

Love (continued)

Immanuel. God with us. God shows us *chesed* in no greater way than when he sheds the splendors of heaven, as the song puts it, to dwell among us as one of us.

Many of you have made at least one career move in your life. You have left one job for another. Maybe you even left one city for another. Most of us work with an eye toward upward mobility. More money. Better hours. More vacation time. Better benefits. We convince ourselves that this is the way life is supposed to go and when it doesn't go that way, we are alarmed.

Sometimes, someone we know makes a move from one place to another without upgrading their status. We call those moves lateral moves and while these moves are not usually derided, neither are they celebrated. Celebration is reserved for those ascending in the ranks.

If we abstain from celebrating lateral moves, then we certainly thumb up our noses at those who are descending in the ranks. People retire or quit jobs to avoid demotion. This is not the script we want to be acting out in our lives. I have heard people say that they

are downsizing their house or their possessions for this or that reason, but I have never heard any man or woman suggest that what they are looking for out of their career is a pattern of downward mobility. If one did say so, we'd not think that person to be a very serious individual. And yet, people do occasionally choose downward mobility only to leave others scratching their heads. Moms and dads alike have been known to put their families before their careers. For some parents this means taking a job with greater flexibility. For others it might mean sacrificing a second salary to be with their children full time. For most people (men and women), careers are difficult parts of themselves to sacrifice, but they do so out of *chesed*. And *chesed* is the key to understanding the motivation behind God's downward mobility as well.

Nothing but *chesed* could explain what God sacrificed for our sake. Only *chesed* can explain the extremes to which he went to be there for us when we needed him. *Chesed* is the only explanation for the birth of Immanuel. So today we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the culmination God's promises of hope, joy, and peace, but also as the ultimate revelation of his unstoppable love for us all.



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John Turpin

Deacons

Bobby Bailey
Jeff Craig
Harold Fisher

Christmas Day
2011

Northcrest
Today

Upcoming Events:

Ignite 2012 – Feb. 24-26

Nursery Attendant:

Today: Linda Sadler
1/1/12: Carol Scott
1/8/12: Sherrie Bailey

Communion Servers:

Trent Barker
Larry Russell
Jeff Craig
Tre Craig
Leon LaRoche
Buddy Borden

Elder of the month:

Rick Sadler

For the Record

<u>Attendance</u>	
AM Class	76
AM Worship	118
PM Worship	
Wednesday	38
<u>Contribution</u>	
Budget	\$3,965
Received	\$2,201
Yr. to Date	\$156,200
Under	\$47,176

Love

By Shane Alexander

So far in December, I have focused my bulletin articles on three important themes that permeated the messianic expectations of Israel: hope, joy, and peace. Today, on Christmas Day, let's focus on our fourth and final theme: love.

The Hebrew word for God's love of Israel was חֶסֶד , or *chesed*. It is one of the most meaningful words in all of the Bible. If you are only going to know one Hebrew word, I'd advise you to learn this one. It is a difficult word to translate into English, but not because it's meaning is too esoteric to grasp. It's difficult to translate because its meaning is too full to sum up in a word or two.

The NIV usually translates *chesed* as "steadfast love," but it is also translated "mercy," "loving-kindness," and "loyalty." It is the word that explains why God continues to be faithful to Israel in the midst of their unfaithfulness. It is a love that is dually anchored in the concept of covenant faithfulness and in the very character of God. As such, it is a

word that can only be properly understand against the backdrop of the story of Israel and the God who chose them as his people.

God's *chesed* was on display when he rescued them from Egypt, brought them into the land of Canaan as conquerors, and when he brought them back to the Promised Land after the Exile. But the prophets, especially those during and after the Exile, were beginning to buzz with the hope of what would be the greatest display of God's *chesed* for his people yet. Nothing would communicate God's tireless, steadfast, inexplicably loyal love for his people more than the Messiah . . . and Israel awaited his coming with an anticipation that makes a child's wait for Christmas Day pale in comparison.

Read the word of the Lord as it is written in **Isaiah 7:14**. *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.*

(continued on back)

Youth Group

This Friday – Lock in, meet here at 7:30, bring snacks and \$15 for movie.

Jan. 16 – Bible study at the Siders from 6:30-8:30.

Winterfest is January 20-22, leave at 4:30.

LTC – All forms need to be turned in now; practice will start January 8.

Other News and Notes

Sunny Glen needs liquid fabric softener & toilet paper. They will pick up the items between January 10-12.

The Wednesday morning ladies Bible study will resume January 4 at 11:00.

The new prayer chain will go into effect January 1. Contact Linda Sadler if you have any questions.

There is a signup sheet in the foyer if you would like to prepare communion in 2012.

Prayers

Lanny Little is improving after his bypass surgery.

Bobby Lenamon, Carolyn Bratcher's brother, is recovering from bypass surgery.

Easton Barker is feeling better after his hospital stay.

Kathy Clements is still recovering from shingles and feeling better.

Dianne Hooks is feeling much better.

Randall Armstrong passed away Tuesday night. His funeral was Friday.



Holiday Schedule

Wednesday Dec. 28 - regularly scheduled classes

New Years Day - Bible class and worship only (no meal or afternoon service)

Birthdays & Anniversaries

December Birthdays

27 – Jeff Craig
30 – Jimmy Prather

Anniversaries

29 – Rick & Linda Sadler
31 – Kellan & Guyanne Mathis

We at Northcrest...

- Demonstrate Christ-like moral and ethical behavior
- Actively attempt to discover where God is at work and join him there (active involvement in ministry)
- Practice acts of devotion frequently (prayer, Bible study, quiet time, and listening to God)
- Share his or her faith at every opportunity
- Participate weekly in the worship assembly and a Bible study class
- Faithfully give as you have prospered
- Have love as the motivation for doing all these things

Gathering

997 "O Come, All Ye Faithful"	Mike Clements
Announcements	Rick Sadler
Shepherd's Prayer	
Call to Worship	Shane Alexander
1000 "Jesus' Birth Medley"	Mike
Reading of the Word	

Abiding

1018 "Joy to the World"	Mike
"A Star Lit for Me"	Shane
Communion	
Offering	
Invitation	Shane
379 "If That Isn't Love"	Mike

Sending

Prayer	Charles Sims
1028 "O Holy Night"	Mike
Benediction	Shane