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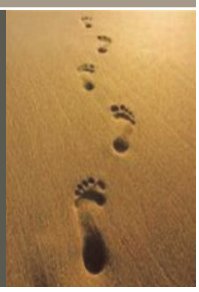
Final Thoughts from the Pastor

The Brownsville Church of God Newsletter **Winter Issue January 2020**

the journey



Editor – Valenceia Prather
Design/Layout – Priscilla Shirley

Regularly Held Services

SUNDAY 10:00 AM
Marriage Class – Sanctuary
Men's Class – Classroom 101
Women's Class – Classroom 102
Teen Class – Classroom 103
Children's Classes – Classrooms 104, 106, 107

SUNDAY 11:00 AM
Worship Service – Sanctuary

WEDNESDAY 7:00 PM
Adult Family Life Studies – Sanctuary
Children's Bible Classes – Classrooms 104, 106, 107
Teen Bible Class – Classroom 103

Nursery (Pre-K) is available for Sunday and for Wednesday Evening Services – Room 105.

Brownsville Church of God
6390 Lincoln Way East
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Churches of God
General Conference

Moving Forward in Joy

Sermon by Pastor Charles Jenkins – December 29, 2019

As we close out this year, often we as individuals tend to reflect back on what has occurred during the year: loss of family members/friends, successes/ failures, happy times, bad times, and creating a positive outlook for the new year.

Often, we tend to emphasize what "we" as individuals within our own might can do to make the incoming year a better year for us and our families. We may be compelled to say…. with God's help I'll do so and so.

Consider this approach… God knowing that we need daily help to live according to His will has already provided for us for 2020. Maybe not in the way we think in the natural or according to the world but according to His will.

Isaiah 55:6-7: **God Promised to Help Us**

Isaiah 55:8-11: **Let God Be the Lord of Your Life**

Isaiah 55:12: **God's Will is For Us to Have Joy and Peace in Our Lives**

<u>What is this joy I am speaking of?</u>

Joy is embedded in the fruit of the Spirit. It is a depth of assurance and confidence that ignites a cheerful heart. It is a cheerful heart that leads to cheerful behavior. The joy of the Lord is not the same as the joy of the world**.** The joy of the world is more of a temporary pleasure than joy...like happiness. **(Romans 14:17; Galatians 5:22-25)**

Four Key Thoughts:

Joy is divine. It is possessed and given only by God. Its roots are not in earthly or material things or cheap triumphs. It is the joy of the Holy Spirit; a joy based in the Lord. It is His very own joy. (John 15:11; Acts 13:52; 1 Thessalonians 1:6).

Joy does not depend on circumstances or happiness. Happiness depends upon happenings, but the joy that God implants in the believer's heart overrides all, even the matters of life and death (Psalm 5:11; 2 Corinthians 6:10; 7:4)

Joy springs from faith. (Romans 15:13; Philippians 1:25; 2 Timothy 1:4).

Joy of future reward makes and keeps the believer faithful. (Matthew 25:21,23; Acts 20:24; Hebrews 12:2)

IN CONCLUSION:

John 17:13 *(Jesus said) "Now I'm coming to you and I say these things while I'm in the world so that they can share completely in my joy."*

Your Success Depends on God

by Michaela Tasker

The idea of independence penetrates our culture. "Do what you want," experts say, "You're the only person that matters!" They may also say, "Only you determine your destiny – the power is all in your hands!"

The message may sound and feel inspirational - especially if it comes from someone we respect. However, these sayings stand in direct contrast to Scripture. Compare these messages with Colossians 1:16 (ESV): *"For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him."*

In other words, God is the "why" of life, as well as the "how" of how we get there. God's glory is the goal of all Creation. Stars, oceans, music, work, Monday morning meetings – they're all for God's purposes. In the words of RC Sproul, "If God is the Creator of the entire universe, then it must follow that He is the Lord of the whole universe. No part of the world is outside of His lordship. That means that no part of my life must be outside of His lordship." Even everyday graces like water and food are meant to give His creatures more reasons to thank Him. These simple graces reflect His character, His love. Even the people who nailed Jesus to the cross received their daily bread from God, without thanks or regard.

Secular (and sometimes religious) culture says that life is all about what you want, and that any self-improvement is by your power. In other words, we're told that all things are through and for us – secular culture teaches a nearly identical version of Colossians 1:16, while placing the word "him" with "you." That is the goal of our sin nature. It's the goal that turned Lucifer to Satan: the idea that we belong on God's throne.

One day, when I began reading Psalm 144, the first verse surprised me: "Praise the LORD, who is my Rock. He trains my hands for war and gives my fingers skill for battle."

The psalmist could have said, "I train my hands for war and give my fingers skill for battle." After all, he put in the hard work! Instead, he demonstrates full reliance on his Designer. We often forget (myself included) that we can't do ANYTHING without Him (John 15:5, Ps. 127:1-3)!

As you were busy reading that last paragraph, you took a breath or two, probably without even thinking about it. Our gracious Sustainer saw fit to let us breathe another time, without thanks. God doesn't just give this grace to His children. God sustained the breath of Jesus' mockers and murderers. He gave breath to the same lungs that spouted lies, blasphemies, and false accusations against Him.

This same gracious God gave us every talent and spiritual gift that we have, so who are we to boast in our talents, our intellect, our spiritual gifts, our kindheartedness, our morality? As Scripture says, all things are through Him and for Him. All gifts, talents, abilities, and personality traits are given to us to magnify His purpose. We often use our God-given abilities as instruments for pride, but by God's grace we still have them. God wants to redeem every part of us for His glory and the good of others, that they might know Him. To paraphrase RC Sproul's quote, if everything's from God, then everything's for God.

I need to remind myself of this every day. The ability to tap the keys on my keyboard right now is a gift, given from God and for God.

Another notable passage is in James 4:13-16 (ESV): *[13] Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"— [14] yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. [15] Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." [16] As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.*

We tend to overestimate how much control we have over our lives. Psalm 127:1 reiterates this point.

So, does this mean we should just give up, lie on the couch, not go into work, and say, "God will handle it"? No. Despite God's limitless power, He includes humanity in His work. As His image-bearers, He empowers us with responsibility over our actions and resources. He commands us to work, to "have dominion over the earth" (Gen. 1:26), to be good stewards, and to pursue righteousness. He wants us to act with diligence & wisdom in all areas of life – whether in work, school, time management, relationships, physical health, etc. - I believe this is part of what it means to live as Christ's representatives.

In Matthew 9:38, Jesus says to "pray earnestly... for laborers in the harvest." As Paul writes about his life mission of making the Gospel known, he says "For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me." (Col. 1:29) (emphasis mine). Therefore, he "toils" and works hard, but still relies on God for power.

As we head into the new year, let's align our mindset concerning our goals and resolutions. Let's remember our life purpose, which can be summed up in the following passages and verses: Matthew 12:30-31, Col. 1:16-18, Eph. 2:10, and Matthew 28:16–20. Let's work hard toward our goals (if they're godly), all by His strength –that's what true success is.

Coming Soon to BCOG! Community Care Outreach

We have neighbors, households, and individuals in our community who desperately, sometimes hopelessly, desire to find solutions to life's problems.

In a burning desire to see our body of believers reach out to the community with the love that Christ has for our neighbors and people in need, our church is preparing to provide teaching, training and support to believers desiring to respond to community needs through this ministry.

Please join us for our first meeting on Monday, February 3 at 6:30 p.m. For more information please contact Ed Bussard.

BCOG Deacon Board

The Deacon of BCOG donated sixteen "I AM" gift bags to the Franklin County Shelter. Eight gift bags for men and eight gift bags for women. They were taken to the shelter on December 20, 2019.

Each gift bag contained items such as gloves, hats, scarves, socks, toothpaste, deodorant, shaving creams, razors, and personal items for women. The donations were well received. Thank God from whom all Blessings Flow.

Deacon James McGraw and the Deacon Board

BCOG Youth Ministry

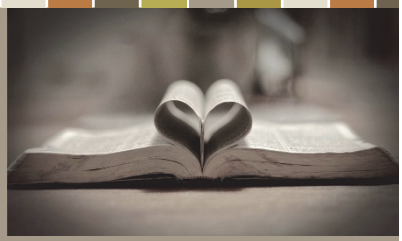
The BCOG Youth Ministry attended the UpRise19 Festival again this year. It was a time of worshiping through songs and personal testimonies from the gospel groups performing on the stages.

We met as a group, specific instruction for safety was discussed, and prayer was given before leaving the church. The youth of Brownsville enjoy the Contemporary, Country, Rap, or Hard Rock gospel music. In addition to hearing great inspirational songs of praise, we enjoy fellowshipping with the youth while sitting under the tent having great conversations and eating packed lunches or buying food from vendors. It was an honor to spend the day with our youth.

The BCOG Youth Ministry had a fun day with our kids Saturday November 16, 2019. We met in the church and prayed as a group before heading to Carlisle Sports Emporium in Carlisle, PA. The kids of Brownsville enjoyed a day of laser tag, arcade video games, and pizza.

What is the best advice you ever received?

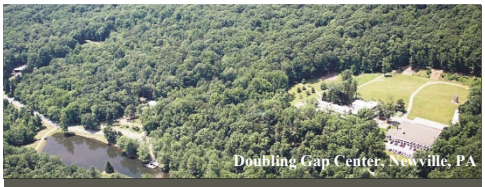
by Esther Ricker



The best advice I ever received was when my pastor encouraged me to give my life to Christ. Now, I could figure out who I really am in Him. I have a home in heaven. Because of this, I found my life's calling. Little did I know this would change the course of my life forever.

According to this advice, I have freedom in Christ. I am secure in Him. He tells me that I am His "Precious Daughter". I found out that in Him, I have a new identity.

After I committed my life to Christ, I started to read my Bible. According to John 14:20 which says, "By believing in Christ, I have an Eternal Home in Heaven". My future is secure, and my trust is in Him. I know He will take care of me. When this life is over, He will take me Home to Heaven to be with Him forever.



Camp YoliJwa News

Camp Yolijwa (**Yo**uth **Li**ving **J**esus' **Wa**y) is our church camp (through Eastern Regional Churches of God) near Newville, PA.

Schedules for camps and other events are out for 2020. Get your copy in your classroom or pick one up from the Camp Yolijwa bulletin board.

The first family event coming up at the Camp will be the Winter Picnic to be held on Sunday, January 26. More information is forthcoming.

Visit the Camp YoliJwa bulletin board outside the secretarial office in the lobby or visit the camp website at www.campyolijwa.org for more information. You can also find Camp Yolijwa on Facebook!

SAVE THE DATE!

ROCKY RAILWAY
JESUS' POWER PULLS US THROUGH

Vacation Bible School
July 27-31, 2020

Churches of God General Conference (CGGC) New Logo

Did you notice the new logo on the first page? Here's the meaning behind the new look: "This mark is comprised of individual elements, the shape of each showing outward movement to connote impact. The design represents individuals connecting together at the table where we partner and plan to empower each leader to maximize the church's reach and impact. Using different shading, the cross is shown in the center of the mark to communicate that everything we do is centered in the message of Jesus." To learn more about CGGC please visit www.cggc.org.

finalthoughts...

WE EXIST for the purpose of Worshipping God, Loving all people, making disciples for Christ.

Our Vision: To be a church where People are coming to Christ; finding love, acceptance, forgiveness and experiencing Christian growth for service that honors God.

Pastor Victor & Mrs. Katherine Johnson

We welcome you to join us on Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m. for Christian Growth Studies for all ages and 11:00 a.m. for worship at 6390 Lincoln Way East, Fayetteville, PA 17222. Word of Life Studies is held on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. for all ages. Nursery is provided for all the above services.

We are so excited for the addition of Pastor Niel Augustine who started this past Fall as our Youth Pastor. He is working closely with the teachers and youth/teens.

Baptisms, New Membership Classes and the Betty Spoonhour Rideout Scholarship Kickoff were held this Fall along with appreciation services for Pastors Johnson and Jenkins and others in Leadership.

Three deacons were appointed who had been serving on a trial basis: James Boyd, his wife, Sherie; Anthony Moore, his wife, Shelley; and Ron Weaver, and his wife, Erica.

We held our quarterly congregational meeting on Sunday, November 3; we thank all of those members who were able to attend.

We thank the Lord for being able to hold our annual Pre-Thanksgiving Gospel Concert again this year. It was a blessing to have many members participate.

We again held our Christmas program, Christmas Eve Service and New Year's Eve Watch Night Service.

Upcoming Events

January 19 - College Day for Students and Parents
January 25 - Women's Bible Study at the home of Sister Donna Washington
January 26 - New Membership Sunday (receiving new members)
February 3 - Community Care Outreach meetings, Mondays
February 23 - Quarterly Congregational Meeting
March 15 – Spring newsletter articles deadline

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