

The Good News

Newsletter - January 2019

A publication of University Baptist Church, Hattiesburg, MS

The purpose of University Baptist Church is, through guidance of 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, UBC is committed to its core values of being inclusive, inquisitive, and community minded.

The Love of God

John 3:16, For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

God sat high on His throne above all things in heaven and on earth – Psalm 113:4-5, 138:6

As He sat above, He looked down on earth to see such a flawed people and He had righteousness anger- Psalm 7:11

He wanted to send His wrath down upon the earth but His love said, “Let me go down Father to such a flawed people so that I can raise them up in your favor” - John 10:17-18

And so Jesus stepped down from His throne in the heavens – John 13:3; 16: 27-28

He stepped down below the angels – Ps. 8:5 Heb 2:7,9

He stepped down below the heavens – John 6:32-33, 38

He stepped down below the stars, the sun, the moon, and the clouds – Eph. 4:9

He stepped down into the womb of a woman – Is. 7:14, Matt. 1:18, 23; Luke 1: 30-31, 35

He stepped down from the womb of a woman and placed His feet on the earth and walked among mankind – Matt. 4:18-20, 23-25, 9:9, Luke 13: 33-35

He stepped down into death's grasp so that He could rise and raise up all believers in Him – John 3:17, Luke 9:56, Rom. 5:15-17; 6:3-4; 8:34; 1 Cor. 15:20-21; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; 1 John 4:14

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, it doesn't matter how many times you fall, just remember to get up cause Jesus came down a number of times out of love to give us all the strength to rise up. - Ps.43:7-9; Is. 57:15; Col. 1: 10-14

Justin U.

The Love of God

My friend, the Lord Almighty, is Jesus
who loves me
Deep in the heavens above sitting
high in glory

Thy gracious love taking the heavy burdens
from the bosoms of every nation
Showering His love on His
lost creation

All the people on earth that come before
Him and rejoice
Singing loud; singing to the Lord with
a cheerful voice

(continued)

When I call on Christ my Savior, my
heart with joy leaps
The Son that shines upon me protect me like
the "Good Shepard" does His sheep

He came down from the cross at Calvary and
gave His life for me
God's matchless love -
how vast! how free!

Justin U.

The Blizzards of Life

(Exodus 13:17-22) 17 When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near. For God said, "Lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt." 18 But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle. 19 Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for Joseph had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones with you from here." 20 And they moved on from Succoth and encamped at Etham, on the edge of the wilderness. 21 And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. 22 The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.

(Psalms 119:105) Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Have any of you readers ever been in a blizzard? I'm not talking about a heavy snow storm, but a whiteout sound producing end of the world feeling blizzard. I've been through more than my share and during two of them I was caught out in the open. The first was as I was traveling to Idaho from Kansas. I was on the interstate driving through Wyoming when the storm of the year suddenly hit. I can't recall ever being that scared and feeling so small before. I was driving at a snail's pace because I couldn't tell where the edge of the highway ended and the ditch started. Pulling over wasn't an option for many reasons, so I white-knuckled along. The only car on the highway, and feeling like I was the only person left in the world. All of a sudden the interior of the car lit up, and from out of nowhere a giant snowplow sand truck eased by me with lights flashing yellow and leaving a path of safety. Which was filled in very quickly in it's wake. I immediately fell in behind it, and the driver led me to an exit that I couldn't see into a motel parking lot that seemed to appear out of nowhere. I was close to death that day and had it not been for the light of the truck to guide me, I wouldn't have survived the blizzard.

The second time I was caught in a blizzard was strange in it's timing. I was parked in a field with my girlfriend enjoying a sunny winter day. There wasn't a bit of snow on the ground or a cloud in the sky. I was actually wearing shorts and a t-shirt that day. It was so nice out that we ended up taking a nap in the car. We awoke to the distinct voice of a blizzard. If you've ever been in one, you'll know the voice that I speak of, it is hallow, icy and scary all on it's own. After waking up we immediately put on more clothes and coats which were inadequate for the circumstance and crawled out of the already buried car. My companion began to walk toward the farmstead located about 200 yards away. The problem is the blizzard was so disorienting that she headed in the wrong direction. One way was to safety and the other was an endless walk toward certain death. Had I not grown up on this property and been familiar with every square foot of it, we would have been done for. As it was, I had to grab her and point her in the right direction, because she was certain her bearings and path to safety were correct. The incidents remind me of our walk with God. There are so many times that we can't see past the tip of our noses because of the storms of life. If we rely on our own understanding and compass

reading we are headed for a crash in a ditch or bound to wonder till we perish from exposure. The Israelites were led through the wilderness to safety with God going before them, night and day. Even in the midst of life's storms they never had to fear because their path forward was well lit. Nothing has changed. We know the way forward because God has given us His Son, the Word, as a lamp for our feet and a light for our path. We have nothing to fear from the blizzards and the storms in this life if we take it one step at a time and never take our eyes off of Jesus. May He guide you and keep you safe. Have a wonderful Christ-filled 2019.

Peace is only in Jesus,
Roger Gillett

Hebrews 12:15-17

15 See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; 16 that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. 17 For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears. (ESV)

We're faced with decisions every day. Some are easy. Should I eat breakfast or sleep in? What should I wear today? Should I take the scenic route or the interstate? What chores can wait till tomorrow? Other decisions are tougher. What do I say to my friend who had a family member pass away? What church is best for me? Who should I ask out on a date? Many choices we make are trivial, but others can be life-changers. Usually we make better decisions as we get older and hopefully wiser. This is because we're able to look back at the bad choices, learn from them, and make a better choice next time.

Paul warned the Hebrews not to be like Esau. Why did he chose Esau, out of all the people mentioned in the Old Testament? He was someone we could all relate to. Esau had a chance to chose between right now and what was right. He was faced with a choice between something good right now, or something wonderful later.

No one wants to look back on their life with regret, and no one wants to wait until it's too late change your mind. That's what happened to Esau. He made what seemed like a simple choice to satisfy his hunger after an exhausting hunting trip. He stumbled on his brother Jacob who'd just finished making a stew that must've smelled divine. He was so hungry, in fact, that he didn't need any convincing from Jacob to swear over his birthright for a bowl of soup. The birthright wasn't just money, but also the rights and

privileges usually left to the first born son of a family in those days. History has witnessed many young people not investing in their future until it's too late, and Esau was no exception. He was still a young man, and wasn't looking ahead. Genesis 25 contains the full story, but verse 34 states Esau despised his birthright. Many scholars believe this sentence actually states that Esau disregarded it. He didn't respect his birthright or his inheritance any more than a bowl of soup.

This is the attitude of the world today. The devil is working hard to distract lost souls from what's important, and keep them focused on making themselves happy now. It's easy to whip out a credit card and buy something shiny and new, but the bill will come due. We're tempted to eat too much, even though we know we might get sick. People are faced with decisions to satisfy some form of lust – whether for their flesh, money, power, fame, or anything else that doesn't last. Even if we eat until we say we'll never eat again, we'll be hungry soon enough. We can quench our thirst for now, but we'll need water again. Do you have a hunger or thirst inside that won't go away, no matter what you've tried? Food, drugs, money, sex – none of these things last. Jesus offered living water to the woman at the well. Though she didn't understand the full extent of what He was saying, her heart longed to be filled in a way only the Holy Spirit can do, and she accepted.

To receive the blessing from his father, Jacob needed to appear worthy. He was smooth skinned, while Esau was hairy. Jacob covered his exposed skin with goat hair, and to his father, he appeared to be deserving, even though he wasn't. We don't deserve heaven, but our sin is covered by the blood of Jesus in the same way Jacob's smooth skin was. When those who've accepted Jesus as their savior stand before God, He sees us as spotless and sinless. Our debt of sin is paid in full. We only need to make the right choice to accept it.

Jacob received the birthright from Issac, and later his blessing. This would pass on to his children for generations, until Christ comes back one day. This cost Jacob almost nothing – simply a bowl of soup. Salvation for us is offered at just the cost of faith. We only need to trust in Jesus as our savior, admit we are sinners, and turn from our ways. Let Him change your life and your heart. Don't live your life for yourself, waiting until it's too late to change. Paul wrote in verse 17 about Esau looking back with regret and repentance because this was a very important story to the Jews. He knew they would all be familiar with the wrong choice he made. At the same time, he's warning us not to chose temporary happiness over an eternity with Jesus. The gospel speaks over and over about turning away from our old ways of pleasing ourselves and choosing to serve Jesus. Paul doesn't want anyone to stand before the judgment throne desperately trying to repent when it's too late. Jesus calls us to live like He did, loving and serving others while on this earth, and the eternal reward is more than we can imagine. The things we think are important today won't seem important any more when we're standing before God. Don't spend eternity regretting your decision. Chose to answer the call of the Holy Spirit. 2 Corinthians 6:2 states, For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation. Don't harden your heart and shut Him out. If He's calling today, invite Him in. Today is the day of salvation. Don't put off this choice. You're never too young or too old. Today is the day. Don't wait. Don't make the wrong choice like Esau did. Don't chose right now. Make the right choice for eternity. Chose Jesus