

Would You Believe?

December 2007



FROM THE PASTOR

My article this month consists of the outline for the sermon preached on 11-25, and can be used by you to follow while listening to this sermon on www.lopca.org, i.e., if you were not present on that Sunday. What better way to celebrate the birth of our Savior than to focus upon - -

The Essential Relationship between Discipleship, Repentance, and Spiritual Warfare

2 Peter 2:1

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

Psalms 19:7-14

The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. 8 The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. 10 They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. 11 Moreover, by them Thy servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward. 12 Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults. 13 Also keep back Thy servant from presumptuous sins; Let them not rule over me; Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be acquitted of great transgression. 14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Thy sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.

The necessity and nature of biblical discipleship

Necessity

“Listen to counsel and accept discipline, that you may be wise the rest of your days.” Prov. 19:20

Nature

Discipleship results in understanding, discernment, and wisdom/obedience.

Understanding, discernment, and wisdom/obedience results in discipleship.

The nature, necessity, and practice of repentance

The nature

Willingness to be changed by Christ with no conditions imposed by ourselves

Turn away from sin by embracing Christ and the changes He brings

The necessity

“I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” Lk 13:3

The practice of repentance

The necessity to repent of known (i.e., chosen) sin

“If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear.” Ps. 66:18

“If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 Jn 1:8-9

The necessity to repent of sins which are “hidden”

“hidden” because they are not discerned (verse 12 above)

The goal of spiritual warfare from Satan's perspective is to undermine personal spiritual health and vitality as well as the spiritual health and vitality of the church so that energy and focus must be devoted to correction instead of to progress. A tactic employed in spiritual warfare is to create known and unknown disobedience so as to complicate our relationship with God, with family members, and with fellow Christians.

Hidden sins result in presumptuousness which means:

1. To take for granted unjustifiably 2. To be arrogant enough to commit a wrong on purpose 3. To unjustifiably regard oneself as entitled to privileges (i.e., to presume on/upon). When presumptuousness remains unchallenged it becomes a part of a person's makeup and turns into a hidden sin in that the conscience becomes dulled and the danger is no longer detected. Presumptuousness then becomes arrogance.

"Blamelessness" (v 13 above) is not perfection, but freedom from bad conduct in the matter at hand. The necessity of an active self examining attitude and practice of repentance.

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer." (14)

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way." Ps 139:23-24

The calamity of surrender to the enemy in spiritual warfare

Active surrender, i.e., saying no to repentance

To do this is to join the enemy

In open rebellion

As an unwitting (1. not aware of the full facts. 2. unintentional.) accomplice, but an accomplice nevertheless.

Passive surrender, i.e., failure to pursue an active self examining attitude and practice of repentance

To surrender, either actively or passively, is to reject the "way of escape" promised and provided by God in 1 Cor. 10:13, and to actually participate with the enemy in producing the damaging effects of spiritual warfare.

Conclusion

"False prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves." 2 Pet. 2:1

We normally expect false teachers to be other people, but the truth is that we can be, and often are, our own false teachers. Therefore, remember that true discipleship produces understanding, discernment, wisdom, and repentance, and strengthens us for spiritual warfare.

"Thus says the LORD who made the earth, the LORD who formed it to establish it, the LORD is His name, 3 'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.' 4 'For thus says the LORD God of Israel concerning the houses of this city, and concerning the houses of the kings of Judah, which are broken down to make a defense against the siege mounds and against the sword, 5 'While they are coming to fight with the Chaldeans, and to fill them with the corpses of men whom I have slain in My anger and in My wrath, and I have hidden My face from this city because of all their wickedness: 6 'Behold, I will bring to it health and healing, and I will heal them; and I will reveal to them an abundance of peace and truth. 7 'And I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel, and I will rebuild them as they were at first. 8 'And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned against Me, and by which they have transgressed against Me. 9 'And it shall be to Me a name of joy, praise, and glory before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear of all the good that I do for them, and they shall fear and tremble because of all the good and all the peace that I make for it.'"

Call upon Christ for forgiveness, deliverance, restoration, protection, and effective resistance against the enemy in spiritual warfare.

Lynn Downing

Larry's Column

We are delighted that the Lord has added these wonderful friends to our church family.

Pascal and Pascaline (along with their son, Will), have finally been reunited as a family, having emigrated from Togo in West Africa. Pascal was minister of finance there, and is now overseeing the financial operations for a local security firm.

Dr. Olga Rybalkina is a sociology professor at Palm Beach Atlantic University where she also oversees international student relations. Olga grew up in eastern Ukraine. She and Henri Dietlin will be married here at LOPC on Saturday, December 15.

Judy Lehtinen is a resident of Singer Island and formerly a part-time student at Knox Theological Seminary. She will be traveling to Holland soon for the wedding of her son (a former Air Force pilot now flying for Southwest Airlines) to a lovely young lady from that country.

Mrs. Jean Archer grew up in New England attending a variety of churches. It was through Bible Study Fellowship that came to know Christ and settled into a Bible teaching church in New Jersey. She has found a home here with Leilou Brady's ladies' Bible study.

Mrs. Lynda Kupiec and her son, Sean, moved here from Michigan. She was befriended by Bryan and Melissa Backus, who invited her to our Wednesday dinners and then began meeting with her at her home to explain the Gospel, which she has now embraced.

Save These December Dates

(Post this reminder on your refrigerator door)

Sunday, Dec. 2, First Sunday In Advent

- 10:30 am – Morning worship
- 4:30 pm – Hanging of the Greens (decorating sanctuary)
- 6:00 pm – Christmas concert with Home School Choir

Saturday, Dec. 8

6:30 pm - Women in the Church “Christmas Glow”

Sunday, Dec. 9 Second Sunday In Advent

- 10:30 am – Morning Worship with the Lord's Supper ; special Christmas vocal music
- 5:00 pm – Outreach Covered Dish Dinner
(along with neighborhood association and Guatemalan congregation)
- 6:00 pm – Christmas music featuring choirs, soloists, bands

Friday, Dec. 14

7:00 pm - Youth Christmas Party at Gauger home

Saturday, Dec. 15

3:00 pm – Rybalkina / Dietlin wedding

Sunday, Dec. 16 ... Third Sunday In Advent

- 10:30 am – Morning Worship; special Christmas instrumental music
- 5:00 pm – Christmas caroling at homes of elderly *(followed by Christmas cookie “exchange”)*

Monday, Dec. 17

7:00 pm – Choir Christmas concert at Lakeside Village

Sunday, Dec. 23, Fourth Sunday In Advent

10:30 am – Morning Worship: Choir Christmas Cantata
- No evening service

Monday, Dec. 24 ... Christmas Eve

7:30 pm – Candlelight Service

Red Poinsettias will be used again this year to decorate our Sanctuary for Christmas. Please indicate your order and dedication on the blue attendance cards found in the pews (or on the web site) and place in the offering plate. The poinsettias will be in the Sanctuary beginning Sunday, December 9. The cost per plant is \$10.00.

Hanging Of The Greens

All of us add beautiful Christmas decorations to our own homes at this time of the year. We need you to help us add beautiful Christmas decorations to God's house, as well. There's a party atmosphere each year on this occasion as many hands join together in the sanctuary hanging garlands, stringing lights, arranging the nativity scene, and

decorating the Chrismon tree. We start at 4:30 on Sunday afternoon, December 2nd.

Then at 6:00, our evening service will once again be a wonderful program of Christmas music, provided by Dot Horstman and her home school choir. Refreshments will follow in the narthex. We need a large crew to accomplish this. It's a great time for families, so bring the kids. Then reserve Sunday evening, January 6th for the "boxing of the greens" to put them all away until next year.

Christmas Outreach Dinner

A major goal for LOPC this year is to cultivate an "outreach mentality." That's what the Christmas Outreach Dinner on December 9th is all about. We will hold a covered dish dinner in cooperation with the local neighborhood association ("Residents of Lake Osborne Heights" – ROLOH) and the Guatemalan congregation that meets in our church.

Dinner begins at 5:00. Bring several covered dishes so that we'll have ample food for our guests. Plan on sitting at a table with someone from the neighborhood rather than another church family. And if you live in the neighborhood, by all means invite your neighbors! That's what this is for!

After dinner, we'll move up to the sanctuary for a delightful time of singing carols and listening to talented musicians from our church. The choir will sing, and we'll feature vocal soloists as well as instrumentalists. We'll also be treated to music from the praise band from the Guatemalan congregation.

Please make this a priority. Every one of us needs to cultivate this "outreach mentality" and to make it a centrally motivating factor behind all that we do here at LOPC. Pray that through this dinner we might cultivate friendships with our neighbors that will lead them to discover God's saving grace in Christ.

Christmas Caroling For Elderly

Among the many Christmas season traditions, this is one of the most valuable. Mercy ministry is essential to the health of a church. God's word in many places tell us how important it is to Him that we care for widows and orphans. That translates today into loving attention to the elderly members

of LOPC, some of whom are no longer physically able to come on Sundays.

Bring your children along on Sunday evening, Dec. 16th so that they can experience that it is indeed "more blessed to give than to receive." We'll gather at church at 5:00 and then head out to sing carols at their doors. Bring some homemade Christmas cookies. We'll give some to those for whom we sing. Then we'll enjoy them ourselves back at church afterward. What's left over will be divided up for us to take to our own homes.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Without a doubt, the most beautiful service of the Christian worship year occurs on Christmas Eve. The candlelight ceremony provides a deeply moving picture of the truth that Christ is the Gospel-Light who has come into a sin-darkened world.

The service begins with a half-hour mini-concert of Christmas music at 7:00. Then the choir processional at 7:30 marks the opening of worship. This will again be a condensed version of the traditional British "Festival of Lessons and Carols."

Many who do not regularly attend church would welcome an invitation to this service. Take advantage of that to invite your neighbors to come with you. And pray that God would use the Scripture and sermon to open their hearts to His saving love.

The Gaugers

Jordan Gauger is playing the violin at her school (Trinity Christian Academy) and has a recital on 12/18! She also made the principal's honor roll and got to celebrate with a trip to Coldstone Creamery hosted by her principal, Mrs. Ansell, who just so happens to be Babe Ruth's father.

Jordan and Jenna are also enjoying taking gymnastics and are looking forward to a trip to Disney World with us, their grandparents (Wilsons) and their cousin, Kyle.

Larry Roff

Thanksgiving Giving

This Thanksgiving was a true blessing for me. I witnessed fellow brothers and sisters in Christ open their hearts so graciously to 22 homeless and needy people. I watched with tears in my eyes as they welcomed these people to our church with smiles, handshakes and a whole lot of great conversation. Although the turnout wasn't what I had originally anticipated, I soon realized that it was exactly what God had planned. My husband reminded me that 22 people ate a huge dinner that they may not have had if we weren't there, and that if one seed was planted for the kingdom, then the endeavor was a great success.

The leftovers were then taken by me, my mother and grandmother to Westgate, where there were more tears as we saw the reality of the despondency in our community. I have never met people more gracious and grateful as I did that day. So Lynn also reminded me that the ministry was just moving from LOPC to Westgate, but it was still there!

Thanks to all of you who contributed financially to help buy all of the food. I promise that your money was well spent and am very thankful for you.

The following people helped buy food, prepare, serve and greet and I absolutely could not have done it without you all: John and Donna Farley, Terry and Betty Kennedy, Ellen Pearl, Ron, Vicki and Amanda Backus, Tom and Betsy Dixon, Deena McCombs and Michaela Grimmig, Scott and Dorothy Wilson, Marge Sloate, Carolyn Kullmar, Thomas Kauper, Naila Nandlal, John Stelter, Buddy, Debbye and Caroline Tate, Becky Robertson, Lisa and Chris Lennon, Dianne Downing, Becky Forester, Mayetta Lee. Thanks, also to Elena Dumitrescu for her stunning violin music. We hope to hear her at LOPC soon!

I also want to thank the office staff for all of their help in setting up tables, preparing the drinks, ordering the banner and managing the Fund – your help was greatly appreciated and invaluable.

Love in Christ,

Christy Gauger

YOUTH PLUGGED IN

Dear Church Family,



Grace and peace to you! As we enter into this Christmas season, plans are underway for our youth Christmas party at Charlie Gauger's house on December 14, 2007 at 6:30 pm. It promises to be a great time as we will be calling it our "Winter Wonderfest" (we'll have to be creative to pull this off in South Florida, personally I was thinking more Christmas in Hawaii). We will have a White elephant exchange (which was a blast last year), Italian food, Karaoke, and Reindeer Games (be afraid.. be very afraid). We will also be taking a trip out to Westgate to drop off Christmas gifts for the children that you all have adopted, and perhaps set up a tree for them and sing some Christmas Carols.

We are also beginning to prepare for the second half of our season which we will kick off with a Lock-In from January 4-5, 2007. Last Year was an absolute blast and we are praying for the same this year. For the next half of the season we are anticipating continuing our bi-monthly trips to Westgate (thank you for your support and prayers) as well as our annual Rummage sale, our first annual Modesty and Purity Fashion Show, as well as several other events which promise to keep us on our toes.

Please pray as we continue to emphasize discipleship and mentoring which is so incredibly important especially when we consider the subtlety of our enemy. Consider that as we enter the Christmas season, there is a movie coming out, which is being marketed as a family film, which has strong atheistic themes. There have also been warnings about a new kind of drug being marketed to our children, appearing to be in the form of pop rocks. The attack on our children is increasing, and we must continue to recognize the importance of fighting this spiritual warfare with spiritual tools.

I would also like to personally request your prayers as my wife and I have decided that I will be leaving Knox Seminary. I have spoken to Pastor Larry and Lynn, and have been in prayer regarding finishing my degree by a series on on-line and intensive courses through Columbia International University. This change has been brought about for several

reasons, and we hope that it will allow us more flexibility and a better balance as we balance raising a family, youth ministry, and school. This has been a difficult decision, yet one we feel the Lord's leading in. Your prayers are coveted.

You've been plugged in!

*Love in Christ,
John, Tiffany, and Hannah
Matthew 5:16*

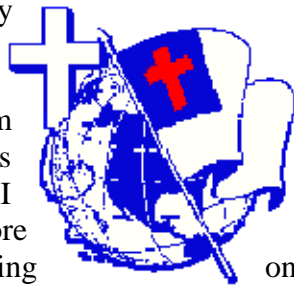
Missions

Every time I participate in what MTW does, I find they are first class, and really know what they are doing, and doing it very well.

Having just come back from their World Missions Conference held in Atlanta, I feel re-nourished and more confident about what is going on in the missions field. The Downings and I took the trip, and that added more pleasure to the event itself. No matter what else—that is one loong drive—nice to have good company. (Lynn and I must have talked too much—poor Dianne kept losing stitches in her knitting.) ... I digress.

The keynote speaker, so to speak, or featured preacher for the two worship programs was Dr. Richard Pratt. He was excellent and dynamic putting some focus and purpose on missions. His theme was that Missions must not be an add-on to the Church—it IS THE Church. Interestingly he pointed out that Mathew was not the first to record God's command to go into all the world and make disciples of everyone. Did you guess it was Moses in Exodus 1:28? We must understand how serious that command is. Not the least of which he pointed out our weakness in vision and commitment in evangelism compared to Islam. (Methods not withstanding.) Who is going to "subdue" all the earth, and "take dominion" over "every living thing."!?

It was great to talk to our connections with MTW staff, in particular, Bill Yarbough and Seth Wallace. It has long been my desire to bring MTW events and conferences down out of the beautiful mountains of South Carolina to the shores of south



Florida. Bringing their capabilities and programs closer so more of our congregation/you can attend and benefit from them.

Additionally, they are helping us through your committee to understand the finances of missionaries and the funding that we contribute so we can parcel it out more effectively.

It was a pleasure to meet the Aschmanns (Ecuador) again, Rick and Betty plus kids, and Bob and Joanne Tanzie (Spain), even Clay and Darlene Quarterman (Ukraine). All are well and we gave them our support from all of you. Tanzie's reported their financial support they are working on has climbed from 75% when they were at LOPC to 80% now, as they get closer to moving to Spain. Even with seeing so many familiar faces, it was interesting to make new friends.

Your committee met again on November 26 to deliberate on your behalf. Our big assignment right now is preparing for our 2008 Mission's Conference at LOPC. It comes fast and goes faster, but takes many months to put together.

Dick Miller

"Best of the Web"

What an amazing resource is available at our computer keyboard. In about 15 minutes, I can glance at e-mail from loved ones around the world; I can get an up-to-the-minute weather forecast without having to wait; I can click on traffic cameras to find the best route to take downtown; I can download lesson plans related to Caroline's home-school curriculum; I can print out a week's menu; I can check my bank balances and pay a bill; I can click on WRMB and listen to my husband's newscasts; and I can gaze at a new photo from my son in the Middle East. In addition, as an online medical and legal transcriptionist, I'm able to work in our family room for surgeons in South Carolina and lawyers in Tallahassee.

As wondrous as all that is, Lynn likes to remind us that the worldwide web was invented so that the Gospel could be propagated more efficiently.

With that in mind, here are some fabulous websites well worth your consideration when you're looking for inspiration and instruction:

1. www.lopca.org – You have to give our church staff (and Dave Livanec) kudos for the updated, fresh look to the entire site. Anything you want to know about LOPC can be found there. The photos are a riot (don't miss "The Frog"). The addition of the pastors' blog is extremely helpful and insightful.

2. www.decentfilms.com - Looking for a good movie to rent, but unsure? Check out this great site for hundreds of reviews of classic and current movies that are well worth your time. All are critiqued from a Christian worldview.

3. www.discerningreader.com - If you're a bibliophile with an insatiable appetite, reformed Christian and new author Tim Challies offers plenty of meat. Every Tuesday morning, he updates his latest book reviews, featuring the good and the bad in modern-day Christian publishing. Over on his blog at www.challies.com, we're all reading and discussing John Owen's classic, *Overcoming Sin and Temptation*. It's not the flashiest title; the Puritans aren't known for their flash and dash, but rather for their unwavering devotion to holy living.

4. www.cheapskatemonthly.com – Founder Mary Hunt is a genius at squeezing every last penny out of a dollar. She advises, pleads and informs about every aspect related to personal finance with lots of humor and love. She does it in a way that is understandable for non-financial types like me. Her site is loved by millions. Her monthly subscriber newsletter (either online or print) will save you a fortune.

That's it for now. Look for more great sites next time. –

Debbie Tate

THE NAVIGATOR

for Ralph Langley, 1915-2004

My father-in-law, thirty years an airline navigator in the days of compass and slide rule, loved to tell of the pilot who always set his coffee cup on top of the navigator's map, the navigator always asking the pilot to please remove the cup, out of respect for the map if not for him, as well as for practical reasons.

This one day, one leg of a long flight, it happened again, the pilot set his cup on the map.

Here, my father-in-law, ace navigator of story as of airplane, would pause.

Well, he would say, the navigator checked the fuel gauges, consulted the atlas, and calculated something on his clipboard.

After they landed, the pilot reviewed the logbook, asked why the flight had taken an hour longer than usual.

Wind, said the navigator, as the pilot understood they had flown around the cup.

*Suzanne Cleary
1315 Elm Street
Peekskill, NY 10566*

Would You Believe?

Peggy Bates	Church Secretary
Bill Campbell	Editor and Administrator
Lynn Downing	Senior Pastor
Shannon Bates	Maintenance Manager
Phil Elder	Maintenance
John Panico	Youth Ministry Intern
Larry Roff	Associate Pastor
Judy Smiley	Administrative Assistant

LOPC SPIRITUAL LIFE CONFERENCE

Friday through Sunday, January 18 – 20, 2008

with Guest Speaker Donald Whitney
author of *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*

This weekend conference is a major part of our on-going pursuit of church health here at LOPC. It will provide wonderful assistance to everyone who participates. The theme of godly living will be developed with very practical down-to-earth applications that fit every life, young or old, single or married, mature or new believer.

Don Whitney is Associate Professor of Biblical Spirituality and Senior Associate Dean at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He is the founder and president of The Center for Biblical Spirituality (www.BiblicalSpirituality.org).

His books on spiritual life have become “must-reads” and come highly recommended by such men as R. C. Sproul (*The Holiness of God*) and J. I. Packer (*Knowing God*). In fact, Packer says Whitney’s book on “Spiritual Disciplines” is one of the best things out there on that subject! Copies of his books will be available for purchase at the conference at discounted prices.

Here is the anticipated schedule for our weekend conference in January.

Friday evening

- Session 1 – The Discipline of Prayer
- Session 2 – The Discipline of Meditation

Saturday morning

- Session 3 – The Discipline of Journaling
- Session 4 – The Discipline of Fasting
- Session 5 – The Disciplines of Silence & Solitude

Saturday evening

- Covered dish dinner
- Session 6 – The Discipline of Family Worship

Sunday morning

- Session 7 – The Discipline of Learning (Sunday School hour)
- Session 8 – The Discipline of Corporate Worship (Worship service)

We will be inviting friends from the community and from area churches to join us. Since there will be printed hand-outs, we need to have registrations ahead of time. The registration fee will be a modest \$10/person, \$15/couple or family. Send checks to the church office (2101 Sixth Avenue South, Lake Worth, FL 33461), marking them as registration payment for the “Spiritual Life Conference.” You can tear off the form below and send it in with your check.

Name

Number attending conference

Address

Zip code

Email address

Phone number