

Upside-down Kingdom...



New sermon series entitled, “Citizens of Heaven”... Jesus calls us to live in an upside-down Kingdom. Jesus says shocking things like this to His disciples. “If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also. If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too. If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile, carry it two miles. Give to those who ask, and don’t turn away from those who want to borrow.” (Matthew 5:39-42)

We must be people who seek repentance and to forgive when we are wronged. We use be people who love others and not judge them. We must be people who declare Jesus as Lord and allow His light to shine out of our lives. We must be “citizens of heaven” here on earth until our King arrives to call us home!

Scripture passages for the series in the month of January...

January 8... Matthew 3:13–17; Isaiah 42:1–9; Psalm 29:1–11; Acts 10:34–43

January 15... John 1:29–42; Isaiah 49:1–7; Psalm 40:1–11; 1 Corinthians 1:1–9

January 22... Matthew 4:12–23; Isaiah 9:1–4; Psalm 27:1, 4–9; 1 Corinthians 1:10–18

January 29... Matthew 5:1–12; Micah 6:1–8; Psalm 15:1–5; 1 Corinthians 1:18–31

Reflections on discipleship from Donna Williams...

We have journeyed through six parables teaching us how to become a disciple and learn how to apply it in our lives to make disciples. Today we will end with our seventh parable. Let's look back at what we studied and learned about the steps of becoming a disciple and a disciple maker. We first learned about the "Sower and the Soil" describing the different believers. Then "Growing Seeds" trusting God and growing a relationship with Him and others, The "Lamp under the Bowl" don't hide your story. Be the light of the world and share the truth of Jesus, "Builders" having a sound foundation in Christ, "Unfruitful Fig Tree" bearing good fruit to grow yourself and others in the Christian faith, "Master and Servant" serving the right master, Jesus, and now we are going to look at "The Cost of Discipleship."

Read Luke 14:25-33... Now great crowds were traveling with him. So, he turned and said to them, 26 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother, wife and children, brothers, and sisters—yes, and even his own life—he cannot be my disciple. 27 Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. 28 "For which of you, wanting to build a tower, doesn't first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, after he has laid the foundation and cannot finish it, all the onlookers will begin to ridicule 31 "Or what king, going to war against another king, will not first sit down and decide if he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 If not, while the other is still far off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. 33 In the same way, therefore, every one of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple.

The parallel passage in Matthew 10:37 helps explain it. So, the cost of being a disciple will sometimes call us to put other relationship second and a relationship with God first. Christ carried the cross for us and gave the greatest sacrifice. We also will have to sacrifice ourselves at times but never at the same cost Christ did. But be prepared, you will bear suffering in the name of Jesus! As we make that choice to accept Jesus as our Savior and Lord, we will joyfully receive that persecution because the reward is growing in faith and trust in the Lord. The parable uses two scenarios: a man building a tower and a king going off to war. Both persons must calculate the cost of success. Just as a follower of Jesus we also must count our costs to become a true disciple of Jesus. We have to be willing to accept that all we have is not ours but belongs to God. We are to be good stewards of these precious gifts from him. We are the steward and God is the owner. In this act of love from God and us we want to thank him and glorify him and not man. Now look back and examine your walk with Christ. Have you taken His parables and applied them to your life each day, week, and month? Take time and thank him for walking with you and growing this wonderful relationship with him. This is just the beginning of your story... hurry and start writing your next chapter and remember to share it with others and not hide the exciting new of Jesus.

Thank you for journeying with me through the parables. God Bless you all!!

Upcoming scheduled events at the Church of God of Landisville

- **Sunday, January 29, 2023...** We will celebrate the Lord's Supper in both worship hours.
- **Wednesday, February 22...** Ash Wednesday services schedule for 1pm and 7pm. Both services will take place in the Sanctuary. Stay tuned for details.
- **Lunch and Learn...** Beginning Wednesday, Feb. 22, a small group discussion on the Churches of God, "We Believe" book outlining and explaining our beliefs and theology as a denomination. The class will take place over the lunch hour and a lite lunch will be served. TTBA
- **Thursday, April 6...** Maundy Thursday worship service at 7pm in the Sanctuary and the ordinances of feet washing and sharing in the Lord's Supper. Stay tuned for details.

Winter weather... We follow the Hempfield school district when it comes to delays and cancellations. We will update you with emails, text messages and phone calls for any changes to our weekly and weekend schedule. On Sundays, if the weather is bad, we will cancel the early service and Sunday school and meet for one combined, blended service at 10:30am. Stay tuned!

Please continue to pray for the following people...

Landisville... Lois Groff and family as they mourn the passing of Harold, Hershey Groff, Bev Korman, Joanne Peters, Nancy Reitz, Lochlan Shiel, Jim Stauffer, John Yoder.

Real Life Church... Deb Blaettler; Pastor Chuck Frank and wife Tammy; Esther Jenkins; Carol Regitz; Bonnie Reinhart; Bob Weaver

A prayer for healing... "Father, you can heal us in a heartbeat. We pray for Your miraculous healing today. From depression, life-long disease, sudden failures, addictions and massive handicaps. We pray for miraculous healing because we know you are as capable of fixing our physicalities as you are to hold the oceans in place as the earth spins around. Through Your Son's death on the cross, we have the opportunity to be healed spiritually. Strengthen our faith where it is weak and strengthen our resolve to linger in Your presence a little longer each day. Take our pain away, according to Your will, in Your time. Send Your Spirit to help us see past our circumstances and onto Your calling on our lives. Fill our hearts with hope as we wait on You to move in our lives and flow out from our hearts. In Jesus' Name, Amen." (Written by Meg Bucher)

Eastern Regional Conference... a season of prayer and fasting!

The search committee, therefore, is calling for a season of prayer and fasting during the month of January. This is a call for seeking God's will as we move forward together, along with giving thanks to God and listening to what He is saying to His people. The Lord is the head of the church, and we follow Him. He will lead the way to where we are going, and to the one He has called to become our new executive director.

Please pray with us through these prayer prompts or visit the website, ercprayandpfast.com and share with us what God is saying to you. Thank you.

1. Give Thanks! We have seen God do mighty things. Give thanks for our previous ERC conference leaders: John Winebrenner, Ken Boldosser, Gail Dunn, Edward Rosenberry, Debra Bender, Jack Selcher, Tom Lucas, Jim Moss Sr., Kevin Richardson, Chuck Frank, Nick DiFrancesco, etc. Give thanks for all the leaders who have blessed your life. Those who have taught you, protected you and challenged you. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Psalm 100; Philipians 4:4-9)
2. Pray that God will raise up a leader for the Conference after His own heart, one who loves God, one who is characterized by godly love for others, one who is obedient to the faith, one of great integrity, one who has a spirit of humility and a heart for service. (Mark 12:30-31; Acts 20:19; 2 Corinthians 5:15)
3. Pray for converts and a culture of discipleship. Pray that saved souls are experiencing growth in Christian maturity and discipling others. (Matthew 28:19)
4. Pray that God blesses the search committee with spiritual wisdom and discernment. Pray for God's guidance throughout the process of finding a new Director. (James 1:5)
5. Pray for unity in the Spirit in the bond of peace amid a time of potential divisiveness and separation. We are better together, we need each other. (Ephesians 4:3)
6. Pray for repentance throughout our churches. May we truly look inward and fall on our faces before God confessing our sins and unfaithfulness. May we seek forgiveness, repair relationships and be humble in spirit. We are all sinners saved by grace. Thanks be to God for his glorious grace. (Revelation Chapters 2-3)
7. Pray for the churches in the conference to be awakened, revived and active in building churches patterned after God's design, loving all people as God has loved us. (Colossians 3:12-13, John 13:34)

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