

April 2019 Messenger

FR. MIKE'S CORNER

Please take the time to read the featured article in this edition of *The Messenger*. We are moving toward Holy Week during this month of April. The article, written by Matthew McCullough, is an excerpt from a book cited at the end of the article.

The Bible is a powerful gift given to us by the Holy Spirit and is meant to do far more than serve as a handbook or pattern for doctrine, worship and our historic traditions. As sure as those elements are critical, the Holy Scriptures are ultimately the living Word of God and divinely designed to shape our thinking, our emotions and the entire way we live our lives.

Every human being must face the issue of his or her mortality. As soon as we begin to develop cognitively, we become increasingly aware of the temporary nature of our lives. The Bible makes a big deal of this concern and the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus gives us our only substantive answer and hope to our mortal dilemma.

The season, which we are now observing, culminates with the glories of the resurrection of Jesus. St. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:19 ***If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. St. Paul rests his whole case for the Gospel on the resurrection of Jesus in 1 Corinthians 15.***

I included this article because it helps to explain why the Holy Scriptures make so much of the resurrection of Jesus.

Make sure you inform yourself about the upcoming worship events during the month of April and May in the calendar section of this edition of The Messenger.

May we all embrace the blessed hope of eternal life available to us through Jesus alone as our eternal Priest and King.



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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- April 7-Vestry Meeting
- April 11-Men's Club
- April 14-Palm Sunday
- April 18-Maundy Thursday
- April 19-Good Friday
- April 20-Holy Saturday
- April 21-Easter Sunday
- April 26-Men's Bible Study



LONGING FOR THE ENDLESS FEAST TO COME BY MATTHEW MCCULLOUGH

“Until we’re honest about the pervasive, painful presence of loss throughout our lives, we won’t be drawn in by Jesus and His promise of eternal life. We need to see with the eyes of the heart that we have nothing unless we have Jesus. Everything else is passing away.

Earlier in the chapter, I raised what seems to me a common objection to the Christian focus on eternal life. Sometimes talk of eternal life seems like a distraction from the challenges and oppor-

Loving this life and all its goodness, knowing with truth and honesty that we’re going to lose everything, can actually deepen our love for the life to come.

tunities and obligations of this life.

At best it sounds abstract and otherworldly. At worst it seems escapist, like some sort of excuse to ignore problems of the present. Or, perhaps, a consolation for those too old or sick to have anything left to live for.

I hope by this point it’s clear that this objection is dangerously shortsighted and ironically off the mark. If eternal life sounds otherworldly to you, then *you’re* the one not paying close enough attention to this world and its concerns.

Jesus focuses on eternal life because He is more attuned to what life is like in this world than those who settle for less. In this world everyone loses everything.

Eternal life only seems like a distraction from what you really want or need if you pretend you’re not dying. That’s why the objection is shortsighted. But the objection is also ironic. Jesus’s promise of eternal life is actually the thing that enables true and resilient joy in our experience of good things that don’t last.

When talk of eternal life seems like a distraction, it’s

because we've failed to appreciate the tremendous challenge of loss to any joy we might experience in the present. We've failed to honestly confront the questions raised earlier in this chapter.

How can we enjoy what we have, when we know we're eventually going to lose it?

When we've learned to feel the weight of this question, we're prepared to see the true and wonderful relevance of Jesus's promise for living now. Jesus's language of eternal life, so far from an otherworldly or ascetic distraction from the goodness of this life turns out to be exactly what we need to make the most of our time under the sun.

Jesus's death and resurrection, and His promise that He will give life to us too if we believe in Him, reframe how we experience the transient things of this life. The way to fully taste the sweetness of eternal life is not to pull back from enjoying the good things of this life, but to leverage these good and passing pleasures into longing for the endless feast to come.

Loving this life and all its goodness, knowing with truth and honesty that we're going to lose everything, can actually deepen our love for the life to come.

Jesus's promise of triumph over death, a resurrection to eternal life, is an invitation to fully enjoy the beauty of life in this world, no matter how fleeting. In other words, the way to deal with the painful problem of loss is not to pull back from loving the transient things, but to press further in.

To love them freely for what they are: precious gifts of a Father who loves you, foretastes of glory divine.

-Matthew McCullough, *Remember Death: The Surprising Path to Living Hope* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 141-142.

ADDRESS CHANGES OR CORRECTIONS

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**HAPPY
APRIL
BIRTHDAY**

6-MIKE BENNETT

**12-VALARIE
ANAYA**

**18-FRED KNUT-
SON**

22-CHRIS COX

**29-REBECCA
WEIN**

Easter Sunday-April 21st 9:00AM



As we prepare for a glorious Easter morning, help remember your loved ones with a memorial contribution towards our Easter lilies and flowers.

Please send the names of those whom you wish to have included in the Easter bulletin to Carla no later than Sunday, April 14th. You may also place your request in the collection plate. Come celebrate our risen Lord on Easter and experience the beauty and joy of that wonderful morning.

Renewing our Call to the Great Commission

Plano, Texas—June 17-19

Don't miss your chance to gather with other Anglican leaders from across North America at Assembly this summer. As we celebrate the 10 year anniversary of the Anglican Church in North America, let's learn, plan, and pray together about the next decade.

All attendees will receive special commemorative editions of the new 2019 Book of Common Prayer to mark the occasion.

5 plenary sessions and 30 breakout sessions offer something for everyone.

Learn more and register today at

Disciple2019.com

Would You Help?

After moving pans around in the sanctuary to catch the water from our leaky roof every rainy season, the Vestry decided that we must either fix the roof or purchase a set of new pans as the leak progressively increased.

The repair entailed reconstructing part of the roof and re-shingling the repaired portion. We had to spend \$4,500 out of the general fund for the repair. We are asking for contributions to replenish the general fund, which is budgeted for our monthly operating expenses rather than unexpected maintenance and repairs.

If you are able to help us reimburse our general fund for this project please make your check out to St. John's Anglican Church and note in the "memo" portion of the check that your offering is for "Roof Repair". Your offering is tax deductible and will help us pay for this much needed repair. You can either place your offering in the collection plate or mail it to **St. John's Anglican Church, 308 North D Street, Porterville, CA 93257.**

Thank you for your consideration and help.

For the Vestry,

Fr. Mike

“. . . the secret of the gospel is that we actually do more when we hear less about all we need to do for God and hear more about all that God has already done for us.”

Kevin DeYoung

YOU TOOK MY PARKING SPACE AT CHURCH

This should wake us up. One day, a man went to visit a church. He got there early, parked his car and got out. Another car pulled up near the driver got out and said, "I always park there! You took my place!"

The visitor went inside for Sunday School, found an empty seat and sat down. A young lady from the church approached him and stated, "That's my seat! You took my place!" The visitor was somewhat distressed by this rude welcome, but said nothing.

After Sunday School, the visitor went into the sanctuary and sat down. Another member walked up to him and said, "That's where I always sit! You took my place!" The visitor was even more troubled by this treatment, but still he said nothing.

Later as the congregation was praying for Christ to dwell among them, the visitor stood up, and his appearance began to change. Horrible scars became visible on his hands and on his sandaled feet. Someone from the congregation noticed him and called out, "What happened to you?" The visitor replied, as his hat became a crown of thorns, and a tear fell from his eye, "I took your place."

When you receive this, say a prayer that's all....
This Easter Season let's remember, "Who took our place"

