



North Fort Myers Church of the Nazarene Messenger

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A Little “Lord of the Rings” Theology

There is a powerful scene at the end of Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, when Frodo, the hobbit who has been charged with returning the “one ring of power” back to its origins, into the fire of Mordor, finally arrives after his painfully, grueling journey. Once he comes face to face with the moment when he must destroy the ring, he finds himself unable to choose that path. He has a terrible struggle, suddenly cherishing this ring, overcome by the power it now has over him.

I confess, as I watched Frodo finally reach Mt. Doom, at the end of three incredibly epic movies (which were released three consecutive Decembers), and I had fully embraced the symbolism between Tolkien’s work and the Gospel, I could not hold back the sobs as Frodo stood on the threshold of finally destroying the ring, but could not bring himself to do it. As his face went from perplexity, to anguish, to pure evil, and he declared, “*The ring is mine,*” and placed it on his finger, my heart was crushed because it felt as though he was powerfully symbolizing the world in which we walk as believers, and I hurt, knowing his fictional struggle was a very real one for too many.

It often seems we are surrounded by people who seemingly long to live lives of peace, but who seek it through every false means possible. They find the peace they seek slowly turning into heartache and chaos, yet cannot seem to bring themselves to give up the chaos in favor of the peace. They look for peace in money, jobs, possessions, relationships, physical and sensual pleasures, mysticisms, false spiritual guides, and even in trying to be “good.” We who know the truth long for them to recognize the emptiness that will eventually overtake and define their lives if they continue to rely on the hollow choices that tie them to this earth and its wasteful offerings.

As we have focused lately on sin and its cost, and as we also focus on being and making disciples of Christ, we long to make clear to the world around us that **there is a peace to be had**. However, as difficult as it may be, we must graciously help the world see that the peace for which they are longing will only come through the decision they will make to reject sin and this world that encourages us to

embrace sin, and feel no sorrow for that choice.

We are near that time of year where we focus on purposefully, joyfully and gratefully celebrating the great price Jesus paid for our peace. However, we are tasked with not only remembering what our Savior did, we are also responsible for helping the world see that His life, death, burial and resurrection are not just occurrences in human history. The sacrifice of Jesus, in leaving His home in heaven, was specifically in order to become the atoning sacrifice for all of mankind. He came to save us from our sin and give us new life in Him. The struggle lies in convincing the “perishing” that there is grace, peace and freedom available that has nothing to do with the emptiness this world wants to tie them to.

As we move forward and become the disciples we should, we want to become more determined and better equipped to lead this stubbornly willful world into the truth and freedom we have found. Sin and its terrible entanglements may appear to have the upper hand. But Easter stands as a reminder to us that the sin which leads to death has been overcome by the Savior. We hold the key to freedom and must learn better all the time how to pass it on to those struggling in the chaos and pain.

The gift of GOD to us, through His Son, is THE answer for this hurting world. He is “*the way, the truth, and the life.*” May we focus this Easter on making certain we are well-prepared to offer this gift to any and every hurting soul struggling to find peace.

I pray that out of the riches of His glory He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to comprehend the length and width and height and depth of His love, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Ephesians 3:16-19

Pastor Becky

Birthdays & Anniversaries

02 – Tammie Joslin
 08 – Perry Souzis
 12 – Dan & Tammie Joslin
 16 – Mary Ellen Steckhan
 20 – Tom Blakeman
 24 – Jim Corle
 27 – Sheryl Colie
 28 – June Franklin
 30 – Richard Colie



Calendar

10 – Food Distribution
 11-13 – District Assembly
 16 – Board Meeting
 14 – Palm Sunday
 21 – EASTER!
 New Speer Family in
 Concert
 All-Church Easter Dinner
 NO PM SERVICE
 28 – The Gideons in AM Service

Prayer Needs:

Dick & Janet VanSkyver
 Jerry Parker
 Ryan Woodby
 Paul & Grace Boling
 Patrick Lindsey
 Louis Perez
 Ernie Rybold
 Ken Vandelinde
 Pearl Buchkoski
 Marlene Ryan
 Our Church Leaders

Phoebe Barr	Dave Peck	Dorothy & Laurel Chapman
David Brantley	Nick Kiser	Michael Romano
Ida Chaplow	Betty Predko	Shery Colie & Family
Matthew Morgan	Ardyth Eldridge	Orion Predko
Eileen Massett	Joseph Groves	Mark & Kim Barr
Cody Church	Betty Retter	Kenny & Gail Goodman
Regina Williams	Alice Daugherty	Phyllis Obney
Bonnie Rose	Eileen Jennings	Kitty Baxter
A Youth Pastor	Our missionaries	Unsaved Loved Ones
The Nation of Israel		
House of James Ministries	Our military, our leaders & our nation	



Sunday, April 28 in our morning worship service, a speaker from the Gideons will be sharing. Please come and support this very special ministry.



The Gideons International



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

We need volunteers to help with the distribution of food on Wednesday, April 10, 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.



46TH ANNUAL SOUTHERN FLORIDA DISTRICT ASSEMBLY

Thursday, April 11 –
Saturday, April 13

@ Palm City New Hope Fellowship
3900 SW Citrus Blvd, Palm City, FL 34990

We are getting ready for another wonderful family gathering of our Southern Florida District team, as we join with our sister churches from Miami to Brandon, and celebrate the work of the Holy Spirit within our District in 2018. We will hear from our District Superintendent, Dr. Brian Wilson, reports from our district leadership team, and will also be privileged to share in the ordination of new elders. Our General Superintendent is once again Dr. David Graves, and we look forward to his direction and leadership over the business of our district.

This year we gather with a focus on testifying to the blessings we have received from the Lord, and the missional call of God to be a blessing to many. This was always God’s plan for His people: That His grace would come to us, on its way to others. Our pastors as well as our elected delegates, Doretta Parker (missionary delegate), Lucille Logan (assembly delegate), and Sheryl Colie (NMI President) will be representing our church at assembly. Please join us in praying for this special event.



D.S., Dr. Brian Wilson



G.S., Dr. David Graves

new SPEER FAMILY



April 21

**In our morning worship service.
This is a great opportunity to invite your
friends, neighbors, co workers and
family for a very special celebration
in honor and praise of our Risen Lord!
See you there!**



ALL-CHURCH EASTER DINNER after New Speer Family Concert – sign up in the foyer!



An Easter Question

Galatians 4:4-5 (NASB)

But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Sources attribute the popular catchphrase “That’s the \$64,000 question,” to a 1940’s CBS radio show called *Take it or Leave it*. Contestants on this show answered increasingly difficult questions as the amount of the prize money doubled with each question.

Just days before his death on the cross, Jesus asked His listeners two “64,000 dollar” questions:

Matthew 22:42 (NASB)

“What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?”

During this Easter season we need to make sure we have the correct answers to these questions. The word of God tells us:

Isaiah 12:2

“Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; For the LORD GOD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation.”

Ephesians 3:9:

to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things;

John 17:22-24

The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

How we think and feel about Who Christ is and His relationship to God the Father, forms how we think and feel about ourselves.

We need to know and understand Ephesians 2:10,
“We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

- *He created each of us with the exact personality and body we would need to fulfill His purpose for our life.*
- *God has equipped us with the strengths, abilities, and talents necessary to do what He planned for us.*
- *The Holy Spirit has given us spiritual gifts with which to serve one another in the church.*
- *Every experience in our life is used by God to equip us for doing His will. Both the pleasant and difficult times shape our character, mature us spiritually, and train us to help others.*

I will wrap this up with one of my favorite scriptures:
2 Peter 1:2-4

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

Peter tells us “His divine power,” not our good works or how often we attend church – God’s divine power – the power to be whom and what God has called you to be – comes directly from the blood spilled for you on the cross on that first Easter morning over 2000 years ago.

“What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?” Christ is the Son of God Who died on a cross to save you and me from our sins! Praise be to God! Have a BLESSED Easter!

Pastor Van

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