

A photograph of a man and a young child walking away from the camera on a sandy beach. The man is on the right, wearing a dark polo shirt with light-colored horizontal stripes and dark jeans. The child is on the left, wearing a light-colored onesie, and is holding the man's hand. The ocean waves are breaking in the background under a warm, golden sunset sky.

# new life *news*

Monthly Newsletter of New Life Church of Christ June 2016

## Steve Says...

### Of God, People and Nations

It has been painful to read about the disobedience of God's people and the way it led God to bring an end to the kingdom of Israel. Some of you have noticed that our nation is similarly involved in sin and rebellion to God. You are wondering if God is about to judge us as a nation in the same way he did the nations in the Old Testament. Good question! Let's walk through some Biblical history to help us come to an answer.

As we have been studying our way through the history of the Bible, perhaps you have noticed how God choose a man, Abraham, and then grew his descendants into a nation. Once they became a nation, it seems like God deals with them as a group or as a nation. Often the king is representative of the whole nation. As the king goes, so go the people. So God brings consequences on the entire nation based on the activities of the king. We also see that God deals with the nations surrounding Israel as nations, passing judgements on entire nations or blessing entire nations at a time. Occasionally, we zoom in to see the life of an individual (ex. Job, Ruth), but for the most part it appears that God in the Old Testament, deals with human history at the level of Governments and Nations. God's people are defined geographically (located in the promised land of Israel) and politically (under the rule of one king or another) as well as by blood (descendants of Abraham).

In the New Testament, some striking changes occur. Christ dies for the sin of individuals not nations. He dies for the sin of all men, not just the descendants of Abraham. Those who believe in him (both descendants of Abraham and gentiles) are forgiven, saved, included in the family of God, and given the Holy Spirit in their lives. 1 Corinthians 12:13 confirms this when it says, "13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—

## June Birthdays

- 1 – Shirleen Gordon
- 4 – Scott Cromer, Kay Buxton
- 5 – Jamie Ward
- 9 – Jennifer Greer
- 11 – Mary Crawford
- 12 – Loretta Ernsberger, Anna Kindt
- 13 – Ruth Manning
- 14 – Cora (Cork) Mowry, Grace Johnson
- 15 – Logan Roseberry
- 17 – Jan Snavely, Larry Greer, Shawna Dudgeon, Aimee Ford
- 18 – Josh Johnson
- 19 – Larry Awwiller
- 20 – Don Basye
- 23 – Sadie Thompson, Eric Vail
- 24 – Chase Starling
- 29 – Eric Ellis

**(article cont.)**

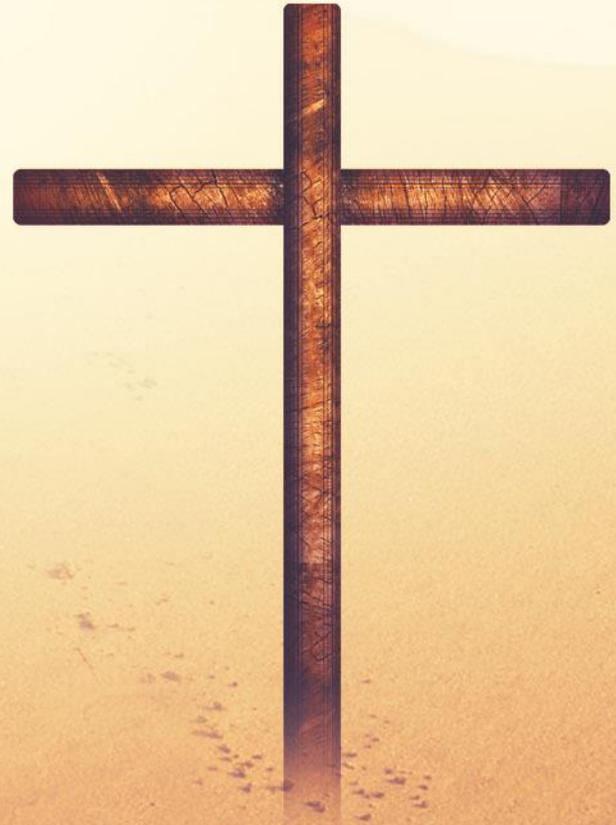
**whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”**

The apostle Peter makes the argument that the people of God now consist of those who believe in Jesus. Here is what he says in 1 Peter 2:7,9,10. **“<sup>7</sup> Now to you who believe, . . . you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”**

The apostle Paul struggles with the implications for what this means for the Jews (read Romans chapters 9-11) but confirms that this is true. He says in Romans 10:9-13, **“if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. <sup>11</sup> As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” <sup>12</sup> For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, <sup>13</sup> for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”**

So now the people of God are no longer defined by blood (descendants of Abraham), but by faith in Jesus. They are no longer defined by obedience to the covenant God made with Moses but rather are dependent on the Grace of God. And they are no longer defined by a geographical or political nation. God’s people are all those who believe in Jesus regardless of geography, or politics, or blood. We usually call these people—The Church.

The people of the Church are different in another way from the people of Israel. We have the Holy Spirit living in us. Only the kings and leaders of the Israelites had this blessing. This is BIG. Consider that Israel was told to separate themselves from the nations around them, but the Church is to go into all the world and share the gospel. Why the difference? The Holy Spirit. He gives us strength to stay true and He guides us. I do not think we truly understand what He does for us and the tremendous blessing that He is in our lives daily.



So the point of all of this is that God is in the business of blessing and disciplining his people. In the Old Testament that meant the nation of Israel and her inhabitants. Now it means the church and her members. Does God still bless nations? Perhaps peripherally when the believers in a nation please Him. Does God still curse and punish nations? Perhaps peripherally when the believers in that nation forget Him. OR If a nation chooses to become an enemy to God and His church, then I believe God may still punish them.

The bigger point to see here is that if we are concerned for our nation, the thing that we should be doing is following Christ even more closely. The more we serve Him, the more the country will be blessed by our presence and then ultimately by God himself!

*“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son”  
— John 3:16*

# A Line from Liming

## **JASON'S JAM** **Kingdom Kids happenings**

Last month we had our first Bible Bucks store and it was a huge success. 441 bible bucks were spent and it was such a joy watching kids buy stuff for friends and siblings and I cannot wait to have another in the Fall. With Summer here, it's time to see what the kids will be doing this Summer. We are going to be doing a curriculum called "Finding Jesus" based on the Disney movie "Finding Nemo". I'm very excited for this and we will begin this in July. Also, now is a GREAT time if you wish to join a teaching rotation in our Children's ministry. Just see me if you are interested! Please continue to pray for our kids as they grow in the Lord.

Well, summer type weather is just about here and it will be time for us to get busy with a great number of activities. It is so much fun to go to the lake and enjoy watching the other people catch our fish.

It is a great time to see the Reds or the Indians watch their opponent hit the ball over the fence. Whatever we are doing, it is a great time to spend time in the summer play.

The important item I want to share is the joy you feel in worship and Sunday school. They are just as great in the summer as they are in the winter. The summer senior activities are really tops as well. Let us be sure that we keep the church first in our plans.

We love our Lord and let us be faithful to show it.

Love you,  
Steve Liming

## **Mark Your Calendar**

### **June 5**

\* Spaghetti Lunch  
11:00am & 12:00pm

### **June 8**

\* Community Dinner  
5:00-6:30pm

### **June 15**

\* Comfort & Joy  
Sewing Ministry  
5:30pm – 8:30pm

### **June 15**

\* Women's Bible Study  
7:00pm

## Busyness Is a Choice, Not an Excuse

Suppose you were to sit down and write yourself a letter describing everything you did today in detail. Would you be exhausted just by reading it? Perhaps you would be astonished to see just how much you were able to accomplish in a day. Or maybe you would feel guilty that you were unable to accomplish more. If being *busy* was the measurement of life, then most of us would pass with flying colors. But what if being busy wasn't really about the quantity of things we accomplished but more about the quality of things we chose to do. Busyness is always a choice, not an excuse.

Let's look at a familiar story found in Luke chapter ten. "Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.' But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.'"

How busy is too busy? When our lives are devoted to all except "the one necessary thing" then we are too busy. Christ tells us that Mary's example of making time to be with him in worship and to learn from him is the one thing necessary in life. He goes on to say that it is the "good portion" to be chosen. If we were to objectively evaluate our schedule for any given day, we would sadly realize how many unnecessary things we have chosen to do with our time and energy.

The opposite of busyness is not laziness but rest. For those who pride themselves on being successful, rest is seen as unproductive and ineffective. Often times the remedy for those realizing the danger of busyness is to stop working altogether and to adopt a lazy attitude or work ethic. We can be busy doing all sorts of things or even lazy by doing absolutely nothing, but neither will allow us to accomplish the one thing necessary for a godly life...sitting at the feet of Jesus.

Remember the parable of the sower? In Matthew chapter 13 Jesus tells the story of how a sower scattered seed on different types of soil. He later explains that the seed is the word and that the soil is our lives. In verse seven "seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them." What are the thorns? Jesus tells us in verse 22, "As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful." The cares of the world and the pursuit of earthy riches choke out the good portion of life.

So what can we do about busyness before it takes over our life completely? We must learn to prioritize and choose to do the things that will make a difference in our lives and the lives of others. Thomas Edison once said, "*Being busy does not always mean real work. The object of all work is production or accomplishment and to either of these ends there must be forethought, system, planning, intelligence, and honest purpose, as well as perspiration. Seeming to do is not doing.*" If we were to read over that letter to ourselves we would find that many of those tasks and events that take up so much of our time did not lead to being productive or accomplishing much in God's kingdom. Let me be clear. I am not saying that going to your child's game or concert is not worth the time and effort. But are we giving the forethought, planning, intelligence, purpose, and perspiration necessary to make that time worth something?

What are we learning about Christ in the process? How are we applying scriptural principals to the way we interact with others while there? Are we willing to share about the things that God is doing in our lives with those seated around us? Or are we like Martha? There was nothing wrong with what Martha chose to do. Those tasks needed to be accomplished, but she failed to prioritize her relationship with Christ.



Martha tries to use her busyness as the reason for not being at the feet of Jesus. His response reminds us that busyness is always a choice, not an excuse.

Finally, in addition to prioritizing the things that truly matter, we must also prioritize time for rest and refreshing. Perhaps you are unsure whether or not you are too busy. Ask yourself if you are often worn out, irritable, and lacking in patience. These could be signs that you have not taken the time to rest and to put life into perspective. Without proper rest, our busy lives spiral out of control leaving us emotionally stressed, physically exhausted, and spiritually depleted. Surely this is not what God intend our lives to be. Jesus Christ is the Life and came to give us life abundantly, but we absolutely must spend the necessary time in worship at his feet. When our busyness distracts us from the things that truly matter we will find ourselves frustrated and exhausted in the kitchen, instead of at the feet of Jesus.