



# GLORY IN UNEXPECTED PLACES

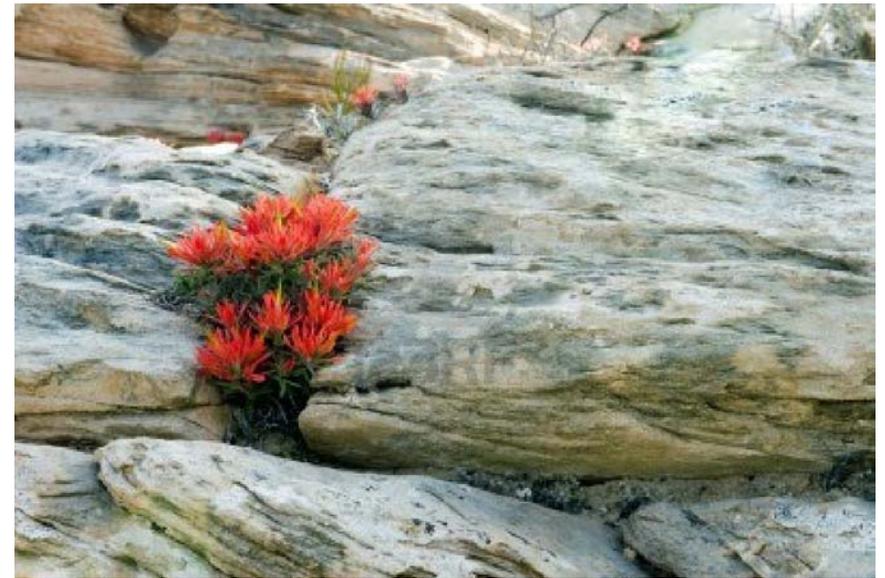
2013 LENTEN DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

## GLORY IN UNEXPECTED PLACES

When the woes of life o’ertake me,  
Hopes deceive, and fears annoy,  
Never shall the cross forsake me;  
Lo! it glows with peace and joy.

In the cross of Christ I glory,  
Towering o’er the wrecks of time;  
All the light of sacred story  
Gathers round its head sublime.

John Bowring



Editor: Martha Evans Sparks

Unless otherwise noted, scripture quotations are from the NIV.

Abbreviation WFMC = Wilmore Free Methodist Church

**WILMORE FREE METHODIST CHURCH**

A COMMUNITY THAT REFLECTS JESUS' VISION AND VALUES

Scripture: Psalm 107:10-13

April 1, 2013  
Easter Monday

### INCARNATION'S GLORY

*Some sat in darkness and the deepest gloom, prisoners suffering in iron chains....Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress (Psalm 107:10, 13).*

Stephen, a Kenyan, cried out to the Lord from prison, "Lord, if you get me out of here I will serve you." He was in for 14 counts of violent crime: caught in a stolen car, 7 million shillings, 7 guns, 135 bullets, 4 different license plates. Truth is, he was guilty! Amazingly, God heard his prayer. Day after day in trial proceedings, one charge after another was dropped. Stephen was released, though he had suffered a number of beatings along the way. Next: to see about that vow. The first pastor he contacted rejected him as an ex-prisoner. Stephen had started thinking maybe he would abandon the whole "serving God" thing, when Paul, a Free Methodist church planter, met him. Paul encouraged him not to give up. In fact, their interactions eventually led to Stephen getting involved in the church planter training that Paul was doing. Now Stephen is planting his first church. The glory of God has truly been revealed out of an impossible and deplorable situation.

Apparently the Psalmist knew of some people like Stephen, rebels, who under pressure turned back to get help from the Lord. He took that opportunity to reveal His glory by redeeming them. Our experience might be far less dramatic. But it teaches us that tough situations and highly troubled situations are sure candidates for God's glory to be revealed. The action in the lesson is to cry out to the Lord.

**Mike Reynen** lives with his wife, Vickie, and son Kyle in Nairobi, Kenya. Daughters Kelly and Kenzie are in US. He is Africa Area Director, Free Methodist World Missions.

Scripture: Ephesians 1:15-23

February 13, 2013  
Ash Wednesday

### VICTORIOUS LIVING POWER

*That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms... (Ephesians 1:19-20).*

It was fortunate that we were only soaked with water and not with eggs and flour as we darted from building to building to get the paper work for our visas in Ecuador. Bob and I were clueless that this was "Carnival" week when people act like little devils just before Lent when behavioral change was expected in preparation for Holy Week.

During Holy Week there were daily processions carrying different statues of Jesus, the Virgin Mary, and the disciples. Lines of people waited to make confessions and to kiss the feet of a statue of Jesus. They observed many "Don'ts" like no alcohol, no swearing, no chewing gum, no kicking a ball, no sewing, no washing clothes, no loud music, etc. But, on Easter Sunday, Jesus was placed back on the cross until the following year and life returned to normal with NO change of heart.

What does my life look like after I have observed Lent and Holy Week? Is the power of the resurrection at work in my life? Do others know that Jesus is alive by my daily life?

"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10). "...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

**Mary Sutherland** and her husband, Robert, served with One Mission Society in Colombia, Spain, and Ecuador for 35 years. Since Bob's death in 1998, Mary continues a correspondence ministry.

Scripture: 24:7 NKJV

February 14, 2013

## THE GLORIOUS DECISION

*The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again" (Luke 24:7 NKJV).*

There has always been a tension between the "cruelty of the cross" and the "love of God." But life itself tells us that one cannot exist without the other. Someone has dared to say, "The cross is the foundation or the ground plan of the universe."

I will dare to step out of my area of expertise and say that there is an analogy within our physical bodies. During my wife's battle with cancer we learned that the white blood cells watch for infection. When they find it they absorb it and in turn they are absorbed by the new cells. Thus death brings life. During the years that I enjoyed gardening, I learned that seeds have to die for life to spring forth. The mountain is bare of top soil so that the valley can live.

A great preacher one day took a boy into a cathedral. The boy looked up into the chancel and said, "Look, there is a cross up there." The preacher pointed to the floor and answered that the aisles were in the form of a cross. He said, "There is a cross down here, too."

You can go to Calvary and say, "Look, there is a cross up there, but there is a cross down here, too."

Over the years I have watched many people die to self in order to live for Christ. It is a decision that must be made. It is painful but glorious!

**Harry Stevenson** is a retired United Methodist pastor. He and his wife, Ann, have lived in Wilmore since 1995.

Scripture: Mark 16:1-7

March 31, 2013  
Easter Sunday

## HE'S GONE!

*He is not here. See the place where they laid him (Mark 16:6b).*

On several occasions, my wife and I have had special opportunities to visit Israel. Each time that we have gone there, we have visited two very interesting places. One is the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. The other is the Garden Tomb. Both purport to be the site where Jesus was buried. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher was built around 325 AD by the mother of Emperor Constantine to protect the site that was thought to be where Jesus was buried. Dr. George Turner, one of the founding members of the Wilmore Free Methodist Church, told me that the geographical evidence is very strong that this is really the place where Jesus was buried.

The other place, the Garden Tomb, was first noted about 125 years ago by a group of British Christians who bought the site and established the Garden Tomb Association. Since then many Christians have visited this site and felt certain that this is where Jesus was laid in the grave. I must admit, the Garden Tomb was more inspiring to me and when I picture Jesus being laid in the tomb, the image that comes to my mind is the Garden Tomb.

I do not know which location is the actual site where Jesus was buried. But I am sure of this. Both tombs are empty! The grave could not hold Him. He came out victorious and left an empty tomb. Where it happened is not all that important. What is important is that He is not there! He is Risen. Thanks be to God.

**Earle Bowen** is a member of Free Methodist Church New South Conference. He and his wife, Dorothy, are living in Avon Park, FL, while Earle teaches at H.E.A.R.T Missionary Training Institute.

Scripture: John 11:23-27

March 30, 2013

### WHEN THE RESURRECTION BECOMES REAL

*Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11:24).*

All of Jesus' followers believed in the resurrection—theoretically. They were all "Bible-believing" Jews who affirmed the doctrine of resurrection, much as we do when we repeat the Apostles' Creed. Martha of Bethany answered correctly, theologically, when Jesus told her, "Your brother will rise again." She said, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11:23-24). She believed in the concept of resurrection, but it hadn't become personal to her—yet.

One by one, the resurrection became personal to all the disciples, but each in his or her own way. At the tomb on Easter morning, the risen Jesus became real to Mary when he spoke her name. The disciples on the road to Emmaus grasped the reality when he broke bread in their home. Thomas believed when Jesus showed him His open wounds. For Martha and Mary the doctrine became reality when Jesus raised Lazarus from the tomb.

It is important for all of us to affirm the doctrine of resurrection. It is more important that the resurrection becomes a personal reality in our lives. There is no set formula for this event, just as there was no standard way the first-century followers of Jesus came into a personal knowledge of the risen Lord. However, when they did experience the reality of victory over death, it changed their lives and their message. Jesus was no longer just the Teacher they admired and followed; He was the Risen Savior whom they worshipped and proclaimed.

**Mike and Martha Henderson** direct a mission called Heart of Africa, which is based here in Wilmore.

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:21-22 ESV

February 15, 2013

### A LENTEN ADVENTURE WITH CHEESE

*For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. (1 Peter 2:21 ESV).*

The season of Lent is a time of reflection and, for many, self-denial. Anyone who has tried to give up a beloved food or habit can testify to how difficult it is. A few years ago, I decided to make the biggest sacrifice I could think of: I gave up cheese for Lent. Do you know how ubiquitous cheese is in our culinary culture?! I couldn't have grilled cheese sandwiches or pizza, cheese on my burger or on my salad or on my pasta, or even cream cheese on my bagel. It was torture. I will not lie – I ate Colby cheese and Triscuits every Sunday that year.

When we give something up for Lent, it isn't just a silly exercise. It's a glimpse into the self-denial Jesus demonstrated every day of His earthly life. Jesus was perfect, but this perfection was not just a "given" part of his character. His purity came from a lifetime of choices. Jesus, being fully human, experienced temptation, and thus could have sinned. Yet every time Jesus was tempted, He chose love for us and the Father. Christ's love is not just expressed on the cross, but in every selfless decision He made throughout His life. He purposefully remained blameless, so that when the time came, His pure sacrifice could redeem the world.

When I think about how hard it was for me to avoid cheese, I am amazed at the greater example Jesus set. Worship Jesus today for the lifelong self-denial He made on our behalf. His love is overwhelming.

**Katie Diddle**, aside from an affair with Colby cheese, loves reading, music, gardening, and her husband of almost three years, Jerry.

Scripture: Hebrews 12:3

February 16, 2013

### THE BATTLEGROUND

*“...for consider the one who endured such contradiction against himself by sinful ones, so that you do not grow weary, giving out in your souls” (Hebrews 12:3, Rick Boyd translation).*

The cross is the battleground between God’s word to us and sin. God has spoken to us in Jesus within a world of contradiction. The cross is where our Pioneer perfected faith and brought it to its intended goal: everlasting joy (12:2). This is what God had in mind for humanity all along, and what He accomplished and made available through Jesus who was crowned with glory and honor and who leads us into that glory (2:5-10).

Christ’s way is not the way of the world, and the contradiction is so intense that the battlefield was stained with the saving blood of the victor, the one who died for us, but who was also led up from the dead by the Father (13:20).

Paul refers to the message of the cross as foolishness to those who are being destroyed, but the power of God to us (1 Corinthians 1:18). We are the ones who are running the race with endurance, fixing our eyes on the victor (12:1-2).

When Jesus told His disciples of the impending battle and they resisted, He told them, “If anyone wants to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and be following me” (Matthew 16:21-24, Rick Boyd translation).

Though the world contradicts us, we must keep running the race that leads to the glory and honor of the children of God!

**Rick and Jodi Boyd** live in Wilmore and have been involved with the Wilmore Free Methodist Church for ten years. Jodi works at UK and Rick is an adjunct professor at Asbury Theological Seminary and a part-time professor at Asbury University.

Scripture: Mark 15:46

March 29, 2013

Good Friday

### THE SILENCE OF MOURNING

*So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock (Mark 15:46).*

Bonnie and I were in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, on Good Friday staying in a missionary guesthouse not far from the plaza in the center of the city. A basilica had stood on that spot on the plaza for 400 years, and we were interested in seeing how Bolivians “celebrated” the day. That evening we walked several blocks to the plaza and watched across the street from the basilica.

After dark, some men appeared carrying a wrapped “body,” others followed carrying a cross, and still others carrying other things. People silently fell in behind, and soon the whole street was packed with mourners walking in silence except for a few of them weeping aloud. We soon realized that there was no way to get back across the street without joining the procession of about 50,000 people walking. As we did this we could gradually thread our way across the street to get back to the guesthouse where we were staying.

No one said a word so all we could hear as we walked were the sounds of feet on the pavement and some weeping. Jesus was really dead. He had died for our sins. We can never read about Jesus being taken to the tomb without thinking of this time when we realized most fully the price he had paid.

**Ron Koteskey** taught psychology in Christian colleges for 35 years, and for the last decade he and his wife, Bonnie, have had a ministry to missionaries.

Scripture: Luke 23:40-43

March 28, 2013

### THE GOOD NEWS OF THE GOSPEL (IN LUKE)

*But the other criminal....said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:40, 42-43).*

All of the Gospels tell us that Jesus was crucified along with two criminals/thieves (Matt. 27:38, 44; Mark 15:27, 32b; Luke 23:32-33, 39-43; John 19:18). Here's the interesting point. It is only Luke who tells us that one of the two crooks did an about face, admitted his own guilt, and asked Jesus to remember him (Luke 23:40-43). You would never know this from reading any of the other three Gospels. Would you not think that all the Gospels would record such a confession and event, even if made shortly before one's death?

I wish I had a good answer why it is only Luke who gives us this inspiring information, but I do not. But that got me to thinking. Besides the dying thief, there are other events/stories that only Luke records: (1) the anointing of Jesus by a "sinful woman," (you know what that means), and not to be confused with the story of Mary's anointing of Jesus in Bethany which the other three Gospels record (Luke 7:36-50); (2) the story of the headstrong and foolish prodigal son who came back home (Luke 15:11-32); (3) the story of the hated and despised Zacchaeus who hosted a salvation-bringing Jesus (Luke 19:1-10).

That is part of the "good news of the Gospel." If a prostitute, or rebellious son, or a tax collector, or a dying thief can come to Him, so can anybody.

**Victor Hamilton** is a professor emeritus of Old Testament at Asbury University. He and his wife, Shirley, have four married children and thirteen grandchildren.

Scripture: John 19:1-3

February 17, 2013

### HE DIDN'T HAVE TO DO IT

*The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head....And they struck him in the face (John 19:2, 3).*

When I was about seven or eight years old, my family took a trip from Indiana to Kentucky to pick up my older sister at Asbury College. Then we visited our friends in Georgia. While there, we went to see a passion play at their church. I walked into the sanctuary and was transported back to Biblical times. As the play began, I found myself drawn into the drama of what was happening on stage. As the scenes got darker and the music more intense, I watched them whip Jesus and thrust the crowns down on His head. As tears flowed down my cheeks, I saw them make Him carry the cross and then hang Him on it. My tender heart was breaking and there was nothing I could do to stop it.

But, oh, the resurrection scene was glorious. The whiteness of His robe, the bright lights and joyful music changed my tears to happiness, my sorrow to joy. As I left the church, I was so glad that the story did not end at the cross, but that God had another plan.

Today, as I kneel at the altar to take communion, those scenes again run through my head. Jesus did not have to suffer for me, but He did. Jesus did not have to die for me, but He did. Jesus did not have to love me, but He did and He still does today.

**Cheryl Schell** is the wife of Mark and mother of Hannah and Adam. She has been the Minister of Children at WFMC for 10 1/2 years. She loves to read and cross-stitch.

Scripture: John 11:25-26

February 18, 2013

### LIVING IN THE ATMOSPHERE OF ETERNITY

*“I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25).*

Lazarus was dead, Martha and Mary were in sorrow, and perplexed about Jesus’ response to their cries for help. But Jesus lived in the “atmosphere of eternity.” What action would glorify the Father? Healing or bringing a dead man back to life? Jesus instinctively knew the answer.

You and I are blessed to see and understand the results of God’s own Son, living as human, ministering in the Spirit, in the “atmosphere of eternity.”

Jesus’ earthly life was a very real example of how we should live and work. Yet the atmosphere in which we live and work too often is not peace and calm, but cluttered with our own weakness, insecurity, faithlessness, carnal restlessness.

“Get a life” we hear the world say today. We can, but not the way the world proposes. Full surrender to the Lordship of Christ, inviting the Holy Spirit to fill us with sacrificial love, with our eyes fixed on the one who promises: “I AM the Resurrection and the LIFE”! “He who believes in me will LIVE”! Those who do, find they can live in the “atmosphere of eternity,” and see the Lord do His own work of blessing others through them.

**Lowell Williamson** is a missionary who served in Asia for over 50 years with the One Mission Society. He is married to Naomi. They have two grown children, a son, Rod, who, with his family, serves with OMS in Taiwan, and a daughter, Renae Thompson, who lives with her family in Wilmore.

Scripture: John 14:6

March 27, 2013

### THE WAY TO *THE WAY*

*Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).*

Here’s my story about *Glory in Unexpected Places*, the unexpected place being the discount store, T.J. Maxx. Walking through there the other day and looking for good deals on, of all things, boys’ jeans, I stumbled upon a devotional book by E. Stanley Jones (for \$4.50!). It was a version of *The Way*, updated in 2011 by Dean Merrill. In it, Jones talks about the way that Jesus has made for us by His death on the cross; not just the “way of eternal salvation,” as Christians tend to think, but instead the way of life, successful and fulfilling life, both here and now and in the days, years and eons to come.

There is, in fact, a way in which we are to live... a right way, which is God’s way. God created our earth, our bodies, and our relationships to live in this certain way... His way. The problem with the world, and with us, is that we’ve departed His way in order to live our way, and we’ve paid dearly for that decision. The more insightful of us have recognized this need for a new way forward, and have searched for it in varying places. Yet human success for a new and good way has been limited and partial... that is, until we find our way back to The Way... God’s way.

The story of Easter points us to God’s way and takes us there. At the end of the day, not just the best way, but the only way forward, God’s way, is by way of the cross. As we’ll align ourselves with the Christ of the cross, we’ll find the way forward, the way we were created to live, the best and only way.

**Daryl Diddle** is senior pastor at Wilmore Free Methodist Church.

Scripture: Numbers 6:24-26

March 26, 2013

### THE PURPOSE OF THE PRIESTLY BLESSING

*“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace” (Numbers 6:24-26).*

Consider the priestly blessing. What kind of blessing was it? A blessing of prosperity and wealth? Expanded territory? Many children? God’s favor? Perhaps. But turning to the Bible dictionary, I find the first use of bless is “to make holy.” Such a blessing to be spoken by the priest over the people of God: a blessing to make them holy in God’s sight!

As we contemplate Christ’s sacrifice, we feel our own sinfulness, our disobedience, and our failures more acutely. We’re grieved by our inability to achieve the righteous life that God desires. We acknowledge that we are far from the standard of holiness, and yet we are indeed blessed. Christ, our High Priest, entered the Most Holy Place and became “our righteousness, holiness, and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30).

Imagine Him, the Lamb of God, standing before the Father in the mighty throne room of heaven purchasing your salvation. My salvation. See Him sit at the Father’s right hand, the job done. Hear Him speak the priestly blessing over your life. Over my life. Feel peace flood your soul. Flood my soul. And know you are holy. I am holy.

When the face of the God turns toward me, the Holy One sees not my sin, but the righteousness of Christ that clothes me (Galatians 3:27). I bear not my name, but the very name of God which marks me as His (Numbers 6:27). Glory be to God.

**Carol Blankenship** said she “is wife to Bryan, mother of three, and a saint in the eyes of God.”

Scripture: Romans 5:18

February 19, 2013

### JUSTIFICATION

*Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men (Romans 5:18 ESV).*

Here we note God’s provision of justification through the “once-for-always” work of Jesus Christ for all mankind.

God as both prosecutor and judge has a case against man (see Micah 6:2). The way out of this dilemma is through justification which is provided by the action of Jesus Christ on the cross. Justification means being restored to a right relationship to God. Salvation, in the broader sense, includes justification. It is a gift but it needs to be received and accepted. We cannot provide justification for our own sinfulness.

The idea that we can save ourselves by personal effort is not new. Luther rediscovered the truth of justification by faith rather than by works. Building on such statements as “. . . but the righteous will live by his faith” (Habakkuk 2:4), and, “For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith’” (Romans 1:17), Luther re-proclaimed the truth that salvation is a gift.

It takes a God-transformation for an individual to be able to be honest about his inadequacies and his shortcoming, about his pride and his sin. Only when Jesus’ free gift of salvation is accepted in humility with true repentance from sin can justification by faith be effective.

**Timothy Thomas**, after a career in education, is enjoying teaching, writing, fixing, puttering, and “computering” along with a little music here and there.

Scripture: Matthew 27:46 HCSB

February 20, 2013

### CHRIST'S GREAT DEPTH OF LOVE

*About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Elí, Elí, lamá sabachtháni?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46 Holman Christian Standard Bible).*

Throughout biblical history the most unforgivable behavior mankind exhibits is the voluntary killing of a firstborn son for spiritual, physical, social, or other benefit. This killing of the firstborn is totally reprehensible to God. Christ, God incarnate, voluntarily became a human sacrifice. In becoming this, God abandoned that part of Himself so far that not even an intellectual assent of God's grace was possible by Christ as He suffered. This sacrifice shows Christ's great depth of love and commitment to a fallen and wayward species: us. How many ways can each one of us use Christ's example of sacrificial love and appropriate that great love for our continual enablement of life, ministry, and care for one another and a fallen world?

**Lyle VanHorn** said he was a "military kid" who grew up "everywhere." He and his wife, Marilyn, have lived in Wilmore since 1989. They have three grown sons. Two are US Army members, the third a businessman in Willisburg, Ky.

Scripture: John 1:35-37

March 25, 2013

### FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST

*The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus (John 1:35-37).*

John the Baptist was a forerunner for Christ, whose job was to prepare Jesus' way. John's ministry was ordained by God and foretold in Malachi 3:1. His ministry was like a road sign arrow pointing people to Christ—their ultimate destination. Though John had several disciples, notice in John 1:35-37, that *only two* of his disciples sought Jesus once they heard John's testimony about Jesus Christ: "Look, the Lamb of God!" When John himself emphasized that Jesus was greater than he, why did only two and not more of his other disciples follow after Jesus, who was the Messiah and Savior? How unfortunate it was for those disciples who did not seek after Jesus but preferred to stay with their mentor, John the Baptist, and missed out on the blessed opportunity to learn from the true master who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Often times Christians can become so focused upon their denomination, ministry, or pastors that they forget whose followers they should truly be, especially when Christ himself is to be their final destination. We then form a personal group of our *own* disciples. Such attitudes can often go unnoticed. We should, therefore, be reminded that we too are followers of Christ and are only a road sign leading others to Jesus, not to ourselves.

**So-Young Chen** is an adjunct faculty member at Asbury Theological Seminary, and a happy wife of Tony and blessed mommy of Joshua Chen.

Scripture: Psalm 41:9 ESV

March 24, 2013  
Palm Sunday

### WHO MISSED IT?

*Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me (Psalm 41:9 ESV).*

One of the lead characters in the Lenten Journey is Judas Iscariot. The mere mention of his name stirs emotions in us ranging from disdain to hatred. Judas' thought processes may have gone something like this:

At the time of the triumphal entry into the Holy City, with excitement at a fever pitch, hosannas ringing forth, and adoration and worship of King Jesus, surely He will claim His Kingship, which seemed to be there for the taking. But He didn't.

Having failed to seize the opportunity afforded that Palm Sunday, Judas then thought of another possibility. There remained the trial and the attendant atrocities. There was the Governor, Pilate, the high priest, the scribes, the Pharisees, and the masses, some of whom had shouted their hosannas a few days earlier. Now they cried out to "crucify Him, crucify Him." Now Jesus could call for the twelve legions of angels and strike them all dead, and Jesus could then be King. But He didn't. "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ" (Revelation 11:15).

No, Jesus had not "missed it," but Judas had. The center of Judas' will had never come under the full control of the Triune God. How tragic that Judas, having spent three years in the company of Jesus and the other eleven disciples, missed it.

**Winston Smith** is the retired Biology Department chair and faculty member, Asbury University, 1965-1994.

Scripture: Mark 8:36

February 21, 2013

### GIVING UP TO GAIN

*What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? (Mark 8:36).*

I Give Up! When we hear these words, what do we think of? We just lost. Or someone had to surrender because he/she was beaten at something. We might think of a cops and robbers show where the criminal comes out of hiding with his hands up saying, "Don't shoot! I give up!"

Sometimes we have to give things up against our will. When my boys were young, we had a rule at Christmas: *Toys in, Toys out*. This meant that when we receive new toys, we must try to find some old toys that we are ready to part with (or maybe not ready, but it would be good for another boy or girl to enjoy) and give them away or sell them at a local consignment store. Hopefully, this taught generosity as well as thrift!

The giving up of something in order to gain something is an irony in the economy of God. Many, many times (e.g., the rich, young ruler) God tells us to give something up in order that we may gain. The practice of giving up something during Lent should be a reminder, not of what we are losing, but of what we will gain in eternity. Recently, I've had to give up a dream/desire I've had for years. However, God has really spoken to me of late about how He should be my desire above all else (Psalm 37:4).

We must remember: Jesus gave up *heaven* in order to gain *our salvation*.

**Amy Cooper** works with special needs children at the Jessamine Early Learning Village. She is happily involved in many areas at WFMC where she and her family have joyfully attended for eight years. She said WFMC is continually a blessing in her life.

Scripture: Galatians 5:22-23 NKJV

February 22, 2013

### RAGS TO RICHES: OUR FAIRY TALE

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law (Galatians 5:22–23 NKJV).*

Who doesn't love the story of Cinderella? It's a classic rags-to-riches tale that ends "happily ever after." But who wants a little girl to be Cinderella *before* she met her prince?

Well...in a way, I do. Think about it. Who was Cinderella before she met the prince? What was her character? Her life was filled with insults and hardships; yet, the fruit of the Spirit was evident in her life.

We pray for all the good things in life—and there's nothing wrong with that. We ask God to take away the hardships in our lives. Again, there's nothing wrong with that. But what if we could honestly boast in our hardships, knowing that no matter our earthly circumstances, if our focus is on God, our lives will glorify Him? Isn't that why we're here: to glorify God?

Everyone loves a good rags-to-riches tale. Somehow, I doubt a whiny heroine would hold our interest for long. We rejoice to see Cinderella find her prince because she deserves it.

How much more should we rejoice when sinners find their Savior? Through Jesus' sacrifice, we become princes and princesses, not just worthy to become royalty but truly children of the King. Thanks to Him, ours is the ultimate rags-to-riches story.

**Jennie Lovell** said she is "a daughter of the King and a mother to two lovely princesses and one handsome prince." Her greatest desire is to teach her children to glorify Him in everything, no matter the circumstances.

Scripture: John 17:22

March 23, 2013

1 Corinthians 10:31

### THE GLORY OF GOD

*I have given them the glory that you gave me (John 17:22).  
...whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).*

Quite often when we hear about the glory of God we think of images such as the cloud or fire when God led the Israelites in the wilderness. For most of us these images are abstract and do not help us grasp the glory of God. We don't understand how it relates to us.

Understanding our limitations, God revealed His glory in Jesus and we see how Jesus glorified God in his teaching, service and, most of all, his agape love for people. Jesus gave the Holy Spirit to us who have faith in Him so people can experience God's glory through our personal lives.

You may ask, "How can I glorify God?" We do it by what we say, how we act and how we think. We do it as we become more like Jesus in caring for the least of our brothers and sisters, when we show agape love to those we think unlovable, when we put others before ourselves, when we live a life of prayer and when we tell people of God's love. We can do these things when we have the love of Christ in us.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the great love you have shown us in your only Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. We ask that others will see you glorified in all we do.

**Bob and Peggy Thurman** moved to Wesley Village from East Tennessee. They joined the WFCM December 25, 2011.

### REFLECTIONS ON A GIFT OF LOVE

*For he says, “In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you.” Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2 ESV).*

I love chocolate. I love steak. I love sugar. So when friends in my distant past would tell me they were giving these things up for Lent, I thought to myself, “There’s no way I am giving up stuff I love. Whew! Glad I’m not that religious.”

I wish my struggles were only eating chocolate and sugar. That would be easier for me than laying down fears, doubts and worries, not to mention television watching and just plain old being too busy. What I am hungry for now is more of God, hearing His voice and having a daily walk with Jesus.

But what if Lent isn’t so much of giving up “stuff” as it is being thankful for what Christ gave us through His sacrifice. I now have freedom to come to Him and have a real relationship with Him. I can lay at the cross my fears, doubts and worries. Isn’t it so amazing that He did it all? It is not by works we are saved but by faith in what Jesus did on the cross.

What an amazing gift I have received—the gift of salvation. Out of that reflection on His love comes a desire to be still and know that he is God. This gift of love causes me to turn off the TV and spend time in His Word. This gift helps me realize that perfect love casts out fear and worry.

**Sarah Apgar** works at Asbury Seminary in the E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism. She and her husband, Richard, are both ATS students. They have a daughter, Abigail.

### AVOIDING CHEAP SUBSTITUTES

*Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here” (Luke 4:9 NKJV).*

Over the past few months, I have been doing a deeper study into the wilderness temptations of Jesus. Satan’s appeal to Jesus to leap from the high temple wall was a cheap and vulgar attempt to persuade Him to choose a spectacular event to declare Himself as the Son of God. Such a jump, especially if God’s holy angels had formed a divine safety net for Him, was sure to gain Him some attention and at least a shallow following.

But notice that Satan never addressed what God’s will was for Jesus. How could he since he does not recognize the will of God for himself or for us? Jesus knew that this leap was not God’s will for Him and so He rejected it without hesitation. He was willing to wait for God’s time and means to declare Him the Son of God. This declaration came in the form of the cross and the resurrection. If Jesus had ignored God’s will and chosen to leap from the temple wall, would we be celebrating His life and our salvation today? The answer is clearly “No!”

Finally, Hebrews 4:15 reminds us that Jesus was tempted in all ways as we are, yet He did not sin. Therefore, this Lenten season is a time of searching in which we should ask ourselves what cheap and vulgar substitutes Satan may be offering us as opposed to the will of God. If we are to be like Jesus – that is, committed to God’s will – then we must, like Jesus, reject the cheap substitutes without hesitation.

**Dean Cook** is a retired pastor of the WFMC and retired military chaplain. Today he enjoys volunteer service with denominational chaplains and local ministries.

Scripture: Mark 1:14b-15

February 24, 2013

### WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT GOOD FRIDAY?

*Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:14b-15).*

What is good? While the word “good” is made up of two consonants and two vowels, it is complex and has virtually unlimited use in the English language. In fact, Webster devotes almost a quarter of a page to the many and varying usages. He/she is good-looking; the cake was good; the weather has been good; I feel good; God is good. We make endless applications of good (with good intent—there we go again).

Let us consider good in a limited spiritual light. When God did His various creations in Genesis 1, we are told that He viewed His handiwork and saw that each was good. The angels who came upon the shepherds in Luke 2 said, “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy....” Jesus referred to Himself as the Good Shepherd. Our spirits long for the time that we will stand before our Savior and Lord listening for Jesus to say, “Well done, my good and faithful servant.”

In this glorious season we celebrate a time that includes a day that we call Good Friday. It’s neither the day itself nor the season. We believers/followers/disciples of Jesus embrace goodness of that day because of Him. What He did in dying—being the perfect good sacrifice—was a price paid for all our sins forever. We need only to accept this good Gift!

**Larry Moore** describes himself as “servant of God/husband of Sammie/patriarch of 23 in Moore clan.”

Scripture: Mark 14:50

March 21, 2013

### REDEEMED DESERTERS

“Then everyone deserted him and fled” (Mark 14:50).

I’ve been wondering—could it be that steadfast devotion to God, obedience in difficulty, acts of loving service— could it be that these are received by God from us as acts of atonement? Atonement for the loneliness and rejection that Jesus, the Son of Man, suffered in the Garden of Gethsemane? I do believe that Jesus knows what loneliness, desertion and solitude mean.

I am awed and amazed that it was to Jesus’ fearful deserters that He gave the command to bring His message of hope and love to the whole world. His hope is in redeemed deserters living out the truth of His kingdom. Even when I give in to temptation to cut and run as fast as I can, His compassion receives me back in forgiveness, heals my broken heart, and gives me a new spirit of humility to carry out His plans.

Oh, to fully understand and accept that God is not only completely aware of my bent to self-preservation and brokenness, but He always has and always will love me with His unparalleled love. My value to Him is not “used up” in proportion to my weaknesses and sin.

Dear Father, I want to totally surrender to you, to know and experience your beautiful love, to hear and understand the truth of your kingdom. Change me, inside out. Help me stay close to you. Keep me faithful. Surprise me with fresh anointing of your power and love. May my faithfulness bring comfort to your heart.

**Pam Pepper** loves cooking Sunday family dinners with her husband, Mike, leading women in studying God’s word, creating greeting cards, and working out at the Lexington YMCA.

### DRIVEN TO DEPENDENCE

*...so that you may stand mature and fully assured in everything that God wills (Colossians 4:12b NRSV).*

One of the most defining moments of my life was stepping off a train platform at a busy intersection in China for the first time at the beginning of my missionary service. The sea of people overwhelmed me. I remember being certain at that moment of the utter reality of my dependence on God. In order for my life to shed any light, or for my hand to extend any gesture of genuine love, I had to humbly denounce my expectations and to rely on Him alone. It's strange, but I felt that I was on holy ground. The reality of His presence was very real, and very personal.

So it is with any of us who are seeking to serve Him. We may be driven by a calling, a passion, or a sense of purpose, but any heart that is right with God, must first be driven to this place of dependence.

“God has created me to do Him some definite service; He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission—I may never truly know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for nothing. I shall do good. I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, if I do but keep His commandments. Therefore, I will trust in Him. Whatever, wherever I am, I can never be thrown away.” From “Meditation” by John Henry Cardinal Newman, 1801-1890.

**Laura Ury** is currently serving with OMS along with her husband, Thane. She now lives in Wilmore. They have four children, Cameron, Bethany (serving with OMS), Bryce and Lauren.

### REFOCUSING ON THE MAIN THING

*This is what the Lord says to you: "Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's" (II Chronicles 20:15b).*

I was in a situation in which I was misunderstood, misquoted, and falsely accused. I felt publicly humiliated and I could scarcely wait to set the record straight when I felt God check me: "You don't need to defend yourself. I will be your Defender."

“Oh, I really think I can handle this,” was my immediate response. But His will seemed clear. In the weeks to come each time I felt I needed to enter the fray, He asked, "So you think you can do a better job of defending yourself than I can?"

In the time leading to the crucifixion, Matthew 26:62-63 tells us that when the Chief Priest asked Jesus to respond to the accusations made against him, Jesus remained silent.

Sometimes I fight battles God never intended for me to fight. It causes me to stray from making the main thing the main thing. Sometimes I get discouraged when I look at our nation, our world. I want to straighten out everyone—Christian and non-Christian alike. I get on my "high horse." Wanting others to adopt my values (for their own good, of course) becomes more important than offering them the glorious Living Water and extending grace.

Our best opportunity to change our world comes when we live our lives in a way that persuades those who are estranged from Jesus to enter a love relationship with Him. We do this best by glorifying God. What better time than Lent to refocus?

**Judy Metcalf** is blessed to be the wife of Arvid, the mother of Patti and Kathy, the grandmother of Rosie, Emmy and Evy Su Mei and a grateful daughter of The King.

### SURPRISED BY THE WILDERNESS

*The Spirit immediately drove him [Jesus] out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan (Mark 1:12-13 ESV). Also read Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13.*

The season of Lent can be a difficult one for many Christians, especially compared to the seasons of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany. It is easy to embrace seasons of expectation, gift giving and joy. A season of fasting, sacrifice and plodding toward the cross is not as inviting. Modern American culture, including much of the church, wants to focus on the blessings of God: prosperity, health, good fortune. After all, God's people should be blessed, not driven into the wilderness.

Jesus, after the dramatic moments of His baptism where God calls Him Son, is soon wandering in the wilderness facing the temptations of Satan himself. However, we are surprised and taken aback upon finding ourselves in the wilderness. Jesus' forty days in the wilderness cannot be separated from God's words at His baptism. Satan's temptations to Jesus are prefaced by the condition, "If you are the Son of God." Jesus' forty days in the wilderness cannot be separated from His future ministry where He will face all the same temptations again. Jesus' responses reveal His true nature and mission.

The season of Lent for the believer can be as it was for Jesus, one of testing, strengthening and preparation for the struggles and temptations which are ever before us. As with Jesus, it not only reveals to us the true nature of our faith, but the nature of the God whom we serve.

**Bill Jamison** is an ordained elder in the Free Methodist Church. He teaches Christian Doctrine and Church History at Lexington Christian Academy.

### TEARS OF GRATITUDE

*. . . who for the joy set before him endured the cross. . . ."*  
(Hebrews 12:2).

I cannot forget the tears of a young Christian woman in southern Japan. We were at a church youth gathering, standing in a half-circle, and Pastor Aihara was coming around with a life-size cross, helping each of us to lay the cross on our shoulder and carry it a few steps.

I had my camera in hand, ready for some good photo moments, when I realized something was happening beside me. Miki stood there quietly with tears in her eyes, her gaze fixed on the young man in front of us carrying the cross.

Miki's tears startled me into reality. Suddenly I was transported back to that Friday in Jerusalem 2000 years ago when Jesus carried His own cross—the cross He would soon be crucified on, for the forgiveness of my sin and yours, for the salvation of all who believe.

Miki's tears made me wonder if I had ever felt the weight and glory of the cross of Christ like she seemed to be feeling it at that moment. Her tears conveyed a profound gratitude for the old rugged cross Jesus so lovingly and willingly bore for her. A longing stirred in my heart for a deeper communion with Him, too.

After the Last Supper Jesus told his disciples, "Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy" (John 16:22). I'm thankful we live "on this side of the cross" of our resurrected Lord, and grateful to join with you in offering Him our heartfelt, joy-filled praise and thanks for all He has done for us.

**Zonia Mitchell** is an Asbury Theological Seminary student in the E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism.

Scripture: John 15:13

March 18, 2013

### WHAT MORE COULD HE DO?

*“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).*

I suspect that most of us have read certain words that immediately seemed “right.” I think that is the case with these words from Jesus. This insight into true Kingdom life recorded by John really could be no other way. What more could a person do for another than willingly sacrifice his life?

This is a fundamental part of what we celebrate every Lenten season – God entered into humanity through Jesus and bore the punishment we rightly were due. His sacrifice was a singularity and an exemplar. It was a singularity in that no other person could make *that* sacrifice; we could not redeem ourselves. It cannot and need not be repeated. Jesus’ sacrifice also stands as an exemplar because it is a reflection of Kingdom living that *we all* are called to emulate. This is a holy and challenging burden. Yet, we can take courage and strength with the trust that God does not ask us to do anything that we do not have the capability to do.

This is a two-fold call to us and our response to the first of the two will greatly enhance our capacity for the second. Jesus beckons us to surrender to Him our claim to our own life; to truly submit to Him as Lord and Savior. Once we have sacrificed in this way to Jesus, we can know that He will empower us whenever or wherever we are asked to lay down our life for another.

**John Ireland** and his wife, Joy, have lived in Wilmore as long as they have been married—a little over six years. He recently completed his Master of Arts in Theological Studies at Asbury Theological Seminary and is a medic in the Army Reserve.

Scripture: Exodus 40:38

February 27, 2013

### TRAVELING WELL

*So the cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel during all their travels” (Exodus 40:38).*

And that’s how Exodus ends. Moses was the leader of a nation of travelers. In referring to his nomadic ancestors, Moses states, “My father was a wandering Aramean” (Deuteronomy 26:5). Moses himself started in Egypt. He fled to Midian, then back to Egypt, and eventually through the desert of the Sinai to the eastern bank of the Jordan River, with the hills of Jericho in sight. Breaking up and setting up camp was common fare for the people of God. That’s why God designed a portable place of worship. The mobility of the people would not lead to instability as long as the tabernacle was located at the very center of the encampment.

The movement of a worshipping community has a center. “In all the travels of the Israelites, whenever the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, they would set out...” (Exodus 40:36). Action that has a center is purposeful. It goes somewhere.

What is true in the worshipping community (the church), is also true of us individually. We travel. We carry on with our lives as we journey toward heaven. The tabernacle of old points us to Jesus Christ, our priest and sacrifice. The center of our worship is Jesus Christ, crucified and risen. When we fix our eyes on him, we travel well. He is our reference by day and night. In Christ, our eyes are fixed on the cloud by day and the fire by night as we travel confidently through the scintillating distractions of day and the paralyzing fears of night. Let us travel well today and always.

**Dan Owsley** is a missionary in Brasilia, Brazil. Dan and his wife, Hope, met and eventually were married in the WFMC, where their travels began. They have four sons.

Scripture: 2 Timothy 4:8

February 28, 2013

### IT'S THE RELATIONSHIP

*Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing (2 Timothy 4:8).*

Paul writes these words near the end of his life of arrests, imprisonments, floggings, beatings and more. Paul's life resembles Jesus' suffering and forgiveness as shown in his words, "May it not be held against them" (2 Timothy 4:16).

How did Jesus, Paul, and many Christians endure such suffering and do so with forgiving hearts toward the very ones inflicting pain? About Jesus it is written, "...who for the joy set before him endured the cross..." (Hebrews 12:2). Was Jesus' joy sitting down at the Father's right hand and enjoying heaven forever? But Jesus had that before He came to earth. Jesus' joy appears to be pleasing His Father. Their relationship motivated Jesus to want what His Father wanted and do whatever was necessary to accomplish it. His Father wanted us.

The "righteous Judge," who has witnessed our every sin, declares the penalty paid and covers us with His righteousness so we can enter eternal fellowship with God, beginning now. Face-to-face with Jesus will make whatever we endure worth it.

"Living He loved me; dying, He saved me;  
Buried, He carried my sins far away;  
Rising, He justified freely forever;  
One day He's coming—oh, glorious day!"

Rev. J. Wilbur Chapman

**Nancy Ellwood** is happily married to Glen in their first year of re-marriage. They enjoy family times with their three young adult children, daughter-in-law, and grandson.

Scripture: John 3:16

March 17, 2013

### GOD'S UNFATHOMABLE LOVE AND SACRIFICE

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16 NKJV).*

Most intriguing in all the world is God's amazing love for His creation. Man was created flawlessly, put in a perfect environment, and even enjoyed walks with His Creator during the day's cool times. Yet, when temptation came, Adam and Eve chose to disobey their Creator and Friend.

Down through history, no matter what magnificent miracles God did, man readily choose gross sin over obedience to God. Man boldly insulted and rejected God.

Sinful man is like a disease-producing virus—destructive and undesirable. Who could love such a being? Yet, God unreservedly loved man. He didn't give up. God is infinite and unfathomably great. We are like protozoa in comparison.

Yet, though man was incredibly minute, extremely sinful, and hateful, Jesus willingly humbled Himself to the lowest degree. He entered this world to offer Himself for painful persecution and flogging. And most puzzling of all, Jesus, with God's complete approval, came to die in our place. Wow! With His unimaginable total self-sacrifice, He proved His marvelous, undying love for every person, including you and me. He redeemed us! He gives us eternal life. How indebted we are! We will live forever with God who loves us so! Oh, how blessed we are! Oh, what joy! How we should praise Him!

**Dennis Probst** and his wife, Priscilla, are the happy parents of four and grandparents of six. They recently retired after nearly 39 years of missionary service in Japan.

**I AM HERE TO BE SEEN**

*"Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate.... Peter looked straight at him... [and] said, "Look at us!... In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk" (Acts 3:2-6).*

Seeing beggars and cripples in foreign countries takes a toll on my heart. What should we *do* when we walk past people like that? Most people pass by without looking. *Why?* Because when you make eye contact with someone, you enter into their situation. It compels you to act.

The Zulu people of Africa understand this concept. In their native greetings, they say "*Sawubona*" which literally means "*I see you,*" and the other person responds "*Ngihkona,*" literally, "*I am here to be seen.*" We don't have a direct translation in English but the inherent meaning in the Zulu greeting is that "*by recognizing me, you brought me into existence.*" When you see a person and greet them you're really looking deep into them and acknowledging their humanity, their dignity, their personality.

Peter and John chose to enter into one man's story. And in that moment the Kingdom of heaven invaded earth. A man who couldn't take a step could now leap and run! Something divine happens when we let others enter into our lives, when we really see them for who they are and acknowledge the image of God in them.

Christ entered into our story when He came to Earth and lived life as we do. As we enter into this Lenten season, will you remember to see others as Jesus sees you? Will you enter into another person's story?

**Bethany Ury** graduated from Asbury University in 2010, and has spent over a year serving in Bangkok, Thailand. She is currently fund-raising to return to Thailand with One Mission Society's human trafficking prevention ministry.

**GRACE IN UNEXPECTED PLACES**

*...The chastening for our well-being fell on Him,  
And by His scourging we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5b NAS).*

God's grace lessons can come in the most unexpected places and by the most improbable means.

Maite was a slight Haitian girl of about 16. She had been selected to be my guide and shopping companion to the famous Iron Market in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. As we were introduced she took my hand and never let go as we navigated a congested street.

It was when we arrived at the stall of one of the vendors she knew that my grace lesson really began. I had chosen some products and had done what bargaining I could with my limited vocabulary. Then Maite stepped in. She told them that was too much, I was her friend and should be charged as such. This enraged the vendors and they began to berate her for betraying them. She came to stand between the vendors and me. They tried to push her out of the way. They even enlisted other vendors to heap abuse on her in an effort to intimidate her. She stood her ground, spoke back firmly but softly, never moving from in front of me.

Smitten with surprise, humility, gratitude, shame, I stood in awe and watched this young Haitian girl take abuse as she deftly negotiated for beautiful Haitian crafts for me. Abuse on my behalf—how can this be! Then parts of Isaiah 53 flashed into my mind. With tears I thanked Maite --and Jesus!

**Sylvia Brown** and her husband, Art, recently returned to Wilmore. She is the grateful mother of 3 and grandmother of 7. Sylvia was previously the Special Collections librarian at ATS, on the faculty of Roberts Wesleyan College and the Director of SEED Livelihood Network.

Scripture: Matthew 16:4

March 2, 2013

### REJECTING MAJORITY OPINION

*Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24).*

I loved walking into the sanctuary at our church in Indiana where behind the platform were three large crosses embossed on the wall. All that was done on the platform took place at the foot of these crosses. Over time Power Point sermon outlines and videos took up more and more of the worship service. The crosses were covered by a screen which was always lowered. I missed seeing the crosses.

Jesus' three commands in Matthew 16:24 are all contrary to society's norms. The world says, "LOVE yourself." Jesus says, "DENY yourself." The world says, "Take up your RIGHTS." Jesus says, "Take up your CROSS." The world says, "Follow us (on facebook, twitter, etc)." Jesus says, "Follow me."

Selwyn Hughes writes in *Every Day with Jesus*: "You will not gain spiritual victory unless, when necessary, you are willing to reject the majority opinion. In Gethsemane Jesus was alone. At a short distance were His disciples, and further away a large crowd, chief priests, and elders. If you desire to be one of the multitude you will find yourself in the crowd *farthest* from Jesus. Alone, you are with Him."

Am I willing to deny myself, take up my cross and stand "alone" with Him? How can I respond with anything but "Yes, Jesus!" Because the One asking me was not "Beneath the Cross," "At the Cross," or "Surveying the Cross." He was *ON* the cross.

**Renae Thompson**, husband, Ken, and children Tyler, Stuart and Jessie have been part of the WFMC family for six years.

Scripture: Philippians 3:10

March 15, 2013

### SIMPLE THINGS GLORIFY JESUS

*I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection... (Philippians 3:10).*

Salt, coins, perfume, bread, seed, wine, towels...how does one connect all of these items together, and moreover, what do they have to do with Easter?

These items are the simple things of life that Jesus used for spiritual illustrations and in so doing glorified his Father and himself. All of us will not be people of power, money, or fame, but we can use the simple things of life that are placed in our hands to glorify Jesus.

The simple items combined with the resurrection power of Jesus bring change to people's lives. I, personally, have been given towels to use in my profession and in my love for people. Sometimes the towels are used for washing feet, wiping up a floor, and sometimes for drying tears. I am reminded at this Easter season that with the resurrection power even simple things may bring eternal change. The power of Jesus in His resurrection allows me to "take a new grip with tired hands" and to stand firm on shaky legs, and to mark out a straight, smooth path so that those who follow me, though weak and lame, will not fall and hurt themselves, but become strong. (Compare Hebrews 12:12 NLT.) The living Jesus gives us this resurrection power, even in the simple items and daily tasks that are placed into our care. My simple item is often a towel for glorifying Jesus. What is your item or task that will glorify Him?

**Rachel Powdrill** is an RN, and also holds a Master of Arts in Counseling (MAC). Recently she has been a caregiver for elderly family members in her home. She and her husband, Sam, have three children and three grandchildren.

### RESURRECTION HERE AND NOW

*Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58).*

I have been reading N.T. Wright's *Surprised by Hope*. Wright believes we do not fully understand the importance of the resurrection and its significance not only for our future hope, but also our present living—and I agree.

Paul devotes 1 Corinthians 15 to the importance of Jesus' resurrection. He writes, "And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith" (1 Corinthians 15:14). Most of us agree with Paul. Without the resurrection, there is no church, no faith, no *future* hope.

But sometimes we can lose sight of the present—what Jesus' resurrection means for us here and now. We may expect Paul to conclude the chapter with an instruction to, "kick up your feet, relax, and wait." But no! His conclusion is a call to go and *do*—always giving ourselves fully to the work of the Lord. Why? Because as we see in the life of Jesus, the work of the Lord is not something that will only take place in the future, but happens here and now. Jesus brought hope and healing into lives of brokenness. Talk about glory in unexpected places—the here and now—the messiness of human life.

God is in the process of bringing about his Kingdom presently. In light of the future hope we have, we are called to be bearers of that hope to those around us here and now—and that work is never in vain.

**Andy Bentz** is a second year MDIV student at ATS. He and his wife Ashley are from Mason, Michigan.

### LESSONS IN GODLY LEADERSHIP

*Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:3-5 ESV).*

My father taught me many lessons in Godly leadership. One such lesson involved focusing less on trying to personally impress my supervisor and more on trying to help my subordinates succeed. "Don't worry about trying to make yourself look good," my father would say. "Take care of the people under your responsibility, and you will be taken care of in the process." In this my father applied his faith.

The skeptic might accuse my father of having a self-serving, ulterior motive: to achieve his own success. In response to such accusation my father might say, "Of course I want to do well to provide for my family and myself. But the people who work for me weren't born yesterday. They will know if my care for them is insincere. They will see right through it if it is selfish and self-serving."

While Jesus had every right to take care of himself, He chose instead to do the will of His Father and humble himself for the benefit of those who would follow. God exalted Jesus as the leader of all leaders, that all could see and know God's approval of Jesus' way.

In this season of Lent, in what way is God calling you to humble yourself for the benefit of another or others?

**Reed Wilbanks** is married to Anne Bradley Wilbanks. They live in Wilmore, Kentucky, where Reed serves as Associate Pastor of Wilmore Free Methodist Church.

Scripture: Isaiah 53:4-6

March 4, 2013

### GLORY IN UNEXPECTED PLACES: ON THE BENCH

*We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6).*

It is not glamorous or glorious to sit on the bench. Ask UK basketball players. Oh, they probably feel immense pride and devotion to the team, but to say there is “glory” would be a stretch.

I, however, found glory on the bench, the organ bench, that is. After 62 years of playing the organ in various churches, I must have played the beloved hymn, “Beneath the Cross of Jesus,” over 100 times, especially during Lenten season. At times, it was almost mind-numbing because I found my fingers and feet sliding from note to note and did not focus on the words.

One Sunday morning I was playing at the Nicholasville Christian Church. Each week we had communion and each week I selected meditative music to play as my sisters and brothers took the elements. On this occasion, I chose “Beneath the Cross of Jesus” and the words went through my mind this time as if it were a new hymn. All of a sudden, the words below jumped out at me and I realized that those words were for me.

I am to this day unworthy of the love of God, but I am thankful that He did not let my unworthiness stand in the way of His glory or my salvation. I find glory beneath the cross of Jesus and am grateful that I also found it “on the bench.”

*Beneath the cross of Jesus....Two wonders I confess: The wonders of redeeming love and my unworthiness. Elizabeth C. Clephane*

**Nancy McConnell** is the mother of Kristi and Sharon McConnell and of 13 other children. She attends Wilmore Free Methodist Church on Sunday evenings.

Scripture: Philippians 2:5-8 NLT

March 13, 2013

### GLORY IN THE UNEXPECTED....INCONVENIENCE

*You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had....he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave....he humbled himself in obedience to God ( Philippians 2:5, 7-8 NLT).*

Ice crunched under the tires of our '78 Caprice as we headed from North Carolina to Pennsylvania. Are we going too fast? No, my Daddy is good at this kind of driving.

That nine hour trip turned into 15 hours of sleet, freezing rain, and snow. I-81 was a parking lot of truckers and cars. For hours, we dozed but never slept, started the car to warm up, then turned it off to save fuel until traffic began to move again.

Up ahead we saw the silhouette of a man trudging through the sleet and mist. As Daddy pulled our car to the side and stopped, my teenage brother slid from the front seat into the back, joining two adults, another brother and the luggage. Talk about crowded.

Draped in a full length wool coat, the walker crawled into the front seat. His name—we didn't know. His age—not a clue. His words—few. His destination—New Jersey to see his momma. Sandwiched between him and Daddy, I stole a glance his way. As he stared out the window, a smile crossed his face. What he was thinking—a mystery. Hours and miles later, he got out at the intersection of I-83 and the PA turnpike. He would soon be home.

I didn't grasp it in the early morning as we pulled back on the highway, but I wonder if Daddy (and the Father) was teaching us to give up our privileges for the sake of others, even strangers?

Christ gave up so much for me; I wonder what I can give up this Lenten season for the sake of Christ and others?

**Dwight Winter** is the husband of Kelly, the father of Katie, Kyla, Clay & Colin and a pastor at WFMC.

### BEARING THE MARKS OF CHRIST

*...in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger, in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, in the word of truth, in the power of God; ... (2 Corinthians 6:5-7a NASB).*

My high school football team had helmets that were almost entirely white. One thing about white helmets, they vividly display the marks of gridiron combat. If a player had gone far into the season, and still had a lilywhite helmet, well, what can you say? Those paint smears on the helmet were to us marks of honor.

In the scripture passage the Apostle Paul lists an interesting combination of battle scars and Christian virtues that mark his ministry. The scars sound severe, including beatings, imprisonments, facing angry mobs, exhaustion, hunger. He begs us not to reject the marvelous message of God's kindness. He doesn't soft peddle the risks of being identified with Christ.

In the season of Lent, Christians have traditionally sought out both symbolic and practical expressions of self-denial and fasting. In doing these acts, we hope to draw closer to our Lord who came as one of sorrows, acquainted with grief. For many Christians around the world persecution is very real, and they don't have to look for, or think up, acts of penance or denial. Some even bear the marks of Christ with physical scars that are much more permanent than paint smears on a football helmet.

No matter how we choose to mark this Lenten season, let us fortify our hearts and minds that come what may, we ardently choose Christ who first chose us.

**Lee Taylor** is the husband of Noel. They have two grown daughters. Lee is a native of NC and currently works at the Toyota manufacturing plant in Georgetown, KY.

### WORTHY OF ATTENTION

*He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him (Isaiah 53:3 (NKJV)).*

During my first year of college at Asbury, I learned a great deal about life. Being from the rural South, I had very little experience with icy weather or living in town. I embraced the new experiences. I enjoyed meeting new people and thought I had met everyone in our class...until I met her. As my freshman year drew to a close, I met a young Hoosier girl who knocked me off my feet and eventually became my wife. For weeks following our meeting, I wondered why I had not noticed her earlier.

Isaiah prophesied that the coming Messiah would not be esteemed by those He came to save. The world would not value Him or consider Him worthy of attention. Today, we wonder how this could be. How could they fail to notice One they had talked about for generations? We think, "How could they be so blind?"

Jesus never called attention to himself. He was born in a common barn and reared by ordinary parents. He learned a trade in his earthly father's shop and interacted with regular people on a daily basis. Many who were healed during his ministry were told by Him to tell no one about their healing. He was eventually rejected by many of the same ones who witnessed his miracles. They did not consider him to be anyone special.

Hindsight always helps us see things more clearly. During this Easter season, consider Him worthy of your attention.

**Jay McCants** met his future wife, Heather, in the lobby of the Glide-Crawford dormitory at Asbury University in 1989. They have two children, Olivia and Isaac, and have been married for nearly 22 years. The McCants family lives in Bagdad, KY.

Scripture: Mark 3:10; Luke 8:45a KJV March 6, 2013

### PRESS UPON HIM

*For he had healed many, insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues (Mark 3:10 KJV).  
And Jesus said, Who touched me? (Luke 8:45a KJV).*

For the diseased soul that was drowning in a sea of sin, dead in its trespasses and then raised to life by the merciful and gracious hand of the Savior, there is no denying the touch of God. Only He and He alone could heal the worst of all diseases—the disease of sin.

Our sin led him to the cross, but it was because of His love for us that He endured it. That horrible and humiliating death suffered by the Son of God is a disgrace to the world but a blessed light of hope in the heart of the saint.

This Lenten season we are invited to walk with Jesus to Calvary's Hill and reflect on what was done through God's love as His wrath for us was laid upon His Son.

*What thou, my Lord, has suffered was all for sinners' gain;  
mine, mine was the transgression, but thine the deadly pain.*

*From O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*

May our reflecting cause us to press “*upon him for to touch him*” that we may know Him even more. How long has it been since you reached out, pressed upon the Lord so hard He noticed and said, “*Who touched me?*”

Do you feel the world pressing on you? Do you feel the weight of past sins pressing on you? Do you feel the worries of life pressing on you? Press upon Jesus, who was pressed to the cross that you may be pressed to newness of life in Him.

**Johnson Cannon** is the husband of Amy Cannon. They reside in Lexington with their five children, Wyndham, Wesley, Dalton, Dexter, and Eloise.

Scripture: John 12:1-8

March 11, 2013

### CENTERED ON LOVE

*Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume (John 12:3).*

This story is a little funny, when you visualize it. Picture Mary, once again at Jesus' feet while Martha serves the dinner. The story is also very dramatic. Mary's actions are almost embarrassing in their extravagance and intimacy, but Mary loved Jesus and unselfconsciously expressed that love. When Judas rebuked her for wasting the expensive perfume that could have been sold to benefit the poor, Jesus affirmed her. He approved this act of extravagant love toward himself.

Jesus centered on love—He knew that what we love informs our actions. So He said the most important command is to *love* God, and the second is to *love* your neighbor. He commanded (not asked) His disciples to *love* one another and said that *love* would be the quality that identified them to others. It sounds easy, but of course it isn't. We can't live in love until we first open ourselves to receive it from God. His love pours over us and anoints us as extravagantly as Mary's perfume anointed Jesus, but sometimes our spiritual senses are too dull to recognize it. When we don't sense or feel God's love for us, we can look to Jesus' sacrifice of death, which was the greatest and most extravagant act of love of all. I pray that we will know God's love for us, sense His anointing for the ministry of love, and act it out, so that the world will recognize us by our love.

**Susie Boileau** is wife to Rick, mother of Max, Ezra & Phoebe and works as a paralegal. She is full of gratitude for the grace of God.

Scripture: Luke 22:19

March 10, 2013

### THE GREATEST ACT OF LOVE

*And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19).*

Growing up and still to this day I enjoy looking at photo albums. I love pouring over the pages of memories made during my childhood years and remembering special times with family and friends, as well as being reminded that certain fashions should never be repeated! Those pictures within the plastic pages are links that help me remember important events and people from my past who have played a part in shaping the person that I am today.

The season of Lent and the sharing of holy communion, for me, are like turning the pages in a photo album full of memories. Although sometimes uncomfortable, it is necessary for us to keep these memories at the forefront of our minds as we walk with Jesus. We remember the difficult choice Jesus made in giving up himself when He had done no wrong. We remember the great pain that He endured on the cross. We remember the greatest act of love the world has ever known. We remember that we are nothing without the grace of God. And, finally, on Easter morning, we remember and celebrate His great victory over death.

We sometimes sing a chorus before we share in communion that says, "We remember all You've done for us; We remember Your covenant with us; We remember and worship You, O Lord." My desire is that as I and all of us remember His sacrifice that we'll be drawn into deeper worship of Him.

**Rose Evans** has served as assistant minister of music at WFMC for 10 years. She's been married to Mark for eight years and attempts to maintain photo albums for their three small children, James, Lydia, and Jonah.

Scripture: Mark 14:36 NRSV

March 23, 2013

### HE COULD HAVE WALKED AWAY

*He said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want" (Mark 14:36 NRSV).*

I had the chance to go to Israel in January of this year. I spent three weeks walking, riding, and exploring the Holy Land. On one particular afternoon, we drove through the wilderness on our way to Jericho. The tight turns, sharp drop-offs, and our driver's ability to take it all without slowing down, made for an exciting bus ride. But what struck me was how vast and harsh the wilderness was with cliffs and caves, and terrain devoid of green.

The next day our group went to the Mount of Olives. At the top we could see across the valley, into the city of Jerusalem. Before we made our descent to the Garden of Gethsemane, our professor gave us a quick geography review. After identifying the valleys that surround the city of Jerusalem, he asked where the wilderness was that we had driven through. Noting how near the wilderness was to our location, he made the statement that I cannot shake from my mind: "Just a few miles... He could have literally walked away." Jesus could have turned around, walked into the wilderness, and hid in a cave. He could have avoided His arrest, beatings, and execution.

During this Lenten season, I am celebrating the obedience and love of Jesus. Without using supernatural powers, He could have avoided it all by simply walking into the wilderness. Instead, He walked into the battle, took on the death we deserved, and gave us life. What wondrous love and obedience is this!

**Andrea Tinsley** has served as minister of youth at WFMC since the fall of 2009. When she's not hanging out with youth, she enjoys traveling, hiking, and cuddling her brand new baby nephew.

**ACTING DESPITE FEAR**

*...a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended....The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus..." (Matthew 28:2-5 NAS).*

A huge stone blocked the entrance and alert soldiers stood guard (Matthew 27:64-66). The guards were looking for danger from people who might try to steal the body. Instead, the perceived danger came from heaven. A severe earthquake occurred, the stone in front of the tomb rolled away, and a fearsome angel appeared. Trained soldiers fell in a dead faint. The women came prepared to care for the body of Jesus and were greeted by the angel. The women did not faint but were fearful. After speaking with the angel and seeing for themselves that Jesus was not in the tomb, they remained fearful but also became full of joy.

Shortly thereafter, Jesus appeared to the women and told them, "Do not be afraid" and directed them to tell the disciples. The women functioned despite their fear (Mark 16:10; Luke 24:10; John 20:18). The soldiers, however, continued to act out of fear (and greed) and spread lies rather than admit the truth (Matthew 28:11-15).

When something new happens, it is natural to be afraid, even if we have been forewarned. We each need to be encouraged and reminded that our Lord is still in control. The Lord has a mission for each of us and we need to act despite our fears.

**Kimberly Barnard**, JD, LLM was formerly with the Judge Advocate General's Corps, United States Army. She now practices law at Barnard Law Office PLLC in Wilmore, Kentucky. She is the daughter of Robert and Evelyn Barnard.

**GREATER TREASURE**

*"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets" (Matthew 5:11-12).*

2007 was a hard year. Reeling from the devastation of divorce and all the "new normal," I was hired as a staff chaplain with Hospice in Frankfort. The job brought a new work-culture.

One of my co-workers was not showing up for meetings, patient appointments, etc. A colleague and I tried to work with this person but, alas, it went from bad to worse.

I began sharing my concerns with our immediate supervisor only to discover that my confidences were not kept. Quickly I found myself the target of the problem. My other teammate and I were shocked and dismayed. I was even put on probation.

Tears flowed many nights on the long commute back to Wilmore. While God gave me the grace to put one foot in front of the other, the answers I was looking for eluded me.

In 2008, I welcomed a transfer to the Lexington office. I was asked to officiate at a funeral service attended by several persons in senior management. God's presence was felt. A son of the deceased wrote a letter to our CEO praising the skillful way our team helped his family, adding specific references to my work.

Redemption came. Praise God for His faithfulness!

**Diane Munoz** and her daughter Kathi, love living in Wilmore where snowy sidewalks get shoveled by kind neighbors and Easter baskets show up on your doorstep. We've called Wilmore and the WFMC home now for seventeen years.