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"Anatomy of a flower"

QUICK MESSAGE

Women's Walk in June!

Get that application in TODAY!

Blossoms from Bloom

Beloved,
There is nothing more exciting to me than to see the first flower in my garden pop through the soil. Beautiful, lush greenery standing at attention in full bud! :o) With each new day I observe the flower's progress as it stretches skyward basking in the sun! I watch in anticipation as the bud prepares for its grand opening...so much potential and glory to be revealed when it opens itself up to the world.

Do you think that our Father looks at us with the same anticipation? When we accept His saving grace we are so clean and fresh. We are "lush" in the fullness of His love. Without blemish we boldly stand before God ready for whatever the Son will have us do to bring Him glory. Our gifts and talents blossom in the fertile presence of the Lord.

All of this sounds magnificent but sometimes as we weather the storms of life, we wither, and find ourselves depleted and shrinking from the beauty God has for us. I am confident that the Father has a plan for each of our lives. And we, as Christians,

have a great responsibility to allow the Father to work out that plan in us. *We must, get out of the way, and surrender ourselves daily to the cultivating of His hands.*

The characteristics of the first spring flower speak with loving assurance. As we take a look at her, may we see how we can mirror the same confidence that she has in the Father to work out His plan and purpose in her.

The first characteristic she portrays is trust. She trusts the Lord to provide everything that she needs. So completely is her faith established in Him that she surrenders the seed of her life and dies, only to find new life within. She extends her roots downward from seed into dust...not afraid to go through the dark, dirty soil to find stability and nourishment. There she finds sustenance and satisfies the need of her existence anchoring down in the goodness of His earth.

For us to be completely satisfied in our faith, we also must be deeply rooted in Him. Likened to the flower, we have died to ourselves and have accepted the seed of His love into our hearts. Now we must exercise our faith and establish ourselves in Him. We must taste

and see that the Lord is good. (Psalm 34:8) We must find our refuge in Him and be satisfied...willfully setting down the roots of our existence in Him to find peace where growth may unfold.

The second characteristic is belief. I'm amazed to watch the first flower because she seems to come forth without fear! The elements are not always favorable to growth in early spring...it can be down right cold and dreary! How can this plant so boldly stick its head above the ground? *She does so...because she believes in Him.* She believes in the plan God has for her life and wastes not a moment to be obedient to His will. She trusts Him in the darkness of her upward growth and faces the elements with sturdy buoyancy. In good spirits she faces each new day trusting the Father for her every need.

How do we measure up to her example? Are we believing and trusting the Father to meet our every need? Or have we forsaken His goodness by embracing fear...the fear of the elements of this world? It is so easy to be frightened by the wickedness we see around us and over-
(continued on page 3)

MAURICE'S MUSINGS

Thank-you!

Probably the best example of ingratitude in the Bible is Jesus' healing of the ten lepers found in Luke 17 (read 17:11-19). These men were able to get Jesus' attention as He entered an unnamed village somewhere between Samaria and Galilee. They "*lifted up their voices, saying, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.'*" Being ceremonially unclean, they were forced to live outside the village, separated from all others, including their families and friends.

Jesus responded to their request by sending them to the priests, who served as the local health department, to certify that their healed condition could be officially and publicly verified.

Their encounter with grace should have been accompanied with intense gratitude. Yet, they simply did what Jesus instructed them to do. Some were probably, and understandably, in a rush to get home to their families. Some were probably in a state of exuberant shock. Some may have gone looking for Jesus later, but by that time had missed the opportunity to express their gratitude.

You see, ingratitude is not always a calloused shrugging of the shoulders. Sometimes expressing our gratitude is just third or fourth on a list we never get around to expressing.

But for one of the healed lepers, gratitude was his first and immediate reaction. Before running off to do all the things he'd been missing during his years as an outcast, he returned to say thanks to his Healer.

He didn't care how dusty the ground was at Jesus' feet. He didn't care that he was there all by himself. All he wanted was to thank Jesus. Nothing mattered more. Before anything else he wanted to say, "Thank You, Lord!"

As I write this we are in the middle of the season of Lent, a time we are to reflect on how Jesus suffered on our behalf. That knowledge should result in endless gratitude.

We like to celebrate Jesus' resurrection, but before He could be raised, He had to suffer and *die*. His resurrection tells us that death doesn't have the last word.

May we pause and thank Jesus, the Lamb of God, who willingly suffered, so we may approach God without fear. For the rest of this Lenten season, may we remember what Jesus endured for each of us, and pause and say, "THANK YOU!"

Pastor Maurice Mitchell

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Are you on Facebook?

Join the Wilmington Area Emmaus page!

Keep up on prayer requests, reminders of Gatherings and Walk Weekends.

Luke 3:1-9 "Do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor."

John the Baptist emphasized the personal responsibility of everyone before God. For anyone to claim salvation by virtue of belonging to the chosen people or the chosen church is just not enough. We can claim salvation, yes, but only if we make the effort to respond to the grace that is freely given us.

The mere fact of membership in the church is not enough. Indeed, it invites perhaps a more severe judgment than if one had never heard of the church (2 Peter 2:21). To be a member of Christ in the real sense of the word, to have put on Christ as a garment, to follow in his way, to enter a state of Christian living in which acts of compassion, forgiveness, generosity, and love emerge as naturally and habitually as leaves from a tree—this is what it means to be a Christian, and therefore a member of the church.

Grace is free, but living a life of grace day by day is not easy. It calls for self-control and perseverance, and many new beginnings. It is a life of constant turning to Christ and resting in his love, even when there are no outward signs of rest or of much love.

Psalms 38 "Make haste to help me, O Lord of my salvation."

Our job is to witness to what the Lord has done in our lives. The Lord's job is to take our witness, grand or simple, and use it to get to the heart of the one hearing us. Many times a witnessing believer is surprised at how the Lord uses some simple incident or phrase to change a hearer's life.

Witnessing is the most natural thing. You fall into conversation with someone who brings up a problem or concern. As you converse you remember how God helped you with a problem of your own. You share that incident. Even if you fumble with words and are certain you have made a grievous mistake, God will use your witness to encourage that person to come to him. As in this psalm, the prayer may be as simple as "hurry up and help me, Lord!" It is not the perfection of witness but the action of the Lord that makes the difference.

Ask God to provide you with opportunities for witness today. You'll be surprised.

"You are then a witness? To what? To your own infallible light and our own justice, which you have chosen. This is the exact opposite of everything Jesus ever did or taught." Thomas Merton



*Words to Consider taken from
"Forward, Day by Day" Vol. 76, No. 4,
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Contact Forward Movement at 800-543-1813 or visit www.forwardmovement.org*



BLOSSOMS FROM BLOOM *(continued from page 1)*

whelmed by the problems we face. *But, Beloved*, we must never forget what the Father has done for us. We must believe and hold firmly to the gospel truth that has been given on our behalf. In moments of weakness, we must devour the word of God, digest it slowly, and *believe*. Believe without waiver...just like the flower...and when we do so we will STAND in His glory! That is her third characteristic.

The flower at the end of my sidewalk is standing at full attention! Boasting of the love she has for the Creator! Of late, she has faced many a frigid day and night...yet, still, she stands in God's glory. She has come through dirt and darkness...even so... she stands victoriously proud and ready to display the opening of her gift to the world. She does not hide her face but boldly announces her presence! Oh, how glorious is her witness before the Lord!

As should we be, *Beloved*! We are His! And, He is ours! He suffered the agony of the cross on our behalf. His seed died so that our seed could have life! He took our place and laid in darkness for three days so we could lift our heads and see the light of eternity. We must not waiver in our faith but stand boldly in the world because of the grace that has been given to us in Christ Jesus our Lord. We must trust that he will provide for us exactly what we need to blossom and radiate the beauty He has instilled within us. When we clothe ourselves in His goodness, His grace and His glory will be revealed when we *open ourselves up for the world to see*.

Watching in anticipation of the flower of Christ that is blooming in you!

De Colores,

Cindy

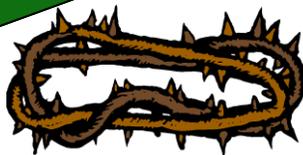


Walk to
Emmaus
THE UPPER ROOM

Wilmington Area Walk to Emmaus
Wilmington United Methodist Church
PO Box 191
Wilmington, OH 45177

SEE YOU AT THE GATHERING!
April 12

Singing starts at 6:45pm
Bring a snack to share afterwards—
when Emmaus meets, EMMAUS EATS!
Don't forget to wear your NAME TAG!
This helps everyone to learn your
name much more quickly!



Lenten Concert

Wednesday, April 20, 7pm

St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Hillsboro

John Glaze, Organ

Jennie Harner, Flute

Peggy Larkin, Soprano

Lynn Lowell, Piano

MUSIC FOR GATHERINGS

MUSIC FOR GATHERINGS

MONTH	SPECIAL MUSIC	PIANO	SONG LEADER
APRIL	Sandie Wingo	John Glaze	Kathy Holbrook
MAY	Dulcimer Trio	Jennie Harner	OPEN
JUNE	Kathy Holbrook	OPEN	OPEN
JULY	Rick Geddes		

Planning ahead! Do you have musical talent you would be willing to share with the Emmaus Community? As you can see, the months are filling up. We typically have two music specials at a Gathering and need a song leader and an accompanist. Although "piano" is listed, we can have guitar accompaniment...or any other instrument able to lead group singing.

To volunteer for a monthly Gathering contact JENNIE HARNER at 937-987-2518 or harnersewing@yahoo.com.

Let's talk about Share Group

During several of the talks you heard about the importance of a Share Group and that we need to maintain a Christ-Centered fellowship with other Christians. Through Share Groups we can help support others and ourselves and provide mutual support, encouragement and accountability in a life of grace.

If you need help in finding a Share group, your sponsor can be a source and is expected to give you advice and support. Another option is to start a new Share group with other Emmaus community members in your area.

As the Women's Good Shepherd I'm available to assist you in finding a Share Group in your community. Feel free to contact me for assistance in locating a Share Group.

Wilmington Emmaus Community Women's Good Shepherd

Ramona Smith

PO Box 708

Lynchburg, Ohio 45142

937-364-2350

E-mai l ramona072@yahoo.com

If you are in a share group please provide the following information:

Name: _____

Contact person for the Share Group: _____

Phone number of contact person: _____

Community location: _____

When do you meet? _____

This information would be helpful for present and future references to maintain a healthy and strong Emmaus Community.

Matthew 18:20

“For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

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As the Men's Good Shepherd I'm available to assist you in finding a Share Group in your community. Feel free to contact me for assistance in locating a Share Group.

Wilmington Emmaus Community Men's Good Shepherd

Jim West

5810 SR. 132

Batavia, Ohio 45103

513-625-6733

E-mail JW719@aol.com

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