

Knowing what God expects in our lives



By Bill Holland

How many times will it need to be declared that we can have as much of God as we want?

And how many tears will we shed from the sadness of knowing that most people only want enough to get by?

How often we find ourselves being so overwhelmed with problems, worries, and stress

that we are just too exhausted to invest time with the Lord, and its sad but common that many of us are guilty of basing our attitude toward Him according to what type of mood we are in.

In Jeremiah 33:3, the Lord invites us to seek His face regardless of our emotional state: "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and show you great and mighty things which you have never known." It's worth considering that not having a passion to communicate with God could be the reason why many people are anxious and fearful about their future.

The battle between following how we feel and obeying what God is saying is not to be taken lightly. To choose which side we will accept has everything to do with our destiny and the joy we experience in the journey.

When our mind and conscience agree that we can steer our ship according to our own compass, we have failed to comprehend the true meaning and purpose of our lives. Our creator brought everyone into His world and offers them an opportunity to be redeemed and spiritually transformed in order that they might live with Him forever.

"Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil" -- John 3:18-19. Those who would rather be the manager of their personal affairs and not accept this invitation of salvation will not only suffer loss in this life but possi-

bly the next one as well.

Maybe some of you today are discouraged and frustrated for whatever reason and we know that being in the wilderness is a challenging and difficult place to be. Sometimes it feels like we have been dealt a terrible hand of cards and within the sadness we are not sure what to do or have anyone we can talk to about it.

I have listened to others share about their bitterness and pain from life's disappointments that can become so heavy in our soul that it's difficult to envision ever having hope and joy again.

Allow me to say, these attacks on our heart and mind can be defeated when we give them to Jesus and allow Him to be our Lord. Aside from the mocking and relentless accusations from the devil, or the painful consequences of our decisions, we have been

designed to meditate about our discouragement and suffer through our grief in order to learn from our experiences and advance in our wisdom and grow stronger in our spiritual maturity.

We are given the choice to learn how to overcome or keep going around in circles. "My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you." -- James 1:19-20.

Within our human nature, we are vulnerable to physical and emotional affliction and there is nothing wrong or sinful with going through these experiences. We are not robots that

cannot feel rejection and we are not immune to the despair of loneliness or the agony of being betrayed.

Many of us have walked through severe trials and tribulations, yet let us not forget that Christ in His infinite wisdom and His own personal sufferings can relate to everything we have endured. James 1:12 says, "Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him."

Be encouraged today and know that God has always loved you and is waiting to reveal your destiny. We are a work in progress and our life is to be a continual classroom dedicated to learning who God is and who we are in Him.

At Valentine's, let's remember the One who first loved us

By Tim Coker, Pastor
Central Baptist Church, Darlington

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten

Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

It was just a bucket of popcorn.

I was sitting in the movie theatre, with a large Coke in one hand and the other hand so deep in a bucket of popcorn that I looked as if my arm had been amputated from the elbow down!

You know the kind of popcorn they sell in the theatres, don't you? It is so buttery your fingers feel like they have been dipped in motor oil. The pieces of kernel and hulls protrude from your teeth, as if you had forgotten to pull out this week's dental floss.

I mean, this was "good eating"! I cannot remember what movie I saw, but I'll never forget that bucket of popcorn!

I remember that night for another important reason as well. That was the night I discovered the truth about Donna -- she was in love with me! I mean, she had to be. Any woman who could witness (and sit through) the episode of "attack and destroy" I had employed on that bucket was either desperate for a man (and Donna wasn't) or was madly in love!

I decided that she was in love and the rest, as they say, is history!

I know I am being a little

silly. But you know, there is something about discovering that you are loved that changes your life ... forever! A great movie can really "move" you. My movie buffs know what I mean. A good bucket of popcorn can bring much satisfaction. Fellow "munchers" can identify. But those of you who have discovered you are loved ... your life has been changed!

It's been a number of years since our first movie together. I still like going to the movies. I now drink Diet Coke instead of the "real thing," but I can still attack a bucket of popcorn!

Mostly, I've never forgotten what it means to be loved ... and to love. My love for Donna has grown through the years, and I believe she still loves me!

It's been a number of years since I first met Christ, but I'll never forget the feeling of

knowing I was loved!

To believe, I mean really believe, "God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son" will change your life ... forever! Once you embrace that Truth ... once you kneel at that Cross ... the rest is history!

How about you? Have you knelt at the cross? Have you received the love and forgiveness offered by Jesus?

I know, I know, it's Valentine's season and your mind is on relationships, gifts and cards, flowers and candlelight dinners. You're just now getting ready for Valentine's Day ... so you're thinking of ... LOVE!

But if you miss the cross ... if you miss the new life and forgiveness (the Bible calls this salvation), if you miss the relationship with Him offered; then you have missed LOVE!

So why not take a moment, right now? Quietly give thanks for the Giver and the Gift! Why not ask Him in ... the Child in the manger ... the Savior on a cross?

Now that we have knelt, and received, let's celebrate! Valentine's is about many things. February is a great month! It is a month for celebrating ... a month for giving ... a month of faith ... a month of hope ... the month of love!

Let's make sure we express our love to the One who first loved us! And let's spend some time with those who are "desperate in their love for us"! Ha! Ha! Who knows? Maybe we can go see a movie. Get the popcorn ready!

Nursing

Continued from page 1

University, she was Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Chief Nursing Administrator at Wilson College in Chambersburg, Pa. Throughout her career, Hart has strongly supported student-centered learning, stu-

dent access, and student success initiatives, all of which complement Coker University's mission. Her areas of specialization include leadership, program development, and student persistence.

Hart received her Ph.D. in Nursing from the University of Missouri in Kansas City, her M.S.N. in Nursing Education

from South University (Florida), and her B.S.N. from Chamberlain University (Missouri).

Jail

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County jail because of the same COVID problem.

"Every jail is having (these problems)," Hudson said. "Everybody's got the same issue. We're just trying to handle it the best way we can."

The sheriff said he feels confident that the detention center can handle the COVID issues. He said he is fully aware of how

dangerous the coronavirus can be. Hudson said that he has recently lost three friends to the virus.

"This thing is real," Hudson said. "It has changed our way of doing things. It has changed our way of life."

Nearby Chesterfield County had to put its county jail on lockdown recently because of COVID, with at least nine inmates testing positive for the virus.

OBITUARY

Joseph Stewart "JJ" Cope Jr.

SOCIETY HILL -- Joseph Stewart "JJ" Cope Jr., 36, of Society Hill died on Monday, Jan. 18, 2021, at Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center.

Graveside services were held Friday, Jan. 22, 2021, at Welsh Neck Baptist Church Cemetery. Viewing was held on Thursday, Jan. 21, 2021, at Kistler Hardee Funeral Home.

Joseph was born in Chesterfield County. He enjoyed hunting, fishing and spending time with his family. Joseph also worked for many years driving trucks with his dad.

Surviving are his parents, Helen and Joseph Cope; his wife, Amy Larymore; two children, Chelsea (Brycen) Larymore and Eddie Tiller; his sisters, Brooke and Heather; special nephews and niece, Joseph Scott, Israel Scott, Taylor Nivens, Joseph L. Cope and Elijah Jackson; his father-in-law, Heyward Larymore; sister-in-law, Angela "Angelica" (Casey) Whitaker and their children; and special friends, Jessie Gainey and her children and J.T. Turner.

Family and friends are invited to sign the online guest book at www.kistlerhardeefuneralhome.com.



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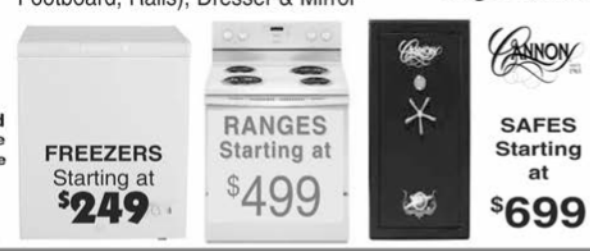
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