

Falls Fellowship



Add me to the Do Not Call list, Satan!

Over the past several months, I have gotten a LOT of spam calls. My phone number became my dad's contact number at some point, so I'm getting a bunch of calls about Medicare, and quite a few from people wanting to know if I want to "sell the house on Possum Track." Makes sense ... who wouldn't want to live on Possum Track? But no, these aren't legitimate calls, they're calls from companies wanting to buy a house for half of what it's worth. I tell all of these people I am not interested, and wonder if this scheme ever actually works. It makes me think of Matthew 4: 8-10:

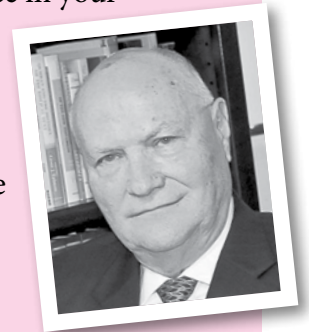
Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 'All this I will give you,' he said, 'if you will bow down and worship me.'

Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

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Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day made its way into our culture as a symbol of expressing love, or at least, acknowledging another person's place in your life. We are not certain when the tradition began. Some say it goes back to a St. Valentine, but then there were several. Which one gets the honor? Others say it goes back to the ancient Romans and is a celebration marking the coming of Spring. Why not credit them with it since we blame them for other things?



Regardless of its origin, Valentine's Day made its way into our culture and so we are stuck with the expectation that we are to buy Valentine's cards for some people in our lives. I noticed that at Hallmark stores Valentine's cards quickly supplanted Christmas cards. No surprise there since Hallmark's tries to convince us that there is a

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Event Calendar

February 5 — Deacons Meeting 7 PM
February 10 — Men's Breakfast 8 AM
February 14 — Valentine's Banquet 6 PM
Sign up sheet in vestibule
March 4 — Deacons Meeting 7 PM
March 9 — Men's Breakfast 8 AM
March 24 — Palm Sunday
March 29 — Good Friday Service
March 31 — Easter Sunrise Service, Falls
Community Cemetery, 7 AM, Breakfast
follows in the Fellowship Hall at 8 AM

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Do Not Call continued ...

I can imagine how this would have played out in modern times. Jesus gets a cell phone call on his Android — Jesus would definitely use an Android, because He knew about the trouble Eve had with an Apple! He knows it's a spam call, because it's from the 666 area code, but he answers it anyway.

It's the devil offering him all the kingdoms of the world if Jesus will bow down and worship him. Jesus responds the same as he did in Matthew 4, and tells Satan to put Him on the *Do Not Call* list.

Not that Jesus would accept any offer, but I think declining Satan's offer was a pretty easy one. What Satan would have gotten was far more valuable than what was being offered — more valuable than may even be able to imagine. This was one of the temptations of Christ and is akin to how we are often tempted by Satan.

Sadly, we don't always do as well as Jesus did. It's like we keep getting these calls from that 666 area code, and we keep answering. Instead of entertaining Satan's offers, do what Jesus did and ask Satan to put you on his *Do Not Call* list!

— Alan Watkins

Treasurer's Report

Our financial statement for the month of December 1, 2023 — December 31, 2023.

Tithes - \$14,844.08

Budgeted/expected tithes - \$12,083.33

Other Income: Parsonage Rental - \$0

Total Income - \$14,844.08

Actual expenditures - \$9,067.65

Budgeted expenditures - \$12,046.51

— Craig P. Jackson, Treasurer

Newsletter articles needed

We have had a newsletter each month for the past five years.

But, we need news and articles from all of our committees to let everyone know what you are doing and when you are doing it.

Communication is very important, so send your news and articles to Frank at fbpowell@mac.com

Thanks!

Please pick up 2024 Offering Envelopes

Members should pick up their offering envelope boxes in the vestibule if you have not already done so. Please see Kevin Barham if you have any questions.

February Birthdays

1	Don Lewellyn
8	Jackson Harney
13	Francine Leclercq
18	Mike Neal
23	Joan Barham
24	Woody Leonard
25	Zoe Davis
27	Mike Leclercq



Family Movies Available

Both of the movies we've seen for movie nights are available in the Church library in case you missed them or want to see them again!

Check them out when you have a chance and stay tuned for future movie nights announcement!

— Alan Watkins

Lent: Our Journey from Grace to Grace

Lent is a 40-day season. It stretches from Ash Wednesday (February 14 this year) through Holy Saturday. Actually, if you were to count up the total number of days on a calendar, you'd have 47 days. So what gives?

When we count the days in Lent, we omit the Sundays. We refer to them as the Sundays in Lent. That's because Sundays are always "Little Easters." So even during the season of Lent, the Sundays in Lent carry with them the joy of Easter morning, when Mary and the disciples found Jesus' empty grave.

The season's forty days come from the gospel passage today about Jesus' temptations in the wilderness. After his baptism in the River Jordan, Jesus spends 40 days in the wilderness, fasting and praying. In turn, his 40-day wilderness journey is reminiscent of the 40 years Israel spent wandering in the wilderness after they left Egypt. Jesus returns to the wilderness at the beginning of his ministry.

Lent is intended to be a season of preparation. We prepare our hearts and minds for Easter. That preparation involves engaging in various spiritual practices. These traditionally include prayer, confession, acts of service, and almsgiving. It also can involve what's called "denial of the flesh." In other words, we give up something for Lent.

The season of Lent is intended to revive our faith. These extra spiritual practices breathe additional oxygen into us. They kindle the flames of faith.

But our Lenten pieties can get the better of us. And here we come to some temptations. Our Lenten prac-

tices can tempt us in two opposite ways.

1. They can tempt us into believing we have to bring ourselves UP. We are unworthy. We haven't lived up to God's expectations for us. So we need to shape up!

But there's a problem with this mentality. It makes us responsible for our own righteousness. We got ourselves into trouble, and now we have to get ourselves out of it.

But this line of thinking cannot have a good outcome. If we think we've done a good job in our Lenten practices, then we'll pride ourselves on the wonderful job we did. We'll feel that we've done a righteous job on the merits of our efforts. It actually leads us AWAY from God. OR, we'll fail miserably in our disciplines and feel like a spiritual flop. The trap will spring either way.

2. The other way we can be tempted is to bring ourselves LOW. What we need to do is wring ourselves free from any speck of pride. We are completely unworthy! Lent is the season of the church year when we prostrate ourselves before the Lord. But there's a problem here, too. This pathway is artificial at best and self-debasing at worst.

As people of faith, we understand we have a tragic flaw. It's called sin. We are sinful by nature. It's in our bones; it's deep in our psyche; it permeates every aspect of who we are. Sin is absolutely ingrained in us. From the minute we're born, there it is. And that tragic flaw of sin will take us down. It's a tragic story, and it can only go one way: towards destruction.

— Rev. Mary Erickson
Sermons.com

Deacons

Frank Powell, Chairman 919-604-1285

Victoria Neal, Vice Chairman 919-880-1888

Bill Upton 910-358-7303

Tommy Brown 843-446-6540

Johnny Ray 919-740-7099

Valentine's cont' ...

card for every occasion.

Is Valentine's Day a coverup for saying "I love you" to someone special in our lives? For men, who often find it difficult to say "I love you" a Valentine's Card goes a long way. It's as though a Valentine's card is the annual rite that seals the words "I love you" for the rest of the year. Say it with a card and forget it for the rest of the year.

Cheryl and I try to make it a habit to say "I love you" to each other without provocation. I find it handy to "Say I love you" after I walk across the kitchen floor she just mopped. Though the words don't cover up the marks I made on the clean floor, it's better than nothing.

We should not confine saying "I love you" to one day in the year. In my counseling with a couple about their marriage, the wife told her husband that he never said, "I love you." His response was "I said it once; that should be enough." No, once is not enough. God shouts "I love you multiple

times every day." Our understanding of that starts with a favorite verse, "For God so loved the world, meaning you, me, my wife, my cantankerous neighbor, my obnoxious uncle ... God loves all of us."

The standard by which we should measure our expressions of love is not a cute Valentine's card but Jesus Christ. It was John who wrote the words, "For God so loved the world ..." and then he followed that with an action statement, "He sent His Son." The gift was a gift of himself. John put it this way, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Words laced with love are important but actions that illustrate love may be more important. A young lady with small children became

a widow. A man in her church owned a laundry. He sent his truck to pick up her soiled clothes every week and returned them home clean and gently bundled for a year. He never sent a card to her; he never said, "I'll do this" he just took action. Now that's a profound demonstration of the kind of love God wants us to show to all his creatures, and not just on Valentine's Day.

— Tom Jenkins



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