

The Master's Message

The Newsletter of the Church of the Master

June, 2022

Virtual Adult Bible Study
Wednesday, 7:00 PM
Saturday, 12:00

2783 Lafayette Avenue
Bronx, N.Y. 10465
718-597-6298

Sunday Worship
Sunday 11:00 am

cotm47@verizon.net

Rev. Dr. Melva J. Hayden, Pastor

Faithful Love

I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy.

Hosea 2:19

As our Lord Jesus taught, he often told stories, parables, to illustrate the truths he wanted to communicate. Perhaps you know the story of "The Lost Son" (Luke 15:11-32).

This story might more fittingly be called "The Forgiving Father." In the story, one of a father's two sons asks for his inheritance and leaves home to spend everything on a good time in the big city, so to speak.

The story includes many little touches from the culture of Jesus' time, details that deepen the story's meaning and multiply its impact. Whole books have been written to explain and expand on these. In light of Hosea 2:19, though, one of these details stands out as key: the father's unwavering, persistent love.

Jesus tells us that as the son, eventually destitute, broken, and desperate, turns toward home, the father eagerly welcomes him:

While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

Luke 15:20

Did you catch it? The father was watching. Every day, he stood at the end of the driveway, staring down the road his son had taken as he left. Every day, the father watched and waited. Who knows how many days, how many weeks, how many months it took! But the father kept watching, kept waiting, kept loving.



How like our gracious heavenly Father! In wisdom, he knows that true repentance cannot be forced. So he waits. He watches. He counts on the words of faithful love he has whispered to our hearts in the past to echo through our souls once again. He relies on his precious promises to rekindle our longing to be home with him and all the family.

The Bible reminds us:

If we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.

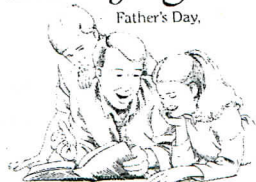
2 Timothy 2:13

Our heavenly Father does not force repentance or faith upon us. Instead, he waits; he watches for our return. And he receives us in mercy—no matter how long it's been since we were last home.

Prayer starter

Dear Father, you are so faithful, steadfast, true! In the cross of my Savior, Jesus, forgive my unfaithfulness, especially . . .

Honor Your Father
Father's Day.



SPECIAL DATES*

- Pentecost, June 5th
- Trinity Sunday, June 12th
- Flag Day, June 14th
- Father's Day, June 19th
- First day of summer, June 21st

News From the Pews



Continued healing for:
Don Fecher, Allen Ford, Carole Mahon,
Alice Rivera

Everyone is invited to join our virtual "**Hour of Prayer Power**" every Wednesday at 12:00. The conference call-in number is 605-475-4860, code: 371231#

Our virtual **Bible Study** meets Wednesday at 7:00 PM and Saturday at 12:00. Contact Ron Rivera (917-716-8273) for information on joining

Celebrating the church's birthday

On Pentecost, we remember when the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus' disciples. As they gathered in Jerusalem 10 days after Jesus' ascension, they saw tongues of fire, heard rushing wind and began speaking in many languages. Because the disciples could then share the good news with all the pilgrims assembled for the Pentecost festival, the occasion marks the birthday of the Christian church. That day alone, about 3,000 people devoted their lives to Christ.

Like the Holy Spirit, Pentecost is important and relevant today. As theologian Henri Nouwen writes, "Without Pentecost the Christ-event — the life, death and resurrection of Jesus — remains imprisoned in history as something to remember, think about and reflect on. The Spirit of Jesus comes to dwell within us, so that we can become living Christs here and now."



- "Dads are most ordinary men turned by love into heroes, adventurers, storytellers and singers of song."

—Pam Brown

CHURCH CHUCKLES

A woman was so enthralled while hiking in the Grand Canyon that she completely forgot to be cautious and slipped off a dangerous trail. As she slipped, she managed to grasp a branch sticking out from the wall of the cliff. "Please, Jesus, there is no help in sight, and I can't hold on for long. Help me, Jesus, please!"

"Certainly, I'll help you," she heard. "Just prove your faith by letting go of the branch."

The woman looked down at the 300-foot drop below her and answered, "Could I speak with your dad, please?"

Sign in a restaurant window:

HELP WANTED.

**Blessed is he
that waiteth.**

DAN. 12:12

The Catholic school nuns were horrified by the students' dirty mouths. For punishment, the kids had to clean the school bathrooms until not even one speck of grime was visible — what the nuns referred to as "immaculate perception."

"The good Lord didn't create anything without a purpose, but mosquitoes come close."

Parents are stewards

Striving to raise happy, well-rounded children isn't wrong "unless those successes become the goal," writes Jeffrey Reed in *ParentLife* magazine. For Christians, he says, the driving force of parenting should be helping kids follow God's path.

"What if we parented as if we were temporary stewards of the greatest containers of godly potential?" Reed asks. "What if our goal for our children was to continually seek God's guidance on what it is that he wants for them and to help them pursue that goal on a daily basis?" He concludes: "In a hundred years, nothing we do will matter apart from the impact we've made in God's kingdom on earth. Perhaps your children will be that legacy."

- "The fact that I can plant a seed and it becomes a flower, share a bit of knowledge and it becomes another's, smile at someone and receive a smile in return, are to me continual spiritual exercises."

—Leo Buscaglia

- "Kindness and consideration of somebody besides yourself ... keeps you feeling young."

—Betty White

DEATH:
WHAT A WONDERFUL WAY TO
EXPLAIN IT...

A sick man turned to his doctor as he was preparing to leave the examination room and said, "Doctor, I am afraid to die. Tell me what lies on the other side."

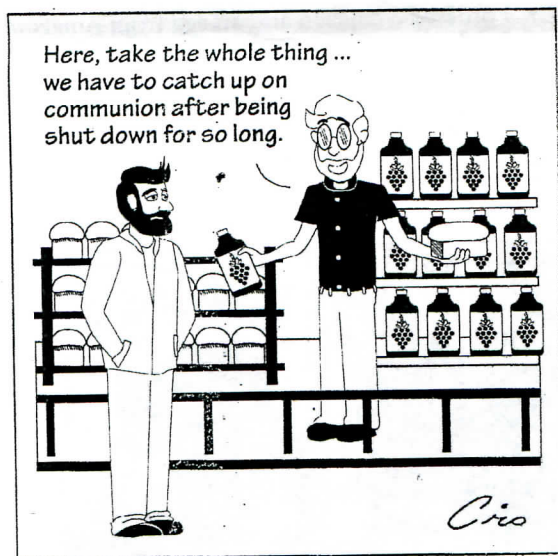
Very quietly, the doctor said, "I don't know..."

"You don't know? You're a Christian Man, and don't know what's on the other side?"

The doctor was holding the handle of the door. On the other side came a sound of scratching and whining, and as he opened the door, a dog sprang into the room and leaped on him with an eager show of gladness. Turning to the patient, the doctor said, "Did you notice my dog? He's never been in this room before. He didn't know what was inside. He knew nothing except that his master was here, and when the door opened, he sprang in without fear. I know little of what is on the other side of death, but I do know one thing...I know my Master is there and that is enough."

• "It is in your hands to create a better world for all who live in it."

—Nelson Mandela



The church hive

Bees live in a cooperative way described as "eusociality," or good relations. Each bee contributes a specific skill to the colony, synchronizing its efforts for the benefit of all. Likewise, a church's health depends on all members fulfilling their responsibility to the organism as a whole. Descriptions of hive life mirror Paul's words about the body of Christ, with members having different gifts "but the same Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:4).



According to R.S. Beal Jr., who was both a pastor and a zoology professor, a beehive is the perfect "living illustration of how to walk in unity." He wrote, "Those of us who have believed in Jesus belong to one another just as much as we belong to Christ. We cannot live independently of one another anymore than we can live independently of Christ. Like the bees, we must learn to practice the sacrifice, labor, sharing, and submission of love that together we 'may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ'" (Ephesians 4:15, KJV). How are you using your own spiritual gifts to build up your church "hive"?



Mr. Rogers, to grads — and to us all

Our world hangs like a magnificent jewel in the vastness of space. Every one of us is a part of that jewel, a facet of that jewel, and in the perspective of infinity, our differences are infinitesimal. We are intimately related. May we never even pretend that we are not. ... Deep down, we know that what matters in this life is more than winning for ourselves. What really matters is helping others win too, even if it means slowing down and changing our course now and then. ...

[Roman philosopher] Boethius wrote this sentence: "Oh happy race of mortals if your hearts are ruled, as is the universe, by love." ... [There is a] deep part of you that allows you to stand for those things without which humankind cannot survive: love that conquers hate, peace that rises triumphant over war, and justice that proves more powerful than greed. So in all that you do, in all of your life, I wish you the strength and the grace to make those choices which will allow you — and your neighbor — to become the best of whoever you are.

—Fred McFeely Rogers, 2002

Grateful people are joyful people

In a 2013 TED Talk, David Steindl-Rast says many people think happiness leads to gratefulness. "Think again," he says. "Is it really the happy people that are grateful? We all know ... people who have everything it [takes] to be happy, and they are not happy, because they want something else or they want more of the same. And we all know people who have lots of misfortune [yet] are deeply happy. ... Why? Because they are grateful. So it is not happiness that makes us grateful. It's gratefulness that makes us happy."

We must be cautious: Depression is a real illness, and therapy or medicine may be necessary to help us feel "happy" and enjoy life again. Also, "joy" is perhaps a more fitting word than "happiness"; happiness can be fleeting and superficial, while joy is heart-deep and abiding. In Jesus, even when we're sad or struggling or fearful, we can have joy – the confidence that God holds us in his arms. And for that, we can be grateful. Indeed, Steindl-Rast concludes, "Grateful people are joyful people."

Fun facts on fathers

Move over, dad jokes! Here's a look at some serious dad facts, courtesy of the U.S. Census Bureau:

72 million

The estimated number of fathers in the U.S.

29 million

The number of fathers who are also grandfathers

2 million

The number of single dads living with kids under the age of 18

18%

The percentage of single parents in the U.S. who are fathers

191,000

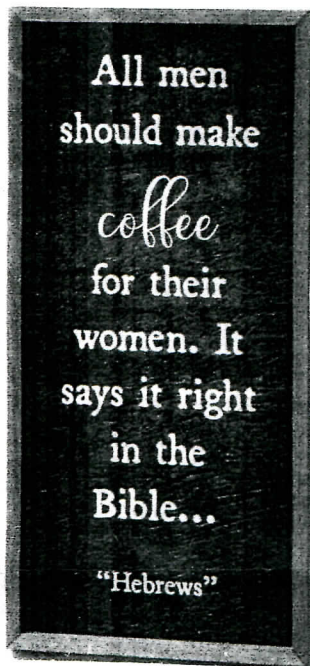
The estimated number of stay-at-home dads

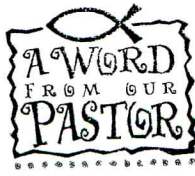
A standup guy

During the pandemic, a Maryland man used "dad jokes" to lift neighbors' spirits. Tom Schruben jotted down a joke-of-the-day on a curbside whiteboard. Hearing people chuckle and chat eased the isolation.

Schruben and his wife, Ann, became intentional about seeking joy after two of their children died. They vowed to "find happiness again" and share it. For Father's Day last year, Schruben held a Bad Dad Joke contest, donating entry fees to a local charity. Here are a few of his favorites:

- If two vegans get into an argument, is it still considered a beef?
- I ordered a chicken and an egg from Amazon. I'll let you know.
- What do you call a bear with no teeth? A gummy bear.





June 2021 Newsletter Article

As we enter the month of June with Father's Day, graduations, weddings vacations and things returning to the semblance of what is normal or the "new normal." We praise God that our nation is slowly coming back from the ravages and losses from the unprecedented Covid-19 or corona virus world-wide pandemic! But there still remains lingering animosity, mistrust, misinformation, and in some instances—disinformation running rampant in our nation! Our political leaders cannot seem to work together in a bipartisan manner because the distrust is so thick between our elected officials. We have shamed those who choose to follow CDC requirements and wear masks. We have gotten into shouting matches and even physical altercations when asked to wear a mask to shop in a particular business or eat in a particular restaurant. Many in our nation have determined they will not get vaccinated which is their personal choice. But those who have chosen to get vaccinated have shamed those who did not. Those who did not get vaccinated have shamed and blamed those who did choose to get vaccinated. With so much vitriol and ill-will following this past election and the unprecedented events of January 6th, our nation cannot seem to agree on what occurred and why.

As I reflected upon the precipice of the reopening our nation, and the current state of our politics and social discourse, I had an opportunity to read the below article in the Spring 2021 edition of *Today's Pastor* titled "*Follow Jesus' Example: Ask Questions.*" The article resonated with me because it speaks so profoundly to our current conditions. Church of the Master received permission to reprint the article from the author and editor of *Today's Pastor*, Bro. Dan Brownell. I pray it will provide food for thought and food for your soul, as much as it certainly did for mine. Happy Father's Day and congratulations to all of our Graduates in the Class of 2021 [2022]!

Shalom to you now,

Rev. Dr. Melva J. Hayden
Pastor
Church of the Master

*Corrections to May 2021 edition of the *Master's Message Newsletter*, *The Pastor's Pen* article "*When May Day Becomes Mayday—Pray Day!*" 1.) Reference to history of "*May Day.*" Should be: (<https://www.history.com>. (Accessed on April 14, 2021)). 2.) Reference to definition of "*Mayday.*" Should be: (<https://www.livemint.com>. (Accessed on April 14, 2021)).

Reprinted from June, 2021

Following Jesus' Example: Ask Questions¹

The culture of rage has reached new heights. A significant part of our society is now aggressively attacking those who hold a biblical worldview. But we're called to the difficult challenge of being faithful to Jesus and His Word while defusing conflict when we can. Paul says in Romans, *"If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all"* (12:18 ESV).

So how can we face hostility without losing our cool? After all, it's human nature to react to an angry comment with a defensive answer. We need to be Spirit controlled, but there's also a practical strategy we can implement. We can follow Jesus' example of asking questions. We know He used this strategy effectively, but it's easy to forget to apply it because we're immersed in a culture that places little value in this approach. We're trained to give answers, not ask questions.

Questions work well because they can:

- Calm and disarm a person and redirect an attack into a conversation. *"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger"* (Prov. 15:1 NIV).
- Get to the heart of a matter quickly.
- Reveal blind spots and make truth resonate.
- Reinforce the Holy Spirit's conviction by helping people recognize truth for themselves.

If we're criticized for our position on an issue, we could recite a list of reasons for our beliefs, but that will likely just elicit rebuttals and counter rebuttals. Or we could respond with a simple question: Whose thought on this topic matters most? Yours, mine, or God's? (Unless the person is an atheist, it would be hard to avoid the obvious answer that God's is most important.)

The next question follows naturally, "So what does God say about the issue?" which provides an opportunity to point out what Scripture says. Of course, there's a chance the person will reject the Bible as the Word of God, but at least then the discussion focuses on what God says rather than winning an argument.

Jesus understood human nature, and we would be wise to follow His lead in lowering walls by asking questions. Now more than ever, we need to be able to engage people civilly to communicate truth.

In Christ,
Dan Brownell, Editor

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