

SOLI DEO GLORIA

Official Newsletter of Southwest Christian Church



Renewal for the New Year

BY RANDY TAYLOR

I hope that you had a blessed 2019. But if that was not the case, I would like to share some words of comfort: those who belong to the Lord have the blessing of knowing our God loves us and will never forget us nor forsake us. In fact, we are called to wait on the Lord because He will give us renewal. Isaiah 40:28-31 says, "The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might He increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait

for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

This is a powerful encouragement for us as we turn the calendar page and begin a new year. Even if 2020 finds us struggling with the weight of burdens, we are encouraged by the fact that we serve a mighty God who was not too weak to act on our behalf. We have the blessing of knowing that God does not deal with fatigue, nor is any obstacle too large for Him to conquer on behalf of those whom He loves. Though even the young and strong become tired and fall, the King of Kings never does. How amazing is that knowledge and how great a source of comfort for those of us who find ourselves struggling.

Looking at Isaiah again, we find a general principle that patient, praying believers are blessed by God with strength in their trials. Verse 31 says that we are to wait on the Lord for strength, which encourages us to stand fast because He will deliver His own. Then, we

see the blessing of having our strength renewed illustrated in this marvelous verse as having wings like eagles, and being able to run and not be weary, or walk and not be faint.

For us to wait means that we are resting and trusting in the promises of God to be sufficient for us in every situation including challenges and strife. The Apostle Paul gives us an incredible example of this trust in his very own life: "a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave

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me. But He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of

my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). Paul's strength came from the Lord for the purpose of being able to see God's glory shine forth in him and through him. When we can rest in the knowledge that God will supply us with what we need, He will receive the glory, and we will be blessed once again for His provision.

So as 2020 is upon us, if you find yourself challenged by the troubles of this life, take courage, for you belong to a Great God who knows what we need exactly when we need it, and who takes care of His own. Lamentations 3:22-23: "The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

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Calendar

January 4
Men's Breakfast

January 5
Christian University Begins

January 10
Christmas Tear down

January 11
Gospel to the Valley

January 12
Guest Preacher: Nigel Shailer

January 15
Wednesday Night Bible Study Begins

January 17-20
Youth Winter Camp

Every Sunday Night
Prayer Meeting

Every Wednesday Night
All Church Bible Study

Every other Friday
Young Adults Study

Love and Marriage

BY RON AND NORENE COLBERT

When Carolyn called and asked me if Ron and I would write a few paragraphs on marriage, it began a time of reflection over the past 50+ years of *wedded bliss*. I quickly saw this young couple taking vows, "I Ron/Norene take you to be my wife/husband to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish 'till death do us part, according to God's holy ordinance." We said those words to each other seriously and in the sight of God and His church. Traditionally, that's what most people said when they married 50+ years ago. We were so in love and so anxious to be husband and wife and, of course, believed everything would be perfect. We didn't give as much thought to the worse, the poorer, or the in sickness part of those vows as we did the better, the richer, the health and the loving and cherishing part.

So, what is the secret to staying married over fifty years? What advice can we give? First, it isn't a secret. The Bible tells us many things about marriage; it's God's ordinance. Genesis 2:23-24 tells us that the Woman was "taken out of Man." The "man should leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife and they shall become one flesh." Most importantly, Ephesians 5:22-33 tells us, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord." Husbands are told "to love your own wives, as Christ loved the church." They are to nourish and cherish her, "just as Christ does the church." Wow! What does a marriage like that look like? 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a tells us, "Love is patient and kind, love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful, it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends."

When the going gets tough: weeks with no paycheck, devastating financial dealings, serious illnesses, ambulance rides, emergency surgeries, cancer, raising the kids, loved ones lost, infertility, and even some angry words and hurt feelings thrown in, we remember that Jesus is Lord of the better and worse, the richer and poorer, the sickness and health. We aren't in this alone. There are also so many wonderful blessings. Because they are such a big part of our lives, we have to mention children. Psalm 127:3-5 says, "Children are a blessing from the Lord." We grandparents will agree that, "grandchildren are the crown of the aged" (Proverbs 17:6).

“ Jesus is Lord of the better and worse

We've always believed that God brought us together and had a plan for our lives together. Along with forgiveness, respect, selflessness, trust, growth, companionship, lots of prayer, and laughing together, sometimes we just have to zip our lip. Always remember if he loves me and cares for me "as Christ does for the Church;" and she's submitting to me "as to the Lord," "Nothing will be impossible with God" (Luke 1:37). So, when your marriage is suddenly forced to deal with something like paralysis and being the caregiver, you deal with it as Christ loves and cares for the Church; selflessly, patiently and so thankfully. As Christians and spouses, we are in the Word together, we pray together, and we serve Him together. We both agree that we love each other more now than when we married, a deeper, more mature love. Ron would sum this all up with one word: *Jesus*. Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength."

Locally Grown

BY CAROLYN MANDIO

For this year's Christmas Eve service, one family in the church donated booklets for people to take called *Your Local Church and Why it Matters* by John MacArthur, which is a much needed explanation of the importance of church in a day when many of us either don't go to church or go because we're supposed to. But, the truth is you don't come because you have to; you come because you need to.

The church is not a building, a style of music, or a program. It is a group of people, and more importantly, it is the group of people for whom Christ died as is seen in Paul's charge to the Ephesian elders: "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). There are many analogies in the Bible which tell us that the church belongs to Jesus and Jesus belongs to the church. If you love Jesus, you'll love his bride. If you love Jesus, you're a part of his body. That doesn't mean that we will not wound each other, even deeply. That's what happens when you put a bunch of sinners in a room together. Perhaps, maturity in a church is not to be measured by how little we offend one another but how often we forgive.

We do meet with music, prayer, preaching, and other things because this is what Christ has established. From the beginning, the church has practiced these things because they are commanded in the Bible. They were not added to further burden us, but because they are healthy for our souls. Thus, it says: "let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near" (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Jesus speaks through his word. Pastors are commanded to care for their people in part by explaining the Bible, and in so far as they explain it correctly it is Jesus speaking to you and the Father answering his prayer to "sanctify them in the truth, your word is truth" (John 17:17). God has also given us two tangible signs of the gospel to grow us. Baptism displays how we are united to Christ in his death to sin and his resurrection to eternal life. Communion is a sign to us that we are white as the blood of Christ because he has died instead of us and a sign to God of his covenant that he will not call to account what has already been paid in full. The booklet has much more to say and they're free for the taking. Some good books of the Bible to start with are 1&2 Timothy and Titus.

 following Christ

At Southwest, we aim at making lifelong followers of Christ not our church or our pastor. That's why our Facebook page is dedicated to sharing Christ-centered theology. So come, check us out and follow us as we follow Christ.

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