

Join us as we celebrate only Jesus!



New Life Christian Community

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." 2 Cor 5:17

Sun, January 29, 2023

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Pastoral Ponderings

"You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God." Luke 16:15

When Jesus said these words, He was directing them to the most (publicly) blameless and "esteemed" men in His current culture. They publicly dotted their I's and crossed their T's. They scrupulously observed the Law of God even to the point of tithing from the herbs of their garden. (Matthew 23:23)

But to what end? What drove them to act as they did? In other words what was the pharisees motive in doing so? Well, Jesus tells us what their motive was "*you are those who justify yourselves before men*".

That word "justify" means to be vindicated or found innocent, and in this case in the court of men. Then Jesus goes on to declare "*but God knows your hearts*". Jesus is saying you may be acquitted by your peers, you may fool them into thinking that you are pure in motive and deed, but God doesn't see as man see's, God see's your heart and you are not justified in His sight, but rather stand guilty. This outward façade of righteousness may fool your fellow man and you may be even held up as a virtuous or esteemed. But Jesus goes on to say, "*For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.*" The things that are esteemed, exalted, high, lofty, or prized by men are abominable, detestable, accursed, the equivalent of idolatry before God. Jesus is cutting a straight course with the religious leaders. Just previous to this verse Jesus said that you can't serve both God and money, and the Pharisees who loved money mocked him greatly. Because Jesus had just exposed their sin, and they didn't like it. There was no way that they would be humbled publicly, there is no self-justification or exaltation in that. They would rather condemn God in the flesh (Jesus), mocking Him, rather than be humbled before man and God.

One of the application questions that we have to ask ourselves is, how do we ourselves respond when sin is pointed out in our lives by God's word? Do you and I humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God or try to justify ourselves before men. Are we willing to have our "righteous" reputation diminished before our peers by confessing and forsaking our faults? Or do we stand with the multitudes of the religious from now and ages past that seek to justify themselves before men but

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Pastoral Ponderings cont.

now stand condemned before God? Many times, doing so by attempting to redefine what righteousness looks like. That's what the Pharisees had done, they had taught that personal wealth was a sign of God's favor upon their life and therefore (as their faulty logic goes) the rotten fruit of their covetousness and therefor wealth, was sold to the populace as a sign that they were in right standing before God and therefore blessed monetarily. Jesus cuts to the quick and says to everyone, if you are serving money then you are an idolater and therefore repulsive before God. Not blessed, not in right standing, not even in any place of neutrality, but accursed, in the same standing as those things devoted for destruction when Israel was inheriting the promise land.

There are three points of application I'd like to ask from the words that Jesus spoke.

1. **Are you esteeming what God esteems or are you following the world and its value system?** In other words, who is dictating your values' God by His revealed Word or man?

2. **Do you fear God or man?** Who's praise you seek, and to whom you yield answers this question. Is it affirmation from man and fear from the same, or an unflinching faithfulness to Christ regardless of the temporal consequences knowing that His strength both to save and to judge are not bound in any sense of space, time or power but are eternally boundless.

3. **What's your response?** When you hear the words of our Lord and they find you guilty, do you try to rationalize or justify your faults? Possibly twisting and redefining scripture to sooth your pricked conscience? Or do you in true humility (not trying to be seen by men) turn from the error of your ways and turn to the Lord who bought you, once again to have your path illuminated by His truth and your feet firmly planted on His immovable word. Knowing that your sins have been forgiven, not by your own effort but by His grace through His once for all sacrifice and resurrection from the dead.

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Video Ministry

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Check out New Life Online
newlifechristiancommunity.org

This Week's Schedule of Events

Tues Men's Bible Study– 6:30 am
Tues Young Adult Study– 6:30 pm
Wed Every Man's Battle– 6:00 am
Wed Immerse– 6:15-7:30
Thurs Men's Bible Study– 6:30 am
Thurs Ladies Bible Study– 10:00 am
Thurs Ladies Bible Study– Noon
Thurs Ladies Study– 6:30 pm
Thurs GriefShare– 6:30 pm
(Adults & Youth meet separately)

Meal Teams

2/5 Church Potluck
2/12 Meal Team 3 (Italian)

Contact *Barbara Judkins* if interested
in joining a meal team.

Fellowship Tip for January

Often January is a time for new beginnings, make sure to share with someone this month the "new beginning" you have in Christ by sharing your testimony. Share of your coming to saving faith in Jesus, and by his grace, what He is currently doing each day in your life to draw you to treasure Him above all things and to call you pursue making Him known to others.

January Memory Verse

Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually! ~Psalm 105:4, ESV

Pastoral Eldership Team

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Pastoral Ponderings cont.

Our default position is to adopt the worlds values and to want praise from the same, but God is a Jealous God and has, and is effectually calling His people to forsake the praise and wisdom of man. Instead, we are called to *"not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."* Romans 12:2

Your brother in Christ, *Matt Leko*

Announcements

Hall of Men: Men young and old tonight is Hall of Men @ 6:30pm. It is always a time of conviction and encouragement to walk as men of Christ now in our generation as we hear about the lives of men from the past where Jesus was honored and glorified. There is no meal but your welcome to bring a snack to share.

Potluck Sunday

Reminder Potluck next Sunday!!

If you able, please bring a dish to pass as we break bread together around a good meal.



New Life Connect

"...so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another."

New Life Christian Community has a secure online community designed to engage the body of Christ in between Sundays. If you would like to be part of this online community, please send an email (see emails to the left) to one of the pastors. They would be glad to set you up with an account. All you need is an active email address.

Today's Passage



ACTS

Pastor Tony will be teaching from
the book of Acts.
Our passage for today is Acts chapter 26.

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Sunday service starts at 9:30 am • nlcc.dresser@gmail.com

Join New Life Connect by emailing Pastor Paul at pastorpaul.nlcc@gmail.com