

August 2016



BEACON

to encourage...to inspire...to inform...

The Good Life

The average Christian suffers from a pervasive sense of spiritual malaise. Just about every believer I know feels like they need to be a bit more spiritual, a bit more faithful, a lot more prayerful, and more biblically proficient. On top of this they feel like they should be doing more as a parent, spouse, neighbor and church member. Throw on top of that the downward moral spiral of the world around us, political and social upheaval, and all the guilt associated with wasted time, wasted opportunities, and failures to fight the influences, deceptions and lures of the world, the flesh and the devil and you have a recipe for spiritual depression.

This spiritual depression starts as a low level feeling of spiritual inadequacy and a vague sense that everything isn't quite what it should be. This vague sense grows with we need to do more, but lacks clear direction, resolve and energy to shape that desire to do more and address the guilt educating shortcomings and the vague feeling becomes a heavy weight - a weight of guilt, a sense of failure before God, a sense of shame hovers over our spiritual life. When the guilt grows to be intolerable we throw ourselves into unrealistic self-improvement plans and unattainable spiritual goals leaving us with an increased sense of failure before God and others. As we continue to wrestle with this sense of inadequacy we can fall either into legalistic diligence (the room of good intentions - see the book *The Cure* for details) or we simply give in and throw our hands up in resignation to the weakness of the flesh and the influence of the world and live a defeated Christian life. So what hope is there for us? Christ! He is our Hope and Salvation:

Paul writes to Titus, his protégé, and church planter on the Island of Crete:

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,¹³ waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our

great God and Savior Jesus Christ,¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. Titus 2:11-14

The grace of God has appeared - Jesus came and completed all that was required of us, in Him we are fully acceptable to the Father, fully loved, fully secure. We are a delight to our Father in heaven, saved from the guilt and punishment of our sin; saved from the power and influence of sin, saved from the futility of this fallen world and delivered into the eternal blessed Kingdom of our Father - and this truth, this bedrock reality - That God's love for us was so great that He gave his Son to redeem us from all lawlessness, to purify us to be His own beloved people - teaches us to delight in doing good (zealous for good works) and renounce ungodliness, fleshly, worldly pleasures, the schemes of the evil one, and all things that would pull us down and do us in. We not only have this truth that teaches us to renounce, and gives us the power, from within (the Holy Spirit) to do good, but vision of the good life to keep our hearts firm and our hopes high.

Jesus told us that he came to bring us life and life that is really life - (John 10:10) life in the fullest - Life in abundance - the good life! Do you feel like you are living life before God to the fullest? Is your life joyfully self-controlled, humbly upright, and winsomely godly? These attributes (from Titus 2) and their adverbs (my addition) are crucial in our calling as Christ's ambassadors, because we are to live like that - joyfully self-controlled, humbly upright, and winsomely godly - before an ever-critical unbelieving world - this present evil age.

This joyfully self-controlled, humbly upright, and winsomely godly life is life that is really living. It's the good life. Rewarding, encouraging, filled with great times, great experiences, great love, great laughter, great sorrow, great struggles but through all the good, the bad and ugly we have an ever increasing awareness of and a love for a great God who with a great love for us, is holding us in His arms.

Over the next several months I'm going to be writing about the "Good Life". It begins with a growing understanding of the grace of God (Titus 2:11) and it works its way out into practical lessons of renouncing evil and living well.


My prayer for you is that you would read and re-read, every day - once twice even three times a day - the passion narratives of our savior. (see below)

As you read think about the Love that God has for you to send his Son to die in your place, and redeem you from this present evil age to be his very own special possession:

I am asking our Heavenly Father, by the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,¹⁰ so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.¹¹ May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy,¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you^[e] to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 1:9-14

Pastor Todd



American Red Cross

**The need is constant.
The gratification is instant.**

Safe Harbor will be hosting another blood drive on Friday, August 12th, from 10am-4pm. If you have given in the past, or would like to be a first-time donator, please call Karen in the church office, or go directly to the website and follow the prompts: www.redcrossblood.org.

All giving donors receive a free iced coffee and donut from DD, along with a \$5 gift code to spend at Amazon.com.

Men's Breakfast

Saturday, August 13th at 8am at the Hilton Garden Inn in Grasonville.

Grab some breakfast or coffee, and come along to the meeting room for a time of fellowship. The speaker for July will be Jonathan Soistman.



Get ready.....get set.....grow!!

Safe Harbor is hosting Olympion VBS August 1st-5th. At Olympion, Coaches challenge kids to join God's Team and run the Race of Faith with wholehearted obedience to God.

It's not too late to register your child—open to ages K-5th grade. Just come early on Monday morning, or any day of the week.

VBS Reachout Adventures



SAFE HARBOR WEBSITE: If you would like to have a church related ministry, activity, or announcement placed on the church website (www.safeharborpca.org), please sent the text and documents to: jackperdue@gmail.com. Begin the email subject line with "Safe Harbor" so that it will be directed properly. Questions and constructive suggestions regarding the website are always welcomed.



Food of the month:
Canned Fruit

~ **The Chesterwye Picnic**, held July 19th, was well attended and a big success. Christian was our DJ again, and his youth group were great, interacting with our friends at the Center.

Thanks to everyone who helped made this event possible: to those that provided pasta salads for the picnic, the ladies that came to serve and your prayers.

~**Haven Ministries Emergency Food Pantry** - provides food for about 85 to 95 families each month. It's new day is the 3rd Friday of each month, 5:30-7pm. This month's food item needed is **Canned Fruit**. **If you'd like to volunteer to help set-up and, or break down on pantry days, call Sandi Wiscott 410-739-7859.**

~**Run 4 Shelter Half Marathon 10k & 5k**- will be Haven Ministries biggest fund raiser of the year, being held on September 10, 2016. Dinner for Safe Harbor's team Amazing Gracers is set for September 9th. If you need any information about the race or ways to volunteer, stop by our table after church or call Sandi Wiscott.

~ **Haven Ministries annual Artisan Bazaar** will be held on November 12th this year. Artisan's applications are still being taken.

~**Bountiful Blessings** Donations are always needed for this much needed outreach for families that have fallen on hard times. If you would like to make donations to this outreach or if you are interested in volunteering with this outreach, please call Stacie McGinnes at 410-827-0618.

~ **The Christian Community Center** Tom Holman who runs the center struggles to have school supplies for the children whose parents can't afford to buy them. There are about 50 children that depend on the center for their supplies though out the year. The list of supplies needed can be picked up at our table in the narthex and printed on the next page also.

Our next meeting will be on **Tuesday August 9th at 6pm at the church.** If you feel led to serve, come join, us and pick the outreach that you'd like to help with.

"There is no small service to GOD: it all matters.
~ Rick Warre

Safe Harbor's
ANNUAL FAMILY



at Tuckahoe State Park

Sunday, August 28th, 2016

12:00 - 5:00 PM

Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, and Lemonade will be provided.

Please bring:

A-L—Dessert

M-Z—Salad, side or appetizer

Bring Lawn chairs (optional)

For Fun:

volleyball, water balloon toss, football, sack races, dodge ball, tug-of-war, corn hole & canoes

We will be playing BINGO again this year! We need cake donations for this. Please contact the church office if you can donate.



Youth Corner

For the rest of the summer youth events, contact the office for a list, or check out the website.

NEW

Harpers Ferry Rafting trip for all youth, college group and families.

Saturday, August 20th—watch for more info on costs.

Contact Laura in the church office if you would like to go.

SAVE THE DATE

The annual Safe Harbor Golf Tournament will be held on September 17 at Blue Heron Golf Course.

Registration will begin in early August



2016 Latin Camp

August 1st-5th, 2016 – 12-4pm

Do you:

- want your child to learn Latin?
- want to bring your child up to speed for a new year of Latin in school?

Then sign up for Latin Camp! This camp is for students in 3rd-8th grade. No previous Latin experience is required! Camp will be held at Lighthouse Christian Academy at Safe Harbor Presbyterian Church, directly following Vacation Bible School. The address is as follows:

931 Love Point Road

Stevensville, MD 21666

Registration deadline: July 25th

Cost: \$135 + \$15 for supplies

Space is limited so sign up today!

Email Abigail Williams if you are interested in Latin Camp:

a.williams@lccademy.org

Note: If you are sending your child to Safe Harbor's VBS, please send a lunch with your child each day.

From the Assistant Pastor....

Title: "Growing in grace is a matter of the heart"

"Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." Colossians 3:16-17

This past week at our Thursday morning men's study, one man said that the men's study had helped him more in his Christian walk than anything other ministry of the church. He said Sunday worship, sermons, and other ministries have blessed him, but this small fellowship on Thursday morning had made the greatest impact for Christ in his life.

What an encouraging statement about the power of life-on-life small groups to help us grow in grace as we spur each other on through the Word, prayer, fellowship, and praise!

This comment got me thinking about the nature of discipleship – how does God actually grow His people in grace?

Let's make this personal: How has the Lord grown you in His grace?

As I ponder this question, I realize how much God has taught me about myself over the years. When I was in college, I thought sanctification primarily happened by information transfer because I was (and still am) intellectually-wired.

I remember sharing my frustration with a Christian friend about non-believers' failure to seek the truth about God, study the best case for Christianity, and subject their own faulty worldview to criticism.

My friend, much wiser than I, asked: "Do you really think these people don't believe because they haven't read the best arguments?"

I had to admit he was probably right.

He then stated the heart of the problem: "The reason people don't believe is because they love other things."

In other words, the heart of the problem is the problem of the heart.

How true this is not only for unbelievers who "suppress the truth by their wickedness (Rom. 1:18)," but it is also true of believers, whose new natures in Christ engage in a moment-by-moment battle with the false desires of the

flesh.

So, how did one man's comment in a men's study lead to the matter of the heart?

Because we need to re-calibrate our understanding of human beings as "thinking things" who grow in the faith by information transfer to one that acknowledges that "we are what we love," and the role our desires and affections play in shaping our hearts after the image of Christ.

In his excellent book, "You Are What You Love," Christian philosopher James K. A. Smith tells us:

"To be human is to be for something, directed toward something, oriented toward something. To be human is to be on the move, pursuing something, after something. We are like existential sharks: we have to move to live. We are not just static containers for ideas; we are dynamic creatures directed toward some end (p. 8)."

So, another personal question: What is your end?

What is your vision of the good life?

What does human flourishing look like to you?

What loves motivate your way of life?

The Lord Jesus asked such questions of people.

When Andrew and Peter begin to follow Jesus during the ministry of John the Baptist, Jesus simply asks them: "What do you want (Jn. 1:38)?"

The Lord asks Peter during his reinstatement: "Do you love Me (Jn. 21:16)?"

And the wisdom of Proverbs tells us: "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life (Prov. 4:23)."

Of course, knowledge matters greatly in the Christian life (See II Cor. 10:5; Rom. 12:2; Ps. 1:2 for starters), but modern Christianity has often been guilty of neglecting the heart, desires, and affections that drive our ways of life toward our vision of the good life.

Because human beings are wired by God as hungering and thirsting creatures whose "hearts are restless until they rest in Thee (St. Augustine, "Confessions," 1.1.1)," discipleship is fundamentally a matter of the heart.

Read again the verse at the top of this essay from Colossians 3.

Notice how God grows His people in grace here: letting God's word dwell in us, teaching one another God's truth and warning each other of spiritual danger, praising God together for what He's done in our lives, praying, and



giving thanks together. This is how we “put on” Christ and “put off” the flesh mentioned earlier in chapter 3.

What happens in a small group can't be reduced to a mere information download (otherwise, wouldn't sanctification simply be a matter of privately reading books?), but is a sacred place where other lives bump up against our own, as the Holy Spirit works through His Word, mutual challenge, prayer, and the joys and support of Christian fellowship and service to shape and mold His people's hearts to love the things He loves.

Small group ministry, or “Life Groups” as we call them at Safe Harbor, are sacred communities composed of four biblical elements: study, prayer, fellowship, and service.

And as I meditated on what goes on during men's study, I saw all these elements of Colossians 3: we dive into God's word together, meditate on it, encourage and correct one another, share life and fellowship, serve needs of the church when called upon, pray, and praise God together.

Life Groups help us move beyond the sanctification by information transfer model to a more biblical model that acknowledges the heart of the problem as the problem of the heart and provides God-given resources and Spirit-inspired practices (study, prayer, fellowship, and service in community) that God uses to help us grow!

After hearing this comment this week, my prayer and hope is that every single member and regular attender of Safe Harbor would be a vital part of a Life Group. My heart was warmed this week to hear this testimony of God's grace in one man's life, and I can't stomach the idea of any of you missing out on watching God grow you in grace, to love what He loves, to want what He wants, and to desire what He desires to the glory of God!

We continue to work prayerfully to start new groups, invite new folks in, and to strengthen and encourage existing groups for greater spiritual impact. May the Lord continue to bless our Life Groups to His glory and our joy in Him!

Please contact Pastor Tony at the church (410.604.1700) or by email (tony@safeharborpca.org) for more information on joining a Life Group or if you are interested in discussing hosting or leading one!

Pastor Tony

School Supplies for the children of Baltimore
Christian Community Center...

2" binders

Back packs

Lunch boxes

Loose leaf paper

Glue sticks

Colored pencils

Composition books

Blunt nose scissors

Pencil boxes

Spiral notebooks

Crayons

Pencils

Folders

Thank you for anything you can give.

All donations can be put on the Faith with Feet table in the church narthex.

WOMEN'S FALL RETREAT



Safe Harbor will be joining the regional conference in Philadelphia this fall for our annual retreat!

Since 1989, the PCA has organized conferences specifically for women. Since 2006, CDM has coordinated several international women's conferences. This year, however, the conference may be closer to home. Rather than one, larger gathering, the 2016 Transformed Conference will be held by seven different churches across the country, and in Canada. CDM anticipates hosting 2,500 PCA women across the locations.

The purpose of the regional Transformed conferences is to provide an accessible (geographically, spiritually, financially, generationally, and ethnically) opportunity to encourage and equip all the women of the PCA. CDM's goal is to utilize and build up women's ministry leadership at the local and regional level.

Women of all ages are invited to join us as we seek to be Transformed through studying Romans 11:33-12:2 together.

The Philadelphia location of Transformed 2016 will be held in Bryn Mawr, PA! Our keynote speaker will be Melissa Kruger, author of *The Envy of Eve: Finding Contentment in a Covetous World* (Christian Focus, 2012) and *Walking with God in the Season of Motherhood* (WaterBrook/Multnomah, 2015). There are 9 additional women who will be speaking throughout the weekend!

Early Registration (by August 19): \$75 each

Early Registration for High School and College Students (by August 19): \$40

Regular Registration (August 20-September 16): \$100 each

Regular Registration for High School and College Students (August 20-September 16): \$50

Pre-Conference Trainings: \$25 each

(Hotel rooms are additional cost)

Please contact Laura Pyle in the church office for more information or go to this link:

[http://www.pcacdm.org/transformed2016/transformed-philadelphia/#1452614249480-](http://www.pcacdm.org/transformed2016/transformed-philadelphia/#1452614249480-3633807b-e5c3)

[3633807b-e5c3](http://www.pcacdm.org/transformed2016/transformed-philadelphia/#1452614249480-3633807b-e5c3)