

The Chilling Tide of Death

John Jones

Deep into the winter, after the Christmas lights and trees have been taken down and boxed up, I really start to notice the cold. Up until this point, there are family gatherings to look forward to and pre-Christmas excitement. After New Years Day, however, it's just cold (most of the time, but this is Tennessee, so you know...). Occasionally, when I'm considering how cold it is, I'll remember seeing videos online of Siberian Christians cutting a hole in the ice so that they can baptize someone. Wow! What commitment!

I thought I'd do a little digging to learn a little bit more about what a baptism in an ice hole might be like. What I found was chilling, to say the least. In Siberia at this time of year, temperatures generally range from -4°F to -58°F (or lower) depending on the region. The water under the ice stays around 33°F, but the freezing air creates an intense shock for the individual who has just emerged from immersion. Just to break the ice to create a baptistry often involves chainsaws, ice saws, or axes to cut through ice that could be up to 3 feet thick!

Can you imagine the commitment that must be made to face these conditions? Why not wait until summer? I think we know the answer. When someone is convicted by the gospel, they realize that their sins need to be washed away (Acts 22:16). Until they do so, they know that they are separated from God (Isaiah 59:1-2) and to die in such a state equals eternal separation (2 Thessalonians 1:9). Baptism can't wait!

Whenever I've heard of someone around here deciding to be baptized in the creek or river during

the winter time, my first thought is always "We have a heated baptistry(!)", but I'm quickly reminded that the icy cold water may be a helpful reminder of the chilling tide of death. Death is cold and lifeless, just like the sinful lives we gave up in repentance when we went to the water. But, the "newness of life" we experience when we are "raised with Christ" is warmth and life and peace (Romans 6:4). We either make the decision to die to self and live for Christ now, or we will never know the warmth of our Father's embrace.

The example of Siberian Christians, doing whatever it takes to obey the gospel, challenges me. Are there times when I have personally rejected God's will for my life because it might be somewhat uncomfortable? Perhaps it was a difficult conversation that needed to take place, but I

avoided it due to potential awkwardness. Maybe there was an opportunity to serve that I considered below me or would cut into my time. There were times when the apostle Paul faced "cold and exposure" (2 Corinthians 11:27) for the sake of the gospel. What difficulties and discomforts am I willing to face to glorify God?

I imagine Paul's words in Romans 8:18 have served as a reminder to Siberian Christians who brave the icy winters to baptize a willing soul: "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." I pray that we can say the same when we face trials and challenges that ultimately will bring glory to God. Don't let your cold, lifeless former self make a reappearance after you've buried him.

On Our Prayer List... *May we always be using God's blessing & power of prayer for one another: Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them they should always pray & not give up. Luke 18:1.

<u>{Recent Medical concerns/updates}</u>		<u>{Upcoming Surgeries-Recovery}</u>			
*Sarah Parnell-had to go to ER & then be monitored for possible TIA/Stroke? on 1/11		Gary Davis-recovering from eye surgery			
*Jerry Martin-has specialist appts for his evaluated BP.					
*Diane Curtis-recent car accident-said ok just shaken up pretty good-prayers on her behalf.					
<u>{THOSE DEALING/BEING TREATED FOR CANCER}</u>					
*Jimmy Phy-CA	*Lillian Childress-successful radiation treatment	*Houston Howell	*Brian Gill-CA-treatments		
*Dale Street-(N. Buttrey grandfather)CA	*Hudson Jones-{2yr old son of Dan & Catherine,Walnut St COC--Leukemia}	*Casey Vailes	*Mack Winstead-CA-continued prayers		
*Robert Gardner(friend of Bill Williams) CA	*Alan Jones-esophageal CA-treatments		*Vicki Donegan-taking treatments-needs prayer		
*David Stokes-(Jordan Stokes& Carly Stone's dad)&Drew Swearns step-dad			*David Nowlin-CA treatments-WcoC elder		
			*Jackie Borders-Lauren Stuart's mom		
			*Maggie Wright -(friend of N. Buttrey) CA		
			*Debbie Gafford-(friend of Diane Curtis)		
<u>Listed below are those that are continuing to have on-going medical issues that are in need of our prayers.</u>					
*Betty Suddeath	*Hattie Tate	*Al & Vicki Peek	*Marvin England	*Joe Wright	*Betty James
*Claude Hurt	*Carlene Davis	*Chase Lewis	*Doug Simpson	*Josh Barnett	*Marcia Simpson
*Sue Edmission	*Alyssa Gold	*Carolyn Wilson	*Mike Gunn	*Scotty Palk	*Margie Gunn
*Joshua James-now hm	*Shane Cobb	*Larry Fuqua	*Janie Brown	*Thelma Davidson	*Warren(Johnny) Proctor
*Savannah Patrick-(Rhetts syndrome-Marsha Patrick's granddaughter-she loves cards) c/o Jaimie Patrick--111 McJury Lane, Lafayette, TN					
<u>{Assisted Living/Nursing Home/Rehab}</u>			<u>At Home in McEwen</u>		
AHC Decatur County-726 Kentucky Ave,Parsons,TN 38363Wyle Marshall-(Rm 726) (Traci Adams dad)			Jim & Jane Ridings-172 Indian Ck Rd		
NHC-812 N.Charlotte, Dickson,TN 37055			Robert Bradford-347 Brown Mill Rd.		
Humphreys County NH 104 Fort Hill Rd. Waverly,TN 37185-June Dreaden- Rm 204			Jimmy Mullinicks-56 Mike Street		
Magnolia Place- 811 W. Main St, Waverly, TN 37185-Jimmy Tyler-(room 106)					
Waverly Hills Post Acute-895 Powers Blvd, Waverly, TN 37185-Bertha Bradford-rrm 102A / Gary Pace					

ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

 <p>Upcoming Bridal Shower for Thora Tomlinson on Sunday, Feb 8th from 2:00-3:30 PM in the Fellowship Room. Evan & Thora were married on Nov. 28th, 2025, so lets join in their celebration! They are registered @ Amazon. https://www.amazon.com/wedding/guest-view/3704BSBNLUJZ</p>	<p>We want to rejoice with John & Sarah Potter on the birth of Lily Lorene she was born on January 6th, along with congrats to her awesome big brother James!</p> <p>Welcome Lily!</p> <p>We also want to rejoice with Donald Skipper who was baptized last Tuesday,</p>	<p>Ladies</p> <p>*The Ruffled Mango Scripture writing group will meet together, Sun, Jan 18th @ 5:15 PM.</p> <p>Also on Jan 18th, if you signed up to be in a Tap-estry Group. We will meet quickly after morning services in Adult Classroom I.</p>	<p>Our sympathy & prayers to the families of JoAnn Haley (Kathy Martin's aunt) Jerry Stuart (Dwight Stuart & Connie Burns) cousin. His services were held on 1/13/26. & Mike Brown of this community.</p>
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IN.F.O.C.U.S. Faith, Obedience, Character, Unity, Salvation

The kids have been back at school for a week after a much needed Christmas break. I know I can speak for mine, it took them a few days to get back in the swing of things. I had one that was sick for a couple of days, but she is better and back at it this morning.

We didn't have any youth activities last week, but we are back at it this week with FLAME on Wednesday night @ 5:15 an our next devotional Sunday night. This week I will be posting youth activities for the next 3 months on our Facebook page. I will also have some copies set out in the church building for parents to grab. Please be sure to check out these upcoming events. If you have any questions about the schedule, please let me know.

In Christ, Keith

