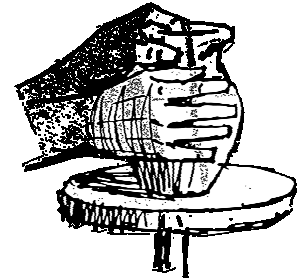


# His Workmanship: Westside

*“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.”*

—Ephesians 2:10



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Isaiah 64:8

## “New” Thoughts for a New Year (Shofar, So Good!) by Shane Scott

Happy New Year! The Lord has blessed us with a new year, and we trust that you made wonderful memories celebrating its arrival with family and friends. The promise of a new year leads many of us to make resolutions, like losing weight, eliminating debt, or getting organized. Yet many of us find that after the excitement of the first few weeks (or maybe days!) of the new year wears off, those resolutions unravel. That's because any meaningful changes we are going to make have to come from within us—from our will.

External factors such as a different number on a calendar really have no power to transform us.



Nevertheless, there is great value in contemplating what the new year brings. When the Lord arranged Israel's calendar, one of the festivals He gave them came to be regarded as the Jewish New Year—*Rosh Hashanah*—and was marked by the blast of the shofar (the ram's horn), the basis of the horrible pun in the title, see Lev 23:24. God gave Israel specific reminders through the year to keep the nation united in its spiritual focus, and

we can make similar use of special days on our calendar as well.

Rather than making a list of all the things you resolve to change this year, take a moment to meditate on some “new” things God has done for us:

### **God has offered us a new covenant.**

In the dark period of Israel's unfaithfulness to its covenant, God offered this comforting promise: *“I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah,”* Jer 31:31. This new covenant would be different from the one made at Sinai. Instead of an “outside-in” covenant, it would be an “inside-out” covenant. *“Not according to... My covenant, which they broke... I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people,”* Jer 31:32-33. According to the New Testament, this new covenant was fulfilled in the atoning work of Jesus on the cross. *“This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood,”* Lk 22:20; cf. 1 Cor 11:25. Through the death of Jesus, our hearts can be transformed and we can truly be God's people.

### **God can make us a new creation.**

*“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come,”* 2

Cor 5:17. Just as surely as God could bring light from darkness and order from chaos in the physical creation, God can sweep away spiritual darkness and bring new life out of the chaos of sin. No wonder the Bible often compares our turning to Him (conversion, and especially baptism) to a second birth, Jn 3:3-5, and to a resurrection from the dead, Rm 6:3-4; Col 2:12. Filled with gratitude for God's work of new creation, we want to live like the new people that we are, to *“put on the new man/self,”* Eph 4:24; Col 3:10.

Finally, **God has promised to finish (consummate) His work in us by a “new heaven and a new earth,”** Rev 21:1. *“It is done!”* He cries triumphantly in Rev 21:6. The new life we experience now in Christ is just a “foretaste of glory divine,” as the hymn says. There is much more to come. This old earth will pass, and God's work of new creation will be completed when His people enjoy the perfect glory of His presence in the *“new Jerusalem,”* Rev 21:2. The highly visionary scenes of Revelation 21 and 22 offer us glimpses of what this new existence will be like. No more death, pain, sorrow, or curse—*“for the former things have*

continued on p. 3

## 2015 Is Going to Scare You, by Lindsey Wagstaffe

2015 is going to contain things that will frighten us. No, I am not a prophet. I just know that life is uncertain, and 2015 will be no exception. You may be an adventure-seeker, or you may like to play it safe—either way, this upcoming year is sure to contain situations that seem custom-designed to propel you neck high into anxiety.

**Clinging to the presence of God is the beginning of what it means to “be strong and courageous.”** “Trust God.” That’s what we say to each other in response to these situations. “*Just* trust God.” And then we act as if that’s the last word on the subject. Simple advice to “trust God” is helpful—but incomplete. The question is, “What does trust look like when I wake up in the morning with a sense of dread about the future?”

**What Courage Has to Do with It.** For some reason, the words “courage” and “bravery” have slipped out of common usage. Many of us don’t connect with these terms at all, let alone use them on a frequent basis. *Courage* is a word for men. *Bravery* is a word for firefighters and people in the military. Both have little to do with you and me in our everyday lives. This should trouble us. Words are powerful—and we should be concerned when meanings change. We have re-defined *trust* as a passive reflection on the sovereignty of God. “Trusting God” has become shorthand for “chilling out.” We’re missing the *action* of it—trust’s twin, *courage*. The definition of courage reads like this: *courage—mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty.* Let’s begin to re-incorporate this critical, beautiful word back into our vocabularies!

### **Be Strong and Very Courageous!**

Joshua is my favorite case study. Nervous does not come close to describing what he must have felt. Pres-

sure does not begin to encapsulate what he’d just walked into. An entire nation was now looking to him—him!—for leadership. God had a message for him in the midst of his fear: “*Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.*” Josh 1:7–9.

These were God’s specific words to

**Clinging to the presence of God is the beginning of what it means to “be strong and courageous.”**

Joshua, in a specific time and place—but they apply to us, too. We’ve even received a similar promise, from the lips of Christ Himself, following his command to go out into all the world with His teaching: “*And behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age,*” Mt 28:20. Notice how the command “*be strong and courageous*” is linked with the promise “*the Lord your God will be with you*” by the little word *for*. Do not be afraid and discouraged—*why*? Because God goes with you. Fear becomes joy. “*In Your presence is fullness of joy,*” Ps 16:11.

**Clinging to the presence of God is the beginning of what it means to “be strong and courageous.”** Joshua started there. You and I must start there. Then action follows. Joshua advanced into battle. He moved. When God is with us, we advance and

move forward.

G.K. Chesterton spoke about the action of courage like this: “*Courage is almost a contradiction in terms. It means a strong desire to live taking the form of a readiness to die. ‘He that will lose his life, the same shall save it,’ is not a piece of mysticism for saints and heroes. It is a piece of everyday advice for sailors or mountaineers. It might be printed in an Alpine guide or a drill book. This paradox is the whole principle of courage, even of quite earthly or brutal courage. A man cut off [on the mountain] may save his life if he will risk it on the precipice. He can only get away from death by continually stepping within an inch of it. A soldier surrounded by enemies, if he is to cut his way out, needs to combine a strong desire for living with a strange carelessness about dying. He must not merely cling to life, for then he will be a coward and will not escape. He must not merely wait for death, for then he will be a suicide and will not escape. He must seek his life in a spirit of furious indifference to it,*” *Orthodoxy*, pp. 91-92.

God’s call to courage in the face of fear is not simply a call to passive reflection. It is a call to daring, forward-moving faith. It is a call to “risk it on the precipice.” It is taking the next step, moving forward in the grace of God.

When you wake up with dread in the morning, you remind yourself of Jesus’s promise that He is with you. You assess what needs to be done. You ask Him for his help to do it. You believe He is with you, enabling you. And then you go to battle.

2015 will often scare me—I’m sure of that. Life has “danger, fear, or difficulty.” But I am also sure of Christ’s promise—and with His presence, He can enable me to “venture, persevere, and withstand.” In short, with Jesus I will face life bravely.



**God makes my heart clean in 2015** “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” —Ps 51:10

**Expressions of Guilt, D. Maxson**  
*“While Ezra prayed and made confession, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, a very great assembly of men, women, and children, gathered to him out of Israel, for the people wept bitterly,”* Ezr 10:1

Ezra felt deep sadness and profound guilt because of the people's intermarriages with the surrounding nations. Several vivid descriptions convey his emotions because of this sin:

- He tore his garments, 9:3, 5
- He pulled hair from his head and beard, 9:3
- He sat appalled, astonished, 9:3-4
- He fasted, 9:4-5
- He fell on his knees, 9:5; 10:1
- He spread his hands upward in prayer, 9:5
- He expressed his shame, 9:6
- He confessed Israel's guilt historically, 9:7
- He confessed God's mercy toward them—which was undeserved, 9:8-9
- He confessed in specific ways how they had violated the covenant, 9:10-12
- He admitted that their punishment was LESS than that they deserved, 9:13
- He wondered if God's anger should completely consume them, 9:14
- He confessed their unworthiness to stand before God, 9:15
- He wept, 10:1

**Observations about your own prayers:**

- Have you honestly faced what you've done to God when you sin?

## Discipleship Here At Home

### CHRONIC CONDITIONS

**Logan Corray; Addison Tope; Christian Harrod; Rocco Jr; Pat Wilkes, Tim Huelsman**—asthma

**Bill Dennis**—adjusting pacemaker and meds  
**Nell Free**—pacemaker, heart; back pain  
**Autumn Hadders**—epilepsy; celiac disease

**Danielle Huelsman**—vertigo, CV syndrome

**Hannah Huelsman**—polycythemia, thickening of blood; heart murmur, acid reflux, chest pain

**Kirk Johnson**—MS

**Menards**—aging; **Lloyd**, diabetes, weak;

**Virginia**, macular degeneration; high BP

**Sandra Perry**—neuropathy from diabetes

**Cheryl Reames**—diverticulitis;

fibromyalgia

**Judy Sartin**—spinal stenosis; arthritis

**Judy and Mike Strand**—hepatitis trtment

**Lynda Szymanski**—COPD, lung

weakness

**Travel Michelle Franke** is in TN, **Michael Fryman** in KY, will return this week.

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### Shofar So Good, from p. 1

*passed away,”* 21:4. We will

experience the peace, beauty, joy,

and glory of God dwelling

among us. His work will

be completed by a new

heaven and new earth for

His new creatures to

enjoy on the basis of the

new covenant.

In 2015, may we let God

work His new work in us; may we

follow through in our commitments

and strive toward the goals we have

set for the year. Most of all, may we

let the great “new” truths of God's

covenant, creation, and

consummation stir us to greater

spiritual resolve.

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• Is confession something you do

casually, perhaps even thoughtlessly,

or is it a gut wrenching experience?

• Are you openly and specifically

confessing sin to God?

• Is your confession leading to

genuine repentance (see Ezra 10) or

do you confess with no intention of

giving up your sinful behavior?

• Do you thank God for His mercy and

forgiveness when you confess sin?



### PRAY FOR healing, protection, help

**Kaylee Chavez**—age 10, at St. Jude's in TN for brain cancer treatment; donate at

[www.youcaring.com](http://www.youcaring.com), type her name at top

• **Noah Hadders**—ill

• **Hannah Huelsman**—tonsillectomy recovery

• **Frank Savarese**—surgery on salivary gland 1/18

• **Ed Fink**—prostate cancer; current treatment for brain tumors. Undergoing chemo this month

• **Christine Adams**—recovering from ankle surgery, using cane; return to work 1/2 days

• **Lloyd Menard**—unable to walk, memory failing

• **Judy Sartin**—rotator cuff injury and leg bruising from fall

• **Tracy, Alivya, Capri Corray**—flu recovery; Tracy has sinus infection

• **Mark Campbell**—recovering from auto accident

• **Chris Bennett**, former member—fell from ladder, fractured pelvis; restricted work 2 mos

• **Chad Meyers** of Smoky Hill—acute renal failure

• **Brittany Tope's** mother—breast cancer in spine; pain in broken ribs which tumor has injured; grandmother—on dialysis

• **Sharon Rupinen, Sandra Perry's** sister—surgery 1/9

• **Melanie Baughn's** mother—in OK has renal failure and cellulitis

• **Jennifer Clayton**, former member—severe lyme disease; heart, spine, neuro issues

• **Sylvia Chapman, Brett's** grandmother—third stage pancreatic cancer; chemo

• **Judy Sartin's** son, **Dave Sartin**—colitis and severe depression; needs new job; **Judy's** friend,

**Vicky Keys**, radiation after mastectomy

• **Kenny Boyd's** coworker **Kim Phillips**—asks our prayers for upcoming heart surgery

• **Rick Robbins**, friend of Howells—brain surgery

• Remember **Greg Geiss**, with spiritual challenges;

**Paul Alfaro** and **Elaine Isbell**, who have returned to Christ and need prayers, support.

### Feeding on His Word Reading

Everyone is invited—including friends,

neighbors—on Fri, Jan 9, to an open

Bible reading of Philippians, James, and

Colossians: 6:30 pm pizza, 7 pm read-

ing at the Hadderses' home in Erie.

See **Joel Walker** for schedule.

*“Courage is the first of the human qualities because it guarantees all the others. Without courage, all other virtues lose their meaning.”*

—Winston Churchill



Exposing current thoughts & trends *religious freedom*

**Shirt Company Won't Fold on Values,** *by Tony Perkins*

T-shirt maker Blaine Adamson doesn't exactly wear his heart on his sleeve, but he's not about to ignore it, either. When the Kentucky businessman was approached about printing rainbow shirts for Lexington's gay pride festival two years ago, he had to turn the job down. As a Christian, he felt that using his shop to promote a message that contradicted his faith was a non-starter.

Adamson has paid for his principles—dearly. In October, the city's "special rights" ordinance—the same kind of measure that's caused a firestorm in Houston, San Antonio, TX; Fayetteville, AR; and Springfield, MO—came back to bite his company, Hands On, which was found guilty of "discrimination" and sentenced to a year of "sensitivity training." As far as Lexington's Human Rights Commissioner was concerned, it's time for Christians in the marketplace "to leave their religion at home."

But that won't happen without a fight. Late last week, Blaine announced that he's appealing the decision. "No one should be forced by the government to endorse or promote ideas with which they disagree," his attorneys at Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) argued. "Laws that do that are fundamentally unjust. We are appealing the commission's decision because the First Amendment protects the freedom of every American to decline to speak on any issue without fear of punishment."

When Adamson takes his battle to the next level, he'll have some interesting allies by his side: openly gay couple (and fellow T-shirt company owners), Kathy Trautvetter and Diane DiGeloromo. "The idea is that when you own your own business, it's your own art and creation—it's very personal...it takes a long time to build a business," Trautvetter said. "When someone wants to force you to go against it—that's what stuck me right in the heart. I really felt for Blaine."

Americans should feel for every businessman who is being muscled out of the market for holding views that an overwhelming number of people share. Thankfully, the Constitution doesn't guarantee rights on the basis of political correctness. So as long as we are a nation ruled by law, the Adamsons have as much freedom to reject homosexuality as his customers do to endorse it.

[Ed. note: Fayetteville's ordinance was repealed by voters in a December special election. Last May, Pocatello, ID, voters narrowly defeated—by just 150 voters of about 9,600 cast—an attempt to repeal the city's nondiscrimination ordinance. In August, however, Chattanooga, TN, voters soundly repealed—by 25%—an ordinance extending protections and benefits to gay city employees.]



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*Assembly Schedule*

**Sunday**

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

**Wednesday**

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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**Sunday morning**

- **adult Bible class**, Lesson 13, "Fishers of Men: the Disciple's Task," Kenny Boyd

- **Sermon**, "Lessons from First Peter," Jim Reingrover

**Sunday afternoon**

- **Sermon**, "Lessons from the Life of Christ," Jim Reingrover

**Sunday morning: Begin new study next week, "I Have Become A Christian! Now What?"**

**Wednesday night: New study in Daniel: Determined to Walk with God, Lesson 2, chapter 1.** Get materials for Wednesday adult classes from the church's website under "Member Files."