

BEACON BITS

A few crumbs of information in place of our newsletter this month

EMAIL: THERE ARE NO TEARS IN HEAVEN.

Weeks after celebrating the fact that the stone that sealed a grave containing the body of Jesus was rolled away and a living, breathing, resurrected man walked out as our savior, we have been called to demonstrate our faith that life ultimately overcomes death.

In the last few months we have hosted far too many funerals. In the last few weeks we've held a service for our good friend Floyd Mock and an unexpected one for Kirk Johnson. This afternoon I received an email from someone that two of her friends passed away. Such pain cannot be ignored.

The pain and grief of death haunts us. It eagerly reminds us of its presence. Why can't we more easily open up the door to our hearts and let it out once and for all? But we can't. We are human and as such, we must bear such pain. And in time, the door opens and the grief finds its way out.

Dealing with the loss of his wife C.S. Lewis wrote of his struggling faith, "But go to [God] when your need is desperate, when all other help is in vain, and what do you find? A door slammed in your face, and a sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside, After that, silence."¹

When we grieve, truly mourn down in our very souls, the loss of a loved one, sometimes the pain is so strong it numbs us to God's presence. Yet, even those who have gone down in history for their faith have struggled. Job cried out to God when he lost his family and possessions. (Job 23:1-17) He was the most faithful man of his time. The prophet Elijah lamented to God in his times of doubt. (1 King 19:10) King David cried out to God in times of desperation and confusion. (Psalm 43) And he is known as a man after God's own heart. David is the second most talked about man in the New Testament besides Jesus Christ. And speaking of Jesus, his reaction to Lazarus' death provides the shortest passage in Scripture when John wrote, "Jesus wept." (John 11:35)

Great modern theologians, Old Testament kings and prophets, and Jesus himself faced the pain that comes with the loss of one we love. They grieved. And so we too shall grieve along with those whose faith we choose to emulate.

As C.S. Lewis continued to journal about his faith following his wife's death he wrote, "I have gradually been coming to feel that the door is no longer shut and bolted. Was it my own frantic need that slammed it in my face? The time when there is nothing at all in your soul except a cry for help may be just the time when God can't give it; you are like the drowning man who can't be helped because he clutches and grabs. Perhaps your own reiterated cries deafen you to the voice you hoped to hear."²

Now is the time to grieve. I have shed many tears and I am prepared to give away more. My faith tells me my tears are mixed together with the tears of those who had great faith, even our Messiah himself. In time the door to my heart will unlock and open. Not by God, but by me because, it is in my grief that it is locked. God is knocking at the door to remind me to come and open it.

My faith also tells me that my grief is temporary. The God of David, the God who sent Isaiah, the God who raised Lazarus and the God who raised Jesus will also raise us all. We will be ushered into a place where there are no tears. A place where joy and laughter dance together in a beautiful song and dance that will never end. Where the doors to our hearts will open and grief will leave and never return because it is not welcomed. And our hearts will be too full of joy anyway to let anything negative in.

Today we will cry. In the future, when time stops and eternity begins, we will experience never-ending joy.

Pastor Eric

¹ Lewis, C.S. *A Grief Observed*. Harper: San Francisco. 1961 pg. 19

² Ibid, pg. 58

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TRUSTEE REPORT

We do not have a janitor at this time. We are receiving many applicants that the Personnel Committee will follow up on. We are working with Donovan Wood, our Groundskeeper, to have a church clean-up day to work on the memorial garden and other maintenance items. We are registered at the Riverside Wal-Mart and each of the Trustees can go and get a tax exempt card. A motion was made and approved in favor of cleaning the rugs in the nursery and piano room. Wallace received quotes from A. Eldridge Roofing and Settimi-Fetters Roofing to permanently fix our roofing issues, including the bell tower. The quotes were approximately \$25k. A motion was passed to take the Settimi- Fetters quote to the Session. Wallace proposed the purchase of a vac/blower to help maintain the parking lot and yard. Cheryl closed in prayer.

DEACONS (*No Report*)

THANKS!

From Diane Johnson

Thank you to my Bethany family for showing your love and support in my family's time of need. A special thank you to the Deacons for a wonderful meal.

From Pastor Eric

I'd like to thank everyone for the cards to celebrate my 40th, hmmm hmmm, 39th birthday this month. Jen and I had a great vacation celebrating my birthday and it's good to be home among friends.

From Pam Easton

Thank you so much for honoring me and for the gift certificate to Parables Christian book store. I've been shopping for a Bible and the timing was perfect!

From Ginny Falnes and Family

Our heartfelt thanks to all of you who have been so supportive with your love, concern and prayers throughout Scott's transition from life to eternity. You are very special Prayer Warriors and friends!

From Marlys Marsh and Kathy Metcalf

Thanks to all the ladies of Bethany that helped make the Mother Daughter Tea a success. Whatever you did, thank you so much. The day exceeded our expectations.. A special thank you to Kathy Metcalf, without whose help this day would not have been possible. Thank you all, Marlys Marsh

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CELEBRATE! SHOW YOUR COLORS!

We are blessed to live in the greatest country on Earth. Honor our military by wearing Red, White and Blue on Memorial Sunday, May 30.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY PASTOR CARLSON!

Celebrate Pastor Peder's 80th birthday after service on Sunday, May 16th.