

# Bio of James Watkins



Seventeen-year old James Watkins left high school in 1943 to serve in the United States Navy. Two years later, he returned to his hometown in Summerville, Georgia and took a job in a textile mill. A fellow worker, Julius Sprayberry, introduced him to the gospel, which led to his baptism and membership in the Lord's

church. On January 10, 1948, he married Foye Dooley. Three months later, they were both buried with Christ in baptism. Shortly afterwards, they heard Rex Turner, Sr. preach in a Gospel Meeting and due to his influence, James enrolled in Montgomery Bible College (now Faulkner University). Upon graduation, James returned to Summerville and his old job in the textile mill.

He began preaching by appointment around the area. In addition to the nearby Lyerly, Georgia, other pulpits he filled included Ider and Cedar Bluff, both in the bordering state of Alabama. In 1954, James and Foye moved to Flintstone, Georgia where James began his first full-time work at the Chattanooga Valley congregation. For the next forty plus years, he preached for five other congregations, which were East Chattanooga: Chattanooga, Tennessee; Riverwood: Nashville, Tennessee; East Ridge: Chattanooga, Tennessee; Landmark: Montgomery, Alabama; and Church Street: Lewisburg, Tennessee.

While living in Montgomery, Alabama, James completed his bachelor's and master's degrees from Southern Christian University (now known as Regions University). Upon his retirement from local work in 1997, James increased his already heavy schedule of gospel meetings and entered into a full-time evangelistic work that includes around forty meetings a year in addition to Lectureships and special series. During his years of local work, there were times when his meetings were scheduled as much as ten years in advance. To his dismay, he has to turn down numerous invitations.

James also began the television program, **PREACHING THE GOSPEL**, in 1997, which is now in its eleventh year. The program has grown from one station to more than thirty in addition to DirecTV and Dishnet satellites. The program may be seen daily on the Gospel Broadcasting Network (GBN), a twenty-four hour, seven days a week satellite television station. The Watkins have four children: Bill, Teresa, Alan and Hope. Bill preaches for the Crieve Hall church in Nashville, Tennessee and Alan preaches for the Grant Street church in Decatur, Alabama.