



# North Fort Myers Church of the Nazarene Messenger

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## Is the Cross Biting?

Samuel Rutherford, while going through a difficult time of painful suffering, once said, “Praise God for the hammer, the file, and the furnace!” The hammer is a useful and handy tool. If nails need to be driven, nothing works better than a hammer which forces the nail deeper into the wood with each blow. But if the nail had feelings and intelligence, it would tell us another side to the story. To the nail, the hammer is a brutal, relentless master—an enemy who loves to beat it into submission. That is the nail's view of the hammer. The nail might be right, except it is forgetting that both the nail and the hammer are being directed by the workman in whose hand they are held.

The same analogy holds true for the metal that comes under the scraping of the rasp and the heat of the furnace that molds it. The metal has to keep in mind that it and the tools that are shaping it are being directed by the hand of the craftsman who is using them.

If the nail, the hammer, the metal, the rasp and the furnace had the power of reasoning, they would all realize that they are being subjected to and used for change by the one who holds the skill to shape them into the purpose for which only the craftsman understands, even if they do not.

Our heartaches and disappointments are like these tools of creation. They come in all shapes and sizes: an unfulfilled romance, a lingering illness, an untimely death, an unachieved goal, a broken home or marriage, a severed friendship, a wayward and rebellious child, an unexpected medical report, a failing grade at school, a depression that simply won't go away, a habit you can't seem to break. Sometimes heartaches come suddenly, other times, they may take a lifetime to build up. But they still bring pain.

What would we say to the clay in the Hand of the Potter that has begun to resent the direction in which the Potter is taking it? Oftentimes, telling the one coming under the creative process that the bruising and crushing and melting process is designed to reshape – not ruin, seems hollow. The truth seems to fall upon deaf ears – we do not hear because we are concentrating on the “shaping” process through which we are walking. It is then that the further words of Samuel Rutherford might bring the greatest help.

*“If your Lord calls you to suffering, do not be dismayed, for He will provide a deeper portion of Christ in your suffering. The softest pillow will be placed under your head though you must set your bare feet among thorns. Do not be afraid at suffering for Christ, for He has a sweet peace for a sufferer. God has called you to Christ's side, and if the wind is now in His face, you cannot expect to rest on the sheltered side of the hill. You cannot be above your Master who received many an innocent stroke. The greatest temptation out of hell is to live without trials. A pool of standing water will turn stagnant. Faith grows more with the sharp winter storm in its face. Grace withers without adversity. You cannot sneak quietly into heaven without a cross. Crosses form us into His image. They cut away the pieces of our corruption. Lord cut, carve, wound; Lord do anything to perfect Your image in us and make us fit for glory! We need winnowing before we enter the kingdom of God. O what I owe to the file, hammer, and furnace! Why should I be surprised at the plough that makes such deep furrows in my soul? Whatever direction the wind blows, it will blow us to the Lord. His hand will direct us safely to the heavenly shore to find the weight of eternal glory. As we look back to our pains and suffering, we shall see that suffering is not worthy to be compared to our first night's welcome home in heaven. If we could smell of heaven and our country above, our crosses would not bite us. Lay all your loads by faith on Christ, ease yourself, and let Him bear all. He can, He does, and He will bear you. Whether God comes with a rod or a crown, He comes with Himself. ‘Have courage, I am your salvation!’ Welcome, welcome Jesus!”*

If you are feeling bruised, crushed or melted – remember the words to the song:

*“Hold on, my child, joy comes in the morning,  
weeping only lasts for the night.*

*Hold on, my child, joy comes in the morning.*

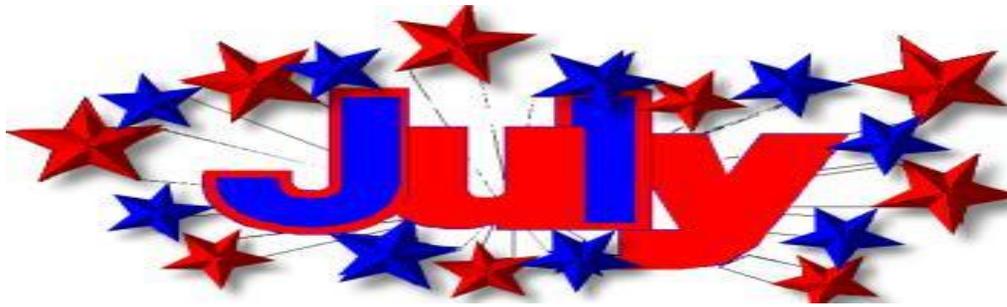
*The darkest hour means dawn is just in sight.”*

Lean into the Master today. Search out His heartbeat. Trust in His plan. He knows what's right for you. Becky

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

10 – Bill & Judi Predko  
 11 – Dave Parker  
 13 – Lucille Logan  
 16 – Alice Daugherty  
 Gail Wills

17 – Bud & Phoebe Barr  
 20 – Angus Fizer  
 22 – Harri & Susi Friedman  
 24 – Richard Loubier  
 28 – Dan Bowker



## Calendar

4 – Independence Day Celebration  
 10 – Food Distribution  
 11 – Church Board Meeting  
 14 – Terrance Lustana  
 Missionary Speaking  
 20 – Open Mic Night  
 22-26 – VBS  
 28 – VBS Program & BBQ  
 Lunch

Wednesday, July 3  
 Prayer around the altar  
 for our nation  
 6:30 – 7:30  
 No Wednesday meal

## Prayer Needs:

Phoebe Barr	Carl Baxter	Steve Cox	Paul Jones
Susie & Jamie Lorenson	Ernie Rybold	Dave Fregeau	Dorothy & Laurel Chapman
Ryan Woodby	Ida Chaplow	Betty Predko	Shery Colie & Family
Paul & Grace Boling	Matthew Morgan	Ardyth Eldridge	Orion Predko
Dave Peck	Eileen Massett	Joseph Groves	Mark & Kim Barr
Louis Perez	Cody Church	Betty Retter	Kenny & Gail Goodman
Children & Teen Depts.	Regina Williams	Alice Daugherty	Phyllis Obney
Eileen Jennings	Kitty Baxter	Nick Kiser	Phillip Lindsey
Marlene Ryan	Our missionaries	A Youth Pastor	Unsaved Loved Ones
The Nation of Israel	Our Church Leaders	House of James Ministries	

Our military, our leaders & our nation

We need volunteers to help with the distribution of food on Wednesday, July 11, 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.



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



# INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION

**Church Fellowship Hall**  
**Thursday, July 4**  
**6 – 8 P.M.**

Hamburgers and Hot Dogs  
 will be served  
 Sign up in the foyer  
 to bring sides  
 Food, Fun, Fellowship, Games

Monday, July 22  
through  
Friday, July 26  
6:00 - 8:30 P.M.



Ages 5 - 11  
PLUS New Teen Class  
Crafts, Bible Stories, Music,  
Snacks, Games  
and a SAFARI FULL OF FUN



**FAMILY Barbecue** Following VBS Program on Sunday

FOR ALL VBS VOLUNTEERS,  
AND  
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WHO ATTEND VBS

(Volunteers sign up in foyer to bring side dishes)

DON'T JUST LAY AROUND THIS SUMMER...

**BE A VBS  
VOLUNTEER!**



## INTERDEPENDENCE

Romans 12:3-8 (NASB)

*For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.*

The 4th of July always reminds us of our FREEDOM as a people. It is a great celebration of independence. Unfortunately, this word-"independence"-has come to mean something that our forefathers never meant it to mean. Today, for too many, it means, "*NO ONE TELLS ME WHAT TO DO, I CAN DO WHATEVER I WANT, & I'M INDEPENDENT.*" To our forefathers however, the idea of INDEPENDENCE was more like INTERDEPENDENCE.

This is also true SPIRITUALLY. One of the reasons American Christianity is in trouble today is because we have a false idea of what it means to be a Christian. We think being a Christian is like being an American ... we are independent. We don't answer to anyone, only GOD, and no one can tell us what to do. **And** attending a church or being a member of one is optional.

The Bible NEVER Teaches that we should be independent! Actually, this is the concept of EVIL! (Live - Backwards) Independent Christians is a contradiction in terms! There is no power in being independent.

A single LOCUST dose little or no harm. But a swarm can destroy many crops in a day. Here at North Ft. Myers Nazarene, we have a prayer chain. When a prayer request is called into the prayer chain, a host of prayer warriors

band together in prayer to call upon the name of Jesus, and the person in need never has to feel alone.

Many years ago, an accomplished organist was giving a concert. (In those days someone had to pump large bellows backstage to provide air for the pipes.) After each selection, the musician received the thunderous applause of a delighted audience. Before his final number, he stood up and said, "I shall now play," and he announced the song title. Sitting down at the console, he adjusted his music and checked the stops. With feet poised over the pedals and hands over the keys, he began with a mighty chord. But the organ remained silent.

Just then a voice was heard from backstage, "Say we!"

As much as some try, not one person is truly a lone wolf, so to speak. As Rubin Welch said in the book by the same title, "We really to need each other." More often than not, by trying to be independent, we actually make matters worse.

The sign in a textile mill read, "**WHEN YOUR THREAD BECOMES TANGLED, CALL THE FOREMAN.**" A young woman was new to the job and her thread became tangled, so she thought, "I'll just straighten this out myself." She tried, but the situation only worsened. Finally, she called the foreman. "I did the best I could," she said. "No, you didn't." replied the foreman, "To do your best, you should have called me."

As children of the one and only true GOD, we are asked to call on Him any time to "untangle" our mess. Paul said, "*My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.*" *Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.*"

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

*Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves.* Romans 15:1

We are called to be interdependent – not independent.  
Blessings Pastor Van



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