

GRAPEVINE

CW Church

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“I am the true vine...” John 15:1

Security

“I am free forever from condemnation.” Romans 8:1-2

There are many of us looking for security today. We look for it with our finances, in relationships, we even go and invest in security systems for our homes to make sure that our possessions are “secure.” But in reality, how secure are we? Think about it for just a moment.

Over the past few years we’ve read, heard about, and have seen on the news about the hurricanes, wild fires, and just recently the major earthquake. That’s just to mention a few natural disasters that have taken place in our world today. Then you have illnesses and diseases that have swept across our world. We’re just emerging from a global pandemic that took over a million Americans in the past three years.

Then you read about the accidents that happen out on the freeway, the shootings in our neighborhoods, and the rise of murders. So, I come back to my question, just how secure are we?

You see we can take all these precautions, and I’m not saying we shouldn’t, but there’s only one way to be totally secure. There’s only one way to be eternally secure and have that assurance while you’re walking this earth. That way is through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Part of the problem with insecurity is that we end up worrying about our security. We become anxious. We fret. Which then leads to depression. Which then causes other physical issues. We put ourselves in chains, emotionally, spiritually, and even physically.

My question is, “Do you want freedom from that?” If your answer is Yes, then that answer comes in a relationship with Jesus Christ. That answer comes in giving your life to Him and knowing that you are free from all that this world throws at you. That when you feel insecure, that the Lord has given you security. Let me show you.

You see, since Christ has come, something wonderful has happened. We’re no longer condemned. In Romans 8:1 it says, “*There is*

therefore now no condemnation...” That means that we’re not doomed, but we’re free from the penalty and condemnation of sin. We’re not judged as a sinner, but are delivered from the condemnation of death and hell; we aren’t judged to be unrighteous, but are counted to be righteous.

We have the Lord on our side. We’re safe and secure from condemnation now and forever. We will not be judged as a sinner; we will never be separated from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Now, I have to be quick to remind each of you, and myself, that we will be judged for our faithfulness to Christ. We will be judged for how responsible we are. For how well we use our spiritual gifts for Christ. How diligently we serve Christ in the work of God. And that will take place at the great judgment seat of Christ.

There is something critical that we have to note here; only someone who has a relationship with Jesus, someone who is in Jesus will not be condemned. They are secure. All non-believers will face condemnation for sin. A genuine believer is a person who does not walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

When you’re walking with Jesus, walking after the Spirit, you have the power of Jesus living in you. You have the assurance and the power of the Holy Spirit living in you. That’s how you can have assurance in this world.

Let’s take a moment to clarify what it means to be *in Christ*. In the simplest of terms, to be *in Christ* means that your faith in Christ *places you in Christ*. Positionally, you are placed in all that Christ is. Christ lived, died, and arose, so to be *in Christ* means that you live, die, and arise *in Christ*. Christ is your Representative, your Agent, your Substitute, your Mediator in life and death and resurrection. Whoever

believes in Jesus is identified with Christ: counted and considered to be *in Christ*; reckoned and credited as *in Christ*.

Spelled out in a little more detail, when you believe *in Christ*, God *places and positions* you *in Christ*. Your faith actually causes God to identify you *with Christ*, to count you as having lived *in Christ* when Christ lived on earth; therefore, you are counted sinless and righteous because Christ was sinless and righteous. You’re counted as having died *in Christ*; therefore, you never have to die (John 3:16). The penalty and condemnation of your sins are already paid for in the death of Christ. You’re counted as having been raised *in Christ*; therefore, you have received the *new life* of Christ. Just as Christ had a new life after His resurrection, even so you receive the *new life* of Christ when you believe in Christ.

Isn’t this good news? What a joy in knowing that you can be *in Christ*. Oh, there’s more to it, but we’ll cover that in the next issue of the Grapevine. The question that I want to leave you with this month is; *Are you in Christ? Are you secure?*

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation no adjudging guilty of wrong for those who are in Christ Jesus, who live and walk not after the dictates of the flesh, but after the dictates of the Spirit.” Romans 8:1.

You’ve been made free through Jesus Christ, as long as you’re *in Christ*. Accept Him today, because you may not have tomorrow.

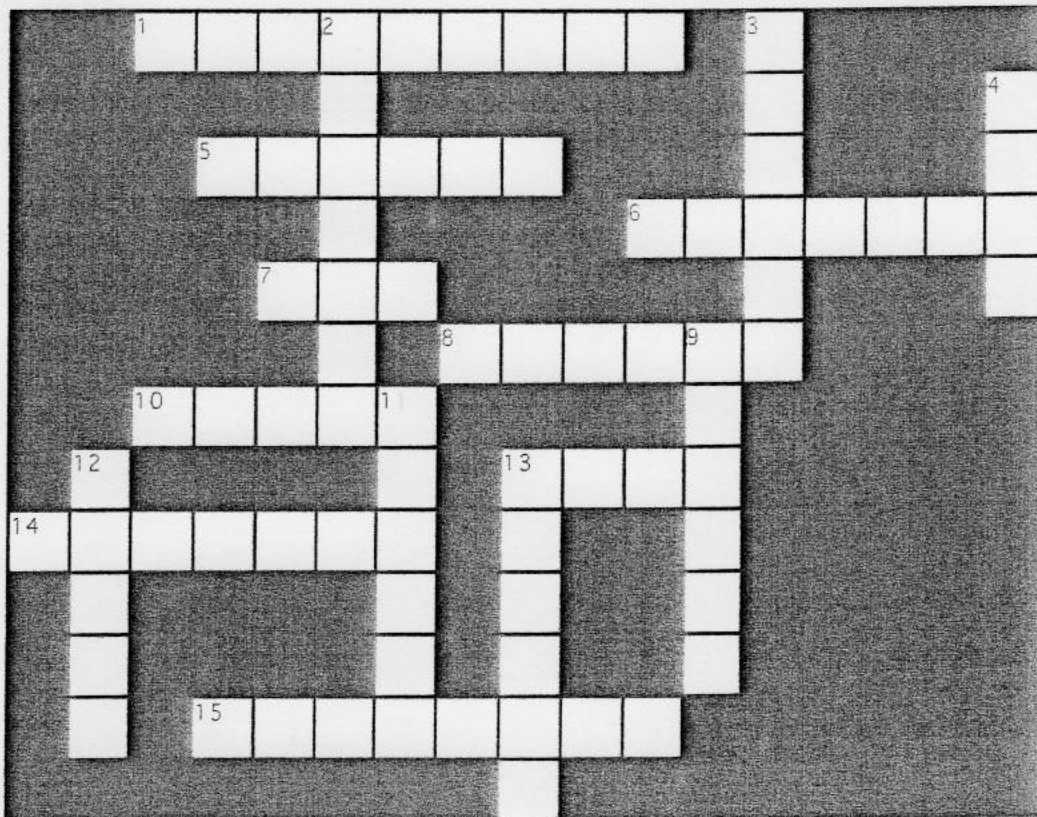
Pastor Rob



Character Puzzle

Mordecai

Character Sketches Volume I, pages 49-51



ACROSS

DOWN

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 cruel tyrant of the Persian Empire | 2 king's attendant |
| 5 father of 1 across | 3 number of years Ahasuerus ruled under Darius in Babylon |
| 6 device for hanging | 4 Esther asked the people to ____ for three days |
| 7 field in which Mordecai was skilled | 9 loyal queen, adopted daughter of Mordecai |
| 8 proclamation signed by the king | 11 feeling the guards had toward the king |
| 10 Esther risked ____ to appeal to the king for her people. | 12 hanged on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai |
| 13 evil plan conceived against the king | 3 king's home |
| 14 meal prepared for the king | |
| 15 told the king of the conspiracy against him | |

Church Workday

March 25th 8-12

Calling all church folk!!!! Spring is upon us and it's time to do some Spring cleaning at the church. March 25th, we'll be gathering for a time of prayer, fellowship, but also cleaning inside and outside the church. There will be a list of jobs that will be posted. There will also be plenty for everyone of all ages to do. So, get your work gloves out. Get your work clothes ready. Grab your tools,

cleaning rags, good attitude, and let's come ready to work hard on the building and grounds.



Come and
Join Us!

Loyalty

How does Scripture illustrate loyalty in responding to adversity?

As the king enters his magnificent palace, two guards stood at attention. Their stern faces concealed the hatred they harbored toward the king they were guarding. Often they had talked to each other how they would like to kill him.

One day they conceived their plan. It would be easy for them to kill their king since they guarded the door of his bedchamber. They were sure that others would sympathize with them. The king was difficult to get along with. Even his former queen despised him.

As they whispered the details of their plan to each other an alert listener sat nearby.

They paid little attention to him, never realizing that a lower court official would be loyal to such a despised king, especially since his family had been brought there as exiles from another land. They were sure that he hated the king, too. But they were wrong. This man had learned the lesson of loyalty. He had purposed to stand by the one he served, even in a time of need.

Overhearing their plot, he realized quickly that the king was in great danger. When the guards walked away, he left that part of the palace and immediately sent a message to the king. When the king heard the message, he was amazed. Could the report be true? He called in a trusted servant and ordered him to investigate the facts.

The report was true, and swift action was taken. The two guards were quickly apprehended, confronted with the evidence and immediately impaled. The king's life had been spared through the faithful official's report. The events were carefully recorded in a book.

But the story doesn't end there. Two great and unexpected rewards resulted from this brave man's loyalty. The first reward came months later when the king was unable to sleep. He thought that if one of his servants read aloud, he might be able to fall asleep. The servant read from the book of records the account of how the king's life had been saved. The king remembered that he had never rewarded the man who protected him, and he decided to raise this loyal subject to a new level of honor.

The second and greater reward came because the one whom Mordecai had raised as a daughter learned from his example the same loyalty which he displayed toward the king was instilled in her life.

In the face of grave danger, she remained loyal to her own people and saved them from cruel destruction. This event is still remembered and celebrated by millions of descendants of those who were saved by her courageous and loyal actions.

—From Esther 2:21-23

Mordecai Character Sketch

WHY DIDN'T MORDECAI WANT TO SEE A GOLESS KING KILLED?

Mordecai was a wise man who had learned from the mistakes of his forefathers. He knew from the words of the prophet Jeremiah that rebellion against God-ordained authority had been responsible for the captivity of his family and nation for over a century (Esther 2:5,6). Jeremiah had predicted a curse for any nation that rebelled against the king of Babylon and a measure of blessing for any nation that remained submissive (Jeremiah 27:6-11). Mordecai was also familiar with the prophecy of Isaiah which transferred that principle to Cyrus, the first king of the Persian Empire (Isaiah 45:1-3). Conscious of God's hatred of rebellion against authority and aware of God's creativity in working through even the cruelest of kings to accomplish His purposes, Mordecai's loyalty to the king remained steadfast (Esther 2:22).



WASN'T MORDECAI DISPLAYING CONTEMPT FOR AUTHORITY WHEN HE REFUSED TO OBEY THE KING'S COMMAND TO BOW BEFORE HAMAN?

Bowing down before a Persian monarch was interpreted as an act respect. Haman commanded worship as a god, a demand beyond his sphere of jurisdiction which Mordecai refused. His decision was based

on higher loyalty to a specific law of God (Exodus 20:3-5). It is very likely that Mordecai believed that as a Jew he was exempt from obeying this command and that the command itself was illegal according to the laws of the Medes and Persians which could not be repealed (Esther 1:19; 3:4). There is strong indication that the Jews enjoyed special privilege from certain Persian laws, namely, any law which would force them to disobey a specific law of God. This privilege was due in part to Daniel's strong influence during the reign of Cyrus the Persian (Daniel 3:28-30; Ezra 1:1-3). The fact that Haman was hesitant to challenge Mordecai's claim and his contempt for the Jews' privileged laws seem to confirm this view (Esther 3:6-8).

WHY WAS IT SO DIFFICULT FOR MORDECAI TO ASK ESTHER TO INTERCEDE BEFORE THE KING?

Esther had not been called into the king's presence for 30 days. Unless given a special dispensation, the automatic penalty for one entering the king's inner court without permission was execution. The Greek historian, Herodotus, mentions an incident which had recently occurred which gives an insight into Ahasuerus' character and temperament.

While passing through Lydia, a rich man named Pythias generously entrain Ahasuerus' troops and contributed an enormous sum of money toward the Grecian campaign. He then requested that the king exempt the eldest of his five sons from the army to be of comfort to him in his declining years. The request was reasonable enough, but the enraged Ahasuerus ordered the son to be sliced in half and commanded the army to march between the two halves as an example of what he considered to be a lack of dedication. It is no wonder that Esther asked Mordecai and all the Jews in the city to fast for three days preceding her bold entrance to the king.

Church of God

We started a journey back to the beginning of the Church of God Reformation Movement last month as well as looking back at the start of CW Church. Let's continue both journeys and see how the Lord is moving today.

D.S. Warner had been a Christian 8 years.

He had been licensed to preach for six years. He had literally covered the whole of northwest Ohio preaching over 1200 sermons and seen over 600 come to know Jesus as their Savior. He had spent a part of 2 years in college. He had a wife who died after 4 and a half years of marriage and buried 4 children.

A year after his wife and three of his children died, he was called to labor as a missionary in the newly admitted state of Nebraska. Since Tampon's death, Brother Warner had been ministered to by the Keller family who had a daughter named Sarah who was 18 years old. She had shown him sympathy during his grieving and they agreed to exchange letters while he was in Nebraska.

Brother Warner arrived in Nebraska six years after it had become a state. He arrived with his Bible, a pony and buggy and a commitment to God. His ministry would be in five counties just south of the Platte River between the "cities" of Grand Island and Lincoln. The winters saw temperatures that were often 32 degrees below zero with many blizzards.

There were few roads, just trails. Most of the settlers didn't have homes, they had huts or dugouts that served as homes that were damp, cold, and dreary. Church of God folk were few in number, poor and scattered across the counties.

Warner organized congregations at Fairmount, Cropsy, Evergrew, and Anderson Community. He had fourteen preaching places that he traveled to by horse and buggy over trails and roads that were almost impossible.

He didn't have much financial help and sometimes built furniture to be able to buy food. He also suffered from chronic sinus headaches.

The correspondence between Sarah and Brother Warner led to Brother Warner suggesting that they marry. Sarah had totally committed her life to the Lord and thought there was no better way to serve Him than to hook up with Brother Warner in ministry.

Brother Warner came back to Upper Sandusky to marry Sarah and the ceremony was performed June 4, 1874. Warner wrote in his diary: "...I was early out to breathe the balmy air. At the rising of the sun there was a heavy fog which all disappeared in a very short time, leaving the morning bright and lovely. All nature seemed cheerful. Never have I heard the birds sing so sweet and melodious as this morn, in the woods over the way from Father Keller's brick farmer's home..."

6 weeks after they were married, they began their journey back to Nebraska. Sarah was pregnant and excited about their trip. She had hardly even been out of Ohio so she enjoyed seeing the new scenery and anticipating their ministry together in Nebraska. They spent late summer and early fall traveling from preaching point and living in the sod huts of their parishioners. They spent most of their time riding in their horse and buggy from congregation to congregation.

Can you imagine the life? I know that there would be some of you that probably would love that kind of lifestyle. It would definitely take faith in the Lord to carry you through. As we continue the story of Brother Warner, you will see how his faith continues to grow. How the Lord continues to bless him and moves in his life through all the trials that he endures.

"Building the Kingdom Together" CW Church 1976

In 1976 Columbus West Church of God extended a call to Pastor Ralph Watts to come and be the Sr. Pastor. Pastor Watts moved his family from Monroe City, Indiana where he had been pastor for 5 years.

Upon coming to CW Church, Pastor Watts led the congregation to reach out to the community surrounding the church building. There were several different ministry opportunities and the church grew. With the support of the congregation and the leadership of the time, the church reached out to the local schools, were very involved in the youth ministry of the Church of God in the state of Ohio, and were active at the state campgrounds in Marengo.

The youth group at the time grew to 40 plus. The church hired Pastor Allen Kirk as associate pastor to work with the youth group. Through both Pastor Watts and Pastor Allen, the youth group took on a very large task of going on a mission trip to Grand Cayman Island.

Now, remember that the group is close to 40 strong plus the leaders. That's a lot of airline tickets, lots of mouths to feed, and the concern of finding a place to sleep. How do we raise enough money to help fund the trip? Pastor Allen got to work on the project and came up with a solution. There was a local company who needed some help with small projects and sub-contracted the youth group to accomplish these tasks.

The whole congregation jumped in to help and business was opened here at the church. The fellowship hall was set up with tables, assembly lines, and lined with people to get the jobs finished in time for the Murfin Company. By the time the youth were to leave for the trip, the money was in the bank.

The youth group flew to Grand Cayman and worked on one of the church buildings on the island. They took off the metal roof so another group could come in and put a new one on. They laid the concrete walls for a new bathroom at the church. They ended up staying at the Christian School on the island. While there, they cleaned the school, did painting, and cleaned up the grounds.

The impact of this trip changed the hearts and lives of the youth group. Upon returning to the congregation, the youth group grew in their relationship with the Lord, but also became bolder in sharing their faith with their friends. This domino effect grew the group and opened up new opportunities for ministry.

It was during these early years of Pastor Watts' ministry that the church took serious the motto set by the Leadership of "Building the Kingdom Together." Not only did the youth group go onto the mission field, but during these early years, they were also some of the highest years for "Faith Promise," (Mission driven program).

During Pastor Watts' tenure at CW Church, the Lord blessed the congregation in growth numerically with attendances on Sunday well over 200 after 13 years. There are many men and women in ministry today because of the Lord working through the leadership of the church during these years. Today, we thank the Lord for His rich blessing and for this heritage and legacy. In the next issue we'll continue to look at the growth and the travels of the youth group during these 13 years.

Resurrection is Coming

Don't Forget

Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, when you will say, "I have no pleasure in them." Ecclesiastes 12:1

Near a village in India an elephant had just finished his bath. Then he filled his trunk with the dirtiest water he could find in the river and went directly down the road to the open window of a tailor's shop. SWOOSH! He blew the muddy water all over the tailor, for he had not forgotten the time when the tailor had pricked him with a needle as he playfully put his trunk in the window some weeks before. The elephant remembered.



Perhaps you intended to do your homework last night, but a friend came to play. Or maybe a good TV program came on and you forgot all about the lessons you planned to do. Sometimes we forget things our parents ask us to do, such as hanging up our clothes. Many adults make New Year's Day resolutions but find that before January 1 has passed they are already forgotten.

Nations have special days to remember soldiers, sailors and others who gave their lives for their country. Without these days, citizens might soon forget those who died to keep their country free.

Our Scripture verse tells us to "remember our Creator." This is a reminder we all need. We so easily forget the God who made all things because we are so busy with the things He made.

CHALLENGE: Look around. Open your eyes to the wonderful creation that surround you. Remember your Creator!!!!

—Pastor Watts

Spring is on its way!!!



Christmas and that home. In Valentine's one of the eggs Day are over there will be a which means little note one thing, we inviting that all will now be family to seeing Easter church eggs and candy Resurrection at the grocery Sunday. We store. This hope to reach year, CW families in our Church is community and doing spread the love something a of Jesus with a little bit little and and different than fun egg hunt. your typical You can help Easter egg by bringing in hunt. We are individually going to Egg wrapped candy Our Neighbors. for us to use to After church stuff eggs. On on March 26th, March 26th we will be please consider handing out taking a bag bags of eggs and help us with a sign and reach our an address to a community. home in the For more church information neighborhood contact Molly your job will Kraft. Let's be to take the reach out and bag and spread share the love eggs in the this year. front yard of

Journey To The Cross

We're so excited about the journey that we're going to be taking together as a congregation April 2-7th. This journey is a series of special worship services walking with Christ on His way to the cross. Our



departure time is Palm Sunday and we return on Resurrection Sunday in our Celebration Service. Each special service that week will begin at 7 p.m. and will feature special music and preaching by Pastor Rob and Pastor Watts. This is a week of services that you will NOT

want to miss. Mark your calendar, make plans, don't miss a single event. If you miss one service you will miss your blessing guaranteed.

Loyalty

Is standing with those I am serving in their time of need

How does the Canada goose illustrate Loyalty in responding to adversity?

The long migration flight finally terminated for the Canada geese. The nesting colony, flying in a large wedge, returned at last to the breeding grounds where they had been reared.

The colony rested with sentinels standing guard while others fed on grain and tender shoots of plants. Within a few weeks the serious task of nesting began. The paired geese searched for a suitable location for their nests.

One goose and gander, just three years old, chose an abandoned shoreline beaver lodge for their nesting site. The beaver lodge met the necessary requirements of proximity to the water and afforded protection from enemies. All considerations for safety had been taken into account—except one.

A nearby wooded area housed a raccoon family. Raccoons are a treacherous threat to all waterfowl. They raid nests indiscriminately for eggs and for newly-hatched chicks. But the geese had no way of knowing that any were so near. Oblivious to their danger, the pair heaped grass and sticks on top of the lodge as the nest took form.

After five eggs had been laid, the female began incubating them. But four weeks later, a deadly assailant skirted the abandoned lodge area during the early hours of a spring night. A mother raccoon, searching for food for her growing young, spotted the nest and approached it confidently.

The female was guarding the nest alone, but she quickly signaled her mate when she faced the murderous attacker. A vicious struggle began,

and the male flew immediately to her aide. As a result of their united defense, the female suffered severe bleeding and a broken wing, but they succeeded in driving the attacker away.

Undaunted by its initial failure, the persistent raccoon repeated its attack the next night. Again the geese valiantly defended their nest, and this time the female's remaining useful wing was broken.

On the third night their vigil was threatened by the determined raccoon as she again tried to make her way past the parent geese. In her display of loyalty the female lost her life, but because of her sacrifice she was able to preserve her nest. That morning, in the care of the remaining male, five downy goslings hatched and within hours they were enjoying the protection of the water.



Some characteristics of Canadian Geese

HOW WILL A "PAIRED" FEMALE GOOSE RESPOND TO AN INTRUDING MALE?

If a rival approaches, both geese will probably drive it away. Once the female has accepted a partner, they establish a relationship which is likely to last for a lifetime. This lifetime partnership is one explanation for the strong bond of loyalty which the Canada geese display.

HOW DO FEATHERS HELP HATCH EGGS?

The eggs must maintain a temperature of 100.4 degrees F to 101.3 degrees F. Down feathers were highly valued by the pioneers as excellent insulators of warmth. Their ability to lock in heat enables the parents to leave the nest for brief periods of time and attend to their own personal needs. With the down feathers under and around the eggs and the warm incubation patch gently

pressed against the top of them, the high temperature which the eggs require is ensured.

HOW DOES A GOOSE DEMONSTRATE LOYALTY TO A WOUNDED MATE?

If a goose is shot down by a hunter during the fall migration flight, its mate has been known to circle back, risking death itself, in order to help its partner. If one is wounded, the other will remain with it until it is healed. If the partner cannot be found the other will often stay behind to look for it, enduring the hardships of winter in that area in order to continue its search.

WHAT ANIMALS ARE A THREAT TO THE GOOSE?

Although mature geese have few natural enemies, they are very alert to predators which endanger their goslings. Those they fear the most are the raccoon and fox. Large fish or snapping turtles can attack from the water as the young goslings are learning to swim. The possibility of the destruction of the eggs from winged enemies such as the crow or raven requires constant vigilance.

HOW DEEP WOULD THE SNOW HAVE TO BE BEFORE A GOOSE WOULD LEAVE ITS NEST?

Several years ago in Alaska, an unseasonable late spring snowstorm came to a breeding ground of the Canada goose. The snow continued falling to a depth of three feet. Days later as the snow melted away, an amazing picture of protection was revealed. Scores of dead geese were still on their nests. They had chosen to suffocate rather than leave the eggs they were protecting.



What's So Good About Good Friday?

This year it is during the "Journey to the Cross" special service that begin Sunday, April 2nd—Palm Sunday and culminate on Resurrection Sunday.

I'd like to point to the Special Service on Friday, April 7th. This special service is one that while you can watch online, it would be best experienced in the Sanctuary. The Special Music and Drama of the Cross. We will revere the cross as an instrument of death, yet also the ultimate instrument of Salvation, Healing and Transformation into new life. We will observe Holy Communion as part of this Service as well. The Praise Team, Tech-Team, and Various Church Members have been working hard to make this a wonderful Night of Reflection and Preparation for Resurrection Sunday. Please plan to Attend, you will not be sorry you did!!!

Blessings, Dawn E. Watts



Taste and See

Taste and See has a new Time, Place and Format. Beginning Thursday, March 2nd, we will meet at CW Church in the CW Kid's Room @ 6 p.m. Notice the time change!!! Please Bring Your Own dinner to the meeting if you'd like to, as some will be coming straight from work. Bring something from home or stop for fast food if you like. We will meet 3 weeks at the church out of each month and the 4th week, we will take a field trip to a restaurant for a meal together. We will choose the locations together.

Dawn O'Keefe and I pray you will come to Taste and See what the Lord will do in our lives.



The Great Escape

Have you ever had those subtle temptations that have just lured you away from where you know you should be? You know the that the Lord has placed you in a certain place, but you see something just out of your reach, or maybe another believer doing something that is something that you THINK that you should be allowed to do, it's just beyond your reach. All you have to do is reach out to it. All you have to do is reach out and touch it. Maybe all you have to do is climb out the window, stretch a little, run the risk of falling, but it'll be worth it. Only, once you get out there, you're caught and here comes trouble to get your attention. Trouble to try and get you back into the place where you need to be. Take a look at this story.

It was one of those beautiful sunny warm late spring evenings when the kids love to be outside playing. We had recently moved about a mile out into the country to live temporarily with my Uncle Frankie and Aunt Blanche. My father had built this house for them, but recently had traded them this house for another house he had built on Green Street in Middletown. We had been living in the thriving metropolis of Middletown, Delaware—population of 1,200 if you counted all the dogs and cats. It was great for a six-year-old town boy to now live in the country.

We had recently put in a huge family garden. I remember hearing the putt-putt-putt of the tractor as my Uncle Frankie pulled into the driveway one evening earlier in the spring. He drove the tractor around to the back of the house. A portion of the property right in the back of the house was fenced in for my younger sister, Sharon, and younger brother, Jimmy. There was also a barn that my father had moved from town out to the country when we moved.

Uncle Frankie maneuvered the tractor and disc around the fence and barn and began driving in circles around the rest of the property. The tractor putt-putted round and round, the odor of its gas and oil mixing with the wonderful smell of freshly turned earth. My sister and baby brother watched from the safety of the fenced-in yard. Being older and more mature, I was standing next to the fence transfixed by that great old tractor going round an around preparing the ground for our garden.

My father had given me some small packets of radish, carrot and lettuce seeds earlier and told me I could plant them. When the tractor finally made a pass directly in front of me, I determined now as the time to plant my seeds. I pulled a packet of lettuce seed out of my blue jeans pocket and walked gingerly over that freshly tilled soils. As I was kneeling down bending over, depositing my precious seeds in the ground, the tractor a forgotten sound in the distance, I felt Daddy's hand on my shoulder. As I turned to look at him, he asked me what I was doing. I replied that I was planting my seeds. He pointed out that this was the family garden and Uncle Frankie wasn't finished working the soil yet. Sure enough, even as my father was speaking and his hand was guiding me from the precious seeds I had just planted back to the safety of the fence, Uncle Frankie came putt-putting back right over my newly planted seed.

My father then showed me an area right next to the fence where he helped me prepare the soil and plant my seeds. That had been several weeks ago and I had already harvested some of my radishes.

Tonight all of that was a distant memory. Tonight I had been banished to my room. I am sure that my sister, Sharon, had arranged my stay here for the evening. Younger sisters are like that. They are so good at getting older brothers in trouble and they are always getting away with murder. In fact, I could hear her playing right outside of my window, adding insult to injury since I couldn't go outside on such a great evening. I noticed that somehow she had maneuvered my tricycle up to my window. My tricycle was not like the little tricycles kids ride today. It was a big tricycle. In fact it was so big that if I lifted the screen window, I'll bet I could reach the seat of the tricycle with my foot. A really sly guy could go, play, and slip back in before his parents knew he was gone. I was a really sly guy. I could hear my parents talking out on the front steps. They were talking with Uncle Frankie and Aunt Blanche. They would probably be there for hours. Sharon was standing there next to the bike and it was so inviting.

I got the screen open and climbed out on the sill. I worked my feet around holding tightly to the sides of the window and carefully stretched my legs out until my toe reached the tricycle seat. I held on tightly hoping the bike wouldn't fall over as I gingerly touched the seat with my other foot. Carefully balancing both feet on the seat, I slowly slid my hands down the sides of the window to the sill, holding on for dear life until I was sure I could get down safely. I was free!!

As I carefully grabbed the handle bars and got the rest of the way down the tricycle, I suddenly realized Sharon was no longer standing by the tricycle. She was standing at the front corner of the house.

I was just wondering what she was doing out there when I thought she might be "telling on me" and then immediately dismissed that thought thinking that she wouldn't dare when she did indeed do the dastardly deed. "Mommy...Daddy...Ralphie is out of his room." What can I do? My first thought was to climb back up the tricycle and get back through the window to my room. Then I realized that it would take too long, and honestly, I might not be able to get back the way I came out anyway. What a great time to realize that. Then I thought, as Sharon continued to make her way around to the front of the house. "There are some bushes at the front of the house, the adults are talking to each other. Maybe they didn't see or hear Sharon, yet."

I jumped off the tricycle and raced toward the front of the house. Just as I got to the edge of the bush and was ready to grab my sister and pull her back to safety, there it was! My Daddy's hand grabbed my outstretched hand. Bypassing Sharon, his forward motion brought both of us around to face the tricycle sitting under my bedroom window. "What are you...how did you...Oh!" With that, he swung me around and began marching me across the front of the house to the front door. As his left hand was directing my steps, his right hand was applying some educational discipline where he thought it would do the most good. Through my tears, I couldn't help notice the smirk on my sister's face as we passed. My Uncle Frankie was standing and as I glanced in his direction I was sure I saw a twinkle in his blue eyes and a not so successful attempt at suppressing a grin. As we approached the steps my mother and Aunt Blanche both stood to let my father and I through. Were those grins on their faces too? When we finally reached my room and my father had given me instructions to get in my bed and stay there, I couldn't help but wonder how everyone got so much pleasure out of my discomfort.

A few seconds later I saw my window screen pulled down from the outside and heard my tricycle being moved elsewhere. Just before I fell off to sleep, I heard rounds of laughter coming from the front steps I wonder what that was all about?

By the way, I quickly learned that trying to escape my parent's discipline only made it worse when they caught on and caught up...and they always caught on and caught up.

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Though I don't remember the experiences myself, I have been told that when I was a toddler and misbehaved in church, my father would take me out to the front steps of the church to encourage my behavior. There were two sets of doors to go through in order to get from the Sanctuary to the front steps. There were two swinging wooden doors that led into a very small vestibule and then the two wooden front doors that led to the front steps. Both sets of doors had that glossy white finish to them. The story is told that my father would take me out through that first set of swinging doors, through the small vestibule, out the front door to the front steps where he would encourage my behavior. Then he would promptly turn and we would go back in the same way we came out. The story goes that as soon as my father's right hand hit the second set of doors to push them open for us to enter the Sanctuary, I would stop crying from his behavior encouragement and behave the rest of the service. I am sure that the first couple of times we went through that experience I did not stop at the second set of doors and my father promptly turned us around to make a second visit to the front steps. Being the quick learner that I am, I discerned my father's boundaries and avoided that immediate second trip to the behavior management steps at the front door of the church. What a shame that it took several more "primary" trips to avoid the behavior management steps altogether.

Now, I know that there are several different stories here that Pastor Watts has shared, but let me try and sum it all up.

You see in every situation, his Father was there with a loving hand to encourage him to head his life, his behavior, in a different direction. Whether it was out in the field and the safety from Uncle Frankie's tractor, to the "behavior" in worship service. (As a side note, I've been through similar doors in different churches. Only it wasn't always my Father taking me through those doors it was also my Mother. God can use them as well, lol.)

The Bible talks about the "Right Hand of God" being the strength of God. When I think about that and study the "Right Hand of God," I find that there's also discipline in that Hand. There's justice in that hand. God is Just. I've been hauled out, led out, pulled out through church doors by that right hand. Not only by my father, but also by my mother. You have the option to fight against it, or go with it. You have the option, the choice, to listen to the Lord and live within the boundaries that He has set up for your life (the Word of Truth) or to live outside and go your own way. That choice is the freedom that the Lord has given to us. There are times when the Lord puts us in our rooms of study, our rooms of prayer, our rooms of meditation.

However, when we are in the rooms, there are temptations lurking just outside the window. We can hear people doing things that we would rather be doing. Maybe even other believers who have vibrant ministries. Maybe those who have it altogether and we can't figure out why we don't, which is maybe why we're in our room seeking the Lord. There maybe times when they will be in the room and we'll be out "playing." However, that shouldn't matter to us. What should matter to us is our focus on what the Lord wants for us. Where the Lord is directing us. What does He want us to focus on. Is there new mercy we need, is there new grace that we need to tap into? Why are we there and not out in the yard playing? Are we needing to spend extra time in the Word? Are we needing to spend extra time on our knees in prayer? Do we need that extra time meditating on His Word? Don't be tempted to "climb out the window." Stay in the room. You will get caught, the Lord knows. Daddy and Mommy always knew when I was misbehaving. God our Heavenly Father knows everything. So, as you're climbing out that window, stretching to reach that tricycle, know that you're going to get caught. Know that there will be discipline to get you back where the Lord wants you to be. The only difference between the Heavenly Father and our story is that the choice is our whether we will accept and reject the "discipline."

I heard the other day that discipline from the Lord is just the Lord disciplining us from this world. Pastor Watts' Father, my Grandfather was disciplining the behavior out of my Father that was unacceptable in the house and in worship. That's what the Lord does. With His right hand He disciplines, while extending and reaching around with His left hand of mercy and grace and love to hold us tight as we go through the "discipline" of His justice. You see it's not just discipline, it's a mixture of love, grace and mercy that comes with the discipline, but that's a whole other chapter.

"Thank You, Lord, that as my Heavenly Father You keep a watchful eye on us at all times. You protect me from the tractor that's coming around the field. You 'encourage' my behavior in life when I slip out the window. Help me to see that discipline as You disciple me from this world and not as punishment. I know that and thank Christ for taking that punishment for me. There's no way I could've taken the weight of it or paid the price myself. I love You and thank You for Your love for me. In Jesus' Name, Amen."

-Pastor Watts

-Pastor Rob



Ministries

Do you know about our ministry opportunities? We'd like to share with you about each opportunity that's available to you throughout the week.

Each day Pastor Rob is live on our church FaceBook page for prayer at 12 noon. If you have a special prayer request, or a praise that we can share together, send it to his email, call the church office, or comment on the church FaceBook page and we'll join you in prayer or celebration for your request. His email is pastorrob@columbuswestchurch.com.

Not only is there a Daily Prayer time on FaceBook, but there is also a Daily Devotion that is emailed out to those who would like to receive it. These devotions are written by Pastor Rob and Pastor Ken Neff. To start receiving these devotions, all you need to do is email Pastor Rob and request to be added to the list. He will then add you and you will start receiving them the very next day.

There are many fellowship and worship opportunities throughout the week as well. There are three Home Churches that meet at several locations, on different days and at different times.



We have two that meet on Thursday. One meets at 5 p.m. in the church Library. It is called the "Rebuilder's Club." The other one that meets on Thursday is "Taste and See" and meets at 6 p.m. in C.W. Kid's ministry room at the church. The third Home Church meets at 2363 Alton Darby Creek Rd., in Hilliard. It is the "Eagle's Home Church." This Home Church starts at 6 p.m.

Our Home Churches all study the passage that Pastor Rob preaches each Sunday. We have the belief that we should all be disciples of the Word of God and should be growing together as a Body of Believers. There are times in these groups where the discussion of that passage takes the full amount of time in the group. Then there are times when it doesn't and the group will then talk about other studies that they bring that week. The main purpose is that we're all in the Word, developing relationships through fellowship, praying together, and ministering to each other when we're in need. We also want to reach out to the lost in our community that we know Pastor is unable to reach. There are people that each of us know that we do business with, live next to, work with, who are lost. It is our job as believers to reach them with the Good News of Jesus Christ. That's where we all step in as a Home Church. We set an environment that can make it comfortable for those individuals to come and hear the Good News. If you're not a part of a Home Church, pick one and get involved today.

We also want to invite all ladies to join the ladies of CW Church on Thursday mornings at 10 a.m. at Eagle's Nest for Bible Study. They are currently studying through the book of Ephesians, a study put together by Pastor Rob.

Again, this is great opportunity to gather for Bible Study, prayer, and worship.

On Wednesday we have "Table Talk" with our Elder Richard Neff, Bud McKinney, and Pastor Watts. This time of discussion is live-streamed on our FaceBook page and YouTube Page. However, you are more than welcome to join us in person here at the church. Pastor Watts is currently leading us through the Bible book by book. We're currently working through the book of Ruth and talking about Revival. This time of great discussion begins at 7 p.m.



On Saturday at noon there is a special Character Video posted on our FaceBook page that we encourage everyone to catch. These videos help us to develop into being "Good Characters" for the Lord.

That leaves us with the greatest time together each week, Sunday Morning Celebration Service. We love to gather for worship each week at 10:30 a.m. Yes we live-stream this service on FaceBook and YouTube, however, there is nothing like being a part of this celebration in person. God moves in the music, the prayer time, and the preaching of the Word. You can feel the Spirit in each and every time of worship. It is something to behold in person. As you've read in the other articles of this issue of the Grapevine we have many special times of worship coming up in the next month. These are going to be great times of worship. However, each week is a great time of celebration. We hope that you'll join us this Sunday for worship and celebrate with us as we lift up the name of Jesus.

As you can see, there are plenty opportunities for you to get involved in the ministry of CW Church. We hope that you will take full advantage of one or more of these opportunities. Should you have any questions about any of them, please feel free to call the church office at (614) 878-6808. Hope to see you around the church real soon.

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