



David Costello

You are cordially invited to attend a

Gospel Meeting

Leoni Church Of Christ

2132 Old McMinnville Hwy, Woodbury

November 8-11, 2026

Facebook
Leoni church
of Christ

Live streaming

Sun. 9:00am — It's Urgent
9:45am — The Christian's Survival Guide
5:00pm — The Church Jesus Built
Mon. 7:00pm — Everyone Has An Opinion
Tues. 7:00pm — What Makes Us Different
Wed. 7:00pm — Things Even Jesus Could Not Do

David Costello lives in Manchester. He is the preacher for the Bethany Church of Christ located on Old Highway 70S in Warren County and has been preaching there for 24 years. He preached for 10 years at the East Main Church of Christ in Manchester, as well as 10 years at Mt. Leo Church of Christ in McMinnville. He directed the Middle Tennessee School of Preaching for 10 years. He has been married for 53 years and has two children and 4 grandchildren.

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An Earnest Plea: Back To God, The Bible, To Righteousness

When it comes to matters relating to the Will of God, we are not discussing trivial issues about which we can afford to remain indifferent. We are dealing with matters of eternal consequence – matters in which careful, timely, and wise decisions can make an eternal difference (2 Cor. 5:10-11,14).

What is it that we want others to know? We sincerely care about you! Our plea is for you to join us in our pursuit of salvation and the knowledge of the truth. God wants all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:3-4). We are not claiming to possess every answer to every question. Rather, we are earnest and sincere seekers of truth, following the example of the Bereans who searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so (Acts 17:11).

Scripture assures us that God has given us *"all things that pertain unto life and godliness"* (2 Peter 1:3). If the principles revealed in God's Word are faithfully restored, we would see a tremendous change in the moral and spiritual condition of our society. The Bible provides the divine principles we need to address life's deepest problems and live in a way that pleases God.

If returning to God's sacred Word resonates with you, then it is my sincere desire that you will attend the Gospel Meeting at Leoni C/C.

The only hope for our society is to turn back to God and recognize Him as the ultimate source of truth, righteousness, and judgment (Psalm 9:17). God and His Word provides the guidance we need when life's problems rob us of our peace and keep us awake at night. Why? Because we need the truth; and, God's Word provides it. Jesus declared that the truth would make us free (John 8:31-32). The truth is God's word (John 17:17).

Jesus reminds us that our lives depend upon more than physical nourishment: *"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"* (Matt. 4:4; cf. John 6:63; 1 Peter 1:23).

Christians who are committed to Christ must be prepared to make this same earnest appeal to others. Peter instructed all of us: *"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear"* (1 Peter 3:15).

We believe in the importance of speaking where the Bible speaks and remaining silent where the Bible is silent; of doing Bible things in Bible ways and calling Bible things by Bible names. We believe this commitment to biblical authority is essential. We want you to examine these principles with an open heart and honest mind.

Henry Ford once observed that human beings often attempt to do too many things at once. He explained that scattering our efforts can destroy our direction, create unnecessary haste, and cause us to pursue the wrong course before finally discovering the right one. He described how he would sometimes go outside and run around his house to release his excess energy. As his mind cleared, he could better determine what needed to be done first. There is wisdom in that observation.

We cannot solve every problem in society at once, nor can we accomplish everything through our own efforts. However, we can identify the things that matter most and begin there. With that thought in mind, I am not suggesting we attempt to solve every problem confronting our world. Instead, I am pleading with you to consider three essential priorities: *reverence toward God, respect for the Bible, and righteousness in our personal lives.*

WE PLEAD FOR REVERENCE TOWARD GOD!

Our reverence for God must influence every aspect of our lives. It should shape our worship, guide our way, and govern our work.

Our Reverence for God Gauges Our Worship

True reverence for God means we approach Him according to His revealed will, rather than according to our personal preferences. Jesus did not come merely to make men religious. He came to reveal the way by which men could be reconciled to God and worship Him acceptably.

The New Testament establishes a pattern for worship. That pattern includes *singing* (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), *prayer* (Acts 2:42; 12:12), *preaching/teaching* (Acts 2:14-42), *giving* (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:6-8), and the observance of the *Lord's supper* on the first day of every week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-26).

Worship must not be governed by what appeals to us, what is popular in our culture, or what religious traditions have established. Rather, our worship must reflect our reverence for God and our willingness to respect His instructions.

Our Reverence For God Guides Our Way

Reverence for God must extend beyond the assembly, and influence the way we live every day. It requires us to examine our religious beliefs and practices in light of Scripture. Jesus warned against worship that was based on the commandments of men rather than the commandments of God. He declared: *"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men"* (Matt. 15:9).

He further warned that human traditions can cause people to transgress the commandments of God (Matt. 15:3, 13-14).

We must therefore be unwilling to accept a religious practice merely because it is traditional, popular, or widely accepted. Our responsibility is to examine everything by the standard of God's Word. Our allegiance must be to God above human traditions, religious movements, and personal preferences.

Our Reverence For God Governs Our Work

Reverence for God also determines the purpose and character of our Christian service. The work of the church includes *evangelism, edification,* and *benevolence.* We seek to teach the lost, strengthen the saved, and help those who are in need.

Jesus taught that our good works should be visible to others so they might glorify our Father in heaven (Matt. 5:16). Paul encouraged Christians to not grow weary in doing good and specifically instructed them to do good to all people, especially those who belong to the household of faith (Galatians 6:9-10).

Our efforts must never become mere activity for activity's sake. We must be motivated by love for God, concern for people, and a desire to fulfill the work He has given us.

If we truly revere God, that reverence will be evident in how we worship Him, how we direct our lives, and how we serve others.

WE PLEAD FOR RESPECT FOR THE BIBLE!

If we are going to return to God, we must also return to the authority of His Word. We cannot sincerely claim to respect God while disregarding what He revealed in His word. One mistaken idea that needs to be challenged is the claim that the Bible cannot be understood clearly enough for us to know what God requires. Such a philosophy conflicts with the Bible's own testimony concerning revelation and understanding.

Paul explained that God's revelation had been made known to him and that when his readers read what he had written, they could understand his knowledge of the mystery of Christ (Eph. 3:3-5). He also instructed Timothy to study diligently, handling the word of truth accurately (2 Timothy 2:15).

Jesus Himself taught that one who genuinely desires to do God's will can recognize whether His teaching comes from God (John 7:17). He further declared His disciples could know the truth and the truth would make them free (John 8:31-32).

Some passages of Scripture require more careful and deeper study. Not every question is equally easy to answer. However, difficulty in understanding certain passages does not mean the Bible is incapable of being understood. We must approach God's Word with humility, diligence, and a sincere desire to learn and obey.

How Can The Bible Be Applied Today?

Some people question the relevance of an ancient book in a modern world. They argue that society has changed so much that biblical principles can no longer adequately direct our lives. But, has everything really changed?

Solomon reminded us that there is nothing fundamentally new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9-10). Consider these important truths:

1) God has not changed (Malachi 3:6).

2) Jesus Christ has not changed (Hebrews 13:8).

3) God's Word has not lost its authority. Jesus said his word would not pass away (Matthew 24:35).

4) Satan continues to deceive. Jesus described the devil as a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44).

5) Sin remains a transgression of God's law. *"Sin is the transgression of the law"* (1 John 3:4).

6) Human nature continues to reveal familiar weaknesses and patterns (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

7) Technology, customs, governments, and generations may change. But God remains God. His Word remains true. Humanity continues to need His guidance.

Why, then, should we doubt the ability of an omniscient God to reveal His will in a way that would remain relevant to succeeding generations? God knows "the end from the beginning" and declares that His purpose will stand (Isaiah 46:9-10).

The Bible was not written merely to address the temporary circumstances of one generation. It reveals God's character, His expectations, His promises, and His plan for humanity. Bible principles continue to direct us toward the life God desires us to live. If we truly respect the Word of God, we will not attempt to reshape its teaching to accommodate our preferences. Instead, we will allow its teaching to shape our beliefs, correct our errors, and govern our conduct.

WE PLEAD FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS IN OUR LIVES!

Our appeal must go beyond what we believe about God and what we say about the Bible. It must reach into our hearts and affect the way we live.

Paul wrote to Titus about the grace of God that had appeared, bringing the offer of salvation to humanity. That same grace teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly, righteously, and godly (Titus 2:11-12). Righteousness is not something God expects us to postpone until eternity. We must practice it right now in this present world!

The Christian life is not simply a matter of avoiding punishment in the future. It is a daily commitment to living in a way that honors God. We are called to reflect His character in our homes, our workplaces, our relationships, and our communities.

Peter reminds us that we should look forward to the coming day of God while diligently seeking to live lives characterized by holiness and godliness (2 Peter 3:11-12). Imagine what our society would look like if people sincerely committed themselves to living according to God's revealed principles. Imagine homes in which husbands and wives honored their commitments, parents took seriously their responsibilities, neighbors treated one another with kindness, and individuals refused to participate in dishonesty, exploitation, and crime. Many of the painful problems confronting our society would be reduced if people genuinely embraced God's standards of righteousness. We must be careful not to suggest that every social problem would automatically disappear, but we should never underestimate the good that results when people faithfully apply God's Word.

Paul warned Christians against being deceived into believing that sinful conduct has no consequences. He urged them to awaken to righteousness and stop sinning (1 Cor. 15:32-34). He also instructed them to reject the works of darkness and to expose them rather than participate in them (Eph. 5:3, 11-14).

Our society does not need Christians who merely condemn the sins of others. It needs Christians whose lives demonstrate the purity, integrity, compassion, and holiness that God requires.

It is time for us to stand up for righteousness – not merely in public discussions, but in our private decisions. We must practice what we profess, demonstrate what we believe, and live according to the truth we encourage others to follow.

The world needs to see that God's way is not merely something we preach. It is something we practice.

THE PLEA STILL STANDS!

Would you like to see our society move in a more favorable direction? Would you like to see stronger families, more honest communities, greater respect for truth, and lives governed by righteousness? Then we must begin by returning to the One who knows what is best for us. We must get back to God, get back to the Bible, and get back to righteous living! This is not merely a political appeal or a call for social reform. It is a spiritual appeal.

Lasting improvement begins when individuals recognize God's authority, submit to His Word, and accept their personal responsibility to live according to His will. This matter is important. It is timely. And, it is eternal.

I am pleading with you to take these matters seriously. If there is anything we can do to help you understand God's Word, obey the Gospel of Christ and complete your obedience to Him, please do not hesitate to contact us. We would welcome the opportunity to study with you, assist you in your pursuit of truth.

Let us also remember that sin often blinds people to the danger they are facing and prevents them from seeing the way forward. We may not always recognize our own spiritual condition, but God sees us. He knows our hearts. He understands our struggles. He cares about our soul and has provided the guidance we need. That is why we make this earnest plea to you to take inventory of your life.

We plead for reverence toward God. We plead for respect for the Bible. We plead for righteousness in our personal lives. And above all, we plead with you to seek God's will, obey His truth, and prepare for eternity that lies before us.

Will you hear this plea? Will you examine God's holy Word? Will you respond to God's will? Our earnest prayer is that you will.

— David Costello

CHRIST SENT ME NOT TO BAPTIZE

Paul wrote these words by inspiration (1 Cor. 1:17). Many love what Paul wrote because they do not believe what Jesus said about water baptism. Jesus said: ***"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"*** (Mark 16:16). But they believe, **"He that believeth and is NOT baptized shall be saved."** Satan added the word "not" to what God said to Eve (Gen. 3:4)!

Many have been convinced that no matter what Jesus said about water baptism, it has "absolutely nothing" to do with salvation. They do their best to dismiss the Lord's words, but they fail miserably.

On the day of Pentecost thousands cried out and said *"what shall we do?"* Peter did not tell them to "accept Jesus into your heart as your personal Savior." What he said was, ***"Repent, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..."*** (Acts 2:37-38). The word "for" is never translated "because of." Baptism is "for" [into, toward, the purpose of] the forgiveness of sins. Peter wrote that water saved those on the ark, just as *"baptism doth also now saves us"* (1 Peter 3:20-21). The devil quoted scripture but misapplied it in an attempt to get Jesus to sin (Matt. 4:6). Men do the same thing today. They've closed their eyes to the truth just as Pharaoh did (Exodus 8:15). Is your heart open to the truth or closed to the truth?

Baptism alone does not save, nor does **Faith alone** save (James 2:17-24). Nothing by itself says. **Repentance** and **Confession** is also required. In EVERY case of conversion in the book of Acts, water baptism was the final act that one had to do in order to be saved! There is no conversion without it. If so, one can be saved without the *blood of Christ.* It's only in water baptism that a sinner contacts Christ's saving blood (Rom. 6:3-6,17-18). Salvation is IN Christ (2 Tim. 2:10). Sinners are baptized **INTO** Christ for the forgiveness of their sins in order to become a Christian (Gal. 3:27). Ephesians 4:5 says one gets INTO the **one body** by being baptized (1 Cor. 12:13). Saul was told to *"be baptized and* ***wash away thy sins***" (Acts 22:16). That makes baptism essential to being saved! And, there is only **one** baptism, not many (Eph. 4:5).

In First Corinthians 1:17, Paul says his work was to "preach the gospel." Baptizing penitent sinners who wanted to be saved was not handled exclusively by the apostles, others baptized too. Preaching the Gospel was his primary work, baptism was the end result of those who believed his preaching and wanted to be saved. John and Jesus both preached and practiced baptism for the remission of sins (Mark 1:4; John 4:1-2; Mark 16:16).

There was a problem in the church at Corinth with some bragging about who baptized them – as if that made them special or more important than others. Some were saying that Paul had baptized them, others said Peter had baptized them and yet others were saying they were baptized by Apollos. That was causing division in the church and was condemned in 1 Corinthians 1:10-11. Paul's response was to show their folly in relying on the one who baptized them instead of relying on Christ in whose name they were baptized. In verses 13 and 14 Paul asked: *"Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Cripus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name."*

Paul was not saying water baptism was not essential to salvation. He was showing that division was sinful and condemned. If they were depending on who baptized them, then he was glad he personally had not baptized any more than he did.

BAPTISM STANDS BETWEEN SINNERS & SALVATION

SINNER ➜ BEING SAVED . . . . . Mark 16:16
SINNER ➜ REMISSION OF SINS . . . . . Acts 2:38
SINNER ➜ A NEWNESS OF LIFE. . . . . Romans 6:4
SINNER ➜ SIN DESTROYED . . . . . Romans 6:6
SINNER ➜ WASHING SINS AWAY. . . . . Acts 22:16
SINNER ➜ CALLING ON JESUS' NAME . . Acts 22:16
SINNER ➜ THE KINGDOM OF GOD . . . . . John 3:3-5
SINNER ➜ WASHING OF WATER . . . Ephesians 5:26
SINNER ➜ DEAD TO SIN. . . . . Romans 6:7-12
SINNER ➜ FREE FROM SIN . . . . . Romans 6:17-18
SINNER ➜ BEING SAVED . . . . . 1 Peter 3:21
SINNER ➜ RAISED WITH CHRIST . . . . Col. 2:11-12
SINNER ➜ BEING IN CHRIST . . . . . Romans 6:3-4
SINNER ➜ PUTTING ON CHRIST . . . . . Gal. 3:26-27
SINNER ➜ DEATH OF CHRIST. . . . . Romans 6:3
SINNER ➜ NEW CREATURE . . Rom. 6:3; 2 Cor. 5:17
SINNER ➜ A GOOD CONSCIENCE . . . . 1 Peter 3:21
SINNER ➜ PUTTING ON CHRIST . . . . . Gal. 3:26-27
SINNER ➜ PUTTING OFF SINS . . . . . Col. 2:11-12
SINNER ➜ SANCTIFICATION. . . . . Ephesians 5:26
SINNER ➜ IN THE ONE BODY. . . . . 1 Cor. 12:13

GOD'S WORD HAS THE ANSWER
IF YOU WILL BELIEVE IT AND OBEY IT

LIGHT FOR LEONI is a publication of the **Leoni Church of Christ**. It is dedicated to teaching the Gospel of Christ. We invite you to read and study God's Word which is able to save your soul (James 1:21).
Sunday: 9am Class – Worship 9:45am & 5pm – 7pm Wednesday

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