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# THE ANCHOR

“so we do not drift away”

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At the end of 2 Kings a sad story is told. The nation of Judah has finally fallen to the Babylonians. The city is burned to the ground, many people are killed, the king Jehoiachin and all the leaders have been taken into captivity while the poorest of the poor are left to farm the land and pay tribute to the Babylonians. When Jehoiachin arrives in Babylon he is immediately thrown into prison. He was robbed of all position and power, dressed in prison garb and for the next 37 years languishes in prison. But then something happens. Nebuchadnezzar dies and Evil-merodach (what were his parents thinking naming him that?) becomes king. And listen what he does for Jehoiachin. “Evil-merodach was good to Jehoiachin, and he gave Jehoiachin an honorary throne that was higher than all the thrones of the other kings held captive in Babylon. Jehoiachin removed his prison garments and put on new clothes. He ate his meals with the king every day for the rest of his life. The king also gave him a stipend on a daily basis for the rest of his life.” 2 Kings 25:28-30.

Sounds pretty good right? Removed from prison, given new clothes, given a new title, eating with the king and even given an allowance for the rest of his life. How fortunate for Jehoiachin! No more prison, no more captivity, finally power and prestige have been restored. How blessed...or is he? Read more carefully, he was no longer in prison walls, but neither was he free to return to the life he had as king of Israel. Yes he had the highest title, but only of the captive kings. That’s like being valedictorian of a class of one, totally empty and meaningless. Yes he eats with the king, the one who has the real power and who refuses to let him go home again. Yes he gets a daily allowance, but what a joke compared to the riches he had as king. What a horrible trade for Jehoiachin. He is still in prison, even though things look a lot nicer than they had for the past 37 years. Perhaps even worse is that this new prison seemed like freedom to Jehoiachin after all he had been through. He’d been a prisoner so long that he had forgotten what freedom tasted like, and for the rest of his days until he died he lived what looked like a life of luxury, but in reality was a prison. What a horribly sad story!

We know something about Jehoiachin’s story though, do we not? We are in prison on this world, broken by our sin, stripped of our power and position locked away. We know this and feel it, but then one day something crazy happens. Freedom is offered. We can join the world and get titles and prestige, money and authority, we can be free. But it is an illusion. Our titles are meaningless, our “freedom” is still enslavement, our money can not buy us free. Yet we’ve been in prison so long this pseudo-freedom looks so promising we buy into it and devote our lives to it. Thinking we’ve found freedom, while real freedom remains outside our grasp.

Don’t buy into this lie, especially at this time of the year when it will be peddled to you so vigorously. Real freedom is not found in anything this world has to offer, no matter how shiny or nicely it is packaged. This world is a prison, and all it offers is dust. Remember that real freedom is found in only one thing, and that thing is a person, Jesus. Real freedom, that breaks the bonds of sin and brokenness, that redeems and restores our soul can’t be bought, only accepted by grace through faith in Jesus. Real freedom is freedom from needing titles and power, and intimately knowing the one with all the titles and power, and being loved by Him. In this holiday season, this prison all around us will be decorated and made to look glorious, but don’t be fooled. Remember where real freedom is found, look to the cross.

## Weekly Schedule

Sunday:  
 SS 9:45  
 Worship 11:00  
 FBCU 6:00  
 Youth 6:00  
 Praise Service 6:30  
 Choir 7:30

Wednesday:  
 Prayer Meeting 6:30

## Prayer List



- Spiritual Growth
- Unity as a church
- The 414 Project
- TSEASA Ministry
- Youth/Children’s Minister

## Memory Verse

“Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!”

Psalm 95:2

**What ARE You Thankful for?**

I am thankful for family, God, Jesus, friends and every good thing on earth.

I am thankful for my house and family and that Jesus died on the cross for my sins.

I'm thankful for my family, friends, house, God, church and life.

Animals = breanna

Animals = deigh

# Sound Bytes

*Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!*

**1 Chronicles 16:8**

*As we enter into this Thanksgiving season, I thought it might be interesting to look at the story behind one of the most famous worship songs written in recent history on the subject. Chris Tomlin's "Forever" takes the verse above and creates a memorable and worship-filled chorus around it. This is the story behind the song. (From www.thefish.com)*

Chris Tomlin has written music for most of his life, but his style changed radically when he started leading worship. "I write a lot of songs," he says of his songwriting style, "but not many ever make it to the recording stage. That's because I'm always asking the question 'Would people want to sing this?'" As it happens, "Forever," a song of praise for the enduring nature of God's love that took Chris four years to complete, has become one of those songs that people just can't seem to stop singing. The idea for the sweeping refrain of the verses came easily enough, but the wide, thrumming chorus was harder to work out. It never left his mind, though. You can find "Forever" on Chris Tomlin's album *The Noise We Make*. "Every time we went into the studio to record something," Chris remembers, "I would bring that song in hopes that someone else would be able to come up with a chorus. I write a lot of patches of songs and then collaborate with someone else to finish them out. With this song it never happened, and it just didn't feel complete. Then one day, four years later, it just came. I was sitting there and singing, 'Forever God is faithful, forever God is...' and I couldn't come up with the next word. Then our bass player's wife, Janet, stuck her head in the door and said 'strong.' And just like that, it clicked." Perhaps best known as a worship leader for the Passion conferences, Chris has been building a strong foundation of worship at college campuses around the country for years. His approach to songwriting, performing and worship is simple. Taking a cue from John the Baptist, he insists that we should all decrease so Christ can increase. "The larger our platform becomes, the more intentionally we have to focus on the heart of our calling: to introduce people to God and show them his glory." It seems that "Forever" has done just that. It still thrills Chris to see people in worship and to hear them singing the song. "I'm so used to being a teacher—teaching people my songs, that it still blows me away that people know it so well," Chris says. "They're like 'Come on, let's get on with it.'" Chris' passionate, transcendent music and worshipful abandon have made a connection with people everywhere, and are refreshing to many who are looking for something more authentic. "The gift God has given me is to write things that are simple and connect with people really quickly," says Chris. "When God is the focus of something people are drawn to it. That's what I want myself and my songs to be a part of." And he's quick to point out that the credit and glory belongs to God. "I have to keep asking myself the question, 'How is this going to bring God glory? How am I going to use this to bring God glory?'" Even so, he does admit that it's exciting to hear others perform "Forever." He says, "It's sort of a validation of the song to hear someone else do it, and to know that they're moved by it as well." --J. Gary Walker

\*The Christmas Cantata will be during the morning service of December 9<sup>th</sup>. We would love it if you could make plans to attend and receive a blessing through song.

Stewardship		
	Budgeted	Received
Month:	14,982.17	33,828.00
Year:	149,821.70	280,606.14



## WMU News

Mary Hill Davis Offering:  
\$3346.00

World Hunger Offering:  
\$906.25

The Month of November: **Kans For Kids**

This month WMU will be collecting Kans for Kids. All Kans donated will be given to the South Texas Children's Home at the end of the months. There will be a basket in the foyer to leave your donations.

The WMU would like to thank everyone for all your generous donations.



Our church is participating in Operation Christmas Child again this year. This is where we each take a shoe box (standard size) or a small plastic container and fill it with gifts either for a boy or a girl. You can also do multiple boxes if you desire. There is a \$7.00 donation for each box to help with shipping costs and other expenses that pertain to these boxes. You can give on line or you can enclose the \$7.00 by check made payable to Samaritan's Purse. If you do multiple boxes just make out one check.

There will be information on the items you can choose from the age of the child you want to give to, along with labels that state for boy or girl at the front entrance of the church. These must be back to the church by 9 am on Monday, November 19th so that we can get them to the appropriate place to be shipped. Lets go in together and make some little boys and girls lives know that God loves them and we love them too.



Two years ago as the church prepared to go to Bela Bela, South Africa for the first time, I asked members of the team to share why they felt God leading them to travel so far from home and outside of their comfort zone. A year later, I can look back and see how God used that trip to change my life. Not only did he give me the privilege of serving him while I was in South Africa, but He also placed a passion in my heart to serve him here at home through foster care. He gave our family a hard job and we have chosen to be obedient, but my heart began to soften to the call while I was serving Him in Africa. I am amazed by my God's Grandness. He is so big that he can bring two callings, one short term- overseas missions and one long term at- home missions, to collision in my life and make sense of it. I pray I never forget that I serve such a big God.

As I was thinking over the things God did on the last trip and wondering what He will do on this next trip, I was also thinking about how the team could share with the church though out the year again. This time my question to various team members is, "How can the church be praying for you?" Your prayers for us as a team as well as individually are so important. We need you, our church family, to be part of this team by faithfully praying for us now as we prepare as well as the 10 days we serve there.

One way to remember to pray is through the Afria bracelets. You may have seen team members wearing bracelets with the South African flag colors. They say, "Pray for Africa Team 2013". The bracelets are a good reminder to pray for those going to South Africa, for the people of South Africa, and for our missionaries, Jan and Erika, who minister there daily. Please take a bracelet if you would like to wear one and be reminded to pray. You can find them in two sizes in baskets at the back of the sanctuary or in the church office.

As for my prayer request, I ask that you be praying for the hearts of the people we meet. I long to have a boldness that is not of myself. And pray that I will continue to trust that God is at work, that He is sovereign, in both the things he has ask me to do (at home and in Africa), and that I will be amazed as I watch His plans unfold.

~Kayla Jones