

March 2011

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THE COVENANT

The Desperate Disciple: Inerrancy

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Because of my recent accident, I'm going to recycle some material...but material you've likely never seen. Recently, I've started a blog called *The Desperate Disciple* to deal with issues that are important to me but might not often come up in Sunday services or the typical Bible study. These articles go a bit more in depth, usually, on subjects that concern theology, the life of the universal church, etc. I encourage you to visit the blog sometime at <http://desperatedisciple.wordpress.com>. I'm going to introduce you to the blog via my article on inerrancy: whether or not the Bible makes mistakes.

Does the Bible err? That topic has become a huge issue for the church, and not only in mainstream Protestant denominations. More and more studies and polls are showing that those in the evangelical American church have a very difficult time with understanding Scripture and its veracity. Many churches claim inerrancy, while others disdain the word. What does it mean and why is it so foundational to faith?

Inerrancy is the concept that the whole of the sixty-six books we find in the Holy Bible are inspired by God and are without error in their original manuscripts. While they were written down by men, the words that were written were nevertheless exactly what God wanted said about Himself. Because they are without error, they can be followed without question as to their ultimate truthfulness about God.

Now this is where things get sticky. A literal interpretation of every word of every book of the Bible gets us into trouble, as well it should. Some portions of the Bible aren't meant to be taken literally at all. Some are poetry. Some are historical, but they are first and foremost histories of God's work among His people; they are not intended primarily to relate the body count of an ancient battle. They were not written by modern journalists (thank goodness). They are books, and they use hyperbole, metaphors, and other literary structures. Some portions are straightforwardly human thought and not manifestly godly thought – the arguments of the friends of Job, for example – and we need to recognize those things. Part of the job of the reader is to sort through the genres, forms, and concepts. It's the reason why Bible reading is often best done alongside the commentaries of the faithful of centuries past. We need their help to make sure we are on the right path. More importantly, we must read asking the Holy Spirit to guide us into truth. Understanding the Word of God is neither a simple nor easy task. That said, I believe it can be done, as I mentioned in my last post.

But without inerrancy, nothing else matters.

You see, inerrancy is what gives us reason to study the Bible at all. We believe that Scripture rightly understood cannot lead us astray from God. But that cannot possibly be true if there are errors in Scripture. We can argue all day about Hebrew numbering systems and how many warriors were in a given skirmish, but that doesn't really matter in the final analysis. What matters is whether Scripture is a faithful report of God doing and saying what He did and said. What matters is if Scripture relates to us the revelation of God accurately or not. My argument is that Scripture must be inerrant for two reasons. There could be more, but these are the ones that matter most to me at this point.

First...if we believe in a God who not only operates in this world but formed the universe with His hands...if we believe that God is deeply engaged in the lives of His people and can shape and form events in history to bring about His ends and the ultimate final good of those who love Him (Romans 8:28)...then inerrancy is a simple matter for Him to bring about. Seriously, if God wants to be in relationship with us, then He is going to preserve His revelation of Himself for us. What kind of insane – or helpless – god would demand dedication and loyalty from his followers and not give them Scripture that is reliable? Why would a perfect god allow error into his teachings? I'm sorry, but if your god is so untrustworthy as to be unable to give humanity a legitimate record of his own revelation, one who cannot keep humanity from getting it all wrong from the very beginning, then that's an unworthy god to worship. Humanity may add error as Scripture is translated. Certainly scribes over the years have made errors in its transmission. We do a plenty good job of distorting Scripture without the original being distorted. But do you want to worship a being that has left no dependable record of himself? I don't.

Pastor, continued from page 1

Second...if there is any error in Scripture, then the whole thing is unreliable. All of us come across parts of Scripture that offend and disturb us. There's no getting around it. But if you simply throw out parts of Scripture you don't like to make yourself feel better, that happy feeling will soon sink into the mire as you realize that in your zeal to remove from God anything you don't approve of, there's no foundation to support the parts you do like either. Let's also remember that some of the most offensive passages in Scripture do not come from the "lesser" books. The gospels are so offensive that scholars have tried to throw out huge chunks of them. Romans, which provides the centering narrative for understanding the whole of Christian thought, is chock full of parts that make 21st century folks cringe. If you cut out what you dislike, you will find you are cutting out the heart of belief itself. Not only that, but you will be following in the footsteps of the ancient heretics. Throwing out portions of Scripture is nothing new; the only difference is what parts offend what sensibilities at what times in history.

For the desperate disciple, inerrancy is the only place to begin. Jesus Christ is desperately hard at times to fathom. He offended His own friends with His message, let alone those who eventually crucified Him. The message of the Bible is difficult for the sin-soaked human heart to accept; indeed, without the work of the Spirit, it is an impossible task. But we who believe do have the Holy Spirit...and furthermore, we have nowhere else to stand. As Peter said in John 6:68-69 when many of the disciples left Jesus over a hard teaching, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." We know from the outset that we will not comprehend all that God has done or is doing. We may find some of God's actions unpalatable. But rather than to throw them out, we will study them all the harder and pray all the more for the Spirit to guide us into God's truth. We will agree that what God has done in history is right, that we will not become gods ourselves, over and above and judging God. We will remember that the first fateful temptation that landed humanity in utter darkness and chaos began with, "Hath God said?"

As for us who are desperate for Christ, we will take God at His Word, period.

Thanks for reading!

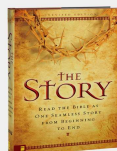
Your brother in Christ,



ADULT BIBLE STUDY

Come and join a Wednesday Bible study! The morning Bible Study meets at 10 am and the evening Bible Study meets at 7 pm. Everyone is invited to attend; both studies are discussing "The Story". THIS MONTH, BOTH STUDIES WILL BE MEETING AT THE HUFF'S HOME.

The Sunday sermons will also be following "The Story", a condensed, easy to read version of the Bible. Copies of "The Story" for adults, teens and children are available after church. Everyone is encouraged to get a copy and read one chapter a week as we learn together over the next several months.



READ THE STORY TOGETHER

Chapter 20 — March 6
Chapter 21 — March 13
Chapter 22 — March 20
Chapter 23 — March 27

Deacons' Special Thanks ...

"Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." (1 Timothy 1:5)

The Deacons, from the congregation's generous contributions and an anonymous donation, were able to work with the Macomb Charitable Foundation to sponsor a Christmas family-in-need. We purchased gifts for a single mother's two children, ages six (6) and eight (8).

We received the following hand-written note, on February 25th, from the mother:

Dear Christmas Elf's:

I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your extreme generosity this Christmas season. Your warmth and sentiment was felt on every gift you purchased. My children deserve so much more than I can give them, and it makes me feel so grateful for people like yourselves, who can open their hearts up to a family in need, a family they don't even know.

May the New Year treat you all as kindly as you have treated us!!

Again, accept a mother's extreme gratitude for all your help. The kids loved the gifts.

May God bless you all

This note is best addressed to the congregation of the Church of the Covenant . You are our lifeline. Your contributions to Deacons' fund and/or food pantry are truly appreciated.

Gay Rapin

March Birthdays!

- March 5 Mike Simmons
- March 14 Margaret DeMuyndck
- March 19 Scottie Sowden
- March 21 Dave Farnsworth
- March 27 Mike Alm

March Anniversaries!

- March 22 Jill and Leon Zech

If we have missed your birthday or anniversary or if you are uncertain that we have yours for future months, please let a Deacon know. We want to celebrate your special day with good news by sending you a card of joy.

OUTREACH

Thank you to the ushers and greeters. Your help is greatly appreciated. Visitors and regular members enjoy seeing a friendly face at the door. The Usher & Greeter schedule for 2011 is being set up, please contact Gloria Cynowa to schedule.

Remember to wear your name tags as visitors would like to know your name. Also, please greet new people and sit by them.

Save May 1 for the Crop Walk to raise funds for hunger relief. There will be a 5 mile and a 1 mile walk in Mt. Clemens. Come with your family.

HOME PLATE 2011 — DETROIT

- ◆ DATE: Saturday, May 14
- ◆ LOCATION: Comerica Park, Detroit, Mich.
- ◆ PROGRAM TIME: 12:30 PM
- ◆ PARTICIPANTS: Current and former Detroit Tigers will share about their careers in professional sports and their faith in Jesus Christ. Visiting players and other athletes may also participate. View the Promo Flyer (HomePlateDetroit.org) for the list of expected speakers.
- ◆ GAME TIME: 4:05 PM
- ◆ OPPONENT: Kansas City Royals
- ◆ COST: \$27.00 per person Includes \$5.00 food coupon, souvenirs, baseball clinic on field, program and ticket to the game. (Children under 4 years are free if sitting on a lap.)
- ◆ Sign up at church during February.
- ◆ TICKETS MUST BE PRE-PAID BY MARCH 6.



See Gary or Gloria Cynowa to sign up

**DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME
STARTS MARCH 13
DON'T BE LATE FOR CHURCH!**

CHURCH OF THE COVENANT VOLUNTEERS				
<i>Head Usher — Gloria Cynowa</i>		<i>Elder of Month —</i>		
	<i>March 6</i>	<i>March 13</i>	<i>March 20</i>	<i>March 27</i>
Ushers	Curt & Vicki Reynolds	Ed Rapin & Gary Cynowa	Margaret DeMuyndck & Mary Ann Krause	Dave & Margaret Neebes
Greeters	Jerri Portlance	June Dickenson	June Dickenson	June Dickenson
Coffee Hour	Connie & Jeff Fuller	Mary Jane Harcourt	Gay & Ed Rapin	Jerri Portlance
Cookies	Scottie Sowden & Dorothy Joseph	Gloria Cynowa & Phyllis Haase	Jean Plonkey & Betty Kordas	Jerri Portlance & Betty Kamps
Nursery	Barb Chadwick	Gay Rapin	Sara Byks	Mackenzie Alm

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

THE ARK – THE STORY

In the ARK we are keeping right up with the congregation in our reading of “The Story”. We are doing fun activities and collecting trading cards for each chapter. Nick and Cooper are reading right along with us and you never know what they will have to say about the lesson. Make sure to join us each Sunday for all the fun!

YOUTH – THE STORY

The youth are also studying “The Story” and meeting twice per month for discussion groups.



We also appreciate all the help the youth have been providing by helping in the ARK and the nursery on the week's they are not in the discussion group. Thanks so much for all you do to help out!

COMING EVENTS

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP GROUP

The Women's Group met on the third Saturday in February at 9:27 am for breakfast. There were 16 women present, we had a nice time sharing memories of our vacations. The next meeting is on April 16. Please come and bring a friend.

SENIOR CARDS & SACK LUNCH

A group for fellowship and card playing meets at the church at 11 am on the 2nd. and 4th. Tuesday of every month. Please come and chat or play Euchre or Pinochle. Bring your sack lunch, coffee will be available and there is a 50 cent donation to defray expenses. This group is open to everyone in the community; see Phyllis Haase if you have questions.

MOVIE NITE

On March 18 at 7 pm there will be a free family movie on the big screen at church. Free popcorn and pop will be provided. Come and have a good time with your family.

EUCHRE NIGHT

Euchre Club will meet on March 26 at 5:30 pm at the church. Registration begins at 5:30 and play starts at 6:00 pm. Refreshments are for sale and prizes are given. Please be on time as seats fill up fast.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE – WE NEED YOU!

The Christian Education Committee is looking for new members with helping hands and great ideas. We welcome everyone who was a kid, has kids, has grandkids, or is still a kid themselves (you should be able to find yourself in this list somewhere). Please see Connie Fuller, Diana Byks or Barbara Chadwick for more information about our committee and meeting times. We appreciate your continued support as we strive to provide creative, fun and educational learning opportunities for Church of the Covenant

ANGEL FOOD MINISTRIES

The February AFM order totaled 42 boxes.

Thanks to Gary Cynowa, Ed Pokrzywinski, and Curtis Reynolds for using their vans to help pick up food at Church of the Nazarene's Hope Pantry. We also appreciate our great volunteers at our church starting at 8:30 a.m.: Tracy and James Cascio, Gloria Cynowa, Sandi Haapala, Mary Lechniak, Margaret Neebes, Annetta Pokrzywinski, Gay Rapin, and Maxine Stephenson. They helped by setting up the tables and boxes in the Social Hall, repackaging and carrying out food boxes to cars on rolling carts, and then resetting the tables and chairs for euchre later that night. Thanks also go to Dorothy Joseph for preparing the AFM menu and to Ed Rapin for posting it on the website.

Orders are being taken from Saturday, February 26th through Sunday, March 20th. AFM food menu forms for March are available at church on the table in the narthex, in the church office, from Gary Cynowa, and on our website at www.covenantmacomb.org. If you can help with our next AFM delivery on Saturday, March 26th, please let Gary Cynowa know after church or call him at (586) 291-0399.

We continue to assist families with food donated by you or purchased by the Deacons from the monthly collected Deacons' Fund. We are in continual need of frozen meats and canned meat and seafood products, chicken noodle soup, jelly and peanut butter, cereal, commonly used canned or frozen vegetables and fruit, and laundry soap, toilet paper and personal hygiene products. Thank you for your generosity to the community that needs a touch of the Spirit within us during these tough times.



MARCH 2011



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 7 pm Committees Adm., Building and Grounds, Outreach & Worship	2 Bible Study 10 am at Huff's Bible Study 7 pm at Huff's	3 7 pm Praise Team at Huff's	4	5
6 9am Music Rehearsal 10am Worship & Communion	7 7pm AA Meeting	8 11-2 Senior Cards 7 pm Session	9 Bible Study 10 am at Huff's ASH WEDNESDAY Service 7 pm	10 7 pm Praise Team at Huff's	11	12
13 9am Music Rehearsal 10am Worship	14 7pm AA Meeting	15 7 pm Deacons	16 Bible Study 10 am at Huff's Bible Study 7 pm at Huff's	17 7 pm Praise Team at Huff's	18 Free Family Movie 7 pm	19
20 9am Music Rehearsal 10am Worship	21 7pm AA Meeting	22 11-2 Senior Cards	23 Bible Study 10 am Bible Study 7 pm at Huff's	24 7 pm Praise Team at Huff's	25	26 8:30 am Pack Angel Food boxes Pick up 9:00-10:30 am Euchre 5:30 pm
27 9am Music Rehearsal 10am Worship	28 7pm AA Meeting					

PRAYER CONCERNS:

Armed Forces Members, including: Mark Alm, & Trevor Brown
Phyllis Lloyd Downs
Veronica Guruk
Ruth McGraw
Peace in the World
Ron Pankhurst
Phyllis Haase
Pastor Huff
Melissa Putt
Betty Radcliffe
Conner Smith
Andrew, Alex & Tanner Skelton & Family
Jason & Julie Taylor and newborn twin sons



Contemporary Worship Sun. 10 a.m.

Come and praise the Lord

Sunday Morning Classes for Children

Coffee hour after service

23401 23 Mile Road, Macomb Twp., MI 48042
(586) 948-2440 www.covenantmacomb.org
Pastor Jason Huff

LETTER FROM MARK & MICHELLE DINNAGE IN TAIWAN



Dear Faithful Friends,

We want to express how much we appreciate each and every one of you in your willingness to partner with us in the ministry God has called us to. This message is serving as our weekly e-mail update and our quarterly newsletter, which is attached. If you are receiving this message and are not on our weekly update list, and would like to be, please let us know.

This week has gone fast, and yet it was one of the hardest weeks for us so far in studying Chinese. We have two more lessons, and we will be finished with our first book, which we will have a test over soon. Please pray for continued discipline in studying and memorizing the vocabulary words and speaking the tones correctly.

This weekend we have the privilege of attending the wedding for one of my closest Chinese friends. It will be at the church where I assisted in English ministry the first time I was in Taiwan. It will be a joy to celebrate with her.

Thank you again for all you do for us.

In His Service, Mark & Michelle Dinnage

CANCER SOCIETY BIKE RIDE

I am excited to announce that I am participating in the American Cancer Society Pan Ohio Hope Ride, a unique and exciting event to raise money in support of the American Cancer Society's mission to save lives from cancer.

We have all been touched by cancer in the past either through a loved one or personal experience. This is an opportunity to aid in researching cures, saving lives and helping create more birthdays.

Please visit my personal page to learn more about my participation in this event and to make a secure, online donation. All contributions are tax deductible and will support the American Cancer Society's efforts. To donate online, visit my personal fundraising page http://main.acsevents.org/site/TR/CommunityFundraisingPages/HOSNational?px=18769945&pg=personal&fr_id=33632



Every bit helps, so thank you in advance for any support you can provide. Please forward this email to your friends and family on my behalf to encourage them to visit my personal site to support the fight against cancer.

Together, we can win the fight against cancer!

Sincerely, Paul Pokrzywinski