

THE FLORAL HEIGHTS INFORMER

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The Holiday Season

Each year in these United States of America we celebrate the holiday season. There it Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. These times are very festive and filled with joy. Shopping malls are filled and celebratory lights abound. Homes are decorated and children are in a playful mode. We gather primarily with family during these seasons. We will watch some good football games and eat some good food. We talk and laugh together. The temperatures are cooler and our spirits are merry. We give gifts and cards to each other and express our care for one another. The normal grind of forty hour work weeks is set aside and our physical batteries are recharged. Not only can the kids not wait each year for the holidays but the grownups as well!

What if every week was like the holiday season? What if we had this festive atmosphere of happiness, jubilation, and singing in our hearts? It seems to me that heaven will be a lot like the holiday season. There will be no thought of sorrows in heaven because sorrows will not exist. There will be no hunger, thirst, pain, or evil in heaven. The apostle John writes of the mood of heaven saying that God would "*wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away. And he that sits on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he saith, Write: for these words are faithful and true. And he said unto me, they are come to pass. I am the Alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that*

Local News:

Welcome to all our visitors:

We pray that you will be edified by our service and that you will ask questions if things are not as you are accustomed to seeing. Please come back at your every opportunity.

Nicolas Long will be preaching this morning on "Letting our Lights Shine."

Don't forget:

Tonight is our last Sunday of the month singing.

Bible Basics Study:

Our lengthy series of sermons over Bible Basics is now complete. There are booklets in the foyer of the 30 sermon study.

Website Update:

Be sure and check our website from time to time for new material. We have recently uploaded the notes over the book of Matthew.

Traveling:

Due to the holiday season there are several of our members traveling out of town. Please pray for their safety and return.

Continue to pray for our shut-ins:

Stella Davidson
696-1030 (Home)

Calvin York
692-0489 (Home).

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overcomes shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Rev. 21:4-7).

Not only the mood but the place itself will be glorious. Again, John writes of heaven saying, "*And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof. And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof: and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it. And the gates thereof shall in no wise be shut by day (for there shall be no night there): and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it: and there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that makes an abomination and a lie: but only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:22-27).*

Lastly, not only will the mood and place be joyous but the environment as well. John writes, "*And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, and the midst of the street thereof. And on this side of the river and on that was the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no curse any more: and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein: and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be night on more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 22:1-5).*

No greater words of comfort can be found in the annals of human history (I Thess. 4:18). I can think back of some very good holiday seasons. Holiday seasons where I received what I wanted for Christmas and times when I looked around me and experienced love. Though these are joyous times there is no greater joy than what the faithful child of God will experience in heaven. So for now enjoy the time here on earth but know that it just gets better in eternity! The apostle Paul wrote, "*Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, Rejoice. Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4:4-5).*

John C. Robertson

Can I have a Clean Fork?

By J. S. Smith

For years, I have read and even appreciated the many articles and sermon illustrations that have resulted from the experience of being told at supper to “keep your fork,” indicating that some delicious dessert is about to follow the completed main course.

Swell. Keep your fork. But I don’t like to eat dessert with a fork encrusted in potatoes and gravy, and licking it clean doesn’t allay a single one of my hang-ups. I want a clean fork!

The point of the “keep your fork” illustration is usually that the best is yet to come – that God’s promises are soon to follow and you want to hang in there and be in on life’s delicious dessert. I’m all for that, but would it be okay if I just had a clean fork first?

After all, I’ve really messed this one up. It is stained, not with gravy and potatoes, but all my sins and disappointments. I’ve repented of every one I can identify, but they still leave a bitter taste in my mouth. And although I know God has washed them away, I still have an unpleasant memory of them that I just can’t wipe off no matter how hard I try.

David penitently said that his sin was always before him and the apostle Paul clearly never forgot that he had been an insolent persecutor of the church of Christ prior to his conversion (Psalms 51:3; I Tim. 1:13). I think they both would have joined me in asking for clean forks if they could.

Baptism, of course, is a time of spiritual cleansing, but the transition from Earth to Heaven on Judgment Day is a point of refreshing and cleansing as well (Rom. 6:1-7; Acts 3:19-21). This old body, so prone to breakdowns and bearing the scars of life and age, will be transformed into a spiritual body, fit for eternal dwelling in a mansion of God’s house (I Corinthians 15:44). I don’t want to carry any dirty, old multi-pronged utensil in with me, stained and smattered with gravy and regret.

Yes, I would like a clean fork when I dig into life’s savory dessert. I want to enjoy it afresh without any aftertaste of failure and disappointment. Even now, I am striving to cleanse my palate of life’s distasteful morsels. “Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious” (I Peter 2:1-3).

When the New Testament talks about faithfulness and reward, it illustrates with concepts sweet and salty, milk and meaty. The reflux of death and sorrow and tears will pass away when dessert is served to the faithful. I think I’ll have mine with a clean fork if that’s okay.

