

Prayers and Praises

- Our brothers/sisters in Africa: Jac Agak, Charles Ngoje, Jacob Randiek, and your orphan(s)
- Lord's comfort for Pat Prince in loss of her mother
- Thanks for examples in body of enduring faithfulness in hard circumstances
- Lord may you be High and Lifted Up among us
- Lord's anointing on Tommy's "Next Right Step" Ministry
- May Larry's brother continue to recover well from surgery
- Thanks for this day's provisions of food, shelter, clothing and love
- Lord's grace on Kathleen's mother Doris in hospital with intense pain
- Blessing of utterance for Jim McAlister's writing project
- Lord we pray for the good of our city
- Lord may our wandering loved ones come home to the Living God
- Dawn Costello's uncle who has cancer
- Thanks we can laugh together
- Lord's blessing on Azad in preaching & singing to many Kurdish on TV
- Lord's drawing in Frank's prison & neighborhood work
- We ask that all our young ones may grow to love You
- Thanks for all teaching, singing, & ministering the Word at FH
- The Lord is our portion, says our soul
- Teach us to hope in You

"My Greatest Accomplishment": Bluegrass Legend Ralph Stanley Reflects

Ralph Stanley may be best known for his grammy award winning singing in the movie "O Brother, Where Art Thou?" For over sixty years Ralph has been making bluegrass music, singing and playing banjo with backup from the Clinch Mountain Boys. After years of performing in season and out of season, Ralph began to receive high honors and recognition. In 1992 he was inducted into the International Bluegrass Music Hall of Honor and in 2000, he became the first person to be inducted into the Grand Ole Opry in the present millennium. Receiving as well an honorary doctorate in music, the man known affectionately as "Dr. Ralph Stanley," was further recognized in 2006 by being given the National Medal of Arts by the President.

As a living legend of bluegrass, Ralph receives many requests for interviews and cameos in music documentaries. During one of these, on public television (if my memory serves me correctly), the show had done a wonderful job of highlighting Ralph's life, including candid and transparent conversations between Ralph and the interviewer. Toward the end of the show, the interviewer asked a simple question, "Dr. Stanley, what do you consider your greatest accomplishment?" I thought that was a great question. A man who had contributed to American music for over sixty years, with award after award—I sat up and leaned forward so I could hear his answer. And Ralph's answer took both the interviewer and me by surprise. Ralph did not hesitate. He had a knowing and replied along these lines: "My greatest accomplishment is the day I got baptized."

There was a pause in the interview—perhaps the reporter was fighting temptation to ask Ralph, "Are you sure?" or to rephrase, "Well, I meant accomplishments in music—what about that?" But the reporter let Ralph's answer stand, and Dr. Ralph Stanley went on to explain there and later.

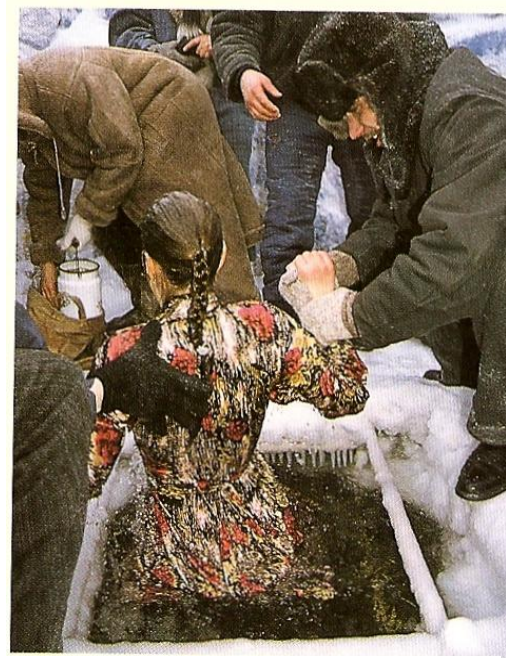
"I dreamed one night I was out walking and met a preacher. I didn't know his name. He reached down and shook hands, gave me a cold handshake. I went on a little further and met another preacher. His name was Landon Colley. He's the one who preached at my mother's funeral and at Carter's (his brother's) funeral. That stayed with me, a vision, you know. I couldn't sleep, it hit me so hard."

"I went to this country church, and I heard this man preach, name's Ezra Junior Davis. After we left the church house, two ladies were going to be baptized. The Clinch River runs by there, and I thought that river was pretty—pretty shade trees. From then on, I could see that river. Well, one Saturday night I couldn't sleep much—worried, had that on my mind—and I got up about 4:30 am and called Brother Junior and told him I wanted to be baptized there in the Clinch River that day." The preacher told Ralph, "That's the best news I've ever heard."

Ralph went to the river and was baptized, late in life. He considered it his crowning achievement, as he declared that Jesus is the risen and duly crowned Lord. Ralph explains further, "I know God is it, and he's all of it. Without the Lord, you couldn't breathe, you couldn't do nothing. He's always been number one with me... I was baptized about six years ago, and I'm real close to God because I know without Him, I wouldn't be nothing. He gave me my talent. He gave me everything I got. He took care of me through the years, maybe doing things I shouldn't have done, but he was there with me." Because of Ralph, I am asking myself, "In what ways might I consider baptism into Jesus to be my life's greatest accomplishment?" LH

To endure the cross is not a tragedy; it is the suffering which is the fruit of an exclusive allegiance to Jesus Christ. When it comes, it is not an accident, but a necessity. . . . The cross is laid on every Christian. The first Chris-suffering which every man must experience is the call to abandon the attachments of the world. It is that dying of the old man which is the result of his encounter with Christ... When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die. It may be a death like that of the first disciples who had to leave home and work to follow him, or it may be a death like Martin Luther's, who had to leave the monastery and go out into the world. But it is the same death every time—death in Jesus Christ, the death of the old man at his call.... But we do not want to die, and therefore Jesus Christ and his call are necessarily our death as well as our life. The call to discipleship, the baptism in the name of Jesus Christ means both death and life.

(Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*)



Baptism in Russian Winter

Navigating Between Adam and Christ in Dying to Self

What we are (our self or personal identity) is partly the result of the Creation (the image of God), and partly the result of the fall (the image defaced). The self we are to deny, disown, and crucify is our fallen self, everything within us that is incompatible with Jesus Christ (hence Christ's command, 'let him deny himself and follow me'). The self we are to affirm and value is our created self, everything within us that is compatible with Jesus Christ (hence his statement that if we lose ourselves by self-denial we shall find ourselves). True self-denial (the denial of our false, fallen self) is not the road to self-destruction, but the road to self-discovery.

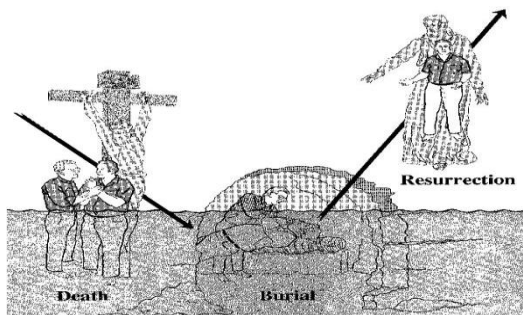
So, then, whatever we are by creation, we must affirm: our rationality, our sense of moral obligation, our masculinity and femininity, our aesthetic appreciation and artistic creativity, our stewardship of the fruitful earth, our hunger for love and community, our sense of the transcendent mystery of God, and our inbuilt urge to fall down and worship him. All this is part of our created humanness. True, it has been tainted and twisted by sin. Yet Christ came to redeem and not to destroy it. So we must affirm it.

But whatever we are by the fall, we must deny or repudiate: our irrationality; our moral perversity; our loss of sexual distinctives; our fascination with the ugly; our lazy refusal to develop God's gifts; our pollution and spoliation of the environment; our selfishness, malice, individualism, and revenge, which are destructive of human community; our proud autonomy; and our idolatrous refusal to worship God. All this is part of our fallen humanness. Christ came not to redeem this but to destroy it. So we must deny it. (from John Stott, 1984)

For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. (Romans 8:13)

Some Scriptures on the Centrality of Death in Following Jesus

- Then he said to them all, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it. (Luke 9:23-24)
- Our old man was crucified with Christ. I am crucified with Christ. But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ whereby the world has been crucified to me and I to the world (Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20 & 6:14)
- And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (Galatians 5:24)
- Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: ... Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. . . . Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. (Colossians 2:20; 3:2-5)
- In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. (Romans 6:11)
- Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. (John 12:24-25)



Romans 6 and Baptism (not simply like but) With Jesus

CLASSES AND WORSHIP SCHEDULE @ FOREST HOME:

Classes begin at 9 am. Worship begins at 10 am.

Grades and ages break down as follow:

Pre-K – Kindergarten

1st grade – 4th grade

5th grade and up

2010-2011 Calendar
 EACH TUESDAY 6:30 am @ the church, Men's Ministry
 EACH WED. 5:00 pm @ the church, Women's Bible Study

DATE	NURSERY (Infants to 2 yrs old) During sermon only	LORD'S SUPPER PREPARATION	WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNER PREP
Feb 6 Feb 13 Feb 20 Feb 27	Mandy Austin Karen Costello D'Ann McAlister Ronna King	Feb/Mar Allens Apr/May Grimensteins	Feb 9 Sarah/Kathleen Feb 16 Lisa/Liz Feb 23 Linda/Lois Mar 2 Ocie/Shannon
		(Sub-Grimensteins) See Jim G. with questions.	