

Ministers:  
the congregation

Kenny Chumbley  
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Sunday:  
8:00 AM: WGCY  
9:00 AM: Worship

Wednesday:  
6:30 PM: Bible Study

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Christ.com](http://gibsoncitychurchofChrist.com)

**This Past Week:**  
Worship-30  
Wednesday-12

**For meditation:**  
**Ecclesiastes 9.5-6**  
One of Solomon's  
recurring themes in  
Ecclesiastes is this:  
"live while you live!"  
Enjoy the good gifts  
God has given you  
without feeling guilty.  
In regard to life, a  
Christian should "live  
it up," but never in a  
way that he would  
have to "live down."

**Radio program:**  
WGCY FM, 106.3  
Sundays at 8 AM

### *The Christian ghost towns of Syria*

Aleppo, Syria, a town straight out of the *Ara-  
bian Nights*, is roughly fifty miles east of  
Antakya, Turkey, ancient Antioch of Syria.  
Despite centuries of plagues, massacres,  
earthquakes, and wars, Aleppo has hung on.  
In antiquity, it sat on the main caravan route  
from India and the East. Various improve-  
ments in transportation, however—including  
the airplane and the cutting of the Suez Can-  
al—greatly reduced Aleppo's importance.

Between the first and seventh centuries,  
the area between Aleppo and Antioch was  
home to about 100 "Christian cities." In con-  
trast to the debauchery and obscenities found  
in homes and on public buildings in Pompeii,  
the lost cities of Syria have the ruins of  
churches adorned with crosses and homes  
with inscriptions such as, "The Lord shall  
preserve thy going out and thy coming in  
from this time forth for evermore." Lord,  
help this house and them that dwell therein."

It is speculated that the demise of the area  
was due to a reduction in the caravan trade.  
Yet, the ruins still testify to vibrant Christian  
communities that flourished for several centu-  
ries, which likely resulted from the mission-  
ary work of the great church at Antioch.

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# Gibson City church of Christ

Highway 47 South, Gibson City, IL



**Jesse O. Smith**  
**Louisville, Kentucky**  
**1923-2016**

Godly man, wonderful friend, pillar in the church

Sermon: Hebrews 11.35-40

## The faith of Christ

8 March 2026

## *Finding balance*

While reading the story of Christ in the Gospels, I've noticed two things I'd like to pass along.

First, the life He calls us to live requires discipline. It's a narrow gate and strait way that leads to eternal life. Christ didn't abolish the Law of Moses, but at times it seems living the gospel is no easier than living the Law. A righteousness that begins in the heart and works its way into every aspect of our life is no easy thing.

Christ could blister the paint of any who scorned righteousness: hypocritical Pharisees, the self-satisfied rich, legalistic lawyers (scribes), foolish virgins, ungrateful guests, untrustworthy servants, et al. heard the thunder of His rebukes.

But while noticing all the above, I also notice that Jesus was very meek and mild when dealing with individuals—including those who were blatantly and egregiously unrighteous. He invited Himself to lunch at the house of a crooked “public servant” by the name of Zacchaeus. He lovingly corrected His friend Martha's misplaced priorities (“Martha, Martha”). When He required total commitment from a rich young ruler, He did so with intense love. Possibly, most surprising of all, is how Christ handled the incident in John 8.1–11.

For one thing, He had no stern words for the men who drug before Him a woman they claimed had broken the seventh commandment. (There are people who seem to enjoy exposing and denouncing the faults of others, who parade their zeal for righteousness by being stern and harsh with sinners.) The men in the John 8 story hated Jesus, and they didn't care two cents about the woman's soul; she was simply a prop they tried to use to destroy Christ (v 6). I find it incredible that their smirks of self-congratulation and pride elicited no rebuke from Christ.

And I find it equally incredible that the woman, caught red-handed in a sin many think is the worst sin which anyone can commit, was not scorched with hell-fire and brimstone. Instead, she was treated tenderly, lovingly, and mercifully by Jesus.

For various reasons, we sinners often do a poor job of rendering a balanced judgment on other sinners,

More needs to be said about this, and I'll try to say more about it in the next article.

kenny

## *Laying aside every weight*

Hebrews 12.1

The biographies of those mentioned in Hebrews 11 should:

**Fill us with admiration.** An old adage says, “You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink”—no, but you can give him salt. The people in Hebrews 11 were the salt of the earth; people who lived in a way that should make us hunger and thirst for righteousness.

**Leave us without excuse.** After reading Hebrews 11, every excuse we might offer for not living righteously has been stripped away.

**Fill us with hope.** Don't say you can't live a life that honors God, these people did it!

“Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses”—the writer's first point in his conclusion to Hebrews 11 is this: *if they did it, we can do it!* Hebrews 12.1 doesn't teach that the saved in heaven can see what we're doing on earth; rather, the saved in heaven are testimony to the fact that we can so live as to go to heaven. They are a *cloud* of witnesses—the Gr. word doesn't indicate puffy white individual clouds but a solid bank of clouds—an overcast. One of the enduring appeals of the Bible is its humanity; everyone can find themselves in its pages. No matter what your situation, no matter how oppressive your circumstances, there is some saint in Hebrews 11 we can relate to and identify with. Their example should be an encouragement.

After referencing numerous “living by faith” success stories, some practical advice is given, beginning with, “lay aside every weight.” For the longest time, I thought the reference was to weights in a weight room. Bodybuilding weights have their place, but you leave them behind when it's race time; you want to compete unencumbered by additional weight.

The writer's reference, however, is not to weightroom weights. The word he uses is used only here in the NT. It is the word *ogkos* from which we get the word *oncology*. The writer is referring to a mass or burden. Given the athletic context in verses 1–2, it isn't a tumor the author has in mind, but excess weight that we can rid ourselves of by dieting. If you're carrying around resentment, a grievance, an air of self-importance, anxiety, discontent, etc., you've got excess fat on your inner man that needs to go.

If you'll ask God, He has a diet plan for you.

kenny