

THE NEWSLETTER

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VOLUME 36, Number 6

JUNE 2017

THE MIRACLES OF JESUS

An article in *The Washington Post* reported that US and Israeli scientists have come up with a theory that Jesus might have walked on ice rather than on water. Their findings were based on evidence of two periods of climatic cooling in the region 1,500 to 2,000 years ago. The article said the finding could provide a scientific explanation for what many people have regarded as supernatural.

Why do intelligent people go to such lengths to explain away the miracles of Jesus? What's at stake in whether or not Jesus turned water into wine or fed thousands with a few loaves.

For me, this is a "no-brainer!" The Bible says Jesus performed miracles and I believe it. I do not need to know how He did it. Accepting that He did is part of what FAITH is all about! It is actually harder not to believe than to believe.

Jesus did perform many miracles. It was part of what drew so many people to the young rabbi. What kind of miracles did Jesus perform?

If Jesus is the Creator of both heaven and earth (as the Bible asserts) then He has authority over both spheres of reality. The laws of nature may have operated for centuries with some predictability. But if the Creator actually came to earth in the God-Man Jesus Christ, there is reason to believe that these laws were bound to obey Him. The uniqueness of His miracles would lie in His power over His own created world.

POWER OVER DISEASE - The Bible teaches that sickness and death entered this world through the misused freedom of our original parents (Adam & Eve). Since then, it has been the plight of humankind to deal with all kinds of disease and ailments. Yet in the 3 years of Jesus' public life and ministry, we see diseases cured by His words or touch. (Matthew 8:2-16; 9:20-22, 27-33; 12: 9-13, 22; 14:34-36; 15:21-31; 17:14-18; 20:30-34; Mark 2:9-12; 7:31-35; 8:22-25; Luke 13:11-13; 14:1-4; 17:11-14; 22:50-51; John 4:46-54; 5:1-9; 9:1-11)

POWER OVER NATURE - Mark Twain once wrote, "Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it." However, the Bible teaches that Jesus had power to control the forces of nature as well. He could calm a violent storm with just a word. (Matthew 14:13-33; 15:32-38; 17:24-27; 21:18-19; Mark 4:37-41; Luke 5:4-8; John 2:1-10; 21:3-6)

POWER OVER THE SPIRIT WORLD - Hollywood has given generations a fantasy version of demon possession. Yet the Bible teaches about fallen angels who came into our world after being expelled from heaven. These demons oppose the purposes of God and in certain cases gain access to willing humans and personalities. Jesus confronted demons and exercised power over them, delivering the tormented from their torment. Jesus has the ability to control evil spirits and to bring sanity and health to those who are the targets of their harm. (Matthew 9:32-33; 12:22; 17:18; Mark 1:23-26; 5:1-20)

POWER OVER DEATH - Although we are inclined to ignore our own mortality, many reminders point to the reality of earthly death. But even this "last enemy" as Scripture refers to it, was not beyond Jesus' miraculous powers. With a touch or a word, Jesus demonstrated His power over death. (Mark 5:35-43; Luke 7:11-15; John 11:41-44.)

WHY DID JESUS PERFORM MIRACLES?

- >>> To fulfill prophecy!
- >>> To authenticate His identity - His divine nature; His ability to rescue; His promise to return!
- >>> To show compassion - for the bereaved; for outcasts; for Gentiles!

GOD IS in the MIRACLE BUSINESS! If you are encountering problems in your life, then you are a candidate for a miracle!

Are Jesus' miracles still important? The question is significant. Jesus' ability to heal diseased bodies, deliver from demons and raise loved ones from the dead reflect His timeless significance to all of us.

Have you ever thought about what it would be like to be one of the blind or the lepers whom Jesus healed, or the dead to whom He gave life? If so, your heart is more likely to resonate with the Bible passages that tell us we have all been born spiritually blind and diseased with a fallen human nature inherited from Adam.

If you see your own experience as consistent with what the Bible says about human nature, then you may be ready to see that Jesus' death for your sins and His resurrection from the dead are the miracles that offer forgiveness and everlasting life to anyone who believes. But this promise of everlasting life in the presence of God requires a positive response from your heart. You, alone, can accept or reject God's payment for your sin. The significance of this decision is beyond measure, because it determines where we will spend eternity - in God's presence or separated from Him for eternity.

Personal salvation is the beginning of what the Bible says God is planning for His family. Beyond the redemption of our own souls is His promise to renew all of heaven and earth. What a day that will be!!!!

THE CHEROKEE INDIAN YOUTH'S RITE OF PASSAGE

His father takes him into the forest, blindfolds him and leaves him alone. He is required to sit on a stump the whole night and not remove the blindfold until rays of the morning sun shine through it.

He cannot cry out for help to anyone.

Once he survives the night, he is a MAN.

He cannot tell the other boys of this experience, because each lad must come into manhood on his own.

The boy is naturally terrified.

He can hear all kinds of noises.

Wild beasts must surely be all around him.

Maybe even some human might do him harm.

The wind blew the grass and earth, and shook his stump, but he sat

stoically, never removing the blindfold.
It would be the only way he could become a man!
Finally, after a horrific night, the sun appeared and he removed his blindfold.

It was then that he discovered his father sitting on the stump next to him. He had been at watch the entire night, protecting his son from harm. We, too, are never alone.
Even when we don't know it, God is watching over us, sitting on the stump beside us.
When trouble comes, all we have to do is reach out to Him.

JUST BECAUSE YOU CAN'T SEE GOD, DOESN'T MEAN HE IS NOT THERE. *For we walk by faith, not by sight.*

DON'T FORGET YOUR GIFTS TO THE BUILDING FUND.

Our Elders are very vigilant regarding the finances of our church fellowship. However, remember that our monthly mortgage alone is just under \$11,000 per month. We still need the consistent, faithful over-and-above gifts to meet this obligation. God has blessed us with beautiful facilities to house and launch ministry in His name. Let's honor Him by our generous gifts.

Thank you for your generous support of the total ministry of Cornerstone and especially our building fund, *Growing Together, Building in Faith*. May God bless you for your faithfulness. You can make a one-time or, even better, a continuing gift to the Building Fund by designating your gift through your regular envelope giving or by using the special Building Fund envelopes that can be found on the table in front of the sound desk in the Worship Center. (When using your regular envelope, please mark the amount for the Building Fund clearly.)

HAVE YOU NOTICED THE BIG JUG IN THE LOBBY?
Why not empty your pockets into the big jug in the lobby each time you come to church! It goes directly to help with the mortgage payment.

WHY SHOULD I READ THE BIBLE

Because it is the message from God

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

Because its message is timeless

All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the LORD endures forever. 1 Peter 1:24-25

Because it is of more value than riches

The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver. Psalm 119:72

Because it assures success

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to that that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Joshua 1:8

Because in it you will find

PEACE *Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble.* Psalm 119:165

JOY *Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.* Jeremiah 15:16

DIRECTION *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.* Psalm 119:105

SALVATION *...but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.* John 20:31

ASSURANCE *These things have I written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.* 1 John 5:13

Because it can make you wise

The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple. Psalm 119:130

...and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 2 Timothy 3:15

READ YOUR BIBLE

As the summer begins in June, let's continue to receive the blessing of Almighty God by reading His Word through from beginning to end. May God bless you more and more as you immerse yourself in His word.

The month of June

1. Job 1-2, Psalm 120
2. Job 3-5, Psalm 121
3. Job 6-8, Psalm 122
4. Job 9-11, Psalm 123
5. Job 12-14, Psalm 124
6. Job 15-18, Psalm 125
7. Job 19-21, Psalm 126
8. Job 22-24, Psalm 127
9. Job 25-28, Psalm 128
10. Job 29-31, Psalm 129
11. Job 32-34, Psalm 130
12. Job 35-37, Psalm 131
13. Job 38-39, Psalm 132
14. Job 40-42, Psalm 133
15. Proverbs 1-2, Psalm 134
16. Proverbs 3-4, Psalm 135
17. Proverbs 5-6, Psalm 136
18. Proverbs 7-8, Psalm 137
19. Proverbs 9-10,, Psalm 138
20. Proverbs 11-12, Psalm 139
21. Proverbs 13-14, Psalm 140
22. Proverbs 15-16, Psalm 141
23. Proverbs 17-18, Psalm 142
24. Proverbs 19-20, Psalm 143
25. Proverbs 21-22, Psalm 144
26. Proverbs 23-24, Psalm 145
27. Proverbs 25-26, Psalm 146
28. Proverbs 27-28, Psalm 147
29. Proverbs 29-30, Psalm 148
30. Proverbs 31, Psalm 149

GOD'S DWELLING PLACE AND OURS

The mention of the word *heaven* raises at once a number of questions. Is there really such a place? If so, where is it? What is heaven like? Will everyone go there, or just a certain few? And then, some will ask, "Do we go there immediately at death, or does the soul 'sleep' for a while?"

For many people in the last half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st, these questions are not relevant. They scoff at the idea of life after death and ridicule belief in a heaven of eternal bliss and a hell of everlasting punishment. They are convinced that man's existence ends at the grave. Or they believe that everyone goes to heaven no matter what they believe or what kind of life they have lived on earth.

Christians, however, do believe in a beautiful place called heaven, and they look forward to eternal life within its gates. Based on their faith in God's Word, they anticipate the joys that await them in their eternal home. This comforting thought brings healing to the wounds of their earthly existence and quenches their sorrows.

The place to find out about heaven is, obviously, the Bible (the place that Christians should go for answers to ALL of life's questions). The word *heaven* in its singular and plural forms occurs more than 600 times in Scripture. We are given much information about our eternal home. First, let's consider it carefully as the habitation of God.

The Bible often speaks of heaven as God's "habitation" and declares that He dwells there (Isaiah 57:15, for instance). Solomon also recognized heaven as God's home when he prayed: *May You hear the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. Hear in heaven Your dwelling place; and when You hear, forgive* (1 Kings 8:30).

This does not mean that God is absent from earth. His presence is everywhere, but His dwelling place is in heaven. He abides there and from that location he is present throughout all His creation. God, our Father, is everywhere at the same time, wanting to BLESS his children!

Not only is heaven God's habitation, but it is also the place where His

saints will dwell forever. We, those of us who belong to Him through our faith in Jesus Christ, can rightly call heaven "our eternal home." Death does not end all, the soul lives on. And for the believer, the soul at death immediately enters forever into the presence of God. Death involves physical and spiritual separation. Physical death occurs when the soul is separated from the body. Spiritual death is the eternal separation of the soul from God. Although the believer in Christ may die physically, having his soul separated from his body, he/she can never die spiritually. He will never experience the separation of his soul from God.

This should be a special comfort to all who believe. It means that our Christian loved ones who have died physically are not separated from the Lord and never will be. When they gave their hearts to Christ, they received life everlasting. Jesus said, *He who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life* (John 5:24). Those who have died in Christ have already entered into the presence of God, and abide with Him in heaven. Jesus taught this truth in His words to Martha at the time of the resurrection of Lazarus. When Jesus arrived at Bethany 4 days after Lazarus had died, Martha came out to meet Him and complained, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died" (John 11:21). Then Christ, assuring Martha that her brother would rise again, stated this beautiful truth: *I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die* (John 11:25-26).

We learn two important lessons from these words of Christ. First, even though believers may die physically, as Lazarus did, their bodies will someday be resurrected. Remember, Jesus said, *I am the resurrection and the life*. Second, through faith in Christ the child of God possesses eternal life. Therefore, in the deepest sense of the word, he will never die. That's why Jesus could give the glorious promise, *whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die*.

Yes, the body may perish, but the soul of the Christian lives on – never to be separated from God, the source of life. Those who teach that the soul of man ceases to exist at death deny a clear statement from the lips of our Lord Himself. Remember that Jesus said, *Whoever lives and believes in Me SHALL NEVER DIE*.

So... when the believer dies – when our physical bodies wear out – we depart from this life to go immediately into the presence of Christ. At that moment physical life is ended, therefore, and the Christian meets Jesus face to face in his eternal home in heaven. The words of Jesus at Calvary emphasize this truth. Remember the words that Jesus spoke to the repentant criminal who hung on the cross next to Him – *Today you will be with Me in Paradise*.

And the teachings of the Apostle Paul also indicate to us his belief that he would be with the Lord at the very moment he departed from this life, "For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ" (Philippians 1:23). And "We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8). The proper emphasis of the Greek words here are properly translated "We are confident, I say, and willing, rather to be once-for-all away from home as far as the body is concerned, and to be once-for-all at home with the Lord."

Paul is speaking about what happens to the soul of the believer immediately following death. When a Christian dies, his soul is ushered into Christ's presence in heaven. Death for the believer brings about an immediate, once-for-all change – from being in our body in our earthly home to being with our Lord in our eternal home.

In summary, let's emphasize two important truths. First, heaven is the habitation of God. It's where the Lord rules over all His creation, accepts the worship of His creation and hears our prayers. Second, heaven is the home of departed saints, where we will abide forever in the presence of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Although our bodies may be buried in the grave to be resurrected at the rapture of the church, our souls go immediately to be with the Lord.

Not everyone, however will enjoy the glories of heaven. There is one condition that must be met if you are to enter that eternal home. The only condition is FAITH in God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

PILLARS OF PURITY

In the howling sexual and addiction storms assailing our nation's young people, scientific research demonstrates that there are two especially strong bulwarks: parents and religion.

While it is becoming more difficult for many kids to avoid being swept away by the surging waters, these two factors are instrumental in creating young people who can stand against the tide.

Effective parents

Like it or not, parents are the most influential factors in the life of a child, and they have the greatest influence in determining what type of young adult that child will become.

This is especially true concerning risky behaviors. Studies continue to reveal that parents are the biggest influence on teenagers' decisions, even more so than their friends. However, that parenting influence begins with family structure and is critical when it comes to preventing engaging in risky behaviors as a teenager. And the relationship dynamic within the family structure is the most critical. Researchers indicate that when teens live with both parents and enjoy close relationships with them, they are less likely to engage in risky, destructive behaviors, mainly because of the existence of more parental monitoring of teen behavior and whereabouts. However, blended families, single parent families and foster families are also very capable of providing essential parental monitoring necessary to help children, and especially teenagers, avoid the pitfalls and dangers of the adolescent years.

Unfortunately, in America in particular, many children are left to rear themselves, and American culture has encouraged parents to adopt a permissive attitude about ANY behavior, rather than understanding that it is the parents' role to PROTECT their children by setting clearly defined boundaries, and disciplining when those boundaries are crossed. However, a word needs to be said for the fact that parents must also understand that they cannot adopt the attitude of "Do as I say and not as I do" without there being mixed signals sent to children. In other words, parents must also avoid risky and immoral behaviors as well to provide a good example for their kids.

The key is the relationship factor! Teens who feel able to and do communicate with their parents about any dangerous or risky behavior are more likely to avoid those behaviors, particularly when the parents are able to articulate clear moral beliefs. That means if parents do not want their teens to engage in risky behavior (doing drugs, engaging in premarital sex, etc) they should say so. They should avoid conveying permissive attitudes about them.

Effective faith

Faith/religion also appears to be a strong factor in protecting teens from risky experimentation. Teens who describe themselves as more religious, who attend church services more frequently, and who have a stronger religious affiliation are less likely to initiate destructive behaviors.

Why? – because children and teens have a built-in capacity and drive to search for purpose and reflect on life's ultimate ends. Faith becomes the way that kids are taught that they live in an ordered universe and have an ultimate place in it. (They are certainly not taught that in their science classes in public school that teach we are all here simply by accident as a result of a big bang millions of years ago and are simply a compilation of random cells.)

The fact that there are transcendent beliefs, values and morals that are to direct and focus their lives becomes extremely helpful, especially when pressures build to take risks. The failure to provide this sense of meaning can lead kids to live as if there is no ultimate purpose in life. That's when lives are often lived for simple self-gratification – including engagement in risk-taking and potentially self-destructive activities.

Denying, avoiding or ignoring the spiritual need of adolescents may end up creating a void in their lives that either devolves into depression or is

filled by other forms of questing and challenge, such as drinking, unbridled consumerism, petty crime, sexual precocity or flirtations with violence.

The most effective religious form is what researchers call authoritative communities – church fellowships. These are groups that live out the types of connectedness that our children increasingly lack. They are groups of people who are committed to one another over time and who model and pass on at least part of what it means to be a good person and live a good life.

Therefore, when it comes to religion, the same principles seem to be the most effective as those pertaining to parental involvement. A religious community that is closely knit and that effectively articulates its beliefs and values to teens is most likely to serve as a protection against risky or dangerous adolescent behavior.

Now, obviously, there are many overlapping dynamics involved in teen decision-making, but when teens decide to abstain from risky behaviors, making the right choices is not accidental. And it is up to parents and our religious communities and leaders to help our young people choose well. Their lives depend upon it! Not only temporal, but eternal!

Faith, more than anything else, affects the values and morals of a culture, a society, a country, and ultimately, the world.

THE FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

Sometimes we may think of our spiritual heritage as if it were a delicate piece of lace gently handed down to us through many generations. Instead, the faith of our fathers is a tear-stained and blood-spattered tapestry. The fabric was not woven hastily or easily.

Sometimes we make the mistake of talking of our spiritual ancestors too much and their faith too little. Who was Abraham, alone? Separate him from faith and its works and he was nothing. Who was Stephen? Who was Barnabas? These men must be remembered because they had faith and because of what they did by faith.

Some people think faith just “appears” like a thunderbolt from the sky. Some may have it; others may not. Others believe they have reached the limits of their faith; they can simply go no further, and they will not attempt to grow in faith. The Bible says that faith comes from hearing God’s Word. Is God limited? Is His Word limited? Then who limits our faith? Only we do the limiting when we stop growing by not studying the Bible

Faith is belief in unseen things. Our fathers had faith, so they acted. The book of Hebrews gives a long list of heroes of faith. These people were not content to merely believe, but their belief was strong enough to move them to action. Faith without works is dead because it is alone. Abraham could say he believed God had a new land for him, but if he had never moved toward that land, would we think he really believed God?

Moses could have lived a life of ease in an Egyptian palace, but rather he chose to suffer with the people of God. “By faith he forsook Egypt” (Hebrews 11:27).

The faith of the ages is centered around the cross. The cross is the focal point of Christianity. God sought man and man sought God, and they met at a tree on Calvary.

The cross divided men of faith. The Jews were on the dark side of the cross, but when they offered sacrifices in faith they looked forward to God’s own sacrifice.

Christians live on the light side of the cross. We can look back to Calvary and see the sacrifice. We can appreciate it because God has given us so much revelation in the Christian age. Our basic faith is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, who died, was buried, and rose again. Immersion is a wonderful symbol of our death to sin, burial with Christ, and resurrection to a new life. The Lord’s Supper reminds us of the price that was paid for our salvation, and we look forward to Jesus’ second coming.

The Christian faith has conquered time and death because it is of God.

Only He knows the long list of martyrs who by faith have died for the faith. He knows the ones who have continually given themselves that the gospel could be told and retold. Our faith should be revolutionary, not for revolution’s sake, but for Christ’s sake. We do not claim that this faith is from earth, so we should never allow it to become entangled with things of earth. We must always be energetic to deliver to the next generation the faith which was once for all given to the saints.

The faithful men of the past have often been called fools, but let us be thankful for them. And let us grow in faith that we may give it to others.

We celebrate **FATHER’S DAY** in June. Let us thank God for faithful fathers who have shown us the way of FAITH!

REPENTANCE CANNOT BE HALF-WAY

But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves (James 1:22).

“Fallen man is not simply an imperfect creature who needs improvement; he is a rebel who must lay down his arms. This process of surrender – this movement full-speed astern – is what Christians call repentance. Now repentance is no fun at all. It is something much harder than merely eating humble pie. It means unlearning all the self-conceit and self-will that we have been training ourselves into for thousands of years. It means killing part of yourself, undergoing a kind of death.” – C.S. Lewis (1898-1963).

There is a mistaken view running around in the minds of many Christians. It’s the view that repentance is being sorry for sin, apologizing for things done wrong and seeking forgiveness.

None of those things should be criticized, but none of them is repentance. Repentance is a change of mind. It is an inner turning of thought, desires, and will away from sin and toward that which is godly. It is turning away from the world, and turning to God, but it is a conscious, purposeful act. No one repents by accident, and no one repents who fails to change his mind.

But it is not enough to say that repentance is a change of mind, for an effective change of mind has an obvious and outward result. A man or woman who changes his or her mind about involvement in some sin, cannot continue to think about that sin in the old way. That which did not seem to bother them before, now becomes an intense source of guilt. Behavior that previously was ignored, defended, excused, justified, now becomes behavior that simply will not do. People who repent are people who learn how to act differently.

It is this understanding of repentance that many in our modern world do not grasp. Too many who claim to wear the name of Jesus seem to think that such a claim has no practical claim on their lives. No wonder so many Christians are weak-kneed, struggling, and faithless people.

Repentance does not mean that a sin committed previously will never rear its ugly head again. It does mean that many of the practices of life are no longer acceptable. It means that the person has a whole new mindset about those things. It means that there is a conscious effort to change. It means there is a purposeful effort to live a different way, do different things.

John the Baptist put it bluntly to those who came to be baptized, but who didn’t understand exactly what it was he called them to. *Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father,’ for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham*” (Luke 3:8). Today’s analogy would be those who say, “But I’m a Christian,” only to continue behaving in unacceptable ways.

The call to repent is a call to change, beginning with the mind and ending with actions.

A BEAUTIFUL PRAYER

I asked God to take away my habit.

God said, “No. It is not for me to take away, but for you to give up.”

I asked God to make my handicapped child whole.

God said, “No. His spirit is whole, his body is only temporary.”

I asked God to grant me patience.

God said, "No. Patience is a byproduct of tribulations; it isn't granted, it is learned."

I asked God to give me happiness.

God said, "No. I give you blessings; Happiness is up to you."

I asked God to spare me pain.

God said, "No. Suffering draws you apart from worldly cares and brings you closer to me."

I asked God to make my spirit grow.

God said, "No. You must grow on your own, but I will prune you to make you fruitful."

I asked God for all things that I might enjoy my life.

God said, "No. I will give you LIFE, so that you may enjoy ALL THINGS."

I asked God to help me LOVE others as much as HE loves me.

God said, "Ahhh, My child, finally you have the idea."

RULES TO LIVE BY

1. Follow the Golden Rule and Be a Friend – Develop the qualities you are looking for, and as like attracts like, you will soon find those qualities in others.

2. Obey the "One Another" Commands of God – It is impossible for me to fulfill the commands of Scripture without being in significant relationships with one another.

3. Seize the "Teachable Moments" in your Life – We are most teachable in times of crisis, when we feel inadequate, when confronted with a need, challenged by a goal, or searching for meaning.

4. Acknowledge your Need of Others – Unless you acknowledge this need for other people in your life, you will never pursue positive nurturing relationships.

5. Appreciate and Accept the Differences of Others – The differences between people are what make relationships special and powerful, and gives you a deeper appreciation for what is important in life.

6. Devote yourself to People – Don't fall into the trap of viewing a close relationship as a means rather than an end – such a shifting of focus will jeopardize the relationship.

7. Band Together in Small Groups for "PPP" (prayer, pages of Scripture, and pain) – When you are committed to keeping your promises and are willing to take the risk of being a friend, you are ready for a meaningful mentoring relationship. (Our spiritual growth groups are designed for "PPP." If you do not attend a group resolve to join one when they start up again in the fall.)

I want to encourage you to seek out someone to "hold your feet to the fire" in a spiritual sense. It is not easy to admit our faults and sins to others, but if we make that conscious choice to allow a godly person in our life to point out these problematic areas, then we can begin or continue to walk in the way God intended us to walk. But make sure you choose a godly person to "hold your feet to the fire."

Strong, close relationships are a key to experiencing the abundant blessings the Lord has always wanted to pour out on us. Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Start looking for Paul, Barnabas and Timothy in your life today – not only will you be a blessing to them, but they will be a blessing to you in ways beyond what you can imagine.

10 REASONS TO BELIEVE IN THE BIBLE

1- ITS HONESTY - The Bible is painfully honest. It shows Jacob, the father of God's "chosen people," to be a deceiver. It portrays David, Israel's most loved king and spiritual leader, as an adulterer, conspirator, and murderer. The Bible represents human nature as hostile to God. It predicts a future full of trouble. It teaches that the road to heaven is narrow and the way to hell is wide. The Bible was not written for people who want simple answers or an easy faith.

2- ITS PRESERVATION - In a cave by the Dead Sea, a 2,000-year-old copy of Isaiah's writings was found that is essentially the same as the book of Isaiah that appears in our Bibles. God has preserved His Word from error.

3- ITS CLAIMS FOR ITSELF - If the authors of Scripture had not claimed to speak for God, it would be presumptuous for us to make that claim for them. The Bible would then be a collection of unsolved mysteries, embodied in historical and ethical literature. But the Bible's authors *did* claim to be inspired by God. Because millions have staked their present

and eternal well-being on those claims, the Bible cannot be a good book if its authors consistently lied about their source of information. But they DID NOT. God chose to speak to all generations through the writings found in our Bibles.

4- ITS MIRACLES - If the Red Sea did not part as Moses said it did, the Old Testament loses its authority to speak on behalf of God. If Jesus did not rise bodily from the dead, the apostle Paul admits that the Christian faith would be built on a lie (1 Corinthians 15:14-17). The New Testament names its witnesses to the resurrection of Christ, and did so within a time-frame that enabled those claims to be investigated (1 Corinthians 15:1-8). Many of the witnesses ended up as martyrs for their claim that Jesus had risen from the dead. Many have died for what they believed to be the truth. But people do not die for what they know to be a lie. The resurrection is powerful evidence of the Bible's authenticity.

5- ITS UNITY - Forty different authors over a period of 1,600 years penned the 66 books of the Bible. Yet, the 39 books of the Old Testament and 27 of the New Testament tell one unfolding story of God's plan of redemption. Together they give consistent answers to the most important questions we can ask: Why are we here? How can we know God? How can we make peace with our Maker?

6- ITS HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL ACCURACY - Many have doubted the historical and geographical accuracy of the Bible. Yet modern archaeologists have repeatedly unearthed evidence of the people, places, and cultures described in the Scriptures. Time after time, the descriptions in the biblical record have been shown to be more reliable than the speculations of scholars.

7- ITS ENDORSEMENT BY CHRIST - Christ endorsed the Bible not only by His words but by His life. He made it clear that He believed the Old Testament Scriptures (Matthew 4:1-11; 5:17-19). He believed the Bible was a book about Himself. He said, "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life" (John 5:39-40).

8- ITS PROPHETIC ACCURACY - From the days of Moses, the Bible predicted events no one wanted to believe. Before Israel went into the Promised Land, Moses predicted that Israel would be unfaithful, that she would lose the land God was giving her, and that she would be dispersed throughout all the world, re-gathered, and then re-established (Deuteronomy 28-31). Those events happened as prophesied. Central to Old Testament prophecy was the promise of a Messiah who would save God's people from their sins and eventually bring judgment and peace to the whole world.

9- ITS SURVIVAL - The Bible has been in existence for over 2,000 years. During that long history, no other book has been as loved or as hated as the Bible. No other book has been so consistently bought, studied, and quoted as this book. The Bible is still the book by which all other books are measured.

10- ITS POWER TO CHANGE LIVES - History is marked by those who claim to believe in the Bible and have been changed and bettered by it. The Ten Commandments are the source of moral direction to countless numbers of people. The psalms of David have comforted many in times of trouble and loss. Jesus' Sermon on the Mount has given millions a pattern for right living. Paul's description of love in 1 Corinthians 13 has softened angry hearts.

The Scriptures, like the world around us, are marked by elements of mystery. Because the Bible is God's Holy Word, you don't have to sort out the evidence on your own. You can be sure that the Author (God through His Holy Spirit) will help you to find answers to all your searching questions.

One important key to understanding the Bible is that it was never meant merely to bring us to itself. Every principle of Scripture shows us our need of the forgiveness that Christ secured on our behalf. It shows us why we need to let the Spirit of God live through us. It is for such a relationship that the Bible was given.

(Reprinted from *Special Edition Food For The Soul*)

**Knowing Christ died – that's history
Believing He died for me – that's salvation**

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

PENTECOST IS SUNDAY, JUNE 4th ! GET YOUR RED READY!

Sunday, June 4, 3-5pm - KINDRED CROSS will be performing at the Strawberry Festival. Plan NOW to come out and support Steve and the band.

Sunday, June 4, 4pm - GOLD LETTER RECEPTION for Prospective Members

Sunday to Thursday, June 25-29, 6-8pm - Vacation Bible School for children up through 5th grade - Come join the **HIGH SEAS EXPEDITION** with **CAPTAIN PAUL**. If you would like to help, please speak to Aliah Ammon as soon as possible.



Thursday, July 20, 2017, 2-7pm – SPECIAL BLOOD DRIVE
Please make an appointment NOW!

GOD'S ANSWERS

You say: "It's impossible"
 God says: *All things are possible* - Luke 18:27
 You say: "I'm too tired"
 God says: *I will give you rest* - Matthew 11:28
 You say: "Nobody really loves me"
 God says: *I love you* - John 3:16 & 13:34
 You say: "I can't go on"
 God says: *My grace is sufficient* - 2 Corinthians 12:9
 You say: "I can't figure things out"
 God says: *I will direct your steps* - Proverbs 3:5-6
 You say: "I can't do it"
 God says: *You can do all things* - Philippians 4:13
 You say: "It's not worth it"
 God says: *It will be worth it* - Romans 8:28
 You say: "I can't forgive myself"
 God says: *I forgive you* - 1 John 1:9; Romans 8:1
 You say: "I can't manage"
 God says: *I will supply all your needs* - Philippians 4:19
 You say: "I'm afraid"
 God says: *I have not given you a spirit of fear* - 2 Timothy 1:7
 You say: "I'm always worried and frustrated"
 God says: *Cast all your cares on ME* - 1 Peter 5:7
 You say: "I don't have enough faith"
 God says: *I've given everyone a measure of faith* - Romans 12:3
 You say: "I'm not smart enough"
 God says: *I give you wisdom* - 1 Corinthians 1:30
 You say: "I feel all alone"
 God says: *I will never leave you or forsake you* - Hebrews 13:5

GROUPS

Spiritual Growth Groups are on hiatus until the fall! Watch the worship folder and plan to attend an Open Bible Study this summer on Sundays at 6pm and Wednesdays at 7pm.

Women's Bible Study on Tuesdays at 7pm and **Men's Promise Keepers study group** on Tuesdays at 7pm continue throughout the summer.

HAVE YOU USED YOUR BLUE ENVELOPE LATELY

Each month, on communion Sunday (the 1st Sunday), we encourage you to use the blue envelopes found in your box of offering envelopes to make special over-and-above gifts to the Fellowship Fund. The purpose of the Fellowship Fund is to be able to provide assistance to folks within our fellowship and community who have special needs. Our collective gifts are extremely helpful to folks in crisis and are very much appreciated by them. Thank you for your sensitivity to the needs of others.

Souled Out 2017

CORNERSTONE FELLOWSHIP
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2017
BEGINNING AT 2 pm

Here at the church!

Join us for a day of concerts, preaching, worship & prayer, and dinner on the grounds! There will be children's activities, and continuous prayer.

**Something will be missing
 IF YOU ARE NOT THERE!**

PLAN NOW to be here! Fellowship with old friends, make new ones, enjoy good food, music and worship the LORD! INVITE EVERYONE YOU KNOW TO COME WITH YOU OR MEET YOU HERE!!!! Watch for the sign up sheets and volunteer to help!

And don't forget that we will again have the **BIZARRE BAZAAR**. What an added treat this has become. If you know a vendor who would like to be included, please have them contact Deb Logan as soon as you can.

You won't want to miss this special day!
RAIN or SHINE!

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY - JUNE 18!