



## THE DOVE MARCH 2016

**Hello Church,**

**I hope you all have had a blessed and meaningful Lent that has led you into a closer relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and a greater understanding of God's ongoing presence in your life. As I write this letter we are in the middle period of this season of preparation, which means the joy of Easter will be upon us soon! But, we are not there yet. There is a vast array of emotions to go through before we get there. We have to experience the worst we can be and the best we can be. We have to follow Christ through the celebration of Palm Sunday and into the tragic events of Holy Week before we experience the Resurrection anew. Being in this position gives us a wonderful opportunity to appreciate the fullness and exactness of God's redemptive plan for us. Every moment, every person, each part had to unfold exactly how it did in order to lead Jesus to the cross and out of the tomb. For God to orchestrate all that He did in what comes ahead, to incorporate all that He did into His plan is truly an incredible thing!**

**In a lot of ways we may wonder how exactly we are supposed to follow in the footsteps of Christ, especially in reading the accounts of the end of His earthly ministry. There is one quality of Christ, a vital part of how He approached ministry that is definitely within our grasp. The quality I am talking about is to approach our faith and life itself with a plan based in obedience and responding to the leading of the Holy Spirit. When Peter preached to the people about Jesus on Pentecost He said to them, "This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put Him to death by nailing Him to the cross" (Acts 2:23). Nothing that Jesus said or did was simply off the cuff,**

**even when He was confronted with the evil and callousness of the world around Him. It all led Him to the cross; there was no such thing as a wasted moment or missed opportunity for Jesus Christ. How often do we approach life with Christ with the same passion and purpose?**

**If you're anything like me, the honest answer to that question isn't one you like. We let so much get in the way of experiencing Christ as intimately as we could and reflecting His light as greatly as we should. Our lives are too precious a gift to let them be dictated by chances, whims, and what the world throws at us on a given day. The pillars and great evangelists of our faith from Paul, John Wesley, Billy Graham, and so many others lived with an all-encompassing commitment to Christ and their testimonies and ministries continue to speak to it. People knew where they stood, how they lived, and followed them for it. That's within our reach! We can do that as individuals and a church! All it takes is prayer, preparation, listening, and then moving! Doing! We're not meant to fumble around and stumble into glorifying God. There's a next step for all of us, and then one after that which builds upon it, and so on and so on for all of our days. As we step into this Spring season of new life, I ask you all to prayerfully consider what claiming a new life in Christ looks like for you and our church. What plan is Christ unfolding and laying out for you in your own life? There is a plan for our church also, and it is my utter hope and sure desire that we would begin to discern it and pursue it not for our sake alone, but for the spread of the Gospel everywhere we can take it. Be passionate, be excited, and be purposeful and hopeful because Christ is waiting for us to join Him in the work ahead!**

**Blessings, Pastor Brad**

## **WESLEY HALL SUPPLIES NEEDED**

Wesley Hall is in need of the following consumable supplies, used to support various events such as funerals, etc. Donation of the following items would be greatly appreciated:

1qt. Ziplock bags

1 gal. Ziplock bags

Paper towels (roll-type)

Donated items can be left in the kitchen. Thanks in advance for your help in this effort.

## **A Prayer to share from Catholic Relief Services (Nicaragua) called:**

### **Giving Thanks**

I give you thanks, LORD, for my perfect arms, when so many have suffered mutilation.

For my perfect eyes, when so many cannot see.

For my voice that sings, when so many are reduced to silence.

For my hands that work, when so many beg.

O wondrous LORD, to have a home to return to, when there are so many brothers and sisters who have nowhere to go.

To smile, to dream, to love, when so many cry and so many hate.

Above all, to have little to ask for and so much to thank you for.

**WHERE WERE YOU?** UMW had our meeting Tuesday, March 1 and we missed you. Mark **TUESDAY, APRIL 5, at 10 AM** on your calendar so you don't miss our next meeting. We'd love you to join us.

## **UMW**

UMW has a beautiful woman (Lois) who has been called by God to use her talents to support our fund raiser. She makes gorgeous framed, lighted Christmas trees, stars and crosses. Samples will be available at Coffee and Conversation March 20. They are \$40 each. There will be order forms available so you can describe your choices of color, battery lights or plug-in, etc. We intend to use these funds as a donation to the church to be used as needed.

Marie Meyer

## **A quote from The Purpose Driven Life**

**By Rick Warren**

Who are you going to live for? What are you going to build your life around? You can center your life around your career, your Family, a sport or hobby, money, having fun, or many other activities. These are all good things, but they do not belong at the center of your life. None is strong enough to hold you together when life starts breaking apart. You need an unsinkable center.

King Asa told the people of Judah "to center their lives in God."

Actually, whatever is at the center of your life IS your god!

When you committed your life to Christ, He moved into the center, but you must keep Him there through worship.

Paul says, "I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts."

## Revival Part 2

By Ed Thornton

### What does the NT say about individual revival? – The Compromising Church

Read Revelation 2:18-29.

The outstanding characteristic of Thyatira was the large number of trade guilds that flourished there. These trade guilds posed a special problem for the Christians of Thyatira. These guilds represented different trades in the city but they were much more than that, the guilds operated much as service clubs do today – the AARP, the Lions Club, and the Rotary Club - so their influence in the community was substantial.

The guilds often held common meals, which more often than not happened in a temple and would begin and end with a formal sacrifice to the various gods. The meat served during the meals would have been meat offered to one god or another. And if that wasn't bad enough the meals often became an excuse for excess and often degenerated into immorality.

There were two sides to this church. First there was the faithful Church. Christ, the author of this chapter, says: "I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance ...." Christ praises this church for her works. This is a church that does good and righteous deeds. This is a church that looks after widows and orphans, that feeds the hungry, that gives water to the thirsty, clothes the naked, that cares for the sick, that visits the prisoners. It is a church with an open heart. Christ also points to the church's perseverance. This church patiently awaits the second coming of the Lord. The church of Thyatira has more deeds, more love and faith, more service and perseverance, than she had at first. There was progress in the life of this church. Yet there is another side to the church of Thyatira. It was a compromising Church. Praise

isn't all that the Lord gives to the church of Thyatira. Jesus says, "Nevertheless, I have this against you. You tolerate that woman Jezebel ...." We can safely assume that Jezebel is not the real name of the woman Jesus is speaking against. The name is symbolic of who teachings the church is following.

Details about the Biblical Jezebel are revealed in 1 Kings. She was the pagan daughter of a pagan king who introduced Baal's worship and Baal's prophets into the northern kingdom of Israel after she married King Ahab. Ahab was the seventh King of Israel. He reigned for 22 years from 871-852 BC.

Jezebel killed the prophets of the Lord; she tried to kill Elijah; she urged her husband to do evil in the eyes of the Lord. In marrying Jezebel Ahab compromised his religious principles. Ahab compromised in order to fit into the culture of his day. And as a result great evil was introduced into Israel.

The "Jezebel" of Thyatira introduced a foreign teaching into the church, a teaching of the religion of the current culture. She taught the teachings of the Nicolaitans. The Nicolaitans said it was permissible for Christians to participate in the pagan feasts, worship, and the sexual immorality of the common trade guild meals. These exact two things were specifically prohibited by the first church council of Jerusalem. Gentile converts had to abstain from these acts as spelled out in Acts Chapter 5.

Why did the church of Thyatira tolerate and even follow this evil woman and her teachings? The church made a compromise with the current religion of culture for the sake of security and prosperity. They want to be liked by the society they lived in. They made just a few "little" compromises here and there to gain acceptance in their society. Christ speaks boldly against any such compromises. He declares such compromises are fatal. There can be no

**compromise at all with the forces of darkness. Yet Jesus gave the Jezebel of Thyatira time to repent of her immorality. He said I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.**

**Always remember God does not tolerate any compromise with the forces of darkness. The church's mission is to be faithful to the Lord and is not to give itself away by compromising any part of what it believes.**

**So what does Jesus want the church of Thyatira to do? He says: "Only hold on to what you have until I come". "Hold on." Grasp. Seize. Don't let go. They are to hold onto His Biblical truths. He tells them to keep their grip on those Biblical truths. How do the believers of Thyatira do this? How do they maintain a pure Christian faith? How do they keep themselves from being defiled and tainted by the world? Jesus has only one answer: Read the Word, Read the Word, Read the Word. This is the only thing to do.**

**You don't need to become an expert in the cultural religions of the world to know they are wrong; you need only to know the Word of God. You don't need to bow before false gods; you need only to read the Word. You don't have to wonder about what is the right thing to do when the religion of culture confronts you; you need only to spend time with the Word. All that you have to do, the only thing to do, is to spend time with the Word.**

**We have our "Jezebels" today in the religion of our culture. Do you know what happens to today's Jezebel? She is put on TV. Her books are for sale on Amazon.com. She speaks at national religious conferences on being open-hearted. She**

**is a guest on The View or the Steven Colbert Show. You will hear her messages spread by the media.**

**Next Jesus' call to the church of Thyatira promises blessing. He makes two promises to those who overcome, to those who don't bow before the altar of the religion of culture. The first promise is: "To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations ... just as I have received authority from my Father". Remember, the Son of God is King. Jesus begins and ends His letter to Thyatira speaking of His rule, His reign, His Kingdom, His authority. Why is this important? Because someday the Kingdom of God will be the only kingdom that will exist and all God's enemies will be destroyed.**

**The second promise for overcomers is: "I will also give him the morning star." Jesus promises overcomers the gift of the bright morning star. The promise of the gift of the bright morning star is the gift of Jesus Himself. Overcomers will have Christ in all His fullness, all His glory, all His wisdom, all His power, all His majesty, all His grace, all His love protecting them. He will be with them and never leave them.**

**Christ's ends this call to the church of Thyatira with a final command: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."**

**The biggest threat facing Christianity today is compromise with the religion of culture. Don't forget, it was the believers of God in Thyatira who were misled by Jezebel into compromising their faith. These servants of the Lord had deeds, love, faith, service, and perseverance and were growing in these. Yet they compromised with the world's culture of religion to fit in, to be accepted. For all around us today there are those who urge us to compromise and accommodate ourselves to our world's religion of culture. But once you start to compromise, where do you stop?**

**Remember:** revival comes from two sources. First there is the revival of the leaders of the church. The challenge for today's church leaders is the same as in Hezekiah's time. They are called to spiritual revival; a time to repent and return, a time to rededicate themselves to the Lord and His Biblical truths based upon separation, surrender, and sacrifice.

Second there is the revival of individual believers. Personal revival can only come when we stop compromising with the religions of culture. Keep your grip on the truth of God's Word. Read the Word, follow the Word.

Remember Jesus' two promised blessings First, "To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations ... just as I have received authority from my Father". Why is this important? Because someday the Kingdom of God will be the only kingdom that will exist and all God's enemies will be destroyed.

Second, "I will also give him the morning star. The gift of the bright morning star is Jesus promising Himself, supporting and protecting the overcomers. Why is this important? Jesus is King of Kings, if He is with us who can stand against us.

## **Why Nobody Wants To Come To Church Anymore 3**

A Synopsis By Ed Thornton

### **Chapter 5: Act Of Love # 1 Radical Hospitality**

#### **What's So Compelling About Radical Hospitality?**

People who demonstrate this Act of Love are open to loving others without judging or looking down on them. They look past differences.

Radical Hospitality really does welcome people just as they are.

#### **Jesus-Style Radical Hospitality**

Matthew 7:1-2 "Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. For you will be treated as you treat others. In essence Jesus says, "You're welcome just as you are." Throughout His ministry, Jesus embraced despised prostitutes, cheating tax collectors, smelly fishermen, and all manner of sinners.

#### **How To Recognize Radical Hospitality**

Radical hospitality is:

Authentically welcoming others and being glad to be with them.

Caring curiosity - an interest in connecting.

Being a friend even through it's not your "job."

Accepting, no matter what.

Profoundly relational the Bible commonly uses relational phrases like parent/child, branch/vine, sheep/shepherd.

Something that takes time.

Unnerving, surprising, and messy.

Radical Hospitality is not:

Greeters at the door

Meet-and-greet time in the service

Coffee and doughnuts or an espresso bar

Parking lot attendants

A come-to-our deal event

Bait and switch

Guest book signing

Awarding prize points for bringing visitors

A strict list of "approved" stuff

Scripted conversations.

Now that you have a better understanding of WHAT radical hospitality is, next month we'll review Chapter 6: Practical Ways To Love With Radical Hospitality.

## **Loving Care**

Loving Care is a ministry at Millville UMC that lends a helping hand to those in need of some assistance following an illness, surgery, injury or loss. A need can be something as seemingly small as a phone call, card, or visit, or something more time intensive like preparing a meal, running errands, or providing transportation. The intention of Loving Care is not to take the place of caregivers, but to give them and the recipient a break from their daily routine and to let them know that we love them and want to help them through a difficult period of time in their lives. We do not ask volunteers for this ministry to do anything that would compromise the safety of either party.

**What Now?** Many of our original helpers in this ministry have passed on, moved or are no longer able to serve in this capacity. We need new faces and are asking everyone, men and women, to prayerfully consider what they can do to help. The more volunteers we have, the better able we are to serve one another and to follow God's command to love one another.

If you have any questions or would like to be a part of this ministry, please give us a call.

Loving Care Committee,

Elizabeth Skinner – 732-9684

Marilyn Ferry – 539-9598

Nancy Bowers – 1-410-598-5600

## **LIVING LAST SUPPER**

Thanks to the great guys who will be bringing to life the lives of the apostles. Hope everyone will be there to see and enjoy their efforts. Remember!!!  
March 23<sup>rd</sup> and March 24<sup>th</sup>. 7 P.M.  
Hope to see you there.  
Marianne Smith

## **Memorial Bricks**

If you would like to order a Memorial Brick for \$ 60.00, please see or call Joe Skinner at 302-732-9684

