



THE CHATHAM MESSENGER

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MARK'S ASH WEDNESDAY COMMUNION MEDITATION

It was about this time of year, many years ago, that I was chatting with a hospital employee in the hallway before a presentation. As we were about to enter the room, I said, "Hey, before the meeting starts you might want to stop by the restroom because there is a little mark, a little smudge of something on your forehead and I wouldn't want you to be embarrassed by it." Well, I was the one to soon be embarrassed as I was informed that it was Ash Wednesday and she, being a good Catholic, had went early in the morning to have the priest place ash on her forehead. Feeling like a heel, I quickly pivoted and changed topics.

So this awkward situation doesn't happen to you, I'd like to remind you that this Wednesday is Ash Wednesday and it marks the beginning of the Lent season for millions of Christians around the world. During Lent, Christians who practice this are called for 40 days leading up to Easter to say no to any habit that comes between God and themselves. It might be an unhealthy physical habit such as overeating, drinking or drug abuse. It might be something in their spiritual diet that is unhealthy like the habit of gossip, jealousy of other's accomplishments, consistently seeing the worst in people, judging others, or it might be the tendency to see our spiritual lives as limited to one hour of worship on Sunday morning.

What has always struck me odd about Lent is that the emphasis on change, righteous living before our Lord, is on the forefront of people's minds for 40 days. And beyond that, it makes no sense to me for individuals to overdose on food or drink during Mardi Gras, to then give up those bad habits for 40 days, only to resume them after Resurrection Sunday. Shouldn't the power of the resurrection change our behavior for 365 days? Shouldn't we die to self daily, everyday, not just for 40 days?

Paul says in II Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come."

Accepting Christ as our Lord changes us. When we hold the cup and ponder the bread, we remember the grace poured out for us that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. We remember that in Jesus Christ, God has done away with the never ending animal sacrifices to cover our sin and has chosen the final extra-ordinary sacrifice of His Son, Jesus, to die upon the cross. He who knew no sin, became sin for us. He who did not deserve the judgement cast upon Him, took the judgement upon himself. By His obedience we are forgiven. By His death, we are granted a new life and therefore should conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of our Lord.

If you're still at it, you are to be commended. If you're not, I want to encourage you to get back with it. What am I talking about? I'm talking about something many of us were encouraged to do when we saw Norma Chasco's record of annually reading through the Bible.

I have to confess it had been awhile since I had systematically read through the Bible in a year, and I hadn't done so chronologically, so I decided that would be the way to go this time. I really enjoyed reading through Genesis again. The chronological Bible I'm using then took me to Job, and it's always good to read of his struggles, the poor counsel that he was given by well-meaning friends, and God's answer to the question of suffering. I then actually enjoyed pondering afresh the laws that are recorded in Exodus.

Then came Leviticus and Numbers, the Achille's heel of Bible readers. Even a blending of the two books to maintain the chronological flow didn't help much. The repetition, the detailed instructions, and the lists of names can cause even committed eyes to glaze over.

If you are still on target for 2017, you've made it through the toughest part. You may, however, be feeling a tad guilty for skimming through some passages of God's Word. My pastoral advice to you is to get over it. Get over the guilt, and just get over the passage. I really don't think every word in the Bible demands our undivided attention and thoughtful meditation.

Don't get me wrong, it's all there for a reason, and it's all important. It just may not be necessary for us to deeply ponder every passage. Then again, pondering can come even after skimming.

That realization came to me when reading about the offerings brought by the twelve tribes at the dedication of the tabernacle. After reading the list once, I really didn't read it carefully eleven more times. In fact, I started wondering why Moses didn't simply say ditto, they all gave the same things. Then I realized God may not have wanted anyone to think He appreciated their offering any less than anyone else's.

So even if your eyes glaze over, and you find yourself skimming, just keep going. Besides refreshing your memory, you may discover something you never saw before, or even better, gain a new insight into God's love for us. God Bless, Rick

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Sunday Worship Service
Bible School

9:15 AM
10:45 AM

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Chatham, IL
Permit No. 9

STATISTICS

Worship 126
Offering \$4,345.44

SERVING THIS SUNDAY – 3/5/17

Greeters Rick & Janet Polley
Visitors' Stand Gary & Lori Gredzieleski
Communion Meditation Chris Luzio
Jack Stucki
Ushers Otto Huber
Duane Carrell
Gary Gredzieleski
Bob Williamson
Jack Ruebush
Churck McLaughlin

WORSHIP NURSERY

Toddlers Julie & Abbie Divjak
Infants Kelly Donaldson
Emily Hughes
Sunday School
Toddlers Julie Divjak
Infants Janet Polley



Let Us Pray For...

--Gary & Lori Gredzieleski at the passing of a relative and a sister-in-law who is ill, and a customer of Gary's in cancer treatment.

--Tina Huber with several relatives undergoing treatment for various cancers.

--Deanna Langheim having gall bladder surgery this week.

--Praise that Bob & Dixie Williamson's grandson's MRI results were good.

Life of Christ

This Sunday at 6:30 we are going to finish chapter 14 of *Life of Christ*, and go on to chapter 15, "The Refusal to be a Bread King."



MARCH SERVERS

3/12: Jack Stucki, Chris Luzio
3/19 & 3/26: Rick Polley, Chris Luzio

MARCH PROJECTIONIST

Erica Blakley

MARCH GREETERS

3/12 Debbie Sanner
3/19 Bill & June Carroll
3/26 Duane Carrell

MARCH VISITORS' STAND

3/12 Judy Marlow
3/19 Judy Marlow
3/26 Bob & Dixie Williamson

MARCH NURSERY

Worship - 3/12

Toddlers: Sara & Regan Bartels
Infants: Dixie Williamson
Kate Sperry
Sunday School

Infants: Kristin Polley

Worship - 3/19

Toddlers: Nikki & Grace Hunley
Infants: June Carroll
Kate Morris
Sunday School

Infants: Jeni Sperry

Worship - 3/26

Toddlers: Kristin Polley
Jake Divjak
Infants: Rhonda Luzio
Courtney Bales
Sunday School

Infants: Dixie Williamson



ADULT VOLLEYBALL

In spite of a jammed finger, and the need to have a set of rings cut off, our adult volleyball season got off to great start last Sunday. All adults are invited to join us at the LSCA gym at 8:00 every Sunday in March, but they are encouraged to leave their rings at home.

MARK'S MEDITATION CONTINUED

Communion time provides us an opportunity to thoughtfully examine our recent behavior and to lay our sin at the foot of the cross. The blood that Jesus poured out for us will wash away every sin, that is a promise. However, we should never be involved with a lifestyle of habitual, Mardi Gras type of purposeful sin. We are new creatures, the old has passed away, and we live for Christ everyday. The Apostle Paul was crystal clear, left no room for doubt, when he wrote in Romans 6:1, "What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? May it never be!"

Let's pledge ourselves anew to our Lord this morning during our communion time.



Junior High Students

See you on Friday! Get ready for a high impact weekend of worship and learning. Of course, there will be plenty of time to goof off and build awesome memories. Here are the key details to remember:

- If you haven't paid for the conference, please bring the \$55 registration fee with you on Friday.
- Drop off your overnight supplies, pillows, sleeping bag, essentials, etc., around 4:30 at my house on Friday.
- Bring enough money for two meals and any souvenirs you might want to purchase at Believe.
- Pick up time will be at 4:30 on Saturday at my house.

Finally, and most importantly, try to read 1 Corinthians chapter 9 three times before Friday. We will be discussing this chapter throughout the weekend. See you on Friday!



It is amazing how fast the summer fills up! Since many of us are planning our summer vacations, I would like to get the dates out there for VBS so you can be sure to attend or volunteer.

This year, we will have four evenings of VBS starting on Monday, June 5th running through Thursday, June 8th. The gospel message will be front and center as kids uncover how our relationship with God began, how the relationship was broken due to sin, how the restoration of the relationship was promised and finally how our relationship is restored through Jesus. Combining those powerful themes with songs, snacks and crafts will prove to be a winning combination for our kids!

If anyone would like to volunteer to lead a break-out session, help with snacks or just general organization, please see me anytime and your help will be gladly appreciated.

“How sweet are your words
to my taste.” Psalms 119:103

So many of you are doing a fantastic job reciting your Sunday School memory verse to me after class. I love it when you stop by my office and it is my pleasure to reward you with a sweet treat for all your hard work! Keep it up!

Also, I wanted to offer a friendly reminder to the High School class that we too committed to memorizing some scripture this week. This discipline needs to be a part of our lives and that became apparent last Sunday as we discussed the full armor of God outlined in Ephesians 6: 11-17. I'm really looking forward to hearing the scriptures you chose to memorize and discussing them with you on Sunday!