

Pastoral REFLECTIONS

December 29, 2024

The Crown of Faithfulness



By the grace of God and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, we have completed another year. No matter the challenges or the pain of losing loved ones, the Lord has provided the strength and wisdom to make it through. I would like to thank the elders, deacons, staff, ministers, ministry leaders and all those who served faithfully all year long. I would also like to thank those who faithfully by way of their finances and prayers supported the Lord's ministry. It is your faithful service, giving, and prayers that have blessed us to make it all year long.

Being faithful does not mean that everything in these individual's lives went well, by no means! This is why the Apostle Paul describes faithfulness as a 'pressing to the mark' (Philippians 3:12-16), 'the fight of the faith' (2 Timothy 4:8), and the writer of Hebrews would say is a 'race to run' (Hebrews 12:1-3). Faithfulness takes courage to remain obedient during life's challenges, commitment to the Lord's vision, and a willingness to endure suffering while using one's spiritual gifts to bless others. It is for this reason faithfulness provides great eternal rewards.

Everyday we go to work and receive a temporary paycheck, it can consume our lives. Like I said repeatedly when teaching Revelation, Satan cannot stop those who are saved from going to heaven, but he can use the challenges of this life to take away our heavenly rewards. This is why after taking us through the 'Hall of Faith' in Hebrews Chapter 11, the writer instructs us 'to keep our eyes fitted...'. Paul remained so purposeful he said, "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain." (Philippians 2:21) This is not a temporal gain, it is eternal and does not require any more work once earned.

There is so much to gain; the 'Crown of Life,' (faithfulness through trials; James 1:12; Revelation 2:10; 3:11), the 'crown of righteousness,' for 'fighting the faith of the faith' (2 Timothy 4:8), the 'incorruptible crown,' (1 Corinthians 9:25) for being disciplined to apply God's word daily in the midst of life's rat race, and the 'crown of glory,' for faithful elders (1 Peter 5:4).

Not only do we receive crowns, for all those who faithfully served, they will wear white robes (Revelation 3:5,18; 6:11; 7:9,13), not be naked or poor (no rewards; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15) in heaven (Revelation 3:17). Those who remain faithful despite numerous trials, will sit with Christ on His throne as overcomers (Revelation 3:21-22; 21:5-7). This is why Paul says, "discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, I myself will not be disqualified." (1 Corinthians 9:27).

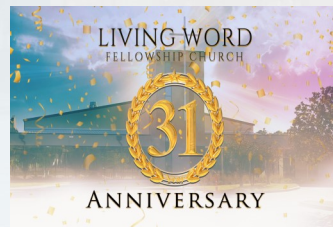
Thanks to all of you, including your children and youth who did not hesitate to serve the Lord. I pray that God blesses you and your family, especially as we approach this new year!!

TO GOD BE THE GLORY!!

UPCOMING Events



DEACON FAMILY FELLOWSHIP TODAY!
Living Word Family, join our church body today after service for the last Deacon Family Fellowship of the year. End your year in community with joy, fun, love, and fellowship! For more information, contact **Rashaud Hudson** or **Keron Brown** at keron.brown@lwfellowshipchurch.org



CHURCH ANNIVERSARY—31 YEARS!
Living Word, thank God for 31 years of Faithfulness to our church, ministry, and families. Celebrate our 31st Church Anniversary on Sunday, January 12, 2025 with two services at 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. Make sure to join us in Fasting and Prayer (January 5th-11th) and for the LIT Prayer Revival (January 7th—10th). For more information, contact **Keron Brown** at keron.brown@lwfellowshipchurch.org



CHURCH FAST—JAN. 5TH-11TH, 2025
It's time to start 2025 in fasting and prayer Jan. 5th-11th. As a church, we fast and pray in community the week before our church anniversary. The method of fasting is your choice, some choose the Daniel Plan, some fast from certain foods or at certain times. Break the fast with your Deacon Families Saturday, January 11, 2025. For more information, contact **Keron Brown** at keron.brown@lwfellowshipchurch.org



THE LIT PRAYER REVIVAL—Jan. 7TH-10TH
The LIT Prayer Revival allows us to start the new year as a community in prayer. Join us each night at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 7th—Friday, January 10th for praise and worship, prayer and a message from Pastor Rodney Maiden from Providence Baptist Church in Cleveland and Euclid, Ohio. Don't miss this time to start your new year in community with your church family in prayer.



JOIN THE NET TEAM
Join our NET Evangelism Team that goes out to spread the gospel in the community. We have opportunities for you to serve on the street team that goes out, on the hospitality team that provides refreshments, or on the phone team that makes phone calls to spread the good news of Christ. For more information sign up on the events page of the website or contact **Pastor Duane Lawrence** or **Omari Dawson**.



ORDER OF WORSHIP

Announcements

Communion

Worship In Giving

Offering boxes are located at all perimeters under crosses

Special Music

"New Land, New Me"

Joshua 23:1-8

Assistant Pastor Pierre Cannings, Ph.D.

Click "Sermon Notes" on the Website

Call to Discipleship

Please remain seated at this time

Visitor's Welcome

Benediction

Children are now required to check-in upon arrival. Please report to the registration desk located in the children's wing.

Infants—6th grade



MIDDLE SCHOOL - HIGH SCHOOL



New Land, New Me Joshua 23:1-8

I. New Land v.1

- a. Rest - to secure repose, rest
 - i. Some 10 or 20 years after the end of the Conquest and distribution of the land Joshua
 - ii. The "long time" harks back to 22:3; the idea of "rest" echoes earlier statements in 11:23; 14:15; 21:44
- b. Enemies on Every Side

II. New Land, Same God v.3-5

- a. Seen
 - i. All the Lord your God has Done
 - 1. To all these nations
 - ii. Because of You
 - iii. Fighting For you
- b. Apportioned
 - i. Apportioned- to fall down (deliberately), throw oneself down
 - ii. Inheritance inalienable, hereditary property, in the case of conquest, hereditary division of the property between an individual or the family as their share of the booty, consisting of lands
 - iii. I have cut off
 - 1. From Jordan to Great Sea to the Sun
 - 2. In v. 4, Joshua shifted the focus to his own role as distributor of the tribes' inheritances.
 - 3. Israel is the people for whom Yahweh fights against all the nations (Exod 14:14, 25; Deut 1:30; 3:22; 20:4; Josh 10:14, 25, 29, 42)
- c. Thrust
 - i. Thrust- to come unexpectedly, to push away
 - 1. Before You
 - ii. Drive Them Out
 - 1. After looking back at what God had done for Israel in vv. 3-4, Joshua would drive out Israel's enemies so that Israel could possess the land, in fulfillment of his promises (cf. Deut 9:3-5; Josh 3:10; 13:6).
- d. Possess the Land
 - i. As He Promised
 - 1. their enemies had been defeated solely because the Lord their God had fought for them. The battles were the Lord's, not his.
 - 2. Thus Israel saw God fulfilling his promises, but constantly placing a new task before his people.
 - 3. God's promise to push out the remaining nations. To "dispossess them" reaches back to Exod 34:24; Num 32:21; Deut 4:38; 9:4-5; 11:23; 18:12; Josh 3:10; 13:6 (cf. Judg 11:23).

III. New Land, New You v. 6-8

- a. Very Firm
 - i. Firm - to remain resolute
 - 1. The task is not, however, stated in military terms. Rather it is in terms of obedience to God's will (1:7-8; Exod 24:7; Deut 28:58, 61; 29:19-20, 26 [Eng. 29:20-21, 27]; 30:10; 31:24, 26; Josh 8:31, 34; cf. Exod 34:27-28).
 - ii. Keep - to stick to an agreement, devote oneself
 - iii. Do
 - 1. Written in the Book of Law of Moses
 - 2. The Israelites' success was dependent on their obedience and on the centrality of the law in their lives (v. 6).
 - iv. Not Turn Aside
 - 1. To the Right or the Left
 - 2. Despite Israel's triumphs, she had a nagging problem. Enemies remained in the land God had given her (13:1-7)
- b. Not Associate
 - i. Associate - to be among to get involved, to associate with somebody
 - 1. The Israelites were to keep themselves uncontaminated by the nations who remained among them and by the gods they worshiped (v. 7).
 - 2. Specifically Joshua dreaded Israel's conformity to the heathen nations, so he forbade all contact and fraternization
 - ii. These nations
 - 1. Not remain
 - iii. Mention name of their gods
- c. Cling
 - i. Cling to the Lord
 - ii. As you have done



BOOKSTORE

START THE
NEW YEAR
WITH A
NEW BOOK

VISIT OUR BOOKSTORE

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING
EMAIL GAIL O'NEAL AT GONEAL@LWFELLOWSHIPCHURCH.ORG



Holiday Schedules

Administrative Offices Closed

Wednesday, January 1st

No Bible Study

Tuesday, December 31st

No Life App

December 22nd - January 19th

PRAYER REQUESTS

Grieving: Tomitra Wiley & family, Arthur Latham & family, Dean'na Mitchell & family, Mary Wheatley and Carol Dickerson and their families, and Randy Hadnot & family.

Health and Healing: Lurlean Lane, Florence Wiggins, Retha Amos, Margaret Baptiste, Cici Sharpe, Eunice Johnson, Jeffrey McQueen, Eric White, Pat Crawford, Tanisha Collins, Jon Heard, Rutha Patrick, Kevin Carey, Sherri Love, Elizabeth Clarke, Clara Williams, Kathryn Ford-Cheatham, Anthony Thomas, Beverly Austin, Joshua Williams, Ruby Hunter, Elizabeth Bean, Patsy Gatterson, Joyce Newsome, Arleatha Housley, Patrina Johnson, Elvis Anderson, Cheryl Walker, Walter Banks, Angelique Hudson, Sheryle Crowe, Arnie Glover, Clarence Coleman, Diana Doyle, Vivian Phillips, Shannon Rice, Freddie Reid, Janie Buchanan, Yolanda Barnes, Rochelle Carter Brown, Terrance Ford, Robert Edwards, Beatrice Williams, Jessie Austin, and Evelyn Harvey.

New
LAND

New
ME

JOSHUA 23:1-8