

The Cross That Leads Home

By Daniel Mark

Taking up one's cross and following in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus is a well-known phrase hackneyed into different misinterpretations among believers. These interpretations are alien to the scriptural intent of the command Jesus makes binding upon all who call Him Lord and would aspire to do so. The New Testament gives us snapshots of all that's entailed in following Jesus, the Lord. The invitation to take up one's cross and go as Jesus directs is the most pronounced and explicit in exercising what must be seen as the ultimate expression of discipleship. Here, our Lord throws down the gauntlet of uncompromising submission and Christlikeness.

The cross Jesus commands us to take up isn't at all the usual misunderstanding bandied about when adversity hits us hard. Carrying the cross of Christ is far and away different from mustering up our intestinal fortitude to brazen it out through all of life's troubling circumstances with pretended equanimity and a phony exterior of spirituality.

All the Synoptic Gospels carry this unsettling condition of the believer's followership. Mark's rendition seems to be very succinct and is herewith quoted: *"Then He called the crowd to Him along with His disciples and said, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.'*" (Mark 8:34) It's noticeably instructive that Jesus not only issued this command to the men who already were His followers but extended it to all prospective believers and disciples. Our Savior left no illusions about the Christian being an adventure-filled existence of obedience only when it's convenient. He said the prime condition is one of complete self-



Congratulations to Helen Cull on becoming an American citizen on September 15!

denial and abandonment in preference to Christ. The cross cannot be carried under any other condition because the ego is the greatest stumbling block in maturing to the stature of the Son of God.

What then is the cross that we are obligated to carry daily? It is the consequence of obedience that runs smack counter to the three-fold enemy of the child of God; the world, the flesh and the devil. These three are in constant opposition to Christ and His kingdom and therefore to all who are Christ's. To be in love with Christ is to be at once at loggerheads with this trio of evils and temptations. With the cross the priorities of God daily and increasingly become second nature and the kingdom, our most cherished destiny and possession. The cross doesn't lead to punishment or misery. To

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the contrary, it is the only means of a sweet liberation wherein God’s life looms ever more manifestly in His children!

All the great guarantees and promises of the life in Christ are unattainable apart from the cross and the carrying of the cross. John’s Gospel has the Lord holding out to believers a life of endless and enormous satisfaction in God’s pasture and, in another passage, we are assured of a life of great abundance, an abundance most prominently spiritual. (John 10:9-10) The utmost secret of enjoying the splendor and infusion of the very life of God Himself lies in the willingness of daily carrying the cross of our Lord and Savior.

Today’s Evangelical Christian preaching and teaching conveniently sidesteps the cross and its challenges and instead serves up an ersatz Christianity scarcely reconcilable with the New Testament. Pastors and evangelists regularly promote a feel-good, sugar-coated faith that ultimately leads to frustration and spiritual ruin. There cannot be a neutral ground of following Christ half-heartedly and expecting God to reproduce the life of His Son in us as He yearns to do. Seldom is any mention made of the carrying of the cross and the spiritual warfare it entails for which we must be equipped with a constant and holy vigilance.

Only the way of the cross leads home, and it glorifies our Heavenly Father and the Son and appropriates for us the incredible benefits of God’s rich salvation through Christ alone!

Financial Update

(Through August 31, 2021)

“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want...”

	Actual	Budget
Income	\$159,216	\$146,664
Other income (PPP loan)	\$29,458	
Total Income	\$188,674	
Expense	\$161,916	\$146,673

Windsor Chapel has sent \$19,624 to our missionary partners this year. That is 12% of your giving!

*Congratulations to
 Janet and Larry Berrill
 On the birth of their first granddaughter,
 Emma Noelle Berrill*



*Emma, the daughter of
 Stephen and Rikki Berrill,
 was born September 22. She weighed 8 pounds
 and was 20 ¾ inches long. She joins her parents
 and older brother Luke.*



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.

Mark Warner	October 1
Elise Bruno	October 2
Marina Cull	October 3
Rose Ventura	October 3
Nancy Muldrow	October 4
Terry Brown	October 6
Robert MacQueen	October 12
Donald MacQueen	October 20

***But God demonstrates his own love for us in this:
 While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
 Romans 5:8***

Elders' Corner

By Pastor Andy Straubel

Well, the fall season is upon us! School is back in session. Nights are getting cooler, and I couldn't be happier. It is my favorite season of the year. It is a time of gatherings—Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas—and a time of fellowship, which got me thinking.

Fellowship was at the center of early church devotion. Fellowship or “koinonia” means “having a share in something.” Theologically it is a shared union we have with Jesus Christ AND with other believers. It is a mutual bond that puts us in a deep, eternal relationship with one another. (See 1 John 1:3; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 2 Corinthians 8:4).

No matter where we are in our faith, fellowship provides us with strength. Fellowship gives us a chance to grow and learn. Fellowship demonstrates to a watching world what we believe. Fellowship also reinforces Christ's teaching and helps us focus on Christ and His desires. It also means we share in the benefits of those relationships.

“And they [the early church] devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and the fellowship to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul...”
Acts 2:42

As Pastor and churchman, our fellowship means more to me than words can adequately express. I long for the day when our fellowship will be fully united. Until then, may God give us grace to endure with patience.

Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other
1Thessalonians 4:9

ISI Garage Give Away



Worship Team News

By Don Ober



Boy, Do I Need a Vacation!

I don't know if you've said it, but I've probably said it a million times by now. I've even said it the day after a vacation ends! Have you ever said, "I need a vacation from my vacation"? We all suffer from stress to some degree or the other, because this world sure can dish it out. With all the bad news we hear each day in the news, with the problems of everyday life, we get treated to death statistics of Covid cases, corrupt politicians on both sides being brought up on charges, both true or fabricated by political foes, real terrible things that happen to everyday people, and just terrible news in general. They say in the news, "If it bleeds it leads," and that sure seems to be the case this year! Social injustice is a constant complaint somewhere, and not to dismiss it, it sure does seem like neighbor is against neighbor like no other time in my life. The news is a constant reminder of just how fallen this world is. It's no wonder we need a vacation.

However, like I said, we sometimes get home from that vacation only to feel like we need another one. What shall we do? For me, my weekly vacation is church. It's the one place I feel safe going. I know there are others there feeling the same angst as I do and are looking to share the same cure for all of this. Like the outside world, we have different races meeting in church, coming from different customs, but there really is a difference. There is a unity here. A unity in Christ! Which by the way, I'm proud when I tell people we have a good mix of cultures here at Windsor Chapel. That's a good thing! I was once chastised by a non-believer sarcastically saying that church on Sunday is the most segregated place on earth. That's not how it should be, and I'm proud to say it's not here!

When I enter church there is a sense of peace.

No, all these problems do not go away, but for that hour or two, we all get along, sing praises to our mutual God and Savior Jesus the King, and there is a sense that whatever cultural background we come from, we honestly love and care for each other. It's like that clean breath of fresh air you get after getting off a stuffy train home from a noisy, dirty city.

MY vacation starts many weeks on a Monday or a Tuesday when I begin a Bible reading, and looking through music we have done in the past and trying to put a cohesive set of music together for the congregation. Thank you all so much for providing me this mini mid-week vacation to get away from the division we all live in and instead think of what unifies us. Many of us have certain favorite songs or songs we are not quite as fond of, but we meet and sing in unison how Jesus changes our self-absorbed minds to a more unifying mind of serving the King. Given the honor of trust the church has placed in me constantly reminds me we are not as divided as the enemy wants us to feel. When someone in church, even someone we are not quite that close to, is sick we pray for them. And when something good happens, we celebrate the blessing. It really is a completely different world in our little makeshift triage unit of faith for those hurting from this very tough world. Without this vacation on a weekly basis, I don't know how I would make it through. I really don't.

In 1 John 22:15-17, we are instructed to be "*in the world but not of it.*" God knows we need this now more than ever. So may I recommend to you, the next time you find yourself saying, "Boy, I need a vacation," it may be a message from God that you need to slow down, pick up his Word, call a friend from church and make plans for coming the next Sunday to worship the King who changes all things, even hearts! And if none of this ever really bothers you, then can I boldly say this, "I need you to please come?" Your presence makes my vacation all the better! And your singing, no matter how good or bad, uplifts me, as I'm sure it uplifts God's heart to see our little quiet corner of unity in a terribly divided world.

Shalom

Further Up and Further In

*Inviting dialogue to encourage growth in
and among us*



By Cindy Bills

A Lesson from Middle Earth

October is arguably my favorite month, and I know I am not alone. The cooler, crisp weather that heralds the changing season is invigorating as it invites us to embrace the rhythm of God's creation. And while I am learning the value of living in the present, October includes for me thoughts of past and future: memories of the summer just past and anticipation of the upcoming holiday season in the near future. And as I integrate these components into my October present, I find a constructive perspective to guide my days.

Jogging (with the company of our Doodle) is an integral part of my commitment to fitness, but the heat of summer usually suspends our twice-weekly outings. And so, this past summer, I found myself retreating to Middle Earth (via film) as I worked through interval training workouts on our elliptical trainer. As *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy begins, there is an introduction that sets the stage for the epic good versus evil struggle that follows.

Middle Earth is populated by a diverse group of intelligent beings: Wizards, dwarves, elves, hobbits, and men. When the evil Lord Sauron determines to put the whole of Middle Earth under his cruel rule, he crafts the "one ring to rule them all" as his ultimate weapon. Men and elves come together to challenge him, and the future of the land rests upon the outcome of the subsequent battle. After young Prince Isildur witnesses the death of his father, the King of Gondor, he grabs his father's broken

sword and severs Sauron's ring-bearing hand from his body. Sauron's kingdom implodes and disintegrates—for the time being. But the young prince disregards the advice of the elf lord at his side, and instead of destroying the evil ring, Isildur keeps it for his own purposes. Sauron's ring has a will of its own, and it quickly slips away from the prince. Its location unknown for centuries, the continued existence of the ring enables Sauron to slowly regain his power even as the general population loses the collective memory of the long-past events that threatened their lives and well-being. It is only as the growing evil represented by the resurgence of Sauron's sphere of evil influence becomes recognized does the folly of Prince Isildur become clear.

And this is the point in the saga that directs my thoughts forward from this past summer, through October, and toward the Christmas holiday that will soon be upon us. John the Baptist went about his days proclaiming the imminent appearance of Christ and the importance of repentance. During his public ministry, Jesus repeated John's message, and the Apostles who continued Jesus' ministry after His death and resurrection continued to call for confession and repentance. If we are to be ready for the coming of Christ—in our celebration of the Incarnation at Christmas and/or His second coming—we must be about the business of confessing and repenting. If any of us believe that we have not sinned, we are deceiving ourselves (1 John 1:8).

This, then, brings us back to *The Lord of the Rings*. The dramatic plot rests upon the deadly consequences of Isildur's choice, centuries in the making. Isildur did not experience any consequences of his choice apart from losing the ring; he could not have imagined the cost of claiming the evil ring of power. But

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consequences are not limited by our lack of vision or imagination. And it is not simply our human limitations of vision and imagination that can set us up to make poor choices. In the course of this powerful story, two elf lords make two observations about the race of men: Men are weak, and they desire power above all else. We see in Isildur the weakness that made him unable to resist the power pull of the ring that could and would only serve the evil purposes of Sauron.

The Lord of the Rings is a fictional narrative, but its author, J.R.R. Tolkien, understood very well the ability of fiction to represent truth in an extraordinarily effective way (*On Fairy-stories*). The story of Isildur challenges us to consider our weakness and our desire for power. It also challenges us to consider that there are consequences to our choices that we may never see or imagine. Our choices matter.

And so we now have our own choice to make. Are we going to take responsibility for our weakness and desire for personal power? Can we accept our limitations as human beings? Are we going to follow Isildur's trail, or are we going to learn from it? If we want to learn from Isildur's choice, we must prepare our hearts for the kingdom of God, proclaimed in the coming of Christ. We must maintain a humble attitude characterized by confession and repentance and a dependence upon Christ not only for our salvation but also for our identity, value, significance, power, and influence.

Tolkien's Middle Earth saga reminds us that our choices matter and that we are not to be trusted to make those choices independently. Praise God that the kingdom of God is upon us! Our loving Lord has provided a way for us to safely travel through this world and into His kingdom. May we prepare with gratitude and joy.

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



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2021
3PM-5PM

WINDSOR CHAPEL
PARKING LOT!

Let's meet up in the Windsor Chapel Parking Lot for beginner line dance lessons to contemporary Christian music! The lessons will be taught by Kristin Westbrook.

- **No experience necessary!**
 - **Demo & Review of dances previously taught**
 - **Learn 1 to 2 additional dances!**
- JOIN THE WINDSOR CHAPEL FAMILY FOR A NIGHT OF LEARNING, DANCING, FELLOWSHIP, AND FUN!

~Bring your own chair and wear comfortable sneakers/boots/shoes ☺~
Any questions, please feel free to reach out to Kristin Westbrook:
(609) 356-3716 or k.l.westbrook25@gmail.com
NO RAIN DATE If it happens to rain, we will dance inside in the sanctuary.

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

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