



THE LIFE LINE

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Monthly Newsletter of Lifeway Baptist Church

December 2020

No Crying He Makes???

By Frank Keeler

Many people are saying or thinking that the best thing about the year 2020 is that it is almost over. If this year made you want to cry or if it did in fact make you cry, consider the words of the beloved Christmas Carol, "Away in the Manger" which tells us that the little Lord Jesus, "No crying he makes." Go to manger scenes around the country and you would be hard pressed to find a crying Jesus. Of course, that is because most churches use plastic dolls for Jesus in our manger scenes.

Because we have sung it over and over we tend to think of the baby Jesus not letting a tear roll down his cheeks on that evening in Bethlehem. Yet the words of the Scripture make it very clear that Jesus was just like us in fact the Bible tells us that Jesus was fully human so that He could make atonement for the sins of people.

Hebrews 12:16-18 For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. ¹⁷For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

If Jesus was just like us did He cry on the first Christmas night? I don't think we'll ever know for sure but the author of Hebrews does tell us that Jesus did in fact cry. Hebrews 5:7 says, "Who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear." Yes Jesus cried, in fact the shortest verse of the Bible is generally believed to be simply, "Jesus wept."

What is it that brought the savior of the world to tears? Primarily, it was us—the people who Jesus came to save. There are three specific places in Scripture in which Jesus feels the same anguish of emotion that we often feel.

When Jesus saw his friend Mary weeping at the death of her brother Lazarus, He also wept before ultimately raising Lazarus from the dead. Jesus feels our hurts because he did become fully human to save us.



Jesus wept when He saw man's rejection of God's plan. Luke 19:41-42 says, "As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, 'If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes.' As a loving Father, God hates to see us turn away from Him but is always willing to welcome us back with open arms.

Finally, Jesus experienced anguish when He was confronted with the price of our salvation. As he prayed in Gethsemane Luke 22:41, "He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, 'Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.' An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground." Facing the cost of saving us from our sins, Jesus had arguably the most intense moment anyone ever had in all of history.

I don't know if Jesus cried in the manger, but I do know that he cried. He cried about us. He hurts when we hurt. He hurts when we reject God's path and go our own way and he weeps over sin.

If 2020 brought a tear to your eye remember that you are in good company.

*Merry Christmas.
Pastor Frank*



LIFEWAY BAPTIST CHURCH

O grasp the strong life line for Jesus can save.

from "Throw Out the Life Line" words & music by
Edwin S. Ufford, 1888 & George S. Stebbins, 1890

This Month in the Life

DEVOTIONAL: THE REAL MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS

By Shira Campbell

As the years have passed, and the many memories of past Christmases come flooding in this year, I realize how much I have changed.

As a child I can remember, not so much the gifts of each Christmas, but of the many family members that have long been gone. I can remember the Christmas music playing in the background as they talked and laughed of their times together.

It seems like ages since I have experienced the sounds of Christmas. Growing up in our house, we did the Christmas lists, thought really hard of what we wanted Santa to bring us, tried so very hard to be good the couple of months before Christmas, the counting down of days and the excitement and anticipation just waiting for that one day, where you sat together opening those gifts. For me, that was the magic of Christmas.

As a mother, I wanted my children to experience that same magical feeling of the magic of Christmas, the anticipation and the building of excitement for that day. Though in our house we did things a little differently. I wanted them to understand the true magic of Christmas, the anticipation of the birth of a tiny little boy, whose life was

meant only to become the one true sacrifice to save the people, to bring the gift of eternal life.

You see as I have gone from a little child to where I am today, my views and memories of Christmases past remind me of the true Christmas.

As you share your Christmas day with family this year, and you feel and see the anticipation in each child, waiting patiently to open each gift, share with them the true gift, the gift of family, the gift of laughter and love. The gift of the manger and the little baby Jesus.

Though we are miles apart, we are a phone call, a text message, a Facebook picture away. We carry each other in our hearts and memories.

May this Christmas be more special than the previous year, for we have seen and experienced a darkness in this world today, but that one precious gift of Christmas many years ago is here to light our paths through that darkness.

Merry Christmas and Happy birthday to our Lord, Father and Saviour Jesus Christ.

MEDIA MINUTE

Submitted by Pastor Frank

CHRISTMAS FILM 'JINGLE JANGLE'
DIRECTOR ON HAVING UNLIMITED
FAITH: 'BELIEF IS SOMETHING WE'RE
BORN WITH'

Hollywood director David E. Talbert says, "People have been taught not to believe," and he hopes his new movie, "Jingle Jangle: A Christmas Journey," will inspire people to believe again. A heartwarming tale, "Jingle Jangle" shows audiences how the power of belief and faith can change the world around them. The whimsical musical features a top cast of actors including the Phylicia Rashad. "One of my favorite lines in the film is, 'Never be afraid when people don't see what you see. Only be afraid if you no longer see.' That line resonates really well for me because one of my favorite scriptures is (Hebrews 11:1), 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for but the evidence of things not seen,'" Talbert told The Christian Post.

The playwright, author, and filmmaker said the

world was framed by the Word of God, so the "things that appear were made from things that didn't appear." That concept is a theme weaved throughout his holiday movie.

Along with Rashad, "Jingle Jangle" features Academy Award-winning actor Forest Whitaker, newcomer Madalen Mills, Emmy winner Keegan-Michael Key, and Hugh Bonneville. The Christmas-themed musical is "set in the gloriously vibrant town of Cobbleton, the film follows legendary toymaker Jeronimus Jangle (Forest Whitaker) whose fanciful inventions



FROM THE BOOKSHELF

By Dagna D. Stencel

I took a small book from the library shelf, "Man in Black" by Johnny Cash.

Anyone who listens to Country music and perhaps some that don't are familiar with Johnny Cash. His music is part of music history not just Country music history.

This is the story of his rise to fame and the problems he had with pills and alcohol. It was a wonder they didn't kill him but God had a purpose for Johnny. He said he knew he wasn't going to die when he took those drugs because he was running from God and what He wanted Johnny to do. He knew he would tire before God did and he'd make the change before God gave up on him. God didn't give up so Johnny gave up, reached up and God pulled him to his feet.

There are many names from the music industry that were a part of helping God pull him to his feet. This book covers the first 43 years of his 71 year life. His music contains themes of sorrow, moral tribulation and redemption especially in his later years. This book delves into what caused Johnny to crash & burn then to be rescued by God's love. If you are at all interested in Johnny Cash and his music this is a pretty good book.

Please stay safe, wear a mask, and stay distant from others. Have a Happy Thanksgiving.



Continued on page 3

The Church Around the World

Sources: The Voice of the Martyrs and submitted by Pastor Frank

FOCUS ON MYANMAR

Lingering Effects of Imprisonment

A key denominational leader targeted by Communist separatists in Myanmar continues to suffer lasting effects from his imprisonment. In 2018, the Wa State Army arrested Christians and at least 120 pastors in northeastern Myanmar, including Aikhun Plot. In prison, he spent most of his time with a metal leg chain digging into his ankle, causing long-term bone damage and pain, and he also contracted a skin disease. Upon his release and after treatment, his skin ailment cleared up, but he continues to experience excruciating pain in his leg as doctors have not been



Christianity has been rendered illegal in Myanmar's Wa State.

able to provide effective treatment. The pastor was recently elected principal of a Bible college and is eager to take on his new responsibilities. "Pray for God's wisdom and guidance for him and his family so he would be able to preside and lead the college effectively for the glory of God and his kingdom expansion," wrote a VOM worker in Myanmar.

For more information on the Persecuted church visit: www.persecution.com

MEDIA MINUTE CONT'D

burst with whimsy and wonder. But when his trusted apprentice (Keegan-Michael Key) steals his most prized creation, it's up to his equally bright and inventive granddaughter (Madalen Mills) — and a long-forgotten invention — to heal old wounds and reawaken the magic within" the synopsis of the movie says.

Talbert grew up in a lineage of "three generations of holiness preachers," so his Christian faith is reflected in the heart of his

work. According to the filmmaker, "Jingle Jangle" was inspired by the films he watched growing up, "Willy Wonka," "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" "Mary Poppins" and the original "Dr. Doolittle." A Christmas Journey" premiered on Netflix on Nov. 13.

Source: The Christian Post

SANCTUARY SIDEBAR

Announcements and Upcoming Events



- **Vista Christmas Parade** is canceled this year.
- **Christmas Eve, December 23**
 - * Service: 5pm
 - * Living Nativity: 6pm-8pm (drive through only)



Wednesday Night Bible Study

If we decide not to meet on Wednesday the week of Christmas and New Years, we will announce any changes as usual by email.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23

Email submissions to newsletter@lifewaychurchvista.com

Newsletter Articles Due



CHURCH STAFF

Frank Keeler
Pastor

Becky Kline
Church Clerk

David Kline
Deacon

Danny Zenner
*Music Coordinator,
Youth Ministry*

Barbara Jarvis
Financial Secretary

Christine Kline
Treasurer

Cheryl-Ann Calica
*Kitchen Manager,
Correspondence,
VBS Director,
Operation Christmas
Child Coordinator*

Donna Keeler
*Women's Ministry,
Special Events*

Dagna Stencel
*Librarian,
Media Worship*

Cathy Oquendo
Nursery Coordinator

Lina Cardenas
*Newsletter Editor,
Digital Marketing &
Webmaster*

Please direct any suggestions, corrections and/or articles for consideration to:
newsletter@lifewaychurchvista.com

Prayer and Praise

- Please pray for **Lorena Evans** who was attending Lifeway for a bit. She is undergoing Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) treatments. Since losing her son 2 years ago she has been suffering from severe depression, anxiety and a panic disorder. She also has been abusing alcohol and has suicidal thoughts. Please pray that she can feel joy once again. She wants to live without this suffering, anger, regret, shame, and resentment and to love and enjoy the family God has left her. She knows she needs Jesus in her life and needs to surrender to him. She wants him to light that fire in her heart that once burned so hot for him.

**"For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous
and His ears are open to their prayers..."**

Verse of the Month

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was **made through him...**

John 1:9-10

The Culture Corner

Submitted by Frank Keeler

SCHOOL FORCES 9-YEAR-OLD GIRL TO REMOVE 'JESUS LOVES ME' MASK. PARENTS FILE FEDERAL LAWSUIT

In early October, a nine-year-old Christian Mississippi girl who wore a "Jesus Loves Me" mask to school was forced to remove it and replace it with one the school approved.

On Monday, her parents, Matthew and Jennifer Booth, filed a federal lawsuit alleging religious discrimination.

The lawsuit notes that the "Jesus Loves Me" mask caused no disruptions, upset no students, and no student objected to its message. The complaint also notes that the "defendants regularly permit (the student's) school-mates to wear masks, with messages on them. Following are just a few examples of the messages and designs Plaintiff and her parents have observed on other students' and faculty's masks: Jackson State University logo; New Orleans Saints logo; 'Black Lives Matter.'"

The Alliance Defending Freedom is representing Lydia and her family. ADF legal counsel Michael Ross stated:

Public schools have a duty to respect the free expression of students that the First Amendment guarantees to them. While school administrators face challenges in helping students navigate school life during a pandemic, those officials simply can't suspend the First Amendment or arbitrarily pick and

choose the messages that students can or can't express. Other students within the school district have freely worn masks with the logos of local sports teams or even the words 'Black Lives Matter.' This student deserves an equal opportunity to peacefully express her beliefs.

The lawsuit asserts that unable to find such a reference, Jennifer then posted on Facebook that Lydia would wear the mask again on October 13. That morning, the school's principal contacted Jennifer Booth and said that Lydia's mask violated the school's dress code, according to the lawsuit. The code prohibits "clothing, advertising, alcoholic beverages or drug culture, clothing with obscene language or gestures or clothing of any suggestive nature."

The principal of the school poked her head into the classroom and winked at Lydia, and then the teacher's assistant asked Lydia to change her mask before lunch so that no one saw her. Lydia then replaced the mask with one with a panda on it, the lawsuit claims.

The same afternoon, Jennifer Booth emailed the superintendent of the district and the principal, stating, "I am requesting my child return to wearing her mask TODAY and have an apology to her from the school district." The lawsuit states that when she was picked up from school, Lydia was upset because she could not wear her "Jesus Loves Me" mask to school.

Source: The Daily Wire

