

North Carolina Conference
The United Methodist Church
700 Waterfield Ridge Place
Garner, NC 27529

Every Day Grace magazine

Discover the stories that unite us in our experiences of life, and remind us where there is story, there is grace. Topics we'll explore include health and healing, rural life, the modern family, urban life, aging, youth and so many more. To receive EDG magazine, email communications: communications@nccumc.org, with your full name and physical address.



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EDGTV is a unique new talk show where authentic and surprising storytelling happens. On EDGTV we'll share the stories you may rarely hear otherwise. Stories of hope and heartache suffering and strength, tragedy and triumph. Stories that remind us we are not alone. Episodes of Every Day Grace will appear on WNCN, youtube and as a video on demand (VOD) Roku channel. To stay up-to-date with the latest happenings on EDGTV visit @everydaygracetv. To learn more about EDGTV watch our trailer: <http://youtu.be/5Xd07XColIlg>



By Belton Joyner, Jr.

April 5, 2015

Text: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11, 20-22 "Resurrection Guaranteed"

As I type these words, the weather forecast around here is for a wind chill tonight of zero degrees. As you read these words, looking to Easter Sunday, you can be reminded that the dreary darkness and crashing cold has been replaced by "a great getting up morning." Happy Easter!

There were some in the church in Corinth who believed that there was a little spark in each of us that never really died. The Greek culture called this "immortality of the soul." In this letter to the Corinthians, Paul challenges that view. He claims what the Church restates each time it proclaims, "I believe in the resurrection of the body."

Note how many times in just a few verses, Paul gives evidence of a resurrected body that was seen by Cephas (v. 5), the twelve (v. 5),

bible+study

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's Adult Bible Study Series

five hundred people (v. 6), James (v. 7), the apostles (v. 7), and to Paul (v. 8). This was no ordinary body: could walk through locked doors (John 20:19) ... could eat (John 21:15)... could talk (Mark 16:14) ... could be touched (Luke 24:39)... could converse (Luke 24:27) ... This was not business as usual!

Paul understands that the resurrected body is not like anything seen before and the good news is that the resurrection of Jesus is just a sampler (1 Corinthians 15:20)! As Jerry Sumney has written: "(Christ's resurrection) is the sample of what the resurrection of believers will be and God's promise that such a blessing awaits those who are faithful."

Over my ministry, I have conducted 249 funerals. Some were occasions for tears; some were occasions for smiles; some were occasions for doubts; some were occasions for shock; some were occasions for relief; some were occasions for despair; some were occasions for praise; some were occasions for memory; some were occasions for expectation. But the core of each of those services is captured in the traditional

opening words: "Dying, Christ destroyed our death. Rising, Christ restored our life."

Amen.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In his book Incarnation (Abingdon Press), William H. Willimon quotes another author: Southern writer Flannery O'Connor said, "I am always astonished at the emphasis the Church puts on the body. It is not the soul she (the church) says that will rise but the body, glorified."

Prayer:

As you prepare your lesson, let your prayer begin: "Thank You, Lord Jesus, for the promise we have seen in You: new life beyond the grave..."

April 12, 2015

Text: 1 John 3:11-24 "Love One Another"

In about a year, it will be time for the quadrennial meeting of the United Methodist General Conference. It does not take much reflection to come up with a list of items on which there will be intense disagreement: power of bishops, budget

expenditures, relationship with Israel and Palestine, accountability...

Perhaps in the year before that gathering, United Methodists around the world ought to focus on the message in this study text: "Love one another."

John wrote those words (1 John 3:11) in the context of a bitter dispute within the church community (1 John 2:26). To fail to love is a serious matter; John compares it to murder (1 John 3:13).

Interestingly, the New Testament has two different words for murder. One of them (phōnos) means deliberate, intentional homicide. The other word (anthropoktonos) means unintended consequences that result in death. John uses this second word: Christians who hate (literally "love less") others effectively destroy them even if it is not intended. it's not enough to talk a good game (1 John 3:18). Do our actions show love? Does our claim of truth show love? John Wesley used "what is the loving thing" as the cradle out of which we find the baby of God's truth.

Persons who disagree with integrity both feel led by God to truth. It is obvious that we do not agree on what we hear God saying to us. However, can I trust your intent, even if our conclusions differ? Can I accept your love of Christ and love by Christ even if I vote one way and you vote another?

In his sermon “Catholic Spirit,” John Wesley said, “Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike?” That invitation captures the spirit of this letter from John to a community in disarray. Can it be any less a message to The United Methodist Church?

What Someone Else Has Said: Forrest Church (God and Other Famous Liberals, Walker and Company) has quoted George Washington: “I was in hopes, that the enlightened and liberal policy, which has marked the present age, would at least have reconciled Christians of every denomination so far, that we should never again-see their religious disputes carried to such a pitch as to endanger the peace of society.”

Prayer: As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: “God of us all, move among us with such grace that we reflect Your love into our relationships. Particularly, grant us unexpected love for those with whom we disagree...”

April 19, 2015
Text: I John 4:13-5:5 “Believe God’s Love”
The cover is held on the book with badly worn and brittle tape. Inside the flyleaf, there is a notation that suggests that the original owner paid \$4.00 for the volume. And then there is the handwritten inscription that means the most to me: “L. H. Joyner, Hatteras, N.C. When my grandfather was pastor at Hatteras, access to the island was only by boat.”

Family archives record that my grandmother wept as they were being rowed to their new home, probably fearing she would never see mainland kin again. Fear does funny things to us.

This week’s study text says that “perfect love drives out fear” (1 John 4:18). John Wesley helps us understand that perfect means “complete, mature, according to the purpose for which it was intended.” I am intrigued by two words in the New Testament language that can mean “drives out” or “casts out.” One of those words implies a casual, almost mindless action (“I’ll just fling that trash away”). The other word represents a deliberate, purposeful step (“I’ll put this garbage into the garbage can carefully so the stink of this rotting fish does not smell up the house”). Which word does the writer of I John choose? It is the second word, the one that means there is intention in what is being done. “Perfect love intends to get rid of fear.” That intent comes from our recognizing that we are loved by God. “We love because God first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

When I know that I am loved by God, I am no longer frightened by God. Awed by God? Yes. Respectful of God? Yes. Challenged by God? Yes. Overwhelmed by God? Yes. Even doubtful of God? Yes. But, fear of God? No.

Sixteen times in these brief verses, the writer uses the word love (agape). There is no boundary between love of God and love of neighbor. To claim one without the other is to be a liar. That’s strong talk. “Liar” is one meaning of the word we translate “devil.”

Yes, fear does funny things to

us. But, thanks be to God, so does love!

What Someone Else Has Said: In his biography of Billy Graham (America’s Pastor: Billy Graham and the Shaping of a Nation, Belknap Harvard) Grant Wacker quotes the evangelist: “(The) one badge of Christian discipleship is not orthodoxy, but love. There is far more emphasis on love and unity among God’s people in the New Testament than there is on orthodoxy, as important as it is.”

Prayer: As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: “Love me into loving, gracious God, that fear may be set aside, overwhelmed by Your grace...”

April 26, 2015
Text: 2 John “Watch Out for Deceivers!”

Last Christmas, my son gave me tickets for the two of us to go see our favorite baseball team, the St. Louis Cardinals, play in Washington. I am writing this before Spring training even begins, but I am already looking forward to the game. When you read this, the game was played last week.

Did St. Louis win? Did the game get rained out? Did we have to pay a fortune for parking? Did we get teased as outsiders? Did Kolton Wong steal a base? How was the traffic on the late-night drive back to B.J.’s home in Williamsburg?

Obviously, there is a lot I don’t know yet about that ball game. It is the very uncertainty that adds to the excitement of anticipation. That is something of the spirit with which the writer closes 2 John: “... I hope to visit you and talk with you face-to-face, so that our joy can

be complete.” It is one thing to talk about the game; it’s another thing to go to the game. It’s one thing to write about issues in the Church; it’s another thing to live them out on a daily “face-to-face” basis.

What is so important that the writer wants to deal with it “face-to-face”? What is so important that the writer is already looking forward to a get-together that hasn’t yet happened?

At the heart of the matter is what some folks were teaching about Jesus Christ. The dilemma was too important to wait until “the elder” (2 John 1) could talk to the community in person, so he writes this letter. Some persons—he calls them “deceivers”—were saying that Jesus was just a spiritual being, saying that he did not come as a human being (2 John 7). That claim tears at the very heart of the Christian experience. The echo of John 1:14 must be heard: “The Word became flesh and made his home among us.”

John writes that the loving thing (2 John 5-6) is to honor the truth. Note the blending of “love and truth” in verse 3. Perhaps it is what the writer of Ephesians had in heart and mind when he wrote about “speaking the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15). Even though the overarching principle is “love,” it is not exclusive of truth. The dangerous “untruth” to which John refers is a denial of the human Jesus Christ. Some students of the Bible refer to this as “Docetism.” The elder’s advice in this text is: avoid it! Chasing this untruth could even shatter how one is related to the Lord (2 John 8). The writer of these verses is delighted when believers live in the truth

(2 John 4). To do so is more than just a pleasant evening to which to look forward; it is a commandment of God (2 John 2:4).

What Someone Else Has Said: In Liturgical Theology (IVP Academic), Simon Chan draws on David Wells to write: “Wells thinks the answer to the theological vacuity of the evangelical church is to be found in the recovery of truth, not so much truth as abstract ideas and propositions as the truth of God’s action in history, carried in the gospel concerning the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

Prayer: As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: “Lord Jesus, the Way, the Truth, the Life, we pray for that love which You brought alive in Your human journey...”

Are You Ready for 2015 Annual Conference?

The 2015 North Carolina Annual Conference will be held at the Wilmington Convention Center in Wilmington, North Carolina, June 10-13, 2015. The theme for the quadrennium and focus of the Conference is a powerful image from Psalm 84, “Strength to Strength.” Bishop Hope Morgan Ward will preside over the conference with the assistance of Conference Secretary Rev. Jerry Bryan and Conference Lay Leader Gary Locklear. For more information about the 2015 Annual Conference, visit: <http://nccumc.org/secretary/annual-conference/>



vip report

BIRTHS:
Congratulations to Angelo (Swansboro) and AmySanchez at the birth of a daughter, Amelia Rose Sanchez - Feb. 23.

Adam Baker (associate, Wesley Memorial UMC, Wilmington) and wife, Jenn, celebrate the birth of son, Duncan, born Jan. 5.

DEATHS:
FOGLEMAN, Leland Jan Died Feb. 7
Service was held Mar. 22,
Page UMC, Aberdeen

FITZGERALD, Jr.; Frank Owen Died Feb. 10
Husband of Mary Owens Bell Fitzgerald
Service was held Feb 19,
Hayes Barton UMC

GILLIKIN, Haywood W. Died Feb. 18
Husband of Jenny C. McIntosh
Service was held Feb. 28,
Riverside UMC

FOWLER, Leon Delanoa Died Feb.19
Husband of Neva Ruth Fowler
Service was held Feb. 21,
High Pine Wesleyan Church

JEROME, Jean P. Died Feb. 17
Widow of Robert L. Jerome
Service was held Feb. 21,
Mary Alice Ingram Chapel

WINBERRY, Christine C. Died Feb. 19
Widow of Herman S. Winberry
Service was held Feb. 22,
Chestnut Street UMC

MASSEY, Gerald R. Died Mar. 11
Service was held March 14
Eureka UMC

TYSON, Lucy J. Died Jan. 31
Widow of Bobby Powell Tyson,
Service was held Feb. 7
Centenary UMC, Smithfield

Let’s Journey To...

Israel/Palestine
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CONNECTING THE CHURCH IN MISSION



Bishop Ward Announces Three DS Appointments



On March 15, Bishop Ward announced the appointment of three District Superintendents to the Cabinet, effective late June 2015. The Rev. Leonard Fairley will become Superintendent of the Capital District. The Rev. Ken Locklear will become Superintendent of the Gateway District. The Rev. Bob Bauman will become Superintendent of the Harbor District. District Superintendents Francis Daniel, Jon Strother and Sam Wynn will be appointed to lead churches in June 2015. The Bishop thanks everyone for their prayers for these and other transitions emerging in the process of appointing clergy for 2015-2016.

Church Mice



The Use of Money

John Wesley's sermon on "The Use of Money" includes three simple principles:

*Earn all you can through honest work and unwearied diligence,
Save all you can through simple living so that you may
Give all you can.*

During this season of Lent, reflect on your use of money and how you may live a life of simplicity so that you may give all you can to the Owner of all. Explore ways to live more simply at www.FrugalLiving.about.com.

The Stewardship Ministry of your United Methodist Foundation is available to assist you and your church in growing discipleship through faithful generosity.

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