Bits 'n Pieces

Avery County

Community Good Friday Service at Banner Elk Presbyterian Church

Pleasant Hill Baptist in the Frank Community of Avery County will begin hosting our weekly Masters Club Youth Group starting this evening and will be every Wednesday 6:45-8

Burke County

National Day of Prayer Meeting
"Prayer on the Square" in Drexel, NC
Thursday, May 4, 2023 @ 5:00 PM
You are invited to attend and pray for our country.
Drexel Memorial Baptist Church is planning an observance of the National Day of Prayer at the Downtown Drexel Park (118 Church Street) on the corner of S. Main Street & Church Street in Drexel. You may bring your own chair for comfort.
Invite your family, friends, neighbors, coworkers!
This year's theme is PRAY FERVENTLY IN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND AVAIL MUCH, which is inspired by James 5:16, which says, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much".
Millions will gather in person and pray in their local communities.
Please join us to pray for our nation at this critical time.

McDowell County

Join us at Nebo First Baptist Church for a royally fun time at Vacation Bible School. We're lowering the drawbridge to the castle. Grab your armor and prepare for fun as you learn to stand strong in the battle of truth. June 19 – 23, 2023, 6:15 pm – 8:30 pm Meal 5:45 pm – 6:15 pm address: 5360 US Highway 70E, Nebo, NC 28761 Phone: 828-442-7552

Mitchell County

Spruce Pine Events:
May 3rd – Downtown Worship (Oak Avenue Upper Street)
May 6th – Run for Holland The 10th annual Run for Holland will be held Saturday, May 6th @ Riverside Park in Spruce Pine. Go to Run For Holland website to register or donate.
May 6th/ June 12th/ July 10th – Mosaic Monday (Central Park)

Pine Branch Baptist Church!
Twists and Turns – Following Jesus Changes the Game Psalm 25:4
VBS NEWS RELEASE
Spin the spinner, beat the clock, skip ahead, level up, and play to win! Twists & Turns™ is a fantastical celebration of games of all kinds. From classic tabletop games to strategy games to video games and more, kids will play their way through VBS in fun locations such as the Bible Study Game Room, Wild Card Crafts, Multi-player Missions, and more ! But more importantly, they'll see Jesus through the eyes of one of His closest friends and discover that trusting Jesus as Savior and following Him changes the game entirely!
It's Vacation Bible School time at Pine Branch Baptist Church
Kids age 3 through grade 12 (PreK - Youth) are invited to attend June 4th through 8th, from 5:30 -8:30 pm nightly. Youth will experience special activities planned just for them. This week of fun, food, and exciting learning opportunities is free of charge and open to everyone.
REGISTER NOW at myvbs.org/pbbc! You may also call 828-577-0060 or visit www.pinebranchbaptist.org for more information.

Yancey County

Camp Funshine is a summer day camp for people of all ages with developmental disabilities. There is no cost to campers! To ensure campers remain safe and are able to get the most out of their experience, each camper must be accompanied by an adult family member or assistant. We enjoy food, music, games, fishing and rafting for the first three days, the fourth day we celebrate our closing ceremony with BBQ and fireworks! Join us June 19-21 9am-3pm and June 22 3pm-10pm at Toe River Campground!

Obedient Heart Fellowship

Twisted Path?

By Jim Huskins
McDowell County

The Hebrew word "aqash" means "to make crooked" or "to distort." Isaiah Chapter 59 addresses people who have separated themselves from God by committing intentional sin. Verse 8 uses "aqash" to say, *"The way of peace they do not know, and there is no justice in their paths; they have made their roads crooked; no one who treads on them knows peace."* Proverbs 28:18 says, "*Whoever walks in integrity will be delivered, but he who is crooked in his ways will suddenly fall."* I thought of "aqash" while I recently watched a video clip from one of the well-known prosperity preachers.

Through a dazzling smile that reminds me of the grille of a 1953 Buick, this preacher assured me that God is not focused on all my failures. Instead, He has mercy for my every mistake. God wants me to stop feeling condemned and unworthy. Apparently I have wasted my life striving for Godly righteousness. I foolishly thought that sin is such a big deal that it could only be resolved through the death of God's Own Son. Mr. Buick Smile says that I do not have the "right image" of God. I suspect that Smiley is "making crooked" plain words of Scripture.

The practice of twisting God's Word began long ago with a question: Did God really say? These days, the Bible is twisted to justify everything that God labels "abomination." One strange twist is the claim that Jesus broke the Sabbath. Bible software makes it easy for every believer to read every verse that mentions "Sabbath" or "Sabbaths." This simple word search does not take long, and it reveals two glaring realities.

First, Sabbath is near and dear to God's heart. Sabbath has its own spot in the Big Ten. According to Exodus 20:8-11, it's number Four. Exodus 31:13 says, *"Above all you shall keep My Sabbaths."*

The second fruit of reading every Biblical reference to Sabbath is learning that not a single verse of Scripture claims that Sabbath has been altered, cancelled, or moved. God never changed His mind about the significance of His Sabbath.

Some believers insist that Jesus arose on the First Day of the week and, thereby, cancelled God's Seventh Day Sabbath. They ignore the fact that the Bible makes no such claim. If Jesus did away with the Seventh Day Sabbath, then why did Paul keep Sabbath for his entire life? Why did James the Elder say in Acts 15:21 that Gentile converts should be in Synagogue every Sabbath to learn what Moses taught about how to follow Messiah. If Jesus cancelled Sabbath, why did He say in Matthew 24:20 that His followers should pray that the "abomination of desolation" not begin on a Sabbath. He obviously expected His followers to be keeping Sabbath when end time events begin.

Some who claim that Sabbath has been revoked say that Jesus had so little regard for Sabbath that He broke the Fourth Commandment. They cite Matthew 12:1 which says that Jesus' disciples picked grain and ate it during a Sabbath walk. They also reference a number of healings which Jesus performed on Sabbath. "Aha," they screech. "There is Jesus breaking the Sabbath."

If those "word twisters" had not chosen willful ignorance of most of the Bible, they would know that pulling grain to satisfy one's hunger is not a violation of Sabbath. Neither is healing. Those actions only run afoul of man-made traditions. People who read the entire Bible know that if Jesus had broken a single commandment, He would not qualify as the Perfect Sacrifice for sin. In that case, we would be hopelessly lost. Praise God that Jesus kept and taught every commandment perfectly—including Sabbath.

The art of twisting scripture is called eisegesis. This is a process of interpretation intended to support one's convictions. It's the opposite of exegesis. The latter is an attempt to determine God's perspective based on what He says in His Word. Eisegesis is nothing more or less than an attempt to justify lies.

One of the most prevalent lies in Christian doctrine is that people who try to adhere to God's instructions for living are attempting to "earn" salvation. Scripture is clear on this topic. No one is saved through merit. Salvation is a free gift by grace through faith in Jesus. The problem is the lie that "salvation" includes license to sin with impunity. Mr. Buick Smile tells me that God has mercy for my every mistake and that I have no responsibility to live according to Godly standards.

No one was ever saved by keeping the Law, and yet Jesus says that the Law will be in full effect for as long as heaven and earth remain. It will not be diminished by the smallest pen stroke. (Matthew 5:18) If the Law has no role in salvation, then why did Jesus tell His followers to not even think that He came to abolish it? The answer is that the Law still serves the function for which it was given: it shows God's people how He wants us to live. 1 John 2:6 says, *"Whoever says he abides in (Jesus) ought to walk in the same way in which (Jesus) walked."* Jesus never walked an "aqash" path. His path was always straight because it was the way of perfect obedience.

Many Christians insist that attempting to walk as Jesus walked is a bad thing. They bemoan "dead works" and "legalism." Other believers are so grateful for their free salvation that they want to follow Jesus' example as perfectly as they can. They joyfully affirm verses like 1 John 2:3-4, "*And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says 'I know him' but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him,"* These radically divergent perspectives cannot both be correct. Jesus requires us to decide which path is twisted.

Obedient Heart Fellowship meets each Sabbath (Seventh Day) at 2460 US 221 Business N. Marion, NC. 10:00 A.M. 828-460-7913

Jim Huskins is pastor of Obedient Heart Fellowship.