

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

SO FORGET ABOUT YOURSELF

By Pastor Brian De Jong

Among the characters in Greek mythology was a hunter from the territory of Thespieae named Narcissus. Narcissus was unusually beautiful and became exceptionally proud. An enemy who hated Narcissus lured him to a pool where Narcissus saw his own reflection in the waters.

Not realizing that it was his own image, Narcissus fell in love with what he saw in the pool. Unable to leave the reflected beauty, Narcissus stared at himself until he died.

It has been said that American culture is Narcissistic, meaning that we easily fall in love with ourselves. Me, me and only me matters – I just can't stop thinking about me. A dictionary definition of narcissism is "an inordinate fascination with oneself; excessive self-love; vanity." How well that describes even American Christians. This self-centered view leads us to idolize our own worship experience, as if that is all that matters.

During our vacation in the south in early May, we worshipped at Koinonia Baptist Church in Jackson, MS. We have many friends there from our time in Seminary, and their pastor is one of the best preachers I've ever heard.

Not to be missed is the choir of Koinonia. As usual, they opened the worship service with an anthem entitled "We have come into this house." What caught my notice were the words of the second stanza, which are as follows:

So forget about yourself, and concen-

*trate on Him, and worship Him.
So forget about yourself, and concentrate on Him, and worship Him.
So forget about yourself, and concentrate on Him, and worship Christ the Lord. Worship Him, Christ the Lord.*



Three times we were told to "forget about yourself and concentrate on Him, and worship Christ the Lord." That song lodged in my mind, and has made me think about what we should think and do in worship.

True worship is God-centered and Christ-focused.

It is not about me, my experiences, my feelings, or my enjoyment. True worship is about God – His glory and honor and praise. Whether I "like" worship is rather irrelevant, is it not? Whether God enjoys worship absolutely matters.

Does that mean we can and should expect nothing from having been at worship? No, I don't believe so. There are important byproducts of having met with God, and having called upon His name. We are fed with His word, we are encouraged by the covenant community, we are challenged to walk humbly with our God. We should walk away from worship as changed people – as better people for having come to God's house.

But byproducts are by definition secondary or incidental. They are often unexpected and unforeseen. The search for products sometimes produces byproducts, not vice versa. Glorifying God....

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Mnemonics...

- *Session Meeting, July 12th*
- *Vacation Bible School, July 25th -29th*

Rejoice!

by John Calvin

*“Rejoice in the Lord always;
again I will say, rejoice!” ~ Philippians 4:4*

It is an exhortation suited to the times; for, as the condition of the pious was exceedingly troublous, and dangers threatened them on every side, it was possible that they might give way, overcome by grief or impatience. Hence he enjoins it upon them, that, amidst circumstances of hostility and disturbance, they should nevertheless *rejoice in the Lord*, as assuredly these spiritual consolations, by means of which the Lord refreshes and gladdens us, ought *then* most of all to show their efficacy when the whole world tempts us to despair. Let us, however, in connection with the circumstances of the times, consider what efficacy there must have been in this word uttered by the mouth of Paul, who might have had special occasion of sorrow. For if they are appalled by persecutions, or imprisonments, or exile, or death, here is the Apostle setting himself forward, who, amidst imprisonments,

in the very heat of persecution, and in fine, amidst apprehensions of death, is not merely himself joyful, but even stirs up others to joy. The sum, then, is this — that come what may, believers, having the Lord standing on their side, have amply sufficient ground of joy.

The repetition of the exhortation serves to give greater force to it: Let this be your strength and stability, to *rejoice in the Lord*, and that, too, not for a moment merely, but so that your joy in him may be perpetuated. For unquestionably it differs from the joy of the world in this respect — that we know from experience that the joy of the world is deceptive, frail, and fading, and Christ even pronounces it to be accursed (Luke 6:25). Hence, that only is a settled joy in God which is such as is never taken away from us.

*Taken from Commentary on Philippians by
John Calvin, Chapter 4, verse 4.*

CAMP WESTMINSTER

The OPC Presbytery of the Midwest invites you to Camp Westminster this summer! Come meet with fellow believers, enjoy the beautiful Green Lake area, and deepen your understanding of Biblical Truth. The speaker, Rev. Neil Tolsma, is a ministerial member of the Presbytery of the Midwest & will be speaking on Abounding Love. OP missionary to Haiti, Ben Hopp will also be there. August 1-5 in Green Lake, WI.



Egg Rolls- YUM!

Mice Maou (my new friend) has agreed to teach us how to make egg rolls. The class will start at 9:00 a.m. on July 16 at Grace OPC. Mice and I will bring all the ingredients. Please sign up on the sheet on the bulletin board. Come prepared for fun & fellowship!

Marge Halbach



Comments on Finance

by Joel Moody

General Fund receipts for May totaled \$13,148.00 as compared to the budget of \$14,637.03, while General Fund disbursements for May totaled \$10,242.80. May year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$62,682.30 as compared to the budget of \$64,402.89 (a shortfall of \$1,720.59), while May year to date disbursements of \$61,956.59 were \$2,446.30 below budget. Through the end of May, the General Fund has increased by \$855.37. The increase in the General Fund was due to actual disbursements being lower than budgeted disbursements. General Fund receipts through May were 0.8% above last year's total, while disbursements were 1.9% above the prior year.

Benevolence Fund Receipts for May totaled \$1,259.60 as compared to the budget of \$1,483.33. Year to date benevolence receipts through May

totalled \$6,050.75, while the budget amount was \$7,416.67 (a shortfall of \$1,365.92). Each month, \$475.00 is sent to Worldwide Outreach for the General Missions outreach of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. In addition, \$200.00 is sent each month to the Midwest Presbytery's Church Extension Committee.

Giving for the Capital Expansion Project through May has reached \$53,696.41. The outstanding Mortgage and Promissory Notes balance was \$94,694.56 as of the end of May 2011. Assuming that mortgage payments continue to be made as scheduled, the mortgage will be paid off near the end of 2012. The promissory notes have specific terms of repayment for each particular note and we plan to pay those back accordingly.

July Birthdays



Vacation Bible School

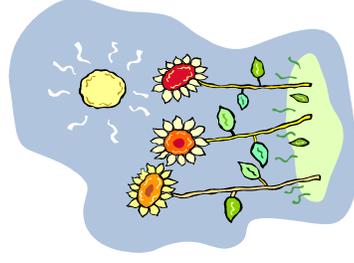
Vacation Bible School will be held July 25th-29th from 9:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m. Children from Pre-K to 6th grade are welcome to attend. Be sure to invite your friends and neighbors as we head out to the Old West in Answers in Genesis's *Gold Rush: Discovering the Rock of Ages*. Contact Deborah Arndt for more information.



Grace OPC

July 2011

Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 Missions Sunday	11 Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25 Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m. VBS 9 a.m.-12 p.m.	26 VBS 9 a.m.- 12 p.m. Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m.	27 VBS 9 a.m.-12 p.m.	28 VBS 9 a.m.- 12 p.m.	29 VBS 9 a.m.- 12 p.m. VBS Program at 6:30 p.m.	30
31 Lord's Supper, (a.m.)						

De Masters in Mount Vernon IN

From the De Masters

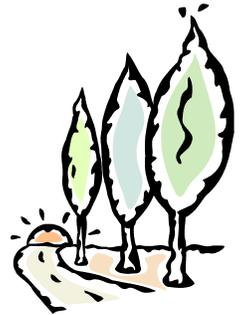
After a 10 hour trip we arrived in Mount Vernon safely and ready to adjust to the different routine. We saw the corn of Illinois growing almost as tall as we are. Once in Indiana, we met the largest farm machinery we ever saw riding on the road. Grain was harvest while we were in WI and in the midst of those fields, oil wells were still pumping. Occasional oil storage tanks are a necessary part of the landscape. Silos/corn storage bins look like huge kitchen canisters. Some owners with a sense of humor label them “coffee, tea, sugar and flour.” Going past Griffin Road brings a new meaning, because of the Froh birth. Seeing Machen Cannon at church, reminds us of the Onnink’s new boy. The garden is growing and soon will have blossoms, grapes, and veggies.

In these few days back we went to the farmers’ market east of Evansville (over 20 miles) where a family of the church sells beef, lamb, chicken, and pork, frozen. They raise these animals on their 80 acre farm. We benefit from their products, having had delicious (don’t groan) liver last night. Monday and Tuesday we spent in St. Louis (only 3 hours away) visiting with friends there we have known for over 50 years. Both were involved in seminaries in MO, FL, IA, and IN.

The church body is a beautiful group of young families. The fathers show good leadership, the mothers busy with the care of the home, and the children responsive. Some difficulties involve having 2 congregations with one session. Since so many things are done separately, there are problems with oversight. The men of this congregation met informally on Sunday night, making some positive plans for Sundays and Wednesdays. They will meet again Saturday at our house to plan more. At the session meeting last night, 3 elders and 2 deacons were nominated, all from this congregation. Things of the past were discussed and, hopefully, resolved. At the end of the meeting, Ivan did a Schlernitzauer thing--hugs all around.

Some things for the future to pray for:

- The training of the nominees for office
- The passing out of flyers in the neighborhood
- Hospitality in our home to the families of the church
- Safe delivery of 2 babies due in July and October



Directory Additions



Strawberry Shortcake



- ★ 2 cups sliced strawberries
 - ★ 1/4 cup sugar
 - ★ 1/3 cup butter
 - ★ 2 1/2 cup flour
 - ★ 1/3 cup granulated sugar
 - ★ 1 Tbsp. baking powder
 - ★ 1/4 tsp. salt
 - ★ 1 cup milk
 - ★ 2 cups heavy whipping cream/ 1 Tbsp. sugar/ 1/2 tsp. vanilla
1. Heat oven to 400°. In a large bowl, mix strawberries and 1/4 cup sugar; set aside. Place bowl & beaters for making whipping cream in freezer for 15 minutes before making the whipping cream.
 2. In a medium bowl, cut butter into the flour, 1/3 cup sugar, baking powder & salt using a fork or pastry blender until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Stir in milk.
 3. Drop by 12 spoonfuls onto a baking sheet and press down with the back of a spoon to 3/4 in. thickness. Sprinkle with a little sugar.
 4. Bake 12-15 minutes or until golden brown. Cool 10 minutes.
 5. Take the beaters & bowl out of the freezer & mix the heavy cream & 1 Tbsp. sugar in the bowl, adding vanilla when soft peaks form. Beat until stiff peaks form.
 6. Assemble the strawberry shortcakes by slicing the cakes in half and adding spoonfuls of strawberries & whipping cream.

“The eyes
of all look
to You,
And You
give them
their food in
due time.
You open
Your hand
And satisfy
the desire of
every living
thing.”



Showing forth the
excellencies of Jesus
Christ

Grace OPC

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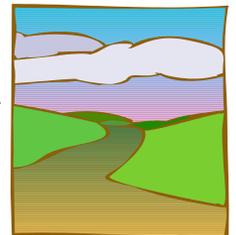


Spurgeon Corner

Hold Fast the Truth!

“Sanctify them through thy
truth.”
(John 17:17)

Sanctification begins in regeneration. The Spirit of God infuses into man that new living principle by which he becomes “a new creature” in Christ Jesus. This work, which begins in the new birth, is carried on in two ways—mortification, whereby the lusts of the flesh are subdued and kept under; and vivification, by which the life which God has put within us is made to be a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. This is carried on every day in what is called “perseverance,” by which the Christian is preserved and continued in a gracious state, and is made to abound in good works unto the praise and glory of God; and it culminates or comes to perfection, in “glory,” when the soul, being thoroughly purged, is caught up to dwell with holy beings at the right hand of the Majesty on high. But while the Spirit of God is thus the author of sanctification, yet there is a visible agency employed which must not be forgotten. “Sanctify them,” said Jesus, “through thy *truth*: thy word is truth.” The passages of Scripture which prove that the instrument of our sanctification is the Word of God are very many. The Spirit of God brings to our minds the precepts and doctrines of truth, and applies them with power. These are heard in the ear, and being received in the heart, they work in us to will and to do of God’s good pleasure. The truth is the sanctifier, and if we do not hear or read the truth, we shall not grow in sanctification. We only progress in sound living as we progress in sound understanding. “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.” Do not say of any error, “It is a mere matter of opinion.” No man indulges an error of judgment, without sooner or later tolerating an error in practice. Hold fast the truth, for by so holding the truth shall you be sanctified by the Spirit of God.



Morning, July 4th Morning & Evening, by C. H. SPURGEON

Front Article Concluded

...is the main thing, our enjoyment is always secondary and incidental to that. For when our hearts are set upon God, then we can anticipate that personal enjoyment of fellowship with our God.

So next time you enter God’s house, will you ‘forget about yourself and concentrate on Him, and worship Christ your Lord?’

