

# The Good News

Newsletter - September 2014

A Publication of University Baptist Church, Hattiesburg, MS

**The purpose of University Baptist Church is, through guidance of the Holy Spirit, to assemble and worship God, to love and encourage one another, to proclaim the gospel of Christ, to minister to all people, and to live in peace.**

**In a world where difficult issues remain, University Baptist Church continues its commitment to be a church where “there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male or female, for (we) are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28)**



## *WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY*

Kat Spangler, our Associate Minister at UBC and leader of our Prison Ministry Support Group and Editor of "Good News", asked me to write an article about World Communion Sunday for this edition. I'm happy to do that, yet I have to be honest. My original thoughts were two-fold: (1) this is the September issue, and (2) the primary focus group of this newsletter is prisoners. Why write a month ahead of time? And why write to a group who will not be able to participate in any formal way in World Communion Sunday?

First, just a word concerning what World Communion Sunday is about. The first Sunday in October has become for multitudes of churches around the world a time to affirm the unity of the Body of Christ as they gather at the table of the Lord to eat the bread and drink from the cup, representing the body and blood of Christ. Different groups of course have different liturgies that they use for Communion. But all of them partake, remembering the Lord's death until he comes again, just as he commanded. It makes sense to write about it and prepare for it in September so it won't be something for which we are spiritually unprepared.

But what about you who are prisoners, who cannot walk or ride to a nice church house someplace on any Sunday, including World Communion Sunday? Here are some thoughts that might be helpful. You may have other and better ideas and we would love to hear from you if you do. But for starters, think about the following:

1. Remember the original "Lord's Supper" was instituted around a table with Jesus and the apostles. They had just finished their meal, which of course was the important Jewish celebration of Passover. That was on the schedule--that's why they had gathered as far as the apostles knew. After the meal, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them saying, "Take eat, this is my body." And then he took the cup, blessed it, and passed it to them saying, "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." It was profoundly simple!

2. Some of you will eat around tables in the prison dining area on World Communion Sunday, perhaps with some Christian friends--or perhaps not. But you will eat and drink. Some of you are not in the general population and will, as usual, be eating alone. But you are not alone--truly you are not! As you eat and drink, although you do not have the church-blessed or minister-blessed bread and wine, with what you do have to eat and drink, remember the Lord's death until he comes. And remember too that you are a part of a World Wide Communion. You, as believers, are as surely members of the Body of Christ as anybody sitting in the most beautiful cathedral in the world.

I promise you this, brothers and sisters. When I receive the elements and partake of the Lord's Supper at UBC that morning, I will be communing with my Lord who gave his life for me, and I will be remembering and communing with you too! I take the scriptural writer's words with utter seriousness: "Remember those in prison, as though in prison with them; and those who are ill-treated, since you also are in the body" (Hebrews 13:3).

-Dick Allison

## *High Road or Low Road*

Most of our life we have often heard of “taking the high road” when confronted with some sort of moral question. This should not be confused with “getting on our high horse.” Doing that could, in and of itself, be a morality question. Our Lord and savior walked many literal roads when he spent his time amongst us. Of course, the two roads I write of in this piece are not, in the literal sense, roadways we physically walk upon. Instead, I use the term metaphorically. With that in mind, one can assume that “high” would mean the morally correct choice to make and “low” to be the opposite. We could equate high with the Christian path and low with all the rest.

If life’s problems were all so clearly defined, then as Christians, our choices would be easy to make. We can only wish that everything was that simple. Talk a look at some of the ten commandments and try to reach a quick and simple decision on what to do in certain situations. Thou shalt not kill (or do murder as some scholars translate it). Sounds really easy, doesn’t it? Murder is usually defined as the taking of a life without effect of the law. With that in mind, if you are faced with a situation where taking one or more lives may, not certainly, save other lives where is the “high road” located or what is it? Look no further than the current Israeli—Palestinian conflict boiling as I write this. Both sides claim self-defense. Both sides, in their prevailing religious beliefs, supposedly honor Moses and the commandments given to him by our Lord, no matter what name we call him. It’s easy to say we should pray and seek spiritual guidance in all decisions. But when rockets are flying and bombs falling from the sky, reading and praying over the Koran, the Torah, or the Holy Bible doesn’t seem like the best option at the moment.

When I was serving in another questionable, from a moral point of view, war in Vietnam, many soldiers bought jackets with the following printed on them: “When I die I know I am going to heaven because I’ve spent my time in Hell.” ... though provoking. Many of those soldiers, including me, thought of our cause as the “high road” and communism as the “low road.” We killed others, and were killed in return, all because of some nebulous idea that our views and beliefs were superior to the other side.

To sum it up, as Christians or just plain good citizens of the world, we must be very careful about taking the “high road” in our moral/spiritual view. A literal high road usually has many places where a wrong turn or slippery surface can lead to a long and deadly fall. So do moral high roads.

-Roger T.

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## *When Our Storm Comes*

Mark 4:37, *And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.*

We as believers know just how hard it gets when storms come into our lives. And if we don’t watch ourselves we will end up just like the disciples did when they were faced with a storm in their lives and were afraid. But that moment they called on Jesus and asked him to save them. And when we are faced with storms we can call on Jesus to save us from our storms as well. But the devil does not want us to be saved from our storms; he wants us to sink further down into our storms and be destroyed by them. We need to tell everyone that we meet that Jesus will save them from their storms before they start to sink further down into them. And we can believe and trust that Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior will calm our storms down just like he did the disciples in their storm. Whenever the storm comes into our lives we know that we have a Savior who will be with us through them and will make them go away. Jesus is the one that will deliver us from any storm that comes in our path. But we need to be careful and watch out for the devil because he will tell us that there is no way out of our storms and that Jesus will never deliver us from them because he doesn’t love us, and that we don’t need Jesus to help us, but that we can make it through the storms by ourselves. But we know that Jesus is the only way out of the storms that we face each and every day. We as believers need to try to tell everyone to show God’s love for our brothers and sisters. We should know that our storms don’t last always or forever; they will soon go away. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen and Amen.

Your Brother In Christ,  
Stephen

\*Please note that this piece was written in May 2001. Stephen has suffered multiple strokes and has a bleeding aneurysm. I am pleased to say that he remains our brother in the faith. I am happy we have several of his writings pre-stroke. -Roger

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good News readers,

“Worship His Majesty” - greetings within love and fellowship! I always want to be within Christ like love and avoid any appearances of selfish pride or boastfulness growing toward Christian maturity. And not to be defiling anyways spiritually by word or within expressions!

We make our way on the journey of life, it is easy to forget places, people and events that have been important to us along the way! Time passes, yesterday fades and we become obsessed with the concerns of the moment. This happens, we can also forget just how good God has been to us. For so long!! Never is this remembrance more needed than when the heartaches of life crowd in on us! When we're feeling overwhelmed and forgotten, it's important to recall all that He has done for us! In this remembering we can find the encouragement to trust Him in the present and for the future... Psalm 103:2.

We present our point of view calmly and reasonably. It all seems so cogent and convincing to us. But unless you're very persuasive a person is not going to change. And not spiritually leading! Often we are the first ones to lead ourselves astray! We often let many thoughts come our way every day that truly do resemble sheep—cloaked wolves—knowing if we listen to these wolfish thoughts they'll lead us to bad fruits: selfishness, sadness, isolation, and sin. It can be tough and hard to look inside ourselves, Jesus wants us to examine our thoughts and actions! By His word...

It's because he wants us to be free to hear and to live by voice of the Holy Spirit! Not to show us how bad we are ... or could have been misled! If we look in Deuteronomy 8:2 and 5—”to humble you and test you to know what was in your heart. Know in your heart that as a mom chastens her son so the Lord your God chastens you.

Psalm 68:19 tells us: bless be the Lord who daily looks us with benefits. Needs to remember that we must be serving the Lord with all humility with many tears and trials. Acts 20: 19 In the last days Acts 20:30: among yourselves men will rise up speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after themselves. People in our lives may sometimes suggest we do what seems most gratifying or practical in that moment! But there is a difference between worldly and spiritual wisdom.

I'm not sure how many may or may not deal with these above thoughts. I must continually pray for holiness from the Lord and bring myself into submission! These are my reasons for writing and sharing all this above! I always remember these promises for help. Psalm 31:23—For the Lord preserves the faithful and truly repays the proud. 24— Be of good courage and he shall strengthen your heart. All you who hope in the Lord. Psalm 32:7—hiding place to preserve from trouble. John 16: 33—that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer for I have overcome the world. John 17:5-17—Jesus intercessory prayer for us...

God bless and keep everyone! Isaiah 26:3,4

Always Within Love and Fellowship,

Roger T.

*Elohim*  
*Praise the Lord*

Oh Lord, empty me dry and fill me up by Thine hand

Oh Abba, Father,  
Be Thou my joy;  
Fill my soul from Thine mighty, stretched-out arm

Be Thou all to me, and more, for ever and ever more.  
Be it Thy will to fill with overflowing fruit;  
To fill me with what Thou art, Thy very self.

May my heart's desire be fullness from Thee;  
To make me over, as Thy Son for ever.

Oh Lord, make me to be Thine;  
I beseech Thee to fill my soul  
Which thirsts for Thee,  
For Thine hand of love to fill me

In Jesus' Name  
A prisoner of Jesus Christ  
Grace and peace be to all. Amen.

Glory be to Elohim.

-David  
Parchman, MS

*A Moment*

When I awake in the early morning, I feel tremendously blessed just to be given the opportunity to enjoy a moment of solemn calm. I live for the moment every day because it's a time where I can get away from all the craziness and the insane happenings that go on in prison. It's a moment where I can be one with God and I can search my soul for some real purpose. Sometimes I have to pinch myself because I'm amazed at the elation I've found in such a sad and horrible place as prison. My relationship with God has helped me to see beyond these prison walls and to enjoy each moment despite where I am.

My grandfather, God rest his soul, told me a long time ago that you have to enjoy every opportunity that you have to live life because you can't get back yesterday. So, while everyone else is sleeping and during the quiet of dawn, I'm on bended knees enjoying a moment and being one with God.

As today comes to a close, I hope and pray that Almighty God blesses me with the opportunity to enjoy another moment with Him tomorrow. After all, He is the one who spoiled me with such a privilege. I pray that each of you can enjoy the same one on one time with the Almighty and create a special moment with Him as well.

God Bless You All Always!  
Justin U.

*A Moment*

*I find peace within when the silence slices thin,  
Throughout the early mornings as dawn slowly creeps in.*

*Just a moment is precious to clear my roaming mind,  
I can hear His voice clearly; strong, gentle and kind.*

*As I walk peacefully through the valley without any fear,  
Just a moment in each day reminds me that He's always near.*

*Always conscious of His love and His saving grace,  
He's the answer to my life being in a better place.*

*Justin U.*

## *Like An Eagle*

The picture across from this piece is a drawing I did for my cousin Chase' high school graduation. This piece was inspired by that picture, that picture was inspired by my cousin Chase, and my cousin Chase is inspired by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I love you Cuz, Congratulations! Skies the limit!

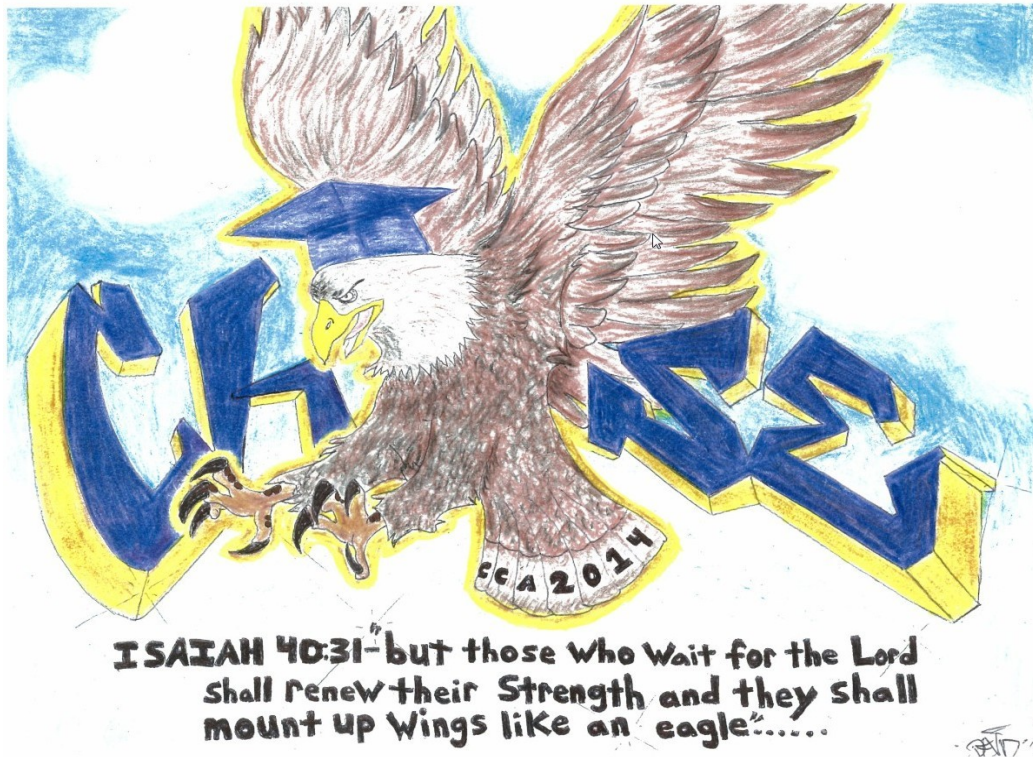
Isaiah 40:29-31

He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

It may be news to some, but the Lord has great purpose for all Christians. This should not surprise those of us who make loving the Lord and our brothers and sisters our number one priority, and who know that all we are and will be depends on Him. A relationship like this requires dedication, obedience, and a generous spirit, and a desire for the best in life for our brothers, as we give our everything to the Lord each and every day. This is what being Christlike means. When others see you, and hear you they can see Christ. Being Christlike also means living life to the fullest, but it also means hard work. In Isaiah 40:29-31 we are shown the awareness of this truth. This is what these verses mean to me. For some reason when I read V. 29 I think of Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" Our Lord and Savior doesn't expect us to do things by ourselves that only He can do by working through us. He gives us the will, strength and resources we need to do His will. When I read V.30 I not only think about young people I also think about all the people, myself included, who try to serve the Lord in their own strength rather than seeking to be strengthened by faith, through His word. This is a daily struggle, but I encourage you to seek Him daily and revitalize that lifeline that gives us our strength. Lastly, V.31 is by far my favorite. This is better than State Farm, Allstate, Geico....., talk about security! No matter what tragedies and difficulties we will face in life, and oh yes they will come. Through faith in Jesus Christ, the Lord renews our strength, restoring and revitalizing us so that we can fulfill our calling. John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life ". God loves his children and He can use people just like you and me to do amazing things for Him. Remember, whenever you become weak, whenever you fail, or get discouraged, seek the Lord, and He will renew your strength : So you can soar like an Eagle.

Song of the Month: 5ive, "Freedom"

By: Devin B.



By: Devin B.

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### **Some suggested topics for the Newsletter**

**Thank you for the continued letters, thoughts, and poems you send in to us each month. We want to know more about who you all are. Story seems to be one of the best ways to get to know who someone really is and so we encourage you all to look at some of these suggested topics to see if any inspiration comes as we seek community with one another. Please know that these are not to restrict your writing; you are certainly welcome to choose to write on another topic or in another form. They are simply some ideas as all writers need somewhere to start. Thank you for your continued contributions to this piece and happy writing!**

- **Choose a story or a character from the Bible and tell us how it speaks to your life or how you connect to it.**
- **Make up a short story**
- **Tell us about a character you've read in a book or watched in a movie that inspires you and why.**
- **Tell us your favorite song. What is it about this song that draws you to it?**
- **Write a song or send in a piece of original artwork.**