



The Center Chronicles

April 2024



This past week, one of my devotions came out of the **Jesus Bible** which is a bible with exclusive articles from Louie Giglio, Max Lucado, John Piper, Ravi Zacharias, and Randy Alcorn that lifts Jesus up as the lead story of the Bible. Think with me about this particular devotion as we continue the Easter celebration.

Living in this broken world, people know defeat all too well. Everyone has experienced a relationship where someone let them down, or a situation that didn't work out the way they hoped. These moments of disappointment or frustration reveal the tragic fact that this world is deeply flawed. Even though believers live in the hope of the resurrection and the victorious life that Jesus promises through His Spirit, he still calls us to live in this world, where we experience death, brokenness, mourning, and pain (in contrast to the coming Kingdom: Revelation 21:4).

Jesus' resurrection reveals to believers the true way to life.

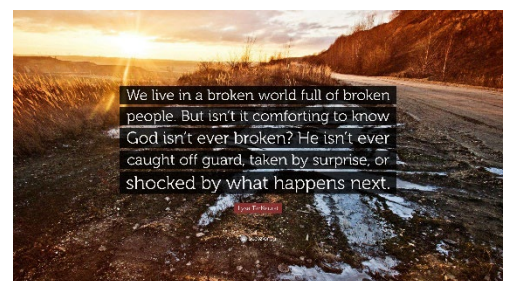
Those who think that the abundant life consists of finding one's way around suffering and hardship have a misguided perception of what Jesus promised. Jesus' life and example teach that the way to a full life consists of service, hardship, opposition, pain, and suffering. Believers look at Jesus' life and see that God's best plan for His Son was to stay close to Him through the most unimaginable of circumstances. The New Testament shows many times over that God was with His Son until the end, when Jesus took our sin upon Himself and suffered on the Cross.

But the good news is God didn't leave His Son in the grave!

Because Jesus submitted to the point of death, and then defeated death, He paved the way for all people to find eternal life. By submitting Himself to death, Jesus found life.

For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for Me and for the gospel will save it. — Mark 8:35

It's only in surrendering to His will and His way that believers actually find the fullness of life as God intended it. Giving is the key to gaining." In all of this, Jesus is victorious. He was, is, and will always be undefeated by sin, by death, and by the grave. His victory is found in the fact that He was, and is, a selfless servant. In graciously giving His life, He also created a pathway to the life that is truly life eternal.



We are living in a broken world. Everywhere we look there is fighting between countries, cities, churches, and even citizens. Some of us are going through fractured conflicts in our own personal lives. But hear the good news! None of this surprises God nor His Son. Christ Jesus came to this world to understand our brokenness, the depth of our conflicts to save and mend our broken lives with His mercy and grace. **Hebrews 4: 15-16** says, “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who was tempted in every way, just as we are- yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” Christ Jesus came to bring healing to the broken hearted....

Blessings,
Jon



The Pastor and Friends are going to Gethsemani

April 1-5, the pastor and friends are going to take a retreat to the Abbey of Gethsemani in Bardwell, KY. We will be joining the Trappist monks to join them in living out Psalm 119:164 where it reads “Seven times a day I will praise you for your righteous law.” We will try to spend time with them in post Easter prayer and worship along with hiking the trails around the Abbey.

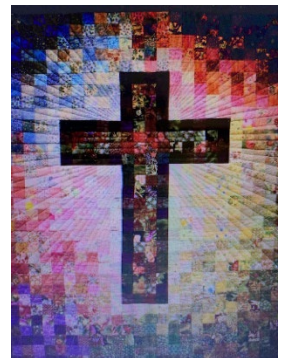


Andrew Bivens and Carolyn Montgomery Wedding Shower

We celebrate the news that Andrew Bivens and Carolyn Montgomery are getting married on **May 11**. We are going to have a Wedding Shower for them on **April 7** after worship in the fellowship hall. They are registered with Amazon.



Thank you Choir for your love for music and your willingness to share it with others. God pieced us together in a special way to proclaim the Good News of Easter in song to those whom God brought to worship and their lives were touched as a result. Don't ever forget that you are a blessing to the Center congregation and community.

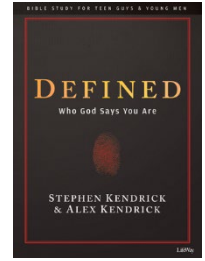




A New Sunday School Class begins April 7

A new Sunday School class will start on Sunday, April 7 in the Fellowship Hall at 9:15am. All young people, ages 9-16 are invited to join Philip Bivens as he focuses on who

we are as defined by God. He will be using Stephen and Alex Kendrick book, *Defined Who God Says You Are* as a guide in this study which will be given out in class.



New WordGo Bible Study

Did you know that Jesus prayed for you specifically the night before he died? A six-week mini study of the **Gospel of John, chapters 13-17 will be offered beginning April 10th from 6:30-7:30pm.** We will focus on just these chapters in John's gospel, which contain Jesus' longest recorded prayer. This in-depth study will welcome us into the heart of Jesus for his disciples then and now. We will be

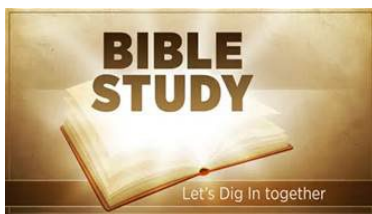
using the WordGo app which features questions to support daily study along with notes and an available lecture on the selected passage. During our meeting we will spend some time in discussion of the questions to share what God has shown us and Jon will conclude with a brief talk to share some principles and truths we can apply to our lives. Don't worry if you're not sure how to get the WordGo app on your device- we'll help you at our first meeting! We will also have the questions available in print form if you need it.

So, please plan to join us for this wonderful study in God's word!



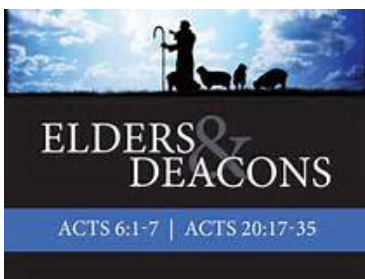
Dorcas Ministry meets every first and third Wednesday at 9:30am

The Dorcas Ministry is a vital ministry of Center Church. It is exciting to hear that this ministry has grown in number. There are countless stories of how their quilts have comforted and ministered to those in need. For more information, please contact Sandra Black at 423-253-3876.



Men's Bible Study meets Saturday mornings at 9am

All men are invited to join us on Saturday at 9am as we continue to study the Gospel of John. In addition to the question/ answer format, we will also be watching segments on John 13-17 done by Rev. Sinclair Ferguson and share thoughts with one another on what we learned.



Deacons and Elders are scheduled to meet on April 18 at 5pm (Deacons) and 6pm for the Session.