

# The FAITH BUILDER

THIS ISSUE:  
15th Anniversary!

Mar/Apr  
2008

2008  
2007  
2006  
2005  
2004



"Dear friends, **BUILD** yourselves up in your most holy **FAITH...**" -Jude 1:20

## Happy Birthday, Hope Church

Pastor Paul Manwiller

**H**appy Birthday to You! You, Hope Community Church, are turning fifteen years old. Our church was born on April 11, 1993. On the next page you can read some details of how the church began. I think you will enjoy reading about how we reached out to people and invited them to our first worship service.

### BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

In this article, I want to invite you to a birthday celebration. Every year we have a birthday party for our church. We usually invite some guests and have a special worship service on the Sunday that falls near the date of our first worship service in 1993. Some of these birthday Sundays have included testimonies, videos, balloons, banners, and birthday cake.

On the tenth birthday we had a dinner party. We used the fellowship hall at Calvary Baptist Church in Canton. We asked many former members to come back to the area and celebrate with us. It was like a family reunion.

Now it's time for the fifteenth birthday. We are planning another special dinner and church reunion. The dinner will be on a Saturday evening, April 12. We have a great location. It will be at the Evangelical Friends Church, at the corner of Bemis Road and Tuttle Hill Road in Ypsilanti Township. There's a fellowship hall for dinner, a sanctuary for worship, and a children's

playground outside for families to visit. Fellowship begins at 5:00 p.m. The dinner is at 6:00, with worship, testimonies, and prayer to follow at 7:00.

### HOPE CHURCH REUNION

This birthday celebration will be a reunion in the sense that we are inviting Hope Church members from the past to come and share with us. I will be excited to hear from former members about what is happening in their lives today.

The celebration will spill into Sunday, of course. There will be more testimonies and unique times of prayer during the Sunday morning worship service in Ypsilanti. We will be inviting people who need to know Jesus to come and worship with us that Sunday. It will be a lovely opportunity for outreach to our community.

The birthday celebration will conclude with a baptism service on Sunday evening at the Livonia location. We have some young believers who desire to be baptized. This will make a joyful conclusion to the 15th birthday celebration.

I hope you will mark these dates on your calendar and plan to come. Birthday Dinner: Saturday evening, April 12. Birthday Worship service: Sunday morning, April 13. Baptism Service: Sunday evening, April 13. See you there! ☩

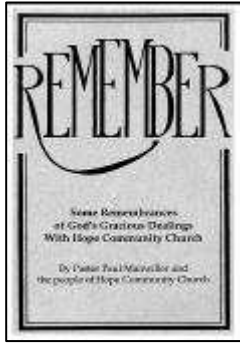
### ▼ Birthday Invitation From 1993



*You Are Invited To Our  
Birthday Service*  
*please join us as we begin worship services at  
Hope Community Church*  
**Easter Sunday**  
**April 11, 9:30 a.m.**  
Meeting at the Radisson on the Lake  
Hotel/Conference Center.  
I-94, Exit 183, Ypsilanti.  
For further information call 721-8190

*Come as you are . . . You'll be loved*

This excerpt, from chapter three of a book called *Remember*, tells about how we invited people to come to Hope Church's original worship service.



It was time to start inviting people to come to the "birthday" service on Easter Sunday, April 11, 1993. We believed God had given us a plan for outreach. It was a program called "The Phone's For You", which involved

phoning 20,000 people and inviting them to church!

### THE PHONE'S FOR YOU

Here's how it worked. We used a reverse directory—one that lists people in order of street address rather than alphabetically by last name. This allowed us to use the phone to cover a neighborhood, street by street. We would place a call and ask whoever answered two simple questions. First we asked, "Are you currently actively involved in a local

church?" If the person said yes, we explained that we really wanted to reach the UNCHURCHED. We told them we wished God's blessings on them. We thanked them for their time. That was it.

If they answered no, we followed up with the second question, "Are you interested in receiving some information in the mail about a new, nondenominational church that is starting in this area?" When we asked this, some people politely declined. Some suddenly "remembered" a church they were already involved with. Some said yes, they would be willing to receive something. Very, very few were negative or angry. Most people seemed surprised and pleased that we were not trying to sell them anything.

Everyone who requested more information received a series of five mailings, each piece containing news about the new church or a friendly reminder about the approaching birthday service on April 11. For two months, from February until April, Nora and I poured our lives into this project—phoning twelve hours a day and then, after Nora was in bed, I would work into the wee hours of the morning preparing the thousands of pieces of mail to send out. I hardly slept.

I was grateful for any help I could get. Nora was the champion caller; I think she

made more calls than everyone else put together. Wayne arranged for us to use his company's office on certain weeknights. The office had four separate phone lines, allowing a group of our friends and family to make phone calls together. My brother, Roger, put in some hours making long-distance calls from Montana to help the effort.

It was during these early months of 1993 that God sent us a wonderful dose of encouragement in the form of Kerry Dennis. She was an acquaintance of Karl who was, like him, new in the area. She came to one of our Sunday services, and even though there were more people on the worship team than in the congregation, she discerned that "the Spirit of God is here" and she stayed with us. She could see with eyes of faith. It was Kerry who once said with great earnestness, "This church has lots of people. We just haven't met them yet."

Right away Nora and I invited Kerry over for dinner. During the meal I started recruiting Kerry for the phone outreach project. Nora started literally kicking me under the table. She was afraid I would scare Kerry away! But Kerry simply got very wide, almost delighted eyes and said that when she was a teenager she liked nothing so much as making prank phone calls to strangers. She said she would LOVE to turn this "skill" into



## In This Issue...

15th Anniversary!  
THIS ISSUE

Volume 5, Number 2: March & April 2008

### 1 Happy Birthday, Hope Church

The upcoming reunion event | Paul Manwiler

### 2 Excerpt From Remember

The story of Hope's first birthday service | Paul Manwiler

### 4 Facing Trials with Joy

What the Bible has to say about trials in our lives | Mark Berry

### 5 Love and Respect

Excerpts from the ladies' online Bible study | Debbie Boyer, Tracey Pitcher, and Yvonne Berry

### 6 People of Hope

New elder, new addresses, missions, and a baby dedication

### 7 Photos of Hope

An eclectic bunch of serious and silly pictures

### 10 Bible Reading Guide

For March & April 2008 | Pastor Paul Manwiler

## The FAITH BUILDER

"Dear friends, BUILD yourselves up in your most holy FAITH" (Jude 1:20)

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something useful for the Lord. Kerry became a faithful phone caller, Sunday school teacher, baby-sitter, and friend of my family.

### SPIRITUAL MAPPING

Our experience with phone calling opened my eyes to the spiritual need in the area. So many people had no church, and among those who did have a "church" were members of cults, Eastern religions, and even a witches coven. Sometimes people ask why we need new churches when there are already "so many churches—one on every corner". The answer is that as the population is growing, there are now fewer churches PER CAPITA than our nation has ever had. If you don't believe that there are large numbers of lost people living right nearby, try phoning 20,000 neighbors and see what they say.

Through the phoning, we also saw some patterns begin to emerge. The people in one subdivision would be spiritually open; the people in the next would not be. On one street there would be many Christians, and those who were not Christians would ask to hear more about the church. On another street, the Christians sounded cold or indifferent, and their unsaved neighbors were all "not interested". I remember phoning my way through a trailer park. Every person I talked to refused information about the church. Amazingly, they almost all used the same words—even the little children!

I believe we were seeing the effect of spiritual influences (angelic and demonic) over different regions. There really are powers and principalities in this dark world (Eph 6:12). We found that it was profitable to give extra attention to streets that were receptive. We would place a second or third call to homes that we had not yet contacted on that street. Through the phone calling, we were able to gain a basis for some "Spiritual mapping," and we were able to pray for each region (Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Belleville, Canton) with much more insight.

### THE BIRTHDAY SERVICE

Finally the big day arrived. Easter Sunday, April 11, 1993. The birthday of the

church. I was a little nervous. This was the moment we had been building toward for a long time. We had prayed by name for every single person who had been willing to receive information about the church. And now I was going to go and meet the people—strangers—that God was giving to our church. I practiced the sermon an extra time at home the night before. I arrived at church early the next morning and prayed. Then I watched as new faces came into the auditorium. Over 100 people were in attendance that morning.

Nora, Karl and Carrie led the worship. I preached about the resurrection of Jesus Christ based on John 20:19-31. It was, after all, Easter Sunday. I had two points: A. The Proof of the Resurrection and B. What the Resurrection Proves. In the bulletin I wrote "Today a church is born! After months of praying and preparation, we are finally ready. Today marks the birth of Hope Community Church. We are eager to see the great things God will do in our church today, and in the months and years to come."

Immediately after the service a woman approached me and asked for prayer. She introduced herself as Jan Overall. She said her husband, John, was not with her because he was ill. In fact, he was waiting for the results of medical tests. We prayed together for John Overall that morning.

### THE SPIRITUAL FRUIT

My encounter with Jan set into motion a series of remarkable events. Her husband was found to be suffering from an advanced form of untreatable cancer. He never made it to church. But I spoke with him about faith in Christ, and he received Jesus as Savior. He soon had a radiance, a peace with God. Four months later, in August, he died. I preached his funeral, the very first Hope Church funeral. John's granddaughter, Shontaya, lived with John and Jan. Shontaya saw the transformation in her grandfather's life. She heard his testimony as he face death. Shontaya chose to put her faith in Jesus, too. She was the first to be baptized at Hope Church. She was also the first teenager to come to our church, the first of many teens and baptisms to follow.

All this stemmed from Jan's attendance at the birthday service. In her remembrance worksheet, Jan says she was:

"Invited to the first official service by someone going through the phone list and asking if we had a church home. The call was followed up by a brilliant green card that came in the mail. I remember coming home from work and seeing that card on the kitchen counter.

I remember reading "Come as you are, you'll be loved" as I looked at the Hope Community Church "swoosh" (—). I felt this incredible sense of peace flow through my body. My curiosity was piqued and I knew I had to go to that first service. Of course the rest is history. Thank you God for creating Hope Church for me and my family."

Rob and Susan Rotz also came to the birthday service. They remember:

"Original phone calling—flyers—talked to Nora. Searching for a church, needed one for Easter Sunday so we decided to try this new church. The night before I picked up a book and read the first chapter. That first Easter Sunday Pastor Paul preached almost exactly word for word what I had read in the book. Seemed a clear sign that we had found our church. Music good, too!"

Most of the folks who came that Sunday did not return. Some of them were merely curious about a new church but not really serious about finding a church home. Some who came were wary about churches due to past negative experiences; they quickly found some fault with Hope and moved on. Some of the visitors that Sunday seemed well-intentioned, but did not follow through. After the birthday service one man gushed about the service and preaching. He told me very emphatically, "You have just made a friend for life!" I never saw him again.

But I know that our outreach efforts had a positive effect, even on those who never got involved in our church. One woman told us she did not want to wait until the birthday service to get back into church. She immediately visited a nearby Baptist Church. Her husband went with her, he got saved, and they joined that church. What a victory for Jesus! ☩



# Facing Trials with Joy

Mark Berry

*“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”* (James 1:2-4)

## JOY IN THE MIDDLE NAME

Our church has recently been blessed with the births of a few precious little girls who have been given the middle name “Joy.” Let’s see... Sarah Joy Bell, Abigail Joy Kalis, Susanna Joy David, Chaya Joy Mewha. In recognition of this trend, it seems fitting that we think a bit about that exciting three-letter word: JOY! Our hearts burn in desire for it. When we’ve got it, there’s nothing like it. Joy makes life worth living. But before we go any further, let’s make a turn right here and pursue this topic down an unexpected path that leads through... trials.

What is your initial reaction when you experience pain? How do you respond when life gets real hard, real quick? With sincere, complete joy? Though this is God’s requirement, it often isn’t our “natural” reaction. The reason is because we like ourselves. In God’s original plan, this characteristic would have been a perfect part of uncorrupted man’s character. But like many other things, we’ve taken it too far. It has gone from “I like myself” to “I demand complete fulfillment and satisfaction NOW!”

## AVOIDING PAIN

Each one of us has been born with an intense self-love and a single-minded self-focus ingrained in our flesh. We want what seems good and pleasing to us, and we don’t want what seems bad and displeasing to us.

Most of us grow out of the blatant tantrum stage that makes our selfishness so transparent, but it is still there... just manifesting itself in other ways. For the sake of love, we will work hard to hold on to what we find good and pleasing, and sometimes twice as hard to avoid the bad and displeasing. To compound our self-love, the world affirms us. From a worldly perspective, it seems common sense that hard, painful, difficult and trying situations should be avoided, and if one is found to be in such a predicament, that one should attempt to extract oneself as speedily as possible.

If we are unable to successfully avoid pain, the “natural” response is often to find someone to blame. We will blame ourselves for not foreseeing the looming badness and avoiding it. Or, more likely, we will blame others, often those closest to us. At times, God is the recipient of the blame. To summarize the way so many of us think:

1. Trials are BAD!
2. When a trial happens, it is SOMEONE’S FAULT (and I should be ANGRY about it)!

## JOY IN THE MIDDLE OF SUFFERING

To think this way, though it seems so natural, is really to think in opposition to the truth of God’s word. God calls us to be renewed by the transforming of our minds. He wants us to think differently. He wants us to believe Him, and when we find that our way of thinking has not lined up with His viewpoint, we should gladly be willing to change. He says that we should respond to trials with pure joy, and so as not to leave us utterly confused, He explains why. Here are some of my thoughts on the previously mentioned verses from the book of James, and how they should shape our view of trials:

1. Trials will happen regardless of how careful we are to avoid them.
2. Trials, in the end, are good for us.
3. Because of this, our response to trials should be JOY!

Trials will happen regardless of how careful we are to avoid them. In a perfect world, as God originally intended our world to be, we wouldn’t face hardships. Instead, our bodies would be perfectly healthy. Our thoughts would be perfectly happy. Our relationships would be perfectly ideal. We would continually experience an unfading feeling of perfect satisfaction, and our circumstances would perfectly complement our joy.

The unfortunate fact, though, is that we live in a fallen world. We expect that life is supposed to go well, but rarely does it unfold in an ideal way. Health is often difficult to obtain,

relationships can tend towards brokenness, and difficult circumstances lead to lives of grumbling. Those who depend on living problem-free for their happiness, satisfaction and contentment will most often lack the joy that they desire.

## THE PROBLEM OF PAIN

There are basically two reasons for the fact that we have problems: sin and the devil. God gave a perfect world to man, and man sinned, contaminating the world and unknowingly handing authority over this world to God’s enemy. “We know... that the whole world is under the control of the evil one” (I John 5:19). As a result of man’s rebellion and the devil’s hunger for power, bad stuff happens. A common misconception is that God is the author of this bad stuff. To the contrary, the truth is that we, mankind, have stepped out from under God’s blessings and have chosen our own path, and that “the evil one” has compounded the problem with his evil schemes. Mankind is truly reaping what it has sown.

Sin has horrible consequences, and we don’t have to look far to see the evidence. I’m not attempting to say that every trial that you experience is the direct consequence of your own personal sin (though we do eat the bitter fruit of our own sin), but that the entire world and everyone in it is suffering the consequences of sin in general and the devil’s influence.

I know that this sounds depressing, and I’m hoping not to sound too pessimistic, but it is simply vain to strive for the man-made, problem-free easy life. It’s a temptation to reach for, but it’s not realistic. Jesus Himself said, “Each day has enough trouble of its own” (Matthew 6:34) and, “In this world you will have trouble”



(John 16:33). Instead of striving against what God says is inevitable, let's concede to the life that we can't avoid. We will face trials. The better we can internalize this truth, the better we'll be able to take joy in what God says He will do in our lives through these trials!

### GOD'S PURPOSE FOR PAIN

Trials, in the end, are good for us. Have you ever heard someone ask, "What good could possibly come out of this?" That person is probably feeling hopeless because he or she can't imagine any external positive result. God often isn't as concerned with the external results as with the internal results. He wants to do a good work in us. He doesn't just want to bless us externally while we remain immature, shallow and unstable internally. He wants us to develop character. Why? So that we can stand the test of time. "...He who stands firm to the end will be saved" (Mark 13:13).

God's agenda is eternal. He sees past the immediate moment. He plans on spending eternity with us, and He doesn't want us to give up before we get there. He wants us to persevere. So here is where trials come in. We develop perseverance when our faith is tested, and our faith is tested through trials. To say it in reverse, trials test our faith, and when our faith passes the test, we have gained perseverance. In a way, the cliché "Whatever doesn't kill me only makes me stronger" has some truth to it. When we have successfully stood for God through a trial, we are more fit to finish the race that He has called us to.

God knows that life is hard, but isn't He wonderful to take the hardships that we face and make something good out of them? If we indeed persevere, we will be thanking Him forever for the good work that He did in our lives. "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

### TURNING TRIALS INTO JOY

Because of this, our response to trials should be JOY! If we look at trials from man's perspective, we will see only the pain. If we look at trials from God's perspective, we will see the purpose. We can have joy knowing that God is doing a good work in us, for eternity's sake. And as an added bonus, we can have joy knowing that God will give us the strength to endure trials as we look to him. As God's people, let's purpose ourselves to endure trials with JOY! And if any of us forgets, we'll let Sarah, Abigail, Susanna and Chaya remind us. ☩

# Love and Respect

*The three testimonies in this article are drawn from the Hope Church women's online discussion forum.*

*Every week, a new question is posted. The questions deal with topics like how to make Sundays special for your family, or how to cope with illness in your home. A recent question asked about books that have had the greatest spiritual impact on your life.*

*Many women responded to a question about how, in practical ways, to show honor and respect for your husband. Debbie, Tracey, and Yvonne agreed to let us publish their answers. If you want to participate in the online discussion, go to: [www.BibleStudy.HopeChurch.info](http://www.BibleStudy.HopeChurch.info).*

### DEBBIE BOYER

"Respect is something I still have so much to learn about, and so many bad habits to break. Some years ago William and I read *Love and Respect* by the Eggerichs. (Anyone can borrow it if you want.) The theme of this book is that just as women crave unconditional love from their husbands, so the husbands crave unconditional respect from their wives. Just as I want to be loved whether or not I am lovable at that moment, so my husband needs to be respected whether or not he is behaving respectably right then.



Just as love is a choice of the will, and not just a feeling, so respect can be a choice of my will. This really raises the standard, because it means I can behave respectfully all the time. And I have discovered that I must think respectful thoughts in order to behave respectfully. Otherwise scorn sneaks out in random comments and tones of voice. I can't hide it. I've learned that I must think and speak respectfully toward William when he is not around, if I want to be in the habit of doing so when he is around.

Some things that motivate me to keep working on respect: 1) The Bible commands it of wives; 2) This is what is necessary to make our marriage work; 3) Our children and other people will not respect William if I do not; 4) If my children learn disrespect from me, it will harm all their adult relationships; 5) Disrespect hurts William.

I still slip up in this area too often. It humbles me that I cannot fix this on my own—I have to keep on going back to the Lord for strength." ☩

### TRACEY PITCHER



"I thought I had this one down—no problem... UNTIL I read *Created To Be His Helpmeet* by Debi Pearl. Now I know that I have a long, long, long (you get the point) way to go in the area of submission. This is something I pray about and work on DAILY.

Here are a few practical ways I show honor, love and respect:

- I always greet him at the door when he comes home from work. The kids and I (the dog too) race to get hugs.
- Toys are typically everywhere all day, but we try hard to have them picked up by the time Don comes home from work.
- I stopped nagging him about all the areas of his life that I think he should change—now I pray! (By the way, not surprisingly God has done a much better job at changing him than I ever did).
- I thank him often for working so hard so that I may stay at home.

That's all I can think of for now. I look forward to reading more replies on this subject. It is an area I truly desire growth." ☩



### YVONNE BERRY

"To show Mark I love him, I try to make sure I look pleasing to him. This is mainly done with a loving smile. The days when I am debilitated with a migraine, I try to remember to still smile, even if my eyes are squinty from light sensitivity. Mark says it makes all the difference in the world when I am being sweet like this, even if he has to do a lot of my work for me during these physical trials." ☩

# PEOPLE OF HOPE Community Church

## NEW ADDRESSES:

Brion and Lyndsay Arbenowske have moved to Plymouth. Their current address is 189 North Mill Street #1, Plymouth Michigan, 48170. You may reach them by phone at 248-787-1531.

Rick and Jenny Routson have purchased a new home, which they will move into on March 1. Their new address is 1384 Mesa, Ypsilanti, Michigan, 48197. ☩

**NEW ELDER:** On January 26, our church had its annual business meeting. We met on a Saturday evening at the Summit on the Park in Canton. During the meeting Wayde Hoppe introduced a nominee for the position of elder for our church. The nominee, Shaun Kalis, came to faith in Christ through the ministry of Hope

Church. He is married to Rachel and is the father of two children. After questions and prayer, the church members voted to approve the nomination. Shaun is now serving as an elder on a provisional basis during a time of training. ☩

## BABY DEDICATION:



Pastor Paul and Wayde Hoppe led the dedication service. Wouter's parents, who live in Texas, were present at the dedication. Amy's mother and nephew were also present. ☩

During our Sunday morning worship service, February 10, Adeline Verkerk was dedicated to the Lord by her parents, Wouter and Amy Verkerk.

**MISSIONS:** During the business meeting, we had an extended time of corporate prayer for several areas of missions: The future ministry of the Thuemmel family; God's guidance for Leah Ransom concerning missions outreach in Northern Ireland; the short-term mission trips scheduled for this summer in Asia, Romania, and Mexico; and the outreach to students on local college campuses. On

Saturday, February 2, we had a special missions meeting with Bill and Pam Marinelli as our guests. Pastor Bill is the organizer of the short-term missions trip to Mexico. He presented an overview of the mission work and invited people to be part of the work of constructing a church building and helping a congregation get established in Victoria, Mexico. Many from our church are interested in participating. Daniel Jones, who will be going on the trip, will help coordinate our church volunteers. ☩

## FUR RENDEZVOUS:

This year's talent show was held on Friday evening, February 22, at the Plymouth Cultural Center. Rick Routson served as emcee. The talent show included songs by Larry Moore, the Hoppe family, the Lula Family, and a piano duet with Alice Berry and Peter Manwiller. There were some Bible memory presentations by the Ypsilanti Sunday School students and the Bell an Mewha children. We saw skits by five hope groups. Josh Hunt did yo-yo tricks. Shauna Garrison did a comedy routine. There were several well-made videos. And Robyn Mehwa presented a gospel testimony. The overall emphasis was evangelism, and the audience included many guests who needed to hear about God's power to save though our Savior, Jesus. Pictures of the talent show are on page 9. ☩

## FOR KIDS



# GUESS WHO I AM



**N**ow I admit, I am an unusual character in the Bible. In fact, I might not have actually existed. Jesus talked about me in the book of Luke. Whether He was speaking in parable or literally, you can decide for yourself. I will say this though: if it was a parable, then it is the only one in which Jesus gives His character a name (that's why you'll be able to guess my name when you're done reading this). Anyway, back to my story: I was a very poor man in my life on earth. On top of that I had a skin disease which caused sores to cover my entire body, and which left me unable to work. So I would sit at the gate of a certain rich man in town. He dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. I would long to eat whatever might fall from his table. At night the dogs would come and lick my wounds. It was a very hard life. And then I died. Angels carried me into Heaven, and I got to be with Abraham and everybody else there. It was great! But then the day came when that rich man, who was not a believer, died too. From hell, he saw me from across the chasm which separated us. He shouted to Abraham, who was standing next to me, "Father Abraham, have pity on me and send [my name] to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire." Abraham explained that was not possible. The rich man replied, "Let him warn [my brothers], so that they will not also come to this place of torment." But Abraham said that even if someone rose from the dead they would not believe it. And that's the end of my account in the Bible. I'll give you one other clue though: I share the same name with a guy who did rise from the dead. Can you guess who I am? ☩

# "Go ye into all the world..."

## Short-Term



### Mexico Missions Planning Meeting



## Long-Term

### God's Direction in My Life

- Salvation "People Need Jesus"
- Calling "Ministry Overseas"
- Preparation
- The Testimony (Leviticus 3:5-6)
- Realization



Sherwood  
Pope

### The Path to Missions

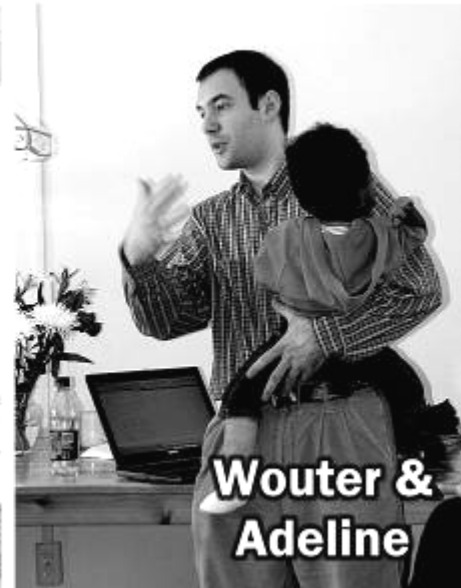
- I. Know the Power of the Gospel
  - A. The power of the Gospel in my Life
  - B. The Gospel and God's Power for Salvation



Karl  
Thuemmel

## Adoption

### Parents Meeting About Adoption



Wouter &  
Adeline



## Broomball / Swordball



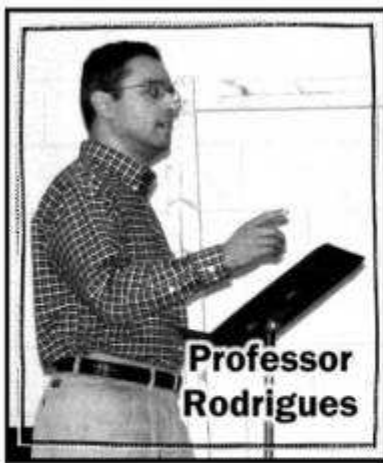
## Men's Soccer League



# Short-term Delay Means Long-term Relief

Sanctuary Renovation at Riverside Park Church of God

# Fur Rondy!



**Professor Rodrigues**



**Sunday School Memory Verses**



**Stand-up Comedy**



**Deal or no Deal**



**A Tale of Two Houses**



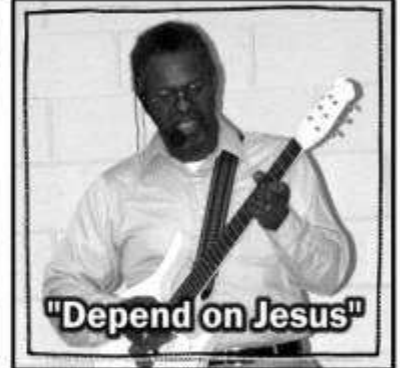
**Filling the Emptiness**



**"You Are No Orphan"**



**"You are the Light"**



**"Depend on Jesus"**



**Yo-yo Tricks**



**Homegrown Hillbillies**



**Saul's Conversion**



**"Excuse me, Mr. Demon"**



**"Aaaah!.."**



**Screwtape Teaching Wormwood**



# BIBLE READING GUIDE

## The Life of Jesus Christ

### Saturday, March 1: Luke 1

Why did Luke write this gospel? Who is Zechariah? Who does he meet in the temple? What does Gabriel tell him? Who comes to visit Mary? What does Gabriel tell her? When do Jesus and John the Baptist meet for the first time? How does John respond to Jesus' presence?

### Sunday, March 2: Luke 2

Why did Joseph take Mary to Bethlehem? Where did they live? Who else hears about Jesus' birth? How did they hear about it? What did the angel say? What did the shepherds do when the angel left? Who do Joseph and Mary meet at the temple?

### Monday, March 3: Luke 3

What was John preaching? (v 3) Repentance is always the first step towards God. What did John say when the people asked if he was the Messiah? How old was Jesus when he began His ministry?

### Tuesday, March 4: Luke 4

What did Satan show Jesus? What does Satan offer Jesus? What is the price that Jesus must pay in order to be king of the world? God had a way for Jesus to be king of the world too; what price did He have to pay in God's plan? Satan sometimes offers us the same thing that God is offering us. Even though we may get the same thing, God's way will bless us and Satan's way will destroy us.

### Wednesday, March 5: Luke 5

The best times to catch fish are early morning and evening. Simon Peter and his companions had fished all night and all morning, and caught nothing. It would be a lot of work to go out and let down the nets again (which meant they'd have to clean them again); why do they do it? What did Peter realize when he saw all the fish they had caught? (see v 8) Why do you think Jesus told him not to be afraid?

### Thursday, March 6: Luke 6

Does healing on the Sabbath break the Law of Moses? Here is an example of legalism. Many mistakenly think that legalism is being overly obedient. Real legalism is using one's obedience of some commands as an excuse to disobey others. How does Jesus know who to choose as His disciples? (see v 12) If Jesus had to pray all night to make a big decision, how

much more do we need to pray when faced with important decisions?

### Friday, March 7: Luke 7

Jesus testifies about John the Baptist, and many of the people who were baptized by John receive Jesus' testimony as true. The Pharisees, however, do not. Why not? (see v 30) They are not saved because they rejected God's purpose for them, namely that they would repent and believe in Jesus. The sinful woman, on the other hand, is saved. Why? (see v 50) Have you been forgiven of much sin? Do you love Jesus much?

### Saturday, March 8: Luke 8

What does the parable of the sower teach us about what we should expect when we share the gospel? Of all the people in the parable, how many receive the gospel and bear fruit for the kingdom? Why were the disciples amazed when Jesus calmed the storm? What healed the woman with the hemorrhage? (v 48) What does Jesus tell Jairus and his wife when word comes that their daughter has died? Faith is linked to healing throughout the Gospels.

### Sunday, March 9: Luke 9

What does Jesus give His disciples? What does He send them out to do? What was Jesus doing before He asked His disciples who the people thought He was? Jesus says He will be ashamed of us when He returns if we are ashamed of Him now. Are you ever ashamed to be a Christian or tell people you believe in Jesus?

### Monday, March 10: Luke 10

Jesus sends out the disciples again. What does He tell them to do? What do they report when they come back? What is the lesson of the parable of the good Samaritan? Who are your neighbors? Was it right for Martha to prepare the meal? What was she doing wrong? (see v 41) Sometimes we need to be reminded of what is really necessary, and of what is only important. Too many of us have these things reversed.

### Tuesday, March 11: Luke 11

What does Jesus teach His disciples about asking for things in prayer? How many times should we ask? Have you asked for the Holy Spirit lately? Jesus confronts the Pharisees and Scribes again. What does He say about them? How do they use the Law to try to

justify themselves? What parts of the Law do they obey? What parts do they disobey? Do you obey some of Jesus' commands and not others?

### Wednesday, March 12: Luke 12

What is the lesson of the parable of the rich man? When will you die? What should you invest your life in then? What message does Jesus have for those who worry about money? When will Jesus come back? (v 40) What does He say He wants us to be doing when He comes?

### Thursday, March 13: Luke 13

When bad things happen to people, does that mean they are worse sinners than other people? What do you think is the meaning of the parable of the fig tree? Jesus says that repenting, not being less of a sinner than someone else, is what will determine how God judges us. What does Jesus say when asked if only a few people will be saved? (v 26)

### Friday, March 14: Luke 14

What is the lesson of the story of the man who built the tower? What does Jesus say it will take for us to be His disciples? What does it mean to carry your own cross and give up all your possessions? (vv 27, 33) Are you willing to "Go all the way" in order to follow Jesus? What kind of people is Jesus describing in the parable about the salt that loses its saltiness? Are you still salty?

### Saturday, March 15: Luke 15

There are three stories in this chapter; what are they and what do they all have in common? Jesus tells these stories in response to the Pharisees who criticized Jesus for eating with sinners. What is the message of these stories to the Pharisees? The third story is usually called "The Prodigal Son". What is a prodigal?

### Palm Sunday, March 16: Luke 16

What does the manager do when his rich boss is going to fire him? What does his boss do when he finds out? What does Jesus mean when he says "use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves"? The manager knew his time was short and he was soon going to lose control of all that money, so he put more value on his future than on the money. Our time on this earth is short; which do you value more, money or God's kingdom?

**Monday, March 17: Luke 17**

The Pharisees ask Jesus when the kingdom of God will come. What does He answer them? What does it mean that the kingdom doesn't come "with observation", but is "within you"? Some people today want to observe the kingdom of God from a distance, as an intellectual exercise. Only those who meet Jesus in person will be able to see His kingdom.

**Tuesday, March 18: Luke 18**

What did Jesus say when people brought Him their babies? How does a child receive the kingdom of God? What does the rich young ruler call Jesus? How does Jesus respond? Many people today think Jesus was a good teacher, but not the Son of God. Jesus is in effect saying, if I am a good teacher, then I am God too, since only God is truly good.

**Wednesday, March 19: Luke 19**

How much money did the nobleman give to each of his servants? How much was a mina worth? Roughly how much in modern dollars did each servant get? What lesson is Jesus trying to teach in this parable about God's reward for those who serve Him faithfully?

**Thursday, March 20: Luke 20**

What is the attitude of the vineyard farmers toward the owner of the vineyard? Who do these farmers represent? (see v19) Who does the cornerstone represent? What happens to those who reject the cornerstone?

**Good Friday, March 21: Luke 21**

What is the lesson of the story of the widow's offering? What kind of faith did this widow have? Have you ever thought that if you tithe you wouldn't have enough money to live on? Have you ever thought that your small tithe would make no difference to God or His kingdom? Jesus describes the end times. How many of the things that Jesus foretells are already happening? Jesus says persecution will come to believers.

**Saturday, March 22: Luke 22**

Jesus eats the last supper with His disciples and tells Peter that Satan is going to sift them like wheat. Do you know how wheat was sifted? It was first crushed violently with a large blunt implement and then thrown up in the wind to scatter the chaff. Satan wants to beat down and separate Jesus' disciples to this day.

**Easter Sunday, March 23: Luke 23**

Why did the Jewish leaders want to kill Jesus? What was the main thing they had against Him according to the Law? (see v2) What did Pilate and Herod think of Jesus? What did they want to do with Him? Why did Pilate have Him crucified? Are you ever

tempted to do something you know is wrong because other people are pressuring you to do it?

**Monday, March 24: Luke 24**

List all the resurrection appearances of Jesus in this chapter. What does He say will be proclaimed in His name? To whom will it be proclaimed? What is the disciples' role in this proclamation? What is a witness? We are witnesses of what Jesus has done in our lives and the life of our church.

**Tuesday, March 25: John 1**

Here is John's written account of the good news about Jesus. John calls Jesus "The Word". What does he mean by this? Jesus is called "The Lamb of God" v. 29). What does this mean? He is called "The Messiah" and "The Christ". What do these words mean? Why do the first disciples choose to follow Jesus?

**Wednesday, March 26: John 2**

Here are two events that are signs pointing to who Jesus is. Why did Jesus turn water to wine? How did this reveal His glory? (v. 11). Why did Jesus drive merchants and money changers out of the temple? How did this reveal His glory and His relationship with God the Father? (vv. 16-17)

**Thursday, March 27: John 3**

Nicodemus, a very religious man, comes to see Jesus. Why does Jesus tell him he must be born again? According to Jesus, how can he be born again? Now for the most important question: Have you been born again? Why isn't John the Baptist upset that people are following Jesus instead of him?

**Friday, March 28: John 4**

Jesus travels through Samaria, a region most Jews avoided. What does the Woman at the Well want from Jesus? What does He have to offer that is better? Note that Jesus doesn't let the conversation get bogged down in religious controversies; He points her to the Christ. How is this an example for us?

**Saturday, March 29: John 5**

Jesus speaks with a man at the pool of Bethesda. What does this man need, and how does Jesus help him? What is this man's greater need? What do you think Jesus means by His warning in verse 14? What does Jesus tell the crowds about resurrection from the dead and eternal life?

**Sunday, March 30: John 6**

The chapter starts with two more miraculous signs to prove Jesus is the Messiah. What are they? Why does Jesus call Himself the "Bread of Life"? What does Jesus mean about eating His flesh and drinking His blood? Why do

some people stop following Jesus? Why doesn't Peter quit?

**Monday, March 31: John 7**

Jesus teaches the crowds in Jerusalem. Does the crowd believe in Him? What does Jesus mean when He says He is going somewhere where they cannot find Him? (vv. 33-34). What does He mean when He speaks of "Living Water"? (vv. 37-39)

**Tuesday, April 1: John 8**

Why did the Jewish leaders want to stone a woman caught in adultery? What does Jesus say to the accusers? What does He say to the woman? What does Jesus say about Himself and Abraham? (vv39-40, vv 54-59) Why do the Jewish leaders then want to stone Him?

**Wednesday, April 2: John 9**

Jesus heals a blind man. Why was the man born blind? Are you willing to allow God to use your sorrows for His glory? When people ask the healed man about Jesus, what kind of testimony is he able to give? When people ask you about Jesus, are you able to give the same kind of testimony?

**Thursday, April 3: John 10**

In what ways is Jesus like the gate to a sheep pen? In what ways is Jesus like a good shepherd? Why do some of the people hate Jesus and want to stone him to death? Why do some of the people follow Jesus and believe in Him? Why do people, even today, react so strongly to Jesus?

**Friday, April 4: John 11**

After hearing that Lazarus is sick, why does Jesus wait and allow Lazarus to die? What does Jesus promise Lazarus' sister, Martha, about the resurrection and the Life? (vv. 25-26) Lazarus comes alive—a foreshadowing of what will happen to Jesus. How do the chief priests react?

**Saturday, April 5: John 12**

Why did Mary pour out, all at once, perfume worth a year's income? Was it a waste? Is there any lesson in this concerning our worship of Jesus? Jesus arrives in Jerusalem. What does He know will soon happen to Him? (vv. 23-25, 31-32). According to verse 43, why did many people refuse to believe in Jesus?

**Sunday, April 6: John 13**

Why does Jesus wash His disciples' feet? Why does Peter initially object? Jesus tells us to follow His example by washing one another's feet. Jesus gives a new command in verse 34. What is it? How will obeying this command show that we are Jesus' disciples? (v. 35).

**Monday, April 7: John 14**

What does Jesus teach us about heaven? About the way to get to heaven? Jesus says He will soon go back to the Father in heaven. Whom will he send to be with us while He is gone? What are some ways the Holy Spirit will help us (see verses 26-27).

**Tuesday, April 8: John 15**

How is Jesus like a vine? How are we like branches? How is God the Father like a gardener? What happens to branches that are connected to the vine? To branches that are severed from the vine? In verses 9-13, Jesus gives the secrets to remaining in the vine. What are they?

**Wednesday, April 9: John 16**

Jesus is still talking to His disciples on the night He will be arrested. What does He say that will comfort and encourage them? What does He say that will toughen them and prepare them for hard things to come? The world gives trouble; what does Jesus give? (v. 33)

**Thursday, April 10: John 17**

In verses 1-5, Jesus prays for Himself. In your own words, summarize what Jesus says. In verses 6-19, Jesus prays for his disciples. What does He say? And in verses 20-26, He prays for all Christians. That's us. What specific things does Jesus pray for us about?

**Friday, April 11: John 18**

Judas brings soldiers to arrest Jesus. What does Peter do? Did Jesus want to be defended in this way? After Jesus is arrested, Peter denies that He even knows Jesus. How can Peter go from being so bold to being so cowardly? Has something like that ever happened to you?

**Saturday, April 12: John 19**

If you were a reporter covering Jesus' death, what would you say concerning Jesus' sentencing before Pilate? About the crucifixion? About the death of Jesus? About Jesus' burial? If you were an editorial writer, what would you say about the significance of these events?

**Sunday, April 13: John 20**

What did Peter and John see when they ran to the tomb? What did the disciple Thomas say he wanted to see? What instruction does Jesus have for Thomas in verse 27? How does the blessing in verse 29 apply to Christians today? According to verse 31, why was the Gospel of John written?

**Monday, April 14: John 21**

Jesus has a private word with Peter. What does He ask Peter? Why do you think He asks

the same question three times? What does Jesus say will happen to Peter in the future? What does He say to Peter about John's future? Jesus is still speaking to his people today: "Follow Me" (v. 19).

## Book of Romans

For the remainder of April, we will undertake a study of the Book of Romans. This is one of the most thoughtful, spiritually stimulating books ever written. The Apostle Paul is writing to the church in Rome, telling about God's wonderful plan of salvation.

After you read each chapter, please answer the following questions:

- 1) What is the main truth in this chapter that helps me better understand the Gospel?
- 2) How does this truth help strengthen my faith?
- 3) How does this truth help me share the Gospel message with others?
- 4) What is a key verse in this chapter for me to meditate on today?

**Tuesday, April 15:**

Romans 1

**Wednesday, April 16:**

Romans 2

**Thursday, April 17:**

Romans 3

**Friday, April 18:**

Romans 4

**Sunday, April 19:**

Romans 5

**Saturday, April 20:**

Romans 6

**Monday, April 21:**

Romans 7

**Tuesday, April 22:**

Romans 8

**Wednesday, April 23:**

Romans 9

**Thursday, April 24:**

Romans 10

**Friday, April 25:**

Romans 11

**Saturday, April 26:**

Romans 12

**Sunday, April 27:**

Romans 13

**Monday, April 28:**

Romans 14

**Tuesday, April 29:**

Romans 15

**Wednesday, April 30:**

Romans 16

# Send to a Friend



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