

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:5-11)

Birth... Sinless life... Death... Resurrection...

This short portion of Paul's letter to the church at Philippi encapsulates the Gospel of Christ. We focus on His birth at this time of year, but the focal point of His life was actually his willing death on the cross, where he took our sin on himself (as the perfect sacrifice that fully met God's law), fully paying the punishment for sin so that all who place their faith in Him will be saved from the day when God's just wrath is unleashed. Our hope is in Christ's resurrection, in which we will share when He comes again.

Our mortality seems to have been the theme for us this year – we're simply in that season where death is a frequent occurrence. Ed's Uncle Kenny; our dear friend & missionary, Char; our neighbor Leah; and Garth – a 50 y.o. pastor who left a wife and six young children. Hardest of all, was the unexpected passing of Beth's mother in March, her father on December 7, and the passing of Ed's father from late-stage dementia on December 13. Their funerals were on two consecutive days in two States.

For the believer, there is always hope, even in tragedy and death. Most of these individuals had "confessed with their mouth and believed in their heart that God raised Him from the dead." We take joy, knowing these now worship God by sight and no longer by faith.

Our year had many fun and bright spots, too. We hauled our last two cows off to the locker, and are down to a half-dozen barn cats at this point. Our grandchildren, Eason and EraMae, visited several times, and rode in the combine as we harvested our 8 acres of (240 bushel-per-acre!) corn. Beth traveled to Israel again in February, and is so thankful for the time she spent with her Mom, Dad and sister Rhonda, as well as the two camps she participates in each year. Ed still manages branding for all Cat® machines.

Family-wise, we celebrated a delightful (if coldish) 30th anniversary on the Canadian side of Niagara Falls. Chad and Samantha relocated to Franklin, TN, closer to his work. Tyler and his Samantha are making great progress on remodeling their home in Peoria, IL (like father, like son).

May the Lord bless and keep you in 2019!

With our love, *Ed & Beth*



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