



THIS ISN'T ALL THERE IS

The following is an excerpt from our late pastor David Kester's sermon of April 11, 2004. David's father Roger died 4 days after this sermon was delivered. David died a little over 4 years after he spoke these words.

1 Corinthians 15:54-57... When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This has been a difficult week for the Kesters. Monday was an especially difficult day. My dad has been in the critical care unit at St. Mary's hospital. Monday night, the doctors told us that he might not survive the night. Dad's kidneys had shut down; he was on a ventilator; he couldn't maintain blood pressure. Around 11:30pm, some of us were sitting out in the hallway around the corner from the waiting room when Nathan and Andrea [my nephew and niece] arrived. Both of them were in tears. I stood up to hug Nathan; I didn't know what else to do. Nathan's gotten to be a big man. It has been a long time since someone was big enough to engulf me in a hug but Nathan did. We were just hanging on to each other. Nathan was crying. I was thinking I have to say something but I wasn't sure what to say. I couldn't say, "Dad's going to get better." Even though he has improved, we still don't know that. Besides even if he recovers this time, we know the day is coming when he will not recover. That day is coming for all of us. Unless Jesus comes first, every one of us will face death. That is the reality of living in a fallen world. I wasn't sure what to say to Nathan. Finally, I said, "This isn't all there is."

I don't know if Nathan even heard me. I was talking to myself as much as I was talking to him. What I meant was that even if my dad died it wasn't the end, not for him, not for me, not for my mom, and not for Nathan. Grief, pain, death are not the final words. I can say with confidence, "This is not all there is." There is more to life than our time on this earth and then death. This life is not all there is. I can say that with full confidence because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the promise that He is the first fruits of a great harvest that is still to come, the promise that as He was raised, so we too will be raised. I didn't know if my dad would survive the night. I do know that he will be raised to live eternally in the presence of Christ for that is the promise of God. And the resurrection of Jesus is God's guarantee that He will keep His promise.

I imagine I will cry when my dad dies. My brother John and I were talking about that. We've decided that we want to do the funeral service for my dad. We were talking about that and what would happen if when we got of front the congregation and we couldn't talk? What if we got one of those huge big lumps in our throat and started to cry? We decided we'd just stand there until we could talk. We decided one other thing too, that while we might grieve, we would not grieve like those who have no hope. For the promise of God, made sure in the resurrection of Jesus is that death has been defeated.

The day is coming when I will lay down my body to take up one that is brand new, imperishable and incorruptible. Imagine that, no aches and pains, no struggle to climb the stairs, no winces or grimaces, no backaches, no struggle to see what is too far away or strain to read things close up. We will have new bodies, ones that will not betray us by wearing out or growing old. Every one of us is going to be changed. The dead will be raised, and if we are still living when Christ returns, we too will be changed

in a moment – in the twinkling of an eye. We will be changed. I don't know if you'll even recognize me when you see me on that day. For I will not be the same David, you see standing here this morning. I will be changed, transformed, clothed in the glory of Christ inside and out. I hope you understand that the day is coming, when you will not be what you are either – nor will those seated around you.

The battle will be over. Our struggle with sin will be done. I can't tell you how much I long for that day. Sometimes I get so tired of fighting, of being tempted by things I thought I'd beaten long ago. I look forward to the day when the battle is over. The resurrection of Jesus is the harbinger of that day. Jesus won the first victory over death and sin. He won the first victory but not the last for the day is coming when we will win too.

I received a Resurrection Greeting from Dale Marshall this week. He said, "The theme that keeps going through my mind is that as a Christian, resurrection means us, not just Jesus." We do not only celebrate Christ's resurrection, we also look forward to our resurrection. Resurrection means us. Sometimes I forget how important that is. You don't forget when you are waiting and wondering if your dad is going to make it through the night. The resurrection is what gives us hope when everything seems hopeless.

Twenty-four years ago, my dad was in the hospital. We didn't know if he would live. (It has been kind of a recurring theme in our family.) During that time, I received a card from Shirley [friend]. I don't remember much of what she wrote. I remember this line. She wrote, "Remember the resurrection." Remember the resurrection. Remember the resurrection means you and me. The resurrection means Roger Kester and David Kester and Nathan Howells and it means you. Jesus is the first fruits of a great harvest. This life is not all that there is. Death is not the victor. "Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Remember the resurrection.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS for FEBRUARY 2009

- Building Offering – February 8
- Dorcas Fellowship – February 10
- Church Board Meeting – February 10
- Bible Study – February 11*
- Movie Night "Prince Caspian" – February 15
- March Newsletter articles due – February 19
- Ladies Nite Out – February 19*
- 7th-12th Graders Youth Group – February 22
- Bible Study – February 25*

All events are at the church building unless otherwise noted.

* Indicates an article is elsewhere in this newsletter.

COMING IN MARCH

- Minnesota Christian Convention,
St. Cloud, MN, Civic Center, March 6-7*
- Father/Daughter Purity Ball,
Mankato, MN Alltel Center, March 7*
- 30-Hour Famine for 7th-12th Youth, March 20-21

WEDNESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY **Everyone & Anyone Is Welcome**

We have been studying "*Beginning Life Together*" on God's purpose for your life. The evening includes a short video presentation, Bible study, discussion and prayer. Please join us at the church on Wednesday, February 11 & 25 at 6:30pm.

LADIES NITE OUT

Once a month, on the third Thursday of each month, ladies of all ages gather in one of the area eating establishments at 6:00pm for a meal and fellowship. On Thursday, February 19, at 6:00pm, we will be meeting at China Buffet on Madison Avenue in Mankato. Come and enjoy the food and fellowship!

THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who provides us each Sunday with Fellowship Snacks. It is greatly enjoyed and appreciated. Yum!

MINNESOTA CHRISTIAN CONVENTION

Do You Need Renewal in Your Life...

Purpose, Community, Joy, Passion, Faith, Vision, Hope, Walk with Christ ???

Come and celebrate our 2009 theme "**GOD OF RENEWAL**" at the Minnesota Christian Convention on March 6 & 7, 2009, at the St. Cloud Civic Center in St. Cloud, MN. The annual event is really THREE conventions in one! The **ADULT CONVENTION** has Mike Kilgallin, President of Crossroads College, as its featured speaker for the main sessions. Workshops covering a variety of topics are also scheduled. It is a great opportunity for convention goers to connect with Crossroads College, MCEA, Pine Haven, and many brothers & sisters in Christ. The **TEEN CONVENTION** will feature SNO-FEAST, "Fireside," and time on "Faith Means DO." The **CHILDREN'S CONVENTION** for kids from ages 4 - Grade 6 has age appropriate classes, games, fun and snacks. A **NURSERY** is provided for the entire Convention for infants through 47 months. The Minnesota Christian Convention website at <http://www.mnconvention.org/> has complete information, including downloadable forms. Also, our church bulletin board has posted convention details, including registration information and housing possibilities.

FATHER / DAUGHTER PURITY BALL 2009

Date/Time: Saturday, March 7, 2009 – 5:00-10:00pm

Place: Alltel Center, 1 Civic Center Plaza, Mankato, MN

Daughter's ages: 12 years and older *Attire:* Formal / Semi Formal

Cost: Tickets \$30 per person before Feb 21 and \$40 per person after Feb 21

Information: Call (507) 327-7047; email purityball@myclearwave.net; website www.purityballmn.org

What is a Purity Ball?

This Christ-centered event is designed to encourage and support the father/daughter relationship, facilitate discussion and prayer, strengthen their relationship and provide them with an avenue to commit themselves to living a pure life. This special evening will also entertain, educate and provide them with life-long memories.

MISSION NEWS

One of the missions our Cleveland congregation supports financially each month is Chinhoyi Christian Mission in Zimbabwe. This is the work of God, led by Dale & Linda Marshall. The Cleveland Church of Christ connection with Dale & Linda began in 1960. Dale and Linda were a young couple with a 7-month old baby girl when they came from Idaho to Cleveland, MN, in August 1960. Dale was our minister here until August 1963. During their tenure here in Cleveland, they gave birth to second girl and a son. After ministering in a New Ulm, MN, church for 2 years, they committed their lives to serving in the African country of Rhodesia which is now called Zimbabwe. They arrived in Rhodesia in 1966. The following is a portion of an email written by Dale in early January 2009. We invite and encourage you to pray for Dale & Linda and for the people of Zimbabwe.

Greetings in Christ,

Some of you have been with us from the beginning of what is now known as Chinhoyi Christian Mission. The years have come and gone and you have been faithful in the partnership of the work God has called us to do. God has blessed us by allowing us to serve Him for 43 years in the exciting and rewarding work in Africa. With the help of many Zimbabwean friends, a few days ago Linda and I celebrated 50 years of marriage (married December 30, 1958). To say that we have been blessed is an understatement.... During those years, relationships have been established that we now find to be very painful as we attempt to step aside. Words and tears fail to express. Larry and Bette Woodard (of Meridian, Idaho) have faithfully stood with us...

This year we will be making some most difficult decisions. We thought it was difficult when we decided to come to Africa, but now we know the greater pain of saying goodbye to friends and partners in the work. If ever we needed your prayers and understanding, it is now. From past

experience, we know you will partner us the rest of the way. There are many questions we do not know the answers to, so once again we ask for your prayers for the work, and for ourselves...

I cannot sum it all up any better than Larry (Woodard) did in a recent correspondence. I want to share (that correspondence) with you...

"As many of you have heard, the economic and political situation in Zimbabwe has become very serious. Dale's long-range plan to hand off the work to the native evangelists and local preachers is getting close. Dale and Linda are planning to return to the United States in late spring. Presently, we are making arrangements for living accommodations here in Meridian, Idaho. Dale continues to struggle with Parkinson's, so the timing is about right. We expect Heidi, Dale & Linda's daughter, to come with Dale & Linda in late spring. Heidi's daughter, Janelle, Dale & Linda's granddaughter (is to come to) Idaho in January (2009) in preparation for going to Boise Bible College next fall.

About mid-2009, after we get Dale and Linda settled, we will have a better idea of their retirement needs. It has been heartening to hear from a number of long-time supporters who stand ready to help this great missionary couple who have spent over (43) years in Africa. We will continue to keep you apprised of this major transition in their lives as we learn more details."

With thankful hearts and requesting your continued prayers,
Dale and Linda Marshall of Chinhoyi, Zimbabwe

BIRTHDAYS: February 2 - Carrie M; 8 - Anna D, John S, Marvin T; 13 - Bernice D; 14 - Julie D; 15 - Rich K; 20 - Scott T; 27 - Mark H, Glenn S; 28 - Steve D, Austin G; 29 - Annabelle B

ANNIVERSARY: February 20 – Steve & Mary D

TO SUBMIT A PRAYER REQUEST to our Prayer Chain:

Call Betty L at 507- 931- 5947 or email prayerchain@clevelandchurch.net

CHURCH OF CHRIST
900 State Highway 99
Mail to: PO Box 307
Cleveland, MN 56017

OUR HEAD: Jesus Christ
INTERIM PASTOR: Randy Hardy

ALL SUNDAYS unless noted otherwise

8:45am Pre-JAM Fun for all ages
9:00am JAM Sessions = Bible Classes
10:00am Fellowship Time
10:30am Worship Service

www.clevelandchurch.net

OFFICE PHONE: (507) 931- 5924
OFFICE/GENERAL: office@clevelandchurch.net
PRAYER CHAIN: prayerchain@clevelandchurch.net
SECRETARY Lisa K: lisa@clevelandchurch.net

If you wish to no longer receive our email newsletters
OR to update your email address,
please reply to this address: newsletter@clevelandchurch.net

Thank you,
Church of Christ Meeting at Cleveland, Minnesota