

The GIPC Connection



Golden Isles Presbyterian
PCA

Monthly Newsletter Edition

Volume 7, Issue 3 • March 2016

The Personal Passion for Christ

*To what profit is it that we dwell in Jerusalem,
if we do not see the face of the King?*

THREE IS a passion for Christ which it has been given to very few to possess, but which has set those who have it apart for ever from their fellow men.

Is not this the quality which separates between Christian and Christian, which marks out some – the rare ones – as beings apart from the rest of us?

Is not this quality in the writing of the mystics which, as in no other spiritual literature, pulls at our heart strings and creates a pain of longing?

Those marvelous ‘friends of God’ had the personal passion for Christ.

Samuel Rutherford had it too, and in his bleak prison he could write, ‘One smile of Christ’s face is now to me as a kingdom.’

The trouble with the rest of us is that we are content to dwell in Jerusalem without seeing the face of the King. We are hard at work for Him; the freighted hours rush by leaving us scarcely time to give a thought to the Lover of our souls who is longing for our friendship.

And when we do not go into the audience chamber we are burdened with prayer requests – business that must be put through, guidance we need here, help there, petitions on behalf of this one or that. All important, all urgent, all worthy, but – just business after all.

Amidst the terrific onrush of the apostasy, amidst the swirl of pleasure which is engulfing the majority of those who call themselves Christians, God has His own, His seven thousand, ‘all the knees which have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.’

They are men and women whose faith and zeal burn brighter as the world’s darkness deepens. They are ready to die at Jerusalem, or anywhere, for their Lord. They are valiant for the truth, and wield the sword lustily on His behalf.

Nevertheless, few have that passion for Christ which Paul expressed in the words: ‘To me to live is Christ.’

There is so much splendid orthodoxy that leaves people cold, so much preaching of ‘the simple gospel’ that excites no enthusiasm.

People can sit and listen to the story of Calvary with dry eyes and no quickened heartbeat. *In the telling of that story there is no ring of personal passion for the One from whose head, and hands, and feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down.*’

But now and again – at rare intervals – one meets someone who, like Paul, has looked into the matchless face of Jesus, and who henceforth sees nothing save the face of his Beloved.

Continued on page 2

March Calendar

Sunday Schedule

9:30 a.m. Sunday School
Public Faith

10:30 a.m. Morning Worship
Gospel of Matthew

6:00 p.m. Evening Worship
Westminster Shorter Catechism

Tue	3/1	Women's Monthly Study (6:30 p.m., Parrish home)
Wed	3/2	Book Group (9:30 a.m., Magnolia Manor)
Wed	3/2	“1st Wednesday” Dinner (6:30 p.m., Currier home)
Sun	3/6	The Lord's Supper (10:30 a.m. Worship)
Wed	3/9, 16, 23, 30	Ladies Bible Study (9:30 a.m., Brown home)
Wed	3/9, 16, 23, 30	Prayer Meeting (7:00 p.m., Brown home)
Sat	3/12	“2nd Saturday” Men's Study (8:30 a.m., at GIPC)
Sat	3/12	Church Work Day (see pg. 3)
Sun	3/13	“Daylight Savings”
Mon	3/14, 28	Women's Study Group (6:00 p.m., Chilton home)
Tue	3/29	Stated Session Meeting (6:00 p.m., GIPC)
Sun	3/27	Easter Sunday (see pg. 4)

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There is a radiance about such a one, a glory shining forth, a wonderful quality of voice and handclasp, a fragrance unmistakable. ‘The smell of their garments is as the smell of Lebanon with all chief spices.’

These keep company with their Beloved in the place where there are a ‘fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.’

What makes the difference?

It is *not* knowledge, for knowledge puffeth up. We have knowledge in abundance nowadays. God has given us great teachers of His Word. Many of us have rejected the place where we think we are competent to pass judgment upon others, and where we say, though not as the Psalmist said it, ‘I have more understanding than all my teachers.’

But too often our knowledge is a form of godliness, the power of which we are denying because we do not possess it.

No, it is not knowledge that makes the difference, nor is it orthodoxy, nor zeal nor works.

Moses, the friend of God

What was it that made Moses the lawgiver, the interpreter of Sinai’s thunder, as keenly appreciative of the grace of God as was even Paul himself?

Just this: Moses was the incomparable ‘friend of God’ because he possessed a passion for God in an unusual degree. That passion had consumed every last vestige of personal ambition, so that when God offered him something that might legitimately have tempted him, especially as coming from the source it did, it made no difference to the man to whom God’s good name meant more than all besides.

Is there anything so sublime anywhere in sacred story as Moses’ refusal to go on without God?

As a concession to his pleading on behalf of the people who had so deeply sinned against God, an angel had been promised to guide them on the way. The Lord had said unto Moses, ‘Depart and go up hence... I will send an angel before thee... I will not go up in the midst of thee... lest I consume thee by the way.’

But Moses had long companied with God, and it was unthinkable that now the wondrous Presence should be withdrawn. An angel might be all right for other people, but not for the man who was accustomed to talking with God ‘face to face, as a man talketh to his friends.’

And so in a marvelous argumentation Moses put the matter before the Lord, carrying his point step by step until he reached the place where he dared to say ‘no’ to Go. ‘If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.’

In the grief of that sad day, how glad God must have been to find one man who at all costs wanted the best, and how gladly He must have said, ‘Moses, I will do this thing also, that thou hast spoken. My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.’ God never forgot it.

The time came when that friend failed Him, nevertheless at the end they went both together up the slopes of Nebo’s lonely mountain, communing together as they walked, and there God gave His beloved friend sleep, and with His own hands laid him away to rest until the great resurrection day.

God did not consider angelic ministration good enough that day for the man who in his lifetime would have nothing less than God Himself.

David, the Psalmist

David also possessed in a marked degree that passion for God. His flesh and his heart cried out for the living God.

His Psalms reveal this passion ever throbbing in his soul. Only in the light of that passion can the Imprecatory Psalms be rightly understood. David hated with a perfect hatred them that hate God, and counted them his enemies. Sin to him – his own or others’ – held its deepest stain and its sharpest sting because it was done ‘against Thee, Thee only.’

When we possess the passion for God that David had, we too shall know ‘the exceeding sinfulness of sin.’

Paul, the Apostle

In the New Testament, Paul is the outstanding example of the man who is dominated by the passion for Christ, as apart from his devotion to the cause of Christ.

That passion was surely born in those three days in which he was beholding ‘the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ’ – sightless days, but filled with radiance.

Paul might easily have become hard and critical and bitter in the stress of controversial conflict. The passion for the person of Christ, as apart from loyalty to His cause, kept him from that.

And so, speaking after the manner of men, we see him fighting beasts at Ephesus, and yet homesick to ‘depart and be with Christ, which is far better.’

The great tender heart of love in Paul that made him the nursing father of the infant churches had its fountainhead in his all-absorbing passion for Christ, to know the love of whom – its breadth, and length, and depth, and height – is to be ‘filled with all the fullness of God.’

There were others also.

Continued on page 3

The Personal Passion for Christ (continued from page 2)

Two humble women were admitted into that inner-most circle. Mary of Bethany and the Magdalene knew something of that priceless relationship with our Lord.

It was Mary's devotion to the person of Christ that led her instinctively and unerringly to do the thing that pleased Him.

In contrast to her love is the cold orthodoxy of the disciples who would have been satisfied if the ointment had been sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor.

Almsgiving, according to the Pharisees, was the chief element in righteousness. But there would always be time for that. 'The poor ye have always with you,' said Jesus, and His heart was comforted by the love of Mary, fragrant as her poured-out ointment.

What a privilege was hers to comfort Him in the days when 'His soul began to be sorrowful, even unto death!'

It was that same passion for Christ which held Mary Magdalene weeping by the empty tomb when the disciples had gone away again to their homes. And how wondrously she was rewarded!

Not only vision of angels but Christ Himself to gladden her heart and dry her tears; and it was written for ever that 'He appeared first to Mary Magdalene.'

In our zeal for the better are we missing the best?

The word of our Lord to us is still, 'He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself unto him.'

Up there, 'His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face,' but it is also blessedly true that He will manifest Himself on earth to those who love and serve Him here.

There is reward for the obedient disciples, there is power and authority for the faithful disciples, there is glory of achievement for the zealous disciple... but there is the whisper of His love, and there is the joy of His presence, and the shining of His face for those who love Him for Himself alone.

And 'to what profit is it that we dwell in Jerusalem, if we do not see the face of the King?'

Excerpted from *Quiet Time: An Intervarsity Guidebook for Daily Devotions* (1963)

"2nd Saturday" Men's Monthly Study

March 12th

8:30 a.m. at GIPC

The March meeting will be held at the church, to be followed by the Church Work Day. The current study is based on the book, "The Life of God in the Soul of the Church." All men are welcome to attend.

Church Work Day

Saturday, March 12th

9:30 a.m. at GIPC

The Building and Grounds Committee is sponsoring a Work Day immediately following the "2nd Saturday" Men's Study, which will meet at the church on March 12th.

All are invited to help spruce up the building and grounds in preparation for Easter Sunday.



Watch for details regarding the types of jobs to be done and the tools to bring!

"Beyond the Pages" Book Group

The Book Group meets at 9:30 a.m. on the first Wednesday of each month and is open to anyone who enjoys reading and discussing books. Meet at Magnolia Manor, St. Simons, in the second floor library of the large building beside the water fountain.

March 2nd: "All the Light We Cannot See," by Anthony Doerr

April 6th: "A Man Called Ove," by Fredrik Backman



"First Wednesday" Church Dinner

March 2, 2016 at 6:30 p.m.

In lieu of the Midweek Prayer Meeting, the church family meets once a month for a potluck dinner.

Join us on March 2nd at the home of Wes and Patti Currier, 512 Rivera Drive. Sign up in the church foyer to bring Mexican/Latin-themed cuisine: appetizers, main dishes, sides, breads, and desserts. Please indicate the name of your dish.

Loan Update

Loan Balance (as of 1/26/16)	\$700,585
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February Payment:

Interest	\$ 3,242
Principal	\$ 2,706
Total Payment	\$ 5,948

Significant Sessional Actions

- Approved vacation for Rev. Brown: April 4-19, 2016

psalm

OF THE MONTH

Psalm 22

My God, my God, O why have You forsaken me? O why are You so far from giving help and from my groaning cry?

By day and night, my God, I call; Your answer still delays. And yet You are the Holy One Who dwells in Israel's praise.

Our fathers put their trust in You; from You their rescue came. They begged You and You set them free; they were not put to shame.

But as for me, I am a worm and not a man at all. To men I am despised and base; their scorings on me fall.

Let those that fear the LORD sing praise! Give glory to Him now, all Jacob's seed; all Israel's seed, in awe before Him bow.

(from Trinity Psalter)

THIS YEAR Easter falls within the month of March, and so for our Psalm of the Month we have chosen a portion of Psalm 22, which contains some of the last words of our Lord spoken from the Cross.

Matthew famously quotes Jesus reciting the first line of Psalm 22, writing, "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?' (Matt. 27:46).

As Jesus felt the searing pain of the abandonment of God and the despair that was produced by the out-pouring on Him of Divine wrath against sin, it was the words of this psalm that He quoted to express His anguish.

David had written these words initially to express the pain of seemingly unanswered prayer in the face of humiliation. But as Christ quoted these words on the Cross He did so expressing true abandonment as He bore the hell of God's wrath against the sins of His people in the midst of the utter humiliation of being killed by His very own creatures.

These words of David, which came to fulfillment on the lips of Jesus, capture succinctly and vividly the horror of the Cross. Bishop J. C. Ryle put it like this, "Let the expression sink down into our hearts, and not be forgotten. We can have no stronger proof of the sinfulness of sin, or of the vicarious nature of Christ's sufferings, than His cry, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' It is a cry that should stir us up to hate sin, and encourage us to trust in Christ."

As we learn this psalm, there are several things that we should take note of. First, we should **ADORE** God for His willingness to accept a substitute in our place, and for Christ's willingness to be that substitute and bear the wrath of God against our sins. Nowhere do we see the grace of God more vividly than at the Cross.

Secondly, we are led to **CONFESS** our sin that held our Savior on the Cross. We must confess that it was for our sins that Christ died, and we must also confess that too often we hold a light view of sin that forgets its cost.

We must, thirdly, give **THANKS** to God that we never have to fear such abandonment by God because Christ was abandoned in our place.

We now have perfect confidence to "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (Heb. 10:22).

Finally, we are led to pray in **SUPPLICATION** that the Church of Christ would be ever more struck by the enormity of Christ's dereliction on the Cross and be driven by it to a pursuit of holiness, and that many more would hear this Gospel and be brought into Christ's Kingdom, having their sins forgiven by faith. ▪

Easter Sunday Schedule

March 27, 2016

6:30 a.m.

Sunrise Service (SSI Pier)
(sponsored by area churches)

No Sunday School

10:30 a.m. at GIPC

Service of Lessons and Hymns

Violinist Luis Haza

12:00 noon

Easter Lunch at the Browns

413 Couper Avenue

No Evening Service

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Westminster Shorter Catechism

1 year plan: Study Q & A:

Week of March 6: 18

Week of March 13: 19, 20

Week of March 20: 21

Week of March 27: 22, 23

2 year plan: Study Q & A*:

Week of March 6: 10

Week of March 13: 11

Week of March 20: 12

Week of March 27: 13

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Question #18

Question: Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate into which man fell?

Answer: The sinfulness of that estate into which man fell consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called Original Sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Question #19

Question:

What is the misery of that estate into which man fell?

Answer: All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under His wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Question #20

Question: Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

Answer: God having, out of His mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Question #21

Question:

Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

Answer:

The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man and so was, and continues to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever.

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Question #22

Question: How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

Answer: Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to Himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Question #23

Question:

What offices does Christ execute as our Redeemer?

Answer:

Christ, as our Redeemer, executes the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in His estate of humiliation and exaltation.

*WSC Q & A are available online in the GIPC monthly newsletter archives at: gipc-pca.org/newsletters.

Rev. Brown is preaching through the questions each Sunday evening.

Sermons are available at: gipc-pca.org/sermons.

MARCH

"Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart." (Luke 2:19)

Family Worship

Old Testament Reading

Date	Book	Chapter	✓
1	Exodus	12:22-51	<input type="checkbox"/>
2		13	<input type="checkbox"/>
3		14	<input type="checkbox"/>
4		15	<input type="checkbox"/>
5		16	<input type="checkbox"/>
6		17	<input type="checkbox"/>
7		18	<input type="checkbox"/>
8		19	<input type="checkbox"/>
9		20	<input type="checkbox"/>
10		21	<input type="checkbox"/>
11		22	<input type="checkbox"/>
12		23	<input type="checkbox"/>
13		24	<input type="checkbox"/>
14		25	<input type="checkbox"/>
15		26	<input type="checkbox"/>
16		27	<input type="checkbox"/>
17		28	<input type="checkbox"/>
18		29	<input type="checkbox"/>
19		30	<input type="checkbox"/>
20		31	<input type="checkbox"/>
21		32	<input type="checkbox"/>
22		33	<input type="checkbox"/>
23		34	<input type="checkbox"/>
24		35	<input type="checkbox"/>
25		36	<input type="checkbox"/>
26		37	<input type="checkbox"/>
27		38	<input type="checkbox"/>
28		39	<input type="checkbox"/>
29		40	<input type="checkbox"/>
30	Leviticus	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
31		2,3	<input type="checkbox"/>

MARCH

"Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart." (Luke 2:19)

Family Worship

New Testament Reading

Date	Book	Chapter	✓
1	Luke	15	<input type="checkbox"/>
2		16	<input type="checkbox"/>
3		17	<input type="checkbox"/>
4		18	<input type="checkbox"/>
5		19	<input type="checkbox"/>
6		20	<input type="checkbox"/>
7		21	<input type="checkbox"/>
8		22	<input type="checkbox"/>
9		23	<input type="checkbox"/>
10		24	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	John	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
12		2	<input type="checkbox"/>
13		3	<input type="checkbox"/>
14		4	<input type="checkbox"/>
15		5	<input type="checkbox"/>
16		6	<input type="checkbox"/>
17		7	<input type="checkbox"/>
18		8	<input type="checkbox"/>
19		9	<input type="checkbox"/>
20		10	<input type="checkbox"/>
21		11	<input type="checkbox"/>
22		12	<input type="checkbox"/>
23		13	<input type="checkbox"/>
24		14	<input type="checkbox"/>
25		15	<input type="checkbox"/>
26		16	<input type="checkbox"/>
27		17	<input type="checkbox"/>
28		18	<input type="checkbox"/>
29		19	<input type="checkbox"/>
30		20	<input type="checkbox"/>
31		21	<input type="checkbox"/>

MARCH

"Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart." (Luke 2:19)

Private

Old Testament Reading

Date	Book	Chapter	✓
1	Job	30	<input type="checkbox"/>
2		31	<input type="checkbox"/>
3		32	<input type="checkbox"/>
4		33	<input type="checkbox"/>
5		34	<input type="checkbox"/>
6		35	<input type="checkbox"/>
7		36	<input type="checkbox"/>
8		37	<input type="checkbox"/>
9		38	<input type="checkbox"/>
10		39	<input type="checkbox"/>
11		40	<input type="checkbox"/>
12		41	<input type="checkbox"/>
13		42	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	Proverbs	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
15		2	<input type="checkbox"/>
16		3	<input type="checkbox"/>
17		4	<input type="checkbox"/>
18		5	<input type="checkbox"/>
19		6	<input type="checkbox"/>
20		7	<input type="checkbox"/>
21		8	<input type="checkbox"/>
22		9	<input type="checkbox"/>
23		10	<input type="checkbox"/>
24		11	<input type="checkbox"/>
25		12	<input type="checkbox"/>
26		13	<input type="checkbox"/>
27		14	<input type="checkbox"/>
28		15	<input type="checkbox"/>
29		16	<input type="checkbox"/>
30		17	<input type="checkbox"/>
31		18	<input type="checkbox"/>

MARCH

"Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart." (Luke 2:19)

Private

New Testament Reading

Date	Book	Chapter	✓
1	I Corinthians	16	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	II Corinthians	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
3			<input type="checkbox"/>
4			<input type="checkbox"/>
5			<input type="checkbox"/>
6			<input type="checkbox"/>
7			<input type="checkbox"/>
8			<input type="checkbox"/>
9			<input type="checkbox"/>
10			<input type="checkbox"/>
11			<input type="checkbox"/>
12			<input type="checkbox"/>
13			<input type="checkbox"/>
14			<input type="checkbox"/>
15	Galatians	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
16			<input type="checkbox"/>
17			<input type="checkbox"/>
18			<input type="checkbox"/>
19			<input type="checkbox"/>
20			<input type="checkbox"/>
21	Ephesians	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
22			<input type="checkbox"/>
23			<input type="checkbox"/>
24			<input type="checkbox"/>
25			<input type="checkbox"/>
26			<input type="checkbox"/>
27	Philippians	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
28			<input type="checkbox"/>
29			<input type="checkbox"/>
30			<input type="checkbox"/>
31	Colossians	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

Women's Discipleship

Women's Monthly Study

Next Meeting: March 1st

"First Tuesday," 6:30 p.m., at the home of Cindy Parrish, 113 Demere Oaks Circle

Topic: *Women of the Word*

Wednesday Morning Bible Study

Meeting each week except the first, 9:30 a.m. at Sara Brown's home, 413 Couper Ave.

Topic: *Nehemiah*

Women's Study Group

March Meetings: March 14th and 28th

2nd and 4th Monday, 6:00 p.m., at the home of Diane Chilton, 106 Arthur J. Moore Drive

Topic: *The Four Loves*