

North Fort Myers Church of the Nazarene Messenger

February, 2020, Volume 10, Issue 10

The Exchange

Jeremiah 2:11 (NASB)

"Has a nation changed gods when they were not gods? But My people have changed their glory for that which does not profit."

Remember Monty Hall and the TV show, *Let's Make a Deal*? How often we watched from our living rooms and den sofas as a contestant who had won some wonderful prize, would inevitably be offered the opportunity to give up their "sure thing" for whatever waited behind a curtain or door, or under a box. So often, the choice would be made to give up what the contestant held in their hand, for something they hoped would be much better. Yet, how often, instead of receiving something better, they found themselves the owner of something so worthless, the audience, along with the contestant, would – with one loud voice – groan, and sitting in our home, we would join that disappointed groan.

Do you imagine the prophet Jeremiah may have voiced the same kind of groan when he was told by GOD to "*go and proclaim*" to his people that they had done the same thing – only on a much weightier scale? They had traded the glory GOD had planned for them to have forever, for something that was not only worthless, but would actually cost them their standing with GOD – something worth everything for something that was completely empty.

"Weighty" is a good word for the significance of what Israel had exchanged. Because the Hebrew word interpreted in the NASB as "*glory*" comes with the connotation of "weightiness" or "copiousness." It is the picture of a nation literally "*obese*" with blessings. A nation who had been so well supplied, so amply provided for, whose needs had been so well met, they could almost be seen as "*fat*" with abundance. Yet Jeremiah is now tasked with showing them they had traded weighty abundance for abject poverty. They had given up provision straight from Heaven's storehouses for empty pantries.

What incredible blessings might we have exchanged, as children of GOD, for deals that are really no deals at all? Have we traded time in prayer or in the Word for extra sleep? Have we traded the gift of time with family for "screen-time?" Have we traded building relationships with neighbors for remaining in the comfort of our home? Have we traded accountability for our actions, for deeply guarded privacy and the seclusion of secret sin? Have we traded living out the call of GOD in our lives as readers, writers, learners, creators – people who are deep thinkers, taking the time to meditate on the Word and bring GOD's Light into our world – people tasked with creating solutions for the issues in our lives and in our world, for checking out of the creative process because it's more fun to watch the latest TV show or play the latest video game?

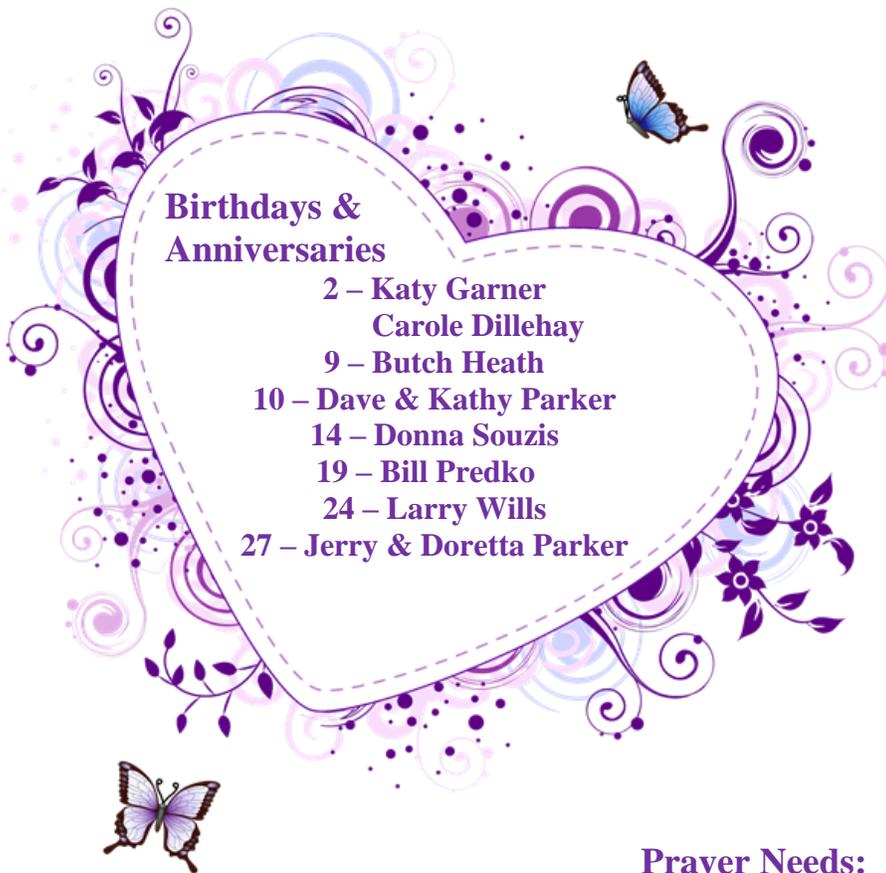
Is it possible we have convinced ourselves that what we are trading is unimportant? Have we bought into the lie that the contribution we would make to this world isn't significant enough to make it worthwhile to purposefully choose to cast aside the frivolous for that which fulfills GOD's best and highest intentions?

The Israelites had literally lived hundreds of years convincing themselves their compromise with holiness and obedience to GOD was so unimportant that they would choose, instead, to bury themselves deeper and deeper in literally worthless pursuits leading to wasted lives ... until their loving Father, had to take steps to show them they had been exchanging abundance for emptiness. What must happen to convince us to stop trading the blessings GOD has in store for us and through us for what might be waiting just behind another curtain?

What must happen for us to hear the "groan" before we find ourselves having exchanged the feast of heaven for an empty table?

Blessings, Pastor Becky





Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 2 – Katy Garner
Carole Dillehay
- 9 – Butch Heath
- 10 – Dave & Kathy Parker
- 14 – Donna Souzis
- 19 – Bill Predko
- 24 – Larry Wills
- 27 – Jerry & Doretta Parker



Calendar

- 2 – The Hyssongs in Concert
- 7 – 8 – Ladies Ministries Yard Sale
- 9 – Church Elections
- 12 – Food Distribution
- 13 – Church Board Meeting
- 15 – Ladies Tea
- 18 – Raisin’ Cane Tour
- 20 – Church Finance Committee Meeting
- 28-March 8 – Work & Witness Trip to Native American Christian Academy



Prayer Needs:

Phoebe Barr
 Ida Chaplow
 Laurel Chapman
 Lori Fillmore
 Sheryl Colie & Family
 Ardyth Eldridge
 Mark & Kim Barr
 Kenny & Gail Goodman
 Children & Teen Depts.
 A Youth Pastor

Tom Blakeman
 Patrick Lindsey
 Judi Predko’s family
 Ernie Rybold
 Orion Predko
 Marlene Ryan
 Louis Perez
 Phyllis Obney
 Eileen Jennings
 Unsaved Loved Ones

Betty Coolie
 Janice O’Lynn
 Eileen Massett
 Paul Jones
 Dorothy Chapman
 Joseph Groves
 Cody Church
 Regina Williams
 Kitty Baxter
 Franklin Graham Tour

Ben Bergman
 Hilda Chaplow
 Mark & Lisa Koch
 Betty Predko
 Paul & Grace Boling
 Lorraine Jungles
 Dave Peck
 Allice Daugherty
 Family of Mark Donnelly

We need volunteers to help with the distribution of food on Wed., Feb. 12, from 4:00 to 6:00 PM, to help with a variety of tasks. 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.

Ladies Ministries Yard Sale
 Friday, February 7 and Saturday, February 8
 8 A.M. – 2 P.M.
 Not too late to bring in your donations.

*Sunday, February 9
 Church Elections*





Ladies Tea

Saturday, Feb. 15
12 Noon

Bring your favorite tea cup
and saucer and join us for a
fun afternoon tea.

Cost \$10

Sign up in the foyer



Friday, February 28 through Saturday, March 7
Sun Valley Native American Christian Academy
Sun Valley, Arizona

We have a team of 12 people going to
work and help make improvements to the school
and to interact with the staff, faculty
and students.

Please be in prayer for the team as they prepare
and as they go, for safety, strength, grace,
and to have the heart of Christ as they minister in
His Name.

If you would like to donate towards this very
special outreach, there is still time to give.

our newly elected
Church Board will
have their first
meeting on Thursday,
February 13 at 6:30
P.M.
and the new Finance
Committee
will have their
first meeting on
Thursday, February
20.



Come tour our farms, see how it's made...
you're going to enjoy our good nature.

Tour cane fields, orange groves, sample the juice, learn
about the process and enjoy a southern lunch.

Tuesday, February 18

Leaving the church at 7:30 A.M.

Returning around 3 and 4 P.M.

Wear your walking shoes.

Praying Always

Nehemiah 1:11 (NASB)

O Lord, I beseech You, may Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant and the prayer of Your servants who delight to revere Your name, and make Your servant successful today and grant him compassion before this man."

I recently read a story about a lady named Aunt Gladys. She was a spirited woman who was very self-sufficient. In the middle of writing an e-mail to her niece, she mentioned she had cut down the old walnut tree behind the garage. The roots had threatened to come up through the concrete and it was time for it to go. So, Aunt Gladys got out a chain saw and cut it down. That might not sound like such a big deal until I read that this chain saw – wielding aunt is 76 years old! To help calm the nerves of her niece she proudly proclaimed in the e-mail that, "I always pray before I tackle a job like that."

Nehemiah knew and understood the power of prayer. He was a butler to the king of Persia while Israel was in exile. News had come to him from the people who had returned to Jerusalem that there was work that needed to be done.

Nehemiah 1:3 (NASB) They said to me, "The remnant there in the province who survived the captivity are in great distress and reproach, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates are burned with fire."

He knew the broken wall and burned gate left the city vulnerable to attack. Nehemiah was compassionate toward his people and wanted to get involved. He also knew that prayer needed to come first, especially since a new king had written a letter to stop the building efforts. We read in Nehemiah 1:5-10 (NASB)

I said, "I beseech You, O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who preserves the covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, let Your ear now be attentive and Your eyes open to hear the prayer of Your servant which I am praying before You now, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel Your servants, confessing the sins of the sons of Israel which we have sinned against You; I and my

father's house have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against You and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses. Remember the word which You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful I will scatter you among the peoples; but if you return to Me and keep My commandments and do them, though those of you who have been scattered were in the most remote part of the heavens, I will gather them from there and will bring them to the place where I have chosen to cause My name to dwell.' They are Your servants and Your people whom You redeemed by Your great power and by Your strong hand.

This brings us to verse 11, our key verse where Nehemiah asked God for help before requesting permission from the king to leave.

Nehemiah 1:11 (NASB)

"O Lord, I beseech You, may Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant and the prayer of Your servants who delight to revere Your name, and make Your servant successful today and grant him compassion before this man." Now I was the cupbearer to the king.

As you read the story, you learn that the wall was built, and the gate repaired. Largely, in response to prayer. Do we make it a habit to cover our work, projects, family, friends, our daily lives, with prayer?

I know you have heard it said many times, "Prayer changes things." So much so that there have been books, college courses, and many, many sermons dedicated to the subject of prayer.

I will close with the words of Paul...*Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NASB)

Blessings and keep praying! Pastor Van



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