

# THE OAKBRIDGE

## Dying Well

From Pastor Seth



During this season, I have been thinking more often of death and what it means for a Christian to die well. What does it look like for one who believes in Christ to meet death with courage and valor worthy of the Savior in whom we trust? While searching out this topic in the resources in my library, I came across an account of one believer's death that captures better than I could ever try to describe the kind of death that manifests a living faith in and deep acquaintance with the Lord Jesus Christ. In volume 1 of the *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, published by Banner of Truth, I found Jonathan Edwards' account of the death of his grandfather, Richard Edwards. Concerning the manner in which his grandfather met his death, Edwards writes, "The piety and evangelical excellence, which had characterized his life, were even more conspicuous in his last sickness, and at his death." You can understand why he wrote this as you read the following account of Mr. Richard Edwards' death.

When his children came around his bed, weeping at the apprehension of his approaching death, and their incalculable loss, he said to them, 'This time I have long expected, this scene I have looked for, and now it is come.' As some of us who lived at a distance came into his sick chamber for the first time, he said, 'I can but look upon you, my children, I can't speak to you; I have a great deal to say, but I can't say it; God now denies me that liberty.' When I first saw him, (April 16th,) he expressed a hope, that he should meet me with joy, at the right hand of Christ in the great day. Something being said to him, with reference to death, he replied, 'Death, indeed, is terrible to nature, but I hope God will strengthen me, and carry me through it, and help me to submit to his will; I lie at the feet of God.'—While he was praying to God by himself, he was overheard to say, 'Lord, I come to thee with my naked soul; I desire to bow under thy chastizing hand, and hope it is a good chastisement.'

As we sat weeping by his bed-side, April 16th, he said to us,—'Come, children, moderate your grief, for such things must be, and the will of God is best. I freely submit myself to the will of God, whether in life or death, to do with me as he pleases.'

He said to me on the 17th,—'Though I seem to be better to-day, yet I am of the opinion that this sickness will be my last; and I am very willing that the will of God should be done, I am not at all anxious about it: I rely on the Lord Jesus Christ; I have chosen him for my Saviour and mighty Redeemer.' On my observing, 'This must be a great support, Sir, to your mind;'—he replied, 'It is so.'

As I was sitting by him on the 17th, I heard him say,—'O my poor, frail, mortal body, methinks, sometimes I should be glad to slip away from thee!' In the midst of most severe pain, he expressed himself very desirous, that God would enable him to bear his afflicting hand, and quietly submit to his will, even to the end; and that he might not at any time, by impatience, be left to sin against him, and for this he desired our prayers, that God would, in this respect, strengthen him more and more; and in a very humble manner, when he had scarce strength to speak, he thus, in a short ejaculation, prayed to God, 'O Lord, increase thy grace, and strengthen thy servant's faith!' During his whole sickness, he appeared to be almost always praying to God; far more than is commonly witnessed on the death-bed of the Christian.

He solemnly exhorted and charged his son John, to carry on the worship of God in his family, after his death. To one of his daughters, he said, as she stood weeping over him, 'I must say to you, as Mr. Whiting said to his daughter Sybil, Through wet and dry, through thick and thin, keep steady for that port.'

On the 18th, as his good friend Mr. Austin, and myself, sat by him, and we observed him troubled with hiccoughs (hiccups), one of us remarked that the hiccoughs were very distressing, and he replied, 'God must take his own way, and use his own means, and I desire to submit to his holy will, and hope I can do it freely.' He expressed to me his conviction, that it was better for

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## DYING WELL *(continued from page 1)*

him to depart and be with Christ, than to continue with his family. On my reminding him, that he had many friends, he replied,—‘I know that I have many friends, but there is one Friend that is better than all;’ and when one of us spoke of making his bed easy; he replied,—‘The favour of Jesus Christ will make my bed easy; the bosom of Jesus Christ is the best resting-place, for a man in my condition.’—To one of my sisters he said, ‘Weep for yourself, my child, as I have wept for myself, I have laid hold of the rock of ages, I hope my anchor is within the veil;’—and to another, as she observed him in very great pain—‘The passage may prove rough, but the shore is safe, and the bottom will bear me.’ In reply to a remark of mine, he said,—‘I trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and have ventured my soul upon him for eternity, and I desire to do so more and more.’

On the night of the 18th, when his distemper was most violent, he expressed his full conviction, that he had chosen God for his portion, and that he would grant him a favourable issue. He expressed high and honourable thoughts of God, in the midst of his greatest distress. On Wednesday, observing his uncommon patience and resignation under extreme suffering, I was led to remark, that to submit quietly and patiently to the will of God, when sorely afflicted by him, was one of the hardest lessons a Christian had to learn. His reply was striking and affecting:—‘Alas! there is no room nor cause to complain of God, for he is infinitely good, yea goodness itself, and the fountain of it; I should be very ungrateful indeed, if I should complain of him who has been so good to me all my days.’

On Saturday, the 19th of April, and the last day . . . of his life, when he lay rattling in his throat, much oppressed for want of breath, and in great pain, so that he seemed to me to be in the very pangs of death, he expressed some fear that he might lie long in that condition, and so endure great pain and misery before he died, and therefore seemed to desire that God would mercifully shorten the time of his sufferings, by taking him quickly out of the world. Mrs. Talcot said to him, ‘But you are willing to wait God’s time:’—to which he replied,—‘O yes, O yes.’

At a time when he appeared to be fast sinking, Major Talcot informed him, that he was ready to think death was upon him, he was so very low; and I added,—‘I hope that God will never leave you nor forsake you:’—with great readiness, and with an air of much inward satisfaction, he replied,—‘I don’t fear it, I don’t fear it!’—When he was hardly able to speak, he told me, in answer to a question, that—his hope of eternal life, through the infinite mercy of God in Jesus Christ, was still firm; that he trusted all would be well with him in a short time, and that then he should think of his present afflictions and sufferings with pleasure!

In the former part of the night, he told us that he was comforted with the hope of going to heaven. On my asking him if he did not wish to recover, he replied:—‘To recover! No; I am better as I am, I have no desire to go back, I have left myself with God!’

In the latter part of the night, having lain down for a little sleep, I was called up, as he appeared to be dying. I asked him if his hope of salvation continued. He said—‘Yes.’—I asked him whether he still had good thoughts of God, and he replied—‘Yes, Yes!’

In the morning of the sabbath, a few hours before his death, I went to him, and told him, I would make one more prayer with him, if he thought he could attend; he was only able to say—‘Yes’—and at the same time nodded his head; and, when it was concluded, gave me the same sign, that he had been able to understand and unite with me. In the prayer, I spoke of him as dying; and expressing my hope to him afterwards, that he was going to keep sabbath with saints and angels in heaven, and inquiring whether he had that hope to sustain him, he gave me the customary sign that such was the fact.

In this manner he lived and died, glorifying God both in his life and in his death, and leaving behind him that good name, which is better than precious ointment.”

May the Lord Jesus enable us all to meet our deaths with such faith and resolve of spirit to entrust our souls to God, no matter what. Death is a vicious enemy. But beloved, in Christ, never forget that death’s sting is gone and we have victory over this enemy (1 Corinthians 15:55-57). Though death is never to be thought of as a good thing in itself, nevertheless, Christ has turned the affliction of death into a doorway of life for all His people. May you rest in this truth and prepare your own soul to meet that day with the “evangelical excellence” of the saints who have gone before us, like brother Richard Edwards.

<sup>1</sup>Edwards, J. (1974). *The works of Jonathan Edwards* (Vol. 1, pp. cclv–cclvi). Banner of Truth Trust.

# NEWS FROM CARLA STILES

**S**o much has happened since I last visited the church in August 2019. At that time, I was still recuperating from some strange viral infection that was never diagnosed. Thankfully, God restored my strength in the fall and I was able to have total knee replacement surgery on November 4. I was so thankful for a great surgical team, hospital and physical therapy team. I'm half way through the normal year of recovery and am doing well. It's such a good feeling to be able to walk well again. Since I had spent so much of 2019 inside my house, I was so looking forward to 2020 as a breakout year, with a vacation with college roommates to Washington D.C. in March and surgery on my left knee scheduled for May. I was now finally going to be able to have a summer where I could get out and about and enjoy the trails near my house. And then along comes Covid-19 and I found myself housebound again and grieving the loss of a vacation and the postponement of surgery. It was a great reminder that we make plans but God directs the steps (Proverbs 16:9).



Quarantine has had its hard times: loneliness, loss of time with family, celebrating Easter alone, cancelling knee surgery, not being able to go to a gym to continue healing of my knee, eye strain due to focusing on computer screens all day. But the good far outweighs the hard. I have learned to be so grateful for a house where I look out at nature and interacting more with my neighbors as people are stepping outside for fresh air. I am so thankful for a new right knee that makes it possible to walk better even if not completely healed. I'm thankful for an elliptical that a friend lent me so that I could continue PT on my knee and so grateful for technology that keeps me connected with the world around me. There has been laughter and tears as I learn how to teach math from a distance (how many ways can I try to set up a whiteboard ☺).

This has been a busier time for me as I connect with singles who now are even more isolated. I introduced you to Ellen and Erin last August. Erin is in a small village in northeast Thailand working with an Australian family. Mid-December, the wife of that family passed away suddenly and Erin's life was turned upside down. The team took a break in their countries but felt God wanted them to continue working in that area even though it would not be same. Erin returned to Thailand in March and was immediately quarantined in her home for 14 days with a Thai doctor checking on her daily. The day she was free to leave her home, the country went on lockdown. I'm thankful that I have been able to connect with her often to help her through this hard time. Ellen was looking forward to a new change in her ministry – working in a Thai preschool. She came back to the United States in February for a family wedding and now is stranded in the here.

I have been connecting with several other global workers from around the world, most of whom have stayed in their countries. Others who were coming to the U.S. on home assignment have had to scramble and change plans and find new tickets and housing. Some families have had to leave for good without time to bring closure to their lives overseas. Others have been sharing opportunities they've had to talk to neighbors about God. Bible studies are happening online – church services are being livestreamed, people are fearful and hopeless and asking where to find hope.

So, in this time of quarantine, God is working! Working in our lives inside and out—here, near and far! He is in control and is calling His church to step out and be the church outside the walls.

## **Praises:**

- Thankful for good medical care in the United States
- God is bringing people into His family – they are looking for hope and finding it in Him

## **Prayer requests:**

- Balance of work and rest – I can spend the whole day helping families with math and connecting with global workers and not take time to rest, relax and spend time with Him
- Pray that I would continue to look for the good things and find joy each day

# MAY BIBLE READING

## *M'Cheyne Bible Reading Plan*

| Family Reading |             |         |        |            | Personal Reading |                |            |         |
|----------------|-------------|---------|--------|------------|------------------|----------------|------------|---------|
| Date           | Book        | Chapter | Book   | Chapter    | Book             | Chapter        | Book       | Chapter |
| 1              | Numbers     | 8       | Psalms | 44         | Song             | 6              | Hebrews    | 6       |
| 2              | Numbers     | 9       | Psalms | 45         | Song             | 7              | Hebrews    | 7       |
| 3              | Numbers     | 10      | Psalms | 46, 47     | Song             | 8              | Hebrews    | 8       |
| 4              | Numbers     | 11      | Psalms | 48         | Isaiah           | 1              | Hebrews    | 9       |
| 5              | Numbers     | 12, 13  | Psalms | 49         | Isaiah           | 2              | Hebrews    | 10      |
| 6              | Numbers     | 14      | Psalms | 50         | Isaiah           | 3, 4           | Hebrews    | 11      |
| 7              | Numbers     | 15      | Psalms | 51         | Isaiah           | 5              | Hebrews    | 12      |
| 8              | Numbers     | 16      | Psalms | 52, 53, 54 | Isaiah           | 6              | Hebrews    | 13      |
| 9              | Numbers     | 17, 18  | Psalms | 55         | Isaiah           | 7              | James      | 1       |
| 10             | Numbers     | 19      | Psalms | 56, 57     | Isaiah           | 8, 9:1-7       | James      | 2       |
| 11             | Numbers     | 20      | Psalms | 58, 59     | Isaiah           | 9:8-21; 10:1-4 | James      | 3       |
| 12             | Numbers     | 21      | Psalms | 60, 61     | Isaiah           | 10:5-34        | James      | 4       |
| 13             | Numbers     | 22      | Psalms | 62, 63     | Isaiah           | 11, 12         | James      | 5       |
| 14             | Numbers     | 23      | Psalms | 64, 65     | Isaiah           | 13             | 1 Peter    | 1       |
| 15             | Numbers     | 24      | Psalms | 66, 67     | Isaiah           | 14             | 1 Peter    | 2       |
| 16             | Numbers     | 25      | Psalms | 68         | Isaiah           | 15             | 1 Peter    | 3       |
| 17             | Numbers     | 26      | Psalms | 69         | Isaiah           | 16             | 1 Peter    | 4       |
| 18             | Numbers     | 27      | Psalms | 70, 71     | Isaiah           | 17, 18         | 1 Peter    | 5       |
| 19             | Numbers     | 28      | Psalms | 72         | Isaiah           | 19, 20         | 2 Peter    | 1       |
| 20             | Numbers     | 29      | Psalms | 73         | Isaiah           | 21             | 2 Peter    | 2       |
| 21             | Numbers     | 30      | Psalms | 74         | Isaiah           | 22             | 2 Peter    | 3       |
| 22             | Numbers     | 31      | Psalms | 75, 76     | Isaiah           | 23             | 1 John     | 1       |
| 23             | Numbers     | 32      | Psalms | 77         | Isaiah           | 24             | 1 John     | 2       |
| 24             | Numbers     | 33      | Psalms | 78:1-37    | Isaiah           | 25             | 1 John     | 3       |
| 25             | Numbers     | 34      | Psalms | 78:38-72   | Isaiah           | 26             | 1 John     | 4       |
| 26             | Numbers     | 35      | Psalms | 79         | Isaiah           | 27             | 1 John     | 5       |
| 27             | Numbers     | 36      | Psalms | 80         | Isaiah           | 28             | 2 John     | 1       |
| 28             | Deuteronomy | 1       | Psalms | 81, 82     | Isaiah           | 29             | 3 John     | 1       |
| 29             | Deuteronomy | 2       | Psalms | 83, 84     | Isaiah           | 30             | Jude       | 1       |
| 30             | Deuteronomy | 3       | Psalms | 85         | Isaiah           | 31             | Revelation | 1       |
| 31             | Deuteronomy | 4       | Psalms | 86, 87     | Isaiah           | 32             | Revelation | 2       |

# May 2020

*Pending*



Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

*And those who know Your name will put their trust in You,  
For You, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You.  
Psalm 9:10*

|  | 1  | 2                                     |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| <b>3</b><br>10:20 a.m. - Online Worship  | <b>8</b><br>6:00 a.m. - Elders Meeting<br>1:00 p.m. - Options for Women Ministry             | <b>9</b>                              |
| <b>4</b><br>7:00 p.m. - Deacons Meeting  | <b>15</b><br>6:30 a.m. - OCC Men's Meeting   | <b>16</b><br>8:30 a.m. - OCC Work Day |
| <b>5</b>   | <b>22</b><br>6:00 a.m. - Elders Meeting  | <b>23</b>                             |
| <b>6</b><br>9:00 a.m. - Prayer Time<br>5:30 p.m. - Missions Committee Meeting<br>6:30 p.m. - Connecting in Prayer  | <b>29</b><br>6:30 a.m. - OCC Men's Meeting   | <b>30</b>                             |
| <b>7</b><br><b>National Day of Prayer</b><br>1:30 p.m. - Psalm 19 Life/Care Grp<br>6:30 p.m. - CTC L/C Grp   |  |                                       |
| <b>8</b><br>9:00 a.m. - Prayer Time<br>6:30 p.m. - Connecting in Prayer  | <b>14</b><br>1:30 p.m. - Psalm 19 Life/Care Grp<br>2:30 p.m. - Visual Arts Committee Meeting |                                       |
| <b>9</b>   | <b>21</b><br>1:30 p.m. - Psalm 19 Life/Care Grp<br>6:30 p.m. - CTC L/C Grp                   |                                       |
| <b>10</b><br>8:30 a.m. - Prayer Time<br>9:00 a.m. - Sunday School<br>10:20 a.m. - Worship<br>2:00 p.m. - Good Samaritan Soc.<br>4:30 p.m. - Taste & See L/C Group  | <b>28</b><br>1:30 p.m. - Psalm 19 Life/Care Grp  |                                       |
| <b>11</b><br>6:30 p.m. - Elders & Deacons Meeting  |  |                                       |
| <b>12</b>  |  |                                       |
| <b>13</b><br>9:00 a.m. - Prayer Time<br>6:30 p.m. - Connecting in Prayer   | <b>27</b><br>9:00 a.m. - Prayer Time<br>6:30 p.m. - Connecting in Prayer                     |                                       |
| <b>14</b>  |  |                                       |
| <b>15</b><br>8:30 a.m. - Prayer Time<br>9:00 a.m. - Sunday School<br>10:20 a.m. - Worship<br>11:45 a.m. - 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday Smorgasbord (31 <sup>st</sup> )<br>4:30 p.m. - Taste & See Life/Care Group (24 <sup>th</sup> )    |  |                                       |
| <b>16</b>  |  |                                       |
| <b>17</b><br>8:30 a.m. - Prayer Time<br>9:00 a.m. - Sunday School<br>10:20 a.m. - Worship<br>12:30 p.m. - Emmaus L/C Group   |  |                                       |
| <b>18</b>  |  |                                       |
| <b>19</b>  |  |                                       |
| <b>20</b><br>9:00 a.m. - Prayer Time<br>6:30 p.m. - Connecting in Prayer   |  |                                       |
| <b>21</b>  |  |                                       |
| <b>22</b>  |  |                                       |
| <b>23</b>  |  |                                       |
| <b>24/31</b><br>8:30 a.m. - Prayer Time<br>9:00 a.m. - Sunday School<br>10:20 a.m. - Worship<br>11:45 a.m. - 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday Smorgasbord (31 <sup>st</sup> )<br>4:30 p.m. - Taste & See Life/Care Group (24 <sup>th</sup> ) |  |                                       |

# MAY BIRTHDAYS

*May 3 - Doug Anderson*

*May 9 - Nancy Weber*

*May 14 - Ryan Wyss*

*May 16 - Josiah Hubin*

*May 19 - Sue Butler*

*May 23 - Sarah Larson*

*May 23 - Mike Pietenpol*

*May 27 - Robbie Smith*



## **Oakridge Community Church**

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## **OCC Vision**

The vision of Oakridge Community Church is to spread a joyful passion for the absolute, eternal supremacy of Jesus Christ in all things, to all peoples.

## **OCC Mission**

The mission of Oakridge Community Church is to glorify God by delighting in, declaring and displaying the gospel of Jesus Christ.