

Reading through the Bible in a year is a challenge, but I'd never heard it compared to a prostate biopsy. Until Saturday morning. But it's not what you might think.

Dave had dropped by to walk the dog and pick up bills, and he popped into the office to see if I had any results from my biopsy. I told him I wouldn't know anything until next Thursday, but told him that the biopsy wasn't anything like I had been led by some to expect. It wasn't a picnic, but it really was a piece of cake. It didn't hurt at all.

We went on to talk about other things, and I asked him if he was excited about an upcoming event he had told me about. He said yes, but then said what he was most excited about was reading through the Bible this year. He was loving it! He looked forward to it every morning, and had a hard time not reading ahead. He then said he had thought it was really going to be hard, but had discovered it was kind of like my biopsy. It wasn't at all what he had thought it might be.

Some, however, have found it to be challenging. I even had someone ask me to hold them accountable because they were finding it very difficult. And I know it can be, especially when you are attempting it for the first time. Just finding time is hard if your life is already full of activities and family responsibilities. And when you are tired, it's hard to stay focused. And then you begin to wonder if you'll even remember what you've read. I won't even mention that we have an enemy who doesn't want us to read God's Word.

Let me encourage everyone who has taken the challenge, to stay the course. Don't worry about remembering, or even understanding, everything. Just read it, and trust God will implant in your heart and mind what He wants you to know. At least this time through. Next time He'll no doubt give you something more.

Like Dave, I really look forward to reading the Bible every morning. And if you want to know what exciting new things God has already shown me in the first few days of this new year, just ask.

God Bless, Rick



THE CHATHAM MESSENGER

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Kirk Polley's Communion Meditation

We have just concluded a very busy holiday season with Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years. If you are anything like me, you have had several party's and/or gatherings. Between family, friends, work...I'm all partied out. Well, at least for two more weeks until my birthday. Anyway...I trust all your parties went well, I hope there wasn't an event or situation that ruined your festivities. Hopefully, the reason for the gathering overshadowed any possible glitches in your plans. Fortunately for us believers, a party being held over 2000 years ago was drastically ruined by a few heavenly glitches.

We sang a song today that the praise team introduced to us several weeks ago. *Death Was Arrested* is quickly becoming my favorite new song. One of those reasons is the imagery I get from verse 4. I won't sing it for you but the words are:

Our savior displayed on a criminal's cross,
Darkness rejoiced as though heaven had lost.
But then Jesus arose with our freedom in hand,
That's when death was arrested and my life began.
That's when death was arrested and my life began.

I picture Satan hosting a party with his cronies. Things were going great. The party is rocking. I mean, why not? Jesus was hanging on a cross for all the world to see. He was drawing his last breaths. There was no getting out of this. Evil had triumphed and they were rejoicing. But all of a sudden...things went dark. If you listen, you can hear the record scratching to a halt at the party. Everyone is looking around at each other wondering what is going on. After a few minutes, Satan lights some candles and a fire and the party resumes.

Three hours later, about the time everyone had forgotten about the darkness, comes this heart stopping noise. It's a cumulation of sounds that has never been heard before...and will never be heard again. It's the sound of Jesus crying out to His Father for the last time. It's the sound of the veil being torn. It's the sound of rocks being split apart. It's the sound of tombs breaking open. It's the sound of the earth shaking. It's the sound of Jesus dying for our sins!

Talk about a party killer. Can you imagine all of Satan's friends leaving, all the while Satan is trying to keep them at the party. "Guys, don't leave...the night is young. Jesus is still dead. We still won." I don't picture too much partying during the next few days by the evil ones. They knew, as did everyone else, that Jesus was who He said He was...and that they messed up. And then, three days later, I picture a legion of heavenly angels going around and arresting Satan's minions with warrants signed by God with Jesus's blood. That's because Jesus arose with our freedom in hand. That's when death was arrested and our life began.

Let's now commune with our freedom giver. Let's now commune with our Savior.

STATISTICS

Worship 122
Offering \$8,762.47

SERVING THIS SUNDAY--1/14/18

Greeters	Will & Sara Bartels
Visitors' Stand	Chris & Rhonda Luzio
Communion Meditation	Rick Polley
	Chris Luzio
Ushers	Chad Formea
	Will Bartels
	Chuck McLaughlin
	Brad Stirmell
	Kirk Polley
	Duane Carrell
WORSHIP NURSERY	
Toddlers	Rhonda Luzio
	Emily Hughes
Infants	Nicole Moore
	Janice McLaughlin
	Courtney Bales
	Sunday School
Toddlers	Julie Divjak
Infants	Dixie Williamson
	Vicki Small



Let Us Pray For...

--Beryl Reese with extreme back pain and preparing for knee replacement.
--Tina's cousin with extensive cancer.
--Family of Brad Stirmell's friend who committed suicide.

NEW DIRECTORY COMING

We are hoping to publish a new fellowship directory in the near future, and want to keep it as current as possible. If you need to make any changes to your information, or want to be added to the directory, please make note of such on the directory sheet posted on the bulletin board.

NOTE OF GRATITUDE FOR MINISTRY OF KENT PARIS

I cannot overstate the significance that Nehemiah Ministries has had in my life. No single person has made as much of a difference in restoring my life than Kent Paris.

In 2012, at the age of 20, I was in desperate need of help and came to Kent for counseling. I was battling a host of problems—depression, social anxiety, same-sex attractions, self-abuse, and a habit of watching pornography. I was nervous about my first appointment. I wasn't sure what to expect, and I had already had some counseling before that was only marginally effective.

What I found was a man who had walked my journey before me, who had lived the gay life and had left it behind. A man of compassion and wisdom, who spoke with discernment and insight into my own situation. A man of knowledge, who could explain the origins of my same-sex attractions and psychological problems. A man of expertise, who had extensive experience in counseling cases like mine. Most of all, I found a man of God—a man who loves the Lord with all his mind, all his strength, all his heart, and all his soul.

Over the next several months, Kent came alongside me in my journey towards recovery. We had counseling sessions every few weeks, and I began to experience transformation in every area of my life.

I left behind same-sex attractions and self-abuse; I gained confidence in myself as a man; I began to value myself as a person and see life as worth living. Most importantly, I began to understand my position as an adopted son of God—that my Father in heaven loved me, delighted in me, cared for me, approved me, and wanted us to have a vibrant, thriving relationship.

Kent was instrumental in providing the tools to build that relationship and pursue life with God. I am, quite literally, eternally grateful for all that Kent has done for me.

(Note: We have been supporting Kent's ministry for a number of years.)



Our mission trip is less than 6 months away! There is still room to join our core group as we minister to a family in Mexico and plant seeds that we will trust our Lord to water. As a reminder, the mission trip is scheduled for the week of June 25th-29th.

For those who have committed to going, please be looking into securing passports over the next few weeks. That is one item we don't want to forget! I will be investigating the best way to book the flights and will be in touch soon!



High School Students

Although I was in the Jr. High class, I heard your discussions concerning this book are off to a great start! If you missed last week, it will be easy to catch up. Just make sure to read the first two chapters by next Sunday evening.

The book explores how certain teenagers are rebelling against the low expectations our society has for them and are doing "hard things" for the glory of God. Written by teen-agers, this book combats the idea that High School students are on a vacation from responsibility, or that the responsibility we assign them in some cases is quite elementary. The authors provide biblical examples, historical studies along with modern examples demonstrating how teen-agers have the capacity to do "hard things" in serving our Lord.

#believe



Jr. High Students

Our first conference of the year will be here soon! This year, the theme of the conference is "WITH", which at first glance seems pretty basic as it is a very common word. However, it takes on a much deeper, significant meaning when Jesus says in Matthew 28:20, "and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." In this context, in terms of a relationship with Jesus, the word with becomes very beautiful.

Believe will be held here in Springfield over the weekend of March 2nd & 3rd. We usually meet here at the church at 5pm on Friday, eat dinner together, then we head to the conference for the evening session. That night, we crash at our house before heading back to the conference for the morning and afternoon sessions on Saturday. We are back to the church by 4:30pm on Saturday for parents to pick up the kids.

Since the early bird discount expires on January 31st, I will post a sign up sheet on the bulletin board this Sunday. The discounted price is \$59 which increases by \$20 as we get closer to the conference. Twenty dollars saved is twenty dollars earned!

Based on the past conferences, I truly hope all the Junior High Students can find the time to attend this conference. It is a high energy event with awesome worship and teaching. Our group always engages in great discussions over the scripture we study. This year will be no different as we marvel in the promise Jesus made to us in Matthew 28:20. The promise that He is with us and has taken up residence inside us through the Holy Spirit. I pray that all of our relationships with Him will deepen when we ponder that reality.