

# The Messenger

*N. Ft. Myers Church of the Nazarene*

*A loving, caring, serving community of believers in Jesus*

**July 2021 ~ Volume 12, Issue 2**

## **When It's Hard to Love**

Peter Miller was a pastor who lived and served in Ephrata, PA during the American Revolution. Miller was also a friend to George Washington. Michael Wittman also lived in Ephrata, but did everything he could to publicly criticize and humiliate the pastor. One day, Wittman was arrested for treason and sentenced to death. Peter Miller traveled 70 miles on foot to Philadelphia to plead for the life of the traitor.

General Washington told him, "No, Peter, I cannot grant you the life of your friend."

"My friend!" said the old preacher. "He's the bitterest enemy I have."

"What?" cried Washington. "You've walked 70 miles to save the life of an enemy? That puts the matter in a different light. I'll grant your pardon." And he did.

Peter Miller took Michael Wittman back home to Ephrata, no longer an enemy, but a friend.

It does not matter whether I am the newest believer in Jesus, or have followed Him for most of my life, exhibiting love and kindness to those who hurt me is probably the highest test of my faith. The "gold standard" for what my behavior should be to those who are hard to love comes from our Lord:

*"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others?"*

The questions I must consistently answer are two-fold:

1) Have I acted with bitterness or anger towards someone who has treated me unkindly?

2) Have I been so perfect that I have not also deserved to be treated unkindly?

These questions should be part of my daily meditation, and if the answer to either question demonstrates that I have done

a poor job obeying Jesus' command to love my enemies, I need to confess that as sin and determine that I will choose instead to love.

The next question is how do I follow Christ in difficult and painful relationships? Paul says more than once that one secret is *hope* (Rom 15:4, 12, 13). Followers of Christ have more resources in difficult relationships than unbelievers do because we have a steadfast hope the world does not share. Paul ends Romans 15 with the answer: "*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope*" (Rom. 15:13). Hope in GOD holds the power I need to love those who are hard to love.

What difference does hope make? Paul explains the principle earlier in the letter, where he ties peace, joy, and faith together with hope:

*Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (Rom. 5:1-2)*

Having believed in Jesus, I have an everlasting peace with the just and almighty GOD, peace that gives birth to hope, and hope that makes me the most uncompromisingly joyful person who lives — and someone who is the most persistent in love.

If I truly believe I will soon spend eternity with GOD, how can I justify a few weeks or months (or years) choosing bitterness and anger to rule my life? If I look at the sacrifice of Jesus, suffered at the hands of people who despised Him and who felt justified in their wrath, who He actually forgave in the middle of His torture, how can I justify harboring hurt and anger towards another human being? If I am tired of loving, I must ask for a refilling. To choose to love the unlovable may be the hardest of all the choices I will make in my life. But perhaps the most important. BG

## July Events

- 4 – Independence Day
- 19-23 – Vacation Bible School
- 25 – VBS Program and Luncheon
- 27 – Church Board Meeting



## July Birthdays & Anniversaries

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 10 – Bill & Judi Predko                   | 21 – Joyce Jones (CJ)       |
| 11 – Dave Parker                          | 22 – Harry & Susie Friedman |
| 13 – Lucille Logan                        | 24 – Betty Farmer           |
| 16 – Alice Daughtery<br>Gail Wills        | Richard Loubier             |
| 17 – Bud & Phoebe Barr<br>Rich Ballentine | 28 – Dan Bowker             |
| 20 – Angus Fizer                          |                             |



## Prayer Needs:

- |   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| Bergman Family                                | Eloise Garner       |
| Ronnie Kiser                                  | Woodby Family       |
| June Carsey                                   | Drew Baker          |
| Shelby Pickett                                | Elis Lodge          |
| Rev. Greg Story, D.S.                         | Eileen Massett      |
| Paul Jones                                    | Tom Blakeman        |
| Dorothy Chapman                               | Paul & Grace Boling |
| Mark & Kim Barr                               | Louis Perez         |
| Kenny & Gail Goodman                          | Eileen Jennings     |
| Roof Repairs and Sign                         | Unsaved Loved Ones  |
| Those affected negatively by the Corona Virus |                     |

- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| Patrick Lindsey                        | Phoebe Barr           |
| Lisa Koch                              | Jeffrey Hailey        |
| Greg Atkins                            | Anna Marie Anderson   |
| Martha Wade                            | Cindy Jones' son      |
| Dave Peck                              | Ernie Rybold          |
| Joseph Groves                          | Regina Williams & Fam |
| Lorraine Jungles                       | Laurel Chapman        |
| The Monroe Family                      | Our District Family   |
| Doug Keuther                           | The Church Roof       |
| Youth, Children's, and Worship Leaders |                       |



Tuesday, July 27-6:30 P.M.



**BUSY HANDS**  
Tuesdays at 9:30  
in the Church  
Fellowship  
Hall – Every lady is  
invited to join us for  
devotional time and  
sewing fun!

## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2021

"The Armor of GOD"  
Monday, July 19-Friday, July 23  
6:00-8:30 P.M.

Bible Stories, Crafts, Games, Snacks

VBS Program – Sunday, July 25 10:45 A.M.  
Followed by VBS Luncheon for VBS Staff, Children  
and Parents – Disney Princesses and Superheroes  
will join us – don't miss out on the fun!

