

## The Dangers of Legitimacy

By Daniel Mark

Our Lord Jesus was constantly correcting the people of His day in their skin-deep and lopsided appreciation of the counsels of God as embodied in His Word. The scribes and Pharisees were everlastingly at loggerheads with Him on virtually all matters spiritual and Scriptural. His greatest supporters were the commoners or the riffraff, but even they were in wonderment of His profound explanation of the Scriptures. At the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, according to Matthew's account, by far the most comprehensive of the great discourse, has the people remarking and marveling that Jesus taught uniquely from the way the Scribes and Pharisees instructed. His exposition was done with authority. (Matthew 7:29)

More often than not, our take on matters of the Kingdom falls far short of God's intended purpose. The result is a spiritually counterproductive grasp of the deep things of God to which the Spirit of God alerts us again and again. The theme of this article bears on an event recorded in Luke's Gospel about two sisters, Mary and Martha, hosting the Lord and His disciples. The details are simple but profoundly instructive as Jesus, as was His wont, made capital out of this to teach us an indispensable lesson. Martha complained that Mary should have been helping her to give Jesus a warm hospitality. On the surface of it and in the natural scheme of things, Martha made a perfectly legitimate claim, but Jesus tells Martha and all of her believers that Mary was on the right track! Come to think of this, it's an unsettling fact that legitimate things can be a possible hindrance to spirituality.

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## Harvest Party



## “The Dangers of Legitimacy,” continued...

The Lord said that Mary had chosen the better part, and it would not be taken from her. What was the better thing that Mary opted for? It was to sit at the feet of Jesus and be in His presence for instruction and fellowship! Our upended sense of priorities would have us berate Mary and praise Martha, but God’s perspectives always wisely trump our very limited understanding.

Both the Old and New Testaments contain exhortations about making the Lord God the preeminent focus of our faith journey and relegate all else to a secondary status. David, in the Psalms, gives us a goal that is of the utmost spirituality and worth. Read in its entirety, Psalm 27:4 is an absolute gem of a holy ambition for that saint who has made God his be all and end all of earthly sojourn. *“One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.”* It’s far beyond the scope of this little article to pretend to a thoroughgoing explanation or interpretation of this highest of spiritual ambitions and truths. But the truth of the matter is that we can have no higher interests or loftier goals than being eternally preoccupied with the Lord and His Word.

The New Testament has a counterpart that’s equally challenging and edifying. Paul replicates David’s noble desire and commitment in Philippians 3:13-14: *“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting things which are behind, and reaching forth unto things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”* Like David, Paul the Apostle was consumed with knowing and pleasing God at the highest level possible this side of heaven, and he consequently rated all else unimportant, by comparison.

The legitimacy of things can and does tempt us into a complacency for which we need the Word of God and the Holy Spirit to knock us out of. There are always spiritual heights and depths God wants us to explore and experience, but like these two giants of faith, we must come to a reckoning and sort out our priorities and set out to seek the Lord all our earthly days, mindful that our God always rewards

diligent seekers! Jeremiah 29:13, Matthew 7:7 and Hebrews 11:6 give us all the assurance and guarantee we need that God will graciously stoop down and generously reward the humble seeking soul.

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

*Isaiah 9:6*



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

Tatiana Morozova	December 4
Brenna Herrity	December 9
Bryan Westbrook	December 9
Bridget Bernheisel	December 10
Steve Masticola	December 15
Kentaro Yamamoto	December 16
Ethan Ventura	December 17
Ed MacQueen	December 18
Larry Berrill, Jr.	December 24
Charles Muldrow	December 27
Timothy Berrill	December 28

## Elders' Corner

By Ed MacQueen

Blessings in the Lord. December is here, and with it the joy and anticipation of the Christmas season. We look forward to the events and gatherings which mark this special time of year. For my family, our Windsor Chapel Christmas Eve service as well as Christmas morning with family are two of the most cherished. Whatever your Christmastime traditions may be, I pray they are full of good cheer, kindness, and building up of one another in Christ.

From the beginning, the time we celebrate as Christmas has been associated with anticipation. In the days before Jesus' birth, as Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem, they both had every reason to feel wonder and anticipation. To Mary months earlier an angel had said her baby would reign over Israel forever, His kingdom never ending. And separately to Joseph, an angel appeared to declare the baby would be the Savior to rescue Israel from their sins. Heralded by angels, destined to be Savior and everlasting King, we can imagine that Mary and Joseph's anticipation on their journey to Bethlehem was great indeed!

While Christmas is a celebration which looks *back* to the birth of Christ, it is fitting for us to share the sense of anticipation and wonder familiar to those who knew Jesus from his earliest days. Mary and Joseph anticipated His first coming, and we, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has now come, anticipate His glorious second coming. At Christmas we give thanks to God for sending His Son to save us from our sins, and this same Son will come again to usher in the new heavens and new earth. For His mercy already bestowed, and for His miracles yet to come, God is worthy of praise.

On behalf of the elders, we are grateful for each member of the body at Windsor Chapel. God has blessed our congregation and made us family through Him. As brothers and sisters in that family, let us all look to Christ this Christmas as we celebrate what God has done and anticipate what God will still do.



## Christmas Festival Of the Light



Trinity International Christian Church will present a free Festival of the Light at Windsor Chapel on Saturday, December 3, from 12:00 noon to 4:00 pm. This enjoyable afternoon will include a Christmas play, live music, petting zoo, delicious food, hot coffee and chai, face painting, vendors and much more! Be sure to invite your family, friends and neighbors to join you. All are welcome!

### *Christmas Eve Service at 7 PM*

Please join us as we joyously celebrate our traditional candlelight Christmas Eve service on Saturday, December 24, at 7:00 pm. We will have a Lessons and Carols service with Scripture readings and music that highlight the Christmas story. It is a wonderful way to celebrate the incarnation of our Savior!

### *Christmas Day Service at 11:00 AM*

We will celebrate the glorious birth of our Savior on Christmas Day, December 25, which falls on a Sunday this year. Our service will contain beautiful music and an uplifting sermon and will be held from 11:00 am until 12:00 noon in the chapel. Bring those who need the hope of the Gospel to join this celebration of Jesus, our peace and living hope!



## Perisseia Christmas Cookie Exchange

Thursday, December 15, 7:00-8:30, at the Straubels' home, 691 Hughes Drive, Hamilton Square 08690

All women are welcome! This is a time of fun and fellowship

Please come—and bring a guest—even if you haven't participated in Perisseia

### Instructions:

Bake your favorite Christmas treats, Package them in sets of 6 in labeled Ziplok bags. Bring as many bags as you would like to exchange, plus one additional bag as refreshment contribution.

Please feel free to come to enjoy the fellowship even if you don't want to bake and participate in the exchange.

For More Information  
Please contact  
Cindy Bills  
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609-275-8557



## Clean up Day



Thanks to all who came out to clean inside and the grounds on a frigid Saturday morning. Your help was greatly appreciated!

## Financial Update

(Through October 31, 2022)

*"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want..."*

	Actual	Budget
Income	\$159,219	\$196,288
Expense	\$193,890	\$196,288

Windsor Chapel has sent \$24,035 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

### The Messiah Beyond Our Expectations

The Christmas narrative can be fairly described as a dialectical masterpiece, one that takes layer upon layer of apparently contradictory and incompatible bits of information and fits them into a miraculous whole. Contrasts and the unexpected become normal and commonplace.

The mighty angel Gabriel is sent from heaven to Galilee, considered a backwater town and some distance from Israel's religious center, Jerusalem. A young woman with no status or renown is chosen to be the mother of the Son of God. Her betrothed marries her, willing to believe that the baby she carries is indeed of God. The two have little in the way of resources—no money, no power, no influence—with which to protect and nurture someone as important as the Son of God.

The young Galilean couple travels to Bethlehem late in the pregnancy, not by choice but by legal decree. And so they find themselves 90 miles from home when the Infant God is born. The royal birth announcement is made by an angel, not to the upper class but rather to a group of lowly shepherds. And as if the announcement of the single angel isn't enough, he is joined by a host of angels rejoicing in the birth of the Messiah.

The newborn King—the Messiah, the Savior of the world—is the fulfillment of long-studied prophecy. Born in Bethlehem, to a virgin, from

the line of David. And yet the religious experts and authorities of the day do not recognize the prophetic fulfillment. Instead, two elderly prophets proclaim the good news in the temple, and upper-class wise men from a distant land appear to pay homage.

The wise men direct attention to the baby Messiah, but not in the way they intend. A jealous ruler seeks the Messiah as well, not to pay homage, but to murder. The result is the untimely and tragic death of a generation of young children. The Messiah Himself is taken by His parents to Egypt. Egypt! The last place a Jewish family would expect or want to go....

And now, centuries later, here we are.... We have the benefit of the New Testament as well as the Old to understand those past events, and more context to understand and integrate the dialectical elements. But we, just like those who lived back then, still interpret what we read and events around us according to our personalities, personal histories, desires, and sin nature. Each Christmas season is an invitation to ponder anew the Incarnation and to pursue a deeper and truer knowledge of the Messiah so that we can better build our faith relationship with Him upon the reality of who He is. He has created us in His image; we must not make Him in ours.

And then from this humble position, we are—perhaps unexpectedly—much better able to glorify God with the angels as we celebrate God's greatest gift at Christmas. From Christmas we look toward the Messiah's return, which will come when we least expect it. Come Lord Jesus!

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



## Jesus – Only He Can Satisfy

By Janet Berrill

Matthew Perry is probably best known for playing Chandler on the popular sitcom *Friends*. Perry just released a book about his life, and it is not a pretty story.

Perry's parents separated before he was a year old. Both parents remarried and had other children. As he grew up, he said he felt a kind of loneliness, never sure he was good enough to belong. When he was fourteen, Perry had his first alcoholic drink, and the way it made him feel inside took away that empty feeling. But it didn't last so he had to keep drinking. By the time he was eighteen, he was drinking every day. He thought fame could fill up the hole inside. His first prayer to God was to ask God to make him famous. "There was steam coming out of my ears; I wanted to be famous so badly," he told *The New York Times* in 2002. "You want the attention, you want the bucks, and you want the best seat in the restaurant."<sup>1</sup>

His prayer for fame was answered. He starred in the number one television sitcom, earning one million dollars an episode. But his hope to heal the hole inside was not. "It was a dark day for me when I realized that it did not do that. That it did not fix what I knew was broken."<sup>2</sup> And now that he had the added fear of twenty-five million people watching, his terror deepened, so did his loneliness and shame. In 2000, Perry starred in the number one movie in America and was a star of the number one sitcom on TV, and he felt completely alone. None of it, not the fame, not the money, not the attention, not the drugs, not the alcohol was enough to fix what was broken inside.

Everyone wants to belong, to be loved, to be accepted. We were created that way by God, so that we would pursue a relationship with Him. But people try to fill that longing in their soul with all kinds of other things, other than God. Money, material possessions, notoriety, social status, power, position, business success—these are just some of the ways people try to find internal peace. When they don't work, tragically some people turn to drugs and alcohol to dull the pain of the emptiness they feel inside. Unfortunately for them, the relief they feel is short lived, so they go back for more and eventually become addicted.

For many people, the Christmas season is a very difficult time because it exacerbates the loneliness they feel during the rest of the year. As believers in Jesus, we have an opportunity to share God's grace to those who are hurting. Jesus is the light of the world, and we are His messengers, bringing His light to those around us who need to see it. As you celebrate the Christmas season this year, I want to encourage you to think about those people who have an emptiness inside and need to experience the love of the God who made them and died to redeem them. A kind word, a small gift, an invitation to lunch, an invitation to your home; all these and so many other things can be used by God to show His love to a hurting soul who needs to experience it. Jesus came into the world to make God known to us (John 1:18). It is only by knowing Him that we will ever fill the emptiness inside. Let's bring that good news to those who need to hear it.

<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia article on Matthew Perry

<sup>1</sup> Diane Sawyer interview with Matthew Perry

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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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