

JULY 2026

Where the
Spirit
of the
Lord is
there is
Freedom

2 Corinthians 3:17

FROM THE PREACHER'S PEN

The Way Up Is Down

Greatness in the Kingdom of God

In Yorkshire, England, during the early 1800s, two sons were born into the same family. The older set his sights on Parliament - prestige, influence, a name for himself. The younger made a different choice. He committed his life to Christ: confidently, unconditionally, wholeheartedly. He turned his face toward China and obscurity. And because he did, Hudson Taylor is now known and honored on every continent as a faithful missionary and the founder of what is today known as Overseas Missionary Fellowship. As for his ambitious older brother? Look him up in the encyclopedia and you'll find four words: "the brother of Hudson Taylor."

Two brothers. Two very different definitions of greatness.

A Request That Reveals Everything

In Mark chapter 10, Jesus is approached by two of His closest disciples with an unusual request. James and John - part of the inner circle, witnesses to more miracles than most - come to Him privately. They've already decided what they want; they just need a "yes" before they ask. "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask." Their request? Seats of honor at His left and right when He comes into His kingdom.

It's easy to judge them. But Matthew tells us they even brought their mother along to make the case. These men had walked with Jesus through the most extraordinary experiences imaginable, and they still couldn't shake the world's scorecard. They wanted ascendancy. They wanted to get ahead.

And honestly - can we blame them? The world they lived in, and ours, operates exactly this way.

The World's Way

The 19th-century philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche despised Christianity. He called service weakness. In its place, he championed what he called the "will to power" - the drive to dominate, to excel, to exert one's strength over others. Cut corners. Exploit every opportunity. Get to the top.

It sounds harsh when stated so plainly. But look around - and look within - and you'll recognize it. The disciples were practicing it right there among themselves, jockeying for position, trying to get the inside track before the others had a chance.

Jesus doesn't simply correct their ambition. He reframes reality entirely.

Greatness Through Suffering

"Are you able to drink the cup that I drink?" He asks them in verses 38-39. He is speaking of

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the cross - the means by which He Himself would ascend to His throne. They say yes, and in ways they don't yet understand, they mean it. James would become the first apostle martyred for the faith. John would be thrown into boiling oil and exiled to Patmos. The path to greatness in the Kingdom runs straight through sacrifice.

Now, most of us won't face imprisonment or beheading. But serving sacrificially still costs something. Sometimes it's standing until your feet ache. It's taking the task nobody thanks you for. It's smiling at someone who just drained you. It's doing the awkward, unglamorous, unnoticed thing - and doing it well - because you're doing it for Christ.

The very nature of sacrifice is that it costs you something. That's what makes it sacrifice.

Faithful in the Position You're In

In verses 40-41, Jesus makes a striking point: some positions in the Kingdom are assigned by the Father, and they are not there by accident. We may look at where we are and think it seems low, unimportant, disconnected from anything significant. But we have a limited perspective.

Consider Aaron and Hur on the hillside while Israel fought the Amalekites. Moses held up his staff, and Israel prevailed. When his arms tired, Aaron and Hur - one on each side - held his hands up until the battle was won. Nobody wrote a saga about Aaron and Hur. But without them, the battle was lost. Some of us are called to hold up someone else's hands. That is not a pointless position. That is a Kingdom assignment.

Consider Daniel in the lion's den. Jonah in the fish. These are not the places anyone would choose - and yet God was doing something profound in each of them.

Andrew Johnson was born in poverty in North Carolina. His father died when he was young. He was apprenticed as a tailor and never attended school - his wife taught him to read and write. He rose through local civic life in Tennessee: mayor, state legislator, governor, senator. He became Abraham Lincoln's vice president and, after Lincoln's assassination, the 17th President of the United States. His ascent was not built on manipulation or self-promotion - it was built on faithfulness, step by often-unglamorous step.

The Scriptures are clear: *"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time"* (1 Peter 5:6). And until that time? *"Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve"* (Colossians 3:23-24).

Servant Leadership in Practice

The legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden - one of the most decorated coaches in sports history - was known for something unexpected: after practice, he swept and mopped the floor himself. He didn't think it was beneath him. He understood that excellence and humility aren't opposites; they're partners.

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That's the pursuit of excellence the Kingdom calls us to: commitment to getting better, doing the best wherever you find yourself, growing in skill and faithfulness - all while maintaining a posture of service. Nothing is too low. No job is too small. We keep improving not to elevate ourselves, but to better serve the Lord and the people He places in our path.

The Greatest Example

In verses 42-45, Jesus gathers the whole group - by this point the other ten are indignant, probably because they would have asked the same thing if James and John hadn't beaten them to it - and He offers the defining principle of Kingdom leadership:

"Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all."

As William Barclay rightly observed: "In the kingdom of Jesus the standard is service. Greatness consists not in reducing others to one's service, but in reducing oneself to their service."

And then Jesus points to Himself. He had every right to be served. He is the King of the universe. But His whole life was poured out for others - healing the sick when He was tired and hungry, never turning anyone away, surrendering entirely to the Father's will. And the greatest act of service in all of history was this: He gave His life as a ransom for many.

A ransom - the price paid to free a slave in a marketplace. We were all enslaved in the marketplace of sin. The Son of God paid for our freedom with His own blood.

That is the standard. That is the example. And that is the life we are called to follow.

The way up, in the Kingdom of God, is down.

- Chris Sanford, Senior Minister

FROM THE YOUTH PASTOR . . .

REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS; AND AGAIN I WILL SAY, REJOICE.

Philippians 4:4

It's a VBS verse. A Sunday School verse. One of the verses you hear a million times growing up in church. *"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice."* What does rejoice even mean? I don't hear many people saying the word, "rejoice" much these days. Dictionary.com defines rejoice as: to be glad; to take delight. Ok, the Bible tells us we should delight in the Lord! That makes sense. I understand that! However, the real translation is something like, *"Rejoice in the Lord when things are going great; rejoice when you feel like it!"*, right? Or maybe, *"Rejoice in the Lord when God answers my prayer the way I want Him too; rejoice when you're happy!"*?

God doesn't really mean for us to rejoice in all circumstances does He? Clearly whoever wrote this did not understand what hard times were... Did not understand what it meant to go through something difficult and continue rejoicing... Oh wait. Let's not get too far ahead of ourselves. The Apostle Paul wrote this verse, didn't he? And Church, can you tell me where he wrote it from? That's right, prison. Jail. And I don't mean cushy 2026 United States jail, I mean first century prison cell, chained to the wall, telling a scribe what to write for you, going to the bathroom wherever you could, no guarantee you were eating that day, darkness in a dungeon from dawn until dusk, jail. And now we realize again the importance of context to reading Scripture. How much more does it mean for us to read the words, *"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice."*, when we realize Paul says these words from this type of prison?

The hope he shows in Jesus, His Lord, the faith! And for him to go on in verses 5-9 to talk about how we shouldn't be anxious about anything is simply astounding. How could anyone take delight in anything while locked up in a prison cell? How could anyone be glad at a time like that? How could anyone rejoice during such immense pain and sorrow!? How? By putting His full trust in Jesus. Paul knew that no matter how bad things got, His God was the winner in the end. He knew that even if he died, he died for something that was more than worth dying for.

Church, I have to ask. Do we have that kind of faith? Do we have that kind of joy, peace, and trust in Jesus? I know for a fact that I do not at times. We like to put our God in a box, and take Him out on Sunday mornings to admire Him, when He should be the almighty Lord of our universe every waking moment of every day.

... FROM THE YOUTH PASTOR

We can't even begin to comprehend His vast love, might, power, majesty, mercy, and strength. He is the GREAT I AM. The Creator, our Savior, the one for whom the angels sing all day and night, *"Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty!"*. Ask yourself, do you worship Him like He is THAT God? Do you rejoice that you can go through struggles for Him? Or is He the God you put in the box and get out on Sunday morning?

Thanks and God Bless
Zach Long
BeRomans12
"Because of the One"

JULY CALENDAR

July 1 - Upper Room 5:30 - 7:00 pm
July 8 - Upper Room 5:30 - 7:00 pm
July 13 - Gen. Board Meeting 7:30 pm
July 15 - Upper Room 5:30 - 7:00 pm
July 19 - Deacons Pantry after am service
July 21 - Home Dept. Picnic
 3:00 Swim & Social 5:30 eat
July 22 - Upper Room 5:30 - 7:00 pm
July 25 - Men's Breakfast 8:00 pm
July 29 - Upper Room 5:30 - 7:00 pm
Aug. 7 - Red Cross Blood Mobile 11am-5pm

GENERAL BOARD MEETING

JULY 16TH
7:30 PM

MEN'S BREAKFAST

MEN'S BREAKFAST
JULY 25TH
8 am

FAMILY MATTERS

We express our sympathies . . . to the family and friends of Mary Jo Hardman. She passed away on June 1st. Her services were held on Friday, June 5th. Mary Jo had been an active member of MFCC for many years, participating in the Secret Sisters and the Relay For Life among other activities.

Our sympathies are also sent . . . to Don and Kathryn Clapper and their family. Kathryn's brother, Jerry Strait passed away on June 15th. His service was held on Saturday, June 20th.

And to . . . The friends and family of Mike Weekly. Mike passed away on Tuesday, June 9th. Services are pending at this time.

Thank you . . . To the Home Dept. . . . Thank you for the delicious luncheon you had for us after Mary Anne Sutton's funeral. Thank you for your kindness.
Howard & Mary Kay Snyder

A "Million" Thank yous . . . To each and everyone for all your beautiful cards, notes, gifts and your nice visits. All is so much appreciated — and to the "Home Dept." for you monthly visits and so cute gift bags. We have a wonderful Church family.
God Bless, Allie Swank

Thank you . . . Church family: Thank you for the thought, prayers, kind words, and cards of encouragement during this past month after my fall. You helped me feel uplifted and encouraged me during this time. Thank you. - Rachel Snyder

CARDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Mrs. Carolyn Kandel
10004 Manor Rd. NE
Minerva, OH 44657

Mr. Ray Leatherberry
2320 Rummell Ave. NE
Paris, OH 44669



Mrs. Melody Fisher
8298 Lincoln St. SE
East Canton, OH 44730

Mrs. Sharon Lewis
c/o St. Luke's
4301 Woodale SE
Minerva, OH 44657

MINERVA AREA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL



We are hard at work preparing for the upcoming school year. Summer facility projects are moving ahead of schedule, bringing fresh energy to the building as we get ready for the fall. Classrooms are being reorganized, cleaned, and refreshed, with additional improvements planned over the next month, including touch-up painting, new carpet squares, and final classroom setup.

These updates will create one of the most functional and spacious learning environments in the school's history, ensuring a welcoming atmosphere for both students and staff.

Our STEM Camp welcomed more than 50 students this year. It provided a wonderful opportunity for children, especially those new to MACS, to experience our school culture, meet our staff, and enjoy hands-on learning. The camp served as a positive and effective outreach tool for our school community.

Our Night of Worship took place on Thursday, June 25. Highlights included music led by the band from Perry Christian, participation from students and alumni, and time to connect over light refreshments. We continue working to build meaningful relationships within the local community. Please pray for our staff as we strive to strengthen community ties, elevate the school's visibility, and create a welcoming space for prospective families.

Looking ahead to the 2026–2027 school year, we are excited to introduce a Band program for our older students. If you have any band equipment you would be interested in donating, please let us know we would be grateful for your support as we launch this new elective.

We are also inviting our church and school family to partner with us in blessing our students through school supply support. Essential items such as pencils, crayons, scissors, and other classroom materials help set our students up for a successful year of learning. A full list of needed supplies is available in the church office. Your generosity makes a meaningful difference, ensuring every child is equipped to thrive. We are truly grateful for any contribution you feel led to give.

PRAYER LIST

Reagan Abner
 Jennifer Allen
 Mike Amatantelo
 Alice Archer
 Christa Archer
 Linda (Keller) &
 Charlie Augsbach
 Bill Becknell
 Dorothy Birney
 Arlene Brown
 Kevin Bryan
 Shirley Catlett
 Don Clapper
 Lora Crabtree
 David Dennis
 Donna Long Dyer
 Barbara Dunlevy
 Larry Hartshorn
 Todd Hetherington
 Dave Hoopes
 Evelyn Hopkins
 Grace Hopson
 George Horvath
 Lee Iden
 Carolyn Kandel
 Rory & Nancy King
 Ray Leatherberry
 Herb & Pat Lowery
 Scoo & Dolores
 McCully
 Jean Miller
 Shea Mitchell
 Sheila Murray
 Tim Parker
 Eric Prowe
 John & Sandy
 Russell
 Gene Schmucker
 Kathy Schmucker
 Gary Schotts



F Freedom came with a price,
 the price of Christ blood
 shed on the Cross.
O Our Lord and Savior saved
 us all from our sins.
U Unrighteous we may be,
 but the grace us God set us
 free.
R Rely on God, He will show
 our paths.
T The truth is in God's Word,
 the Bible, His Holy Book.
H Helping one another
 along the way.

O Obedient to what God
 wants us to do.
F Father, Creator,
 God is He.

J Jesus died for our sins.
U United one day, we
 believers will be in Heaven.
L Love one another as Christ
 loved us.
Y You are a special creation
 made from God, our
 Heavenly Father.

Written by Steve Patterson on June 18, 2012.
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ATTENDANCE

	<u>June 7</u>	<u>June 14</u>	<u>June 21</u>	<u>June 28</u>
Worship	127	112	133	
Bible School	62	65	66	

Lynette Shatzer
 Shawn Shatzer
 Sally Shaw
 Allie Swank
 Carol Thomas
 Marge Warrick

MILITARY

Military: CSS Jesse Clark; Sgt. Kurt Warrick, Staff Sgt. E6 Michael Derrick, Sgt. David Moore. **Please let us know about Military updates/corrections.**



FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

300 West Lincoln Way
Minerva, Ohio 44657

June 25, 2026

Church Services

minervafcc@hotmail.com

Celebration 10:15 am

Sunday School 9:00 am

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday
8:00 am- 4:00 pm

Minerva First Christian Church
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JULY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

1 Carol George Dave & Terri Bush 48 years	16 Donna Dennis Luis & Chere Torres 43 years
3 Roseanna Throckmorton	17 Mikayla Tomlinson
5 Barb Norton	20 Nathan Brown Vickie Grindstaff
6 Brad Snyder	23 Josiah Sanford Dan & Flora Bergman 49 years
7 Shawn Archer	24 Bill Shaw
9 Case Oberly	25 Alexis Oberly
13 Ruby Guy Herb & Pat Lowery 70 years	28 Isabelle Brown
14 Ginny Stryffeler Mike & Lani Lowery 36 years	31 Caleb Snyder Brent & Julie Brown 22 years

SERVE THE LORD WITH GLADNESS!

	July 5	July 12	July 19	July 26
Comm. Meditation	Jordan Vert	Dave Bush	Zach Long	John Russell
Ushers	Mike Fountain	Ken Hoopes	Landon Sterling	Brandon Keen
Deaconess	Shirley Catlett	Shirley Catlett	Shirley Catlett	Shirley Catlett
Shut-In Teams	Jake Reed & Bob Palmer	Kenny Hoopes & Brad Snyder	Brandon Keen & John Long	Nate Oberly & Jay Harsh