

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

A NEW THING

By Pastor Brian De Jong

There is something fresh and promising about a new year. New opportunities, new adventures, new directions – we all enjoy new things. When you experience something new, there can be a sense of hope and anticipation. Who knows what might happen? Good may come in this new chapter of life!

In Revelation 21 we see a vision of the new heaven and new earth. In the midst of that glorious scene, John hears a wonderful statement from

God. He records it as follows: “*And He who sits on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” And He said, “Write, for these words are faithful and true.”* (Rev 21:5)

The eternity we will spend with our God will be characterized by newness. The old order – the order of grief and pain, of sin and death – will be done away with. A new order will be installed – an order of joy and peace, of righteousness and life. In glory, we will walk in ‘newness of life’ in the fullest sense of that phrase.

That change has already begun in each of us who have trusted in Christ. Paul tells the Corinthians that “*if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*” When God does a work of grace, He brings about a dramatic change. The old things of the old man pass away. The old is replaced by a new creature with new things. We now see everything from a distinctively different

perspective – everything is new, new, new!

Add to this that we live in the New Covenant. The Old Covenant with its types and shadows is gone, having passed away with the death and resurrection of Christ. We are members of a new and better covenant – with a better mediator, better promises, and better blessings. Everything about the New Covenant is superior to the Old Covenant.



So what should our attitude be in light of all this newness? Being new creatures in Christ Jesus, living under the New Covenant, and looking forward to the new heaven and new earth, we should be buoyant and hopeful. Our lives should be marked by joyful anticipation of all that God has in store for us!

Not only should we remain positive, optimistic and hopeful, we should adopt a sober commitment to ridding our lives of the last vestiges of the old man. Paul counsels the Ephesians along these very lines:

Ephesians 4:21 *if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus,²² that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,²³ and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,²⁴ and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of...*

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Mnemonics...

- *Session Meeting, 14th*
- *Cong./Corp. Meeting, 22nd*

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A Remedy for Wandering Thoughts

Chapter 8, Sections 4-5

by Richard Steele

SECTION IV BELIEVE IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Believe in the presence of God. The eye of the master makes the scholar busy. If his eye be off the scholar, the scholar's eye is off his book. "I have set the Lord always before me ; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved!" Psalm 16:8, else your hearts will be moved, and removed too upon every motion. And therefore faith, which doth realize invisible things, is of great use in holy duty. "He that cometh to God, must believe that he is." Heb. 11:6. He must as fully believe that God is present, as if he were visible; that thou art encompassed and involved in the presence of God. If thou go forward, he is there; if backward thou mayest perceive him; on the left hand, there he doth work, though thou canst not behold him; he hides himself on the right hand, that thou canst not see him, yet he knoweth the way that thou takest. Job 23:9, 10. This is his common presence; but then in an ordinance, there he is in the midst of his people; there he looks over heaven and earth as nothing, and to this man he looks, that is poor and contrite, and trembles at his word; and therefore when you pray, you must not only speak, as speaking of God, but to God. It is slighting a prince when we deliver a petition, and look another way; we bid our children look at us, when they speak to us, and so should we at God, who is not far from every one of us in his ordinances. There he is with his host about him; and though he is above us to determine whether his angels are employed to conduct his word to us, or our prayers to him, yet it is certain that they attend the great Jehovah, and never more willingly than in his ordinances; being transported with joy at a sinner's conversion and most pleasantly feasting on our penitential tears.

It is true, God is always, and everywhere with thee, with those more common attributes of immensity, power and providence; but in his worship, there he is also present by his grace, mercy, holiness, and efficacy.¹ His common presence may be compared to the sun in a cloudy day; it is in the sky, we have

great benefit by it, we should die without it; but his special ordinance presence, is like the sun breaking out of a cloud in a summer morning, that discovers atoms, warms our bodies, and refreshes our spirits. Even so the common presence of God upholds the world; in him we live, move, and have our being, and the belief that God is every where should persuade us to sin nowhere. But now the special presence of God in his worship, that like the sun breaking out, enlightens the mind, warms the heart, and melts the most rocky soul. Hereby God doth, as it were, shine directly upon us; so that to trifle or sin before him, is a crime intolerable. The name of every place, where God is rightly worshipped is Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is there.

Thy closet, the Lord is there between thy chair and thee, and canst thou shift from him? thy bed-chamber, the Lord is there between thy bed-side and thee, and canst thou turn from him? by the fire-side with thy family, the name of that place is Jehovah Shammah and wilt thou sleep? In the assembly, the Lord is there, and what are the persons there, in comparison of him? O therefore hear and look at God, and pray and look at God, and meditate and look at God, sing psalms and still look at God. It was Hagar's saying, "have I also here looked after him that seeth me? And she called the name of the Lord that spake to her, Thou God seest me." Gen. 16:13. call the name of the Lord that speaks to thee, and the Lord to whom thou speakest, "thou God seest me."² Keep thy eye upon him, as he keeps his eye upon thee; find a fairer object, and gaze and spare not; but while there is none in heaven or earth desirable like him, let nothing in heaven or earth distract thee from him. The lively sense of this will charm the heart exceedingly, and we steal from duty because we see no one there. It is said, "a king that sitteth in the throne of judgement, scattereth away all evil with his eyes," Prov. 20:8; that is, his very countenance should read such a lecture of justice, temperance, chastity, and piety, that every spectator should fear to do otherwise. then, how should the

Steele Continued...

presence of God so enchant the soul with holiness, goodness, and sweetness therein, that not one thought could be spared from so lovely an object!

The full and clear vision, and fruition of this presence of God doth so eternally ravish and content the soul in heaven, that they would not look off the face of God for a thousand worlds; no, though all the kings of the earth in their greatest triumph, should pass by the heavenly gates, with the earth's utmost glory with them, a glorified soul is so full of the presence of God, that it would not spare one minute's look to see it all. It is said of one Theodorus, a martyr, that in all his tortures he smiled, and being asked his reason, answered that he saw a glorious youth wiping the sweat off his face, whereby he was infinitely refreshed. If thou couldst but see by the eye of faith, the blessed face of God smiling on thee, and with the handkerchief of his love wiping thy sweat and tears away, thy heart would be glad, and thy glory rejoice, and thou wouldest say, Lord, it is good, yea, it is best for me to be here. Go not willingly from him, without a sight of him; Moses had few distractions when he saw God face to face. The actual faith of a saint engages the actual presence of God. Drexelius tells us of a vision of a holy man, and behold in the temple, an angel at every man's elbow that was at prayer; he that prayed with malice in his heart, his angel wrote his petitions in gall; he that prayed coldly, his prayers were written in the water; he that prayed with distractions, his suits were written in sand; and he that prayed in faith, his angel wrote his petitions in letters of gold. The moral whereof at least is good; if thou wouldest believe that every word spoken by thee or to thee, is written, with what care and conscience wouldest thou pray and hear? And be sure, there is one among you that takes notes of all, who will give to every man according to his works, whom to see and feel in an ordinance will release you from distractions.

*“In prayer
then, fix
thy eyes
heavenward,
and let
nothing
divert them,
till the prayer
be done.”*

SECTION V

LAY A LAW UPON YOUR SENSES

Lay a law upon your senses. Beg of God to sanctify them ; as they are all pensioners to Satan by nature and agreement, so bring them all into covenant with God, that ye may be sanctified in soul, body, and spirit. Give them to him, use them for him. It is said, “The fool's eyes are in the ends of the earth.” Prov. 17:24. Any new face that comes in, any strange garb, any noise about, every head that moves, every leaf that stirs, commands the eyes and heart of a fool, but “Let thy eyes look straight on, and let thine eye-lids look straight before thee.” Prov. 4:25. Compose thy eyes in that devout and heavenly posture, that whatever falls out, thou mayest keep to thy business without wavering. For the heart is used “to walk after the eye,” Job 31:7, to the undoing of the soul. It is a precept among the Rabbins, that if a Jew be at prayer, though a serpent come and bite him, yet he must not stir till he hath done his duty. Satan, that old serpent, will be nibbling at thy heel with one vain suggestion or other; but go thou through with thy business, and let God alone with him.

In prayer then, fix thy eyes heavenward, and let nothing divert them, till the prayer be done. This will show that thou wouldest lift thy heart thither, if thou couldest, and will prevent many an impertinent distraction that comes in by the eye. If any deride thee for this, doubt thou not of good company. “Unto thee do I lift up my eyes, thou that dwellest in the heavens.” Psalm 123:1. Let your ears be shut to every thing besides your work. And the lifting up your craving hands, will not be unprofitable to this end; for you will find them to flag when the heart flies off* from its business, whereby you may be advertised to come in again. “Let us lift up our hearts with our hands unto God in the heavens.” Lam. 3:41. And let your prayers be vocal, if it may

Steele Continued...

be, for the voice both helps to fix the thoughts and raise the affections, the want whereof we discern in meditation.

In hearing of God's word, let the eye be chained to the preacher with the greatest attention and reverence; as if you saw an angel in the pulpit, or Christ himself. And beware, lest your needless compliments to men be interrupted as a neglect of God. It is small manners to be complimenting the king's servants in his presence chamber, till you have done your homage to the king. Do your work with God; it is time enough to perform your civilities to men, when that is done. Look then to God; from him is thy expectation, with him is thy business. "The eyes of all them that were in the synagogue, were fastened on him." Luke 4:20. And therein, also, let your ears be only open heavenward. Lord! to deal with thee I am come, and thou shalt have all, both my soul and my body.

And here I cannot but digress a little, but it is to cure a more criminal digression, which is that frequent abuse of whispering, and talking to one another in the service of God, which, except it be upon such instant indispensable business, and cannot be ordered before or after the ordinance, is a sin in a high degree; and that,

1. Because it brings a guilt and distraction upon two persons at once. If a vain thought there be so evil as you have heard, how criminal then is this, that involves you both, yea perhaps occasions a distraction to twenty more that observe you? And the guilt of all their vain thoughts on that occasion will be charged on your account according to the equity of that law. Exod. 21:23.

2. Because this hath more of affront in it. Thy heart testifies to God's face, that thou dost despise his presence. Who but an impudent renegade would, while the king is laying down terms of mercy and honour to him, be talking and laughing with his companions at some uncouth courtier that comes in? And who but a practical atheist shall be whispering with his neighbour about any thing, while the king of heaven and earth is treating with him about eternity? You hold it no piece of good manners, while any man

is speaking to you, especially if he be your superior, to neglect him so far, as to turn from him to discourse with another nay, if the most necessary business call you away, you apologize for your absence, and crave pardon; and shall you dare, while your Maker is in conference with you, to confront him with an open parley with others? This is a high affront, if you consider it well.

3. This hath more offence in it. An offence to the preacher, that hath taken much pains to prepare that, which you will not take pains to hear, or else imply, it is not worth the hearing. An offence to the congregation that sees it, who must needs, if they fear God, be troubled at so public a fault. An offence to the angels, that, while they stoop down to look into the mysteries opened in the church, see you slight them so openly. An offence to your own souls, that perhaps miss in that moment of what would most have done them good. O therefore, christian reader! mourn for thy misbehaviour in this way, and amend it for time to come, lest God refuse to treat with thee, that triflest thus in thy treating with him. Remember, it is work enough for a poor man, to converse with a great God. He needs no other business to fill his hands.

And then in meditation you must also compose your senses. There shut your eye and ear, and sequester yourself wholly to the contemplation of things invisible. The least sight or sound will here distract: any thing, however trifling, will throw us off the hinges in this duty. Indeed it is said of Isaac, "That he went forth in the field in the evening-tide to meditate." Gen. 24:63. And in that kind of meditation, where the rise and subject matter is sensible, there the senses must be active and busy: but I think, in other cases, the outward senses may stand aside, and let the soul alone without them; we are never more sensible than when we use no outward sense at all.

And lastly, in communicating at the Lord's table, fix both your eyes on the sacred elements, until the eye has affected the heart to feel what Christ felt, to die in his death; and looking on him whom you have pierced, you mourn for him with a

Steele Concluded...

superlative sorrow; and then look at those sacred signs with an eye of faith, till virtue come from that brazen serpent to cure your sin-stung soul. Look yet again, till thy heart be inflamed with love to him, till he cry in heaven: "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my love, thou hast ravished my heart with one of thy eyes, with the chain about thy neck." Cant. 4:9. He that spends his eye there to observe his neighbours, and to criticise upon their gestures, hath little to do, and less to get in that sacred ordinance. And then lay a law upon thine ear, and taste and touch, for most of the senses are gratified and useful in this ordinance; that nothing may interrupt thy communion with Jesus Christ at that time. For there the utmost strength of body and soul are scarce enough to gain, and feel, and do, what is there to be gained, and felt, and done.

And in general, be not treacherous to yourselves. Satan without you can do no great matters

within you; your senses you can command, your hearts not so well. Be faithful in what ye can, else if you could order your very hearts, you would not. He that will not do what he can, would much less do what he cannot.

¹ Remember, there is above thee a heaving ear, a seeing eye, and a register-book, wherein all thy thoughts, words, and actions are written, and thou shalt not do amiss. ~ A Rabbi to his scholar.

² God looks not at the oratory of your prayers, how elegant they be, nor at the geometry of your prayers, how long they be, nor at the arithmetic of your prayers, how many they be, nor at the logic of your prayers, how methodical they be; but the sincerity of them he looks at. — Brooks.



Continued from the front

...the truth.

Perhaps you're still searching for a meaningful New Years Resolution to make your own? If you're in the market, consider this: I resolve to spend the next year laying aside my old self with all of its corruptions and lusts, and to put on my new self – to be renewed in holiness, righteousness and truth!



January Birthdays



New Phone Number

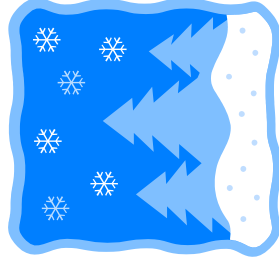




Grace OPC

January 2014

Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ



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

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Chronological Bible-in-a-Year Reading Schedule

Jan 1: Gen 1-3	Feb 16: Lev 11-13	Apr 3: Jud 10-12	May 19: 2Sam 19-21
Jan 2: Gen 4-7	Feb 17: Lev 14-15	Apr 4: Jud 13-15	May 20: Ps 5/38/41-42
Jan 3: Gen 8-11	Feb 18: Lev 16-18	Apr 5: Jud 16-18	May 21: 2Sam 22-23; Ps 57
Jan 4: Job 1-5	Feb 19: Lev 19-21	Apr 6: Jud 19-21	May 22: Ps 95/97-99
Jan 5: Job 6-9	Feb 20: Lev 22-23	Apr 7: Ruth	May 23: 2Sam 24; 1Chron 21-22; Ps 30
Jan 6: Job 10-13	Feb 21: Lev 24-25	Apr 8: 1Sam 1-3	May 24: Ps 108-110
Jan 7: Job 14-16	Feb 22: Lev 26-27	Apr 9: 1Sam 4-8	May 25: 1Chron 23-25
Jan 8: Job 17-20	Feb 23: Num 1-2	Apr 10: 1Sam 9-12	May 26: Ps 131/138-139/143-145
Jan 9: Job 21-23	Feb 24: Num 3-4	Apr 11: 1Sam 13-14	May 27: 1Chron 26-29; Ps 127
Jan 10: Job 24-28	Feb 25: Num 5-6	Apr 12: 1Sam 15-17	May 28: Ps 111-118
Jan 11: Job 29-31	Feb 26: Num 7	Apr 13: 1Sam 18-20; Ps 11/59	May 29: 1King 1-2; Ps 37/71/94
Jan 12: Job 32-34	Feb 27: Num 8-10	Apr 14: 1Sam 21-24	May 30: Ps 119:1-88
Jan 13: Job 35-37	Feb 28/29: Num 11-13	Apr 15: Ps 7/27/31/34/52	May 31: 1King 3-4; 2Chron 1; Ps 72
Jan 14: Job 38-39	Mar 1: Num 14-15; Ps 90	Apr 16: Ps 56/120/140-142	Jun 1: Ps 119:89-176
Jan 15: Job 40-42	Mar 2: Num 16-17	Apr 17: 1Sam 25-27	Jun 2: Solomon
Jan 16: Gen 12-15	Mar 3: Num 18-20	Apr 18: Ps 17/35/54/63	Jun 3: Prov 1-3
Jan 17: Gen 16-18	Mar 4: Num 21-22	Apr 19: 1Sam 28-31; Ps 18	Jun 4: Prov 4-6
Jan 18: Gen 19-21	Mar 5: Num 23-25	Apr 20: Ps 121/123-125/128-130	Jun 5: Prov 7-9
Jan 19: Gen 22-24	Mar 6: Num 26-27	Apr 21: 2Sam 1-4	Jun 6: Prov 10-12
Jan 20: Gen 25-26	Mar 7: Num 28-30	Apr 22: Ps 6/8-10/14/16/19/21	Jun 7: Prov 13-15
Jan 21: Gen 27-29	Mar 8: Num 31-32	Apr 23: 1Chron 1-2	Jun 8: Prov 16-18
Jan 22: Gen 30-31	Mar 9: Num 33-34	Apr 24: Ps 43-45/49/84-85/87	Jun 9: Prov 19-21
Jan 23: Gen 32-34	Mar 10: Num 35-36	Apr 25: 1Chron 3-5	Jun 10: Prov 22-24
Jan 24: Gen 35-37	Mar 11: Deut 1-2	Apr 26: Ps 73/77-78	Jun 11: 1King 5-6; 2Chron 2-3
Jan 25: Gen 38-40	Mar 12: Deut 3-4	Apr 27: 1Chron 6	Jun 12: 1King 7; 2Chron 4
Jan 26: Gen 41-42	Mar 13: Deut 5-7	Apr 28: Ps 81/88/92-93	Jun 13: 1King 8; 2Chron 5
Jan 27: Gen 43-45	Mar 14: Deut 8-10	Apr 29: 1Chron 7-10	Jun 14: 2Chron 6-7; Ps 136
Jan 28: Gen 46-47	Mar 15: Deut 11-13	Apr 30: Ps 102-104	Jun 15: Ps 134/146-150
Jan 29: Gen 48-50	Mar 16: Deut 14-16	May 1: 2Sam 5:1-10; 1Chr 11-12	Jun 16: 1King 9; 2Chron 8
Jan 30: Ex 1-3	Mar 17: Deut 17-20	May 2: Ps 133	Jun 17: Prov 25-26
Jan 31: Ex 4-6	Mar 18: Deut 21-23	May 3: Ps 106-107	Jun 18: Prov 27-29
Feb 1: Ex 7-9	Mar 19: Deut 24-27	May 4: 2Sam 5:11-6:23; 1Chron 13-16	Jun 19: Ecc 1-6
Feb 2: Ex 10-12	Mar 20: Deut 28-29	May 5: Ps 1-2/15/22-24/47/68	Jun 20: Ecc 7-12
Feb 3: Ex 13-15	Mar 21: Deut 30-31	May 6: Ps 89/96/100-101/105/132	Jun 21: 1King 10-11; 2Chron 9
Feb 4: Ex 16-18	Mar 22: Deut 32-34; Ps 91	May 7: 2Sam 7; 1Chron 17	Jun 22: Prov 30-31
Feb 5: Ex 19-21	Mar 23: Josh 1-4	May 8: Ps 25/29/33/36/39	Jun 23: 1King 12-14
Feb 6: Ex 22-24	Mar 24: Josh 5-8	May 9: 2Sam 8-9; 1Chron 18	Jun 24: 2Chron 10-12
Feb 7: Ex 25-27	Mar 25: Josh 9-11	May 10: Ps 50/53/60/75	Jun 25: 1King 15:1-24; 2Chron 13-16
Feb 8: Ex 28-29	Mar 26: Josh 12-15	May 11: 2Sam 10; 1Chron 19; Ps 20	Jun 26: 1King 15:25-16:34; 2Chron 17
Feb 9: Ex 30-32	Mar 27: Josh 16-18	May 12: Ps 65-67/69-70	Jun 27: 1King 17-19
Feb 10: Ex 33-35	Mar 28: Josh 19-21	May 13: 2Sam 11-12; 1Chron 20	Jun 28: 1King 20-21
Feb 11: Ex 36-38	Mar 29: Josh 22-24	May 14: Ps 32/51/86/122	Jun 29: 1King 22; 2Chron 18
Feb 12: Ex 39-40	Mar 30: Jud 1-2	May 15: 2Sam 13-15	Jun 30: 2Chron 19-23
Feb 13: Lev 1-4	Mar 31: Jud 3-5	May 16: Ps 3-4/12-13/28/55	Jul 1: Oba; Ps 82-83
Feb 14: Lev 5-7	Apr 1: Jud 6-7	May 17: 2Sam 16-18	Jul 2: 2King 1-4
Feb 15: Lev 8-10	Apr 2: Jud 8-9	May 18: Ps 26/40/58/61-62/64	Jul 3: 2King 5-8

Chronological Bible-in-a-Year Reading Schedule

Jul 4: 2King 9-11	Aug 19: 2King 24-25 ; 2Chron 36	Oct 4: Matt 3 ; Mark 1 ; Luke 3	Nov 19: Acts 9-10
Jul 5: 2King 12-13 ; 2Chron 24	Aug 20: Habaakkuk	Oct 5: Matt 4 ; Lk 4-5 ; Jn 1:15-51	Nov 20: Acts 11-12
Jul 6: 2King 14 ; 2Chron 25	Aug 21: Jer 41-45	Oct 6: John 2-4	Nov 21: Acts 13-14
Jul 7: Jonah	Aug 22: Jer 46-48	Oct 7: Mark 2	Nov 22: James
Jul 8: 2King 15 ; 2Chron 26	Aug 23: Jer 49-50	Oct 8: John 5	Nov 23: Acts 15-16
Jul 9: Is 1-4	Aug 24: Jer 51-52	Oct 9: Mt 12:1-21 ; Mark 3 ; Lk 6	Nov 24: Gal 1-3
Jul 10: Is 5-8	Aug 25: Lam 1:1-3:36	Oct 10: Matt 5-7	Nov 25: Gal 4-6
Jul 11: Amos 1-5	Aug 26: Lam 3:37-5:22	Oct 11: Matt 8:1-13 ; Luke 7	Nov 26: Acts 17-18:18
Jul 12: Amos 6-9	Aug 27: Ezek 1-4	Oct 12: Matt 11	Nov 27: 1/2Thess
Jul 13: 2Chron 27 ; Is 9-12	Aug 28: Ezek 5-8	Oct 13: Matt 12:22-50 ; Luke 11	Nov 28: Acts 18:19-19:41
Jul 14: Micah	Aug 29: Ezek 9-12	Oct 14: Matt 13 ; Luke 8	Nov 29: 1Cor 1-4
Jul 15: 2Chron 28 ; 2King 16-17	Aug 30: Ezek 13-15	Oct 15: Matt 8:14-34 ; Mark 4-5	Nov 30: 1Cor 5-8
Jul 16: Is 13-17	Aug 31: Ezek 16-17	Oct 16: Matt 9-10	Dec 1: 1Cor 9-11
Jul 17: Is 18-22	Sep 1: Ezek 18-19	Oct 17: Matt 14 ; Mk 6 ; Lk 9:1-17	Dec 2: 1Cor 12-14
Jul 18: Is 23-27	Sep 2: Ezek 20-21	Oct 18: John 6	Dec 3: 1Cor 15-16
Jul 19: 2King 18:1-8 ; 2Chr 29-31 ; Ps 48	Sep 3: Ezek 22-23	Oct 19: Matt 15 ; Mark 7	Dec 4: 2Cor 1-4
Jul 20: Hos 1-7	Sep 4: Ezek 24-27	Oct 20: Mt 16 ; Mk 8 ; Lk 9:18-27	Dec 5: 2Cor 5-9
Jul 21: Hos 8-14	Sep 5: Ezek 28-31	Oct 21: Mt 17 ; Mk 9 ; Lk 9:28-62	Dec 6: 2Cor 10-13
Jul 22: Is 28-30	Sep 6: Ezek 32-34	Oct 22: Matt 18	Dec 7: Acts 20:1-3 ; Rom 1-3
Jul 23: Is 31-34	Sep 7: Ezek 35-37	Oct 23: John 7-8	Dec 8: Rom 4-7
Jul 24: Is 35-36	Sep 8: Ezek 38-39	Oct 24: John 9:1-10:21	Dec 9: Rom 8-10
Jul 25: Is 37-39 ; Ps 76	Sep 9: Ezek 40-41	Oct 25: Luke 10:1-11 ; Jn 10:22-42	Dec 10: Rom 11-13
Jul 26: Is 40-43	Sep 10: Ezek 42-43	Oct 26: Luke 12-13	Dec 11: Rom 14-16
Jul 27: Is 44-48	Sep 11: Ezek 44-45	Oct 27: Luke 14-15	Dec 12: Acts 20:4-23:35
Jul 28: 2King 18:9-19:37 ; Ps 46/80/135	Sep 12: Ezek 46-48	Oct 28: Luke 16-17:10	Dec 13: Acts 24-26
Jul 29: Is 49-53	Sep 13: Joel	Oct 29: John 11	Dec 14: Acts 27-28
Jul 30: Is 54-58	Sep 14: Dan 1-3	Oct 30: Luke 17:11-18:14	Dec 15: Colossians ; Philemon
Jul 31: Is 59-63	Sep 15: Dan 4-6	Oct 31: Matt 19 ; Mark 10	Dec 16: Ephesians
Aug 1: Is 64-66	Sep 16: Dan 7-9	Nov 1: Matt 20-21	Dec 17: Philippians
Aug 2: 2King 20-21	Sep 17: Dan 10-12	Nov 2: Luke 18:15-19:48	Dec 18: 1 Timothy
Aug 3: 2Chron 32-33	Sep 18: Ezra 1-3	Nov 3: Mark 11 ; John 12	Dec 19: Titus
Aug 4: Nahum	Sep 19: Ezra 4-6 ; Ps 137	Nov 4: Matt 22 ; Mark 12	Dec 20: 1 Peter
Aug 5: 2King 22-23 ; 2Chron 34-35	Sep 20: Haggai	Nov 5: Matt 23 ; Luke 20-21	Dec 21: Heb 1-6
Aug 6: Zephaniah	Sep 21: Zech 1-7	Nov 6: Mark 13	Dec 22: Heb 7-10
Aug 7: Jer 1-3	Sep 22: Zech 8-14	Nov 7: Matt 24	Dec 23: Heb 11-13
Aug 8: Jer 4-6	Sep 23: Est 1-5	Nov 8: Matt 25	Dec 24: 2 Timothy
Aug 9: Jer 7-9	Sep 24: Est 6-10	Nov 9: Matt 26 ; Mark 14	Dec 25: 2 Peter ; Jude
Aug 10: Jer 10-13	Sep 25: Ezra 7-10	Nov 10: Luke 22 ; John 13	Dec 26: 1 John
Aug 11: Jer 14-17	Sep 26: Neh 1-5	Nov 11: John 14-17	Dec 27: 2/3 John
Aug 12: Jer 18-22	Sep 27: Neh 6-7	Nov 12: Matt 27 ; Mark 15	Dec 28: Rev 1-5
Aug 13: Jer 23-25	Sep 28: Neh 8-10	Nov 13: Luke 23 ; John 18-19	Dec 29: Rev 6-11
Aug 14: Jer 26-29	Sep 29: Neh 11-13 ; Ps 126	Nov 14: Matt 28 ; Mark 16	Dec 30: Rev 12-18
Aug 15: Jer 30-31	Sep 30: Malachi	Nov 15: Luke 24 ; John 20-21	Dec 31: Rev 19-22
Aug 16: Jer 32-34	Oct 1: Luke 1 ; John 1:1-14	Nov 16: Acts 1-3	
Aug 17: Jer 35-37	Oct 2: Matt 1 ; Luke 2:1-38	Nov 17: Acts 4-6	
Aug 18: Jer 38-40 ; Ps 74/79	Oct 3: Matt 2 ; Luke 2:39-52	Nov 18: Acts 7-8	

DEACONS' REPORT

by Jeff Froh

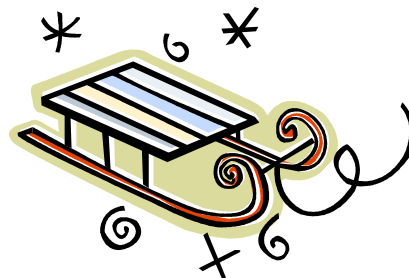
The Lord continues to bless Grace Church and the Diaconal outreach.

Areas we have assisted over the past few months...



Camp Calvin

Advance Notice! This year's Camp Calvin will be held June 16-21, 2014. Please mark your calendars now for this fun event.



Thank You

Men's Retreat

The Apple Valley/ New Hope Men's Retreat will be held February 21-22 at the Green Lake Conference Center in Green Lake, WI.

Dr. Craig Troxel will be speaking on the topic "Where is your heart?: thinking (again) about what you know, choose & love". From the brochure: "If you want to grow in repentance and faith, if you desire true Spiritual renewal, if you hope to avoid the pitfalls of hypocrisy, if you need honest talk in your marriage, if you long to pray with more honesty, if you know you need to examine your real motives, if you truly desire to love and serve God: *then you need to know what the heart is and where it is in your relationships with God and others.*

There will also be free time with opportunities to interact with other men. Basketball, ping pong, and

other activities will be available, as well as hymn-singing during the afternoon for all who desire to participate." The retreat is open to all men 16 years and older.

The deadline for registering for the retreat is January 20, 2014 or until all space at the retreat is filled. More information is available in the green brochures on the shelf in the hallway. Men can sign up online at nhopc.org.



Book Review

by Carla De Master

Another OPC celebrity in the book world!! Donna Buchanan, pastor's wife, Chain O Lakes Church, Central Lake, MI has illustrated a book by Judy Snow Nations: Men of the Holidays. This book covers Valentine, Patrick, Luther, Squanto, and Nicholas. It is written from a Christian perspective, with no "saints" before the names. It is a good book for children about third grade level. Donna has a unique way of sketching, which she taught us the last time we were in MI. It requires no large amount of materials, good for a homeschooling mother of 6. It is her way to relax and her children are developing artistic gifts as well. Bruce Buchanan

is Carol and Mark's pastor. The families spend a lot of time together. The book does not go into depth of doctrine, but show the basic life in Christ that they had. I especially appreciated the story of Squanto (for Thanksgiving). Any homeschoolers who want to borrow the book, see me.



Perfect Winter Stew



- ★ 3/4 cup Kraft Zesty Italian Light Dressing
- ★ 2 lbs. beef for stew - beef chuck roast cut into 1/2-1 in. chunks
- ★ 6 slices lean bacon chopped
- ★ 3 cups sliced mushrooms
- ★ 1 cup chopped onion (1 large)
- ★ 3 cups sliced carrots
- ★ 1 1/2 lbs potatoes, peeled and cut into large chunks
- ★ 1 can 14 1/2 oz stewed tomatoes, undrained
- ★ 1 can 14 1/2 oz beef broth

Pour dressing over meat in large resealable bag. Seal bag; turn to evenly coat meat with dressing. Refrigerate 30 min to marinate. Meanwhile, cook bacon in large pan on med. heat 5 min or until crisp. Remove bacon from pan. Drain. Add mushrooms and onions in same pan, cook med-high 10 min or until tender. Remove meat from marinade; discard marinade. Use dutch oven and put in meat, carrots, potatoes, tomatoes, broth, and bacon. Stir. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to low; cover and simmer 1 hour 15 min. Uncover and simmer an additional 15 minutes or until meat is cooked through and sauce is thickened. Use cornstarch/water mix to thicken if needed.

Deborah Arndt

“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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CHECK OUT THE AUDIO:

**SERMONAUDIO.COM/
GRACESHEBOYGAN**

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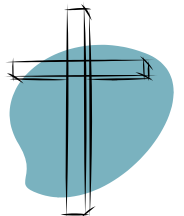


Spurgeon Corner

*“For me to live is Christ.”
(Philippians 1:21)*

The believer did not always live to Christ. He began to do so when God the Holy Spirit convinced him of sin, and when by grace he was brought to see the dying Saviour making a propitiation for his guilt. From the moment of the new and celestial birth the man begins to live to Christ. Jesus is to believers the one pearl of great price, for whom we are willing to part with all that we have. He has so completely won our love, that it beats alone for him; to his glory we would live, and in defence of his gospel we would die; he is the pattern of our life, and the model after which we would sculpture our character. Paul’s words mean more than most men think; they imply that the *aim and end of his life* was Christ—nay, his life itself was Jesus. In the words of an ancient saint, he did eat, and drink, and sleep eternal life. Jesus was his very breath, the soul of his soul, the heart of his heart, the life of his life. Can you say, as a professing Christian, that you live up to this idea? Can you honestly say that for you to live is Christ? Your business—are you doing it *for Christ*? Is it not done for self-aggrandizement and for family advantage? Do you ask, “Is that a mean reason?” For the *Christian* it is. He professes to live for Christ; how can he live for another object without committing a spiritual adultery? Many there are who carry out this principle in some measure; but who is there that dare say that he hath lived wholly for Christ as the apostle did? Yet, this alone is the true life of a Christian—its source, its sustenance, its fashion, its end, all gathered up in one word—Christ Jesus. Lord, accept me; I here present myself, praying to live only in thee and to thee. Let me be as the bullock which stands between the plough and the altar, to work or to be sacrificed; and let my motto be, “Ready for either.” may await storm or fire with equanimity, for he shall abide the test.

Evening, January 7, Morning & Evening, by C. H. Spurgeon



Meetings

The Annual Congregational and Corporation Meetings are scheduled for Wednesday, January 22nd at 7:00 p.m. at the church. The “weather date” is January 29th. All reports are due by Wednesday, January 15th. They can be left on the secretary’s desk or e-mailed to ...

