Our responsibility to God can be summed up in one word, love. We are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our might. This is how we fulfill His law. It seems simple, doesn’t it? Yet, I would guess that for most of us putting it into practice is extremely difficult.

What motivates us to love and obey God? What warms our affections for the Almighty One? Is it the dread of His severe chastening? Is it the thundering of His holy law? The Apostle John presents us with the answer. “We love God,” he says, “because He first loved us.” The much-needed motivation is to be found in a growing knowledge and willing acceptance of God’s great love for us. Our duty is a response to His grace. Robert Murray M’Cheyne understood this well when he wrote:

“What parent does not know that the true way to gain the obedience of a child is to gain the affection of the child? And do you think God, who gave us wisdom, does not Himself know? Do you think He would set about obtaining the obedience of His children, without first of all gaining their affection? To gain our affections, which by nature rove over the face of the world, and centre anywhere but in Him, God has sent His Son into the world to bear the curse of our sins.”

The purpose of the Apostle John in 1 John 4:9-10 is to deepen our understanding of the Father’s love. We see love magnified by God’s grand design, by our rebellious attitude and by God’s suffering Son. To meditate on such a glorious theme should stir our affections and increase our desire to love and obey God.

Love Magnified by God’s Grand Design

God demonstrates His love for us in that He sent His only begotten Son into the world (1 John 4:9). This is a profound revelation. God’s love is an active love. He loves us in word and in deed. The sending of His Son into the world is proof of His love. Yet, the Father’s act of sending the Son is not the full manifestation of His love. Jesus came as a means of achieving God’s grand design for His beloved children. God sent His Son, says John, “that we might live through Him.” Jesus came to give life, and it is in this renewal of life that God demonstrates His love.

On the sixth day of creation God formed man of the dust of the ground and imparted life to him (Gen. 2:7). Adam was a living being in the fullest sense of that expression. He was alive physically, but also spiritually. He even had opportunity to enter into a state of eternal life. God issued a command to His newly formed creature: “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” Obedience to this command would have maintained Adam in a state of life, disobedience would introduce death.

Shortly after this command was given Adam unknowingly encountered his arch enemy, Satan. Satan came in the form of a serpent, with the evil intention of deceiving Adam. Satan had an agenda; he had a grand design of his own. Continued
**The Father’s Great Love**

He wanted to destroy the principle of life in God’s image bearer. He challenged the Creator’s command and tempted Adam to rebel. We know the tragic outcome, Adam disobeyed and death entered the world.

Death has reigned over man ever since. The sending of the Son is God’s response to this ancient problem. Motivated by love, God refuses to abandon His children to eternal death. The restoration of life is a sovereign, gracious gift. We did nothing to make it happen. How could we, we were dead in our sins and trespasses? We contributed to our new birth as much as Lazarus contributed to his resurrection from the dead. In Christ, God disrupts the plans of Satan (1 John 3:8) and secures success for His grand design.

What is meant by the restoration of life? To give life is to restore to man what was lost in the fall. God renews His peaceful relationship and sweet fellowship with His children. He renews our minds and restores knowledge. He removes Satan’s lie and replaces it with Divine truth. He replaces the principle of sin with the seed of righteousness, enabling us to know and keep His law. John says, “Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.” Renewed life also means renewed love. If we have life, we also have a love for God and for His children. The great themes of John’s first epistle are the evidences of new life in Christ (1 John 1:3, 2:20, 27; 3:9-10).

What love the Father has for us! Consider His grand design and marvel in His mercy and love. We were dead, but now we have eternal life in Christ.

**Love Magnified by Our Rebellious Attitude**

God’s love is magnified by His restoration of life. It is magnified even more when we consider our attitude to God when He lavished His love upon us. Surely, He saw something in us worthy of such love, some hint of sorrow for sin and desire for God? Not according to John. He expressed His love while we had no interest whatsoever in Him. “In this is love, **NOT THAT WE LOVED GOD...**”

Since the entrance of sin into the world man has lived in rebellion against God. We constantly assert our independence and autonomy. We refuse to submit to His wisdom and rule. His ways truly are not our ways. Accompanying this rebellion is a fervent hatred. We despise God, His laws and His people. Cain’s murder of Abel was an expression of this hatred (1 John 3:12). To murder Abel was high handed treason against Abel’s Master. We, like Cain, shake our fist in anger at God with every thought, word and action.

Any earthly King would utterly destroy citizens showing such a vehement hatred to the crown. God as a just judge hates us in our sin. In such a state, we are called children of wrath. This is why Christ is sent to be a propitiatory sacrifice. Yet, Christ was sent while we were in rebellion with His Father. Christ was sent by the Father to bring peace.

How can we even begin to grasp this? This is an astonishing display of love. While our hearts despised God, He sent His Son as a gift. This defies all conventional wisdom. Jesus once said, “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friend.” This no doubt is true. It is a sign of great love for one to give his life for a FRIEND. Yet, God has done something greater. He sent His only begotten Son to lay down His life for an ENEMY[!]. Hear the Apostle Paul, “For when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

If this knowledge does not soften the hardness of our hearts I do not know what can. What a marvelous demonstration of love. For God to love the ungodly, for the Holy One to favor the unholy, is truly amazing.

*Continued*
The Father’s Great Love

Love Magnified by God’s Suffering Son

God is represented in this passage as the giver of a gift. John says “God sent His only begotten Son into the world.” Oftentimes the quality and costliness of the gift represents the greatness of the giver’s love. A few months ago, I was watching my oldest son, Stephen, play with his younger brother, Evan. I was encouraged to see Stephen sharing many of his toys with Evan. However, there was a limit to Stephen’s generosity. Under no circumstance would Stephen share his most cherished toys. To use a positive example, it was a singular testimony of Mary’s love for Christ that she used a very expensive oil to anoint His feet (John 12:3).

God gave His only begotten Son, His special treasure, to sinners. There could be no costlier gift. There are many sons of God, but only one with the special title ONLY BEGOTTEN. Jesus was greatly beloved and cherished by His Father. He was His Father’s delight. Yet, the Father has such a great love for us that He sent His dearly loved Son to be born of a woman, born under the law.

One would expect Christ to enter the world with great pomp and show. Surely, He would come as a mighty ruler of men, abounding in riches? No, He came as the Lamb of God. He was sent to be the propitiation for our sins. John uses the word propitiation early in chapter two and again here. In both texts, Christ’s work of propitiation is directly connected with “our sins.” A propitiation is a sacrifice to remove God’s judicial wrath. Christ was sent by the Father to be a substitutionary sacrifice. He came to bear the full weight of Divine justice and Holy anger for “our sins.”

Christ was sent as a suffering servant. It is no wonder He evidenced such anxiety as the day of His crucifixion approached. In Gethsemane, He sweat drops of blood as He pleaded with His Father to remove the cup of His wrath. Yet, He knew that it was the will of the Father. On the cross He cried out, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?” The Father forsook His Son for you and me.

Through His death, God’s grand design of renewed life was made possible.

As a result of Christ’s propitiatory sacrifice God’s anger is removed from us. We are now at peace with God. All our sins have been cleansed. We are right with God. These blessings are ours because God sent His only begotten Son as an expression of His love.

What are we to do with such a rich teaching? We are to behold the Father’s love, to make it our chief study, to meditate upon it, and to rest peacefully in it. If you are downcast, perplexed with doubts and fears, then refresh yourself in the Father’s love. Let it motivate you to renewed zeal in the service of the Lord.

How deep the Father’s love for us,
How vast beyond all measure,
That He would give His only Son
To make a wretch His treasure.
How great the pain of searing loss;
The Father turns His face away,
As wounds which mar the chosen One
Bring many sons to glory.

Stuart Townend, b. 1963

Pastor Matocha

God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8, NRSV
December “Mingle and Jingle”

What a wonderful time everyone had at the November luncheon. We had several people visiting our church who brought food to share with us. If you see visitors, please invite them to our upcoming congregational time together.

Can you believe we are into December? Sunday, December 11th, following the morning worship service will be our annual Christmas “Mingle and Jingle”. Families are asked to bring finger foods, appetizers, and desserts. If your last name begins with A to L, bring a finger food. M-Z families bring an appetizer or dessert.

Suggested **Finger Foods** could be: chicken wings, meatballs, sandwiches cut in quarters, cheese dip, cheese and crackers, etc. **Appetizers** could be: chips and dip, vegetables and dip, fruit, etc. **Desserts** could be: brownies, cupcakes, fudge, Christmas cookies, or candy. As always, in any of these areas use your imagination!

Seating will be limited. This is to encourage mingling and fellowship. Let’s also wear some Christmas color. It’s a time of rejoicing as we prepare our hearts for the coming of our Savior’s birth.

So, let’s share the message of the season on December 11 using our four F’s…Fellowship, Family, Fun…without the Fuss!

Lynda

I missed the November Men’s Prayer Breakfast. Patrick said that the turnout was a little low but that the men who attended enjoyed themselves.

The next breakfast will be Wednesday, December 7, 2016 at 6:30 AM in the Fellowship Hall. Now that we are in the holiday season I hope everybody will make it.

Mike

Calling all ladies, young and the young at heart, please join us on Saturday, Dec. 3rd at 11:00 at Ms. Bess’ Honey House for our annual Cookie Swap and Luncheon. This is a wonderful time of food and fellowship with singing of Christmas carols, scripture reading and special entertainment. Bake your favorite cookie recipe and bring a dozen to swap and share. This has proven to be a sweet time of fellowship as we celebrate the birth of our Lord.

Thank you to our November hostesses Kitty Brewer and Pat Russell. Beautiful fall plants and gourds were used for decoration along with ”Mr. and Mrs. Scarecrow” made by our very own Lynda Meharg.

Finally, I want to thank you all for your support, encouragement and patience as I served as your WIC president. It was truly an honor to come along side such a wonderful group of ladies as we served our loving and gracious Heavenly Father. Let us support our in-coming president and the WIC with fervent prayer and participation. Thank you again for your willingness to love and to serve.

Pat Russell
What a joy it has been to join the sweet staff and students at MSCS this year! It is such a privilege to be entrusted with these sweet two and three-year-olds for a few hours each day. Just as I was coming out of the toddler stage with my own children, I got right back into it each day with these delightful, funny preschoolers!

On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday I get to share with Cathy Duncan the sweet two-year-olds. We have 5 this year, 2 happy, busy boys and three sweet and sassy girls. In this class, we work a lot on learning to obey, share, sit still for a few minutes, and be kind with our words and hands. Each week we have a theme and try to reiterate it with a picture or craft. So far, we've used crayons, paints, ink pads, glue, glitter, and markers! For Thanksgiving, we made hand print turkey t-shirts and when we learned about Pilgrims and Indians we made feather headdresses. Those are especially fun units that we all really enjoy!

On Tuesday and Thursday I get to have the 7 three-year-olds for a free play day. Their academic days are spent with Miss Kitty, so I just get to play with them these two days! They always like telling me about what they learn with Miss Kitty (which is a lot!) and we usually enjoy extra outside time as well as plenty of books and singing. It's a pleasant change of routine and I have enjoyed getting to know these sweet ones in addition to the two-year-olds.

It has been a great start to the school year, even if a hot and dusty one! The air conditioning went out the first couple of weeks in September and we are so thankful it was fixed since Fall decided to skip us this year! This semester is a long one so teachers and students alike will enjoy a week off celebrating thankfulness to God for His goodness to us with our friends and family. Happy Thanksgiving from MSCS!

“Miss” Kathryn
HAPPY HEARTS

It's Monday before Thanksgiving. We had Happy Hearts last Thursday, November 17, so it seems to me that Thanksgiving has already come! We enjoyed the usual Thanksgiving feast of turkey and dressing, ham, sweet potato casserole, squash casserole, eggplant casserole, green beans, a delicious congealed salad, cranberry sauce, apple and cranberry bake, rolls, and chess pie! I think that's all of it! It was delicious and I truly appreciated Jean making the sweet potato casserole, Nell the congealed salad and her sweet tea, and Frances the chess pies. Nell decorated with her spectacular fall assembly of pumpkins, squash, colorful leaves, doves, pine cones, fabric leaves and scarfs, and pilgrims. It was beautiful and appropriately festive. We arrived at the church quite early to get it done on Thursday morning and we had lots of fun doing it. We were so pleased to have Ben Chilcutt in the kitchen helping Nancy Franks, Johnice Shumaker, Jean, Nell, and Ann Chilcutt clean up afterwards.

Our program was the same as last year. We packed Operation Christmas Child boxes and you may remember last year I stated that we do this to the glory of God, to give of our abundance to those who are less fortunate throughout the world, and because Libby Springer told me about this program and what it meant to her and her students. It delights me to carry on her favorite charity. She and Anne Marie Chilcutt had started the tradition at Heritage Academy. It is a very special activity and Jay Nail was the designated person at Main Street Presbyterian. One of our adult Sunday School classes offered to purchase the contents and assist with the postage for Happy Hearts' boxes. Several members also brought items and donated postage. Our group had fun assembling the boxes, stuffing them, and labeling girl or boy and the appropriate age. Johnice is vital to this operation. There was lots of laughing and talking as we went about the task, proof that when we do for others we receive a blessing. It is one of the few interactive programs we have at Happy Hearts, not to exclude singing our favorite hymns. For the most part we enjoy hearing a speaker followed by a time of questions and answers.

Thinking how everyone chips in to make Happy Hearts the success that it is makes my heart grateful and joyful! How neat that Kitty Brewer came to me offering to purchase the supplies for our boxes, that her Sunday School class wanted to help us!! Poogie and Frances Laws delivered the boxes for us and then delivered a few meals to shut-ins. Nell Fleming decorated - that is such a bigger job than it sounds like. She has to load everything into her car, unload it at the church, decorate, then undecorate, and the process to return it to storage includes loading and unloading again. The preschool wanted to use her decorations for their Thanksgiving feast on Friday, so at least all the effort she put into it was beneficial for two occasions! Back to counting our blessings, those who help with the cooking and the cleanup are vital to this ministry. It is indeed a team effort. Everybody having a great attitude and coming for good Christian fellowship is a special blessing. There are many who donate throughout the year to help finance Happy Hearts activities, including our budgeted amount from the church. For as long as Happy Hearts has existed, our church secretaries have been vital to the ministry. Diann is always ready to help do whatever needs to be done. She opened, sorted, and placed all the supplies for the boxes on tables in the fellowship hall. and when it was all over, I called to ask for one more favor - I couldn't remember if both ovens had been turned off, of course they had. But Diann ran up and down the stairs to check and put my mind at ease. The secretary always notifies everyone with a postcard in the mail and reminders in the bulletins.

All of this rambling following a full day of preparation for our family Thanksgiving is my way of counting blessings and giving thanks for God's provision in so many ways. We so often take for granted our everyday blessings. On the 17th I witnessed our church family coming to the aid of each other and going the extra miles!! You amaze me!!

Continued
Happy Hearts

Happy Hearts is among my most special blessings but it would not be without YOU! Your participation is what this ministry is all about. We were so pleased to have Jennifer Gardner, the Shulls, and every other person there. It was wonderful to have Todd with us also. We missed those of you who were unable to attend.

So I am hoping you have a Happy Thanksgiving filled with an awareness of your unique set of blessings and lots of good food, family time, and safe travels. God is abundantly good to each of us. He has provided all that is needed for our bodies and souls. YOU are needful for my happy heart.

Bess
Dear Friends,

As we move towards Thanksgiving and Christmas, may our amazing God open our eyes even more to the abundant grace He has lavished on us and our families.

We appreciate your encouragement and support and we cherish your prayers.

- Please pray that our finances would allow us to continue offering the same services and also grow. We would like to add a much-needed psychiatrist and possibly a pediatrician or another family medicine doctor.
- Please pray for our annual Thanksgiving Baskets that will be delivered to 100 of our patients. Pray that both those giving and receiving will be blessed.
- Please pray for our annual Christmas Shop where parents and grandparents can shop for Christmas gifts for their children at greatly reduced prices. Pray that all will see God's love and provision through this shop.

With Christian love,

Tom and Connie Edwards
Larry Brown  
African Bible College, Malawi, Africa

Carey and I arrived in the United States on August 1. We will be on home mission assignment until the latter part of June, 2017. We are based in Memphis, TN, and are fortunate to have the use of my home church’s (Second Presbyterian Church) missionary house.

Meanwhile I understand that Malawi is undergoing considerable challenges. Scanty rainfall for the past two years has caused problems with hunger and availability of electricity. The river which turns the turbines is down so low that generation of power has become difficult.

Since there’s little news to report since I’m not on the field, I thought I’d share this with you - it’s called the Prayer of St. Patrick of Ireland.

*Christ be with you, Christ be within you,*

*Christ behind you, Christ before you,*

*Christ beside you, Christ to win you,*

*Christ to comfort and restore you,*

*Christ beneath you, Christ above you,*

*Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,*

*Christ in the hearts that love you,*

*Christ in the mouth of friend and stranger.*

Thank you for your years of support, prayer, and encouragement.

*Larry Brown*

Dale Ellison Family  
Peru Mission

Hello friends,

We have been back since September. We love our new apartment and are grateful to God for providing this place. We are very close to many friends and we have easy access to public transport. Lauren is in a new school and doing well. Susan has started again with home school for Rebekah and Zachary. Dale continues to oversee Geneva School and helps our Bethesda Clinic administrator as well. Our church is doing well, having grown by several new members this past year!

- Pray for our continuing process with getting all the paperwork done for both the clinic and the school. Bureaucracy is always a challenge.
- Pray for more folks from the neighborhood to visit and join our church as we continue to minister to the area.
- Please pray for our children’s education to go well and our ability to be good parents.

Thank you so much for your prayers and giving! We are so dependent on your goodwill toward making disciples in Peru. May the Lord bless you all.

*Dale and Susan*
Dear Friends,

The fall semester started off at full speed! The Lord has been at work and we would love for you to join us in praying.

Here are specific ways you can pray for RUF at Mississippi State:

- The relationships sermon series tends to bring a lot of new students to RUF. Please pray that the Holy Spirit would work through His Word on Thursday nights to bring people to repent and believe.
- We welcomed a new intern this semester from Auburn. Please pray for Allie Harmon as she and her ministry on campus.
- College can be a lonely time for students. Please pray that students, especially freshmen will find friendship and the love of Christ at RUF.

We know that God hears and answers the prayers of His people and we are always grateful for your prayer support. Thank you for being a part of what God is doing through RUF at Mississippi State. Your prayers and support enable us to be on campus!

Merry Christmas,

Brian

Austin Lenox

God is moving at UT and it’s our privilege to be a part of it. Matt is going through Galatians this semester, showing us that Jesus + Nothing = EVERYTHING when it comes to being seen as holy and righteous before God. It’s been afflicting to the spiritually comfortable and comforting to the afflicted – exactly what we want the Gospel to do each week! The sophomore book study I am leading is going through *The Enemy Within* by Kris Lundgaard about the importance of the mortification of our flesh.

We’ve been blessed with an amazing group of students on our ministry team this year that work so well at making RUF a safe, fun place to learn, question, grow, and fellowship.

Please pray for our entire staff (Matt, Ellie, Katherine, and me) as we lead small groups, book studies, prayer meetings, and other extra-curricular events.

Please pray for me that I would be sustained to do this job purely by God’s grace and love for me shown through His Word and not be tempted to lean on my own abilities and strengths.

Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow! Thank you so much for being a constant source of prayer, encouragement, and provision from the Lord to me. It’s not an exaggeration at all to say that I would not be able to be here in Knoxville, on the campus of UT, if it wasn’t for the prayers and support of my donors, family, and friends.

Austin Lenox
December’s VOLUNTEERS
NURSERIES

December 4  Sandra Pilkinton
          Janie Williams

December 11  Ann Marie Chilcutt
             Kitty Brewer, Olivia Laws

December 18  Shirley Swoope
             Patrick & Morgan Shipp

December 25  Melissa Duncan
             Roger & Joy Day

USHERS

December 4  Gee Allgood, Roger Day,
           Brent Drown, Henry Pilkinton,
           Trip Hairston

December 11  Allan Brewer, Phillip Goodwin,
             Richard Laws, Russ Russell,
             Brad Talley

December 18  Gray Flora, Bill Laws,
             Matt White, Ben Woodson

December 25  Grover Allgood, Ray Kilpatrick,
             Mike Meharg, Jay Nail,
             Patrick Shipp

Gifts to the Church

In Memory of
Zach Swedenburg
by
Mrs. Fran Perkins
David Swedenburg

In Memory of
Penny Burchfield
by
Mrs. Fran Perkins

MONEY COUNTER

Henry Pilkinton

Budget Report

November 2016

$21,450

Samara Reece Talley
November 1, 2016
8 pounds, 3 ounces
22 inches

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Phillip & Jessie Talley

Proud Grandparents
Brad & Alice Talley
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Special Events at Main Street

Saturday, Dec. 3  11:00 a.m.
WIC Cookie Swap at the Honey House

Wednesday, Dec. 7
Christmas Parties at MSPC

Saturday, Dec. 10
Brewer Community Group
Workday at MSPC

Sunday, Dec. 11
Congregational “Mingle & Jingle”

Monday, Dec. 12
MSCS Program in the Sanctuary

Sunday, Dec. 18
“Lessons and Carols”

Saturday, Dec. 24
Christmas Eve Service  5:00 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 25
Morning Worship Service only

Sunday, Jan. 1
Morning Worship Service only

Sunday, Jan. 8
Gina Frye from Life Choices will be our guest during Sunday School.

Sunday, Jan. 15
Christina Thomas will share with us concerning her new position.

Sunday, Jan. 22
Drake Bassett from Palmer Home will be our guest during Sunday School.

NEW NEEDS:
Colleen Meek as she begins her new position as Youth Ministries Coordinator at Main Street.

CONTINUING NEEDS:
Our Shut-Ins:
  Dot Norton
  Louise Armstrong
  Sadie Brewer
  George & Martha Clegg
  Jamie Mills
  Jennifer Garner
  Phillip Goodwin
  Bubbie Yelverton
  Verda Laws
  Sue Lovegren
  Edna Mae McCoy
  Billy & Emily Shull
  Fran Perkins
  Dot Pilcher
  John Mark Russell
  Faith Whitlock - Christa Chapman’s mother

Helping Hands
Life Choices Pregnancy Center
Palmer Home
All churches and pastors in Columbus

President Barack Obama
Officials in Washington
Governor Phil Bryant
Mayor Robert Smith
Police Chief Oscar Lewis
Sheriff Mike Aldredge
State and City and County Officials
Main Street Presbyterian Church
(A Presbyterian Church in America Congregation)

www.mainstreetpres.org
662-328-2523

Sunday Schedule
9:00 a.m. Church Officer Prayer Time
9:30 a.m. Sunday School
10:40 a.m. Morning Worship
6:00 p.m. Evening Worship

Wednesday Schedule
5:30 p.m. Supper
6:00 p.m. Children and Youth Activities
6:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study and Prayer Time

Thursday Schedule
Weekly Prayer Meeting at Noon