

Welcome to New Life !

We are very pleased you are here. We sincerely hope you will be especially aware of God's presence as we worship. If this is your first time to worship with us, here is what you can expect:

Worship in Singing & Giving

- We leave how to worship up to you as an individual. During **singing** worship, you are free to connect with God in whatever biblical way that expresses your heart's adoration. Some may remain seated, others stand, kneel, clap or lift their hands.
- If you would like to receive personal **prayer** during worship with singing, you may go to one of the Prayer Teams located at the back of the sanctuary.
- Invitation is given for **tithes and offerings**. If you are our guest, please do not feel obligated to contribute when God's tithes and offerings are received.

Worship in Sharing God's Love

Expressions of greeting and God's love are extended to all, especially to our guests.

Worship in Meditating on God's Word

Teaching from the Bible for about 35 minutes.

We encourage you to use our **staffed Nursery** [which has a private nursing room] and **Children's Churches** during the service. Please ask an usher for assistance in locating the various rooms.

{over for sermon notes}

THE FINAL 18"

“Our convictions must move from our head to our heart”
Romans 8:11

FOCUS FOR THE DAY... The Easter story is more than religious rhetoric

- We often miss the point because of a dirty, clogged mental “filter system.”
- There is no scientific record of anyone having been in a grave for three days and rising from the dead.

Luke 24:1-11 NLT 1 But very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. **2** They found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. **3** So they went in, but they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. **4** As they **stood there puzzled**, two men suddenly appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes. **5 The women were terrified and bowed with their faces to the ground.** Then the men asked, “Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive? **6** He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Remember what he told you back in Galilee, **7** that the Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and that he would rise again on the third day.” **8 Then they remembered that he had said this.** **9** So they rushed back from the tomb to tell his eleven disciples—and everyone else—what had happened. **10** It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and several other women who told the apostles what had happened. **11** But the story **sounded like nonsense to the men, so they didn't believe it.**

- Their mental and emotional filters were blocking out the voice of the supernatural speaking **18" lower in their heart.**
- The father, in the parable of the prodigal son, tried to break through his older son's dirty filter -- so his heart could hear.

Luke 15:32 “We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead [to our family] and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!” NLT

- THE EASTER STORY -

- A supernatural event about a person in history who was buried and literally came back to life. [Jesus]
- It so transformed 11 unbelievers into serious believers that those 11 men, who for no personal gain, literally took serious physical risks the rest of their lives -- even becoming martyrs.

How does a person clean the filter in their head?

- God created us with 3 unique parts called the **body, soul and spirit.**

“DIGGING DEEPER”

For personal or small group study

Week of March 23, 2008

• If you only use only your **mind** to understand Jesus’ resurrection, you’ll totally miss it.

• It was God’s Spirit power that had literally raised Jesus from the dead, and still today literally changes people’s lives from the inside out—in spite of the fact it didn’t, and doesn’t, seem logical!

Romans 8:11 “if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies (empower cleaning and change in you) through His Spirit who dwells in you.” NKJV

2 Corinthians 5:17 “When someone becomes a Christian he becomes a new person inside. He is not the same anymore. A new life has begun.” LB

What does God say to you from these testimonies from two people whose lives were literally changed by God?

Vince Mendez:

Pam VanMatre:

Ephesians 1:19-20 “I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God’s power **for us** who believe him. This is the **same** mighty power that raised Christ from the dead...” NLT

What does this resurrection power do in your life?

1. It cancels your past failures. **Colossians 2:14** “He forgave all our sins ... canceled the record of the charges against us ... by nailing it to the cross.”
2. It conquers your problems. **Romans 8:35, 37** “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship ... or danger ...” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loves us!”
3. It changes you from the inside out. **Romans 12:2** “Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its mold, but let God remake you so that your whole attitude of mind is changed.”
4. It promises you eternal life. **Galatians 6:8** “If you follow your selfish desires, you will harvest destruction, but if you follow the Spirit, you will harvest eternal life.” CEV

• You can’t understand **spirit truth** with your natural mind.

1 Corinthians 2:14 “The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he **cannot** understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

Shifting the short distance of **18" from your head to your heart** can make the difference of whether you will experience God’s authentic and long-term peace and joy within, and where you will spend eternity -- in God’s heaven or the devil’s hell.

QUICK REVIEW: Which point or scripture passage most challenged, confused, or caught your attention in this week’s message? Why?

TODAY’S FOCUS

1. After you have had time to process the series on “Bringing Home the Prodigal” -- and especially the story of the older prodigal son last week – is there another name you might want to tack on the cross [as we did a few weeks ago] if given a chance? Why?
2. Describe a time, or share a story, about an instance when a clogged, dirty filter caused you, or someone you know, problems. How does a clogged, dirty mental or emotional filter affect your ability to hear God’s voice clearly?
3. How has the power of the Easter story changed your life? How difficult has it been to get the truth of Easter from your head to your heart? Why?

GETTING THE POINT

1. Read Luke 24:1-11. What dirty filters kept the light of truth from moving from the head to the heart of the followers of Christ? Do we find this in the church today? How about your own life? In what ways?
2. What does it mean to *move the final 18 inches* from your head to your heart? What importance is there in understanding how our spirit (heart) and soul (head) work in allowing the truth of the Easter resurrection power to continually change your life? Does God speak to our head or to our heart? [1 Corinthians 2:14; John 4:23-24; Romans 8:8, 13-14]

What really changes us --- our head or our heart? (Or both?)
[John 6:63; Ephesians 1:19-20; Romans 8:11; 2 Corinthians 5:17]
3. How does moving things from your head to your heart affect what your convictions are? [**a conviction: something you would die for**] Is it necessary? Why? [1 Corinthians 2:14; 1 John 3:21; 1 Timothy 1:12; 2:9-10]

A LOOK INSIDE

1. What have you personally gained from this study on “The Final 18 Inches” that you can put into practice this week?