



Title: Her Epistle Reads of Christ
Theme: Rejoicing in What the Lord Has Done In and Through Bonnie K. Laughlin
Series: Pillars of the Church

The leadership and the members of CrossRoads Church strive to make the Word of God their guide in determining what the Lord would have them do in worshiping Jesus Christ. The Bible says, the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit. (Ephesians 6:17) If a person does not make his choices or decisions based on the whole counsel of God's Word, then he will make decisions according the sinful nature, from a world's view or worse yet Satan's lies.

I would propose to you that when you honor faithful servants of the Lord who sacrificially exercise their Spiritual gifts and who are allowing the Lord to do a work in them, then you are honoring God who created that person, Christ who died for that person's redemption and the Holy Spirit who enables that person to achieve God's will for them.

The fact is there are servants of the Lord today who can say as the Apostle Paul said, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Galatians 3:20) Bonnie K. Laughlin is a pillar of this church whose life expresses that truth.

What does God's Word say about Christians who have Spiritual gifts and who let Christ do a work in and through them? Are we to honor them? How is God glorified through them?

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All are called to honor the servants of the Lord, whether they be public servants or Christians who exercise Spiritual gifts for the common good of the Body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:7) Romans 13:7 says, "Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor." Romans 12:10 tells us, "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves."

To "honor" (*time*) means to ascribe their worth to a person and/or give recognition of another's worth. (Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament) Honor is to be given by believers one to another instead of claiming it for self." (Vines Dictionary of the New Testament) Matthew Henry tells us that Romans 13:7, "sums up the

duty which we owe not only to magistrates, but to all superiors, parents, masters, all that are over us in the Lord, according to the fifth commandment."

The truth we are to grasp from Romans 12:10 is that we are to have a heart for giving honor rather than taking honor. This is the attitude we are to have for those who exercise their Spiritual gifts sacrificially. (Bible Exposition Commentary; Matthew Henry Commentary)

Even the secular world understands the value of recognizing those who serve others. Corporations and small businesses have seen a tremendous increase in productivity and morale in the people who work for them when proper recognition is given for sacrificial service. They have seen the destruction that comes when recognition for sacrificial service is replaced with reward for productivity. Appreciation for sacrificial service builds up, rewards for productivity breed unhealthy competition thus replacing quality of service with quantity of production.

The Apostle Paul set the heart pulse for the Body of Christ in regard to how we should feel about the children of God

Once the Body of Christ understands the value of honoring one another they must have illumination from the source of their understanding. The Apostle Paul set the heart pulse for the Body of Christ in regard to how we should feel about the children of God when he wrote, "But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning, God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14)

The Body of Christ enjoys the value of having other Christians around to serve them only because God in His mercy sent the Holy Spirit into a sinners' lives and called them to Christ. It is the Lord, Jesus Christ, working through the Holy Spirit who molds repentant sinners into the image of Christ. If you are not a born again Christian, please understand, Christians are sinners saved by grace, they are being transformed by the Holy Spirit more and more into the image of Christ. (2 Corinthians 3:18; 2 Peter 1:5-9) It must be noted that Christians are under the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit of Christ. They are not yet perfected.

The Apostle Paul used the word "sanctifying" (*hagiamós*) in reference not only to the activity of the Holy Spirit in setting man apart unto salvation and transferring him into the ranks of the redeemed, but also to his holiness. (The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament; Zodhiates)

In Philippians 1:6 the Apostle Paul writes, “being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” Please note the words “in you” and catch the truth that God will continue to do His work in and through the Body of Christ. (The Bible Knowledge Commentary)

For this reason, at CrossRoads Church we point all who claim to know Christ to the exhortation found in 2 Peter 1:5-8, “For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The members of CrossRoads Church are very thankful to the Lord for sending His Holy Spirit into the life of Bonnie Laughlin to reveal her personal need of Christ and to enable her to express the Lord’s love to us. Like the Apostle Paul, Bonnie beats her body and makes every effort to add to her character the exhortation of the Apostle Peter. She is effective and very productive in what Christ calls her to do.

Bonnie’s knowledge of forgiveness found in Christ is expressed to others

Bonnie’s knowledge of forgiveness found in Christ is expressed to others. Jesus said, “For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” (Matthew 6:14)

Before I came to Christ I lived a life that would have left a black mark on tar paper. If there is any marriage that presented grounds for Biblical divorce it was ours, not because of Bonnie’s behavior, but because of the lifestyle I chose. In my mess she allowed the Lord to express His forgiveness in and through her to me. We have seen Bonnie show forgiveness to those who have falsely accused her and even to those who have said her brain cancer is caused by the bitterness she holds toward others.

The Lord’s forgiveness shown through Bonnie has brought the backslidden back into fellowship with the Body of Christ and enabled them to become an active part of this local church. Instead of feeling defeated and unimportant, they have discovered the joy and trust that comes with accountability and servant-hood.

One person writes, “In and through Bonnie I have experienced the Lord’s forgiveness and enablement to seek Him whenever I slip into sin. I no longer wait to run to the Lord for His forgiveness and empowerment to defeat sin which so often attacks me. I run to Him quickly so I can

find His embrace. Through Bonnie I have come to enjoy the fresh clean start that comes from confessing to Christ and repenting of sin. Through her life expressions I have in practical ways come to enjoy what is written in His Word, 'Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is [His] faithfulness.'" (Lamentation 3:22-23) (Author wants no recognition)

Through Bonnie, Christ has shown the benefits of feeding upon the written Word of God

Through Bonnie, Christ has shown many His forgiveness as well as the benefits of feeding upon the written Word of God. Jesus said, "...It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' (Matthew 4:4)

The Lord has brought the Word of God to life to Bonnie just like He did to the Psalmist who wrote, "Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the LORD. Blessed are they who keep His statutes and seek Him with all their heart. They do nothing wrong; they walk in His ways. You have laid down precepts that are to be fully obeyed. Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying your decrees! Then I would not be put to shame when I consider all your commands. I will praise you with an upright heart as I learn your righteous laws. I will obey your decrees; do not utterly forsake me." (Psalm 119:1-8)

All who have sat in Bible studies with Bonnie have been blessed on many occasions with her input. Often what she has taught has been confirmed by the whole counsel of God's Word, by men and women who have withstood the trials of life and persecution of man and whose life outcome has proven that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and will be the same forever. (Hebrews 13:7)

When working with World Wide Pictures of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Keith Rocks said, "Bonnie is a walking commentary, a person who has great knowledge and understanding of God's Word." While attending the North American Conference for Evangelists, Bonnie's suggestions on how to handle the media in dealing with touchy topics such as homosexuality, un-Biblical divorce and sex outside of marriage was held in high regard, because her response was birthed from the whole counsel of God's Word.

Because of her knowledge of God's Word, Bonnie has been used of the Lord to assist me in purchasing some of the highest quality Bible study material that can be purchased enabling us to be serious in our approach to the teaching of God's Word. After visiting our church's website, Al Deagar of Media Spot Light said, "Very thorough." A Logos Bible Software Representative said, "Absolutely Wonderful." Pastor John Oldfield writes, "Boy, after reading your ...list of study aides, I was nearly exhausted! That is a monster library of

resources!... ...I'm proud of you." (e-mail sent Thursday, October 18, 2007 12:10 P.M.)

Bonnie's knowledge of God's Word and her discerning spirit have made her the perfect Biblical helper (Genesis 2:20) (*ezer*), a corresponding helper who complements what her husband is called to do. (The Complete Word Study of the Old Testament) Bonnie knows that to be a Biblical helper is not demeaning, but makes her a servant of the Lord to be God's called helper to her husband. (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

Her surrender to the Lord's leading has helped me put together messages that are being used on SermonCentral.com. These messages now have nearly 8,000 viewings with 90% of those responding saying that these messages are a help to them. (SermonCentral Website May 25, 2008)

Bonnie, for this I would like to Biblically honor you, publically ascribe your worth and recognize that it was your joyful surrender to the Lord's will for you that has enabled you to be a perfect helpmate to me. I am most certainly a blessed man. (Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament teaches us to "honor" (*time*) means to ascribe there worth to a person and/or give recognition of another's worth.)

The Lord answered, "Yes" to Bonnie's and her mother, Doris Stump's prayers, and that is what has enabled me to receive a powerful thirst and hunger for the Word of God.

Bonnie's Christ-likeness in prayer has upheld those needing God's intervention

Bonnie's feeding upon the Word of God has and is being a blessing to many. Her Christ-likeness in prayer has upheld those needing God's intervention. Hebrews 5:7 says this about Christ, "During the days of Jesus' life on earth, He offered prayers and petitions..."

A popular term used today is "What would Jesus do?" He would pray about everything. Jesus prayed at His baptism, (Luke 3:21) He prayed before the choosing of the twelve, (Luke 6:12) when the crowds began to increase, (Luke 5:16) before He asked the twelve for their confession of faith, (Luke 9:18) and at His Transfiguration. (Luke 9:29) The disciples knew that He often prayed alone. (Mark 1:25) It is only natural that those who know Him would ask Him to teach them to pray.

If Jesus Christ, the perfect Son of God depended on prayer during His days on this earth (Hebrews 5:7) then why would it seem out of place for us to be obedient to God's Word that tells us to, "...pray continually..." (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

Bonnie learned the joy of taking every thought captive and making it obedient to Christ so she can demolish all arguments and pretenses that set's itself against the knowledge of God. (2 Corinthians 10:5) Bonnie is Holy Spirit illuminated with the truth of Philippians 4:6-7, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

From that desperate cry for God's intervention for our marriage in our Chelsea, OK apartment to that heart cry to the Lord on the trip home from Mayo Clinic after being diagnosed with brain cancer. Bonnie has had her heart and minded guarded in Christ. Bonnie has experienced the Lord's faithfulness in answering prayer to taking Doris home to be with Him as well as still being faithful to intercede for her family as we face uncertain days ahead.

Bonnies' epistle is one that reads like that of Christ, a continual faithfulness to pray to God our Father, because He always proves Himself faithful to this Body of Christ and to our family. Bonnies' heart in prayer is that Christ be glorified in all that the Lord is taking her through.

The beloved John gives us this revelation about Christ in recording Jesus' prayer for Himself. "...Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted Him authority over all people that He might give eternal life to all those you have given Him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave Me to do. And now, Father, glorify Me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began." (John 17:1-5)

On our website we have placed Bonnie's prayer request in writing, "The Lord would give a miraculous healing, only if it would bring others to Christ. The Lord would use this health crisis to give all who know her the opportunity to hear of the loving saving grace of the gospel of Christ. Amen!"

Bonnie's health crisis has proven her genuine

Bonnie's Christ-like heart in prayer has been a blessing to many and her health crisis has proven her genuine. Jesus made a powerful statement that is very difficult for modern time Christians to digest. Luke 9:23 says, "If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me."

I like what The Pulpit Commentary says about this sobering passage of Scripture, "This cross assumes various forms; such as persecution and martyrdom, affliction and sorrow of whatever kind, appointed by God; temptations of Satan, permitted by God for our trial, to increase our

humility and virtue, and to make brighter our crown." The Bible Knowledge Commentary gives us this understanding, "For some this includes physical suffering and even death, as Biblical history and modern times have demonstrated."

In great trials and difficulties it is easy to ask, "Why me?" Bonnie's life expresses Holy Spirit illumination of 1 Peter 1:6-9, "...though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy..."

The Holy Spirit of Christ has revealed to Bonnie and us in this church that trials are preparing us to grow mature in Christ and prove that our faith is genuine. The Lord has taught us through Bonnie that 1.) Trials meet needs. 2.) Trials are varied. 3.) Trials are not easy and 4.) Trials are controlled by God.

Five years ago when Bonnie was first diagnosed with brain cancer she wrote from her heart and the Lord made the way for us to get her testimony into 4,600 homes in Norton County and beyond. One man who does not attend church on a regular basis said to me, "Your wife is genuine, she is going to make it." (Man wants to remain unrecognized)

Now that it has been five years and it is found that Bonnies' brain cancer is recurrent her spiritual heart expresses a faith that is still genuine. Bonnie writes, "Here are the facts... As of January 2008 my brain cancer is recurrent and I am now going through chemo therapy.

I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that God has ordered and numbered my exact days from the beginning of time. He has set them, and He is in absolute control. Though I go to doctors for care and treatment, it is done with the absolute understanding of my heart that they cannot add even one minute to the days that God foreordained as the span of my life. Likewise, Satan himself cannot steal one day from my life. It is not possible. I am totally and completely in the loving hands of the Sovereign Creator of the universe and my soul is in the care of His Glorious Son who gave His life that I might live eternally.

Truly, 'It is Well With My Soul.' Whether it be through my healing or sickness, whether strength or weakness, I pray that Christ is glorified.

We're all living on death row, after all. Some of us are just privileged to be more consistently aware of that than others.

It is my prayer for each of you that you will know and receive the absolute love of Jesus Christ, being born-again and forgiven,

cleansed of sin, and then, that you will walk closely to your Savior, Jesus Christ, growing in the grace and knowledge of Him who died for you... that it will be 'well with your soul' no matter what storms of life may rage your way... that your hearts will be kept in perfect peace. Mine is.

I have no complaint against my Savior. I don't ask 'Why me?' Why NOT me? Paul called suffering 'fellowship' with Christ. If I can fellowship more closely with my Savior through trial and weakness, than through blessing and strength, should I complain?"

Bonnie K Laughlin

For a season known only by the Lord, Bonnie's ministry has changed from that of being a servant to one who now needs to be served. It has taken a good number of people to do the work in this church that Bonnie has done in the past. Bonnie Laughlin's ministry has changed from that of being a wonderful helpmate to me and a key worker in CrossRoads Church, to that of being an instrument through whom Jesus Christ is enabling others to minister unto Him in practical earthly ways.

Bonnie's value of ministry has not changed--only her style of ministry unto the Lord. In teaching of a future time of judgment our Lord Jesus said, "Come, you who are blessed by My Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited Me in, I needed clothes and you clothed Me, **I was sick and you looked after Me**, I was in prison and you came to visit Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in or needing clothes and clothe you? **When did we see you sick** or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for Me.'" (Matthew 25:34-40)

Does going through this cancer trial make us more spiritual than others? No! Does it mean that we have a better ministry than others? No! Does it mean that we a lesser quality of ministry than others? No! It only means that we are the Lord's, and He has chosen the course of ministry style for us that He will use to give others an opportunity to consider Christ and put their trust in God.