

Join us as we celebrate only Jesus!



New Life Christian Community

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." 2 Cor 5:17

Sunday, January 25, 2026

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Pastoral Ponderings

(To get the full context of this you may want to read the story of Abraham and Abimelech in Genesis 20 and 21)

In any garden, there are many different plants, trees, and shrubs. At various times and in different seasons each has its own captivating beauty and wonder. In many gardens, there are a couple of firmly rooted, ancient trees. Markers that give us direction and a sense of connection to the past and to the very garden itself. Some bear delicious fruit while others stand out nobly, almost as if they were the reason the garden itself existed. A couple weeks ago we spent some special time in an ancient part of the garden with some close friends. On Wednesday evenings we are often there. It is so good to share the wisdom of those around us and those who have traveled this garden path before. As we looked at the foliage in this proverbial corner, one particular tree stuck out. We didn't spend much time there, but I could not shake the thought that we had passed by without enough exploration. That we had missed some deeper beauty. Later that week as Lorraine and I were back in our current familiar corner together, we listened as Abimelech spoke to Abraham. In short, Abraham has just been revealed as a liar by Abimelech. A lie that brought on Abimelech and his kingdom "a great sin". Thankfully, God Himself protected Abimelech and his kingdom. Yet one must wonder what a prophet and a chosen man of God was doing, assuming that there was no fear of God in a gentile king, or that his own protection depended on him deceiving Abimelech and taking matters once again into his own hands. God had already told Abraham He would make him a great nation. Abimelech is then spoken to by God and immediately obeys and goes to Abraham and confronts him but also restores Sarah to him and goes even further to provide payments to make the situation right. Abraham prays to God, and the wombs of Abimelech's wife and servants were opened. Strangely, immediately following this, the next chapter talks about Sarah's womb opening and the birth of Isaac, which quickly results in their mistreatment of Hagar and Ishmael and another promise from God to protect and multiply a nation separate from the chosen line of Abraham. Through it all, we get to see a glimpse of "El Roi", the God who sees caring for all His people. Immediately following this story, and sandwiching it for some peculiar reason, we see Abimelech re-enter and yet again confront Abraham saying, "God is with you in all that you do. Now therefore swear to me here that you will not deal falsely with me or with my descendants or with my posterity". We do not know much about this Philistine king, but everything we do know to this point shows he has integrity and a fear of the One True God. This early example of a relationship between someone chosen of God and some-

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Pastoral Ponderings cont.

one seemingly outside this relationship gave us pause. It made us think of our responsibility to unbelievers and how we are called to act wisely in front of them that they may “see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven”. This turned us to that corner in Proverbs 11:30 to look again at the tree we had passed by so quickly. ***“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and whoever captures souls is wise.”*** Now follow along with us. Righteous? There is only one who is righteous and it is the one who is right with God through Jesus. So that would be all of us who believe in Him, correct? It would seem here that the fruit of that belief is a Tree of life. That ancient tree that we are forbidden to eat the fruit of, bears fruit in those who believe. But what is that fruit? Either these are two completely disconnected thoughts in the same verse, or they are connected. As a believer, what is the only lasting fruit that we can bear? If we do good works like making buildings or planting hospitals. If we have the best business principles or achieve great wealth, all of these will decay and come to nothing. But, if we can lead others to Christ, this is an everlasting fruit. If their soul is captured by Him they will live forever. He who captures souls then is wise and the way to capture souls is to bear the fruit of the tree of life. There is only one wisdom, and it is found in the tree of life.

Think of it logically. If $A = B$ and $B = C$, then $A = C$. If wisdom = capturing souls and capturing souls = the fruit of belief and the fruit of belief = a tree of life, then the tree of life is Wisdom itself. We are outside the Garden of Eden, and we can't reach the tree of life, and yet we can approach the real Tree of Life and “take and eat” and share this with all that are around us. Like Abimelech's words to Abraham, God is with us (Emmanuel) in all that we do; we must not deal falsely with unbelievers. We are called to be wise with them, and the only Wisdom we have is the thing that can captivate their very souls. We must share with them the fruit of the Tree of Eternal life = Wisdom itself = The belief in Christ. We should never assume that there is no fear of God in anyone! We are compelled to act with integrity to all, knowing that whether the seed from that tree that we plant will grow or not is totally dependent on God. Praise be to God that through Jesus Christ, He continues to captivate souls. To God alone be all Wisdom and Glory and Honor. May faithfulness to this fill us with His wisdom as we stumble to help others be captivated by Him alone.

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Check out New Life Online newlifechristiancommunity.org

This Sunday's Worship Songs:

Ancient of Days
Christ Our Hope in Life or Death
There is a Fountain
Our God will Go Before Us
O Great God

This Week's Schedule of Events

Tues Men's Bible Study- 6:30 am
Tues Young Ladies Study- 7:15 pm
Wed Immerse- 6:15 pm
Thurs Men's Bible Study- 6:30 am
Thurs Ladies Bible Study- 10:30 am
Thurs Ladies Bible Study-Noon
Thurs GriefShare- 6:30 pm
Thurs Women's Study- 6:30 pm
Thurs Men's Bible Study- 6:30 pm

*Double check with your leader if
you are still meeting this week.*

Meal Teams

Jan. 25 Meal Team 3 - Italian
Feb. 1 Meal Team 4 - Rice & Beans

*Contact Barbara Judkins if interested
in being on a meal team or a helper.*

Fellowship Tip for January

Often January is a time for new beginnings. Reflect this month on the "new beginning" you have in Christ by sharing with someone the story of how God has worked in you to bring you to saving faith in Jesus, and by His grace, what He is currently doing in your life to draw you to treasure Him above all things.

January Memory Verse

Proverbs 24:13-14 - "My son, eat honey, for it is good, and the drippings of the honeycomb are sweet to your taste. Know that wisdom is such to your soul; if you find it, there will be a future, and your hope will not be cut off."

Pastoral Eldership Team

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Announcements

Hall of Men is back this Sunday 6:30pm! All ages encouraged to come. We're reaching back into the annals of history to blow the dust off the writings and work of faithful men of old. For our encouragement, we will listen to a presentation on the life of one of these men, celebrating the grace of God through Christ in him and how by faith he was able to stand firm in the Gospel in the midst of the trials and temptations of his own generation.

Ministry Team Fair right after service!

Come meet our wonderful ministry team leaders, learn about each ministry, and find out more ways to pray for and/or participate in serving the body of Christ here at NL.

Walk for Life Today! Today there is local Walk for Life sponsored by Options on 8 (our local pregnancy resource center) talking place this afternoon from 3-5pm. In joining the walk, we can publicly highlight the sanctity of every human life, that the taking these lives is murder, that there is forgiveness in Christ for the sinner, that there is true hope for the hurting, and displays there is a local community of support dedicated to help. The walk starts and ends at St Joseph's in Osceola with a free chili dinner following.



If you are a visitor this morning or have only been coming to New Life for a few months we are glad you are joining with us! If you would like to learn more about New Life be sure to stop by the Resource Center in the front foyer to pick up a welcome bag we have for you. In addition, you're invited to join us for our meal after service. We would love to meet you and get to know and for you to get to know us more.

Today's Passage



Jesus

Proclaimed
to the
Colossians

Pastor Tony will be teaching from
the book of Colossians.
Our passage for today is Colossians 3:5-11.

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newlifechristiancommunity.org

Sunday service starts at 9:30 am • nlcc.dresser@gmail.com

Join New Life Connect by emailing Pastor Paul at pastorpaul.nlcc@gmail.com