

# Faith & Family

Connecting the Community to the Christ

# Connect

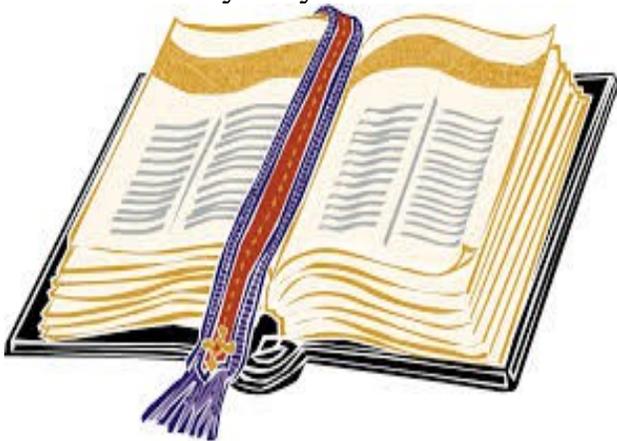
A Ministry of Victory Baptist Church

## “Loving The Lord With All Our Heart”

Pastor Mike Ennis  
Matthew 22:37 (ESV)

<sup>37</sup>And he said to him, “**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.**”

Most Christians would say that they “love the Lord” and some would even go so far as to say they love the Lord with



their whole heart. I believe they are sincere but may not understand what it means to love the Lord with their whole heart.

The first thing that it means is that He has first consideration in all the decisions that we make in life. Life becomes “what does He want” rather

than “what do I want.” Many believers who say that they love the Lord do not allow Him into their daily lives. He is reserved for Sunday mornings and perhaps devotion time, but He is not really considered in our day to day priorities and decisions. The apostle Paul wrote:

2 Corinthians 5:9 (ESV)

<sup>9</sup>So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.

Second, loving the Lord with “all of our heart” means that He is the focus of our attention. This is to me one of the failures of believers that we do not talk about. I call it the sin of distraction. We get caught up in the business of life and focusing on things of a temporal nature and we give the Lord little, if any, attention except during religious times. If He is to receive whole hearted love, we must pay attention to Him first. We cannot let the cares of this world crowd out attention given to Him. He has promised us that if we put Him first, He will take care of the issues of life.

Matthew 6:33 (ESV)

<sup>33</sup>**But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.**

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Mike Ennis – Senior Pastor

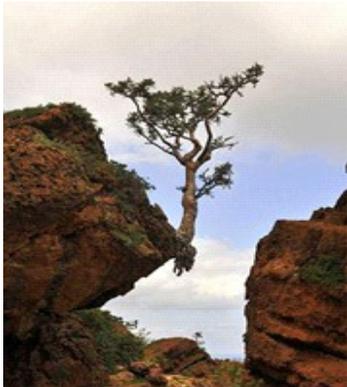
Landon Bagley -Associate Pastor

## Sweet Disposition

by Don Sweet

### *Disembarking!*

I love beautiful photos and enjoy coming up with topics for those images. This one had me



going and I had to hang in there until the appropriate title fit the scene. Many came to mind while viewing this photo, such names as tenacity, stubbornness, strength, persistence and many others.

This scene also reminds me of where America is today, hanging by a thread! The question is why?

Our traditional new years day meal is homemade lasagna. We went overboard this year to assure this the most delicious ever. While consuming it, we noticed something different. After much thought and deliberation, we identified the problem. It wasn't the overload of any particular ingredient; it was the absence of one.

The answer to America's 'why?' is simple. America has removed the main ingredient from her original recipe. America's recipe book is the Bible, the missing ingredient God. God, has been replaced with something called 'change' or 'a better idea'. It's left America with a bitter taste in the people's mouth.

As I consider this photo, I am reminded of those who are surrounded with overwhelming evidence that their existence is nearing finality; they are hanging by less than a thread. Their entire existence has been consumed with rejecting the Lord. They have refused the bread

of life ( John 6:33 **For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world** ) or in drinking of the Living Water. Jhn 4:14 **But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.**

What intelligent person hangs on a cliff and denies his circumstance? What person sees the results of what God has done in others and yet denies the end result? Who can stand by and ignore what has happened to a friend through drugs, or alcohol, or infidelity, or crime and overlooks the outcome? Who is it that can be cognizant and deny what has happened in their own life?

I can't observe this photo and deny that God has held me up and supported me over the years. I know this as fact. I am rooted in His Word and not by my strength, but by His I stand. I am a simple person and what He wants us to know is simple (Eccl 12:13 **Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.**) SIMPLE!

Man is faced daily with disembarking this world. It is not that man is unaware that his demise is coming; it is just not important now; it's a fairy tale, a lie, false teaching etc. When mankind doesn't have to think on a matter, somehow it becomes not a matter at all.

Man writes his own recipe book for living; some interesting, some not. God wrote the only recipe for everlasting life and Christ is the only ingredient. God's treat can be feasted on forever. Thinking on this later may just be that, too late! (2 Cor 6 :2 **behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.**)

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## Seeking Shortcuts

A shortcut is a deviation from an established route that enables one to arrive more quickly at a desired destination. The problem with shortcuts is they often end in disaster.

Many seek a shortcut to JOY & INNER-



PEACE by using alcohol and drugs. Many seek a shortcut to LOVE & SELF-ESTEEM through unrestrained sexual activity. Many seek a shortcut to

PROSPERITY & SUCCESS by lying, cheating and through criminal behavior. We may think these shortcuts will get us to our destination quicker, but such deviations always end in disaster.

God wants us to be fulfilled and happy, but to reach this destination we need to follow the established path He has ordained. God's way is long for a reason – capacity must come before blessing. We often think God is trying to stop us from having fun. This is not true – He is actually trying to lead us to the place where we can experience real JOY, LOVE and BLESSINGS.

God knows that our shortcuts in life inevitably end in disaster (He's been watching the human race for a long time). When we seek shortcuts, we only hurt ourselves in the long run. If we trust in God and follow His established paths (Biblical doctrines) and do our best not to deviate (sin), we will ultimately arrive at a place of true inner-happiness, integrity and self-esteem.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your

ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.(Proverbs 3:5-6)



### Devotions For Kids: Isaac

Genesis 27:18-23,28-29

Isaac and Rebekah got married and had two sons, Esau and Jacob. As time passed, Isaac became old and was blind. It was the custom for a father to speak a blessing on his eldest son. This is called a birthright. So Isaac called Esau and asked him to first go out and hunt for a wild animal and cook it for him.

When Isaac's wife Rebekah heard this, she thought of a plan to trick Isaac into blessing Jacob instead of Esau, because Jacob was her favorite son.

While Esau was out hunting, Rebekah prepared a pot of goat meat. Then she gave Jacob the goatskin to cover his arms because Esau's arms were hairy, while Jacob's arms were smooth.

As Jacob served the food to his father, Isaac asked, "Esau, is it really you, my son? Come here so that I can touch you." Jacob held out his arm covered with the hairy goatskin. When Isaac felt it, he thought it was Esau standing there, and he spoke his blessing, but he was blessing Jacob.

What does it mean to be blessed?

Do you think that Jacob did a bad thing? What Jacob did was not right because he lied to his father and took the special blessing that was meant for Esau.

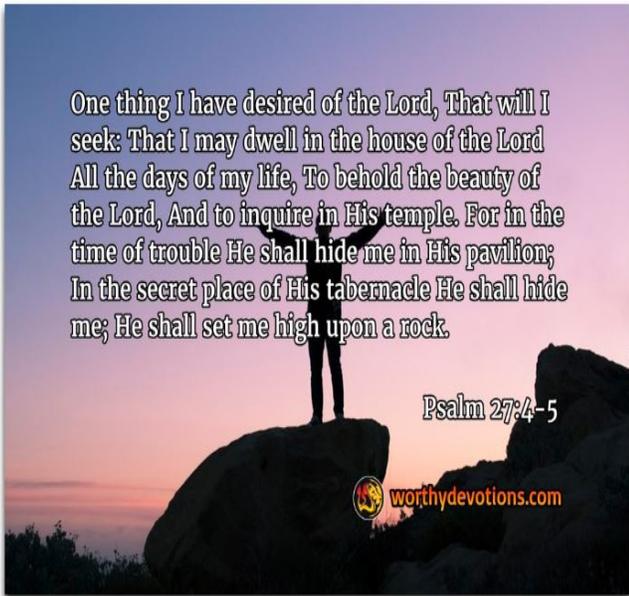
But what is a blessing? One hears the words "bless you" so often that it doesn't seem all that special anyway.

When a father or mother honors the Lord, God special favor is on all their children. This blessing from God doesn't necessarily mean that a child will grow up to live a long and healthy life or become rich, but rather that God will draw the child close to Himself. God will answer the prayers of a parent and bless every son and daughter in the family, not just the eldest son.

## February – March Issue 2019

### IT'S NEVER AS BAD AS IT SEEMS!

**Psalm 27:4-5 One thing I have desired of the Lord, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the Lord, And to inquire in His temple. For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock.**



The world these days is full of bad news, with tensions growing in the Middle East, tensions with North Korea, and nature constantly adding to the chaos with one disaster after another. It's a time of trouble all right, and for us believers, it may sometimes be hard to believe – but it never is as bad as it seems. Let me illustrate with a joke I like to share with my messages.

Way out west (in America, of course), a cowboy is driving down a road, his dog riding in the back of his pickup truck, his faithful horse in the trailer behind. As he takes a curve on the highway he suddenly loses control of the vehicle and has a terrible accident.

Sometime later, a State Police officer comes on the scene. A great lover of animals, the officer's attention is first drawn to the horse. Realizing the serious nature of its injuries, he draws his service revolver and puts the animal out of its misery. Then walking around the accident he finds the dog, also critically wounded, and whining miserably in pain. This grips his heart and he quickly ends the dog's suffering as well. Finally, the police officer locates the cowboy, who has suffered multiple fractures and can barely breathe. “Hey, are you okay?”, he says. The cowboy takes one look at the smoking gun in the trooper's hand and quickly replies, with unexpected energy, “Never felt better!”

We are pilgrims in this dangerous world, which will wound us at times so badly it will seem unbearable – yet we have this promise from God, “in the time of trouble He will hide me”. It's because my real life, my true life is in Him and with Him no matter what happens to me here. So when the world approaches me with a smoking gun, ready to put me out of my misery, I can find a supernatural strength, and simply say, "I never felt better!"

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