

The Crosswalk

First Christian Church
2501 N Park Lane
Altus, OK 73521

JANUARY
2016



Salt And Light

As we begin a new year everyone is looking for ways to make this year better than last. We're going to lose weight, kick a bad habit, start a good habit, or any number of things we "resolve" to do. As Christians we usually try to do the same thing. We resolve to spend more time in the word or in prayer, draw closer to God, or be better at talking to our friends about Jesus. As I was thinking about this whole process of setting goals for our year, and what we should be keeping in mind while setting these goals, Jesus' words from the Sermon on the Mount jumped out to me.

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." - Matthew 5:13-16

It is believed there are over 14,000 uses for salt. It is one of the most useful substances on earth. You don't throw out salt. Period. It's too useful. It can be used for any number of things from cleaning your sink to your stinky shoes, from shelling pecans to removing onion stink from your hands. In the ancient world it was an absolute necessity because without refrigeration it was the only way to preserve foods. Most cultures had to import salt, but Israel had a ready source of salt in the Dead Sea. However, while the Dead Sea is ten times as salty as the ocean it is not good quality salt. In 2006, they did a study that showed that only 12-18% of Dead Sea salt is actually sodium chloride. In the ocean that number is closer to 97%. That is a lot of impurities in your salt. So if something happened to your bag of Dead Sea salt it was possible for all of the actual salt to dissolve out and now you don't have a bag of salt crystals, but a bag of crystal impurities. And that bag doesn't have any of the uses that a bag of salt would. When you have a bag of something as useful as salt you put that on the top shelf of the pantry where it doesn't get bumped over, spilled, or wasted for any reason. However, if you find that bag is just a bag of something as common as dirt you don't put that in the pantry. You don't even keep that in your house, if you keep it at all. Chances are you're going to throw it out.

That is what Jesus warns will happen to us if we lose our "saltiness," if we are no longer making a difference in this world. There is a lot of good that needs to be done in this world, and Christians can easily get distracted by a good thing that isn't the main thing and their significance is lost. The YMCA is a great organization. It stands for Young Man's Christian Association. It began in London in 1844 as young men migrated to the city from the countryside. 11 men got together in what was essentially a small group bible study that offered support to young men in this new environment. In the 1860's they began to add dormitories to offer these young men places to stay. In 1869 they started building gymnasiums as well, just as an extension of what all was offered at the YMCA. They started out as a group under the banner of Christ, but as they moved further and further away from the gospel message they became just another community organization. They do great things, don't get me wrong, but what do they offer that is of any permanence? And they aren't alone; the Red Cross, and even some church denominations I could name all began as Christian organizations but have moved away from that which sets us apart and are now simply one of many. And a voice in a crowd is much harder to hear than a voice by itself. If we want our New Year's resolutions to help us make a difference in our community they need to set us apart. We need to look different to make a difference in the lives of those we wish to reach.

It's hard to watch people we love make stupid decisions. I think we all know people who have destroyed their lives by ignoring solid biblical advice and simply living the way they wanted to. I look at people whose lives are simply falling apart, dripping with drama, on a first name basis with the police, and then I look at the Sermon on the Mount and see polar opposites. How many marriages and families have been torn apart by addictions to pornography? Jesus says, "I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." I don't know about you, but every time I hear someone swear on a stack of bibles or on their grandmother's grave or the like, I tend to believe them less and less. That's why Jesus says, "Simply let your 'yes' be 'yes,' and your 'no,' 'no.'" How many friendships have been broken, feelings hurt, or even lives lost just because, "he started it." Jesus taught, "If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." This way of life, as backward as it seems to us fallen people, is the hope of humanity. We need to live this difference this year. It is the difference that Christ makes in us that will light the way for the lost.

One quick note in closing about being the light of the world; darkness is the natural state of things. There has to be a source of light, but there doesn't have to be a source of darkness. Light is fundamentally different from darkness. Darkness is simply the lack of light, but because of that darkness cannot push back the light. A light source may not be very powerful and not illuminate much, but it isn't being pushed back by the darkness, it's not holding it in. Darkness can't contain light. No matter how small the light, darkness must flee before it. Ever since The Fall man's natural state has been sinful, but God has been our constant source of light. All throughout history God has been interfering and lighting the way. In the case of the Israelites in the wilderness he did so quite literally as that pillar of fire. And now he lives in us. When we accept him His Spirit comes and makes his dwelling in us. Now we are that light to the world. Don't hide that under a bushel. Don't let Satan blow it out. Let it shine! So when you make your resolutions this year make sure you aren't getting distracted by good things that aren't the main thing so that your saltiness won't get diluted and your light will shine for the whole world to see.

In His Service,
Ben


January 2016

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 OFFICE CLOSED HAPPY NEW YEAR	2
3 BEN'S 1ST SUNDAY SS 9:30AM WS 10:30AM	4	5	6 DINNER 6:00 PM CLASSES 7:00 PM	7	8	9
10 SS 9:30AM WS 10:30AM	11	12	13 LBS 9:30 DINNER 6:00 PM CLASSES 7:00 PM	14 ELDERS 6:00 PM DEACONS 6:30 PM BOARD 7:00 PM	15	16
17 SS 9:30AM WS 10:30AM	18 OFFICE CLOSED PRESIDENT'S DAY	19	20 LBS 9:30 DINNER 6:00 PM CLASSES 7:00 PM	21	22	23
24 SS 9:30AM WS 10:30AM	25	26	27 LBS 9:30 DINNER 6:00 PM CLASSES 7:00 PM	28	29	30
31 SS 9:30AM WS 10:30AM						

Serving In January	
January 03	
Meditation:	Doug Dalton
Servers:	Brenda Gibson, *Iris Felix John Signorelli, Rebecca Cullen
Greeters:	Bob Clark/FD, Lloyd Colston/FHD
Nursery:	Sarah Skiles, Wanda Jones
Lord's Supper Prep:	?
January 10	
Meditation:	Randall Coffman
Servers:	Brenda Risner, Ruth Carson Tara Coffman, *Wanda Jones
Greeters:	Bob Clark/FD, John Signorelli/FHD
Nursery:	Lindsie Simmons, Rebecca Cullen
Lord's Supper Prep:	?
January 17	
Meditation:	Lloyd Colston
Servers:	Brenda Gibson, Iris Felix *John Signorelli, Rebecca Cullen
Greeters:	Bob Clark/FD, John Signorelli/FHD
Nursery:	Kristi Jordan, Tara Coffman
Lord's Supper Prep:	?
January 24	
Meditation:	Rick Weinkauff
Servers:	Brenda Risner, Ruth Carson Tara Coffman, *Wanda Jones
Greeters:	Bob Clark/FD, Jerry Gibson/FHD
Nursery:	Brenda Gibson, Jane Clark
Lord's Supper Prep:	?
January 31	
Meditation:	Joe Price
Servers:	Brenda Risner, Ruth Carson Tara Gibson, *Wanda Jones
Greeters:	Bob Clark/FD, Lloyd Colston/FHD
Nursery:	Kristi Jordan, Rebecca Cullen
Lord's Supper Prep:	?

In Our Prayers
Larry Allen - heart
Reba Stephens - health
Jackie Garland - cancer
Charlotte McPherson
Yudell Barton - health
Marcia Sharma - stomach cancer
Kaybree Mann - brain tumor
Nita Walker - health
Andrea Matthews - heart problems
Robert Ramer -experimental therapy
Sam Smith - mass in esophagus
Tammie Crowder - infection
Sandy Farris - cancer
Arnold Goucher - cancer
Herb Lacey - liver cancer
Linda Crandal - leukemia
Billie Vaughn - Jerry's cousin
Periodically the Prayer List will be updated. If we remove someone that you still want on the list, please let us know and we will be glad to put them back on.
<i>If you have a prayer need or know of any changes, please contact the church office.</i>

<u>Birthdays & Anniversaries</u>
01/07 Bob McGuire
01/17 Crystal Crawford
01/18 Lanny Zieman
01/18 Rick & Roma Weinkauff
01/20 Gabriel White




<u>Your Elders</u>	
Phil Carson, Randall Coffman, Doug Dalton, Gene Drechsler, Jerry Gibson, Jim Jones	
<u>Your Deacons</u>	
Crystal Crawford, Rebecca Cullen, Brenda Gibson Joe Price, Rick Weinkauff, Daniel White	

<u>Sunday Services</u>	
Sunday School	9:30 am
Worship Service	10:30 am
<u>Wednesday Night</u>	
Dinner	6:00 pm
Classes for all ages	7:00 pm

<u>Secretary's Report</u> December 2015	
Average Attendance	53.33
Average Visitors	9
Total Average Attendance	64.33
Total Offerings	\$8,399.00

Years ago during a visit with Billy and Ruth Graham, I noticed while we were outside that their dog was continuously going around in circles.

"What's wrong with this dog?" I asked them.

"He's chasing his tail," they told me.

I had heard about dogs chasing their tails, but I had never actually seen one do it before.

Like that dog, some people are effectively chasing their tails in life. They are chasing after happiness. But the best way to not be happy is by trying to be happy.

Our purpose in life as Christians is to know God and bring Him glory. If you will do that with your life, if you will get up every morning and say to yourself, "I want to know God, and I want to bring Him glory," then you will find the happiness that has eluded you. You will find the satisfaction you have always wanted by having your priorities in order.

Anything short of this ultimately will disappoint, because true and lasting happiness never will be found in the things this world tells us to look for.

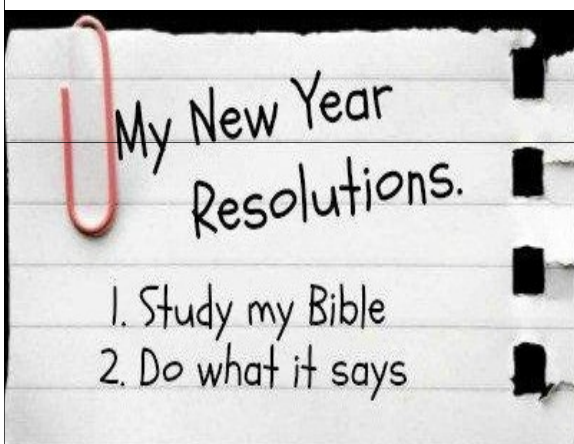
The Bible offers something better than happiness, and that is joy. Happiness largely depends on good things happening. When things are going reasonably well, we are happy. If things aren't going so well, we are not happy. But we can have joy despite our circumstances.

The problem with happiness is that it's generally derived from accomplishments, accumulation, and, to some degree, through escape. The trouble with that is we won't always be able to accomplish something or escape somewhere. And the things we have accumulated will go out of style, break, get lost, or may be stolen.

If we live for happiness, we'll never find it. We'll be like that dog, constantly chasing his tail.

-----Greg Laurie-----

And we try to make it so difficult!!!



ADD TO YOUR DIRECTORY

**Ben & Kristen Partin
605 Navajoe Road
Altus, OK 73521**

**(505) 603-5121 Ben
(505) 603-5233 Kristen**