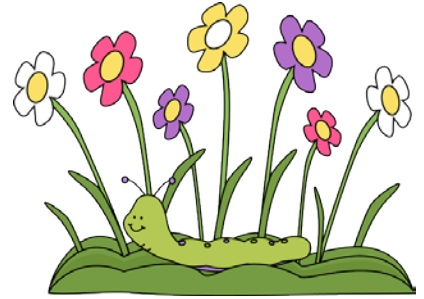


...from the Heart



Published quarterly by the Patchogue Church of the Nazarene

Spring 2017

1 Corinthians 15:3-7

I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles.

March 1 is Ash Wednesday and Lent begins. We will have a service at 7pm. Then March 5 is the First Sunday of Lent and we begin the Sermon Series, "40 Days with Jesus."

In its wisdom the church gave us this 40 day period we call Lent (46 days really, except that the 6 Sundays are not counted). It is a time for us to seek the Lord, reflecting on His life, suffering, death *and* resurrection. It is a time for prayer, fasting, being in the Word, and attending worship services in order to go deeper with God, restoring, renewing, or rejuvenating our relationship with God.

Lent ends on Saturday, April 15; on the way we will have messages each Sunday of Lent. We will hear from people who were there when Jesus cleansed the Temple, or was cheered as He entered Jerusalem, which we will celebrate on Palm Sunday, or denied knowing Him, or saw His crucifixion (we will have a Good Friday service at 7pm on April 14).

For some people that is where the story ends, Jesus dies on a cross and is put in a tomb with a heavy stone sealing its entrance. They are stuck there – stuck in their relationship with God.

If the story ended with the crucifixion of Jesus there never would have been a celebration we call Easter (which is on April 16th this year). The story goes on to the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and the story continues for He is not dead, He is surely alive.

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The stone was rolled away. The stone could not keep all that Jesus was in the tomb. The tomb was empty. The stone was rolled away. Jesus lives.

What is the stone for you?

Pain?

Depression?

Age?

Divorce?

Illness?

Betrayal?

Loneliness?

Addiction?

Grief?

The stone has no power over Jesus. Listen: *Jesus is not in the tomb. The stone was rolled away.*

No matter where you are or how you are feeling, God wants you to know that He is with you, He is for you, and He wants you to experience His love and grace, fresh and new today. Jesus is not stuck in a tomb and He invites you to know Him and live your life unstuck and in step with Him through the power of the Holy Spirit and in the truth of His word found in the Bible.

One of the great opportunities that we have during this time of year known as Lent is to move toward a fresh start in an intentional pursuit of Jesus. Let's do it.

And that's...

F.T.H.
Pastor Jerry



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Associate Pastor: Rev. Nick Franco

Winds of Change



The month of March is often characterized by its gusty winds. For people of the Northeast, March winds are no more a surprise than April showers or February snowfall. The wise prepare accordingly, adjusting clothing, habitat and activities to correspond with these seasonal changes.

In years past the powerful winds of the Great Plains were called Mariah. That name was popularized in the song, *They Call the Wind Mariah*, from the 1951 Broadway Musical and 1969 movie, *Paint Your Wagon*. Singer, Mariah Carry's operatic mother, loved the song so much she claimed it for her daughter. But the origin of Mariah is believed to be a variation of the Hebrew word *Moriya*, which means teacher. The name is borrowed from a hill where Abraham prepared to offer his son Isaac up as a sacrifice. This amazing and somewhat distressing story is found in Genesis. "Some years later, God tested Abraham's faith. 'Take ... **your only son**, (emphasis mine) Isaac, whom you love so much - and go to the land of Moriah. Go and sacrifice him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you.'" Genesis 22:1, 2 (NLT)

In this account God asks what seems impossible and unthinkable. Abraham was to bring the son he'd waited for his entire life, to a place he's never been, kill him and offer him up as a sacrifice to God. It was completely out of character for this God he'd come to know, who had never, ever required a human sacrifice. Try to imagine Abraham's initial reaction to this request, start by imagining your own.

How would you characterize your experience with God? Is it relational? Are your daily prayers conversational or more like petition? Maybe you think of God as an unknowable force somewhere in the universe. You turn to God if you're desperate, only after having exhausted every other possibility? Whether you're up close or far away from God in your personal life, God is never far from you. From cover to cover, the Bible reinforces the idea that God is attempting to bridge the physical/spiritual gap that separates us from Him. That's exactly what He was doing when he sent Abraham to go on this *mission impossible* in the land of Moriah. Much like us, Abraham was being directed to travel on a journey that generated more questions than answers. We too are on a journey, the journey of life. I'm sure; there are

days when you've thrown up your hands in frustration asking WHY? Why is this happening to me? Everyone from seasoned Christians to disbelieving atheists face these days and situations. You're trying to live the right way, to do the right thing but **winds** of disorder remain hard against you.

Most people know that the most dangerous moments of flight are the takeoff and landing. On takeoff, the plane heads directly into the wind. Without the wind's resistance under its wings, liftoff would be near impossible. Could it be that God uses the problems that trouble our lives as the resistance needed for liftoff? Andre Crouch, contemporary Christian music pioneer, wrote these lyrics: So I thank God for the mountains and I thank Him for the valleys and I thank him for the storms He's brought me through. Cause if I never had a problem, I'd never know that God could solve them, I'd never know what faith in His Word could do.

As Abraham traveled with his son Isaac to the hill top in Moriah, the winds of doubt and fear against him must have been extreme. Just as Abraham was ready to take the life of his son, God called out to him:

“Abraham! Abraham!” “Yes,” Abraham replied. “Here I am!” “Don't lay a hand on the boy!” the angel said. “Do not hurt him in any way, for now I know that you truly fear God. You have not withheld from me even your son, your only son. Because you have obeyed me and have not withheld even your son, your only son, I swear by my own name that will certainly bless you. ...all the nations of the earth will be blessed—all because you have obeyed me.” Genesis 22: 11-13,17 (NLT)

God called Abraham his friend. Friends don't abandon each other when external circumstances change; they stay together through the good and the bad days. Abraham trusted God because God had proven Himself trust worthy. Think of it, God used Abraham to model the sacrifice He, himself would make centuries later. God gave His only son, Jesus, to be crucified on the very hilltop where he sent Abraham to offer Isaac. The Romans later called it the place of the skull, Golgotha. Are the winds of life blowing hard against you on this journey of life? Think of this; God's Holy Spirit is referred to as a mighty rushing wind in Acts 2, the wind beneath your wings. We're never closer to God then when we're facing the winds of adversity. Who knows what wonderful things God is planning to accomplish, by using the struggles you overcome as a model for future generations to draw strength from.

Serving Him Together,

John Mercurio



Welcome to the World

*Giovanni James Bonfiglio...
December 25, 2016... – 7lbs. 8oz.
His proud parents are Jesse & Ashley Bonfiglio.
Pastor Jerry & Ann Bonfiglio have become first time Grandparents.*

*Samuel Nicholas Franco...
December 27, 2016... – 7lbs. 9oz.
His proud parents are Rob & Krystn Franco.
Pastor Nick & Corinne Franco and John & Jennifer Mercurio
have a new Grandson.*

FOOD PANTRY UPDATE:

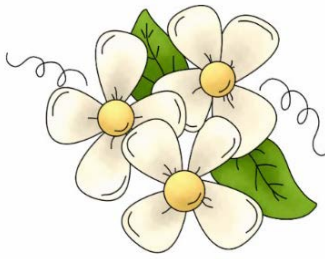
Thank you to all who faithfully give to the Food Pantry. We are busy! We are receiving basic food items plus so much more. Thank you for your thoughtfulness and kindness to those in need. Just think of a child finding cookies, juice or maybe a box of sweetened breakfast cereal between the rice and beans; Pure Joy! May God bless your caring hearts.

MaryAnn Mavridis

"... for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me..." Matthew 25: 35 (esv)

Stay Connected to Your Forever Family!

Pastor Jerry sends out a daily email which includes updates and announcements regarding church activities, prayer requests, a devotional, jokes, (of course) *quotes, trivia, news, and so much more!* To begin receiving "Good Morning", send your email address to: pastor.jerry@verizon.net. You will be added to the distribution list. Check out our website at www.patchnaz.net for Sermons, Bible Studies and other Church activities.



Weekly Schedule

Sunday

10am - Service - Nursery available; 10:45am - Children's Sunday School - Fellowship Hall;
10:45am - Teen Bible Study - HPYC Building
First Sunday of the Month - Holy Communion
Third Sunday of the month - Children's Missionary Workshop

Monday

7pm - First & Third Monday of the month - September through June - M.E.N.
(Men's Encouragement Network) - Fellowship Hall

Tuesday

7pm - Every Tuesday. Ladies - In - Touch at Mary Ann Malcolm's Home

Wednesday

7pm - Every Wednesday - Fellowship & Games HPYC Building
7pm - Second and Fourth Wednesday each month - East End Bible Study - Mercurio home .
7:30pm - First & Third Wednesday each month - Kairos - Young Adult Bible Study- Fellowship Hall

Thursday

10am-12noon - Every Thursday - Ladies Prayer & Bible Study Group- HPYC Building
7pm - Second Thursday each month - September through June - Ladies Sewing Circle - HPYC Building

Saturday

8am - First Saturday of each month - September through June - M.E.N.'s Breakfast - Fellowship Hall
7pm - First Saturday of each month - September through June - Good News Bowlers at Bowl Long Island Patchogue

Easter & Spring Schedule

March 1 - 7pm Ash Wednesday Service, the beginning of Lent
March 5 - First Sunday of Lent, Sermon Series, "40 Days with Jesus" begins.
March 11- Don't forget to set your clocks ahead before bed!
April 9 - Palm Sunday
April 14 - 7pm Good Friday Service
April 16- RESURRECTION DAY (8:45am Easter Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall)
May 11-13 - Metro NY Church of the Nazarene District Assembly
May 14 - Mother's Day

Check the "Good Morning" for details, additions, or changes

Missions



Missions

Haiti Report

In February of 2015, I attended a Men’s Breakfast at our church where Pastor Larry Mancini (of the Bay Shore Church of the Nazarene) gave a presentation on a relief effort he and his church had recently begun in Haiti, in a small remote village referred to as Bellevue. The relief effort centered around a church in that community. It had been leveled during a 7.0-magnitude earthquake in January 2010 when the mountaintop it sat on collapsed. Additionally, Pastor Joes – the pastor of this church - along with his family had been living in his own chicken coop after his house came down during the quake. Upon seeing the devastation and how Bellevue remained untouched since the earthquake, Pastor Larry felt the Spirit of God moving him to facilitate the rebuilding of this church and, eventually, the village. At the presentation the men (myself included) became excited and offered to help in any way they can.

Since that presentation our church has been involved in three trips to Haiti. Barbara Brennan, Tom Stone, Angelo Vitale, and myself have all been on at least one trip. For the first one, in September 2015, the object was to build a retaining wall on the grounds near the church to prevent the dry, sandy dirt underneath the foundation to collapse again should another earthquake hit. During the second trip, in March of 2016, workers dug and poured a new foundation. It was slightly larger than the original for two reasons. Firstly, it gave the congregation more room for seating and other activities in the church. Secondly, the new footprint placed one side of the foundation to lie on top of the retaining wall, allowing the masons to tie the two structures together, making it incredibly strong.

For the third trip, which took place January 20-27, 2017, we began erecting the walls of the church. We hired masons (as we did the first two trips) because of their knowledge of construction techniques in the Caribbean, and to help the local economy—we pay them a day’s salary so they have money to buy food for their families. Our role has been to support these masons to keep them working like a well-oiled machine. We’d supply them with blocks, mixed cement, sand, water, or rocks located in various places on the job site so they wouldn’t have to stop. Members of the community were excited to help. We’d usually have a “bucket brigade” scenario where Haitians and Americans would line up and pass whatever items were needed to the masons. Despite language barriers, we were able to communicate and share more than a few laughs with them. Meanwhile, some of the ladies of the village would keep cisterns filled with water by taking buckets with them down to a spring 20 minutes away.



Together, we were able to accomplish a lot more than we were originally expecting to. The day we landed in Haiti, Pastor Larry said to us that the masons were expecting to get the church walls three blocks high by the end of our stay. By the time we left on the 27th, three out of four walls were complete, save for a final course of rebar on the top. The fourth wall was intentionally not started, as work on a cistern for the church plumbing needed to be finished first, a job best left solely to the masons. Through donations, Pastor Larry was able to pay the workers for an additional ten days after we had left. As of this writing, the work on the cistern is in progress, and the walls are ready for the roof to be installed. The roof structure will be made of iron girders with either steel or concrete for sheathing.

The progress in Bellevue isn't limited to the church itself. While down there I felt that things were about to really take off in this village. The week prior to our trip, Pastor Larry along with our District Superintendent met with several people in Port au Prince, including the local District Superintendent, a pastor of the largest Baptist church in Haiti, and a young Christian man named Jhon who served as our translator for the week. These men were overjoyed of the news that we had such a heart for this village and offered any assistance they can provide. Jhon agreed to receive relief supplies from America and take them to the church to distribute to the community. Through one of the men who went on the trip, we have access to discarded 55-gallon drums. For \$100, we can fill it with any supplies regardless of weight, and it'll get sent directly to Jhon.

Soon, a well will be put on the side of the road right next to the church, providing clear drinkable water to the community. They'll no longer have to make that sometimes dangerous trip to the spring, and the likelihood of bacteria-borne sickness will go down significantly.

Plans are in the works to increase opportunities for people of all ages to get an education. Public school is largely nonexistent in Haiti, so you don't go to school unless you have the money to pay for it. Pastor Joes started a school a few months before our trip, on faith that eventually the enrollment will be enough to cover the teachers' salaries. To put it another way, the teachers had been working without a salary. For his school (and most other private schools), it costs \$10 a month for a child, while for a high school-aged child the cost is around \$40 a month. Teachers' salaries are typically in the \$40 a month range. Soon there will be avenues to sponsor children and their teachers. Adults will also have the opportunity to receive the education they never did as a child.

During down times (when we weren't needed for work) we had ample opportunities to strengthen our bond with the citizens of Bellevue. On previous trips, we'd go back to the house we were staying and eat lunch. This time we tried something new; we each brought a jar of peanut butter and a jar of jelly, and using bread from a bakery we'd make sandwiches for everyone who showed up at the work site. It was a tremendous blessing to share a meal with them and pray with them. Barbara Brennan headed up daily craft sessions with the kids. She'd have them sew together either a change purse or a wallet. They (along with some of the workers) really enjoyed it. Those children who didn't participate in crafting that day were all too happy to throw a Frisbee around with us, hold arm-wrestling matches, teach us some basic Creole, show us their dance moves, or just go for a walk with us. At least once a day a worker would take us to his house, and we'd have the opportunity to bless him and his family. They'd feed us heaping portions of food, and given that many of them in this community struggle to find proper nutrition, the sacrifice they were making to show their appreciation for us was quite humbling.



Even more humbling were the two church services we attended. The first was on the Sunday after we landed. We sat in front of the church, behind the pulpit facing the congregation. Watching these people worship God brought tears to my eyes several times during the service. Though they have little, it was quite apparent that they save their best for God and loved him with everything they had. While the clothes they wear throughout the week are either worn out, the wrong size, or both, everyone has either a nice suit or dress to wear for church. During worship singing everyone stood up and sang. Though the building had a dirt floor, tarps for a ceiling, a half-dozen backless benches for seating, no electricity, no instruments, projection system, or sound system, it was one of the most amazing services I've ever been to. After service was over, we handed out some relief supplies to the congregation.

Our Sewing Circle and Barbara teamed up to create outfits for the children – dresses for the girls and shorts for the boys, with each also receiving a crocheted hat. We also handed out some toiletries and meals donated by our food pantry.

Thursday, after work was done, Pastor Joes held a special farewell service for us. Once again the villagers packed the sanctuary. They sang loudly to God and to us, and once the service was over they mobbed us. They hugged us and kissed us with tears in their eyes. Afterward, we took a short hike to Pastor Joes' house to bless him and his family. Most of the people in the church accompanied us, and during the hike we all laughed and sang together. It was so loud the entire village probably heard us. People came out of their houses to see what was going on, and when they saw us they smiled along and waved. At the end of the night, when we had to go back to our house, there were more hugs and more tears. A couple of the kids said to me, "No New York!" They did not want us to leave!

This trip was a life changer for me. I really took a long look at my relationship with God. I'm a faithful churchgoer. I'm also on two church boards, the advisory committee for Operation Facelift, an AV tech, and head of the young adult ministry. Despite all this, I had been wrestling with the fact that I had not felt close to God in quite some time. Seeing these people, with so little to their name save their best for God, worship Him with all they had, and being in constant joy made me realize my attempts at being right with God weren't going to work. I put Him in a box, and took that box and put it in the back of my closet. I let every distraction get in the way of me just being His child and giving Him all of me. The hand of God is moving so mightily in Bellevue because they don't get in His way. I really needed to learn that lesson.

I hope this report piques your interest and spurs you to want to help. I'm living proof that, for anything you do that brings God glory, He will bless you many times over and take care of any apprehensions you may have. That's another story, but feel free to ask me about it.



There will likely be another trip in September of 2017, at which time (Lord willing) the church will be complete and we'll have a huge dedication ceremony for the entire village.

Bondye beni ou tout
(God bless you all)

Frank Donato

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

It is hard to believe that we are just about 2 months into the new year....time sure does fly. Before we know it, the snow will be gone and the flowers will be blooming. I can't wait!

In our two Bible study groups, we are almost done with the book we have been doing for the last few months. The Thursday morning ladies are a week ahead of the Tuesday evening ladies due to some health and weather issues. I have another study in mind when we are finished but I am waiting to see if we will be doing a church-wide study for the Lenten season. Our prayer time continues to be a major part of our times together and we continue to see the wonderful way that God is answering our prayers. If you aren't a part of either group, maybe now is the time to join in.

Usually at this time we are planning another One-Day Ladies Retreat at the church. I have been prayerfully seeking the Lord about this and just feel that now is not the time for this event. In the meantime, we will try to have Saturday brunches more at least every other month. As with all our activities, all ladies are welcome to join in our fellowships.

Also, if you have any suggestions for activities for the ladies, please let me know.

We will start collecting items for Operation Christmas Child 2017 in March. This has proven to be a good way to invite our congregation to participate in purchasing toys, etc. to fill the shoeboxes at our November Packing Party. A list of items will be given at the start and a reminder will usually be included in our Sunday bulletin. If you pick up one small item each time you shop, the boxes will be full! Thank you in advance for your generous giving!

As we start Lent, we will be entering into a time of reflection as we prepare to celebrate the Resurrection of our Savior on Easter Sunday. I hope and pray that you will set aside some time each day to really consider just what Jesus has done for us by His death on that Cross. It may be a story that we have heard so often but one that never grows old! To God be the glory for the things He has done.

Blessings,
Mary Ann





Sing Loud For All, For One.

One Sunday, a few weeks ago during our time of songs of worship, my older brother said to me, “It is good standing next to you. I can hear how the song is supposed to sound.” As I smiled at him I thought, “Well, I’m certainly not a singer,” but his words became a mental picture. All of us collectively “making a joyful noise” made it hard for one of us to hear the actual tune of the song.

We experience a wonderful dynamic at work when believers come together to “sing psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs...to make music from your heart to the Lord.” And yet, even though my brother was physically present, and could read the lyrics on the screen, he was still having a hard time *hearing the song for himself*- until he moved over and stood closer to me.

Now, I love to sing, but I don’t think about what it sounds like to anyone around me. I sing for and to the Lord, and I know it sounds good to *Him*. Because my brother could hear *me*, he could hear the melody that went along with the lyrics and his participation in corporate worship could now become an individual act of worship too. He knew how to sing the song *for himself*, standing with the rest of us.

In life, how can we help our fellow believers who can “read the lyrics” but have no idea what to do with them. We can help when we understand the power of personal one-on-one fellowship, whether it’s in a group or solitary setting.

Can we fully understand how meaningful it is to another believer that we make the time to be physically present with them? Elbow to elbow and shoulder to shoulder, will you allow them to get close to you? Let them come near you and keep on singing *your* life’s love songs to God even if you sometimes sound flat or off-key. To someone trying to find their own way and place in the song, you’ll sound like, well, just what they needed to hear! Then they, too, can sing it out for themselves, loud and clear.

Sue Cerruto

Share your talents



A talent is worth only what you do with it. Imagine your talent as a plain bar of iron that's worth about \$5.00. That same bar of iron, when made into horseshoes would be worth more than \$10. If made into needles, it would be worth around \$3,500. And if turned into balance springs for watches, its worth would become over \$250,000! What is your talent, and how are you using it? (NewsletterNewsletter)

Are you talented with a needle & thread, a crochet hook, or knitting needles? The ladies sewing circle meets the second Thursday of the month, 7 pm, at the Youth Center. You can work on a project of your own or make a project to donate which will in turn bless others.

A few months back in preparation for the mission trip to Haiti this past January, 50 "Dress a Girl Around the World" style sundresses were donated from ladies at my Quilts 4 Kids group. Barbara Brennan asked if we had anything for the boys? After finding a simple pattern for shorts, Barbara went home and sewed up 50 pairs of boys shorts to go along with the dresses. Way to go Barbara! Amazing what you can do with some fabric and some elastic.

I am preparing another 50 dresses to go out this time to the Paradise Orphanage in Burkina Faso, Africa. This orphanage was started by the Makofsky family, while in attendance here at the Patchogue Church. (<http://www.kayaskids.org/>) I have started making some shorts to go with the dresses, because why should girls have all the fun? Thanks for the inspiration Barbara. If you have any fabric you can donate see Barbara or me. There will be another mission trip to Haiti in September and hope to have another donation going out.

God gave us each a talent. If yours is sewing why not join us at our sewing circle.

Corinne Franco

When to go to the Doctor?



Most people go to the doctor whenever they don't feel well. I am different, as you already know. I don't go to the doctor unless I HAVE to. I have been sick with this cold/cough for over two months now, but I refused to go for help. I plow through it and figure it will run its course and leave me soon. My recent episode was no different in my mind. But, I had to go to the doctor to have blood work done and my regular prescriptions refilled, so I asked him about my cough, etc. He listened to my chest and said, "That doesn't sound good." He had me do a breathing test to see if I needed an inhaler, which I didn't. He prescribed serious antibiotics and a steroid pack. He didn't do the blood work, because it wouldn't be reliable while I am as sick as this. What? Sick? I don't need a doctor, or do I? Well, I guess I did. If not for the coincidence of my regular meds at the same time as being in this state, I wouldn't have gone. I'm glad now I did.

Jesus referred to our physical health a number of times in the New Testament. He is called the great physician and the healer. He healed many who were sick. It's all documented in the Bible. He said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick." (Mt. 9:12) or as the New Living Translation renders it and continues in Jesus' words, "Healthy people don't need a doctor, sick people do." Then He added, "Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: 'I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.' For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners." Wow! Am I arrogant or just stupid? Maybe a little of each. :-)

I know there's a difference between the physical and the spiritual, but Jesus used physical illustrations to teach spiritual lessons. Here I am, a walking spiritual lesson. I should have gone to the doctor a month ago or so, but in my blindness, I waited until it was worse than it could have been. Spiritually, I want to run to the Doctor of our souls as soon as I feel something isn't right. In Him is healing, forgiveness, life and well being (shalom). Why wouldn't I run to Him instead of waiting things out to see where it would take me. It never ends well in those circumstances. He is waiting for us to come to Him and ask for healing, forgiveness and whatever is needed to remedy our spiritual lives. Don't put it off! Why suffer in misery longer than you have to.

We have the best Doctor available to us night and day, and yes, He makes house calls. He is deeply concerned about our spiritual well-being, and He cares about our physical health as well. Sometimes, we need to seek professional health providers for advice. I was amazed how my doctor reacted to my condition, and the thoroughness with which he tested and treated my condition. How much more would the Divine Healer care about my soul and spiritual condition.

I am thankful for this experience. Maybe I'll be more willing to see the doctor in the future for my physical well-being. I will certainly be more willing to seek the Doctor of our souls for my spiritual well-being going forward. Sometimes our fleshly attitudes carry over to our spiritual lives. That's not a good thing.

Praying for you (and me),
Pastor Nick

