

**Prayer List of the Sick and Afflicted:**

Bryan Dyer, Susie Riddle's son and Cindy Murray's brother, is undergoing cancer treatment.

Lisa Bunch is being treated with low dose cortisone for polymyalgia muscle pain.

Charlie Henard is receiving periodic infusions to treat his Multiple Sclerosis.

Virginia McKinney is home dealing with kidney failure but is doing better.

Charles Blair, gospel preacher at the Stop 11 congregation, had surgery for a blood clot on his spine. He is now recovering at home and receiving physical therapy.

Brother Ronnie Whittemore of the Stop 11 congregation, is scheduled to undergo a cardiac ablation for his heart.

Floyd Coley is experiencing issues with his hip and back. He is undergoing physical therapy and had a spinal injection. He also is dealing with GI issues.

Deloris Hendrickson is doing better but having problems with sleeping, back pain and GI issues.

Joni McConnell underwent surgery for a heart valve replacement, is undergoing physical therapy and is now doing well.

Karen Spole's brother-in-law Dennis will have exploratory surgery. Also, Karen's husband Chet is undergoing rehab after a heart attack.

**Pray For Our Shut-Ins:**

Karen Spoles, Iris Hash, Virginia McKinney and Kathy Malowitz

**Pray For The Mission Works We Are Supporting:**

John Grubb and his wife, Eta (Mission work in Asia), Daniel Goshorn and family (Mission work in Peru). See reports of their works on the bulletin board.

**Benevolent Opportunity**

For the month of March, we are collecting spaghetti noodles and sauce for donation to the Martinsville school food pantry.

**Monthly Pitch-in Dinner:**

Our next pitch-in dinner will be Sunday, April 12, during our gospel meeting.

Following the pitch-in, at 1:00 PM, we will have the final service of the meeting.

**Spring Gospel Meeting:**

Our 2026 spring gospel meeting will be held April 10 – 12 with services at 7:00 PM on Friday and Saturday evenings and Sunday services at 9:30 and 10:30 AM. A pitch-in dinner will be held following Sunday morning services followed by a final service at 1:00 PM. Our speaker will be brother Bill Boyd of the Rockliff Church of Christ in McMinnville, TN. The theme for the meeting sermons is "Lessons From The Book of Romans".

**Radio Program:**

Please remember to tune in every Sunday morning at 8:00 AM to WCBK 102.3 FM to hear our radio program which is entitled: "Preparing For Eternity".

**God's Plan For Our Salvation**

Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).

Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).

Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).

Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).

Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).

Faithful Christian Living, after the above five steps (I Peter 2:11, 12; Rev. 2:10).

March 15, 2026

***MORGAN STREET CHURCH OF CHRIST***

**540 E. Morgan Street  
Martinsville, IN 46151  
(765) 342-6027**



**Schedule of Services:**

**Sunday**

Bible Study – 9:30 AM

Worship – 10:30 AM

Evening Service - 6:00

**Wednesday**

Bible Study – 6:00 PM

**Thursday**

Ladies' Bible Study – 11:00 AM

**Radio Program:**

"Preparing For Eternity"

Sunday Mornings 8:00 AM, WCBK 102.3 FM

**Website:**

[www.morganstreetchurchofchrist.org](http://www.morganstreetchurchofchrist.org)

Gospel Preacher – Bob Hawkins

## THE CONTROVERSIAL THIEF ON THE CROSS

There is a 3-minute reel going around the internet that involves the thief on the cross. The speaker says: "Just think about the thief on the cross." He tells the story of the thief as he gets to heaven's gate. An angel asks him: "What are you doing here?" The thief says: "I don't know." The angel replies in shock: "What do you mean you don't know?" So shaken, the angel has to call in his supervisor who asks the thief: "Are you clear on the doctrine of justification by faith?" The thief responds: "I've never heard of it in my life." He is then asked about the doctrine of Scripture. To which the thief answers with an ignorant stare. The last question the thief is asked is: "On what basis are you there then?" To this question, the thief replies: "The man on the middle cross said I can come." The storyteller is both comical and engaging. One denominational "pastor" called the reel the best three minutes of preaching he has heard.

The question that must be asked is: "What is the preacher's point?" Calvinists have always been quick to use the thief as an example of the doctrine of justification by "faith only." Too, they affirm that this doctrine is taught in the Scriptures. Now, this preacher affirms that the thief was saved without a knowledge of the doctrine of justification by faith and without a knowledge of the doctrine of Scripture. The thief stood at the gate of heaven just because Jesus told him he could come. Is Jesus appearing to individuals today and simply telling them they can go to heaven? If so, which ones have been given this personal invitation? Again, we ask: "What is the preacher's point?"

Let's consider a few things in response to this story.

First, **faith is absolutely essential for a person to go to heaven.** "*But without faith it is impossible to please him*" (Heb. 11:6). Prior to His crucifixion, Jesus declared: "*I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins*" (John 8:24). Was it possible for the thief on the cross to manifest faith in Jesus Christ? Certainly. Having gone through the crucifixion experience with Jesus, the thief heard everything the Jewish leaders were saying at the foot of the cross. "*He saved others; himself he cannot save*" (Mark 15:31). "*If ye be the Son of God, come down from the cross*" (Matt. 27:40). The thief would have been well aware of the claims Jesus made about Himself from these and other comments. He hung beside Jesus for six agonizing hours. He heard the seven sayings of the Christ. He experienced the darkness that came upon the land. He witnessed the patient endurance of this man from Galilee. His heart could have developed a belief in the Christ. A Roman centurion came to such a belief (cf. Mark 15:39). Let's recall the words the thief spoke to Jesus. He said: "*Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom*" (Luke 23:42). It was the anticipated Messiah who was to rule over the coming kingdom. By his own words, the thief realized Jesus was the Messiah. He had faith in Jesus Christ.

Second, **repentance is also part of the plan of God.** Jesus affirmed this during His earthly ministry as well. "*I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*" (Luke 13:3). Repentance begins with a change of heart. It leads to a change of one's actions. It results in a reformation of life. Let's read three texts consecutively that tell us about this thief. "*Then were there two thieves crucified with him; one on the right hand, and another on the left*" (Matt. 27:38). "*The thieves also,*

*which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth*" (Matt. 27:44). "*And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou art come into thy kingdom*" (Luke 23:39-43).

There are several things mentioned in Luke's account that prove the thief had a change of heart. He rebuked the other thief for maligning the Christ. He admitted he had committed crimes worthy of punishment. He asked Jesus to bless him. There is no doubt this thief repented while on the cross. Paul tells us of the benefits of repentance in 2 Corinthians 7:10. "*For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death.*" By the actions of this thief, we know he repented of his sins.

Third, **most individuals like to proclaim that the thief on the cross was completely ignorant of spiritual things.** We find this was not the case when we pay attention to his words. He said to Jesus: "*Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom*" (Luke 23:42). He had some understanding of the kingdom. This is not surprising when we recall that John the Baptist (Matt. 3:1-2) and Jesus (Matt. 4:17) both proclaimed the coming kingdom in Jerusalem and Judea. John's preaching was extremely popular. "*And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem*" (Mark 1:5). Eventually, Jesus' popularity grew. In John 3:26, we are told: "*and all men come to him.*" It is highly probable this thief heard some of the things taught by John or Jesus or both. As he witnessed Jesus on the cross, his mind was convinced of the truthfulness of His claims and of His kingdom. Thus, the thief requested to be remembered when the Lord entered into His kingdom.

Jesus did not tell an ignorant, faithless, impenitent sinner that he would be with Him in Paradise that day. Instead, he told a man who had knowledge of the kingdom, a man who called him Lord, and a man who had a complete change of heart to be with Him in Paradise. Preachers and others need to quit using the thief as an example of "cheap salvation."

Many will point out that the thief was not baptized. There are several responses that can be made to this argument. First, are those who make this statement sure the thief was not baptized? He could have been among those John baptized (Mark 1:5). Remember, he knew about the kingdom. Second, the thief did not live under the New Covenant of Jesus Christ. He lived under the Old Testament. The Old Testament did not require individuals to be baptized. Third, while Jesus was on earth, He had the power to forgive sins at any time he desired (Matt. 9:6).

Now that Jesus has died and ratified the New Covenant with His blood (Matt. 26:28), the New Testament is the covenant under which we live. The New Covenant commands all men to "*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*" (Acts 2:38).

About three thousand on the day of Pentecost "gladly received" Peter's words and "were baptized" (Acts 2:41). Those who desire to be saved today must give heed to the words of the apostle of Christ as well. Read Acts 22:16, Rom. 6:3-18, 1 Peter 3:21. - Victor M. Eskew