



The Allegan Congregationalist

March 2024

Our church exists to introduce people to Jesus Christ and train those who already know Him.

The Single Sufficient Sacrifice

by Greg Carlson

Calendar Events:

- 3/17 Stone Soup Served on Safari
- 3/22 Ladies' Retreat
- 3/22 Seder Meal @ Trinity CC
- 3/28 Maundy Thursday Service at 7 PM
- 3/29 Good Friday Service 7PM First Baptist
- 3/31 Sunrise Service, Breakfast, & Resurrection Sunday

Inside this issue:

Soup on Safari	2
Get it Right	3-4
Women's Fellow.	5
FCC Directory	5
Skating	6
Calendar	7

Todd Wagner's powerful article "Let's Get It Right" (see further in this newsletter) ends with a passage in the Letter to the Ephesians that shows us a mighty motivation for living a life that evidences the life of our great God and Savior.

"Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do,
because you are his dear children.
Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ.
He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us,
a pleasing aroma to God" (Eph. 5:1-2 NLT).



This thought of Jesus' sacrifice is taken further in the book of Hebrews. "*This priest (Jesus Christ) had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins...*" (Heb. 10:12).

"It is finished!" declared the Lord Jesus of His atoning work on the cross (Jn. 19:30). Having died so completely and effectively for our sins, and having fully absorbed the wrath of God for our sakes, the one single sacrifice is the victorious cry of the born again believer. The Son who pleased His Heavenly Father in life also perfectly satisfied Him in death, the death that redeems all who come to God through the person, work and merit of the risen Lord Jesus.

Few truths of the New Testament more establish our feet on the path of righteousness. Indeed, believers do not live for salvation, but *from* salvation. Redemption in Christ so justifies us that God "will not impute sin" to us (Romans 4:6). He deals with us as a loving Father rather than punitive judge. He chastens us in love, but never passes sentence on those considered forever acquitted through Christ. "God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you... He has made us accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 4:32; 1:6).

The increasing knowledge of "so great salvation" fuels the heart of the believer with the very love of the Lord Jesus Himself (see Romans 5:5). Rather than serving God from merely a sense of submissive obligation, the remembrance of the One who made the solitary sufficient sacrifice causes genuine devotion to flame up within us, resulting in "the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His Name" (Hebrews 13:15). We trust and obey God with the one motivation that satisfies both Him and ourselves, namely, the remembrance of His love and our desire to respond in kind (see I Corinthians 13).

The Single Sufficient Sacrifice (cont.)

Believers live self-sacrificial lives as the fruit of the Holy Spirit's working in us. "Do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices, God is pleased" (Heb. 13:16). We also present our bodies as "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God" (Rm. 12:1). Never, however, do we view the need for any sacrifice for sin other than our Lord's "one sacrifice for sins forever." The work is done. The gift is given. The saving grace of the Lord Jesus is the sole basis of our eternal redemption, and the assurance that in this moment we may "come boldly to the throne of grace" - so long as we come by way of the "One sacrifice!"

Paul said, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rm. 5:1). All fear of condemnation is cancelled (See Rm. 8:1). Guilt is gone. In God's eyes, it is just as if I never sinned. Instead of feeling that I am sinning all the time, my heart is so full of love that it overflows.



Stone Soup Served on Safari

Engaging Families to Grow Kids in the Gospel

Please join us on Sunday, March 17 for a Stone Soup Luncheon and African Travelogue. Our FCC youth will be serving a delightful lunch and Elsie Jones will share her journey through an African Safari. Bring your adventurous spirit and prepare for some fun as we'll test your skills as a Maasai clansman for the day.



Sunday, March 17
After Church

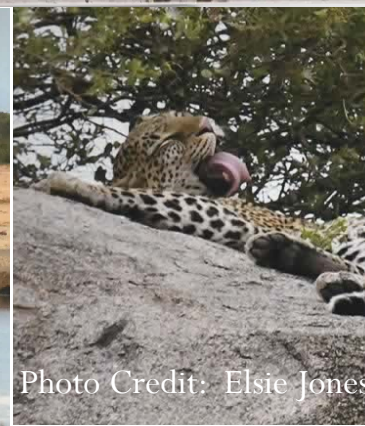
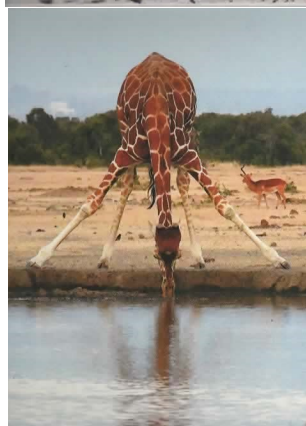
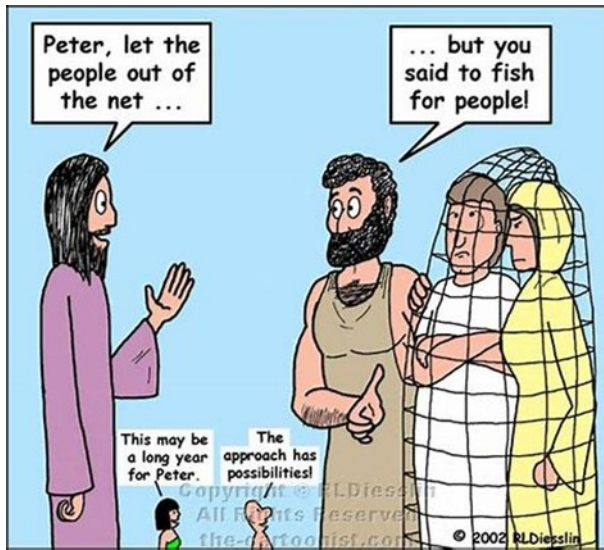


Photo Credit: Elsie Jones

Let's Get it Right!

By Todd Wagner



When it comes time to prepare something for our monthly newsletter, I never know where the Spirit will lead. Sometimes, it's through His word as I read and study the Bible. At other times through current events or something that happened in our community. And yet, there are times when we're approaching a point in our liturgical calendar that I want to focus on, such as Advent or Easter. But this month, the Holy Spirit spoke through two different mediums.

The first was through a devotional article Joanie Townsend shared with me about discipleship. The second came from a short video I watched on social media, and both seem to complement each other when it comes to how we as Christians live our lives and live out our faith.

"Every day, you are shaping your reputation. And as a Christian, every day you are shaping Christ's reputation too. What do our lives say about Christ as we walk around as His disciples?" This was the opening statement from Alistair Begg's February 14th devotional, and it is an attention grabber. Further, it begs (no pun intended) the question of how we as believers behave and live out our faith. Have you ever considered what your life and behavior say about Jesus? How do others see how you live and what you do daily? When you think about it, and I mean really think about it, you might just surprise yourself.

In the social media video, evangelist Willie Spears asks people a thought-provoking question. He asks, *"If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?"* In other words, if the government sent the authorities to your home or place of employment, arrested you and seized your phone, computer, letters, etc.; and conducted a thorough investigation, what would they find? What would police surveillance reveal about how you lived your life and interacted with others? Would there be enough evidence they could use to convict you of being a true disciple and follower of Christ? And what could the prosecution use in court to prove you were living out your faith as a follower of Christ?

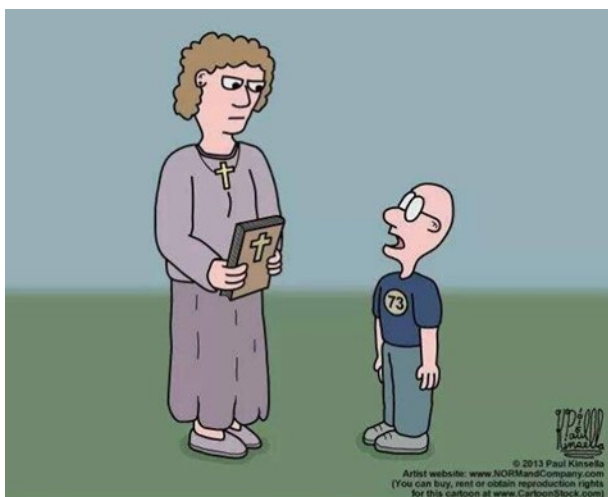
In our criminal justice system, there are differing burdens of proof that are used to find someone guilty. One is by the preponderance of the evidence. The other is by reasonable doubt. Simply put, the preponderance of evidence means that if the prosecution can prove by a weight of 51% that a person was involved with something, they could be found culpable. The reasonable doubt standard is a higher burden of proof where the prosecution needs to show a "reasonable person" that the accused is responsible beyond "reasonable" doubt.

So, I ask you, could you be found guilty of being a disciple of Christ? Would they say your phone records or social media pages were full of biblical content proclaiming the kingdom of God shared with other people, or would they say you hardly shared anything encouraging with anyone in over 2 years? Would your emails and social media pages show you sharing the Gospel and the way to salvation, or would they just reflect selfies and shared jokes with close friends? Would people testify at your trial saying you provided for others in need and never posted your works on social media? Or would

Let's Get It Right (cont.)

they testify how you showed everyone how awesome you are at helping people?

Would witnesses say that when you spoke to others your words were always savored with salt and truth, or would they testify they heard you in the gossip circles talking about others in a rather unsavory way? Would witnesses testify about you speaking of many important people, but never speaking about Jesus? As Willie Spears says, "I would hope there would be so much evidence against you, it would be proven without any shadow of a doubt that you were indeed a friend and disciple of Jesus Christ".



"Let me get this straight... God wants me to let him save me from what he will do to me if I don't let him save me?"

I concede that there have been times when I have not had enough evidence to convict me of being a friend of Jesus. And I suspect you can say the same if you're being honest with yourself. The apostle Paul writes, "... *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23 NIV). This is why I know I need a Savior! Why I know I need the teaching lead of the Holy Spirit to continuously work in my life to conform me to the image of Christ. And if I know I need Jesus, I know there are many more wandering in the darkness that need Him even more!

When the apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome he proclaimed, "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel...*" (Romans 1:16a NIV). So why should we be timid about sharing the Gospel with others? Why do we not make this our daily priority as disciples? I urge you, to start stacking the evidence against

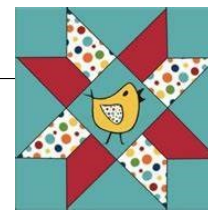
yourself so that when you're accused of being a Christian, there will be no shadow of a doubt. Commit to the mission of introducing people to Jesus Christ. Not Jesus the man who "gets us" as the Superbowl commercial portrays, but the real Divine Jesus who is both fully God and fully man. The One who gave His life for all through crucifixion and death and was raised back to life. The only One who is the Truth and the Way to Life. I pray I will be found guilty of being a Christian. How about you?

Let us do as Paul urged the believers in Ephesus. "*Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God*" (Ephesians 5:1-2. NLT).

Our everyday lives not only shape our reputation but Jesus' also. Everything we say and do as disciples testifies to Christ and how we live out our faith. So, **let's get it right!**



Each week following service, the Women's Fellowship hosts coffee and snacks to help foster community within our church family. How can you participate? Please stay after and join us Sunday mornings. Also, let Julie (269-673-4071) know if you would like to host one Sunday to celebrate a special occasion. We'll be right along side you to help with the coffee, set-up, & clean up.



An Invitation to a Woodland Retreat

Come away with us. Ladies of FCC are invited to join us for an overnight woodland retreat Friday, 3/22 through Saturday 3/23. Amy Hansen will host us at her family home in Luther, MI on the Pine River. We plan to leave the church Friday at 1 and have activities scheduled through Saturday afternoon.

Please contact Julie DeHaan at 269-673-4071 or Jacks1jr@gmail.com to signup.

Secret Sisters...a new chapter begins

Would you like to be more involved with Women's Ministries at FCC? Consider becoming a part of the secret sister program. This program is designed to encourage one another through prayer. Participants commit to praying for their sister in Christ weekly and sending a notecard each month. Small gifts secretly left on the round table may be included, but are not required. A new program to begin after Easter, organized by Julie DeHaan, who welcomes your suggestions.

Ladies Banquet

We are making plans for our annual Ladies' Banquet to be hosted in May. Do you have an idea for this year's program? We meet Monday, March 11 to finalize details and would be delighted with your input. Please join us or see Theresa Prolo.

Fundraising Ideas

In the past, we have hosted a Spring Plant Sale. This combined with the Annual Bazaar are the two main fundraisers for the Women's Fellowship. Do you have ideas? Would you be willing to help implement them? Funds are used for program activities, church projects, hospitality, and fellowship building.

The New FCC Directory

Hey FCC Family!

Our church directory is scheduled for an update.

Is our contact file accurate for you?

Please provide the office with the following:

- † Name
- † Address
- † Birthday
- † Anniversary
- † Emergency Contact
- † Phone—home / cell / work
- † Email

CHURCH DIRECTORY UPDATE



Skate-tastic!



Pictured at the skating rink in South Haven. Back Row: Milo, Margaret, Ted, Jeff, Austin. Front Row: Faith, Bella, Annika, Ivy, Chelsea, Alaina, Anderson, Lisa



On Sunday, February 25, our CE board hosted a skating outing at the outdoor rink in South Haven.

The sunrays were warm, the air a bit brisk, as folks circled around under the gazebo.



I may have been tasked with catching a photo of a Ted-terrific-wipeout. No such opportunity. Only a memory that those old hockey skates pinch more than they used to.



13 Dawn Henningson

24 Marty Nooney

29 Mark Lovett

01 Al Trutsch

06 Finn Luedecking

07 Ally Brown

Barb Brower







25 Bob & Joan Simmons

31 Ted & Julie DeHaan



Please call the office if there is an anniversary or birthday you would like to add to the list.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
3 9 Sunday School 10:30 Worship CE Mtg	4	5	6 5:45 Prayer Mtg	7 9:45 & 12:30 Food Warehouse 3-5:30 CK Dinner	8 8 Food Warehouse	9 8:30 Men's Breakfast 
10 9 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Trustee Mtg	11 5:30 Women's Fellowship	12 7 Diaconate Mtg	13 10 Senior Support Group Meeting 5:45 Prayer Mtg	14 9:45 & 12:30 Food Warehouse 3-5:30 CK Take-out Dinner	15 8 Food Warehouse	16
17 9 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Luncheon & Travelogue 	18	19	20 5:45 Prayer Mtg	21 9:45 & 12:30 Food Warehouse 3-5:30 CK Take-out Dinner	22 8 Food Warehouse 5:30 Seder Meal @ Trinity CC 	23
Palm Sunday 24 9 Sunday School 10:30 Worship <i>Hosanna!</i> 31 Resurrection Sunday! 	25	26	27 10 Senior Support Group Meeting 5:45 Prayer Mtg	28 9:45 & 12:30 Food Warehouse 3-5:30 CK Take-out Dinner 7 Maundy Thursday Service	Good Friday 29 8 Food Warehouse 7 Good Friday Service @ First Baptist	30
<p>Join us to celebrate our Risen Lord on 3/31! We'll begin worship at sunrise at Hudson Corners Cemetery, followed by breakfast at church at 9, and corporate worship at 10:30.</p>						



The First Congregational Church of Allegan

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Email: fccofallegan@gmail.com

Website: fccofallegan.weebly.com

Worship with us on Sundays at 10:30 AM!

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Fear is a Liar

You and I know that the devil is the father of all lies. This month I fell into his snare. I had made a mistake at work and would be inconveniencing others when I corrected it. I couldn't sleep, couldn't act, and found myself frozen, until a knockout punch was delivered by...the radio! Three songs, played in succession reminded me of the truth of my heavenly Father.

First, Zach Williams sung, "*Fear is a Liar. He will take your breath, stop you in your steps...Cast your fear in the fire.*" Followed by Aaron Cole collaborating with Cain, '*Cause on my best day, I'm a child of God. On my worst day, I'm a child of God. Oh, every day is a good day And You're the reason why.*" Finally, Ellie Holcomb belted, "*Though worry whispers lies but let the truth bring clear . You are stronger, love, you are stronger than your fear.*"

What an encouraging playlist for me that day. Perhaps you have your own. Friends, we serve a Risen Savior who is alive. He has defeated death. He loves you perfectly. Hold His truth and strength in your heart, casting out all fear. May the truth of His word be written on your hearts and mind in an endless loop. Go on, push play!

Fear is a Liar

Zach Williams

I'm So Blessed

Aaron Cole & Cain

Stronger

Ellie Holcomb

