

(1) Encouraged By or Embittered By, Reminders?

Philippians 3:1

3:1 Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.

Philippians 4:4-5

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

Reminding them. Rejoice used 8 times in Philippians. Strong idea throughout the text.

We could use a reminder to rejoice in the Lord.

Why? Jesus Christ rose from the dead. It is why I believe the bible is the Word of God and why I am here this morning.

Source: American Psychological Association, American Institute of Stress, NY

Research Date: 4.6.2012

Percent of people who regularly experience physical symptoms caused by stress 77 %

Regularly experience psychological symptoms caused by stress 73 %

Feel they are living with extreme stress 33 %

Feel their stress has increased over the past five years 48 %

Cited money and work as the leading cause of their stress 76 %

Reported lying awake at night due to stress 48 %

Causes of Stress

Job Pressure Co-Worker Tension, Bosses, Work Overload

Money Loss of Job, Reduced Retirement, Medical Expenses

Media Overload Television, Radio, Internet, E-Mail, Social Networking

Annual costs to employers in stress related health care and missed work. \$300 Billion

Stress = to experience stress or worry:

Rely on money, instead of on God. Stresses you out! No way to live.

Philippians 4:4-7

5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about

anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

What is the real problem? No God! No turning to God! No gratitude!

An anxious person is ungrateful. A bitter person, ungrateful. A person giving into their anger? No gratitude.

There is no gratitude in a bad attitude!

Bad attitude about commitment?

Good attitude is a "God" attitude - with an extra "Oh" for the surprises in it!

Reminded, there is no hope of holiness without mercy.

The blood of Christ brings perfection, sanctification.

Heb 9:22, Heb 10:26-31 (Treat it with the sacredness it deserves!)

No cross, no connection to God.

If you don't see he picked up the the cross for you, you won't pick up your cross for him!

Easter, a reminder, Jesus Christ Rose from the DEAD!

Everyday, honest with ourselves regarding our sin, we'll see our need for the cross and thus our need to live radically different - to repent, to change the core of our thinking and our mind.

Open about life, open about heart, open about struggles and weaknesses

Anderson/Smith - grateful for their openness!

(2) Justification Through Christ Or Rationalization Through Self?

Philippians 3:2-6

2 Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. 3 For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— 4 though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for

legalistic righteousness, faultless.

Huh? Mutilators of the flesh?

Self-justification. Listing off his religious credentials.

My own conversion...all the reason's I was right with God.

Acts 15:1-2; 5-11 (50 AD)

Galatians 1:6-10

6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— 7 which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! 9 As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

10 Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Galatians 5:2-4

2 Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. 3 Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. 4 You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

Cannot possibly earn your forgiveness. You don't earn a gift, but you can lose it!

Dad - wanted to win his love. Often drove me to different kinds of success, a weird bitterness, as if the more I did the more I'd fill his heart with regret. Humanistic, think our worth is measured by our "success" as a disciple, as an individual...

Christ's blood is priceless. That's what God gave up for you.

Love my son very, very much. He's Turning 1 on Tuesday. I can't imagine watching him grow up only to be crucified.

That is priceless. To God, *you could* be worth it!

Galatians 5:11-13

11 Brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished. 12 As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!

13 You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love

Persecuted for truth. The offense of the cross? Removes need for circumcision.
Freedom from the Law, but not freedom from obedience to God.

Galatians 3:26-29

26 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

What promise? Heirs?

Genesis 17:9-14

9 Then God said to Abraham, "As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. 10 This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. 11 You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. 12 For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner — those who are not your offspring. 13 Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. 14 Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."

How can a covenant be everlasting that is in the "flesh?" It can't!

We learn if you are not circumcised, you are not God's people, you are cut off. You cannot participate in the new covenant and have broken it.

Philippians 3:3

3 For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in

Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh.

No confidence in the flesh - e.g., the physical circumcision.

How on earth then, are “we”, disciples, “the circumcision!?”

Colossians 2:11-15

11 In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, 12 having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, 14 having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. 15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

When a person who has faith in the power of God is baptized, they are spiritually circumcised by the hands of Christ, their sinful nature is circumcised/removed and the written code, the LAW, get's nailed to the cross.

It says “dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature!” Faith, in the power of God, baptized, alive in Christ!

That is how we are the circumcision, it is spiritual, it is done by Christ when someone is baptized and has faith in the power of God in the very resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Got to have faith, got to have your own faith, in the power of God at Jesus' Christ's resurrection! Why I have not baptized my infant son, no faith.

(3) Living in The Past Or In The Hope of The Future Resurrection?

Philippians 3:7-11

7 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9

and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. 10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

There are no hearses with trailers hitched to them.

He who dies with the most toys...still dies.

Naked we came, naked we depart.

The power of his resurrection!

12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Christ takes hold of us, for a goal. What goal is that? The prize? The call heavenward!

15 All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. 16 Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

It is a mark of maturity to forget what is behind! Learn from the past, DON'T LIVE IN IT! We must REFUSE to let our past dictate our response to challenges instead of our future in Christ! This is a mark of maturity spiritually.

"I'm just that way. That's just how I am, because of my past..."

Mature? This is who I can become, because of my God. I strain toward the last day, the resurrection, and eternal life with my God, with my Father!

17 Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. 18 For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. 20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there,

the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Paul's example - imitate it. Grateful for the good examples around us and even from this church (Like Colton, like Ashley Godwin, like Matt and Helen, like Chris and Sonja - who came back).

Enemy of the cross, defined right here. Their mind is on earthly things!
Transform our lowly bodies?

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

12 But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 15 More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. 19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

1 Corinthians 15:20-23

20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. 22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

1 Corinthians 15:42-45

42 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 44 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 15:50-54

50 I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all

sleep, but we will all be changed— 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. 54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

1 Corinthians 15:58

58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Living in the hope of the resurrection - you will stand firm, the failures of the past and even the present will not move you from fully giving yourself.

Work of the LORD? (Missions)

2013 Plantings

Las Vegas

Jason Dimitry - Special Report from the Las Vegas Mission Team! This weekend, Sarah & I took the entire LV Mission Team to “*spy out the land*” of fabulous Las Vegas! Special thanks to our overseeing Evangelist and Women’s Ministry Leader Tim & Lianne Kernan, who came as well and absolutely poured their hearts out to prepare the Mission Team for its landing!

We all came together at the Westin Resort located at the base of the beautiful Las Vegas Lake. This “mini-conference” was entitled, Oasis Not Mirage! The goal of this weekend was to unify the disciples, give vision for this dark city, and to search for jobs and apartments. Tim kicked-off the weekend on Thursday evening by preaching a stirring lesson which set the pace for our three day retreat. So on Friday morning, all the disciples were up early and dressed in “their best” to attend interviews and fill-out job applications. Excitingly, our prayers are being answered as already four of the disciples have secured job offers!

Sarah & I also landed an apartment only four blocks away from CSN - a community college of 44,000 students, and Jeff & Lucia Eitelbach of Portland found their apartment close to UNLV - a university of 28,000 students! The evening concluded with challenging charges from our intern David Jefferson and our administrator Emilio Bonilla! Saturday started out with a

morning d-group, then it was off to “stomp the land” claiming it for the Lord at the Hoover Dam, at UNLV and at the Stratosphere! And OF COURSE no Vegas trip would be complete or righteous without a “cranking buffet,” which we thoroughly enjoyed at the Treasure Island Hotel and Resort!

After checking out the Bellagio Water Show and walking “The Strip,” the disciples left with heavy hearts, as they saw the level of degradation through the widespread public intoxication and prostitution solicitation! It became very apparent to us all that this great city is in dire need of the Kingdom of God!

The overwhelming message that I believe God wanted to get across to us is best summed up with an inspirational quote found on a monument at the Hoover Dam that described the sacrifice and commitment of the workers who built it, “They died to make the desert bloom.” After a weekend of inspirational preaching and discipling, I can say confidently that the hearts of the disciples are ready to go in the desert and die to themselves so that the Kingdom of God can BLOOM in Las Vegas. (John 12:24-26) Please, please pray for the soon-to-be Las Vegas International Christian Church, as our official send-off is April 14, 2013 at the City of Angels All Congregational Service, and our Inaugural Service will be – Lord willing – on May 19, 2013! And to God be the glory!

Sydney Planting

Ongoing Support

Africa – Kinshasa

Lola Lof of Kinshasa: Greetings from the Lord’s mighty prayer warriors in the Democratic Republic of Congo! The Kinshasa Church is determined to help Congolese disciple parents in the education of their children according to the Scriptures, as children are the true happiness of the family! (Psalms 127:3) This was the topic of our workshop. Micky did a great job in teaching and challenging the audience, as he was assisted by our awesome sister Marthe Mupala, who was the speaker for the women classes! It was wonderful!

Then on Sunday almost 370 attended the service, as Micky preached a powerful sermon entitled, Raising Awesome Kids! Of note, the waters of baptism were stirred again, as Julie was plunged into this refreshing water of hope! She is the fruit of neighborhood evangelism, because she lives in the same street with our awesome couple John & Chantal Itetsi. To God

be all the glory!

India - Chennai, Mumbai, New Dheli

Raja Rajan of Chennai: Greetings from Southern India! Last Sunday, we had a record "non-push" attendance of 107, while meeting in family groups! So exciting is that three more souls have been added to His Kingdom! Varun, a young man of 17 years, who ran away from home after fighting with his parents was desperately seeking God. When his parents heard the news that he is becoming a Christian they too wanted to celebrate! Today, our first baptism was Felix - a sophomore from the prestigious Madras Christian College!

Next, Vignesh - who just graduated as an Aeronautical Engineer - also entered the waters of the Indian Ocean to be baptized into Christ!

Excitingly, more great news from the New Delhi Remnant Group! Evelin, the mother of Neha and Barkha, made the decision to become a Christian and was baptized! Please continue to keep the 1.2 billion lost souls of India in your prayers!

Kiev

Manila

Mexico City

Paris

Anais Laurent of Paris: Bonjour mes frères et sœurs! God has indeed shown Himself to be great here in Paris! We are so excited as this past week our dear sister Carine was baptized!!!!!!!!!! She used to take a salsa class with our sister Sandra, but recently fell out of contact until Carine "happened to walk by" the cafe where we have Bible Talk! (Acts 17:26-27) Since then, her heart to give-up everything and let Jesus truly be Lord has been so inspiring that her mom is now studying the Bible and several of her friends have already come out! To God be all the "gloire!"

Santiago

Sao Paulo

NEWS FLASH! Raul Moreno of Sao Paulo: "At the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace!" (Romans 11:5) God's plan has always been to gather His faithful remnant, so that God could bless the earth with the knowledge of Him! (Isaiah 11:9-12) In 1987, the Sao Paulo (International) Church of Christ (ICOC) was planted. By 2001, this vibrant congregation numbered 3,200 disciples with an attendance of 5,000, as well as having planted six other

ICOC congregations around Brazil!

However, at the “Unity Meeting” in LA in November 2002, the ICOC returned to a more “Mainline Church of Christ theology” abandoning the Biblical teachings of Kip McKean upon which the ICOC (Boston) Movement had been built such as discipling, a central leadership and Jesus’ vision of the evangelization of the nations in this generation. In fact, the return to Mainline theology was so complete that most ICOC congregations changed their name from “International Church of Christ” to “Church of Christ!”

In February 2003 just three months after the “Unity Meeting” where the ICOC Central Leadership was dissolved and called “unbiblical,” the Kreite Letter became the match that set-off an explosion of bitterness throughout the world in “what was left of the ICOC.” So, not only did the former Sao Paulo ICOC Church fall to 800 members, but they became autonomous and most who stayed grew “lukewarm.” Then a short time later, its 12 sectors separated and became autonomous from each other as well!

One of those sectors - the East Sector - became the Artur Alvin Church, which was led by Renato & Maria Jose Tria. Since Renato has always believed that there needed to be “a movement” to evangelize the world, it is not surprising that certain leaders in the Sao Paulo Church of Christ tried to fire the Trias, but “Renato’s” congregation stood by him! Then, a little over two years ago, Renato reached out to Kip on Facebook! From that time, Kip, Lynda & I have studied the Scriptures with the Trias about God’s remnant through the centuries.

So it was very exciting last week when Renato & Maria Jose courageously called their whole church of about 90 “on the roster” to join God’s new movement! Although this was their membership on paper, only about 40 were attending Midweek Services showing its true membership. Unfortunately, the Financial Board did not want to be called back to “total commitment,” and they opposed Renato by coming to the front and speaking out loud to the church after Renato made this announcement last Sunday! For the last eight days, they have conjured up terrible lies about Renato’s & Maria Jose’s characters, and have “poisoned” many in the church. (Acts 14:2)

That said, for us in the Sao Paulo International Christian Church, today was historic as Renato & Maria Jose Tria officially joined God’s Modern Day Movement by placing membership along

with five other courageous souls! The Trias are “heroes in the faith” throughout Brazil, as they have been in the fulltime ministry for 15 years! God used them to plant the Recife (Brazil) ICOC Church; to lead the Belo Horizonte (Brazil) ICOC Church to over 500 disciples; as well as leading various sectors in the Sao Paulo ICOC Church!

Sunday was amazing! The group that came from Renato’s congregation was so happy! One of the mothers told me that she felt like how she did the very first time she came to church! Renato & Maria Jose were happy too! We gave them a huge basket of fruit saying that they will see much, much more fruit to come! Pray because at this time we are “counting the cost” with each disciple from Renato’s church, who wants to place membership in the next few weeks! Truly, God is gathering His remnant!

Ministry Training, Travel and Relocation

Argo and Anu Arenson - Russia

Kyle and Joan Bartholomew - Manila Planting

Tyler and Shay Sears - Dallas, Tx

Oleg and Alianna Sirotkin’s - Moscow

Joe and Kerry Willis - Sydney

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

13 Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. 14 We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 15 According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage each other with these words.