



North Fort Myers Church of the Nazarene Messenger

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Perfection

When I was a young bride, and probably unappreciative of the incredible value my mother-in-law would add to my life, I would occasionally make the prideful excuse, “I am just a perfectionist.” I had been raised that if something was not done “perfectly,” then it was not just “not good enough;” it was, in fact, unacceptable. One day, my mother-in-law responded to that excuse with the wise words, “You know what a perfectionist is? It’s just someone who wants everything done their way.” It probably stung a little at the time. But looking back, I recognize that it was a pivotal moment for me. Because she was absolutely right, and the realization of the truth in what she was saying may not have set me free immediately, but it certainly set me on the path towards freedom.

No matter what anyone’s idea of perfection is. As long as it is sprinkled in any way with human thinking, it isn’t **really** perfect, is it? We all apply our own view and our own perspective to the idea of what we think is perfect, and since we are flawed, well ... Therefore, any true perfection can only ever come from the only One Who is the very definition of perfection – GOD. And there is no better time to allow ourselves to focus on the idea of perfection than at Christmas.

In Luke 4:16-21, Jesus entered the synagogue in His hometown, and when He stood up to teach the people, He read Isaiah 61:1:

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners;

If we ever have had the desire to know what GOD looks like, and how He would appear if He were standing in front of us “in the flesh;” and if we ever wondered what it is that He intends to accomplish in us – this is it. And we know this because of Christmas. Because it was through the sending of His Son that GOD came to be “with” us. Emmanuel offered us a picture of Himself through His only Son, and everything about Who He is was displayed when Jesus came.

Jesus was sent to bring the good news and the power of reconciliation to GOD, to meet the needs of the poor and hurting, to comfort those who are brokenhearted, to release people from the bondage of sin, and to reach into every single area of fallenness of our lives – spiritual, physical, emotional, relational – everything that is not perfect, but needs perfecting – and bring GOD’s Kingdom into it.

If we are wondering what GOD wants to accomplish in and through us, we look at Jesus. If we wonder how the Gospel applies to every situation in our lives and how we are supposed to live that out – we look at the practical, hands-on, eye-to-eye, face-to-face, boots-on-the ground (or perhaps, sandals), activity that made up every minute of every day of the ministry of Jesus in this world. We don’t have to wonder.

Perfection Itself arrived for us by way of a smelly stable and hay-filled manger. It walked down dusty roads and sat beside sick-beds. It celebrated at weddings and wept beside graves. It held children in Its arms and laughed at corny jokes. It brought joy where none had existed and value into lives where none had ever been. It touched the untouchable and loved that which had never known love. Perfection lived amongst the worst kind of imperfection, and so do we.

As Christmas dawns once again and we move into a season the world has turned into something it was never meant to be and about something it was never meant to mean, take a moment to contemplate what perfection has come to mean to you. Has it been a goal for your life, your surroundings and the people you have chosen to embrace? Has it become a source of frustration for you because you desire it but have always been made aware of how distant you are from it? Or are you at the place where you recognize that Perfection only has one Source – and that Source came to you for the sole purpose of bringing you good news, bandaging your brokenness, freeing you from your sin, and bringing a peace to your spirit that is the closest thing to perfection you will ever experience on this side of eternity. GOD with us – that is perfection.

Pastor Becky

Birthdays & Anniversaries

01 – James Boye
 05 – Jean Monroe
 10 – Laurie Brooks
 11 – Jay Adams
 17 – Paul Bolling
 Brenda Loubier
 18 – Tim & Carole Dillehay
 19 – Marie Haddad
 Doug Haiflich
 Jerry Parker
 28 – Perry & Donna Souzis
 31 – Nancy Bastin



Calendar

1 – The Kramers in Concert A.M.
 11 – Food Distribution
 15 – All Church Christmas Dinner
 17 – LAMB's Christmas Party
 24 – Candlelight Communion Service
 25 – Christmas Day



Prayer Needs:

Phoebe Barr
 Ida Chaplow
 Peggy & Steve Cecil
 Ryan Woodby
 Sheryl Colie & Family
 Ardyth Eldridge
 Mark & Kim Barr
 Kenny & Gail Goodman
 Children & Teen Depts.
 Patrick Lindsey
 Our missionaries

Tom Blakeman
 Ida Chaplow
 Judi Predko's family
 Ernie Rybold
 Matthew Morgan
 Marlene Ryan
 Louis Perez
 Phyllis Obney
 Eileen Jennings
 A Youth Pastor
 The Nation of Israel

Laurel Chapman
 Janice O'Lynn
 Eileen Massett
 Paul Jones
 Orion Predko
 Joseph Groves
 Cody Church
 Regina Williams
 Kitty Baxter
 Unsaved Loved Ones
 Our Church Leaders

Ben Bergman
 Hilda Chaplow
 Mark & Lisa Koch
 Betty Predko
 Paul & Grace Boling
 Lorraine Jungles
 Dave Peck
 Allice Daugherty
 Dorothy Chapaman

*All Ladies
 are Invited to our*

2019

Lamb's Christmas Party



December 17 – 6:00 P.M.

in the Fellowship Hall

*Bring a fingerfood and
 a \$10 wrapped gift
 (Bring a gift you would
 like to receive yourself.)*

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

*All Church
 Christmas
 Dinner*

Sun., Dec., 15

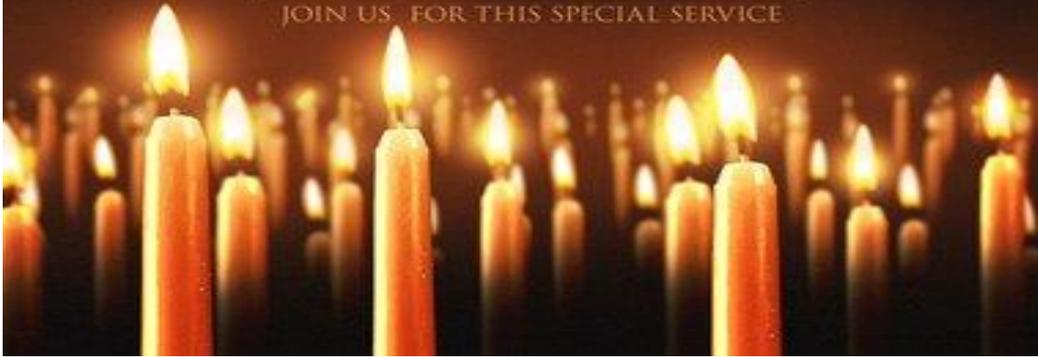


December 24, 6:00 p.m.

CANDLELIGHT

COMMUNION

JOIN US FOR THIS SPECIAL SERVICE



Check out our Winter/Spring Concert Schedule:



THE KRAGUN'S
JANUARY 5



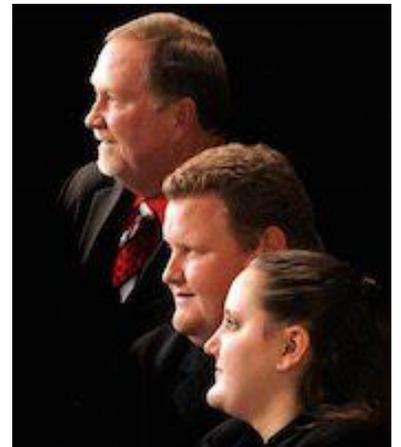
THE BURCHFIELD BROTHERS
JANUARY 19



THE HYSSENGS
FEBRUARY 2



JIM HUTSON
MARCH 15



THE GROVES FAMILY
APRIL 19

The Joy of giving

Luke 2:4-14 (NASB)

⁴ Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, ⁵ in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. ⁶ While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

⁸ In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; ¹¹ for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."



Remember Tickle-Me Elmo? Cabbage Patch Kids? The Furby? What do they have in common? Each rank among the twenty most popular Christmas gifts of all time. Also included on the list are familiar favorites such Monopoly, the Nintendo Game Boy, and Wii. As you well know, the list could go on and on. I wish I had bought a couple of the Tickle-Me Elmos, it would have been a great investment. We all delight in giving gifts at Christmas, but that's nothing compared to GOD's delight in giving the first Christmas gift. This gift came in the form of a baby, born in a Bethlehem manger (LUKE 2:7).

Despite His humble birth, the Child's arrival was proclaimed by an angel who declared, "I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord" (V.10-11). Following this magnificent news, a "heavenly host" appeared, "praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests'" (V.13-14).

Every year we hear this story read, preached on, and if you watch the "Charley Brown Christmas story" (one my personal favorites), you will hear it even again. This Christmas enjoy giving gifts to your loved ones, but never lose sight of the reason for the giving – the spectacular favor of GOD on His creation crystallized in the gift of His own Son to save us from our sin. We give because He gave. May we worship Him in gratitude!

Love and Prayers for a Blessed Christmas,
Pastor Van

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