

Living as children of light

By Jean LaRosa

A couple of weeks ago I heard a message about our inheritance as believers in Christ, based on a portion of Ephesians 4 and 5. While I was following along in my Bible, my attention focused on some of the paragraph headings, especially "Living as Children of Light" and "Living in the Light." Now I know that the section headings aren't part of the inspired text, and they vary in different translations, so your Bible may not have the same headings as mine before Ephesians 4:17 and Ephesians 5:1. But they captured my attention, and I've been thinking about them ever since. What does it mean to live as children of light? Am I doing it?

In Ephesians 5 we are instructed to "Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are His dear children." (Ephesians 5:1) This is at the heart of discipleship. Christian philosopher Dallas Willard provided this definition: "*A disciple is a person who has decided that the most important thing in their life is to learn how to do what Jesus said to do.... Disciples are simply people who are constantly revising their affairs to carry through on their decision to follow Jesus.*"

We forsake our inheritance as believers when we run after the same things the world runs after: pleasure, wealth, political or personal power. Only walking in the way of Jesus gives real meaning to our lives. But what does the way of Jesus look like? Are we who want to be Christ followers distinctive in an appealing way, or in a negative way, known mostly for what we are against? Has Christianity in America become just a cultural label worn to identify

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5-Day Club



“Living as children of light,” continued...

with those who are like-minded? Earlier this week I drove past a house with a lot of yard signs. One sign said "God Bless America" in large letters, and another one said "Let's Go Brandon," a popular euphemism for a vulgar expression insulting the President. Did the owner of that property not see a conflict between those two sentiments?

Our culture believes that might makes right, and that the ends justify the means. But that isn't what Jesus taught his followers. When He was being arrested, His followers asked Him if they should strike with their swords. Before He had time to respond, one of them cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. But Jesus rebuked him and healed the man. (Luke 22:49-51) Instead, He told His followers, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:44-45)

The way of loving one's enemies is not easy to live out. I'm not even very good at loving people I just dislike, or strongly disagree with. And there is so much to disagree about! The present moment finds us deeply divided over political and social issues. We may find ourselves in situations where people we live with, work with, or worship with have strongly held views that differ from our own concerning issues we believe are important. Can we disagree with one another while demonstrating kindness, humility, and respect? Several years ago, I had a manager who modeled for her team how to disagree with others in a respectful way. There were two expressions I remember her using during meetings: "I see it differently," and "I have a different view." She made it clear where she stood, without demeaning the person she disagreed with. I learned from her example how to do that in my professional relationships. I need to learn from Jesus how to do it better in my personal relationships.

Ephesians 5:1-2 reminds us to imitate God in everything we do, and to live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. I think this is what it means to live as people of light. As the rest of Chapter 5 makes clear, this requires careful thought and intention: "Carefully determine what pleases the Lord" (v.11), "So be careful how you live" (v. 15), "Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do." (v. 17) I want to take the time to examine my life on a regular basis, to be careful how I live, to ask myself if I understand what the Lord wants me to do. I want to be sensitive to the leading of the Spirit to make changes where they are necessary.

Let us be disciples who, as Dallas Willard said, are constantly revising our affairs to carry through on our decision to follow Jesus.



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.

Juanita Cherry	August 8
Barbara MacQueen	August 11
Kenneth Bills	August 13
Andrew Straubel	August 20
Tingling Sun	August 27
Joseph Herrity	August 29

Elders' Corner

By Pastor Andrew Straubel

Matthew 5:16 says, *“Let your light shine before others so they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”*

July has been a month of lights shining brightly. The Summer 5-Day Club is now behind us, and it was a complete success. Olga and the CEF team came in and did a wonderful job. Dorothy, Ed and Barbara, Tom and Kate supported the effort along with our own Elizabeth McQueen who joined the CEF team as a CEF summer missionary. Way to go, Elizabeth!

Thanks are also in order to those involved in the memorial service for Tom Boote. In the end, it all came together. The service was an amazing tribute to Tom and can be seen on YouTube. Thank you all for making it happen. For those who asked, we did make it to the Veteran’s Cemetery in time.

August plans include a Women’s Fellowship with Michelle S. Kim on August 20, from 10:00-1:00 pm. Light refreshments will be served. The Annual Church Picnic is also planned for August 27, from 4:00-7:00 pm, at Joe and Randy’s house in Yardville. Bring your own lawn chair, salad or desert, and a swimsuit.

I would also like to say thank you for all the cards and notes after my recent surgery. It went very well, and rehab is in progress. I can get around with minimal difficulty with Janice and Hannah at the ready.

The fall schedule is just around the corner. We begin a new study entitled “Embers to Flame” on the theme of rekindling the church. Please continue to pray for the elders as we attempt to be faithful in what God has prepared for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10; 1 Corinthians 15:58)

Women’s Fellowship

Saturday, August 20



All women are invited to hear Michelle S. Kim, author of *Non-Stop Love: A Journey Towards Joy*, on Saturday, August 20, from 10:00-1:00 pm. Invite your friends! The gathering will be held downstairs in the chapel. Light refreshments will be served.

Picnic and Pool Party

August 27

Please join us for a wonderful time of fun, food and fellowship at the home of Joe and Randi Herry, located at 287 Springdale Avenue, in Yardville. It will be held from 4:00 – 7:00 pm on August 27. Everyone is invited!

Please bring lawn chairs, a towel and bathing suit if you wish to swim, and either a salad, dessert or beverage to share. Hamburgers and hot dogs will be provided.



Financial Update

(Through June, 2022)

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

	Actual	Budget
Income	\$101,637	\$117,773
Expense	\$119,481	\$117,772

Windsor Chapel has sent \$15,265 to our missionary partners this year. That is 15% of your giving!

Further Up and Further In

*Inviting dialogue to encourage growth in
and among us*



By Cindy Bills

Sylvia: A Not-So-Silly Squirrel Story

Once upon a time, there was a cute little squirrel named Sylvia. Sylvia was the youngest of twenty, and she lived with her family and dozens of other squirrel families in a stand of Blue Spruces known as Blue Point Ridge. Being a squirrel in Blue Point Ridge was serious business. Young squirrels were not encouraged to be curious and were warned to avoid distractions, and they were taught the squirrel code very early on: Squirrels were always to look out for one another and to take nut gathering with the utmost seriousness.

Sylvia was not serious in the way the other squirrels were. While the young squirrels would dash along the floor of the Ridge looking for nuts, Sylvia perched in a cozy spruce and gazed thoughtfully at the beautiful, symmetrical branches surrounding her. Sometimes she would simply marvel at the beauty of the Ridge and ponder how it came to be. And if a raccoon or stray cat or dog encroached on their territory, the others would chatter their curses at the intruder while Sylvia wondered what had brought it so close. Her siblings and friends found Sylvia to be downright annoying as they were always trying to find her as she wandered in the woods, and her parents and elder squirrels were always scolding her for her unserious ways.

It was a short walk to squirrel school, but it was one that Sylvia enjoyed immensely. The path led out of Blue Point Ridge for a bit, and Sylvia loved the open country, the bubbling creek, and the lush green valley just beyond. But her classmates did not like that section of the route so much. They would hop and chatter along their way, but when they left the secluded protection of the Ridge, the unfamiliar creek became an object of fear and they hurried past.

One drizzly fall morning, Sylvia and the other

young squirrels were trotting to school. When they came in sight of the creek, her companions shrieked and sprinted the rest of the way to school as Sylvia stared. The creek was shrouded in a glistening mist. Sylvia crept toward the mysterious sight. It wasn't that she wasn't afraid; but she was overwhelmed with curiosity. As she stared into the mist, she thought she saw a shimmering figure in the mist, almost like a holograph. When the figure disappeared, she shrugged her shoulders in bewilderment and followed her classmates to school.

At bedtime that evening, Sylvia told her story to her mother. "Sylvia!" exclaimed her mother. "Now you are being downright silly! Please be a good little girl squirrel.... Please be serious!"

It was a particularly rainy September and October, and the mist appeared more regularly over the creek. The little squirrel students developed the habit of dashing past the area as fast as they could go, arriving early and breathless at school. Except Sylvia. She developed the habit of inching closer to the creek and standing before the glistening figure in the creek mist. She found it both frightening and irresistible. After a few days, she found herself awed by the figure and started to bow her head in respect before continuing her journey to school.

And then one day, Sylvia made the mistake of mentioning her time with the mist figure to a few friends during noon playtime. They stopped and stared at her almost in disbelief, and then burst into an avalanche of laughter. "Sylvia is silly!" "Sylvia is silly!" they chanted around the garden, and soon the entire school knew. Her teachers became concerned, and the principal threatened to dismiss her. When her parents confronted her, Sylvia could only explain what she saw and felt. Her parents feared for her mental health and scolded her soundly: "Sylvia, stop this nonsense right now! This is too silly!" And they begged her to be a serious little squirrel.

Sylvia was very sad. She knew she was not silly. She knew there was more to the world than what the other squirrels could see. She didn't know who the figure was, but she did know she wanted to

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“Further Up and Further In,” continued...

know. It was so hard to not be able to talk to anyone about it, but she continued to linger by the creek on rainy days.

And then one day it happened. A storm came upon the Blue Point Ridge one evening just as the young squirrels were settling in their nests. Lightning lit up the sky above, and thunder drowned out the cries of terrified squirrels. Suddenly the situation became life-threatening as a tree in the middle of the Ridge sustained a direct lightning hit and caught on fire; and then the fire started to spread with alarming speed. Before long, the entire Ridge was ablaze and squirrel families were racing for their lives.

The rain came, but not in time to save their homes. Running blindly in the most familiar direction, the ragged groups of squirrel families came to the creek. They stopped in their tracks as Sylvia walked forward, her eyes fixed on the figure in the mist. Bowing before the figure, she was able to see the last thing she expected to see: a tiny bridge formed from debris that had collect in this shallow section of the creek. She looked closely at the mist figure and was sure she saw a smile. Sylvia turned and shouted, waving her arms in excitement. “This way! We can cross the creek here!” She couldn’t see their faces, but their reluctance was clear by their lack of response.

The fire raged behind them until eventually, the squirrel families had no choice but to try to cross the creek. Sylvia kept waving her arms and shouted words of encouragement as the first few families took their first tentative steps across the makeshift bridge. Before long, the entire group was across the bridge, safe from the fire, and scouting out the nearby forest for a satisfactory place to begin a new colony.

Once again, Sylvia lingered, glancing at the mist figure who remained. She bowed and whispered, “Thank You!” As she walked toward her new home, she cast one last glance at the figure. She was sure He winked.

And from that time on, none of the squirrels called Sylvia silly. She had earned a new nickname: “Spiritual Sylvia.”

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

38th Annual ISI Garage Giveaway For International Students and Visiting Scholars

Help international students and their families experience the warmth and caring of our local community. The ISI Thirty-Eighth Annual Garage Give-Away assists international students and visiting scholars by providing them with large and small items to help ease their transition to Princeton. Donations of adult or children’s bicycles (hot item), furniture, small appliances and kitchen, bath and bed needs are especially welcome. Drivers with pickups and vans and helpers are also needed.

Contact:

Bob Louer: Robert.Louer@gmail.com
973.462.4071

Carrie Louer: Carrie.Louer@gmail.com
407.538.1099

Tom Taylor: guytmt@gmail.com 908.406.4790

Glenn Shimomura: gaabcshim@gmail.com
908.369.4898

Where: Lutheran Church of the Messiah, 407 Nassau Street and Cedar Lane, Princeton, NJ

When: August 27 (Rain Date: September 10)

Time: 8-9 AM Delivery/Drop-off

Set-up: 8-10 AM

Open to Students/VisitingScholars 10-11 AM

Clean-up: 11 AM-12 PM

Needed: 8 AM-12 PM: Helpers/Volunteers and Drivers with Pick-ups/Vans.

Items Needed: Adult/Children’s Bicycles (hot item), Pots, Dishes, Silverware, Sheets, Blankets, Pillows, Towels, Comforters, Throw Rugs, Toasters, Irons, Heaters, Fans, Desks, Dinette Sets, Lamps, Chairs, Couches, Beds, Bookshelves

Not Accepted: TVs, Computers, Monitors, Toys, Clothes, Books, Curtains

Here to Help

By Janet Berrill

I work for a nonprofit called WISE UP. We help at-risk high school students with the college admissions and financial aid process. Part of what we do is fill out all the applications for financial aid, including the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). In order to do this, we need to get financial information from the families of the students with which we work. In prior years, I would begin gathering this information from the families at the end of summer as October 1 is when the FAFSA becomes available. The process of gathering the information took so long that this year I decided to start in May. I was hoping that starting right after taxes were due would make the process go faster.

I was wrong. I began by sending out an email early in May telling the families what information we need. I got some replies, but not many. For those who didn't reply, I sent a follow up note. Some people replied saying they would get the information to me and then never did. Others would give me some of the information, but not all of it. I would have to follow up on the missing documentation. The month of May came and went as did June. It is now July and I am still following up with some people about getting us the information we need.

I try to remain pleasant in my emails, but sometimes I feel like writing what I am really thinking. *"I am trying to help you. We need this information so that we can fill out the application for YOUR child so that they can get the financial aid they need to attend college. Why are you making this so difficult?! You are welcome to fill out the application on your own if you would prefer that. If not, please send me what we need! I've been asking you for it for two and a half months now! This is for YOUR benefit. Why are you making me work so hard to help you??"*

Of course, I don't say that, but sometimes I feel like it. This morning I heard a song on the Christian radio station that made me wonder if God feels the same way about me when I am "too busy" to spend

time with Him. *"Janet, I am here to help you. You will benefit from spending time with me. If you do things on your own, it will be more difficult for you. Let me tell you what I have for you to do today, so that you don't get overwhelmed doing other things. This is for your benefit; this will help you."*

I am very thankful that God has a lot more patience than I do! I get frustrated when the people I am trying to help make that difficult, but God is ever so patient with me. Whereas I might feel like giving up and saying, "If you don't get me the information by Friday, you're on your own!" God continues to call me and wait for me. He loves me, He knows what is best for me and wants to give that to me. He doesn't throw up His hands and say, "Forget it! You're on your own!" Instead He works to teach me that He is what is most important so that I choose Him.

It's been said that busyness is not what keeps us from spending time with God; self-reliance is. My sinful nature tells me that I can do it on my own, that I don't need God. So, when I have a lot to do, I skip spending time with God and get working on my To Do list. When I do this, I am missing out on the blessings and help God has for me. I want to remember how I feel about helping the students we are working with in order to remind myself that God is reaching out to help me immeasurably more. He has so much to offer me when I spend time with Him.



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

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