

THE STERLING HERALD

Sterling Avenue Church of Christ | 816-356-3096 | sterlingavechurchofchrist.org | May 31st, 2020

ON SEEING THEM

By: Jason Hardin

And so, we came to Rome. And the brothers there, when they heard about us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage. (Acts 28:14-15)

I'm thankful for websites and livestreams and video conferencing. I'm sure Paul was thankful for parchment and ink and faithful messengers to carry his letters to the churches. His epistle to the church in Rome had arrived three years before he did in the flesh. Now, finally—after months and more than a thousand miles on the Mediterranean—Paul saw these brothers and sisters with his own eyes.

"I long to see you," he had written in Romans 1:11-12, "that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you—that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine." John knew the feeling. "Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete" (2 John 12).

I'm thankful for those letters. I'm thankful for the ancient innovations that made them possible. And I'm thankful for the wonders of modern technology. Can you imagine what John would say about email or how the heart of Paul would explode at the possibility of connecting with brethren via live video?

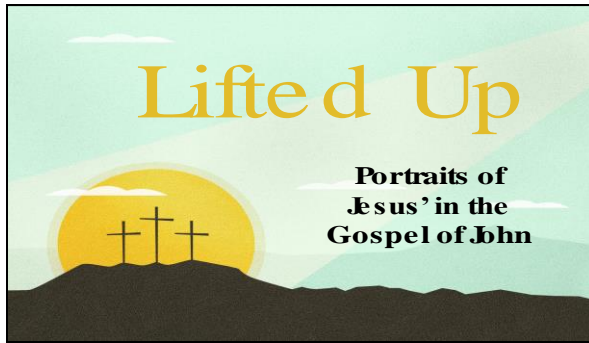
And yet, even 2,000 years later, it's not the same as seeing each other with our own eyes. Face to face. I have hundreds of hymn tracks on my smartphone, but it's not the same as the mutual encouragement that comes from singing "in the midst of the congregation." High definition video can't compete with the joy of physical presence... hearing Bible pages turn and little babies cry... seeing tears of conviction roll down cheeks and couples who have been married more than 50 years still holding hands in worship.

Paul, John, and others used paper and ink, and I'm glad they did. We use lenses and microphones, and I'm thankful for them. But an indispensable aspect of joy is made "complete" only when God's children are face to face.

So much of the disciple's walk is "by faith, not by sight." Though we have not seen Jesus, we love him. "Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls" (1 Pet 1:8-9). One day, we "will see his face" (Rev 22:4).

In the meantime, like Paul as he traveled the last few miles to Rome, we thank God for fellowship and foretastes of glory. And we take courage.

FAMILY MATTERS



1. Lifted up _____

2. Lifted up _____

3. Lifted up _____

4. Lifted _____

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- We are thankful that Shiloh is doing much better after the Mullins family had a scare as Shiloh swallowed a peanut. She had a procedure and in Clint's words "she is 100% normal." We are thankful to our Father for His care and that Shiloh is doing well.
- Brother Ken Whittlesey turned 97 years young recently. We are so thankful to have him with us as a member of our congregation and so encouraged to see His fervor to serve the Lord.
- We will be studying Psalm 32 on Wednesday night at 7:00pm.
- I am also beginning a new series on Sunday nights at 5pm called, "How to Study the Bible." We will be looking at simple things we can all do to be better students of the Word.

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