



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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Unexpected

"No one is so brave that he is not disturbed by something unexpected." - Julius Caesar

Centuries ago the Proverbs stated, "Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth" (Prov. 27:1). The United States of America got a hard lesson in this very thing on September 11, 2001. This calamity caused 2,977 souls to be ushered into eternity before they were ready. How disconcerting it is to contemplate that one can enter into a day, fully expecting to lie again in bed when nightfall comes. Tragedies, accidents, sudden illnesses, no, we are not ready for them when they strike.

Isn't it ironic how we preach to folks time and again about the importance of always being ready in the event that our Lord comes, or that we leave this world through death? When tragedy strikes, we are shocked and dismayed.

When those precious souls awoke on Sept. 1, 2001, in their wildest dreams or imaginations, do you think they were aware it was their last day? Isn't it interesting that Scripture warns about boasting? The Proverbs warn of it with the unexpected, and James warns of it when contemplating the brevity of life. "Whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away" (James 4:14).

The events of 9/11 should cause all of us to take a more humble stand in life. That day of tragedy serves as an unpleasant reminder that we are not as invincible as we have convinced ourselves to be. True, we live in a great nation. We have extraordinary military might and sophistication. But even we were fooled into complacency. Let's use the memory of this unexpected event to remind us that one day our Lord will return. He Himself said, "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming" (Matt. 24:42).

The Covenant of Circumcision

From the time of Abraham, circumcision was required for one to be in covenant relationship with God. "And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant" (Genesis 17:9, 10, 14). So the uncircumcised male would be cut off from his people, an outcast, because he had broken the covenant.

The same is true today. So many literal, material practices that were a part of Judaism, have a spiritual application in Christianity: the Holy Place pictures the Church; the Most Holy Place, Heaven; the Candlestick, the Light of God's Word; the Table of Shewbread, the Lord's Supper; the Altar of Incense, Prayer, etc. The covenant of circumcision has its fulfillment also. Even today, those who are not circumcised are not in covenant relationship with God. Let Paul explain.

Spiritual Circumcision. Writing to Christians (those in covenant relationship with God) Paul writes, "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (Colossians 2:11). How had these Christians been circumcised? A circumcision "made without hands" must be spiritual in nature. The circumcision of Christ. What is Paul talking about? Read the next verse. Always read the next verse.

The Circumcision of Christ. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (Colossians 2:12). In Judaism, circumcision was accomplished with the hands. Spiritual circumcision is made without hands. In circumcision under Judaism, there was a

putting away of the flesh of the foreskin. In spiritual circumcision, there is a putting away of the sins of the flesh. Baptism is to the Christian what circumcision was to the Jew.

The Like Figure. In baptism there is a putting away of the sins of the flesh. In baptism there is a death, burial, and resurrection: death to sin, burial in water, and resurrection to newness of life. Jesus said that when He comes again, all the dead will be raised. "And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:29). There are only two ways to come forth from the grave: to life, or to damnation. We must experience the first resurrection (from baptism) in order to escape the second death (the resurrection to damnation).

Spiritual circumcision (baptism) is just as essential today as fleshly circumcision was under the law of Moses.

Do Not Repay Evil for Evil

What do you do when you have been unjustly attacked by someone?

The book of Proverbs goes against what our natural instincts would tell us to do. We are told, "The vexation of a fool is known at once, but the prudent ignores an insult" (Proverbs 12:16). "Hatred stirs up strife," says the wise man, "but love covers all offenses" (Proverbs 10:12).

Jesus told us to turn the other cheek and to love our enemies (Matthew 5:38-48). He told us to treat others the same way we would want to be treated (Matthew 7:12). He taught us to forgive and to receive back the one who has wronged us as God has forgiven us and received us back (Matthew 18:21-35).

That's risky though. Believing the best in people who have hurt you usually means being hurt again. Opening yourself up to those who have already hurt you almost guarantees that you're going to endure further suffering.

But isn't that what it means to "take up the cross?" Nails hurt. Forgiveness is painful. We are absorbing the pain and giving up the right to justice. Love and mercy involves great risk and comes at a high cost to our hearts.

Do it anyway. Open your heart. Overcome your fear. Crucify it. Remove the judgment. Invite your enemy back in.

Let us remove all pride from our hearts this day and help us to replace anger with compassion ... to replace revenge with mercy.

Jesus Conquered Death!

"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15).

A Christian can sing the song, "Victory in Jesus" for good reason. No other victorious banner flies as high as the empty tomb. Without Jesus' death, there would have been no resurrection ... without Jesus' resurrection, His death would have been no different than anyone else's. The resurrection declared Jesus to be the Son of God with power (Romans 1:4). Power over sin, power over Satan, and power over death itself. The keys of freedom from death and Hell reside in His hands alone (Revelation 1:18). Those who believe in Him shall live forever more despite the temporary death we face (John 11:25-26). What was accomplished by the resurrection of Jesus will one day be accomplished across the board when the Conqueror of death returns to finish what was started (1 Corinthians 15:26). Jesus didn't cheat death, He conquered it!

Begin Today!

Dream not too much of what you will do tomorrow,
How well you will work perhaps another year;
Tomorrow's change you do not need to borrow
Today is here...

Boast not too much of mountains you will master,
The while you linger in the vale below;
The dream is well, but plodding brings us faster
To where we go...

Talk not too much about some new endeavor
You mean to make a little later on;
Who idles now will idle on forever
Till life is done...

Swear not some day to break some habit's fetter,
When this old year is dead and passed away;
If you have need of living wiser, better...
Begin Today!