

VOLUME LXXII
JUNE 2017

THE SHEPHERD'S STAFF



The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want." Psalm 23:1 ESV

*A FATHER
is neither an anchor
to hold us back,
nor a sail
to take us there,
but always a guiding light
whose love
shows us the way.*



YOU SAID IT!!!

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Grief and Rejoicing

"If you live long enough, you eventually reach a chapter in life where death seems to occupy center stage."

When I was a child, the concept of death was far removed from daily existence. It was foreign and incomprehensible. At some point (relatively early in my childhood), I was forced to give thought to this unpleasant topic.

The first funeral I remember (even though I did not personally attend) was that of my maternal great-grandfather Singleton in the 1960s. I recall the somber atmosphere in the homes of my relatives there in north Louisiana. I was told that my great-grandfather had gone to heaven. I was aware that, somehow, this event was accompanied by sadness and tears.

A short time later I attended my first funeral. My paternal grandfather Walker passed away. I knew Granddaddy had been ill for some time. I now understood that death took away a loved one. Even though I knew that Granddaddy was a Christian and will be in heaven, I became keenly aware of the sense of "permanent" loss that inevitably goes with death.


There were a few more losses in the next decade, but most were people with whom I did not have a close relationship, so my emotional involvement was minimal. And then I entered full-time missionary/pastor ministry.

The first time I had the responsibility to conduct a funeral I called the pastor of my home church to ask for guidance as to what to do.

Long ago I lost count of how many funerals I have done. I have occasionally been present for the last breath of one finishing this life. I have often cried with family members in their times of grief. I have sympathized with parents who have lost a tiny baby; I have hugged those who have had their teenager snatched away in the prime of life; I have wept when a marriage reaches the death do us part conclusion. My pain has been real as I have tried to be a source of comfort to those undergoing such loss.

In recent years, however, my experiences with death have become more personal. I have lost grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. My brother and sister-in-law have lost two sons—one at birth and another as a young man in the prime of life. Kim's father passed away, then, a few years later, her only brother was killed in a motorcycle accident. This

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<p>year her mother went home to heaven. And now we are walking through the valley of the shadow of death as we watch my dad rapidly approach the end of this life due to an aggressive brain tumor; on a daily basis we anxiously await a phone call with the news of dad's heavenly promotion.</p> <p>If you live long enough, you eventually reach a chapter in life where death seems to occupy center stage. Admittedly, this sounds morbid and depressing. But, for the saints—the children of the Living God through faith in the resurrected Savior Jesus Christ—this drama that is inevitably accompanied by tears is also a sweet reminder of a glorious reality that outshines everything we have ever seen on this side of the grave! Therefore, we say with the Psalmist:</p> <p>Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. Psalm 116:15</p> <p>Death may seem to occupy center stage for some of you, but for all the tears and sadness due to temporary separation, as a Christian you should keep your eyes on Jesus:</p> <p>...that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 1 Thessalonians 4:13</p> <p>We do have hope! That shell of a body in a casket or those ashes in an urn are just an indicator that:</p> <p>This perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.</p> <p>Our focus should not be on the perishable remains, but on the fact that Jesus gives us victory!</p> <p>When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:53–57</p> <p>I encourage you to echo with me this expression of praise:</p> <p>Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.</p> <p>Serving the Savior, Pastor Keith</p>			

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Don't Tell Your Left Hand

Does anybody truly like a boaster? Have you ever woken up and thought, "You know, I'd like to find someone who celebrates his generosity and just listen to him talk for a few hours"? I can't remember that thought ever going through my head. Jesus says that those "givers" effectively shoot themselves in the feet with their arrogance (Matthew 6.2-4):

Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.


Pretty straightforward: if you're giving to get attention from others, you're missing the whole point of giving. If you're in the habit of inviting folks over to your home to brag about how much you're contributing to this cause or that needy individual, I would strongly urge you to consider Jesus' words and start keeping secrets from your left hand.

As I sat through church this past Sunday (May 21), I started wondering how many of the saints at PCC do sponsor a child via Compassion International. Obviously, by Jesus' own testimony, if those folks pranced around saying, "I give \$38.00 a month to be a better Christian than you," this would be ill advised and not in accordance with Scripture. (For the record, I have never heard anyone in our church say that. Lay those paranoias to rest.) On the other hand, is there not a place to share what God has enabled you to do with your monies? Might it not be a way to build up the church to simply let other folks know where your "offering" budget is going?

Consider 2 Corinthians 8.2-4:

For in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints...

I'm speculating here, certainly, but I feel like this whole "begging us earnestly" bit indicates that the Corinthians were excited about their "charitable donations"! This is something they would have talked about on Sunday mornings: "Hey Philip, did you hear what

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Paul said our cash is doing in Jerusalem? Can you believe it? What an awesome God we serve!" I think the key distinction is, as is so often the case, one of attitude. In the Matthew passage, Jesus rebuked those who told simply to get attention for themselves. They weren't giving to give – they were giving to get the spotlight. In the 2 Corinthians passage, they were giving more than they had so that they could be a part of what God was doing!

There's a fine line here, but I would like to know people's passions. I resoundingly do not want to know how much money they're giving to different organizations. That's none of my business as your brother in Christ. Amounts are between you and God. I think it would be fun to watch your eyes light up as you get a chance to share about where your money goes. Too often, it seems, we shortchange opportunities to share about what God is doing out of a laudable but misdirected hypersensitivity to hypocrisy and boasting.

Would you mind if I just give you a quick run down of what God has allowed me to support?


1) Pahrump Community Church – I believe that God would have us first and foremost support our church. I'm thankful for the choices of elected leadership regarding where all the monies go. I'm glad that we support our ministries and that we designate 10% of our income to Village Missions. It makes me happy to see that some of my offering also specifically goes to missionaries here and abroad.

2) Village Missions – I love the ministry of Village Missions. I've grown up in it and see the great need for full-time pastors in rural communities in the United States and Canada. Sometimes I wish I had more to give to VM because I want to see places like Gabbs, Nevada and Bangor, California get missionaries. (It's also my pleasure to give a little extra to VM around Christmastime.)

3) Awana – Y'all know that I'm an Awana guy. To think that I get to give some of the money God has given me to help boys and girls around the world is a thrill. "Reaching boys and girls with the Gospel of Christ and training them to serve Him." Getting Bible verses into the heads and hearts of our brothers and sisters in Swaziland and China? Yes please.

4) International Justice Mission – I would encourage you to go look this group up. We read our news outlets and hear about the atrocities committed around the world. Those are just the big things. IJM fights against human trafficking, slavery, and injustices of

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every other stripe. I'm humbled to think that even my small amount of money each month contributes to rescuing preteen girls from brothels and ten year old boys from despicable working conditions.

5) Living Water International – I drink quite a bit of Dr. Pepper. It's a discipline for me to drink even half as much water as I should. I read stories about how countless diseases in third world countries could be easily avoided simply by providing a source of safe water. Living Water goes in and drills wells and tells people about hygiene practices and, you guessed it, the Living Water who is Jesus Christ.

Obviously, I'm not rolling in the dough here as your Associate Pastor and I'm about to get married. I can't give oodles and gobs of moolah to these organizations, but I do get to give a little. I wish I could give more because there are so many wonderful organizations that exist to expand God's Kingdom! Sometimes (around Christmas, usually), I'm blessed with the privilege of giving to Voice of the Martyrs, American Family Association, The Human Coalition, and Operation Heal Our Patriots. I don't share this info to wow you or to guilt you. I share it to celebrate what God is doing through even my small offerings!

Let me repeat, please don't share money amounts. Don't tell your left hand. Do take the time to praise God with others for some of the organizations you get to support. They may not know that some of them exist or they may be emboldened to take a step of faith and start sowing bountifully.

By God's grace,
 Pastor Caleb

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Have you ever been in a season where you find yourself going through the motions?

That's where I found myself this past month. I was trying to get in the groove of things without staying focused on what God had for me here.

I started skipping ministries so I could rest and I was in a funk. I wanted to do things for the kingdom of God but was putting them off.

That is until I had a conversation with my friend Elijah. He was talking to me about an encounter he had with someone down in China Town and how God was moving there. I got pumped up at hearing his testimony and kind of wanted to go with him.

He kept talking about it and invited me to go with him and a few others if I wanted. I said yes since it was the exact thing I wanted to do.

I hadn't gone in a while so all those nerves kept popping up saying that I shouldn't be there. But I remembered who I was in Christ and how God saw the people I was going to and those nerves went away.

That Tuesday we packed up the leftovers from dinner and went to China Town handing out food and sharing the gospel.

It's never as hard as I make it out to be anyways and we were able to tell people about how they're loved by Jesus. And we were able to bless them with a meal.

Have you been in a place where you feel stuck in a go through the motions cycle? Remember the best portion is always at the feet of Jesus. Don't stay satisfied going through life, share the awesome God you know with the people around you.

With love in Christ,

Ben Michael

P.s. You are a masterpiece created by God with a divine purpose and an eternal destiny.

Don't sell yourself short the power of God that raised Jesus from the dead is inside you. You're capable of sharing that with at least one person around you.

Ben Michael is a Youth With A Mission Missionary out PCC Church Family Supports



The Lord is There ... in the Corner

By Vicky Hoffmann

"For the LORD disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child." Hebrew 12:6 NLT

"and, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28:20 NKJV

Last month I shared my hiking experience and how knowing one of the names of God, Jehovah Shammah, helped me have the courage to do something scary. As I continue to mine the depths of that name, it is so very clear that knowing that our God is Jehovah Shammah, which means "*The Lord is There*", is a precious gift to believers in Christ in countless situations. One of these situations we will all find ourselves in is when God disciplines us.

Take a look at this picture. It is a picture of my precious granddaughter Anna. Can you see the pain, the angst on her face? While I cannot know for certain what she was feeling, I can guess that her sadness radiated from a tiny heart that feels desperately alone. Anna found herself in the corner. Her mother was giving her a time out. My sweet little one had repeatedly done what her mother told her not to. Now she must be disciplined, so that she will learn to obey. The age appropriate discipline my daughter-in-law chose was to have Anna stand by herself and think about what she had done. She was obviously devastated by the imposed separation, her aloneness, and wanted nothing more than for it to end. Being alone was too much to bear.

Are there times when you feel like Anna did? Do you feel the pain of being "sent to the corner" by God? Has the Father who loves you too much to allow you to continue to go down the wrong path, allowed suffering in your life to get your attention? Has the Giver of all good things removed from your grasp something you are clinging to instead of Him? Has the Sovereign God brought you to a time in the desert because you have begun to depend on the water of the oasis instead of Him?

And when that has happened, have you felt like Anna probably did? Alone, separated from the love of your Parent? The great good news is that you weren't, you won't be – not ever! Jehovah Shammah – *The Lord is There*! Because you are born again, God resides within you, He is ever present. He is now and ever will be with you. He will not leave you alone while you are refined by His discipline. "*Lo, I am with you always*", Jesus said. Always.

A word picture I think of when I think of Jehovah Shammah is the picture of The Potter. Several times in Scripture God is referred to as The Potter. And we are the clay. We are always on The Potter's wheel until we die, always being worked by His hand, formed into the image of Christ by the touch, the pressure, even the speed He chooses as He turns His pot. When we are under His discipline, we may feel the pain of the pressure or even fear from the speed of the wheel as it turns, but there is good news. We are never left to spin on the wheel without His touch, His care, His design. His hands are always on us. Jehovah Shammah, *The Lord is There*.

So dear pilgrim, when you find yourself under God's discipline, and you will, I would encourage you to do what I am learning to do: remind yourself that you are not alone. There is not a time when God will not be with you. Even when you feel the most alone, you are not. Remind yourself of that over and over again. Jehovah Shammah, *The Lord is There*. "*Lo, I am with you always*." Always. Take comfort that you are not alone. Talk to God in your pain as if He is right there, because, O blessed truth, beloved child, He is.

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*In
Loving
Memory
of*

ZOLIN



BURSON

FEBRUARY 4, 1934—MAY 20, 2017



FIRST CHOICE PREGANCY CENTER IS ... Celebrating our 20th Anniversary

Saturday, August 26th
11 am to 4 pm

FREE ADMISSION

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Water Rock Ranch

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RAFFLE Drawings

You could win a Cruise for Two

(Any Cruise Line not to exceed \$1000)



Come and see what we are raffling off!!!

Raffle tickets \$20 for an arms length.

(Must be present to win.)

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Bring the family-Lots of things to do:

Bounce House Children's pool (7 and under) Horseshoes
Swimming Relaxing

Kids watermelon eating contest (ages 5-7 & 8-12)

Sponge Throwing contest (ages 5-7 & 8-12)

Tour the ranch and see the live animals

Bring your chairs and canopies and sun screen.

Enjoy the music provided by:
Trinity Church Worship Team and Fidelis Church Team

SNACK SHACK

Food, snacks, and drinks available
(For a donation)

Parking Area is along the road (both sides)
Handicap parking available on site

All proceeds go to the Center!

If you have any questions?????
contact

Nancy Erwin, Director at (775) 513-6207
or
the Center at (775) 751-2229

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Saratoga Springs
Death Valley National Park, California
By Bob Jacobs

The bubbling waters of Saratoga Spring rise near the southern boundary of Death Valley National Park. Several springs feed three large open water ponds measuring 6.6 acres total in size. This rare desert wetland supports a rich community of plants and animals. Common reed, bulrush, and saltgrass provide food and shelter for many of the animals living here. Some of the species present such as the Saratoga Springs pupfish, are found nowhere else in the world.

Since water is so rare in Death Valley, Saratoga Springs attracts a variety of birds and other wildlife. Bring binoculars and take the time to explore this wetland area. Remember this is a sensitive habitat, so **PLEASE BE CAREFUL** and not disturb the vegetation and wildlife.

Man has lived around these springs since prehistoric times. Except for two partially collapsed stone structures in the area, little evidence remains of recent human habitation at the spring. The springs were probably named in 1871 after the town of Saratoga Springs, New York and this area was an important water source for the world famous twenty-mule teams of the 1880's. The area saw a failed nitrate rush in 1902, and similarly unsuccessful attempts to mine gold and silver in the early 1900's. The Pacific Nitrate Company arrived in 1909 and built a small camp, but left within a few years. From the 1930 through the 1960's the springs provided water for the successful talc mines in the nearby Ibex Hills.

Saratoga Springs is located in the extreme southeast corner of Death Valley National Park. To get there from Shoshone, California, take California Highway 127 south for about 26 miles. Turn right (west) on Harry Wade Road where the Saratoga Springs Monument is. From this point on you will be driving on dirt roads and a high clearance vehicle is recommended (the roads are very "washboardy"). Drive the Harry Wade Road 5.9 miles and turn right (north) on the Saratoga Springs Road. In about four miles, this road ends at a small parking area. Walk a few hundred yards further uphill to the north for a great view of the springs.

NOTE: Needless to say, don't visit this area in the summer. It gets really HOT. The rest of the year is a great time to visit. Also, while you are in this area consider the difficulty and hardships of walking across this land in the 1800's; those old timers were some tough people.

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**Prison Ministry
May 2017**

It's amazing how "stuff" happens. One morning as Lois and I were going into a building we met a former Boot Camp prisoner. It is our habit not to acknowledge former prisoners on the outside in case they may be in a situation where they don't want to reveal their imprisonment by greeting us and explaining how they know us. However, we tell them that if they say "hello" we will give them a hug right where they stand. They are entitled to confidentiality. AND we give a lot of hugs. This former prisoner shouted out hello and came running over to us. He was with a young lady and they wanted to get married right away. They were hoping we could help them. Neither Lois nor I are licensed to perform marriages. As we were all heading into the building, we met another team member, Drake. He is licensed in that regard and told them where to go to get a marriage license and promised to meet them next day for the service. They were not members of a church and the question came up "where to go?" They solved the problem by going to the Duck Pond, a beautiful park in Pahrump and they were married there. It is our joy to be part of their happiness.

Mother's Day was special for us. On that special day we were in Jail and one of the prisoners drew a beautiful card and many of them signed it. It is our joy to be able to furnish them with pencils and paper. What a wonderful way for us to get some of it back! That is not the only wonderful thing that happened, this month five of the prisoners at the Jail asked us to baptize them and we were happy to do so. However, there is no water in our meeting room, which created a problem, until one of the Officers brought us a pitcher of water. The

Lord always supplies our needs, even in unusual places.

As we offered our singing service at Inspirations Adult Living Ministry we had a new member of the residence join us in our singing. He surprised us by singing "Jesus Loves Me" in Chinese. Each week we are now joined by Dorothy, a resident and she plays a beautiful violin. She is becoming a real member of our team. It is almost like giving a concert with our four instrumentalists and singing team members. Attendees are not only residents but also visitors from outside, you are certainly welcome to join us each Tuesday morning at 10:15 am.

Days are getting warm and, in our area, warm is spelled HOT. The plus side is that as we drive the 65 miles to Boot Camp we travel in the daylight. We drive through the rough desert but the background is the beautiful mountains and at night, when we drive home, we often see the rising moon over them. Since the drive takes about one hour, we spend our going home time praying for the individual prayer requests of the prisoners. It's almost like having the Lord as our extra passenger. We are blessed!

We thank all of you for your prayers and support of our Ministry.

God bless you,
Irene Hunt, Chaplain



**STATISTICS FOR MAY
MATERIALS GIVEN**

Total Services—22
Total Attendance— 458
Total Team Hours —132
Ministry Miles— 730

Bibles—9 **Daily Bread—86**
Books—23 **Writing Materials—81**

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The Guiding Light

NOTE: I remember the title of my editorial being the title of a weekly "Soap Opera" which is just about where that comparison ends.

I love the month of June. In addition to it being the month of my birthday, it is also the annual celebration of Father's Day. When it comes to my father, I could talk for hours about my Dad. He was humorous. He was witty. And, he could be genuinely just plain silly. He could tell animated stories and stretch serious incidents into humorous anecdotes.

One thing I will always remember is the "bald" spot in the center of his head that he always had from the time I can remember. It never seemed to grow wider. I can't explain that! But, you could always see it sticking up over his reading chair in front of the fireplace. When my brother and I had to pass behind the chair, somehow, we always had to touch that particular "bald" spot. Time and again he would say, "You kids stop that." But, the temptation was just too great. Our hands just couldn't resist touching that "bald" spot. He never got angry, he just repeated his mantra of - "You kids stop that."

Well, one evening the dam finally burst. My mother walked behind his chair and tapped his bald spot. My mother always said she never knew why she did it; but, she had seen us do it so many times that her hand just naturally went for the "spot" as she passed in back of his chair. My dad came out of that chair like a rocket! He was speechless! He sputtered and muttered incomprehensively. To this day, I

don't know who looked more shocked - my mother or my dad. I ran to my room and put a pillow over my head so they wouldn't hear me laughing. My brother just stood there in utter disbelief. (Did he just see what he thought he just saw?!?) That was one incident we never talked about during family gatherings until we were well into our teens.

But, that was my dad - a "good old chap." He was a gentle man with a tender heart. My dad only spanked me once and believe me I deserved it. And, you know what he did - he cried. I felt so bad, I admitted I deserved a spanking and promised I would be a "good girl." (That promise lasted for, I am sure, less than 24 hours.)

My family went to the circus every year from the time I can remember. It was an event that we looked forward to. My brother liked the "cotton candy" and Crackerjacks. I never was one to like "sweet" stuff. I looked forward to buttered popcorn and balloons. My mom said the first year I went to the circus, I was quite small. So, my dad carried me around on his shoulders. He must have bought me five balloons which I "popped" joyously. My mom got upset because my dad kept buying me balloons knowing that I just liked to "pop" them. But, my dad thought it was amusing. But, then again my mom always said whatever I did was "funny" to my dad. (You know, moms tend to be a little bit more sensitive to "funny" than dads.)

My dad spoke fluent "French" which he learned when he was stationed in Paris. He tried to teach us, but we never got past "Monsieur and mademoiselle" i.e. Mister and Miss. He finally gave up and lost his own communication ability because of lack of use.

I miss my dad. I miss his silent way of "loving" me. I miss his direct way of counseling me without threats or fear. When I saw this quotation, it brought tears to my eyes because it defined my dad so perfectly: