



**REMEMBER IN PRAYER:** Our Country, Veterans, and Elders; Elementary, High School, & College Students; High School & College Graduates; Brad Bailey's Brother, Mark—health; Bohne Family—personal issues; LaVonne Boles (Lisa Jurrens's friend)—Stage 3 colon cancer; Danelle & Janelle's Cousin's Daughter—health; Evelyn Brown—stent surgery & mother, Zachery Corman—recent baptism; Marie Riley—broken hip; Ashley's Duester's father—blood clot; Lance Duester's father; Walter Davis—health; Ashley Duester & baby; Daniel Enfield—health; Donnis Genung—cancer treatment; Katrina's sister—bone cancer; Robert & Susan Grissom's Son, Joel Grissom—health & family issues; Daughter-in-Law—broken leg; Danelle Hayes—health; Marjean Hayes—health; Jeffrey, Kelsey, & Leo Hergenreder—personal issues; Jurrens Family—Passing of Sheila Holliday; Jurrens & Mohlman Families—passing of Tina Mohlman; Ken Kucera—heart attack; Ken Lockling—health; Judy Melvin—health, her brother's wife's—health; Louise Nealeigh—health; Doris Reichert—surgery recovery; Angie Riley's brother, Julian—stroke & Angie's Mother; Ann Prior—cancer return; Prior Family—Ellen Prior's passing; Sudanese Brethren—persecution; Peggy Shearer—hip replacement surgery; Jaci Smith's foster brother, Larry—personal issues; Jaci Smith & baby; Shirley Steen—broken wrist; Maggie Sales's brother, Gavin Wallace—health & broken nose; Alice Wells—dermatology health; Gary & Norma Werner—Norma's health; Matt & Hope Witt—teaching in China; Amy, Kamryn, and Kiley Wright—recent baptism; Jo Wright's son, Joe, stroke recovery; Jo's Sister, Mary, cataracts; those travelling.

**PRAY FOR OUR MISSIONARIES:** Russel Bell: mission work in India & Romania.  
Jeff Zanarison: Bible project in Madagascar

<b>Happy July Birthday:</b>	DudLee Brennfoerder	-	5	Joan Glassmyer	-	8
	Floyd Baker	-	10	Ray Riley	-	10
	Roger Nealeigh—16	-	24	Clayton Peshek	-	24
	Reed Munsell	-	29	Amy Wenske	-	29
				Kelsey Hergenreder	-	31
<b>Happy July Anniversary:</b>	Clayton & Rebecca Peshek	-	4	Brad & Lorinda Bailey	-	15
	Jim & Monica Fielder	-	20	Brett & Maggie Sales	-	26

- **The Elders** meet every other Wednesday night after class. They discuss concerns for the well-being of the congregation, and pray together. (They do not transact business, which is done in the monthly leadership meetings, so they do not keep minutes.) If you have a spiritual concern or need to discuss with the elders, you are welcome to visit with them during their Wednesday night meetings.
- **One Word, One Church** — Below are the dates and chapters to read this week:
 

July 18	-	Luke 15	July 21	-	Luke 18
July 19	-	Luke 16	July 22	-	Luke 19
July 20	-	Luke 17			
- **Bible Teachers Workshop** this Saturday, July 23rd at York College. Registration begins at 8:30 AM. You can register on-line at [www.york.edu/BTWorkshop](http://www.york.edu/BTWorkshop) or at the door at the Mackey Center. Fee is \$30

## “WITH PERSECUTIONS”

*“About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. He killed James the brother of John with the sword . . .”\**

What is God doing here? This is James the son of Zebedee, the brother of John. He's Jesus' first cousin: his mother Salome, wife of Zebedee, is the sister of Mary, mother of Jesus. This James is one of the first four Apostles, one of the fishermen who left his father in the boat with his hired hands to follow Jesus. He's one Jesus' closest followers, one of the inner three whom Jesus took with him when he healed Peter's mother-in-law of a deadly fever, when he raised Jāirus' daughter from the dead, and when he went up the mountain for the Transfiguration. This James saw up close the majesty of God the Father shining upon the face of God the Son. This James was one of the three that Jesus asked to go further into Gethsemane to watch and pray with him.

What is God doing, so early in the life of the church, allowing this James to be slaughtered off before he does anything of note? Other than the bare notice of his execution in Acts 12, all we have on this James is in the four Gospels, where he follows, sees amazing things, and makes two big mistakes: with his brother John, he asks Jesus to give him a throne when he sets up his kingdom on earth; and (again with John) he asks Jesus to let him call down fire to destroy a Samaritan village. That's all we know about him.

His brother John goes on to be prominent in the early church; he wrote the Gospel and Epistles of John and probably the book of Revelation. But this James makes no mark on the rest of the New Testament—Herod simply snuffs him out. Why didn't God keep him alive and use him mightily as he did his brother?

It's a mystery to me. If I were God, I wouldn't have done it that way. I can't explain it.

I can just speculate. In an interview with Kent Brantly a reporter called him a hero for fighting the ebola epidemic and suggested that God saved him from dying of ebola because he was such a faithful follower of Christ. Dr. Brantly responded that it was precisely because he was being a faithful follower of Christ that he caught ebola in the first place. His point: Following Christ does not mean we have Christ in our hip pockets; it does not make us invulnerable to suffering. Rather, following Christ makes us vulnerable to suffering with him. Christ could call us to suffer with him, and for him, to the honor of his name.

That's what Jesus says when Peter asks, *“See, we have left everything and followed you: What reward shall we have?”* Jesus responds with a double-edged saying: *“Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the Gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now at this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”*

“With persecutions” calls Peter up short. The rewards of discipleship are great, but so are the costs. James the brother of John was killed for his faith. So was Peter. So were all the Apostles except John.

“With persecutions” calls us up short, too. The rewards are great, but the cost of discipleship is also great: *“If anyone will follow me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and come follow me.”* We must count the costs and decide whether we're willing to pay the price of following Jesus.

\*Acts 12:1-2. Other Scriptures: Mt.4:21//Mk. 1:19//Lk. 5:10 (the four fishermen); Mk. 1:29 (Peter's mother-in law); Mk. 5:37//Lk. 8:51 (Jāirus' daughter); Lk. 9:54 (calling down fire); Mt. 17:1//Mk. 9:2//Lk. 9:28 (the Transfiguration); Mt. 20:28ff//Mk. 10:35ff (asking for thrones); Mk. 14:33 (Gethsemane); Mt. 20:20, 27:56; Mk. 15:40, 16:1 (Salome, mother of the sons of Zebedee and sister of Mary); Mk. 10:28 (“We have left all”).