

"The Link"

BETWEEN YOUR CHURCH... AND HOME!



A CHURCH FAMILY DISCOVERING
"NEW BEGINNINGS"



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Issue 11

Getting the Most out of Worship, and Making It Personal

I'm sure this has never happened to you, but just in case you know someone else who has struggled with getting the most out of a Sunday morning worship experience, I thought it might be wise to share these thoughts for the other person's benefit.

What was the intent and main points of the sermon you heard two weeks ago? How did it minister to you personally, and what changes, insights, or growth came about as a result of that message?

Many folks will sit through a Sunday morning worship hour having never been personally involved in the experience. This is hardly what God desires, and it leaves many feeling empty and asking themselves more than once during the hour, "*how much longer?*" This sense of emptiness and mundane ritual is almost fully our own fault, because we do practically nothing to prepare ourselves for worship beforehand, take a passive role during the course of the worship hour, and exit with no plan or even intention of applying truth gained to real life situations in the days to come. We are freewheeling or coasting through what should be one of the most helpful spiritual exercises of our lives.

1. Pray for the hearers. Before Sunday ever arrives, ask God to prepare your own heart to receive and act upon the upcoming message. Do this with a humble awareness that you are not spiritually complete, and there are many rough edges that need to be chipped away. Beware of the nagging urge to pull splinters out of other people's eyes while the log is in yours. Ask that individuals will be responsive to the Spirit's urging to be present and equally anxious to experience God when the Word is preached.

2. Pray for the messenger in very specific ways. Ask God to enable him to arrange his schedule and set priorities in such a way that he has sufficient time and focus to develop a sermon or study particularly suited to the needs of the body. Pray for clarity of thought and a holy sense of his high privilege to stand before God's people to offer spiritual teaching. Pray that the message is another of those divine encounters where it fits perfectly with the needy voids of attending listeners. Remember to pray for certain individuals who have yet to commit to following Christ full-time.

3. During the worship time take notes, and especially mark those points to be personally considered. Filling in outlines is a start, but maintaining a study notebook is far better. Flesh out the message in your own handwriting, and always keep the notebook with your Bible. When the Spirit moves you in a notable way, don't forget to include comments or insights gained from music, prayers, and testimonies.

4. Review the notes during the week and incorporate them into your own personal or family time with God. If there were handouts or inserts on Sunday, use those as part of your quiet time. Meditate on or memorize key passages from the sermon. Explore parallel or related topics and verses. By doing this throughout the week you will not soon forget what the message was about and how it involves you personally.

Cont'd on next page

5. Seek further knowledge of what you are not clear on. It is normal to not understand everything and beneficial to admit it. Some questions may be answered with a little study on your own. Other questions may need the help of the messenger, if possible. Find out what he intended to say and the biblical basis for the instruction. Many times our questions or confusion come about because of a misunderstanding or lapse in our attention span. Then there are those extra special questions that have no answer this side of heaven. Mark those as "to be answered later."

6. Share some truth you learned with someone else. God does not teach us and grow us so that we become spiritually-fat couch potatoes. Exercise the knowledge and faith you acquire by sharing with others. Some of this will be through relationships with those closest to us. We help guide someone else as we pass on a word of knowledge or experience gained. If we will be attentive throughout the day we will recognize when God prepares us for a divine appointment even through casual relationships.

7. Consider being part of a worship hour prayer team that prays for the messenger and listeners during the entire service. This requires the pastor's support, of course, and should be done as behind-the-scenes as possible. Avoid calling attention to this ministry and the prayer warriors. In fact, make it one of the best kept secrets of the church. Unholy things happen when pride and ego get in the way. If this looks too much like work, then it may be that you have been coasting for too long already. Make a commitment today that your Sundays will not be idle times of relaxation and entertainment like a spectator sport. Determine that you will no longer be a passive pew sitter but an active worship partner.

Pray with Thanksgiving

by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson

I'm learning how to pray a different kind of prayer — prayer said with thanksgiving. I learned it from St. Paul who, writing from prison, taught me a most powerful lesson. He said,

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, **with thanksgiving**, present your requests to God."¹

Strange. Here he is suffering himself, yet he's telling me to pray with thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving is the seasoning that makes our prayers edible to God. After all, who wants to hear people whine all the time? I've learned that you can't whine and give thanks in the same breath. Self-pity and thankfulness don't mix any better than oil and water.

In fact, mixing thanks with prayer somehow changes it. When we remember what God has done for us in the past and think about who he is in the present — and express that in thankfulness — our prayers become more gentle, more trusting somehow. Thankful prayers are offered with faith. And faith is an essential ingredient for prayers that God chooses to answer.

We remember the Pilgrims on Thanksgiving Day, not so much for their turkey dinner, but for the sheer faith that inspired them to give thanks in a year that saw nearly half their number die of sickness. Yet they prayed with thanksgiving.

When your annual day of feasting is over, you may bemoan your extra helpings of dressing, mashed potatoes, and pumpkin pie. But if you can hang on to the "thanks" part of Thanksgiving, you'll be a different person. Because when you learn to talk to God about your needs — mixed with a healthy dose of heartfelt thanks — then you have crossed the divide from whining at God to real prayer.

Happy *thanks*-giving!

November 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Daylight Savings Time ends 12:15 Property/ Baptist Men 12:15 WMU 5:30 Finance Com	2	3 7 pm Deacon's meeting	4 7pm Business Meeting	5 7 pm Pastor Search Com	6	7
8	9	10	11 Veterans Day	12 7 pm Pastor Search Com	13	14
15	16	17	18 6 pm Family Night Dinner 7 pm Bible Study	19 7 pm Pastor Search Com	20	21
22 Christmas Shoeboxes are due	23	24	25 7 pm Bible Study	26 Happy Thanksgiving	27	28
29 Last day for Bedford Christ- mas Station Col- lection	30					

A Leper's Thanksgiving

Ten men silhouetted along the low ridge called to the leader of a small band below: "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." One of the ten was Bartholomew. He glanced up. We're lepers, he thought. Ragged, pitiable, incurable lepers. Why would he care about us?

From the time their skin disease was diagnosed, lepers were cut off from society, forced to live on their own in caves or huts away from towns. A fortunate few had relatives who would leave food for them, but many had no one. They weren't allowed close enough to beg for a living. Ragged, thin, rejected. *Lepers*. Even the word spoke an icy finality. These ten stayed together for protection, pooling their meager resources.

"Have mercy on us!" Bart's friends shouted again.

As Bart looked, Jesus was turning their way. He cupped his hands now so his voice would carry better, and called across the low valley which lay between the road and the ridge where the lepers stood. His voice rang out sharp and compelling in the stillness of the morning.

"Go! Show yourselves to the priests!"

The lepers looked at each other. You only went to the priests if your leprosy was gone. Only the priests could issue a clean bill of health so you could return to your family.

As they held up their decaying limbs, they were asking, "Why go unless we're healed?" They looked over to Jesus again, but he had turned away, conversing with Peter and John. So the lepers began their trek towards the town of priests; it was something.

Then Bart heard a shout, a cry of exaltation, a loud eerie call that filled the valley and bounced off the hills: "I'm healed! I'm whole. My leprosy is gone! It's gone!" Bart look at his own diseased body, too, and realized that the leprosy had left him too. His fingers were whole. He reached up to touch his nose. It, too, was smooth and whole. Other lepers began exclaiming also. "I'm healed! I'm healed!"

Bart looked back at Jesus and his band just in time catch a smile flirting at the corners of Jesus' mouth. The healing hadn't occurred as the lepers stood looking and wondering. It had taken place as they had begun to *obey* Jesus' words. "*As they went*" they were healed.

Suddenly Bart broke from the circle of rejoicing ex-lepers. He bounded over the little creek and raced towards Jesus' band, rags fluttering behind him. He sped toward Jesus and then landed on his knees before the Master in a cloud of fine dust.

He spoke just a phrase -- "Thank you, Master" -- in his broken accent of Samaria. Then he just knelt there sobbing.

Jesus spoke now, not really to Bart, but beyond him somehow, as if to the whole world. "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?"

Bart's mind spun. He thought of the countless times God had answered his prayers before his leprosy, provided for his family, given him work, healed his sickly daughter. How often had he really said "Thanks"? So often he had taken these blessings for granted, rejoicing in his good fortune, but never racing to the Giver with a word of heartfelt thanks on his lips.

As the Bart knelt, Jesus' hand instinctively rested on his head, blessing, and at the same time stroking and smoothing the tangles left from years of sojourn. Jesus wept as he caressed the man's head, tears making rivulets down his cheeks into his beard.

Bart looked up. The rest of the leper band was now heading off towards the priests' village. They had received physical healing, indeed, but at Jesus' feet, Bart had received a healing of his whole person. As Jesus helped him up, he said, "Rise and go. Your faith has made you whole."

Bart embraced Jesus. Then they stood there for a moment looking at one another -- smile meeting smile. The gift of healing had sent him the message of God's love, but thanks had brought him home.

Bible Wordsearch

Wordsearch 242

Matt.6:5-18

The Lord's Prayer

S	S	E	F	S	R	E	H	T	A	F	M	L	H	A
Y	T	A	Y	O	W	S	E	E	S	O	L	T	D	U
R	B	R	T	D	R	O	O	D	G	E	U	I	M	E
A	E	T	E	A	M	G	N	N	T	R	S	D	S	B
G	D	H	R	E	R	O	I	K	T	F	B	R	U	A
A	C	H	C	L	T	D	D	V	I	R	D	A	O	B
I	N	E	E	S	N	U	C	G	E	O	H	W	I	B
N	S	A	S	A	R	O	U	A	N	E	Y	E	V	L
S	I	D	T	E	R	R	D	E	A	I	C	R	B	I
T	N	S	B	N	E	D	E	V	O	L	K	O	O	N
M	S	M	E	E	Q	D	E	V	I	E	C	E	R	G
U	O	R	E	M	A	N	I	C	F	A	C	E	S	W
S	S	D	E	L	I	V	E	R	M	O	O	R	K	A
Y	L	I	A	D	Y	A	R	P	A	G	A	N	S	S
W	O	H	S	H	A	L	L	O	W	E	D	L	Y	H

AGAINST	BREAD
BABBLING	DAILY
CORNERS	DEBTS
DELIVER	DONE
DISFIGURE	DOOR
FATHER	EARTH
FORGIVE	FACES
HALLOWED	HEAD
HEAVEN	HEARD
KINGDOM	LEAD
KNOWS	LOVE
OBVIOUS	NAME
PAGANS	PRAY
RECEIVED	ROOM
REWARD	SEES
SECRET	SHOW
SOMBER	SINS
STANDING	TELL
STREET	TRUTH
UNSEEN	WASH

After you find all the hidden words the left over letters spell out a Bible verse reading from the top left to the bottom right

MORE PUZZLES AT:
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Three Score and More

3 Score and more will not be meeting in November. All members are encouraged to come and participate in our Church Thanksgiving Dinner and service.

3 Score and More had a beautiful fall day to celebrate the bounty of this year's harvest. Louise had the pavilion all decorated with corn stalks, bales of hay and loads of pumpkins and gourds. The whole event had the feel of down on the farm, even had some laundry hanging on the clothes line. We made a pot of "Stone Soup", grilled up some cheese sandwiches, smeared some crackers with peanut butter and ate until we almost popped...but managed to save room for dessert. The pumpkin decorating contest proved that we have some very crafty 3 Score and More members. God has been good to us all.



Birthdays

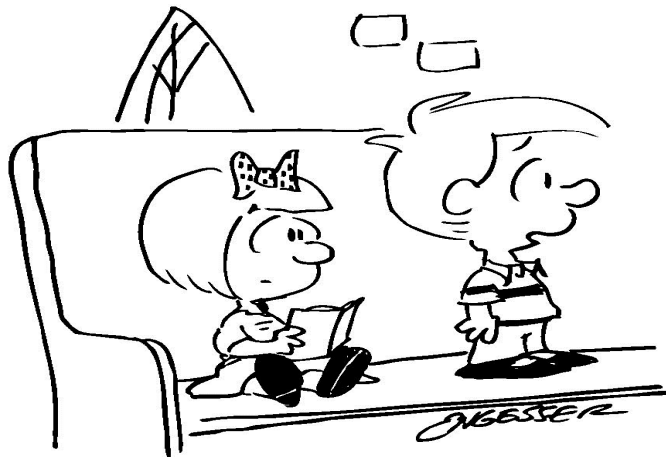
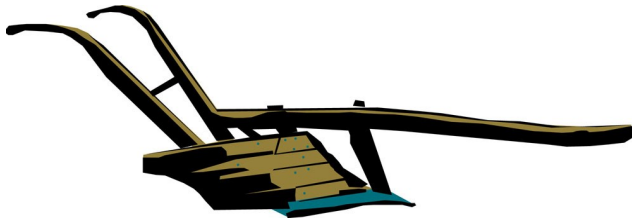
- November 4th- James Board
- November 7th- Barbara Brown
- November 11th- Jesse Jayne
- November 14th- Karen Foutz
- November 26th- Jennifer Jayne
- November 28th- Audrey Thompson
- November 29th - Joe Evans

? Bible Quiz?

The book of Exodus contains many laws for living. One law deals with harvesting crops. God instructed people to plant and gather for six years. What does he say to do in the seventh year? Choose the correct answer from the options below.

- A. Plant double what you usually plant
- B. Plant only grass for the animals
- C. Let the land rest and lie fallow
- D. Give away all your crops to the poor

Answer above the calendar



"Dad's not diggin' Pastor's Thanksgiving Day message on gluttony."

A Note from the secretary:

If your birthday isn't listed, please let me know, if it doesn't show up, I don't have it, and if you have anything that you would like to announce in the newsletter please let me know, thanks!!

Also, address changes, phone numbers and emails, and if I have your email the newsletter can be sent that way!

Church Members

- Debbie Board
- James Board
- Jim Brown
- Lucille Caniff
- Myrtle Ellis
- Jim Ferrando
- Kenneth Gray
- Delmar Hill
- Collins Leftwich
- Reva Meade
- Agnes McPherson
- Jack & Edna Powers
- Connie Scarrow
- Jack Wheeler
- Jimmy & Jerri Wheeler
- Ken & Arlene Wheeler
- Sherman Wheeler



"We give thanks to you, O God; we give thanks; your name is near. People tell of your wondrous deeds."

Psalm 75:1, NRSV