

That's Impossible!

Pastor Andrew Straubel

Have you ever said those words? Or thought them? In early 1991 I was invited to stop in at a church that was closing to take anything related to ministry that wasn't nailed down. We found blackboards, flannel graph, craft materials, chairs, and an overhead projector, remember them? While rummaging through one closet I found a framed picture of an ancient Greek word, "tharseo." Although I had many years of Greek in College and Seminary, I was unfamiliar with the term, so I went home, and grabbed my Lexicon (Greek Dictionary). I asked myself why someone would frame a picture of a Greek word? What did it mean? How did it end up in the musty closet of an old Reformed Church in the center of town? It turned out that study became one of great encouragement at a very trying time in life and ministry.

The term "tharseo" means "to take courage" and is used just seven times in the New Testament and exclusively of Jesus in the form of a command. Jesus charged the crippled man in Matthew 9:2 to *"take courage!"* He told the woman with an incurable blood disease to *"take courage"* (Mathew 9:22). He told Peter as he began to sink while walking on water to *"take courage"* (Mathew 14:27). He told Blind Bartimaeus as he cried out over and over again, *"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me,"* and was told to be quiet, *"take courage."* (The NIV translates it to, *"Take heart!"*) He whispered to the Apostle Paul while in prison and preparing to witness before magistrates to *"take courage!"* And, interestingly, Jesus uses the term to encourage his disciples on the eve of his departure from this world (John 16:33). He says, *"In THIS world [emphasis mine] you will have trouble. But take heart [tharseo], I have overcome the world."*

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The Children's Sunday School Classes



“That’s Impossible!” continued...

In each instance that the word is found, key observations can be made. First, each individual hearing this charge was somehow in a helpless situation. How they got there seemed never to be the issue. Second, each individual was without resources to change their circumstances. And third, each individual had no prospects of relief in the near or far future. Isn't it interesting that God seems to find people just in the nick of time? No one wants to get themselves in that place, desperate, helpless, hopeless, despairing. Regardless of the reasons that may have got us there, Jesus meets us in our impossible situations. And when He does, it is not with critical words of condemnation but life-giving words of hope and encouragement, a “good word” from the Lord.

If there is ever a day we need to hear a “good word” from the Lord it is today. Take courage! Cheer up! Jesus’ words of never leaving us or forsaking us (Matthew 28:20) are as true now as they were then. It has been said of this word, “take courage,” that with the charge comes the enablement. That means Jesus grants us the ability to overcome life’s most difficult of circumstances because He overcame (John 16:33). Isaiah 43:2 says, *“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned, the flames will not set you ablaze.”* So if and when you are “going through it,” trust in the Lord with all our hearts, do NOT lean on your own understanding. In all our ways acknowledge HIM, and He will direct our paths (Proverbs 3:5-6).



It is amazing what lessons can be taken from an old musty closet. I keep the picture of that ancient Greek term in my office as a constant reminder to “take courage!” Remember, nothing is impossible with God (Matthew 19:26).

Harris Ministry Clothing Giveaway

The Harris Ministry is having their annual President’s Day Clothing Giveaway and can make good use of your clean and gently used clothing for men, women, children and infants. Clean bedding and towels are also needed, but no furniture, please.

Please place your donations in the chapel back hall by Sunday, February 18. The Harris Ministry greatly appreciates your contributions to this important outreach.



New Directories

Our new 2018 Chapel Directories containing updated information and the listings of our newest chapel members are available in the chapel foyer. If you have not received an email containing a PDF copy of the directory, please contact the chapel office. Thank you for helping us to keep our database up-to-date.

Prime Timers

Watch the bulletin for fellowship dinners and faith-inspiring videos. Prime Timers is open to all adults. Please contact Charlie Muldrow (609) 448-8910 for additional information.

New 11th Hour Classes

Join us on Sundays for two wonderful opportunities during the 11th Hour as we seek to discover and apply biblical truths to our lives:

Epistles of John - All women are invited to the Chapel House as we seek to understand and appreciate God's Word as He inspired the Apostle John. We will be doing an informal inductive Bible study of John's Epistles. John's desire to share his personal experience with the incarnate Christ to subsequent generations of believers gives us a wonderful opportunity to learn from the Apostle whom Jesus loved. Teachers: Janet Berrill, Cindy Bills.

Discipleship Essentials - Men will study, "Discipleship Essentials," by Greg Ogden. We'll discover the fullness of life in Christ, and grow in Christ as we seek Him together. Jesus' own pattern of disciple-making was to be intimately involved with others and allow life to rub against life. Through this study we will deepen our knowledge of essential Christian teaching and strengthen our faith. Teacher: Pastor Andy Straubel

Perisseia

Our women's growth group has begun its winter series. All women are welcome as we gather to discuss what it means to be a Godly woman in our world today.

Meetings are Thursday evenings, 7:00-8:30, in the Chapel House. For more information, please contact Cindy Bills (cbills@verizon.net; 609-275-8557). No commitment or preparation is required.



Tom Taylor presented the 2018 budget at the Annual Budget Meeting in January. FINCOM is still seeking a treasurer.

A Reminder From FINCOM

Reimbursements

FINCOM needs to track the cost of items purchased for the church. Knowing the cost helps us in the budgeting process when members no longer donate their time and effort.

Please show your receipts for items purchased. If you wish to donate that money back to the church, just write a check for its value and put it in the offering.

Tax Receipts for non-cash gifts

We provide receipts (not stating the value) for the donation of goods if requested at the time the donation is made.

Talk to your tax advisor, but as per IRS guidelines, donations of goods and property of \$250 or more need to be properly receipted.

Get credit when you forget

Blank giving envelopes are available in the lobby for cash donations.

Elder's Corner

By Ron Bystrom

The Year Ahead

2018 has arrived and we just had our Annual Meeting. As we look to the future, as Elders it is our hope that individually and collectively we will earnestly seek to know, love, and fulfill the purposes that God has for our lives. In some ways, what that will look like we do not know. However, in other ways, God seems to be leading us in definite directions.

One of those directions is to encourage and empower Andy as our senior Pastor to seek the Lord with new vitality and to LEAD us in the directions that God has placed on His Heart. Secondly, Jesus said that "others will know we are His disciples because of our Love for one another." Thus, via the prayer chain, participating in the opportunities provided by our tremendous Fellowship Team, and by encouraging each of us to consider how we can demonstrate love to each other in practical, caring ways, we hope that this "love" will be obvious and felt by all.

Finally, as Elders we ask you to continue to pray for us. We desire to be sensitive and obedient to the Head of the Chapel, namely, Jesus Christ. We desire to lead, love, and care for the Windsor Chapel family in a way that honors Him. But like you, we are "mere men." Thus, it is only as God works through us as Elders, and all of us as a Windsor Chapel family, that God's ultimate purposes will be fulfilled. Please join us in prayer for this to be our reality.

We hope that 2018 will be an encouraging, growing, and significant year for you as you walk in love with Him, and as together, we fulfill His purposes.

Love

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

John 13:34-35

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Galatians 5:22-23

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28

Financial Update

(Through December 2017)

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want..."

	Actual	Budget
Income	\$287,491	\$309,000
Expense	\$322,052	\$369,258

Windsor Chapel has sent \$55,577 to our missionary partners this year. That's 19% of your giving!

When Do You Praise God?

By Janet Berrill

Recently during the worship service, we sang the song *Blessed Be Your Name*. Although we have sung this song many times and I have always enjoyed the lyrics, the meaning of the words had a fresh impact on me. Below are just the verses of the song:

*Blessed Be Your Name
In the land that is plentiful
Where Your streams of abundance flow
Blessed be Your name*

*Blessed Be Your name
When I'm found in the desert place
Though I walk through the wilderness
Blessed Be Your name*

*Blessed be Your name
When the sun's shining down on me
When the world's 'all as it should be'
Blessed be Your name*

*Blessed be Your name
On the road marked with suffering
Though there's pain in the offering
Blessed be Your name*

Verses 1 and 3 describe life when everything is going well, the way we would want it to go. We have what we need and everything is fine. The response is to bless the name of the Lord, that is to praise God.

Verses 2 and 4 describe life when things are not going well. We feel like we are in a desert, alone in a wilderness, experiencing suffering and pain. But the response is the same, that is to praise God.

Why do we praise God? Because of who He is; because He is worthy of praise! He is holy, righteousness, perfect, worthy, loving, gracious, merciful, kind, patient, all wise, all powerful, all knowing, omnipresent and more. Those are certainly characteristics worthy of praise!

Who God is does not change based upon our circumstances. When our life is going well, God is worthy of praise. When we are facing challenges, God is still worthy of praise. I think as Christians we tend to forget that sometimes. We are quick to offer praise to God when He answers our prayers the way we want. When the sick person is healed, we praise God. When the unemployed find a job, we praise God. When the wayward child returns home, we praise God. But God is still worthy of praise when the sick person is not healed, or the unemployed cannot find work, or the wayward child remains lost. Who God is does not change based upon how He answers our prayers or the situation we are in.

Granted, it is much easier to praise God when everything is going well. Praising God when things are not going the way we want is a matter of faith. It takes faith to tell God we believe He is who He says He is, that He is loving, kind, gracious, merciful, etc., when our prayers are not answered the way we were hoping. When we praise Him at this point, we are telling Him that we trust Him, that we believe He knows what is best, that we will relinquish our will to His. No matter what is happening in our lives, God does not change and is always worthy of praise.

Blessed be your name, Lord. Period.



Further Up and Further In

*Inviting dialogue to encourage growth in
and among us*



By Cindy Bills

Use Your Words!

Ken and I have been blessed with three grandchildren, with Number Four on the way. The eldest is Sam, who just turned four. Sam is spectacular! But at four, he is not always able to manage negative emotions in a constructive way. On those occasions upon which he needs help in that regard, we often encourage him to “use your words.” It is a common strategy in dealing with young children, and often helpful. But it is my observation, and unfortunately my experience, that adults often have difficulty using their words as well.

Recent research in neurobiology has confirmed what most of us know even if we won’t admit to it: our emotions drive our reactions and strongly influence our perceptions and perspective. Scientists tell us that our amygdala, the emotional center of our brain, is our “first responder,” the gateway through which information and stimuli enter for processing. And if our amygdala remains in control, we inflict unregulated and unfiltered emotions upon ourselves and others. Fortunately, the Lord also created our brains with a prefrontal cortex, the part of our brain that integrates and processes information. The Apostle Paul knew this centuries before the discipline of neurobiology was even imagined: “*Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger.*” (Ephesians 4:26). Paul understood that it is not our emotions that handicap our ability to love but rather our management of our emotions.

The challenge for us as well-informed 21st Century Christians is to exercise patience and restraint in order to give our prefrontal cortex time to process the information given to it by our amygdala and other regions. And although adults have more words at their disposal than their preschool counterparts, we often do not choose our words with appropriate care, and we often do not express ourselves with a loving and gracious tone and demeanor. This is not a new problem. James describes the tongue as a fire, a restless evil, and the source of deadly poison (James 3).

God is the God of relationship, and it is His desire to fit us together into a dwelling of His presence, for His glory (Ephesians 2:21-22). We can promote and prosper that work by using our words—carefully—when interacting with one another. Carefully chosen words, reflecting the grace and truth of our Lord Jesus Christ, are essential resources in this endeavor. Indeed, King Solomon reminds us in Proverbs that a gentle answer turns away wrath. As we use our words to bless and encourage one another, to be slow to speak and quick to listen, we will experience both the comfort and delight of fellowship and manifest the love that our world so desperately needs to see.

Please feel free to contact Cindy (609-275-8557 or clbills@verizon.net) to continue the dialogue....

If you have any items or information you would like to share in the newsletter, please e-mail:

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