

Mt. CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH

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Rev. Dr. Richard L. Nash, Pastor



THINE IS THE KINGDOM..."

by Max Lucado

There are certain mountains only God can climb. Ascend them and you'll end up bruised and embarrassed. Stay away from them and you'll sidestep a lot of stress. These mountains are described in the final phrase of the Lord's prayer, "Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." A trio of peaks mantled by the clouds. Admire them, applaud them, but don't climb them.

It's not that you aren't welcome to try, it's just that you aren't able. The pronoun is thine, not mine; thine is the kingdom, not mine is the kingdom. If the word Savior is in your job description, it's because you put it there. Your role is to help the world, not save it. Mount Messiah is one mountain you weren't made to climb.

Nor is Mount Self-Sufficient. You aren't able to run the world, nor are you able to sustain it. Some of you think you can. You are self-made. You don't bow your knees, you just roll up your sleeves and put in another twelve-hour day ... which may be enough when it comes to making a living or building a business. But when you face your own grave or your own guilt, your power will not do the trick.

You were not made to run a kingdom, nor are you expected to be all-powerful. And you certainly can't handle all the glory. Mount Applause is the most seductive of the three peaks. The higher you climb the more people applaud, but the thinner the air becomes. More than one person has stood at the top and shouted, "Mine is the glory!" only to lose their balance and fall.

"Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever." What protection this final phrase affords. As you confess that God is in charge, you admit that you aren't. As you proclaim that God has power, you admit that you don't. And as you give God all the applause, there is none left to dizzy your brain.

From *The Great House of God*

© (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001) Max Lucado

ISAIAH 53 (NIV)

Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

Surely, he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment, he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied, by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will give him a portion among the great and he will divide the spoils with the strong because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.



IT'S LONELY AT THE TOP



By Rev. Douglas L. Maven
First A. M.E. Church, Paterson,
New Jersey

Scripture: Mark 15:33-41

When Jesus was on the cross, where were his disciples? Where was the tenth leper who came back to thank him? Where was the woman who touched the hem of his

garment and was made whole? Where was the man who had been blind? Where were the 5000 who ate until they were full from the loaves and fish?

Jesus was the ultimate example of lonely leadership. He was “despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not” (Isaiah 53:3). Throughout his ministry, Jesus accepted and endured the lonely role of leadership, which eventually led him to the cross at Calvary.

Persons in leadership will sometimes be wrongly judged if they do not meet others’ expectations. For example, the people of Judah expected a militaristic Messiah. They expected him to preach the gospel to please the prominent, not to promote the poor. They expected him to honor the haughty, not to heal the brokenhearted. They expected him to protect the status quo, not to provide deliverance to the downtrodden.

They expected him to be blind to religious hypocrisy, not to give “sinners” access to the kingdom of God. And when he didn’t meet their expectations, they rejected him and even tried to destroy him.

Sometimes those in positions of leadership experience feelings of isolation from God. As Jesus hung upon the cross, his words were the ultimate expression of loneliness: “My God, my God Why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46).

From this profile of Jesus as the suffering servant. The hope of African American believers and their leaders spring eternal. Leaders who are willing to share in his suffering can most effectively lead his followers today.

Prayer

“Lord, grant us strength to bear the burdens of leadership. In our isolated moments of despair and disappointment, allow the Holy Spirit to comfort us with the promise of your presence to be with us even unto the very end of the age. Amen”

SIMPLIFY YOUR FAITH

by Max Lucado

How do you simplify your faith? How do you get rid of the clutter? How do you discover a joy worth waking up to? Simple. Get rid of the middleman. There are some who suggest the only way to God is through them. There’s the great teacher who has the final word on Bible teaching. There’s the father who must bless your acts. There’s the spiritual master who’ll tell you what God wants you to do.

Jesus’ message for complicated religion is to remove these middlemen. He’s not saying you don’t need teachers, elders, or counselors. He is saying, however, that we are all brothers and sisters with equal access to the Father. Seek God for yourself. No elaborate channels of command or levels of access.

You have a Bible? You can study. You have a heart? You can pray. You have a mind? You can think!

From *And the Angels Were Silent*

THE MONTH IN REVIEW



Leon “Lee” Brown, a valuable asset to several ministries at this church, is now in Kansas preparing for active duty in the U.S. Air Force. Before he left, Lee was celebrated with true words, good thoughts, great food and fellowship on the evening of March 22. Lee came to Connecticut from South Carolina some 14 or so years

ago to accept an ESPN job offering. He came to Mt. Calvary as a stranger but left as a dear friend who will be greatly missed. May God continue to Bless and keep Lee.

On March 29, the 102nd Church Anniversary Committee hosted a “Soul Lunch” that was a smashing success. Delicious fish and chicken meals were available at a reasonable price. Watch the bulletin and website for upcoming events sponsored by this committee and other ministries including:

- **Fit & Fun Zumba on April 13**
- **Heal-A-Tea on April 27**



In life, we plan and save for cars, homes, education, vacations, weddings, retirement and other necessities and desires. The same should be true for Death. It's a difficult topic even for us Christians who know we will have everlasting life through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Our mortal bodies will die and rest in some form when that spiritual journey begins. We should plan to not burden those we leave behind.

Growing up, my family (the Wood family) did not discuss the type of funeral we wanted but my parents did purchase life insurance policies for themselves and their children. This is how some families choose to prepare for Death but here are some other thoughts which include excerpts from **6 Things You Should Do Now to Prepare for Your Own Funeral** by Ace Ratcliff.

1. Do the paperwork to designate who will be in charge of decision making for your funeral. Without a legal document authorizing someone specific to handle your funeral arrangements, there's an order. In fact, there's a legal hierarchy that you can follow all the way down to your second cousins, if need be. The most effective document to accomplish this is called a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care (DPOAHC). You can have one drawn up with a lawyer or you can simply get one online, but there needs to be an included paragraph that specifies you are also designating your agent the right to control your funeral arrangements.
2. Then make sure the documents are legal and kept where everyone involved can find them. Once the DPOAHC is filled out, make sure your designated agent is aware of it and willing to undertake the responsibilities. Make sure the document is signed and notarized. Make sure the designated agent has a copy and have copies on hand for your primary doctor, hospital you may be admitted to, funeral home you might designate and family member(s) you so choose.
3. Consider your funeral options now. The decision needs to answer one major question: What do you want to happen to your body after you die? There are three major choices: burial, cremation, or donation. Burial is typically the most expensive option. The average cost of this type of funeral in 2018 was \$7,181.00. Cremation is far less expensive than burial and allows the family more flexibility in planning

the funeral or memorial. The average cost for "direct" cremation in 2018 was \$2,200.00. Body donation is always an option for disposition. If you're local to a medical school, you can donate your body to them to help students learn anatomy and physiology firsthand.

4. Sit down with your loved ones to tell them what your funeral wishes are. Include your preferences on your DPOAHC to help with the process. Your family needs to know whether you want memorial or funeral services held. They need to know whether you want those services to be religious. They even need to know if you have someone you'd like to give your eulogy. Every single bit of detail you decide before your death means one less decision your grieving family has to make after the fact.

If you find that having this talk is too challenging and you really want to make sure your wishes are handled, you can visit your local funeral home and make all of your decisions with a funeral director. They will keep all of your arrangements on hand until the time comes.

5. You can start saving for your own funeral now. You could simply start a savings account now; \$20 here and there could go a long way toward funding a funeral, as long as your designated agent has access to the account. If that's not your preference, you can actually buy funeral insurance from your local funeral home.

6. Remember that death is natural, and there's nothing morbid about discussing yours. Talking about your inevitable death and the funeral arrangements that will follow is terrifying for everyone. It's hard, but taking small steps now means everything will be much easier for the people you love later.

So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

1 Corinthians 15:42-44

WHY CHURCHES FAIL: PART I



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By Dr. Richard J. Krejcir

Faith is what moves a real effectual and effective church!

In my first doctoral dissertation on "why churches fail," I tracked over 1,000

churches for over 10 years. I looked for the marks that caused people to leave. I found the top four reasons why a churchgoer leaves their church.

1. The number one reason why people stop coming to any given church, (your church) was reported by over 91% people citing the significant factor or main reason being conflict and gossip! (James 3:5-6)

2. The number two reason that people leave a church is the hypocrisy and judgmental attitude and actions of people. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of people who left a church stated they experienced church people being judgmental to them, the hypocrisy they witnessed especially by pastors and leadership, or the hurt by church members they experienced. Another significant factor in this category was the poor "people skills" of the pastor and/or leadership! Why? Because they do not manage the judgmentalism, conflicts and/or gossip! (Matthew 5:9)

3. The number three reason why people leave a church is because they wonder, *where do I fit in?* They experience a lack of hospitality and concern or care from the leadership or people in general. Sixty-six percent (66%) reported that if people do not feel they belong, they leave. (2 Corinthians 5:20)

4. The number four reason why people leave a church is the unwillingness to deal with sin. This creates strife and factions in a church for which sixty-two percent (62%) of people reported to be the reason they left. The atmosphere of contention they feel is the primary basis for factions-the dissatisfaction, disagreements, and dissention (if they stay), all because they do not feel at "home," having a place to care and to share. Thus, the poor "people skills" of the leadership, the unwillingness to deal with and resolve conflict, and the lack of seeking Christ first and foremost cause the majority of conflicts between the people in the church and the pastor. (Matthew 6:33)

These top four problems cause the vast majority of people to leave a church, over ninety-one percent (91%): unresolved conflict, gossip, no teaching, and inhospitality that prevent "connection." (This statistic discounts people who move for a job or school change, which is around nineteen percent (19%); this was removed from statistical

relevance in the percentage hierarchy.) Over ninety percent (90%) of people surveyed and interviewed felt a significant, overwhelming lack of courtesy, absence of Fruit, and bad character that led to broken relationships and the flight from their church. Over eighty-five percent (85%) reported no one ever called, visited them, or asked why they left within the first four months after leaving. Eighty-two percent (82%) stated that if they were visited and given a reason and/or an apology, resolving the conflict or action was taken to resolve it, they would return. Over seventy percent (70%) of them were in leadership of some kind, and thirteen percent (13%) were pastors! These reasons led to over ninety percent (90%) of feeling shunned, feelings of rejection, and/or not feeling wanted or cared for there. This prevented them from getting anything significant or spiritual out of church, so they left.

My personal observations were simple; Ephesians 4:1 - 5:2 was not applied or sought by the leadership. This comes from a lack of quality, biblical understanding from the leadership. This Bible illiteracy and feeling that it is not relevant resulted in a lack of quality expository or exegetical Bible teaching. In addition, discipleship was not considered important nor was Fruit being modeled by the church leadership.

Of the churches and people surveyed and tracked that were satisfied and healthy, the Bible was taught effectively, the church was healthy, and when problems came, they were met and turned into happenings of connection and learning. After that, the congregation was better able and willing to put God's precepts in practice with real, authentic Christian character and faith. Problem churches turned around and factions ended simply by seeking Christ first. It starts from the leadership. People do not know the Word or the precepts of our Lord because the Bible is not taught in such a way that it is real and can be applied to their lives and situations. Sheep who are not being fed will feed upon one another and not love one another! The Church is called-even mandated to equip and disciple its people, not just in the basics of the faith, but also in how to be Christian in their families, work, school, and relationships. When churches do not engage in this vital call, they create ineffective Christians who do not seek to live their lives to His glory (Psalm 119:9-12)! After a while, the church stagnates to nothing and eventually will close its doors.

When evil men advance against me to devour my flesh, when my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. Psalm 27:2

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HERITAGE CORNER



ELIZABETH KECKLEY *Fashion Designer* (1818 - 1907)

Former slave Elizabeth Keckley was dressmaker and confidante to Mary Todd Lincoln until she published a tell-all book about the first family in 1868.

Elizabeth Hobbs Keckley was born into slavery in February 1818 in Dinwiddie, Virginia. Her parents were listed as George Pleasant and Agnes Hobbs, but Pleasant, who belonged to another family, paid infrequent visits; Keckley later reported her mother's deathbed confession that her master, Colonel Armistead Burwell, was her real father.

"Lizzie" was passed to the ownership of Colonel Burwell's son, Robert. She was impregnated against her will by a white man, and after giving birth in 1839 to her son, George, she moved with Robert Burwell's sister to St. Louis. There, she married James Keckley, but the union was short lived. By then, she had learned the dressmaking trade and exhibited considerable flair in her creations. Loans from her wealthy dressmaking clientele enabled Keckley to purchase her freedom for \$1,200 in November 1855.

In addition to her sewing skills, Keckley was an excellent networker. By 1860, she had moved to Washington, D.C., and established her own dressmaking business. She was soon styling the Washington elite, including the wives of Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis, and Stephen Douglas, Lincoln's former political rival. She had a spare style in contrast to the Victorian norm and was an expert with fit. She also scored the coup client, first lady Mary Todd Lincoln, who was an enthusiastic clotheshorse.

Keckley not only became Mrs. Lincoln's dressmaker, she was also the first lady's personal dresser and closest companion. She was a White House habitué during the pivotal years of the Abraham Lincoln presidency; the two ladies travelled together, with

Keckley present for the Gettysburg address, and they raised money together for the Civil War effort.

Keckley's son died in the war in August 1861, but her mourning was cut short to comfort Mrs. Lincoln, who lost her own son to typhoid the following February. Keckley was also there to provide support following the president's assassination and Mrs. Lincoln's transition out of the White House.

Keckley decided to write her memoir in part to salvage the former first lady's reputation after the war. However, the publication of *Behind the Scenes: Or, Thirty Years as a Slave and Four Years in the White House* in 1868 had the opposite effect; feeling betrayed by the revelations in the book, Mrs. Lincoln cut off contact with the woman she once called her closest friend.

The once-celebrated dressmaker eventually lost most of her prominent clients and ran out of money. She accepted a faculty position at Ohio's Wilberforce University in the Department of Sewing and Domestic Science Arts in 1892, but ill health prevented her from continuing. She died impoverished in May 1907 at the National Home for Destitute Colored Women and Children in Washington, D.C.

Keckley had an aristocratic bearing and was considered beautiful in her day. Her story has been revived and explored in plays and books such as *Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker*, written by Jennifer Chiaverini and published in 2013.

<https://www.biography.com/people/elizabeth-keckley-9361611>



Mary Lincoln's purple velvet skirt with daytime bodice is believed to have been made by African American dressmaker Elizabeth Keckley.

The dress is currently on display in the Smithsonian National Museum of American History in Washington D.C.



*to all those born in
the month of APRIL*

Sis. April Taylor	3	Sis. Eustacia Williams	17
Sis. LaTasha Smith	4	Dea'ness Donna Campbell	19
Sis. Caroline Champion	4	Sis. Roxanne Gill	20
Sis. Nelida Hall	5	Sis. Estelle Freeland	23
Sis. Michelle Robinson	6	Sis. Tamego Samuel	23
Sis. Kimberly Moore	10	Bro. Ricky D. Brown	26
Bro. Steven Bowen	14	Sis. Betty Gamble	26
Bro. Tyrone Coleman	14	Sis. Mary Singleton	26
Sis. Juanita Elliot	14	Sis. Leslie Robinson	28
Bro. Eugene Robinson	14	Sis. Shannon H. Eaton	28
Sis. Norma Wilma	15	Sis. Lea Wilson	30
Sis. Susie Goolsby	15	Sis. Pearlie Williams	21

*Happy Belated Birthday to Tru. Nelson K. Carter, Jr.
who celebrated his 60th birthday in March.*



Anniversary Celebrants	Date	Years
Bro. Moses & Sis. Mary Singleton	18	69



"For this reason a man
will leave his father & mother
and be united to his wife,
and the two will become
one flesh." Ephesians 5:31

"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put
asunder" Matthew 19:6



to the following bereaved families:

Sis. Margaree (Andrews) and Bro. James White in the passing of her sister-in-law, Eloise Andrews, in Sumter, S.C. Mrs. Andrews died on March 6, 2019 and her funeral was March 13th.



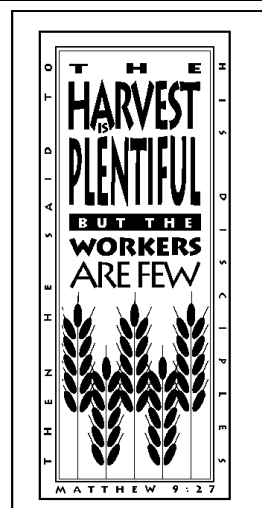
The family of Bernice (Brown) Stewart, 78, beloved widow of **Tru. Alcurtis Stewart, Sr.**, who passed on March 7, 2019. She was born and raised in Alabama but in Connecticut her employment included working with her husband managing their businesses through Mr. All, Inc. In her spare time, Bernice loved cooking, gardening, and spending time with her family. She was a member of Mount Calvary for many years. On March 15th a Homegoing Service for her was held at The Lodge Community Chapel. Memorial donations may be made to Susan G. Komen New England, 76 Batterson Park Road, Farmington, CT, 06032.

*From our happy home and circle,
God has taken ones we love;
Borne away from sin and sorrow
to a better home above.*

Remember a card, visit or gift sometime after the funeral services may also lift loved ones' spirits.

No new members were fellowshipped in the month of March. Invite a friend or family member to church with you this month. An invitation may be all it takes.

*I must work the works of
him that sent me, while it
is day; the night cometh,
when no man can work.
John 9:4.*



HEALTH NEWS

REASONS WHY YOUR FINGERS ARE SWOLLEN

Fluid Retention: Swelling happens when body fluids collect in tissues or joints. Sometimes your pinkie might be puffy. Or you may have trouble slipping your rings on and off. A salty meal could be one culprit. That's usually not a cause for worry. But other times, your swollen fingers and hands can signal a health problem that needs your attention.

Exercise and Heat: Your heart, lungs, and muscles need oxygen to fuel your workout. So, more blood goes to those places and less flows to your hands. Small blood vessels react to this change and expand, and that swells your fingers. Something similar happens when your body heats up in hot weather. To cool down, blood vessels in your skin swell to allow heat to leave the surface. This is totally normal.

Injury: You may have a torn a ligament or sprained your finger. Or injured a tendon, or dislocated or even broken a bone. If the injury isn't too bad, ice, rest, and over-the-counter pain medicine may be enough. See your doctor if you can't straighten your finger, have a fever, or you're in great pain.

Infections: Three that can cause swollen fingers are:

- Herpetic whitlow: A herpes infection that causes small, swollen, bloody blisters on the fingers
- Paronychia: An infection in the nail base caused by bacteria or fungus
- Felon: A painful pus-filled infection in the fingertip

Finger infections can spread to other parts of the body if they're not treated early.

Arthritis: Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) affects the lining of joints and causes swelling, pain, and stiffness. The symptoms often appear first in the hand joints. RA usually affects both hands

Psoriatic arthritis can affect people who have a skin condition called psoriasis. It often causes sausage-like swelling in fingers and toes. Both arthritis types are serious and can cause joint damage and other body problems without treatment.

Gout: This "rich man's disease" largely used to afflict people who could afford lots of meat, seafood, and alcohol. Today, gout can hit people of all income levels. It causes extreme pain and swelling, usually in the big toe. But you can get it in any joint, including your fingers. It happens when too much uric acid in your blood forms crystals in the joint. Drugs can help ease the pain and prevent more attacks.

Medicine: Some common culprits include:

- Over-the-counter pain pills like aspirin, ibuprofen, and naproxen
- Steroids
- Certain drugs for diabetes or high blood pressure
- Nerve pain drugs like gabapentin and pregabalin
- Hormonal therapies with estrogen or testosterone

Puffy fingers from medication usually isn't a serious condition. But talk to your doctor if you're worried.

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome: This is a pinched nerve in a place in your wrist called the carpal tunnel. Some people say their fingers feel useless and swollen, even if they may not look it. You may feel pain, tingling, or numbness, too. Making the same hand motions over and over can cause carpal tunnel syndrome. It can be treated and usually doesn't do lasting damage.

Kidney Disease: Your kidneys get rid of waste and extra fluid from your body. One of the first signs that something is wrong is puffiness in your fingers, feet, and around your eyes. You're more likely to get kidney disease if you have diabetes or high blood pressure. Control these problems to protect your kidneys or stop the disease from getting worse. If your kidneys don't work well enough, you'll need a transplant or dialysis.

Sickle Cell Disease: Normal red blood cells look like doughnuts and are flexible. When you have sickle cell disease, the cells are stiff and crescent-shaped. These get stuck in small blood vessels and block blood flow. In the hands and feet, this causes painful swelling. Other problems include infections, anemia, stroke, and blindness. Sickle cell is a lifelong condition. In the U.S., it's most common in African-Americans.

Lymphedema: This swelling happens when fluid in the lymph system can't drain well. It's sometimes a side effect of cancer treatment. Women with breast cancer often have lymph nodes in their armpits removed to check for cancer. This upsets the flow of lymph and can lead to swelling in the arms and hands. Radiation can damage nodes and make the problem worse. Lymphedema can happen any time after treatment. It can't be cured, but it can be managed.

Scleroderma: This is an immune system disease that tricks your body into making too much of a protein called collagen. This thickens and hardens skin and can affect other body parts too. Your hands may become stiff and your fingers may puff up like sausages. Some people have mild symptoms. In more serious cases, organs can be injured. Scleroderma does not go away but can be treated.

Source: <http://www.webmd.com/>



*On a cross that was carved from one simple tree
 Jesus suffered and died for the world to see
 Crowned by sharp thorns, pierced and broken by nails,
 His enemies were certain Christ's ministry failed.
 But soon it was clear that His death had assured
 Our life everlasting through the pain He endured.
 At that sorrowful moment, we all gained our connection
 To the wonder and joy of his Easter morn resurrection.
 Hang this nail in your home, forever to be
 The sign of God's promise of eternity.*

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