

ATTENTION!

Business Meeting Today at 2:30 p.m.

**Saturday Meeting: TWO WEEKS AWAY!
PREPARE!**

**Speakers: Tom Thornhill; Micky Galloway;
Randall Jarrell**

**FEBRUARY 25-26
FLYERS AVAILABLE!**

Quotes about Preparation

“Preparation time is never wasted time.”

(Anonymous)

“What we prepare for is what we shall get.”

(William Graham Sumner)

Indio Informer

Vol. 34 No. 7

February 12, 2023

Putting First Things First

By R. W. McAlister

Matthew 6:33, *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”* This may come as a shock, but most of us fail to do this! Why? Because instead of seeking God’s kingdom first, we’re spending our time wrapped up in the cares of this world! Have you ever considered that if this one passage were followed to its proper conclusion, it would revolutionize the church in all its phases of activity? If we sought first the kingdom of God in attendance, we’d be here every time the doors opened if physically possible! If we sought first the kingdom of God in evangelism, every baptized believer would be speaking the truth in love to every lost soul he or she encountered! If we sought first the kingdom of God in our giving, the church treasury would be overflowing! If we sought first the kingdom of God in edification and encouragement of our brothers and sisters in Christ, there'd be a lot more folks in the mold of Barnabas to build up and encourage our brethren!

Perhaps the most common sin today is that of reversing the divine order of things; of making secondary things primary, and making primary things secondary. How many people do we or have we known who disregard the importance of attending evening services? Instead, they’re at work because they’d rather make a dollar, or they’re at home because they think their rest is more important and so on. They’ve made what should be a primary concern a secondary one. What about someone who holds back on putting money in the collection plate because he’s worried about finances? Well, he turned a primary concern, indeed an act of worship, into a secondary concern when he put personal finances ahead of worshipping God. It seems incredible that God, who made

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.

Sunday.....10:45 a.m.

Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

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me, and gave His Son to die for me, should give me the option of saying what place He shall occupy in my life.

If we're going to be pleasing to God, we each have some "first things" to do. We must seek the kingdom first, then all of the things we need will be added to us. Seeking the kingdom first means becoming part of it and putting it first in our lives (I Peter 3:21, Matthew 6:33).

The second thing we have to do on our list of "firsts" is to keep our lives right with God so we can teach others. Matthew 7 verse 5 tells us: "*Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*"

We have a responsibility to make sure our brothers and sisters are walking in the way they should (II Thessalonians 3:15), but no one will ever listen to us until they can see that we're concerned about the sin in our life and that we're trying to get rid of it. No one likes a hypocrite.

The final thing we must do is to follow Christ before all others. In John 14:15, Jesus says, "*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*" Our Savior also tells us in Revelation 2:10, "*...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*" Our dedication to the Lord must come first, before all else. We have no right to tell or expect someone to follow a leader we're not faithfully following ourselves, and friends, people are very critical and they'll know if you're a follower of Jesus Christ.

If we need to reorganize our priorities, why wait any longer?

A Combination that is Difficult to Beat

By Jim Faughn

One of my favorite books in the Old Testament is the book of Nehemiah. It, of course, provides the reader with details concerning the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. From an

historical perspective, that makes it interesting. However, that is not the only thing that intrigues me about this book. There are a number of lessons that are still useful for us today. Without going into detail, I would suggest, for example, that present-day leaders could learn a great deal from the qualities, personality, strategies, etc. of Nehemiah himself. We can also learn a lot from the people who "*...had a mind to work*" (Nehemiah 4:6). A recent reading (again) of Nehemiah reminded me of one possibly overlooked verse. It would be helpful for God's people today to read and consider it.

The context of the verse has to do with the opposition and ridicule on the part of those who were enemies of the people of God and their project. In the words of Nehemiah 4:8, "*And they all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it.*" Please notice carefully the response to that: "*And we prayed to God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night*" (Nehemiah 4:9)

There are three very important components in that verse.

- Prayer (they prayed to God)
- Action (they set a guard)
- Persistence (the guard was in place day and night --- It could be said that they "never let down their guard.")

They did not depend upon any one of these three by itself. They did not just pray. They did not just take action. They did not just persist in building the walls without taking defensive measures. They persisted in that as well. It should go without saying that God's people are under increasing attacks today. The number of people who are opposed to us and to what we are trying to accomplish for Him is seemingly growing daily. It is not now, nor has it ever been, the time to "throw in the towel" and give up. Neither is it the time to do only one of the things that the people of Nehemiah's day did. It is now, and it always has been, the time to pray, act, and persist. Great things can still be done!