

# Mt. CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH

## NEWSLETTER

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### LIVING IN HARD TIMES

By Pastor Ray Pritchard of Keep Believing Ministries

1 Thessalonians 3:1-8

What do you do when your world caves in?

How does a Christian respond when hard times come?

What can we do to keep our faith strong?

*All of us face those questions because we all go through deep trials eventually.* When that happens, everything we believe will be put on the firing line.

Many years ago, I learned an important truth from my friend Jim Warren. One day I joined him on Moody Radio for Primetime America, the program he hosted each weekday afternoon. While we were preparing for the broadcast, he told me, "Ray, I heard something today that really helped me. When hard times come, be a student, not a victim." Over 20 years have passed since that day, and I still regard that simple sentence as one of the most profound things I have ever heard.

Some people go through life as professional victims, always talking about how they have been mistreated. But perpetual victimhood dooms you to a life of self-centered misery because you learn nothing from your trials. What a difference it makes to be a student and not a victim: A victim says, "Why did this happen to me?" A student says, "What can I learn from this?" A victim blames other people for his problems. A student asks, "How much of this did I bring on. A victim looks at everyone else and cries out, "Life isn't fair." A student looks at life and says, "What happened to me could have happened to anyone." A victim believes his hard times have come because God is trying to punish him. A student understands that God allows hard times in order to help him grow. A victim would rather complain than find a solution. A student has no time to complain because he is busy making the best of his situation. A victim feels so sorry for himself that he has no time for others. A student focuses on helping others so that he has no time to feel sorry for himself.

**#1: Our Trials Are Unsettling:** "So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens. We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, so that

no one would be unsettled by these trials" (v. 1-3a). As I survey the New Testament teaching regarding trials, two truths stand out. *First, trials are the common lot of every Christian.* No one is exempt, no one gets a trouble-free ride to heaven. If you don't need this sermon today, put it in your back pocket because you will definitely need it tomorrow! *Second, your particular trial doesn't matter as much as how you respond to it.* Often, we focus intently on the details of our difficulties as if the difficulty itself were the most important thing in the world. It may seem so at the time, but it's not really true. God is much more concerned with how you respond than with the trial itself. Why? *Because most of the time you don't have a choice about the bad things that happen to you.* Usually they just happen without any rhyme or reason. But you can control how you respond—in faith or unbelief, in humility or arrogance, in forgiveness or in anger, in hope or in despair. Our trials often come with very little warning. *James 1:2 reminds us to "Count it all joy" when you encounter various trials.* That's not possible as long as you focus on the trial itself. But if you shift your focus to God, then you can find joy even in the worst moments of life.

**#2: Our Trials Are Appointed:** "You know quite well that we were destined for them" (v. 3b). It's a very strong way of saying "these hard times were placed here by God." They didn't happen by accident. In fact, this is the opposite of chance or circumstance. There are no accidents with God, only incidents that are appointed by him for our good and his glory. With that important understanding, we pass on to the third great truth regarding hard times.

**#3: Our Trials Are Necessary:** "In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know" (v. 4). Some people may regard this as a negative, but to me it is a positive. I personally have much more confidence in someone who expects trouble and prepares for it than in someone who goes through life singing "Everything's Coming Up Roses." The truth is, every rose has its thorns, and the sooner we understand that the happier we will be. Romans 5:3-4 spells out how this process works: "We also rejoice in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces endurance, endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope." We all want hope,

### Living in Hard Times (continued)

but we don't want affliction. If you want hope to flood your heart, it starts with affliction that leads to endurance that produces proven character that results in the Holy Spirit filling us with hope.

*We need to remember that trials are not entirely negative.* They may in fact be a sign that we are in the will of God. "Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Tim. 3:12). Yet storms often come to believers to make them able to stand firm, rather than to blow them away (cf. 2 Cor. 4:15-16). (From the *Bible Knowledge Commentary*).

**#4: Our Trials Are Dangerous:** "For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter might have tempted you and our efforts might have been useless" (v. 5). *Satan tempts us to fall away during our trials.* Paul knew that was a possibility, which is why he was so worried about these young Thessalonian believers. How does the devil tempt us in hard times? I can think of three obvious answers to that question. First, he tempts us to doubt God's goodness. He whispers in our ear that God has forgotten us, that he doesn't care, and that he isn't good. Second, he tempts us to retaliate against others with anger and resentment. This is one of his favorite tools when the hard times involve problems with friends and family members. Third, he tempts us to give in to despair and discouragement. *All these things lead to the ultimate act of desperation where we give up our faith in God altogether.* Hard times eventually wear us down. Little by little we lose the joy we once had. Under pressure we begin to give in to bad habits, wrong attitudes, and then we begin the long slide in the wrong direction.

**#5: Our Trials Are Productive:** "But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you" (v. 6). Here Paul plainly says that we can overcome our trials by faith. What kind of faith does he have in mind? ... *That is the shared faith of God's people.* So many believers struggle because they try to handle their problems alone. But God never intended that you should walk through the lonely valley by yourself. Verses 7-8 reveal another way in which our trials are productive: "Therefore, brothers, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith. For now, we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord." Here is the final truth about hard times you need to know. *We never suffer alone.* Our friends watch to see how we will respond to tragedy. They want to know if what we say we believe is really enough for us in the hard times. And

further in the distance, others watch what we go through. Many of them are unbelievers who wonder if Christ is real. They don't know, they aren't sure, maybe they've read the Bible, maybe they haven't, but they're watching how we respond to mistreatment, malicious accusations, sickness, the loss of a job, the end of our marriage, a career setback, or a financial collapse. From the shadows they watch us as we suffer to see if what we have is real or not.

*In this case, the great Apostle himself drew strength from the courage of these new believers.* Although he had come to minister to them, by standing firm in hard times they were ministering to him. Paul is saying, "I can face my trials because I see how well you are facing yours."

**I Wouldn't Take Away the Pain:** Many people reading this message are going through hard times right now. I wish it were not so, but it is true. As I thought about the matter, I concluded that even if I had the power (which I don't), I wouldn't take the pain away or make the hard times disappear. *God has ordained that your trials are part of his plan to make you like Jesus. There are no shortcuts to spiritual maturity.* Were I to take away the pain, I might move too soon and block God's work in your life. Because I see things from a human perspective, I might actually hurt you instead of help you even though my motives would be good.

**"He knows the way that I take. When he has tried me, I will come forth as gold"** (Job 23:10). You can have an easy life, or you can have a deep faith. You can't have both. There is no gold without the fiery furnace. *Our hard times are designed to bring us closer to the Lord.* Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning. Let us therefore endure our trials with grace and courage, knowing that in the end the clouds will part and the sun will shine again.

Fear not, Christian friend. We have a great God who loves us more than we know. Look to Jesus and you will find the strength you need. When your trials are over, you will come forth as gold.

Excerpts from Living in Hard times. See <https://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/living-in-hard-times/> for full sermon.

**"Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today." - Thich Nhat Hanh**

## HERITAGE CORNER



### COMMISSION HONORS COMMISSIONER DONNA CAMPBELL IN CELEBRATION OF WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

The State of Connecticut Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Commission is proud to honor Commissioner **Donna E. Campbell** for her appointment by the Honorable

Governor Ned Lamont as the first female Chair of the Commission in its 34-year history. Donna has been Commissioner for over 10 years and served until 2019 as Vice Chair, under Chairman James O. Williams.

Commissioner Campbell, along with the Honorable U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal, Governor Ned Lamont, Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz, and Commissioner A.J. Johnson, led the Bell Ringing Ceremony at this year's Annual Bell Ringing and Awards Ceremony at the State Capitol in January.

Commissioner Campbell is a recently retired Contractual In-Home Therapeutic Specialist and resides in Hartford. She is also a National Certified Diversity Trainer, as well as a Justice of Peace for the City of Hartford. Donna serves on the Board of Advisors for the State of CT Diabetes Association; member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People for over 50 years and former Membership Chair and Community Coordinator of the Greater Hartford Branch of the NAACP. Currently, she serves on its Executive Board; Presenter for the Department of Correction Prison Association; Presenter at the T.D. Jake's National Conference with an attendance of more than 5,000 people; Nominated for 100 Women of Color 2019; Former Commissioner and Secretary for the State of CT AAA Commission; Member, National Council of Negro Women Hartford Section; Founder, Women's Circle of Love; Chaplain for Professional Women's Ecumenical Lay Ministries; and former Hartford President of Jack and Jill of America. She is the owner of, "I Do" Wedding Planning Services and in her pastime, Donna is a Standup Comedian and volunteers at the Hartford Democratic Headquarters. She attended New Britain Senior High School (presently serving on its Class of 1967 Reunion Planning Committee) as well as CCSU; CT

School of Radio Broadcasting; Hartford Seminary; and Southeastern University. She holds a B.A., an MA in Youth and Family Ministries, and a Master of Divinity.

She has been a member of the Mount Calvary Baptist Church for over 25 years and is a former member of St. James Missionary Baptist Church, New Britain, CT since the age of 4, founded by her parents, the late Deacon and Deaconess Herman and Ruth Cunningham. She served in the following capacities: Founder and Chief Editor of the Gospel Truth Newsletter; Youth Minister; Vice President and President, SJMBC Usher Board; Announcement Clerk; Deaconess; and Assistant Church Clerk.

Her mentors were the late Dr. Thomas Hoyt (her Seminary Professor and personal spiritual guide) the late Fennell Atwater; and former Radio and TV Personality, Lew Brown.

She is married to **Marvin Campbell** and has two sons, Rhashim of Georgia and Marlon of Hartford, and two granddaughters, Aria Jada and Amaya Janee of Georgia.

Let all that you do be done in LOVE.  
1 Corinthians 16:14

### WE HAVE A CHOICE

In so many areas of life we have no choice. "It's not fair," we say. But the scales of life were forever tipped on the side of fairness when God planted a tree in the Garden of Eden. All complaints were silenced when Adam and his descendants were given free will, the freedom to make whatever eternal choice we desire.

Any injustice in this life is offset by the honor of choosing our destiny in the next. Wouldn't you agree? It would have been nice if God had let us order life like we order a meal. It would've been nice, but it didn't happen. When it came to many details of your life on earth, you weren't given a choice, a voice, or a vote. But when it comes to life after death, you were! In my book that seems like a good deal. Wouldn't you agree?

From *He Chose the Nails* by Max Lucado



*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 birthday in March. Hopefully he will be added to the list by 2021.



Anniversary Celebrants	Date	Years
Bro. Moses & Sis. Mary Singleton	18	70



"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. Hazel Hines** on the passing of her aunt, Lendora "Pinky" Walston Williams, 101, on Friday, February 21, 2020. Her funeral service was, February 28, 2020 at the Batts Chapel Baptist Church in Tarboro, NC. She lived independently until recently.



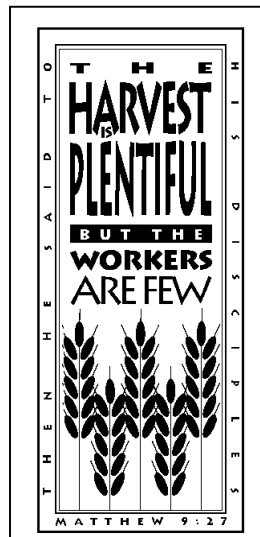
**Sis. Mattie Adgers and Sis. Iris Adgers** in the passing of their sister and aunt, Helen Riaford respectively on February 26, 2020. She recently relocated to Hartford. A private memorial service was held on Friday March 7, 2020.

*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 fellowshiped 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.*







## SOULS TO THE POLLS

By Sis. Susan Hutchinson

The “Souls to the Polls”-Black History Ministry program which was held on February 29 was such a treat! The tables in the F.D.

Oates Fellowship Hall were beautifully decorated in red, black and green featuring Black History literature - (magazines, calendars, books) as well as the “I Am Beautiful” statements made by the Youth. Other tables contained voter registration cards, census data and voter information handouts for us to take with us after the program ended. The poles were decorated with posters of notable African-American heroes and heroines.

Sis. Cynthia Williams Daniels was a wonderful Program Leader and the Youth shared their “Rise Up” presentation which stated how they plan to “rise up” in their own lives and positively impact the community as a whole. Justin Coleman delivered a passionate Spoken Word and Sis. Janette Isaac presented a detailed description of the history of voter suppression and she even displayed examples of some strategies used to intimidate/belittle our people such as: “recite the alphabet backwards” or “how many candies are in this jar?” It was a fitting complement to the informative YouTube video on the history of voting that we viewed due to the outstanding efforts of Mount Calvary’s “media mogul” Donald Smith. State Commissioner Donna Campbell shared a lot of voter facts and a glossary of the most common terms used in voting via handouts and voter registration cards, census data, etc. She, too, emphasized the importance of voting and why it is vital to do so.

Keynote Speaker Kenneth Green delivered an informative, historical and powerful message pertaining to the voting process, democracy and the U.S. Constitution. He explained, in detail, why it is SO IMPORTANT to vote in local primaries and races in addition to voting in the presidential elections. In fact, he stressed that it is MORE IMPORTANT to vote locally since this is where we can foster change and demand accountability from elected officials. He gave an example by informing us of the recent attempt at the federal level to create a law of “zero

tolerance” concerning police resistance. The federal government cannot make the states adopt this law, but they can provide incentives, like federal monies, to encourage them to do so. If states adopt this law, the impact will be dire for our communities since whether or not you are “resisting” is not determined by you, but by the police officer. This means you can’t even question him/her and must comply in order to avoid being charged and/or arrested. The bottom line is this: we MUST vote and encourage others to do so if we are to advance as a people and a nation. The program ended with delicious food of soup, salad, sandwiches, desserts and beverages which was enjoyed by all-special thanks to Terrence and Mary Owens!

## BIBLE STUDY GOES VIRAL

On Wednesday, March 25, 2020, Rev. Lorenzo Elliott conducted the first virtual evening Bible Study utilizing the Zoom App and it was well received. Subsequently, he engaged in a Sunday night session in which many more participated. I’ve also read that Sunday Morning Service will appear online. It is such a Blessing to be able to rely on modern technology, beyond the telephone, to hear and see the study of the Word of God. Rev. Elliott’s current Bible Study subject is: *Communicating the Christian Worldview to a Post Modernistic Mind (An Apologetic)*. If you want to join the Study, please contact Rev. Elliott or anyone who attends evening Bible Study for access information. The Bible is the Roadmap to Life.



**“We can't be afraid of change. You may feel very secure in the pond that you are in, but if you never venture out of it, you will never know that there is such a thing as an ocean, a sea. Holding onto something that is good for you now, may be the very reason why you don't have something better.”**

— C. JoyBell C.

## THE REAL CELEBRATION

The calendar says Good Friday is April 10<sup>th</sup> and Easter is April 12<sup>th</sup>. So usually about this time of the year, some of us are planning and looking forward to an Easter Sunday Celebration.

We concentrate on buying dress outfits for the family to wear to church or dinner. We might be planning the dinner menu and making sure we have all the ingredients for the meal in the house. We might even be buying supplies to color and/or hide eggs, hard-boiled or plastic, for the Easter Egg Hunt. And let's not forget the jellybeans and chocolate bunnies! Others of us might be getting excited about the Easter Sunday morning parade of fashion and hoping the weather we experience would be Spring-like not an extension of Winter with a somewhat uncommon flow of snow.

In all the busyness of getting the Celebration together, many might lose sight of the real reason for the season-**The Resurrection of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, born of a woman to be crucified on a cross to save us, you and me, from our sin so that we will have the eternal life God intended for us to have.

The **Celebration** is He was buried but rose from the grave with all power as foreshadowed in the Old and fulfilled in the New Testaments of the Bible. Destroying forever the sting of death.

This year is not usual and I believe the Pandemic we are experiencing has caused us to focus most on why we are Christians, believers of the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the power He rose with.

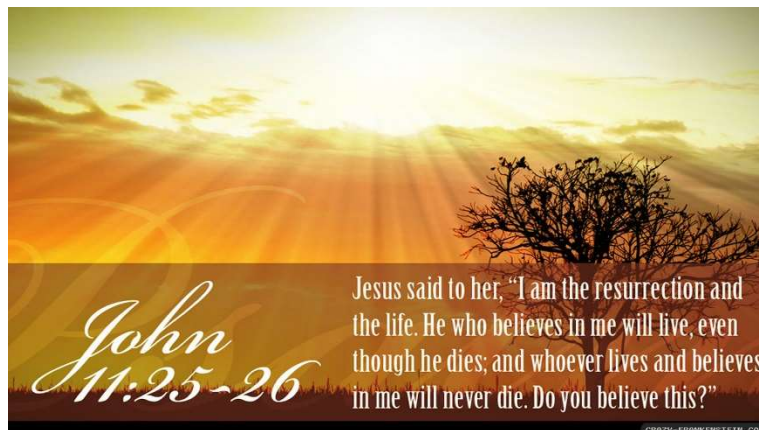
We know in our hearts and mind that He is: In Control; He is still with us; and He will see us through any and every crisis, including this COVID19 Pandemic. Not knowing how and when He is going to do it may make us nervous or fearful but the commemoration of His resurrection reminds us that He is going to work it out. We have Hope.

In the meantime: Watch as well as pray; Keep the Faith; Hunker down at home; Keep social distances; Find other ways to reach out to friends and loved ones;. And, remember the lyrics to the following hymn:

### On Christ the Solid Rock I Stand

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name  
On Christ the solid rock I stand  
All other ground is sinking sand  
All other ground is sinking sand  
When darkness veils his lovely face  
I'll rest on his unchanging grace  
In every high and stormy day  
My anchor holds within the veil  
On Christ the solid rock I stand  
All other ground is sinking sand  
All other ground is sinking sand

Be Well. Be Safe. DLWood



### Helpful Scripture Readings

- When you have worry (Matthew 6:19-34)
- When God seems far away (Psalm 139)
- When your faith needs stirring (Hebrews 11)
- When you are lonely and fearful (Psalm 23)
- When you feel down and out  
(Roman 8:31-37)
- When you want peace and rest  
(Matthew 11:25-30)
- When the world seems bigger than God  
(Psalm 90)
- When you want courage for a task (Joshua 1)
- If your pocketbook is empty (Psalm 37)

## HEALTH NEWS

### SUDDEN HEALTH PROBLEMS AFTER 50

#### One Minute You're Fine ...

When you're past 50, some ailments can announce themselves suddenly and painfully. And aches and ouches you might not worry much about when you're younger could be a sign of bigger problems in middle age.

**Heart Attack** This is the big one: 735,000 people have one every year. A 50-year-old man has a 1 in 2 chance of getting heart disease at some point. The most common signs are chest pain, shortness of breath, and pain in your back, shoulders, or neck. You might also feel sweaty, dizzy, or like you're going to throw up. Your risk is lower if you're at a healthy weight, don't smoke, and get regular exercise.

**Stroke** This is when blood doesn't get to parts of your brain like it should, and those brain cells start to die. Get help right away if you have sudden weakness or numbness in your face, arms, or legs, you lose your bearings or get confused, and have trouble speaking. You can lower your odds if you keep your blood pressure in check, eat a low-cholesterol diet, manage your stress, exercise, and quit smoking.

**Aneurysm** Many of the lifestyle changes you make to lower your risk of heart disease and stroke can make you less likely to have this as well. An aneurysm happens when the wall of an artery gets weak and bulges outward. If that wall gives way, it can lead to serious internal bleeding or a stroke. Symptoms can include pain, nausea, dizziness, clammy skin, and a rapid heartbeat.

**Gallstones** These are hardened chunks of bile, a fluid that helps your body get rid of waste. They get stuck on the way out of your gallbladder, a small organ below your liver. They can range in size from a grain of sand to a golf ball and can cause severe pain in your upper belly or behind your belly button. You're more likely to get them if you're obese, have diabetes or Crohn's disease, or don't exercise.

**Acute Pancreatitis** Sometimes, gallstones can set this off. It's inflammation of the pancreas, which makes enzymes and hormones like insulin that help with digestion. It causes severe stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, and a fever, and can be life-threatening. Seek medical help immediately if you have these symptoms. It also can be caused by heavy drinking, high levels of calcium, or a kind of fat called triglycerides.

**Vertigo** If you suddenly find yourself dizzy, you might have vertigo. It can happen if tiny crystals in your inner ear, which help you control your balance, get moved around. You're more likely to get it as you get older, probably because the crystals aren't held in place as well.

Your doctor can treat it with a series of head movements that move those particles back into place.

**Detached Retina** Your retina is a light-sensitive layer in your eye that tells your brain what you see. If it pulls away from the outer wall of your eye, it won't get oxygen and other things it needs. You might see floating specks or flashes of light. You can permanently lose your eyesight, so see a doctor right away. It's more common in people who are very nearsighted or have had cataract surgery or other eye diseases.

**Kidney Stones** These are hard clumps, usually made of calcium, that form in your kidneys. They often pass harmlessly out of your body, but larger ones can be extremely painful and cause bleeding or infections or block the flow of urine. They're more common in men than women. You can help prevent them by drinking plenty of fluids every day. Water is best.

**Pneumonia** People over 50 are at higher risk of the kind of pneumonia caused by bacteria, not the one caused by a virus. Called pneumococcal pneumonia, it can be life-threatening. Older people are more likely to get it because your body's immune system gets weaker as you age. But there are vaccines for it, and the CDC recommends them for everyone over 65.

**Spinal Stenosis** This develops slowly, but it can make itself known suddenly. It happens when the channel in your backbone that holds your spinal cord and other nerves narrows, usually because of arthritis. The nerves can be pinched or squeezed, causing pain, numbness, or cramps in your lower back or neck. It can be treated with drugs or physical therapy, or, in some cases, surgery.

**Gout** This condition shows up as a sudden pain and swelling in one of your joints, often a big toe. It's a form of arthritis caused by a buildup of uric acid in your body. If you take certain medications for high blood pressure, eat red meat and shellfish, or drink alcohol, you're at higher risk. The soda sweetener known as fructose also raises your risk, and so does obesity.

**Pulmonary Embolism:** This is when a blood clot gets stuck in a blood vessel in one of your lungs. Your chances of having one go up after age 50, and it can be serious, so get medical help fast if you have chest pain, sudden shortness of breath, and dizziness. You also can have a cough that may even bring up some blood, leg pains, and clammy or bluish skin. The blood clot often starts in your leg, so an early sign might be swelling or pain in one of your calves. Your risk goes up if you've had heart disease or recent surgery, or you were in a cramped position (like in an airplane or car) for a long stretch of time.

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

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# Behold, the Man

by Robert Hawkins © 2003

**He hung each star and planet -- now hangs on splintered wood  
He washed the feet of others -- now His are bathed in blood  
He called Himself, Good Shepherd -- this sacrificial Lamb  
Behold, this Jewish drifter -- was Israel's great I AM**

**Condemned to die, yet blameless -- convicted on a whim  
He cured the blind with spittle -- but now they spit on Him  
Was called a friend of sinners -- on either side, a thief  
Behold, the Man of Sorrows -- acquainted with much grief**

**The One who healed so many -- can't move His hands or feet  
He offered life eternal -- but dies now in the heat  
The Son of God Almighty -- though He was virgin-born  
Behold, the Rose of Sharon -- now wears a crown of thorns**

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