



FAITH

And we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him” (1 John 4:16).



Finding Hope in Saturday’s Darkness

I wonder what it was like all those years ago when a group of fearful men and women huddled and hid in a locked room? Yesterday was full of possibility, but today their leader was put to death by those He came to save. How could they find hope when the One in whom they hoped was gone? How could they take another step when, for three years, their every step followed the Great Shepherd? They were alone. Despondent. Hopeless. Could anything good come from so much evil? Could life ever again have meaning outside pain and suffering? Would anyone be saved when the One who came to rescue was lying dead in a tomb?

I cannot imagine the hopeless thoughts that went through the disciples’ minds as the devil sifted them. But I know what held them fast; it was peace. Not the peace the world gives, but the supernatural peace of God—freely given and freely received. Did they catch glimpses of their Savior when their eyes were off the waves? His image must have filled their minds as they dwelled upon the memories of yesterday. But in those dark moments, did they remember His words?

He told them these things would happen as a sign (Matthew 12:40). After Peter’s confession that Jesus was the Messiah and the Son of God, Jesus repeatedly told the disciples the things that would happen (Matthew 16:13–21; 17:22–23; 20:18). On the

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night He was betrayed, He assured them more than once that everything would seem wrong but was all part of His sovereign plan (John 14:18–19; 16:16; 16:33). Christ's words were faithfully planted in their minds as He taught them for three years. Because He did not want their faith to fail, He gave them the words and promised to buffer the waves of doubt that would assail them in the moments of suffering between Friday and Sunday. They huddled in despair, but had they remembered His words, they would have known it was momentary.

I want to learn from the disciples. I want to trust that God's Word is true when I cannot see or feel it. I need to concentrate on the One who promised that all things would work together for my good, rather than focusing on my hopelessness and dreary circumstances. Jesus' charge is the key: "The one who loves his life will lose it, and the one who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life" (John 12:25).

For it is hating life in this world—realizing it offers no hope—that allows us to let go of our expectations, forgotten hopes, and dreams. To hate this life is not a decision to be miserable for as long as we draw breath; instead, it is a choice to pursue the treasure in heaven that moth and rust cannot destroy and where thieves cannot break in and steal (Matthew 6:19–20). Hope that is fixed on a kingdom that cannot be shaken gives us the ability to endure the troubles of this life (Hebrews 12:28).

Hating this life is not living hopelessly here; instead, it is living hopeful in the next while here. This is the hope that seeks Christ's righteousness and the kingdom of God above all. Because the believer's security is found in heaven, he has no regard for harm done to his body. That hope goes out and joyfully sells everything, even counting it dung, so that Christ is gained.

Many wasted tears were shed on that dark Saturday two thousand years ago. The Savior promised His disciples that He would leave for a moment, rise the third day, and return to them. Yet, they seemed to waver. They doubted because they wanted to understand intellectually and observe with their own eyes rather than trust in all the Savior's promises.

Today, we find ourselves amid birth pangs, and I would ask, "Where is our hope?" The answer is where we place our trust. Our confidence and security will not be shaken if our hope is in Christ.

Will you choose to learn from those early believers' mistakes in today's dark hour? Will you choose the promises of Christ over the pragmatism of your mind? Only His words can buoy our hearts in uncertain times.

We all have a choice to make today—not to allow our hearts to be anxious and to trust God our Father and Jesus Christ His Son. For us, He is preparing a special place. Therefore, set your hope upon the unseen things. Believe in God and allow your peace to testify of this hope.



—Pastor Caleb

"Truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice. You will become sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn to joy. When a woman is in labor, she has pain because her time has come. But when she has given birth to a child, she no longer remembers the suffering because of the joy that a person has been born into the world. So you also have sorrow now. But I will see you again. Your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy from you" (John 16:20–22).



"Don't let your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if not, I would have told you. I am going away to prepare a place for you. If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also. You know the way to where I am going" (John 14:1–4).

Join me in reading through the Bible in 2022.

2022 Scripture Reading Plan

Faithtoyou.com/scripture



Arise and Shine!



Pastor Noel Alberto grew up on the streets of the Philippines and spent ten years in prison as a young man. While there, he accepted the Lord as his Savior, and the Lord has completely changed his life.

Today he and his family serve at Arise and Shine Community Church. In 2022 the church will celebrate 35 years of ministry to the Filipino people, fulfilling the Great Commission to bring the gospel to all. Pastor Noel has been the senior pastor at Arise since 1996.

Remembering his past, he preaches the gospel to about 400 inmates each

Monday and mentors 15 ex-inmates who actively serve the Lord.

He also oversees the Arise and Shine Academy and teaches at Baptist Bible College of Asia in Manila.

Since 2005 Pastor's goal has been to proclaim God's Word to as many people as possible each year by utilizing evangelistic crusades, seminars, youth camps, schools, hospitals, and public places such as buses and trains.

Pastor Noel and his wife, Gina, have four children: Faith Giel, Rapture Noah, Great Blessing, and Amazing Xaris.

DON'T HIDE . . . SEEK!

Though the Resurrection had occurred, the disciples were hiding out! The happy news had not driven their doubts away. But we are like them when we lock ourselves behind closed doors:

• **Doors of isolation**—If we never make friends with non-Christians or interact with the world, we deny God's power to change lives. Hiding in church or refusing to contact anyone suspected to be a nonbeliever limits Christ's work. The truth does not have to hide or isolate itself.

• **Doors of anonymity**—If we relate to those around us but never tell them we are Christians, we deprive them of discovering what God has done in our lives.

• **Door of superficiality**— If we only talk of sports and weather and keep to safe subjects with people around us, we cooperate with the world's intention to ignore God and any issue that might lead someone to consider God's perspective seriously.

Christ can make his presence known behind closed doors, but he will not unlock them for us. Unless we step out of our hiding places, we will never see all that Christ can do through us.

—Author unknown

COMMUNITY



Take It to the Bank

by Carmen Ludwig

In 1985, the pastor said, "Don't let another day go by without accepting Jesus into your life." That night, as the earth rang in the New Year, heaven rejoiced over one young woman who repented. Meet Miss Carmen.

Our family was poor and illiterate; we lived in El Salvador. My name is Maria del Carmen Franco. At four years old, my mother left me with a friend to raise. Like all good Catholic girls and boys, I made my first communion at seven years old. My birth mother visited and brought me a bag of "M&M'S." I didn't see her again until I was a teenager when she came to take me back. I refused. For middle school, I attended parochial school but find it strange that I never read the Bible.

I am conflicted about illegal crossings on our southern border. In 1980, when I was 17, my cousin paid a coyote \$2,000 for us to get to the USA. We traveled with 50 people, including a baby. When we arrived in L.A., the girls went to "gramma's"; the boys went with the coyote to his apartment. We received clothes and food and a place to stay.

Soon I married and quickly had two beautiful children. But my alcoholic husband beat me when he was drunk. It was so bad that I slept with a bat under my mattress. When the sun began to set each day, I never knew what was coming.

People of different religions always knocked on our door, and I always told them to leave me alone. But I saw how some people around me, including my cousin, were not drowning in everyday life. I didn't ask questions but eventually was invited to attend John MacArthur's Spanish church. We opened the Bible and read along. It was so easy to read, like simple math: $2 + 2 = 4$. I wrote down

everything. When reading the Bible at home, I found the second commandment in Exodus 20. It was clear: we should not worship any graven images. That verse pierced my heart since I grew up praying to saints, statues, and Mary. I realized that Christ was the one true God.

I asked my husband if I could attend a Bible study. He said yes, but his jealousy was quickly apparent. He became aggressive; his anger and the beatings became worse. After one of them, I couldn't walk. The doctor told me I had to leave. In May 1987, my cousin drove the kids and me to the Antelope Valley.

Later that year, at a Hume Lake women's retreat, I attended a Set Free class. I was late to the large sanctuary. The speaker shared how God sets us free. I had never told anyone that as a young girl, I was raped. The speaker asked those ladies to stand who wanted God's gift of freedom. My heart pounded. My legs were shaky. Finally, I pulled myself up, and a group of women laid hands on me and prayed. That day I was healed from much pain. I knew Jesus had been with me through it all. Only God can set us free.

Over the years, there were other joys and sorrows. While my mom was in California for a visit, she became a Christian. In 2002, my heart cried when a drug addict killed my oldest son in a head-on collision. In 2013, I married Dave Ludwig. Now, children and grandchildren fill our lives. God is good. I should have died many times throughout my life, but He saved me.

I no longer fear sunsets. God has a purpose for me, and there were reasons I faced what I did. Nothing surprises our Lord, and nothing is impossible for Him. You can take that to the bank!



Dave and Carmen Ludwig





YEAR IN REVIEW

Two themes were evident at the February 20 meeting—God is faithful, and the people of Faith Community enjoy being together. Each ministry report highlighted exciting ways that God was glorified during 2021, from the door-to-door outreach, online video devotionals, VBS, men’s and women’s Bible studies, and so much more. Also, the church experienced tremendous growth in the number of attendees.

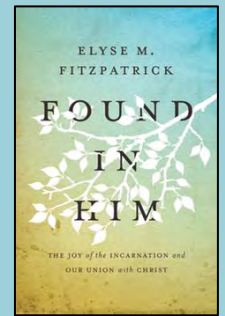
Pastor Caleb shared his vision for the church as found in Acts 2:42: that we will be a community that values teaching, fellowship, communion, and prayer.

It was exciting to hear the projected building plans for the next one-and-a-half years, beginning with a new parking lot out on the dirt area and culminating with a new worship center that seats 500 people.

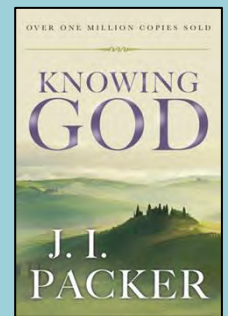
Find the video on Faith Community’s YouTube channel that captures the excitement. And contact the office for the packet of notes that was given out.

May God continue to be glorified!

READ ANY GOOD BOOKS?



Found in Him by Elyse Fitzpatrick reminds us that we are not alone. Jesus came to earth to be one with us; we are literally in Him. The author fleshes out the practical implications of our union with Christ and gives us the confidence to approach the Son of God. (Available in paperback on the library cart.)



Knowing God aims to redirect our attention from society’s modern skepticism to the straightforward, profound truth that to know God is to love His Word. Packer shows us what it means to know God. He points the reader to the true character of God with his theological competence and compassionate heart. (Available in paperback on the library cart.)

MARCH FOR LIFE

Walk for Life, hosted by Care Net, is on March 19. You can get involved. Find the one that is best for you!

Join one of Faith Community’s teams or create a team and invite folks to join you.

Create a Team

If walking is not for you, how about joining a virtual team and donating to the walkers?

Donate

Questions? Please call us. We can be reached at 661-729-4277.



COMMUNION



Never Walk Alone

by Carol Macy

When we think of the word “communion,” we often think of a church service involving dry, tasteless crackers and a thimble-sized cup of grape juice. However, Webster’s 1828 dictionary defines it more broadly as “fellowship” or “intimate familiarity.” What is often called the “Lord’s Table” is meant to remind us of the deeper, more intimate communion Christ sacrificed His life to have with us. That communion with Christ and acceptance of His love has only grown as I’ve spent time with Him in the Word and prayer.

How is it possible to truly grasp the love that God has for us, the love that He speaks about in His Word? Through my observations and my journey through deep and dark valleys, I have realized the Father’s incomprehensible love for us (1 John 4:16 AMP).

Having experienced His love in my most bottomless pits, I must continually choose to believe with deep, consistent faith in the love that God has for me so that I might know the joy of abiding in Him as He abides in me, even when I do not see where He is leading.

Nothing is new under the sun; neither are our difficulties new or unique. However, knowing that doesn’t negate pain or grief. My life’s path has led me through seemingly impossible challenges and adversity, but God has been faithful.

Whether ostracized from family members, caring for my older brother after a catastrophic head injury, or being forced from our home by mold, God was faithful. And when we fostered two abused children, traveled on a heart-wrenching journey resulting in a son in prison, or just experienced the day-to-day challenges that come with parenting ten unique individuals, God was faithful. In everything, God has proven His love in more ways than I can even begin to explain. I have experienced the truth of Isaiah 30:20–21 (at the top of the right column).

Knowing that I have communion—intimate fellowship—with the Lord gives overwhelming joy and peace to my heart. Honestly, if I’d have had the choice, I wouldn’t have signed up for parts of my journey, but neither would I erase them because, through those difficult times, I’ve learned how much my ever-faithful Father loves me.

“Though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of oppression, yet your Teacher will no longer hide Himself, but your eyes will [constantly] see your Teacher. Your ears will hear a word behind you, ‘This is the way, walk in it,’ whenever you turn to the right or to the left” (Isaiah 30:20–21 AMP).



“Dear brethren, if we shut our ears to what Jesus tells us, we shall never have power in prayer, nor shall we enjoy intimate communion with the Well-beloved.”

—Charles Spurgeon,
Encouraged to Pray



“If you have ever prayed in the dawn, you will ask yourself why you were so foolish as not to do it always; it is difficult to get in communion with God in the midst of the hurly-burly of the day.”

—Oswald Chambers



“Once you become aware that the main business that you are here for is to know God, most of life’s problems fall into place of their own accord.”

—J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*



Abide in His Love

by Tim Schroeder, Elder

Do we practice Christianity or a dead religion? Countless Scriptures contrast these two. But the core issue is this: the faithful Christian has given his life to the resurrected Jesus and realizes that he was bought by the blood of Christ, which makes his life not his own. Subsequently, we live in abject dependence upon our Savior, infused with His resurrected life to bear His image to a world that desperately needs Him!

What does a Christian's life look like when it is no longer his own but rather one of Christ living in him? The Bible is full of verses that assure us that being filled with His very life only occurs with total dependence upon Him. Some of Paul's assurances are below. Some characteristics of this life are at the right.

—Paul said that the life he presently lived in the body, he lived by dependence upon (faith in) the Son of God. "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20).

—In Eph. 3:17–19, he prays for the Ephesian Christians to be firmly established in Christ's love through utter dependence (faith) on Him and to receive God's fullness.

—In Col. 3:3, Paul conveys, "For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." He then tells us that Christ is our life.

—He describes our life in Christ as

"always carry[ing] the death of Jesus in our body, so that the life of Jesus may also be displayed in our body" (2 Cor. 4:10). "For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus's sake, so that Jesus's life may also be displayed in our mortal flesh" (vs. 11). "Even though our outer person is being destroyed, our inner person is being renewed day by day" (vs. 16).

—One of the many more examples of this concept is found in 1 John 4:9: "God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent His one and only Son into the world so that we might live through Him." "And we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him" (vs. 16).

The Bible tells us that if we live in total dependence upon Jesus, His life fills us. When His life fills us, His love fills us. We will overflow with His love because He gave us the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5). It cannot be any other way.

Too many Christians think that Jesus died and rose from the dead so that He would raise us to new life at our death. The truth is that we participate in that new life now! Eternal life is the present possession of every believer. We don't have to wait until we die; we can experience that abundant life right now—His life flowing through us as we abide in His resurrected life!



In addition to Christ's amazing love, some traits we see in us when we are filled with the resurrected life of Jesus are:

***Abundant life**

(John 10:10)

***Inexpressible joy**

(1 Peter 1:8; John 15:11; 16:22; 17:13)

***Incomprehensible peace**

(John 14:27; 16:33; Philippians 4:7)

***Glorious liberty**

(Romans 8:21; Galatians 5:1, 13; 1 Peter 2:16; John 8:31–36)

***Triumphant**

(2 Corinthians 2:14)

* There are many more that could be on the list. Can you name some?



A trip of the lifetime awaits friends and family of Faith Community. Touch down in January, and the journey of a lifetime begins. You will walk the Mount of Olives, boat on the Sea of Galilee, float in the Dead Sea, pray in the Garden of Gethsemane, roam the streets of old Jerusalem, sing in cathedrals, and much more.

Faithtoyou.com/info



CARE





"Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone cheerful? He should sing praises" (James 5:13).

Pray as the Spirit leads:

*Grace Bohannon's mom and dad have COVID-19, and Grace is taking care of them.

*Paul and Cathy Escamilla have COVID-19.

*Gino, a relative by marriage of Nikki Pencille, has stage 4 stomach cancer with less than six months to live. Pray for salvation for him and others in the family.

*Dora Railsback's nephew Scott (51) had a major stroke and is paralyzed on his left side.

*Jeannette Isles's husband died.

*Norma Lopez's daughter-in-law Yolanda has ovarian cancer.

*Dennis and Angelica Umali want to continue taking care of his mother Ofelia and face challenges.

*Pamela Caldwell's nephew Ben (30) had a brain bleed and is paralyzed on his right side. He needs salvation.

*Natalie Lewis continues her therapies.

*Roxie Reinholdson continues to heal from knee surgery.

*Melissa Oliver asks prayer for her unsaved family members.

*Robert has stage 4 lung cancer.

*Baby Jordan Ludwig has ongoing health challenges.

*Baby Emmerit Porter needs healing.

*Kalli Reader has extensive injuries from an auto accident.

*Ken Hill's dad is improving but is alone in the hospital. He needs salvation.

*Dianna Romero's family lost a brother and son in a motorcycle accident.

*Sara Butler continues with chemo and gives praise that her tumor has shrunk.

*Natalie Kidman's husband David has a brain injury from a bike accident and needs salvation.

*Sharon Dison is recovering from recent brain surgery.

*Aaron Brownell, a firefighter for L.A., is applying for a religious vaccine exemption.

*Shane Speer's mother died.

*Kyle Smith has medical needs.

*Aron Carle's friend Cecilia is in a coma. Aron has back problems.

*Caesar Coons Sr. has liver cancer.

*Nick Ford has stage 4 cancer and has chosen not to do chemo.

*Lynn Grandinetti is bedridden with lung and heart issues.

*Trevor Pencille continues having back pain.

*Lily Sadorra's husband died.

*Jan Smith's friend Sally was in a car accident. Her husband died, and Sally's in the hospital and not doing well.

*John Williams is in the hospital with severe leg cramps.

*Pray for the Lancaster March for Life on Saturday, March 19.

*There are many ministries at Faith. They each need prayer to reach people for Christ.

*Praise for the recovery of Bev Gonda's dad.

*Praise for Linda Foster's future son-in-law's healing from cancer.

*Praise God for many answered prayers. If you would like your prayer needs to go out to church members immediately, contact Laura Cox: prayer@faithtoyou.com.

UPCOMING*

Sunday, March 13
Fundraiser for Camp Faith
Cornhole Tournament

Friday, March 18
Serve at Grace Resources

Saturday, March 18 & 19
Classical Conversations
Yard Sale
8 a.m.

Saturday, March 19
Lancaster March for Life
Meet at Grace Chapel
7:30 a.m.

Saturday, March 19
2 – 5 p.m.
School House Rocked
Screening

Friday, March 25
Frontline Workers
Appreciation Dinner
6 p.m.

Friday, April 15
Serve at Grace Resources

Friday, April 15
Good Friday
5 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 17
Easter Sunday

June 13–17
Vacation Bible School

June 25
Anthem Growth Year
Application Deadline

July 11–15
Camp Faith

*For more information:
Faithtoyou.com/info
661-267-2200

The Christian Standard Bible is used
unless otherwise indicated.



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