

Pastoral REFLECTIONS

June 25, 2023

Hidden In Plain Sight

In his book, "Table Talk" Martin Luther wrote, "A hungry man is more thankful for his morsel than a rich man for his heavily laden table. A lonely woman in a nursing home will appreciate a visit more than a popular woman with a party thrown in her honor. A Russian who finally gets his copy of the Holy Scriptures after seventy-five years of state-imposed atheism is more thankful for his little book than we are for all the Christian books, magazines, and translations overflowing our shelves."

"Ralph Waldo Emerson observed that if the constellations (any of 88 groups of stars forming patterns) appeared only once in a thousand years, imagine what an exciting event it would be. But we barely give them a look because they're there every night."

"There is an imaginative story about a day when the sun did not rise. Six o'clock came, and there was no sign of dawn. At seven o'clock, there was still no ray of light. At noon, it was as black as midnight. No birds sang, and only the hoot of an owl broke the silence. Then came the long black hours of the afternoon. Finally, evening arrived, but no one slept that night. Some wept, and some sang their hands in anguish. Every church was thronged with people on their knees. Thus, they remained the whole night through. After that long night of terror and agony, millions of eager, tear-streaked faces were turned toward the East. When the sky began to grow red and the sun rose, there was a loud shout of joy. Millions of lips said, "Bless the Lord, O my soul!" because the sun had risen after one day of darkness."

The very consistency of God's blessings sometimes seem to dull our gratitude. We need to change this pattern because Satan uses it to keep us heavy-laden (Luke 8:14). The wonderful thing about the mercies of God is that they are fresh every morning and new every evening. God wants us to be people who exhibit thankfulness in proper proportion to the gifts and blessings we've received. "...in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit..." (1 Thessalonians 5:18-19). "But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you. Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:31-32)

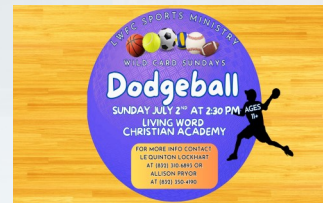
"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you." (Philippians 4:8-9)



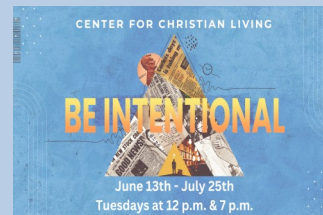
UPCOMING Events



CONTEMPORARY SERVICE KICK BACK
SUNDAY, JUNE 25TH AT 1:00 PM
Kick back and fellowship after Contemporary Service today at 1:00 p.m. for food, fun, games, music & more! For more information contact **Keron Brown** at keron.brown@lwfellowshipchurch.org



DODGEBALL WITH SPORTS MINISTRY
Join us **Sunday, July 2nd 2:30—4:30 p.m.** for Dodgeball with the LWFC Sports Ministry at Living Word Christian Academy at 6601 Antoine Dr. Houston, TX 77091. For more information contact **Le'Quinton Lockhart** at (832) 310-6893 or **Allison Pryor** at (832) 350-4190.



CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING
Don't miss Center For Christian Living every **Tuesday at 12 p.m. & 7 p.m.** starting until July 25th. This reformatted CFCL will focus on topics related to the theme for the year, which is "BE INTENTIONAL" There will be classes for women, men, 55+ adults, adults, young adults, youth, and kids. For more information visit www.lwfellowshipchurch.org/center-christian-living



WOMEN OF GRACE MINISTRY
BE INTENTIONAL DISCUSSIONS
Ladies, it's that time again for the Women of Grace Ministry for our BE Intentional Discussion Series Saturday, July 1, 2023 from 9:00 a.m. - 11 a.m. For more information contact **Eleanor Wilson** at wog77088@gmail.com



L.E.G.I.T. YOUNG ADULT CONFERENCE
Connect with the L.E.G.I.T. Young Adult Ministry for the Be Intentional Conference Saturday, July 8, 2023 12 p.m. - 8 p.m. This Conference will feature and afternoon and evening of fun, food, fellowship, BE Intentional workshops, speakers, dinner provided, Exalt the King, a Drama Ministry presentation, and much more! Register at <https://bit.ly/LEGITConference2023>



ORDER OF WORSHIP

Announcements

Communion

Visitor's Welcome

Worship In Giving

Offering boxes are located at all perimeters under crosses

Special Music

"For Me"

Psalms 118:5-9

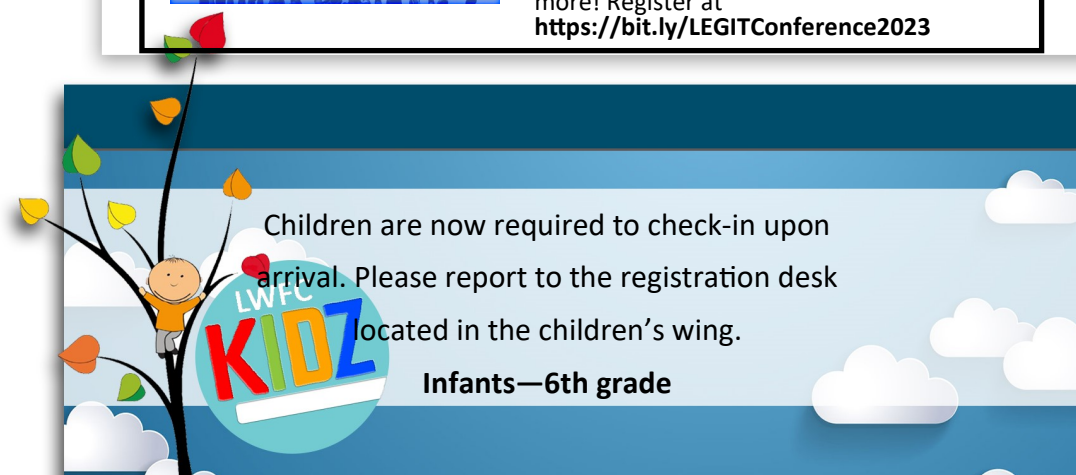
Dr. Pierre Cannings

Click "Sermon Notes" on the Website

Call to Discipleship

Please remain seated at this time

Benediction



For Me
Psalm 118:5-9

I. Make the Call v. 5

- a. I called
 - i. The Lord –
 1. is generally regarded as a contracted form of the divine name. In this psalm it was inspired by the formula used in Exod 15:2 at v 14.
 - ii. From my Distress Ps 18:6; 86:7; 120:1
 1. Distress -extreme anxiety, sorrow, or pain
 2. It also may refer to the strong emotional response that one experiences when pressed externally by enemies or internally by wrong decisions or passions
 3. the great trials due, as the context suggests, to enemies; out of a deep experience of agony.—/ *called upon Yah*], in prayer for relief
- b. He Answered
 - i. Set me in a Large Place
 1. broad place,” as “the wide, open spaces” of the desert.
 2. The king bears witness before the congregation to Yahweh’s liberating help in answer to prayer in a time of military crisis. The beautiful metaphor of being given room to move and develop after the constraint of disorientation also occurs in Pss 4:2 (1); 18:20, 36 (19, 37); 31:9 (8); 119:45.
 3. The Lord took him from his tight space (*mēšar*, “distress,” but also a restricting, claustrophobic experience, as in Ps 116:3; Lam 1:3) to a broad or “spacious” place of freedom (*merḥab*, from *rḥb*, “be wide”).
 4. but here it refers to Yahweh’s celestial abode. The subsequent contrast between the psalmist’s confined existence on earth and the freedom of heaven recalls the sequence of ideas in Pss 4:2, *baššār hirḥabtā lî*, “in distress set me at large,” and 18:7–8.
 5. Since the psalmist was in immediate danger of death (vss. 10–14, 17–18), *mēšar* should designate a place from which he called for divine help, much as in Ps 61:3, where the poet pictures himself on the edge of the abyss The motif of Sheol as a place of confinement (see third Note on Ps 88:9 on Sheol as Prison)

II. For Me vs. 6-7

- a. Lord is for Me
 - i. For Me- Job 19:27; Ps 56:9; Heb 13:6
 - ii. I will not Fear
 1. Fear - has a tendency to either immobilize men or seriously affect their activity. This is especially true of the spiritually uncommitted).
 2. On the basis of this he reminded the people (vv. 6–9), that since **the Lord** was **with** him, he need not fear what others might do to him (cf. Heb. 13:6). And because the Lord was his **Helper** (cf. Ps. 27:9) he could be sure of **triumph**. Therefore the people too could be sure that **it is** better to turn **to the Lord than to trust in** human resources’
 3. He is convinced the Lord is for him so he will not be afraid (cf. Pss 23:4; 46:1–2[2–3]). The Lord’s protection amply surpasses the power of any foe because anyone who opposes him is only human (cf. Ps 56:11[12]).
 4. “The fear of men diminishes in proportion to consciousness of the greatness of God.” Human threats are no match for divine protection (cf. Rom 8:31).
 - iii. What can man do to me?
 1. Man - Recourse to human allies and counselors comes a poor second to a practical faith in Yahweh (contrast 2 Kgs 16:5–7; Isa 7:1–13). The sequence in vv.8–9 stresses the polarity between Yahweh and human beings by indicating that no humans, not even leaders, are reliable
 2. The poet sharpens the contrast between God and man by placing *yahweh* at the beginning of the verse and *’ādām* at the end.
- b. The Lord is For Me at Ps 104:8.
 - i. Those who Help Me
 1. Help – to stand by someone
 2. The psalmist views the Lord’s support as not just theoretical or moral but tangible and practical as the Lord is with him as his “helper” (cf. Heb 13:6).
 - ii. Look with Satisfaction.
 1. Satisfaction-
 2. Those who Hate Me
 - a. Hate

III. Take Refuge vs. 8-9

- a. Better to Take Refuge
 - i. Refuge - to cover, hide, orig. meaning to hide oneself
 1. Protection from danger or distress
 2. God is depicted numerous times as the “refuge” of his people, most often in the Psalms (e.g., Ps. 7:1 [M¹T 2]; 46:1 [M²T 2]; 59:16 [M³T 17]; 94:2; Jer. 16:19). It is definite dangers, sometimes named, that cause God’s people to take refuge in him. These are most often enemies (e.g., Ps. 17:7; 37:40), but also the oppression suffered by the poor (Ps. 14:6; Isa. 25:4; cf. Ruth 2:12). To seek refuge in something other than God, such as wealth, is foolhardy (Ps. 52:7 [M⁴T 9]).
- b. No trust in man
 1. Trust- reliance, security, cause for hope
 - a. the psalmist affirms that even the best human resources fall far short of what the Lord does for his people (cf. 2 Kgs 16:5–7; Isa 7:1–13). Whom we choose to trust has profound consequences.
 - b. The *ot* considers these sources of false security in some detail in order to show by contrast the excellence of hope in God. The list includes man (Ps 118:8)
 - c. Better to Take Refuge
 - i. Trust in Princes.
 1. Princes - whether king or commoner
 2. Even human princes, perhaps here referring to foreign military alliances as in Isaiah 7 (cf. the references to nations in v. 10), cannot provide the safety the Lord does. The best of human help is paltry compared to what the Lord provides, so the true source of security is the Lord alone



New Members Orientation 2023

CLASSES ARE 8AM-12PM EACH WEEK

SUNDAY JULY 2 & 9
SUNDAY AUGUST 6 & 13
SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 3 & 10
SUNDAY OCTOBER 1 & 8
SUNDAY NOVEMBER 5 & 12
NO CLASSES IN DECEMBER

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON BECOMING A MEMBER CONTACT PASTOR DUANE LAWRENCE AT DLAWRENCE@LWFELLOWSHIPCHURCH.ORG



PRAYER REQUESTS

- Grieving:** Pastor Cannings & family, Bryan Grand & family, Pastor Lawrence & family, Wayne Jackson & family, Nord Bullock & family, Michelle Lewis & family, Moniqua Glasper & family, Clifford Jackson Jr, & family, Susie Farley & family, Vincent Robertson & family, Tonya Hudson & Rashaud Hudson & family, and Sylvester Jackson & family.
- Health and Healing:** Lurlean Lane, Florence Wiggins, Retha Amos, Margaret Baptiste, Cici Sharpe, Eunice Johnson, Jeffrey McQueen, Eric White, Ella James, Pat Crawford, Lisa Roberts, Birdie Williams, Jon Heard, Lakesia Davis, Rutha Patrick, Betty Goode, Latifah Brown, Tanisha Collins, Eric Prichett, Rufus Hadnot, Pat James, Kevin Carey, Lori Lee, Nikisha Doyle, Jessie Austin, Sherri Love, Elizabeth Clark, Clara Williams, Betty Cunningham, Dorothy Price, Kathryn Ford-Cheatham, Anthony Thomas, Beverly Austin, Joshua Williams, Ruby Hunter, Yvette Ford, Elizabeth Bean, Diane Ford, Patrice Terell, Patsy Gatterson, Rita Hughes, and Calvin Wilson.

