

Light and Life

He Stoops to The Ash Heap

Though it is beyond our comprehension, many passages describe the majesty of God. “Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom O Lord, and You are exalted as head over all” (1 Ch. 29:11). “O Lord my God, You are very great: You are clothed with honor and majesty, who cover Yourself with light as with a garment, who stretch out the heavens like a curtain” (Ps. 104:1-2).

The book of Revelation describes all of creation revolving around His throne with even the powerful angelic beings praising Him without ceasing: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come” (Rev. 4:8). The elders around His throne who wear crowns cast them down at His feet and say, “You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and are created” (Rev. 4:11).

Even by looking around us we can start to understand the depths of God’s glory and might! “Since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and divine nature” (Rm. 1:20).

His unimaginable glory is enough to leave us in awe. How much more amazing then, that this same God stoops down from His throne to lift us up! “The Lord is high above all nations, His glory above the heavens. Who is like the Lord our God, who dwells on high, who humbles Himself to behold the things that are in the heavens and in the earth? He raises the poor out of the dust, and lifts the needy out of the ash heap, that He may seat him with princes - with the princes of His people” (Ps. 113:4-8)!

Remember to thank God for stooping down to lift us up!

- Sam Bunyard

Another Perspective

How Do You Define Yourself?

I didn’t ask how you ‘identify’ yourself. Some may present themselves to others as ‘beautiful’ but be full of “all uncleanness” on the inside (Mt 23:27). Instead, how do you ‘define’ yourself? What makes you, you?

Do you define yourself by gender? God made separate genders and assigned separate roles to each of them (Ge 1:27, Ti 2:1-8), but He does not define us on that basis (Ga 3:28). Do you define yourself by race or ethnicity? God separated us into various ethnicities (Ge 11), but He does not define us by such (Ac 10:34-35). Do you define yourself by status or occupation? We may define ourselves as middle class or upper class, or as a teacher or a plumber – but God doesn’t define us in those ways (Ga 3:27-28). We may define ourselves by marital status or by other family relationships. And God gave responsibilities to us based on those relationships (Ep 5:22-31, 1 Co 7:1-5, Mt 19:12); but He does not define us in those ways. In recent years, it has become common, if not popular, to define oneself by personality traits – ‘Type A/B’, ‘Extrovert/Introvert’, ‘Optimistic/Pessimistic’ (and/or Sarcastic), ‘Life of the Party’/‘Party Pooper’, etc. But God doesn’t define us with these labels.

No, God uses His own standards to define us. They are vital to our understanding not only of Him, but of ourselves. God created everyone; therefore, all belong Him (Ac 17:28); God loves everyone (Jn 3:16); God wants everyone to be saved (1 Ti 2:4); and God made provision for everyone to be saved (1 Jn 4:10). God wants everyone to be “in Christ Jesus” (Ga 3:27-28).

You see, God ‘defines’ us as either “in Christ Jesus” and therefore saved (Ep 2:13) or “separated from Christ” and therefore lost (Ep 2:12). Everything else may matter to us, but this is what matters to Him.

- Philip Strong (edited for space)

ASSEMBLY TIMES

Sunday

Morning Bible Class 9:30
Morning Assembly 10:30
Evening Assembly 5:00

Wednesday

Evening Bible Class 6:30

DOWNTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

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plan for eternity!

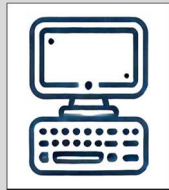
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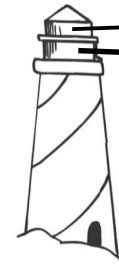
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DOWNTOWN GOSPEL BEACON

**PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY THE DOWNTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST
ROGERS, ARKANSAS**

November 10, 2024

FAMILY NEWS

PRAYER LIST –

Preachers we support: Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, Canada, Mexico, Peru, & U.S.

Sick: KFletcher, Swims, JMarshall, RStarr, MiBader, JTerrell, ACorder

Shut-ins: BPennington, SCole, SWiese, VCarter, KHeilighenthal, AHopper

Military: Kyler Sullins, Sean Potter

HEADS UP! – We will have a videographer with us today. Try to ignore him.

If you don't want to be in the video ad, just let one of the elders know.

SENTENCE SERMON – The danger is not that God has set the bar so high we will miss it, but that we have set the bar so low we will make it.

Two Steps Forward – Then What?

Sometimes we take two steps forward and three steps back. It happens with diets, with budgets, and with our spiritual efforts as well. We work on one character flaw, thinking maybe we've got it licked, when another one raises its ugly head – reminding us of our human frailty. Oh well, no one said Christ-likeness would be easy.

Take the tongue, for example. James called it “a restless evil” which no one can tame (3:8). Of course, he was not suggesting that we should surrender the fight and just give up trying. But he did imply that taming it would not be easy – and he was right about that.

Paul himself had the same kinds of spiritual struggles (Ro 7:15-25). Like us, he sometimes wanted to ‘kick himself’ for his sins. But there was no undoing them – no retakes or do overs. He concluded the only solution to his spiritual struggle was found, not in himself, but in the forgiveness found only through Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross.

Think about that. As strong as Paul was, his only hope for spiritual victory was in Jesus. If **we** have any chance of victory over sin, Jesus is our only hope as well. Forgiveness is not a license to quit the fight; but it **does** make it possible to take steps **forward** – again and again. - *WKing*