



# The Senior Scene

*Love people. Know Jesus. Live Transformed.*

Volume 28

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## Consider Him

*Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the source and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Hebrews 12:1-3*

We all long for joy in our lives. And Jesus promised joy to those who believe in Him and remain in His love (John 15:9) And He longs for us to have joy – *I have told you this so that... your joy may be complete* (15:11). Yes, the Bible promises joy, but we often struggle to live into joy. Could it be that we have misunderstood how joy comes to us?

We would like to think that joy is attained in a life of ease and comfort. But our lives are rarely easy or comfortable. And the truth is, that is not the means by which we attain joy. In fact, the road to joy is more often characterized by entanglements, detours, deep valleys and steep climbs. Doesn't sound very joyful, does it? Our verses in Hebrews tell us about the joy of Jesus and if you re-read them, His path does not sound very joy-producing either!

But it tells us to "consider Him." Jesus was filled with joy as He walked this earth even though His path was paved with misunderstanding, rejection, opposition, and eventually the brutality of the cross. And He knew what was coming. But He "set His face" and headed into it. (Luke 9:51)

Through all the hardship and persecution, He never lost focus on the main thing – the **joy** set before Him. Jesus was about joy from the beginning – the announcement of His birth was about great joy! And in His earthly life we read in Hebrews that *God anointed Him with the oil of joy.* (1:9) The kind of joy that comes from connection to the Father.

As He walked through this life, He kept before Him that joy of reuniting with the Father and sitting at His right hand; the joy of His victory over sin and death; the joy of being surrounded for all eternity by those He loved so much He willingly endured the cross and

all that led up to it. How was He able to endure? For the joy before Him!

Can we expect any less on our path to joy? Matthew 5:11-12 tells us that we can rejoice and be glad even *when others persecute us, for our reward is great in heaven.* Our path to joy may be filled with suffering and trials (although never as much as Jesus endured). He has already walked the path and is lighting the way for us to follow. And through it all, we have the same enabling power He had. For the joy set before us, we can also endure. And at the end of the path, we will experience the same joy in the presence of the Father!

In a life that is often stress-filled and sorrowful, *consider Him.* And as we do, we will see that we have no reason to feel downtrodden or pessimistic whatever our circumstances. They are temporary. His joy is eternal. When our hearts are troubled by uncertainty and difficulty, and when the seemingly insurmountable problems of life cloud our vision, we can again read today's Scripture and *run with perseverance the race marked out for us.* And mostly, let us *consider Him* who endured... so that we will not grow weary and lose heart.



## Winter/Spring Bible Study

### The 7 Last Words from the Cross

Thursdays: February 20 thru April 3 at 10AM  
in the Edinburgh Room.

This is a contemplative study with the intention of preparing our hearts for the Easter celebration as we look at Christ's words of forgiveness, hope, compassion, and obedience.

## From Doing to Trusting

I don't have an earth shattering, mind blowing, heaven opening, lightning bolt story. Maybe it's the same as yours?

I grew up in an average 1960's/70's family. Mom, Dad, 3 kids. I am the oldest; my sister is 4 years younger, and my brother is 7 years younger. My dad worked at IBM and my mom was a housewife. We went to church (Episcopalian) *every* Sunday. Mom was in the women's groups, and dad was a junior warden. We went to all functions -- helping to set up chairs, serve food, work at rummage sales, etc. We attended Sunday school and did confirmation. I sang in the choir and played flute. DO-ERS.

My first taste of what it was like to love Jesus was in high school when we had a church function called Faith Alive Weekend. To be honest I don't remember much about it. I was "moved" by the weekend and decided that following God was important, but again, nothing earth shattering.

But after that weekend, we said prayers at mealtimes, we had new Bibles, and church became somewhat more meaningful. The services were the same - rote liturgical. I attended youth group, and also attended youth group and church camp with Glenshaw Presbyterian Church. It still wasn't that "feeling."

I married a non-believer. But at the time was I a believer? Not so sure. When we moved to Ohio for Ken's job, I met the wife of one of Ken's co-workers. She took me and our toddler son Kevin to her church. I got a job cooking lunch for the daycare/preschool at the church. But it got too hard when I was pregnant with Lauren and having some problems. One of the teachers was the wife of a pastor at another church, and I started going there -- Methodist. I joined the ladies' group -- we sewed and had Bible study together. I started teaching Sunday school. Again, a DO-ER.

About two years later, I gave up teaching Sunday school because the kids stopped coming, a good friend stopped going to church, and then I stopped going too. It was easy to quit. I had just found a full-time nursing job, so I "didn't have time to go to church."

I hadn't given up on God, I had given up on Church. I hadn't had a relationship with Jesus - ever. A friend helped me find an Evangelical Free church. For the first time in my life, church services focused on the biblical teachings of Jesus. I was finally learning what it meant to be 'born again' and to love Jesus. I saw it in the members, especially the women in the women's Bible study group. I attended this church for many years. The prayers and help of this church family got me through Lauren's accident (which is a whole other story about God's grace and power and love).

A new pastor came, and I felt restless again. Church no longer felt like a family. Plus, we were considered outsiders in the small town where we lived since we weren't born/raised there. As I look back, I didn't ever feel like I belonged there. I started talking to Ken about downsizing. We weren't getting any younger. We looked around the Cleveland area but I was uncomfortable with everything I saw.

Then one day we visited our folks in Pittsburgh. Lauren and I were driving down McKnight Road and as I looked around the area where we had grown up, I felt a wave of warmth spread over me. It had to be the Holy Spirit telling me, "Move back". There was a little nudge from my sister but a bigger nudge from God. I had interviewed for a director's job in Ohio just prior to this visit, but I didn't get it. And I knew. It was time to come home. I would have 25 years at my job and be eligible for retirement later that year. Ken was already retired. Our parents were having some health problems. So, we decided to move back to Pittsburgh.

Looking for a house was difficult. We made *a lot* of trips to see houses. Then one Saturday morning, we saw a house we hadn't seen before on Realtor.com. And next thing we are driving to Pittsburgh and making an offer on it. It was everything we needed. I know it was God that found that house for us - there wasn't anything close on the market before it.

The best part of all -- once we were here (took us a year to get here) Lauren wanted to find a young adult Bible study. I looked online and found MPC. She started attending; then we started attending SNW. Then WTW. Then came the job working for Betsy Rumer.

I have never felt the presence of God as much as I have here. And I'm building my relationship with Jesus. Relationships are hard for me. But this one is easy. He doesn't push me away. I am letting Him take the lead ... showing me what's next... praying for His wisdom and guidance... really reading His Word. And I have church family support like never before. Just like the Israelites who were exiled by God for 70 years, we were exiled to Ohio for 30 years where we worked, lived, and raised our children, not really feeling like we were home, only to follow God's command when it was time to return back to Pittsburgh, our "home".

Trust God - He knows what He's doing! I'm so glad I do. As for my husband, is he a non-believer or do I just not know? We are still together. He is supportive of my faith, and I believe that one day he will confess out loud that Jesus is Lord. I see God's hand on him and on our lives every day.

Barb Kowalski



# How Great Thou Art

Author: Carl Boberg; Translator: Stuart K. Hine (1949)



O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder,  
Consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made;  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

Refrain: Then sings my soul, My Savior God, to Thee,  
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.  
Then sings my soul, My Savior God, to Thee,  
How great Thou art, How great Thou art!

When through the woods, and forest glades I wander,  
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees.  
When I look down, from lofty mountain grandeur  
And see the brook and feel the gentle breeze.  
[Refrain]

And when I think, that God, His Son not sparing;  
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;  
That on the Cross, my burden gladly bearing,  
He bled and died to take away my sin. [Refrain]

When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation,  
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart.  
Then I shall bow, in humble adoration,  
And then proclaim: "My God, how great Thou art!"  
[Refrain]

"How Great Thou Art" is one of the most beloved hymns of the church. A 2-mile walk in both storm and sun inspired young minister/poet Carl Boberg of Monsteras, Sweden to write the poem that became this beloved hymn in 1886.

One day he left a church meeting to walk home on a beautiful sunny afternoon. But that changed suddenly. Dark clouds rolled in, and a thunderstorm unleashed its fury on him. Lightning blazed and thunder rumbled and a deluge of rain soaked Carl and everything around him in minutes. The power and grandeur of the storm amazed Carl. In an instant, the peaceful day became a turbulent gale. Even in the fierce storm, Carl was not frightened but was filled with wonder at the display of God's power. Then just as suddenly as the storm appeared, it was over. The sun broke through the clouds and a lovely rainbow was painted across the now calm sky.

Then as Carl reached home, he heard church bells ringing in the rain-cleansed air. The sound of the bells mixed with the sound of the birds who had resumed singing after the storm. This beautiful and sacred moment stirred Carl's heart. That evening, inspired by the events of that walk, Carl wrote a poem entitled, "O Store Gud," which means 'O Great God' in Swedish. The poem was not originally written as a song, but soon others began singing it to an old Swedish tune.

The poem eventually traveled far beyond Sweden. It was translated into German, then Russian. More than 40 years later, an English missionary to the Carpathian area of Russia, Stuart Hine, heard the Russian version of the song. Soon after, Hine found himself in the middle of a threatening storm, much as Boberg had the day he wrote the poem. As the thunder rolled through the Carpathian Mountain range, it was so awesome, it reminded him of the beautiful Russian hymn that had already become so dear to him. He translated the song to English.

In 1939, Hine composed his own arrangement of the original Swedish melody and shared the song as he traveled and ministered in his home country of England during the dark days of World War II. After the war ended, he wrote the 4<sup>th</sup> verse and renamed the song, "How Great Thou Art."

The song was not widely known until 1957, when the Billy Graham Crusade in New York City launched it. It was performed nearly a hundred times during those meetings and soon spread worldwide.

The great hymn "How Great Thou Art" reminds us to pause and marvel at God's work—from mighty storms to gentle breezes. One cannot sing this majestic hymn of praise and adoration without realizing anew the omnipotence of our majestic Creator.



## 2nd Thursday

February 13 at noon. On the menu: chili or chicken vegetable soup, rolls, and cream cheese tart. Program: Jeff Woods from Misty Pine Dog Therapy Program.



He and his 4-legged friends will present "What Dogs Do for Humans." Prepaid registration of \$10 for this luncheon is due by Friday, February 7.

March 13 at noon. On the menu: shepherd's pie, pistachio salad, rolls, and mint brownies. Program: Lee Goldman Kikel from the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh. Lee will tell the story of her father, who was an Auschwitz survivor who settled in Pittsburgh after the war. Prepaid registration of \$10 for this luncheon is due by Friday, March 7.

As with all the luncheons this season, our service project is North Hills Community Outreach. If you are able, please bring a non-perishable food item to donate to NHCO.

The Big Box of Crayons - The leftover letters reveal this month's Scripture:



B	B	L	U	S	H	P	B	T	N	A	L	P	G	G	E
A	U	T	A	H	T	I	S	A	L	M	O	N	M	H	K
N	A	G	R	A	D	N	E	V	A	L	E	A	O	C	N
A	E	V	N	M	K	K	S	N	O	S	J	R	I	R	B
N	E	I	O	R	T	O	G	G	I	Y	C	R	E	O	C
A	G	O	L	O	O	O	I	O	R	H	B	V	L	O	H
R	R	L	E	C	D	D	U	R	I	H	L	I	P	E	E
A	E	E	M	K	N	Q	E	D	N	I	V	P	P	G	S
S	W	T	R	I	R	B	I	O	S	E	E	L	A	G	T
P	O	V	E	U	Z	E	I	R	S	R	U	U	H	R	N
B	L	S	T	Z	T	T	H	N	E	V	I	M	T	E	U
E	F	C	A	D	A	N	D	E	L	I	O	N	I	E	T
R	N	J	W	N	B	T	A	D	E	O	R	Y	M	N	T
R	R	H	R	R	N	I	R	L	E	M	O	N	S	O	U
Y	O	A	O	G	R	E	K	O	E	H	O	U	Y	A	R
E	C	W	L	E	O	N	I	G	A	G	R	H	N	Q	D
T	N	R	T	L	I	M	E	S	J	T	N	C	N	U	N
I	E	S	I	W	S	L	A	E	T	U	N	A	A	A	O
H	I	S	I	M	A	H	O	G	A	N	Y	E	R	C	O
W	H	R	R	I	S	S	T	R	X	X	R	P	G	O	R
Y	E	L	L	O	W	O	M	A	U	V	E	U	X	A	A
P	U	R	P	L	E	X	N	Y	K	C	A	L	B	X	M

AQUA

BANANA

BLACK

BLUSH

BRICK

BROWN

BURNT SIENNA

CARNATION

CHESTNUT

COPPER

CORNFLOWER

CRIMSON

DANDELION

EGGPLANT

GOLDENROD

GRANNY SMITH APPLE

GRAY

GREEN

INDIGO

JAZZBERRY JAM

LAVENDAR

LEMON

LIME

MAGENTA

MAHOGANY

MANGO

MAROON

MAUVE

OLIVE

ORANGE

ORCHID

PEACH

PERIWINKLE

PINK

PLUM

PURPLE

RASPBERRY

SAGE

SALMON

SHAMROCK

SILVER

TEAL

TURQUOISE

VIOLET

WATERMELON

WHITE

WISTERIA

YELLOW

