

Cape Coral
Church of Christ
1010 S.W. 20th Avenue
Cape Coral, Florida 33991
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http://www.thelordsway.com/capecoralfl

Schedule of Services

Sunday: Bible Study: 9:30 A.M.

Worship: 10:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday: Bible Study: 6:00 P.M.

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Have You Conquered?

"Death has been swallowed up in victory. 'Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?' The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:54-55).

It's that time of year that scary images will be coming across your TV screen and terrifying creatures knocking on your door. No, I'm not talking about the upcoming election. It's Halloween, the day the world glorifies death and violence as the most powerful force they know. This should leave Christians scratching their heads because death is a defeated enemy and love has been shown as the force that even moves God to action.

After all, who fears Redcoats banging down the door anymore? That conflict is past. Or who is tensed about the outcome of a Super Bowl over ten years ago? Death held power over mankind from Adam to Christ, but Jesus conquered death with eternal life over 2,000 years ago. The cross is overwhelmed; life reigns; victory is ours. So, when you see a zombie or horrifying image enter your home, know that death's time is over! Have you conquered death through Christ?

Trust in the Lord

In a powerful Psalm, David expressed the distress we all feel at times and gives us the encouragement that we need to endure.

> Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, And wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord, and do good; So shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed (Psa. 37:1-3).

No one who seeks to please God with every fiber of his being can miss how wicked the world about him is. As Paul described it in his day, "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:16). It is hard to live in a nation where God was once honored by the average person but has now decayed to the point that evil is exalted, and righteousness debased. David knew in Psalm 37 how much the wicked detested the holy and that his despite for the just led him to plan evil against him. "The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth" (Psa. 37:12). You and I are treated the same way by the wicked today.

The message of David in this Psalm, though, is "do not despair." God is on the side of those that love Him. After those frightening words in verse 12, the Psalmist wrote, "the Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming" (Psa. 37:13). The wicked would draw out his sword, but it would enter his own heart. The wicked may seem to have the upper hand at times, but the righteous will prevail in the end. "The Lord knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be forever" (Psa. 37:18).

David reminds us that God orders the steps of a good man, and though he might occasionally fall, he will not be cast down because the Lord will hold him up (Psa. 37:23-24). On and on, the psalmist goes, rejoicing over the victory of the righteous and the judgment of his oppressor. He concludes this powerful Psalm by saying that the transgressors shall be destroyed together, but the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord (Psa. 37:38-39).

All around us, it is evil, all the way from despising the public servants in blue, whose difficult job it is to uphold the law, to the unbelievable wickedness now declaring that a baby is not a human being even after he is born until he reaches a certain age. It is not easy to deal emotionally with such situations. Still, we must not let

it destroy our faith because, in the end, the wicked of our day, just like those of David's day, will be destroyed, and the righteous of every age will enjoy that eternal inheritance of which David spoke. Take heart and trust in the Lord!

A Tall Order

Are you ready for a challenge? How about this one? "Therefore be imitators of God as beloved children" (Eph. 5:1). That's a tall order, is it not? Clement of Alexandria daringly said that the true Christian wise man practices being God. But if we are to be imitators of God, we must know something about Him.

God is Love. "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:8). We must learn to love as God loved us. Among other things, it means "to let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:31-32). Am I kind? Am I tenderhearted? Do I forgive others? Am I imitating God in His love?

God is Light. "This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). We, at one time were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light" (Eph. 5:8). In the very next verse the apostle Paul reminds us that the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true. Am I imitating God by walking in the light?

God is Wisdom. "With God are wisdom and might; he has counsel and understanding" (Job 12:13). If we imitate God, this wisdom will give us the ability to make the right choice. "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:15-16).

Am I an imitator of God? Do I walk in love? In Light? In Wisdom?

When Christians Help Christians

One of the great blessings of being part of the Lord's church is knowing that we do not have to face life alone. God has placed Christians together so that we can strengthen, encourage, comfort, and help one another. Paul wrote, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill

the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). Every Christian carries burdens. Some are visible, while others are hidden. A faithful Christian does not simply ask, "How are you?" We should be willing to help carry the load.

Sometimes that help is physical. First John 3:17 asks, "But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?" If we have the ability to help a brother or sister, love should move us to act.

Sometimes the need is emotional. Paul commanded, "Comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all" (1 Thessalonians 5:14). A visit, a phone call, a meal, or a few encouraging words may be exactly what someone needs to keep going.

Sometimes the need is spiritual. Galatians 6:1 teaches that when a Christian is overtaken in sin, those who are spiritual should seek to restore that person "in a spirit of gentleness." Helping one another includes caring enough to encourage faithfulness.

Jesus said, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). Christian love should be seen, not merely spoken. Look around the congregation. Who is struggling? Who is lonely? Who needs encouragement? Who needs help?

"Through love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13). When Christians help Christians, burdens become lighter, faith becomes stronger, love becomes visible, and the church becomes what God intended it to be.

The Avenue of Prayer

The story is told of the ship's captain of the long ago who became dangerously ill while at sea. He had a well supplied medicine chest but he had failed to bring along a doctor.

He set the ship's telegraph to work until a doctor could be found. North, south, east, and west went the message until finally a doctor was found. The doctor prescribed medicine and the captain's life was saved.

Now, let us notice a striking difference between the operator of the wireless and the Christian who prays to God. The former sends a message hoping someone will hear. He knows not where his message is going. He knows not if it will be received. However, he who prays knows who will hear and knows his request will be considered by a loving Father.

My brethren and friends, let us take full confidence in the avenue of prayer which God has given. As the penman says, "The prayers of the righteous avail much" (James 5:16; Prov. 15:29).