

Friday, July 29th 2016

Another Good Reason For A Reunion!

Over the past couple of weeks, I've been studying in scripture about people who have tests and trials of their faith. It was in preparation for a message I am bringing this weekend. However, truth be told, we all struggle with trials, tests and temptations in our walk of faith. I've yet to meet anyone who is walking with Jesus who has not had to face the reality that something they believed God could do and hoped that He would do, but hasn't happened yet, can be very disillusioned.

I'm no stranger to some of those emotions. 25 years ago my lower back had become so painful that I was preaching from a stool every weekend and simply trying to navigate my way around any large spaces knowing that the pain which was clearly there was not getting better or diminishing after nearly four years of physical therapy and other non-invasive means.

However, when I finally chose the route for surgery there was one... make that two... things that made that experience faith building for me. One was my commitment to sustain a focused and expressive spirit of praise and worship throughout my recovery period, which was about 8-10 weeks. I found that the spirit of praise and worship gave encouragement to my heart and seemed to build my expectation that I would, one day, be fully functional and free of pain.

However, the second thing was nearly as important. There were people all around me who consistently affirmed that they were praying with me, believing God with me, and affirming the power of Jesus to complete this healing in whatever way He chose.

There's no doubt in my mind that those two things; continual praise and worship and the community of the saints drove me toward God in all of this and not away from Him. There's no way to specifically promise this, but I believe that everyone who attends our upcoming reunion will very likely have conversations with others who have gone through some kind of trial or test of their faith and learned something of the faithfulness and goodness of God. This will always result in your own experience of growing intimacy with and confidence in the goodness of God.

We are prayerfully anticipating the time together which is just 5 weeks from today!

Please do register and let us know of your intention to be here. It's so encouraging! And feel free to invite others who you think would benefit from this time.

Blessings,  
Jay

Friday, July 15 2016  
Rethinking A Reunion

When the idea first came to my mind that we should consider pulling together a reunion of those students and young adults who were part of our student ministry in the mid thru late 70's, I have to say that the idea really appealed to me. Here are a few reasons why every one of you who find your way to this website, and particularly this page, should prayerfully consider the possibility that this is an event that you don't want to miss.

First, you're going to hear some amazing stories from people who you may not have seen or heard from personally in 40 years! Having had the privilege of remaining in this area for the last 4 decades, I can assure you that this statement is true. When we are in the early stages of life, we all speculate about how people will mature and eventually "turn out," thus we have acknowledgements for "who is the most likely to succeed," etc., etc., at our graduation parties. At this reunion of fellow students who shared in a spiritual journey for some period of time, many for a number of years, the possibilities of what was before them was much greater than their academic or social achievements in high school. By the overwhelming testimony of the scriptures, God is seemingly in the specific "business" of making more of our lives than we ever could have imagined. Now, clearly, I'm not talking simply about professional accomplishment or financial acquisitions; I'm referring to the way that God has filled our lives with meaningful and purposeful endeavors and relationships.

If you come to this reunion you're going to hear stories of people who moved to other parts of the country and found themselves intensely searching for a fellowship where they could engage others with the same spiritual vibrancy that they had come to know in their high school years. Many succeeded at that and some did not. It will be fascinating to hear the stories of what God did in our lives in just that realm alone.

There will also be stories of people who took gigantic leaps of faith; leaving the traditional safeguards of family, friends and culture to pursue a calling from God somewhere else in the States or around the world.

There will also be stories of people who discovered that they really did have some unique spiritual enablements, call them spiritual gifts or just simply favor on their life from God. Whatever they call it, it resulted in them making a difference in a significant way in some cross section of our society.

Let's be honest. We are all coming into the time when we want to believe that our lives have made a difference, that the world will be somehow better because we're a part of it. However, we're also gathering together for those of us who may need an additional breath, a second wind if you will, so that we might finally discover that place of purpose and fulfillment. I firmly

believe that that is going to happen with quite a number of us as we listen to each other, seek to experience God's presence and go out of our way to be part of a culture of encouragement. In fact, that is our prayer for this entire event: that everyone would leave encouraged by the Lord!

So, if you've not yet registered, please do so right now. Make the effort to put this weekend on your calendar so that when the time comes you will be prepared not just to receive a blessing, but to be a blessing to others. The time is coming and we pray that many of you will be part of this once in a lifetime spiritual reunion!

Pastor Jay



Thursday, June 30 2016

Dear Friends,

Greetings in the name of Jesus! I hope this is not the first message you've received about the plans for a FUDD/Agape'/Outreach Reunion that's being planned for this coming Labor Day weekend, September 2-4, 2016.

There's really a lot of excitement about this event as a number of folks from the area, as well as those from other parts of the country, have expressed an authentic excitement about the opportunity to reconnect with friends and acquaintances that helped to shape those early years of our personal faith journeys.

It's not only the fact that we'll be sharing memories and very likely laughing a lot at the rather profound and yet quite simple experiences that affected so many of us from 1974-1980. What's even more important, in my opinion, is that we also sense that the Lord wants to do something new in all of our lives as we gather with humility and honest hunger born of faith.

We are trying to plan this event so that a maximum number of people can attend. Consequently we are having one long evening together on Friday, Sept. 2, and then hopefully for the majority of us, another day or day and a half at a lovely resort area in Deep Creek, MD. In both of these opportunities we are seeking to keep costs down and to facilitate arrangements for anyone who might be coming from some distance. (We've already had inquiries from Florida to California and even other countries!)

There are two things that our team would request of you as soon as possible:

1. If you believe you can attend the event, please make a commitment right away. The sooner we can establish fairly accurate numbers, the better our plans will be able to accommodate everyone who will be attending.
2. You may know people who have not yet heard about this reunion. Please help us by forwarding on this link without any hesitation. (If you prefer, send us their contact information and we will gladly reach out to them.)

Finally, I know from personal experience that none of us have gone through these 40 years without some level of testing, disappointment and perhaps even brokenness. I dare say that one of the things that I believe we can anticipate is that we will grow as much through our shared set-backs as our shared victories. So please come, even if you feel spiritually dry and certainly if you feel blessed and over-flowing with spiritual life.

Our commitment is to make this as inclusive as possible so that all of our spouses will feel included even if they weren't part of those years that we shared together. Please check back to the website frequently and if you desire to contribute some thoughts or photographs, we would be delighted in building an archive of experiences that we will share in the unity of the love of Jesus.

With great anticipation,  
Jay & Carol

P.S. If we can be of some financial assistance, please let us know. We don't want anyone to miss out because of a lean financial season in your life. If you will direct your request to me personally, I will be sure that you get a timely response with some specific and generous assistance.