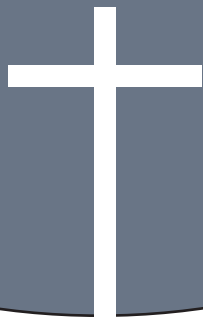


2019

Lent

CABC LENTEN DEVOTIONALS



 CABC KNOW. LOVE. SERVE.

## **Don't let your Paintbrush get Dry**

**Barry Myers**

**March 6**

*You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? (Matthew 5:43-48)*

*Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. (Philippians 2:3)*

Those words, "don't let your paintbrush get dry!" were spoken to me in anger years ago, by someone that I did not like. I was in my mid-20s and an infant Christian. I was unmarried and had purchased my first home. To help with household bills, I invited a friend of mine, Ed, to move in. Shortly afterward, Ed began dating Sue (not their real names). At first she was pleasant, but it soon became apparent that these two as a couple were like mixing fire with gasoline; it was a very volatile relationship.

As time passed, the fights began to take place on the property or in the house when I wasn't present. The evidence of damage made it clear. Even after Sue took a baseball bat to the fenders of Ed's VW bug, they continued the relationship.

One day Sue showed up on a Saturday when Ed was not home; I was outside painting. I said very few words to her, remaining focused on my work. She wanted to talk and I made it obvious that I did not. As she quickly turned on her heels to leave she said angrily, "Well, don't let your paintbrush get dry!"

God burned those words into my memory to teach me a necessary lesson. Had I offered a sympathetic ear and put her needs above my own concerns, perhaps God could have changed the course for her that day. It was a missed opportunity to be Christ for someone that was hurting.

Every day I now pray that I will be a light to those people I meet. I pray that the way I speak and act will ultimately be a reflection of God's compassionate love.

As I was pondering what to write about for this year's devotional, I felt the Lord telling me to share some of the times I felt Him speaking to me through different ways.

One time is very vivid in my mind. Pastor and I were being interviewed for a new pastorate; it was a whole morning of questions and a break in the afternoon and then dinner with the congregation that evening and ending with Bob preaching the following morning. Well, after the questions in the morning, we were given the afternoon on our own. We went to a nearby McDondald's and sat down with our lunch. After praying for the food, we started discussing the morning's events and all the concerns we had. The big question was, there was no parsonage...which meant we would either have to buy a home or rent. Could we afford this??? As we were talking, a little wren flew down beside our window and from SOMEWHERE a piece of bread fell beside the bird, which he quickly ate!! I BELIEVE IT WAS GOD; yep, a "God Wink", telling us everything would work out.

What happened after that? God was saving us a home just three houses away from the church! And that is not all. The lady who was selling the home had had it on the market for a long time and she really wanted to sell. She went to a meeting that night and was asked if she had any prayer requests. She remarked that she wanted to sell her house. Well, you can imagine her surprise when she got home and heard our realtor telling her of our offer. I truly believe God had that all planned.

Another time is so vivid in my mind. I had been struggling with depression and anxiety for days. One Sunday while heading to church, on the Hanover Brands marquee, there was this sign:

Some One Knows  
Some One Cares  
Some One Whispered  
Your Name in Prayer

What do you think? A God Wink??

These are only two of the many, many times I believe God has sent me winks. What about you? Watch for your "God Winks" every day.

***The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their cry. (Psalm 34:15)***

*Dear Heavenly Father, please help us each day to see the many  
"God Winks" you give us. In Jesus' precious name. Amen.*

## **I Am a Child of God**

**Greg Gross**

**March 8**

Hi, my name is Greg. In the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous, I say my name is Greg and I am an alcoholic. But that does not define who I am—I am a child of God.

I made the choice to put alcohol and drugs in my body, starting when I was 14 in the early 70s. After getting out of high school by the skin of my teeth, I worked for my Dad and my Grandpa at Lauer & Gross in West York.

In that dark life of drinking and drugging, my body was breaking down. I thought if I could find a female, I would change. I found "the one" on a job in Dover. My love went to her instead of alcohol and drugs. It didn't take long to marry her and have a kid on the way.

After my dad passed away, I started to drink again and we sold the store in West York. I got another job at Pfaltzgraff in Dover and I started drugs again. At the new job, I was the main operator in the kiln area and a coworker gave me a pill to help keep me going. After one accident, I was moved into a loader/unloader position. This was a second shift job and it was the party shift. I had a second accident and I had to go for a drug and alcohol test.

That is when I found the rooms of AA. That was January 3, 1994. I am now 25 years clean and sober. My wife and I had our ups and downs, but we always stayed together. July 31, 2018, at 5:10 in the morning, she passed away from cancer. I lived in the hospital with her until the end. She was my first and only love.

I could not have gotten through my addiction and the loss of Leisa without Jesus. And He is still getting me through it. After coming to CABC in 2014, I found a strong love for Jesus. When I was baptized by Pastor Todd, he gave me a verse:

***Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him and He will make your path straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)***

Because I am a child of God, I know that I am forgiven and my sins are gone and I am white as snow. Anyone that comes to Jesus can be the same.

There is hope.

*Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. (Matthew 5:4)*

*My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. (Psalm 73:26)*

The dictionary describes the word Soul as the spiritual part of a person as distinct from the physical, and regarded as the source of thought, feelings and actions. Since the church is the people, this definition is the people of the church building.

January 7, 2019, we lost our precious grandson, Benjamin. For almost 25 years he had no control over his body, but that day he was set free to be with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Knowing that Benjamin is whole, and being who he was intended to be, makes his death bearable.

Our church family responded with love, prayers, cards and food. Their love for us also made getting through the process of funeral arrangements, the viewing and the memorial service more bearable. Some in this church family are going through trials of their own, but still took time to grieve with us.

As a family, we would like to thank the many people who were involved. It is times like these that show the true heart and soul of a church family.

We thank God for each one of you.

These days, in the early course of our retirement, Vicki and I are instantly made available to the propriety of our grandchildren. No more am I preoccupied with all the time and thought once required of the workplace. We are now blessed to a much better call, and a much greater joy.

***Children's children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children. (Proverbs 17:6)***

Recently, while en route to babysit grandchildren, we drove east into the dawn and marveled while watching a splendid sunrise. There it occurred to me that for so long I had turned west in the mornings to the paper mill, only to rush to a time clock and all manner of noise, far too often missing morning devotions. Later that morning I would be led to the context of Isaiah 59:19. How sweet to be given rest from all that, and to revel in the promise of God: to endure for as long as the sun shall rise.

As I considered these things with thanksgiving, there came the familiar sound of Vicki's cell phone. In a most profound and glorious way, mixed with all wonder, there stepped into our morning an additional blessing. The photograph with text sent to us was from a very dear and faithful friend. It was, of all things, the colorful image of the very same sunrise we were all watching!

The message attached to the photo read:

"Who can deny this majesty so glorious?  
Be filled, friends, with His Love today."  
~Bonnie

With her benediction of sorts, this all served to affirm me in our like faith and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. May we be renewed each morning with mercy and love.

***Psalm 136***

***So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-13)***

A few months ago, an email was sent out by a corporate employee at my company. The email was mistakenly sent to everyone; being a global organization, that meant tens of thousands of contacts. The email asked for a response if you wished not to be included in the ensuing correspondence. Immediately there was a rapid fire of return emails using the "reply all" option. You could hear the constant pings of incoming email alerts throughout the office. Our work was interrupted, our mailboxes jammed, and many necessary applications began to fail.

I found it quite interesting to see how differently people reacted to the situation. I have the "quick view" option on my email so I saw replies without opening anything. Many misunderstood the obvious error and asked to be removed from the list. Some replied angrily in all caps asking people to stop using the "reply all" option, while they themselves obviously used it. Others were politely attempting to inform others of what was happening. Some took an instructional approach, adding screen shots to redirect. There were many that found humor in it, writing things like "oh the humanity" and "please, think of the children". Some blamed our administrators, voicing threatening complaints, and some shared their wisdom with technical work-arounds.

The split-second "send" required a few hours to correct because of a lack of unity and insight as to how to respond. Had we all taken a moment and simply not replied, there would have been no issue. The company and all of its independent franchises lost time and revenue across the world.

It brought to mind the Church as the Body of Christ and how uniquely each member processes information and responds to crises. What a challenge to find unity and a focused resolve! Satan is quick to send costly messages that generate confusion and disharmony. However, God "replied to all" before any issues evolved and equipped us with the focused direction we need. He has already addressed any crisis we may endure as a body and as individuals. We are not called to judge or demean the diverse interpretations and methods of others. He instead instructs us to obediently "reply" only to Him using our gifts in our own unique ways. In doing so, our contributions will build up the Church and reap spiritual maturity.

*Father God, let your Holy Spirit move in me to use what you have given to me individually and to seek only to encourage others as they do the same.*

We worship a big God. He is sovereign and powerful. We are in His hands, and nothing happens to us by chance. That's good news. But in grief, if that is all we remember about God, it might actually make the pain worse, rather than better. It might leave us thinking, like Mary and Martha, "**Lord, you could have stopped this, and you purposely didn't. Why?**" (John 11:23, 32) God's sovereignty might leave us more angry than comforted. So we need to remember some other things, too.

#### Jesus Defeated Death

God hates death even more than we do. That's part of the reason Jesus came. The wonderful news for us is that when Jesus broke death's power by dying and rising from the dead, He did it not only for Himself but also for all who are united to Him (Hebrews 2:14-15). That means that those who die in Christ are more alive than ever and are experiencing life, joy and glory beyond anything we can imagine, right now, in God's very presence. It may seem that the Lord did not "heal" or "protect" them, but in fact He has healed and protected them in a much fuller, deeper, more permanent way.

#### We Grieve with Hope

1 Thessalonians 4:15 says, "**But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.**" Notice that the text does not say that we shouldn't grieve, just that we should grieve differently than those who have no hope. Even in the context of hope, we still grieve, and that is appropriate. Jesus Himself wept at His friend's tomb. The Bible does not dismiss or minimize grief, and we shouldn't underestimate its impact. But we grieve differently than those without hope.

Let's say I don't know Jesus, and I believe there is no further existence after death. Then the dead really are lost to me. Every single thing that made them who they are is gone forever. That grief is a black hole.

But for those who die in Christ—and for those who grieve in Christ—the picture is very different. The sorrow of missing loved ones is still incredibly painful, but the separation is only temporary. We will see them again. That is an entirely different picture.

#### God Is with Us

In the midst of grief, it is critical for us to remember that the God who is sovereign and mighty is also Immanuel—God with us. When our grief is debilitating and it feels impossible to function, God does not sit aloof in heaven. He does not leave us to figure out how to handle grief on our own or how to cast about for resources to get through it. He walks every step of the journey with us.

Jesus came and lived as a human in this broken world. He gets it. He knows the tormenting thirst and weakness of life's final hours. As our High Priest who fully understands our heartaches, He intercedes for us (Hebrews 7:25), as does His Holy Spirit (Romans 8:34). He calls us friends (John 15:15) and promises that He will never leave nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5), that His Spirit will dwell in us (John 14), and that He will give us peace (14:27, 16:33) and even joy (15:11, 16:22). What we need most in the midst of grief is God Himself. He will meet us, give us Himself, fill the void left by our loved ones, warm our hearts, lift our burdens, and draw us into the sweet balm of fellowship with His Spirit. And as our Father tenderly swaddles us in His love, our love for Him will grow, our faith and trust will deepen, and even amid the heartache of grief we will praise Him with deep and true joy.

This is something the Lord does by His Spirit, through His Word, prayer, and the fellowship and love of His people. Those means of grace are not "tasks" for our to-do list—more burdens placed on our grief-weary shoulders. They are His love for us. If in your grief you struggle to pray or read the Bible, ask someone to pray for you and read the Bible to you.

Grief is really, really hard. It hurts like crazy. But the Lord has broken death's power, and therefore His children who have died are with Him. And He is with us. And before you know it, we will be together with Him and with them. That removes death's sting—it really does. Even in the rending ache of grief, with the Holy Spirit's help, we can hang onto Jesus and grieve with the hope that His death and resurrection bought for us.



While sitting at an employee banquet for my husband's work, this young, attractive woman came up excited to speak with me. I hardly recognized my former client from Tender Care. It was over two years prior that she had come to the pregnancy center for help with material assistance for her new baby. She was a "regular" customer and she was always treated with dignity and respect. As is often the case, those clients who come in for help more frequently are the ones with whom we are more likely to establish a relationship.

During one of her visits to the center, she confided in me that she was going to rehab. I shared with her some of my own struggles and she thanked me for not judging her. I assured her that judgement was not on our agenda, only praying the best for herself and her little girl.

These two years have brought sobriety, hope, and confidence to my young friend. She was anxious to show me current phone pictures of her thriving two-year-old and her family. She thanked me for our kindness at Tender Care and for accepting her as she was. I am reminded that Jesus loves you and me right where we are—in our trespasses and sins and in our hopeless state. He was willing to go to the cross for all of lost humanity. I didn't need to go to a personal rehab to get clean first. I confessed my sins and the perfect blood of Jesus cleansed me and made me a new creation. The former things have passed away and all things have become new. He placed His Spirit in me and causes me to walk in His ways. Those ways include showing His love, free of judgement and condemnation, to every person He places in our path.

***"Woman, where are your accusers? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, Lord," she answered. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Now go and sin no more." (John 8:10-11)***

***Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me. (Matthew 25:40)***

***Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)***

***I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. (Ezekiel 36:26-27)***

Mr. C and I are downsizing. Now before you conjure up an image of a toned, fit and svelte couple, let me say that is not what I am talking about. Mr. C and I are sorting through 54 years of "stuff" which we've accumulated. For me they are treasures, each with a warm memory attached; for Mr. C, not so much. We have had a few tense moments (Pastor Todd is on speed dial) as we decide what to keep and what needs to go. (Mr. C is dangerously close to being in the "to go" pile.)

Webster defines "treasure" as something of great value; so, if I am honest with myself, none of our "stuff" is a treasure. We truly only have one treasure in life and that is our relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. It truly amazes me that in Exodus 19:5 God calls us His treasured possession! During this Lenten season we are especially aware of just how much he "treasures" us because we remember the price He paid to redeem us. (1 John 4:10)

So there may be a few more knock-down, dragged-out fights polite disagreements about what goes and what stays from our attic, basement, and closets, but rest assured, we will never part with our gift of salvation that was given to us by God himself. That treasure we will keep and carry into eternity.

*Father God it is so wonderful to be 'treasured' by you. Please never let me forget the cost, the price you paid for me to be called "a child of God". Thank you Father. Amen*

A girl is lost and left in gloom  
To walk a night without a moon.  
And at her heels come hissing snakes  
Condemning all the path she takes.  
And those she finds make no attempt  
To lead her from her dark descent.  
Until a man she meets at last  
Who judges not her paths of past.  
He asks her simply to take his hand  
And follow Him from the darkened land.  
Now at last she sees the sun  
And all the darkness begins to run;  
And now with light to guide their way  
They walk the road to their eternal stay.

(This is a true story of Brenda's aunt, who is still living, 86 years young.)

***Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.***  
***(Matthew 11:28-30)***

The day was so full of beautiful sunshine, though it was so bitterly cold. Everyone was looking for a fire to huddle around. The only heat was the wood stove in the middle of the big room. Luke was keeping it constantly filled so that Grandma Billie would be warm in her little corner of the big house. Grandma Billie and Grandpa Joe had lived in their log home for over 50 years. When the cancer took him in 1990, she stayed in their home, keeping watch over the children they shared and the ones that became a part of the family through circumstances unknown. Grandma Billie has become a part of the only source of Christ that her family has seen. She never gives up on them, though she's seen so many tragedies in her lifetime, including the murder of her own child through the beating by cousins, just because of a misunderstanding.

She has never wavered in her relationship with Jesus. She stands in the gap bringing her little ones with her to church. Though she can hardly see anymore and can hardly walk, she gets someone to take her and the little ones as often as she can to hear the Word of God. She knows that is why she has lived these long 57 years in her adopted homeland, so far from her family and loved ones. The Lord has given her a long life so that she can see her little ones come to know the Christ she met so long ago with her parents, Pastor and wife to the Indian Nations.

She reminded me of this verse when we were talking after the passing of my own parents. She said the Lord would make my hurting less difficult when I trusted the Lord. She was right.

I keep that verse close to my heart as I think of her now at the age of 86 and how her age is beginning to show. God has made our burden light; as we know and she has said, "It is well with my soul."

*If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. (1 Corinthians 13:1-8)*

Frank and Barb DeCello are wonderful examples of these verses. In the face of hardships that would bring most to anger, tears, or both, Frank and Barb choose joy, laughter, and humor. Through their time together, Barb experienced a few health issues and Frank always looked after her and cared for her. During Frank's battle with Lewy Body Dementia, Barb has been his strongest advocate; Barb sought out information, assistance, and everything she needed to make the most of her and Frank's time together.

Frank and Barb are able to do this because they put their hope in GOD and they find their peace in HIM. No matter the circumstances, Frank and Barb cling to each other and to GOD, especially during this difficult time of their lives.

Their example of faith and of love is evident to any who take a moment to really see them, to see their faith, and to see their commitment to each other and to GOD.

p.s. Thank you GOD for blessing me with a daughter beautiful both inside and outside and with the ability to take my jumbled thoughts and express them so perfectly.

Many mornings I wake up a few minutes before my alarm goes off. My mind instantly is flooded with thoughts—and worries. I think of the day ahead, of kids' appointments (Neurologist? Pulmonologist? Haircut?) or what is needed for school (did I write that last check for the Band trip? Is it a bake sale day?). I think of school assignments (big papers, projects), tests (midterms that could use an extra prayer), and my kids' social and emotional well-being. My mind brings up worries for my children, my family, my friends. I think of friendships and broken relationships. I mentally look through my to-do list for home and for work and try to anticipate who may need something today so I can prioritize. By the time I get to the kitchen to start the coffee (let Willowby out on the way...is his hip doing better? Why is the cat staring at me? What did I forget for her?!) my mind is already going 100 mph in 80 different directions. And I have yet to have one sip of caffeinated clarity.

***Be still and know that I am God. (Psalm 46:10)***

I often need to remind myself to be still. I would like to think that I don't need to be reminded that He is God, but when I look at all the things I think I am responsible for, maybe I need that reminder, too. I choose to take all those thoughts and worries and boldly go to the throne of grace and lay them down. And I choose to trust, trust in the One who knows me better than I know myself, to work all things out in His perfect will. I choose to be grateful for a God who has already been working on all the crazy details of my life and the lives of those I love. I choose to rejoice in a loving and gracious and merciful Father. And then I choose to breathe, just breathe, and be thankful for those mercies that are new every morning, and let thankfulness and trust in Him be my guides for this day.

***The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,  
His mercies never come to an end;  
they are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness.  
"The Lord is my portion," says my soul, therefore I will hope in Him."  
(Lamentations 3:22-24)***

*Good morning, Lord. Thank you for today. Please still my racing mind, fill me with your peace and your purpose for today. May what I do be done in joy and to bring you honor. Thank you for caring for all the details of my life, and for providing for all my needs. Increase my faith and let my words and deeds be a witness to You. Amen.*

(I heard a similar story to this on the radio one morning on the way to work; I added some details.)

***Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it. (Isaiah 30:21)***

A father and son woke one sunny morning and decided to go for a hike in the woods. As they were walking, the little boy, with stick sword in hand, was engaged in the most epic imaginary battle. Swinging his sword at the imaginary beasts, the little boy was having the best time.

The father called out to his son, "Hey! Do you know where we are?"

"Nope!" the little boy replied, with a swipe and a jab of his sword at an ominous looking bush.

"Do you know how to get back to where we came from?" the father asked, a bit of concern in his voice.

"Naw, Dad!" the boy replied while jumping off a big rock, sword pointing into the air in triumph.

The father called out, "Do you know where we are going?"

"Not really...it's okay!"

The father called the boy over to him, knelt down, and looking in the boy's eyes he asked, "Aren't you scared that you don't know where you are, how to get back home, or where you are heading? Doesn't it frighten you that you may be lost?"

"No, Dad! I'm not scared because you are with me!" the boy replied and ran off to continue his epic adventure.

We have no need to be afraid or nervous of where we are or where we are going because our Father is with us always. He will never leave us alone. He wants us to be as children and live with joy and not with worry. I trust in the Lord that He will point the way for me and I will do the work He wants me to do. I rely not on myself but on the Lord for protection and guidance. As long as the Lord is with me, I have no reason to fear and I will never be lost. I love this story because it is also something each child can relate to and understand.

***Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it. (Proverbs 22:6)***

Within this past year, Jeff and I have encountered a few God-given times where He has proved this to be true. An edifying situation was shared by our daughter-in-law. Her unsaved father was diagnosed with cancer and when he was asked by a pastor what he knew about Jesus, he replied that he really didn't know much but he felt "something was different" when Jeff prayed to God. In our hearts we thanked God, realizing people really can see Jesus in our lives. The second situation was convicting. We were babysitting grandchildren in their home and I was attempting to clean a light fixture, needing Jeff's help, but we both displayed impatience with one another. About 20 minutes later, our five year-old granddaughter said, "I really don't think you should treat each other that way!" It was a great teaching time to share that she was absolutely right, we should be showing love, just as Jesus did.

People are watching you! But the important question is, are you watching Jesus? If our eyes are truly fixed on Him, we will be reading His word daily, praying, and allowing His Spirit to lead us (Romans 8:14, ***"Those who are led by the Spirit are sons of God."***) Jesus is our example to follow: He fixed His eyes on His Father, He memorized God's Word, He was led by the Spirit, and He did only what His Father told Him to do. This is how Jesus obtained victory. If we have Jesus in our hearts, we should be showing the world this same victory!

Speaking of victory, I love the story in John 18:4-6, where Judas and the mob show up at the garden with weapons to detain Jesus. He didn't run or flee, he STEPPED FORWARD. He didn't ask them what they wanted or why they were there, but He asked them, "Who is it you want?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I AM HE" Jesus said. And when Jesus said, "I AM HE," they drew back and fell to the ground. Jesus used His own weapon, "I AM" (Jehovah) or "I AM" (God). Why did they fall? It was the power of His words; He is always the victor! And by His help we can be victors too. We have the same power that rose Jesus from the dead living in us (Romans 8:11) and we have the armor of God (Ephesians 6:11) to put on daily. He supplies everything we need—He is everything we need!

People certainly watched Jesus and, if you are a Christian, they are watching you, too! What is the world seeing in your life?

*Dear Jesus, we know that Your love is the greatest gift of all. And we know that this is a gift that must go forward. You have put us in the world at just this time, at just this place, to share You and Your love. Yes, Lord, our lives should reflect to others that we know You. But we also ask Your Spirit to lead us with Your words to share Your great love with others.  
Thank you, Lord!*



**On the way to Today: Lesson Learned from  
a Model "A"**  
Pastor Bob Coddington

**March 23-24**

***Ephesians 2:1-10***

A few years ago, after much negotiating, I purchased a 1931 Model A Ford coupe. It spent some 15 years in a warehouse covered up by a canvas tarp. The motor was seized up and would need to be replaced. The Lord had led me to a recently rebuilt motor some months before this. I really enjoyed this "Do It Yourself" project. I bought tools and several books and went to work.

After many days of tugging, prying, fussing and smiling, the day of truth came. Old motor out, rebuilt motor in; now, would it run?

One of the best sounds I can remember was the sound of that motor coming to life. The life for which it was created. I might hasten to add that this sound was only topped by the sounds of that first cry for each of our four daughters.

I tell you this story to reflect on my life in Christ. For many years I was hiding my life and the gifts the Lord has given me under a "canvas". When I came out from under that "canvas" and began using these gifts that God has given me, I found a new purpose in life: the life that God has intended me to live for Him. I have tried to share this story with all who will listen. The Old is gone and the New is before me and I am living it in the Risen Christ. May God bless you as you share your story with all the Lord brings into your circle of friendship.

*Lord, it is my prayer that each one that reads this will be encouraged to share his or her testimony with others. Amen.*

This spring marks my sixth year as a youth baseball coach. As a former player and lifelong fan of the game, the role of coach fits me. I love teaching the fundamentals and complexities of baseball and seeing players progress through each season. But I found early on that my role on the field is more than just showing the kids how to field, hit and pitch. The most important lessons I try to teach them on the field include how to communicate properly with their teammates, be disciplined, show respect to coaches, umpires and other players, and recover from a missed play or strikeout. I also like to explain to them how the game is much more fun when you understand how to win with integrity, or more importantly, lose with integrity.

I only have these kids on my team for a few short months, which does not leave much time to make an impact. But the truth is, after the season ends I am still "coach" to this whole group of kids that I've worked with over the years, and I need to remain a positive example to them. They should see the lessons I have taught them being lived out in my life, no matter when or where I may cross paths with them. If I've done my job right, they will not just be better ballplayers and learn important life lessons, but they will see the teachings of Jesus Christ being lived out in my life!

***Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. (Proverbs 22:6)***

This idea of "training up" is not reserved for coaches (or teachers, or church leaders, or parents...). We all have an opportunity to impact others in our daily walk. Who are you coaching in YOUR life? Maybe you're impacting someone and you don't even know it. It's not easy to be "on" 100% of the time, not knowing what someone will hear you say or see you do. But what a gift we can give to others, especially those who look to us for direction, that when they look at us they see Jesus' love and encouragement staring back at them.

*Heavenly Father, I thank you for the opportunity to be an example for others and I pray that you would guide what I say and do as I live a life for You. Amen.*

Certain pictures and scriptures about Jesus flash into my mind...

He was playful.

There is a scene in the movie, "Passion of the Christ"—one of the few that did not make me close my eyes. It was a scene between Jesus and Mary. They were splashing each other with water, laughing, teasing. It was a wonderful demonstration of a mother/son relationship. So often I think of Jesus as a baby at Christmas or in his thirties during his ministry. But I love to imagine him as a son, a sibling, a friend. Fully God and fully Man. Only our God.

He was responsible.

So many of my contemporaries are struggling with care for aging parents. I marvel when I think of Christ on the cross, very near his death, talking to John about caring for the same mother who had cared for him. **"She is your mother."** (John 19:27) He honored his mother from his first miracle at the wedding in Canaan to the cross. Do you honor your parents?

Does he still feel the pain?

I try not to, but my mind wanders to the cross. Pain at its worst, bullying at its best. I am reminded of an old song by Ray Boltz. "Does he still feel the pain every time I fail?" Or do we continue to doubt him like Thomas? Or deny him like Peter? I never want to hurt him but I have to wonder...

He so knows what we need.

**"Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10)**

My life would be so different if I could just remember that He is God and I am not. And that we are to pray rather than worry. I repeat this scripture, use it as a password and let go, surrender until I read the prayer chain or my phone beeps.

The last thing on my mind.

Jesus prays to the Father, to forgive those who had done this to Him. Can you imagine? Who do you need to forgive? Is there anyone for whom you keep a scorecard of wrongs? Forgiveness is for us and yet we can hold on so tightly. Scripture is clear.

*Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. (Matthew 6:26-32)*

I live in the Dominican Republic, a Caribbean country that proclaimed its independence in 1844, but which over the years has been struggling to eradicate the deficiencies that affect it.

Like the Dominican Republic, many countries suffer the scourge of poverty, malnutrition and social inequality. Despite the situation, it is normal to appreciate a smile on the faces of its inhabitants, so that is proof that God, the Creator, takes care of his children.

Matthew 6: 26-32 gives us encouragement and reminds us that we can trust that our Heavenly Father cares for each one in any part of the world. His Word also helps us understand that we should not worry too much in this world.

As humans, we try to discover how God is going to work on our behalf. We despair and even lose faith, believing that God has moved away from us. He gives us a promise in his word saying ***“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20)***

Today I invite you to place your worries in the hands of God.

*Dear Lord, help me depend on you at all times.*

One morning about five years ago, almost one year after my husband and I were married, I was making the bed. To set the scene, we were living in a very small "cabin" his parents owned that was quite cramped. As I was shuffling along the side of the bed squished between the mattress and a large dresser, I jammed my foot very roughly into something much harder than my delicate toe. I proceeded to make a loud grunting noise and angrily looked to see what on earth was so obnoxiously in my way.

It was my Bible. My big, hard-covered, "obnoxiously in my way" Bible. Sometimes that might be how we look at it. A big book, full of lots of rules, that gets in the way. But in this "obnoxious book", we read

***All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)***

Everything in the Bible is given to us. To teach us, correct us, and make us better people. So that we may be wise and ready for anything that may come. You've heard people say they wish there was a manual for life... it sounds to me like that is just what God gave us.

*Dear God, thank you for your Word. For the hope, peace, comfort, and promises it contains. Help us to not see it as a hindrance or something that gets in our way, but to see it for what it is... your guiding answers for all our questions.*

Twenty-five years ago my congregation of choice met in a small, local chapel. Although it was quaint by most standards, it provided a suitable environment for our weekly Bible study. At that time, the Pastor (Shepherd) happened to be big in the topic of **The Body of Christ**, particularly as it is found in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 12.

***The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:12)***

The body analogy fits so well that the Apostle Paul referred to it some two dozen times in his various letters. One Sunday session I remember being stirred to share from a squeaky chestnut pew my own perspective of Paul's insight—that the body needs an eye, and the eye needs a body. "I may be only a 'big toe' in this assembly," I said, "but I am a part of this body."

Sometime later I recalled thinking how any old toe is critically dependant on the eyes of the body in order to be kept safe and balanced and to see, as well as measure, steps without becoming a 'stubbed toe'. I realized what a great responsibility it is for the eyes (leadership) of the Church Body to shepherd the flock, not forgetting the words of **Christ the Head** as in John 10, or His instruction to Peter, "Feed my sheep."

So when Pastor Ralph stepped down from the pulpit, I heard Pastor Todd with wife Lori say that they've always held to their favorite hymn, "Be Thou My Vision." Then I knew we could be joyfully assured that the Body (flock) of believers at CABC is keeping in step with the Holy Spirit, the eyes of Todd, and the blessing of God.

This past year I have seen God move in a strong way at Awana! This year Awana leadership was expecting a low number of children. We had a lot of 6th graders move up to Pulse youth group and we couldn't see where children would come from. In our Cubbies group (ages three and four), we were expecting only to have about four children, for Sparks (K-Grade two) we expected 12 and for T&Ts (Grades three-six) we expected about 24. God had something else in mind and was moving without us seeing. The four Cubbies we thought we would have turned into 14, the 12 Sparks turned into 30, and the 24 T&Ts turned into 46. That's double the amount of children we expected!

It's fantastic, but the number of kids is not what is important. It means nothing if they aren't learning anything when they walk through the doors. God is too great and too big and too wonderful to let that happen. We start every Awana meeting with our theme song and prayer as well as pointing out the prizes/rewards they can earn. We follow this up by saying and asking, "the awards are good and fun, but they are not what is important. Why are we learning these verses? Why is it so important?" With a beaming smile and hand raised high in the air, Miss Finley Hess answers, "So we can hide God's Word in our heart!" (I think this is her favorite time at Awana. She loves to share God!) The kids get it! They know God loves them and that it's important to know His Word!

Before Christmas I taught a Candy Cane Lesson to go with our Candy Cane Theme Night. That simple lesson brought two Sparks to know Christ as their Savior. The following week, I taught the Christmas lesson and gave the opportunity again to accept Christ. This time four children prayed. I knew some had prayed before and I was concerned they didn't understand salvation. I wanted to be sure they knew it could never be taken away from them. I prayed to God and talked with Pastor Todd. I came to realize that God took care of everything at the beginning of the Awana year! He is so good!

The next lesson series I was scheduled to teach was on the fruit of the spirit. I was able to go over teaching that salvation is prayed for one time, we never lose it, and after that God ripens the fruit inside us so we become more like Him. The examples the kids give and the understanding they have blows me away. You can see the love they have for God and the excitement. And it is showing not only in the way they talk but also in the way they learn their verses.

At the end of the Awana year, awards are handed out for finishing books (usually we have about 10 Sparks and 10 T&Ts) but this year we have record number of children finishing books. We have children knowing all 66 books of the Bible and so excited about God! We are seeing God move in the questions the kids ask, the answers they have, the love they have for one another, and the way they worship God.

God further confirmed that He is moving in Awana after I started writing this. Miss Devon, who leads the Cubbies, teaches her Clubbers to praise God through song and dance. They then share that worship one evening with the rest of Awana at our closing before dismissal. This year she picked "God is on the Move" by Seventh Time Down. She sent this after I titled this devotion "Watching God Move!" I just love God and how He works everything together. God you are truly amazing and I never cease to be in awe of how You move!

*For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in. (Matthew 25:35)*

I've been going on mission trips to the Dominican Republic for fourteen years. Every night we give a devotion; God laid this on my heart. We do food distribution and my devotion was related to the food we hand out.

**Bulk of Rice and Beans:** This represents the Bible before it is opened. It is the Bulk of God's Word. When it is opened, it serves people everywhere.

**Sardines:** Like fish in the sea, they swim in many directions. Our Bible says that there is only one way, and that's through our Lord, Jesus Christ.

**Spaghetti:** When it gets soft, it's not always straight. God did not promise us that there wouldn't be hills to climb and valleys to go through, but He promised He would be there to help us through them.

**Oil and Boullion cubes:** These melt into liquid and absorb into the food, like God's Word melts into our hearts, so we can learn more about Him.

Once we have gathered the food, we put each item into a bag and tie it shut. That is like taking God's Word that we study and holding it dear in our hearts.

Once the bag is opened, when we hand them out, the food is like God's Word, being passed out everywhere.



*There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:  
a time to be born and a time to die,  
a time to plant and a time to uproot,  
a time to kill and a time to heal,  
a time to tear down and a time to build,  
a time to weep and a time to laugh,  
a time to mourn and a time to dance,  
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,  
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,  
a time to search and a time to give up,  
a time to keep and a time to throw away,  
a time to tear and a time to mend,  
a time to be silent and a time to speak,  
a time to love and a time to hate,  
a time for war and a time for peace. (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)*

The time I have been given in my life has taken new direction since August 22, 2018. Prior to that day and for the past 10 years, I've had at least one little child (often three) in need of my constant care and support. On that warm summer day though, I watched my baby boy bravely board a school bus for his first day of Kindergarten and my time shifted. I went home to a VERY quiet home and spent the next few weeks crying a bit (ok maybe daily for a week or so!), learning a new routine, and leaning on my heavenly Father for help in my new routine.

Sometimes our season shifts. Sometimes we make the shift (starting a new job or leaving one, a new home, marriage, starting a family, retirement) and sometimes the season is shifted for us (a loss of a loved one, an opportunity lost that we were counting on, a friendship strained, or babies growing up too fast). In these shifts, I believe our God is right there with us, and has so much for us to hear when we stop and listen. After all, he put this all into motion in the first place.

Genesis 1:14-15 ***“And God said, ‘Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times and days and years and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth.’ And it was so.”***

God spoke, and time was created. It marked days and years on earth from that point on. This time in my life was being marked, and I wanted to know what God had to say about it.

Surprisingly, though the only word I heard was “no.” “No”??? Lord, that can't be right! “No.” Ok, I heard...now what does that mean for me? I shared with my best friend (luckily also my hubby), and he immediately agreed. Yes...I said immediately. What?!? I have MORE time on my hands now right? (ok yes I know all you mamas who have been through this before are now laughing at me! Three kids in school, work and everything you still always did? No...probably less time! Bless my sweet September heart. I've grown since then you will be pleased to know!)

“No.” And as Mike and I unpacked that a bit together, we felt him calling us to all the great “YESes” we had already given. Was the Lord really saying “no” because time for the “yeses” we were already doing was that important?

Well, I went to one of my most trusted mentors (lucky again...also my mama!) and she AGREED! Ok Lord, I'm listening...

“And age to age He stands. And time is in His hands.  
Beginning and the end. Beginning and the end.”

How Great is Our God. He created it, he ordained it and he controls time: our days, hours and minutes. And I will use it to worship Him. Not just on Sundays in song. This is every day worship to our creator. Giving Him the say in how I use my time.

“No.” This was going to be hard. Because even when I committed to working hard at the “yes” I've already committed to, and saying “no” when something new was offered for the coming school year, I hadn't actually had to say “no” yet. So many things that I'm offered, invited to, or asked to do, I want to do! But each time now, I was placing it at His feet to give him the final decision.

So does this mean I'll never say "yes" to anything new again? Nope, already have said some yeses. Has saying "no" to things I love been hard? Oh yes!

But God has honored it, and paved the way in those hard moments.

In a day and age where distractions are abundant, this has taken discipline. I do not get it right even half of the time. I'm thankful for mercies that are new every morning. And I'm excited for the future, walking with Him, and laying my time at His feet.

*Dear Lord, I pray you will help me to give you my time. Each minute, hour and day you have ordained, and I want to use it to honor you. Please give me clarity in each decision, fellow believers to help me along the way, and your words from scripture to direct me. Thank you for your grace, mercy, and love. Amen.*

*Mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance. (Jude 1:2)*

In Fall 2015, Pastor Todd preached on Jesus feeding the 5,000. He shared how most likely we are all familiar with this story; however, he wanted to add some different insight that we may have not heard before. One of the things that he pointed out is that after all 5,000 people were fed and no longer hungry, there was still bread and fish remaining. There was not only enough for everyone, there was an abundance left over. Pastor Todd then shared that often when God answers prayers He does so in abundance. He doesn't just answer our prayers, He does so in a way that is more than we could ever imagine.

I couldn't help but think of my family, and how God has answered our prayers for another child. My husband Cory and I prayed for another child for many, many years. We were faced with unexplained secondary infertility and endured so many disappointing months waiting for God to give our son Jonah a sibling.

In those days of waiting, God showed us another way and led us to adoption. We adopted Ellie when she was 10 years old after she had lived with us for one year as a foster child. Our prayers had been answered and we had another child and she had a forever family. And yet, God was not done. He not only answered our prayers for a second child with Ellie, He then abundantly blessed us with two more biological children!

When I announced our miracle pregnancy with Hope, there was a collective sigh at the wonder of God. We found out we were pregnant less than two months after adopting Ellie. Therefore, there were lots of people commenting how God had blessed our family tremendously by answering our prayers after years of waiting. When we found out we were expecting a girl, God confirmed that the daughter named Hope that we had dreamed of for years truly was going to be a part of our family. It was as if a foretelling by God was coming to life. Our Hope was coming.

And then two years later when we announced our pregnancy with Gabriel, there was a collective awe at the abundance of God. I heard from so many people the amazement they experienced when they read our Christmas card announcing our pregnancy, and were blown away that we were expecting another baby. More than one person told me "my jaw dropped". Gabriel was and truly is our sweet surprise miracle baby. And fun little fact, our "bookend boys" Jonah and Gabe are over 14 years apart! God writes the best stories.

My days are so filled now and I am reminded constantly of how God loves us so much that He not only answered our prayers, He did it in abundance. Each day, I have an abundance of dishes to do, laundry to remember, nails to clip, reminders to give, food to cut, and encouragement to share. This may seem like a lot of monotonous stuff to do for some. I choose to look at the little things that fill my days as constant reminders of God's abundance. My dream has always been to be a mom. Not only did God give me the gift of a child 19 years ago, but I still have 14 years left before I am an empty-nester. That's 33 years of full-time parenting! Another prayer He has granted me in abundance.

God has given far more than I could have ever imagined. Where do you see His overwhelming abundance in your life?

How quickly do you want an answer to your prayer? Most of us would reply, "immediately". The events of this season remind us that often God sends His answer in a three-day pattern.

Devotional writer Dave Adamson explains, "I was thinking about what the Saturday after Jesus died was like. History says Jesus died on Friday and rose on Sunday, which means that Saturday in between is the only day in 2,000+ years when no one on earth believed Jesus was alive. But that dark day was the middle part of a three-day story that recurs throughout Scripture."

We hear a call to Abraham in Genesis 22 to offer his only son Isaac in sacrifice to the LORD. The trip to Mt. Moriah took three days. It wasn't until day three that the Lord provided a ram for the sacrifice.

Queen Esther is convinced she must speak to the king on behalf of her people, the Jews (Esther 4). She asks the Jews to pray and fast three days while she prays and plans to risk her life. On day three, the king grants her a hearing and the treacherous plot of Jewish extermination is exposed.

What requests are on your heart this season (concerns for your children or grandchildren, health issues, financial struggles, etc.?) Do you find yourself in the middle of your own three day story? You pour out your heart to the Lord, believing He hears, and you wait. Saturday between crucifixion and resurrection can be a very long day. Remember that God does not finish a story on day two. If the Savior lived out a three day story, you can expect the same. Jesus trusted His Father for the resurrection answer on day three. Will you join me in trusting our Savior for the answer we need on our day three?

***From that time on, Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. (Matthew 16:21)***

*Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. (Psalm 119:105)*

Three years ago our first grandson, Murphy, put an app on my phone. It is YouVersion – an online Bible. When I got this app, I started to read the Bible again, from Genesis all the way through to Revelation.

Last year, our second grandson, Gavin, told me about the devotionals that are on YouVersion. Many of these devotionals are short, five to seven days, but they all have resulted in tremendous growth in my relationship with GOD. These devotionals are easy to find, easy to follow and provide much information, inspiration and insight. Two recent devotionals that I really enjoyed are “The 7-Day Anxiety Detox” and “How Joyful People Think”.

Our third grandson, Emmett, and I are experiencing The Bible Project together. This website, [TheBibleProject.com](http://TheBibleProject.com), is a wonderful way to experience GOD’S Word. The Bible Project “helps people see The Bible as one unified story that leads to Jesus.” It does this with videos, pictures, background information, and explanations, along with allowing you to read and or listen to The Bible.

I am grateful for grandsons who can show me so many new ways to stay strong and focused on my relationship with JESUS. These tools are a quick, easy, and convenient way to grow, learn, and shine HIS Light.

If you need help getting started on this app or website, please ask our grandsons, your grandchildren, or any of the youth at CABC.

*I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness. (John 12:46)*

## What is Better? Deb Trojak

April 6-7

The story of Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42) has always bothered me until recently. This is probably because I identify with Martha. I love hospitality, but I also have to make sure that everything is perfect. I stress over details and so when I read the story and it says that Martha was “distracted by all the preparations that had to be made...” I am right there with her. I’m just as indignant as she is that Mary just sits at Jesus’s feet doing nothing (or seemingly nothing). And I have always been a bit miffed that Jesus sticks up for Mary.

In 2018 a song that resonated with me was “Breathe” by Jonny Diaz. A particular line in the song caught my attention and flipped my perspective of Mary and Martha. The line says, “Let your weary spirit rest, lay down what’s good and find what’s best.” This line somewhat mirrors Jesus’ response to Martha: **“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”** (Luke 10:41,42)

What Martha is doing isn’t bad, but it isn’t what’s best. So often in my life I get caught up in trivial details that really don’t matter. I’m so busy trying to make sure that everything is exactly where it needs to be that I forget where I need to be—at His feet. Mary chooses what is best. She chooses to listen to Jesus and to sit at His feet. In the grand scheme of things, that is what is most important. Martha isn’t doing anything intrinsically bad. In fact, what she’s doing could be considered good. But in all that she’s doing, she’s completely missing the point.

As Jesus says—“few things are needed—or indeed only one” and that One is Him.

How often do I ask myself that question—more often quietly to myself? Well, I should keep track on a given day or each day for a week. While I believe my heart is usually in the right place, catch me in my work setting and next thing I know, a shift has taken place (not that this is the only place, but it seems to happen quicker at work). Work provides a vast array of personalities and situations, people who can't or just don't feel like doing their work thoroughly, followed by demands from upstairs I am not ready to hear. Well, those good intentions I carried with me from my morning devotions have taken a big hit. I am in self-preservation mode—more like selfish mode.

Can I give examples when I am elsewhere? You bet I can. But this is to be a short devotional, so I'll share those another time. Why is it so easy to focus on what is best for me, what I can do for my enjoyment, what my goals are for the day and receiving what I believe I deserve? If I allow my natural tendencies to control any situation, selfishness reigns!

Philippians 2:3-4 reminds me clearly...***“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”*** Well, Paul has made that clear!

Key reminders that I see in this passage are:

- Don't be selfish
- Be humble (lowliness of mind)
- Consider others' interests more than my own
- These motives will stem from love (God's love for me, passing through me to others)

That surely sounds like Jesus—giving up his rights for others while helping those around Him wherever He could. He is the truest, most perfect example of a servant. This verse involves what I can do for those in my workplace. It does not matter if they meet my standards. They are God's children.

Opportunities are not limited to just my workplace, but also my neighborhood, my church family, my biological family, and the family of God everywhere. The Lord can use me anywhere and anytime to help someone and to share the love of Jesus in some way, if I am open and willing.

Can I start working on my perspective? Can I not allow my surroundings to distract my focus away from what God's Word convicts me to do? I am for trying harder, loving the unlovable, and asking God to show me where He wants to use me—today and each day I wake up. Are we all up for that challenge?

We are only here on earth for a short time. Why not make the most of it before we meet Jesus at the end of our time on this earth. Just ask Him...where and how would you like me to serve You, Lord, and others, today, this week, this year? He will not leave our side, and I expect we will enjoy being a vessel for His kingdom work. We have to admit—it does feel better to give than receive. Also, maybe once in a while, we can reward ourselves too. We should celebrate those special times when ministry goes well and when we have cleared a hurdle that has stood in our way.

I guess it is getting pretty clear: it is not about me, but it is about how I can share God's love. Others' needs ARE more important than mine. I am already very loved and cared for—God has that covered with a big blanket!

Enjoy this Lenten season as we prepare to celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior!

*Dear Lord, allow me to be sensitive to the needs of others around me. Let me experience the joy that comes from pleasing you and fulfilling your purposes for my life. I ask this in the name of your son, Jesus, our loving Savior. Amen.*

Our small group this month is looking at authority—and our homework assignment was to answer two questions: “who do you have authority over” and “who has authority over you.” The genesis of this is 1 Peter 2, where Peter tells us we are to “submit to every human authority.”

As I was thinking about the question “who has authority over me,” I thought about God and His authority. Talk about ultimate authority. In Genesis 1, there are about nine times in the NIV translation that reads “And God said” and things happen. He said “Let there be light” and it was so. He said “let there be” again and the heavens and waters separated. He spoke again and there was earth; again and there was night and day. This continued until finally God looked at His creation, said it was good, and rested.

Then look at “authority” in the New Testament. Matthew 7 tells us that Jesus was “teaching them as one having authority.” The New Testament speaks of Jesus having “authority” over unclean spirits, to forgive sins and in Matthew 28, He says **“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”** With this kind of power, how did Jesus end up nailed to the cross? He told Peter in the Garden of Gethsemane when He was arrested to put his sword away and in verse 53—**“Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?”** This, my friends, is authority!

Then He was crucified, He died, and was buried. Is this where His authority ended? Peter says not even. Acts 2:24, Peter says **“God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.”** Authority over death! We celebrate that authority at Easter. We celebrate a risen Christ who has all authority in heaven, on the earth and in the grave. All authority over all things—ALL things!

But does He have authority over your life?

*Father, thank You that with Your authority to create with just Your voice, You also give us authority. That authority allows us to go against what You have deemed to be good and in our best interests. May Your Spirit watch over us and lead us in Your way, under Your authority. Amen.*



"What do you do for you?"

I was asked this question recently and it made me pause. We, as a culture, have begun to promote self-love and self-care. They are concepts that say you should take care of yourself first—taking time to do the things you enjoy, to refresh yourself—so that you can then care for others.

These are seemingly harmless ideas and ones that make complete sense if you're coming from a secular perspective. But I'll admit, every time I hear someone talking about them in a positive light, I cringe internally. To be perfectly honest, I have no problem with self-love. In fact, that is my problem. I love myself way too much. My human nature is such that I am constantly at war with myself. If I have the option to take the bigger piece of pie...I'm gonna take it. It is only Christ's admonishment that I should love others as greater than myself that keeps me (somewhat) in check.

I'm not saying that taking time for yourself is a bad thing, but when I am faced with the concept of self-care, I keep coming back to Jesus' example. In Luke 5:16 it says, ***"But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed."*** And this is not just a one time thing. Repeatedly, Jesus takes the time to get alone with God.

I need to follow my Savior's example of self-care. There's nothing wrong with setting aside time to do things that I enjoy, but those things are not going to rejuvenate me and allow me to pour into others' lives the way that some alone time with God will.

What could be more refreshing and altering than spending time focused, not on myself, but on the One who actually has the ability to change me?

## What are you Going to do with It? Dan Inners

April 11

On Wednesday, January 30, I had the privilege to go serve dinner to the people at the LifePath shelter in York. Now for those of you who remember, this was the first day of the Polar Vortex that hit York this past winter. The temperature was six degrees this afternoon!

My job for the evening was to serve the main dish, which started as spaghetti for the first few people and changed to chicken noodle casserole for the remainder. A few things really caught my attention this evening. As I started scooping noodles onto trays, the gentlemen running the kitchen kept telling me that I was scooping too much and needed to cut down on my serving size. I was only giving one serving spoon sized scoop and I assure you that if I were at home, my size would have been two or three heaping serving spoonsful worth. I wasn't used to putting so little on a plate/tray.

The first group of people we served were people from the public, homeless people who were living outside during the Polar Vortex. They entered with their noses as red as Rudolph's and yet they were so incredibly thankful for this small scoop of food that I was putting on their tray. Just about every person who came through the line looked me in the eye and thanked me for this food. This amazed me and humbled doesn't even come close to explaining the feeling in my stomach.

As the line kept coming, the boss kept reminding me to keep my serving size small. After a short time, I noticed this one lady who kept looking at me and smiling. Of course I just smiled back. She wandered up to my station and asked if she could have seconds—I looked around and didn't see the boss, so I said yes. Oops! The boss was right around the corner and reminded the lady as well as me that seconds were not an option. It was so hard for me to see this in action. After dinner the people we had just served needed to clear out so the people who are residents at LifePath could come eat. The residents get to eat as much as they want until the food runs out.

I left my duties as a server and am eager to return another time to give as much as I can. As I left, I was reminded of this: each and every day we get up, we look in the mirror, and some of us complain. "I don't want to go to work;" "I don't want to go to school;" "I don't want to eat this." I met a bunch of people who literally have nothing and yet were grateful for small amounts of food and a little bit of warmth for a short time before being sent back out to the Vortex.

The next time you get up and look in the mirror, don't look at yourself but instead see Jesus staring right back at you. Each day you awaken is a gift; you are the one responsible for how you use your daily allotted time. Let's be thankful, joyful, humble servants. How are you going to use your time today? What are YOU going to do with it?

*Thy Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee. (Psalm 119:11)*

In 2016 a little four-year-old boy from Tyler, Texas became a YouTube video star when his father posted a video of him. What was little Tanner Hemness doing in the video? Well, he was reciting Scripture verses from A to Z. Yes, within six months Taylor Hemness taught his son, Tanner, (yes, from Tyler, Texas...lots of "Ts" here!) 26 Scripture verses—one for each letter of the alphabet!

My friend, Bonnie Fuhrman, urged our Ladies' Bible study group to do the same—memorize! UGH! While I was totally impressed with little Tanner, I knew that I would not be so successful at this memorization thing. And at this writing, I am nowhere near my goal.....but I am trying. And I would like to encourage you to do the same. And what better season to "hide God's Word in our hearts" than Lent.

When I first started this exercise, I was planning to write just one verse for each letter. This project has now grown to at least one and many times three or four for each letter. But I must tell you that the greater blessing that has come from all of this Scripture reading, writing and memorizing is the blessing, the joy, the peace, the gratefulness and the change in me that comes from my devotion time as I read these ancient words.

I pray that you, too, take up the challenge to "hide God's Word in your heart" and to be blessed during this Holy Lenten season.

*Dear Lord, help me to delight in your Word, to meditate on your precepts and your truths and hide your Word away in my heart, so that I will not sin against you. Help me to share these truths from your Word with others, as I strive to be Your light in a dark world. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

To view little Tanner and his scripture memorization go to:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/blog/2017/01/4-year-old-recites-abcs-using-bible-verses/> At the bottom of the article, you will see the listing of the verses that he has recited and the Scripture references.

Our Lord has risen!

What beautiful words, what an exceptional God, and what an overwhelming love!

During this Lenten season, I look back over the previous two years. Did I lean on the Lord for everything? Did I? Was there a time that I forgot? I don't think so, yet when life gets rolling through the months, it is very possible. Did I remember to Praise our Lord? That I trust I did; I am a secret car singer at times to my own type of praise and prayer, an off-tune, ear-piercing worship. Ahh...but did I leave God when my brother was diagnosed with Renal Cancer or when my husband was diagnosed with LBD? God clearly states in

Deuteronomy 31:16, ***"Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you."*** Wow, I could have turned my back in frustration, yet He still walks with me.

Trials come in many sizes, not one more important to God than another. Always listening and watching is a God that has led me through many rough years, the cancer that took my brother Doug in 2017 and my husband's declining health. I can say, "okay, enough is enough, God," but is it? Christ died on the cross for me—for you. Could we really get mad and pull away from that kind of love? Don't pull away, because it states in Philippians 4:6-7, ***"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*** Faithful He is, gently guiding me through the rough patches and hitting me square in the heart with His blessings.

Frank's illness, Dementia with Parkinson's, created a syndrome, Capgras, a rather cruel syndrome where Frank begins to look at me as an imposter in his life; he feels that I am someone who at times is trying to deceive him into thinking I am his wife. Still, Frank recognizes everyone else in his life. That is the cruelty and reality of Capgras. However, God uses all to His good. On New Year's Eve Frank went to the ER with pneumonia and an UTI. On January 2 we went to the Brethren Home at Cross Keys Rehab. Frank spent 21 days and I spent every day for six hours alongside Frank, leaving at the end of the day.

As many of you may have experienced in these situations, it was difficult, especially when God revealed to me His great gift and lesson for me.

Frank recognized me the entire time during his stay at the rehab and yet here at home, how long will this last? Obviously, I wish forever more, but honestly it does not matter. Our Gracious Father reminded me that my husband still loves me, and his heart recognizes me. God says in Joshua 1:19, ***"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous."***

I think there is a lesson in that which we can all learn. For me, it is that God will forever be by my side guiding me, loving me and setting me straight when I walk in anger and frustration. God also taught me the biggest lesson at this time in my life. I am loved by Frank, my husband of 29 indescribable years; he knows me in his heart even when disease tries to push me out.

I pray for all of us that during and after this Glorious time of year where Our Saviour, our King, our God is risen, our hearts will rise as well to the possibilities that God has so much more planned for us. Life may get tough— that's a given— but if I had turned away I would never have tied the gift of recognition back to God. And that would be a shame. Praise God in all ways.

***Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? (Matthew 6:27)***

I babysit my granddaughters on a regular basis. When the four-year-old is up to something, she often says to me, "Don't worry Grammie, I got this." That usually means, "although what I'm doing may look dangerous to you Grammie, have faith in me. I have this under control."

It makes me think of all the times I let worry take over my life, and God is saying to me, "Don't worry, Vicki, I got this. Just give it to me."

You cannot add one day to your life by worrying, so why not give it over to the One that can give you rest? He does not want you to carry this or any burden alone.

Perhaps the answer may come through sharing with a fellow follower, my Home group, the prayer chain—or maybe via a daily devotional.

***Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.***  
***(Matthew 11:28)***

I'm sure we all have a journey we can share. This journey is mine.

Our church has many members. In this story, I am talking about a family I feel is an inspiration to me. I have admired and watched them as they have gone through their journey. I then had the benefit of attending a support group started by them at our church. On the last Tuesday of the month at 1:30 here at CABC, we have a dementia support group with co-leaders Jen from Cross Keys and Barb from our congregation.

All of our lives are busy and, if you are like me, you sometimes think, "I don't have time for one more meeting!" Or you are more introverted and walking into a group for the first time can be intimidating. You are nervous about the unexpected, or, even worse, of others seeing your world.

I had a father who lived next to us who was starting with dementia and a mother-in-law who moved in with us who was further in the process. I couldn't understand how someone could ask the same questions so many times or why someone could be so confused. How do you keep from losing your patience with people?

This class was and is so very important to us. It is educational, emotional, caring, and loving, with leaders and students who care and help you understand this horrible disease. Barb and Jen get answers for you and give many ways to help get you through this process.

I want to thank Jen for choosing a career in which she exceeds, above and beyond most professionals. I thank Barb for loving her husband as much as she does and for being a sponge, educating herself so she can educate us. I thank Our Lord and CABC for giving us a facility in which to meet, filled with the presence and love of our Lord.

*Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. (Romans 12:17)*

As a young Christian, I had lots of questions and was frequently confused by the wording of certain scriptures. I prayed for spiritual direction, but it still took time for me to gain proper perspective.

One evening my women's study group leader challenged us to select a scripture that was difficult for us to interpret and then meditate on it until God revealed its whole meaning to us. It didn't take long to find one.

Romans 12:17 not only confused me, but it made me a bit angry. The part about not returning evil for evil was easy to digest, but the rest of it made no sense. "Do what is right in the eyes of everyone," seriously?! This was a time when I was getting a lot of advice from family and friends that did not know Christ. I was also getting advice from some fellow believers that didn't fully understand my circumstances. They all certainly meant well, but the direction they gave was so clearly wrong that I couldn't give credence to it. Yet here is this scripture, I thought, instructing me to do what these people are telling me to do. I prayed intently for understanding. I fussed over the concept for a few days.

Finally, I went into prayer and boldly told God that I was not getting up from prayer until He gave me clarity on this scripture. It was then that He spoke to me in plain, elementary terms. I was compelled to repeat the scripture enunciating every word slowly. When I got to the word "eyes", it all became clear. We are not called to do right in the thoughts or opinions of others, but to let others SEE us doing right. I felt like God and I had a good chuckle over my misunderstanding.

It is wise to consider the counsel of other believers and certainly to keep the peace with everyone as much as possible. However, God determines the right/wrong part, not us, not our friends, and not our families. As long as others witness us doing the right Godly thing, regardless of whether they agree or not, God can use that obedient example for the greater good.

*Father God, help me to move in a right direction today, allowing that obedience to bear witness to your eternal goodness. Amen.*

***But I tell you that men will have to give account on the Day of Judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned. (Matthew 12: 36-37)***

We have all heard this childhood rant, "Sticks and stones can break my bones but names will never hurt me." As adults, we all know that this is not a truth. Most of us can recall past comments by others about us that have cut to the core of our soul. As Joanne Lowe (Living Connections Ministries) states, "Have you ever seen a balloon that has been punctured by a fingernail or other object? It only takes a little hole in the balloon to deflate it. It may take a while to completely deflate but eventually all the air goes out. You may try to patch it with something and it might help for a while but it doesn't last." That is what discouraging words and sarcastic remarks can do to each of our hearts. Our hearts can be slowly deflated and then patched but never quite restored. People can try to encourage us and tell us not to listen to those who put us down, but the hole is already there. Just remember, Jesus is the only one who can reach down and completely make our hearts new.

So what is it that we should know about words? Jesus spoke a lot about words and the effects that words can have on each of us. As the scripture above (Matthew 12: 36-37) proclaims, we will all be held accountable for our words on the Day of Judgment. We should make sure our words are encouraging and helpful for building each other up. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians states: ***"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."*** (Ephesians 4:29) It seems clear to me that God wants us to think very carefully before we use our words. He will judge us on what we have said to others. Read what the Bible has to say about words in Proverbs 15: 1-2, Proverbs 16: 24, Proverbs 17: 27-28, Proverbs 18: 20-21 and Proverbs 21: 23. The list can go on and on!

Another aspect of the use of words is our reaction to them, particularly words that wound our heart. What did Jesus have to say about these kinds of words? In Matthew 5: 11-12 Jesus says, ***"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*** Additionally in Luke 6: 27-28, He says: ***"But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you."*** It is our job as Christians to pray for those who mistreat us and forgive those who have done us harm.

In other words, Jesus calls us to love. In Matthew 22: 37-39 Jesus said, ***"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself."*** In Paul's letter to the Galatians, he made it clear that love is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5: 22). So if we are truly born again Christians, we have the capacity to love. So how do we love? In his letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 13: 4-13), Paul gives us a guideline for how to love. Go back and read it for yourself and put it into practice.

In conclusion, we need to practice the discipline of being impeccable with our words, making sure they are above reproach. We need to steer clear of words that tear down (gossip) and do not build up others. We need to love others as ourselves. Are we an encourager? We need to think about how we have used words in the past to hurt people. Did we ask for forgiveness? We need to think about how others have healed or wounded us by their words. What was our response to them? Remember our goal is the transformation of our lives to become more like Jesus! Amen.

*Precious heavenly Father, I continue to celebrate your will in my life.*

*I pray that the words that I speak daily would be pleasing to You. I pray that these words would build others up and not tear them down. Please guide me, Father, during each day to listen more than I speak. Allow my words to reflect Your light in this fallen world. Please encourage me to forgive others who have spoken untruths about me and not hold grudges. Please continue to transform me to be more like You each day. Allow my love for you and others to shine through in my daily walk. In Your precious, holy name I pray. Amen.*



I can be a sentimental man. I hold onto stuff longer than I should. One example of this are the t-shirts that I have received from the many different teams, musicals, groups, and trips of which I have been a part since high school. As growing up and growing out catches up to me, I am not able to fit into any of those shirts from high school, or sadly even college. However, I can't part with these mementos of good times of many kinds.

Many years ago, my grandmother took my high school shirts and created a beautiful quilt to make my shirts, that were useless to me, become useful again. She later made one from my college shirts and this past Christmas my wife commissioned Heidi Bortner to turn our old camp shirts into a blanket as well. I hadn't given these quilts much thought until we moved into our new house in Spring Grove just a couple of months ago. With new bedroom assignments and beds to go with them, we needed to use these blankets that I have acquired. That first blanket from high school is now one of the covers on my son's bed to help keep him warm on our chilly nights.

I never would have thought the swimming or musical shirts I got while in school would someday help keep my kids warm. Judson finds the different patches of shirts interesting, but they simply don't mean to him what they mean to me. What it made me think about is the legacy that those shirts have and the ability to adapt to a new purpose.

***We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. (Psalm 78:4, NIV)***

We don't know what effect the works of our labors will have on the next generation. This view of the past affecting the present gives me more of a reminder to make sure I am investing in things that will have a lasting impact long after I am gone. I don't want my kids just to know about my school adventures. Those blankets will eventually be thrown away. The legacy Jesus can have on their lives and the lives of those they share Him with will last forever. What legacy are you leaving behind?