

# THE NEWSLETTER

*A Ministry of Cornerstone Fellowship of Coatesville Pennsylvania*

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## **Jesus LOVES YOU!**

Why not resolve to live 2016  
more highly devoted to living for HIM!

## **BEGIN THE NEW YEAR RIGHT!!**

One of the best habits you can ever develop is to read the Bible every day. Whether you are using this schedule to read through the Bible once again after many times, or you are reading through God's Word for the very first time, I know that you will find the journey rewarding if you approach this daily exercise with a heart for God and His Word. Perhaps some of you who are not yet believers in Christ will use this schedule to systematically discover what the Bible has to say about God and to see if the case for Christianity is truly made therein. Paul taught "*so then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*" (Romans 10:17).

## **THE BIBLE IS OUR... spiritual food**

*Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart; for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts (Jeremiah 15:16).*

## **guide for life**

*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path (Psalm 119:105).*

## **source of truth**

*Thy word is true from the beginning; and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever Psalm 119:160).*

## **source of discipline**

*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16).*

I trust that you will find the Scripture to be all of these and more in your life during the coming year!

We are going to read two Old Testament chapters every day of the year. We will read one Poetry chapter each weekday; and one New Testament chapter each weekday. If you do, get ready to grow! GOD BLESS YOU ALL!

## **January**

- 1 Genesis 1&2, Psalm 1, Matthew 1
- 2 Genesis 3&4
- 3 Genesis 5&6
- 4 Genesis 7&8, Psalm 2, Matthew 2
- 5 Genesis 9&10, Psalm 3, Matthew 3
- 6 Genesis 11&12, Psalm 4, Matthew 4
- 7 Genesis 13&14, Psalm 5, Matthew 5

- 8 Genesis 15&16, Psalm 6, Matthew 6
- 9 Genesis 17&18
- 10 Genesis 19&20
- 11 Genesis 21&22, Psalm 7, Matthew 7
- 12 Genesis 23&24, Psalm 8, Matthew 8
- 13 Genesis 25&26, Psalm 9, Matthew 9
- 14 Genesis 27&28, Psalm 10, Matthew 10
- 15 Genesis 29&30, Psalm 11, Matthew 11
- 16 Genesis 31&32
- 17 Genesis 33&34
- 18 Genesis 35&36, Psalm 12, Matthew 12
- 19 Genesis 37&38, Psalm 13, Matthew 13
- 20 Genesis 39&40, Psalm 14, Matthew 14
- 21 Genesis 41&42, Psalm 15, Matthew 15
- 22 Genesis 43&44, Psalm 16, Matthew 16
- 23 Genesis 45&46
- 24 Genesis 47&48
- 25 Genesis 49&50, Psalm 17, Matthew 17
- 26 Exodus 1&2, Psalm 18, Matthew 18
- 27 Exodus 3&4, Psalm 19, Matthew 19
- 28 Exodus 5&6, Psalm 20, Matthew 20
- 29 Exodus 7&8, Psalm 21, Matthew 21
- 30 Exodus 9&10
- 31 Exodus 11&12

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**MAN MEASURES MATERIAL WEALTH. GOD MEASURES CHARACTER.**

**MAN SAYS WE MUST HAVE SOMETHING. GOD SAYS WE MUST BE SOMETHING.**

**MAN MEASURES VALUES BY THE DEGREE OF HIS OWN STRIVINGS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS. GOD MEASURES TRUE VALUES BY THE DEGREE TO WHICH HIS POWER IS PERMITTED TO FLOW THROUGH A PERSON**

Billy Graham

## **UPWARD 2016**

Please pray for the children and adults who will be participating in the UPWARD basketball and cheerleading program this year. Our goal is that each child will experience the love of God as they are having fun learning their skills.

Game Day Volunteers are still needed! You can still volunteer to help. Please see Peter Jensen or Lois Jensen if you can help with set up, break down, clean up, or security. See Chuck Smyser if you can help donate or work the refreshment stand.

UPWARD practices begin Monday, January 11, with the first games scheduled for Saturday, January 23.

## REFRESHMENTS NEEDED

We are looking for donations of refreshments for the refreshment stand for the UPWARD season. We need:

- cases of water
- bags of snacks (chips/pretzels/pop corn, etc)
- twizzlers (individually wrapped)
- individual size rice krispie treats
- individual size fruit snacks
- individual size cracker snacks

If you would like to donate, please bring your donation to the church and put them in the bin in the lobby. Thank you!

## A FINAL CHRISTMAS THOUGHT

for this year, at least

### WILL YOU BE READY?

*'Twas the night Jesus came and all through the house,  
not a person was praying, not one in the house.  
The Bible was left on a shelf without care,  
for no one thought Jesus would come there.  
The children were dressing to crawl into bed,  
not once ever kneeling or bowing their head.  
And Mom in the rocking chair with babe on her lap,  
was watching the Late Show as I took a nap.  
When out of the East there rose such a clatter,  
I sprang to my feet to see what was the matter.  
Away to the window I flew like a flash,  
tore open the shutters and lifted the sash.  
When what to my wondering eyes should appear, but Angels  
proclaiming that Jesus was here.  
The light of His face made me cover my head  
it was Jesus returning just like He'd said.  
And though I possessed worldly wisdom and wealth,  
I cried when I saw Him in spite of myself.  
In the Book of Life which He held in His hand,  
was written the name of every saved man.  
He spoke not a word as He searched for my name,  
When He said, "it's not here," my head hung in shame.  
The people whose names had been written with love,  
He gathered to take to His Father above.  
With those who were ready He rose without sound,  
While all of the others were left standing around.  
I fell to my knees but it was too late,  
I'd waited too long and thus sealed my fate.  
I stood and I cried as they rose out of sight,  
Oh, if only I'd known that this was the night.  
In the words of this poem the meaning is clear  
The coming of Jesus is now drawing near.  
There's only one life and when comes the last call,  
We'll find out that the Bible is true after all.*

## THE CLOSING CURTAIN

We are living in the last age of the world. God has revealed himself to men in different stages of history; He talked with Adam, Noah and Abraham. Later, He gave the law to Moses. Finally, He completed His revelation in sending Christ. We live in the Christian age, and the world will end with this age.

We live in terms of yesterday, today and tomorrow. We measure our days and lives by the sound of the clock. When the end comes, God will call "halt" to time, and all the clocks of earth can run down, never to be set or wound again. Then eternity will be realized by all.

We do not know when Jesus will come again. Some church papers list their monthly calendar, and add, "unknown date - Jesus' return." This helps remind Christians of their most

important appointment.

Many people recognize that this age is the "beginning of the end." Former President Dwight Eisenhower once said, "The curtains of history are drawing to a close." Jesus might come tomorrow, or next month, or next year. We can be certain that He will return. Our problem is in being ready to see Him if He comes before we die.

The early church believed that Jesus was coming immediately. Some Thessalonian Christians stopped working so they could be waiting when Jesus did arrive. Paul rebuked them for this. He told them to go about their ordinary tasks, keeping their hearts and minds ready for Jesus' coming.

One President of the United States was seeking reelection, and he and the Governor of Indiana were making short speeches as they traveled across the state. One small town was on the schedule, and feverish plans were made to properly welcome the President. The campaign visit occurred during summer vacation, but one local school band hastily reorganized and learned to play "Hail to the Chief," the traditional welcome song to the Chief Executive. The crowds jammed the tracks as the special train arrived. The director held her breath, and the band played. The President and the Governor spoke for a few minutes each, and then the train pulled away. The band members heaved sighs of relief and scattered to their homes.

The band had to learn the special number hastily because the President was coming. The town was not accustomed to state visits, so the number was not as familiar as others.

Some people say, "How do I dare plan for the future, knowing that the Lord may come and interrupt these plans? Should I just drift along and wonder, or should I plan?" We should make plans with these conditions in mind, "As the Lord wills," and "If the Lord tarries." We must always expect His return.

Love brought Jesus to Bethlehem. Love will bring Him to earth again. Only God's reasons prevent Christ's return. When He comes, He will join the dead saints and the living Christians in the air for a grand reunion. He loves His church, and He longs for her to be united in heaven. We should prepare our hearts now so we can sing "Hail to the Chief" at His appearing.

Once young and gay,  
The old earth slows,  
And evening shadows fall.  
The Master pulls the curtains closed –  
A trumpet call! A Shout!  
And loud hosannas ring.  
Time is no more and all things  
Are given to the King.

Jesus is coming again. Will you be ready when He comes?

## YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN THIS WAY BEFORE

In Joshua, the third chapter and the fourth verse, there is a little sentence that is often quoted as a New Year's text. "When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God... then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before." And every New Year may be a way that we have not journeyed before. However, just because we flip the calendar over and change from 2015 to 2016, it does not mean that we shall have either a New Year or a happy one. Life can drift on, year to year, very much in the same old way.

It only becomes a new year as we make it so. We can make it a

new year by our choices. We each choose the road that we shall walk in the unknown adventure of 2016. If it is to be a **new** year it means that we shall make some new choices, otherwise it will just be the old year transplanted over into 2016. Most of us make resolutions with our minds, but we never put our wills in back of these resolutions, and so either we leave them in the things that we plan on doing and thinking that we should do, or else we half-heartedly make a start but never really follow through.

But think of how our choices can determine the kind of a year it will be. Suppose that we decide to choose a new mood – one of friendliness, faith, hope – and carry it over into the New Year. Then the on-coming days on the calendar will contain new friendships, new adventure, and a way of fellowship. Each of us chooses the attitude and the mood in which we live.

Or, suppose we decide to start out each day with a word of worship and of faith. It does not take many minutes early in the morning to set the tempo of the day. Why not start each day reminding yourself "This is the day the Lord has made. I will rejoice and be glad in it." Or, you can begin the day with the Lord's Prayer and then the day becomes a journey fortified with the Spirit of God. Let life bring what it may. You do not meet it alone; all the day you walk in the glory of a rich fellowship.

Or, perhaps, you feel you have a legitimate right to feel hurt because someone has not dealt with you in too Christ-like a manner. Isn't now a good time to choose to leave that old resentment back in 2015 and to start out 2016 with a clean page of fellowship? – it's called forgiveness! It may not be easy to forget, and it may be hard to forgive, but life is too short for old resentments and hates. It cannot be a **new** year unless you make it new in your relationships with others and with God.

Or, it can become a **new** year as we choose to leave some old fear or worry back in 2015. What has happened to everything that you worried about as 2014 became 2015? I rather imagine that you cannot even think of them. Time has come and you have discovered that for every day God has given you strength and for every moment there has been the glory of His grace. So leave the old fears and worry in 2015 and adventure out into 2016 in the love and the strength of our Father God.

The Bible is right "You have never been this way before," but rest assured in the days ahead that there will be that same strength and that same courage that you found in the years that are past as we knit our life through our choices into the things of our God.

During one of the critical stages of World War II, England's late King George VI presented his annual New Year's Day message. He concluded it by saying, "I said to a man who stood at the gate of the year, 'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown!' And he replied, 'Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.'"

Are you ready to walk into the darkness and the unknown in the safety of God's Light?

### ELDERS ELECT OFFICERS

Cornerstone's ELDERS have elected Corporate Officers for 2016. The officers of the congregation are:

President - Ray Stubbs

Vice President - Glen Warren

Secretary - Darryl Robinson

Treasurer - J. Hank Hamilton

Please pray for our ELDERS as they seek to lead Cornerstone

in the directions that God has willed.

### UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE OF SCRIPTURE UNDERSTAND ITS HISTORY

The origin of the New Testament canon begins in the Old Testament. "The Jewish religion was based on a covenant and thus was written down. It is only normal that early Christians, believing Jesus had fulfilled Old Testament promises, would write His story down."

This writing included the four gospels, which early Christians saw as more than mere biographies. "By 150 A.D., Irenaeus, an early church father, confirmed the Gospels in all of his works. Around the same time, Titian, a pupil of Justin Martyr, took a Syriac translation and compiled the Gospels into one narrative called the Diatessaron." These two facts show the Gospels were widely accepted and used before the close of the second century.

"In 325 A.D., after Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, the Council of Nicea met to discuss six to eight books many Christians had accepted as Scripture but others questioned. This was not forming the canon. This was tying a ribbon on the gift that was already established as Canon."

Five criteria were used to determine if a book met canonical standards. Of utmost importance was apostolicity. Canonical books had to be written or approved by one or more apostles. Canonical books also had to be antique, written in the era of the apostles; orthodox, agreeing with the Old Testament revelation of God; catholic, universally accepted; and traditional, seen as Scripture from the time of their writing.

"Apostolicity was crucial because it was the authority of Jesus who appointed the 12 apostles and sent them out with His official authority. They were witnesses to His life, death, burial, and resurrection. No one in the early church debated inspiration, inerrancy, or infallibility. They were assumed to be true because they were writing under the authority of Jesus."

### UNDERSTAND ITS PURPOSE

No leader in the early church had to sanction the books of the New Testament to give them authority. "These books were written assuming authority. It is blatant in the Gospels and Paul shows this in many of his introductions. His identification as an apostle is not window dressing. He is announcing the authority God gave him to give the gospel and instruct people how they should live in light of it."

For those early believers, Scripture was more than a book to read and place back on a shelf. The words were life.

Believers had to trust in the gospel explained through these books. "It is hard for us to grasp the reverence, the awe, early Christians felt for Holy Scripture. It was authoritative. It was apostolic. Most importantly, it was the source of the gospel. This is where they found the truth of Jesus."

Not only did the early church find the truths of Jesus in the Scriptures, they also found the person of Jesus there. The New Testament provides all the early church needed to know about both the historical and theological reality of Jesus. In the Gospel of John, the apostle uses the Greek word *logos*, translated in today's Scripture as "word." He says, "In the beginning was the word..." To the first people reading it, *logos* was a pregnant word. "Logos invoked the idea of life, rationale, structure, and expression of meaning. Invoking it in his introduction, John gives readers an accurate biographical picture of Jesus and a full

theological treatment of the Son of God who took on flesh and dwelt among us."

### UNDERSTAND ITS USE

For an early church to have a book of Scripture, a literate individual had to copy it by hand. Most people in early centuries could neither read nor write and this impacted the style, structure, and use of the New Testament. "The biblical books were written to be heard, to be read aloud by the few who could read and listened to by the rest."

These special readers were also the keepers and protectors of the books. Part of the desire for standardizing the canon was rooted in the fact that under persecution, keepers could surrender non-canonical books, but they would surrender their lives before giving up canonical books.

Canonical books were central to the worship of the early church. Early church services consisted of reading large blocks of Scripture with little commentary. "One thing many modern churches lack is prolonged reading of Scripture. In many modern services, pastors present their ideas, weaving Scripture in as support. The early church would not consider that a Christian worship service. They saw these books as a means through which God confronts believers in Christ and draws them to Himself. It was Holy Scripture that made up a worship service. Much of the modern church has lost the reverence and awe that defined first century gatherings of Jesus worshippers."

Excerpted from *afa Journal* - December 2015

### YOUTH NEWS

#### DON'T FORGET!!

**YOUTH FELLOWSHIP** (grades 6-12) - WEDNESDAYS, 7-8:30 pm weekly (following the Mid-Week Worship Celebration)! Come and experience it! Bring your friends!!

**YOUTH SPIRITUAL GROWTH GROUP** - THURSDAYS at 7pm (EVERY YOUTH is invited!)

**YOUTH BIBLE FELLOWSHIP** - for Jr & Sr High - 9:30 am Sunday mornings

Worship Celebrations - Sundays at 8:15 and 10:45 am and Wednesdays at 6:30pm

#### PLEASE HELP US OUT!

#### EMPTY INKJET PRINTER CARTRIDGES

Please donate your empty inkjet printer cartridges to the youth group to be recycled. A container is placed in the coat room to receive your donations. KEEP THOSE CARTRIDGES COMING!

We appreciate every bit of help we receive.

### CHILDREN'S NEWS

**COOL KIDS** - Children, 4 years old up through grade 3 are invited to participate in COOL Kids on Sunday mornings at both the 8:15 and 10:45 celebration services. Following the praise time and the reading of scripture in the Worship Center, kids are dismissed to ROOM 108. COOL Kids (Children Of Our Lord Kids) helps kids learn to celebrate Christ in a way they enjoy and become excited about.

### EPIPHANY

Epiphany occurs between the birth of Jesus and the Lenten season. Epiphany literally means to "make known," "to reveal," or "to show how." Scripture is filled with accounts of God making himself known to human kind.

As we consider those who came to visit Jesus, there are 2 groups that immediately come to mind. The first were his fellow countrymen and neighbors. They were in the right place at the right time. The other group made a conscious effort. They took a long trip that had an uncertain finish. The wise men left the

comfort of family and surroundings for the unknown.

These 2 sets of visitors describe 2 ways that we can approach the journey of faith. The shepherds had to make few decisions. They heard. They saw. They believed. They worshiped. They returned to their jobs. God's promises had been fulfilled. There was not doubt or uncertainty. Some of us are like that – we grow up in the church. Doubts never overtake us. Our faith is on a constant and consistent path.

The wise men, on the other hand, had to make several decisions. They had to travel the unknown, following a star to a foreign destination. They had some questions and they needed some answers in their quest. Some of us are like that – We are full of questions. We have some doubts. There are issues that need to be discussed and dealt with!

Shepherds make wise men nervous! And wise men make shepherds nervous! What we need to remember is that shepherds and wise men are on the same journey. The roads are very different, but the quest is identical. And essentially we must remember that the most important matter is not the path, but that we are here, together, seeking and worshipping. Some of us are here with tears; some with questions; some with fear; some with thanksgiving; some with joy; some with confidence; some with uncertainty. But WE ARE HERE WORSHIPPING THE SON OF GOD, TOGETHER!

### A DIFFERENT KIND OF PUZZLE

In this puzzle, can you find the name, *Jesus* 15 different times and the title *Christ* another 15 times? It may help to make a tally mark in the space below each time you find one of the words.

*For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father; he hath declared him. John 1:17-18*

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# HAVE A BLESSED AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!