

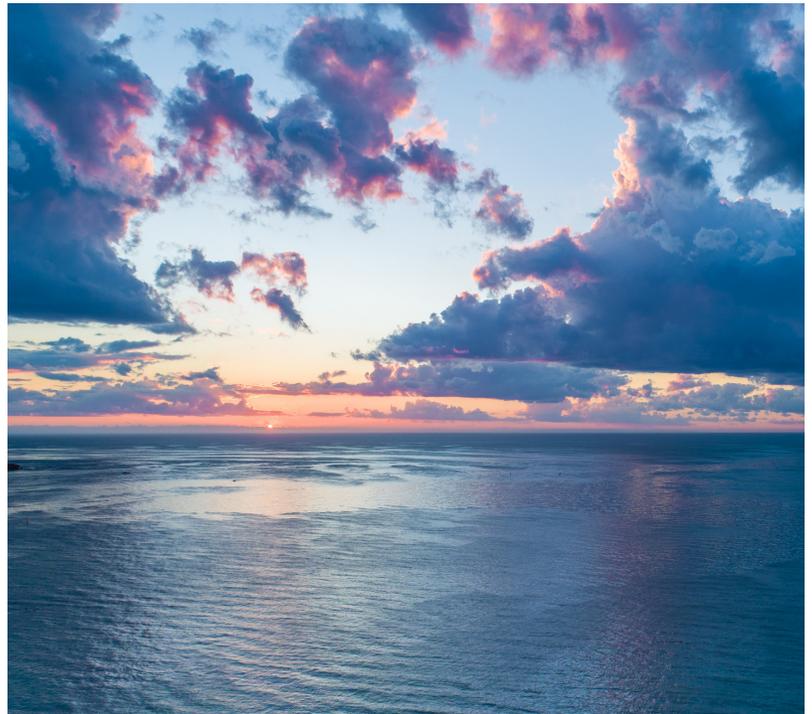
JULY 2021 | VOL. 4

A LIFE OF FAITH

MBC Women's Ministry Monthly Newsletter

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Focus-4



MISSION: *Develop fully devoted followers of Christ who engage God, connect with the family of God, and impact the world around them. (Col. 2:2)*

VISION: *Supply avenues of growth in a relationship with God. Equip and encourage women to develop relationships with one another and to impact those outside our church with the Gospel.*



EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Clothes Collection for OCC (July 1-31)
- Summer Book Club on Tuesday evenings at MBC.
We are reading and discussing Another Gospel? by Alisa Childers.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD CORNER

We will be collecting clothes in July for our shoeboxes. Now is a good time to find fun flip flops, socks, underwear, hats, and summer clothes on clearance.

School supplies are also starting to go on sale. Keep an eye out for bargains and let us know when and where you find them so we can post them on our Facebook pages.

~Susan



LINDA'S MONTHLY RECIPE

Chocolate Mayonnaise Cake (Joe's favorite!)

3 c. flour
1-1/2 c. sugar
2/3 c. unsweetened
cocoa
2-1/4 t. baking powder
1-1/2 t. baking soda
1-1/2 c. mayonnaise
1-1/2 c. water
1-1/2 t. Vanilla

Blend dry ingredients.
Add mayonnaise,
water, and vanilla.

Bake at 350 degrees
for 30 minutes.

Cool and frost with
favorite chocolate
frosting!

Memory Verse of the Month

*Therefore, if anyone is in
Christ, he is a new
creation. The old has
passed away; behold, the
new has come.*

2 Corinthians 5:17

Christ is our Mediator

Written by Brandee Miles

My husband and I have been studying the Trinity and researching differing teachings and heresies on this glorious and mysterious core tenet of the Christian faith. In the process, we reviewed the “Angel of the LORD” that appears only in the Old Testament and vanishes as the pages of the New Testament open. I have always been taught that the Angel of the LORD is the pre-incarnate Christ, a theophany, which is God revealing Himself to men in a visible form (think Abraham’s visitors in Genesis 18:1-22 or Jacob wrestling with God in Genesis 32:22-32).

This is completely different than God adding humanity to Himself as He did in the incarnation. God became a man. He did not appear to be one, He became one so that He might die in our place. He now sits in the throne room of heaven as our mediator and advocate. As mediator, He is the one in the middle between the two parties in order to reconcile them to one another. The Son became man so that He might lay His hand upon us in order to reveal God to us. Christ is also fully God so that He may lay His hand upon God and interpose on man’s behalf.

In studying the Trinity and Christ’s role of mediator (a role only Christ can fulfill), I saw passages in the Old Testament through the lens of Christ always being in that role. Since the fall of man, we have always needed someone to mediate between us and a Holy God. Christ has always been that Mediator. In Exodus 32 and 33, Moses meets with the LORD “face to face” and yet, a few verses later, he will ask to see “God’s face.” Most commentaries suggest that “face to face” simply means it was an intimate communication not a physical interaction. Yet, “face to face” has already been used in other Christophanies (pre-incarnate appearances of Christ) in the pages of scripture as physical (see Genesis 32:22 and Judges 6:22). Exodus 34:5-6 has some interesting grammar that relates to this. It might be missed in some translations because they artificially insert a pronoun. So, I will use the ESV:

And the Lord descended in the cloud and stood there with him as he called upon the name of the Lord. **6** Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in faithfulness and truth;

I heard an Anglican pastor comment on this passage, and he discussed the grammar of the text and Hebrew commentaries. In Hebrew studies, there was a mysterious quality of God from passages such as Psalm 110:1 that conveyed a concept of two Lords. Thus, when reading the above passage in Exodus, one might observe in verse 5 the LORD descended and “stood with” Moses. Yet, the next verse says The LORD passed before him. Are there two LORDs here or just one? We will not know for certain this side of the restoration of all things, but verses like these encourage us to explore the depths of God, especially when I read verses like Hebrews 11:26. Moses “considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.” Moses knew Christ! Moses was present at the transfiguration! He knew him “face to face” as one would talk with a friend.

So, maybe, Christ was the LORD in verse 5, the mediator who stood between Moses and the consuming presence of the Holy LORD God in verse 6. Regardless, Christ has always been our mediator and continues eternally in that role. He never fails, never tires, never waivers and will never cease making intercession on our behalf.

CRAFTS AND KIDS WITH JENEE

Tie-Dye Beach Towels

Summer is here and it's time for swimming, sprinklers, water parks, camps, and slip and slides! Who doesn't need a good personalized towel for the kiddos? And let's be honest, small names written in Sharpie don't always cut it, so how about HUGE BLOCK LETTERS to make sure your son or daughter gets home with the same towel they left with, or so you know who left that wet towel on the floor where they stood? I found the summer project for you, for all who are weary!

Tie-Dye Beach Towel Materials

- spray tie-dye kits
- white beach or bath towels
- lots of duct tape
- really warm water for mixing the tie-dye
- print-out or picture of the color wheel (optional, but this may help you select your colors)

1. Separate your bottles into three categories: primary, secondary, tertiary.
 2. Lay your towel out flat and use your tape to spell out your child's name in large letters. This can be frustrating, but stick with it. It will be fun.... Promise... I hope.
 3. Make sure you have a covered surface (or if you don't mind your grass being a little colorful use that) and begin to mix your tie-dye colors with warm water. You may want to use gloves for this so you are not all the colors of the rainbow!
 4. This is where your color wheel may come in handy. Use it to decide which colors work best beside each other and start spraying!
 5. Be sure to cover your entire towel, and don't worry about the letters. Just keep spraying!
 6. Once you have a mostly dry front, flip the towel over and spray the back.
 7. Let the towel dry completely before you take the tape off. I know you are ready now, but just wait!
 8. Finally, wash your towels separately twice alone in the wash to seal in the colors, and you're done!
- This is a great project to do as a surprise (so you don't have to clean up the mess) or embrace the mess and have the kids help. The spray bottles get pretty messy, but they are an easy way for your kids to participate and also check out the color wheel and why we don't blend every color willy-nilly (it only takes one brown towel to do the trick, unless you have my kid who is super excited about it)!



Have you ever skied or biked on a trail? There's a rule each novice should learn before her first trip. Your focus picks your path. If you stare at a big rock, you will hit it. If you focus on the ditch ahead, you will fall into it. To avoid pain, the wise gal learns to avoid obstacles by picking a clear path with her eyes. Instead of focusing on the obstacles, she focuses on where she wants to go.

Sounds so easy, does it not? Mmhmm.

I've faced this challenge as a mom repeatedly, especially as the mom of a child with special needs. I decide I'm going to accomplish something, but somehow my daughter does not get the memo. I make plans—she needs me. I try to work—she needs me. I try to focus—she needs me. I try to clean up—she makes a giant mess during the night. Rinse and repeat.

It's not always my daughter who needs me. Like everyone else, I have other responsibilities, other people who are important to me, other things that pull at me. It's hard to get it all done and things fall apart.

These past couple of weeks, I've started and restarted a post to continue my series on the Lord's Prayer. Yet, every time I start it, something feels off, something comes up, or sometimes I'm just plain distracted. As I determined to get it done again, I typed and deleted, started and stopped, and just plain despaired. My feeling of failure loomed in front of me: *Why can't I get a simple post done? Why can't I focus? Am I failing you, God, by not getting this done?*

Ugh. Can you relate?

Ten years ago, this perceived failure might have wrecked me, but I've been in counseling and have been learning not to be so hard on myself. So, today, as I faced the reality that my post was not going to happen by this month's deadline, I decided maybe the Lord wanted to teach me something else. I still hope to continue my other series, but today I needed to hear that it's OK not to be perfect. It's OK to take care of my family's needs. It's OK to not be able to think clearly and super-deeply all the time. It's OK not to achieve everything we set out to do.

In the past, I would have been tempted to look at others and compare my life to theirs, seeing my own perceived failings. I'd have heaped condemnation on myself. I'd have focused on my trials rather than on God's grace.

But God has been working on me. Not that I have arrived, but today I see His grace. I see me doing some things well and some things not so well. But above all, I see His GRACE.

Zephaniah 3:17 says, "The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you but will rejoice over you with singing." (NIV) If I'm going to pick my focus, then I can't spend my time comparing myself to others. I can't spend my time condemning myself for not being perfect. None of us are going to be perfect, and thanks to our grace-giving Father in Heaven, none of us have to be perfect. Jesus lived a perfect life for us, so we don't have to. That doesn't mean I go around stomping on God's grace, but it does mean that when things don't go my way or I don't achieve what I wanted, I don't need to spend my time condemning myself, focusing on my shortcomings, or focusing on my trials.

No, instead I can pick my path, focusing on the eternity of freedom to which we are called. I can ponder over the grace-giving God whose love in Jesus will not rebuke me but will instead draw me in. Jesus came to give us life and to give it abundantly. Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

As new creatures, we can put off old thoughts and old patterns of focusing on the negative paths of this world. Instead, we can concentrate on picking our path in the light of our new lives in Christ. When tempted to focus on the messes of today, we can instead choose to focus on the Heavenly home that awaits us in eternity with Jesus Christ.

My sisters, my prayer as I write this is that we can help each other to pick our focus. Instead of looking down at ourselves, let us choose to focus on Jesus who leads with love and grace.