

THE MESSENGER



Welcome

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." -1 Peter 1:3-5 NKJV

This season of winter can leave us tempted to long for that which we don't have be that warmer days or warmer feelings towards what our life consists of at the present time. Let us fight this temptation and remember the glorious hope that is already ours and will never fade away. Let the bare trees remind us of the promise of new life that we have in Christ; though we do not now see it, it is coming and in many ways, is here now.

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THIS ---?

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with God

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Kids Korner

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

JANUARY

Birthdays:

- 3- Julia Smith
- 4- Caleb Vinalass
- 10- Ron Courtney & Levi Buchanan
- 12- Pearl Reed
- 16- Nicole Lengacher
- 17- Gray Preston
- 18- David Jones & Grace Miller
- 20- Rich Ehrhart
- 21- Alexis Preston
- 22- Randy Reeher
- 23- Dot Marsteller & Angela Cobucci
- 25- Riley Buchanan
- 27- Colton Kendra
- 30- Carol Brosius
- 31- Rebecca Taylor

FEBRUARY

Birthdays:

- 3- Joe Kendra
- 6- Vonna Murrin & Cindy Sereda
- 8- Gary Visniesky
- 9- Kelle Ohl
- 10- Chris Bowser
- 12- Phillis Eastlick, Elizabeth McHenry, & Dee Ruhlman
- 15- Derrick Lengacher
- 18- Corey Cowan & Jeff Mohr
- 19- Connor Benson
- 21- Tyler Reeher
- 22- Jeff Knauff
- 26- Wesley Palm
- 28- Liam McHenry & Jacob Smith

Anniversaries:

- 6- Frank & Debbie Weese
- 24- Derrick & Nicole Lengacher
- 28- Paul & Cindy Sereda

MARCH

Birthdays:

- 1- Jamie Greggs
- 11- Lee Earnhardt
- 12- Hannah Camp & Jake Mohr
- 14- Bill Murrin
- 15- Zelda Camp
- 16- Emma Stuck
- 22- Allison Kell
- 25- Aggie Hough
- 26- Garrett Ohl
- 30- Helen Bozzo

Anniversaries:

- 2- Daniel & Hannah Camp
- 5- Lee & Michelle Earnhardt
- 7- Corey & Gayle Cowan
- 19- Ray & Nita Murrin

Prayer Requests

- Continue in your prayers for health needs within our church.
 - Prayer for the young people and children in our church that their hearts would be turned to Christ.
 - Protection and encouragement for missionaries.
 - Salvation for Non-Believers
 - Marriages
 - Unspoken Prayer Requests
 - Other needs within our church family.
 - Leaders within the church, community, and country.
- BE SURE TO JOIN THE
CHURCH EACH MONTH FOR
OUR PRAYER MEETING



Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

-Philippians 4:6-7-

“THIS ----?”

When we come to the end of a summer day,
And the birds have gone to rest,
And we gaze once more on the gorgeous array
Of a sunset in the west.

And to think there are some folks who will say
“There is no God at all.”
Why “things just happened,” and yet you may
Believe them one and all.

But who is it ripens the fields of grain?
What causes the winds to blow?
In summer the sunshine and the rain?
In winter the ice and snow?

And who is it that paints the western sky
With the colors we see there?
And where does He come from, and where does He go?
We wonder, yes, wonder where.

And what makes the winter days so cold?
And the long summer days so hot?
And why is it you and I grow old,
When we'd just as soon we'd not.

They tell us that men from a monkey evolved,
That our forefathers lived in a tree.
But there is a puzzle-that it should be solved
Would bring great satisfaction to me.

If human beings from monkeys evolved,
As the evolutionists say,
Why is it we have monkeys at all,
When they all could evolve the same way?

When these and other things are explained
In a simple language to me,
I may wish that I had a tail that was trained
To support my weight in a tree.

But until they are I shall be inclined
To think God create man,
And the change of the seasons, and things of that kind
Are just part of HIS MIGHTY PLAN.

-Ruth Blair Gardner

(inspired by a beautiful Sunday evening sunset)

June 1958

*Passed away June 7, 1960



This poem was found in the church office that was written by a prior church member. A scan of the actual document is included.

(THE—??)

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And the birds have gone to rest,
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In a simple language to me,
I may wish that I had a tail that was trained
To support my weight in a tree.

But until they are I shall be inclined
To think God create man,
And the change of the seasons, and things of that kind
Are just part of HIS WISE PLAN.

Ruth Blair Gardner,
(inspired by beautiful Sunday evening sunset)
June 1958

See June 7-1960

A DAUGHTER LIKE MARY

By Cassie Jaussen

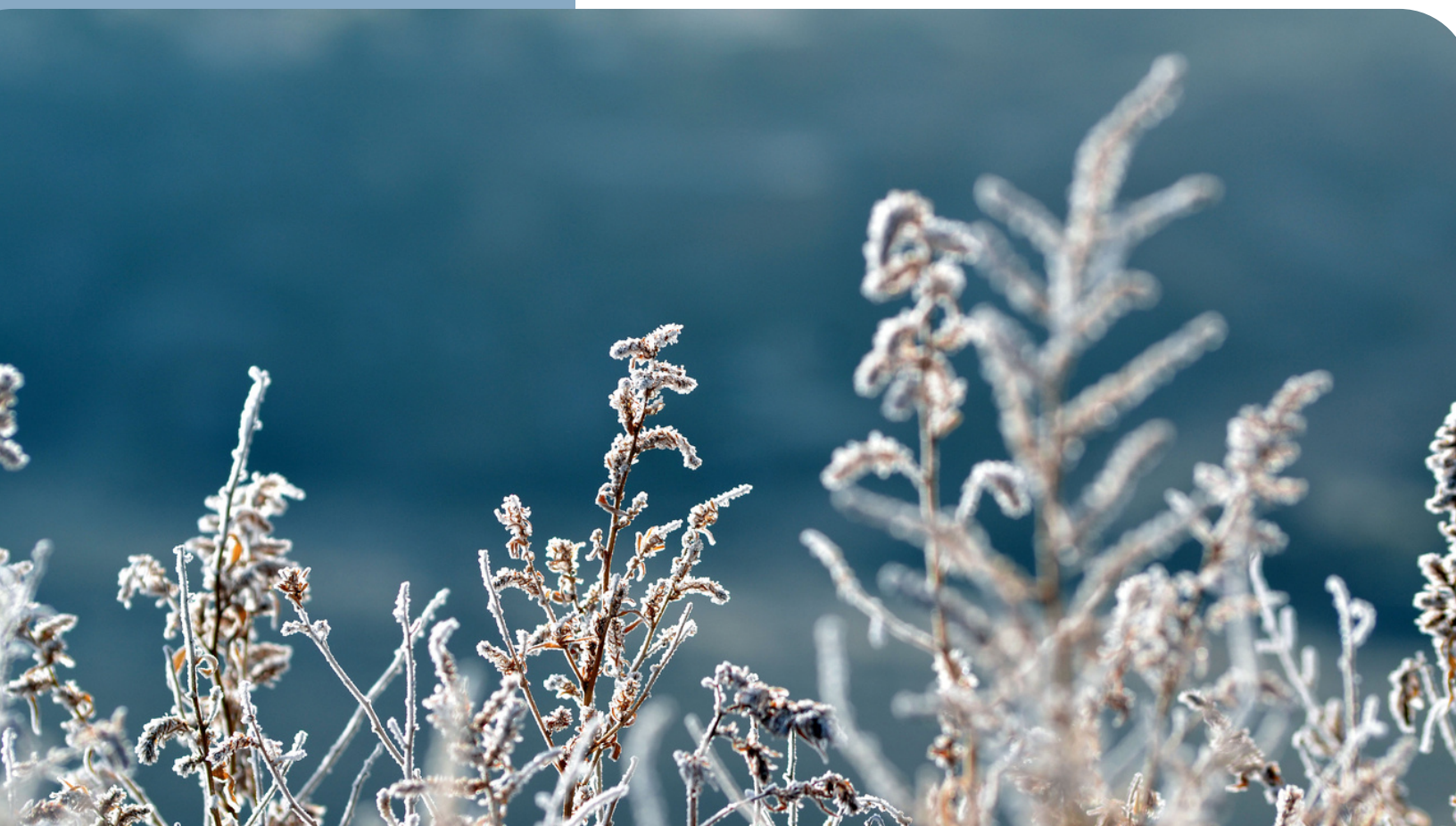
During Christmas found myself meditating a lot on Jesus's birth. But also, being a mother myself, I can't help but think about Mary and how this miraculous birth was seen through her eyes. Place yourselves in her shoes and try to imagine with me. Traveling 90 miles, a four-day journey. That's walking eight hours a day. Large, swollen, exhausted, in the last days of pregnancy. Unsure of where to labor, unsure of the future. Nowadays, we have the luxury of creating a birth plan with every last detail thought out. We have the luxury of creating cozy and beautiful spaces for our little one to enter the world. Nesting we call it. I imagine Mary didn't have those luxuries. I imagine Joseph knocking on doors and being turned away as Mary was standing in the streets vulnerable and in pain, enduring each contraction. I imagine the panic and worry starting to set in. I imagine her turning to God in prayer,

"Lord, please provide a safe place for this baby." I try to imagine how she felt when they were told there was a stable. Relieved maybe. But also, maybe there was a tiny voice inside her thinking, "Really, a stable Lord? There has to be a place more ideal than this." I imagine this wasn't how she pictured the birth of her son, the birth of God's son. But she had no choice but to trust this was where God had placed her. And it was not by accident.

Where has God placed you? Wherever it may be, you may also think this was not my original plan. You may think this isn't an ideal place, time or situation.

*The steps of a good man are ordered
by the Lord, and He delights in his
way. Though he fall, he shall not be
utterly cast down; For the Lord upholds
him with His hand.*

-Psalm 37:23-24 NKJV-

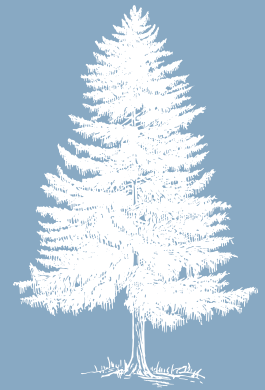


Maybe you're a mom who has to work to help support your family and all you want is to be home with your children. Or maybe you gave up your career/never finished school to stay home and raise your children. Or maybe you've dreamed of having kids, but now you feel shattered because you can't conceive. Or maybe you have lost a child. Or maybe it's as simple as, "This wasn't my birth plan" or "This wasn't how I expected motherhood to look." Either way, all of us have plans that did not go how we had hoped. All of us have prayers that were answered in ways we did not expect.

I'm sure Mary giving birth in a barn was not her ideal plan or what she expected. But we can do what she did and trust God's plans over ours. We can trust His plans even when they don't make sense to us. We may be uncomfortable, or even suffer for a time, but the pain and suffering are worth it when we know this is exactly where God wants us, and has placed us. Not by accident. The great thing is, He will never leave us or forsake us through it all.

We can now see the significance of Mary giving birth in a stable, but at the time, she could not have known just how impactful the location of Jesus's birth would be for generations to come. We may not see the significance of where God has placed us either in this moment. But we can trust and know God's plans are greater than ours. We have a sovereign God and an omniscient God. A God that loves his children and wants to lead them to salvation. A God worthy of our trust and worthy of our full surrender.

Mary accepted this is where she would give birth to her son, Jesus; In a stable. The Son of God, In a manger. The Great High Priest, wrapped in swaddling clothes. The King, is surrounded by animals and animal dung. Meek and lowly. I'm sure it didn't make sense to her. But she trusted her Father anyway. If you're in a place that doesn't make sense to you, if your situation is not going according to your plans, will you trust God anyways? Let's surrender everything to Him. Let's say to the worthy King, "not my will, but yours be done!" Let's allow our faithful God to lead us. But most importantly, let's be daughters like Mary. Let's have faith wherever God chooses to place us.



And Mary said:

*"My soul magnifies the Lord,
And my spirit has rejoiced in God my
Savior. For He has regarded the lowly
state of His maidservant; for behold,
henceforth all generations will call me
blessed. For He who is mighty has done
great things for me, and holy is His
name. And His mercy is on those who
fear him from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with His arm; He
has scattered the proud in the
imagination of their hearts. He has put
down the mighty from their thrones, and
exalted the lowly. He has filled the
hungry with good things, and the rich
He has sent away empty. He has helped
His servant Israel, in remembrance of
His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to
Abraham and to his seed forever."*

-Luke 1:46-55 NKJV-

UNION AND COMMUNION WITH GOD THE END AND

DESIGN OF THE GOSPEL

By Hugh Binning

Psalm lxxiii. 24-28.—“Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel, &c. Whom have I in heaven but thee? &c. It is good for me to draw near to God.”—1 John i. 3. “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”—John xvii. 21-23. “That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, &c.”

It is a matter of great consolation that God's glory and our happiness are linked together, so that whoever set his glory before them singly to aim at, they take the most compendious and certain way to true blessedness. His glory is the ultimate end of man, and should be our great and last scope. But our happiness—which consists in the enjoyment of God—is subordinate to this, yet inseparable from it. The end of our creation is communion and fellowship with God, therefore man was made with an immortal soul capable of it, and this is the greatest dignity and eminency of man above the creatures. He hath not only impressed from God's finger, in his first moulding, some characters resembling God, in righteousness and holiness, but is created with a capacity of receiving more of God by communion with him. Other creatures have already all they will have,—all they can have,—of conformity to him, but man is made liker than all, and is fitted and fashioned to aspire to more likeness and conformity, so that his soul may shine more and more to the perfect day.

There was an union made already in his first moulding, and communion was to grow as a fragrant and sweet fruit out of this blessed root. Union and similitude are the ground of fellowship and communion. That union was gracious,—that communion would have been glorious, for grace is the seed of glory. There was a twofold union between Adam and God,—an union of state, and an union of nature, he was like God, and he was God's friend. All the creatures had some likeness to God, some engravings of his power and goodness and wisdom, but man is said to be made according to God's image, “Let us make man like unto us.” Other creatures had *similitudinem vestigia*, but man had *similitudinem faciet*. Holiness and righteousness are God's face,—the very excellency and glory of all his attributes, and the Lord stamps the image of these upon man. Other attributes are but like his back parts, and he leaves the resemblance of his footsteps upon other creatures. What can be so beautiful as the image of God upon the soul? Creatures, the nearer they are to God, the more pure and excellent. We see in the fabric of the world, bodies the higher they are, the more pure and cleanly, the more beautiful. Now then, what was man that was “made a little lower than the angels”?—in the Hebrew, “a little lower than God,” *tantum non deus*. Seeing man is set next to God, his glory and beauty certainly surpasses the glory of the sun and of the heavens. Things contiguous and next other are like other. The water is liker air than the earth, therefore it is next the air. The air is liker heaven than water, therefore is it next to it. *Omne contiguum spirituali, est spirituale*. Angels and men next to God, are spirits, as he is a spirit. Now similitude is the ground of friendship. *Pares paribus congregantur, similitudo necessitudinis vinculum*. It is that which conciliates affections among men. So it is here by proportion. God sees all is very good, and that man is the best of his works and he loves him, and makes him his friend, for his own image which he beholds in him. At length from these two roots this pleasant and fragrant fruit of communion with and enjoyment of God grows up. *This is the entertainment of friends, to delight in one another, and to enjoy one another. Amicorum omnia communia. Love makes all common. It opens the treasure of God's fulness, and makes a vent of divine bounty towards man, and it opens the heart of man, and makes it large as the sand of the sea to receive of God.*

Our receiving of his fulness is all the entertainment we can give him. O what blessedness is this, for a soul to live in him! And it lives in him when it loves him. *Anima est ubi amat, non ubi animat.* And to taste of his sweetness and be satisfied with him, this makes perfect oneness, and perfect oneness with God, who is "the fountain of life, and in whose favour is life," is perfect blessedness.

But we must stand a little here and consider our misery, that have fallen from such an excellency. How are we come down from heaven wonderfully? Sin has interposed between God and man and this dissolves the union, and hinders the communion. An enemy has come between two friends, and puts them at odds, and oh! an eternal odds. Sin hath sown this discord, and alienated our hearts from God. Man's glory consisted in the irradiation of the soul from God's shining countenance, this made him light, God's face shined on him. But sin interposing has eclipsed that light and brought on an eternal night of darkness over the soul. And thus we are spoiled of the image of God, as when the earth comes between the sun and the moon. Now then, there can no beams of divine favour and love break through directly towards us, because of the cloud of our sins, that separates between God and us, and because of "the partition wall," and "the hand writing of ordinances that was against us,"—God's holy law, and severe justice, Eph. ii. 14, Col. ii. 14. Then, what shall we do? How shall we see his face in joy? Certainly it had been altogether impossible, if our Lord Jesus Christ had not come, who is "the light and life of men." The Father shines on him, and the beams of his love reflect upon us, from the Son. The love of God, and his favourable countenance, that cannot meet with us in a direct and immediate beam, they fall on us in this blessed compass, by the intervention of a mediator. We are rebels standing at a distance from God, Christ comes between, a mediator and a peace maker, to reconcile us to God. "God is in Christ reconciling the world." God first makes an union of natures with Christ, and so he comes near to us, down to us who could not come up to him, and then he sends out the word of reconciliation,—the gospel, the tenor whereof is this, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son," 1 John i. 3. It is a voice of peace and invitation to the fellowship of God. Behold, then the happiness of man is the very end and purpose of the gospel. Christ is the repairer of the breaches, the second Adam aspired to quicken what Adam killed. He hath "slain the enmity," and cancelled the hand writing that was against us, and so made peace by the blood of his cross, and then, having removed all that out of the way, he comes and calls us unto the fellowship which we were ordained unto from our creation. We who are rebels, are called to be friends, "I call you not servants, but friends." It is a wonder that the creature should be called a friend of God, but, O great wonder, that the rebel should be called a friend! And yet that is not all. We are called to a nearer union,—to be the sons of God, this is our privilege, John i. 12. This is a great part of our fellowship with the Father and his Son, we are the Father's children, and the Son's brethren "and if children then heirs, heirs of God," and if brethren, then co-heirs with Christ, Rom. viii. 17.

Thus the union is begun again in Christ, but as long as sin dwells in our mortal bodies it is not perfect, there is always some separation and some enmity in our hearts, and so there is neither full seeing of God, for "we know but in part," and we see "darkly," nor full enjoying of God, for we are "saved by hope," and we "live by faith, and not by sight." But this is begun which is the seed of eternal communion, we are here partakers of the divine nature. Now then it must aspire unto a more perfect union with God whose image it is. And therefore the soul of a believer is here still in motion towards God as his element. There is here an union in affection but not completed in fruition,—*affectu non effecta*. The soul pants after God,—"*Whom have I in heaven or earth but thee? My flesh and my heart faileth,*" &c. A believing soul looks upon God as its only portion,—accounts nothing misery but to be separated from him, and nothing blessedness but to be one with him. This is the loadstone of their affections and desires, the centre which they move towards, and in which they will rest. It is true, indeed, that oftentimes our heart and our flesh faileth us, and we become ignorant and brutish. Our affections cleave to the earth, and temptations with their violence turn our souls towards another end than God. As there is nothing more easily moved and turned wrong than the needle that is touched with the adamant, yet it settles not in such a posture, it recovers itself and

rests never till it look towards the north, and then it is fixed—even so, temptations and the corruptions and infirmities of our hearts disturb our spirits easily, and wind them about from the Lord, towards any other thing, but yet we are continuing with him, and he keeps us with his right hand, and therefore though we may be moved, yet we shall not be greatly commoved, we may fall, but we shall rise again. He is “the strength of our heart,” and therefore he will turn our heart about again, and fix it upon its own portion. Our union here consists more in his holding of us by his power, than our taking hold of him by faith. Power and good will encamp about both faith and the soul. “We are kept by his power through faith,” 1 Pet i. 5. And thus he will guide the soul, and still be drawing it nearer to him, from itself, and from sin and from the world, till he “receive us into glory,” and until we be one as with the Father and the Son,—“He in us and we in him, that we may be made perfect in one,” as it is in the words read.

This is strange. A greater unity and fuller enjoyment, a more perfect fellowship, than ever Adam in his innocency would have been capable of! What soul can conceive it? what tongue express it? None can, for it is that which “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into man’s heart to conceive.” We must suspend the knowledge of it till we have experience of it. Let us now believe it, and then we shall find it. There is a mutual inhabitation which is wonderful. Persons that dwell one with another have much society and fellowship, but to dwell one in another is a strange thing,—“I in them, and they in me,” and therefore God is often said to dwell in us, and we to dwell in him. But that which makes it of all most wonderful and incomprehensible is that glorious unity and communion between the Father and the Son, which it is made an emblem of. “As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.” Can you conceive that unity of the Trinity? Can you imagine that reciprocal inhabitation,—that mutual communion between the Father and the Son? No, it hath not entered into the heart to conceive it. Only thus much we know, that it is most perfect, it is most glorious, and so much we may apprehend of this unity of the saints with God. Oh love is an uniting and transforming thing. “God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” He dwelleth in us by love, this makes him work in us, and shine upon us. Love hath drawn him down from his seat of majesty, to visit poor cottages of sinners, Isa. lxvi. 1, 2 and xlvi. 3, 4. And it is that love of God reflecting upon our souls that carries the soul upward to him, to live in him, and walk with him. O how doth it constrain a soul to “live to him,” and draw it from itself! 2 Cor. v. 15. Then the more unity with God, the more separation from ourselves and the world, the nearer God the farther from ourselves, and the farther from ourselves the more happy, and the more unity with God, the more unity among ourselves, among the brethren of our family. Because here we are not fully one with our Father, therefore there are many differences between us and our brethren because we are not one perfectly in him, therefore we are not one, as he and the Father are one. But when he shall be in us, and we in him, as the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father, then shall we be one among ourselves, then shall we meet in the unity of the faith, into a perfect man, “into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,” Eph. iv. 13. Christ is the uniting principle. While the saints are not wholly one, *uni tertio*, they cannot be perfectly one *inter se*, among themselves. Consider this, I beseech you Christ’s union with the Father is the foundation of our union to God, and our union among ourselves. This is comfortable, the ground of it is laid already. Now it is not simply the unity of the Father and the Son in essence that is here meant, for what shadow and resemblance can be in the world of such an incomprehensible mystery? But it is certainly the union and communion of God with Christ Jesus as mediator, as the head of the church which is his body. Therefore seeing the Father is so wonderfully well pleased and one with Christ, his well beloved Son and messenger of the covenant, and chief party contracting in our name, he is by virtue of this, one with us, who are his seed and members. And therefore, the members should grow up in the head Christ, from whom the whole body maketh increase “according to the effectual working [of the Spirit] in it,” Eph. v. 1, 16. Now, if the union between the Father and Christ our head cannot be dissolved, and cannot be barren and unfruitful, then certainly the Spirit of the Father which is given to Christ beyond measure, must effectually work in every member, till it bring them to “the unity of the faith,” and, “to the measure of the perfect man, which is the fulness of Christ.” So then every believing soul is one with the Father as Christ is one, because he is the head and they the members,

and the day is coming that all the members shall be perfectly united to the head Christ and grow up to the perfect man, which is "the stature of Christ's fulness." "And then shall we all be made perfect in one," we shall be one as he is one, because he and we are one perfect man, head and members.

Now, to what purpose is all this spoken? I fear, it doth not stir up in our souls a desire after such a blessed life. Whose heart would not be moved at the sound of such words? "Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son." We are made perfect, he in us, and we in him. Certainly, that soul is void of the life of God that doth not find some sparkle of holy ambition kindled within, after such a glorious and blessed condition! But these things savour not, and taste not to the most part, "the natural man knoweth them not, for they are spiritually discerned." How lamentable is it, that Christ is come to restore us to our lost blessedness, and yet no man almost considers it or lays it to heart! O how miserable,—twice miserable—is that soul that doth not draw near to God in Christ, when God hath come so near to us in Christ, that goes a whoring after the lust of the eyes and flesh, and after the imaginations of their own heart, and will not be guided by Christ, the way and life, to glory! "Thou shalt destroy them, O Lord," Psal. lxxiii. 27. All men are afar off from God, from the womb behold, we may have access to God in Christ. Wo to them that are yet afar off, and will not draw near, "they shall all perish." "I exhort you to consider what you are doing the most part of you are going away from God, you were born far off, and you will yet go farther, know what you will meet with in that way,—destruction."

You have never yet asked in earnest, For what purpose you came into the world? What wonder ye wander and walk at random, seeing ye have not proposed to yourselves any certain scope and aim! It is great folly, you would not be so foolish in any petty business, but O how foolish men are in the main business! "The light of the body is the eye," if that be not light, "the whole body is full of darkness." If your intention be once right established, all your course will be orderly, but if you be dark and blind in this point, and have not considered it, you cannot walk in the light, your whole way is darkness. The right consideration of the great end would shine unto you, and direct your way But while you have not proposed this end unto yourselves—the enjoyment of God—you must spend your time either in doing nothing to that purpose, or doing contrary to it. All your other lawful business, your callings and occupations, are but in the by; they are not the end, nor the way, but you make them your only business; they are altogether impertinent to this end. And the rest of your walking, in lusts and ignorance, is not only impertinent, but inconsistent with it and contrary to it. If you think that you have this before your eyes, to enjoy God,—I pray you look upon the way you choose. Is your drunkenness, your swearing, your uncleanness, your contentions and railings, and such works of the flesh,—are these the way to enjoy God? Shall not these separate between God and you? Is your eating and drinking, sleeping as beasts, and labouring in your callings,—are these all the means you use to enjoy God? Be not deceived; you who draw not near God by prayer often in secret, and by faith in his Son Christ, as lost miserable sinners, to be saved and reconciled by him, you have no fellowship with him, and you shall not enjoy him afterward! You whose hearts are given to your covetousness, who have many lovers and idols besides him, you cannot say, Whom have I besides Thee in earth? No; you have many other things besides God. You can have nothing of God, except ye make him all to you.—unless you have him alone. "My undefiled is One," Cant. vi. 9. He must be alone, for "his glory he will not give to another." If you divide your affections, and pretend to give him part, and your lusts another part, you may be doing so, but he will not divide his glory so, he will give no part of it to any other thing. But as for those souls that come to him and see their misery without him, O know how good it is! It is not only good, but best, yea only good; it is bonum, and it is optimum; yea, it is unicum. "There is none good, save one, even God;" and there is nothing good for us but this one, to be near God, and so near, that we may be one,—one spirit with the Lord,—"for he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit."

Rejoice in your portion, and long for the possession of it. Let all your meditations and affections and conversation proclaim this, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none in the earth whom I desire besides thee." And certainly he shall guide you to the end, and receive you into glory. Then you shall rest from your labours, because you shall dwell in him, and enjoy that which you longed and laboured for. Let the consideration of that end unite the hearts of Christians here. O what an absurd thing is it, that those who shall lodge together at night, and be made "perfect in one," should not only go contrary ways, but have contrary minds and affections!

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BOOKS & RESOURCES

Deeper, by Dane C. Ortlund: “How do Christians grow? Few question the call of the Bible to grow in godliness, but the answer to exactly how this happens is often elusive. In this book, Dane Ortlund points believers to Christ, making the case that sanctification does not happen by doing more or becoming better, but by going deeper into the wondrous gospel truths that washed over them when they were first united to him. Drawing on wisdom from figures throughout church history, Ortlund encourages readers to fix their gaze on Jesus in the battle against sin, casting themselves upon his grace and living out their invincible identity in Christ.” -Crossway

Bread of Life, by Abigail Dodds: “In Bread of Life, Abigail Dodds—an avid baker and mother of 5—invites readers to ponder and celebrate God’s spiritual and physical provision in Christ through the hands-on art of bread making. Offering readers easy-to-follow directions for everything from focaccia to chocolate babka along with full-color photographs throughout, this unique book is an enriching blend of devotional meditations and recipes that invites readers to ponder the true bread of life as they bake for their families and friends.” -Crossway

The Mission of Motherhood, by Sally Clarkson: “No calling is greater, nobler, or more fulfilling than that motherhood. Every day, as we nurture our children, mothers influence eternal destiny as no one else can. Tragically, today’s culture minimizes the vital importance of a mother’s role. In The Mission of Motherhood, Sally Clarkson helps you rediscover the joy and fulfillment to be found in the strategic role to which God in all his wisdom has called you, for a purpose far greater than you can ever imagine.” -Crown Publishing

The King and the Dragon, by James Shrimpton: When the knight slays the dragon in any story, readers and listeners all cheer in celebration. We rejoice because it echoes the Bible—the victory of good over evil is a prominent theme because the Lord came to have final victory over the devil. In this imaginative story, James Shrimpton teaches children the story of redemption in the Bible through the lens of dragon slaying. With a memorable rhyming style, engaging artwork, and theologically grounded storytelling, this book is perfect for teaching children the story of Christ’s defeat of sin, death, and evil.
-Crossway (Great for Children)

-AUDIO-

-Martin Lloyd Jones Trust: A great resource to listen to sermons by Martin Lloyd Jones. Pastor Todd has been referencing Lloyd Jones’ series on Ephesians which can be found [here](#). Suggested listen: “The Drama of Redemption”

-Renewing Your Mind: The “Rebirth” episode. “Jesus surprised Nicodemus when He declared that no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they have been born again. Many people today are just as surprised as Nicodemus. What is this rebirth? From his sermon series in the gospel of John, today R.C. Sproul addresses the doctrine of regeneration.”

-The Bible Project: The “Heaven and Earth” video offers an illustration and explanation expressing the hope we have in the reunification and renewal of heaven and earth when Christ returns.





EASTER READINGS

a time of reflection



SUNDAY, MARCH 3

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"

And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

-Genesis 3:1-8 NKJV-



REFLECTION

We have all eaten of the fruit of sin in one area of our lives or another. We have listened to the seductive voice that encourages us to live contrary to what the Lord God has called us to. Like Adam and Eve we have tried to cover our sin with our own works and have hidden from God, not He from us.

Are there areas of unconfessed sin in your life that you need to bring to the Lord?

Have you found yourself hiding from the Lord or find yourself in a time like this now? Come to Him.

YOUR RESPONSE





SUNDAY, MARCH 10

Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?"

So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?"

Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."

And the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

So the Lord God said to the serpent:

"Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."

-Genesis 3:9-15 NKJV-





REFLECTION

At many times we blame shift when we are in sin. The truth is that we are guilty. We have not kept the way of life and have gone down the path of death. Yet, while Eve was in sin, while we were in sin, He made a way. At the very beginning He declared that One would come to rectify what had been lost.

Have you tried to shift onto others or even God sins that are your responsibility?

How are you comforted by the fact that God has made a way for these sins to be forgiven?

YOUR RESPONSE



SUNDAY, MARCH 17

Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked--but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth.

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

-Isaiah 53:4-12 NKJV-



REFLECTION

The One that God foretold to Eve that would come to crush the head of the serpent has come. He was afflicted, and died for our sins. Yet, we know that He is victorious and "made intercession for the transgressors."

Reflect on the fact that God not only came to pay the penalty for our sins but also intercedes on our behalf.

YOUR RESPONSE



SUNDAY, MARCH 24

There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."

And they divided His garments and cast lots. And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God."

The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, and saying, "if You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself."

And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew:

THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."

But the other, answering, rebuked him saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong."

Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said,

"Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'"

Having said this, He breathed His last.

-Luke 23;32-46 NKJV-



REFLECTION

The reality of the crucifixion can sometimes be lost if you have read it many times. Read it slowly and contemplate that which Jesus did on our behalf. His suffering was true and endured out of love for us. Let that reality not be lost. He suffered so that we may live.

Do you find it easy to not let the reality of the crucifixion penetrate your heart and mind?

Let this not lead to self-loathing, but lead to recognition of our standing without Christ, and gratitude and praise for the grace and mercy of God. Thank Him for His mercy and grace in our lives and the work of Christ at the cross.

YOUR RESPONSE



SUNDAY, MARCH 31

Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there as a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.

But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."

So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word.

And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."

-Matthew 28:1-10 NKJV-

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

-Ephesians 2:4-7 NKJV-



REFLECTION

He is risen! Our victorious King Jesus is alive. Remember that He is very much alive and well this very moment. He is with God the Father and has given us His Spirit to comfort and affirm our faith. Rest in this assurance that your King is victorious, He is alive, He is reigning. Despite what we experience we know that He is interceding for us and that His Kingdom is come.

What does Christ's victory over death mean?

How can we live each day remembering the the reality of Christ's resurrection?

YOUR RESPONSE



Kids Korner

MEMORY VERSE:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. -2 Corinthians, 5:17
NKJV



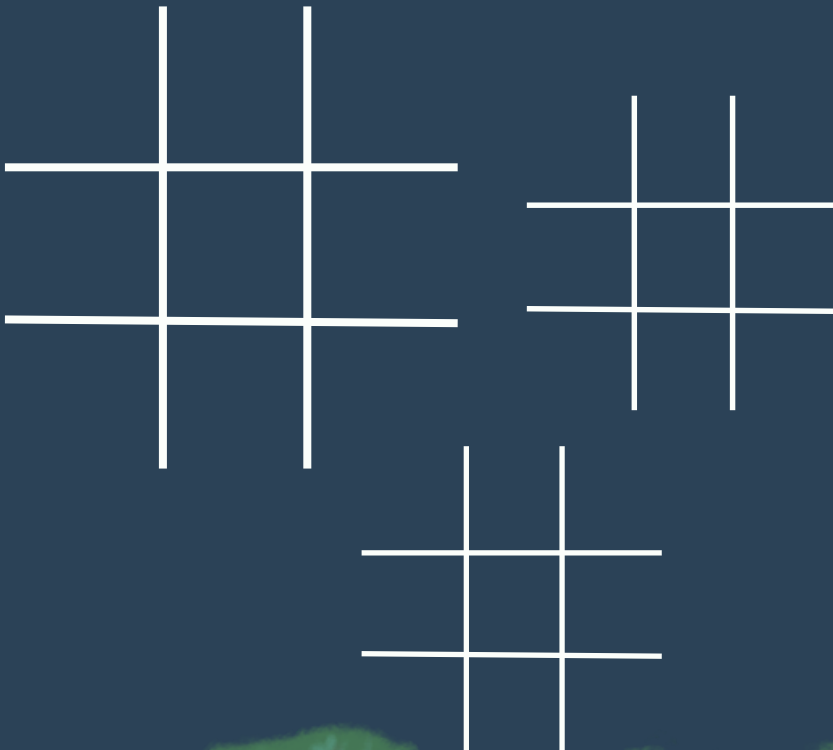
BIBLE SCAVENGER HUNT:



- What four books in the Bible tell about Jesus' life on Earth?
- Which book in the Bible has Jesus' *Sermon on the Mount*?
- Blessed are those who are persecuted for _____ sake, for theirs is the _____ of Heaven. -Matthew 5:10 NKJV
- Who baptized Jesus?
- How many people saw Jesus after He came back from the dead? See 1 Corinthians 15

ACTIVITIES:

- Get outside and play! Bundle up and if there is snow, make a snow angel, snowman, or fort. Remember how God created the snow and the seasons and thank Him. What fun to have in His creation!



SERMONS

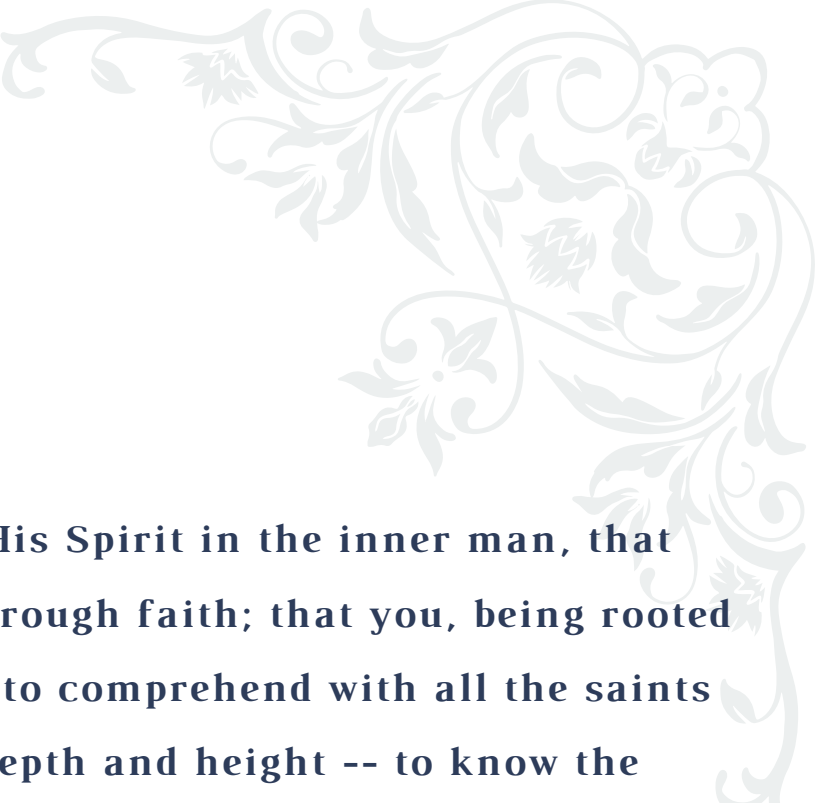
- THE BEAUTIFUL STORY... THAT'S TRUE!
- POPULATING THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH
- WHAT'S BEHIND ALL THIS?
- HE GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME
- WHEN GOD MESSES WITH OUR PLANS
- ENJOYING THE JOY OF GOD BY DELIGHTING IN HIM

We have been working through the book of Ephesians and other topics as a church. The teachings are listed above and are on the church website and YouTube. Don't hesitate to listen again or share them with friends or family. What hope we have as being the redeemed!

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles -
- if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God
which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known
to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when
you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of
Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men,
as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and
prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body,
and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I
became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to
me by the effective working of His power.

To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was
given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable
riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the
mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God
who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the
manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the
principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the
eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in
whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in
Him. Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for
you, which is your glory.

For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He
would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be



strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height -- to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

-Ephesians 3, NKJV-





GIVE

<https://tithe.ly>



Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

-Hebrews 10:23-25-



Sunday

- 9:00 AM - Sunday School
- 10:00 AM - Morning Worship
- 5:00 PM - Bible Study

Be sure to stay up to date with weekly happenings by checking the bulletin!

Do you want to contribute?

Please Contact

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