the sheet, on the table, in the foyer asap, or see Mike Davidson or Brian McManus. Also, please bring cleaning supplies, toilet paper, and paper towels and place on the pulpit, to be taken on the mission trip.

Also, if you picked out a name, off of the tree, of children in Eastpoint, see Mike Davidson about getting a backpack to put the items in and when you bring the items back, please make sure that their information is with the items.

AREA EVENTS

Gospel Meeting at Mt Zion Church of Christ, July 9th-July 12th with Ty Rhymes. Sunday afternoon service: 1 pm; Monday-Wednesday services: 7 pm.

Vacation Bible School July 10th-July 13th at Jacksonburg Church of Christ, 6:30 pm-8:30 pm. Classes for all ages. If you need a ride, please call 256-762-6802.

Gospel Meeting at Lexington Church of Christ, July 16th-July 19th with Jeff Abrams. Sunday afternoon service: 1:30 pm; Monday-Wednesday services: 7 pm.

THANK YOU

The thoughtful act of giving or serving does more than meet a specific need, it encourages a heart with the assurance that yes, God truly cares. Your thoughtfulness was appreciated more than you know. Thank you for the thoughts, prayers, and cards during my chemo and surgery. They have been a great encouragement to me and my family. Your support has been such a blessing!

*In Christian Love,
Danny Thomas*

(brother-in-law of Harold Hines & Regina Wilkerson)

LADIES OVER FOOD FOR SICK

We are in need of some ladies that are willing to call people to provide food for ones that are sick or have had surgeries or babies. You only have to do this for a month. The months that are needed are: August, October, November, & December. If you can help with this. please see Sonva Cox asap.