

RELIGION



Elder
Richard Wayne
Wood

Sunday
School Lesson

Hope Eternal

Scriptures: 2 Corinthians 4:16 – 5:10

By the end of this lesson, we will:

*Acknowledge the hope Paul, faced with death, manifested in God's eternal promise;

*Experience awe in the faith of family and friends who are facing their mortality;

*Develop a growing trust in God's promise of eternal life through faith.

Background: In 2 Corinthians, 4th chapter, Paul addresses suffering – explaining the comfort in suffering and the means of deliverance from suffering. He tells of the triumph that Christ provides through other believers who supported him because of the Gospel. 2 Corinthians also speaks to God as the one who raised Jesus from the dead and will do the same for the believer, and speaks of the Holy Spirit as God, spiritual and physical life, and the role of faith for the believer and the perspective of the future as a resurrected saint.

Lesson: Paul says that because he believes what God's word says and because of his personal belief that God will raise the believer as He did Christ, he sees the body of believers increasing - "For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God" (4:15). Speaking to the body of believers, Paul encourages them with the knowledge that there is renewal that is available daily to believers. He recognizes the physical reality of age and its effects on the physical man, but emphasizes that the soul is the eternal part of a believer and is being renewed as the inner self of the believer continues to grow and mature in Christlikeness. He expresses that a part of the renewing process is suffering (noting his own). He refers to it as "momentary, light affliction." Paul is convinced that the greater the suffering, the greater the reward in the life to come (verses 17-18).

Paul speaks of the assurance of resurrection in verses 1-5. He contends that man's earthly resistance is fragile, insecure and lowly. The human body is referred to as the earthly tabernacle and as such is temporary, but there is "... a house not made with hands; eternal in the heavens" (5:1) available to all true believers. Paul is speaking of the new body that is to be had only as heavenly residents – that body is eternal. So, because we live in expectation of eternal glory - "we groan," longing to be free from this earthly body and the physical and mental expressions of mortality (verses 2-4). There is comfort for the believer in God's provision. The Holy Spirit is given to the believer as a precursor of the heavenly existence that will come as a part of our eternal inheritance. "... Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave us the Spirit as a pledge" (verse 5). "... while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord." We cannot live in both our temporary and our eternal, glorified bodies at the same time. However, the believers' hope is in God's Word. "For we walk by faith, not by sight." We live in faith, trusting that God is telling the truth (verses 7-8).

"For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ ..." The faithfulness of each believer will be evaluated by Christ. He expects us to find the fruit of our lives ... whether we have invested in the kingdom of God. Checking our choices, have we made choices that will please God (verses 9-10). "And, behold, I come

See **Hope** on B4

Why young people are shunning church: one young man's perspective

BY TIMOTHY RAMSEY
THE CHRONICLE

A few years ago, I wrote an article about why I felt young people were walking away from the church in record numbers. I touched on several issues that I have witnessed and why things are totally different now versus during our parents' or grandparents' generation when nearly everyone went to church.

Recently, I saw a post on Facebook where some young people were talking about the same topic. With all of the reservations young people had about the church, I felt the pandemic would have been a great way to reinforce the connection the church has with the community. From what I saw on the Facebook post, for many young people, that did not happen.

One of the young men on the post made some valid points, so I reached out to him for an interview to expand upon his thoughts. Frankie Gist recently sat down with The Chronicle and these are his thoughts on why young people have been leaving the church.

Question: Is this a trend that you have noticed recently, or something that has been happening for years?

Answer: This is something that has been happening for several years now. You're talking to someone who grew up in ministry. I did everything the church wanted me to do and I was that promising child that people said was going to be a preacher one day. All I was taught is that you have to live right and if you don't, God is not going to bless you and you won't make it to heaven. I didn't realize how bad church folk were, and it's not necessarily the church, because I want to make it clear that we are the church, it's the people inside these buildings acting like they don't have skeletons inside of their closets.

I went from church to the street, because I got hurt in the church and the streets showed me more love than the church ever did. I watched how some



Frankie Gist

of my peers and some around me, or even from afar, how church folk threw them away and they never looked back at the church ever again. It's not that they don't love God, they just don't like going to that building that they call church.

Q: Do you think your story is similar to other people that have also gravitated away from the church?

A: It's crazy how the church is supposed to be the hospital, where if I'm broken, I can be healed, if I'm confused, you can make my mind straight. So, the church is a hospital, but it's like you're going to the hospital to die, because they kill every dream you had, every faith that you had, and every hope that you had. The thing is, so many people experienced something like I experienced in the church. When you thought you could go to a church and find different, but instead you found hurt, it's very hard for someone to trust a church again. So, I do believe a lot of young people walked away from the church for the same reasons I walked away,

which was church hurt and people judging me and not knowing me.

Q: Since you have walked away from the church, do you still consider yourself a religious person?

A: I am not a religious person; I am a spiritual person. I always say that it's relationship over religion, because so many people are religious, but don't have a relationship. So many people speak religion, but don't talk about the power of having relationship. You have to get to know God for yourself and so I wouldn't consider myself as religious, I would consider myself as spiritual, but I am big on relationship with God over religion.

Q: What do you think needs to change inside the church to change this current trend with the younger generation?

A: First, the church has to wake up; the church is sleeping. And let's talk about the problems in the church, which is why the church can't reach nobody, because the bishop is sleeping with folks, the pastor is sleeping with folks, they are doing fraud,

they are doing all types of different things, and the problem is the only way the church is going to be able to reach young people is to meet them where they are. You can't go into Piedmont Circle talking Jesus if I never knew Jesus.

It's OK to wear jeans and a regular t-shirt and go out there to talk about football instead of talking about Jesus, because Mary said it best, it's the God in me. When you are truly anointed and when you are in God's favor, you don't have to say Jesus' name, because the anointing on your life should make their soul so convicted that they ask you who Jesus is, instead you asking them, do they know Him. That's when you know who's really spending time with God and who's not spending time with God, it's because the people who are spending time with God, you never hear them say 'do you know Jesus.' But the people who spend time with God, you'll sit around them long enough, you'll end up speaking in tongues and maybe asking them what church they go

See **Gist** on B4

RELIGION CALENDAR

Thursdays and Saturdays

Free Meals

Christ Rescue Temple Church, 1500 North Dunleith Ave., will serve hot meals as part of the People Helping People Feeding Program. Meals will be served every Thursday and Saturday from noon until 1 p.m. at the church's location. For more information, call 336-722-9841.

Each Sunday Worship services

Green Street United Methodist Church, 639 S. Green St., Winston-Salem, invites you to join online worship services on Sundays at 11 a.m., or in-person services at 8:45 a.m. The 11 a.m. service, which is available via Facebook and YouTube, is a celebration of the diversity of the human family, a no-frills service that is thoughtful, personal, and deeply spiritual. The 8:45 a.m. service is a quiet, contemplative space including prayer, scripture, preaching, and communion; masks and social distancing will be in effect in the sanctuary. Join us at www.greenstreetumc.org, on YouTube, or on Facebook.

NOW

Zoom services

New Birth Worship Center (NBWC) in East Bend has gone virtual. Please join Dr. James L. E. Hunt, Senior Pastor on Sunday mornings at 10 a.m. on Zoom webinar. The link is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84789021891> or Dial-In: 1 301 715 8592 ID Mtg. #: 84789021891. In addition, Sunday School is taught by Deacon James Henry at 9 a.m. via telephone conference call #: 1 917 900 1022 ID#: 868433#.

All are welcome to join us for Zoom (virtual) Bible

Study on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. Our Pastor, Dr. Hunt, will be the teacher. The Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89195349778> or Dial-In Mtg #: 1 301 715 8592 ID#: 89195349778. For additional information, please call 336-699-3583 or visit www.newbirthworshipcenter.org or visit our Facebook page.

NOW – Nov. 13 GriefShare

St. Paul United Methodist Church sponsors "GriefShare," a support group for persons experiencing grief due to the death of a loved one. The 13 sessions feature biblical teaching on grief and recovery topics. The sessions are designed to give encouragement and support to persons on their journey from "Mourning to Joy." Sessions are free; each is self-contained, meaning one does not have to attend the sessions in sequence. Seminar sessions include "Is This Normal?," "The Challenges of Grief," "Grief and Your Relationships," "Why?" and "Guilt and Anger." For information about how to participate in these virtual Saturday morning GriefShare sessions, please call St. Paul UMC at 336-723-4531.

Sept. 4

The Trinity Center of Winston Salem invites all families and individuals to the TTC food pantry (drive-thru style). TTC food pantry will be open on Saturday, Aug. 21, and Sept. 4, from 9:30 – 11 a.m. The church is located at 5307 Peters Creek Parkway. All households in need of groceries, join us every first and third Saturday for grocery pick up. In addition, please contact the administrative office at (336) 784-9347 for any rescheduling dates and cancellations.

Aug. 29

First Waightown Baptist Church (FWBC) Livestream

Senior Pastor Dr. Dennis W. Bishop will continue The Vivid Covenant series at 10 a.m. on Sunday, August 29. The base scriptures are Genesis 1:28 (The Cultural Mandate) and Matthew 28:19-20 (The Great Commission). This week's message will focus on Luke 11 and Matthew 6:9-13. The church will be observing Family and Friends Day. Members are encouraged to invite others to share in the service which can be found on YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com> (First Waightown); Facebook Live, <https://www.facebook.com/FirstWaightown/>; and the First Waightown website, <https://www.firstwaightown.org>.

Aug. 29

Family and Friends Day

The Pilgrim Rest Missionary Baptist Church, 1905 N Jackson Ave., will be celebrating Missionary and Family and Friends Day on Sunday, Aug. 29, at our 11 a.m. worship hour as Pastor Hart will conclude his series preaching from the book of Revelations. We continue to practice safety protocols guidelines; masks are required.

How to submit items to the Religion calendar:

The deadline is Sunday at 11:59 p.m. to have all calendar items submitted for that week's paper. Send your calendar items to news@wschronicle.com. You can also drop them off, Monday through Friday before 5 p.m., or mail your items to Winston-Salem Chronicle, 1300 E. Fifth St., Winston-Salem, N.C. 27101; or send them via our website, www.wschronicle.com.