



August 2024

CrossWay Community Current

an Evangelical Free Church

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AED-equipped, wheelchair accessible • www.crosswaygr.com • crossway.communitygr@gmail.com

A month in transition

It seems that August often offers a time of transition for CrossWay's preaching schedule, and this month fits that bill.

Pastor Bob Manuel begins the month with messages that complete his brief series of questions posed by God (though there are so many more). Jed Ostoich fills the pulpit mid-month, followed by Pastor Bob's introduction to his series on Paul's Epistles to the Church at Corinth. See the schedule, at right, for details.

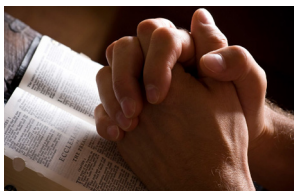
Blessing our neighbors



Thank you, CrossWay, for going the extra mile, donating an abundance of school supplies for Ridge Park students, and then coming out to play with our neighbors in the Camelot community. Many of our folks greeted the residents, who

came out in great numbers to enjoy fun and games. Thanks again to our fire dept. first responders, who brought out the firehose for some wet relief from the heat, spraying the crowd and bringing on the grins and laughter. A great day for starting some meaningful conversations and touching hearts.

Changing it up a bit



All are invited to join in prayer together in the lobby classroom at 9:30 a.m. Sunday, Aug. 4. This opportunity stands in place of our monthly post-worship meeting in the sanctuary, as we'll be fellowshiping together at that time with our church's summer barbeque and a baby shower for the Jake Stevens family.

August 4: "Where have you come from?" & "Have you considered My servant Job?" — Job 1: 7-8

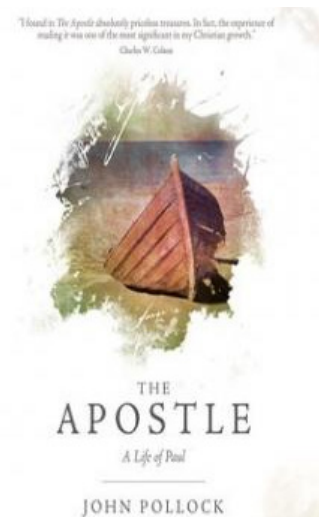
August 11: God asks 77 questions! (In the entire book there are 330 questions) — Job 38 and 39

August 18: Jed Ostoich pulls back the curtain on the letters to the Corinthians

August 25: Pastor Bob returns with his introduction to his new series, based on I Corinthians 1:1-3

New to the CrossWay library

Original copyright 1969, John Pollock's *The Apostle: A Life of Paul* has since been republished and then brought out on audio. It brings to life the words it lifts from the pages of scripture, adding color and context for a true-to-text portrayal of this last Apostle, chosen by Christ to bring the Good News of salvation by grace through faith to the Gentiles, while retaining his heart for his own people. Just shy of 300 pages, but you'll want to take your time and savor the descriptive details Pollock provides. You'll find it on the book table near the coffee bar in the CrossWay lobby.



Coming Up at CrossWay Community

Sundays • 9:30^{AM} • Prayer, lobby classroom
Sundays • 10^{AM} • Gather for worship together
Tuesdays • 1^{PM} - 3^{PM} • Neighborhood prayer walk
Wednesdays • 6:30^{PM} • Underhill Club
Sat., Aug. 3 • 9^{AM} • Men's breakfast @ Bob Evans
Sat., Aug. 3 • 9^{AM} • Women's breakfast @ Russ's
Sun., Aug. 4 • 9:30^{AM} • Church prayer meeting, lobby classroom
Sun., Aug. 4 • 11:30^{AM} • Church BBQ & Stevens baby shower
Wed., Aug. 7 • 6^{PM} • Elder meeting
Sun., Aug. 11 • 11:30^{AM} • Summer Missions at CrossWay
Sun., Aug. 11 - Wed., Aug. 14 • Unity Music Festival, Muskegon
Sun., Aug. 25 • 11:30^{AM} • Summer Missions at CrossWay



Recipients of Grace?

This month, I would like to encourage you to be glad recipients of the grace of God. “But there is, purely speaking, no such ‘thing’ as grace. That’s Roman Catholic theology in which grace is a kind of stockpiled treasure that can be accessed through variously carefully controlled means. But the grace of God comes to us no more and no less than Jesus Christ comes to us. In the Biblical Gospel we are not given a thing; we are given a Person.” (Dane Ortlund: *Gentle and Lowly*, p.69). When we are given grace, “He sends not grace in the abstract but Christ Himself.” (*Gentle and Lowly*, p.211).

I would suggest that grace can one of the most difficult things to accept from God. That is, if left as an abstract “thing” in our thinking, “grace” can more or less be talked about, theorized and debated over, but receiving grace through the Person of Jesus, well, we are not in control of that/Him.

This has been on my mind this past week or so as I have been studying the life of Jacob.

In the Gospel Transformation Bible we read, “Jacob, is made weak through the wrestling — a match that ends with God ironically declaring that Jacob has “prevailed” (32:28), despite showing His divine power by crippling Jacob with a touch (32:25, 31). Thus, we understand that Jacob prevailed not by strength but by declaring his dependence upon the blessing of God (32:26) — a vital lesson in grace. So, despite “prevailing,” Jacob lives the rest of his life with a limp (32:31) — another lesson in what it means to be a conduit of God’s grace.”

Then, “As Jacob would soon discover, grace, not negotiation, is the only solvent of guilt.” — Derek Kidner: *Genesis*, p.168. You see, Jacob “won” with God through “losing.” (Hosea 12:4) He had to come to a point where he realized he was totally dependent upon this “man” he was wrestling with. When he realized this, that his never-ending deceptions and working the system would no longer bring about the results he needed, God blessed Him and gave Jacob a new name: “Israel.”

I think we intuitively know, if we truly lived by grace, in our relationship with Jesus, it “scares” us some. And, it (He!) should. In a similar vein, Pastor Tim Keller once wrote of a conversation he had with a parishioner who said God’s unmerited free grace was a “good yet scary idea.” He asked her what was so scary, and she replied, “If I was saved by my good works — then there would be a limit to what God could ask of me or put me through. I would be like a taxpayer with rights. I would have done my duty and now I would deserve a certain quality of life. But if it is really true that I am a sinner saved by sheer grace — at God’s infinite cost — then there’s nothing He cannot ask of me.” (Keller: *Prodigal God*, p. 121)

Jacob lived his whole life trying to subvert the “rights” he did not have, deceiving his father Issac, his brother Esau, father-in-law Laban. He was used to working the system or creating his own if the system did not work for him. God’s wrestling match with Jacob, and His eventual crippling of Jacob, was a severe mercy, a severe grace. Jacob won through losing. Jesus conveyed this idea when He said: “Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.” (John 12:24)

Winning through losing. Dying to self in order to live. This is only done by receiving the grace of God that comes to us through Jesus. Like Jacob, one of the most “scandalous” things about God’s grace (about Jesus as He comes to us) is that we will never, can never deserve His grace. We freely accept it/Him. Like Jacob, this means we are not our own. We were bought at a price and are therefore called to honor God with our bodies. (I Cor. 6:19-20)

With all this in mind, to help you appropriate the grace of God found in Jesus, I encourage you to read Matthew 20:16 and chew on the following applications: We are not given what we have earned, but we are given what we need. And finally: “Jesus was not preaching to the perilously immoral, but to the perilously moral. Jesus did not call the pious to repentance simply because he rejected their sin, but also because he condemned their righteousness.” (Dane Ortlund: *Surprised by Jesus, Subversive Grace in the Four Gospels*, p.50).

27 years later...

It was that long ago that CrossWay sent Tom and Dora and their young family to serve the Lord in the Czech Republic.

On July 21, they took us down memory lane with throw-back pictures and stories of their early days when they were learning the language and making connections. After two years, they moved to a different city and met their first Roma couple, which opened a whole new mission field to them and consequently to EFCA/ReachGlobal.

They have spent the last quarter century organizing outreach and ministry to this under-reached people group throughout Europe, founding Roma Network and recently forming ties with Shankar, a man of God who has formed his own Roma network within India, the country which has passed Mainland China in population.

Shankar is ministering in the slums of Mumbai, offering the children of the Banjara (India's Roma) an education, teaching in English, Hindu, and the Banjara language in a 10x20-foot room. The school operates in shifts, with 35 students in 1st-3rd grades, followed by 25 in 4th-6th grades, then 15 10-13-year-olds (children of an age who are typically employable/trafficked), and 10 teens who come to school in the evening. A single underpaid teacher handles these lessons, and the children are issued two pencils each year. Shankar's Global Banjara Education Trust funds this program at the cost of \$220/child each year. The children also learn soccer skills to give them recreation and future opportunities.

Shankar also works with adults, working as a church planter trainer. He operates tea shops that support a trainee and two helpers, getting them out of the slums. It costs just \$6,000 to stand up one of his tea shops.

Tom and Dora have connected with Shankar through their Roma Networks conferences, including the most recent meeting in Minnesota in April, with 300 attendees from across the globe. This month, the couple are traveling to Mexico for the ReachGlobal/Equipping Ministry, which they have recently joined. They'll be meeting with our frontliners Keith and Judy there, along with many that will become new friends.



You're welcome to add to CrossWay's
support for the Beckers.

Write tax-deductible checks to
EFCA - ReachGlobal
attn: Donor Services -
gift designation #1063 — Beckers
901 East 78th Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55420

***To join a communications and prayer
support team for one of CrossWay's
missionaries, please contact Pam Reed,
CrossWay Missions Coordinator, listed
in our fellowship directory.***

Welcome, new members

They joined the church at our annual meeting in May, but it took a while for them to all worship at the same time! So, when they did, in late July, Pastor Bob called them all down to the front for prayer, and we took a picture of them!



From left, facing the congregation: Jocelyn & Jed Ostoich, Carol Gerlach, and Alison Kane. Oops! Sally Erhardt was over there on the left, and try to imagine Austin Snoeyink on the right. (Oh, well, we tried!)

Welcome to all!