

THE VOICE OF BLESSING

MATTHEW 3:13-17

Sometimes we preoccupy ourselves with important questions to the extent that we overlook equally important questions. For example, Matthew 3:13-17 often finds us asking the question, "Why did Jesus have to be baptized?" But let us not overlook the equally important question, "What did baptism mean to Jesus?"

Did it mean the time of the kingdom of God is now? Surely. Did it mean an identification with the Father? I think so. But it was also an experience of blessing for Jesus. God said, "You are on the right track. Continue with my blessing."

The voice of blessing is one that many people take for granted. Many people wander through life, like Esau, searching for a blessing that is never pronounced.

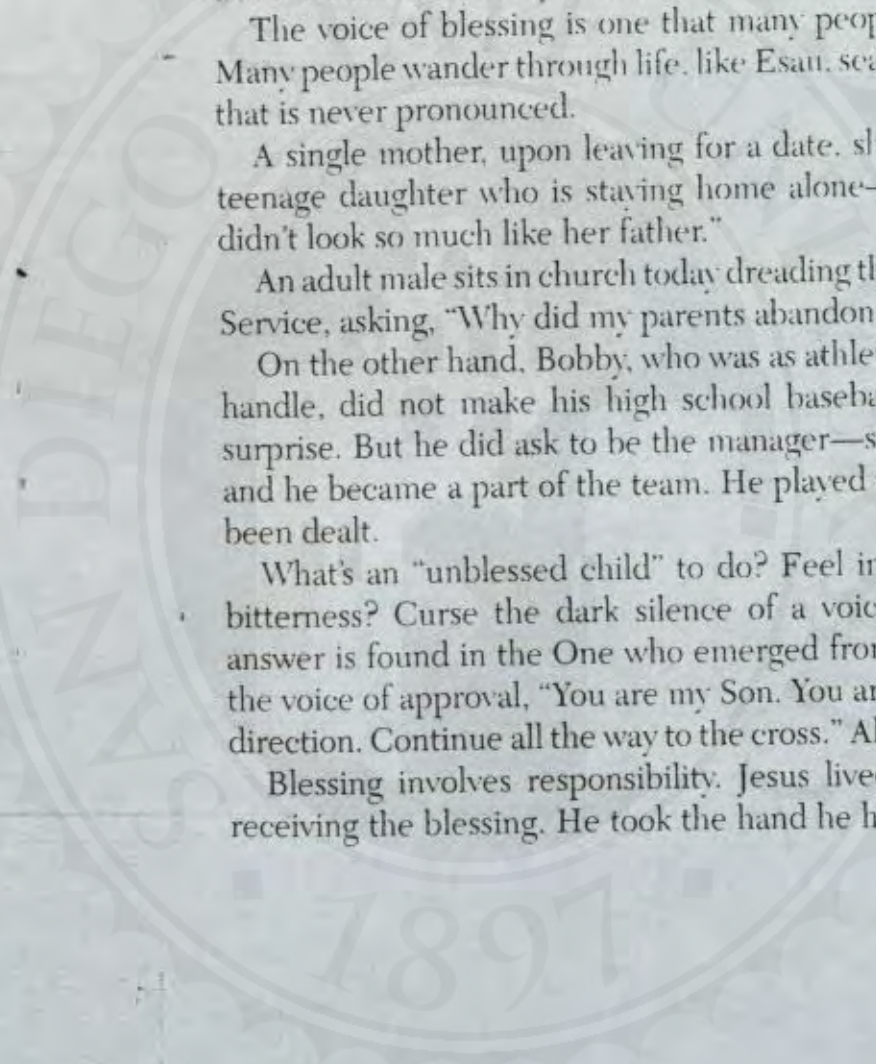
A single mother, upon leaving for a date, shuts the door on her teenage daughter who is staying home alone—again. "If only she didn't look so much like her father."

An adult male sits in church today dreading the Parent Dedication Service, asking, "Why did my parents abandon me?"

On the other hand, Bobby, who was as athletically gifted as a hoe handle, did not make his high school baseball team, to no one's surprise. But he did ask to be the manager—some said "batboy"—and he became a part of the team. He played the hand that he had been dealt.

What's an "unblessed child" to do? Feel inferior? Strike out in bitterness? Curse the dark silence of a voice never heard? The answer is found in the One who emerged from the Jordan hearing the voice of approval, "You are my Son. You are headed in the right direction. Continue all the way to the cross." All the way to the cross!

Blessing involves responsibility. Jesus lived in obedience after receiving the blessing. He took the hand he had been dealt and he



played it. That's what we can do. That may be *all* we can do. We must be like Jesus and let nothing deter us. The crowds wanted to make him king. He resisted. His best friend wanted to talk him out of it. He refused. Judas tried to force another course. Jesus chose to play the hand God had dealt. We can do the same.

Parents and other significant adults will fail to bless us even under the best of circumstances. Other times we will not feel worthy of blessing. That is true—we're not worthy. As in Jesus' most famous story, the parent waits to bless whether or not we are worthy. God's presence depends not on our faithfulness but on God's. So we continue.

Keith Miller asked, "Who gives you your grade?" Who is the audience to whom we play out the drama of our lives? It can be an audience of the One who will never fail to be with us as we carry out God's will. John Claypool quotes a rabbi who once said, "When I stand before God, He will not ask me why were you not Abraham, Jacob or David?" He will ask, "Why were you not Bernie?"

In 1969, Bob Whelan, six two and two hundred pounds, departed for Vietnam. Within a year this fine athlete returned weighing eighty-seven pounds. A land mine had blown away both legs. A long recovery followed. Never did he bow to despair or see himself as unblessed. "Before," he said, "I had one hundred options. Now, only five, but I'll make the best of those five."

In 1990, Bob Whelan completed the Boston Marathon. He covered all twenty-six miles-plus running on his hands and arms—hopping much like a frog. When he crossed the finish line, few dry eyes were seen. He is a winner. He chose to look to God in gratitude for what he was, not what he was not. He played the hand he was dealt. So can we, for each of us already has the blessing. ~~© 1997~~



The Spirit

immediately drove him out
into the wilderness

Mark 1:12

MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE

EPIPHANY SUNDAY

JANUARY 5, 1997

10:30 AM

PREPARATION OF OUR HEARTS FOR WORSHIP

"Let the people be in silent meditation and prayer upon entering the sanctuary."

WE PRAISE GOD

PRELUDE

CHORAL INTROIT "We Have Come Into His House" Organist
Chancel Choir

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

♦♦♦♦

§HYMN OF PRAISE "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah" # 281

‡CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Rejoice, for God has sent the Messiah.

People: Let the mountains bring peace to the people.

Leader: May righteousness rule from sea to sea.

People: Let justice come down like rain.

Leader: May mercy endure as long as the sun shall last.

People: Let truth outlive the moon.

Leader: Arise, shine, for the light has come.

WE CONFESS OUR SINS

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (In Unison)

God, you are the Light of the world. In your light, we see our lives and know our poverty. Forgive us, we pray, for our silence and hesitancy in speaking for you. Pardon our haste to be quiet about your wondrous works done in us. All-seeing God, you know our lives, our hearts, and our thoughts. Pardon us for the wrongs we have done in quietness and calm. Forgive us our secret prides and selfish desires. Inspire us to share love and kindness with others that we might live in peace with them all the days of our lives. AMEN.

DECLARATION OF PARDON

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

*"The Apostle's Creed"
The Presbyterian Hymnal*

p. 14

WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD

ANTHEM

"Let There Be Peace On Earth—arr. H. Ades

Chancel Choir

♦♦♦♦

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Leader: Lift up your hearts

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Leader: Let us pray.

PASTORAL PRAYER

CHORAL RESPONSE "O Lord, Have Mercy" Chancel Choir

♦♦♦♦

ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

RITUAL OF FRIENDSHIP "What A Fellowship"

GIVING OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY MUSIC Chancel Choir

"Let Us Break Bread Together"—W. Howorth

Shirley Logan, Soloist

DOXOLOGY "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow"

OFFERTORY PRAYER

THREEFOLD AMEN

GOD SPEAKS TO US

SCRIPTURE Robert Matthews Matthew 3:10-17

MUSICAL SELECTION "Lead Me, Guide Me" Chancel Choir

Dolores E. Stevens, Soloist

COMMUNION MEDITATION Rev. George W. Smith

"The Voice of Blessing"

WE CELEBRATE THE LORD'S SUPPER

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

HYMN OF APPROACH "The Old Rugged Cross" Insert

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

SERVING THE BREAD AND THE CUP

Say to your neighbor: "This bread is the body of Christ, broken for you."

"This wine is the blood of Christ shed for you"

THANKSGIVING AFTER THE SUPPER

INVITATIONAL HYMN "Amazing Grace" # 280

BENEDICTION

CHORAL BENEDICTION "God Is A Good God" Chancel Choir

ORGAN POSTLUDE

§ Congregation standing

‡ Congregation sitting

♦♦♦♦Worshippers will be seated

TO OUR GUESTS. You are welcome to our worship service and all activities of the church. Please help us to know you by signing the record of attendance sheet as you enter the foyer. You are invited to meet with others in the Fellowship Hall for refreshments. Please come again and invite your friends and neighbors to come with you.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE CHRIST AS YOUR SAVIOR, we invite you to come to the front of the sanctuary during the Invitational Hymn. Two Elders will be at the front of the sanctuary to greet you.

THE USHERS FOR TODAY are Malvin Bruce, Joe Littlejohn, William Ponder, and Rufus Purdie. The Ushers today are also responsible for loading the food for the homeless.

PREPARING FOOD FOR THE HOMELESS TODAY will be **THE PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN.** If you are asked to help prepare or purchase food, please do it with a smile! We love your time and talent. Thank you.

CHRIST UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SAN DIEGO

3025 Fir Street at 30th
San Diego, CA 92102

Phone: 239-2346/2347
Office Hours: 9 AM to 2 PM

MINISTER:	Rev. George W. Smith
MINISTER OF MUSIC:	Dr. Leon Kelley
CHANCEL CHOIR DIRECTOR:	Mrs. Dolores E. Stevens
ORGANIST:	Ms. Juanita Dentham
YOUTH CHOIR DIRECTOR/PIANIST:	Ms. Geraldine C. Pipkins
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COORDINATOR:	Ms. Cathy Ramsey
CHURCH SCHOOL CO-SUPERINTENDENT:	Ms. Freddie Jackson Mr. Robert Matthews
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT:	Mrs. Zee Griffith
BOOKKEEPER:	Mrs. Helen Deisher
SECRETARY:	Ms. Cathy Ramsey

Cover art: "Call of the Namib Dunes," 24" x 48" acrylic, by Lucy Janjigian.

Announcements

January 5, 1997

TODAY, SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 1997

9:00AM Church School.
10:30AM Morning Worship Service.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 7

6:30 PM Boy Scout Meeting.
7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8

5:00 PM Mid-week uplift.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 10

6:00 PM Youth Choir Rehearsal.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 11

9:00 AM Youth Tutorial program

TUESDAY, JANUARY 14

10:00 AM Ruth Rewarded Circle gathering at the church. Room 3

SUNDAY, JANUARY 26

3:00 PM Humility Circle gathering.

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

God measures our stewardship, not by how much we possess, but by how we use what we have."

—The Christian Way
(Mable Henderson)

Per Capita

Per capita for 1997 is **\$18.39**

Our apportionment to Presbytery is due by January 15, 1996

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- ANNOUNCEMENT** — The seventh annual Dr. MLK Jr., commemorative concert will be held March 1, 1997 at 2:00 p.m. in Brown's Chapel at Point Loma Nazarene College. Please see Mrs. Edie Grice or Mrs. Iberia Daniel or Judge Elizabeth Rigs for tickets (Cost: \$15.00).
- ANNOUNCEMENT** — The San Diego County choir orientation will be at 4:00 p.m. at New Creation Church, January 4, 1997. Anyone interested in signing, contact New Creation Church at 3115 Altadena Avenue, ph: 584-5460.
- ANNOUNCEMENT** — The telephone directory is ready for preview. Please stop by table in The Fellowship Hall and verify your address today.
- ANNOUNCEMENT** — The Presbytery presents Jr. High Winter Camp—January 24-26, 1997. Call Cathy at 239-2346 for further information.
- ANNOUNCEMENT** — Delores Fisher/The UMOJA Theater Co., Offers discounted group tickets of 15 or more to see The Wiz on January 12, 19, and 26. Call the office if you are interested in going (239-2346).
- NOTICE** — **NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS:** If you have a favorite quote/thought and would like to share it with the congregation, please call the church office, 239-2346 and give it to Cathy.
- ANNOUNCEMENT** — Youth Tutorial Program each Saturday at the church from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. **TUTORS NEEDED!** Call Cathy Ramsey at 239-2346 and inform her of your availability.

The 1997 Flower and Coffee Hour Charts are available for sign-up in the Fellowship Hall. Birthday Clubs and organizations are requested to sign up for Fellowship Hour. Available dates: January 12, 19, 26.

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Jo Hohlfeld, Mary Owens, Vida Van Brunt, Ida Mull, Leslie Lewis, Bennie Mae Brown, Norman Pickett, Calvin Martin, Vivian Brown(Lovelady), Julia Burt, Stan Hay, Jan Gonzalez, Jean Fields, Lovell Cyrus, Allie Mae Jones, Mrs. Mona Toombs, Marita Saunders and others dear to thee.

The Old Rugged Cross

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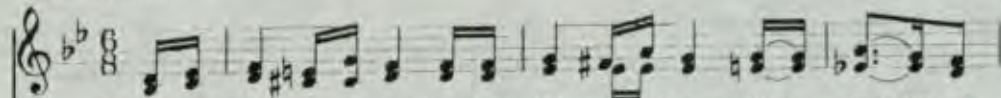
Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross:

— Hebrews 12:2

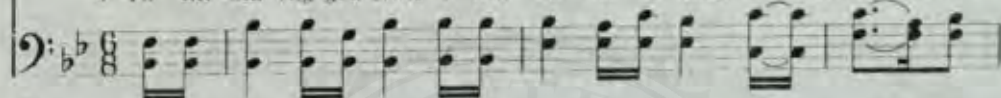
RUGGED CROSS

George Bennard

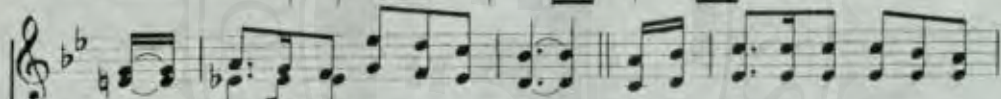
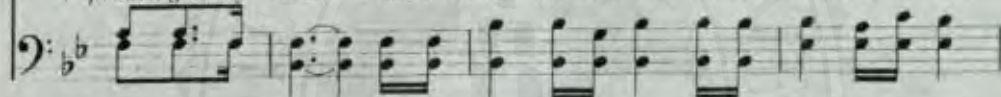
George Bennard



1 On a hill far a-way stood an old rug-ged cross, The em-blem of
 2 *O that old rug-ged cross, so de-spised by the world, Has a won-drous at-*
 3 In the old rug-ged cross, stained with blood so di-vine, A won - drous
 4 *To the old rug-ged cross I will ev - er be true, Its shame and re -*



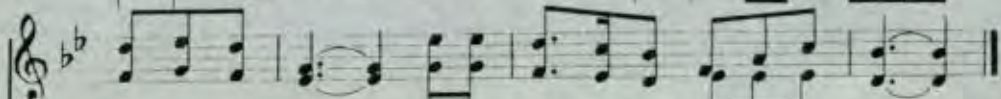
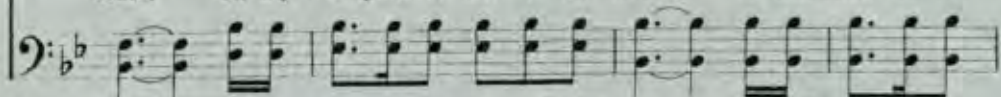
1 suf-fering and shame; And I love that old cross where the dear-est and best
 2 *trac-tion for me, For the dear Lamb of God left His glo-ry a-bove*
 3 bear - ty I see; For 'twas on that old cross Je-sus suf-fered and died
 4 *prouch glad-ly bear, Then He'll call me some day to my home far a-way,*



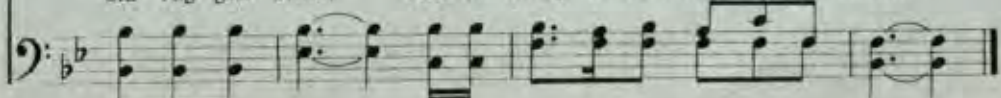
1 For a world of lost sin-ners was slain.
 2 *To bear it to dark Cal-va-ry.* So I'll cher-ish the old rug-ged
 3 To par-don and sanc-ti-fy me.
 4 *Where His glo-ry for-ev-er I'll share.*



cross, Til my tro-phies at last I lay down; I will cling to the



old rug-ged cross, And ex-change it some day for a crown.



*Join Us For The
Second Annual Breakfast Honoring*



The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Wednesday, January 15, 1997

7:00 A.M.

Bayview Baptist Church

6126 Benson Avenue at 61st Street

(From Imperial Avenue in San Diego, go south on 61st Street)

Keynote address: The Reverend J. Alfred Smith
Civil Rights Leader, Oakland, California
Pastor, Allen Temple Baptist Church

Donation: \$25 per person Table for 10: \$250
Seating Is Limited

Sponsored by The United African American Ministers Action Council (UAAMAC) and Baptist Ministers United. Proceeds will help to provide scholarships for deserving college students.

Reservations: 463-1702 or 264-1207