



Footprints to Follow – The Weight of Sin

There was once an elderly woman who believed in the saving grace of God and made her experience of salvation known. This humble woman was carrying a bag of potatoes on her back when a skeptic walked by her asked, "How do you know that you are saved?" The Christian woman took a few steps and then let her bag slip out of her hand. Without turning around, she asked the unbelieving man, "How do I know that I dropped my potatoes? I've not turned around to see."

The skeptic replied, "You know because of the lessening of the weight."

"That's right!" replied the elderly, Christian woman. "That's how I know I'm saved. I have lost the heavy burden of my sin and found peace, forgiveness, and salvation in the Lord."

This second account took place with an old holiness minister preaching in the out-of-doors.

The old preacher was letting the crowd know about the saving blood of Jesus that could break men free from the weight of sin. He was interrupted by a young infidel who mocked, "I don't feel no burden or weight of sin. So why do I need this Jesus you're talking about?"

The old man looked at the young man and his companions and asked, "If there were a corpse laying here on the ground between us and you put a three-hundred-pound weight on its chest, would he feel it?"

The young skeptic proclaimed with astonishment, "Of course not, he's dead! He can't feel a thing!"

The old preacher stated matter-of-factly, "Exactly!"

Dear Reader, might we pray that the skeptics we meet will have the sensibility to feel the weight of their sin and feel the need to have their burden removed that only Jesus can give. And might we have the sensibility to share such common truth in such a common way that the common sinner might come under conviction from a MOST UNCOMMON GOD!



The Skydiver



Cousin Leroy

The old preacher at Leroy's little church had been having trouble with the collections.

One Sunday he announced, "Now, before we pass the collection plate, I would like to request that the person who stole the chickens from Brother Leroy's hen-house please refrain from giving any money to the Lord. The Lord doesn't want money from a thief!" The collection plate was passed around and for the first time in months everybody gave.

The Service

The preacher had just finished his sermon. He sat down with his wife and she asked him how he thought the church service went.

The preacher shrugged and said, "The music was excellent, and I think the prayer and communion times went quite well, but," he continued, "I just don't think the sermon ever got off the ground."

The wife looked over at him, and before she could stop herself, she said, "Well, it sure did taxi long enough."

A man goes skydiving for the first time.

After listening to the instructor for what seems like days, he is ready to go. Excited he jumps out of the plane. After a bit, he pulls the ripcord. Nothing happens. He tries again. Still nothing. He starts to panic, but remembers his back-up chute. He pulls that cord. Nothing happens. He frantically begins pulling both cords, but to no avail.

Suddenly, he looks down and he can't believe his eyes. Another man is in the air with him, but this guy is going *up*! Just as the other guy passes by, the skydiver -- by this time scared out of his wits -- yells,

"Hey, do you know anything about skydiving?"

The other guy yells back, "No! Do you know anything about gas stoves?"

Things Not To Say To A Police Officer

Sorry, Officer, I didn't realize my radar detector wasn't plugged in.

Are you the same guy that pulled Me Over Yesterday?

Hey, you must've been doin' about 125 mph to keep up with me. Good job!

What's up Barney?

You're not gonna check the trunk are you?



The Little Snowflake

Pastor Billy R Douglas

**Faster and faster he fell to the ground, Not one little word not even a sound.
And although he wondered where he'd come to rest, He knew in his heart The Maker knew best.**

**Then all of a sudden he came to a stop, In a small little town on a lonely hilltop.
And there in the silence he still couldn't see, And thought to himself...why here? Why me?**

**Could this be a trial or maybe a test, Yet he knew in his heart The Maker knew best.
And there on that hill on the snow covered ground, He could hear the wind whistling and blowing around.**

**Then off in the distance he thought he could see, A shadowy figure walk...no limp past a tree.
A small little boy so lowly and meek, He wore not a smile but a tear on his cheek.**

**His hair was a mess his clothes were not much, And under his arm he carried a crutch.
And there in the silence the little boy sat, No mittens no coat not even a hat.**

**The snowflake then wondered but what can I do, He had no idea not even a clue.
LORD I wish I could help to make the boy glad, He seems so distraught so lonely so sad.**

**When all of a sudden a wind gust appeared, And tossed the little snowflake back up in the air.
Just for a moment then back to the ground, But just long enough that the boy looked around.**

**As he looked around he started to move, Making big snow balls first one and then two.
And when he had finished he had three in all, And stacked them together so round and so tall.**

**He then looked around for some sticks and some rocks, Then what did appear on that lonely hilltop?
The best looking snowman you ever did see, The little snowflake thought...THE MAKER USED ME!**

**As on the boys face he now saw a smile, He knew that the journey was worth every mile.
No matter the journey, the trial, or the test, He was right all along The Maker knew best.**

(written by Billy R Douglas)

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28

Merry Christmas and may the LORD bless and keep you, Pastor Billy R. Douglas

**A Word to the Wise – Prepare for the “Day of Wrath.”**

Pastor Steven Huston

“A false balance is abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is his delight. When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.” Proverbs 11:1-2

Economies rise and fall dependent on many factors that most of us don't understand, but there's a day approaching in which we must understand what the new economy will be based on and how to be prepared.

First, that day is called “the day of wrath” and it won't matter if the market is bear or bull because the Lion economy will be all that matters in that day; be prepared for the return of the Lion of Judah! The phrase “day of wrath” is only used four times in the King James Version of the Bible (Job 21:30; Zeph. 1:15; Rom. 2:5) and speaks to a day of judgment, a day which every man and woman must face. Solomon warns that neither “the coin of the realm” nor anything minted by the U.S. Treasury Dept. will be of any help, for “Riches profit NOT” in that day.

After reading the first verse, surely the Wise Man is referring to ill-gotten gain, right? NO! During THAT day anyone who depends on any riches other than the riches of righteousness will find themselves sorely disappointed. Let me remind you that the rich young ruler who came to see Jesus, asked what he must do to inherit eternal life; he clung to his riches and went away sad. Sadder yet will be his condition in the “day of wrath,” for those riches which he would not give up will only serve as an indictment against his account and his conscience. How much more so for those of us on this side of Calvary who choose to cling to riches rather than clinging to Christ. In the “Lion economy,” all the world will show their life ledger sheets in answer to Jesus' solemn question in Matthew 16:26. “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” The rich young ruler and masses of souls will look at the “day of wrath” in light of the eternal Lion's economy; they will ask and answer their own question: “What did I give in exchange for my soul?” And they will cry out in unison, “IT WAS NOT WORTH IT!”

Even in today's economy where gold and silver have some temporal worth, their worth is minimal in times of trouble or when the wrath of man falls heavily or the judgment of God calls for an accounting. Put not your hope in riches; put your hope in righteousness – the true righteousness of Jesus.

This Christmas season reminds us that Christ, the newborn King, is the only defense against the day of wrath – either man's or, particularly, God's. Man's wrath will seem as a picnic on a summer day compared to God's wrath to come – whether in divine judgment upon this world in the “Day of Jacob's Trouble” or as the individual soul stands at the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of what that soul has done in the flesh, for good or for bad. (2 Cor. 5:10)

Jesus came to save his people from their sin; he came to help us exchange currencies. Whenever one travels from one country to another, if one hopes to survive in that country's economy, they must exchange their native currency for that of the new country. If we hope to enter the Kingdom of Heaven we must be prepared with God's currency: RIGHTEOUSNESS! Jesus came that we might trade our worthless currency – sin in its many forms – into God's “coin of the realm” – righteousness. 2 Corinthians 5:21 well explains what Solomon is getting at: “For he (God) hath made him (Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (Jesus).”

Let us put on the armour of light; let us put on Christ! (Rom. 13:12) for He alone is our righteousness; only His righteousness has any worth. He will be our only protection against the Day of Wrath because “Righteousness delivereth from death” and Jesus is that righteousness.



Christmas Memories and Meditations

Pastor Steven Huston

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord... Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” Luke 2:11, 14

As we step into the Christmas season, we cannot help but recognize the immense grace and mercy that God has shown to all of mankind. The earth and all its inhabitants – cursed, in darkness, broken by sin, and helpless to do anything about it; yet by God’s abundant, tender mercies, “the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” That’s Christmas; that’s real hope! It’s God’s amazing grace that forgives, heals, and perpetuates itself in the lives of others, as the seed of the gospel is planted in their hearts. That’s a reminder that we must give the greatest of all gifts this Christmas, and throughout the year – the gift of life – sharing the truth about Jesus Christ and why He came to a lost and dying world.

There are many who are hurting this Christmas season. Think of all the loss that’s taken place in our nation alone. Between hurricanes, political division, cultural division – and these taking place in homes throughout the land, family deaths, divorces, children running away from home, job losses, and the list goes on and on. People need Jesus; ALL people need Jesus. We need to let our light shine before men that they might see our good works and glorify our Father in Heaven. We need to speak the truth about Jesus, letting others know about a hell to shun and a heaven to gain, the only one who can calm our fears, heal our hurts, and give us hope when there seems to be NO hope in the world – they need to hear about Jesus, His love for them, and the transforming life He offers through His atoning work on the cross. That’s the only gift that will do us any good this Christmas; everything else will break, rust, and pass away. Jesus is enough and is FOREVER!

My dad made sure we appreciated the gift of salvation through Jesus, the real meaning of Christmas. No present was opened until the most important “present was opened.” I fondly remember my dad sitting in his chair and calling us children to gather around him every Christmas morning; he would humbly read “the Christmas story” from Luke chapter two. As we grew older, he would stop to let us fill in the blanks. I’ve continued this tradition with my own children; I hope they will pass it on to my grandchildren as well. There is no greater gift, next to salvation, than the passing on of a spiritual heritage to our children and grandchildren.

Passing on a spiritual heritage is great, but can never replace the gift of salvation. We must have intentional conversations with our children and grandchildren; we must talk to them seriously about their soul; about eternity; about life, death, and the judgment.

Give the gift of family devotions to your immediate family and to those close to you. Take a few verses from Luke chapter two every day. Discuss them, meditate on them, and find ways to apply them to your lives today. The “Christmas story” is really about submission to a holy God – in what ways do we see this in Luke 2 and how can we be submissive to God’s will – both personally and as a family? The “Christmas story” is also about God making and keeping promises – what are some of those promises we’ve read about and how does God keep them in context? What promises can we make to God and how shall we keep them? There are many points from the Advent that we could continue to investigate, but let’s close with just one more. Christmas reminds us that Jesus was born for the specific purpose of dying - Jesus came to die so that we might live; it’s about sacrifice as well as submission. What are we called to sacrifice? Let’s approach these questions, and others, prayerfully, expectantly, and willingly. Merry Christmas, dear readers.



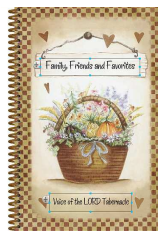
Reesie's Recipes



Pecan Upside Down Cake

- 1 yellow cake mix
- 1 pack of instant vanilla pudding. (3.4oz)
- 3 eggs,
- 1/2 cup oil.
- 1 cup water
- 1 stick butter, melted
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup pecans

Spray bundt pan with cooking spray. Add melted butter to the pan. Cover bottom of pan with light brown sugar, layer pecans on top of butter and brown sugar. Mix the cake, pudding, eggs, oil, and water. As directed on box. Carefully pour cake mix on top of pecans. Bake at 350 for 35 to 45 minutes. Or until toothpick comes out clean. Let cool for 10 minutes before turning out onto plate.



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Hot Fudge Pie

- 1 stick butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 3 Tbsp cocoa powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- Pie shell

Preheat oven to 350°F. Cream butter and sugar with a mixer for 3 minutes until fluffy. Add eggs and vanilla; mix by hand. Stir in cocoa, salt, and flour by hand to keep it gooey. Pour in the mixture into pie shell. Bake for 30-35 minutes until the center is set.

Christmas Punch

- 3 sm. pkg. strawberry jello
- 2 pkg. strawberry kool-aid
- 4 c. sugar
- 4 c. hot water
- 12 oz. frozen orange juice
- 1 gallon cold water
- 2 liter 7-up, chilled
- 1/2 gallon strawberry ice cream

Mix first 4 ingredients until well dissolved. Add juice and cold water. At time of serving add the 7-up and ice cream



The Son Is Given

Brother Tyler Willis

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.” Isaiah 9:6-7

As we enter into the Christmas season, it is important for us to remember who we serve. To remember that the One promised, and prophesied of, holds our lives in His hands. When we were helpless in our sins, the Son was given to us so that we may have access to God the Father - the greatest Christmas gift of all time. The Son is able to provide us with everything we could ever possibly need. He's the greatest counselor, He's the mighty God; the one who lasts through all generations - the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When we need peace within trying times, the Prince of Peace is there to comfort us.

Not only is He all of these things, but He is the head of the eternal government. When our time on earth has ended, we will abide within His perfect kingdom for eternity. There will be no more sickness, no more pain, no more cares or worries of this current world. Sin has been defeated and will have no place within His kingdom.

This is a promise made by the Lord, and the prophet says that it's the “zeal of the Lord” that will accomplish this. It's the passion of God - the love of the Father - that allowed these things to take place. God loved us so much that He promised us a gift that no one could ever replace - a brand new start for a fallen creation.



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- 5.The First Christmas Night - Billy Fields
- 6.From the Manger to the Cross - The Barry Jones Family
- 7.C H R I S T M A S - Billy R. Douglas
- 8.Three Little Pennies - Spirit Led
- 9.Still the Greatest Gift of All - Sharron Kay King
- 10.It's Christmas Time - Carroll Roberson
- 11.The Christmas Guest - Mike Vaughn
- 12.Mary Did You Know - Billy Fields
- 13.What Child is This? - Billy R. Douglas
- 14.Worship the King - Ray Owens
- 15.The Christmas Story - Steven Huston

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THE STORY BEHIND THE SONG

O Holy Night

This month we feature an amazing Christmas carol whose popularity has never waned, even when it was banned by the leaders of the church. Whether it's the contrast between light, upbeat verses which turns to a forceful crescendo at each verse's chorus or the faithful telling of Jesus' birth according to Luke two, something about this song, which had its birth in France, has captured the hearts and minds of people all over the world for almost 180 years.

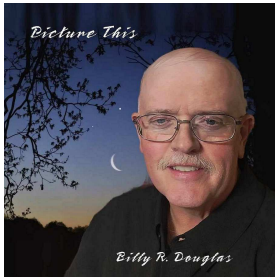
In the mid-1800s, French poet Placide Cappeau was asked by his parish priest to write a poem for Christmas Mass. He put his pen to paper and O Holy Night (Cantique de Noel) came into being. Well, at least the words. The music would come from his friend who was a well-known composer – Adolphe Charles Adams, a Jew. It was sung at the Midnight mass on Christmas Eve, won wholehearted support from the church of France, and gained instant popularity among the laypeople. The first thunderous chorus commands submission due to the deity of Jesus coming to earth: "Fall on your knees, Oh hear the angel voices!/O night divine! O night when Christ was born/O night, O holy night, O night divine."

Full support – UNTIL – its author was convinced by socialist propaganda, leaving his faith and the church to serve in a socialist movement. Between its author denying the faith and the composer, due to his Jewish beliefs, not believing that Jesus was the Son of God, O Holy Night was suddenly deemed by the French Catholic church as unfit for church services because of its "total absence of the spirit of religion." Regardless, the people loved this song and, although it had been banned, continued to sing it. The second crescendo of chorus reminds us that Jesus gives us the power to believe, the power to submit, and the power to live a life above sin – for Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil and to break the bonds of sin: "He knows our need/ to our weakness no stranger!/ Behold your King! Before Him lowly bend!/ Behold your King! your King! before him bend!"

It reminds us that we must humble ourselves or in the end be humbled – FOR CHRIST DOES RULE. How sad that poet and composer alike refused to "lowly bend" to JESUS, THE KING!

Banned, yet gaining popularity in France, O Holy Night made its way across the ocean to America during the time of the Civil War. Abolitionist John Sullivan Dwight was inspired as the third verse proclaimed Christ's victory over sin and our shared humanity. He slightly changed the lyrics: "Truly, he taught us to love one another; his law is love and his gospel is peace. Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother; and in his name all oppression shall cease." The third and final chorus resounds with believers, reminding them of their duty to magnify Christ in life or in death, for He IS worthy of praise! "Christ is the Lord, then ever, ever praise we!/ His power and glory, evermore proclaim!/ His power and glory, evermore proclaim!"

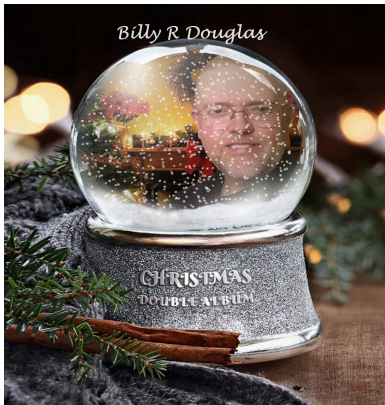
Can I get an "Amen" to this? – Ours is a "weary world!" We've been wearied politically. With the troubles found surrounding church, we've been wearied ecclesiastically. With Christmas around the corner and the increase in the cost of living, we've been wearied economically. We all have things that wear us down personally. With the turmoil that surrounds us this year, might we take comfort in the truths we sing as O Holy Night sacredly falls from our lips and wings its way to Heaven, reminding us of how the world must respond to Jesus' divine birth: "With a thrill of hope, a weary world rejoices."



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Nancy's Nuggets Of Wisdom

God's Mercy

Sister Nancy Willis

Jeremiah 31:15- Thus saith the Lord; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.

I can honestly say I know what this lady was going through, as parents I'm sure you have been there too. It seems no matter how much you talk or try to explain to your children that Jesus is their only hope, it's like talking to a brick wall. I'm talking about kids that's been brought up in church and have turned their back on the LORD. I believe we are gonna have to be like Rachel and get a burden and begin to cry out to the Lord for their deliverance, for him to open their eyes and see just where they are and that Jesus is our only hope. I can remember being in a revival a few years back and I remember one night how the glory of the Lord filled that place and people was laid out everywhere and how the spirit of the Lord was so awesome. And I remember feeling so safe, as if nothing in this world could harm me. I remember thinking there was something missing, me and my husband was safe from harm, but none of my kids was. I remembered how I began calling out to God to save and protect them, to bring them back to the fold, and I remember how the Lord spoke and said he had heard my cry and he was gonna restore them. Like with Rachel the Lord heard my cry and seen my tears and said there would be hope in the end that they would come again from the land of the enemy. God is not a man that he should lie and if he said he would do it, he will. (September 2006)



Keep Your Eyes On Jesus

by Pastor Billy R. Douglas

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A Word for TODAY!



By Sister Michelle Deuling

Verse for Today: Proverbs 19:11 The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression. **Additional Passages for today:** Proverbs 12:16; 14:29; 15:18; 16:32; 17:14; 20:3; 25:21; Colossians 3:12-13; James 1:19; Matthew 5:44; 18:21-22; Romans 12:18-21; Ephesians 4:32-5:1

Thought for Today: Foolishness shows itself when a person looks to find fault with others and is quick to get angry.

Story for Today: Benny threw down his bicycle, raced up the steps, and onto the farmhouse's porch where he lived. The morning fun was over and once again, Benny burst through the door, letting the screen door slam behind him as fresh tears washed down his young face. The red-headed eight-year-old swiped at the tears running down his freckled face as the sobs grew even louder. Corbin looked up from the paper that he was working on at the table and greeted his little brother. Showing concern for the upset little boy, Corbin began questioning Benny as to what happened this time. It seemed that every time Benny went to play with his friends, he found something that upset him and sent him home in tears. Recognizing how easy it was to develop a poor character, in this case, one that was easily angered, Corbin began to talk to the developing young man. After asking several questions, Corbin ascertained that several of the neighborhood boys were playing at the stream and Benny's favorite pocket knife had been lost by Kevin, one of Benny's closest friends.

Benny had loaned Kevin the small knife to cut a branch to make a fishing pole. Kevin had accidentally dropped the knife into the water. When Kevin failed to return the knife, Benny accused him of stealing it. He didn't believe Kevin that it had fallen into the stream and by the time the boys parted, Benny admitted that he had said some very mean things to his friend. Corbin asked if that made him feel better. The tears fell even harder as Benny admitted that he felt even worse, especially when the other boys explained that they had seen the whole thing and that Kevin really had dropped the knife when he lost his footing as the branch gave way. The Bible had much to say as the boys began looking through the scriptures about anger. Proverbs was full of wisdom about how those who are quick to become angry show just how foolish they are. They also read scriptures that told how we are to, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). Benny realized that he should have thought the best of Kevin instead of accusing him. He also realized that if he had just stayed calm and asked questions, he might have left as friends and without feeling so badly about how he spoke. Corbin concluded his talk by reading James 1:19-20; "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

Benny bowed his head and prayed to ask Jesus to forgive him for being so naughty. He wanted to glorify God and he promised that he would work hard to be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath. He started thinking about ways he could have handled things differently and planned to come up with three questions he would ask before responding when things happened. And, he planned to take time to listen to the answers. He also realized that he needed to go ask Kevin to forgive him. Corbin and Benny made their way back to the stream and while Benny sought forgiveness from his friend, Corbin was able to locate the missing knife as the sun glinted off the metal in the shallow water just downstream from the place where Kevin almost fell.

Questions for Today: Have you ever found yourself speaking rashly because you jumped to conclusions? Do you listen to the whole matter before you allow your emotions to reveal your response to a situation? What three questions would you ask yourself, to give you time to think about what you are doing? Does eternity enter your thinking when you begin to feel anger rise up within you? Do you stop to pray before responding?

Prayer for Today: Heavenly Father, thank You for loving us and for forgiving us. Thank You that we can forgive others because You first forgave us. Please help us to be slow to anger and quick to trust You. Please help us to bless others because You have blessed us. Please help us to turn our troubles over to You rather than trying to avenge ourselves. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

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Northeastern Minnesota

God's Simple Plan of Salvation

My Friend: we are about to ask you the most important question of your life. Your joy or your sorrow for all eternity depends upon your answer. The question is: Are you saved? Do you know Jesus Christ as your personal LORD and Saviour? It is not a question of how good you are, nor if you are a church member, but have you put your faith in Jesus? Are you sure you will go to Heaven when you die? The Bible makes the plan of salvation plain and simple. *Romans 10:13* says *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.* Call on Jesus today. Put your faith and trust in him and ask him to forgive you of your sins and to be your LORD and savior and you will be born again...SAVED!! Do this today, tomorrow may be to late! Please write or call us if you have made the decision to accept Jesus.



VOTL Tabernacle
216 Hill St. Livermore, KY

Services

Sunday Morning Service 11 AM

Everyone Welcome

Submit your Prayer Request to:
Voice of the LORD Ministries
P.O. Box 541 - Livermore, KY 42352
Phone: 270-313-8753
Email: voiceofthelordministries@juno.com