



The Harbinger

March 2008

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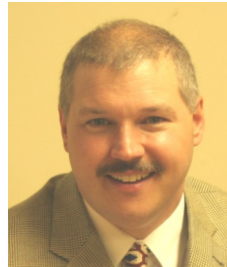
Next
HARBINGER
DEADLINE
March
16th

MEMORY VERSE



OF THE MONTH!

The LORD is good,
a refuge in times of trouble.
He cares for those who
trust in Him.
Nahum 1:7



Of First Importance

What is the single most important aspect of the Christian faith? Good Question! Stop reading right here and think for a few minutes and write down your answer.

Now, let me see if I hit some of your answers. Faith, hope, love (the wonderful Christian triumvirate), God's glory, Sovereignty, blessings from God, good works, walking the talk, sanctification, justification, assurance of salvation. I don't know if any of these hit the mark or not, and they are all important in one way or another as Christians, but none of them are correct according to the Scripture.

It is wonderful how clear Scripture is on this subject. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:3 "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance..." and what is of first importance is Christ's Resurrection. That is the "white hot core" of our faith. When all is said and done, all the apologetics stated and defended, all the doctrines argued back and forth, none of them hold a theological candle to the Doctrine of the Resurrection. Paul spends one of the longest chapters in the New Testament on this subject and gives us 6 reasons why the resurrection is so important.

If Christ has not been raised, then our Preaching is useless (v. 14)

The Bible puts forth that there is power in the preached Word (Isa 55:11; Heb 4:12). As a pastor, when I step into the pulpit every Sunday, I rely of those promises and the power that comes along with them. So what Paul is saying here is that if the resurrection of Christ is not true, then everything God has ever said is untrue. They are just words, just pretty poetry, simply nice sayings, practical moral teachings. If Christ is not raised, then the Gospel preached is absolutely powerless to save. All the foot stomping, pulpit pounding, impassioned pleading is for naught. It boils down to nothing more eternally powerful than a very good political speech. "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country!"

If Christ has not been raised, then we are false witnesses (v. 15)

Secondly, Paul turns to us. Here we are spending all this time building relationships so that we can share Christ. We read books on defending the faith, we spend time in Sunday School learning about God and Scripture. We stand on the side of Christ, even though culture looks at us out of the corner of their eyes. We open our mouth and swear that what we are telling them is 100% truth, that without a personal relationship with Christ they are going to Hell. If Christ has not been raised, you are very simply a liar!

If Christ has not been raised, then our faith is futile (v. 17)

Faith is the conduit through which we are saved. It is a gift from God (Eph 2:8-9) that "empowers" us, if you will, to respond to the Gospel. It is that wonderful gift that gives us assurance, that gives us hope, that gives us the conviction that what we believe is the truth. Paul states here that if Christ's resurrection is a sham, then that wonderful gift from God is useless, pointless, fruitless, in vain, and ineffective.

If Christ has not been raised, then we are still in our sins (v. 17)

Isa 1:18 states, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool." One of the

ing the gym are all opportunities to live incarnationally.

Groups

When decisions for Christ are made in isolation, involving that person in growth is difficult. Recognizing and working within groups normalizes their faith and makes sharing their faith natural. They are already an insider. As mentioned in previous letters, we have been involved with the baseball team. As a matter of fact, three of the coaches just came by my cafeteria table to say hi. This winter we have continued to love and serve the team and coaches as best we could. Practice started last week. I dropped by just to be present, incarnate. Numerous players greeted me. Access to the group creates multiple opportunities to share Christ.

Today, the non believer and believer alike will not walk across campus to hear about God. Even when the meeting or discussion is right in the dorm, students will seldom attend. The day when we could expect students to come to us is long gone. They will go to be with friends, if they have them. We need to reduce the geographic distance a person has to travel to come to Christ. And we need to maximize relational bonds within an identifiable group.

Illustration

Let me illustrate what we are talking about. A few weeks ago I gathered my courage and went to a new dining hall. It was awkward. The checker could make it difficult for me. I prayed. When I walked in the women behind the counter jumped up, hugged me, and asked where I had been. Prayer one answered. In a few minutes the men started to come in. I went over and sat with two men. Other guys came in, some of whom I knew. We talked about a lot of things... well I should say, they talked about a lot. We talked about God. We all agreed to be there next week. The next week a couple other men joined us. Tomorrow we meet for the third time.

Sitting in the cafeteria I am present with students, in their world, on their turf, in their group and am involving them in the process of coming to Christ. God does what He desires. On our part we want to be in geographic proximity of groups, involved in process, and live incarnationally with the world around us.

[This is an important letter. Substitute the word "neighbor" for "student," and the word "community" for "campus" and you have it's impact for us, living here in Southwest Harbor. Read it with yourself and your relationship with those around you in mind. And, we will definitely invite Doug to visit us sometime this year!]

2. John Rankin—Theological Education Institute, Connecticut

Dear Friends:

Good afternoon, and greetings in the love of the Lord.

Today we have launched a new portal website, www.johnrankin.org, and on it I have something like a blog, called "Occasional Observations." This new website leads to the main TEI site, portions within it, and will do likewise for other websites I have planned.

It is meant to be publicity friendly, and since it is linked to my name, it is much easier for people to remember, when I am speaking in person, or via the media. For example, tomorrow I will be interviewed on Channel One in New York City for a segment on evolution and intelligent design. This program goes to 11,000 public and private schools.

On the new website, you will see, under related links, the prominent display of my article, "Darwin and the Days of Creation." I was able to easily refer Channel One to it, and it sums up my position well.

[You might want to check out John's website, and also his latest book, "***The Six Pillars of Honest Politics***," which our library now has.]



KBC is COMING.....

Get ready, get set, hike!!!? This years KBC theme is ***Friendship Trek*** where kids come to hike through the Bible and learn about their friend Jesus. KBC will be held from **Aug 11th through the 15th**. So mark your calendars and start praying about how you can help out.



SUNDAY SCHOOL



Have you noticed a woman in the fellowship hall dressed in a feather mask and a robe? Have you seen sweet little angels dancing and singing around the music room door. This is all part of our new Hands on Sunday school program for our younger learners. We have provided Sunday School classes for school age children for many years now. (Thanks to all of you who have taken time to teach.) God has blessed us with enough younger children that we felt it was time to add a new class. This class is for 3 year olds through kindergarteners. These children meet in the fellowship hall at 9am. They just finished working with the Bible point that **Jesus can do anything**. Each week they have games, a craft or two, a Bible lesson, a Bible verse, and enough energy left over for some singing.

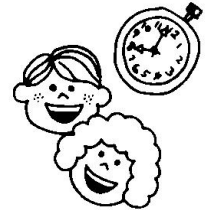
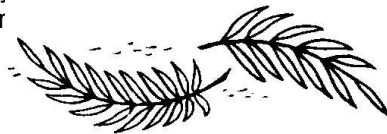


We also have a new addition for the 9am hour that has been needed for some time. Each week our nursery room is full with the youngest of our church family. It was approved that we hire a babysitter so that parents and grandparents of very little ones could attend the Adult Sunday school class. This service is provided starting at 8:45am and goes till 10:15am.

Our older learners, first graders through fifth graders, are still enjoying the **Hands on Curriculum** that we started in September. This class grows from 2 to 7 or more children on any given week. They currently are studying the miracles of Jesus. Just last week they learned about saying 'Thank you' when Jesus healed the ten lepers. '**Be thankful in all circumstances**' **1Thess 5:18** was their Bible verse. What a wonderful lesson to learn at any age.

After the Sunday school lesson at 10am we meet with all the children together for about fifteen minutes to review the monthly scripture and sing the children's chorus praise songs. This is a great way to tie the Sunday school program, at 9am, into the church service at 10:30am.

As you can see we are very busy downstairs during the Sunday school hour with learning and fun. Please be praying about who you might be able to bring with you to our children's Sunday School program. Maybe a child in your household not hear about our wonderful Savior.



New After School Program

The kids need your help!!!! We are looking to start a five week program, to meet one day a week, after school for **first and second graders**. This will be similar to KBC. You do **not** need to plan anything or be available for all five weeks. We need folks who would like to just be a warm body or a kid wrangler. You could prepare a snack, or help with a craft, or a game. Please contact Erin at 244-9176 or my church email eritter@swhcc.com



Fellowship Nights

The Christian Education Ministry will be informing people in the bulletin and in the Harbinger on what form of childcare will be available at our monthly Fellowship Nights. This month, if the kitchen is completed enough for a Fellowship Night, the March potluck presentation will be appropriate for the older Sunday school children. The Christian Education Ministry will be providing a babysitter for children 5 and under.



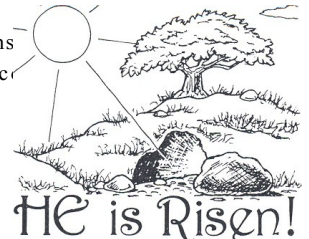
Easter

WORD LIST

angel	mina
authority	mock
betray	murderer
bread	parable
Caesar	paradise
capstone	Passover
Cleopas	peace
colt	persecute
covenant	Peter
crucifixion	power
darkness	prisoner
denarius	redemption
desolation	resurrection
dispute	robe
Emmaus	rooster
fish	scripture
friends	Simon
ghost	spices
Golgotha	sword
Jerusalem	tomb
kingdom	two
linen	widow
living	
Magdalene	

w w p c n m b
r o r i o s r o m
s d i i i v n a o d o
w i s h t r e t e p o g t
o w o d a r k n e s s o s n w
r e n e l a d g a m u l d e t i r
d e e e o l i v i n g g n y e l e k w
y r s s d i c p p t o e z t w s c r n
r e e i w e x n e t i g u i u c o o w
e d c d m e n i h r x p h r f r m w n
w r i a e m c a f p s j r o i i l b t
o u p r b m a j r i b e n h s p e s t
p m s a i a p n d i c r c t h t g r q
a o p s u s t e t u u e u r u n c
r c s s t m i n c s r a t r a
a k m o o i o i a y c d e
b x n v l n n l g m s
l e t e c a e p a
e b o r n m r

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For what I have received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 NIV

English lawyer Frank Morrison was a firm agnostic who did not believe any one could really know if there was a God for sure. Upset by the claims of Christians, Morrison set out to use his powerful legal mind to debunk the faith. He set his target on the cornerstone of Christianity, the resurrection of Jesus. Morrison knew that if he could discredit this plank of faith, the rest of Christianity would collapse. He studied the evidences for the resurrection as he would materials for any other trial. As months went on, Morrison concluded after analyzing the evidence that the only answer to the empty tomb and eyewitness accounts was that Jesus really did rise from the dead. This skeptic became a believer in Jesus and wrote the book, *Who Moved the Stone!*

Are you struggling to believe? Do you wonder if the Christian faith is incredible? Consider the resurrection of Christ. No one has ever found his body. Hundreds testified that they saw him alive after his crucifixion. His followers held this confidence even in the face of suffering and even death. Take time to examine the resurrection and you will find Jesus moving the stone of doubt in your heart!

Belief in the resurrection is not an appendage to the Christian faith, it is the Christian faith. John Whale



2008 Easter Services

Easter is a time when we observe the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus. It is a somber and joyous time when we can reflect and remember what Jesus did on our behalf.

Please join Cornerstone Baptist Church, Manset Union and Southwest Harbor Congregational Church as we unite together as the body of Christ at each of the following worship services.

Mauddy Thursday

Thursday March 20th

At Southwest Harbor Congregational Church

Led by Pastor Blake Brown

6:30 pm



Good Friday

Friday March 21st

At Cornerstone Baptist Church

Led by Pastor Greg Hewitt

6:30 pm

Easter Sunrise Service

Sunday March 23rd

At Seawall Campground

Led by Pastor Chuck Ives of Manset Union

6:30 am

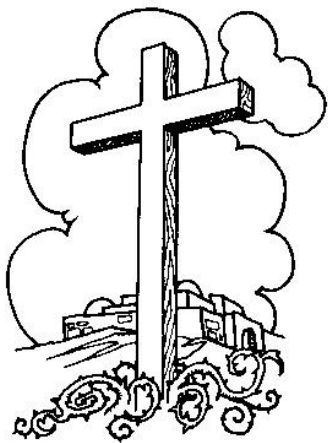


Pancake Breakfast

All are welcome for a full Pancake breakfast @ SW Harbor Congregational on High Road immediately following the sunrise service



MARCH



GOOD FRIDAY

*Why should He
love me so?*

