

September 2021



Jim and Robyn Cicchese

What the World Can Do to You

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed in us. Rom. 8:18

This verse was called to my attention by one of the campers at our TFC week at Living Word Bible Camp. In an anonymous testimony written after camp, this camper said they suffered from "self-abuse." I understood this to mean that they were very critical of themselves, even to the point of creating anxiety and depression. The camper went on: "...this week has been so amazing, and I have had no self-abuse or anxiety, and it has been a wonderful time to recharge with the Holy Spirit..."

That quote summarizes one of the many benefits of TFC camp, and also an unusual application of Paul's words in Romans. Despite being unusual, it is a great reminder nonetheless.

Paul's words can teach us to ease up on ourselves and others. In this world, with its Covid dangers, Afghanistan disasters, challenges to religious freedom and more, it is essential we remember one thing:

Christ did not come to make this life better, easier or safer for us.

If that were why Christ came, we would have to say He failed for 1 out of 3 Asian believers who faced extreme persecution last year (according to opendoorsusa.com). In fact, throughout history, high or extreme levels of persecution are the norm. Paul insisted in his second letter to Timothy that "Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted..." -2 Tim 3:12.

No, the promise we have in Christ is not that this life will be better. Rather, we know that we have a lot to look forward to in the next life!

As I examine the testimonials from our summer camp, I am struck by the fact that self-abuse, anxiety and depression don't have to be a normal part of our lives, if the Holy Spirit is in control. This is true even if we suffer from persecution, or people around us don't behave as we think they ought.

In fact, many of the fear responses I see in people (and in the media) right now are generated by the unconscious assumption that God wants to make life on earth easy, safe and wonderful. It is possible that we may have that life (and we should thank God when we do), but it is just as likely that life will be hard, dangerous and short. Scripture says we thank God for that as well.

In every case, the one response that Scripture explicitly rules out is fear. This is true because God is our refuge, and because perfect love casts out fear! But self-love drives us to extreme fear.

When the only hope we have is in this life, every possible danger is terrifying. On the other hand, when our real hope is in the glory that is to be revealed in us, we know that Covid, the Taliban, the government and even vaccines (or other people's lack of...) can have no eternal impact on us. We can live without fear only when death is the beginning, not the end.

When fear drives our outward relationships, we abuse others. Sometimes we do this to "protect ourselves" and other times to punish those who offend us in some way. When fear drives our inward relationships, we abuse ourselves. Without God's help, I am my own worst critic. Every mistake is a failure that makes life harder, shorter or more painful, and I punish myself for every error.

But when we focus on the glory God will reveal in us someday, we can more easily overlook and forgive things in ourselves or in others. This is the first step on the path to peace.

I am thankful that camper got a week of peace, and I pray that you can find the same. It will happen if you focus on what **God can do in you**, and set aside what the **world can do to you!**

*We can live
without fear
only when death
is the beginning,
not the end.*

Jim Cicchese

What's Happening.....This Month at TFC

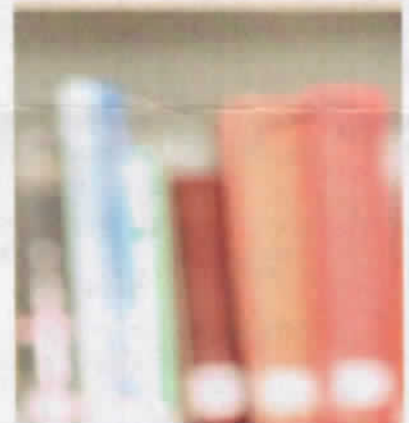


Bible Club Kick-off

The Bible Club season is getting close! Clubs will kick-off September 13th-14th. We will have 7 Bible Clubs in various locations meeting this fall, as listed below. Be sure to check out the Bible Club nearest you for some fun & games, spiritual growth & fellowship with other teens, and teaching from Scripture!



- Cottage Grove Bible Club
- New Richmond Bible Club
- Hudson Bible Club
- Red Wing Bible Club
- Roseville Bible Club
- Stillwater Jr. High Bible Club
- Stillwater Sr. High Bible Club



In Loving Memory



Gifts were donated to Teens For Christ in loving memory of Lucille Crosby, Shirley Cicchese's mother and Jim Cicchese's grandmother.

Lucille will be greatly missed, but we rejoice in her promotion to glory.



UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

Bible Clubs Start.....13th-14th

LOOKING AHEAD...

OCTOBER

Quiz Meet.....2nd

Mission Impossible.....9th

Save the Dates!

Mission Impossible Rally

Saturday, October 9th

Time and location are still to be determined for Mission Impossible, but mark your calendars for one of the most exciting rallies of the year!



Ambassador Visit Day

Tuesday, November 2nd

7:45am-1pm

Join us for some classes and lunch on November 2nd and learn more about Ambassador!



CONTACT US!

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