

Faith

'Nations shall walk by your light, and kings by your shining radiance'

Isaiah 60:1-6

Imagine a Jewish man that we will call Yeshua in the Jerusalem temple around 500 BC. A prophet is speaking, and Yeshua is listening intently. This prophet reminded him of one of the prophets from 200 years ago named Isaiah.

Yeshua used to sit at his grandfather's knee many years ago in Babylon when the Israelites were in exile, and his grandfather taught him the Torah, the Prophets, and the Psalms. Yeshua remembered the scriptures word for word.

Isaiah had prophesied destruction for Jerusalem if the people did not make changes in their lives. He prophesied against the corruption in the government, the lack of caring for widows and orphans, the reliance on politics and military might instead of God, and the growing gap between the poor and the rich.

According to the scriptures, the people ignored the warnings from Isaiah, and refused to repent and return to God. Yeshua's grandfather said they would not listen because everything seemed to be good. They had a beautiful temple, priests to offer sacrifices, a king to take care of them, a growing economy, and they were God's chosen people.

As prophesied, Jerusalem was eventually destroyed, and the people were carried off into captivity in a foreign land: Babylon. Yeshua, like many other Jews, longed for the return home to Jerusalem. After a number of years, the Persians defeated the Babylonians, and they allowed the Israelites to return home.

As Yeshua began the walk home from the temple, he could

not help but compare the way things were in Jerusalem with the way they had been described by his grandfather.

The temple was in deplorable shape. The Samaritans had recently staged another raid on Jerusalem causing quite a bit of damage as well as killing a number of people. Farmers were afraid to go out into the fields to work. Yeshua passed a number of people as he walked, and all of them were downcast with their eyes fixed on the street in front of them. No one smiled. He saw emaciated children and beggars everywhere. The streets seemed dark everywhere he looked.

Yeshua did not know what to make of the "new Isaiah" that he heard in the temple. He loved what he had to say about God being present and close to His people once again. The return of wealth and prosperity were hope for the future. The collection of all of God's people into the homeland would bring joy into everyone's heart.

However, the part about all nations coming to Jerusalem and worshipping God went against everything that he had been taught. God was Israel's God, and they were His chosen people. What other nations did was their business, as long as they left us alone. Yeshua wondered if it would ever be possible for all people to worship God together. Maybe someday, if God sent the right person to provide the light for people to see, it could happen.

Jesus Christ is the light of the world. Email me with any comments at www.newtonfumc@yahoo.com.

Joe Miller Jr. is pastor of First United Methodist Church in Newton.



JOE MILLER JR.

\$10 net saves lives

Sometimes the simplest idea yields the biggest results. For *Nothing But Nets*, the simple idea is to provide mosquito nets to families who live in malaria-infested areas of Africa.

"Every \$10 donation to *Nothing But Nets* goes directly towards the purchase, distribution and education about the proper use of an insecticide-treated bed net," said Penny Gregrich, who is organizing several activities to raise money for NBN.

In Africa, malaria is the leading killer of children, and those who survive the disease are often faced with physical and mental impairments, according to Gregrich. Malaria also harms the babies of pregnant women who contract malaria and is one of the leading risk factors for infant mortality in Africa.

Sports Illustrated columnist Rick Reilly started the idea, which was adopted by the United Nations Foundation. The National Basketball Association and the United Methodist Church have joined with several national sports associations and charitable groups to buy nets. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation matches

each donation, net for net.

"Bed nets work in two ways. They stop mosquitoes from biting during the night and spreading the disease, and the insecticide on the net kills the mosquitoes when they land, stopping them from flying on to their next victim," Gregrich said.

Jasper First United Methodist Church will host several community-wide activities to raise money for nets, including a volleyball tournament, a basketball tournament, a domino tournament and maybe a ping pong tournament.

"It is the goal of the FUMC to host one planned activity per month to raise funds for *Nothing But Nets*," according to Gregrich.

The first event is a volleyball tournament for ages 12 and up set for Jan. 20. Gregrich said they hope to get participation from schools, churches and other clubs, or individuals who just love to play can show up and be assigned a team in the day-long event. Cost is \$10 per person.

For more information contact FUMC at 384-3557 or Gregich at 382-9090.

Bits of Faith

Easter rehearsals

The First Baptist Church of Jasper will begin Easter musical rehearsals tonight, Jan. 9, at 7 p.m.

The Master's Lighthouse

Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, FM 2992 (between 1746 and 1013) northwest of Spurger, will present The Master's Lighthouse Jan. 11 with food and fellowship at 6 p.m. and the concert at 7 p.m.. For more information call 429-3415.

Men's Day Breakfast

The annual Men's Day Breakfast will be held Jan. 20 at 7:45 at Mt. Olive Baptist Church in Jasper.

Sing With One Voice

Sing With One Voice is scheduled for Jan. 22 at St. Michael's Catholic Church in Jasper.

The Tomb/Circuit Riders

Circuit Riders Motorcycle Ministries is looking for people who want to ride with a purpose. Join at 243 N. Main St. in Jasper the second Monday of each month, or Sunday services at 6 p.m. For more information call 594-8379.

Spanish ministry

Tanglewood Baptist Church sponsors a Hispanic Mission, Mission Bautista Calvario in Jasper. Worship services are 9:45 a.m. Sunday mornings and Bible study and prayer services Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. For more information call 384-4727.

Men's breakfast

First United Methodist Church hosts a men's breakfast every Wednesday at 7 a.m. in the Frank Ealand Hall. For more information, call 384-5735.

send a net,
save a life: www.nothingbutnets.net

(Advertisement)

Things That I Ponder

Cold?

It was so cold last week that we began to think that we were back in Indiana! Having to scrape ice off the windshield every morning before going anywhere. All those extra clothes we had to put on to stay even partially warm! What is going on here? I did not ask for this! Moving to Texas back in the last century hoping to leave all the cold up north was a big thing! Now here it is, cold again!

Have you ever thought about the fact that when we move we take us along? I have lived in six states and two countries overseas. Everywhere I went I was there! Here at the first of the year I reflect on what that might mean. How do I like me? Am I the kind of person that says what I mean and mean what I say? Do I walk my talk?

My son visited us Christmas week! He made some observations then held them up like a mirror that hid no warts. I do not need to make any superfluous New Years resolutions! Just do it! As the Nike commercial says!

How are you doing with the new start you were given? Have you been blessed with a mirror that revealed to you how well you are doing? If I met you today would I meet the same person I met 2 years ago? I trust that as time moves along, waiting on no one, you are making the changes that will enhance your life. After you leave this life as my mother did nine years ago, will they say you really were the kind of person you wanted to be?

Let us celebrate our diversity this year! Let us welcome the many variation of personalities we meet in our daily walk! I encourage you to meet a new person each time you leave the house! There are huge rewards in really meeting the people we see every day!

At Consolidated Health Care Services, Inc. We welcome new people to our circle of friends every week! The staff is enriched with each new acquaintance we make. It is with gratitude that we serve the people who have chosen us to provide them with the in home medical care they need.

Jacob Kaufman, RN, DON, is Regional Coordinator of Clinical Services for Consolidated Health Care Services, Inc. He can be reached by phone at: 866-486-9228. kaufman@lpemail.com

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