



Hampden Heights Sentinel

HIGHLIGHTS:

- RJA harbors students full of STEAM, with strange hair, mad scientists, and future concert pianists! Page 1
- Is God just a chore to be checked off? Page 2
- The truth does not change according to our ability to stomach it. Page 2
- What is Christ costing you? Page 3
- How would you encourage Christ? Page 4
- Is accomplishment, wealth, wisdom, even life meaningless? Page 5
- Talking the talk, walking the walk. Page 6

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Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

~Matthew 5:7 NIV~

RJA News Corner by Lee Stahl, Principal



RJA Steam Night

If you are thinking STEAM is water that has changed from a liquid to a gas, you'd be wrong in this case. STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics. RJA held a STEAM exhibit on the evening of April 18. We showcased the various science projects and art works of our students. Over 150 people showed up to see the exhibit and to enjoy a free meal with donations from Subway, Sam's Club, a bible study group, and parents. It was exciting to see what our students have accomplished!



RJA Students on Wacky Hair Day!

WE FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS! Submitted by Darlene Peterson

Second graders are learning to write, follow, and give instructions. Each student picked something that they could make. They made a list of materials needed for their project and

wrote out step-by-step instructions. The students presented their instructions to their actively listening peers, who applauded for all of the interesting presentations. The topics ranged from how to care for a pet rabbit to how to make several different kinds of sandwiches. Then the whole class was hungry and could hardly wait for lunch time! The second grade's culminating activity for following instructions was to make their own clay dough. Edwin, the 6th grade teacher's assistant and also the photographer that documented the progress of the project, listened to each student read all the instructions from their take-home booklets in order for them to become familiar with the process. Then, Mr. Long graciously supplied us with the materials that were listed to make our clay dough. Next, the students took turns reading the steps of instructions. They carefully followed each step of measuring, adding, mixing, and kneading.

Finally, the very happy and intrigued second graders made several colors of dough by mixing the primary colors of food coloring to make red, blue, green, orange, purple, and violet clay dough. Very satisfied that they learned to read, listen, give, and follow instructions, the second graders took home a sampling of all the colors of well-made clay dough the following day.



Miss Cindy's Piano Students

Buttons of proud parents were popping on Sunday, April 14th at Hampden Heights S.D.A. Church as children performed at Ms. Cindy's annual piano recital. The young pianists, comprised mostly of RJA students (past and present) (cont. page 6)

Grace's Outpost by Ashley Richards

"Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name." – Psalm 100:4, NASB

I read these words a couple months ago, and found myself challenged and inspired by an idea I had never even considered before: I do not enter God's house with thanksgiving and praise.

Do you? Have you ever? I'm not sure I have, ever.

And I was gobsmacked.

I slip into church, sometimes, calmed by the music and sometimes the inspiring discussion in Toni Wlasniewski's Sabbath School class, thoughtful and at peace. I stride into church, sometimes, full of purpose, sorting logistics for leading worship with my mom and making sure all the key people know about a song change or that we need an extra microphone. Sometimes I even see a friend I've not seen for a while, and chat a little bit about how life is going. I may slip in early, keen to write my tithe check, or honestly just

waiting for the next part of the Sabbath schedule I keep. Sleep, wake, pray, breakfast, dress, drive, Sabbath school, wait for church to start. And again, and again, every Sabbath.

But what I don't do? I don't enter God's house with thanksgiving and praise, joy radiating from my very soul, eager to hear from God (but *why* don't I?). These days, half the time I don't even enter God's house *happy*. I'm often tired—soul-weary—and grumpy or worried or bitter or jealous or just unhappy, if I'm being honest.

I don't consider it a joy to enter God's house, if I'm being honest, but rather, a chore to check off of a list. When did life become this way?

When did the business of busyness take away our sense of awe, of joy, of gratitude, of thankfulness? Of *reverence*? It's true, reverence doesn't have to be quiet, not always, but what *should* it look like? One definition in the Merriam-Webster dictionary says that reverence is "profound adoring awed respect." Do

we come into God's house with profound adoring and awed respect? Is our *worship* filled with profound adoring and awed respect? Do we pray, do we sing, do we share the great news of King Jesus' death on the cross for us, with profound adoring and awed respect? Do we *love King Jesus* with profound and joyful adoring and awed respect?

And what would it look like if we did?

What would it look like if we were the church that entered the house of God with giddy joy, refreshed hearts, and grateful minds? What if we entered God's house with shouts of joy, grateful prayers, and songs of praise and adoration on our lips? What if we entered the house of God, falling to our knees in gratitude or desperation or relief, pouring our hearts out to God, begging Him for more of Him in our lives? What if coming to church was the place our spirits were revived, our faith was bolstered, and we found hope in the community of King Jesus, the angels, and our true family?

It's true, not always is life full of puppy dogs and rainbows and equally clichéd happy things. Not always do we know how to be happy when the world comes crashing down around us.

God gets that. And when that happens, King Jesus is the One who rescues us, scoops us up in His arms, and carries us through the fires, the floods, the deaths, and the depressions.

David said in Psalm 27:4, "One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to meditate in His temple."

And honestly, that's all I want. To come into the house of King Jesus and behold His beauty. To be transformed by His beauty. And to give Him every ounce of love, worship, and gratitude that lives in my heart.

And to want to go to King Jesus' house more than anyone else's. (Don't you?)

Notable Quotes selected by Bob Kondracki

It is better to be divided by truth than to be united in error.
~Adrian Rodgers~

Men in general are quick to believe that which they wish to be true.
~Julius Caesar~

He who dares not offend cannot be honest.
~Thomas Paine~

All control, in essence, is about who controls the truth.
~Joseph Rain~

We live in a fantasy world, a world of illusion. The great task in life is to find reality.
~Iris Murdoch~

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.
~Colossians 2:8~

The Bible is one of the greatest blessings bestowed by God on the children of men. It has God for its author; salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture for its matter. It is all pure.
~John Locke~

The great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie, deliberate, contrived and dishonest, but the myth, persistent, persuasive and unrealistic.
~John F. Kennedy~

A dog barks when his master is attacked. I would be a coward if I saw that God's truth is attacked and yet would remain silent.
~John Calvin~

The truth does not change according to our ability to stomach it.
~Flannery O'Connor~

I think the truth is black-and-white.
~Nancy Grace~

Going Deeper by Barbara Snyder

Counting the Cost

Two weeks ago, I was asked at the last minute to present a devotion for one of my meetings. Paging through the New Testament for a passage that I was hoping would bring me some message, I was immediately attracted to the caption for this section of Luke 14:26-35 "The Cost to be a Disciple". Since I have been reading Dietrich Bonhoeffer recently and he had written a book entitled *The Cost of Discipleship* I felt this just might be where to begin. Let me quote the verses that caught my notice.

"If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost whether he has enough to complete it? ...or what king will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with 10,000 to meet him who comes against him with 20,000? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends in an embassy and asks terms of peace. So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple. Salt is good; but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is fit neither for the land nor for the dunghill; men throw it away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

What does counting the cost mean? I believe it is a call to maturity. Study the examples. They have to do

with building, and defending. Our cost is based on placing ourselves in the business of building a relationship with Christ. Yet the sacrifice of counting the cost is nothing compared to the reality of paying the bill. The cost is time consuming and most probably heavy, but so is the cross of Christ. So, the meaning is twofold: 1. Take the commitment to Christ seriously. 2. Know ahead of time that we will have our own crosses to carry. It's best to carry it with Him being our Simon of Cyrene.

Why is the salt mentioned? The cross is our life. When the scripture says "even our own life" it may be referring to our life and limb but in reality it is always referring to giving up the ego life, stripping away the falseness of our interior world made up of our talents, our roles, our pretending, our preconceived ideas, our positions in the world and in the church. We all have to wear different "hats" or "masks" during our day to day life just to get through. But the closer we come to Jesus the more authentic we will become, the less we have to playact, the less we have to fear, the more energy we have to really live!

In summary: Commit to Christ. Count the cost. Carry the cross. Commit to authenticity. Then you will be spiritual salt, zest, a flavor, a preservative, a relish to yourself and others. Without commitment to Christ and authenticity, counting the cost, and carrying the cross, our salt will be flavorless and unpalatable to others and ourselves.

How to live this message.

These words had always stumped me when I first became a Christian. Why would God ask us to give up our children, our spouse, or ailing parents? Why would He demand such a sacrifice when He also commands us to care for others? The verses scared me. As a new Christian I stayed away from these heavier verses. I only believed that giving up meant giving up certain foods, entertainment, especially movies and music, giving up activities, especially on Sabbath when these same activities on other days were both encouraged, necessary, and good. But there has to be a deeper method to our thinking and our living other than reacting to the scriptures as a constant set of demands and commands. Our God is a God of love, order, and relationship and is therefore not wanting to destroy those graces in us.

The way to live this is the way of all scripture. Live Jesus. Spend that hour daily with Him, studying His word, listening and looking for His presence and His guidance. Assume growth is happening and share this growth by witness through service.

As long as I have been on this path I continue to grow spiritually. I have fits and starts, failures and backward motion but I also have a consistent, constant companion on the journey. The longer I am with Jesus the more I am coming to the view that what He asks from me is much more tender and giving than it is harsh and draining.

All departure from Christ's plan for us starts in our mind with an idea, an interpretation of a want, a hesitation about truth as it is in Jesus. The mind is where it starts but the heart is where it stops or grows. All of the joys and sorrows of life are interpreted in the mind as either blessings or curses. It is through the heart though that the answer comes. With "heart work with Christ" we are part of the solution turning departure into deepening devotion.

We can help this process but it takes time and prayer. Name the joys and sorrows of our heart and life; label them as harmful or beneficial, and hold them (figurately) in your hands loosely. Imagine your open hands held up to God filled with what you love, and hate, your struggles, your sins, your talents, your aspirations, dreams, and goals for today and for the future. If asked to turn away from parents, children, spouse, consider the meaning to be more like "Leave them to God." or "care for them, Lord, for I no longer can." Then wait for more of His will to be revealed. Do not hurry or rush it.

Even truth must be held loosely. When one grasps truth so tightly that (again figurately) it is crushed, deformed, shattered, the truth itself looks broken and useless to others. Biblical truth is a gift. Do not squeeze it tightly but share it, not forcefully but lovingly with someone else. Note that our daily life is moving within the reality of our interior and exterior world. (cont. page 4)

Going Deeper (continued from page 3)

Consider opening your mind to reality, not as things should be but as they are. Things are as they are in an immense whole of which we are a part and which we cannot pretend to grasp the whole. Humility and caution and perhaps counseling is needed here.

"...Seek truth in my own life and action, moving where movement is possible and keeping still when movement is unnecessary, realizing that things will continue to define themselves and that the judgments and mercies of God will clarify themselves and will be more clear to me if I am silent and attentive,

obedient to His will, rather than constantly formulating statements in this age which is smothered in language, in meaningless and inconclusive debate in which, in the last analysis, nobody listens to anything except what agrees with his own prejudices."
~Thomas Merton~

Now that is a loaded statement but one with potential for great wisdom in allowing God to be God in scripture and all things so that those hard to understand scripture passages are no longer threatening but loving as He is.

I still chew on these things. Amen.

Question of the Month by Ashley Richards

This month's question of the month: Knowing what you know now, if you had had the opportunity, what would you say or do to encourage Jesus as He went from the last supper to the cross?

"I know what You're going through. I appreciate it. Bear with it—it'll be worth it!—we'll be together eventually. Everything will be different, one day!" – Teresa de Peña

"Look at heaven—it'll be perfect! We appreciate everything You did for us!" – Rick Plunkett

"Thank You, Jesus, for what You are doing for me, because, on my own, I couldn't do it." – Eric Blackerby

"Probably, when He rode into town on the donkey, just when He's getting off, I'd say, 'What You're about to do is amazing.'" – John Richards, II

"Your sacrifice won't be in vain." – Bob Kondracki

"I would say thank you, give Him a hug; I would say, 'I will be waiting for You at the resurrection.'" – Natalia Peguero

"I would thank Him for what He's done and encourage Him to follow through with His plan, because, in the end, His people will come through for Him." – Lorraine Edris

"Never give up—keep pushing forward." – Enrique Peguero

"I'll pray for You." – Lisa Lozar

"I would kneel before Him and say thank You." – Debbie Taylor

Calendar of Events for May submitted by Wendy Hughes

5/1/19	Wednesday	Son Shine Seniors	11:00AM	Son Shine Seniors		Fellowship Hall
5/3-5/4	Friday & Sabbath	Academy Days at BMA		RJA		BMA
5/4/19	Sabbath	Communion				
5/4/19	Sabbath	1st of the Month Bible Study and Potluck		Wayne Johns	Wayne & Arleen	Fellowship Hall
5/4/19	Sabbath	Adventist Youth Movie Night	8:00 PM	Adventist Youth	Wendy & Daren	Fellowship Hall
5/5/19	Sunday	Miniature Golf & Italian ice	1PM - 3	Young Youth	Stacy & Jason	
5/5/19	Sunday	Pathfinder Fair	8:00AM	Pathfinders	Virginia	BMA
5/5/19	Sunday	Lay Pastor Training	10:00-2	Lay Pastors	Lance Moncrieffe	Fellowship Hall
5/11/19	Sabbath	RJA Sabbath @ Hampden		RJA	Lee Stahl	Sanctuary
5/11/19	Sabbath	Potluck				Fellowship Hall
5/14/19	Tuesday	Movie Night/Pathfinders, End of Year	6:00 PM	Pathfinders	Virginia	Fellowship Hall
5/18/19	Sabbath	Progressive Party	12:00-4	Social	Arleen Johns	????
5/18/19	Sabbath	Adventist Youth Pizza & Games	8:15 PM	Adventist Youth	Wendy & Daren	Fellowship Hall
5/19/19	Sunday	Family Fun Day/Pathfinders	all day	Pathfinders	Virginia	Pavilion
5/20/19	Monday	Board Meeting	7PM			Board Room

The Crow's Nest by Bob Kondracki

Maintaining Proper Perspective

We all have our passions. We all have things in our lives that have more significance to us than others. Of course, not everything that's important to me might be as important to you, and vice versa.

However, many of us do share interests and beliefs that are uniformly important to a much larger demographic than just ourselves.

Take sports for instance. There are a huge number of sports fans in the US, and throughout the world. And regardless of which sport they follow, fans can usually relate to each other on some level because all live vicariously through their favorite teams. However, some fans tend to take their enthusiasm to great lengths. Now I have what many would consider more than a casual interest in sports, football and hockey in particular. I used to take it more seriously than I do now however. Since the years of my youth, I've gradually learned that getting upset because one group of millionaires lost a game to another group of millionaires was rather silly. I had absolutely no impact on the game, so I was not in the least bit responsible for whether my team won or lost. And watching these guys on the sideline, I often couldn't tell whether they won or lost! It made me realize that I might be more upset than they were! At that moment, it all seemed so meaningless.

Nonetheless, I am still a fan, and I watched the first part of the annual NFL draft last week. Now the NFL does everything it can, naturally, to

involve the fans as much as possible, because the more emotionally invested you are in something, the more you'll take it seriously, of course. And as I'm watching the cameras constantly panning to the fans of the team currently on the clock, I know what to expect. Yet I'm still surprised to the extent some of the fans go to exhibit their support, and the fanaticism they display. And to be honest, some of the behavior is also rather disturbing. I can't help but wonder about some of these people who are dressed in expensive authentic team gear, with painted faces, who most likely paid a fair amount to come to this event, and scheduled vacation time to attend. I observe their reactions with some humor, and some concern, as some of them seem like they will have to be coaxed in off the ledge when their team doesn't draft who they thought they should. All hyperbole aside, the emotion displayed is genuine, and some are really angry, suicidally disappointed, etc., and some are overjoyed, like they just won the lottery or something. And this is only the draft! They may need a jacket, a real straight one with plenty of buckles, if they were ever to watch their team play in the Super Bowl. When did this stop being just a hobby for them, and become an obsession, elevated to an unnatural priority in their lives?

Now I get it, many of us use our hobbies and interests as a distraction from the problems and disappointments in our lives. I also understand that it is not just an option, but a necessity

to have something to provide escape from the problems of this world. And even though I understand the mechanism that makes this human tendency operate, and I recognize that I must guard against it, I nonetheless also find myself vulnerable to getting my priorities distorted.

It seems like it's human nature to focus on the here and now, and push the future to the back burner in the moment. What is important to us right now captures our full attention because it is happening now. It is right in front of us. It is the most essential thing of importance at this particular time. When my team won the Super Bowl, it was extremely satisfying and important at that time. Now, 20 years later, it has lost much of its significance. The point is, what is important to us now, what our priority is right now, because it has our attention at the present time, may not be of any consequence whatsoever in the future. We must be extremely careful we don't over-invest in something for which there is not only little or no return, but inversely, continues to demand even more than we were initially prepared to offer.

Watching the fans at the NFL draft, and seeing other things in our world and in my own life that seem to be out of order in priority, I often think of King Solomon's perspective on how we live our lives as expressed in Ecclesiastes.

If you're feeling happy, energetic, oblivious to the problems of your own life and society in general, if you go about your day without a care in the world, don't read

Ecclesiastes. Or, maybe you do need to read it. You see, Solomon was proclaimed the wisest man who ever lived. But he too, was led astray from what was most important in life...for a time. If Solomon, who received his wisdom directly from God was vulnerable, how much more so are we?

You see, Solomon was a realist, while some of us are idealists and opportunists. But realists and idealists often are in conflict with each other. Solomon finally understood the reality of this life, albeit after some mistakes in his own. Throughout the book of Ecclesiastes, he extols the meaningless of life. Everything is meaningless (1:2) What has been done will be done again (1:9) Everything done under the sun is merely a chasing after the wind (1:14) Even wisdom is meaningless (1:16) Wise or fool, the same fate overtakes them both (2:14) You get the idea. And that was only the beginning! There is some encouragement sprinkled through the book, but after Solomon examines human life in general, he finally arrives at one conclusion. Instead of me pontificating on what he said, I'll quote it directly from him, "Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil." ~Ecclesiastes 12:13-14~

According to Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, life is meaningless

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The Children's Page by Ashley Richards

Do you know the story of Pentecost? It's an amazing story that takes place just after Jesus returns to heaven, and the disciples returned to Jerusalem to pray. They were all united in a desire to follow Jesus, and the Holy Spirit worked mightily in them! The Holy Spirit appeared as flames of fire on their head, and a mighty wind filled the room! The power of God worked through them, and they went out from there, teaching the people about Jesus. They spoke in their own language, but, in Jerusalem at that time, there were many, many Jews visiting for the Jewish feast of Pentecost, and they each heard Jesus' disciples speaking to them in their own language! Isn't that amazing? That day, many, many people were saved for the Kingdom of God! If you want to read it yourself, you can find the story in the book of Acts, chapter 2. In the puzzle below, you can find words related to the story—the words will go across or down, but not backward or diagonally.

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

- | | | | |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Apostles | Jerusalem | Pentecost | Repent |
| Baptized | Jesus Christ | Peter | Rushing wind |
| Fire | Jews | Praising God | Signs |
| Galileans | Languages | Prayer | Tongues |
| Holy Spirit | Miracle | Preaching | Wonders |

The Crow's Nest (from pg 5)

unless you live with God as your priority.

"To the person who pleases Him, God gives wisdom, knowledge, and happiness, but to the sinner He gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind." ~Ecclesiastes 2:26~

Let's not let what is in front of us right now, what's occupying our attention at this moment, divert us from what's ultimately the most important thing in life. Let's plan to make God the priority over all things, not just later, but right now, and forever.

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"
~Mark 8:36~

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that during the feast of Pentecost people came from FIFTEEN regions and countries, each speaking different languages, and ALL of them heard the good news of Jesus dying to save them from their sins? People came from Africa, the Middle East, and Rome! And yet, none of the disciples knew the languages that these visitors spoke, but the Holy Spirit translated their words into something that they could understand, so they could hear the good news of Jesus!



RJA News Corner (continued from page 1)

as well as some community children, each played 2 selections. More than 70 parents, relatives and friends attended and stayed to fellowship with each other afterwards at a potluck meal.

"I have always viewed this as one of my ministries. Most children have a hymn or praise book in addition to their regular piano books. They are encouraged to play special music and

offertories for their churches and for RJA days at area Seventh-day Adventist Churches." Ms. Cindy

**Reading Junior Academy...
Educating Today and for
Eternity!**