

# The Good Word

*"Exalting the Savior, Equipping the Saints,  
Evangelizing the Sinner"*

December, January, February 2019-20

2020

WOW! Does time fly! It is about to turn another year, and the year is 2020. It seemed liked just yesterday that we were all preparing for Y2K. Well, those who are old enough to remember were preparing. Time has a funny way of slipping by. I guess that's why we are reminded so often by the Lord about living today...living day by day...even considering each moment that we are given. I suppose all of us should slow down a bit and enjoy the moments we do have, and appreciate the people that God has placed in our lives a little more. Not to mention, give the Lord His time and glory that is do His name.

God has blessed each of us so much, and yet we take these wonderful blessings for granted. Somehow, seemingly the older we become...we realize this more and more. As I write this, we are getting ready for the holidays. Thanksgiving is here, and we are trying to make every effort to be with family, and on the heels of the turkey and stuffing, is Christmas. Almost seems like the latter has taken over the former. Ever wonder why? I have a theory...I just think we are less thankful and unwilling to slow down enough and give our thanks to God. We are eager to rush to the store (now on Thanksgiving) rather than black Friday...we are eager to get our list done...we are eager to get our schedules made for what gatherings we are to be a part of...WHY? So, "we can be done and sit down and enjoy" is what I hear many say, including myself. All the while, we are simply being swept up in the rush of it all and once again...another year passes by...without a pause.

The Bible states, "*BE STILL, and KNOW that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!*" (Psalm 46:10)

God will receive His praise one way or another. He would like to receive it from you, His special creation. And, in fact...when He receives it from you, you will benefit as well. Here are seven ways we benefit: *Praise changes the spiritual climate. Praise fulfills your primary purpose of existence. Praise empowers you to great deeds. Praise restores your understanding to the right order. Praise reminds you of God's presence in your life. Praise crucifies your pride. Praise attracts God's presence.* I am sure there are more, but these come to my mind and heart during a recent study of mine. You might hear them in a sermon around Thanksgiving.

BUT, none of this happens...until we get still before God first. We must slow enough and yes, even STOP if we are to meet with God. Meeting with God is not a thing that can be approached so flippantly or lightly. It isn't going to happen when we finally get around to it at a convenient season for us or when it isn't a priority. Be still is translated in Hebrew "to let go" or "to cause to fall". That is you have to "let go" of some things in this world and "fall" or humble oneself to be in his presence.

When is the last time you simply were disciplined enough to be still...where your mind, will, emotions were centered on HIM!. That's the best moments of life.

In His Grace, Pastor Jeremy

## Contact Information

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As we have seen, there is no legitimate scriptural reason not to celebrate Christmas. At the same time, there is no biblical mandate to celebrate it, either. In the end, of course, whether or not to celebrate Christmas is a personal decision. Whatever Christians decide to do regarding Christmas, their views should not be used as a club with which to beat down or denigrate those with opposing views, nor should either view be used as a badge of honor inducing pride over celebrating or not celebrating. As in all things, we seek wisdom from Him who gives it liberally to all who ask ([James 1:5](#)) and accept one another in Christian love and grace, regardless of our views on Christmas.

in Israel, the practices of shepherds in winter, and the dates of Roman census-taking. None of these points are without a certain amount of conjecture, which brings us back to the fact that the Bible doesn't tell us when Jesus was born. Some see this as proof positive that God didn't want us to celebrate the birth, while others see the Bible's silence on the issue as tacit approval.

Some Christians say that since the world celebrates Christmas—although it is becoming more and more politically correct to refer to it as “the holidays”—Christians should avoid it. But that is the same argument made by false religions that deny Christ altogether, as well as cults such as the Jehovah's Witnesses who deny His deity. Those Christians who do celebrate Christmas often see the occasion as an opportunity to proclaim Christ as “the reason for the season” among the nations and to those trapped in false religions.

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## Records

	Sept	Oct	Nov
Sunday School Average Per Wk	234	239	246*
AM Worship Average Per Wk	345	345	353*
PM Worship Average Per Wk	125	106	116*
Total Income Average Per Wk	\$6,716	\$7,040	\$6,794

N/A: Not Available

\* : Incomplete Information

## Q & A

### Question: "Should Christians celebrate Christmas?"

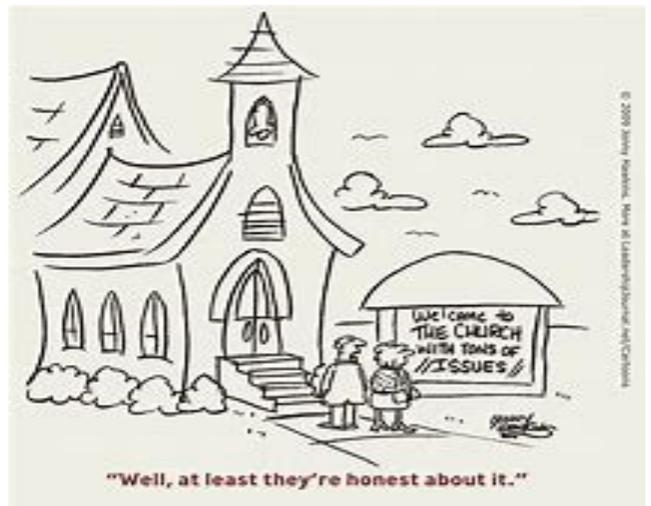
**Answer:** The debate about whether or not Christians should celebrate Christmas has been raging for centuries. There are equally sincere and committed Christians on both sides of the issue, each with multiple reasons why or why not Christmas should be celebrated in Christian homes. But what does the Bible say? Does the Bible give clear direction as to whether Christmas is a holiday to be celebrated by Christians?

First, let's look at the reasons why some Christians do not celebrate Christmas. One argument against Christmas is that the traditions surrounding the holiday have origins in paganism. Searching for reliable information on this topic is difficult because the origins of many of our traditions are so obscure that sources often contradict one another. Bells, candles, holly, and yuletide/yule decorations are mentioned in the history of pagan worship, but the use of such in one's home certainly does not indicate a return to paganism. While there are definitely pagan roots to some traditions, there are many more traditions associated with the true meaning of Christmas—the birth of the Savior of the world in Bethlehem. Bells are played to ring out the joyous news, candles are lit to remind us that Christ is the Light of the world ([John 1:4-9](#)), a star is placed on the top of a Christmas tree to remember the Star of Bethlehem, and gifts are exchanged to remind us of the gifts of the Magi to Jesus, the greatest gift of God to mankind.

Another argument against Christmas, especially having a Christmas tree, is that the Bible forbids bringing trees into our homes and decorating them. The passage often cited is [Jeremiah 10:1-16](#), but this passage refers to cutting down trees, chiseling the wood to make an idol, and then decorating the idol with silver and gold for the purpose of bowing down before it to worship it (see also [Isaiah 44:9-18](#)). The passage in Jeremiah cannot be taken out of its context and used to make a legitimate argument against Christmas trees.

Christians who choose to ignore Christmas point to the fact that the Bible doesn't give us the date of Christ's birth, which is certainly true. December 25 may not be even close to the time Jesus was born, and arguments on both sides are legion, some relating to climate in Israel, the practices of shepherds in winter, and the dates of Roman census-taking. None of these points are without a certain amount of conjecture, which brings us back to the fact that the Bible doesn't tell us when Jesus was born. Some see this as proof positive that God didn't want us to celebrate the birth, while others see the Bible's silence on the issue as tacit approval.

Some Christians say that since the world celebrates Christmas—although it is becoming more and more politically correct to refer to it as “the holidays”—Christians should avoid it. But that is the same argument made by false religions that deny Christ altogether, as well as cults such as the Jehovah's Witnesses who deny His deity. Those Christians who do celebrate Christmas often see the occasion as an opportunity to proclaim Christ as “the reason for the season” among the nations and to those trapped in false religions.



Vision 2020 Information:  
 Seed Goal (\$2,020): MET!!  
 Faith Goal (\$20,202): MET!!  
 Action Goal (\$202,020): \$86,046.90

# Women's Ministry

## Death before Life

*Behold, the former things have come to pass,  
And the new things I now declare;  
Before they spring forth  
I tell you of them.*

*Isaiah 42:9*

*He makes all things*

# NEW

*Revelations 21:5*

We have just passed through, in my opinion, the most beautiful season of the year. And what do we have now after a blast of cold weather, a bunch of dead chrysanthemums that were in full bloom just weeks ago, bare branches that have said goodbye to their green leaves, and brown grass blowing in the fields. Winter is full of death.

This is exactly the topic we like to talk about often, except for maybe the dying of mosquitos and ticks! But, this season is a perfect reminder of what has to happen before “new” can begin. God paints a visual picture for us every year to remind us that death is part of the process of new life.

Death is a good and necessary thing. To be reborn, we must die. Die to our former self. Die to our sinful ways. Die to our selfish desires. Bury the old man to become the new creation. We can't hold on to these things and also embrace the beautiful new creation that God is making in us. The brown leaves can't remain on the tree, if new leaves want to grow. So, they must die. As with us, our sinful ways must be put to death for us to walk in the newness of life. What things in your life do you need to put to death? What dead things are you holding on to that are preventing spiritual growth in your life. Is it a grudge of unforgiveness that you just can't let go of, or a favorite TV show that doesn't reflect the holy nature Christ, or a relationship that is taking time away from your devotion to Christ and His church? Let it die, and prepare for God to start something beautifully new in your life.

Blessings to you in the “new” year,

*Katie*



### Ladies Movie Night—“Overcomer”

Wear your PJ's and enjoy a movie together at the church.

**January 10, 2020—7-9:30 p.m.**

Bring your own drink and we will have the popcorn!

All ladies and girls welcome!

### Christmas Party

Thursday December 5th,

noon –2 pm

Join us at the home  
of Katie Murphy

for an afternoon of fellowship

#### What to bring:

- A finger food snack or Christmas treat to share
- 12 small bags of a few cookies or other treat to put in care packages.
- A few dollars to cover cost of sending packages.



### Joy Seekers Winter Bible Study

Starting April 30 at 7pm

### we over me

LETTERS OF HOPE FROM REVELATION

Whitney Capps

Starting January 7th

### Tuesday Mornings

8:30 am-10:00 am

Breakfast, Study & childcare  
Sign-up on the main board for  
childcare & book

# WARRIORS FOR CHRIST

**“Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.”**

**1 Corinthians 16:13**

## Focus on Faithfulness

*When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God with the priests the Levites carrying it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it – Joshua 3:3*

*When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, “What are these stones?” Joshua 4:21*

Growing up, I remember hearing from my Grandparents that events which occurred many months or years ago seemed to have happened “just yesterday”. This past year feels like that to me. Christmas of 2018 feels like it was only “just yesterday”! The years seem to be going by faster, and as I think back, I can no longer remember all of the details of all my memories. I wonder if the Israelites experienced this as they wandered in the desert for 40 years. Did their day to day routine slowly form into a blur of months and years? Were the miracles they witnessed by the Lord becoming distant memories that were slowly fading from their minds? In chapters three and four of the Book of Joshua, the Israelites are preparing to enter the Promised Land. A land that they had walked away from 40 years before, because they had lost their focus. They had shifted their focus from God to the world.

As the people again prepared to enter the Promised Land, the Lord wanted to make sure that they were focusing on Him. To make sure that they focused on God, Joshua told the people to watch for the Ark of the Covenant, the presence of the Lord, to pass through the camp. An entire nation stood prepared and waiting, in anticipation, for the Lord to move! They were completely focused on the Lord. When the people saw the Ark pass by, they followed the priests into and crossed the Jordan. This river crossing was the first, of many seemingly impossible tasks, that the people would be asked to perform by keeping their focus on the Lord.

However, the Lord not only desired for the people to keep their focus on Him for the day, but also wanted them to remember His faithfulness. He knew, that over time, the people would forget what God had provided for them. He knew that, in time, they would again lose their Godly focus and need to be reminded of His faithfulness. To remind the people, Joshua selected 12 men to take stones from the Jordan. These stones, the men carried on their shoulders and placed in a pile so that anyone who passed by would notice them. As the story of God’s faithfulness would be retold, future generations would be reminded of His faithfulness and restore their focus on God and His plans.

As this year draws to a close, has God called you to set a stone? A large stone, a reminder to you and generations to come of His faithfulness that will help direct our focus back to Him? Will we proudly set stones for all to see, boldly proclaiming and remembering where God has taken you this year?

Have a blessed new year!

John



## Warriors for Christ Men’s Bible Study

**Strong and  
Courageous**

1st & 3rd Thursday of each  
month

6:00-6:45 am

Fellowship Hall

Breakfast and coffee provided



## Focus on the Target

**ALL MEN AND BOYS**

Join us for a wild game feast, shooting gallery,  
and some friendly competition.

**January 11, 2020 ~ 6 - 9 pm ~ Fellowship Hall**

Sign up to bring Wild Game dishes on the bulletin board or  
to participate in the Dessert Competition

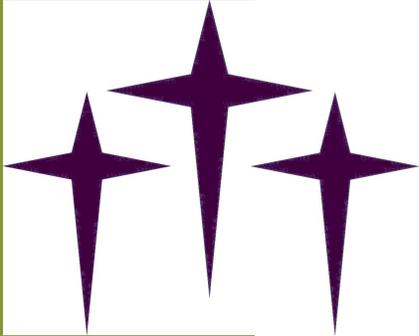
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