

SHEKINAH

Quarterly Newsletter from

CMCC
Central Maryland
Christian Church

Spring 2011

Volume 3 Number 1

Thoughts from my heart...

Repentance to life or death?

...Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life... (John 6:68)

Peter and Judas Iscariot, the disciples of Jesus had one thing in common. They both had strong personalities. They both had ambitions, but they expressed it very differently. Peter had his own ideas about how the Kingdom of God should be. But yet, he did not step out of Jesus' authority and boundary. On the other hand, Judas saw the Kingdom of God being established only by violent force. When Jesus refused to walk in his way, Judas was ready to betray Christ. Many of us are like Judas. When God refuses to walk according to our plan, we reject Him whole heartedly! But Peter, even though he disagreed, reluctantly followed! (John 6:59-71)

Judas was not only bitter, but he was very angry with Jesus for wasting 3 ½ years of his life for nothing. All he saw was that Jesus was

anxious to end His own life on the cross, and he was not going to fight for Israel. Judas did not understand the Last Supper. He did not understand that Jesus was the "Lamb of God". He did not understand when Jesus said, "This is my body, Take eat! Judas also did not understand when Jesus said "Drink from it **all of you** (that included Judas also!). For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins!" (Mat.26:27,28) Nowadays also many of us partake in this Lord's Supper without any understanding, just like Judas. Our own self will and ambitions of life distort the real meaning of the Lord's supper. Judas walked out to betray Jesus. Many of us walk out from Jesus and His Church, because we think we know exactly what we want in our life! But the truth of the matter is that we really do not know what we want. We are totally lost without Christ. We will be complete

only in Him! Judas' end affirms this truth.

There was a striking similarity between Peter and Judas again! They both let down their Master! They both were remorseful, and they both wept bitterly. When Jesus looked at Peter after his denial three times, Peter understood that he cannot stand by his own strength and moral character, but by His grace alone!

On the other hand, Judas tried restitution. He gave back the 30 pieces of silver, but that did not wash away his guilt. The right thing Judas should have done is that he should have gone closer to Jesus, and looked at Jesus' eyes so that he could be redeemed! But instead, he decided to take his life away. His big, selfish ego did not let him go near Jesus! We can see two types of guilt trips here. One (Peter's) that humbles itself

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and accepts the grace of God and His sovereignty in his life, and the other (Judas') that becomes a neurotic guilt which implodes within through depression and eventually suicide. Judas took complete control of his life even up to the last second of his death. Sometimes our ego is so big, we cannot humble ourselves to go to Christ for redemption.

We would like to control our life even up to the point of death. We would rather end our life than accepting Christ's Lordship and His total control of our fragile life! Even great Christians are tempted to end their lives instead of accepting Lord's reign in their lives. God has spoken very clearly, "I will never leave you nor forsake you!" How many of us truly believe that?

Many people nowadays walk through the valley of depression and death. But only faith in Christ can lift them out of such a black hole. They all hear a voice in their heart! Whose voice is that? Is it devil's or Christ's? If the voice says, go ahead end your life, it is the voice of the devil because he comes to only kill and destroy. But there is another voice that is calling us constantly: "Keep looking at Me and be saved"! This voice does not tell us to destroy our life, but just admonishes us to follow Christ so that we can be rescued from the valley of the shadow of death. Even Psalmist David went through so much depression, but yet he bounced back beautifully, because he trusted in the sovereignty of God in His life, and he had surrendered his life to the Lord. Whose

voice are you listening to now? Do not follow the path of Judas' emotions. It is all neurotic guilt, bitterness, and lack of faith in God's saving power. Suffering is part of life. We will all face some time serious problems, such as severe health problem, family problems, financial burdens, or even some shameful events. But our God is bigger than these problems, and if we only hold on to Him, He will pull us up! Do you feel that you have lost the real meaning of life? That could be a real warning light! Come back to Jesus, and start looking into His eyes for meaning of your life now. Christ in us is the hope of glory! We are complete in "Him" only. Peter clung to the Person of Christ. Judas clung to earthly glory and pride. When his dreams crashed, he crashed too. Let us follow Peter's way—true repentance to life,

Interesting Tidbits about Easter

* Many Christians observe the season of Lent before Easter, a 40 weekday period (Sundays not included) of fasting, repentance, and soul-searching as they meditate on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. During this period, many churches are decorated in purple, the royal color, to prepare for the King.

* Some say that Easter was originally a pagan festival in honor of an Anglo-Saxon goddess Eastre—the fertility goddess Ishtar that was adapted by the Christians to entice pagans to convert. Because of this, many churches have started referring to Easter as **Resurrection Sunday**'.

* The Easter bunny is the earthly symbol of fertility goddess Eastre. It was believed that these bunnies or hares laid eggs in the grass and children went hunting for these eggs – thus the Easter egg hunt. This tradition has nothing to do with the resurrection of Christ.



Giving an Effective Testimony

Recently our Pastor's wife conducted a workshop on 'How to give a good testimony' at an international women's conference. She showed how a good testimony should be given. Here are some key points that she gave to prepare an effective testimony.

A testimony gives glory to God and at the same time encourages others. It also helps unbelievers see that trusting in Christ as their Savior will bring a real tangible positive change in their life. Hence, we should never be ashamed or shy to tell of the wonderful things that Christ has done in our lives.

When giving a testimony, always follow the 3 point outline :

1. My life before I received Christ
2. How I received Christ
3. Since I received Christ.

Always be prepared to give your testimony. To give an effective testimony, especially to unbelievers, present it in your own personal and sincere way. Avoid using Christian words like saved, hell, holiness and instead use words like spiritual birth, rescued, found hope for life, headed in the wrong direction. Avoid exaggeration of your circumstances or ex-

periences – keep it real. Be careful not to put down people or talk ill of any denomination. Give a specific first-person account of an instance in your life and how that incident drew you to Christ and how it changed your life. Never give the impression that you are better than anyone. Instead emphasize that you are not perfect, only forgiven. Remember to be brief, preferably 3-5 minutes to be effective. Do not crowd your testimony with too many verses from the Bible, instead use only those verses that were relevant to the specific instance you talked about.



Interesting Tidbits ...Contd. From Pg 2

* Exchanging of real eggs – while, colored and gold leafed is an ancient custom predating Christianity. In most cultures, the egg signified birth and resurrection. One unsubstantiated **legend** is that Simon of Cyrene, who helped to carry Christ's cross was an egg merchant. On returning to his farm, he discovered that all his hen's eggs had miraculously turned a rainbow of colors. * In parts of Germany in the early 1880s, Easter eggs substituted for birth certificates.

* In Anglo-Saxon countries,

people bake 'hot cross buns' that they eat on Good Friday.

* In many countries people roasted lamb on Easter Sunday. This has its roots in the Jewish holiday of Passover.

* The Easter Lily is a Japanese flower known for its beauty and its pride and is a symbol of purity and holiness. Legend has it that when Jesus went to a place, all the flowers, plants and animals bowed to his passage – except the lilies. But when the lilies saw Jesus on the cross, their head bent and since that day, they

continue to bend their head as a sign of respect.

* The next time Easter comes so late is on April 25 2038, and the earliest it can occur is on March 22, 2160. Easter is always on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the spring equinox.

* The first Easter egg baskets were made to look like bird's nest.

* Some Churches keep up the old tradition of using evergreens—symbol of everlasting life for display instead of flowers.



Where : Central Maryland Christian Church

When : June 27—July 1, 2011

8:30am—4:00pm

Who : Boys and Girls ages 4—12 years

Registration Deadline: May 20, 2011

More Info and Registration forms on our

website: www.acts242church.org



Announcements

April 03, 2011: Church Rededication service @ 10:30am

April 22, 2011: Good Friday Service @ 7:30pm

April 24, 2011: Easter Service @ 10:30am

June 05, 2011: Church Anniversary Service on @ 10:30am

Monthly Schedule

Sunday Worship Service - 10:30 am

Women's Fellowship - 2nd Saturday @ 2:30pm

Children's Sunday School - 10:30am

Kidz Club - 2nd Saturday @ 4:30 p.m.

Bible Study & Prayer Session every Friday, except the 2nd week @ 7:30 p.m. Call for location.

Young Adults Bible Fellowship every Friday except the 2nd week @ 7:00 p.m. Call for location.

Contact



3229 Corporate Ct, Ellicott City, MD 21042



410-418-4500



pastor@acts242church.org

Visit: www.acts242church.org