

**PRAYERS**

Richard – Father of Valerie Brist – He has kidney issues

All holiday travelers

**Congregation News:**

**Those Privileged to Serve**

**Sunday Morning Service:**

**12/23/18**

**12/30/18**

Bible Class	Paul Darling
Announcements	Colby Crawford
Song Leader	Paul Darling
Opening Prayer	Paul Darling
Lord's Supper	Colby Crawford
Closing Prayer	Colby Crawford
Sermon	Colby Crawford

Colby Crawford
Paul Darling
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<b>Bible Classes</b>	<b>Sunday Morning</b>
Adult	Paul Darling
Children	Colby Crawford
Toddlers	Cindy Bright
Babies	Anissa Crawford

<b>Wednesday Evening</b>
Colby Crawford
Linda McBrayer

**Birthdays & Anniversaries**

**Building Cleanup**  
McBrayer

**Aberdeen church of Christ**  
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**Bulletin Submissions**  
If you would like anything added to the bulletin such as prayer requests, news, or events, please make submissions by Friday night to: [tlbj@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tlbj@sbcglobal.net)

# Aberdeen church of Christ

December 23, 2018

## Everyone Loves a Baby

At this time of year, if you tell someone that you don't celebrate Christmas as a religious holiday for the birth of Christ, you get a lot of strange reactions. You try to explain how you celebrate it as any other national holiday – a time of family fun and get-togethers, but they don't understand. Sometimes as we think of this we wonder why Christmas is so popular, especially amongst "religious" folk. I recently looked at a site on the internet called "The History Channel". It noted that Christmas, unheard of until the 4th century, has gained popularity and fallen from popularity for centuries. It's very beginning as a "religious" holiday was placed at December 25<sup>th</sup> to coincide with pagan holidays already in place. By the middle ages it had become a drunken, carnival-like holiday in which people, after going to religious celebrations at their church, would then go engage in drunken partying. It was banned several times in Europe, but each time revived. When the Puritans came to America it was ceased, the Puritans noting (rightly so) it had no Biblical basis whatsoever. In fact, the Continental Congress met on December 25<sup>th</sup>. It was not until the 19th Century that the religious celebration of Christmas again became popular. Today, it seems to be amongst the favorite of many "religious" people. The question still remains, "Why?" It is not because of an apostolic action found in the Scriptures – such is simply not there. It is not because of a command of Christ, for He commanded the observance of the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Him (Matthew 26:26-28), which was done, and should be done each first day of the week (Acts 20:11). It simply cannot base its popularity upon any Biblical basis whatsoever, thus the question still remains.

Let me give you my input on the answer as to why it is so popular with some. While many observe Christmas as a religious holiday out of loyalty to the traditions of men (which is condemned clearly in the Scriptures – Matthew 15:9), I believe the answer is really found in the title of this article – *Everyone Loves a Baby*. Ask people when they speak of Christmas to describe Jesus. The picture all have is that of a baby - a cute precious baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes. But is that the picture that Jesus desires us to have emblazoned on our hearts and minds? The Scriptures do give the

description of Jesus being born. Then they tell us of his circumcision at eight days. After that, there is a gap in the history of Jesus until we find Him at 12 years of age in the temple, going about His Father's business. Then there is another gap until we find Him beginning his ministry at about 30 years of age. The bulk of the gospel accounts deal with the brief years after this until his death, burial and resurrection. The writers of the epistles likewise dwell, not on a baby in the manger, but a man – the God-man who went about doing good, teaching others, living an exemplary life. People don't really want to be bothered by the Jesus of the Bible. They, like everyone else, love a baby. No demands ... no rebukes ... just a little baby to admire. The religious world does not care for the Jesus who said such things as:

- *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth ... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.* (Matthew 5:19-20)
- *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness.* (Matthew 6:33)
- *Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction ...* (Matthew 7:13)
- *Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.* (Matthew 7:21)
- *But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* (Matthew 15:9)
- *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.* (Mark 16:16) [They even changed the Bible to get this one out of many!]
- *I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* (Luke 13:3)
- *If ye love me, keep my commandments.* (John 14:15)

The world looks at such statements as these, and they don't like what they read. What to do then? In John 6:66 we read that when Jesus uttered some hard sayings that "many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." Many today do that, and Christmas, as a religious holiday, fits right in. They can turn their back on the God-man Jesus and His "hard sayings" and look to that little baby who makes no demands. After all ... *everyone loves a baby.*

## Are You Open?

When I played backyard football as a teenager and college student, it wasn't uncommon for a receiver to run back to the huddle to persuade his quarterback with the words, "I am open; you have to hit me down the line; I am wide open every time!" If you have been there, you know the situation and the feelings those words evoke in your memory.

God wants the saved to live pure lives and be "zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). Zealous is defined as "active, devoted, and diligent." Our appreciation for His gift of salvation is a life that is active in His righteousness. We can't be saved and be noncommittal, inactive, indecisive, or lazy. Do you run back to the huddle each day to say to God, "I'm open, Lord"? Do you say, "I am open to your will, your work, your wisdom, your open doors of opportunity?"

Paul had much to say to the brethren of Corinth about this openness. For example, consider Paul's use of the word "open" in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 6:11-13: "O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open. You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections. Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open."

Are you open to speaking honestly to people about their lives, their souls, and their choices? Notice Paul's wisdom. He immediately reminds them of the abounding love for them as he says, "our heart is wide open." Are you open to generosity of self, service, and heart? Until we open our hearts with genuine sacrifice for others instead of lip service, we will not be open to sharing the words from God that convict us of sin.

Are you open to the mission to "be open" with others? You are your brother's keeper. You are to love your neighbor as yourself. The golden rule does apply to each of us. When we see others not open to God, we ought to be willing to try to "open" their hearts to the Lord. Paul wasn't satisfied that some at Corinth were still not open. So he opened his heart widely to them. Then he opened his mouth boldly to them.

Perhaps it is opinion, but I believe all people at some time in life will be open to learning more about God. At that moment they are most likely to turn to godly people who have been open with their love to them throughout the years. Jesus washed feet, then spoke of love (John 13:34). Later these same men were open to dying for Him. Let's open our hearts so when the time comes others will be open to our open (honest) words. Are you saying to God, "I'm open"?