

MOUNTAINSTREAMNEWS

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WAS PAUL CRUCIFIED FOR YOU?

MESSAGE FROM PASTOR



1 Corinthians 1:12-13
What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ." 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

Throughout its history, the church has been dogged by an issue that has plagued mankind ever since the entrance of sin. It is the tendency to be schismatic and fractious even among people who should be profoundly unified. Facing this troublesome issue in the first century Corinthian church Paul confronted it bluntly with the telling question "Was Paul crucified for you?"

God has always placed gifted leaders among His people. These leaders very often are either good teachers who present biblical truth in clear compelling ways; visionaries who recognize where God is

leading before others do; or deeply compassionate individuals who connect with people from various spheres of life. As they exercise their God-given abilities, they cannot help being noticed and appreciated. But unfortunately, legitimate appreciation can quickly morph into unholy veneration. Admirers become so enamored by them that (mostly without the leaders' knowledge or consent) they want to idolize them. They hang on to every word spoken by these leaders. They regard their favorite leader as the sole repository of truth and strive to denigrate other leaders in order to "protect" their own. These misplaced loyalties do not just hamper the gospel ministry but are affronts to Christ Himself. As Paul pointed out, these misguided acolytes behave as if their preferred leader was the one who purchased their redemption with his own blood.

Paul's blunt question reveals that the factions are missing the point. Christianity and Christian ministry is about Christ. Christian leaders are but instruments, used by God as He wills (1 Corinthians 2:5-7). No amount of fervid devotion to a Christian leader will ever secure our salvation. It is Christ

who must be our focus. He is the One who died for us. He is the One for whom we should live. Anything else becomes vain idolatry that undermines the body of Christ.

It is ok to appreciate good Christian leaders and individuals. It is ok to love them and celebrate their labor for Christ. But we must never forget Who gets priority. Jesus must always be front and center. He did all the heavy lifting. He died for us. He rescued us. He equips us to serve. Only He can save anybody. Our lives must scream "Look at Jesus!" We must be careful to deflect any ill-advised praise and attention that overzealous folks try to heap on us. We must strenuously resist our hearts' deadly inclination to seek and revel in human adulation. We must remind ourselves that our deepest and truest meaning and validation occurs when we genuinely pursue Christ and His glory alone. We must intentionally point people away from us and toward Christ who was crucified for us!

God bless you,
 Pastor James

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WHAT'S HAPPENING

CORPORATE PRAYER
TUE @ 7 PM

SEP 19

Join us via Zoom video
 Please contact Pastor James for log on information at rcantio@gmail.com

YOUTH GROUP
FRI @ 6:45 PM

SEP 22

In-person at church.
 For teens ages 13 and over

EVENING SERVICE
1st & 3rd
SUN @ 6 PM

OCT 15

Join us in-person at church

KIDZONE & NURSERY
SUN @ 11 AM

SEP 24

These ministries are available every Sunday during the morning service
 Kidzone for ages 6-12 yrs. old.

WORSHIP SERVICE
SUN @ 11 AM

SEP 24

In-person service and Livestreaming on Facebook, Youtube and our webpage.

- **Ladies Meeting** September 30 @ 10:30am. Join them for a Sukkot Celebration and learn how the Jews and early Christians celebrated the fall harvest time. Host Lori Ditaranto & Laura Gentile.
- Middle Smithfield Street Clean Up is Saturday, Sept 23. Our team will meet at the Park & Ride at 8:30 am. Contact Tom for more details.
- Pregnancy Resources of the Poconos Walk for Life is Saturday, October 7. Registration and Breakfast will be at 8:30 am and the walk starts at 9 am. Please see Lori for sign-up sheets and more details.
- **Our church's 15th Anniversary and Friend Day** is October 1st. Invite a Friend! Sign up at the Information Counter to bring an item for our International Luncheon following our Anniversary and Friend Day Celebration.
- **Men's Retreat** at New Life Island October 13-14th. See Ted for details.
- **Help Needed:** If you'd be willing to bring refreshments on a Sunday, speak to Becky or Lori.
- Join us on 1st and 3rd Wednesday at 3:15 at the Garden at Stroud as we sing and share the gospel with the residents. Contact Tom for more information.
- Bible Reading plans for 2023 are available at the Information Center. Also, read Pastor Jimmie's daily blog on the readings via the link on our website.

QUICK TIPS ON WAYS TO GIVE YOUR OFFERING

Traditional during the Sunday morning service, with a check by mail or through our secured website. Please remember to hit "SAVE" after you give if you did not set up an account so the church can have a record of who gave for tax purposes. Thank you!