



WEST SIDE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Sept. 19th

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Cheap Grace

by Tim Tripp

I had a mantra with my kids as they were growing up. I wanted it to be in their minds and to surface every time they were tempted to wrong. My statement went like this: "Our life together on earth is just not long enough. My goal is for all of us to make it to heaven so that we can be together forever." I realize now as I look at it that the statement was made with good intent but it was also the wrong message, or at best an incomplete message.

In my underdeveloped theology, I taught my children as a core family value to live their lives so that they could make it to heaven. What I didn't realize then was that I inadvertently taught them that being good enough to barely squeeze in through the closing gate was acceptable. I think it also taught them that some sin was okay. I think that when temptation was difficult it offered the excuse that it is fine to live with sin in your life if you get it right in the end. It may have led to the belief that God's grace will cover you for a season of sowing the "wild oats" as long as you follow the script of the prodigal son and eventually come home.

I think my statement was also unbiblical. Nowhere in scripture does it indicate that the goal of the Christian life is going to heaven. Nowhere is there an indication that a believer must be just good enough between baptism and death to warrant the title "good and faithful servant." Nowhere in scripture does it allow for sin and worldliness to willingly remain a part of the Christian life so long as they 'get it right in the end.'

My statement reeks of what Dietrich Bonhoeffer called "cheap grace." He describes cheap grace as the *"preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate."* (The Cost of Discipleship, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 1937, Copyright in English, 1959, pgs. 44-45.)

Bonhoeffer contrasted cheap grace with "costly grace." Costly grace, he says, is the treasure in a field and the pearl of great price of which a man will exchange everything he has to obtain it. Costly grace requires humility, sacrifice and surrender. The sacrifice required to cover mankind with grace was the life of the Son of God, Jesus himself. That was very costly indeed. Is it acceptable that what cost him so much should cost us nothing? Yes, his grace is offered freely but once received in faith it should motivate complete obedience.

There is no doubt that heaven is where we all want to be when this life is over and that Jesus opened the way to heaven for us on the cross. However, he is the way to the Father and his path was one of suffering and cost. Heaven was never the goal of the Christian life. Discipleship is the goal. Following him and being faithful in the challenging times is the objective. Heaven is the reward for the faithful. Those who walk the path of discipleship and sacrifice will be rewarded with eternity.

I've changed my message and my challenge to my family. I still want us to be in heaven together but the goal here is for all of us to live a life of discipleship and have an impact on the community around us for the Kingdom. I challenge you to include that in your family mission statement as well.

DIOS LE BENDIGA! (God Bless You!)

by Aris Ortiz

Blessings to you my West Side Family! continued from last week..

As the Apostle Paul was writing those words to the church to the Corinthians, that they gave as much as they were able and even beyond their ability, the same way you my brothers and sisters, when trusting in your leadership about doing the Lord's Work and using from the contribution to send us - the the entire Hispanic Group - to do mission work. Giving us the tools that we can be equipped to fulfill that great commission of our Lord Jesus Christ in today's life and reach and do as much as we can, for souls to come to Jesus and be part of the Kingdom of heaven. THANK YOU for loving the souls of the lost, of those that don't speak the same language but through the Spanish ministry here at West Side, you are touching, teaching, preaching to the Hispanic community here in Russellville.

Thank you for your prayers, for your thoughts and every good intention of assisting us now and in the near future. We are so blessed to be sent from a church that loves the Lord and cares for the lost.

We will be planning to worship with you in the future and soon we will let everybody know about our last Sunday here. God bless you my West Side Family.

Gathering Times

Sunday Morning 10 Am Worship
& Kids for Christ
ages 1yr-5th grade

In- Person Adult/Teen Bible Study
Wednesdays 6:30pm - Room 3 & Cornerstone

Friendship Cafe and Conversational Christianity
Sunday Mornings at 8:45

In- person Adult Bible Study
Sunday Mornings at 9am

West Side News

Remember on Sunday Mornings at 8:45 Friendship Café offers a time of coffee and “conversational Christianity” for those interested in a casually structured time of spiritual conversation guided by discussion cards.

An adult class meets in Room 3 of the main building for those who prefer a more structured time of Bible Study.

KFC Classes for ages 1yr-5th grade meet during the worship hour.

Wednesday night currently offers 1 adult class and Youth Group for ages 6th grade – 12th grade at 6:30 pm , and Midweek Worship at the Student Center for college students at 7pm.

Baby Shower

Mark your calendars for October 17th!

There will be a baby girl shower in honor of Erin Grice Putman at 2pm at Old Post Park. Erin and Cory are registered at babylist.com

www.babylist.com/baby-erin-putman

Save the Date!

Friends & Family Day 2021

will be at Old Post Park, Oct. 10th

4-6pm - More details coming soon

Transportation Assistance

Randy Powell has offered to provide transportation to anyone needing assistance in that area, especially for doctor's appointments. He has experience loading wheelchairs and would love to help out if needed. Feel free to reach out to him directly at 479-567-4235, or if you prefer, you can call the office and let your need be known.

Sign up for WS emails at
westsidear.org/subscribe

Week of: 9-12-2021

Weekly Giving: \$ 12,285

Attendance

Weekly Budget: \$ 13,820

Sunday AM - 285

YTD Giving: \$ 505,417

Wednesday PM - 98

YTD Budget: \$ 511,331

Family Illness and Recovery

Lauren Reed's brother, Wes Honnell, was critically injured in a car accident on Monday sustaining life threatening injuries. He is making some improvements! The family asks that you continue in prayer for his improvement as well as continue lifting his wife Jessica and the entire family in prayer for peace and strength.

Sharon Johnson, Carol White's sister, remains in comfort care at the John Keever Solace Center in Asheville, NC. Please continue prayers for the entire family during this time.

Sid Womack will begin chemo treatments Monday. Please keep Sid and Karen and family in your prayers as they navigate this journey. Pray for effective treatment, strength of body and mind, and complete healing.

Mary Reid will be having a PET Scan soon to determine possible blockage to her heart. Please pray that she can have peace about this test and pray also for good results.

Sympathy:

We extend our sympathy to Cecil Johnson in the recent loss of his nephew, Todd. Please keep the family in your prayers for comfort in this time of loss.

We extend our sympathy also to Kay Fureigh in the loss of her sister Bonnie Green recently. Please keep the family in your prayers for peace and comfort at this time.

We extend our sympathy to George Reed and family in the recent loss of his sister Connie Sue Polk due to Covid. Please keep the family in your prayers for peace and comfort in this time of loss.

We extend our sympathy to Richard French and family in the loss of his mother Maribeth French. Please pray for peace and comfort as well as safe travel for the family during this time of loss.

Love. Share. Disciple.