

Pastoral REFLECTIONS

March 24, 2024

The Free Gift



“A certain atheistic barber was conversing with a minister as they rode through the slums of a large city. The Unbeliever said, “If there is a loving God, how can He permit all this poverty, suffering, and violence among these people? Why doesn’t He save them from all of this?”

Just then, a disheveled homeless man crossed the street. He was unshaven and filthy, with long, scraggly hair hanging down his neck. The minister pointed to him and said, “You are a barber and claim to be a good one, so why do you allow that man to go unkept and unshaven?” “Why, why...” The barber stuttered, “he never gave me a chance to fix him up.” “Exactly,” said the minister. “Men are what they are because they reject God’s help.”

God has done more. He allows us to hear the gospel on radio and television and has established churches all over the city. Even though many people hear Him, they do not accept His free gift.

“In the year 1829, a Philadelphia man named George Wilson robbed the U.S. Mail, killing someone in the process. Wilson was arrested, brought to trial, found guilty, and sentenced to hanging. Some friends intervened on his behalf and finally obtained a pardon for him from President Andrew Jackson. But, when George Wilson was informed of this, he refused to accept the pardon!

The sheriff was unwilling to enact the sentence – for how could he hang a pardoned man? An appeal was sent to President Jackson. The perplexed President turned to the United States Supreme Court to decide the case. Chief Justice Marshall ruled that a pardon is a piece of paper, the value of which depends on its acceptance by the person implicated. It is hardly to be supposed that a person under the sentence of death would refuse to accept a pardon, but if refused, it is then not a pardon. George Wilson must be hung. So, George Wilson was executed, although his pardon lay on the sheriff’s desk. So, some of us also reject the gift of salvation by refusing the pardon offered (Quoted from Illustrations for Biblical Preaching by Richard Green).

Christ’s death paid the price for all of our sins, and His resurrection provides us victory over the power of sin. The gift is available to all because all are pardoned. It is a free gift available to all who accept Christ and what He has provided. “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, {it is} the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:8-10)

UPCOMING Events



DONATE EASTER EGGS FILLED WITH CANDY
Please donate candy-filled Easter eggs this week for the Good News Fest. Donate to the Children’s Wing. Please fill the eggs with candy and the team will add the scriptures! For more information contact Sylvia Edwards at sedwards@lwfellowshipchurch.org

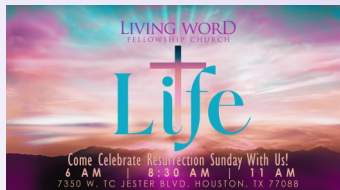


Easter Weekend 2024

FRIDAY, MARCH 29TH—GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE
6:00 P.M.
LWFC Drama Ministry & Creative Jams
Present “Forgiveness”



SATURDAY, MARCH 30TH—GOOD NEWS FEST
11 A.M.—2 P.M.
Good News Fest—Bring the entire family and invite friends and neighbors for Fun, Food, Games, and more for the Entire Family! There will be an Easter Egg Hunt for the Kids!



SUNDAY, MARCH 31ST—RESURRECTION SUNDAY
Services will be held at:
Sunrise Service—6 A.M.
Praise And Worship Service —8:30 A.M.
Contemporary Service —11 A.M.



MEN’S PURITY DISCUSSIONS
Living Word Men, join us for our 2024 Purity Discussions. You don’t want to miss this opportunity to engage in thought-provoking conversations and walk through *Every Man’s Battle* by Stephen Arterburn and Fred Stoeker. Register at <https://bit.ly/MensPurity> or, for more information contact Jeffrey Allen at Jeffrey.allen@lwfellowshipchurch.org.



LWCA/ABC SUMMER CAMP
The Living Word Christian Academy and ABC Word Academy have a Christian-based, fun-filled summer camp available for ages 5—12 years-old. The campers will have a dynamic summer with robotics, arts & crafts, cooking classes, karate and much, much more! Register on the events page of the website or call (281) 260-7402



ORDER OF WORSHIP

Announcements

Communion

Worship In Giving

Offering boxes are located at all perimeters under crosses

Special Music

“His Passion”

John 10:16-18

Click “Sermon Notes” on the Website

Call to Discipleship

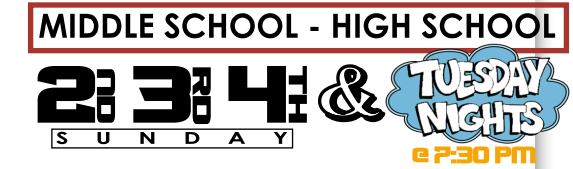
Please remain seated at this time

Visitor’s Welcome

Benediction

Children are now required to check-in upon arrival. Please report to the registration desk located in the children’s wing.

Infants—6th grade



His Passion

John 10:16-18

A. For the Lost (v. 16):

1. The word 'to have' means 'to hold on to or cling to a certain condition.' Christ does not ever plan to let go of us (10:27-30; 14:16-17; Ephesians 1:13-14).
2. By saying other sheep, Christ also claims ownership. He already knows who will come to Him and claims them beforehand (Ephesians 1:4-5). "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:12-14; NASU)
3. Christ, by His death and resurrection, is the only person who gently leads these Gentiles to God. "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day" (John 6:44; NASU). This is because until Christ draws us to God, we have no hope of having a relationship with God (Ephesians 2:11-22), which means even our prayers cannot be answered (John 9:31).
4. Notice Christ says, 'My voice.' There were many voices teaching in Christ's day, but sheep only respond to the voice of their shepherd, even when many shepherds call sheep out of the sheep pen in Christ's day.
5. The New Testament church will be Christ's possession, where everyone is a son of God, so there is no difference between "Jew, Gentile, bond or free" (Galatians 3:26-29). There will be one Spirit, one Christ, and one God working for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:4-8) of His body, the church (Ephesians 1:22-23).

B. Much Pain and Humiliation, our Gain (vs. 17-18):

1. No matter how much Christ may seem neglected by everything on Calvary's cross, God will always be His Father. He is life so He can pick up again (John 11:25).
2. He willingly bore not just the outer pain but also the intense inner pain and distress He felt (The Garden of Gethsemane; Matthew 26:36-46).
3. Because Christ, in His own power, overcame the power of death and got up from the grave, He will never have to experience another Calvary.
4. Christ continuously humbled Himself "on my own initiative," meaning that no one had the power or authority to crucify Christ unless He willfully chose to allow them (Philippians 2:6-11).
5. He repeatedly makes it clear that He willfully, decisively, as displayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, had complete control over what would happen before, during, and after the cross.
6. Even though Christ gets to make up His own mind, the order came from someone He has a very personal relationship with: "MY Father." It is still His decision, but turning it down is tough for him.
7. The love of God is the heart of Christ; we must treasure the gift.
8. When we see everything God and Christ did for us, becoming a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1), or denying ourselves while bearing our cross (Luke 14:26-27; Matthew 11:28-30 – a load that is easier than what the world can do to us) is a transformational, sometimes painful process (Philippians 3:1- 11) that comes nowhere close to what Christ did for us. It should be a joy as we would do for everyone who blessed our lives.



PRAYER REQUESTS

Grieving: Janie Buchanan & family, Kathleen Franklin & family, Andrew Gibson Jr. & family, Mary Bender & family, Cloteil Bolden & family, and Mignette Dorsey & family.

Health and Healing: Lurlean Lane, Florence Wiggins, Retha Amos, Margaret Baptiste, Cici Sharpe, Eunice Johnson, Jeffrey McQueen, Eric White, Pat Crawford, Birdie Williams, Tanisha Collins, Jon Heard, Rutha Patrick, Kevin Carey, Sherri Love, Elizabeth Clarke, Clara Williams, Kathryn Ford-Cheatham, Anthony Thomas, Beverly Austin, Joshua Williams, Ruby Hunter, Elizabeth Bean, Patsy Gatterson, Joyce Newsome, Arleatha Housley, Patrina Johnson, Elvis Anderson, H.D. House, Jr., and Angelique Hudson

P A L M S U N D A Y

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