

## Who Are You Really Following?

By Dr. Steven John Bassett

*"As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow Me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." And at once they left their nets and followed Him. Going on a little farther, He saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat, mending their nets. Immediately Jesus called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed Him" (Mark 1:16-20).*

Unfortunately, too many people who have heard these scriptures do not understand the gravity of what took place here. These average hard-working men had everything to lose and no real knowledge of what they would gain by following this man named Jesus. Moreover, in a short time they had to decide to either leave everything they knew and owned for an unknown future or stay and continue living as always. Subsequently, there is no doubt that the Holy Spirit was at work in this moment, drawing these men toward an unknown life of faith and away from the worldly life they were used to.

Obviously, we know that these men went on to become disciples of Jesus, leaving behind everything to follow Him. Similarly, this is the same expectation for everyone who wants to gain a true personal relationship with Jesus. There must be an authentic full surrender from the heart to serve the kingdom of heaven leaving this world behind to follow Jesus just as the early disciples did. Consequently, it is much more than mere words prayed in the form of a sinner's prayer or a half-hearted commitment of your life that is needed to gain eternal life in Christ. Unless one truly decides to walk away from this world and all it has to offer, they will remain eternally separated from the kingdom of God in spite of their own beliefs. *"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 14:12).*

Therefore, Jesus comes to each one of us to offer us salvation on His own terms. Regrettably, many

## Congratulations Graeme and Gina Cull!



**Pastor Andy Straubel officiated at the August 8 wedding of Gina Gainey to Graeme Cull here at Windsor Chapel. Graeme and Gina met at their job where they are both Emergency Medical Technicians. Gina's bridesmaids were fellow EMTs, while Sean MacDonald and Larry Berrill served as Graeme's groomsmen. The newly married couple are now residing in Middletown, New Jersey.**

seek to have a relationship with Christ based on their own terms, but in the end, this is just not possible. Unfortunately, far too many make the choice to hold onto this world with all of its pleasures. Confidently, they falsely claim to follow Christ, but have never truly surrendered everything to become His true disciple. Sadly, just as the parable of the sower illustrates, there are many who begin down the path of salvation, but in the end, they end up turning their backs on Christ to live their lives out in this world according to their own desires.

Jesus said, *"The seed sown on rocky ground is the one who hears the word and at once receives it*  
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## "Who Are You Really Following?" continued...

with joy. But since he has no root, he remains for only a season. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. The seed sown among the thorns is the one who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful" (Matthew 13:20-22). Therefore, many believe they are following Christ because they may have made a verbal commitment (a sinner's prayer), but they end up falling away from their verbal commitment when distracted by this world. These are the ones identified in Jesus' parable who remained for a season and turned away, or the ones who were choked out by the worries and passions of this world.

Hence, Jesus calls each one of us with seeds of the Good News offering His free gift to follow Him and serve His kingdom. This is in spite of whether we think we are living a good moral life, or if we know we are wholeheartedly indulging in sin. Either way, all are sinners separated from God and in need of a Savior. For example, "As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax booth. "Follow Me," He told him, and Matthew got up and followed Him" (Matthew 9:9). Matthew was a sinful tax collector hated among his own people, yet Jesus saw his true heart and offered Matthew the chance to turn away from his sinful life to gain eternal life. Consequently, Matthew dropped everything and followed Christ. Thus, Jesus listens to our hearts and not our words or deeds. The religious leaders of the day boasted about their words and deeds only to be rebuked by Jesus for falsely claiming to follow the one true living God.

Therefore, it is not our outward words or deeds that make the difference, but instead it is an inward full-surrender of our lives to follow Christ that produces spiritual rebirth. When we hear the Gospel, we are faced with a choice to repent of our lives in this world or to reject the Good News and remain separated from God. Jesus meant it when He said, "If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, yet

*forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:24-26).*

Thus, who is it that you are following? Is it your friends or others who influence you? Is it the social norms of this world? Is it a pastor, a local church, or a doctrine that steers your day? Is it your own interpretation of the world around you that guides your steps? Or, is it Jesus? We know that it should be Jesus. He is the one who tells us, "Follow Me!" Yet, for many, the other choices are their reality. However, none of those choices will keep us on the narrow path Jesus intends for us. Accordingly, if we are to follow Him, we must seek to do the Father's will for our lives while surrendering our own will for our lives.

In conclusion, this is how the Word of God, Jesus, has taught us to live here in this world.

He is the Good Shepherd who will guide your steps along the narrow path that leads us to the kingdom of heaven. His wish is for all of mankind to be spiritually reborn, filled with the Holy Spirit, and live as true disciples until He returns. Furthermore, Jesus calls us to place our full trust in Him for all of our needs and follow the guidance and teachings of the Holy Spirit that lives within us. The Spirit of God will teach us all we need to know so we can live a righteous life until the day of His return. "But if anyone keeps His word, the love of God has been truly perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him: Whoever claims to abide in Him must walk as Jesus walked" (1 John 2:5-6).

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## 11<sup>th</sup> Hour Adult Sunday School Class

Our 11th Hour adult class will resume the study of the Gospel of Luke on September 20. Since we remain under COVID-19 restrictions, we are planning to do our class via Zoom at 11:30 on Sunday mornings. This class is for both men and women. Larry and Janet Berrill and Ken and Cindy Bills will continue to teach. Although attendance is not required, anybody who would like a Zoom invitation to our class must e-mail Cindy Bills so that she can include you on the invitation list (cynthialbills@gmail.com). If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact any of the teachers. We hope to see you in class!

## Worship Team News

By Don Ober



### The Heart of The Song

As discussed last month, the worship team plans on highlighting one song each month and ask one of the team members to share with you, why they feel that a certain song resonates with them.

This month we feature the song "Remembrance" by Hillsong. Our singer Jessica Klippert would like to share with you what this song means to her. In case you do not know Jessica, she is one of our lead singers. She was born and raised in Lamar, Colorado. She loves people and animals, and is pursuing a career in social work.

### **Remembrance by Hillsong**

By Jessica Klippert

A few months ago (pre-COVID-19), I was listening to a Hillsong United album on iTunes in my bedroom when a song called "Remembrance" stopped me in my tracks. You see, I often have conversations with God while listening to music at home, in my car, on walks, etc. This song spoke to my heart immediately.

Ephesians 2:4-5 says, *"But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made me alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."*

"Remembrance" brings us to the cross of Christ and reminds us to continually remember what He has done for us. This is the theme of communion; although we are not celebrating communion due to the COVID-19 virus, we still need to be corporately reminded of Christ's sacrifice. We are learning this

beautiful song as a congregation this month. My prayer is that God will use this song to speak to our hearts and remind us of His boundless love and goodness displayed in and through His Son.

### Other Worship Team News

Sometime in late September or October the team will be bringing back "Hymn Sing Weekend," and we will once again be asking for your input on what songs you may like to hear and sing. We are approaching it a little differently this year and are asking you to join us in what should be a blessing to all. This year we are asking for suggestions from you in the form of songs that you feel will be enjoyed by the most people and most widely known rather than maybe something known only to a few. So put on your thinking hats, search your old hymnal and report back to one of the Worship Team members your hymn requests.

## *Perisseia*

Our women's growth group will begin a new fall series on Prayer on Thursday evening, September 24, 7:00-8:30. All women are welcome to join us! Since Covid-19 restrictions remain in place, we will be meeting via Zoom.

Although attendance is never taken and participants are encouraged to attend or not as they deem best, Cindy needs to know who would like to receive a Zoom invitation. Those who participated in our last study will automatically receive an invitation unless you request to be taken off the list. Please e-mail Cindy Bills at [cynthialbills@gmail.com](mailto:cynthialbills@gmail.com) if you would like to receive a Zoom invitation or if you have any questions.

***There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers. Proverbs 6:16-19***

## Elders' Corner

By Ken Bills

The Westminster Shorter Catechism was written nearly 400 years ago, and together with the Westminster Confession and the Westminster Longer Catechism, remains a classic statement of Reformed theology. It was written to assist in teaching children the basics of the Christian faith. While I may not agree with, or even understand the entirety of the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, I have long appreciated the first question and answer of the Shorter Catechism:

### 1. *What is the chief end of man?*

*Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.*

This first question is of primary importance. What is our purpose? Do we even have a purpose? Some would say we don't, and that our lives are ultimately meaningless. Others would say that we need to create our own purpose and meaning. The Catechism affirms that we are indeed created for a purpose, and that our purpose is bound up with our being in a proper relationship to our Creator. What are we made for? To glorify God. To enjoy Him forever. Only when we are in a proper relationship to God can we truly fulfill the purpose for which we exist.

Glorifying God includes worship and songs of praise, of course, but also much more. In 1 Corinthians, Paul exhorts us: "*So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*" (1 Corinthians 10:31) Glorifying God is to be what ties everything we do together. Whether at work, or play; whether sick or well; whether alone or with others; we can seek to glorify God through all we are and all we do. We can glorify God by loving Him with all of our heart and soul and mind and

strength. We can glorify God by loving our neighbors in the same way that God does. Knowing our purpose doesn't give us a detailed blueprint for our lives, but it reminds us that we live not for ourselves, but for Christ who loved us and gave himself for us.

I particularly appreciate that the Shorter Catechism does not stop there. Yes, we are created to give glory to God. But we are also created for joy, and our ability to glorify God is inextricably linked to our enjoyment of Him. We glorify God not just for happiness, and not for joy in the abstract. The joy we are meant to experience is the joy of being in a relationship of love with our Creator. We are invited to draw near to, and rejoice in a faithful, loving God and to enjoy in that relationship His unmatched goodness, His unblemished purity, His incomprehensible majesty, His inexhaustible forgiveness and redemption, His everlasting love.

The more we glorify our Lord, the more joy we experience. And the more joy we experience, the more we are able to glorify God. So, yes, we have been created for a high and holy purpose – for God's glory and for inexpressible joy in Him, forever and ever. Amen.

### Happy Birthday!

*Blessings to all who celebrate a birthday this month. May you feel the love, joy and presence of the Lord as we all celebrate your special day with prayers and warmest wishes.*



<b>Elizabeth MacQueen</b>	<b>September 1</b>
<b>Dmitri Morozova</b>	<b>September 1</b>
<b>Esther Dada</b>	<b>September 8</b>
<b>Yvonne Ritchie</b>	<b>September 10</b>
<b>Jean Warner</b>	<b>September 15</b>
<b>Emily MacQueen</b>	<b>September 23</b>
<b>Elena Morozova</b>	<b>September 26</b>
<b>Cynthia Shaw</b>	<b>September 26</b>

## Further Up and Further In

*Inviting dialogue to encourage growth in  
and among us*



By Cindy Bills

### An Issue of Vision

As those of you who participate in the Windsor Chapel Prayer Chain know, I needed eye surgery recently. The surgery was an unanticipated event to correct a problem that I had never heard of. I learned that the sudden distortion that was affecting my ability to read represented what is known as a macular pucker.

I have learned that a macular pucker is the result of damage to the retina. As we age, the vitreous, which is a jelly-like substance that fills the inside of our eyes, often pulls away from the retina. This detachment can damage the retina. In my case, I noticed a sudden onset of multiple “floaters.” And even though I did not experience a retinal tear or detachment, there was enough damage to marshal my body’s healing forces. Over the course of a few years, scar tissue built up and began to pull on the vitreous that remained intact, causing the macula—the central part of the retina that is responsible for close vision—to wrinkle. And so whenever I focused on small print, I found that the word was distorted. It was quite alarming to realize that I was unable to read confidently.

Fortunately, a macular pucker can be treated. A delicate, sophisticated surgical procedure removes the offending vitreous and scar tissue, reducing the stress on the macula and offering some level of improved vision. And although the improvement can take as long as three months to be realized, I am most grateful to report that my ability to read fine print was largely restored a week after the surgery.

It has occurred to me that the phenomenon known as a macular pucker in the physiological realm has something to teach us about the spiritual realm. As sinners in a sinful world, we sustain a good bit of internal damage to our hearts and spirits. Some of this damage is of our own doing; a good bit of it is

inflicted upon us by other sinners. On this side of God’s kingdom, it is unavoidable.

Sometimes, the damage we sustain is so painful that we avoid dealing with it, denying or minimizing the pain. We “let it go” and move on without genuinely resolving the issue. Over time, emotional and spiritual scar tissue can develop. And then, our spiritual vision—our perspective—can become distorted. We practice Christianity more to meet expectations than to express a vibrant, living relationship with Almighty God. We react negatively to people and events that remind us of past pain as we misinterpret current events according to the past. Our distorted “sight” handicaps us, and we struggle to give and receive love.

But the Gospel is Good News indeed! Jesus came to redeem us—to take our sin and our pain and use those very negative issues to draw us to Him. He takes that sin and pain upon Himself and offers us freedom and healing. By the power of the Holy Spirit, He removes our spiritual and emotional scar tissue. But our redemption—and the restoration of our spiritual sight—requires our participation: we must practice confession, repentance, and forgiveness. And then our spiritual vision can be restored! We are able to approach others with open hearts and know peace and joy as we minister in the name of Christ.

To be sure, God’s work in us can be intimidating, not unlike my eye surgery. Often, we are blind to our distorted perspective, and we need the help of a faithful brother or sister to expose it. And once we recognize that the scars of this life have twisted us away from God and away from others, we are required to acknowledge a need that we cannot meet on our own. It is our Lord who covers our sin and redeems our pain even as we confess, repent, and forgive. And just as I needed prayer support to manage the stress of my surgery, we need the patience, encouragement, and unconditional love of our brothers and sisters to support us as we allow the Great Physician to do His work in us.

*Please feel free to contact Cindy (609-275-8557 or [cynthialbills@gmail.com](mailto:cynthialbills@gmail.com) to continue the dialogue...*

## Firmly Rooted

By Janet Berrill

On August 4, tropical storm Isaias hit our area. A former hurricane, Isaias was traveling north along the coastline after making landfall in the Carolinas. In its wake it left damage including flooding, toppled trees, damage to homes, and even death. As I sat in my office at home that afternoon, I was looking out the window at the raging storm. The rain was heavy, but it was the wind that really grabbed my attention. Strong gusts blew through the trees causing them to bend and rapidly blow back and forth. I watched in amazement as the trees withstood the brutal beating the wind was giving them.

Once again I marveled at God's amazing creation. God designed the tree to be able to withstand the harsh conditions the weather sometimes brings. In storms such as Isaias, a few trees will fall down, some will lose large branches, many will lose small branches, likely all will lose some leaves, but for the most part, the trees will survive the storm.

How do the trees remain standing when strong wind gusts blow through their branches? I know you know the answer is because of its roots. As a tree grows taller, its roots grow deeper. It is the roots that anchor the tree in a storm.

The same is true for our faith. It is the roots of our faith that keep us standing when the storms of life strike. Without deep roots, we will be toppled over when life's difficulties hit us. In the Bible God tells us who He is, what He will do, and who we are in Christ. As we study His word, God reveals these truths to us so that we can draw on them when we are going through a difficult time. Life's circumstances will not toss us about from despair to hopelessness to anxiety to fear;

rather we can remain steady and hopeful because we know who God is.

Life has currently thrown me a curve ball, well not me, actually, but my son. But isn't it true that when our children are affected we feel it worse than if it happened to us? My son lost his job. When he told me on the phone, I waited for him to say he was just kidding, but that didn't happen. It was like a gut punch. I was shocked and speechless. My son is now unemployed and without a career. What is he going to do?

I could have become anxious and worried, but instead my roots held me firm. I believe God is in control and this did not happen without God being fully aware of it and giving His divine permission for the greater good. I believe God loves my son more than I do and that He has good plans for my son. I believe that God designed my son with a personality and strengths that are perfectly suited for the work He has for my son to do and that, as my son seeks Him, God will lead him to the job that is right for him. I trust God in this storm.

What life situation are you in right now? Are things going well? If so, use this time to grow your roots. Study the Bible so when the storms come God can bring to mind the truths He has taught you that will help get you through the storms.

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**If you have any items or information you would like to share in the newsletter, please e-mail:**

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