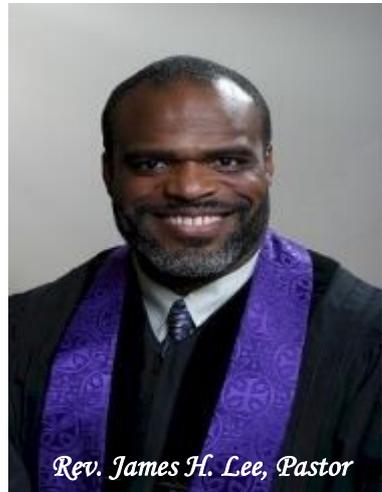
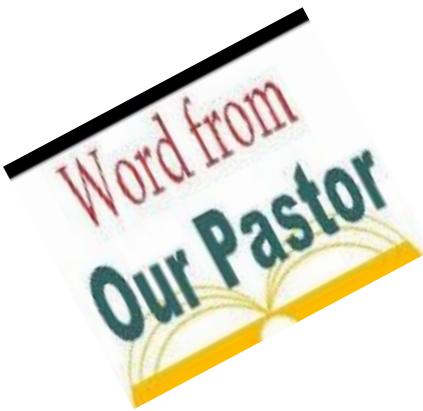


April 24, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



Rev. James H. Lee, Pastor

Dear NCFA Family and Friends

I continue to give thanks to God for each of you. We are blessed to have a diverse church, where each gift is needed, whether we are fully utilizing your gift or not.

I have been doing a lot of reflecting over the last couple of weeks. The texts in the Lectionary continue to flow through my mind. I find myself looking at the ways in which I'm like the individuals on the Emmaus journey. I experience confidence and comprehension in some aspects of life, and I find myself doubting in other areas. I hear Jesus speaking "Shalom" into my life so that I can not only have peace but have but that everything will be in right standing so that God's ultimate peace will be realized in me.

As I thought about Peter going to back to fishing and Jesus calling him and the others to a meal, I marveled at the way Jesus restores people so they can live out their purpose, and I struggled with the fact that I have tried to go back to fishing after the death of J.J., Stacie, and Jane. My world had been rocked, and I needed some sense of normalcy. The Lord revealed to me that my "normal" would need to be redefined, and I needed to discover what new reformation would take place in my life. As I have considered this journey, I needed two quotes from Gerald Sittser and Maya Angelou and the experience of that impetuous one, Peter.

- ◆ "You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it.-- Maya Angelou
- ◆ "I see now that my faith was becoming an ally rather than an enemy because I could vent anger freely, even toward God, without fearing retribution." — Gerald Lawson Sittser, [A Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grows Through Loss](#)

Peter wept bitterly when he heard the rooster's crow, and he realized that he had denied Jesus. What does it mean to realize your own limitations and to know that you have let the one you love down? How powerful is it to use your leverage not to lord over but to lift up? Brother, if you love me, fulfill your purpose instead of falling back into familiar patterns that don't lead to life and changed lives: feed and tend to my sheep, including you. Amen? Amen.

As we continue on our journey, I need us to be mindful of several things

- * Elder Jane Mack's Memorial service will take place at 3:00 pm. in the sanctuary of Covenant Presbyterian Church, 3003 Northland, Drive, Austin, TX 78705.
- * Sunday morning Deacon Sam Okyere Mireku will be preaching at the NCFA Chapel, while I will be preaching at the Wilshire Campus.
- * We will have our Family Friendly worship on Sunday. Our Youth Choir will be singing, and Elder Nikkie Shubitz will lead our Time with Children.
- * A group of our youth and members from the Mission and Evangelism committee will be putting together the "We Care Kits." May God bless our efforts to equip saints to preach the Gospel with and without words. Amen? Amen!
- * Please pray for our Session, which will be meeting after worship.
- * As many of you have already noticed, there's a new mailbox in the breezeway. In order for us to ensure that we receive all mail and correspondence, please use our new address: 1507 Wilshire Blvd., Unit#2, Austin, TX 78722. Thank you.
- *

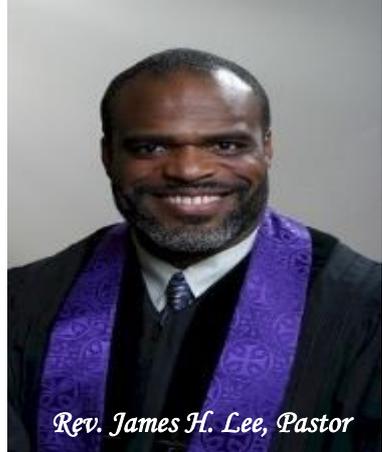
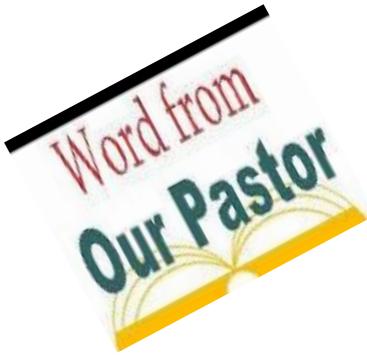
Please know that you are loved by God and your me. I continue to lift each of you in prayer. Please, please, remember that tomorrow is not promised to any of us. Love the people in your lives; when they are gone, the idiosyncrasies seem very insignificant

April 24, 2015



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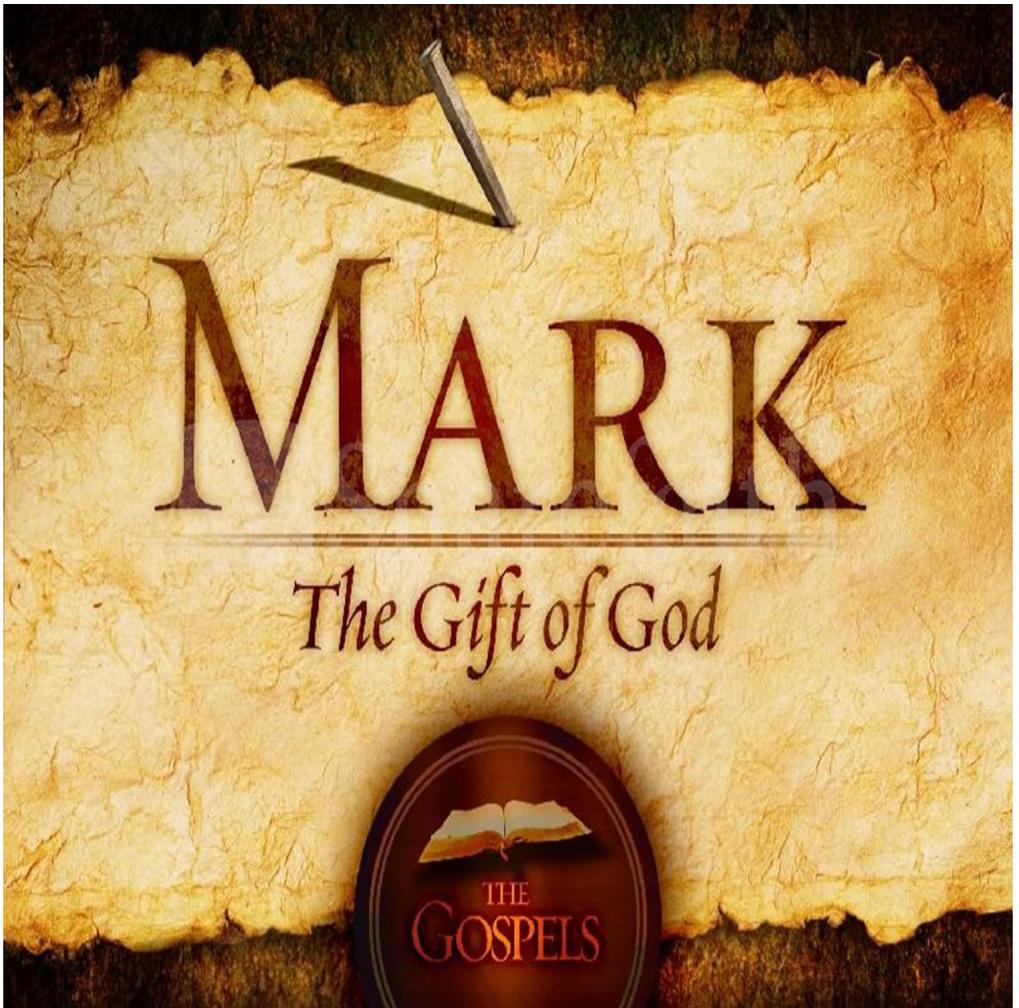
Hebrews 13:20-21 (NRSV): ²⁰ Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, ²¹ make you complete in everything good so that you may do his will, working among us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

***God Bless each and everyone of you,
James***

April 24, 2015



Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



Rev. Jeff Saddington is leading a 6-class series on the Gospel of Mark. This week we will read Mark Chapters 7-9 in preparation for next Thursday's study, 7-8pm in the Fellowship Hall.

Dates: April 30th, May 7th and 14th.

Light snacks provided. Please feel welcome to join the fast-moving conversation on some fast-moving Scriptures!

Presbyterian Women

May 1, Friday Church Women United will meet at 9:30 AM at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 3208 Exposition Boulevard. The program is Friendship Celebration: "Journey of the Caregiver."

May 12, Tuesday Annual PW Spring Luncheon, 10:00 AM-1:00 PM, Covenant Presbyterian Church, FEB 200. NCF ladies invited

April 24, 2015



NCFA CONNE^XION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



- 1st Matthew Castilleja
- 2nd Justin Wallace
- 4th Gemma Munoz
- 6th Jhaliah J'nae Edwards
- 11th Kayla Zajicek
- 13th Abigail Iris Longino's
- 15th J.T. Longino
- Abraham Agbottah
- 16th Kofi Vida-Torku
- Alida Tallman
- 18th Aquanetta Hicks
- 22nd Wonho Shin
- 24th Lucy Oglesby
- 25th Angel Mojica
- Lydia Marion

New Covenant Fellowship

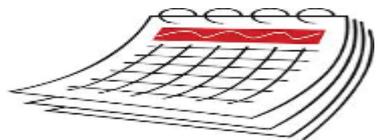
Session Members

- ***Rev. James Lee**
Pastor/Moderator
- ***Elder Kathy Smith**
Clerk of Session
- ***Rev. Bill Harris**
Administration & Personnel
- ***Elder Tim Lenz**
Buildings & Grounds
- ***Elder Mary Jo Mojica**
Congregational Life
- ***Elder Randy Mojica**
Children and Youth
- ***Elder Cathy Angell**
Discipleship & Women's Ministry
- ***Elder Caly Fernandez**
Evangelism
- ***Elder Tracey Lenz**
Finance & Stewardship
- ***Elder Robert Booth**
Lay Ministry
- ***Elder Benton Hooks**
Men's Ministry
- ***Elder Vernon Bailey**
Missions
- ***Elder Charles Robinson**
Worship & Membership

Deacons

- Connie Jones, Chair
- Kathryn Aldas
- Ulysses Cox
- Naomi Jones
- Samuel Okyere Mireku
- Lucy Oglesby
- Ashley Phillips
- Carol Saddington
- Cathy Trifiro
- Roxann Vallejo

APRIL



April 26
4th Sunday of Easter

April 28 6:30 –9:00 pm
Men's Ministry Dinner and Bible Study, in the NCFA Kitchen

April 29
6:30pm Light Dinner

April 30 12noon
Bible Study at Connie Jones's home

April 30, 7-8pm A Study of the Gospel of Mark, Fellowship Hall

May 3rd
5th Sunday of Easter

April 24, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



We Care Kits

“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”
1 Peter 3:15

We are currently accepting the following donations:

Food/Drink Items:

- Granola Bars**
- Peanut Butter Crackers**
- Trail Mix**
- 8-oz. Water Bottles**

Hygiene/Personal Items:

- Travel-Size Toothbrush**
- Travel-Size Toothpaste**
- Travel-Size Soap or Body Wash**
- Travel-Size Shampoo**
- Pocket-Size Kleenex**
- Pocket-Size Comb (no pointed handle)**
- Chap stick**
- Adult White Crew Socks – Size Large**

All donated items should be placed in the donations box located in Classroom 7. If you have any questions, please email or call me:

calyflower2020@yahoo.com / (512) 228-4712

The Evangelism Committee and the Children and Youth Committee have scheduled April 26th as the date to build the We Care Kits.

April 24, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

NCFA

SUNDAY MORNINGS

NCFA Sunday Schedule

8:15am - Worship Service
Waller Creek Chapel
41st St. and Red River

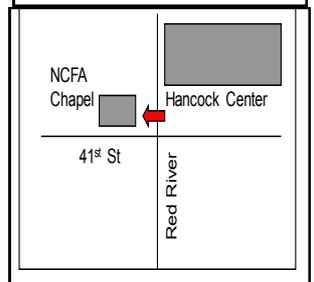
10:15am - Worship Service
1507 Wilshire Blvd.
9am Adult Sunday School
10am Fellowship
10:45am - Children's Church

NCFA SUNDAY WORSHIP AT 8:15am -- Waller Chapel

Come rise and shine with us
at our **8:15am** chapel service
where we glorify God
through the Word, Prayer, Hymns,
and Communion.

41st and Red River, entrance gate on 41st.

In the words of Phillips, Craig & Dean,
"Come, just as you are, to worship."
All are welcome to this traditional,
intimate style of worshipping our Lord.



NCFA Waller Creek Chapel — Upcoming Preachers

April 26 — Sam Okyere Mireku

May 10 - Rev. Trish Holland

May 24 — Rev. Jeff Saddington

Prayerfully seeking a musician called to join this worship service.

NCFA SUNDAY WORSHIP AT 10:15am

We would love to have you and your family
come share in the CELEBRATION OF
THE GOOD NEWS!



We are worshipping in the Fellowship Hall of
Genesis Presbyterian Church on the
Wilshire Campus starting at 10:15 a.m.

Real Church...
Real People...
Real Simple...

New Covenant Fellowship of Austin PC(U.S.A.) is a
racially diverse community informed by the Bible,
empowered by the Holy Spirit, and motivated to share
God's love with all. In response to God's love, we are
called to equip disciples to faithfully serve, to encour-
age seekers to joyfully commit, and to implore all to
worship our Lord, as we love our neighbors,
grow in grace, and live by faith.

JOIN US IN THE CELEBRATION OF THE GOOD NEWS

April 24, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



ARE YOU A MUSICIAN?? A pianist? A guitarist? A soloist?

Our 8:15 am service at the NCFA Chapel on the Perry Estate 4100 Red River is in need of a musician now, as Carol has retired from playing the piano at the early service. (She will continue to accompany the 10:15 service).

If you can help, or know someone who might be able to, please contact Trish Holland, 512-461-6250 cell

"You can do what I cannot do. I can do what you cannot do. Together we can do great things."

- Mother Teresa

Four areas of FOCUS for 2015

1. Retain and minister to visitors and members through personal contacts, strengthening families, ministry-driven events, and identifying and utilizing the numerous gifts of our members.

2. Better utilize social media and other modes of communication to celebrate our ministry, share resources, and organize ourselves.

3. Enhance our Children and Youth ministries through mentoring, attending their extracurricular activities, utilizing their gifts in worship, and assisting in the Nursery and Church School.

4. Continue emphasizing Marketplace Ministry and celebrating the various ministries within our church and community.

Continue to reach out into the community like the Community Garden and our



Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

PRAYER AND PRAISE

**FAITH and PRAYER
both are invisible,
but they make
impossible things
possible.!!!**

Get More Quotes @ thedailyquotes.com

- ⇒ REMEMBER THE PARALYTIC WHOSE ILLNESS WAS BROUGHT TO JESUS'S ATTENTION. BY THE MAN'S FRIENDS, AND BASED ON THEIR FAITH, JESUS ACTED. NOW WE WILL RAISE UP OUR PRAYERS AND PRAISES BY OUR FAITH IN GOD "WHO HAS NOT WITHHELD HIS LOVE FROM US."
- ⇒ THANKSGIVING FOR THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JANE MACK, A FOUNDING MEMBER OF BOTH COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN AND NEW COVENANT FELLOWSHIP. AS A MATRIARCH OF OUR CHURCH, JANE'S SELFLESS DEEDS INCLUDED MAKING OUR BEAUTIFUL WORSHIP BANNERS, PREPARING COMMUNION AND THE SANCTUARY FOR WORSHIP, AND PROMOTING THE PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN CHAPTER.
- ⇒ PRAISE FOR JOHN H.'S CHAPEL SERMON, "THE GOSPEL IS DO-ABLE!"
- ⇒ PRAISE THAT SAM O.'S FAMILY HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE IMMIGRATION BOARD AND A DATE WILL BE SET SOON. PRAYERS THAT THEY MIGHT ARRIVE IN TIME FOR HIS GRADUATION FROM APTS ON MAY 24.
- ⇒ PRAISE FOR DORIS'S HEALING.
- ⇒ PRAISE FOR THE BIG THING GOD IS ABOUT TO DO IN VERNON'S LIFE.
- ⇒ PRAISE FOR PETE HENDRICK'S PRESENCE IN CHAPEL WORSHIP.
- ⇒ LIFT UP THE FAMILY OF MALEECA, WHOSE LIFE WAS TRAGICALLY ENDED BY A DRUNK DRIVER RUNNING A RED LIGHT IN AUSTIN.
- ⇒ CONTINUED PRAYERS FOR D'S HEALTH; PRAISE FOR SOME RECENT IMPROVEMENT. LIFT UP HER IMMEDIATE NEED FOR HOUSING.
- ⇒ PRAISE GOD FOR THE BIRTH OF ABIGAIL IRIS ON APRIL 13 TO NEW PARENTS BECCA (WEAVER) AND J.T. LONGINO.
- ⇒ PRAISE FOR PATRICK AND JENNY'S OPPORTUNITY TO MEET THEIR 2-YR-OLD NEPHEW RORY IN MAY.
- ⇒ PRAISE GOD FOR ELLIS'S SERMON, "THE MEANING OF LIFE" AND HIS HELPFUL REMINDER OF OUR PURPOSE: TO GLORIFY GOD!

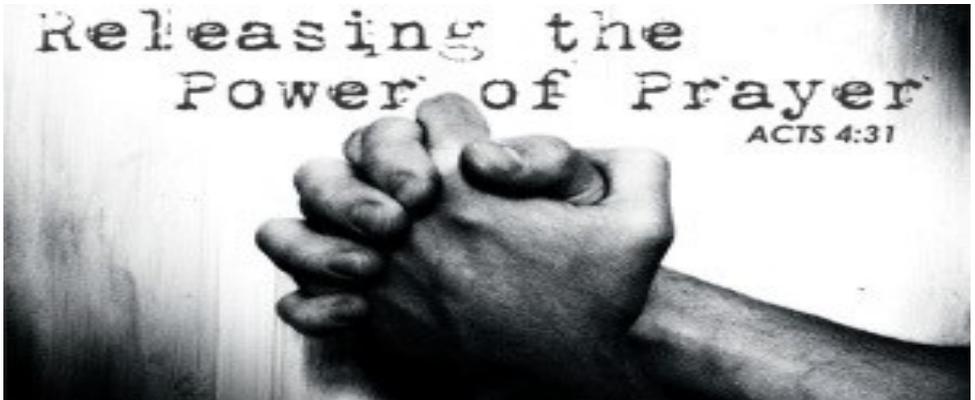
April 24, 2015



NCFA CONNE~~X~~ION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

PRAYER AND PRAISE



- ⇒ PRAISE FOR THE SAFETY OF TIM AND TRACEY'S SON AND DAUGHTER-IN-LAW RYAN AND TRACY WHO WERE DRIVING DURING LAST NIGHT'S VIOLENT STORM IN SPICEWOOD. LIFT UP THE PROPERTY DAMAGE SUSTAINED BY THEIR CAR AND HOME.
- ⇒ THANKSGIVING FOR OLIVER'S TALENT AND GENEROSITY IN PROVIDING LOVELY PHOTOGRAPHS OF OUR MEMBERS TAKEN ON EASTER. THANKSGIVING FOR THE JOY AND COMFORT THAT THE PHOTOGRAPH OF ROBERT'S FAMILY WILL PROVIDE HIM DURING STRESSFUL MOMENTS AT WORK!
- ⇒ PRAISE THE LORD FOR SECOND CHANCES AS WERE PROVIDED RECENTLY TO A FORMER INMATE WHOM JOHN HAD PRAYED WITH IN PRISON A YEAR AGO; THANKSGIVING FOR THEIR COINCIDENTAL MEETING THIS WEEK.
- ⇒ PRAYERS OF HEALING FOR CATHY A.'S FRIEND MAXINE WHO IS HOSPITALIZED. LIFT UP CATHY'S FRIEND JOE WHO FACES SURGERY IN MAY TO REMOVE A POTENTIALLY MALIGNANT KIDNEY. PRAISE FOR THE PROVIDENCE OF A NEWLY INSTALLED FIRST PASTOR IN 25 YEARS FOR CATHY'S AUNT'S CHURCH IN NEW YORK. AND PRAISE FOR CATHY'S HEARING OF GREATER, MORE POWERFUL MEANING IN SEEMINGLY SIMPLE GREETINGS OF WORK ASSOCIATES.
- ⇒ LIFT UP THE FAMILY OF RANDY'S COWORKER JOSH, WHOSE BABY WAS RECENTLY DELIVERED STILLBORN. TAKE AWAY THE FEARS OF HIS OTHER COWORKER, DAVID, WHOSE WIFE IS ALSO EXPECTING A BABY THIS MONTH.
- ⇒ PRAISE FOR THE RETURN OF DOUG'S "FAVORITE MISSIONARY"—PATRICIA! THANKSGIVING FOR THE FIRST TEAM OF VETERINARIANS TO ACCOMPANY THE MISSION IN SUDAN AND FOR THEIR EFFORTS TREATING THE ANIMALS AS A WAY OF EXEMPLIFYING JESUS'S LOVE AND HEALING. PRAYERS FOR THE CHILDREN WHOSE GRAPHIC DESCRIPTIONS OF FAMILY BEATINGS ARE OF GREAT CONCERN FOR THEIR SAFETY AND WELL-BEING. LIFT UP 8-YR-OLD NA NG AMI FOR SAFETY GOING TO SCHOOL FOLLOWING HIS RETURN FROM BEING KIDNAPPED AND WITNESSING HIS YOUNG FRIEND'S MURDER BY THEIR CAPTORS.

NCFA CONNE^XION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

PRAYER AND PRAISE



- ⇒ **THANKSGIVING FOR ALL PRAYERS FOR TRACEY DURING TAX PREPARATION TIME.**
- ⇒ **THANKSGIVING FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE IT TO CHURCH AND TO WORSHIP OUR LORD.**
- ⇒ **PRAISE GOD FOR SCOTT HAVING HIS OWN OFFICE AT LAST— WITH HIS NAME ON THE DOOR!**
- ⇒ **LIFT UP GRACE FACING A BIG EVENT THROUGH HER WORK WITH BREAKTHROUGH AUSTIN.**
- ⇒ **PRAYERS FOR GEORGE’S UNCLE’S SURGERY ON APRIL 27TH TO CLEAR 3 BLOCKED ARTERIES.**
- ⇒ **PRAYERS FOR PEOPLE WHO GET CAUGHT UP IN BAD SITUATIONS.**
- ⇒ **TRAVELING MERCIES FOR ELLIS AND LUCY ON THEIR TWO-DAY TRIP TO ATLANTA; TRAVELING MERCIES FOR HER PARENTS WHO WILL TRANSPORT LUKE AND RICK TO THEIR HOME IN SALADO.**
- ⇒ **THANKSGIVING FOR OUR CHURCH’S SUPPORT OF RANDY’S EFFORTS WORKING WITH YOUTH.**
- ⇒ **LIFT UP JAMES THAT HE MAY FIND SOLACE IN HIS RECENT LOSSES, THAT HE MAY PERSEVERE WITH STRENGTH AND GUIDANCE AS HE SEEKS TO REFLECT THE GLORY OF THE LORD.**



April 24, 2015



NCFA CONNE~~X~~ION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

*1 John 3:1-7
John Harrison
New Covenant Fellowship of Austin
– Chapel Service
April 19, 2015—3rd Sunday of Easter*

1 John 3:1-7: See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. This is the word of the Lord, Thanks be to God.

With graduation coming up, I find myself thinking about how much I've learned since I came to seminary. As much as my professors have taught me, though, some of my most important lessons have come when I have shared my life of faith over email with my mentors from home. I want to take a moment and express just how grateful I am for email, because if I can remember just one or two key words, it usually only takes a few seconds to go back to a moment that changed my approach to faith. What is amazing is that I can see the exact date and the exact time of day I had these conversations.

I remember working in Alaska and writing to someone from church whom I've known my whole life. I had been wrestling with my faith; but in the course of writing to my friend Howard, I came to the conclusion that because I do believe miracles are possible, I could believe in the resurrection of Jesus. I can pinpoint that moment literally to within an hour, which I find amazing.

Today's scripture from 1 John brings to mind two more email conversations that have been very important to me as I get ready to account for the hope I have in me as a Christian leader.

The first email I want to talk about came from a close friend and mentor, also named John, whom I consider my hardest grader in seminary. You see, to become a candidate for ordination, one has to prepare a statement of faith to share with the whole presbytery, and I shared that statement with my friend John. In one of the sentences in my statement, I said, "In faith, I believe that in Jesus I am a new creation."

He wrote back: "If we are a new creation, then why do we confess our continuing sinfulness every Sunday at church? Be careful not to dodge the question of where we are in our lives."

I thought "Gee, this is a tough crowd," but that question has stuck with me ever since. If Jesus came to take our sins away, then why do we still sin? I want to be a new creation, but my life is telling me there's still plenty of the old left in me.

I feel like my birthday cake never quite gets cooked all the way through, and it's never quite ready to eat.

April 24, 2015



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John Harrison
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Like a youtube video that keeps pausing every five seconds to load, my new creation is sputtering at best.

For St. Augustine, the question became “Is it even possible not to sin?” After ten years of trying to make himself righteous, all he made himself was miserable, so in the end his answer was “No.” For Paul, the answer varies depending on what epistle you read, but you won’t find many Christians who disagree with Romans that all have sinned and fallen short, and that everyone is saved by grace alone. Righteousness can only be a gift from God, and the only thing for us to do with such a precious gift is to accept it.

We have plenty of beautiful hymns to help us remember this humble surrender to grace. I was at a conference a couple of years ago when I bumped into my old associate pastor, and we decided to sit next to each other for the worship service. The bulletin called for the hymn “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing,” and we shared a hymnal. She told me afterward that she felt a spark of pride when we got to the third verse and I let go of the hymnal. When she was my pastor, she would use the third verse as the declaration of pardon every time she preached. She taught those words to a whole congregation to guard their hearts and minds in the moments when it just doesn’t feel possible not to sin.

Oh, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I’m constrained to be,
Let that grace now like a fetter
Bind my wandering heart to Thee:
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love.
Take my heart, oh, take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.

But after I read the words from our scripture today, “No one who sins has either seen him or known him,” I find the words of the hymn a little troubling. Does the good news really leave me constrained to be a debtor? Is the umbilical cord of God’s grace really best described by the word fetter, the same word Paul uses so many times to describe the leg irons he wears in prison while writing letters? If we’re going to talk about the gift that sets the whole world free, we’re going to need better language than debts and chains to do it. The world’s already got plenty of those. What we need is freedom.

But that’s the hard part, isn’t it? The gospel is all about finding freedom at the very same moment we find ourselves bound up in chains, waiting. Let me read verse 2 again: Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.

Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.

April 24, 2015



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1 John 3:1-7
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April 19, 2015—3rd Sunday of Easter

I came to believe this when I was living in the house of another friend at home who I keep up with regularly in email. I had forwarded him an email I wrote on an execution night, and I ended by quoting a verse from a chapter later in 1 John, that perfect love casts out fear. He wrote back to me saying:

“One issue to consider with "Perfect love casts out fear": perfect is beyond our reach. Clarence Jordan [author of the “Cotton Patch Gospel”] uses "mature." I often use "agape love" which Martin Luther King used often. The good news is that the gospel is do-able. Love u.”

When I go to my Greek dictionary, sure enough, the word meaning “complete, perfect, full, wanting in nothing” can also mean “of full age, adult, full-grown.” Those two meanings make a big difference in how we discern what grace means!

When we get hung up on the question of whether it’s possible not to sin, we fall into the same trap as the Pharisees, and we distort the gospel to simply mean not sinning. The gospel is not perfection. The gospel is love! And anyone who knows a thing about love knows it’s about what you do with imperfections. I have come to see it as a sign of mature love when one leaves the task of being perfect to the Lord and finds love for themselves and other people anyway. “Be mature as your Spiritual father is mature” feels like a much more loving command to obey.

Just because we don’t have to be perfect, though, doesn’t mean we don’t hurt the people we love when we sin. In the end, sin is simply infidelity and betrayal, and the hardest thing to accept is that we do this to people and to God all the time. There is no room in John to say “Father forgive us, we know not what we do.” For John, Grace is “Father forgive us, we know damn well what we do.” Mature love means walking back into all the pain and suffering we have caused to seek reconciliation anyway. To accept forgiveness for our most unfaithful moments is what it means to abide in Jesus, and to live into that grace—one step, one breath, one moment at a time—is what it means to do the gospel. It is in that space of mind that we will see Jesus and be like him.

It is not our own goodness that we abide in, but God’s. This is the peace that guards the heart of St. Augustine when he is exhausted, fed up, and beat beyond a shred of hope that sheer effort is going to get him anywhere. He says: “If I do not abide in him, I can do nothing, but he abiding in himself makes all things new. You are my Lord because you have no need of my goodness.” That is the amazing love of God.

The prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea each express that love God has for Israel in the metaphor of an unfaithful spouse being forgiven and welcomed home. I can’t imagine how painful an infidelity must be, but I can imagine that without the Holy Spirit, reconciliation simply isn’t possible. That is the kind of reconciliation God made with us in Jesus Christ. That is the reconciliation God makes every time we repent, every time we cry out God’s holy name. We confess our sins every week to resolve our relationship before it spirals so painfully out of control. But even then the words of the hymn do hit close to home: “Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love.”

April 24, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

*1 John 3:1-7
John Harrison
New Covenant Fellowship of Austin
- Chapel Service
April 19, 2015—3rd Sunday of Easter*

When I think about what makes someone come back home after they've put their partner through something like that, I don't think people come back home because of what they know is wrong, but because of what they know is right. It's not guilt but love that turns us homeward. Yes, we sin in little things, and yes, we sin in big things; but God takes us back every time, always with the hope that that will be the last. We abide in that overwhelming mercy and ecstatic love of Jesus Christ one step, one breath, one minute at a time.

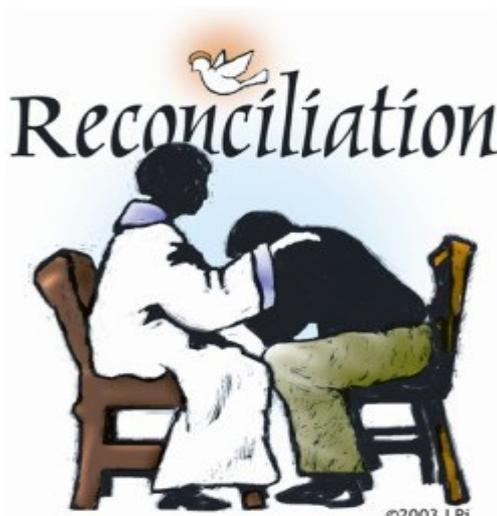
It was Billie Holiday's 100th birthday a couple of weeks ago, and I don't think anything can make this point quite like a song of hers called "Don't Explain."

Hush now, don't explain
Just say you'll remain
I'm glad you're back
Don't explain

You know that I love you
And what love endures
All my thoughts are of you
For I'm so completely yours
Cry to hear folks chatter
And I know you cheat
Right or wrong, don't matter
When you're with me, sweet

Hush now, don't explain
You're my joy and pain
My life's yours, love
Don't explain

Don't explain, just come home and abide with a love that hopes all things, believes all things, endures all things, and remains steadfast forever. Amen.



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April 24, 2015



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