May is a very special month, it holds a very special day in it. It is called Mother’s Day. There is just something very special about mothers. If you don’t think so just remember 100% of every person on the earth has a mother. I thank the Lord from the bottom of my heart that I had a Godly mom. Folks let me encourage you while you have a mom to be sure to let her know what she means to you. As I think back in my life, I failed to do this the way I should have, but as we all know hindsight is 20/20.

The thing I remember the most about my mom is her voice and the words that she shared with me in my life. I remember being in the hospital several times as a small child with Pneumonia and my mom was there standing beside my bed holding my hand and praying for me while I laid under an oxygen tent. I remember how her voice would tremble as she prayed to God for me to get better. I also remember how she would assure me that everything was going to be OK. I remember hearing her telling me how much she loved me all through my life, even though some of the years in my life I was not too lovable. I can remember her voice telling me when I was not living right, that God saw what I was doing, and that it hurt Him. I also remember coming home late at night and trying to sneak by her door without her hearing me and I would hear her praying and thanking God for bringing me home safely. Boy, she knew how to use her voice to talk to God and to get my attention as I walked by her room. I will always remember her words of challenge, that she spoke to me, and these are the same words that she wrote in my Bible that she gave me. She said Steve, “Sin will keep you from this book and this book will keep you from sin.” She also wrote Sin will take you further than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay.” Those words still echo in my ears and heart today.

The two things I miss the most about my mother’s voice: one is asking her to pray for me and listen to how she would pray to God. It was just like she and God were sitting right across from each other while she lifted me up in prayer.

Even though my mother developed Alzheimer’s and could not always remember who I was and all that was going on, I could set by her recliner and ask her to pray for me. It was unreal to hear how she prayed to God, still you would never know she had this horrible disease. The second thing I miss about her voice is hearing her sharing her thankfulness to God how good He was to her and how God had helped our family through so many tough times. One day I took my mom and dad to a place on top of Blue Rock Mt. called Quiet Reflection before she developed Alzheimer’s. It was during the fall of the year. As I took her to the chapel and opened the door, and as she looked through the big pane glass windows, she started crying, lifting up her hands and just praising God for the beauty of what she was seeing, and how great the God she served was. What she was seeing overwhelmed her and it really got to me. It just showed me just how much my mom loves the Lord that day and what He truly meant to her. Love is the greatest thing in the world, God’s Word tells us that time and time again. There is just something about a mother’s voice, it is the greatest. Her voice can soothe her crying child, it encourages the broken heart of her children and that sweet voice will give her children advice that will stick with them as long as they live. I can just hear the voice of my mom, talking about what’s going on in the world today. She would say “Now Steve, God is in control. He has been taking care of us and provided for us all our lives, so just use your voice and Praise Him for who He is, what He has done, and what He is going to accomplish through all of this uncertainty that is taking place today. But most of all thank Him for His great Love and Salvation that He has given you.” I believe the greatest attention getter in the world, other than the still small voice of God is, the voice of a mother who loves her family. Oh, how I can’t wait to hear the voice of my mom again.

Words of Wisdom

- Moms are the people who know us the best and love us the most. N/A
- Silence is golden unless you have kids, then silence is suspicious. N/A
- A mother is your best critic and yet your strongest supporter. N/A
- Only God Himself fully appreciates the influence of a Christian mother in the molding of character in her children. Billy Graham
- I don’t believe there are devils enough in hell to pull a boy or girl out of the arms of a godly mother. Billy Sunday

Something to think about:

- A wise woman told her husband who was complaining about how things looked around the house. She said, we can’t all look good at the same time, It’s either me, the kids or the house.

Steve Williams is the Pastor of Berry Chapel Baptist Church in Spruce Pine.

Berry Chapel Baptist Church

Mother’s Day

By Steve Williams

Mitchell County

May is a very special month, it holds a very special day in it. It is called Mother’s Day. There is just something very special about mothers. If you don’t think so just remember 100% of every person on the earth has a mother. I thank the Lord from the bottom of my heart that I had a Godly mom. Folks let me encourage you while you have a mom to be sure to let her know what she means to you. As I think back in my life, I failed to do this the way I should have, but as we all know hindsight is 20/20.

The thing I remember the most about my mom is her voice and the words that she shared with me in my life. I remember being in the hospital several times as a small child with Pneumonia and my mom was there standing beside my bed holding my hand and praying for me while I laid under an oxygen tent. I remember how her voice would tremble as she prayed to God for me to get better. I also remember how she would assure me that everything was going to be OK. I remember hearing her telling me how much she loved me all through my life, even though some of the years in my life I was not too lovable. I can remember her voice telling me when I was not living right, that God saw what I was doing, and that it hurt Him. I also remember coming home late at night and trying to sneak by her door without her hearing me and I would hear her praying and thanking God for bringing me home safely. Boy, she knew how to use her voice to talk to God and to get my attention as I walked by her room. I will always remember her words of challenge, that she spoke to me, and these are the same words that she wrote in my Bible that she gave me. She said Steve, “Sin will keep you from this book and this book will keep you from sin.” She also wrote Sin will take you further than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay.” Those words still echo in my ears and heart today.

The two things I miss the most about my mother’s voice: one is asking her to pray for me and listen to how she would pray to God. It was just like she and God were sitting right across from each other while she lifted me up in prayer.

Even though my mother developed Alzheimer’s and could not always remember who I was and all that was going on, I could set by her recliner and ask her to pray for me. It was unreal to hear how she prayed to God, still you would never know she had this horrible disease. The second thing I miss about her voice is hearing her sharing her thankfulness to God how good He was to her and how God had helped our family through so many tough times. One day I took my mom and dad to a place on top of Blue Rock Mt. called Quiet Reflection before she developed Alzheimer’s. It was during the fall of the year. As I took her to the chapel and opened the door, and as she looked through the big pane glass windows, she started crying, lifting up her hands and just praising God for the beauty of what she was seeing, and how great the God she served was. What she was seeing overwhelmed her and it really got to me. It just showed me just how much my mom loves the Lord that day and what He truly meant to her. Love is the greatest thing in the world, God’s Word tells us that time and time again. There is just something about a mother’s voice, it is the greatest. Her voice can soothe her crying child, it encourages the broken heart of her children and that sweet voice will give her children advice that will stick with them as long as they live. I can just hear the voice of my mom, talking about what’s going on in the world today. She would say “Now Steve, God is in control. He has been taking care of us and provided for us all our lives, so just use your voice and Praise Him for who He is, what He has done, and what He is going to accomplish through all of this uncertainty that is taking place today. But most of all thank Him for His great Love and Salvation that He has given you.” I believe the greatest attention getter in the world, other than the still small voice of God is, the voice of a mother who loves her family. Oh, how I can’t wait to hear the voice of my mom again.

Words of Wisdom

- Moms are the people who know us the best and love us the most. N/A
- Silence is golden unless you have kids, then silence is suspicious. N/A
- A mother is your best critic and yet your strongest supporter. N/A
- Only God Himself fully appreciates the influence of a Christian mother in the molding of character in her children. Billy Graham
- I don’t believe there are devils enough in hell to pull a boy or girl out of the arms of a godly mother. Billy Sunday

Something to think about:

- A wise woman told her husband who was complaining about how things looked around the house. She said, we can’t all look good at the same time, It’s either me, the kids or the house.

Steve Williams is the Pastor of Berry Chapel Baptist Church in Spruce Pine.
The Dangers of Talking to Yourself
By Kurt Bomar
Avery County

With our confinement from the virus, I imagine many of us are reduced to talking to ourselves. Did you know it can be dangerous to talk to yourself? I am not talking about other people seeing you carrying on your private conversations and thinking you’re losing it. This reminds me of a comedian’s suggestion that all the vagrant mumblers in NYC should be paired up and place on park benches, just to make the rest of us feel comfortable thinking they are having intelligent conversations.

Rather I am talking about the dangers of when we seek our own advice instead of getting our advice from the Lord.

King David made just such a mistake and it cost him. As a young man, he was afraid of King Saul who wanted to kill him out of jealousy. 1 Sam. 27:1 tells us “and David said in his heart (talking to himself), I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul”. As a result of that conversation with himself David, he got mixed up and came to the wrong conclusions. He fell into depression and ended up living in enemy territory for almost a year and a half.

I have done the same thing. When someone slights me, I can get quietly offended and then I start talking to myself. I can build an airtight case against that person in my mind. It goes something like this: Now Kurt, what do you think about that? I think what they said or did was unfair and unkind. I do too! What should I do?

I think I should give them a piece of my mind the next time I see them. In the meantime, I’m going to let everybody know what I think about them. I agree that’s what I’ll do.

Jeremiah was right, “the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked.” (Jer. 17:9) What happens next? I spend an extended time in a spiritual wilderness like David did, completely outside of the will of God. I also miss the opportunity of learning what God wanted me to learn from that person.

So, what should we do? Follow the advice of Paul in Philippians. 4 “Be anxious for nothing. But in everything with prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known (not to yourself, but rather) to God. And the peace of God will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” When you get upset, do not fall into the trap of talking to yourself. Take it to your Father who loves you and understands. He will work you through it.

Selah (think about it)

Kurt Bomar is pastor of Walnut Grove Church.

Notes From the Shire
By Nancy Malik
Avery County

May what a delight May can be, even with snow. The beauty of the Blue Ridge in spring awakens our senses! And this worldwide virus has caused families, businesses, and churches to go to the worldwide web to meet each other in praise and encouragement. The explosion of outreach to a broken world has brought much growth in our faith as we see the mighty hand of God in a time of diversity. My radio show, Adventures in Creation, has Prayer as the theme for May! This virus has brought many of us who are over-busy, low in prayer, Christians, to our knees!

My heart goes out to those in deep fear, with no family or friends that have an answer for the hope and answer to a heart empty except for fear. The Creator God stepped out of heaven to be born as a baby, lived 33 years and in His last three turned the world upside down when His teachings of The Word, Jesus, Himself, came alive. His body took on all sin, mine, yours, all that was ever committed, on a wicked cross, a hideous death, yet rising again as The Victor over sin! Five hundred people witnessed His ascension and were willing to die for His truth and have continued throughout history! Millions have died due to “not denying” His death and resurrection for all to live who answer His call!

God placed on my heart as I write this that someone is reading this and knows their empty heart needs filling with the truth, not of fear, but of a sound mind as you read this. The Billy Graham Association is available 24/7 to answer questions and offer the ultimate healing for your heart at 1-888-388-2683. Please call no matter what time of day. He is calling you to Him and a new life! God is calling us to Him for an unbelievable eternity. Not hell, but life everlasting with Him! God bless you, Dear Ones! He loves us so!

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world (us) that He gave His one and only Son (Jesus) that whoever believes in Him, WILL NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVER-LASTING LIFE!” Amen.

Nancy Malik has lived 3 years in Avery County. She is a member of Heaton Christian Church. She has taught creations science to children for many years.

856 Georges Fork Road, Burnsville, NC 28714
828-682-9675
Info@compassionatecarewnc.org
Contents

In Every Issue

Clint’s Chronicles on the Funny Farm - p. 15
Life Lessons - p. 9
Your Government - pp. 32-33

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace: that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation: that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!”

Isaiah 52:7 KJV

Visit Us Online At: www.brcnews.com

Thank You For Supporting Our Advertisers!

Serving: Avery - Burke - Madison - McDowell - Mitchell - Yancey Counties

ADVERTISER CLASSIFICATIONS

APPLIANCES
Jonathan’s Used Appliances (7)

ARCHITECTURE
Barry Wilson Architecture (20)

AUTOMOBILES - Dealers
Jim Armstrong (24)
John Greene Chrysler (23)
Marion Chrysler Dodge (19)
Spruce Pine Chevrolet (13)

AUTOMOBILES - Repair
John’s Precision Auto Body (22)

AUTOMOBILES - Tires
Bull Tire & Service (8)
McCabe Tire & Service (35)
Spruce Pine Tire (12)

AUTOMOBILES - Supply
B & J Auto Supply (22)

BUILDING SUPPLIES
Summit Building Supplies (12)

CHURCHES
Atagass Baptist (4)
Bear Creek Baptist (4)
Berry Chapel Baptist (4)
Burkemont Baptist (4)
Faith Fellowship (4)

FIRST BAPTIST SPRUCE PINE
First Baptist Spruce Pine (4)
Grassy Creek Baptist (4)
Great Hope 7th day Adventist (4)
Mountaineer Seventh day Adventist (4)
Newland Christian Church (4)
Pine Branch Baptist (4)
Pleasant Hill Baptist Church (4)
Plumtree Presbyterian (4)
Spruce Pine United Methodist (4)
The Rock Church (4)
The Bridge (4)
West Burnsville Baptist (4)

CHIROPRACTIC
Cruz Chiropractic (39)

CPA
Jamie Miller (7)

DENTIST
Scott Murphy (20)

DSS
Mitchell DSS (33)

EVENTS
Billy Graham/The Cove (18)
Catawba River Baptist Assoc. (15)
Freedom Life (28)
Mountain Time on Main (16)
Tancey Baptist Assoc. (15)
Tancey Senior Center (34)

FARM SUPPLIES
Griffith’s General Store (17)

FINANCIAL PLANNING
Retirement Resource Management (25)

FLOORING/CABINETS
Carolina Flooring/Cabinets (8)

FOSTER CARE
Seven Homes for Kids (31)

FUNERAL SERVICE
Mountaineer Seventh day Adventist (4)
Sassaman’s Funeral Home (11)

FURNITURE
Back Store (37)
Peoples Furniture (20)

HEALTH CARE
Bakersville Clinic (18)
Carolina Home Care (25)
Pratt Health Care (40)

HOME BUYERS
Sillman Home Buyers (33)

HOSPICE
Hospice and Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge, Inc (24)

HOUSING
Clayton (26)

INSURANCE
Finnert Insurance (19)
McDowell Farm Bureau (22)
Miller Insurance Group (11)
Mitchell Co. Farm Bureau (9)
Premier Insurance (27)

MILCH
McClure Construction (21)

NURSERY
Lakeview Nursery (30)

ORTHODONTICS
Small & Martin Orthodontics (29)

PAWN
Mountaineer Pawn Shop (5)

PLUMBING/HEATING
Burleson Plumbing Heating (17)
Benjamin Franklin Plumbing (29)

PRESCRIPTION
The Prescription Pad (8)

RADIO
Glory Radio (33)

REALTORS
Whitson Realty (28)

RESTAURANTS
Bantam Chef (22)
Bubba’s Good Eats (14)
DT’s (15)
Western Sizzlin (25)

RETAIL
Grassy Creek Clothing (37)

STORAGE
DR Storage (36)

TRANSPORTATION
Mitchell Transit (16)
Tancey Transit (39)

TREE SERVICE
Ray’s Tree Service (24)

www.brcnews.com  May 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page  3
The Rock Church
4806 US 64
Morganton, NC 28655
Phone: 828-334-3193
www.trcmorganton.com
Pastor - Billy Chapman
Sunday Morning – 10 AM
Sunday Night – 6 PM
Tuesday Night – 7 PM
Come Join Us
Tent Revival 2020

Plumtree Presbyterian Church
4927 Hwy NE
Plumtree, NC 28664
Phone: 828-765-8019
www.plumtreechurch.com
Pastor Ryan Bridge
pastor@plumtreechurch.com
Sunday School 9:00 am
Worship Service 10:00 am
Ladies Group Tuesday – Thursday evenings 7:00 pm
Young Adults Wednesday 6:30 pm
“Healing Services 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month 9:30 am
John 15:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

Pleasant Hill Baptist Church
2396 Enoola Road
Morganton, NC 28655
(828) 437-4822
www.pleasanthillbc.org
Senior Pastor
Dr. Jack Hodges
Sunday School: 9:30 am
Sunday Worship: 10:30 am
Sunday Evening: 6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening: 6:30 pm
“Love All, Reach All, Teach All, Send All”

Marion Seventh-day Adventist Church
188 Ward Dr.
Marion, NC 28752
(828) 688-4018
Pastor Tim Sheridan
Sabbath (Saturday)
Bible Study - 9:15 am
Sabbath Worship - 10:50 am
Reaching the World with the Everlasting Gospel of Jesus Christ!
www.marinseventhdayadventist.org

First Baptist Church of Spruce Pine
125 Tappan Street
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
(828) 437-0411
www.firstbaptistsprucepine.org
www.sprucepinebaptist.com
Pastor Rock Schilling
Senior Pastor
Sunday School - 9:45 am
Sunday Worship - 10:30 am
Sunday Evening Bible Study - 6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening Prayer Meeting - 7:00 pm
“A Local Congregation of Christ’s Church”

Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church
29740 US Hwy 70 E
Morganton, NC 28655
(828) 475-2040
Pastor Barry Malhorney
Sabbath (Saturday)
Bible Study - 10:00 am
Sabbath Worship - 11:00 am
Vegetarian Buffet after church
Wednesday - Praise, Prayer & Proclaim - 7:00 pm
www.greathopesda.com

Phyllis Creek Baptist Church
327 Bear Creek Road
Bakersville, NC 28705
www.bearcreekbaptist.com
Reverend Bruce Cannon
Sunday School 9:45 AM
Worship Service 10:45 AM
Discipleship 6:00 PM
Evening Worship 6:45 PM
Wednesday Worship 7:30 PM
“For God so loved the world, he gave his only Son…”

The Bridge Church
of WNC
207 Pinebridge Avenue
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
www.bridgechurchnc.org
Pastors - Tom & Tammy Anglin
Sunday Service 10:30 AM
Service Wednesday 7:00 PM
Church Office M-F 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM
“Home of Tri County Christian School”
Our mission is to help save the Body of Christ in this area in order to see the spiritual growth of our church, our community, state, nation and world (Titus 1:2)

Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church
2187 Jamestown Road
Morganton, NC 28656
(828) 594-8212
Pastor Steve Bexton
Sabbath (Saturday)
Bible Study - 9:30 am
Sabbath Worship - 11:00 am
Vegetarian Buffet after church
Wednesday - Praise, Prayer & Proclaim - 7:00 pm
www.morgantonadventist.org

West Burnsville Baptist Church
222 West Burnsville Church Rd
Burnsville, NC 28714
(828) 682-3990
Pastor: Terry Long
Sunday School: 9:45 am
Morning Service: 11:00 am
Evening Service: 6:00 pm
Wednesday Service 6:30 pm
Church vision: Orchestrating God through knowing, growing, giving, to build the church and impact the world.

Burkemont Baptist Church
4668 Burkemont Rd.
Morganton, NC 28655
(828) 437-2357
For more information, please visit www.burkemontbaptist.org
Dr. Luke A. lane
8:30 am – Early Worship
9:45 am – Sunday School
11:00 am – Worship
6:00 pm – Evening Worship

Altagas Baptist Church
3631 Altagas Hwy
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
www.altagasbaptistchurch.org
Pastor - Steve Williams
Sunday School: 9:45 AM
Worship Service: 11:00 AM
Sunday Evening Case Meal - Ministry - 5:30 PM
Wednesday Evening Service - 7:00 PM
Where Everybody is Somebody
And Jesus Christ is Lord!

Altapass Baptist Church
3631 Altagas Hwy
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
www.altapassbaptistchurch.org
Pastor - Dr. Marcus R. Benfield
Sunday School - 10:00 am
Worship Service - 11:00 am
Sunday Evening Service - 7:00 pm
Sunday Youth Program - 7:00 pm
1st and 3rd Sunday
(Conducts for Christ ages 5-11)
3rd & 4th Sunday
(Teen Discovery ages 12-18)
Wednesday - 7:00 pm
“A Christ-Centered, Bible Believing Church”

Newland Christian Church
280 Millers Gap Highway
Newland, NC 28657
Phone: (828) 265-1464
www.newlandchristianchurch.com
Pastor - Phillip Greene
Sunday School: 9:45 am
Sunday Worship: 11:00 am
Sunday Evening Bible Study: 6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening Prayer Meeting: 7:00 pm

Spruce Pine United Methodist Church
11900 Hwy 226 South
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
www.sprucepineumc.org
cpumc@bellsouth.net
(828) 765-7446
Pastor Rick Schilling
Sunday School: 10:00 am
Sunday Worship: 11:00 am
Church Wednesdays: 6:00 pm
The mission of Spruce Pine United Methodist Church is to be a beacon on a hill spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ through: Worship, Fellowship, Education, and Nurturing Service.

Call us at 828-765-6800 to enroll in this important outreach effort.

You can let tourists, visitors and even neighbors know where your church is and when you meet by listing in the BRCN Church Directory. This visible and effective advertising is specially priced at $300.00 per year for our churches - approximately $5.75 a week!

www.brcnews.com
May 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 4
Walking along the dirt road, the thud of the man’s walking stick kept time with the beat of his heart. Alongside him, beyond the forest ferns and looming dogwoods, the river ran clear. Here and there, the rush of white-water pulsating through rocks and ledges as it flowed forever onward echoed the sound of the time. These mountains were the home of Fletch’s family for as long as he could remember. They were the clan of Gragg, a tribe of those ancient forefathers known in their mother country as the Clan of MacGragg. They had emigrated from Scotland centuries before to escape the tyranny of England. No longer a young man, his memory spanned the deep hollers and ravines like the morning mist, each with a story of its own. As the beating of the aged Sycamore kept time to Fletch’s legs as he pushed ahead. The hushed tones of mournful cries seemed to leech into the grain of the wagon boards, filling the cracks until there was none. Etching the pain of ones being until there was nothing left to fear. The vision then looked to the sky, as if to ask God why. The swirling gray cauldron above looked like someone wringing their hands in tormented anguish. The flash of shadowing lightening turned his head to look away. Then came the answer in the form of a deep growl of distant thunder that shook the ground.

Somewhere nearby, the flash of a photographer taking a picture of two traumatized children standing near the roadway, caused him to flinch. It was as if mankind was trying to mimic the almighty power from above. Forever etched onto his monochrome plate was the form of two souls whose lives would never be the same; generation forever altered by the course of events, not of their own doing. Gragg sucked in a deep breath as if he had just surfaced from beneath the water. There before him was the stone walls covered in thick laurels. The darkness permeated evermore as the moon had already risen high above the horizon behind him. “This too shall pass,” he could hear his Granny tell the children as they would sit and listen to her tell them tales of yesteryear, always with giving the sense of comfort of one having survived worst times.

Fletch turned around to go back to his holler from whence he came. As he did, the Whippoorwill sang once more. Its cry echoed again off the canyon edifices and never ceasing. The beat of the aged Sycamore kept time to Fletch’s legs as he pushed ahead. The hushed tones of mournful cries seemed to leech into the grain of the wagon boards, filling the cracks until there was none. Etching the pain of ones being until there was nothing left to fear. The vision then looked to the sky, as if to ask God why. The swirling gray cauldron above looked like someone wringing their hands in tormented anguish. The flash of shadowing lightening turned his head to look away. Then came the answer in the form of a deep growl of distant thunder that shook the ground.

Somewhere nearby, the flash of a photographer taking a picture of two traumatized children standing near the roadway, caused him to flinch. It was as if mankind was trying to mimic the almighty power from above. Forever etched onto his monochrome plate was the form of two souls whose lives would never be the same; generation forever altered by the course of events, not of their own doing. Gragg sucked in a deep breath as if he had just surfaced from beneath the water. There before him was the stone walls covered in thick laurels. The darkness permeated evermore as the moon had already risen high above the horizon behind him. “This too shall pass,” he could hear his Granny tell the children as they would sit and listen to her tell them tales of yesteryear, always with giving the sense of comfort of one having survived worst times.

Fletch turned around to go back to his holler from whence he came. As he did, the Whippoorwill sang once more. Its cry echoed again off the canyon edifices bringing a chill up his spine. Up above the moonlight now lit his path and reflected golden rays across the silvery waters of the river nearby. Although some would fear the darkness, Fletch knew he wasn’t alone. Many had survived worst times than these, and yes, many had gone on home to cross that river of Jordan to a far better place. Someday he would too.

The Whippoorwill called once more, and the voice echoed again, “This too shall pass.”

Thanks be to God.

Timothy W. Tron lives in Colletsville, NC, with his family. He is the former Director of the Trail of Faith in Valdese, where he still volunteers and helps with tours. He now teaches Math full time at Watauga High School in Boone. He is the author of a new Christian series, “Children of the Light,” with the first book being, “Bruecke to Heaven,” and his recent book, being the second, “The Light in the Darkness.” He is an active loan officer, artist, and musician. Timothy also has a BSEE from UF, and is a Lay Speaker. He can be reached at twtron@live.com.

MOUNTAINEER PAWN SHOP

WHY PAY RETAIL?

Crazy Deal of the Month

1/2 Carat 14kt White Gold Diamond Solitaire

$240.00

Your Ammunition Headquarters

10% OFF Law Enforcement Discount

Medterra CBD Oil tincture

New Broad Spectrum

Full plant extract without THC

CBD with additional beneficial compounds such as CBG, CBC, CBDV, & natural terpenes.

NEED QUICK CASH?

We loan money on any item of value

30 years experience in the business

828-765-7651

12513 S 226 HWY • Spruce Pine, NC 28777

Your Ammunition Headquarters

10% OFF Law Enforcement Discount

Medterra CBD Oil tincture

New Broad Spectrum

Full plant extract without THC

CBD with additional beneficial compounds such as CBG, CBC, CBDV, & natural terpenes.

NEED QUICK CASH?

We loan money on any item of value

30 years experience in the business

828-765-7651

12513 S 226 HWY • Spruce Pine, NC 28777
I trust this article finds you well and coming to the end of the coronavirus pandemic. For the most part, my family has moderately complied with the social distancing guidelines. We realize the seriousness of the disease but at the same time, we know that God is overall. Faith over fear has truly been the model for our family.

We had concerns about this disease, however, we found it hard to believe everything we were hearing about the coronavirus. At times we did not know what to believe about it because the numbers and predictions kept changing. I recently discovered that the models used to project deaths and case numbers of COVID-19 are unpredictable and are flawed.

“The basic reproductive ratio, R_0, is one of the fundamental concepts in mathematical biology. It is a threshold parameter, intended to quantify the spread of disease by estimating the average number of secondary infections in a wholly susceptible population. Despite its place at the forefront of mathematical epidemiology, the concept of R_0 is deeply flawed. There are many methods to calculate R_0 from mathematical models, few of which agree with each other and few of which produce the average number of secondary infections.” (The Failure of R_0, Computational and Mathematical Methods in Medicine August 16, 2011; https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3157160/).

R_0 is affected by numerous biological, socio-behavioral, and environmental factors that govern pathogen transmission and, therefore, is usually estimated with various types of complex mathematical models, which make R_0 easily misrepresented, misinterpreted, and misapplied. (Complexity of the Basic Reproduction Number; https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/25/1-17-1901_article)

It was extremely difficult for us not to shake hands and hug people. I trust at the reading of this article that we are back to fellowshipping with one another. Fellowship is at the core of our Christian beliefs and practice in the church. We know that a sinless woman was at the feet of Jesus kissing his feet and anointing them with perfume. She was showing how sorrowful she was for her sin and how much she loved Jesus. Jesus then rebuked the host of the home he was in saying to the Pharisee “you did not greet me with a holy kiss, wash my feet, or anoint my head with ointment” which were all customary practices during the time of Jesus.

Touch is an expression of love and affirmation. My wife has great insight noting that her dad of 81 years has been handshaking and hugging all his life. It is amazing to me how people are so quick to jump on the “science train” and follow recommendations that may or may not be fully accurate. For example, at first, we were told not to wear a mask and then a few weeks later we were recommended to wear a mask. We were told to stay away from groups of 100, 50, 10, and then as few as five people to a group. My family alone is more than five people. I am not saying the recommendations were bad or ill-advised.

I would feel horrible if I infected someone I know or let alone a family member. But it was extremely difficult if not impossible to totally disassociate myself from family members. Social distancing proved to be effective as numbers began to decrease. We are fighting the invisible enemy. However, this virus is not invisible to God or beyond his wisdom and control. God can certainly prevent me from going to places or meeting people who may be infected. I realize God is “nowise respecter of persons” it rains on the just and unjust. I trust the sovereign will of God and realize that God never makes a mistake. I will try my best not to test God and trust His sovereign plan and my role in what He is doing. Consider this verse. Proverbs 3:5-6 (KJV 1900)

5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; And lean not unto thine own understanding: 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, And he shall direct thy paths.

And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

2 Corinthians 12:9

9 And said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

2 Corinthians 4:15–18

15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. 16 For which cause we faint not: but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

At times it is difficult to walk by faith and not by sight. Who would intentionally walk around with their eyes closed? God is not asking us to walk in blind faith; He is asking us to trust Him in areas we cannot physically see with our eyes and things we cannot control. Trust and faith say, “God I do not know what tomorrow holds, but I do know who holds tomorrow”.

May God bless you as we live and go forward in faith. May our churches not go back to normal. I pray our normal is greater faith and sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with urgency because our “redemption draws near”.

Happy Mother’s Day and love to all.

Pastor Dean Honeycutt shepherds Snow Hill Baptist Church in Bakersville, NC. He may be reached at 828-385-0213, snowhillbaptist@gmail.com, or visit their website at www.snowhillbaptist.com.
Obedient Heart Fellowship

Isolation? By Jim Huskins
McDowell County

Sometimes in the aftermath of WWII, many among us developed a fascinating set of core convictions which include: We have been freed from the “drudgery” of feudal production. Technology will mitigate the effects of infertility and aging. The fact and functions of human gender no longer apply. Greed is now a virtue. If these propositions are true, then paradise is now technically feasible, and God is no longer necessary.

Contrarian perspective can be found in a Maurice Telleen editorial circa 1980: “Despite all our achievements, we owe our existence to six inches of topsoil and the fact that it rains.” As evidence that moderns have not superseded the boundaries of the human condition, I propose that nothing says needy like “global pandemic.”

Every great civilization concluded that “they” were invincible. Soon after any current civilization will apply to those storied empires the words we have for Greece: “His empire is the cities.” Technology will destroy them. The fact and functions of human gender no longer apply. Greed is now a virtue. If these propositions are true, then paradise is now technically feasible, and God is no longer necessary.

All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness. For he gave us his Son, that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in unrighteousness, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all aspects into Christ, who is the head of the body, the church. And he is the head of the church, the head of every man, as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the savior. Now as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their husbands in everything. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the savior. As the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

We may be anxious about our finances, jobs, groceries, and much more. But we, as children of God will survive the storm. We can choose to embrace the quiet time that God has granted us right now and draw closer to Him, or we can let our circumstances control our emotions.

One inescapable result of isolation is an awareness of being alone. We are social by nature. Even if we are spending this surreal period with the most important people in our lives, we may still feel alone. It is an awareness of being alone. We are social by nature. Even if we are spending this surreal period with the most important people in our lives, we may still feel alone.

He never says that grace makes obedience unnecessary. Such claims are pure hubris.

Many pastors, teachers, and theologians tell us that the first two-thirds of the Bible has been canceled. Paul teaches in 2 Timothy 3:16: “All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.” When he wrote those words, the so-called New Testament did not exist.

He never says that grace makes obedience unnecessary. Such claims are pure hubris.

Many pastors, teachers, and theologians tell us that the first two-thirds of the Bible has been canceled. Paul teaches in 2 Timothy 3:16: “All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.” When he wrote those words, the so-called New Testament did not exist.

Jim & Beverly Hawkins are members of Obedient Heart Fellowship.

www.brcnews.com

May 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 7
By Jody Griffin
Avery and Mitchell County

“...and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Amen. (Matthew 28:20, KJV)

The promise of God’s Presence is perhaps one of the most misunderstood of all the promises found in Scripture. Our human understanding cannot perceive of a God Who will be with us through good AND bad, through ups AND downs, through our righteous living AND in the midst of our sin. Yet that is exactly what Jesus declared to His disciples before He ascended again into the heavens.

It is this very Promise that I have been privileged to remind the community that makes up AMCI during these most challenging times. “He is here. He is Present among us, and for this singular reason we can trust that all is well.” The disciples who heard these words would soon find themselves facing threats to their safety and well-being; yet they would press on and they would trust that God was with them.

Being separated from one’s family is perhaps the single most difficult consequence for many or even most of the incarcerated. It has been such an honor for me to be a source of encouragement to the men I serve. And I am blessed beyond measure to encourage staff members each day who know that their work is truly “essential”. No doubt, there is a great risk to all during days of the pandemic. But we MUST remember that we are NOT alone.

God’s Presence is part of God’s Sovereignty, and God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit keeps this Divine Promise even as we fail to recognize it. How might this Promise help all of us today? Here is a suggestion...Make this Promise of God a mantra that carries you through.

“He is here. He is Present among us, and for this singular reason I will trust that all is well.” A mantra is designed as a repetitive word or phrase used in meditation. Though often associated with Eastern religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism, it has also been employed as a tool in the Christian faith to aid the individual in entering most fully into the Presence of Christ. Can’t you see the potential for God’s Blessing to be made known to you as you repeat this mantra throughout the day?

Thank you to all who are praying for us at AMCI! We know your prayers as a source of comfort and peace during these days. We are anxiously awaiting the days when volunteers and visitors are among us again! Until then, we are depending upon the Promise of His Presence to sustain us through these days and to deliver us into a future filled with hope! “He is here! He is Present among us and for this singular reason we will trust that all is well!” Thanks, Be to God!

May 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 8

Jody Griffin is pastor of Central Baptist Church in Spruce Pine and Community Funded Chaplin at Avery-Mitchell Correctional Institution.

FOR ALL THINGS AUTO, TAKE IT TO BUFF’S!
Check Engine Diagnosis • Alignments • Brakes • Oil Changes • Inspections
1211 BURKEMONT AVE., MORGANTON, NC
Located in: Magnolia Plaza • 828-438-3800
“We’ve Moved Across the Street next to Rural King. Come See Us!”

High Country Prison Ministry
Call the agents who call North Carolina home.

Mitchell Co. Farm Bureau
Spruce Pine
828-765-9678
Bakersville
828-688-3745

First Baptist Church Nebo

Instead of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” — Romans 14:17. One could look at this broken, wounded world, see the sadness, hear the stories of rejection and loss and feel like the Great Comma- nion is not what it used to be, but give thanks and I hope each of you do as well, for the ability to do and accomplish what I can do. The great commission for each of us is to reach as many with the good news of Christ as possible in whatever way we possibly can, using whatever talents we might have. Regardless of age and ability, I pray that as your seasons change you never, and I never, lose the desire to make some small difference in someone’s life as frequently as possible. We always have the ability to smile rather than frown, to praise rather than complain, to give thanks rather than just requesting more.

Recognize your seasons as a blessing in life, give all you can give, love all you can love, praise all you can praise, be a witness as long as you may live. Christ desires for you to have. I pray that you find the lasting joy and contentment that God has helped you overcome, and the victory you have in Him. Prepare to hold you back from the plan that Christ has for you, for in living for Christ and engaging in the journey of fulfilling His plan is where joy is found.

To be able to serve Christ in the ways that he did, to acknowledge him, and he will then make our paths according to His Perfect Will. God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” — Romans 14:17. One could look at this broken, wounded world, see the sadness, hear the stories of rejection and loss and feel like the Great Commission is not what it used to be, but give thanks and I hope each of you do as well, for the ability to do and accomplish what I can do. The great commission for each of us is to reach as many with the good news of Christ as possible in whatever way we possibly can, using whatever talents we might have. Regardless of age and ability, I pray that as your seasons change you never, and I never, lose the desire to make some small difference in someone’s life as frequently as possible. We always have the ability to smile rather than frown, to praise rather than complain, to give thanks rather than just requesting more.

Recognize your seasons as a blessing in life, give all you can give, love all you can love, praise all you can praise, be a witness as long as you may live. Christ desires for you to have. I pray that you find the lasting joy and contentment that God has helped you overcome, and the victory you have in Him. Prepare to hold you back from the plan that Christ has for you, for in living for Christ and engaging in the journey of fulfilling His plan is where joy is found.

To be able to serve Christ in the ways that he did, to acknowledge him, and he will then make our paths according to His Perfect Will. God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” — Romans 14:17. One could look at this broken, wounded world, see the sadness, hear the stories of rejection and loss and feel like the Great Commission is not what it used to be, but give thanks and I hope each of you do as well, for the ability to do and accomplish what I can do. The great commission for each of us is to reach as many with the good news of Christ as possible in whatever way we possibly can, using whatever talents we might have. Regardless of age and ability, I pray that as your seasons change you never, and I never, lose the desire to make some small difference in someone’s life as frequently as possible. We always have the ability to smile rather than frown, to praise rather than complain, to give thanks rather than just requesting more.

Recognize your seasons as a blessing in life, give all you can give, love all you can love, praise all you can praise, be a witness as long as you may live. Christ desires for you to have. I pray that you find the lasting joy and contentment that God has helped you overcome, and the victory you have in Him. Prepare to hold you back from the plan that Christ has for you, for in living for Christ and engaging in the journey of fulfilling His plan is where joy is found.

To be able to serve Christ in the ways that he did, to acknowledge him, and he will then make our paths according to His Perfect Will. God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” — Romans 14:17. One could look at this broken, wounded world, see the sadness, hear the stories of rejection and loss and feel like the Great Commission is not what it used to be, but give thanks and I hope each of you do as well, for the ability to do and accomplish what I can do. The great commission for each of us is to reach as many with the good news of Christ as possible in whatever way we possibly can, using whatever talents we might have. Regardless of age and ability, I pray that as your seasons change you never, and I never, lose the desire to make some small difference in someone’s life as frequently as possible. We always have the ability to smile rather than frown, to praise rather than complain, to give thanks rather than just requesting more.

Recognize your seasons as a blessing in life, give all you can give, love all you can love, praise all you can praise, be a witness as long as you may live. Christ desires for you to have. I pray that you find the lasting joy and contentment that God has helped you overcome, and the victory you have in Him. Prepare to hold you back from the plan that Christ has for you, for in living for Christ and engaging in the journey of fulfilling His plan is where joy is found.

To be able to serve Christ in the ways that he did, to acknowledge him, and he will then make our paths according to His Perfect Will. God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” — Romans 14:17. One could look at this broken, wounded world, see the sadness, hear the stories of rejection and loss and feel like the Great Commission is not what it used to be, but give thanks and I hope each of you do as well, for the ability to do and accomplish what I can do. The great commission for each of us is to reach as many with the good news of Christ as possible in whatever way we possibly can, using whatever talents we might have. Regardless of age and ability, I pray that as your seasons change you never, and I never, lose the desire to make some small difference in someone’s life as frequently as possible. We always have the ability to smile rather than frown, to praise rather than complain, to give thanks rather than just requesting more.

Recognize your seasons as a blessing in life, give all you can give, love all you can love, praise all you can praise, be a witness as long as you may live. Christ desires for you to have. I pray that you find the lasting joy and contentment that God has helped you overcome, and the victory you have in Him. Prepare to hold you back from the plan that Christ has for you, for in living for Christ and engaging in the journey of fulfilling His plan is where joy is found.

To be able to serve Christ in the ways that he did, to acknowledge him, and he will then make our paths according to His Perfect Will. God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” — Romans 14:17. One could look at this broken, wounded world, see the sadness, hear the stories of rejection and loss and feel like the Great Commission is not what it used to be, but give thanks and I hope each of you do as well, for the ability to do and accomplish what I can do. The great commission for each of us is to reach as many with the good news of Christ as possible in whatever way we possibly can, using whatever talents we might have. Regardless of age and ability, I pray that as your seasons change you never, and I never, lose the desire to make some small difference in someone’s life as frequently as possible. We always have the ability to smile rather than frown, to praise rather than complain, to give thanks rather than just requesting more.

Recognize your seasons as a blessing in life, give all you can give, love all you can love, praise all you can praise, be a witness as long as you may live. Christ desires for you to have. I pray that you find the lasting joy and contentment that God has helped you overcome, and the victory you have in Him. Prepare to hold you back from the plan that Christ has for you, for in living for Christ and engaging in the journey of fulfilling His plan is where joy is found.
The Coronavirus is a thorny virus, reminding us of sacrifice and self-denial. It is a symbol of the cost Jesus paid. The virus, under extreme magnification, actually looks like a thorny crown; therefore, it is - quite literally - the thorny crown virus. The coronavirus reminds us of death and the season of Lent. “One of the central symbols of Lent is the thorny crown. It reminds us of sacrifice and self-denial. It is a symbol of the cost Jesus paid. The term “corona” in “coronavirus” is a word meaning “crown.” It is because the virus, under extreme magnification, actually looks like a thorny crown; therefore, it is - quite literally - the thorny crown virus. The coronavirus reminds us that as Christians we always - even when there is no virus in our midst - embody the sufferings of the world. Lent is the time when we are particularly reminded of that great truth.”

During this Holy Week in which we remember the passion of Christ, we allow ourselves space to lament. Standing at a distance and seeing Jesus on the cross, we witness darkness covering the whole land (cf. Luke 23:44). And following Joseph of Arimathea to the tomb, we wait – holding on to the hope of resurrection.

The Psalmist willingly shared his struggles. In fact, many scholars have noted that more Psalms are classified as laments than any other category. Laments are passionate expressions of grief, sorrow, or regret and they serve as beautiful examples of the human struggle. Psalm 22 is a lament that is familiar to many because Jesus quotes verse one from the cross: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Jesus is the best possible companion for those who are depressed and feel abandoned by God, because on the cross, Jesus felt abandoned by God. But we can look back on Jesus, the proof of God’s love, and remember that God has not abandoned us to our pain. Philip Yancey writes, “Those disciples who gazed at the cross from the shadows, soon learned what they had failed to learn in three years with their leader: When God seems absent, he may be closest of all.

Dr. Tracy Jessup serves as vice president for Christian Life and Service and senior minister to the University. He is a graduate of Gardner-Webb with a B.A. in Music and earned his M. Div. degree at Samford University’s Beeson Divinity School. He completed his Ph.D. at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He also teaches in the undergraduate department of religious studies and enjoys the opportunity to serve the local church through interim pastorates, pulpits supply, and preaching revival services. He and his wife, Teresa, have two children, Christian and Anna.

Check out our Website-www.brcnews.com And find us on Facebook

Virtual Care - Available

MCHP - Mountain Community Health Partnership

www.brcnews.com

By Terry Check

McDowell County

We’re going to continue our new series of articles titled Unlikely people that God used. We’re going to learn from God’s word there isn’t anyone the Lord will not use if they will come on His terms. My inspiration comes from the many people I have to meet with awesome testimonies of being saved from sin, drugs, alcohol, dangers and even themselves. Yet, despite their awesome testimonies many of them feel God has no place for them. Talking with them has made me realize there are a lot of born-again believers who for whatever reason believe God won’t use them because of their past. I want them and everyone reading this series to know that God’s word is filled with men and women who were saved from devastating situations and moved forward to proclaim the gospel and lead many to Christ. This series will share the stories of many from God’s word and my prayer is that it will encourage you to be obedient to God’s call for your life and let Him call others through you.

Let’s take a look at Enoch from the Old Testament. We know from Genesis 5:24 “And Enoch walked with God: and he was not: for God took him.” Enoch was not someone who failed God and repented of that failure to return and serve Him in amazing ways. No, Enoch’s life was defined by a lifetime of service. There are men and women today who have served God quietly, faithfully and without any recognition. Those folks who only want to see souls saved and the gospel shared across the world. Enoch was someone we can regard as a hero because Enoch stood strong over a long time. He refused to compromise; that’s why Hebrews 11:5 says “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death: and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.” Enoch did so not for a few decades but for three hundred years!

Enoch’s world was much different than ours. Earth had not yet been destroyed and rearranged into its present form through God’s destruction by flood. A person’s life was measured in centuries, not decades. For example, Enoch was born only 622 years after creation, the seventh generation from Adam. Enoch’s great-grandson was Noah and we remember his famous story about the Ark and its completion when Noah was 600 years old.

Enoch lived during an age of corruption, rebellion, and moral decay; his culture looked a lot like ours. That is where we can find encouragement! If Enoch can survive 300 years and live in such a way that it impresses God, we can too. After all, Enoch lived by Faith, look at Hebrew’s 11:5 again it opens with “By Faith.”

Today’s Christian is saved by grace through faith and that faith comes by Jesus defeated death, hell, and the grave. What greater authority can we place in the Age of the Coronavirus: The struggle between fear and comfort” (4/2/20). The Times, posed these questions to his readers in an article titled, “Mental Health issues do these issues manifest in your life? David Brooks, an opinion columnist with the New York Times, asked, “Do you feel a sense of isolation, or do you feel an increase in anxiety, depression, or something else? How do these issues manifest in your life?”

Let us take a look at Enoch from the Old Testament. We know from Genesis 5:24 “And Enoch walked with God: and he was not: for God took him.” Enoch was not someone who failed God and repented of that failure to return and serve Him in amazing ways. No, Enoch’s life was defined by a lifetime of service. There are men and women today who have served God quietly, faithfully and without any recognition. Those folks who only want to see souls saved and the gospel shared across the world. Enoch was someone we can regard as a hero because Enoch stood strong over a long time. He refused to compromise; that’s why Hebrews 11:5 says “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death: and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.” Enoch did so not for a few decades but for three hundred years!

Enoch’s world was much different than ours. Earth had not yet been destroyed and rearranged into its present form through God’s destruction by flood. A person’s life was measured in centuries, not decades. For example, Enoch was born only 622 years after creation, the seventh generation from Adam. Enoch’s great-grandson was Noah and we remember his famous story about the Ark and its completion when Noah was 600 years old.

Enoch lived during an age of corruption, rebellion, and moral decay; his culture looked a lot like ours. That is where we can find encouragement! If Enoch can survive 300 years and live in such a way that it impresses God, we can too. After all, Enoch lived by Faith, look at Hebrew’s 11:5 again it opens with “By Faith.”

Today’s Christian is saved by grace through faith and that faith comes by Jesus defeated death, hell, and the grave. What greater authority can we place...
He understands more than anyone the potential within each seed. Yet, the en- 
emy cannot stop the sovereign will of God and every believer is living proof of 
that truth. Those who receive Jesus are given eternal life and as if this were not 
enough, we are also given this protective gear so that we can stand firm against 
our adversary, the devil. 

Our lives must be built on the foundation of God’s word. His truth, or it will 
fall apart at the first sign of a storm. The saddest thing today seems to be the lack 
of most Christian’s biblical knowledge. Neglect of the truth has opened the door 
to demonic oppression and deception for many believers. Unrest and chaos seem 
to be the rule instead of the exception in the lives and homes of those who call 
themselves people of the truth. When we choose to deceive ourselves or others, 
we have joined forces with our Father’s archenemy and that is not the side we 
must choose.

Warren Wiersbe wrote on this matter of deception. “Once a lie gets into the life of a believer, everything begins to fall apart. For over a year, King David lied about his sin with Bathsheba and nothing went right. When David repented, he 

In Ephesians 6:14a, my translation says ‘having fastened on the belt of truth’, 
but many translations say ‘having girded your waist with truth’. Those leather 
straps that hung down in front of the soldier were a danger during times of 
combat. The soldier would tuck them into the belt so that he could move without 
being hindered. We have already established that we are in a spiritual battle day 
in and day out. Every time the enemy tries to trip us up with a lie, we must combat 
it with the truth. Scripture memorization is the key to victory over these lies. We 
must hide the word of God within our hearts and the Holy Spirit will take those 
words and bring them to our remembrance during every spiritual battle. We must 
be people of action, unhindered by the lies of the enemy. Each time we choose 
truth, we are protecting ourselves from the schemes of the devil.

We must abide in the truth of God’s Word by putting on the belt of truth and 
that truth will set us free to operate in power and authority. We will not be victims, 
but victors! 

Caron Cline is a follower of Jesus Christ who loves to teach the word of God. 
Her desire is to see every believer growing in the grace and knowledge of the 
Lord.

Pleasant Hill Baptist Church
The Belt of Truth
By Caron Cline
Burke County

On the day that an individual bows the knee to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, the devil declares war. He has 
one blueprint that has been fairly successful in shaking the faith of many a saint and we would be wise to prepare our- 
selves for his attacks. Fortunately, our Father has provided the armor necessary to sufficiently protect our soul and that 
armor is Jesus, Himself. The descriptions of the armor in Ephesians 6 are brief because Paul has already described each piece throughout 
this letter. He uses the concept of the Roman soldier as a word picture to describe the importance of truth in the life of a believer. 

Ephesians 6:10-14 says “

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 
11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the 
devil’s schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the 
rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against 
the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full 
armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your 
ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the 
belt of truth buckled around your waist…”

Roman soldiers wore belts that were made of thick, heavy leather. They were 
called ‘baletes’ and held the soldier’s sword and a small shield as well as holding 
the rest of the armor in place. The belt also had 5 leather straps hanging over 
the lower half of the front of the body. Since Paul referred to this as the belt of 
truth, some scholars believe it refers to the 5 ministry gifts listed in Ephesians 
4:11-12. These 5 gifts all involve the teaching of God’s truth to the saints for their 
maturity in matters of faith. Note that the belt covered the area of the body used 
for reproduction and elimination. Our responsibility is to produce fruit based on 
God’s truth and eliminate error that rises up against the truth. A belt enforces 
and protects our core. The belt of truth is mentioned first because Jesus is our foun-
dation, the strength, and the center of our very being. Everything is contingent 
upon our decision to operate in the truth. Truth holds everything else in place. 
We must be people of the Word; living by every word that proceeds from the mouth 
of God. (Matthew 4:4) How much of the truth do we digest each day? It has been 
said that Martin Luther memorized the entire Bible in Latin and that John Wesley 
memorized almost the entire Greek New Testament. These men changed the world 
because they were saturated with truth internally and they lived it out externally. 

The word of truth is synonymous with the gospel of our salvation. In John 14:6 
Jesus tells His disciples that He is the way, the truth, and the life and that no man 
or woman can come to the Father except through Him. 

Truth is not only the gospel message but is also a lifestyle. 
A Sunday school teacher asked a little boy to define a lie. He said, ‘it’s an 
abomination to God and a very present help in time of trouble’. So many have 
this mindset concerning truth; it is relative. It is easy to justify deception to cover 
ourselves, but as Christians, we no longer need to cover ourselves, for we are 
covered by the blood of Jesus. Truth is to be our foundation. Satan and his cohorts 
are allergic to truth. Keeping people from hearing and believing the truth is their 
main objective.

In John 8:44-47 Jesus said, “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want 
to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not 
holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his na-
tive language, for he is a liar and the father of lies”. The devil is a liar and there is 
no truth in him. The minds of unbelievers have been blinded by Satan so that 
they cannot understand the truth. He works overtime to keep them from receiving 
God’s word.

In Mark 4:1-6, Jesus told the parable of the sower and teaches us a powerful 
lesson concerning one of Satan’s top priorities: to steal the seed of God’s Word.

WE ARE COMMITTED TO 
DOING OUR BEST FOR YOU! 
And Our Community

“INSURANCE is the most IMPORTANT thing a person has because it protects him against 
the loss of everything he has in the world.”

-H.O. Hirt, ERIE Founder

(828) 765-1711

May 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 11
PSALM 119 Most Important Lesson
By Shawn Thomas - Angleton, Texas

"How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the Law of the LORD." (Psalm 119:1)

Well, that eliminates all of us, doesn’t it? Psalm 119 is such a majestic Psalm. It is the longest Psalm, the longest chapter in the entire Bible in fact, at 176 verses. It is divided into 22 sections of eight verses, the verses of each section all starting with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet (1-8 all begin with Aleph, 9-16 all begin with Beth, etc.). And the theme of Psalm 119 is the incomparable word of God. It is well worth our time to read, study, and apply. But it begins with a convicting message which must not be overlooked:
The very first verse of Psalm 119 says: "How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the Law of the LORD." There is much on which to "chew" in Psalm 119, but we need to digest this first: there are NONE of us who qualify for the blessing of this first verse! Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.
The very first verse of Psalm 119 says: "How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the Law of the LORD." (Psalm 119:1, but we need to digest this first: there are NONE of us who qualify for the blessing of this first verse! Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD."}

"Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

The very first verse of Psalm 119 says: "How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the Law of the LORD." (Psalm 119:1, but we need to digest this first: there are NONE of us who qualify for the blessing of this first verse! Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

"Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

The very first verse of Psalm 119 says: "How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the Law of the LORD." (Psalm 119:1, but we need to digest this first: there are NONE of us who qualify for the blessing of this first verse! Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

"Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

The very first verse of Psalm 119 says: "How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the Law of the LORD." (Psalm 119:1, but we need to digest this first: there are NONE of us who qualify for the blessing of this first verse! Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

"Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

The very first verse of Psalm 119 says: "How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the Law of the LORD." (Psalm 119:1, but we need to digest this first: there are NONE of us who qualify for the blessing of this first verse! Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

"Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

The very first verse of Psalm 119 says: "How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the Law of the LORD." (Psalm 119:1, but we need to digest this first: there are NONE of us who qualify for the blessing of this first verse! Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

"Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

The very first verse of Psalm 119 says: "How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the Law of the LORD." (Psalm 119:1, but we need to digest this first: there are NONE of us who qualify for the blessing of this first verse! Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

"Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

The very first verse of Psalm 119 says: "How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the Law of the LORD." (Psalm 119:1, but we need to digest this first: there are NONE of us who qualify for the blessing of this first verse! Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

"Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

The very first verse of Psalm 119 says: "How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the Law of the LORD." (Psalm 119:1, but we need to digest this first: there are NONE of us who qualify for the blessing of this first verse! Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

"Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

The very first verse of Psalm 119 says: "How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the Law of the LORD." (Psalm 119:1, but we need to digest this first: there are NONE of us who qualify for the blessing of this first verse! Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

"Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

The very first verse of Psalm 119 says: "How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the Law of the LORD." (Psalm 119:1, but we need to digest this first: there are NONE of us who qualify for the blessing of this first verse! Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

"Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

The very first verse of Psalm 119 says: "How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the Law of the LORD." (Psalm 119:1, but we need to digest this first: there are NONE of us who qualify for the blessing of this first verse! Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

"Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

The very first verse of Psalm 119 says: "How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the Law of the LORD." (Psalm 119:1, but we need to digest this first: there are NONE of us who qualify for the blessing of this first verse! Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

"Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

The very first verse of Psalm 119 says: "How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the Law of the LORD." (Psalm 119:1, but we need to digest this first: there are NONE of us who qualify for the blessing of this first verse! Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

"Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

The very first verse of Psalm 119 says: "How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the Law of the LORD." (Psalm 119:1, but we need to digest this first: there are NONE of us who qualify for the blessing of this first verse! Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.

"Who among us can say: "My way is BLAMELESS"? Who can assert that they walk in the Law of the LORD.
If you've spent time around the NCBM team, you've surely heard us say, “It's a God thing.” It’s practically our unofficial slogan, and for good reason. God has shown over and over that he’s always a step ahead; positioning the ministry to respond to the needs of aging adults. Along those lines, “It’s a God thing” is the only way to describe the timing of the One Hope outreach that provides a spiritual response to social isolation and loneliness among older North Carolinians. The NCBM HOPE LINE, a toll-free “warm” line for callers experiencing isolation and loneliness, opened in June of 2019. Staff and volunteers were fully trained and experienced when just over the course of a few days in mid-March, calls to the Hope Line exponentially increased. When we begin planning One Hope in 2018, none of us could have imagined the events of March 2020. But God knew.

Demand for the Hope Line has continued to be great. We’ve added two lines and temporarily expanded hours to include weekends. The Hope Line (866.578.9054) is now available daily, 9:00 am - 9:00 pm. Hope Line staff and volunteers help create a sense of strength and grounding in times that feel uncertain. We are trained to skillfully listen and respond to callers. There is power and confirmation in being heard. It's not our job to diminish a caller’s fear or ignore it. Rather, we acknowledge how they are feeling, knowing it can be incredibly isolating and lonely when you don’t have a safe outlet where they can be heard. They also have someone ready and willing to pray with and for them.

If the mission of One Hope speaks to you, we invite you to join our outreach efforts as a volunteer. Our callers would love to hear your voice as you lend a listening ear and share your compassion in a time of need. Get in touch today!

Whitney Brooks, NBC-HWC and Healthy Aging Expert, works with individuals and groups as an integrative health coach. She developed and teaches the specialized training provided to NCBM staff and Hope Line volunteers. Connect with Whitney at www.mswhitneybrooks.com.
In three months, from January 1st to April 1st, the S&P 500 went down almost 25 percent. In the same period, the Federal Funds rate dropped from 1.55% to .06% and our National Debt is expected to expand to over 30 trillion dollars. This information looks alarming for our nation but what does it mean for you and your retirement? First and foremost, this event has significantly impacted your ability to produce income if you are expecting to live off either your investments or interest earnings. A second concern is a likely rise in taxes that will be implemented to pay for this additional national debt. As a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER practitioner, I am trained to look at the impact on both personal and professional lives. This pandemic has caused the largest disruption to both jobs and businesses in my lifetime. The drop in the stock market and tax interest accounts are only rivaled by what took place during the Great Depression. It is a reality that the future will look different, but what we learn from this event could shape our future into a better place.

On a positive note, during this pandemic, I have learned that people are generally good and caring. I have seen that nurses, doctors, schoolteachers, police officers, and public health officials are critical to our society. I have also realized that what many of us deem as essential is very different from what our government deems essential. And most importantly I have learned to appreciate faith, family, and friends more than ever before.

Looking back on my experiences in financial planning I recognize that in the 90’s I was very involved in helping people save for retirement. I primarily worked with nonprofit organizations to implement their retirement plans. At that time, it was all about the efficient frontier (asset allocation) and how diversification could minimize the impact of market fluctuations. It was an interesting theory, but as I have seen several times since the 90’s it is not perfect. If you can wait asset allocation works out in the long run. That is the key statement having the ability to wait. Today as people rely on their investments for income that may not be an option. As I moved into the early 2000’s and more Baby Boomers were retiring, it was a time to get from your retirement accounts needed to be an alternative for pensions plans that were replaced by 401(k), 403(b), 457 and IRA plans. With the loss of pensions, there was a great need for guaranteed income that you could not outlive. This was the dawn of the Annuity era. This type of planning met the need for guaranteed income and was quickly adopted by most financial planning professionals. For the next 15 years, comprehensive retirement planning consisted of balancing your managed portfolio for growth and an annuity for guaranteed income. I have found that most advisors do a pretty good job of these two elements, but over the last 5 years, I have realized this is incomplete retirement planning. Complete planning involves tax-efficient planning. With so much money in these qualified plans (401(k)), there is a tax risk that few consider. If you look at your statement and you see that you have $500,000 in your IRA, most think they have a half of a million dollars. If you try to access this money you will quickly see that you do not have $500,000 but more like $375,000 if you consider a total tax of 25% for state and federal taxes. By being strategic about how you access these funds can reduce the tax you will pay.

As I study the current situation I see that the United States started 2020 with 23 trillion in debt. With the implementation of the stimulus packages and the reduction of tax collection from closed businesses and unemployed workers, it is estimated that our debt will balloon to 30 trillion by the end of the year. Just look at the unemployment numbers and you can see this in real-time. The impact that 0% interest has on savings and fixed income investments complicates conservative investments. There is no place to get a safe return like we used to get on government bonds and bank accounts. The market drop changed the 20-year average of the stock market from just over 6% return to about 4.5% return. This would give a 60/40 portfolio a blended average of 2.7% before taxes and fees. Consider fees in a portfolio of 1% and taxes of 25% and your after-tax net of fees return is 1.275%. Can you live off of this return? I am not providing this information in an attempt to frighten you but rather to make you look clearly at the situation and decide if this is what you want or expect from your retirement plan. You cannot control the market, but you can minimize your taxes.

There is also another very real concern and that is with a debt of 30 trillion dollars do you think taxes will rise or fall? I believe that they will rise, and they will not be limited to your tax brackets. We may see taxes rise in hidden ways. For those on Social Security, we could see all benefits taxed at 100% instead of 85%. We could see the elimination of deductions for our taxes. Finally, we could see our retirement savings taxed at a different rate than income tax rates. These are all risks associated with taxes that we can minimize through planning.

So, my takeaway from this is that these are challenging times. Finding ways to minimize taxes and future taxes can offset some of the limited returns on portfolios. Now is the time to act as we can pay taxes on lower returns, and even many let them grow tax-free.

I wish everyone great health and invite you to schedule a time to talk with me about how I can help you with a complete retirement plan. Give me a call at 828-559-0299 or email me at steve@retirerm.com

Just let me know that you read this article in the Blue Ridge Christian News and I will run a tax analysis of your retirement plan at no cost.

Steven W Gaito is a certified financial planner, owner of Faith Based Health Care and Retirement Resource Management. National Speaker on the topic of Social Security optimization, quoted in national publications like Money Magazine, US News and World Reports and Fox Business. Loves to educate and teach on financial topics like taxation of retirement accounts, long term care, healthcare, and efficient savings plans for small businesses. Has provided financial planning for missionaries through the International Mission Board.
Dear friends,

Allow me, if you will, to begin with a bit of foreign language for you…Sus scrofa domesticus – A Vicious Beast! (If you don’t know Latin, translate as PIG!).

Shortly before moving to Harrell Hill I received a telephone call from my buddy Doug. He described a “situation” in which he was leading his pod of hogs, or is it a herd? May be a word, who cares – it was a platoon of hogs. It seems they had wriggled out of their pen and run amok among the Christmas trees. Neither cow nor pig enjoyed the whimsical frolicking! So Doug set out to save the day…his specialty in my opinion. He took a bucket of pig food pellets, or whatever it’s called, to lure los puerros (that’s Spanish for pigs) down from the feed barn. As though marching along with de porcs (that’s French for pigs) the daddy piggy – aka “Borri” – insisted on a snout full of pig pellets. Now Borri was a rather substantial creature who tipped the scale at 700+ pounds. So, had it been me, I would gladly have surrendered to Borri’s extortion tactics…but not Farmer Clint. I mean, who in charge, right? So when my pal did not acquiesce to Sir Borri’s demands, that monstrous hog chomped a rather sizable chunk of Sir Doug’s backside!

For reasons only the Lord knows, Doug had called to tell me he’d wanted me there to help him move these cannibalistic maiale (that’s Italian for pigs). Have you noticed my different linguistic skills? Whatever! I pondered why ‘my friend’ would subject me to such peril. But, as has happened many times over our quarter-century long friendship, Doug simply chuckled and said he looked forward to my arrival at the farm.

Fast forward 4 months, now it’s July 2010; Doug and Barbara ask if I will “watch the farm” while they go visit one of their children. On the outside I exuded confidence and proclaimed that I would be honored to be “in charge” of Harrell Hill Farms if even for one day. However, deep down in the pit of my soul I was filled with terror and anticipation of what happens if…what happens? Heck, I don’t know what I’m even doing here much less how to handle a genuine farm crisis.

The morning began like most every summer morning in the mountains, cool breezes, the flutter of hummingbirds and butterflies. I went to church, praised God and made plans to visit my friends there. I felt that adrenaline rush of knowing that I would be able to protect and safeguard the farm to myself…a genuine Farmer Clint. After church I returned to the farmhouse relieved that the day was nearly done, Doug and Barbara would soon be home and I had averted disaster. I reclined on the sofa and drifted asleep.

Sometime later I was woken by squeals and grunts the likes of which were unfamiliar to my city-slicker brain. Rubbing my eyes I peaked out the window – when what to my wondering eyes should appear, pigs were everywhere. Digging, rooting, voracious varken (that’s Dutch for pigs) were devouring Barbara’s herb garden and flower bulbs. Oh no, it was “The Nightmare on Byrd Road!”

Quickly, tentatively, I charged into the front yard and tried to re-unite with the swine (that’s German for pigs) of the error of their ways. They continued to graze at the beautiful floral beds as if I were not present. I grabbed a tobacco stick, swung it with authority, bellowed in my best Farmer Clint voice…all the while praying “Lord, please don’t let these pigs eat me.”

Miracle of miracles, a mere tap of the pole and that sweet piggy family ceased its demolition and looked at me. My confidence blossomed as one-by-one hog, sow, piglets fell into line and followed me down Byrd Road. At last I was a genuine badge carrying pig farmer. (Importantly, when I first sprang out the door of the church I had filled my pockets with tomatoes for insurance. I figured that if it ‘went bad’ I could hold them off with treats, imagining a slow death but at least they would have eaten something before turning on me!)

The relaxed stroll – Farmer Clint and his pig friends -- proceeded incident free for nearly 300 yards, the sweet scent of honeysuckle wafting on a soft summer breeze (I think it was honeysuckle, perhaps it was kudzu…how was I supposed to know – I’m new to this. But the air was clear and fragrant!) I thought to myself, “Doug will be so proud of me for corralling these critters. At last I accomplished something on my own…NO PIG LEFT BEHIND, that’s my motto. And, for once, Doug did not have to rescue me!”

Suddenly, without warning, the fat-back brigade sprinted in every direction. I was stunned, baffled, befuddled; my confidence and swagger gave way to fear, confusion and doubt. I knew this was Showtime and quickly bounded in pursuit…swinging my tobacco stick, speaking in a Darth Vader voice, chasing the slippery, bacon bits toward the Aunt Mae barn.

Ya know what? I managed to corner all but one of the little rascals and ‘drove’ them into the pen like a pro (okay, they sort of went in by themselves but I was present). But one little piggy, this little piggy,....she was outta heah! She wriggled her way through the cabbage patch, pausing long enough to destroy a few of the choice tender heads; bolted through the thick Christmas tree field, where I followed and was scratched, bruised, fell on my face and nearly broke my leg. We were heading toward the meadow for a Farmer Clint vs. Porker faceoff!

I exited the Christmas trees the speedy piggy stopped…sniffed the air, pawed the earth, and made that guttural sound from deep in his belly (and, by the way, pigs do not say OINK OINK but something far more threatening). In a flash he span on his piggy hoofs and gleared into my eyes (I later observed that one of the butt tomatoes had fallen from my pocket and somehow the little ham noticed!) He followed the briar piggy through the Christmas tree maze I looked over my shoulder and observed the monster finishing the red tomato fruit.

His snack now history, the Son of Boris opined that perhaps Farmer Clint had more ripe tomatoes in his pockets and decided to investigate further. Scampering at the speed of light he charged, I ran like the wind. (Okay, with a fused right ankle I sort of hobbled along but at least I was in the lead).

Pig weed scarred my groin, ground hog caverns nearly severed my ankles, knees mauled my Farmer Clint face, and it was a race against certain death. I would not succumb to a man-eating piglet!

Huffing, puffing I was near cardiac arrest when it came to me…empty your pockets; give it up, all of it, and be saved! Slowing to a mere trot I strategically dropped the delicious morsels in my wallet. The ferocious pork loin slid to a stop and inhaled my offerings. This pig was truly famished, leaving no evidence of the banquet. And then, THEN, after completing the feast he approached slowly – I bristled for battle, tobacco stick at the ready. I poised to strike my very best blow as he joyfully skipped around me, making a path toward the barn. It seems my satiated little ham-hock was now interested only in reuniting with his family. Cautionedly I advanced in front of him, opened the gate, and gingerly coaxed him into the pen. Smiling up at me it was if he was saying, “This was my destination all along.”

It was over…ended…terminated…finis. Pigs in place, Farmer Clint in charge.

King of the farm! Predictably Doug and Barbara arrived home late afternoon. “Well, Pollard, how did everything go?” Doug asked. Filled with pride, my swagger intact, I replied, “No problem, Doug. I’ve got this thing well in hand. Running Harrell Hill Farms is a piece of cake.”

Secretly, of course, I knew that I once again the Lord had saved my bacon on the Funny Farm!

Farmer Clint
Witness of Scripture
By Glenda Ward
McDowell County

Believeth: To adhere to, committal to, faith in, reliance upon, trust in, this person, and this involves not only the consent of the mind but an act of the heart and willingness of the person.

“Whenever believeth in Him” is equivalent to whosoever trusts in or commits themselves to Christ. Belief is faith which consists of believing and receiving what God has revealed.

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” Everlasting life is not only a future hope but the present possession of everyone who believes in Salvation through Christ Jesus.

The story of The Woman at the Well is a well-known story in the Bible; many Christians can easily summarize this story. On the surface, the story chronicles morality, preconceived ideas, and a woman who was avoided or shunned by her community. In Scripture, she is described as the Samaritan woman. She is not named but is identified by her nationality. But to take a deeper look, we realize it reveals a great deal about Jesus’ character. Jesus is a master teacher and He taught in a variety of ways. He spoke frequently to the multitudes, He also spent considerable time giving kindly attention to individuals in one-on-one situations. In this, we should follow His example.

Jesus’ conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well is told in the Book of John chapter 4. The Samaritans had once been Jews. They knew about the coming Messiah. They knew Jewish law. But they had intermarried with people of other faiths that had brought new gods into their land, and as a result, they knew that they would be excluded when the Messiah came.

The story falls into three major segments:

- Why the Lord happened to be passing through Samaria.
- The actual exchange between Jesus and the Samaritan woman.
- The effect that ultimately was produced as a result of this encounter.

The Lord’s travels were meticulously structured to enhance the greatest advantage for the success of His coming Kingdom. The timing was of importance, for everything must proceed on schedule to that most important hour. Jesus’ ministry and teaching was the stage for the success of His coming Kingdom. The timing was of importance, for He knew that He was the one who was to come. In His timing He knew that several happenings are in order.

Jesus and His disciples left Judea and went to Galilee passing through Samaria, coming to a city called Sychar which was near the parcel of land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now, Jesus on His journey came to Jacob’s well, and being tired from His travel sat down on the wall at the well at about the sixth hour while His disciples went into the village about a half-hour away, to buy food. [In His humanity Jesus experienced the same physical limitations that all humans experience.]

While Jesus is at the well a woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me to drink.” And knowing the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans, the woman asks Jesus why He asks for a drink from her, a woman of Samaria. Jesus answers this woman in John chapter 4 verse 10. Three things are significant about Jesus’ encounter with this Samaritan woman. First, she was a Samarian and Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. Second, she was a woman and Jesus spoke to her despite the fact. Jewish men did not speak to women in public. Third, Jesus asked for her to get Him a drink of water, although using her cup or dipper would have made Him ceremonially unclean. The most common view to the origin of the Samaritans was that they were of a mixed-race who developed as a result of intermarriages and other pagans who eventually infiltrated the land mingling with them. There was much animosity between Jews and the Samaritans. Given her heritage, this Samaritan woman was not a stranger to Jewish teachings, which said that there would be a Messiah who would come and save His people. Given her heritage, this Samaritan woman was not a stranger to Jewish teachings, which said that there would be a Messiah who would come and save His people. But she was not a Jew, and so salvation would not be coming for to. At least, that is what she thought until that day when Jesus spoke to her.

Jesus told her of all the things going on in her life. Jesus’ behavior was shocking. This woman had the word details publicized about the essence. Jesus knew this woman. He knew her history. He knew what she had gone through. He knew her emotions and her heart. He knew her miseries and her sorrows. He knew her joys and her sorrows. He knew her life. He could not possibly have known naturally. This woman began to realize this man was not like other Jewish men. How did He know so much about her? In John chapter 4 verse 13 and 14 Jesus goes on to tell her about the living water and everlasting life. Jesus spoke of the “free gift” of “living water” that bestows life such that she would never thirst again. Jesus used the word water to refer to eternal life, the gift that would satisfy her soul’s desire was only available through Him. As the woman began to grasp the reality of her encounter with Jesus, she makes a statement in John chapter 4 verse 25. Jesus says unto her, “I that speak unto thee am He.” “The woman then left her waterpot, and went away into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?” The woman’s testimony to the people of the community was compelling. She claimed to have met a man “who told her of all the things that ever she did.” This was a strong suggestion of Jesus’ supernatural nature. Her careful choice of words produced the exact response for which she hoped. She wanted the people of Sychar departed from the city and made their way to find Jesus. From verse thirty-five we can figure that it is December or January on the occasion of His journey (since the harvest occurs in April-May). Jesus says to his disciples, you are saying, “There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest?” “I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, (perhaps beckoning toward a multitude of people approaching down the road; the human crop, who, even now, are ripe for harvest.”), and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.” Many of the Samaritans believed in Him for the saying of the woman which testified. The Samaritans came to Him, they besought Him that He would stay with them two more days. Jesus stayed two more days in Sychar teaching the people of the community. The outcast Samaritans recognized Him and accepted Him for who he truly was, the Lord and Savior.

What took place that day had everything to do with timing. Most women didn’t go to draw water in the heat of the day. They usually went in the morning when it was cool. But this woman went out in the middle of the day when she perhaps expected no one else to be there, and that is exactly when Jesus met her. At the beginning of time, God already knew the outcome, and as she went to the well in the middle of the day, perhaps He smiled, thinking, ‘I have someone just waiting for you! He must have been filled with joy knowing that she was about to discover the only One who could satisfy her heart and give Her True Hope. He was just sitting on the wall of the well, waiting …at the exact place she would be …at the exact time that there would be a Messiah who would encounter her. Today we can know that He does the same for us. He sees us coming. He knows everything about us, and He loves us just as we are. Sometimes, the busyness of our day keeps us from looking for Him, but He is waiting for us. And when you encounter Jesus, you will experience His gentleness of His voice, and it will be impossible to miss His presence again. He positions Himself in our life so we can meet Him face to face just when we need Him the most. He is with us always.

Glenda Ward is a member of Grand View Baptist Church in McDowell County. She is the mother of five grown children. Glenda is a Christian writer/author of “Something to Think About” – weekly Christian Articles. She writes Church Programs & Bulletins, VBS Material, Christmas and Easter Programs; all material based on the KJV of the Bible. Also testing the field in tributes, individual memoir writings, etc.

Next Best Thing to Family, Mitchell County Transportation 828-688-4715
Where we treat you like family
Trusty Over Reasoning
by Marlene Houk
Burse County

My twelve-year-old daughter showed me her sewing project. I tilted my head and tried to see the familiar shape of a pair of pants, but it wasn’t working. Instead of seeing the back and front inside legs together, she had sewn the two back legs together and repeated this with the two front legs. When she sewed the important inseam, the outside seams of the legs were on the inside, and the pants were upside down! Now, a cute little curve jutted out from each side, and the pockets fluttered at ankle-length. My daughter thought that, since the pieces were cut together, they should be sewn together. We both laughed with abandon, realizing that her reasoning was off.

My daughter’s experience reminds me of Naomi’s story in the Bible, located in the book of Ruth. Naomi was Ruth’s daughter-in-law, dedicated and kind. She had accepted Naomi’s Jehovah God and moved with her back to Naomi’s hometown of Bethlehem. Their physical journey becomes the door which opens upon several spiritual journeys that occur in this story.

In chapter one, Naomi travels from human reasoning to trusting the LORD, and her adventure transports her from despair to delight. In chapter one, Naomi’s reasoning rests on her own ability to fix Ruth’s and Orpah’s dilemma and find her two widowed daughters-in-law husbands. At the end of the chapter, she declares that the LORD sent her out full, and she has returned empty, assuming that if she’s hurting, God hates her. Her humanness craved an answer to her sorrow above God’s Word. And, today, we seek immediate solutions within our reasoning when, instead, God offers an immeasurable future of divine delight. Naomi looked at life through her physical senses. She was unable to look beyond her circumstances and trust her Redeemer to banish bitterness.

However, Naomi changes in chapter two. She admits that someone other than herself has provided for them. In stark contrast to chapter one, she focuses on someone other than herself: Boaz. And in Ruth 2:19-20, she recognized the LORD’s part in relieving their poverty.

In chapter three, Naomi trusted that the LORD who provided their food would also provide a permanent solution. She could not force Boaz to accept Ruth’s request to redeem them; she could only do what she told Ruth to do in verse 18: sit still.

Chapter four tells the result of her refocus from reasoning to trusting. Naomi was willing to journey in her trust, and her faulty conclusions faded into the distance. Human thinking hinders holy trust. But trusting the LORD brought Naomi fruitfulness in the form of a sweet grandson and healing purpose to her pain.

We can trace Naomi’s journey from reasoning to trusting with the simple repetition of her name for her God. Naomi grieved deeply the loss of her husband and sons, and she was justifiably filled with despair. But she continues to call Him, LORD, six times. LORD includes the idea of God seeking a relationship with His people. Naomi embraces this when she addresses Him as LORD whether in the anguish of heart (Ruth 1:13) or thankfulness (Ruth 2:20). She opens her wounded heart, showing her relationship with her God by calling Him, LORD. Naomi hadn’t deserted her LORD; she simply couldn’t see beyond her grief which is a normal reaction. But, through the cracks in her heart, the LORD shines through to us.

Naomi’s instructions to Ruth revealed her heart and documented her own journey from reasoning to trusting. What template did Naomi share that would help us turn from reasoning to trusting?

She told Ruth in Chapter 3, verse 18 to “sit still my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall; for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.” As if to underscore her instructions, neither Ruth nor Naomi speak for the remainder of the book.

The rest that Naomi sought for Ruth becomes the spiritual rest that our souls crave. Hebrews 4:9 tells us that, as Christians, we already have the spiritual rest we need so desperately because Our Redeemer declared that His sacrifice was finished. Boaz reminds us of Christ in that he also finished Ruth’s and Naomi’s redemption process, allowing them to rest. We can enjoy the rest that we have in Christ, relaxing in His plan for us. We know that we trust God when we stop depending upon ourselves to solve our problem. We still go. We still work. But we leave the reasoning to our Redeemer.

My daughter continued to sew, but she has also learned to follow directions carefully, seeking help if uncertain. And that is key to a life of faith: subjecting our reasoning to the sweet trust we find in the LORD as He gives us directions from His Word.

Marlene Houk is a regular contributor to Blue Ridge Christian News. Her passion is to delve deeply into the truths of Bible women and to discuss those in Bible Studies called Backstage Pass to Bible Women. She and her husband discover joy, nurture, and challenge in their church. Her contact is marlenehouk@bellsouth.net Learn more about women at the Bible in Marlene's website: www.MarleneHouk.com
Get away to The Cove in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains of Asheville and experience life-changing seminars led by renowned Bible teachers. Or plan a self-directed or staff-guided Personal Spiritual Retreat and privately focus on God in the serenity of our 1,200 secluded acres. All seminars are free of charge in 2020. (Material, food, and lodging fees apply.) FOR DETAILS, VISIT THECOVE.ORG OR CALL 828-771-4800.

“Hear what the Spirit says.”
—REVELATION 3:22, NKJV
In my previous articles, I wrote about four “Inward” Habits of the Heart or spiritual disciplines that we must pursue in our faith journey to maturity in Christ. As we choose to spiritually discipline ourselves, the Holy Spirit then transforms us into the image of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Those first four inward habits, Meditation, Prayer, Fasting, and Study are the first four of what is known as twelve fundamental spiritual disciplines for the believer. The next four “inward” habits of the Christian life are the four of what is called the Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). Peter and Paul wrote about the Fruit of the Spirit in their letters to the churches. Those four “inward” spiritual Disciplines that must be practiced in order for God to continue to mold us into the image of His Son. The practice of the outward disciplines is evidence of a maturing relationship with Christ. By faith, we have been reconciled to a new relationship with Christ. But it is only as we mature in Christ that we will live in the world differently from ourselves to live for Christ. As we live for Christ, we take on the character of Christ, allowing the Holy Spirit to produce the Fruit of the Spirit, and only then will we choose to live lives of Simplicity, Solitude, Submission, and Service.

Given these outward disciplines is “Simplicity.” It is indeed timely that a discussion of simplicity comes up at this particular time when governmental restrictions surrounding the threat of the coronavirus pandemic have become stricter and tighter; and a time when access to goods and services has been diminished and curtailed. There has been widespread discussion of an “inward lifestyle of simplicity.” The need for an inward and outward lifestyle of simplicity is demonstrated in Scripture.

The search which is described in the Spiritual Disciple of Simplicity is “an inward reality that results in an outward lifestyle.” Lifestyle choices are very personal, and most are very private. Most, if not all, of our choices, are conditioned responses to what we have learned; what we have understood to be true; or what we think that we need in order to survive. So, along with an American culture that has put an extreme value on the rights of individuals, it certainly seems that the average American has become more and more selfish. That sadly includes Christians. Our culture bombards us with powerful messages (e.g., more is better; luxury gives joy and/or happiness; money provides security; entertainment provides rest, etc.). That truism lures us into the pursuit of more and more things. We have become selfish and self-centered—and in becoming selfish, our hearts are torn away from pursuing a simple life and walk of faith with Christ Jesus.

The Spiritual Discipline of Simplicity is God’s answer to selfish humanity—and it is His demand of us who choose to live for Him and for His glory. Foster further defines simplicity as “the discipline of freeing ourselves from unnecessary excess and self-gratifying luxury.” Isolated and removed from material things during this pandemic has forced all the world’s citizens into simpler lives and lifestyle choices. A new reality is the inward and outward lifestyle of simplicity. To know that all that we have is from God frees us. To know that it is God’s business to care for all that we have is freeing. To know that all of our goods are available to others is freeing. The adverse is, as Foster warns, “If what we have we believe we have gotten, and if what we have we believe we must hold onto, and if what we have is not available to others, then we will live in anxiety.”

God’s children are called to practice the Spiritual Discipline of Simplicity. It is an inward reality that results in an outward lifestyle. A child of God lives an outward lifestyle of simplicity when he/she makes choices out of freedom, grace, love, and a commitment to seek first God’s kingdom (His eternal plans and purposes). And that, my brothers, and sisters in Christ, produces peace in a time of fear, trouble, and difficulty. May the peace of God be with you all.

Finally, let me pass along some deep wisdom from Richard Foster, who shares that when God’s people are living in freedom from anxiety, then three inner attitudes will be present: (1) If what we have we receive as a gift, and (2) if what we have is to be cared for by God, and (3) if what we have is available to others; then we will possess freedom from anxiety. This is, perhaps, one of the greatest descriptions of the inward reality of simplicity. To know that all that we have is from God is freeing. To know that it is God’s business to care for all that we have is freeing. To know that all of our goods are available to others is freeing. The adverse is, as Foster warns, “If what we have we believe we have gotten, and if what we have we believe we must hold onto, and if what we have is not available to others, then we will live in anxiety.”

Finally, let me pass along some deep wisdom from Richard Foster, who shares that when God’s people are living in freedom from anxiety, then three inner attitudes will be present: (1) If what we have we receive as a gift, and (2) if what we have is to be cared for by God, and (3) if what we have is available to others; then we will possess freedom from anxiety. This is, perhaps, one of the greatest descriptions of the inward reality of simplicity. To know that all that we have is from God is freeing. To know that it is God’s business to care for all that we have is freeing. To know that all of our goods are available to others is freeing. The adverse is, as Foster warns, “If what we have we believe we have gotten, and if what we have we believe we must hold onto, and if what we have is not available to others, then we will live in anxiety.”

God’s children are called to practice the Spiritual Discipline of Simplicity. It is an inward reality that results in an outward lifestyle. A child of God lives an outward lifestyle of simplicity when he/she makes choices out of freedom, grace, love, and a commitment to seek first God’s kingdom (His eternal plans and purposes). And that, my brothers, and sisters in Christ, produces peace in a time of fear, trouble, and difficulty. May the peace of God be with you all.

Finally, let me pass along some deep wisdom from Richard Foster, who shares that when God’s people are living in freedom from anxiety, then three inner attitudes will be present: (1) If what we have we receive as a gift, and (2) if what we have is to be cared for by God, and (3) if what we have is available to others; then we will possess freedom from anxiety. This is, perhaps, one of the greatest descriptions of the inward reality of simplicity. To know that all that we have is from God is freeing. To know that it is God’s business to care for all that we have is freeing. To know that all of our goods are available to others is freeing. The adverse is, as Foster warns, “If what we have we believe we have gotten, and if what we have we believe we must hold onto, and if what we have is not available to others, then we will live in anxiety.”

Finally, let me pass along some deep wisdom from Richard Foster, who shares that when God’s people are living in freedom from anxiety, then three inner attitudes will be present: (1) If what we have we receive as a gift, and (2) if what we have is to be cared for by God, and (3) if what we have is available to others; then we will possess freedom from anxiety. This is, perhaps, one of the greatest descriptions of the inward reality of simplicity. To know that all that we have is from God is freeing. To know that it is God’s business to care for all that we have is freeing. To know that all of our goods are available to others is freeing. The adverse is, as Foster warns, “If what we have we believe we have gotten, and if what we have we believe we must hold onto, and if what we have is not available to others, then we will live in anxiety.”

God’s children are called to practice the Spiritual Discipline of Simplicity. It is an inward reality that results in an outward lifestyle. A child of God lives an outward lifestyle of simplicity when he/she makes choices out of freedom, grace, love, and a commitment to seek first God’s kingdom (His eternal plans and purposes). And that, my brothers, and sisters in Christ, produces peace in a time of fear, trouble, and difficulty. May the peace of God be with you all.
By John McCoury
Roan Mountain, Tennessee

AS we read in (GALATIANS 6:9): “And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not it garden time again.” If you have ever attempted to grow a garden from seeds, then you have probably learned a few lessons as my first attempted garden from seeds. The spiritual parallels that God has interwoven into creation are truly phenomenal, and I learned a lot of through that little garden. The first lesson I learned is that a garden that produces fruit mid-summer is the result of a daily process that begins during the frost of winter. When spending a week or two watering pots of dirt indoors that have no sign of life above ground, you begin to have a tiny “crisis of faith,” wondering if your daily efforts are completely in vain. Then the first signs of green life nudged their way through the soil, and a twinkle of hope is born. But the garden is still a long way from bearing fruit at that point. Attention to the delicate seedlings must be deliberate and consistent each day after those first signs of life appear to nurture the sprouts into plants that will be ready to brave the outdoors after the last frost. What a picture of our spiritual needs! The watering of our souls through God’s Word and the exposure to the Son daily are key ingredients to growing roots fit for our thriving in this world. I spent weeks watering those tiny plants after finally getting them outdoors. I began this phase hopeful, but as the changes in the garden took place at a less-than-visible pace, I felt myself growing less enthusiastic about the process. Such is life, right? One morning a string of tough moments occurred as a wife and mom doubted whether any of my efforts would one day bear fruit. It was then that the Holy Spirit intervened in my thoughts through Galatians 6:9: “Let us not get tired of doing good, for we will reap at the proper time if we do not give up.” During the times when we are not visually able to see the fruit of our labor, let us be encouraged that our job is to keep showing up, knowing the results are in God’s hands. Father, You have promised that if I will sow seeds of goodness through the power of Your Spirit at work within me, I will reap a harvest of blessing in due time. Help me to hold on to that promise in the waiting. Harvesting! Cor. (5–9). Everybody has a place in the Lord’s harvest, and all are doing His work (John 4:34–38). There must be no competing or comparing, for the Lord alone recognizes the work and gives the reward. It makes no difference who the servant is as long as Jesus Christ is Lord of the harvest. When you give to others whose ministry blesses you, you are sowing seed that will bear fruit. When you use your resources for sinful purposes, you sow to the flesh and will reap a sad harvest.in conclusion Isaiah 55:10-13 “For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.” Here are some suggestions for fifteen rows worth planting: Four rows of peas: Preparedness Perseverance Promptness Politeness, then three rows of squash: Squash gossip, Squash criticism, Squash selfishness: along with five rows of lettuce: Let us be unselfish, Let us be loyal, Let us love one another, Let us be truthful, Let us be faithful in duty. And three rows of turnips: Turn up with a smile, Turn up with a new idea, and Turn up with determination. And then? Water, weed, tend with care, and patiently watch the garden grow.

John McCoury is pastor of Evergreen church in Roan Mountain, Tennessee and also chaplain at Roan Highlands Nursing Center.

Scott W. Murphy, D.M.D., P.A
General Dentistry for the Family

We Love To See You Smile!
Always Accepting New Patients • Insurance Filed For You
Monday - Thursday 8-5
Friday 8-2
(828) 433-1223
341 East Parker Road, Morganton, NC 28655

May 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 20
Now that is something for us all to think about! life in a wonderful place called heaven where Covid-19 will never enter that city. They then rolled a rock stone in front of that tomb—ROCKS. His dead rock hill called Golgotha—ROCKS. They took His body and placed it in a tomb—ROCKS. They gave Him vinegar to drink—ROCKS. They took Him to a into evil—ROCKS. They spit upon Him—ROCKS. They mocked and ridiculed and rejected by men—ROCKS. When He did good, somebody tried to turn it into evil—ROCKS. They spit upon Him—ROCKS. They mocked and ridiculed Him—ROCKS. They gave Him vinegar to drink—ROCKS. They took Him to a rock hill called Golgotha—ROCKS. They took His body and placed it in a tomb—ROCKS. They then rolled a rock stone in front of that tomb—ROCKS. His dead and lifeless body laid for three days in that rock tomb—ROCKS. But early on the third day, up from the dead He rose and from a rock tomb called Calvary flows a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the Tree of Life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” But not everyone will be there. Revelation 2:7 tells us to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. The overcomer will not be hurt by the second death. (Rev. 2:11) and will sit with Jesus on his throne Rev. 3:21. When we overcome sin in our life, we are proving God’s way is perfect and we will enjoy the rewards of Heaven. I may be physically looking at a large oak tree, but it’s nothing compared to the Tree of Life we will see when we overcome.

For thirteen years he had nothing but ROCKS in his life. He was hated by his brothers—ROCKS. He was sold as a slave into Egypt—ROCKS. He was thrown into prison—ROCKS. But when it was all over, Joseph discovered honey from the rocks. It was those rock experiences that elevated him to be second in charge of Egypt. Joseph experienced honey from the rock.

This was also true of Jesus. If anybody knew about rock experiences, it was our Lord Himself. Have you ever thought about all the rocks Jesus faced when He walked among us? He was born into a poor family—ROCKS. He was despised and rejected by men—ROCKS. When He did good, somebody tried to turn it into evil—ROCKS. They spit upon Him—ROCKS. They mocked and ridiculed Him—ROCKS. They gave Him vinegar to drink—ROCKS. They took Him to a rock hill called Golgotha—ROCKS. They took His body and placed it in a tomb—ROCKS. They then rolled a rock stone in front of that tomb—ROCKS. His dead and lifeless body laid for three days in that rock tomb—ROCKS. But early on the third day, up from the dead He rose and from a rock tomb called Calvary flows for you and me today the sweet honey of salvation and the sweet honey of eternal life in a wonderful place called heaven where Covid-19 will never enter that city.

Now that is something for us all to think about!

Dr. Dennis Love is the Senior Pastor at Glenwood Baptist Church in Marion, NC. He and his wife Vicki have been married for 39 years and they have been in Marion for five years. They have two sons and three grandchildren.
Asheville, N.C. (March 31, 2020) – The Board of Directors for Dogwood Health Trust recently approved the allocation of $10 million to address COVID-19 needs throughout the 18 counties and Qualla boundary region of Western North Carolina. The funds are to support the goal of “flattening the curve” in the COVID-19 epidemic here locally. Efforts are focused on supporting both the increased access to testing and advocating for social distancing measures; mitigating negative social impacts like food insecurity or educational disparities as well as shoring up regional healthcare resources by investing in the production of additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and hygiene supplies for healthcare workers.

Dogwood is partnering with Asheville-based Cultivated Cocktails (formerly H&H Distillery) and Southeastern Container Inc. in Buncombe County to produce and bottle hand sanitizer. Cultivated Cocktails is one of a few distilleries trying to curb the shortage of hygiene products by using the ethanol produced for whiskey and converting it to battle bacteria. “We began our mission with our Sanitizer Donation program to provide as much sanitizer as possible to our region with no charge,” said Taylor Howard, Founder/Owner, Cultivated Cocktails. “Partnering with Dogwood makes that possible, potentially helping thousands during this pandemic.”

Southeastern joined the collaborative effort by offering to create bottles for the solution, which will be divided between health care professionals, first responders, and nonprofits who are at the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the general public. “Partnering with Dogwood was truly the right thing to do,” said Doug Wehrkamp, President and COO, Southeastern Container Inc. “We are glad to help and truly hope we can do our part to help combat this horrible virus as quickly as possible.”

“As was the case with Kitsbow and others who have stepped up to meet a growing need in our region, Cultivated Cocktails (H&H Distillery) and Southeastern saw that need and responded,” said Antony Chiang, CEO for Dogwood Health Trust. “We’re happy to be able to fuel some of this momentum with investments and collaborative partnerships like this one. Not only are these innovative partnerships working on multiple levels to save lives, they are that ‘win, win, win’ that Dogwood is looking for that benefits local companies, employees, and our community.”

Dogwood continues to look for opportunities where the Trusts’ engagement will catalyze the capacity to do more where needed, and where the coordinated effort will ensure an equitable and wise distribution of resources to multiple sectors and geographic areas throughout the region. Innovative partners are encouraged to reach out to Dogwood via their website or by emailing covid@dogwoodhealthtrust.org.

Dogwood Health Trust is a North Carolina nonprofit corporation with the sole purpose of dramatically improving the health and well-being of all people and communities of Western North Carolina. Dogwood Health Trust became operational upon the sale of Mission Health’s assets to HCA Healthcare and is the recipient of the net proceeds of the sale. To learn more, please visit www.dht.org.
 vine to ease the excitement. When we arrived there were only a few people there, but it was enough to keep the bull interested. We would sometimes plan ahead and make sure to have refreshments ready for when the train arrived, so that when it pulled into the station the passengers could enjoy some light refreshments as they disembarked.

The train always arrived on time, but it was often a surprise to see what kind of weather it would be when it arrived. Sometimes it would be a hot, humid day with high humidity, and other times it would be a cold, windy day with low temperatures. But no matter what the weather was like, the train always provided a great opportunity to see the world from a different perspective.

One of the things that my family always enjoyed about the train ride was the chance to see the local wildlife. We would often spot deer, rabbits, and birds along the tracks, and it was always a thrill to watch them in their natural habitat. We would also sometimes spot other trains on the tracks, and it was always exciting to see how close we could get to them without getting too close.

I have so many memories of those train rides, and they all seem to be so far away. But even though the train is no longer running, I can still remember the feeling of excitement and wonder that I felt as I rode along those tracks. And I know that those memories will always stay with me, reminding me of the joy and wonder of childhood.

Preacher Chris Rathbone serves as Pastor at Mine Creek Baptist Church.

Hector was a great man, and he had a big heart. He loved his family and his community, and he always had a smile on his face. I will always remember the way he would light up when he talked about his family and his church. He was a true gentleman, and he will be missed by many.

Dr. Buddy Freeman is now serving as the pastor at First Baptist Church of Marshall, NC.

Dr. Buddy Freeman is now serving as the pastor at First Baptist Church of Marshall, NC.

Whom's better than the easy button?

The Greenes button!

2018 Jeep Wrangler Sport 4X4 – Stock 2801A

2.0 Liter Turbo Engine, Automatic, 3 Piece Hard Top, Heated Seats & Steering Wheel. Only 6,000 Miles.

Buy Now $28,900!

What’s easier than the easy button?

The Greenes button!

2019 Jeep Wrangler Sport 4X4 – Stock 2801A

2.0 Liter Turbo Engine, Automatic, 3 Piece Hard Top, Heated Seats & Steering Wheel. Only 6,000 Miles.

Buy Now $28,900!

7 SMART REASONS TO BUY CERTIFIED FACTORY BOURDO:

1. 7-YEAR/100,000-MILE FACTORY WARRANTY
2. 3-MONTH/3,000-MILE SERVICE PLAN
3. 125-POINT INSPECTION
4. CARFAX REPORTS
5. 24-HOUR ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE
6. CAR RENTAL ALLOWANCE
7. SIRIUS SATELLITE RADIO

2018 Jeep Wrangler Sport 4X4 – Stock 2801A

2.0 Liter Turbo Engine, Automatic, 3 Piece Hard Top, Heated Seats & Steering Wheel. Only 6,000 Miles.

Buy Now $28,900!
In recent weeks, we have seen many changes in our lives. We have become all too familiar with terms such as “social distancing” and “quarantine.” Nearly all sporting events were canceled in a very short time, causing some to question what to do in their spare time. Others received the heart-breaking news that they have lost their job. As we face a path still defined by uncertainty, we do well to pray like the psalmist, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23-24).

The first question we must ask is “Where is my trust?” Fear is the natural response to an individual’s loss of security and comes in a variety of ways. What will the economy do? How will I provide? Scripture necessitates that believers place unwavering confidence in God, the One who never changes (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8). Proverbs 3:5-6 instructs us, “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

Philippians 4:6-7 teaches, “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” If your trust is truly placed in God, you will discover peace, even in times of uncertainty. Those who trust God must trust the nature of God’s plan. God’s plan is described briefly in Philippians 1:6, “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” This work was begun the moment of salvation and will be culminated when we are glorified. This plan is further elaborated in Romans 8:28-30. All that God directs and/or allows into our lives will be sovereignly brought about to produce that which is beneficial.

We must also trust the nature of God’s promises. While many promises can be cited, I will cite only one. Hebrews 13:5 urges us, “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Regardless of what we may face as believers, we can be assured that we will never face it alone.

A second question we must ask is “What are my priorities?” These times have shown how fluid and changing everything can become in a short time. Jobs that were certain become uncertain. Offices are closed and people are sent home, some to work at home, while others to not work at all. Such change produces uncertainty and reveals one’s priorities. What is truly important? Is it the security of a job? Or is it your walk with the Lord? Matthew 6:33 teaches, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Colossians 3:1-3 teaches, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” God often allows trials to enter our lives to remind us of that which is truly important. Use this time to prayerfully examine your own life to determine what God is trying to teach you.

Pastor Dan Qurollo is pastor Morganton Baptist Church. Check us out on our website www.morgantonbaptist.net or find us on Facebook and YouTube.
Window Shopping For Death

By Steve Bietz
Burke County

This Spring, my wife and I decided to spend some money and do some needed upgrades on our home. We are getting some windows replaced. Our home was built in the late 80s and still has the original single pane windows. New windows do not come cheap. We don't know if this will be the last home we own or if we will sell it as we get older, but in either case, we thought it best to upgrade our windows. We took some time to consider the financial phases and minuses. This is several thousands of dollars. We considered the wear and tear on our furnace as it works harder because of our outdated less efficient windows. We looked at the monthly electric bills. We looked at resale value. And after considering the cost, we decided that the best deal was that we would replace our windows.

Maybe you have had to consider home upgrade costs lately. Maybe your furnace, or your siding, or your roof, was a replacement cost you needed to consider. Much of our lives are about price tags. Of course, my article title is suggesting we consider the cost of death. Now I am not referring to the funeral package you choose, although that is indeed a cost to consider. According to the National Funeral Directors Association, the average traditional burial can cost around $9000.00 once all services are accounted for. While the averages for cremation are between $2000.00 - $4000.00. Something to consider for sure.

Jesus indicated that becoming a Christian and a disciple is a serious thoughtful process. Could it be like considering the cost of window replacement? Luke (14:25-35) records that great crowds were following Jesus when He turned to them on this particular occasion and reminded His listeners of the seriousness of looking at the price tag. Count the cost is His message. How foolish it would be if we were a builder who began construction without getting estimates on the costs. You might run out of money after only laying down the foundation. I certainly got estimates on replacing the windows in my house. Or what if you were a king with 10,000 men, Jesus noted, and the army you are going to face has 20,000 men. Wouldn't you want to think this thing over a good bit before you charged at the enemy? Might want to ask for peace terms instead of attacking. Jesus said that we should make sure that following Him is worth it. There is no room here for a decision to be made on a whim and a prayer. There are serious consequences to consider...life-threatening consequences.

Sometimes, I have been able to make a quick decision about the cost of a decision. I owned a printing company for many years. One day, I got a call from a fellow who said that my printing company had been recommended to him. So, we made an appointment when I would come to his business and discuss what he wanted to print. When I arrived, the owner of the company was on the phone, so I had a few minutes to browse around his company, which was a men's clothing store. As I looked at a rack of sports coats, one my size caught my eye and I took it off the rack to get a better look at it. It was nice so I reached for the tag hanging from the sleeve so that I could consider the cost. I got to tell you, I thought the price tag had been misprinted. Remember, this is just a sport's jacket. The cost was $4000.00. I very gently put the jacket back on the rack, in the hope that I did not dare damage it. The cost consideration was so obvious that I did not think to look at the price tag. Count the cost is His message. How foolish it would be to consider the cost of death and taxes that are unavoidable on this planet. No, I am referring to eternal death. If we are comparing the price of eternal death to the price of eternal life, what are the considering factors? What is your life worth? The currency of heaven is love and it is best seen expressed in charity. That is where we find our true value. Count the cost? How can any price be too much to live in God's love today, and for eternity? Jesus may demand everything, but it is still the best bargain that the world has ever known. As you consider the cost of being a disciple for Christ, count the cost of not following Christ.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. John 13:34-35

Steve Bietz, Pastor, Morganton Seventh day Adventist Church.

Steven W Gaito
CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™

With an estimated 30 trillion dollars of debt by the end of they year, what impact will this have on the taxes you pay on your retirement?

Let me show you what it could be and how to minimize the impact of taxes in retirement.

To schedule an appointment email, me or call me at the number below.

68 South Main Street, Suite 200 Marion NC 28752
(828) 559-0299
Steve@retirerm.com

The Western Sizzlin Steak of the Week

828.765.9151 South Hwy 226 Spruce Pine, NC Spruce Pine Shopping Center

Carolina Home Care Specialists, INC
Excellence in Personalized Care

Medicaid Covered Services
• In-Home Care for Children & Adults
• CAP for Disabled Adults & Children
• CAP Choice
• Pediatric Nurse Aids

Other Services
• Private Pay
• Insurance
• VA Homemaker Service
• Companion/Sitter
• Respite

Phone (828) 765-4343 • (866) 765-4340

Our In-Home Aides are supervised by a registered nurse who is available during all hours worked by the aide.

May 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 25
POEM
A Mother’s Prayer for Help
By Joy Baldwin
Madison County

Lord give me FAITH to live each day
And PEACE to sleep at night
HOPE to help my friends in need
And not give up the fight.

Give me COURAGE ere to stand
Your POWER for the way
Lord help me follow you each step
Oh, lead me on each day.

Lord give me UNDERSTANDING
For those who are in need
CHARITY to care for all
Desire to sow good seed.

Give me LOVE for all mankind
Your spirit to light my heart
Give me JOY that I can share
And laughter to impart.

Forgive me of my sins I pray
And wash me in your blood
Fill my heart with RIGHTEOUSNESS
My soul with eternal love.

AMEN

Joy is a resident of Madison County, where she now lives with her husband, Danny Joe Baldwin. She is currently a member of Mt Zion Baptist church in Marshall, NC. As a previous member, she calls Forks of Ivy Missionary Baptist Church in Weaverville, “home away from home”. She is currently singing with the Gospel Group “Jonah’s Voice” out of Mars Hill, NC. Her latest song “Homecoming” will soon be heard by many.
How to Live Stream
By Kevin Purcell
Burke County

In this crazy pandemic, churches are going live on Facebook or with other services so that people can still worship together even when they are physically apart. My church started live streaming our service for people who were sick and for people who wanted to virtually visit High Peak Church before visiting in person. When the Coronavirus came along and people retreated to their homes, we were ready. Maybe your church was not, but you should be. No one knows what this crisis will end. We know God is in control and by the time you read this, I might have to cut this off a little bit sooner. However, it is still a good idea to keep streaming, even if people don’t need to stay home to avoid a virus.

Reasons to Stream Worship Live
First, consider streaming because it is a good way for shut-ins and sick people to worship even while they can’t get out. If they do not own a computer, smartphone or tablet, a simple gopro camera will do. They could log onto the Internet for the homebound person and show them how to enjoy the worship service remotely.
Second, potential visitors would love to sample your service before they commit to coming. They are more likely to do so if you have a vibrant online presence. Experts tell me that most guests will check out a worship service online before they ever visit in person. One of the members who joined most recently found us through our Facebook page (Facebook.com/HighPeakChurch).

Third, Facebook saves your service. People who really enjoyed or felt inspired by a sermon special event can go back later and relive the special moments.

Fourth, those who fall away from church will often check in on their “former” church through Facebook live or live streams. They might even decide to come back after being inspired by the service.

It is not all perfect. Some people will watch and decide they like “worshipping” in their pajamas and want it to be a part of their daily life. They could log onto the Internet for the homebound person and show them how to enjoy the worship service remotely.

There is one more option I want to mention from a company called Mevo. It’s a camera that can OBS Studio but it’s complicated and sometimes unstable. It runs on Windows. The most expensive option that’s got great support costs $600+ (www.telestream.net/wirecast/overview.htm).

A lot of different software (#5) will help you stream live to Facebook. There is a free program that can OBS Studio but it’s complicated and sometimes unstable. It runs on Windows. The most expensive option that’s got great support costs $600+ (www.telestream.net/wirecast/overview.htm).

The best option for those who fall away from church will often check in on their “former” church through Facebook live or live streams. They might even decide to come back after being inspired by the service.

Let’s look at each item. First, you probably already have a sound system and it likely will include an extra sound output that you can use to connect to the computer (#1 above). That cable will need an adapter that will convert from the output of your sound system to the typical video or sound input jack on your computer. Sometimes you can do this with one cable or you may already have the sound system output cable and only need an adapter (#2 above).

The next thing you need is a camera (#3 above) with an HDMI output. We use an old HD video camcorder that has an HDMI output jack. You can also use a DSLR like a Canon, Nikon or Sony Alpha camera with a USB cord (no worrying about 5V or 12V power). You may need a longer zoom lens if you are far away like my church.

The camera connects to an adapter (#4 above) to the computer. We use an Elgato HD60 capture device. You’ll plug the HDMI cable from the camera to the HD60. Then you will plug the HD60 to the computer. A lot of different software (#5) will help you stream live to Facebook. There is a free program that can OBS Studio but it’s complicated and sometimes unstable. It runs on Windows. The most expensive option that’s got great support costs $600+ (www.telestream.net/wirecast/overview.htm).

The best option for those who fall away from church will often check in on their “former” church through Facebook live or live streams. They might even decide to come back after being inspired by the service.

A Simpler Setup But Lower Quality Option
There is one more option I want to mention from a company called Mevo. It’s a camera that connects to your smartphone or tablet and lets you stream to Facebook for a subscription. It is easy to set up and lets you create what looks like a multi-camera setup with only one camera. You can have one spot focused on the pastor and the one on the band. Have another on the screen where words are displayed. It is small enough to carry and move from place to place to place, so you could even use it for more than just rearing worship. Check it out at www.mevo.com and subscribe for as low as $15/month or as much as $75/month for all the bells and whistles. You do not need the costlier option if you only plan to record or stream it to Facebook.

Dr. Kevin Purcell is the pastor of High Peak Baptist Church of Exit 107 on I-40. He’s written about church and Bible technology for www.ChurchTechToday.com and other publications. He covers Bibles software and tech at www.KevinPurcell.org and on his YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/c/KevinPurcellBeThePulpit.
The sun was shining at last. Though the air held a bit of that frosty touch, the sun’s brightness invited a stroll outdoors.

The rock garden located below our patio is planted with bulbs. As I walked up to the edge of the patio and looked down, beautiful purple and white crocuses that had pushed up through the mulch greeted me. They were like bright smiles in a dreary yard awaiting new life to pulse through the tree limbs, bushes, and other plants.

Bravely they had stuck their little heads above the ground where I could enjoy them and smile back!

The saying, “The earth laughs in flowers” is attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson. I agree with him.

I cannot go by a garden, come across flowers blooming in unexpected places or enjoy those in a pitcher or vase on my table without smiling. I am tickled by them. And laughter always accompanies tickling.

Like with so many things in our daily lives, flowers can become commonplace to us. But instead, they should awaken awe, beauty, and invigorating hope into our souls.

Not just because they are there for our enjoyment, but because the Creator has given us this beauty through His amazing creative hand. They are reminders of his beautiful promises that feed our souls as well.

It is important for us to look beyond the creation and see the Creator’s hand. To see His love for His creation. To know that all He has done and continues to do in sustaining us and this planet we live on is so that we can know Him in a personal way.

In Colossians 1: 15, NLT, we read these words.

“Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation.”

Then further along in verse 17, it says, “...and he holds all creation together.”

Unfortunately, because of sin’s curse, decay accompanies every living thing. But let these hearty flowers remind you of God’s promises as seen in 2 Peter 1: 3 – 4.

“By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises...that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world’s corruption...”

Bright and beautiful promises for this world and the next. Selah

Promise of Spring

Decaying mulch hardly seems the bed for beauty. Nevertheless, it emerges from beneath the ground
Purple and white crocuses breaking through winter’s harshness.
A cross, crown of thorns and a borrowed tomb hardly seem the likely place to find promise.
Till Jesus burst forth from the tomb...just as He said.

“Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, But is risen!”

Luke 24: 5 and 6

Ken and Jan love residing in the mountains of Avery County. Visit Jan’s new blog @pauseandconsider.net, Journeying with Jan. Ken’s photos can be seen at kenmeropphotography.com.
1 Peter 5:7 – "Keep praying, do not give up, and don’t give in. Approach the throne of grace He calls us to Himself.

His love that completes us and makes us whole. It heals us. It is the fear and trembling in us that shows our motive and intent. It is no matter how difficult the journey to get there, it is the attitude of faith that garment.

Jesus hears the one. The one crying out. The one who has the faith to touch His told her that her faith had made her well.

clean, with fear and trembling (in reverent awe), she told Jesus everything, and He for the one who had touched Him. Look at her response. She came completely

There is something for us in this. Jesus stopped what He was doing and looked at a crowd of people that were touched by Him.

"Who touched me?" The disciples questioned Him, and people thought He was crazy. He was in a crowd. Of course, someone touched Him, but they did not understand.

In fact, Jesus was on the way to Jarius' home to heal his daughter, walking on the road in the midst of a crowd, and he came to a complete stop and questioned, “Who touched me?” The disciples questioned Him, and people thought He was crazy. He was in a crowd. Of course, someone touched Him, but they did not understand.

The woman understood. She was healed. She felt it. She believed.

There is something for us in this. Jesus stopped what He was doing and looked for the one who had touched Him. Look at her response. She came completely clean, with fear and trembling (in reverent awe), she told Jesus everything, and He told her that her faith had made her well.

Jesus hears the one. The one crying out. The one who has the faith to touch His garment.

No matter how difficult the journey to get there, it is the attitude of faith that heals us. It is the fear and trembling in us that shows our motive and intent. It is His love that completes us and makes us whole.

He calls us to Himself. He says we are His and He is accessible. Keep Praying, do not give up, and don’t give in. Approach the throne of grace with confidence, leave your burdens there, and know that Jesus has heard your prayer! Do not lose heart during difficult times.

1 Peter 5:7 – “Cast your cares upon the Lord, for He cares for you.”

Philip Greene is the Station Manager/Program Director for WECR-AM Radio/ Glory 1130.

BY BRIAN BARRIER

Mitchell County

Although due to the recent COVID-19 outbreak and government-ordered shutdown of most all public gatherings and events, a local coordinator has found a way to keep the "Good News” and the National Day of Prayer in our community this year.

Monica Kritz, the Mitchell County Coordinator for National Day of Prayer, has partnered with radio station WTOE in an effort to make this the largest National Day of Prayer event in the history of Mitchell County.

The National Day of Prayer is a day set aside for communities around the United States to gather and pray for our nation, state and local leaders and situations. Although this year will be much different, it could turn out to be the largest attendance in history because most people have been ordered to stay home except for essential activities. Access to this event will be open to many who were not able to be in attendance in person over the past few years. Also, many who wanted to be there in person but were embarrassed to be seen at a public event will be tuning in to hear from God! Perhaps our Lord is providing people the necessary time and opportunity to tune into WTOE on AM 1470 or listen live at www.ourlocalcommunityonline.com.

The 2020 National Day of Prayer for Mitchell County will take place on Thursday, May 7th, 2020 starting at 11:00 am. Again, it will be streamed live at WTOE online and also radio station AM 1470. The theme for this year will be "Pray God's Glory across the earth". In preparation for the event, you are asked to read Habakkuk 2:14.

The event will include exclusive speakers, music and of course, a special time of prayer.

Kritz had the following message for the community, "Wherever you are, stop for a few moments and listen and pray with us...this is for individuals, for our town and county, for our state, and our nation! Please help us spread the word...share this information with everyone you know! Our nation is in distress, and we need the power of God to intervene in our situation! Of course, we must do our part...we need to repent and turn away from our sin and call on GOD to forgive us and heal our nation. Please, heed this call to pray! And tell others!"

*** We are asking everyone to tie red, white, & blue ribbons on your car antennas. Tell others about this as well, in honor of the National Day of Prayer 2020. ***

I think we can all agree that we need God more than ever in these unprecedented times. God told us:

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land". 2 Chronicles 7:14. To God be the glory!

Brian Barrier is a life-long resident of Burke County, U.S. Army Veteran, a member of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church and Publisher of the Blue Ridge Christian News.
Hymns
By Allen Buchanan
Mitchell County

What is your favorite hymn or Christian song and why?
To get an idea as to how people react to this question, I turned to social media. Many replied that it’s difficult to pinpoint one or two songs. Answers included: Too hard to answer, I have so many. “You Were Faithful Yesterday.” I guess because He has been, is, and will be. There are too many to name. But, at the moment, one of my favs is “I Got Saved.” It is “Well With My Soul” is one of my favorites. Cause as long as that is true, you’re ok! “Amazing Grace.” What would we do without His grace? “I Can Only Imagine.” “Leaning on His Everlasting Arms,” I remember my mother singing it in church. “It is Well.” “Right Now - I have so many…” “What A Friend We Have in Jesus.” When I need encouragement from Jesus, I sing this song. Contemporary is “All My Hope Is in Jesus” by Crowder. He is the only one I can trust now and forevermore. “Must Tell Jesus.” I love getting on my knees and telling Jesus all of my troubles. I guess I would say, “Rock of Ages.” Why?
Because the LORD is a constant, solid source of protection, security, strength, and encouragement. Because only He can save, and He does it freely if I only cling to Him. And because when this life is over, I am gonna fly to worlds unknown and behold Him on His throne!” Blessed Assurance is my favorite hymn. I don’t really know “why,” I have just loved it the most for as long as I can remember. The most amazing thought to me is that My Savior knew me and my sinfulness and loved me anyway! It’s heartbreaking to me to think that while He was suffering on the cross to cover and pay for my sins He looked down through time and loved me. My favorite song is “When He Was On The Cross, I Was In His Mind.” I’ve told my kids; I want it sung 3 times (at least) at my funeral! “Amazing Grace”—the massage always comes through no matter what genre of gospel music it’s sung... and the “Fa So La Song” by the Inspirations—reminds me so much of my grandparents. “Who You Say I Am” by Hillsong. My girls love it!

Other songs that were mentioned include: “I’ll Fly Away,” “Nothing Else,” “Heart of Worship,” “Draw Me Nearer,” “Chain Breaker,” “It Will Get Better,” “Sheltered In The Arms of God,” “In Christ Alone,” “His Eye Is On The Sparrow,” “Give Me Your Eyes,” “Testify To Love,” “I Love To Tell The Story,” “Let Them See You in Me,” “I Have Been Blessed,” “Jerusalem,” “It’s Under The Blood,” “My Name Is Written In Heaven,” “Victory In Jesus,” “Right On Time,” “Where Could I Go But To The Lord,” and “Just As I Am.” As I wrote these song titles down memories filled my heart and soul. The first time I ever heard, “I Can Only Imagine” was after my brother heard it on WMT. He called me and said I needed to hear it. Awesome words brought me to tears. I spent that evening trying to imagine being in heaven, in the presence of Jesus. Brings to mind another song, “Won’t It Be Wonderful There?” My favorite song of all is “How Great Thou Art.” I remember a radio personality stating that Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) would replace hymns. I’m a fan of CCM but I still love the hymns I grew up listening to. The sweetest memories are listening to my mother or grandmother singing hymns as they did housework. One of the easiest ways to pass time away on road trips was singing our favorite hymns. When my wife’s family gets together, they sing many of the old loved songs.

Allen Buchanan is a freelance Christian writer. Allen attends Bear Creek Baptist church.

Is Fear Reining in Your Life?
By Miguel Cruz
Yancey County

COVID-19 is all we hear about these days, and people are afraid. And along with that, people are confused. There is the traditional media that specializes in pushing fear and worse case scenarios, then there are all the other social media that we all use to keep in touch. People are posting and re-posting interviews and statements saying this is all a hoax and we should get back to normal again.

So how do we decipher all this? I say with Wisdom. Spend an hour in Proverbs as soon as you can and see what God has to tell you about Wisdom. Ecclesiastes & Psalms are also good books to study. How do we get Wisdom in this day and age? Aside from spending time in the Word of God and spending quiet time to LISTEN to what God has to tell you in your heart, we have to educate ourselves. Regarding COVID-19, that is not hard to do. I recommend going on the CDC website for yourself, get the FACTS, and stop listening to the TV announcers.

I got on today 4/18/2020 and get the following FACTS:
US population according to the US Census estimated on July 1, 2019 – 332,239,523
Confirmed Corona cases according to CDC – 524,514
Percentage of infected - .0015%
How does that compare to what you are hearing?

What about worldwide, the world population is roughly 7.8 billion. According to the CDC website, there are 1,739,007 confirmed cases worldwide, this comes to .00002%.

The current research is saying that thousands have probably been infected and did not know it because the symptoms were not severe. So even if you did get it, if you are healthy it may present no more than a cold or the typical flu. If on the other hand, you are in poor health, then you can have life-threatening consequenc-es so it would be wise to use all precautions.

The next wave of information/misinformation/opinion depending on how you view it is going to be about the statistics I just quoted above. The media and vaccine proponents are going to be telling us that the quarantine is working, and we should keep it up until the curve is flattened or a vaccine is ready. The anti-media is saying you see, it’s been all a hoax. Who’s right? You will have to decide for yourself, but I think a little bit on both sides. The virus is real and devastating to those with compromised immune systems, and some quarantine measures were probably necessary, for those anyway. So, the quarantine measures I am sure did help. It if was worth people losing jobs, businesses, and wreaking lives, that’s debatable. As for those who say we need to keep up the quarantine until everyone on the planet can get a vaccine, you can follow the money on that one. I think we should have those yelling the loudest be the first in line for the human trials. They can be Guinea pigs.

So, what can we do now? If you have more time on your hands, Please, Please, Please, spend time with God, listen to your heart, be still and know that He is God and He is in control.

Dr. Miguel Cruz is in practice along with his wife of 35 years, Lesia Cruz who is a certified Integrative Nutritionist. They own Cruz Life Center in Burnsville NC.

Dr. Cruz is a licensed Chiropractor since 1981. When asked what he does for a living he explains that he helps people get out of pain and improve their overall health without the use of drugs or surgery. Something everyone seems to want but nobody seems to know how to get there. Dr. Cruz accepted Jesus Christ in the summer of 1979 while in chiropractic school. He has since dedicated his life towards helping people grow in physical health and spiritual health.

Lakeview Mercantile & Gardens
3 & 4 Generation Owners • 55 Years Experience • New Merchandise

- Garden Supplies
- Seed
- Annuals
- Perennials
- Shrubs
- Soils
- Fertilizer
- Pottery & Containers
- Hanging Baskets

665 Oak Ave. Spruce Pine, NC
765-9133
Hours: Mon - Sat 9am-5pm
Faith In A Time Of Crisis
By David Valls
Mitchell County

I had planned to finish my series of articles on the purpose of salvation, but God has laid something else on my mind. As most of us know, our nation is facing something like we have never seen before in our lifetime. The Lord gave me this thought, should a time of crisis lead to a crisis of faith? The answer is no! If we are a Christian, we understand that just because we trust Christ it does not mean we will not be faced with difficulty. It is in times of difficulty when God builds our character. It is in these difficult times that we learn much of God’s provision through the grace that he has given to us. When Paul had a thorn in the flesh three times, he asked God to remove it... but God responded not by removing this circumstance from Paul’s life but by declaring, MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR THEE. We find many examples in the scripture of people who dealt with a crisis but responded with faith. It’s not that they were not fearful, but amid the fear, they demonstrated great faith.

The Greatest example of all is our Savior, Jesus Christ! He faced the greatest challenge any could ever face by overcoming the power of death, hell, and the grave. A challenge only He could overcome by taking upon himself the sin of the entire world as he drinks that bitter cup of his father’s wrath. He achieved this greatest victory so that you and I could overcome anything that we face, but we find that the human part of Jesus was in a crisis in the garden as he literally felt the weight of the world being placed on his shoulders. The Bible says he prayed until His sweat became as great drops of blood. No doubt, His human nature wondered if he could go any farther in his humanity. He said if it is thy will let this cup pass from me but then He makes the all-important statement: NOT MY WILL BUT THINE BE DONE. In a time of crisis, Jesus trusted not in his humanity but the divine power that he had given to him so that he could accomplish his task. In other words, he trusted in the Father’s will over His humanity and He endured the cross and rose again that we could have life eternal.

Another example is that of the widow who only had enough meal in her barrel to fix one final meal for her and her son before they would die. God sent a prophet named Elijah who requested that she make a cake for him as well, but she thought it not possible. But she had faith and the meal barrel and the oil didn’t run dry! God provided. Then I think of Abraham who after God gave him his son Isaac, was asked of God to sacrifice him. Talk about having to demonstrate faith in a time of crisis! This was the promise son that Abraham had waited so long for and now surely God would not take him! Abraham does what God asked and about the time he raised the knife... but God responded not by removing this circumstance from Paul’s life but by declaring, MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR THEE. We find many examples in the scripture of people who dealt with a crisis but responded with faith. It’s not that they were not fearful, but amid the fear, they demonstrated great faith.

Deception is the devil’s primary strategy to keep us from growing spiritually and fulfilling God’s purposes for our lives. To be deceived simply means you believe a lie. This is dangerous because if you believe a lie, then it will become your reality even though it’s not true. For example, you can believe someone doesn’t like you or that you are unimportant. If you believe being rejected when the truth is, they haven’t thought one bad thing about you.

Everyone is affected to some degree by lies they believe. I used to believe I would be able to have a second-rate life because my father had sexually abused me, and I was “damaged goods.” If I hadn’t come to know the truth about God’s love for me and how He could heal and restore my soul, my life would be much different than it is today. I seriously doubt I ever would have become a Bible teacher who is helping others discover how they can know God and become everything He has created them to be in Christ. We need to pray for God to reveal any deception in our minds because every lie we believe represents something the devil is stealing from us that God wants us to have. I’m talking about real peace and joy, freedom from constantly feeling guilty about something you’ve done, the ability to have healthy relationships or any of the other promises God gives us in His Word.

The Truth About Our Enemy

Out of town? You can still read the "Good News" on our new Website: www.brcnews.com
And find us on Facebook

May 2020- Blue Ridge Christian News page 31
time to plan for reopening with tailored conditions

rep. greg murphy, the us congresswoman for nc’s 3rd congressional district, is a physician from greenville, nc. i served with dr. murphy while he represented pitt county in the nc house before he was elected to congress. he is a very knowledgeable and able medical professional in addition to his legislative responsibilities. dr. murphy recently released a video explaining the need to reopen selective parts of the economy, while maintaining certain restrictions that appear effective in suppressing the coronavirus.

according to dr. murphy, continuing some restrictions, including washing hands, wearing masks, and social distancing should still be viewed as essential to stop the virus spread. however, certain small businesses such as beauty salons, barbershops, and restaurants, are critical parts of our economy. they should be allowed to reopen if they follow appropriate restrictions. these businesses will need restrictions tailored to their specific circumstances, perhaps including staggering appointments, requiring chairs to be 6 feet apart to match social distancing guidelines, ensuring staff and customers wear masks and mandating the cleaning and sanitization of surfaces that one would touch multiple times a day. additional guidelines for restaurants could include seating being one table apart, no greater than four individuals at a table, and all staff members wearing masks and gloves. the virus has affected all businesses, small to large. dr. murphy emphasizes our need to develop a common-sense approach to reopening.

i certainly agree that we need to immediately plan for phased reopening, area by area, both geographically and by business or activity. we also especially need to focus on how we can avoid further loss of education for students by providing safe space or alternative methods.

i pray that everyone in your family is healthy and safe. at the time of the writing of this article, our state is still battling covid-19 with state-wide executive orders issued by governor cooper, as well as additional county-level social-distancing orders. i hope that some of those orders will be relaxed reasonably by the time this article is published and that you have been able to complete some home projects and spend quality time with your families during the last two months. to date, north carolina has had approximately 6800 confirmed cases of covid-19, with about 200 deaths in our state. we do not know how many of the 8600 persons infected have recovered, but several thousand of them may have. many of those who have not contracted the virus still have been affected in other ways, with the loss of their jobs, their businesses, their ability to attend church or even hike in many of our state and federal parks. it has truly been a life-altering time for all of us, and the after-effects of the shutdown are likely to be felt for many months to come. on april 28th, the nc general assembly will return for the 2020 short session. i personally believe that governor cooper should have called us back earlier for an emergency special session, but he chose not to do that. when we do return on april 28th, the house and senate will begin assessing the state’s revenues and cash balance in order to determine how much funding is available for a disaster relief package, and how those funds should be prioritized. other issues on the front burner will include how we as a state should safely reopen our economy, and how to better protect the first amendment rights of our churches to continue meeting, and the right of our citizens to peacefully protest. in my view, these are fundamental freedoms that need to be protected if we are to continue to be americans. as with most tough issues in raleigh, there are no easy answers. i am thankful that for this time you have granted me the privilege and responsibility to be your voice in government. please feel free to contact me to share your thoughts on how we should safely and efficiently return our state to normalcy.

and as always, my staff and i continue to be available to assist you, the citizens ofavery, burke, and Caldwell counties, with any state-level government issues that you may encounter. may god bless each and every one of you during these uncertain times. we don’t know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future.
Evangelism Explosion International

Share Life Today Now Heard Daily On American Family Radio
By John Sorensen

Arden, North Carolina: Evangelism Explosion’s daily radio segment, Share Life Today, is now aired every weekday on American Family Radio. Share Life Today is played on 696 radio stations across the United States—180 of those on American Family Radio’s nationwide network.

Dr. John B. Sorensen, President, and CEO of Evangelism Explosion International is the voice of Share Life Today. Each one-minute feature aims to encourage and equip Christian believers to be winsome and active in sharing their faith with the world around them. “Every believer as a witness” is a key strategy to fulfilling the Great Commission. Listeners will learn tips and tools to help them become a better witness for Jesus. They also hear stories of changed lives and learn to better understand the Gospel.

Evangelism Explosion’s (EE) mission is to glorify God by equipping believers to multiply in and through local churches worldwide—for friendship, evangelism, discipleship, and healthy growth. EE believes that this can assist the Church to witness to every person on earth.

American Family Radio’s mission is to give voice to the American Family Association and to inform, equip, and activate individuals to strengthen the moral foundations of American culture, and give aid to the Church in the United States and abroad in its task of fulfilling the Great Commission. Part of their action statement is to encourage Christians to bear witness to the love of Jesus Christ as they live their lives before the world. Evangelism Explosion’s goal is to see every believer become a confident, equipped witness for Jesus Christ. The two organizations stand united in purpose to further the Gospel of Jesus throughout the world. Share Life Today is a free Christian broadcast available to stations by contacting Charley Mefferd at Ambassador Advertising (charley@amb-os.com). Interviews with Dr. John B. Sorensen and other Gospel training tips and tools can be found by visiting ShareLifeToday.com or by contacting Lara Dykes (ldykes@eeworks.org).

Rev. John B. Sorensen, D.D. is the President/CEO of Evangelism Explosion International, headquartered in Arden, N.C. EE has been a leader in equipping Christians to share their faith for more than 50 years. For more free tips and resources, visit evangelismexplosion.org.

Check out our Website-www.brcnews.com
And find us on Facebook

WE BUY HOUSES
Behind on Payments? Need Quick Cash? Any Price Range
Call (828) 412-0822
www.sillmanhomebuyers.com

Cody Penland is a Youth Leader at First Baptist Church of Nebo. I have my Bachelor of Science in History from Montreat College (’17), and currently attend Fruitland Baptist Bible College in pursuing a call to Pastoral Ministry. I coach boys’ basketball for the McDowell County Recreation Department.

Evangelism Explosion International

First Baptist Church Nebo continued from page 9

We buy houses...check us out. Sillman Home Buyers
Spruce Pine, NC

SILLMAN HOME BUYERS
Spruce Pine, NC

The Heartbeat of Glory in the Morning
Wake up with Glory in the Morning
99.1 FM Home of the HIGH COUNTRY GRANT SHOP 100% local and online sales Open 7 days a week Visit us in downtown Banner Elk or shop online www.gloryinthemorning.com

If you would like to be part of our “Heartbeat” and help bring the Message of God to our community, contact our sales team, (828) 264-2411

Check out our Website-www.brcnews.com
And find us on Facebook

May 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 33
By Jon Mullen  
Mecklenburg County

A month ago, yesterday… I sat at my desk in the slanting dust-mote sun of a school morning, thinking about ordering caterpillars. A teacher had asked. I had a slip from Ward Science for free caterpillars, buried in a pile on my desk. The caterpillar books were ready, and the habitat was done.

A month ago, we talked about germs. And on a whim, I told my kids about this sickness that was spreading in China. I joked with each other and the kids, the little routines that teachers are so adept at recognizing and creating. And between ourselves, we marveled at the rude parajoke with each other and the kids, the little routines that teachers are so adept at recognizing and creating. And between ourselves, we marveled at the rude parajoke.

Later, we stood in the scudding sunlight of carpool, doing what teachers do. We talked about the importance of hand-washing. I watched the shadows crawl across my backyard. The same as they did yesterday, and the day before. The world rages outside, and I am worried about buying groceries. A month later, I laugh when the kindergarten teacher tells the 5-year-old he needs to be wearing pants when he “zooms”…. this time. A month later I almost cry as I listen to my co-teachers yelling hellos to each other as we sit in our cars in a parking lot…waiting to do a surprise “drive-by” parade for a co-teacher who’s struggling with cancer. I realize I can’t remember the last time I bought gas. Apparently, it’s cheap now. But I don’t need any. I’ve used less than a quarter tank. A month later, I would give my world to dig through a pile to find that yellow case…. “Well, I got my gloves, hand sanitizer and wipes here just in case….…. “Well, I got my gloves, hand sanitizer and wipes here just in case….” She held them each up in turn, as the other teachers laughed and applauded.

I had planned to pop popcorn for the kindergartners that day. Instead, I sat in a drafty gym, as the gray slate spreaded on. Random doors slamming in the fluorescent-thickened air of the closed classrooms. The paper I put outside my door for one of my first graders yesterday, was still in my box. I thought about the full halls, the sunlight, sweaty recessed kids, and teachers, like auctioneers trying to focus distracted kids at the fountain. “Trinity! You can’t fill your bottle at the fountain now! Others have to drink. Wait till you get back to the classroom. Gavin’s blue water bottle sits by the drinking fountain, labeled by his mom. I put it in my classroom. He will need it in a couple of days. It is been getting warmer. I look down the flown-bird-empty halls. The eerie pools of turned-off lights in the wrong places, and the acrid smell of chemical-clean. Bulletin boards are strewn with scrawly kid-drawings and writing; carefully curated and tacked up by teachers in hurried-afternoons and pre-kid mornings.

Mrs. Doran had displays from the 100th day of school in Kindergarten. I walk back to my post. The traffic has died down; the vice principal says I can go home.

“See you soon!” she says with a distracted wave and smile. As I turn off my lights and close the door, I see my coffee cup sitting on my desk, the eraser on the floor by the Smartboard, and the pile of leftover day objects sitting on my tables. “I should probably wash some of the science equipment in the sink…..” I think to myself. “Naah, I’ll get it in the morning.”

A month later.

A month. I’ve forgotten what day it is. The very idea seems like pure snobbery. I watch the shadows crawl across my backyard. The same as they did yesterday, and the day before. The world rages outside, and I am worried about buying groceries. A month later, I laugh when the kindergarten teacher tells the 5-year-old he needs to be wearing pants when he “zooms”…. this time. A month later I almost cry as I listen to my co-teachers yelling hellos to each other as we sit in our cars in a parking lot…waiting to do a surprise “drive-by” parade for a co-teacher who’s struggling with cancer. I realize I can’t remember the last time I bought gas. Apparently, it’s cheap now. But I don’t need any. I’ve used less than a quarter tank. A month later, I would give my world to dig through a pile to find that yellow slip; or to have kiddos sitting on my blue carpet. Even that kid who I’m generally ok at… always glad is absent.

A month later, I think about the dishes in the science sink, the popcorn maker I left sitting on the counter, my coffee cup, and the crate of clipboards I hauled to the gym to make it easier for parents to sign for Chromebook forms…. And I wonder if I’ll get my clipboards back. I didn’t give it much thought. I’d be back tomorrow. Like I have… every… day….

Instead, it’s been a month, of phone calls, dizzying updates, emails, and screaming media bombardment. It’s been a supernova of death, sickness, fear, masks, gloves, Isolation, and emptiness. It’s been a world, and nation, spinning out of control. Suddenly the idea of kids on the carpet becomes terrifying. And I can’t remember the last time I gave or got a hug.

And I feel the uncertain wobble of time. This is beyond my control. All of it. The response, the leaders, the followers, the barrage of misinformation, the bickering, the sickness, the death, the horror, the emptiness, and the maddening persistence of inconclusiveness. A month later, I wake up, my house for company, and the dogged hues of monotony crawling down my walls, the weight of the day splintering through my blinds.

I’m up. Now what?

A month later I am a first-year teacher again. I navigate a new world of Canvas, Zoom, log-ins, invitations, meetings, and digital kids. Virtual. Everything is virtual. My world is posting, hosting, and adapting. Adapting is one thing we teachers are good at. We make it work. Even though we feel like our classrooms have become a version of Ikea furniture being put together with bad instructions, and poor materials. And the routines change, they slow down, shift colors, textures, and priorities. My dog chewing at bees in the slanting afternoon sun becomes the highlight of my day.

And each day, it gets marginally easier. And each day it gets marginally harder. I alternate between boredom, panic, hope, and nostalgia.

The world is closed. Well open it in the morning. We’ll get there. We will. For now, though, we live in The World of “When”. “When this is over…. next year, when…. It’s the “when” that keeps me going.

Dawn follows dark. It always does. It’s the way of the world. Trust me, I am a science teacher.

Jon Mullen is a Kindergarten through 5th grade Science Teacher at Myers Park Elementary School, in Charlotte NC. This is his 24th year teaching, and his first year teaching from home.
We are going to look at several Scriptures in this article to justify how prayer is in the life of the believer. We will begin with a verse out of Matthew 21:22 which says, “And all things, whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.” Those words of our Lord alone, if there were no other verses in the Bible to verify how important prayer is, would be enough. The greatest sin of our day among believers may very well be prayerlessness, failing to communicate regularly with the Lord Jesus.

Prayer Has a Calming Power
Matthew 21:22 implies that God is interested in every part of our lives. Note the words “all things.” That means there is no part of our lives that God is not interested in. He wants to provide completely, thoroughly, utterly, and unquestioningly.

Coupled with the words “all things” we find another keyword “whatsoever.” “Whatsoever” seems to be an all-inclusive word. God gives, gives, and keeps on giving regarding His born-again children.

James wrote in another place in God’s Word, “Ye have not because ye ask not” (James 4:2). There are many provisions we would have if we would only ask God for them. Why do we do without what we need and receive it through faith?

Another verse says in Matthew 7:7, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” Who in their right mind would turn down an opportunity like this promised from a faithful and holy God? I am thoroughly convinced many of us are doing without because we have not asked, sought, and knocked. We must believe that God is going to be true to His Word, acting as the faithful and dependable One.

Prayer Has a Healing Power
James also says, “Pray for one another that ye may be healed” (James 5:16). Healing can come to our lives through prayer. I have been a pastor now for some forty-five years. There have been many of my church members who have been sick, yet through the prayers of God’s people, they have recovered.

There was a man in Zion Hill years ago who doctors had about given up on and said he had about a year to live. The sick church member lived many years after the year in which they said he would die. God responded to the cries of His people.

Does God save all the sick every time we ask Him to heal them? No, he does not. There is a will that is higher than ours; that is God’s will. We should pray about healing by giving God our desire to be healed; we should believe He can heal, and then we should leave the healing matter to the Lord. If He wants to take us home through the illness we have, that is O.K. If God wants us to be home with Him then who are we to say what we want is more important than what He wants.

Some folks think all you need to do is name and claim your healing. That is false because God does not always do what we want to be done when we want it done. We must realize we are to shut up to God’s will.

Jesus prayed on one occasion when the cross was looming before Him in Luke 22:42, “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done.” The human side of Jesus wanted to shun the cross, but His Deity side said, “Not my will, but thine be done.”

Prayer Has an Enlightening Power
We are enlightened through our prayers and the prayers of others. Ephesians 1:16-18 tells us, “Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling.”

The Apostle Paul gives mention of the words, “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know...” We pray about a lot of matters concerning ourselves and others, but how often do we pray as the Apostle Paul did in Ephesians 1:16-18? How often do we pray for a greater spirit of wisdom, a greater knowledge of the Lord, and that our eyes of understanding may be more wide open to get a taste of the hope of our calling and the riches of the glory in the saints of God? I dare say not as often as we should.

If you know someone who is going through so much darkness and needs more light and understanding, why not pray as Paul did in Ephesians 1? You may need to pray this for yourself, for your children or grandchildren, or for fellow church members.

Proverbs 10:13 tells us, “In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found: but a rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding.”

Proverbs 16:22 says, “Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it: but the instruction of fools is folly.”

Prayer Has a Calming Power
Philippians 4:6-7 says, “Be careful for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” It is human nature to worry about things that will probably never happen or things that may come out the way that we cannot change. Paul told the church at Philippi, “Be careful for nothing” (v.6). The apostle addresses over-anxious care or what we might call worry.

I am convinced that we need to worry less and do more. If we were doing more, we would worry less.

Instead of worrying, he recommend prayer and supplication. You cannot pray and worry at the same time. One of our great hymns says in its lyrics, “I cast on Him, my every care, and wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer.”

If you want an antidote for being disturbed, nervous, uneasy, distraught, or ruffled in spirit, I can recommend a good one. It is the same on Paul recommend-

ed- that being praying.

When we pray our hearts are kept or guarded. It is then that peace overcomes our troubled and agitated hearts; we can experience sweet peace that passes all understanding.

Some people have the philosophy, “Why pray when we can worry.” Instead of having that state of mind, one should say, “Why worry when we can pray.” Prayer commits everything to God and leaves our anxieties, our cares, our concerns with the Lord Jesus.

Peter said it well when under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost he wrote, “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Peter 5:7). Instead of worrying about everything and creating ulcers as large as a grapefruit, why not cast your cares upon Christ? The verb tense of the word “casting” in 1 Peter 5:7 is present tense in the Greek New Testament, which speaks of a complete act that occurred in the past. When the Bible uses the word regarding God which says He “careth”, it is present tense which speaks of an ongoing, continual, perpetual caring the Lord has for me and you.

Tom Walker is President of Foothills Baptist Bible College and Pastor of Zion Hill Baptist Church in Marion, NC.

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 1 John 4:7

The hospice you choose makes a difference.
Choose the one with:
• local staff
• two hospice inpatient units
• palliative care in all settings
• grief counseling for any adult

Kids Path™
Camp Erin®

Serving Polk, Henderson, Rutherford, and McDowell in NC and Cherokee, Greenville and Spartanburg in SC
(828) 245-0095 NC (864) 457-9100 SC (800) 218-CARE (2273)

NOW OPEN!!!
A family owned & operated business
(682) 245-0095 NC (800) 218-CARE (2273)

Manager: Nicholas McCabe
828-608-0840

May 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 35
Hi friends! This month I wanted to talk about an animal that we take for granted. What I mean is, it is a very common animal and sometimes we don’t realize how important it really is to us. We get a lot of what we eat from this animal including yogurt, cheese, milk, ice cream, cottage cheese, beef, jerky, hot dogs, hamburgers, steak, the list goes on. This animal is known as the “foster mothers of the human race” because they produce most of the milk we drink. Do you know what this animal is?

If you guessed a cow, you are correct. Cows came to America with Christopher Columbus on his second voyage. Eventually, every family had their own cow until around the 1850s when they started transporting milk by train.

Cows are herbivores, with four chambers in their stomachs. The first chamber, the rumen, holds 50 gallons of half-digested plant food. This is also where cud comes from. Cud is regurgitated, semi-digested food, that comes back up in their mouth from their first chamber stomach. They chew on this for up to eight hours a day. I always like to think a cow is happy and healthy if you see it chewing its cud. If it’s not chewing cud, something is wrong.

The second stomach chamber is called reticulum, which acts as a filter. And the last compartment is called abomasum which is a lot like our stomach.

Cows love to eat. They gobble up to forty pounds of food a day and drink as much water as a full bathtub. A standard bathtub holds up to 80 gallons of water! Could you drink that much water a day? Humans are encouraged to drink only half of a gallon of water a day which I find hard to do sometimes.

Cows are very smart animals. They remember who their friends are as well as those who are mean to them. They spend most of their time hanging out with their pals during the day and they stay away from those they don’t like. Cows remember people the same way. They will recall how you have treated them in the past. Cows also recognize up to fifty other members of their herd.

Cows are great problem solvers! They love solving problems and will work hard to find the answer. The problem can be as simple as getting to the greener grass on the other side of the fence. They can figure out cause and effect problems as well like if I raise this handle with my hand, water comes out for me to drink.

Cows can smell water and odors up to five miles away and can hear both low and high-frequency sounds that we can’t hear. A cow’s lifespan is twenty years, but most don’t live that long. If a cow has horns you can count the rings on them to estimate how old he/she is.

Not all cows are mean. Some are sweet, gentle, or timid. And all cows are curious! The assumption that the color red makes bulls mad is a myth. The movement of the bullfighter’s cloak is what makes the bull charge. You are also safe to wear the color red around cows; you are not going to get chased because of it, because cows are red/green color blinded!

The color red around cows; you are not going to get chased because of it, because of the bullfighter’s cloak is what makes the bull charge. You are also safe to wear the color red around cows; you are not going to get chased because of it, because cows are red/green color blinded!

Cattle have 32 teeth in their mouths but none of these are located in the top mouth from their first chamber stomach. They chew on this for up to eight hours a day, along with molars on the sides. Cows also have a long, rough, sandpaper tongue.

Mother cows carry their babies inside for 9 months just like we do. If a baby calf gets lost after it is born, a mother has been known to walk many miles to find her baby. Mother cows are very protective, I cannot tell you how many times I have seen a cow charged at and ran off by a very protective mother. After a calf is born, I have witnessed the others in the herd come and check the baby out, welcoming it to their family. Mother cows will hide their babies in tall grasses, hay or under trees to keep them safe until they get old enough to hang out with the others.

There are two types of cattle, dairy, and beef. Today, with the help of milking machines, a single dairy cow can produce 25 gallons of milk a day, which is 400 glasses of milk!

Did you realize that cows were so important to us? That we depend on them to survive. Some people think that they are just dumb animals that don’t belong, or that farmers and farming are not important. Did you know that cows were mentioned in the Bible? In Elijah’s time, there was a contest. The heathens sacrificed a bull to their gods to see if they were real and would make it rain, the gods did not make it rain. God then had Elijah sacrifice a bull to Him and He made it rain, showing that He was the one true God!

Can you think of other things in your life that you might have taken for granted? Or maybe you didn’t realize how important they were to you? It may be even a person. I can think of at least two people that I have taken for granted before. My parents. They kept me fed, in nice clothes, gave me a place to live, took care of me, and told me about Jesus when I was young. I’m sure that you have someone in your life that has taken good care of you that you maybe you sometimes forget to say “thank you” to. It is the same way with God. Sometimes, we get mad at Him when things don’t go our way. Sometimes we distance ourselves from Him for no good reason. Maybe we think we can handle a problem all by ourselves without needing His help. Or maybe we don’t realize all the good things He does for us or has blessed us with. You see there are many things in our life, that we take for granted. Did you know that God blesses us each day just by letting us wake up to a new morning? The guarantee of the sun coming up each day is a blessing. The air we get to breathe is a blessing. The fact that no matter what we do wrong, God will forgive us, when we ask, is a blessing!

Dear Lord, please help us not take You or our daily blessings for granted. Help us be thankful and appreciative of each and everyone that you have blessed us with. We thank you for the animals you have given us to use to help nourish our body and to help us grow. In Jesus’s name, I pray AMEN.

“Since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.” Romans 1:20-21

Bibliography

Kid's Corner - Facts About Cows

18 Fun Facts About Cows! | THATSFARMING.COM

Fun Cow Facts for Kids - Interesting Information about Cattle

3/10 mile North of Walmart

www.brcnews.com
May 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 36
Burke County Public Schools has received two grants, totaling $6,000, to help purchase masks for the district. Each grant was for $3,000; one was from the Community Foundation of Burke and the other from Duke Energy Foundation. All Burke County Public School employees are wearing their masks while they are working. This precaution, as well as social distancing and staying at least six feet apart from each other, are measures district employees are taking to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Burke County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Larry Putnam said, “I realize wearing a mask is awkward for some people, but it could be the difference in saving their life and others. It is one of the new normals we are having to get accustomed to during this time. I want to thank our head school nurse Miranda Michaels for securing the masks and organizing the mask distribution and for Director of Student Services Dr. Mike Swan for his work in securing the grants. Our goal is to eventually equip all BCPS employees, not just essential workers, with masks, as well as distribute them to their family members and eventually provide them to all of our students. We have a standing weekly order with a local manufacturer for the masks and are grateful for these grants to help us provide this valuable piece of protection.”

Cheryl Shuffler is the Public Relations Officer for the Burke County Public School System.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16
New Dimensions School

By David Burleson
Burke County

The New Dimensions School and all schools in North Carolina are experiencing a new way of teaching and learning. For the first time, all students are learning remotely. Our staff at New Dimensions is doing everything possible to assist our students and families as we continue remote learning. I am personally appreciative of the outstanding work of our entire staff, students, and parents during these challenging times.

We began remote learning at New Dimensions on Monday, March 16. As a staff, we continue learning how to best meet the needs of our students in the virtual world. I have faith in our staff to meet the needs of the students we serve. We know that until at least May 15 we will be working together on the new adventure. While there continues to be uncertainty, I know that educators can make this work.

Our staff will continue to work remotely and do the job that needs to be done for our students. Our goal is to be compassionate, flexible, and understanding. We will continue to rely on each other and ask for help when we need it. As we move forward during these uncertain times, our staff will continue to be a calming and encouraging voice for our students and families. We will continue to show our Warrior family that we care and will do the best we can to teach remotely.

Our staff will use the resources available to engage and involve our students. Our goal is to set reasonable expectations for our students. We must communicate that this is not a vacation or snow days, but an opportunity to continue learning in a different way.

We all realize that this will not be easy. We all chose to be educators because we enjoy being around people. Our students are why we do what we do. Not being with our students is unnatural, to say the least. In this new normal, we will still be motivated and encouraged by making a difference for students. We can take solace in the fact that as an educator we can be a positive and reassuring voice for our students. Educators can supply students with hope and encouragement.

The staff, students, and families of New Dimensions have focused throughout the year on providing encouragement and support to others in our community. Our school has always risen to the occasion when others needed help. From can food collections for local food banks to providing presents for children at Christmas, New Dimensions has always stepped up. This time has been no different. Under the leadership of teachers, Aaron Mirtsching and Dan Ishuin, the New Dimensions STEM Club has used our 3D printers to make over 900 straps for facemasks. These straps have been donated to health care workers in Burke and Caldwell Counties along with other places around the country. Aaron Mirtsching says, “New Dimensions has always sought out ways to give back to the community. Even though our doors to the school are locked, the STEM club is still reaching out to help others in the community. The STEM club has dedicated their 3D printers to print face mask straps. These straps hold the elastic off the ears so that it is a little more comfortable. At this point, we have made and donated over 900 straps! The straps are not just helping our community. We have sent out straps to Florida, Louisiana, Tennessee, Georgia, Texas, to the coast of North Carolina, and even to an Air Force base in Jordan! It is awesome to know that our little school is making a large impact.”

There is no indication when schools in North Carolina will reopen. When we do reopen, I know that our staff will be prepared. Our staff continues to provide feedback on the work our students have completed and allows our students to show them what they have learned over this time. We are also beginning to plan for next year just like we would during any normal year.

As a school, we will continue to be as flexible as possible, do the best we can, and do all we can to be a partner with each of our Warrior families. We will get through this together.

We continue to pray for our community and especially for those directly impacted by the coronavirus.

David Burleson is the Director of the New Dimensions Charter School in Burke County.

Check out our Website- www.brcnews.com
And find us on Facebook

May 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 39
When you and your loved one need home health care, PruittHealth Home Health is ready with a skilled team that combines expertise, state-of-the-art technologies, and deeply rooted commitment to deliver the best in home health care.

When you return home from the hospital or long-term inpatient care, or just need skilled care at home, our home health team is ready to help you move along the path to optimal health and wellness.

Our team of skilled experts coordinate care, providing:
- Skilled nursing services
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Speech therapy
- Medical social services
- Home health aides

We use advanced electronic charting systems to track progress and treatments in real time, resulting in better care in your own home. To ensure the best possible care, we focus on educating both our patients and families on the personalized care pathway that is tailored to their needs.

Serving Avery, Mitchell, Yancey, and surrounding counties.

PruittHealth Home Health (Avery)
828-733-1550

PruittHealth Home Health (Mitchell)
828-688-3421

PruittHealth Home Health (Yancey)
828-682-7825

The PruittHealth Organization complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.