

# REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

## The Resurrection, Evidence & Unbelief

By Pastor Brian De Jong

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Inside this issue:

<i>Pastor's Article</i>	1
<i>So Great a Salvation</i>	2-3
<i>John Ploughman</i>	3-4
<i>Comments on Finances</i>	4-5
<i>Social Fellowship Calendar 2018</i>	6
<i>April Birthdays and Anniversaries</i>	7
<i>Spring Worldview Movie Night</i>	7
<i>April Calendar</i>	8
<i>Recipe Corner</i>	9
<i>Hospitality Sunday</i>	9
<i>Spurgeon Corner</i>	10

### Mnemonics...

- *Meadowview Manor, April 1st*
- *Stephanie Arndt Baby Shower, April 7th*
- *Session Meeting, April 10th*
- *Worldview Movie Night, April 13th*
- *Hospitality Sunday, April 22nd*
- *Men and Boys' Breakfast, April 28th*

When Jesus Christ arose from the dead, He provided the most convincing proof of His deity. Prior to His suffering, He had told his closest followers that he would be crucified, but that He would rise again on the third day.

On that morning, He fulfilled His promise by coming forth alive from the tomb. He almost immediately appeared to Mary Magdalene. He also showed himself to Peter, and to the twelve. Two other disciples,

journeying to Emmaus spoke with him along the road, and recognized him finally when he broke bread with them. Moreover, He appeared to the Eleven in the upper room, though the door had been locked from the inside.

In the days and weeks that followed, Jesus was seen alive by scores of witnesses, and at one point he was seen by 500 people at one time. He did things that proved that He was alive, such as eating fish, offering for doubting Thomas to put his fingers in the nail holes and in his side. He even offered advice on fishing and cooked a shore breakfast for his weary disciples.

All of this evidence from multiple eyewitnesses establishes the fact beyond reasonable dispute: Jesus arose from the dead, just as He had said he would. This evidence further proves His contention that He was no mere man, but the Son of God incarnate. Flesh and blood cannot rise from the dead – Jesus is God.

What seems so abundantly obvious to us is somehow not convincing to unbelievers. Skeptics have littered church history with their disbelief, especially and particularly about the resurrection of

Christ. How can it be that what convinces many fails to convince others?

One response to this quandary is to suggest still more evidence.

Apparently we haven't made the case in an overwhelming fashion, so if we apply more evidence, the unbeliever will surely believe. So books are written such as "More Evidence that

Demands a Verdict" (by Josh McDowell).

Or perhaps we have enough evidence, but we haven't presented it in the right way. If we were more authoritative or more persuasive, could that

do the trick? So we look to "experts" and "celebrities" to make the case. Surely if a successful professional athlete were to present the evidence, it would finally take hold? Or should we search the halls of academia for a "Scientist" who could be our spokesman. Surely if a scientist said what we Christians have said, people would believe a scientist!

But the real problem is not in (a) the amount of evidence available, (b) the type of evidence available, (c) the persuasiveness of the presenter, of (d) the lack of an expert spokesman. The problem is simply in the nature of the audience receiving our testimony. In a word, they are DEAD in their trespasses and sins.

Because fallen man is spiritually dead, he cannot and will not respond to a landslide of evidence persuasively presented. He has more than enough



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# So Great a Salvation

Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

Hebrews 2:1-4

The central theme of Hebrews 2:1-4 is escape. When we think of escape, we can think of deliverance from a dire and threatening life situation---escaping from a kidnapper or soldiers being surrounded in battle and finding a way to retreat safely. That's an escape. But the most common idea with which we associate the idea of escape is imprisonment. Not just from jail, but from those prisons that are the most notoriously inescapable, such as Alcatraz in this country, Devil's Island, and the most dreadful of all French prisons, the Chateau d'If.

Do you remember the story? It's my second-favorite novel. The story is of Edmond Dantes, who was falsely accused of a crime and unjustly convicted and then sent forthwith to the most dreaded prison, the Chateau d'If. He suffered there for years in solitary confinement. Until, one day, he met a copriisoner who was an aged priest. The priest had been there for decades and had spent much time trying to dig a tunnel, a possible escape. But he didn't do his math right, and he ended up digging into Dantes' chamber.

So, at last the two met, and they had fellowship. The old priest became Dantes' mentor and counselor. He taught him all things about science, philosophy, and theology. He also told him about a map that led to a vast treasure that was hidden under the sea. The old priest later died, and through an extraordinary set of circumstances, the death of the priest led to the escape of Edmond Dantes from the Chateau D'If. He then found the vast treasure under the sea. He financed the rest of his life with his nom de plume, the Count of Monte Cristo. What an escape story.

As dire and as dreadful as the circumstances were in the Chateau d'If, there's an even greater and more dreadful captivity than any human can imagine. The author of Hebrews here speaks of an escape from that. And he asks the question, "How can we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?" Beloved, this is a rhetorical question. And the answer to the question is simple. How should we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? The answer is we can't.

Maybe Alcatraz could possibly be escaped or Devil's Island or even the Chateau d'If, but the one prison from which no one ever escapes is hell. There's no escape route. You can't dig under it. You can't climb over it. No guard can be bribed. The sentence cannot be ameliorated. And so the author of Hebrews is saying, "Do you realize what you've heard? We have heard from the Word of God Himself about a great salvation."

Let me just pause for a second and comment on the very idea of salvation. We use that word all of the time in the church. What does it mean. When someone says to me, "Are you saved?" The first thing I want to say is, "Saved from what?" The idea of salvation suggests the idea of some kind of escape or deliverance from a dire circumstance and the verb *sozo*, in the New Testament, is used in a variety of ways.

If you are saved from a threatening illness, as people were in the New Testament by the touch of Jesus, Jesus might comment, "Your faith has saved you." He's not speaking about eternal salvation; He's speaking about their rescue from the dreadful disease. In the Old Testament, Israel went into battle and God intervened on their behalf and saved His people. He saved them from military defeat. That was rescue from a clear and present danger. And so, this verb *to save* is used in all kinds of ways and in virtually every tense of the Greek verb. There was a sense in which you are saved, you are being saved, and you will be saved. Salvation takes all these different tenses of the verb.

So, there's salvation in the general sense that has its manifold applications. But when the Bible speaks

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about salvation in the ultimate sense, it's speaking of the ultimate escape from the most dire of all human conditions. What does it mean to be saved? It means as the Scriptures tell us, to be rescued from the wrath that is to come.

God's wrath, as we're told in Romans, is revealed to the whole world, and the Bible makes it abundantly clear that there awaits a judgment. The greatest calamity that anybody can ever imagine is to be sentenced to hell. The Chateau d'If is a luxury resort compared to hell.

And so, now, the author raises the question, how do we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? We've heard the Word of God. It's a message of good news, not just good news, great news; not just great news, the greatest of all possible news. That those who believe in Christ will be saved from the wrath which is to come. How can you possibly neglect it in the first place? That's not the question the author is asking here. He says, how can you possibly escape? The question is, how can you possibly neglect such a great salvation.

Beloved, if you come to church every single Sunday of your life, and go to Sunday school every single week of your life, you may still be neglecting this great salvation. Is our heart in it? That's what I'm asking you. And you know I can't answer that question for you. You know if you're neglecting your salvation. You know that. I don't have to tell it to you. I just have to tell you what the consequences are if you continue in that neglect. So I pray with all my heart that God will awaken each one of us today to the sweetness, the loveliness, the glory of the gospel declared by Christ

Let's pray.

We thank You, O Jesus, that You are for us the great escape. We're thankful that because of You and what You've done for us we have nothing to fear from the wrath that it is to come. But we pray, O God, that You would feed our souls, cause us to hunger and thirst after You as the deer pants after the mountain stream. Ignite a flame in our hearts that we may not neglect You but pursue You with everything we have. For we ask You in Your name.

Amen.

Excerpted from Dr. R. C. Sproul's Final Sermon, November 26, 2017, Saint Andrew's Chapel, TableTalk

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## John Ploughman Chapter 6: On Gossips

In Walton church in our county, there is a brink, or scold's bridle, which was used in years gone by to keep women's tongues from troubling their husbands and their neighbors. They did queer things in those good old times. Was this bridle a proof of what our parson calls the wisdom of our ancestors, or was it a bit of needless cruelty? "It is nothing—only a woman drowning," is a wicked and spiteful old saying, which, like the bridle, came out of the common notion that women do a world of mischief with their tongues. Is it so or not? John Ploughman will leave somebody else to answer, for he admits that he cannot keep a secret himself and likes a dish of chat as well as anybody; only John does not care for cracking people's characters and hates the slander which is so sweet to some people's teeth. John puts the question to wiser men than himself: Are women much worse than men in this business? They say that silence is a fine jewel for a woman, but it is very little worn. Is it so? Is it true that a woman only conceals what she does not know? Are women's tongues

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like lambs' tails, always wagging? They say foxes are all tail, and women all tongue. Is this false or not? Was that old prayer a needful one "From big guns and women's tongues deliver us?" John has a right good and quiet wife of his own, whose voice is so sweet that he cannot hear it too often, and, therefore, is not a fair judge. But he is half afraid that some other women would sooner preach than pray and would not require strong tea to set their clappers going. Still what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, and some men are quite as bad blabs as the women. What a pity that there is not a tax upon words: what an income the Queen would get from it. But, alas, talking pays no toll; and lies paid double, the government might pay off the National Debt, but who could collect the money? Common fame is a common liar. Hear-say is half lies. A tale never loses in the telling. As a snowball grows by rolling, so does a story. They who talk much lie much. If men only said what was true, what a peaceable world we should see. Silence seldom makes mischief; but talking is a plague to the parish. Silence is wisdom; by this rule, wise men and wise women are scarce. Still waters are the deepest, but the shallowest brooks brawl the most. This shows how plentiful fools must be. An open mouth shows an empty head. If the chest had gold or silver in it, it would not always stand wide open. Talking comes by nature, but it needs a good deal of training to learn to be quiet; yet regard for truth should put a bit into every honest man's mouth and a bridle upon every good woman's tongue. If we must talk, at least let us be free from slander, but let us not blister our tongues with backbiting. Slander may be sport to tale-bearers, but it is death to those whom they abuse. We can commit murder with the tongue as well as with the hand. The worst evil you can do a man is to injure his character, as the Quaker said to his dog, "I'll not beat thee, nor abuse thee, but I'll give thee an ill name." All are not thieves that dogs bark at, but they are generally treated as if they were.

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## Comments on Finances

By Joel Moody

**General Fund** receipts for February totaled \$12,263.35 as compared to the budget of \$12,939.00, while General Fund disbursements for February totaled \$12,530.47. February year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$23,117.63 as compared to the budget of \$25,878.00 (a shortfall of \$2,760.37), while February year to date disbursements of \$25,180.23 were \$697.77 below budget. Through the end of February, the General Fund has decreased by \$2,046.40 (before a transfer of \$6,300.00 from the unused Lawnmower Fund back to the General Fund) due to lower receipts which were partially offset by lower disbursements. Year to date General Fund receipts for February were 9.7% below last year's total on an average Sunday while disbursements were 3.2% above the prior year.

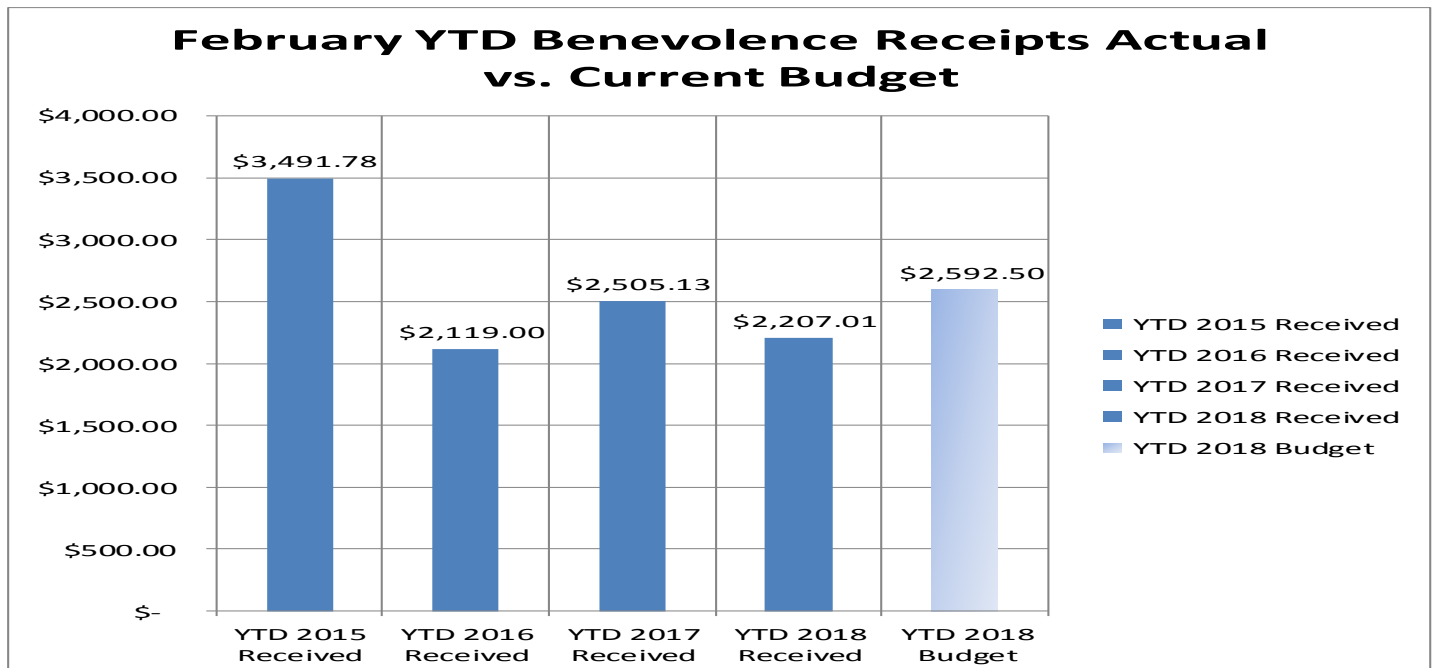
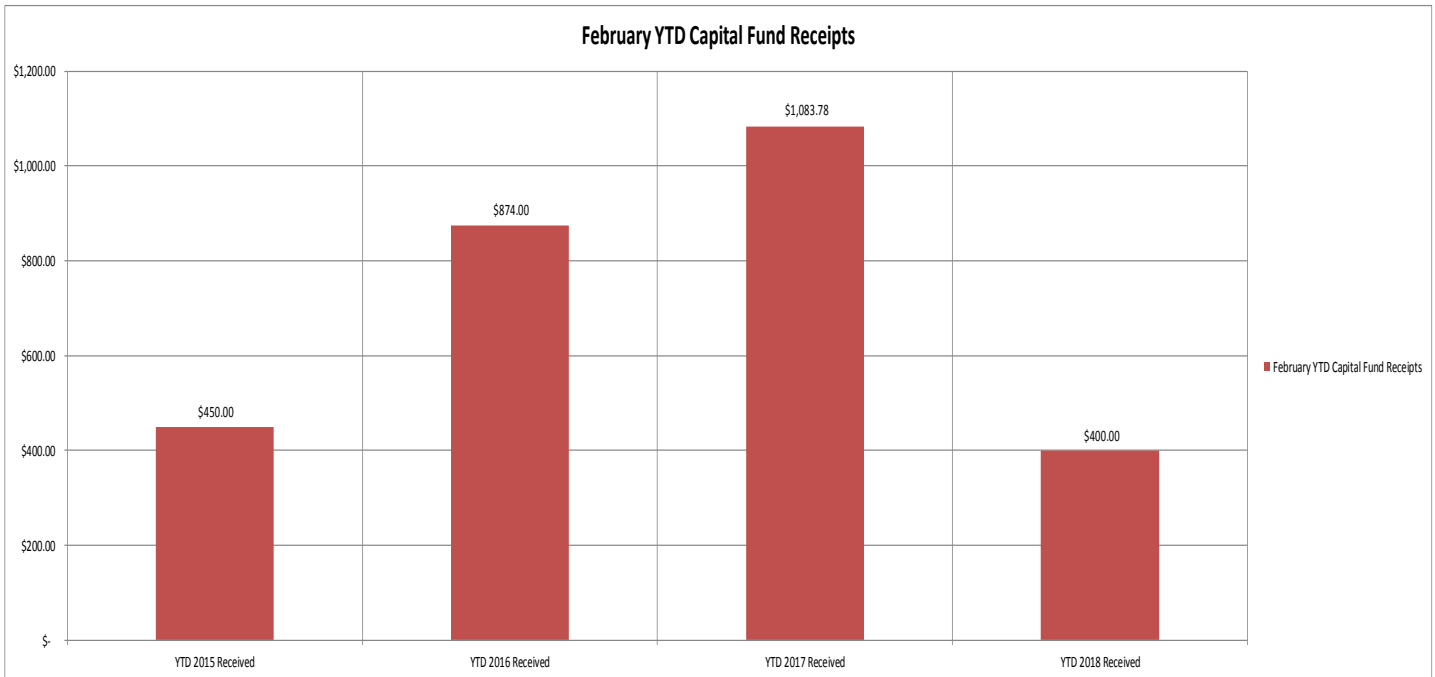
**Benevolence Fund** Receipts for February totaled \$1,041.01 as compared to the budget of \$1,296.25 (a shortfall of \$255.24). Year to date Benevolence Fund Receipts through February totaled \$2,207.01 and fell short of budget by \$385.49. Please refer to the graph for a historical trend of benevolence receipts as well as the current benevolence budget. During February, \$400.00 was sent to Worldwide Outreach (WVO) for the General Missions outreach of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, \$200.00 was sent to the Midwest Presbytery's Church Extension Committee (CHEX), and \$100.00 to Elijah De Jong, seminary student. During April, we are scheduled to disburse \$2,625.00 to the Hub-Spokes missionaries (the Hopps in Haiti and the Robbins in Uganda).

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Finances Continued...

February Year to Date giving for the **Capital Fund** was \$400.00. Please refer to the Capital Fund Graph that shows the historical giving for the years indicated in the graph. You may contribute to the Capital Fund by marking your gift as “Capital Fund” and placing it in the offering plate. Please note that the Capital Fund is used to pay for current and future needs that may exist to purchase additional **equipment** (such

as computers, the sound system, tables and chairs, etc.) **or building-type items** (such as a parking lot, driveway, furnace boiler, etc.). Since some capital needs are quite substantial in nature, resources to finance and pay for these projects can take years to pay for them. Even though capital needs may not be large in the current year, we should wisely allocate our giving not only to current needs, but also to these future needs as well.



SOCIAL FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES 2018

March 18, 2018	Fellowship Lunch	Ladies Group
March 30, 2018	Milwaukee Admirals Hockey Game	Bob & Debbie
April 7, 2018	Stephanie Arndt Baby Shower	Ladies Group
April 13, 2018	Worldview Movie Night	Pastor Brian
April 22, 2018	Hospitality Sunday	Pastor Brian
May 10 or 17, 2018	Ladies Evening (Dessert) / Gail Jansen	Ladies Group
May 20, 2018	Fellowship Lunch	Ladies Group
June 21, 2018	Grace Davis Baby Shower	Ladies Group
June 28, 2018	Mini Golf	Wendy Froh
July 1, 2018	Fellowship Lunch	Pastor Brian / Jason
July 4, 2018	Golf – Sunset Hills	Jeff Froh
July 20, 2018	Timber Rattlers Game	Jeff Froh
July 28, 2018	Alyssa Arndt Baby Shower	Ladies Group
August 9, 2018	Church Picnic	Ladies Group
August 18, 2018	Bike Trail Ride	Roger
September 6-8, 2018	Church Campout at Kohler-Andrae	Pastor Brian
September 28, 2018	Worldview Movie Night	Pastor Brian
October 12, 2018	Progressive Supper Hospitality Night	Pastor / Ladies Group
October 27, 2018	Reformation Conference - Snack	Ladies Group
October 28, 2018	Reformation Conference Lunch	Ladies Group
November 10, 2018	Harvest Home	Ladies Group
November 22, 2018	Thanksgiving Football Game	Steve Boss
December 2, 2018	Evening Fellowship / Appetizers	Ladies Group
December 27, 2018	Bowling / Pizza / Game night	Pastor Brian
January 11 or 18, 2019	Snow Tubing	Roger / Jonny
February 15, 2019	Taco / Game night	Wendy / Sara

\*Bay Beach outing - TBD

# April Birthdays

Jay Buyze 1st  
 Nicholas Froh 3rd  
 Pastor Brian De Jong 5th  
 Nancy Harmelink 7th  
 Trent Adam 8th  
 Randy Jensema 10th  
 Audrey Voskuil 17th  
 Gail Moody 18th  
 Sue Gross 20th



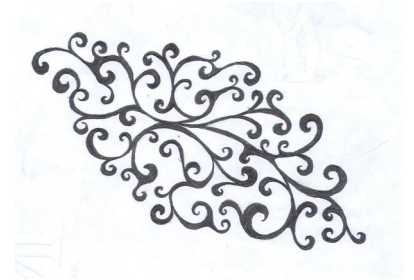
Sara TenPas 21st  
 Toni Barthels 22nd  
 De Lou De Jong 22nd  
 Jeff Froh 22nd  
 Emile Blasczyk 24th  
 Chris Kaeiser 24th  
 Christian De Jong 28<sup>th</sup>  
 Rodney Nyhof 28<sup>th</sup>

## *April Anniversaries*

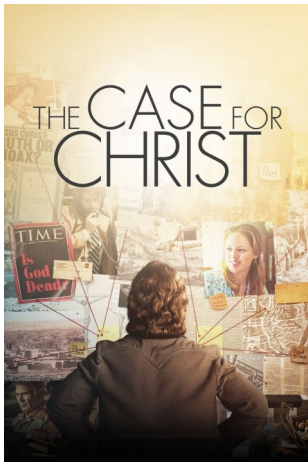
Jason & Emily Will  
 ~April 8th, 2 years~

Joe & Heidi Mamazza  
 ~April 20th, 6 years~

Josh & Stephanie Arndt  
 ~April 13th, 5 years~



## Spring Worldview Movie Night



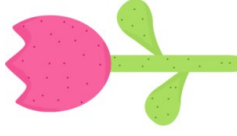
The Spring Worldview Movie Night will be held on Friday, April 13th. We will be watching a discussing the movie "The Case for Christ - the Lee Strobel Story." Invite a friend and join us for this time of fellowship!



*Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ*

Grace OPC

# April 2018



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Meadowview Manor, 3pm	2	3	4	5	6	7 Shower for Stephanie Arndt
8	9	10 Session Meeting, 6:30pm	11	12	13 Worldview Movie Night, 7pm	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 Hospitality Sunday	23	24	25	26	27	28 Men and Boys' Breakfast, 7am
29	30					

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# Chicken Piccata

## Ingredients:

- 2 skinless and boneless chicken breasts, butterflied and then cut in half
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- All-purpose flour, for dredging
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/3 cup fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 cup chicken stock
- 1/4 cup brined capers, rinsed
- 1/3 cup fresh parsley, chopped

## Instructions:

Season chicken with salt and pepper. Dredge chicken in flour and shake off excess.

In a large skillet over medium high heat, melt 2 tablespoons of butter with 3 tablespoons olive oil. When butter and oil start to sizzle, add 2 pieces of chicken and cook for 3 minutes. When chicken is browned, flip and cook other side for 3 minutes. Remove and transfer to plate. Melt 2 more tablespoons butter and add another 2 tablespoons olive oil. When butter and oil start to sizzle, add the other 2 pieces of chicken and brown both sides in same manner. Remove pan from heat and add chicken to the plate.

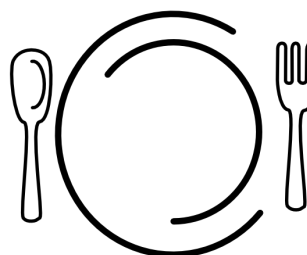
Into the pan add the lemon juice, stock and capers. Return to stove and bring to boil, scraping up brown bits from the pan for extra flavor. Check for seasoning. Return all the chicken to the pan and simmer for 5 minutes. Remove chicken to platter. Add remaining 2 tablespoons butter to sauce and whisk vigorously. Pour sauce over chicken and garnish with parsley.



*“For He  
has satisfied  
the thirsty soul,  
and the  
hungry soul  
He has filled  
with what  
is good.”*

## Spring Hospitality Sunday

Save the date for our Spring Hospitality Sunday, to be held on Sunday, April 22nd. Join us for this time of fellowship!





Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

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## Spurgeon Corner

*"It is time to seek the Lord."*

*Hosea 10:12*

This month of April is said to derive its name from the Latin verb *aperio*, which signifies *to open*, because all the buds and blossoms are now opening, and we have arrived at the gates of the flowery year. Reader, if you are yet unsaved, may your heart, in accord with the universal awakening of nature, be opened to receive the Lord. Every blossoming flower warns you that *it is time to seek the Lord*; be not out of tune with nature, but let your heart bud and bloom with holy desires. Do you tell me that the warm blood of youth leaps in your veins? then, I entreat you, give your vigour to the Lord. It was my unspeakable happiness to be called in early youth, and I could fain praise the Lord every day for it.

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Salvation is priceless, let it come when it may, but oh! an early salvation has a double value in it. Young men and maidens, since you may perish ere you reach your prime, *"It is time to seek the Lord."* Ye who feel the first signs of decay, quicken your pace: that hollow cough, that hectic flush, are warnings which you must not trifle with; with you *it is indeed time to seek the Lord*. Did I observe a little grey mingled with your once luxurious tresses? Years are stealing on apace, and death is drawing nearer by hasty marches, let each return of spring arouse you to set your house in order. Dear reader, if you are now advanced in life, let me entreat and implore you to delay no longer. There is a day of grace for you now—be thankful for that, but it is a limited season and grows shorter every time that clock ticks. Here in this silent chamber, on this first night of another month, I speak to you as best I can by paper and ink, and from my inmost soul, as God's servant, I lay before you this warning, *"It is time to seek the Lord."* Slight not that work, it may be your last call from destruction, the final syllable from the lip of grace.

Evening, April 1st, C.H. Spurgeon

## Front Page Concluded...

evidence, and it leaves him without excuse. His problem is that he is in such an estate that he cannot respond unless and until the Holy Spirit makes him alive. If the Spirit does not regenerate him and enlighten his mind again, he won't understand anything we're talking about – it is foolishness to him, because such things are spiritually discerned.

Therefore what we need is not semi-trailer loads of more evidence, but we need the Spirit to come with quickening power. We need a mighty movement of God upon the hearts and minds of spiritually dead people. Then, and

only then, will all of our evidence get any traction whatsoever. Then the blind will finally cry, "Oh, I see!" Then the unbeliever will believe, and angels will rejoice in heaven!

