

Norwood Christian Grapevine

I am the vine; You are the branches... John 15:5

Pastor's Promptings...

TURNING 50

This month I turn 50. Looking back over my first 50 years of life I see a life of ups and downs, successes and failures, good choices and mistakes. I have made many mistakes in my life. There are things I wish I would not have done and some things I wish I had done but did not. There are relationships I damaged, many times without even knowing it, and others I simply let slip away with the passage of time. Yes, if I had it all to live over again there are many things I would do differently.

I don't think I'm any different than you. I think we all have things in our past that we wish weren't there. Few of us can truthfully sing the words of Frank Sinatra, "regrets, I have a few but then again too few to mention." We all have things in our past we wish would not have happened.

Thankfully, I also had some successes in life and made some good decisions. Among the things I did right include choosing Chris to be my wife and having a vasectomy reversal, without which we would not have been blessed with Thomas and Robert as a part of our family. If I had to do it all over again there are some things I would not change at all.

Yes, my first 50 years were a mix of good and bad. Of all the ups and downs in my life there is one defining moment that overshadows them all, one decision that not only changed my life forever, but it

defines who I am. That decision was the day I recognized that I was a sinful, selfish person in need of a savior. The day I accepted the gift of salvation offered to me by my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is a day I will never forget.

Entering into the New Covenant with Jesus changed my life forever. Because of my relationship with Jesus, all my past mistakes have been wiped away. I am no longer defined by the failures of my past. Because of my relationship with Jesus, all my past successes pale in comparison to the holiness and infinite power of Jesus.

My relationship with Jesus has taken the ups and downs of my past life and replaced them with a vision of the future – an eternity with the Lord. Through Jesus I can see myself as God sees me. I don't let mistakes hold me back. I try not to let successes go to my head. I live focused on Christ and all He has created me to be.

No, my first 50 years were not perfect. The remainder of my life on earth will not be perfect either. I am not perfect. But praise be to God, I have a perfect Lord in Jesus Christ who shed His blood for me so when God looks at me through the perfect blood of Jesus, He sees not my imperfections but the perfection of Jesus!

Regardless of how old you are and what mistakes you've made in your past, Jesus offers you the same gift of salvation I accepted 37 years ago. It was the best decision I have ever made. I recommend you make the same decision. If you want to learn more about how to accept Jesus'

offer of forgiveness and salvation, give me a call, or better yet, drop by on a Sunday morning and learn all about it.

Serving Christ and His family,

Pastor Ken

THE WITNESS BY DAVIS WATSON

As the former Municipal Town Judge, I had many opportunities to evaluate the testimony of witnesses. Many times these witnesses would say, "This is what my friend said that he did." This is not a witness but someone who is repeating what someone said about an event. This type of testimony would not be permissible in court because the event was not actually seen by the witness. All this witness was doing was repeating what someone else said that he saw. To be a witness one must actually see an event.

Many people think they are witnesses but are only repeaters of what they have been told about an event. Many people think the Bible is just a collection of stories or fables that are not really true. Other people believe the Bible, but twist it to conform to their own preconceived notions of what it says about God. And others believe the Bible is the actual word of God given to us so that we can become more like His Son, Jesus Christ.

For the past several months, I have been studying the book of 1st John.

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This book is found near the end of the Bible in the New Testament. John is the witness and he confirms that he is a witness in the opening paragraph saying, "We have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched." John is a man who actually walked and talked with Jesus and he is writing to the early Christians and to us about certain problems within the early Church.

These early church problems are not just with the early Church but are also with today's Church. Here are just a few problems with the church today: some people think to be saved all you have to do is repent of your sins, or be baptized, or repeat a "sinner's" prayer. Others believe once saved you will always be saved. Others believe that Jesus is not God and others believe Jesus is God but not the only god. Others believe if I'm a good person and do good things I will go to heaven. And others outside the church think that they are so bad that there is no hope for them and others in the church think they are so good that God is lucky to have them.

But, what does John say? Now, remember John is the perfect witness. He spent three years with Jesus and spent the rest of his life telling other people of what he heard, saw and touched.

First, let's look at repentance, baptism, and sinner's prayer. What does John say? "We know that we have come to know Him (Jesus) if we obey His commands... This is how we know we are in Him: Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did." (1John 2:3 & 5) You may have taken the first few Christian baby steps but are not currently walking as Jesus walked. Are you in danger of losing your salvation? I don't know; God only knows your heart. But, John, the

witness, says, "Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother." (1John 3:10)

Are there people in your life that you do not love? John, the witness, says, "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." (1John 3:17-18)

Just who is Jesus? All through the book of 1John, John says, the eternal life, the Righteous One, atoning sacrifice, the Christ, one and only Son, Son of God, and near the end of this book John writes, "We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true—even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life." (1John 5:20) Just who is Jesus? Jesus is God!

Where do you stand? John, the witness says: "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives." To the "holier than thou" church member, John is saying that if you think you have not sinned, His word has no place in your life. And to those who think they are "too far gone," John, the witness, is saying that we must confess our sins and He will forgive them.

Just who is the Norwood Christian Church? We are a group of imperfect people with imperfect leadership who are trying to do the right thing. As John, the witness, says, "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we

should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure." (1John 3:1-3)

Norwood Christian Church is a group of imperfect people meeting together preparing ourselves for our perfect place in heaven by loving God and his children.

true woman 
NOW IS THE TIME

Revive Our Hearts Ministries presents True Woman '10 in Fort Worth, Texas on October 14-16, 2010. If you would be interested in attending this conference with other ladies from the church, please contact Chris Lawrence at 327-4380 for more information. For a complete list of speakers and registration information, visit www.TrueWoman.com.

 *Thank You* 

Dear Church Family,

I just wanted to say "Thank you" to all of you. The dinner was great, but the fellowship was even better. Each and every one of you have a special place in our hearts.

Norwood Christian Church knows genuine hospitality. You have opened your arms wide and accepted those that are new to the area. All of you have opened your homes and your hearts without hesitation. We will meet again, someday. So for now, see you soon.

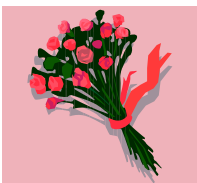
Love & Prayers,
The Millers

Larry, Tammy & Cheyenne

May 2010

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Matthew 5:7

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2 Bible Study 10AM Worship 11AM	3	4	5 Truth Project 6PM	6 Praise Team 7:30PM <i>National Day of Prayer</i> Dick & Kathy Nelson—Annv.	7	8
9 Mother's Day Breakfast 9:30AM Worship 11AM <i>Mother's Day</i>	10	11	12 Truth Project 6PM	13 Praise Team 7:30PM	14	15 Jim Newport
16 Bible Study 10AM Worship 11AM	17	18 Ken Lawrence	19 Truth Project 6PM	20 Praise Team 7:30PM	21	22
23 Bible Study 10AM Worship 11AM	24	25	26 Truth Project 6PM	27 Praise Team 7:30PM	28	29
30 Bible Study 10AM Worship 11AM Dick Nelson	31 <i>Memorial Day</i> Howard Greager Tom & Terri Gabarron—Annv.					



Mother's Day Breakfast – May 9th

It's that time of year again! Guys, we will once again honor the ladies of the church family by cooking them breakfast on Mother's Day, May 9th. Breakfast will be at 9:30 a.m. Please bring something for the potluck breakfast.



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www.NorwoodChristian.com

10 AM ~ Bible Study

11 AM ~ Worship Service

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ONE YEAR BIBLE READING PLAN

May

Week	<u>The Law</u> MON	<u>History</u> TUE	<u>Psalms</u> WED	<u>Poetry</u> THU	<u>Prophecy</u> FRI	<u>Gospels</u> SAT	<u>Epistles</u> SUN
18 (5/3)	<u>Exodus</u> 17-20	<u>II Samuel</u> 5-9	<u>Ps</u> 51-53	<u>Job</u> 35-36	<u>Jeremiah</u> 27-31	<u>Mark</u> 15-16	<u>II Cor.</u> 4-5
19 (5/10)	<u>Exodus</u> 21-24	<u>II Samuel</u> 10-14	<u>Ps</u> 54-56	<u>Job</u> 37-38	<u>Jeremiah</u> 32-36	<u>Luke</u> 1-2	<u>II Cor.</u> 6-8
20 (5/17)	<u>Exodus</u> 25-28	<u>II Samuel</u> 15-19	<u>Ps</u> 57-59	<u>Job</u> 39-40	<u>Jeremiah</u> 37-41	<u>Luke</u> 3-4	<u>II Cor.</u> 9-10
21 (5/24)	<u>Exodus</u> 29-32	<u>II Samuel</u> 20-24	<u>Ps</u> 60-62	<u>Job</u> 41-42	<u>Jeremiah</u> 42-46	<u>Luke</u> 5-6	<u>II Cor.</u> 11-13
22 (5/31)	<u>Exodus</u> 33-36	<u>I Kings</u> 1-4	<u>Ps</u> 63-65	<u>Proverbs</u> 1	<u>Jeremiah</u> 47-52	<u>Luke</u> 7-8	<u>Galatians</u> 1-3

"Take It or Leave It" – A Ministry Opportunity for you!

We are pleased to announce that "Take It or Leave It" the "indoor free box" ministry started by Kate Davis and Lisa Platt is doing well and expanding. "Take It or Leave It" has moved into their new home in the Royer building across from Clark's Market. This is a great opportunity for you to help minister to the needs of the community. There are many ministry tasks we are seeking volunteers for. Contact Kate Davis at 708-4880 or Lisa Platt at 708-9603 to find out more about volunteering in this exciting ministry to the community.

