

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Ephesians 5:8 (NKJV)

⁸For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord.
Walk as children of light.

I recently read an article that started off like this:

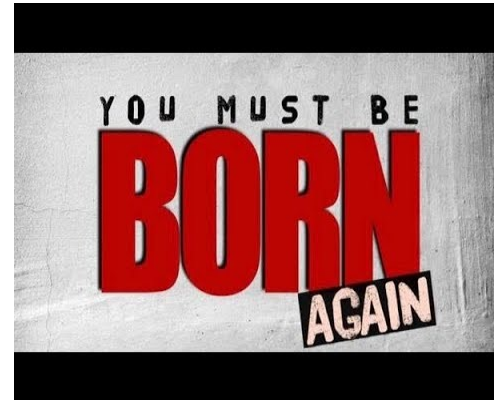
She struck terror in all who met her. Her voice, like an agitated hive of bees, stung all who came in range of it. *Her words were sword thrusts (Proverbs 12:18). Her tongue broke spirits (Proverbs 15:4). Her speech wielded the power of death (Proverbs 18:21).* All who saw her braced themselves. Her philosophy was identical to a past roommate's who, after eating too much Chinese food, would smile and say, "Better out than in." Her incivility must rumble out — no matter the discomfort it caused everyone else in the room.

And none could take offense because, as everyone was fond of reminding themselves, "That's just how she was." To complain about her was to complain that water was wet and rocks were hard. Gravity was what it was; she was who she was. Her personality, in this view, was an inflexible disposition, a scientific inevitability, something she couldn't help. To mutter against her was to grumble against biology. And well-mannered was not who she was. Politeness was not at the core of her. Rumor had it, she was born this way.

Don't Be Yourself

"Just be yourself," "keep it real," and "keep it 100" are life slogans for many in our day. And when they are, authenticity often takes precedence over courtesy, self-actualization triumphs over self-discipline, and the self — whoever it may be — is to be celebrated and never censured. And subtly, we can adopt this philosophy in the church. Even though every imperative in the Bible protests it, every identification of sin condemns it outright, every discussion of holiness and God's judgment warns against believing it, we too excuse sin tendencies as our personalities.

Oh, her? She's just strong-willed and independent. That's why she doesn't submit to her husband. Him? Don't worry, he isn't trying to be inhospitable and cold towards everyone. He's just shy and introverted. Yeah, he doesn't lead spiritually, but don't fret. He just doesn't go deep — that's not who he is. Why isn't she growing in her knowledge of God's Word? Because she just isn't a reader. Why does it seem like he flirts with every girl he meets? Don't read too much into it. He just has a playful personality — that's just the way he is. This unassailable sense of self is contrary to biblical thinking. Our personality must bow to God's standards, never vice versa.



(continued)

The Bible tells us, **John 3:7 (NKJV)** *7Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'*

Ever since the fall, being yourself is the opposite of what God desires. Since the fall, our authentic selves are unsurpassed in self-absorption; they hate God by refusing to treasure him above all things. Therefore, the authentic you is worthy of death. And this is the scandal of the gospel. It tells each man, woman, and child — whether criminal, “good,” religious, or otherwise — *that they must be born again to enter the kingdom of God (John 3:3)*. It tells us that the unregenerate man who is “keeping it real” is keeping *himself in constant threat of God's wrath and only increasing his condemnation (Romans 2:4–5)*.

Whether Mr. Rogers or Gandhi or Stalin, being the “true you” does not produce the righteousness that God requires. *We all need God's righteousness freely offered to us in Christ (Philippians 3:8–11)*, and we all need to be *new creations of the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5)*.

Jesus doesn't say, “Just be the true you.” He says, “You must be born again.” (John 3:7).

Be Something Greater

And Jesus died on a cross so that we can be born again. He bore the wrath of his Father while we were “just being ourselves,” and sent the Holy Spirit to make us new creations in him. And the Spirit dwells inside of us who are born again to cause us to increasingly walk out who we already are.

This new us is a better us than we could have imagined. We are not made to image the ideal versions of ourselves, but to reflect the image of God himself. God ordained our salvation to make us look like his Son (Romans 8:29) — a being who, if you saw now, as Lewis writes, “you would be strongly tempted to worship” (Weight of Glory, 45). So, “just be yourself” is only good advice when it means “be that person: the new you in Christ.” Paul returns here again and again in his epistles: *At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light. (Ephesians 5:8)*

In other words, Paul tells Christians to be who we are in Christ. *We walk as children of light — not to become light, but because, by a work of our almighty God, we already are. We live as new creations with new affections and joys because, by the Spirit's regenerating work, we already are new creations (2 Corinthians 5:17). And we become more like who we already are when we stare at Christ and seek to be what he is (2 Corinthians 3:18). We do not gaze within and become more of what we see inside, but we gaze without to see him — and to others who look like him — and, by the Spirit, mimic what we see (Philippians 3:17).*

Don't be yourself. Be something higher. Be who God predestined you to be. Be who you are in Jesus.

Yours In Christ,

Pastor Don

Note to self...
I will remember who I
am in Christ...I am a
new creation, forgiven,
valuable and cherished.
His banner over me is
love.



Manhattan Filet with Pan Sauce Bordelaise

Ingredients:

- 2 large New York strip steaks
- salt and ground black pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- ¼ cup sliced shallots (Pearle Onions)
- ½ cup red cooking wine
- 2 (10.75 ounce) cans low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon cold butter



Directions:

Cut all visible pieces of fat from the steak so that only the center "eye" portion of the steak remains. Set steaks aside. Cut all meat from the trimmed fat scraps, discard the fat, and finely chop the meat scraps until they resemble ground beef. Transfer chopped meat to a container and refrigerate.

Season steaks with black pepper and place on a wire rack set over a tray; refrigerate uncovered, 8 hours to overnight.

Bring steaks to room temperature and season with salt.

Heat vegetable oil in a large skillet over high heat. Cook steaks in hot oil until browned on one side, 4 to 5 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-high and turn steaks. Continue cooking until steaks start to firm and are reddish-pink and juicy in the center, 4 to 6 minutes more. An instant-read thermometer inserted into the center should read 130 degrees F (54 degrees C) for medium-rare. Transfer meat to a plate to rest, 5 to 10 minutes. Set the skillet aside.

Place chopped beef scraps in a cold skillet and heat over medium-high heat. Cook and stir until meat is browned and caramelized. Add shallots and a pinch of salt; saute until shallots are golden brown and are softened, about 5 minutes more.

Pour red wine into the skillet and bring to a boil; cook and stir until wine is almost completely evaporated, 2 to 4 minutes. Add chicken broth and bring to a simmer. Reduce heat to low and cook until reduced by about half, 60 to 90 minutes. Strain sauce into a bowl and skim any fat that rises to the top.

Heat the empty steak skillet over medium-high heat. Pour strained sauce into the skillet and bring to a boil while scraping the browned bits of food off of the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon. Season sauce with salt and pepper. Continue cooking until reduced and thickened, 3 to 5 minutes.

Remove the skillet from the heat. Whisk butter into sauce until melted and smooth.

Place each steak on a plate and spoon sauce over the top.



If you would like to share your favorite recipes with the church family, you can do this by dropping it off at the church office, or you can send them by e-mail or by mail.



What do you do on a cold youth group night in January? You have a scavenger hunt following the clues and collect some cash.



Community FREE Movie Night at Center Hill

sponsored by the Youth will be held Friday, February 3 at 7 PM at the Fellowship Hall. Refreshments will be provided. The movie will be "God's Not Dead."

The Youth played some silly games involving shaving cream and Cheetos.



As of January the Covenant Brethren Church Executive Board announces that the CBC now has 81 congregations with 7,014 members in three countries, and 141 credentialed ministers. More are on the way. This is up from 54 congregations, 4,283 members, and 96 ministers just one year ago.



Worthington Area Churches 2023 Lenten Series

March 5 - April 2

Sundays @ 7 PM

March 5, Pastor Stephen Rigatti

Worthington Presbyterian Church

March 12, Pastor Victor Sansing

Franklin Union Baptist Church

March 19, Pastor Ron Shafer

Center Hill Covenant Brethren Church

March 26, Pastor Luke Speck

Location to be determined

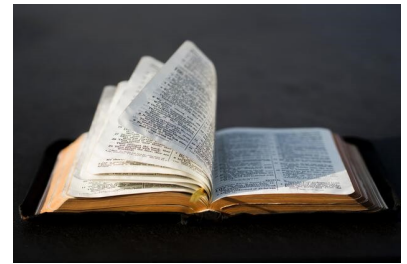
April 2, Palm Sunday

Walkchalk Salem Baptist Church

(Reenactment of last week of Christ's life)

April 7, Good Friday, Cross Walk

Starting at 12 Noon/ Route will be determined



A New Calling for a New Year...

It is good every new year to think about some new things. The Bible is full of them. And things get old soon enough. I found that out with the purchase of my first new car when I was eighteen years old. It was a 1958 Ford Fairlane 500 and it cost a total of \$2,400. Ten years later it was taken to a local car auction and sold without any reserved bid. A few days later an envelope came in the mail. I opened it to find a check for just thirteen dollars and fifty cents! What disappointment! I still wish I had that car — just for old-times' sake.

Jesus gave a man named Levi (or Matthew) a new calling. It's recorded in Luke's gospel. "After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. 'Follow me,' Jesus said to him. And Levi got up, left everything and followed him." The next thing Levi did was throw a big party to celebrate his new calling. Wow! No evidence here that he complained or questioned his Master, but accepted this new challenge.

Our Covenant Brethren Church needs a wave of new leaders to step forth and accept the challenge to become ministers in our congregations. Might you be one of these? Don't expect this challenge to always be filled by somebody else. And don't expect this challenge to be filled by someone from another congregation. It might be YOU who can respond as Levi did. If you have an inner sense God might be calling you, here are three steps to follow.

PRAY – First of all get on your knees and seek the direction of the Holy Spirit. See if he will increase the burden that is placed on your own heart. Part of your prayer should be for God to show you that you have spiritual gifts that could be used in this way.

PURSUE – Share this concern with a few special friends in the Lord. One of these should be your pastor or a spiritual partner with whom you have developed a close spiritual bond. If you are married, of course, your spouse should be included in your deliberation.

PREPARE – Become available for opportunities for study and learning that would lead you in this direction. Specific courses are being developed within the CBC that will be helpful. Offer to fill the pulpit when your pastor is on vacation.

Along with individuals who should be open to this new calling, congregations should also be taking the initiative in calling people who are gifted in this direction from within the congregation.

I once heard of a man who was gifted in sculpturing wooden images of various breeds of dogs. Someone asked him how he does it. And he said that it is very simple. He explained, "I just take a block of wood and chip away everything that doesn't look like a dog." In a similar way, that is what God does to develop ministers out of us too.

Please be open to receive a new calling for the New Year!
Jim Myer – Executive Board member





If you wish to join Center Hill Church as a member, please inform Pastor Don.



These ministries are open to everyone and are wonderful for building relationships and getting involved in other church activities. Come and join us!!

Women's Fellowship (2nd Tuesday of each month)
Men's Fellowship (4th Tuesday of each month)



"For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him..." Psalm 103:11

All-U-Can-Eat Pancake Breakfasts

Includes pancakes, sausage, eggs, toast, home fries, & beverage

Saturday, February 18

Saturday, March 18

7-11 AM



Adults: \$10, Kids 4-12: \$5, Kids 3 and Under: Free

Come out and enjoy a tasty breakfast and some great fellowship!



New members welcomed!

Center Hill welcomes new choir members all year round. The choir meets on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 PM. If you enjoy singing, we have a place for you.



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