

The Church of the Damascus Road

Echo!

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Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA

Fiery Silent Sermon

A member of a certain church, who previously had been attending services regularly, stopped going. After a few weeks, the preacher decided to visit him. It was a chilly evening. The preacher found the man at home alone, sitting before a blazing fire. Guessing the reason for his preachers visit, the man welcomed him, led him to a comfortable chair near the fireplace and waited. The preacher made himself at home but said nothing.

In the grave silence, he contemplated the dance of the flames around the burning logs. After some minutes, the preacher took the fire tongs, carefully picked up a brightly burning ember and placed it to one side of the hearth all alone then he sat back in his chair, still silent.



The host watched all this in quiet contemplation. As the one lone ember's flame flickered and diminished, there was a momentary glow and then its fire was no more. Soon it was cold and dead. Not a word had been spoken since the initial greeting. The preacher glanced at his watch and realized it was time to leave. He slowly stood up, picked up the cold, dead ember and placed it back in the middle of the fire. Immediately it began to glow, once more with the light and warmth of the burning coals around it. As the preacher reached the door to leave, his host said with a tear running down his cheek, 'Thank you so much for your visit and especially for the fiery sermon. I shall be back in church next Sunday.'

We live in a world today, which tries to say too much with too little. Consequently, few listen. Sometimes the best sermons are the ones left unspoken.

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I Wish You Enough

Recently I overheard a Father and daughter in their last moments together at the airport. They had announced the departure. Standing near the security gate, they hugged and the Father said, 'I love you, and I wish you enough.'

The daughter replied, 'Dad, our life together has been more than enough. Your love is all I ever needed. I wish you enough, too, Dad.'

They kissed and the daughter left. The Father walked over to the window where I was seated. Standing there I could see he wanted and needed to cry. I tried not to intrude on his privacy, but he welcomed me in by asking, 'Did you ever say good-bye to someone knowing it would be forever?'

'Yes, I have,' I replied. 'Forgive me for asking, but why is this a forever good-bye?'

'I am old, and she lives so far away. I have challenges ahead and the reality is - the next trip back will be for my funeral,' he said.

'When you were saying good-bye, I heard you say, 'I wish you enough.' May I ask what that means?'

He began to smile. 'That's a wish that has been handed down from other generations. My parents used to say it to everyone...' He paused a moment and looked up as if trying to remember it in detail, and he smiled even more. 'When we said, 'I wish you enough,' we were wanting the other person to have a life filled with just enough good things to sustain them.' Then turning toward me, he shared the following as if he were reciting it from memory.

I wish you enough sun to keep your attitude bright no matter how gray the day may appear.

I wish you enough rain to appreciate the sun even more.

I wish you enough happiness to keep your spirit alive and everlasting.

I wish you enough pain so that even the smallest of joys in life may appear bigger.

I wish you enough gain to satisfy your wanting. I wish you enough loss to appreciate all that you possess.

I wish you enough hellos to get you through the final good-bye.

He then began to cry and walked away.

They say it takes a minute to find a special person, an hour to appreciate them, a day to love them; but then an entire life to forget them.

TAKE TIME TO LIVE...I WISH YOU ENOUGH



**BLESSED
are ALL
THEY THAT
WAIT FOR
HIM.** ISAIAH 30:18

Feeling Blessed

We've said this before, but it can't be reiterated too many times... God makes everything that happens work to the good for those who love him and are called according to his purpose. Everything. No matter what is happening in your life right now, no matter how devastating the circumstances may seem, have faith in God. Know that his hand is working, even in what may seem to be the most horrible circumstances you could ever face. Know that his will will be accomplished, no matter how the people and circumstances in your life try to stop it. Know that his hand is on you and on your life, no matter how frightening things may be. So instead of feeling frightened or worried, feel blessed.

—Bonnie Ricks, *New Song Ministries*

Serving God for Free

You will enjoy the new insights that Rick Warren has, with his wife now having cancer and him having 'wealth' from the book sales. This is an absolutely incredible short interview with Rick Warren, 'Purpose Driven Life' author and pastor of Saddleback Church in California. In the interview by Paul Bradshaw with Rick Warren, Rick said:

People ask me, What is the purpose of life? And I respond: In a nutshell, life is preparation for eternity. We were not made to last forever, and God wants us to be with Him in Heaven.

One day my heart is going to stop, and that will be the end of my body-- but not the end of me.

I may live 60 to 100 years on earth, but I am going to spend trillions of years in eternity. This is the warm-up act - the dress rehearsal. God wants us to practice on earth what we will do forever in eternity.

We were made by God and for God, and until you figure that out, life isn't going to make sense.

Life is a series of problems: Either you are in one now, you're just coming out of one, or you're getting ready to go into another one.

The reason for this is that God is more interested in your character than your comfort; God is more interested in making your life holy than He is in making your life happy.

We can be reasonably happy here on earth, but that's not the goal of life.

The goal is to grow in character, in being more like God, or in our case, Christ likeness.

This past year has been the greatest year of my life but also the toughest, with my wife, Kay, getting cancer.

I used to think that life was hills and valleys - you go through a dark time, then you go to the mountaintop, back and forth. I don't believe that anymore.

Rather than life being hills and valleys, I believe that it's kind of like two rails on a railroad track, and at all times you have something good and something bad in your life..

No matter how good things are in your life, there is always something bad that needs to be worked on.

And no matter how bad things are in your life, there is always something good you can thank God for.

You can focus on your purposes, or you can focus on your problems:

If you focus on your problems, you're going into self-centeredness, which is my problem, my issues, my pain.' But one of the easiest ways to get rid of pain is to get your focus off yourself and onto God and others.

We discovered quickly that in spite of the prayers of hundreds of thousands of people, God was not going to heal Kay or make it easy for her. It has been very difficult for her, and yet God has strengthened her character, given her a ministry of helping other people, given her a testimony, drawn her closer to Him and to people.

You have to learn to deal with both the good and the bad of life.

Actually, sometimes learning to deal with the good is harder. For instance, this past year, all of a sudden, when the book sold 15 million copies, it made me instantly very wealthy.

It also brought a lot of notoriety that I had never had to deal with before. I don't think God gives you money or notoriety for your own ego or for you to live a life of ease.

So I began to ask God what He wanted me to do with this money, notoriety and influence. He gave me two different passages that helped me decide what to do, II Corinthians 9 and Psalm 72.

First, in spite of all the money coming in, we would not change our lifestyle one bit.. We made no major purchases.

Second, about midway through last year, I stopped taking a salary from the church.

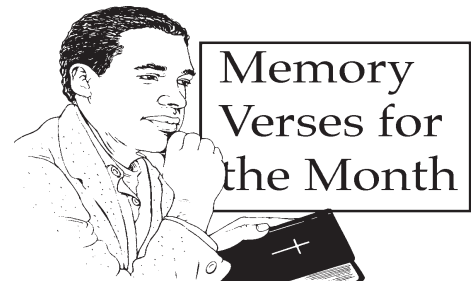
Third, we set up foundations to fund an initiative we call The Peace Plan to plant churches, equip leaders, assist the poor, care for the sick, and educate the next generation.

Fourth, I added up all that the church had paid me in the 24 years since I started the church, and I gave it all back. It was liberating to be able to serve God for free.

We need to ask ourselves: Am I going to live for possessions? Popularity? Am I going to be driven by pressures? Guilt? Bitterness? Materialism? Or am I going to be driven by God's purposes (for my life)?

When I get up in the morning, I sit on the side of my bed and say, God, if I don't get anything else done today, I want to know You more and love You better. God didn't put me on earth just to fulfill a to-do list. He's more interested in what I am than what I do.

That's why we're called human beings, not human doings.



"But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (John 4:14).

The wicked borrow and do not repay, but the righteous give generously (Psalm 37:21). Do not take advantage of each other, but fear your God. I am the Lord your God (Leviticus 25:17).

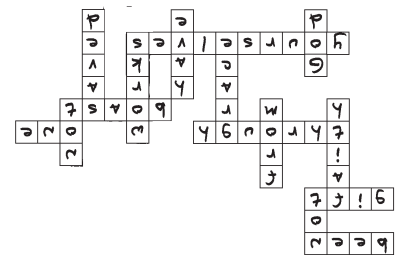
Better a little with righteousness than much gain with injustice (Proverbs 16:8).



Story Tellers

Story Tellers is the third Friday of every month at FDCF and the third Saturday at NCCF unless a scheduling problem arises. You can read a book to your child on tape, and then send the book and audio cassette tape home for your child to listen to you read to them, and read along with you. The tape, and book are free to you. You just pay regular mail home to your child, or, at FDCF, you can send them out on a visit like regular property through R&D. Sign up with Pastor Stone, or at our regular worship service, or with any Inside Church Council member.

Answer to Just for Fun on page 3

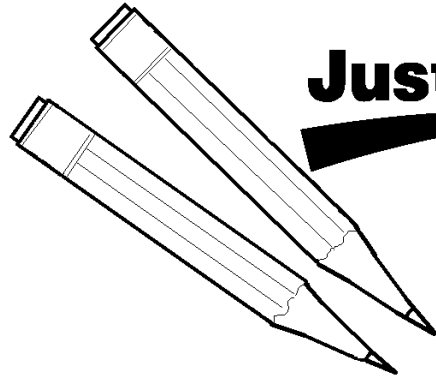


**The Church of the
Damascus Road**
Echo!

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An official publication of The Church of the Damascus Road, a Christian Community of Reconciliation, serving the inmate population of the correctional facilities at Rockwell City and Fort Dodge, Iowa.
Rev. Paul E. Stone, Pastor
Rev. Carroll Lang, Editor

**"WE WILL
SERVE
THE
LORD
OUR
GOD
AND
OBEY
HIM."
JOSHUA 24:24. NIV**



Just for

Fun!

Circuitous Call

- Christ's courage at Calvary cull, Circuitous Call.
- Celestial Call, to Calvary's Cull, Circuitous Caul.
- Christ's cull, at Culrinary Cull, Circuitous Caul.
- Carpenter's Cross, to Crucifix Cull, Circuitous Caul.
- Christ's Crucifixion, at Calvary's Cull, Circuitous Caul.
- Christ's Call, to Canticle Call. Cowboy

Circuitous — indirect, going a long way around (Luke 23:33: "and when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.")

45 Lessons in Life

1. Life isn't fair, but it's still good.
2. When in doubt, just take the next small step.
3. Life is too short to waste time hating anyone.
4. Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your friends and parents will. Stay in touch.
5. Pay off your credit cards every month.
6. You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.
7. Cry with someone. It's more healing than crying alone.
8. It's OK to get angry with God. He can take it.
9. Save for retirement starting with your first paycheck.
10. When it comes to chocolate, resistance is futile.
11. Make peace with your past so it won't screw up the present.
12. It's OK to let your children see you cry.
13. Don't compare your life to others. You have no idea what their journey is all about.

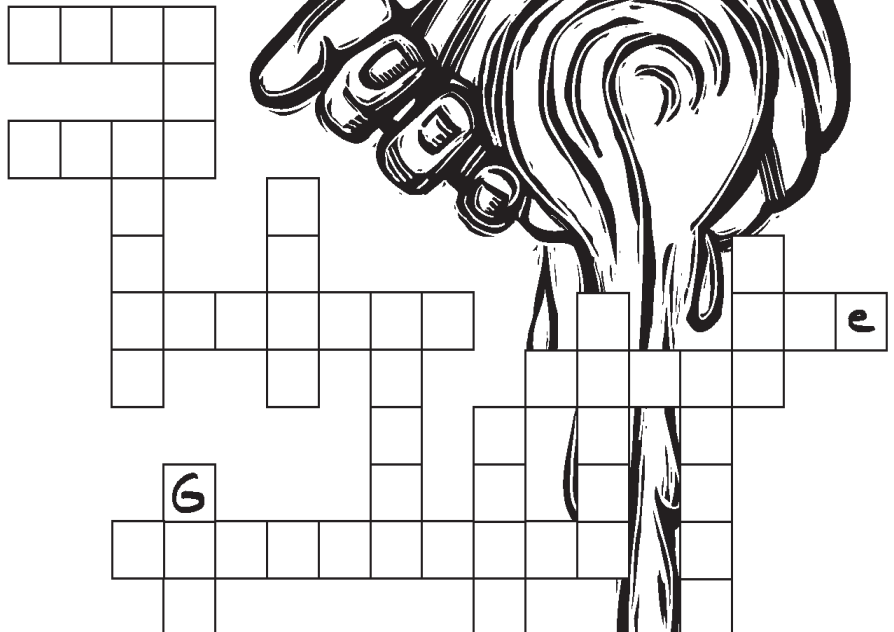
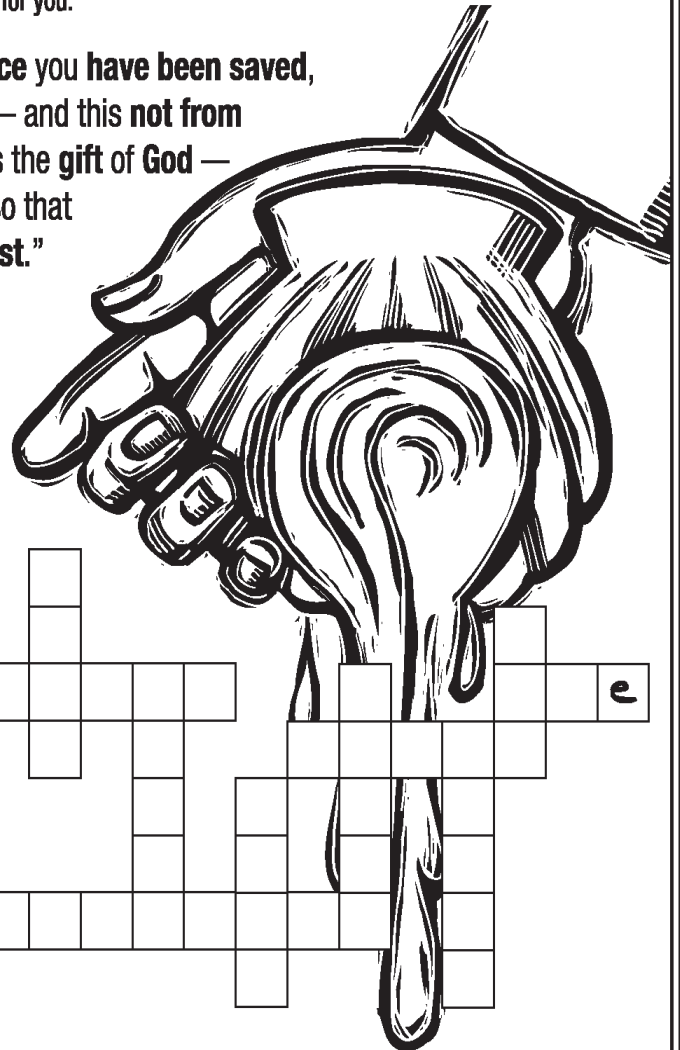
Continued on page 4

THE GIFT

God has given us a gift that we can't work for or buy. Discover what this gift is by reading Ephesians 2:8-9, NIV.

Fit the words in bold into the word puzzle below. We've provided two letters for you.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast."



Answer on page 2

Forgiveness

If you have given yourself to the Lord and are saved, then you have received the Holy Spirit. It dwells within you to help and guide you. It is important not to grieve the Holy Spirit by the way we live our lives, as it says in Ephesians 4:30-32 – “*And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*”

Are we grieving or pleasing God with our attitudes and actions? We need to act in love toward our brothers in Christ just as God acted in love by sending his Son to die for our sins.

It's in the Lord's Prayer that we pray, “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” Are we just saying those words, or are we taking action on them? God does not forgive us *because* we forgive others, but solely because of his great mercy.

As we come to understand his mercy, however, we will want to be like him and that's an ideal mindset to have. Having received forgiveness we will even want to pass it on to others. Those who are unwilling to forgive have *not* become one with Christ, who was willing to forgive even those who crucified him. If that's not the ultimate example, I don't know what is! Set your sights on him.

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, first I want to stop and thank you for the everlasting agape love that you show is and wrap us in, and for the sacrificing of your Son, Jesus Christ upon that cross to get rid of death once and for all for those who believe. And thank you for your forgiveness, Father, and your never-ending mercy. We know that once we repent and ask for forgiveness it's erased from your memory. We also know that there is no sin too great for your forgiveness. Help us to straighten our paths to be in line with you every single day. We love you, Father, with our whole hearts. In your Son Jesus Christ's holy name. Amen

—Paul Abbot



45 Lessons, from page 3

14. If a relationship has to be a secret, you shouldn't be in it.
15. Everything can change in the blink of an eye. But don't worry; God never blinks.
16. Take a deep breath. It calms the mind.
17. Get rid of anything that isn't useful, beautiful, or joyful.
18. Whatever doesn't kill you really does make you stronger.
19. It's never too late to have a happy childhood. But the second one is up to you and no one else.
20. When it comes to going after what you love in life, don't take no for an answer.
21. Burn the candles, use the nice sheets, and wear the fancy lingerie. Don't save it for a special day. Today is special.
22. Over-prepare, and then go with the flow.
23. Be eccentric now. Don't wait for old age to wear purple.
24. The most important sex organ is the brain.
25. No one is in charge of your happiness but you.
26. Frame every so-called disaster with these words, “In five years, will this matter?”
27. Always choose life.
28. Forgive everyone everything.
29. What other people think of you is none of your business.
30. Time heals almost everything. Give time time.
31. However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
32. Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.
33. Believe in miracles.
34. God loves you because of who God is, not because of anything you did or didn't do.
35. Don't audit life. Show up and make the most of it now.
36. Growing old beats the alternative — dying young.
37. Your children get only one childhood.
38. All that truly matters in the end is that you loved.
39. Get outside every day. Miracles are waiting everywhere.
40. If we all threw our problems in a pile and saw everyone else's, we'd grab ours back.
41. Envy is a waste of time. You already have all you need.
42. The best is yet to come.
43. No matter how you feel, get up, dress up, and show up.
44. Yield.
45. Life isn't tied with a bow, but it's still a gift.

—Written by Regina Brett, 90-year-old columnist of *The Plain Dealer*, Cleveland, OH



Worship & Bible Study

FDCF Fort Dodge

6:30pm WednesdaysHoly Communion
6:30pm Fridays Prayer & Bible Study

Pastor Contact Hours

2:00pm - Count Wednesday
2:00pm - Count Friday

NCCF Rockwell City

6:30pm Tuesdays Prayer & Bible Study
6:30pm ThursdaysHoly Communion

Pastor Contact Hours

2:00pm - Count Tuesday
2:00pm - Count Thursday

Just Some Thoughts

God Himself doesn't propose to judge a man until he is dead. So why should you?

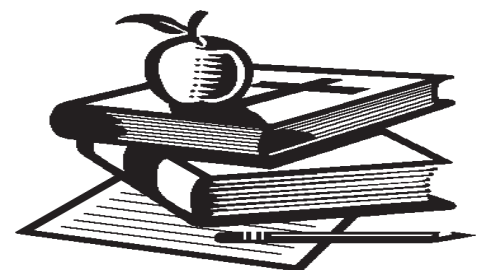
We're called to be witnesses, not lawyers or Judges.

God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called.



Articles Invited

The editor of this newsletter is inviting **all readers** to contribute articles, poetry, art work, and opinions for the newsletter. So don't be bashful. Give all your newsletter submissions to Pastor Stone.



Check Them Out!

The Church of the Damascus Road Librarians are inviting you to come to the chapel (MPR 23 in FDCF H Building; Treatment Center Room A in NCCF), and “check out” the books, tapes and compact discs in our library! There are many genres of books to choose from! We hope to see you there!