

Iglesia El Camino

En los meses de Agosto y Septiembre el Señor nos permitió realizar eventos que han sido de mucha bendición para la Iglesia El Camino. Primero fue el "Back to School Picnic", al cual llegaron tres familias nuevas. Y para el Septiembre tuvimos la ceremonia de bautizos y el almuerzo de aniversario de nuestra iglesia, aquí llegaron dos familias más. Damos gracias a Dios por estas vidas, una familia esta ya asistiendo regularmente a la iglesia y nos mantenemos en oración por los demás hasta que todos ellos puedan llegar a los pies de nuestro Señor Jesucristo.



During the months of August and September the Lord allowed us to hold events which have been of great blessing to El Camino Church. First came the "Back to School Picnic," to which came three new families. In September we had a baptism ceremony and a luncheon to celebrate the 3rd anniversary of our church. Two new families joined us for these events. We thank God for these lives—one family is now attending our church regularly. Keep others in your prayers, until they can all get to know our Lord Jesus Christ.

Youth News

Fall is a very busy time for the students. They are readjusting to school after summer break, heavy deep in homework and trying to navigate the social relationships with new friends and homecoming just around the corner. We have chosen this time to focus on a study entitled "Essential Truth: Inviting Christ into Your Reality." We also had a pre-"See You at the Pole" rally on Sept 25 and with that there is a 30 day challenge to the students. Pray for our youth to accept the challenge and to hear God's still, small voice in the midst of the vast noise around them.

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THE MESSENGER

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OUR MISSION IS TO LOVE GOD, LOVE EACH OTHER,
AND HAVE A PASSION TO REACH THE UNSAVED.

From The Senior Pastor's Desk

My last newsletter article focused on passing the generational torch – preparing the next generation of leaders and workers at Immanuel. If you missed the service where I preached on that subject (August 21), let me encourage you to go to the church website at www.immanuelcma.org or get the CD or DVD and listen to the message. It is a very important message for Immanuel's future. It challenges the older generation to mentor the younger generation and it challenges the younger generation to step-up and be ready to serve and lead.



I want to continue in this same vein of thought, but bring the application to the family. Moms and dads, how are you preparing your children to know the Lord, walk with Him, and serve Him faithfully through the church? I love child dedications. However, they are rather brief in nature in order to say what needs to be said before the young child is unhappy to be at the front of the church. So let me reiterate some things that I often say as a part of those child dedications.

Spiritual training begins at home. Deuteronomy 6:6-9 presents a just-in-time training of our children in the Word of God. This is biblical training that happens as life happens. There ought to be times in our homes where we sit and read the Word of God with our children, talk about what it means, and apply it to real life situations. And the Word of God, its truths and principles, should also be woven spontaneously into conversations throughout the day. You ought to help your children apply God's Word to the situations, choices, and decisions they are facing.

There is no more important way to teach your children about the Word of God than to live out its principles before them day-in and day-out. They must see in your walk what they hear in your talk. Otherwise what you are saying will not ring true to them and they are apt to put the Christian faith on a shelf somewhere. Now understand that there are no parents who are perfect in living out God's Word. We will all fall flat on our faces at times. You will have an argument with your spouse that the kids overhear. Or you will be impatient with your children and speak to them too harshly. But there is a great lesson for your children that when they see you fail, then you are humble enough to admit you were wrong, to apologize, and seek forgiveness.

The church should not be the sole place where your children receive spiritual training. But having them in church is an important part of their training. See the church as your partner in raising your kids to live godly lives. They benefit from learning the Bible in Sunday School and Children's Church. They will never forget some of the verses they learn in AWANA. The teachers they have in church programs will help to support the same values and truths you live by and are trying to teach to your children. Ruth and I have really appreciated over the years other Christian adults who were saying the same things to our kids that we were saying, other models and mentors of spiritual life. So take advantage of every children's ministry program at Immanuel. By the way, their church attendance is not their choice, but it is your choice. They are not mature enough to make the choice, so we make it for them – teens included. Hey, in today's world, we make sure our kids are in sports, music lessons, dance, and academic programs. All of those are good things, but do not neglect the priority of the most important thing – spiritual training. Teach your kids at home and have them in church.

Will all of this assure that your children will walk with God all the days of their lives? There is no such assurance. They are human beings with their own wills. They will ultimately have to make their own choices. While they are under your tutelage, influence for the Lord in every way you possibly can. Give them the best spiritual platform from which to make good life choices. Nothing else you do is more important.

Pastor Terry

These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.
~ Deuteronomy 6: 6-9



OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2011



Why do we have to suffer? Good question. I wish I had a good, concise, all-encompassing answer, but I don't. When we read through Scripture, we see that many righteous people suffered. Job is a good example of a righteous man who went through a great deal of pain and suffering. I cannot imagine what it felt like, and it was because he was a righteous man that he underwent Satan's attacks.

Joseph, David, Jeremiah, Peter, John and Paul are other examples of people who suffered a great deal for being men of God. Jesus, Himself, suffered more than all and did so in order to reconcile us to God the Father.

Even though we know this as Christians, suffering is a topic that makes us all uncomfortable, especially when we are going through it.

We read passages like Romans 5:3-5 where Paul shares with the Christians at Rome ... *we [Paul and his companions] also rejoice in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces endurance, endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope. This hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

Let me ask you something. Do you rejoice in your afflictions, or tribulations? This isn't natural. It doesn't make sense. If you saw someone who was going through a great deal of pain and suffering and that person was rejoicing in the midst of it, what would you think of that individual? To be honest, I would probably think that person needed serious counseling.

Yet that is how a Christian should respond who is under great affliction. He or she should be rejoicing. Why? Well Paul declares that affliction produces endurance, or another translation is perseverance.

When I think of endurance or perseverance, I see a soldier or athlete. They must undergo rigorous training in order to endure the hardships they encounter in carrying out their missions. It isn't easy. And the same is true for the Christian.

Right down I know that there are a lot of us going through some difficult times, and we may even be praying, *Lord, get me out of this mess.* But we can change this prayer to *Lord, help me to walk through this challenge. Help me to realize that in the midst of this hardship I can rejoice, because You are using it to build my endurance in You and not myself.*

As we confront those endurance building challenges, Paul teaches us that our character is going to begin to mirror that of Christ Jesus, who knew what it meant to suffer. Those who know us best will see the difference in our countenance, and will want to know why we are rejoicing rather than flying apart under the stress of the situation. It is then that we can share that it's because of Christ Jesus in our life that we are living with a hope that will never disappoint us.

Think about it. We have hope that will never fail us. It is a hope that will enable us to look at our suffering from Christ's perspective.

As Christians, we must remind ourselves, and one another, that we have the Holy Spirit living in us 24/7/365. He is the one who will give us the ability to rejoice in whatever the situation is. He is not only living in us and empowering us to go through the hardships that come our way, but He is pouring into our hearts **Christ's unconditional love.**

Think about it. We don't have to ask God to give us His unconditional love, He freely pours it into us the moment He comes into our lives through the Holy Spirit.

When we are operating out of the fullness of Christ's love, we can echo Paul's words to the Corinthians when he declared, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. He comforts us in all our afflictions, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any kind of affliction, through the comfort we ourselves receive from God* (2 Cor. 1:3-4).

As we go through suffering, we can in turn be used by God to lovingly give comfort to those who are encountering pain, suffering and sorrow.

I know that these are easy words to speak, but difficult words to live out. But I see God doing this in the life of my brother, Tim. Even though he is going through extreme pain and suffering, he is still reaching out to help others who are going through hard and challenging times. I see in my brother, a man who is living in the reality of Romans 5:3-5, and he challenges me by his life, to want to live rejoicing in the Lord no matter what I face. I also have the Holy Spirit living in me, and if I am willing He will enable me to let Christ's unconditional love flow out of me to others as I rejoice in my hardships.

Pastor Rick

Recently (and often) I was thinking of God's grace. As I look back on my life I see very clearly His grace given to me at various stages of my life. My childhood is my focus today. As a boy of ten or eleven I was running with a pretty rough gang on the streets of Chicago. Two of my best friends in the gang were Andre (a Hispanic boy) and Roy (a black boy). The leaders of the gang were thirteen or fourteen year old black boys who had muscles (which I lacked) and scars. We ditched school, of course, but beyond that stole cigarettes, harassed other kids who were "goody-goody-two-shoes," and were into looking and laughing at pornography (although I didn't know what it was about). It slowly escalated to robbing stores - it was great fun. Several of us went into the store, separated, and walked all around distracting the owners; as we were doing our thing, others were carrying out merchandise from the shelves.

God answered the prayers of my mother but in a way that she nor I expected. When I became twelve my father died. My younger sister and I were sent to an orphanage, at my mother's request, similar to the Hershey school, located thirty miles west of Chicago. Yanked out of the crucible of trouble just at the right time. While in the orphanage (six years) we were subjected to strict discipline; rigid routines (up at 6:30 am to bed with lights out at 9:30 pm), personal Bible study at 6:45 pm, church every Sunday at 10:00 am, choir practice, chorus practice, you had to choose a musical instrument to play or participate in sports (football in the Fall, basketball in the Winter, Track in the Spring, and baseball in the Summer), etc., etc. One rarely had choices to make and strict punishments were imposed for infractions or being a "smart-mouth." It was a tough life and a disciplined life but one that I now appreciate.

When I was running with the gang in Chicago I didn't know that I needed help, but God knew. How could the death of a twelve year old's father be a blessing? But it was in my case! God's grace came showering down on me and as I look back I can see it very clearly. Many Scriptures speak about the grace of God but two impress me from time to time. 2 Corinthians 9:8 states, "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." What a thing and time in my life -- my father's death and being sent away from the gang. But God did not just save me from something, He saved me to something as well. Ephesians 2: 4-5 says, "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved." God's grace brought me to know Jesus as my Savior and Lord and to use what-

ever gifts I have to serve Him and His church.

God's grace is awesome! This is the stage of life that I wanted to share in this newsletter but there are other

stages of my life that I may write about in the future. What I want to impart to each reader is to look back at how wonderfully God has moved in your life and just praise Him for His great love and grace. You know, today I wonder whatever happened to Andre and Roy. Did they escape the gangs or did they go on to bigger and more serious ventures resulting in prison or death? I hope that the grace of God reached to them as well as it did to me.



Cambodia Fall 2011

By the time you are reading this, the first team will be only weeks from boarding the plane to Bangkok. The October team leaves on Thursday the 20th and will return on Sunday the 30th. Team two will not be far behind as their trip is scheduled for November 10th through 20th. On behalf of the teams, we would like to extend a big thank-you for your support through the Spaghetti Dinner, "Caring for the Copelands", blankets and bandages, financial gifts and especially your prayers! The main "work" portion of the trip will be focused on the playground area in the yard of the new church in Poipet. This will be used greatly to support their children's ministry. We are very excited about the ongoing partnership with the Copelands. Please pick up a prayer guide and continue to pray for the team, the Copelands and the ministry in Cambodia.