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Being the heart and hands of Jesus Christ for our valley Vol. XI Issue IV April 2011



REV. BOB SHEPARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## THE "EMPTY" PROMISES OF GOD

*"Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'" Mark 16:6-7*

A young man from a wealthy family was about to graduate from high school. It was the custom in that affluent neighborhood for the parents to give the graduate an automobile. "Bill" and his father had spent months looking at cars, and the week before graduation, they found the perfect car. On the eve of his graduation, his father handed him a gift wrapped Bible. Bill was so angry that he threw the Bible down and stormed out of the house. He and his father never saw each other again.

It was the news of his father's death that brought Bill home again. As he sat one night going through his father's possessions that he was to inherit, he came across the Bible his father had given him. He brushed away the dust and opened it to find a cashier's check, dated the day of his graduation - in the exact amount of the car they had chosen together.

As I thought about this story, I couldn't help but wonder how many people in this world have done the same thing to God. Literally tossed aside a wonderful promise, because they didn't understand it, or they didn't believe that it was possible.

In our world, we are taught that; "if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is." So many of us have been taken in by "empty promises," that we are leery of anything or anyone that tells us we can have something for nothing. The world simply does not work that way.

The truth of the matter is, the world is full of empty promises. We watch TV, and the advertisements tell us that we can be happy, sexy, rich, or famous, if we only purchase a certain product. It doesn't take long before we have been fooled enough to know that the world's promises are full of emptiness.

But, God never made a promise that was too good to be true. God is different. Instead of promises full of emptiness, on Easter, he gave us emptiness that is full of promise.

He gave us an empty cross as a promise of His forgiveness

He gave us an empty tomb as a promise of victory (His and ours) over death

He gave us the empty grave clothes as a promise that JESUS IS ALIVE and He is coming back.

Have a blessed Easter enjoying the fullness of God's promises in your life.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

• - Mark these dates on your calendar - •

### Easter 'Sonrise' service

Sunday, April 24th 6:00 am

Ohme Gardens

### Benefit Art Auction

Friday, April 29th 11:00 am - 7:00 pm

McDee's Art Center

See flyer insert

### Stamp Out Hunger food drive

Saturday, May 14th

### Applebee's Dine To Donate

Sunday, May 22nd

Back To School Clothing Giveaway Fundraiser



## Serve Wenatchee Valley Support Update

As you can tell, March was a good month for us financially. This helped us make up in part the slow start we experienced in the first couple of months. With government- national, state and local budget cuts already implemented or soon to be coming the challenges looming for our ministry to meet human needs is growing. Thank you for your support as we are the instrument God is using to bring peace and comfort to hundreds of families in our valley during these tumultuous times.

	March 2011	Year to Date
Income	\$17,145	\$37,425
Expenses	\$13,738	\$43,524

United Way contributors did you know... that even though SWV is not an official partner agency of United Way, contributions can be made to our ministry through United Way by designating us as a recipient of your donations by writing us in as one of the unofficial receiver of funds.

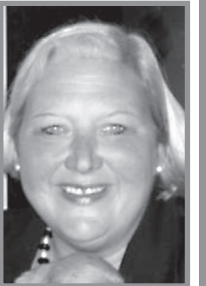
For those of you with cell phones here is a quick & easy way to send your support.  
 STEP 1: Dial 27722 and text the word "serve".  
 STEP 2: You will immediately receive a confirmation text message (don't be alarmed) You will need to reply with the word "yes" to confirm the donation (without step 2 the donation will not go through)  
 Each time you do this a \$10 donation will be made to our ministry. It will appear on your next cell phone billing. You are only able to make three donations per month in this fashion.

## PRAYER CONFERENCE 2011- 24 HOURS OF SEEKING GOD'S FACE

Hundreds of Christians throughout our valley met for our 24-hour marathon of prayer during the weekend of March 18-19. Two-hour sessions, including a prayer walk, were held in various churches within our valley including Leavenworth, Orondo, East Wenatchee and Wenatchee as we prayed for Christian unity and renewal for our valley. A special word is extended to all who helped and Wenatchee First Assembly for the use of their Sanctuary at our opening and closing sessions.

## Gretchen's Prayer Corner

### HE IS NOT HERE - HE IS RISEN



This upcoming holiday that we refer to as Easter, is actually THE most important victorious day on the Christian calendar. For those of us who follow Holy Week as both historical and Living, we recognize that the Cross and the death of our Lord on that black day called Good Friday - Golgatha - is only one half of the full story. **UP FROM THE GRAVE HE AROSE, WITH A MIGHTY VICTORY SHOUT!** The beginning of a hymn that I grew up on, tells the rest of the story. The crucified Lamb of God on Friday busts out of the guarded vault by Sunday, only, without telling anyone that He is leaving, goes down to hell, completely legally and blood - bought, as rightful owner, to pick up the keys of 'hell and death'. **OH, TRIUMPHANT ONE - OH, VICTORIOUS, GLORIOUS, GLORIFIED, WONDERFUL GRACE - ONE AND ONLY.**

Do we understand what it is that Jesus did and truly what He bought and paid for with, through, in and by His Precious Blood?? Do we ever think about the God-Power keeping the Lamb on the Cross providing our only possible propitiation, our only rightful entrance into the Presence of the Father? And then, do we take time to meditate on the God-Power that busts this Jesus out of the rock - tomb that holds absolutely no power over this Resurrected, Glorified, Beautiful Lord Jesus Christ? **OH, WORTHY, HOLY, LOVELY, WONDERFUL, MIGHTY, PERSONAL, MERCIFUL, LORD JESUS - RESURRECTED AGAPE.** This is the Father's Plan - this truly amazing plan to do us good - a marvelous plan to provide the only perfect Way that we can come home to Him - A plan that is completely legal, yet very much apart from the law, and only through His Son. This is Love; This is Agape.

After the Resurrection of Jesus as portrayed in Luke's Gospel in Chapter 24, Jesus appears to two disciples on the way to the village of Emmaus. In these verses the text tells us that the disciples don't actually recognize Jesus when 'they look upon Him with their eyes'. The disciples and Jesus continue together on the road walking and talking. Verse 17 of Chapter 24 says: "Jesus said to them: What manner of communications are these that you have one to another, as you walk, and are sad?" Then, down in verse 24, the telling of the events of the week continue, with the women going to the sepulchre - "But, Him they saw not." In verses 25 and 26, Jesus rebukes this unbelief: "Then He said unto them, O, fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His Glory?" Later in this same day, Jesus takes bread and blesses it. Is it the similarity to the Lord's Supper in Matthew 26:26, the purposeful actions of our Lord in this breaking of bread account in Luke that breeds the FAMILIARITY apparently necessary for the disciples?? I would submit yes, as the very next verse, verse 31 reads: "**AND THEIR EYES WERE OPENED, AND THEY KNEW HIM;** and He vanished out of their sight." This prompts an immediate - their other business can wait! - type of deal in them, where the disciples MUST go back at once to tell the others that they had **SEEN THE LORD**, [and what He had said to us!]

When we too can **SEE** the Lord with this type of clarity, then we, along with the disciples have no other possible proclamation but an immediate, obedient, and in an extremely loud, strong voice, one:

**VERSE 34: "THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED!!!!!!!!!!"**

May the Blessed Holy Spirit continue to remove all hindrances to our vision, that we may see with tremendous clarity this finished Cross-Work, and the busted wide open tomb. May our eyes be opened, and may we Know Him.

**HALLELUJAH!! THE LORD JESUS IS RISEN INDEED.**