



North Fort Myers Church of the Nazarene Messenger

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Holding Nothing Back

We just gathered together as a church on a Friday night to watch the film, *War Room*. In this incredible story of grace and restoration, a subplot to the movie finds a man, after confessing his sins to GOD and reconciling his relationship with his wife, needing to confess the sin of theft he had been committing for years at his job. He had been secretly siphoning drugs from the samples he handed out to clients, from the pharmaceutical company for which he worked. The Holy Spirit convicted him that although the company had already fired him after learning of some discrepancies in his financial reporting, he needed to go to the head of the company and confess his additional crime. The boss is so overcome by the idea that someone who had already lost their job would show such integrity, knowing he was risking being charged for his crime, that he forgives his larceny, and chooses not to report him to the authorities as long as he pays back the money he had made by selling the drugs.

Many people who would witness this man's initial confession and turning of his life over to Christ, would think it would have been alright if he had not confessed his additional sin to the people who had already fired him for the dishonest dealings that had been already uncovered. After all, some might rationalize, they fired him for being dishonest. Does he really need to open himself up to greater punishment by showing them that he had committed even worse crimes than the company knew?

It shines a light on just how much we trust GOD's grace and how much of it we take for granted. It also begs the question of just how deeply we recognize our need for confession and transformation. As believers in Jesus, are we justified in only confessing our sin to GOD when we've committed the "really big" sins? Or do we only bow in humility before Him when we've acted so badly that we are feeling a greater weight from the Holy Spirit? If that is true for us, is it possible that we aren't really experiencing the convicting power of the Holy Spirit of GOD very much because we have grown so used to ignoring or rationalizing the little compromises in our lives? It is definitely possible to grow so used to ignoring

the Holy Spirit's convicting Voice, that our sensitivity toward Him dims and that Voice grows more and more difficult to distinguish.

When we downplay our sin, don't we also downplay GOD's grace? After all, doesn't a halfhearted confession of sin bring us to a halfhearted love for Christ? If we owe 100% of our salvation to GOD's grace, what could possibly be our motivation for only offering Him 99% of our sins? If grace is the unmerited favor of GOD, and we do nothing to earn it, can we not say that our sin is actually what qualifies us for grace? If we have no sin, we have no need for grace. But since we know that none of us is without sin (Romans 3:10), none of us is without the need of His grace. The greater the sin, the greater the grace. (Luke 7:40-48) The question then becomes, doesn't incredible grace require radical repentance? Why would we – why do we – hold back from GOD?

Ministers are bombarded with the latest statistics for how, why and in what way the church is failing. It can become disheartening; but it would be foolish to ignore all the statistics and not seek what truth GOD would provide through them. One of the latest "shortcomings" being pointed out within the modern church, which must not be ignored, is the lack of repentance being observed regularly within our various churches. In a recent sermon, I made the point that sadly, and much to our great loss, too many believers in Christ only follow Him to the point of discomfort. When our walk of faith begins to cost us more than we wish to give, we too often back up and settle for comfort. It seems too many have adopted the misconception that we can somehow add Jesus to our lives without subtracting sin. We can change our beliefs without changing our behavior. But is it possible for us to have revival without repentance? What would happen in our church if we surrendered 100% to His grace and chose sorrow over comfort, inconvenience over compromise, refused to "*cherish sin in*" our hearts, but chose to make confession our constant companion? I'm pretty sure we would begin to see revival happen. Let's try it and see. Pastor Becky

Birthdays & Anniversaries

03 – Karen Haiflich	20 – Mary Kisner
11 – Stacie Jo Fizer	Tom & Julia Moore*
Lorraine Jungles	Judy Rice
15 – Kitty Baxter	25 – Norma Gruber
17 – Brody Fizer	28 – Gary Rice
19 – Elmer Jones	30 – Marilyn Colter
Betty West	Tim Dillehay



Calendar

6 – Ash Wednesday – Lent Begins
 9 – Block Party @ the Parsonage
Spring Clocks Forward 1 Hour!
 12 & 26 – Busy Hands
 13 – Food Distribution
 14 – Lifeline Family Center Dinner
 Board Meeting 6:30
 30 – Open Mic Night
 31 – Birchfield Brothers/Mark Murphy
 In Concert



Prayer Needs:

Dick & Janet VanSkyver	Phoebe Barr	Craig Smith	Dorothy & Laurel Chapman
Jerry Parker	David Brantley	Nick Kiser	Michael Romano
Ryan Woodby	Dan Bowker	Ida Chaplow	Shery Colie & Family
Paul & Grace Boling	Matthew Morgan	Ardyth Eldridge	Orion Predko
Patrick Lindsey	Eileen Massett	Joseph Groves	Mark & Kim Barr
Louis Perez	Cody Church	Betty Retter	Kenny & Gail Goodman
Ernie Rybold	Regina Williams	Alice Daugherty	Phyllis Obney
Ken Vandelinde	Bonnie Rose	Eileen Jennings	Jerry & Deane Werling
Pearl Buchkoski	Jeff Werling	Kitty Baxter	Country of Ukraine
Marlene Ryan	A Youth Pastor	The Nation of Israel	Unsaved Loved Ones
Our Church Leaders	House of James Ministries		
Our military, our leaders & our nation			



Come join
Busy Hands
 Tuesdays,
 March
 12 & 26
 @ 9:30 AM
 in the
 fellowship
 hall

We need volunteers to help with the distribution of food on Wednesday, March 13, from 4:00 to 6:00 PM, to help with a variety of tasks. In February, we fed over 200 families. Please spread the word to anyone you think could benefit from this special outreach and join us as we partner to help those in need. And once again, thank you for being the hands and feet of Jesus in North Fort Myers.



Harry Chapin Food Bank
 OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA
Fighting Hunger, Feeding Hope



A little reminder to our winter residents





**neighborhood
block
party**

Saturday, March 9
11 AM – 3 PM
at the Parsonage
17600 Williamsburg Drive
North Fort Myers 33917

Food, Fun, Games, Live Band, Bounce House,
and lots and lots of fellowship

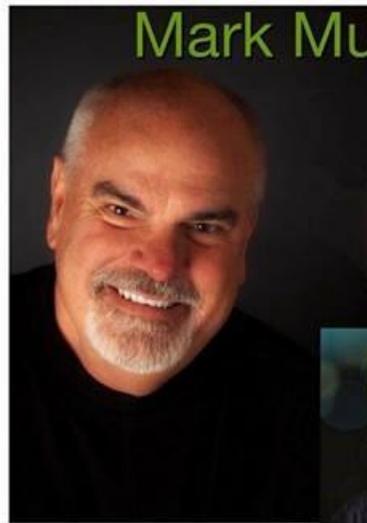
Come meet new friends and get to know our neighbors.
(Sign up sheet in the foyer)

**Don't Miss this Very Special
Event!**

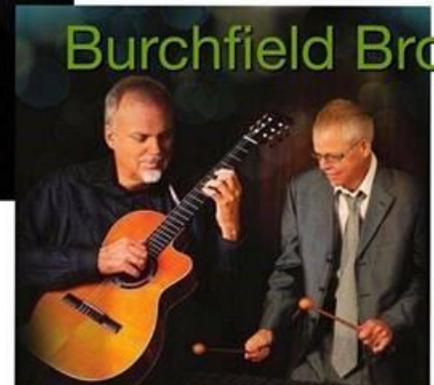
**Mark Murphy & The
Burchfield Brothers
Together in Concert!**

**Sunday, March 31
10:45 AM**

**Invite your friends, neighbors,
family, co-workers and anyone
you meet!**



Mark Murphy



Burchfield Brothers

Join us for
Open Mic Night

Sat., Mar. 30
6:00 PM

Family
Friendly

**Come join
the fun!**

**Tell your friends and
come sing your
favorite tunes.
Everyone is invited!**

Destiny
benefit dinner 2019
...before you saw the light of day, I had holy plans for YOU... Jer 1:5 MSG

 *Lifeline Family Center, Inc.*

w/ Ruth Graham & Windsor Bauder
Thurs., Mar. 14 ~ 6:30 PM

Our LAMBs group has purchased
the tickets and will provide them to the
first 16 people interested.

What about me?

We read in Acts 1:15-26 :

At this time Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren (a gathering of about one hundred and twenty persons was there together), and said, "Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. For he was counted among us and received his share in this ministry." (Now this man acquired a field with the price of his wickedness, and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his intestines gushed out. And it became known to all who were living in Jerusalem; so that in their own language that field was called Hakeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) "For it is written in the book of Psalms, 'Let his homestead be made desolate, And let no one dwell in it'; and, 'Let another man take his office.'

Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us—beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection." So they put forward two men, Joseph called Barsabbas (who was also called Justus), and Matthias. And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." And they drew lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

Most of us have been there. The "school yard pick," it is called. The last to be picked for the team, with words that go something like this, "Alright. I guess you're with us." Makes one feel downright unwanted, doesn't it? It does not happen just on the school yard. When you get to high school and college every year the student body votes on the ones most likely to... and your name was not even on the ballot.

Poor Joseph. He was not just passed over but passed over by God. I am sure it would be difficult not to take that personally. The disciples prayed, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen"(vs.24). And God chose the other guy.

As the disciples congratulated Matthias, have you ever wondered about Joseph? How did he handle this vote? Did he feel jilted, wallow in self-pity, or maybe distance himself from the others? He may have trusted God and cheerfully remained in a supportive roll in the group.

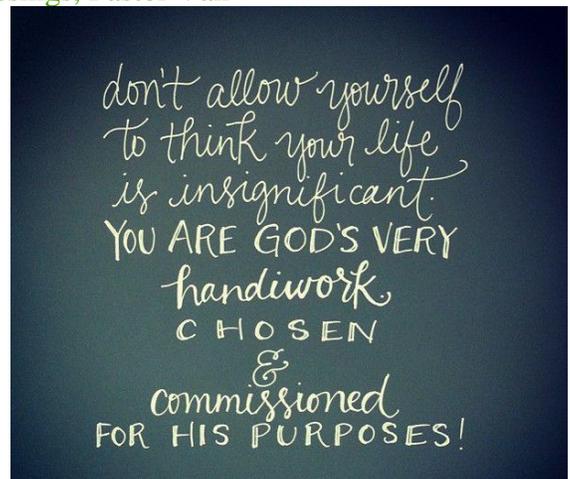
I know which option is best. And I also know which option my human side would want to take: "How embarrassing! If you don't want me, fine. Let's see how you do without me."

That choice might feel better, but the feeling of taking revenge would only last for a little while. Because we all recognize that it's selfish. Trusting God to know best and responding with a cheerful attitude would definitely be the better choice.

Joseph isn't mentioned again in Scripture, so we don't know how he reacted. The question for us, of course, is how do we respond when we're not chosen? Always remember that Jesus' Kingdom always matters more than any temporary success we might enjoy in this life, and may we should joyfully serve in whatever role He selects.

I may have been chosen last but at least I got to play! And, oh what a game it is!

Blessings, Pastor Van



North Fort Myers Church of the
Nazarene
6781 Bayshore Road
North Fort Myers, Florida 33917
239-567-0150
Website: nfmnazarene.com
Facebook: N Ft Myers Naz