

I JESUS L O R D



FCC Greenwood SC



...where strangers become family

WELCOME TO OUR NEWSLETTER!

Volume 2, Issue 2
February, 2016

Do you love me? Check "Yes" or "No"

The month of February is known as the "Love" month since Valentine's Day is the 14th. For many school children across the country, this is a time to trade cards and candies with those who are considered to be close friends.

I remember getting excited when I got a card from some of the more beautiful girls at school. Any other time of the year, I would not even be on their radar, but for that one day in February every year, I would feel special because of the cards.

Unfortunately, that special feeling began to fade when I thought about the fact that the cards were being given to everybody, and that feeling of being loved and accepted ended the next day. Isn't it wonderful that God refuses to be our Valentine? He doesn't wait until that special day every year to give us a card or a box of chocolates. Instead, He reminds us everyday of His love for us as we can live another day. Even though we are sinful creatures and deserve to be wiped out, God gives us a gift every day known as the "Present" and it is up to us how to live in the here and now.

Do we live like life is a gift from God or do we act like God owed us another day? Do we treat God like a Valentine and acknowledge once per year or do we come into His presence on a daily basis to say "Thank You" for another day of life?

"But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
(Romans 5:8 ESV)

Can we build it? Yes we can!
-Earl Winfrey

**A New Year
A New Attitude**

January:
3 - The Axe of the Lord (Matt 3)
10 - Salt and Light of the World (Matt 5:13-16)
17 - Required Righteousness (Matt 5:17-20)
24 - Be Perfect (Matt 5:21-48)
31 - Secret Service (Matt 6:1-18)

February:
07 - Treasure Hunting (Matt 6:19-34)
14 - Here Comes the Judge (Matt 7:1-6)
21 - The Golden Rule (Matt 7:7-12)
28 - Life is Hard (Matt 7:13-14)

March:
06 - A Secure Foundation (Matt 7:15-29)
13 - The Sign of a True Disciple (Matt 16)
20 - Fair Weather Fans (Matt 21:1-9)
27 - Victory in Jesus (Matt 28)

greatexpectations

FCC of Greenwood SC - www.fccgwd.org

Check us out online:

www.fccgwd.org

Facebook:

First Christian
Church Greenwood

Mkdisciples Study
Group

Early Morning
Snuggles

Address:

First Christian Church
474 Deadfall Road West
Greenwood SC 29646

Church Office:

864-223-2940

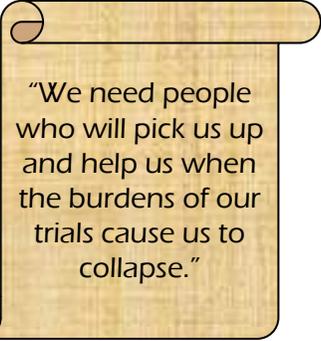
Please keep us
informed of any
address changes so
we can keep our
records up to date.

Lord of the Rings... and other things - Michael Winfrey

Do you have a favorite movie? I don't mean one that you just "like". I am talking about one that you could watch ALL THE TIME! For Wil, that would be all the "Star Wars" or any of the "Transformers" movies. Michaela's choice would be "Frozen". Earl would probably pick "Remember the Titans". For me, as if you couldn't guess by the title, would be the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy. When "The Fellowship of the Ring" came out, my sister and I decided to go see it and we both were immediately hooked. It seemed like years before "The Two Towers" came out. There was a midnight showing the night before it was released and we were there. I wasn't going to let a little thing like an 8am exam the next morning stop me! After eons and eons of waiting, "The Return of the King" released. This time, even a temperature of 104 was not going to keep me from missing out. You can call me crazy, but that is how much I enjoy these movies.

My favorite of the three would have to be "The Return of the King". It is my favorite because of one scene...just one scene grabbed my heart and wouldn't let go. Throughout these movies Frodo Baggins and Samwise Gamgee, two hobbits, were on a quest to return the one ring to the fires of Mordor so it could be destroyed. Frodo's job, his calling, was to carry this burden. This was a difficult job for such a small hobbit. Sam, being the faithful friend that he was, walked with Frodo the whole way.

The two brave hobbits make it to Mordor and after capture, escape, and exhaustion, Frodo could go no further. He was right there at the end of his journey and the burden of carrying the ring was so great, he couldn't move. Sam grabs Frodo and begins to reminisce about The Shire, their beloved home. Frodo had carried the ring for so long that he could no longer remember the loveliness of his home. All he could see was Sauron, the dark lord, who was trying to get the ring.



"We need people who will pick us up and help us when the burdens of our trials cause us to collapse."

I am watching this scene, the music is building, and then Sam says it...the words that get me EVERY TIME!!! He says, "Come on Mr. Frodo. I can't carry it for you...but I can carry you!" Sam, who has been with Frodo since the beginning, picks Frodo up and begins to carry him up the mountain. I can't count how many times I have seen this movie, yet I still get teary eyed at this scene.

The friendship between these two runs deep. We should all have friendships like that. Friends who will walk to and through the "fires of Mordor" with us. We need people who will pick us up and help us when the burdens of our trials cause us to collapse. For some of us, that person is our spouse. For others, it is a lifelong friend. No matter who the person is, the burdens that we carry become as light as a feather because we are not alone.

Thanks to God, we also have a friend who can help us on our spiritual journey. This may sound cliché, but we really do have a friend in Jesus because He has been to the place where we long to go. He is the ideal person to get us to our destination.

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:14-15 ESV)

Humility ~ an Award Series by Sara Lantzer

On my 35th birthday, I gave awards to my family members for helping me achieve certain qualities in my life. Brother Third received one titled Humility. (Please note that names have been changed to protect the identities of the superheroes around me!)

Matthew 18:4 - *"Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."*

Humility is often defined as a weakness, as an undesirable trait. This cannot always be the case, however, because Jesus encourages it, and models it Himself (just take a look at Philippians 2:8). Being humble has to do with your relationship to and among others, having a preference to bear injuries rather than return them. The opposite is arrogance, which promotes yourself above others either at their expense or contrary to reality. True greatness grows from the habit of humility.

Powerful, 3-word sentences I learned from my brother: I love you. I am sorry. Please forgive me. (These small phrases are often the hardest to say!)

Pharaoh was not willing to let go of his high position, even though God was actually his boss. (His arrogance destroyed him and his people.)

In the movie *One Night With The King*, Esther is forced from her lowly position into a close relationship with a king (She finds favor because of her humility, in contrast to the candidate from Persepolis who is gaudy and hoity-toity.)

But what if you ask for forgiveness, and are rejected? What if those in authority are enamored by the gaudy and glamorous? What if all your friends will desert you if you take a step towards the lowly? Has God been blinded by His Greatness? Has He become tired of lifting us humans up from the mire while He treads pathways of light?? Has He left us on our own to pursue relationships while tyrants backbite and slander and crush those under them on their way to the top??? Certainly NOT! Humans are very close to God's heart, and He cares about each and every one of them to the point of coming down from His position of peace and power to join us in our everyday lives that we might one day join Him in His everyday life.

We might be able to choose what to say or where to live or who to hang out with, but we can't choose the benefits or consequences that follow. Cultivate Humility!

Sara Lantzer is a good friend of the Winfreys and a member at the First Christian Church in Mountain City GA.



For this month's article, I decided to share a sermon I preached on Jan 26, 2014 at the First Christian Church of Mountain City GA. The title was "Excellence" from the series "God the Builder."

"Excellence" (Colossians 3:1-17)

Our God is an awesome God. Our God is an excellent God. Our God created an excellent church and our God created excellent people to serve in His excellent church. Let's think about how great God really is. Going back to Genesis 1, God took nothing and made something.

One day a group of scientists got together and decided that man had come a long way and no longer needed God. So they picked one scientist to go and tell Him that they were done with Him. The scientist walked up to God and said, "God, we've decided that we no longer need you. We're to the point that we can clone people and do many miraculous things, so why don't you just go on and get lost."

God listened very patiently and kindly to the man and after the scientist was done talking, God said, "Very well, how about this, let's say we have a man making contest." To which the scientist replied, "OK, great!"

But God added, "Now, we're going to do this just like I did back in the old days with Adam." The scientist said, "Sure, no problem" and bent down and grabbed himself a handful of dirt.

God just looked at him and said, "No. You go get your own dirt!"

I don't know about you, but there is no way I could create something out of nothing. I could go into a dark room, flip the switch while saying "Let there be light" and then the lights would come on. But other than that, my words are not that powerful. God spoke and the earth appeared. He spoke again and the land was established. He took dust and formed man, took the rib out of the man and formed a woman. Not only that, but He also gave man and woman the ability to create life on their own. And God did all of this before the end of the week.

Imagine how much stuff you could get done in a week if God was working for you! Our God is a God of excellence. Not only can He get things done quickly, but He is also perfect in the way He works. God's timing is perfect. He always knows what we need when we need it, and even though we may not agree with His decisions, He still looks for what is best for us instead of what we think we need in life. So here is my question. Since God is an excellent God and He is always taking care of us, shouldn't we be trying to do our best for Him? If we really love God the way we say we do, excellence should be our top priority so we can show God how much we appreciate His excellent ways.

If we are going to have excellence as our top priority, we need to take a close look at the way we live. And before we can look at the way we live, we need to remember who we are living for. Jesus gave us life by giving up His life. He set the example for us to follow, so we should be willing to live for Him. And if we are living for Him, everything we do should be excellent. In today's text, we will be looking at what the Apostle Paul had to say about our new life we have in Christ.

(To be continued on the next page...)

"A determined soul will do more with a rusty monkey wrench than a loafer will accomplish with all the tools in a machine shop." - Robert Hughes

(Continued from page 4)

I. Set your mind on things above (Read Colossians 3:1-4)

A. Focus on what you love - Our natural tendency is to lean towards that which we love. If you love cooking, you will most likely take the time to cook a meal rather than going to the drive thru on the way home. If you love working outside in the yard, you are probably looking forward to warmer weather so you can start getting ready for another season of landscaping. In both cooking and landscaping, if you love the activity, you usually focus on becoming better at what you do so you can enjoy the satisfaction of a job well done.

In the same way, if we love God, we will focus on things that are Godly, and that will motivate us to live a better life for Him. It's all about having the right attitude when approaching life. We have to learn to set our minds to living the way God told us to live if we want to live a life of excellence. Living a life of excellence means that we live on purpose for the Lord.

B. Live on purpose - In Daniel 6, we see the account of Daniel and the Lions' den. In this account, Daniel is living a life on purpose for God. Daniel lived the way God told him to live, and he was blessed by gaining a good reputation throughout the kingdom. (Read Daniel 6:4-5)

There was no doubt in the minds of Daniel's enemies that he was a man of God. And they also knew that there was no way to trap Daniel unless they figured out a way to stack the laws of the land against God's law. If Daniel had to choose between obeying man's laws or God's commands, he would choose God's commands every time, so his enemies were able to set a trap. However, their trap backfired when God saved Daniel from the Lion's den because of his refusal to crack under the pressure to obey the laws of the land.

Daniel held his ground and God rewarded him for living a life on purpose. He wasn't just obedient when everybody was fine with him being a Christian. He was obedient when it counted the most. People were watching to see what he would do, and he survived because of his excellent faith in God. So if you were faced with an accusation that you obey God's commands, would you be found guilty?

C. Remember who is in charge - God is the Creator. We are His creation. Creation does not demand from the Creator! God demands from us and we have the responsibility to obey Him. The reason why most of us are in this mess that we are in today is because we tend to have an issue with control. We don't want to let go and allow God to lead us because that means we have to give up control of our lives. But the sad part is that we blame God when our lives are messed up even though we never gave our lives to Him! We can't have it both ways, we either give our lives to God or we don't. You cannot hold God responsible for your life if you never give your life to Him.

(To be continued on the next page...)

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II. Put to death what is earthly (Read Colossians 3:5-11)

A. Death is final - In Hebrews 1, the writer talks about how Jesus upholds the universe by the word of His power. And the power of Jesus is the reason why we are able to conquer the sin in our lives. We have the power to live excellent lives free of sin as long as we understand that sin has no place in our lives.

In Colossians 3:5, the Apostle Paul says that we need to put to death what is earthly in us. Then he lists several examples of what is earthly so we can understand what he is talking about. The concept of death is that death is a permanent separation from what you put to death in your life. So if you put sin to death, it is final. You should not go back to your life of sin because it no longer exists thanks to Jesus. Of course the problem is that we don't understand this, and that's why we keep going back to the same old rut we were in before we met Jesus. And we will never pull out of that rut as long as we settle for what we think is good. We need to do better than that. We need to focus on living the best life we can live for Christ because He deserves our very best we have to offer.

B. Don't settle for mediocrity - In Hebrews 8, the writer explains that Jesus is our High Priest for the new covenant. The old covenant was not good enough because it was never meant to be a permanent solution to our sin problem. While God's people were under the Old Covenant, priests had to offer sacrifices for their own sins before they could offer sacrifices on behalf of the people. Those sacrifices were needed every year because they never did away with the sin. The sacrifices rolled over the sin so it had to be dealt with the next year.

The old covenant was a mediocre system that eventually became nothing more than mindless rituals performed with insincerity. The new covenant is a covenant of excellence because it completes the process of cleansing us from our sin. And since we live under the new covenant, we should live a life of excellence so we can show the world who we belong to.

C. Who do you belong to? - (Who owns you?) In Psalm 150, we are reminded that we need to praise the Lord for everything He has done. We should have an attitude of praise because He is the One who gives us life. As long as there is breath in our bodies, we should praise the Lord because He is the One who gave us the air that we breathe. As long as there are instruments to play, we should praise the Lord with those instruments because He is the One who gave us the materials and resources needed to create those instruments. And as long as we have the ability to play the instruments, we should praise God for creating us with the intelligence to learn new things and develop our skills so we can create music.

(To be continued on the next page...)

"Our attitude towards God affects the way we serve Him at church. If we approach God with the attitude that He deserves our very best, then we will do our very best while serving Him at church. We should expect excellence in everything we do because that is what God deserves."

(Continued from page 6)

III. If you want to live a life of excellence, put on the new self (Read Colossians 3:12-17)

A. Expect excellence in everything - Excellent = extremely good: of a very high quality or standard. Other words to describe excellence = outstanding, brilliant, exceptional, first-rate, admirable, superb, tremendous

Do those words describe your life? Do those words describe your relationship with God? Do those words describe our church? If they don't, perhaps it is time for us to step up and pursue excellence as God's people. In Exodus 19, Moses is getting ready to have an encounter with God on behalf of the Israelites. We see God laying out the rules for how they were to prepare themselves and the punishment of death for those who do not follow through with the rules. In other words, if you want to have this encounter with God, you must follow His rules.

When we gather together every week to worship God, do we expect an encounter with Him? Do we look for God in our church service? Do we see God in our church service? I'm not talking about a pseudo-spiritual emotion filled circus act that confuses everybody. I'm talking about a life changing experience with God that motivates us to do something different with our lives. If we don't come to church expecting this to happen, then we shouldn't be disappointed if we don't recognize God working in our lives.

Our attitude towards God affects the way we serve Him at church. If we approach God with the attitude that He deserves our very best, then we will do our very best while serving Him at church. We should expect excellence in everything we do because that is what God deserves.

We don't have to be the best church in the area, but we should strive to be the best church that we can be. God is a God of excellence; therefore we should make it a priority to be a church of excellence.

B. Avoid apathy always - Yesterday, I had the privilege of attending the memorial service for Paul Carrier. If you remember, he is the one who lead our men's retreat and preached for us a couple of years ago. At one point during the service, one of the speakers asked the people to stand who have been encouraged in some way by Paul Carrier, and most of us stood. Throughout the 50 plus years of ministry, he never once had an apathetic attitude towards serving God, and the service yesterday proved this fact. If you want to make a difference for the church, you must avoid apathy always.

C. We need to commit the Church to Christ - People will notice if the church is not an excellent church for the Lord. They can pick up on the negative energy that is generated when people are discouraged. They can see the body language of those who are just going through the motions. They can tell if the service was thrown together that morning or if somebody took the time to plan ahead. If the church is not an excellent church for the Lord, that church will stick out like a sore thumb because it is a very awkward church.

Let's make sure we never become that church. Our church is committed to Christ, and we need to make sure we keep it that way. We serve an excellent God, and He deserves our very best effort at all times no matter what we are doing.

(Read Colossians 3:16-17 again) Before we can become a church of excellence, we have to be a people of excellence. And the only way we can become a people of excellence is if we each commit to being the very best we can be for the Lord. Can we make a decision to be excellent for the Lord?

92 Year Old Preacher

(Taken from public domain)

While watching a little TV on Sunday instead of going to church, I watched a church in Atlanta honoring one of its senior pastors who had been retired many years. He was 92 at that time and I wondered why the church even bothered to ask the old gentleman to preach at that age. After a warm welcome, introduction of this speaker, and as the applause quieted down, he rose from his high back chair and walked slowly, with great effort and a sliding gait to the podium. Without a note or written paper of any kind he placed both hands on the pulpit to steady himself and then quietly and slowly he began to speak....

"When I was asked to come here today and talk to you, your pastor asked me to tell you what was the greatest lesson ever learned in my 50-odd years of preaching. I thought about it for a few days and boiled it down to just one thing that made the most difference in my life and sustained me through all my trials..

The one thing that I could always rely on when tears and heartbreak and pain and fear and sorrow paralyzed me...

The only thing that would comfort was this little song:

"Jesus loves me this I know.
For the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to Him belong,
We are weak but He is strong.....
Yes, Jesus loves me....
The Bible tells me so."

The old pastor stated, "I always noticed that it was the adults who chose the children's hymn 'Jesus Loves Me' (for the children of course) during a hymn sing, and it was the adults who sang the loudest because I could see they knew it the best."

"Here for you now is a Senior version of Jesus Loves Me":

Jesus loves me, this I know,
Though my hair is white as snow
Though my sight is growing dim,
Still He bids me trust in Him.

When the nights are dark and long,
In my heart He puts a song..
Telling me in words so clear,
"Have no fear, for I am near."
(CHORUS)

(CHORUS)

YES, JESUS LOVES ME.. YES, JESUS LOVES ME..
YES, JESUS LOVES ME, FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO.

When my work on earth is done,
And life's victories have been won.
He will take me home above,
Then I'll understand His love.
(CHORUS)

Though my steps are oh, so slow,
With my hand in His I'll go
On through life, let come what may,
He'll be there to lead the way.

(CHORUS)

I love Jesus, does He know?
Have I ever told Him so?
Jesus loves to hear me say,
That I love Him every day.
(CHORUS)

Bible Trivia Questions (Send answers to Earl)

Answer to last month's question: Samson killed the people in the temple by pushing the pillars over and causing the Temple to collapse (Judges 16:30)

Winners: Larry La Douceur/Freda Austin/Michael Winfrey

This month's question:

What happened to Elimelech in Moab?



Be one of the first 3 people to answer correctly and you will be a winner!

"Pray for FCC"

For 2016, we want to cover our church in prayer on a weekly basis. Along with the many prayers that go up on our behalf, I am declaring every Tuesday to be a day for us to offer up special prayers specifically for our church. Please join us by praying at some point every Tuesday!



First Christian Church Greenwood SC

...where strangers become family



FAVORITE SOUP SUPPER AND CAKE WALK

(Annual Fund Raiser)

When: Saturday, February 6 @ 6pm

Where:

First Christian Church
474 Deadfall Road West
Greenwood, SC 29649
www.fccgwd.org

Cost: \$5 per person, \$15 per family, \$.25 (Cake Walk)

On February 12 @ 6:00pm, we have been invited to see Cole Austin (Freda's Grandson) in "Hallelujah Girls," a school play at Anderson Christian School. For more information about the school, here is their website:
<http://acslions.publishpath.com/>

"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." - Romans 12:12 (NIV)

Don't forget to pray for those churches around us and near our hearts!

Bethany Christian Church (Bumpass, VA)
Christian Church at Deleon Springs, FL
Christ Church Forgiveness (Greenwood, SC)
East Win Christian Church (Memphis, TN)
First Christian Church of Fairburn, GA
First Christian Church of Hampton, SC
First Christian Church of Kissimmee, FL
First Christian Church of Mountain City GA

Hartford Christian Church (Hartford, KY)
Lilburn Christian Church, GA
Port Orange Christian Church, FL
Rabun County Church of Christ (Tiger, GA)
Southlake Christian Church (Groveland, FL)
Toccoa Christian Church (Toccoa, GA)
Tomoka Christian Church (Ormond Beach, FL)
Tucker Christian Church, GA

If anyone knows of any churches that need to be added to this list, be sure to let Earl know.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - FEBRUARY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Sunday: S.S. - 9:45am Worship - 11am Wed - 6:00pm	1 Matthew 19:16-30	2 (Pray for FCC) Luke 12:13-21	3 Luke 12:22-34 Elders Meeting after Bible Study	4 1 Timothy 6:1-10	5 1 Timothy 6:11-21	6 (Matt 6:19-34) Favorite Soup Supper and Cake Walk @ 6:00pm
7 Circle of Joy at the church 1:30pm	8 Romans 2:1-11	9 (Pray for FCC) Romans 2:12-16	10 Romans 14:1-12	11 Romans 14:13-23	12 (James 4:1-12) Anderson Christian School play 6:00pm (Cole Austin)	13 Matthew 7:1-6
14 Valentine's Day	15 (Luke 11:9-13) Winfreys at Barnabas Retreat (15th-18th)	16 (Pray for FCC) Matthew 22:34-40	17 Romans 12:1-8	18 Romans 12:9-21	19 Romans 13:8-14	20 Matthew 7:7-12
21	22 Psalm 16	23 (Pray for FCC) Luke 13:22-30	24 John 14:1-14	25 John 15:18-27	26 James 1:2-18	27 Matthew 7:13-14
28 Family Meal after Worship	29 Matthew 12:33-37	"Pray for FCC" is a reminder for us to pray for our church every Tuesday	Daily Scriptures are given for us in anticipation of the sermon the following Sunday	(TBD) Worship with Winfreys at Magnolia Manor - 10:00am	Magnolia Manor is a nursing home in Greenwood	



First Christian Church of Greenwood SC (864) 223-2940 www.fccgwd.org

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