

'THE REALLY GOOD LIFE'

(Life of Christ Series)

Study of Luke's Gospel

FORWARD UNTIL UPWARD

(The 2019 Vision for CBF)

To tell you the truth, many Christians are rather surprised that we are still here. The world conditions seem so ready for the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ (*Matthew 24:4-8, Luke 21:29-36 & Revelation 6*). Knowing that His actual return to earth (*John 14:1-3, Acts 1:11*) will be preceded by the even more imminent evacuation (the 'rapture') of all believers before 'the 7-year Tribulation' (*1 Corinthians 15:50-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, 1:10 & 5:9*) makes this seeming delay of our Lord more exciting than disappointing. *2 Peter 3:14-15* says: ***"Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things (last days & 2nd coming of Christ), be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation...."***

A few verses before he had revealed the reason why God is being extremely patient in these days before the end of this age: ***'The Lord is not slack concerning His promise... but is longsuffering toward us (all elect believers), not willing that any (any of those He foreknew would be saved) should perish but that all (the 'us' & 'any') should come to repentance'*** (*2 Peter 3:9*).

So how are we to interpret the Lord's longsuffering in these final days before He takes us away prior to the Tribulation period and what are we supposed to do besides *watch and pray* while we wait? It seems clear that there is a single answer to both questions— the purpose of this pause or delay is SALVATION (v 15).

And what are we supposed to do while we eagerly await the call of Christ to the clouds above earth? SALVATION (v 15) is also the answer for how we are to occupy our time in these last days. SALVATION of those He has chosen to be saved before the end is God's reason for not having ended the age yet. And salvation maintenance (sanctification) activity by those of us who have already been saved is to be the heightened focus of our prayers, energy, and monetary expenditures (individually and congregationally) (*Revelation 3:7-13*).

Thus, CBF's primary ministry objectives for 2019 are clearly influenced by the above prophetic philosophy of ministry more than any other single factor. Yes, we do earnestly pray and hope for property and a larger facility where our worship services and restricted ministries can be consolidated and expanded. But as important as this is, it is secondary to the SALVATION of those the Lord wants brought to faith and into the family of God before time runs out on the Church Age.

As God provides and leads, we will take care of the flock of God and the material things He has entrusted to us – but escalation of SALVATION related ministries will tend to drive our vision for 2019 or until the Lord returns. To the leadership of CBF, church growth does not refer to numbers of people or the facilities in which to serve them – it refers to spiritual maturity and fruitfulness of the church family. Those other definitions of growth will happen as God wills but we must focus on discipleship of those who have SALVATION and delivering it to those who don't.

Translated into actual ministry vision, this means that we anticipate God's opening of many doors of opportunity for CBF to tell others about His SALVATION in these last days. Locally, because we are effectively reaching many thousands of unsaved and un-churched people on Guam through radio, cable television, and the internet, we will try to expand and improve these areas this year.

Regarding foreign missions, we want to add new missionaries and missions endeavors to neglected places and difficult regions of the world as much as possible. A missions trip to Myanmar, the Philippines, and India later this year are just the beginning of getting the best news of salvation out while there is still time left before the end comes.

The Rest-Stop of Remembrance

(The Lord's Table – Remember, Refresh, Rededicate)

GPS navigation systems can be very detailed in the information they provide. Often times they will inform drivers of places to dine or refuel or motels along the way. God's Positioning System for Christians informs us that weary travelers need to pull over from the rat race of life every once in a while to spiritually remember Who they are on the way to see, refresh their spiritual strength to continue the journey, and rededicate themselves to letting Christ be in charge of our life all the way home to glory.

At Christ's Bible Fellowship, there are 12 of these spiritual rest-stops on Route AD 2019. The first Sunday of each month of the year is specially set aside to observe the second of two biblical ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ, called communion or the Lord's Table. Baptism after trusting Christ is the first ordinance (*an important command to be obeyed but not a sacrament conveying saving grace*), that demonstrates publicly a believer's unashamed relationship to Jesus as Savior and Lord.

The other Scriptural command (ordinance) is the Lord's Table, where committed Christians 'remember' what Jesus did on the cross and renew their dedication to Him in devotions, holy living and ministry. It is not a continuation of His cross work or a repetition of it - this is a serious false teaching of the Roman Catholic Church (*see Hebrews 10:11-14, 6:6, etc.*). If you know love Jesus and are living for Him the best you can, remember, refresh, and renew at the rest stop of the Lord's Table today.

'Happy New You!'

(Biblical 'New You Resolutions' for 2019)

Luke 2:25-40

Study God's Word Better

(Simeon – Be a faithful, functional member of a specific Bible-teaching ministry like CBF)

“And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: “Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace according to Your word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all peoples; a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel.”

And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”

2:25-35

Share the Gospel Boldly

(Anna – Be more faithful leading others at work, school and neighborhood to faith in Jesus)

“Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity, and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And coming in that instant, she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.”

2:36-38

Settle Down and Be Blessable

(The family of Jesus – Become very faithful in keeping your life simple, spiritual and special)

“So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own city, Nazareth. And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon Him.”

2:39-40