



Editor: Donna Mathewson

The Berean News is published monthly by the Berean Bible Students Church, 535 East Maple Street, Lombard, Illinois, 60148. The purpose is to share ideas, thoughts, and news from the Lombard church along with praising the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Berean News will be mailed free of charge to anyone who makes a request in writing. Copies are available in the main lobby. Press deadline for the September issue is due by August 10, 2012; donna.mathewson@comcast.net

Perspective

Free Will

By Larry Urbaniak

This year is an election year. November 6 is election day. Of course long before November each state has a primary election. Here in Illinois in order to vote in the primary the voter must declare himself a Republican or a Democrat. He then receives the ballot only for the party he has declared. We are still free to vote however we wish in November. Even though I do exercise my right to vote even in a primary, I realize that I am not really a Republican or a Democrat. In fact, I am (or should be) a Monarchist.

I am awaiting the coming of my King, Jesus Christ. As much as I appreciate and am thankful for the freedom I have in this country, I certainly look forward to giving it up when the perfect king comes. In reality, as a new-born and hopefully growing Christian, I am working on giving up my free will day by day. The freedom I have is the freedom to turn over my free will to God through Jesus Christ. I must give up my free will to do the will of God.

Sometimes I unfortunately can fool others by the external good works I often do. When my heart condition and spiritual life are at all tainted by self-love or self-centeredness, then I can never fool God. Proverbs 21:2 says, "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts." God sees and knows my heart condition, my motives, my intentions.

I do want to serve God and please Him by

servicing others. Too often, however, my own free will leads me out from under the authority and lordship of Christ my King. One of my inbred, natural ways is the method of comparison. I too often find myself comparing people to others - even comparing how they do things to how I would do them. When I do not give this tendency over to God, it becomes a sin. My freedom to make comparisons is an exercise of my own free will. It shows me that I think my way is the right way. It prevents me from seeing and following God's way which is different from my own way.

Jesus Christ is my King, but only when I claim him as such. God has given me free will. That free will allows me to refuse the Kingship of Christ which I should be learning to live under right now. I must ask and allow God to reveal my impurities to me. Any ambitions, desires, expectations, comparisons, and even hopes that I have are not spiritual if they are not filtered through a kingdom perspective. Psalm 139:23-24 reads, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

May you and I be true Monarchists. May we allow God to try us, to purify us, to show us anything in our hearts or thoughts that is not pleasing to Him. He loved us enough to give us His own son. May we love Him enough to claim His son as our Lord and King - right now!



Beside Still Waters...

Abounding Grace by Donna Mathewson

"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." 2 Corinthians 9:8



Abounding grace; I love that phrase! God's grace is such a precious gift and yet Paul tells us that God is able to make ALL GRACE ABOUND to us! The Greek word for abound in this text means "more than enough, to be left over, make extremely rich, get it done with resources left over." Wow, I want that kind of grace, the kind where there are leftovers! How do we get it is the question. Verse 7 gives us the key: "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." It is the law of generosity. If we are cheerful gift givers, we will taste of this abounding grace! Sow and you shall reap. Give grace and then you will receive grace. What a transforming effect this principle will have in our lives! The more we appreciate the grace that has been bestowed upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior, the easier it will become to bestow grace on others in our lives.

A true understanding of where we would be without Christ and a realization of how undeserving we truly are of all that he has done in our lives helps us to truly appreciate this grace, a grace we are so unworthy to receive and yet so freely given. So live a life of ABOUNDING grace! Give grace freely to those around you. You will find your life filled with riches beyond your wildest dreams!

Father, thank you so much for the grace that flows from your throne. You gave your Son that we might live. We have done nothing to deserve your kindness and yet your grace

abounds to us. Help us to give such grace to all those with whom we have contact in this life. May it be said of us that grace abounds from our hearts, that we might taste of the riches you have in store for us today! In Jesus name Amen.

Amazing Grace

John Newton (1725-1807)

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

T'was Grace that taught my heart to fear.
And Grace, my fears relieved.
How precious did that Grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come;
'Tis Grace that brought me safe thus far
and Grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me.
His word my hope secures.
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.

Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

When we've been here ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun.
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we've first begun.

*Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.*

104th Christian Believer's Conference

Gordon College Campus, Wenham, Massachusetts

August 1-5, 2012

Conference Theme:

"Walking in the Light"

"But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin."

1 John 1:7



Make plans to attend now!

Conference costs have been reduced by half for 2012 for adults & teens
Children are free! For more information go to www.cbconference.com or
contact donna.mathewson@comcast.net



2012 Camp Blessing Schedule

July 15-20 (Sunday - Friday) -- Wausau, WI

Children's Camp (ages 7-12) - Liz Fischer with Director-in-Training Shannon Fischer

July 22-28 (Sunday - Saturday) -- Wausau, WI

Teen Camp (ages 12-18) - Jeff and Melissa Cannon

August 17-19 (Thursday - Sunday) -- Wausau, WI

Adventure Retreat - Mike Fischer

September 21-23, 2012 (Friday - Sunday) -- Wausau, WI

Women's Retreat - Clare Ostwald and Cassidy Pohl

October 5-8, 2012 (Friday - Monday) -- Wausau, WI

19-30's Retreat - Director TBD

October 5-8, 2012 (Friday - Monday) -- Apple Valley, CA

General Retreat - Doug Famous





A Daughter's Heart

Treasures of darkness By Donna Mathewson

A few weeks ago Andy Weeks read Isa 45:3 in his sermon and it really struck a cord with me, "I will give you the treasures of darkness, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who summons you by name." Sometimes the treasures that God has in store for us are buried in the darkness of our experiences. We don't see them because they are buried deep in the darkness beyond our view, but as we seek the Lord in the hard times and we put our trust in Him, we are able to unbury those treasures and it is then that we know without a shadow of a doubt that He is God!

I wonder how often I have missed the buried treasure simply because I was too focused on the circumstances and being consumed by the trial before me. Quite frankly, I wasn't looking for any treasure in the experience. All I wanted was to be done with the suffering.

In the last year or so, the Lord has made me more aware of the necessity of thanksgiving in my life, not just for the good times, but especially in the hard experiences of my life. As I have learned to be thankful for the suffering in my life, God has revealed to me the hidden treasures that I had been missing for so many years. My life has taken on a new joy that I had not experienced before.

Without going into a lot of detail, a little over a year ago I was given a letter from the bank who had foreclosed on the building where I worked that was full of lies and banned me from the property. I had managed the property prior to the foreclosure and so was helping in the transition. I was totally blindsided as I had bent over backward to be helpful, going above and beyond, as all who worked around me would attest to. I was shocked as were all around me. I even had many come to my defense to no avail. I remember reading the letter and then picking up the phone to call the person who had delivered it, he didn't answer (I am so glad on hindsight) because that was when I prayed. God instantly brought to mind the scripture in Matt 5:44 "But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." So right there in my office I

did, I prayed for those in the management company who were telling lies about me, I prayed for the bank VP who I felt hated me for no reason and had been fed a lot of lies. I even wrote them all an email expressing my shock, but letting them know that I was praying for them and that I was still willing to help if they need me, which I did whenever I was contacted with a request or question. Never got a response to that email, but it didn't matter because God had helped me to find the hidden treasure, his overwhelming peace and assurance that I was bringing joy to my Father. In discussions with the lawyer of the firm I worked for, he indicated that I had become the scape goat and that the man doing the persecuting was the bank "pitbull."

Some years ago, the Lord had revealed to me in a study of the "Prodigal Son" that He longed to have ALL his children home and that was why He provided His son as a ransom, so that all His children would be able to come home. This really changed how I think about others, especially those who are unkind to me and mine. If I am to become like Christ, I have to look at them through the eyes of God, that they are His children and He wants them home. Thus my heart was touched that this poor man had to be a "pitbull" everyday...how very sad for him! I began to pray for him in a new light. I was so blessed that I could be a blessing to those with whom I worked, how horrible to have a job where you had to be mean to people everyday in order to keep your job.

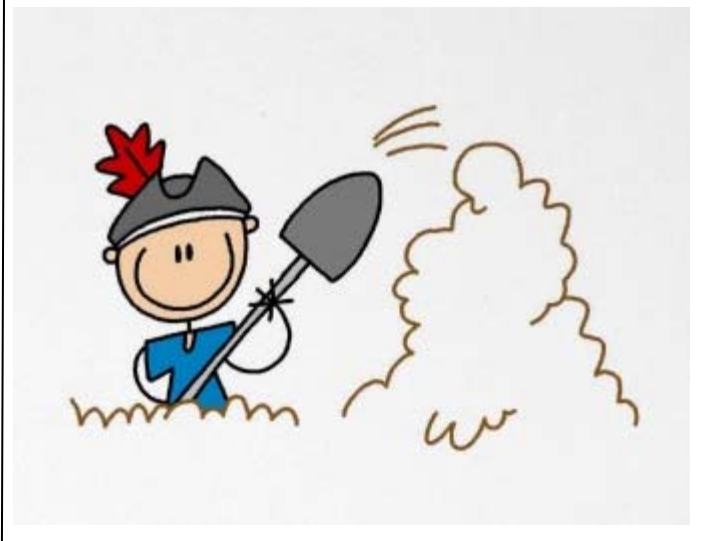
This experience changed me in so many ways. A few years ago, I would not have been able to see beyond the pain of the false attack and I probably would have wallowed in it for a long time. I would have missed the opportunity to find the buried treasures, to know that God has His hand on me and that no matter what crosses my path He is with me and He is in control.

Since that experience a year ago, so much has changed in my life. I worked from home

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for 6 months, which wasn't all that bad! Since that time, God has led me to other employment, at an Autism Foundation where I feel like I am able to get a taste of what it will be like in the Kingdom to really change lives.

In the end, trusting that God knows what He is doing is the only intelligent thing to do. We need to follow Him wherever He takes us, whether the road is easy or hard. After all it is He who knows the best way to get us to the Promised land...don't forget to search for the hidden treasures He had buried along the way!





Ebenezers

Wanderings by Jon Larson

It wasn't that long ago that I'd equate the word "wandering" with the term "waste of time." Of what possible value could there be to just wandering? Later, after reading Deut. 8, it hit me like a ton of bricks that there can be great value in wanderings if we choose to learn and convert the experience to wisdom. Is such a thing even possible? Well, Moses certainly thought so and he should know, having spent 40 years wandering thru the wilderness. After 40 years of wandering, Moses did not believe wandering to be just a waste of time, because there was value in it, if you could learn from it.

Moses writes that as they wandered the wilderness, "God suffered his people to hunger." Okay, but of what possible value is there to being hungry? Well, Moses understood that hunger can bring about the wisdom of humility and obedience, if we choose to learn thru the experience. That's the \$64,000 answer as to why God suffered his people to hunger. As for myself, I've yet to have been even remotely endangered by starvation, or for that matter, even serious hunger. On the other hand, The children of Israel walked "through a great and terrible wilderness with fiery serpents, scorpions, and drought, where there is no water."

Whoa, hunger is one thing, but no water, to boot?! There is a profound difference between hunger and thirst. After going without



"To make a long story short, we're going to be homeless for about forty years."

food and water over an extended period of time, thirst becomes the consuming passion, while hunger seems to become almost trivial. Thirst becomes paramount, and people have literally gone insane in the latter stages of thirst. Therefore, when you're wandering a desert wilderness for 40 years, your first priority becomes water. The children of Israel found their water flowing "out of a rock of flint."

On a personal aside, when I was a kid I remember being totally amazed at water just pouring out of a huge spigot suspended and floating high up in the air. I truly marveled, as I gazed in awe at the sight. Of course, my know-it-all friend brought me back to earth by pointing out to me the clear feeder pipe running straight up the middle of the downward stream which fed the water to the spigot, and also suspended it high up in mid-air. Quite suddenly, I was no longer amazed or in awe of that spigot. However, the rock of flint in the desert wilderness had no hidden pipe feeding it with water. WOW, that rock pouring out water was an honest-to-goodness miracle, which was truly amazing! I continue to stand in awe of that rock of flint, and the One who caused it to gush water in a desert wilderness.

Not only did they get their water out of a rock, their food fell out of the sky. They called it manna from heaven, and they just loved it because they were so hungry. After a while tho, they weren't so hungry and many longed for more variety, and some even began to disparage the manna. Therefore, there's good reason "God suffered his people to hunger," for them and for us. As they stood before the promised land, Moses said, "You shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you these 40 years in the wilderness, to humble you, and to prove you, to know what is in your heart." That's the point, and really, isn't it just a fabulous blessing to know what the point is?

There is a line in verse 4 that has really intrigued me for a long time, "Neither did your feet swell, the whole forty years." WOW, they

Ebenezers continued from page 6

weren't walking around in Air Jordans either! Personally I find this just as amazing as water flowing from a rock, or manna falling from the sky. There has got to be a reason their feet didn't swell, and I think I've finally found it in verse six, "to WALK in the ways of the Lord, and to fear him." Now, that's a path I, too, would love to tread, and I can do it without swollen feet, to boot!

Another line that just bowls me over is in verse 18, "You shall remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that gives you power to get wealth." Now, the question should be, what exactly is wealth? Is it merely money and other things of this world? We shouldn't believe that,

because our true wealth is the treasure which we lay up in heaven. As disciples of Jesus, we are empowered to seek wealth and treasure which is not merely of this world, and it is the Lord our God who gives us the power to get it. Twelve spies were sent into the promised land beyond the Jordan. When they came back, ten spies basically said, "We don't have the power to conquer." As Jesus said, "Oh, thou of little faith." Of course, the other two spies basically said, "Thru God we have the power to conquer," and our guys, Joshua and Caleb, were right on the money! As Jesus said, "Great is your reward in heaven."



Bible Quiz

Bible Foods



- 1.) Who found honey inside the body of a dead lion?
- 2.) Elisha purified a pot of stew that had been poisoned with what?
- 3.) Who served cheese, milk, and veal to three angels that visited him?
- 4.) Who traded his birthright to his brother for some bread and lentil stew?
- 5.) What did John the Baptist eat in the wilderness?
- 6.) What did the widow make for the prophet Elijah?
- 7.) Who woke up under a tree and found an angel had cooked food for him?
- 8.) What type of bird did God provide for Israel in the desert?
- 9.) What did the spies which Moses sent not return with?
- 10.) When his brothers came to buy food, in whose sack did Joseph place his cup?

Answers on the bottom of Page 10

Eric's Epiphanies



LOOKING OUT FOR #1

By Eric Honea

It is universally known and accepted that it is human nature to think about yourself and look out for your own interests. We call this looking out for number one. There is another fact of human nature which is not quite as well known but still observable: When we have the good things we sought we often fail to enjoy the peace that we expected to come with them. Instead we turn our thoughts anxiously to the next challenge or threat.

Jesus taught us that human nature was backwards on both points. He demonstrated that the divine nature which we are to strive for is the exact opposite. On the first point we are to deny the impulse to seek first our own interests. We are to seek the interests of others and the kingdom first. On the second point we are not to worry about tomorrow or the future. We are not to rob ourselves of peace and joy.

Matt 6:28-34 *"And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire,*

We keep a bird feeder filled with various seeds just outside the kitchen window, always hoping to attract beautiful and interesting varieties of birds. However, most mornings I see five plain brown sparrows. I am not disappointed, but instead reminded of Luke 12:4-7 wherein Jesus asks "do not five sparrows sell for two pennies?" Yet, not one of those little sparrows is forgotten in God's sight. I am reassured of God's love for me and his care for all his creatures. "You are worth more than hundreds of sparrows."

Shareen Venning



will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

2 Peter 1:3-4 *"His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."*

Ironically when we follow Jesus' teaching we have looked out for number one far better than our selfish human nature ever could have. Once it has been experienced the divine nature makes human nature look illogical and self destructive. Once we have peace and joy by escaping the corruption of human nature we never want to go back.

Bible Quiz

ANSWERS



1. Samson
2. Wild Gourds
3. Abraham
4. Esau
5. Locusts
6. Bread
7. Elijah
8. Quail
9. Grapes, Pomegranates & Figs
10. Benjamin



Viewpoints

9 Reasons I am a Christian By Dennis Thorfeldt

Creation: The universe didn't just happen to get there. It is finely tuned through its estimated 13.7 billion years of existence to support life on this planet. Tinker with any one of millions of physical laws, such as gravity, and we would not be here. Physicist Paul Davies said, "I have come to believe more and more strongly that the physical universe is put together with an ingenuity so astonishing that I cannot accept it merely as a brute fact."

Beauty: Beethoven's Ninth, a snowflake, the sweet smell of a baby who has been sleeping, and a sunset upon the ocean. And isn't it interesting that we have the capacity, unlike mere animals, to appreciate and be brought to tears before them?

Reliability of Biblical Texts: The New Testament has far more evidence of its source of origin than the handful of existing copies of such ancient works as Homer's *Iliad*. Scholar F. F. Bruce said, "The historicity of Christ is as axiomatic for an unbiased historian as the historicity of Julius Caesar."

Scripture: Unlike other religious texts, the Bible tells it like it is. It gives us the good, the bad, and the ugly of its heroes. Abraham, Jacob, David and Peter are not spared the low points of their lives. Furthermore, scripture's message rings true - it does not sound like a fairy tale or a group of stories made up by their authors for their own benefit. It clearly presents the problem - human depravity and also the solution to our predicament - Christ's atoning death on the cross and his resurrection. It emphasizes what God has done, not what we must do, for our salvation.

Jesus: Christ's life and teachings are unlike and beyond any other person in the history of the world. Napoleon was reported to have said, "I know men and I tell you that Jesus

Christ is no mere man. Between Him and every other person in the world there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creation of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded His empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for Him."

The Trilemma: C. S. Lewis, commenting on Christ's claim of divinity, said: "You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to." He is the Son of God!

Resurrection: When Jesus' tomb was found empty after his crucifixion, his formerly despondent disciples turned the Roman world upside down with the message that Christ had conquered death. They were even willing to die for it. How else can we explain this other than that Christ rose from the dead?

Influence of Christianity: In spite of some pretty terrible incidents perpetrated in the name of Christ, Christianity has had a hugely positive effect throughout history - the emancipation of women, freeing of slaves, civil rights, the establishment of hospitals, orphanages, universities, and other reform movements, to name a few. The relative prosperity and success of the West, including the rise of science, were largely brought about by devout Christians.

My Personal Experience: Finally, as a forgiven sinner, I can testify to an imperfect yet growing sense of God's peace, presence, and influence on my life.





Of Interest...

Attendance

May 13-103

May 19 (May Conv)-142

May 20 (May Conv)-143

May 27-94

June 3-115

June 10-110



Upcoming Speakers & Studies

July 1

Food Pantry

Sermon: Joe Funari

Study: Joe Funari

July 8

Sermon: Andy Weeks

Testimonies: Brian Dunn

July 15

Pot Luck

Sermon: Owen Kindig

Study: Owen Kindig

July 22

Sermon: Larry Urbaniak

Sermonanalysis: Larry Urbaniak

July 29

Sermon: Dennis Thorfeldt

Prayer Meeting: Allan Crawford

August 5

Food Pantry

Sermon: Joe Funari

Testimonies: Jon Larson

August 12

Sermon: Mike Knapp

Lessons From James: Andy Weeks

August 19

Children's Dedication: David Elliott

Lessons from James: Andy Weeks

August 26

Catered Lunch

Sermon: Wayne Urbaniak

Study: Wayne Urbaniak

Sept 2

Food Pantry

Pot Luck

Sermon: Kent Urbaniak

Study: Kent Urbaniak

Mark your Calendars...

July 15—Visiting Speaker, Owen (Dick) Kindig

August 26—Visiting Speaker, Wayne Urbaniak

Sept 2—Visiting Speaker, Kent Urbaniak

Sunday Services

Prayer Meeting- 8:15AM

Worship- 9:00AM

Sermon- 9:30AM

Second Service-10:30-11:30AM

Sunday School-10:15AM

Study/Youth For Truth-10:30AM



Mondays

1st Monday of the Month—Men's Meeting, 6:30PM

Tuesdays

Weekly—Church, 10:30AM

Every Other Tuesday—Church, Nehemiah, 7:00PM

Alternating Tuesdays Beginning again in the Fall—Pioneer Club

Every Other Tuesday—Women's Meeting—Church 12-2PM

Thursdays

Weekly—Women's Meeting—Church, Be Mature (James), 7:00PM

Weekly—Joe Knapp's Home, 6:45PM

