

# THE NEWSLETTER

*A Ministry of Cornerstone Fellowship of Coatesville Pennsylvania*

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## BLOOMING IN GOD'S GARDEN

How many of us have ever worked with plants? groomed a landscape? worked in farm fields?

Gardening, in many ways, is like our life in Jesus. And many of us use work gloves as we work the soil. But work gloves help me to remember that it's what's inside that really matters. The work gloves are useless until someone's hands slip inside. Once a person has put on the gloves, real work can begin. It's only when the Holy Spirit comes into our empty, lifeless lives that we can begin to work and our faith grows.

Before the Holy Spirit came to live inside us, we couldn't do anything that would be God-pleasing. Even though we see philanthropists all around us doing good things, Hebrews 11:6 reminds believers that *without faith it is impossible to please him*. Even though our actions may help others, they have no value in God's eyes. But once the Holy Spirit comes inside us, he animates us – gives us real life. The very Spirit of the living God works within us so that *whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God* (1Corinthians 10:31).

Once the Holy Spirit takes up residence in a believer, everything we do – outside of sin – becomes a good work that greatly pleases our Lord. But even then, God's work in us is not complete. Our Lord wants us to grow in His grace (2 Peter 3:18).

Growing in God's grace is more than mere intellectual assent – more than simply knowing about God or the Law of God. It's knowing God himself – deeply, intimately. Just as we grow to know our spouse, our children, or a close personal friend – learning that person's likes and dislikes, what pleases them, and what they might do themselves in this or that situation – so we come to know our Lord Jesus more and more deeply and fully.

And as that knowledge deepens, we grow more like him in our thoughts, actions, and attitudes. We are continually transformed more and more into the image of Jesus, our Savior and Lord.

So every time you look at your garden, or don the garden gloves to work in the soil, let it remind you about what God intends to grow in the garden of your life. Envision the Holy Spirit entering your life just like a hand enters a gardening glove. Keep that picture in your mind as you consider the Spirit's work in your life – to plant, nurture, prune, water and harvest a crop that is possible because of His abundant grace, the undeserved love and acceptance of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## WHAT IS YOUR HEART'S DESIRE?

Pleasing God can be summarized by Matthew 3:17, which says, "Then a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love – my Son with whom I am pleased.'" God the Father was completely pleased with Jesus.

So, if we know that the desire of God's heart is to find pleasure in his son, Jesus, we should ask the question: "What is our heart's desire?"

A clue to what our heart's desire should be is found in the life of the biblical King David. With all his failures, he was still called "a man after God's own heart." Relationships are built on joint interests. That is how it was with David and God. David thought and did things that pleased God. When David was right with God, what pleased him most was different than when he was out of sorts with God.

David's son, Solomon, is a good example of someone who chased after his own heart's desires – and found them lacking. Solomon is one person who went after everything he wanted. Ecclesiastes 2 tells us he reveled in everything he could devise: architecture, building, agriculture and engineering. In Ecclesiastes 2:7, Solomon tells us he tried eugenics (breeding his slaves), which is the same idea Hitler proposed to breed a perfect race! Solomon accumulated vast wealth, collected beautiful objects of art, acquired a taste for music, and had many wives. Yet at the end of his search, this is what he had to say:

"But when I turned to look at all that I had accomplished and all the hard work I had put into it, I saw that it was all pointless. It was like trying to catch the wind. I gained nothing from any of my accomplishments under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 2:11).

Only when Solomon was chasing after God's heart were his own desires in line with what would truly be fulfilling. Solomon made some great choices when he aligned his wants with God's.

One night God appeared to Solomon. He said, "What can I give you?" Solomon responded to God, "You've shown great love to my father David, and you've made me king in his place. Now LORD God, you've kept the promise made to my father David. You've made me king of people who are as numerous as specks of dust on the ground. Give me wisdom and knowledge so that I may lead these people. After all, who can judge this great people of yours?" (2 Chronicles 1:7-10).

Solomon asked for wisdom. God must have been pleased at that choice, because Solomon also received riches, fame and honor.

We can use Solomon as an example of what to ask God for, but we can also learn by the example he set when he made a mess of things later in his life. He never got honored by God like his father David. His name is not included on the list of names in Hebrews 11 of those who had great faith. As wonderful as his request was and as pure as his motives seemed, maybe wisdom falls short? I think it was a very high level for a starting point, but God wanted him to go on from there. Solomon himself says wisdom alone is not enough (see Ecclesiastes 2:16-23).

With all that in mind, if God were to say to you, "What can I give you?" What would your heart's desire be?

### GOD'S LAW OF SUCCESS

Would you like to do great things for God? You should! How can this be done? God's law of success is *Be faithful in little things and you will be given greater things to do.*

Why is God so interested in faithfulness? Nowhere does He say that His servants must be handsome, beautiful, brilliant, or clever. He simply wants them to be faithful—obedient.

Faithfulness is the best compliment that can be given to a servant. A bad servant is lazy, or he complains about his work or his boss, or he steals from his employer. Faithfulness is a trait difficult to possess because too many temptations would lure the servant from his duty.

Jesus taught this law of success in the parable of the talents. A certain man was going on a trip. He gave his three servants talents, or money, to be invested until he returned. The first servant was given five talents, and he doubled the money while the master was absent. The second servant was given two talents, and he, too, doubled his money. The third servant was doubtful about his own abilities. Because he was afraid to try, he buried his money so it could not be stolen or destroyed.

When the master returned, he reprimanded the third servant for his laziness. The other servants were rewarded for their industry. They had been faithful in a few things, so the master made them rulers over greater things. In the small task they had proved their capabilities.

We show our faithfulness to God in being careful with the small tasks of life. This principle of success can be demonstrated by the following story: A young man went to college to train for the ministry. He needed to work his way through the school, but when he arrived on the campus, he learned that no more jobs were available. The president of the college wanted to help the student, so he put him to work in the dairy barn at the college farm. His job was currying the cows. Brushing Holsteins did not seem to have any connection with learning to preach, but the student was determined to do his work well. He was given greater tasks; he graduated, and preached, and became a professor at a large university. Brushing cows did not seem to be a very important job, but because he was faithful in small tasks, thirty years later, he became president of his old college.

## FAITHFULNESS IN ALL THINGS

God wants us to be faithful, or trustworthy, in all of our tasks. He that is faithful in small tasks will be faithful in large ones. He that is unfaithful in small tasks will be unfaithful in large ones. Faithfulness disciplines the worker.

If you want to do great works for God, look at the work you are presently doing. If you are in school, do the best studying you can do. If you are a housewife, be as efficient and industrious as you can. If you have a job outside your home, do a good day's work. Then God will see your faithfulness and give you greater tasks. No task is so small or insignificant that it should be performed carelessly.

In Jesus' day, the master of the house would often be away, with the house left in charge of the servants. Our Master is away also. Let us be faithful to Him in all things. Let us not become discouraged, for God wants us to be faithful to Him until death. Let us do all of our tasks well, and receive new work with a happy assurance that we can do it.

### CARROT, EGG, OR COFFEE

You will never look at a cup of coffee the same again.

A young woman went to her mother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it and she wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting and struggling. It seemed as soon as one problem was solved, a new one arose.

Her mother took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water. In the first, she placed carrots, in the second she placed eggs and in the last she placed ground coffee beans. She let them sit and boil without saying a word. In about twenty minutes, she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then, she ladled the coffee out and placed it in a bowl. Turning to her daughter, she asked, "Tell me, what do you see?" "Carrots, Eggs, and Coffee," was the reply.

She brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they had gotten soft. She then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard boiled egg. Finally, she asked her to sip the coffee. The daughter smiled as she smelled its rich aroma and tasted it. The daughter then asked, "What's the point, mother?"

Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity - boiling water - but each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak.

The egg had been fragile, its outer shell had protected its liquid interior. But after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened.

The ground coffee beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water, they had changed the water.

"Which are you?" she asked her daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?"

Think of this: Which am I?

Am I the carrot that seems strong but with pain and adversity, do I wilt or become soft and lose my strength?

Am I the egg that starts with a malleable heart, but changes with the heat? Did I have a fluid spirit, but after a death, a breakup, a financial hardship or some other trial, have I become hardened and stiff? Does my shell look the same, but on the inside I am

bitter and tough with a stiff spirit and hardened heart?

Or, am I like the coffee bean? The bean actually changes the hot water, the very circumstance that brings the pain. When the water gets hot, it releases the fragrance and flavor. If you are like the bean, when things are at their worst, you get better and change the situation around you. When the hours are the darkest and trials are their greatest, do you elevate to another level?

How do you handle adversity?

## ARE YOU A CARROT, AN EGG, OR A COFFEE BEAN?

### APOSTASY AND PROSPERITY

"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:8).

One of the most tragic movements in Christendom today teaches that God promises to make each Christian prosper in material wealth. Suffice it to say, the Bible teaches no such thing as seen in our text and elsewhere, but this false teaching is not new and is associated with apostasy.

Consider chapters 17 and 18 of the book of Judges, which describe a period of rampant apostasy and confusion. The chapters provide character sketches of an itinerant Levite, the tribe of Dan, and a man named Micah. First we see that Micah steals 1100 shekels of silver from his mother, who then places a curse on the unknown thief. Micah, fearing the curse, confesses the crime. His mother tries to lessen the curse by dedicating all the money to the Lord and converts 200 shekels into an idol. Micah places the idol with his others, and consecrates his son as priest, even though they are of the tribe of Ephraim. Later, he hires the Levite to be his priest and exclaims, "Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest" (Judges 17:13).

In the next chapter, spies of the Danites go to the priest for God's blessing on their efforts to find land that they can conquer. When the marauders return, they recruit the Levite to a more prosperous position. He joins them, having stolen Micah's idols, and establishes the tribal priesthood.

Each one in this story was confident that God would bless them materially because they had the **trappings** of religion. The common denominator was greed. Their desire for personal prosperity led them to a prostitution of the true worship of God. But whenever religion is "used" to justify the "love of money," it suffers degradation. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24). Be careful when listening to TV preachers who preach a message of prosperity. The apostle reminds us that we must learn to be content in whatsoever state we are.

### THE AFFIRMATIONS OF A REVOLUTIONARY

These principles come from the pen of George Barna.

"What we believe drives what we do. What we believe matters to God – which is why so much of the Bible painstakingly explains God and His Kingdom.

"I am a Revolutionary in the service of God Almighty. My life is not my own; I exist as a free person but have voluntarily become a slave to God. My role on earth is to live as a Revolutionary, committed to love, holiness, and advancing God's Kingdom. My life is not about me and my natural desires; it is all about knowing, loving, and serving God with all my heart, mind,

strength, and soul. Therefore, I acknowledge the following:

- ▶ I am a sinner, broken by my disobedience but restored by Jesus Christ in order to participate in good works that please God. I am not perfect; but Jesus Christ makes me righteous in God's eyes, and the Holy Spirit leads me towards greater holiness.
- ▶ God created me for His purposes. My desire as a Revolutionary is to fulfill those ends, and those ends alone. When I get out of bed each day, I do so for one purpose: to love, obey, and serve God and His people with all my heart, soul, mind and strength.
- ▶ Every breath I take is a declaration of war against Satan and a commitment to opposing him.
- ▶ God does not need me to fight His fight, but He invites me to allow Him to fight through me. It is my privilege to serve Him in that manner. I anticipate and will gladly endure various hardships as I serve God; for this is the price of participation in winning the spiritual war.
- ▶ I do not need to save the world; Jesus Christ has already done that. I cannot transform the world, but I can allow God to use me to transform some part of it.
- ▶ My commitment to the Revolution of faith is sealed by my complete surrender to God's ways and will. I will gratefully do what He asks of me simply because He loves me enough to ask. I gain my security, success, and significance through my surrender to Him.
- ▶ I am called to be the Church and to join with other revolutionaries to advance God's Kingdom.

Get used to the idea that your life is lived in the context of warfare. Every breath you take is an act of war. To survive and thrive in the midst of the spiritual battle in which you live, seek a faith context and experience that will enhance your capacity to be Christ-like. The mission demands single-minded commitment and a disregard for the criticism of those who lack the same dedication to the cause of Christ. You answer to only one Commander in Chief, and only you will give an explanation for your choices. Do whatever you have to do to prove that you fear God, you love Him, and you serve Him – you live **ONLY** for Him!"

Are you a **REVOLUTIONARY**!

### WHAT IF IT'S TRUE– THAT THE BIBLE HAS THE ANSWERS TO MY QUESTIONS?

#### Can I Find Purpose For My Life?

We live in a society that in the post-Vietnam, post-impeachment scandal era has become increasingly cynical and jaded. What have we become - and does it even matter?

The following is excerpted from a composition by a Columbine High School student written shortly after the mass murders there:

*The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings, but shorter tempers; wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints; we spend more, but have less; we buy more, but enjoy it less.*

*We have bigger houses, but smaller families; more conveniences, but less time; we have more degrees, but less sense; more knowledge, but less judgment; more experts, but more problems; more medicine, but less wellness.*

*We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often.*

*We have learned how to make a living, but not a life; we've*

*added years to our life, but not life to our years.*

*We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet the new neighbor. We've conquered outer space, but not inner space; we've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul; we've split the atom, but not our prejudice.*

*We have higher incomes, but lower morals; we've become long on quantity, but short on quality.*

*These are times of tall men, and short character; steep profits, and shallow relationships. These are times of world peace, but domestic warfare; more leisure, but less fun; more kinds of food, but less nutrition. These are days of two incomes, but more divorce; fancier houses, but broken homes.*

*It is a time when there is much in the show window, but nothing in the stockroom; a time when technology can bring this newsletter to you, and a time when you can choose to either make a difference .. or just hit "delete."*

Those words, though they may be a fairly accurate assessment of our world and society, are as insightful as they are scary, but is that all there is? Is there no hope? If the Bible can be believed – AND IT CAN – there is hope! Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Jesus offers us more than answers. He offers us Himself – and in that, there is great hope.

### **THROUGH THE BIBLE IN A YEAR**

#### **August**

- 1 Nehemiah 7 & 8
- 2 Nehemiah 9 & 10; Psalm 131; 2 Corinthians 3
- 3 Nehemiah 11 & 12; Psalm 132; 2 Corinthians 4
- 4 Nehemiah 13; Psalm 133; 2 Corinthians 5
- 5 Esther 1 & 2; Psalm 134; 2 Corinthians 6
- 6 Esther 3 & 4; Psalm 135; 2 Corinthians 7
- 7 Esther 5 & 6
- 8 Esther 7 & 8
- 9 Esther 9 & 10; Psalm 136; 2 Corinthians 8
- 10 Job 1 & 2; Psalm 137; 2 Corinthians 9
- 11 Job 3 & 4; Psalm 138; 2 Corinthians 10
- 12 Job 5 & 6; Psalm 139; 2 Corinthians 11
- 13 Job 7 & 8; Psalm 140; 2 Corinthians 12
- 14 Job 9 & 10
- 15 Job 11 & 12
- 16 Job 13 & 14; Psalm 141; 2 Corinthians 13
- 17 Job 15 & 16; Psalm 142; Galatians 1
- 18 Job 17 & 18; Psalm 143; Galatians 2
- 19 Job 19 & 20; Psalm 144; Galatians 3
- 20 Job 21 & 22; Psalm 145; Galatians 4
- 21 Job 23 & 24
- 22 Job 25 & 26
- 23 Job 27 & 28; Psalm 146; Galatians 5
- 24 Job 29 & 30; Psalm 147; Galatians 6
- 25 Job 31 & 32; Psalm 148; Ephesians 1
- 26 Job 33 & 34; Psalm 149; Ephesians 2
- 27 Job 35 & 36; Psalm 150; Ephesians 3
- 28 Job 37 & 38
- 29 Job 39 & 40
- 30 Job 41 & 42; Proverbs 1; Ephesians 4
- 31 Isaiah 1 & 2; Proverbs 2; Ephesians 5

#### **September**

- 1 Isaiah 3 & 4; Proverbs 3; Ephesians 6
- 2 Isaiah 5 & 6; Proverbs 4; Philippians 1
- 3 Isaiah 7 & 8; Proverbs 5; Philippians 2
- 4 Isaiah 9 & 10
- 5 Isaiah 11 & 12
- 6 Isaiah 13 & 14; Proverbs 6; Philippians 3
- 7 Isaiah 15 & 16; Proverbs 7; Philippians 4

- 8 Isaiah 17 & 18; Proverbs 8; Colossians 1
- 9 Isaiah 19 & 20; Proverbs 9; Colossians 2
- 10 Isaiah 21 & 22; Proverbs 10; Colossians 3
- 11 Isaiah 23 & 24
- 12 Isaiah 25 & 26
- 13 Isaiah 27 & 28; Proverbs 11; Colossians 4
- 14 Isaiah 29 & 30; Proverbs 12; 1 Thessalonians 1
- 15 Isaiah 31 & 32; Proverbs 13; 1 Thessalonians 2
- 16 Isaiah 33 & 34; Proverbs 14; 1 Thessalonians 3
- 17 Isaiah 35 & 36; Proverbs 15; 1 Thessalonians 4
- 18 Isaiah 37 & 38
- 19 Isaiah 39 & 40
- 20 Isaiah 41 & 42; Proverbs 16; 1 Thessalonians 5
- 21 Isaiah 43 & 44; Proverbs 17; 2 Thessalonians 1
- 22 Isaiah 45 & 46; Proverbs 18; 2 Thessalonians 2
- 23 Isaiah 47 & 48; Proverbs 19; 2 Thessalonians 3
- 24 Isaiah 49 & 50; Proverbs 20; 1 Timothy 1
- 25 Isaiah 51 & 52
- 26 Isaiah 53 & 54
- 27 Isaiah 55 & 56; Proverbs 21; 1 Timothy 2
- 28 Isaiah 57 & 58; Proverbs 22; 1 Timothy 3
- 29 Isaiah 59 & 60; Proverbs 23; 1 Timothy 4
- 30 Isaiah 61 & 62; Proverbs 24; 1 Timothy 5

### **HOW DO I FIND PURPOSE IN LIFE?**

Have you asked this question? If you have I hope this will help clarify things.

Psalm 40:8 "I desire to do your will, O my God, your law is within my heart."

Ecclesiastes 12:13 - "Now all has been heard, here is the conclusion of the matter. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

Meaning in life comes from obeying God and doing his will.

John 17:4 - "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do."

Romans 11:36 - "For from him and through him and to him all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

God is the power that sustains and rules the world we live in. Our purpose in life is to bring glory to God.

If you read Matthew 28:18-20 you will discover that part of a Christian's purpose in life includes taking part in the Great Commission, and building the Kingdom of God.

Does God have a special purpose for me?  
I'll answer that with a resounding YES!

Acts 20:24 - "However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace."

God has given each of us work to do, which is part of his purpose to bring his good news of salvation to all creatures.

2 Timothy 1:9 tells us that each one of us was chosen by God to live a holy life, and show his love and kindness to us through Christ.

A promise from God

Romans 12:2 "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will."

Let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do. You will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is.

## BE HERE!

Melinda Bienkowski will be asking for volunteers to provide food for **Souled Out 2016** on Saturday, September 10. Please be ready to sign up. Come for the food, come for the concerts, come for the fun, come for the fellowship, come for the Bizarre Bazaar – whatever the reason – **COME to SOULED OUT 2016**. Bring your friends and families!

### FIND THE WORDS

The Bible describes ministers using many different words. Can you find them in the puzzle below?

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

ambassadors  
angels  
apostles  
bishops  
deacons  
elders  
evangelists

fishers of men  
laborers  
messengers  
ministers of God  
overseers  
pastors  
preachers

servants of God  
shepherds  
soldiers of Christ  
stewards of God  
teachers  
watchmen  
witnesses  
workers

### 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 SGG resumes in September!

**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.

### SUMMER EVENTS for YOUTH in grades 6-12

Saturday-Sunday, July 30-31 - Beach Trip

Saturday, August 13 - Good Works Workday

Saturday, August 20 - White Water Rafting

Wednesday, August 24 - Slip-n-Slide Kickball

### 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 (**C**hildren **O**f **O**ur **L**ord Kids) helps kids learn to celebrate Christ in a way they enjoy and become excited about.

### SUMMER EVENTS for EVERYONE!

**Sunday, July 31 - The CORD will perform at the United Church of Surf City. Why not make a day of it.** Come to Surf City for worship at 10am, visit the beach and stay for the Concert at 3pm.

**Saturday, August 20 - White Water Rafting**

**Saturday, September 10 - SOULED OUT 2016**

**Friday, September 23 - NEWSBOYS Concert at "The BOB"**

### SPIRITUAL GROWTH GROUPS RESUME

Spiritual Growth Groups will resume in September. Currently, there are groups that meet Sundays at 2:30pm and 6pm; Wednesdays at 7pm; Thursdays at 10am and 2 groups at 7pm, plus 1 group at 7pm for YOUTH. SGGs are an excellent way to grow in our faith while forming wonderful relationships with other members of our fellowship. Watch for the sign up sheets and don't hesitate to sign up. Spaces are limited in each group. And watch your worship folder for the resume date of each group.

### BIBLE STUDY GROUPS FOR MEN & WOMEN

Bible study groups for men and women meet each week. **Promise Keepers**, an open Bible study group for men meets each Tuesday at 7pm in Little House # 2. If you have questions, please speak to Glen Warren, the group's leader.

**Monday Night Bible Study for Women**, an open Bible study group for women meets on Monday at 7pm in Room 103. You won't want to miss a single week. Watch for the resume date or speak to Ruth Parker, the group's teacher.

### MORE THAN A CARPENTER

Josh McDowell, excerpted from *Good News Tracts*

Two thousand years ago Jesus entered the human race. He was a member of a poor family, part of a small Jewish community, and a resident of one of the smallest countries in the world. Most of his 33 years on earth he was a carpenter, following in the profession of his earthly father. His last three years were spent in public ministry.

Ask a group of people "Who is Jesus Christ?" and they will usually respond that he was a great religious leader. I agree, but I believe he was much more.

## WHO DID JESUS CLAIM TO BE?

The distinct claims of Jesus to be God eliminate the popular idea that he was just a good moral man or a prophet who said lots of profound things. Often such conclusions are passed off as the only ones acceptable to scholars. The trouble is that many people agree, never seeing the error of such reasoning.

Who people believed Jesus to be was fundamentally important to him. To say the things Jesus said about himself and to claim the things he claimed, there's no way we can conclude that he was just a good moral man or a religious prophet. For example...

### He forgave sins – something only God can do.

"When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Son, *your sins are forgiven.*' Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts,... 'Who can forgive sins but God alone?'" (Mark 2:5-7)

### He claimed equality with God.

"*I and the Father are one,*" Jesus said. When the religious leaders prepared to stone him to death, Jesus asked, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?" They answered, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but *for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God*" (John 10:30-33)

### He claimed to be the only way to God.

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. *No one comes to the Father except through me*" (John 14:6)

These are hardly claims an ordinary person would make!

## HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO JESUS' CLAIMS?

Author C.S. Lewis once believed that Jesus was just a good, moral teacher. Then he came to understand the logical conclusion of the claims Jesus made, and experienced a complete change of heart.

Afterwards he wrote, "I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must *not* say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would *not* be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on the level with the man who says he's a poached egg – or else he would be the Devil of Hell. **You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse**" (from *Mere Christianity*).

Then Lewis adds this about Jesus: "You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

**Make no mistake about it: Jesus claimed to be God. He didn't leave another option. His claim must be either *TRUE* or *FALSE*.** It's something that must be given serious consideration.

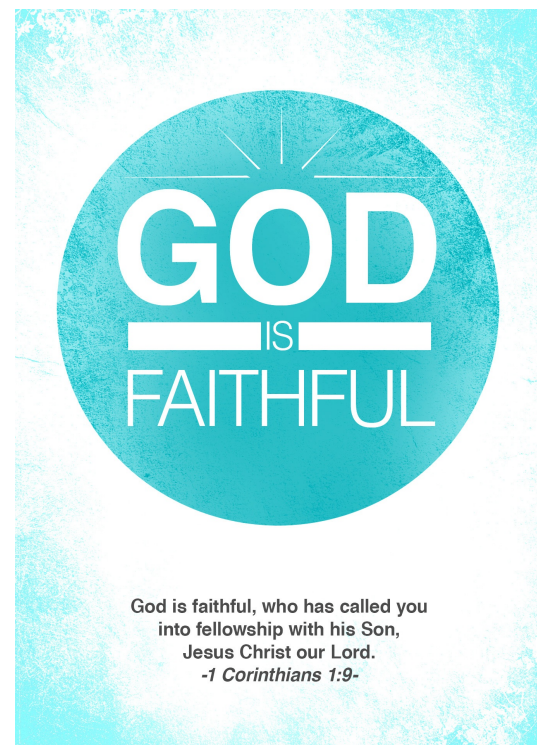
## WHO DO YOU SAY THAT JESUS IS?

Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:15). It is a question that every one of us must answer now... or when we face God at the final judgment: It is "appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). Thankfully, the Bible says that whoever believes in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as their Savior from sin *is not condemned*. But it warns that "whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God" (John 3:18).

Three days after his crucifixion, Jesus rose from the grave, proving victory over sin's ultimate consequence – death. He cleared the way to God "by being the first to rise from the dead" (Acts 26:23)!

Have you trusted in Jesus Christ as your Savior? If you haven't, why not let him know right now that you believe that he is God's Son, that you fully realize that when he died on the cross he was dying to take the penalty for *your* sins, so you can be forgiven by God and receive eternal life. Tell him that you want him to turn your life around, so you can please him in the way you live.

Discover yourself that Jesus Christ is much, much more than a carpenter!



# FAITHFULNESS IN ALL THINGS