

# Elkton Communicator

A Publication of the church of Christ in Elkton, TN

22JAN2012

## *Men Privileged to Serve*

### Announcements

Dick Sullivan

### Sunday Services

9 am

**Singing**— Jimmy Davis

**Prayer**— Jim Lovell

10 am

**Singing**— Jimmy Davis

**S. R.**— Jerry Moody

**Prayer**— Chris Crabtree

**Sermon**— Joe Greer

### Lord's Table—

- Presiding

- Jarred Butler

- John Bryan III

- Serving

- Charlie Wilburn

- Jay Butler

**Prayer**— Tim Burgess

5 pm

**Singing**— Joe Greer

**Prayer**— David Beyer

**Sermon**— Jim Lovell

**Prayer**— Buck Smith

### Wednesday Bible Study 7 pm

**Singing**— Singing Night

**Invitation**— Jimmy Butler

*“The works of  
His hands  
are faithful  
and just.”*

*Psalm 111:7*

## Before and After

by Bryan Nash

We've all seen them, the infomercials that promise to revamp everything about you. Are you fat? There's a product to make you look like a stick. Are you depressed? There's something to make you grin from ear to ear. Are you too hairy? There's something you can use to take the hair right off. Plus, there's more good news. It will never grow back. Do you not have enough hair? You guessed it. All of these ads are accompanied by *before and after pictures*. Although comical at times, the intent is to show the unbelievable transformation that will be made. In all actuality, very few of these products deliver what they promise. Pay close attention the next time you see a before and after picture. It's amazing what good lightning, good posture, fashionable style, and a tan will do for a person.

In **Ephesians 4**, Paul gives us the before and after picture of Christianity (without the tricks and gimmicks). This is a real life change. The before picture is dreary and depressing while the after picture is glorious and godly. The first section of Ephesians (chapters 1-3), explain principles and doctrine; the last part of the letter (chapters 4-6), deals with practice and duty. Paul writes in **Ephesians 4:1**, “... *walk worthy of the calling with which you were called*” There must be a change, a radical change. Not a change caused by visual illusions, but a true transformation of the most important kind. Let's look at the person before and after Christ.

### **THE BEFORE PICTURE**

**The before man lives in vanity.** These walk “*in the futility of their mind*” (4:17). The person trying to find happiness without Christ is like a kid chasing a bubble. As soon as he thinks he has it... where did it go?

**The before man lives in ignorance.** (4:18) This is not for a lack of intelligence or knowledge, but one of willful ignorance. This section of Ephesians is like the Cliffs Notes of **Romans 1**. There we read “*For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse*” (Rom. 1:20). “*And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting.*” (1:28)

**The before man becomes callous.** (Eph. 4:19) If you are not accustomed to an activity, it is unpleasant at first, even downright painful. But over time it becomes routine. Anyone that has played the guitar can attest to this. It hurts at first, but over time calluses develop on the fingers, and it is no longer uncomfortable. It's the same with sin. The first time a person engages in something he knows is wrong, it hurts. There is regret. The second time, it still hurts but not quite as bad. This process continues until a person is past feeling.

**The before man becomes immoral.** (4:19) There is no shame or sense of propriety (lewdness). These have defiled themselves (uncleanness), and they cannot get enough (greediness).

This is an accurate picture of a worldly person. Such a vain life leads to rebellion and rebellion leads to calloused living and calloused living leads to a life without shame or moral compass.

### **THE AFTER PICTURE**

**The after man has learned Christ.** (Eph. 4:20). “*But you have not so learned Christ*” implies that they have learned Him. These people have a new life because they have a new Lord. Whereas previously they were serving

*continued on back page ...*

*continued from the front ...*

self, they have now given themselves over to His will. Until a person knows Christ, there is no reason for change. That's why Paul through the Spirit doesn't tell them how to live until after three chapters of Christian doctrine. Knowledge motivates.

**The after man lives to a new standard.** "...*truth is in Jesus*" (4:21). The life of vanity has ceased. The life of willful ignorance has ceased. Now, they live in the absolute truth of Christ.

**The after man has a new lifestyle.** (4:22). The old way of living has been laid aside. This is an ongoing, daily process. There is no room for procrastination when it comes to putting off the old man. "*So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.*" (James 4:17)

**The after man has a new thought process.** (4:23). "... *and that you may be renewed in the spirit of your mind*" mirrors Romans 12:2. "*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.*"

That leads us to the question: "Do I look like the before picture or the after picture?" It will be one or the other.

adapted, jg

**Many of you know Justin Dobbs ... here is a post of a conversation between Justin and his three year old son, Elijah.**

Daily Bible reading was 1 Kings 11. *After the reading...*

**Elijah:** What happened, Daddy?

**Me:** Well, son, do you remember the name of David's son?

**Elijah:** Solomon!

**Me:** Right. You see, God had blessed Solomon and He had made him very wise to do what was right. But Solomon decided to be foolish and to do what he wanted to do instead of what God wanted him to do. He didn't obey God.

**Elijah:** Solomon disobeyed, and God gave him a spanking.

**Me:** ... Well, pretty much, yes.

***Out of the mouth of babes ... ;)***

## News and Notes

- **Singing**— Wednesday night.
- **Ladies Class**— Thursday evening at 5:30.
- **Wednesday night assignment list**— Men ... please sign up for leading singing or doing the invitation.

### SICK

- **Eli Williams**— (classmate of Kaleigh Butler) Eli has been walking with help after brain surgery last week. Coordination and balance is a problem. He faces a very difficult process of possible surgeries and treatments. Eli is the son of Vic and Kristie (Sharp) Williams. Here is a new address ... **Elijah Williams c/o St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 262 Danny Thomas Place, Memphis, TN 38103**
- **Lillian Magnusson**— Was recently in the hospital. Her address; **29358 8th Ave., Ardmore, AL 35739**
- **Lou Parker**— Upper respiratory problems with a bad cough.
- **Ruth Davis**— Has been sick this week.
- **Jared Butler**— An MRI shows two bulging discs. He is seeing a neurologist and trying to find a treatment that may be of some help without having surgery ... or, will determine if surgery is his next step.
- **Others in our prayers** — Suzy Milligan, Betty Yant, Justin Ruf (working overseas), Edith Marie Wilburn, Sandra Davis, Reba Gordon (at Sunbridge), Rhenda Martin, David Bryant, Lillian Magnusson, Richard Patterson and Kathleen Hillis.