

Found in Him

By Pastor Andrew Straubel

When I was five years old my brave parents took my twin brother and I to the Plymouth Meeting Mall. Malls were new back then and it was crowded. As the infamous story goes, my brother and I took off in different directions and got lost in the sea of people. As you might imagine, it was bedlam trying to find us. Somewhere between Woolworths and Spencer Gifts we were found at the base of two clothing trees which appeared to be twirling by themselves. That is when my parents started tying us together with a rope. Honestly, I don't remember being lost, but I do remember being found (ouch).

In Elyse M. Fitzpatrick's book, *Found In Him*, the author explores the riches of the incarnation of Jesus [how God became man] and the oneness or union we have with Christ. Many Christians, she says, "wander around a spiritual wilderness, malnourished, thirsting, and consuming rubbish because they have never feasted on the soul-consoling, heart-transforming, zeal-engendering truth found in the study of the incarnation and union" (p.18). Her goal in writing is for us to know, "how found, loved, welcomed, and reconciled we are in Him...and to see how Christ has forever taken our nature to himself and bound us to himself in enduring oneness" (p.19).

Theologically speaking, to be "in Christ" is to be spiritually united to and identified with Jesus such that all the blessings and benefits obtained by Christ belong to us, His children. The Apostle Paul uses the phrase, "in Christ" more than one hundred sixty times, twenty-seven in the book of Ephesians alone. Ephesians 1:3 says, "Blessed be God...who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places." What are those spiritual blessings you ask? Let me

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INTERNATIONAL LUNCHEON



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encourage you with a few of them, they are the source of our acceptance, security, and significance.

If you have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and saved by God's grace, then you are accepted by God. Be encouraged: 1) you have been adopted into God's family (Ephesians 1:5). 2) You are accepted as God's child (John 1:12). 3) You have been justified and forgiven from all your sins—past, present, and future (Romans 5:1). 4) You have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:18). And 5) You are complete in Christ (Colossians 2:10).

You are not only accepted, you are also secure in your relationship with the Lord. 1) You are free from condemnation (Romans 8:1). 2) You are considered a citizen of Heaven (Philippians 3:20). 3) You are born of God and the evil one cannot control you (1 John 5:18). 4) You have been given a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7). And 5) You have been given free access to God to find grace and mercy in time of need. Now that is worth celebrating!

Accepted! Secure! You have also been given significance. You are the salt and light of the earth (Matthew 5:13-14), a channel of Christ's life, a branch of the true vine (John 15:1, 5). You are God's Temple (1 Corinthians 3:16), a minister of reconciliation for God (2 Corinthians 5:17-21). You are a special act of God's creation, a piece of artwork (Ephesians 2:10), chosen and appointed to bear fruit (John 15:1-5). As a limb is to the trunk of the tree, we are inherently connected to Christ.

This concept finds beautiful expression in the contemporary hymn, “In Christ Alone.” It says, *“In Christ alone my hope is found, He is my light, my strength, and song. This Cornerstone, this solid ground, firm though the fiercest drought and storm. What heights of love, what depths of peace, what fears are stilled, when strivings cease, my comforter, my all in all. Here in the love of Christ I stand.”*

For all those who have ever been lost, in Christ, you have been found. Delight in it!

Men's Breakfast

Join us on Monday mornings, from 7:00 to 8:00, at the McDonald's on Brunswick Circle as we study, “Inexpressible: HeseD and the Mystery of God's Lovingkindness,” by Michael Card. God's identity is beyond what we could ever fully express in human words, but Scripture uses the Hebrew word “heseD” to describe the distinctiveness of God's character. As we follow our God of heseD, we ourselves are transformed to live out the way of heseD, marked by compassion, mercy, and faithfulness. Contact Scott Bruno (609-213-9545) for more information. The food, fellowship and study are great!

INTERNATIONAL LUNCHEON



Elder's Corner

By Ken Bills

Cindy and I are not really gardeners, so for a long time we had no flowering plants in our backyard. In more recent years, we have planted flowering bushes, and I have been enjoying their blossoming this spring. So I began to wonder what, if anything, the Bible has to say about the wonder that is flowering plants.



Of course, God created all plant life, and declared it good:

And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. Genesis. 1:11

In the Old Testament, putting aside references to food crops, the most prominent references to flowers are as a metaphor for transience of human life:

All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. (Isaiah 40:6b, 7b, 8)

As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him... (Psalm 103:15, 17b)

In this world, our lives are like flowers—here today and gone tomorrow—and only God's

Word and his steadfast love stand unchanging. While that is no doubt a valuable lesson to meditate on, it is a very different line of thought from the joy that the explosion of spring flowers can bring to our souls.

In the New Testament, the longest passage involving flowers comes from Jesus:

And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? (Matthew 6:28-30)

"Lilies of the field" is probably best understood as a generic reference to a variety of wild flowers. I love that Jesus Himself took joy at the glorious extravagant loveliness of flowers in the fields. Their beauty is not earned or deserved, but a gift from God and attributed to God's on-going creative loving care even for plants. Jesus does not deny that flowers have only a brief time to flourish, but emphasizes that God nevertheless lavishes His love on them and blesses them with glory that even King Solomon could only envy. And in times when we are anxious, flowers are a powerful reminder of God's faithfulness and care for his creation, and for each of us.



So it is good for us to take a few moments in the spring to marvel at the wondrous beauty of the flowers around us, still apparent even in this fallen world, and to ponder the extravagant on-going glory and faithfulness of God revealed in His creation.

Further Up and Further In

*Inviting dialogue to encourage growth in
and among us*



By Cindy Bills

June is here. 'Tis the season for celebrations. We celebrate new graduates, brides and grooms, and parents. While bittersweet moments are often a part of any of these celebrations, Mother's Day and Father's Day are especially associated with bittersweet thoughts, and sometimes, more bitter than sweet.

The honoring of mothers has a long, global history. The first official Mother's Day in the United States was organized by Anna Jarvis in the early 1900's and was celebrated in a Methodist Church. Jarvis worked hard to put Mother's Day on the United States calendar, and in 1914, President Woodrow Wilson signed the document that made Mother's Day an official U.S. holiday. Father's Day was established later and reflects the desire to complement Mother's Day as well as the push of commercial enthusiasm from retailers.

Mother's Day and Father's Day are largely secular holidays but are welcomed in the church. It seems natural. The Old Testament Law commands us to honor our father and mother. Fathers and mothers are given responsibility and authority by God in order to fulfill His purposes for them: to care for their children as gifts from Him; to teach them about Him and His work in and among His people; to demonstrate His loving character; to discipline them toward godly lives; and to train them according to God's purposes. As fathers and mothers occupy positions of responsibility and authority, they are to be honored.

So what does it mean to honor our father and mother? The Hebrew word used in this phrase is *kabed*. It connotes a wide and seemingly inconsistent variety of meanings: heavy, hard, grievous, rich, honorable, glorious. The essence of the term conveys heaviness, though almost always

in a metaphorical sense. When we honor God, we give weight to His glory and praise His name. But the same term is used when describing the weight of Pharaoh's hardness of heart when he refused to release the Hebrew people from Egypt. So then when we honor our father and mother, we are attaching a weighty significance to their position of responsibility and authority before the Lord. With that significance comes an expectation of respect.

While no parent is perfect, and even the "best" Christian parents must depend on the Lord to work His loaves and fishes miracle with their efforts, every child bears at least some consequences for the brokenness of his or her parents. Many parents—even nonbelieving parents—do well in equipping, encouraging, and empowering their children to grow into strong, healthy, productive adults. Other parents, however, do not. Some parents choose to abandon their parental responsibilities; others use their authority over their children to meet their own needs. Many of these parents demonstrate the "sins of the fathers" phenomenon described in Exodus 34. The Lord's law of sowing and reaping is manifested as generations of parents reflect the brokenness of their parents and carry family dysfunction forward. It has been observed in the social sciences that family systems can be as determining a factor in a person's mental health as his/her genes can be in determining physical health.

Now we encounter what a therapist might call a dialectical issue: What are we to do with the command to honor our parents on the one hand, and the pain and brokenness that follows ungodly parenting on the other? I would suggest that is it critically important to hold both in tension and balance. It is appropriate to regard our parents with respect for their position and significance, but that does not mean that we minimize or deny ungodly parenting and the destructive consequences of a childhood in a highly dysfunctional home. For those of us who have grown up with parents who did not love us as God intended, we work to love our parents and appreciate what we can even as we grieve the loss of parents we never had, hike a difficult trail of forgiveness, and depend on the Lord

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as we look for His redeeming work in our lives. I often encounter a common misconception that once a person becomes a believer, he or she will be removed from his/her history and move forward as a new creation in Christ. But we are living in the “now and not yet.” The Apostle Paul observed that we have been made complete (Colossian 2:10) and also that we are being made complete (II Corinthians). Another dialectical issue! Those of us who grew up in homes characterized by abuse or neglect can count on the Lord’s good work in us even as He asks us to depend on His grace as we deal with the ongoing consequences of our childhood—a thorn in our flesh. And since we are created by God with a very strong emotional memory, it is vital that we understand that it is not possible to simply “move on” or “get over it.”

What does all this mean for Windsor Chapel as the body of Christ? May we embrace other dialectical phenomena: we are to honor our father and mother even as we follow the God of truth and acknowledge ugly truths that may be in our history or a brother’s or sister’s history. We rejoice always but weep with those who weep. And as we encourage others to honor their father and mother, we can also encourage those who are recovering from dysfunctional families of origin to grieve in honesty and walk in forgiveness. As Christ did not break the battered reed (Matthew 12:20) and as he came to heal the lame (Matthew 21:14), may we count it a privilege to come alongside those who grieve and struggle, understanding that the forgiveness and recovery process is long and difficult.

Father’s Day and Mother’s Day represent opportunities: we are reminded to honor our father and mother; we are invited to come before our heavenly Father to seek healing and redemption as we recover from a painful childhood; we who are parents are encouraged to thank the Lord for our children and ask for His help in fulfilling our parental responsibilities; and as members of the body of Christ, we can approach one another with sensitivity and grace.

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

UPLIFT Praise & Prayer Ministry

By Amy Kasternakis

Did you ever see pictures from the Hubble telescope? They fascinate me. The colors and forms are amazing and incomprehensible. I feel humbled when the same God who created the universe and beyond, invites me to talk with Him and cast all my cares upon Him. What a privilege! Especially since He is the potter and I am just clay (dust). It is refreshing to get out of my head and surrender over my concerns along with my messy, honest feelings and allow the God of the Universe to work His will. When I do that, and trust in God’s sovereignty, I can be freed up to *let go of the outcome* of my situations and make room for God’s peace. I can boldly ask for what is on my heart and trust God to give what is best. He is my Father and I am His child. Thankfully, He never tires of conversing with you or me.

The name of the UPLIFT ministry was taken from Exodus 17:12. Aaron and Hur held up Moses’ hands when he grew tired so that He could complete the task to which God had called him and the battle could be won. They even pulled up a stone for him to sit down upon. We all need support walking through this Christian life and a space to share our needs and rejoice in praising God for His provision. Hopefully, the UPLIFT ministry will provide a little bit of that support each week. God promises us that where two or three are gathered, He is in the midst (Matthew 18:20). It is a privilege to stand with you in uplifting your requests together and to uphold that confidential request throughout the week. We are grateful for those that have returned to offer a word of praise and thanksgiving for what God has done. It is okay to return as often as you like. It is okay to persist with the same request. In fact, scripture encourages our persistence in prayer (Luke 18:1-8 and Ephesians 6:18). Much character-building work happens in the “in-between time” when we are waiting on God’s answer.

If you have any additional ideas about prayer at Windsor Chapel, please contact any member of the UPLIFT team: Steve Bassett, Marquita and John Kimmel, Scott Bruno, Kevin Simme, and Amy Kasternakis. We thank Char and Ron Bystrom for helping launch this initiative and will miss them as they move on to their next adventure.

The Unreceived Gift

By Janet Berrill

Most of you know that I run the video system on Sunday mornings which displays the words to the worship songs we sing. A short time ago, I became aware of someone who had trouble seeing the words as we were singing. I listened to the issue and was determined to help the person. I wanted the person to know that I cared about helping them.

Unfortunately, the solution to the problem was not a quick fix. On Saturday of the next week, I was thinking about the person's concern. I had the idea to print out the words of the songs, so that the person could hold them in their hands and not have any trouble seeing the words. I printed out all the songs and arranged them in the order we would be singing them. I also indicated the order of the verses and choruses for each song on the paper. I brought them with me on Sunday morning, excited to give them to the person. By doing this, I wanted to show the person that they are important, that I cared about their situation, and that I was willing to do something to help them. I wanted my actions to show the person that they are valuable by giving them the gift I had prepared.

Before the service I looked for the person and did not see them. As I waited, I engaged in conversation with someone else and found out that the person for whom I had prepared the printout of the songs was not going to be in church that day. I was disappointed. I had this gift ready to give them, and they were not there to receive it. They would never know all I hoped to communicate to the person through the gift.

That moment of disappointment is when God spoke to my heart. In an instant I had the sense that God was saying to me that just as I

had a gift prepared that I was unable to give because the person was not there, so it is with God when I do not show up for our daily time together. He has good things He wants to give me. When I do not come to Him, I miss out on receiving them. And just as I was disappointed, God is disappointed when He cannot give me the good things He has planned for me because I am not there.

Throughout my life, my daily time with God has gone through cycles from non-existent, to every once in a while, to nearly every day. Sometimes I feel like I have to drag myself there and sometimes I look forward to it with joyful anticipation. Sometimes I come away with having heard directly from God, and sometimes I do not feel that I heard anything. Regardless of all these variables, God still desires to meet with me, for He cannot give me the good things He has prepared if I am not there to receive them.

Financial Update

(Through April 30, 2019)

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

	Actual	Budget
Income	\$100,185	\$95,100
Expense	\$94,444	\$95,000

Windsor Chapel has sent \$13,095 to our missionary partners this year. That's 13% of your giving!

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

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