

new life news

Monthly Newsletter of New Life Church of Christ

August 2017

A photograph of several bright yellow sunflowers with dark brown centers, resting on a light-colored surface. A piece of light brown, textured fabric or ribbon is draped across the scene, partially overlapping the sunflowers.

Mark Your Calendar

July 31-August 11

Safety Town

August 16

Comfort & Joy Sewing

5:30pm

August 23

Beveridge Discussion

Group

7:00pm

August 27

Celebrate Milestones

Steve Says . . .

. . . that while I was in Honduras, I had the opportunity to teach three days at Lifeline's Bible Institute. The students were young ranging between 16 and 25 years old, but they engaged with me in some spirited study of the scriptures. At one point, we were discussing Mark 8:34 which says, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

I asked the students what it meant to deny yourself. They started to give me nice safe answers, until I stopped them. "Don't give me Bible Institute answers." I told them, "Give me what it means personally to you." At that point they began to tell me their personal stories.

One young man was told by his father, "If you go to that Bible Institute don't expect any help from me and if you go and then drop out don't come back here looking for help." He was 15 years old and having been told that, made the decision to leave his parents and follow the Lord.

Another young lady was from the mountains. She had come to San Pedro Sula and got involved in the gangs. Someone warned her that she was on a list to be killed, so she fled to her home in the mountains. Now her parents don't trust her and they are unwilling to support her at the Bible Institute which is located on the outskirts of San Pedro Sula. So she works part-time and attends classes when she can.

A third student was mugged and beaten while out evangelizing. His father came to take him home away from the

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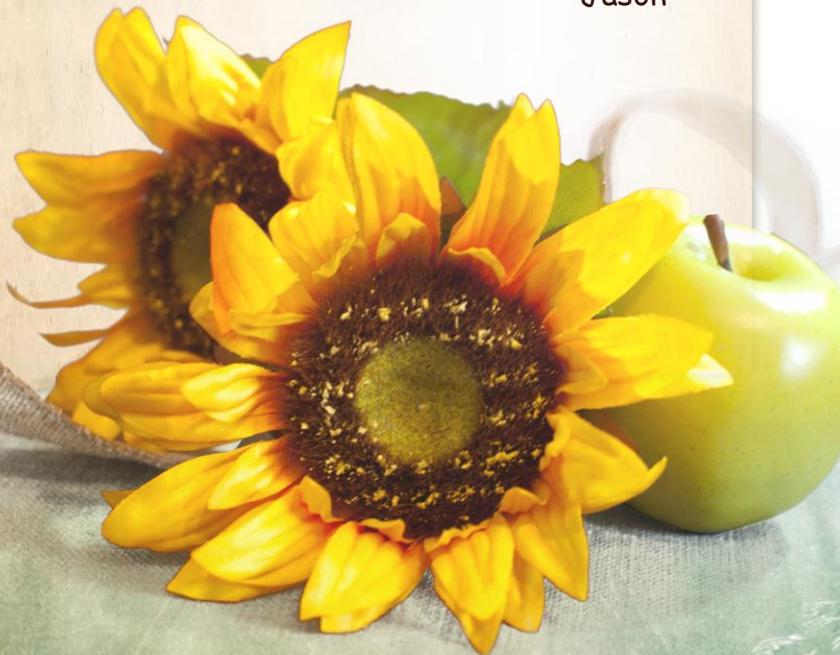
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Bible Institute. He refused to go with his father. He told him "this is where God wants me to be".

These students understand sacrifice and commitment. In their young lives, they have already faced resistance and persecution. Their response has been to dig more deeply into their faith and to put Jesus first in every way. I was inspired by their faith and wanted you to hear their stories, so that together we can emulate their commitment to Christ.

I wanted to take this opportunity I get to communicate to the church, and take this month to thank you all. I turned 30 a few weeks ago, and my wife had a surprise open house lunch for me. I was so encouraged to see so many of you who came out and gave gifts, kind words, yummy bread, and STEAK!!! Life has really been a rollercoaster these past few years, but a few things have been consistent, God is good, he provides, this church is loving and caring, and did I mention God is good. Seeing God work through the people of this church has been an amazing experience. Sometimes it's hard to grasp that I had a stroke and life has been forever changed, but knowing how God has used this situation to further reveal himself to me and also how I am now the Children's minister here at New Life, has been a blessed assurance. My family and I love you all, and look forward to what God has in store for my family and this church.

~Jason



August Birthdays

- 1 – David Crawford
- 2 – Becky Sharp
- 6 – Tristan Cromer
- 7 – Tyler Ehret, Ryan Sharp
- 9 – Jeff Culler
- 10 – Nathan Hickerson
- 11 – Barry Fluty, Gary Fry, Brenda & Linzy Weyhmeller
- 12 – Pam Mowry
- 14 – Makenzie Frontz, Lois Worner
- 15 – Ben Bushong
- 16 – Irene Beal, Lois Cox, Brittney Ehret
- 17 – Marlee Cromer
- 19 – Jane Olson
- 23 – Sylvia Liming
- 24 – Ericka Kistler
- 25 – Deb Rockwell
- 26 – Josh Clark
- 29 – Warner Manning, Gavin Sharp
- 30 – Jenny Armstrong, Ellen Fox
- 31 – Chris Cromer

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'Unplugged'

As a teenager in the late nineties and early two-thousands I remember being excited when bands I liked would come out with 'unplugged' albums. All this means is that their songs would be done all acoustic, without the general effects and distortion that was common for the sort of music I liked. It was cool because it was different and it also had a different feel to it. It had a more mellow and clear sound and you could actually hear what the singer was saying! What if we could live our lives 'unplugged' for a season? I have never been much for keeping things around that I feel distract me. I have enough trouble paying attention as it is. For this reason the whole smart-phone movement hasn't had much of an appeal to me. However, in the six month stint that I did actually have a smart phone, I noticed how easy it was to pull it out and start flipping around looking for something interesting on it. I have written before about our phones and how easy it is to see that they completely dominate our lives (just look around at a group of people just about anywhere and you will see what I mean). While it is tempting for me to go on a long tirade about why I believe we would all be better off if we just throw our phones in the river and move on with life, I won't go any further than to suggest intermittent periods of fasting from phones. I am fully convinced that this practice will lead us all to a sharper focus on the Lord's presence and fuller relationships with other people. Whenever I have the opportunity to go to camp or mission trips there is a no-phone policy. Students can take them and use them as cameras, but they are discouraged from using them for anything beyond this. This is also the policy of Lifeline when we go to Honduras. Phones can be taken and used at specific times, but we are strongly encouraged to avoid using them throughout the day. And what is the result of a group of people being together for a week or more without constant access to their phone? God works. He works, as He always does, but He works with people who aren't too distracted to listen. After the glaze works out of a teenagers eyes (it usually takes about two days for this to happen), they begin to be aware that Someone is pushing and prodding them. They begin to see that there is a world around them that screams that God is present and that He works through people. Another great thing that happens is that people talk to each other. Real conversation happens about things that actually matter. Time is passed in actual community rather than in awkwardly orchestrated sessions that feel forced and only partially fulfill what it means to live in community together. People become friends. Friends share through conversation and these conversations naturally flow into deeper levels as people grow comfortable with one another. So as much as I would love to convince everyone to drive over to the blue bridge in Bellville and chuck their phone into the Clear Fork River, I know that realistically that will never happen. But at the very least, let's commit to have regular times where we fast from using our phones for anything other than (imagine the thought!) phone calls. Set them on the shelf or coffee table and go out with friends or family. Play a game as a family. Talk with your spouse. If something happens that you find interesting, call or visit someone and tell them rather than posting it on social media. And most importantly, listen. God is speaking through His word and through His people. When we back away from clutter we will be able to defragment our minds to be open to an awareness of his presence. I encourage you to pray and decide where you can start with this sort of fast. Talk with your family and see what works for all of you. I have seen how strongly the Lord speaks into people's lives when they are unplugged. For those of us who are blessed enough to have these times scheduled into our lives it comes easier. But for the rest of us it takes a focused effort to commit to set some time apart. I hope you and your family will take this challenge. I am confident that you will be blessed if you do.

-Kyle

The Gospel on Two Wheels

I have been thinking a lot about the “good news” and the hope and joy we have in Jesus Christ. The thing that makes the Gospel such good news is the fact that there is bad news as well. As I reflect on the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus I cannot help thinking about the sin that led to His sacrifice...my sin. The Gospel message reminds me of the good I have been saved for (reconciliation) and the bad I have been saved from (sin).

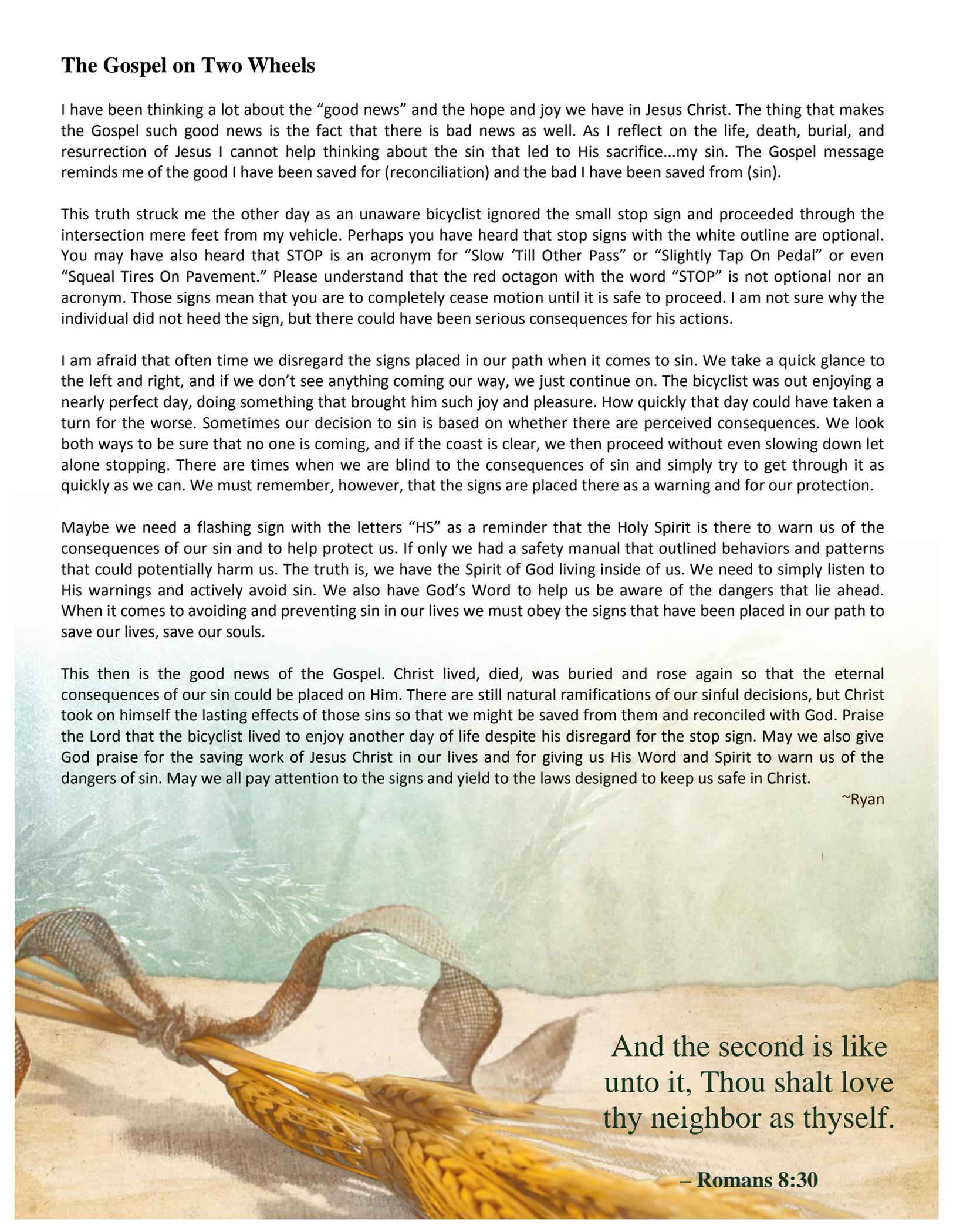
This truth struck me the other day as an unaware bicyclist ignored the small stop sign and proceeded through the intersection mere feet from my vehicle. Perhaps you have heard that stop signs with the white outline are optional. You may have also heard that STOP is an acronym for “Slow ‘Till Other Pass” or “Slightly Tap On Pedal” or even “Squeal Tires On Pavement.” Please understand that the red octagon with the word “STOP” is not optional nor an acronym. Those signs mean that you are to completely cease motion until it is safe to proceed. I am not sure why the individual did not heed the sign, but there could have been serious consequences for his actions.

I am afraid that often time we disregard the signs placed in our path when it comes to sin. We take a quick glance to the left and right, and if we don’t see anything coming our way, we just continue on. The bicyclist was out enjoying a nearly perfect day, doing something that brought him such joy and pleasure. How quickly that day could have taken a turn for the worse. Sometimes our decision to sin is based on whether there are perceived consequences. We look both ways to be sure that no one is coming, and if the coast is clear, we then proceed without even slowing down let alone stopping. There are times when we are blind to the consequences of sin and simply try to get through it as quickly as we can. We must remember, however, that the signs are placed there as a warning and for our protection.

Maybe we need a flashing sign with the letters “HS” as a reminder that the Holy Spirit is there to warn us of the consequences of our sin and to help protect us. If only we had a safety manual that outlined behaviors and patterns that could potentially harm us. The truth is, we have the Spirit of God living inside of us. We need to simply listen to His warnings and actively avoid sin. We also have God’s Word to help us be aware of the dangers that lie ahead. When it comes to avoiding and preventing sin in our lives we must obey the signs that have been placed in our path to save our lives, save our souls.

This then is the good news of the Gospel. Christ lived, died, was buried and rose again so that the eternal consequences of our sin could be placed on Him. There are still natural ramifications of our sinful decisions, but Christ took on himself the lasting effects of those sins so that we might be saved from them and reconciled with God. Praise the Lord that the bicyclist lived to enjoy another day of life despite his disregard for the stop sign. May we also give God praise for the saving work of Jesus Christ in our lives and for giving us His Word and Spirit to warn us of the dangers of sin. May we all pay attention to the signs and yield to the laws designed to keep us safe in Christ.

~Ryan

A painting of a woven basket, possibly a basket of grain or a similar object, resting on a sandy surface. The basket is made of light-colored, textured material and has a dark, possibly leather or fabric, strap or handle. The background is a soft, greenish-yellow wash, suggesting a natural setting. The overall style is soft and painterly.

And the second is like
unto it, Thou shalt love
thy neighbor as thyself.

– Romans 8:30