

Family & Friends..... January 19, 2022

How about some snow to perk things up in January? While watching the snow fall, I got a text message that said "It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas." I had to laugh at that one. The Cardinals had a party in our backyard Saturday morning at the feeders. We enjoy their beautiful red color mixed with the snow that has fallen on the landscape. This made it a sight to behold. A female Cardinal came and sat close to our kitchen window and said hello. We later had a small bird that looked like a House Finch that came and sat on the window sill looking right at me, and then tilted its head from right to left. He was spunky, curious, and cute. The squirrels were up to their usual capers, knocking and chasing each other off the feeders and through the woods. They were so cold they could barely shake their tail in warning to the others to stay away from the seed, where they should not have been anyway. Then a pretty red fox showed up. I said "Hello There" and he hung his head as if he had done something wrong, and I felt bad then. Did you hear about the Sloth in Brazil that was rescued by a man? A man saw him in the road, wrapped a flag around him, picked him up, and then crossed the road and put him in a tree. The Sloth held out his right arm and hand as he held on to the tree with his left hand, and reached out to the man. He wanted to touch the man's hand who saved him. Now that can bring tears to your eyes. We should all be grateful and express our gratitude more often. To God Be the Glory!

Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, rejoice! Philippians 4:4

We are blessed with our visitors each week: Virginia Anderson (Newton, Kansas), Alex Gaw (Searcy), Kelli Homeyer, Karla Winslow (Bella Vista), and David and Sarah Ellison (Fayetteville).

Those on our prayer list this week: We have several surgeries this week: Aaron Sloan (knee surgery) on January 17th. Sue Gartrell on January 19. Doug Klingman's surgery was postponed. We are sad for Alex Thompson in the loss of his cousin Melanie Gordon. Pat Musson has had some problems from her radiation treatment and needs our prayers. Continue to remember and pray for Susan Duffy, Donna Rowland, Marcus Mullins, Lee & Sierra Horton, Sarah, Noel, and Leah Musson, Bob Douthin, Ramin Salimi, Marg Kahler, our missionaries, our military and police force, our country and president, and a cure for the Covid virus.

There will be a potluck supper on January 23 at 5:00 P.M. Meat will be provided. We will be talking about our Care Group restructuring.

Items needed for Fair Haven Children's Home: cookie mix, cereals, pie fillings, egg noodles, and trash bags. Food Pantry: ketchup, mayo, mustard, peanut butter, honey, jelly, salad dressing, hot sauce, taco sauce, canned chicken, tuna, and Spam.

Light up your world with an act of kindness. Love you, stay safe.

Karen

**Bella Vista
Church of Christ**

Highway 71 and County Road 40
989 NW McNelly Road
Bentonville, AR 72712

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Don Butcher.....636-548-0458
Dallas Dobbs.....479-640-49439
Pery Johnson.....913-707-8379
Ray Reiss.....903-908-0203

DEACONS

Mark Bagwell John Bowman Chris Johnson Bryan Busbee Joe Hott Robert Horton
Randall Hunt Harold Phillips Terry Roberts Aaron Sloan Mitchell Whittington

MINISTERS

Jeff Grisham.....479-531-9135
Parker Willis.....615-587-3208
Cory Spruiell.....501-941-4525
Javier & Helmer Rosero.....Bogota, Colombia

LORD'S DAY	8:15 AM
Early Worship	9:30 AM
Bible Class (Livestreamed)	10:30 AM
Worship (Livestreamed)	
EWEDNESDAY	9:45 AM
Ladies' Class	7:00 PM
Bible Classes (Livestreamed)	

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LIVESTREAMING

Our God

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning. Great is Thy faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:22-23).

This beautiful passage sets forth three wonderful, infinite, unending things about our God, upon which all of us are so dependent. Our Father in heaven assures us of His love, His mercies and His faithfulness. In this article we look briefly at the love of God.

The love of the Lord is steadfast . It was out of love that God created the universe and this earth we live on; and it was out of His love that he created man. God's infinite love predates time. Back of everything is the love of God. God loves His children, not because of who they are, but because of who He is. Man needs many things: food, clothing, shelter, medical attention and recognition, just to name a few. But our greatest need is the love of God. His love is unfathomable, beyond our full comprehension. Love is much more than just a characteristic of God; it is His character; His very essence. John defines God for us by saying, "God is love." (1 John 4:8,16).

Many love stories have been told down through the centuries, but by far the greatest love story ever known is the story of God's redemptive grace through His Son, Jesus Christ. This is a story that began immediately following the entrance of sin into the world through Adam and Eve. God gave the ultimate manifestation of His love in offering His Son as our sin offering. "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). "For God so loved the world (you and me) that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16). His love predates any performance on our part. God doesn't say, "I love you if." He says, "I love you, period!" God will always love us, regardless of what



we do, or don't do. Paul wrote, "Neither height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:39). That doesn't mean that He will save us if we reject His offer of grace, but it does mean that He will always love us and stand ready to receive us, if we will accept Him and His offer of salvation through surrender and obedience.

The love of the Lord never ceases. In the beautiful 100th Psalm David wrote: "For the Lord is good and His love endures forever" (Verse 5). A part of His infinite love is His longsuffering, or patience. "The longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah." That waiting, and imploring man to change his ways under the preaching of Noah lasted for one hundred and twenty years. Our God is a God who waits and continues to love, just as the prodigal son's father was waiting and watching for his son to come home, because he still loved him dearly. The apostle Peter assures us, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). If you are not a child of God spiritually, what a promise God gives you! His longsuffering waits. His love for you never ceases.

The love of the Lord cannot be merited or earned, but it can be spurned. The apostle John wrote, "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). One pioneer preacher from a past generation used to close every sermon he preached with these words: "God loved you first, love Him back." In a nutshell, that is to be our response. Again, John adds this explanation, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3). Augustine once wrote, "We fall in love with what God has created instead of with God." A line from an old Bill Gaither song says, "The one who knows you best, loves you the most."

It behooves us all to live this poetry written by George Matheson, which was later set to music in a beautiful hymn:

O love that will not let me go,
I lean my weary soul in thee.
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be."

-CHARLES CASH

From *Lifelines* May 2013

Our Love for God

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23 ESV)

There are countless passages of Scripture that speak of God's love for his creation. So many, in fact, that there should really be no doubt that God loves us. The whole of Scripture testifies of God's steadfast love for us, and of his desire to be with us. The fact that we have the Bible, this collection of documents that reveals God to us, is evidence that he wants us to know him and to have a relationship with him. From creation to the rescue of Noah and his family in the flood narrative, to the call of Abram, to the rescue of Israel from Egypt, to the coming of Jesus, all the way through his crucifixion and resurrection, we are confronted at every turn with the love of God for us.

What about our love for God? As much as we are confronted by God's love for us in Scripture, it also appears that God is often confronted by humanity's lack of love for him. We often get the picture in Scripture of God reaching for people as people continue to move away from him. We rejoice in and celebrate the steadfast love of the Lord that never ceases; yet often our love for him is not nearly as steadfast.

This appears to be one of the great problems Israel throughout the biblical narrative. God loves and rescues Israel from Egyptian bondage, but while he is giving Moses the law by which they are to live, they are at the base of the mountain building a golden calf. Idolatry, which God continually compares to adultery, continues to plague Israel. Over and over we see Israel fail to live up to the confession they were to constantly make:

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)

How could they do that? How can we do that? As much as we wonder about the way in which Israel continued to reject God and give their allegiance to others, we have to admit that we have done the same thing. We have to own up to the fact that from time to time our love for God has not been steadfast. So, what can cause us to behave that way?

There may be several reasons we can think of as to why this could happen. Maybe it is affluence, or our relatively comfortable lives. Maybe it could be the opposite; the trouble we see around us or the trouble we experience could cause us

to doubt God's love and care for us. It could be that the busyness and distractions of daily life draw our attention to other things and we forget the steadfast love of the Lord that never ceases. But, there are some things that we can do to keep our love of God from growing cold.

Worship. The church gathers every week to confess her love for God as a community. It is in worship where we sing praises that tell of our great love for God and remind us of what he has done for us. We gather to participate in communion, that weekly reminder of God's great deliverance at the cost of Jesus. We learn more about him as we study his word, as well as more about what he wants from us in response to that love.

Daily devotionals. The passage from Lamentations says that God's mercies are "new every morning." Shouldn't our commitment to love him, to respond to his love also be remembered every day? Carving out some time each day to spend in communication with God, reading from Scripture, and pouring out our hearts to him in prayer is a great way to be reminded of his love for us.

Loving those around us. Each day we come in contact with various people. We interact with people in various ways and always have the opportunity to love them, to seek their good, the way God continues to love us. Actively loving the people around us helps to remind us of the steadfast love of the Lord.

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23 ESV) Since this is true, shouldn't our love for him be steadfast and unceasing? May God continue to help us respond to his love correctly.

-JEFF GRISHAM

SUNDAY SERVANTS: 1/23/22

First Service

Welcome, Prayer & Scripture	Aaron Sloan	Song Leader	Marquis Elliott
Greeters	Joe Hott, Chris Johnson	Communion Scripture & Prayer	Dallas Dobbs
		Closing Prayer.....	Randall Hunt
		Nursery Workers	Bobette York, Angie Christiano

Second Service

Welcome, Prayer & Scripture.....	Perry Johnson	Song Leader	Mark Bagwell
Greeters	John Bowman, Don Cope	Communion Scripture & Prayer.....	Kirk Franklin
		Closing Prayer.....	Curt LaPorte
Nursery Workers.....	Muriel McSweeney, Abby McSweeney	Van Driver	Janis Thompson

January Worship Coordinators

Worship Coordinator	Mark Tucker	Streaming Coordinator	Abby Willis
Audio Coordinator	Jim Caylor	Video Coordinator	Aaron Bagwell