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Choir Rises To Occasion For Service

JULY 22ND 2011 BY NEWS

Choir Rises To Occasion For Service

JOPLIN - When disaster strikes, pastors are called into an extreme level of service to help meet the needs of their congregation and community. But it's not just pastors and their staff, but also other areas, such as music ministries, that are presented with unexpected tasks.

When the tornado came to Joplin, Larry Sanborn and his wife Gloria took refuge in an interior room of the lower part of their split-level home. The tornado broke their windows, burst open their doors and took off part of their roof, but they personally made it through uninjured.

Sometime after that fateful night, he's not quite sure what day it was, Larry Sanborn received a call. As music director of First United Methodist Church in Joplin, he was asked if he would be able to get his choir together to perform at a special service in a few days. The service would be a community-wide service, and President Barack Obama and Governor Jay Nixon would be speaking at the service, along with Rev. Aaron Brown from Saint Paul's UMC.

As an uninjured survivor of the deadliest tornado in 60 years, with a severely damaged home, Sanborn already had a lot of emotions to deal with; now he had two more: honored and excited.

"I've been music director here 46 years," Sanborn said. "We've sang at Annual Conference a couple of times, but we've never had an opportunity anything like this."

Sanborn went to the church, and the church staff pitched in with helping him call all the choir members. Because they would be on stage with President Obama, all the choir members had to pass a security clearance, and Sanborn had to get all of the names, birth dates and Social Security numbers to the security team in Washington D.C.

Sanborn called in a few veteran members of the choir, to bring their number up from 28 to 35. The choir got in a practice that week, singing "Hymn of Promise" by Natalie Sleeth. When Sunday came, the U.S. Army sent a bus out to the church to pick them up, so they could get through traffic and past security.

Before the service Glenda Austin, Sanborn’s sister-in-law and pianist for First UMC, played a grand piano for fifteen minutes.

“It was wonderful. You could have heard a pin drop in there,” Sanborn said.

The memorial service wasn’t the only big task for the choir. Like most churches in Joplin, First UMC was packed the Sunday after the tornado.

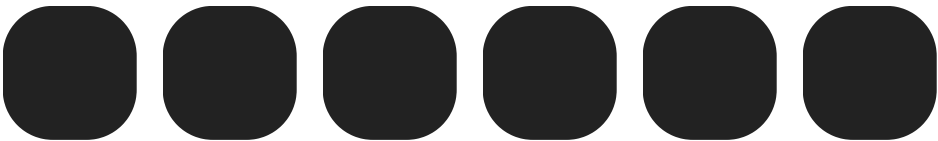
“It was full – it looked like Easter,” Sanborn said. “It was similar to the crowds we saw after 9/11.”

The Sanborns are living with Gloria’s mother, about five blocks from their home. They are waiting on insurance adjusters and contractors to begin rebuilding. They were told that it might be several months before they will be able to move back into their home.

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THE PLEDGE; Men at the Cross Devotional

JULY 22ND 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

THE PLEDGE; Men at the Cross Devotional

Reprint Compliments of Men At The Cross By Joe White

VIDEO OF THE DAY

2 Corinthians 1:19-22

19For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes." 20For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. 21Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, 22set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

The air rushed out of the front right tire of our travel van as quickly as the "swoosh" a little child hears as expectantly releases an untied balloon to watch it spurt feverishly through the air about him.

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[images/Blog Images/show/ujdu](#)

It was 12:30 in the early morning and definitely no time for a flat tire . . . especially to a group of weary

travelers with no spare and a nine-hour all night drive from Denver to Kansas City facing them. To my amazement we found an open tire store with one tire on the shelf exactly the right size. As I reached in my pocket to get my billfold, I realized I had left that and all my travel money at the McDonalds across town. With frantic haste, I pleaded with the mechanic to trust me and put the tire on our van while I hitched a ride to retrieve my billfold.

"How do I know you'll return to pay me?" he asked with a shout.

"I'll leave Brad Friess with you. He's my close friend," I said clumsily.

That was enough to seal the deal. Brad was my friend and no fool would leave a friend behind for the price of one measly tire! Besides, Brad is one of the greatest guys you could ever meet . . . a handsome, intelligent, talented 6'5" basketball standout for the University of Arkansas Cagers team.

images/Blog Images/show/ujdv
images/Blog Images/show/uje0 Brad was a pledge ... a very good one at that! With billfold in hand, I returned for the tire and my friend ... for a starlit trip to Kansas City where my friends laughed at me all night long for leaving an unsuspecting character like Brad Friess as a pledge for ... of all things ... a steel belted radial white wall tire worth no more than \$99.

QUESTIONS:

1. When a person receives Christ as personal Savior, the Holy Spirit enters his heart to stay. How is this gift from God a firm, secure "pledge" that Jesus will return to take that person home?
2. In light of this all-important word from God, what does the phrase "the security of the believer" mean to you?
3. What do the terms "down payment", "pledge", "earnest money contract" have in common and how do they describe God's mission with the Holy Spirit?

LIFELINE:

"I will never leave you or forsake you" may be the most pleasant words in scripture.

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STORMS OF LIFE; Men at the Cross Devotional

JULY 21ST 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

STORMS OF LIFE; Men at the Cross Devotional

Reprint Compliments of Men At The Cross By Joe White

VIDEO OF THE DAY

2 Corinthians 5:1-5

1Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. 2Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, 3because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. 4For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

Randy Odom is a fine counselor at Kids Across America, our summer sports camp reserved especially for some of America's most deserving kids who come from the financially deprived concrete world of urban inner city America. Not only does Randy love God, but he loves urban kids with a passion.

One stormy spring day, Randy pulled up in front of his trailer house at the exact moment a tornado arrived at his front door. In haste he jumped out of his car (as the door was ripped from its hinges), dove into his "home on wheels" where he was met head on in the hallway by a flying door. The door pinned him to the floor while his whole house was literally demolished above him. Although his house was scattered for city blocks, Randy was protected by the door and escaped without injury.

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These "earth suits" we inhabit while we visit this earth are about as stable as Randy's mobile home in a tornado. We can exercise them, feed them, and doctor them all we want, but the "tornado of time" will eventually scatter them into the dust of the ground. No medicine or vitamin or magic potion can keep the inevitable from happening. "As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field so he flourishes. When the wind has passed over it, it is no more....."

Psalm 103:16 Fortunately, oh so fortunately, our spirit is protected from destruction by the spirit of Christ, if indeed He is alive and well in our hearts. It is our spirit, sealed by grace for eternity by His spirit, that is destined to live with God forever unscathed, unharmed, free to live, fit for life with a King.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is our "blind spot" that causes us to focus so much time and attention on our "earth suit" with such a limited life span and so little time and attention to our "inner man" that will live forever?
2. What are some ways you can change your priorities to refocus on that part of you that will live forever?
3. How do you express high value to that inner being?

LIFELINE:

What a great time to pour our hearts into these daily devotionals to prepare the part of us that will live forever.

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THE STICKIES; Men At The Cross Devotional

JULY 20TH 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

THE STICKIES; Men At The Cross Devotional

Reprint Compliments of Men At The Cross By Joe White

VIDEO OF THE DAY

1 Corinthians 16:1-4

*1Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do.
2On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in
keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be
made. 3Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and*

send them with your gift to Jerusalem. 4If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me.

Twice a year, "the stickies" arrive. You can always recognize them by the fingerprints on the packaging, and the card that reads: "I lov yew, Dady." They arrive at Christmas time, and on my birthday, and sometimes for no special occasion at all. The correct celebration is never the point. The stickies are always the same- a scrap of cloth, a tattered item from the garbage can, a little wad of yarn with feathers glued randomly to it. Carefully, I run my fingers across the colorful plumage, remarking, "Gee, Cooper, this is the most beautiful bird I've ever received."

[images/Blog Images/show/ujd7](#)

Silence intrudes-followed by correction.

"It's a hand gwenade."

Ah, yes-a hand grenade, one of the many tokens of love I've received from my kids over the years. They are always so touching, so personal . . . so sticky. But it doesn't matter that they are coated in that goo that covers every child's hands. They are sincere, and that's why for as long as I live, I would never dream of throwing them away. I keep them in a special drawer, where my children-who are grown now-can one day bring their children to rummage through the stickies.

[images/Blog Images/show/ujd8](#)

Paul's closing instructions to the Corinthians begins with sincere giving, (I Cor. 16:1-4). There is perhaps no greater mark of Christianity than one's willingness to give to others. And Paul doesn't just instruct the Corinthians to give; he tells them to give habitually-once a week, as soon as the paycheck comes in.

To be specific, Paul wants them to give to the church in Jerusalem. It is the most ungrateful that are the most unsympathetic to the needs of those who helped them get their start. When we know someone, or some ministry that was instrumental in our spiritual life, we should ask God how we could bless them with our giving. Then, we should bless them with a blessing they'll never forget.

QUESTIONS:

1. If you were to make a list of the top three people you give to, who would be on that list.

2. In what ways do you give?
3. In what ways would you like to become more giving?
4. In what ways would you like to become more giving?

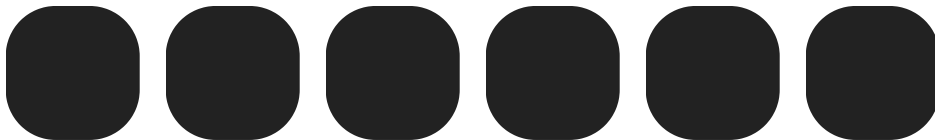
LIFELINE:

Realize that everything you have is not your own. You have because the Lord has blessed you and given to you. Are you grateful or are you grumbling from what the Lord has given to you? Do you return His blessing?.

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THE SPOTLIGHT OF TRUTH; Men at the Cross Devotional

JULY 19TH 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

THE SPOTLIGHT OF TRUTH; Men at the Cross Devotional

Reprint Compliments of Men At The Cross By Joe White

VIDEO OF THE DAY

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

3For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. 6After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

THE SPOTLIGHT OF TRUTH At one time or another, we've all seen a police helicopter whirring back and forth across a city sky, its spotlight probing the ground for some fleeing villain. It's rare, however, that one sees the hunted pinned down in a circle of light. Recently, one of my directors had that opportunity.

"I was coming home from church

<images/Blog ImagesM@TC 7.19.2011 a1. Helicopter.jpg/show/ujc3>

one night with my family," he tells me. "We had just entered an overpass, and below us the highway was dotted with traffic. Suddenly, my son shouts, 'Hey, Dad, look at that car down there. It looks like it's on stage.'

Sure enough, ahead of the other cars sped an old, black van-smack dab in the middle of a fluorescent halo. Above it, flying as low as possible, a police helicopter kept its search beam trained on its suspect. The light was so bright that every detail of the van stood out-the license number, the missing taillight, the rusty paint on the back, left quarter-panel-nothing was hidden from view. It truly was on stage. No doubt, they had their man."

<images/Blog Images/show/ujc0>

In chapter fifteen of I Corinthians, Paul has his spotlight trained on the Resurrection. Just like the helicopter's search beam, the light of verses 3-8 shines so brightly that nobody can be mistaken about the identity of the man on stage. The man had a name, and His name was

Christ Jesus. The man had a purpose, and his purpose was to die for our sins. The man was buried, and stayed in the grave for three days. The man was raised from the dead. Finally, the man appeared to many people after His resurrection, and in a specific order: first to Peter, then to His Twelve disciples, then to a congregation of five-hundred, then to James, then to the apostles, and finally to Paul. (*By the way, in our judicial system, it takes only two witnesses to convict a defendant. Paul had five hundred of them.)

In short, the resurrection is illuminated by facts. When we study it in light of Paul's evidence, we can arrive at only one conclusion: Jesus Christ is guilty of rising from the dead. Case dismissed.

QUESTIONS:

- 1. Without looking at the text, name four pieces of evidence that verify Christ's resurrection.
- 2. In twenty-five words, or less, describe how the resurrection gives you hope.

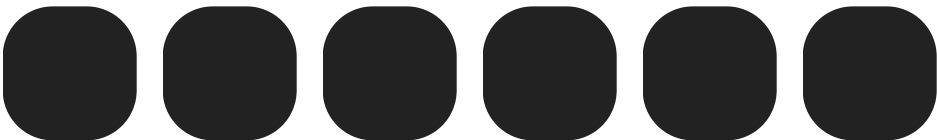
LIFELINE:

If you were the defendant in this case, you would be charged with trying to prove the resurrection was false. Divide up into two teams, defense and convicted. Play out how this trial might proceed based on Paul's writing in 1 Corinthians 15:1-8.

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