

# Making Disciples Aflame for Christ

DECEMBER 2023

*"The nearness of God is my good..." (Psalm 73:28)*

A Personal Note from Ray and Tressa:

As 2023 comes to a close, we have countless reasons to bless the Lord for the storm as well as the calm. 2023 has been a year full of storms!



**The year began with Tressa's Uncle** literally near death as he underwent cancer treatments for leukemia. As his power of attorney, there was much care and concern to make correct decisions! By God's grace, He took hold of my right hand and with His counsel He guided (Psalm 73:24). God directed and poured out His mercy on Uncle Norman! He left the rehab facility in March; returned home; his strength is increasing steadily; and his bloodwork is fantastic! One of the most precious outcomes of this storm is a rich relationship with our uncle – truly a gift brought about by the Lord.



**In February, Tressa's 89-year-old mom** was hospitalized for a lodged kidney stone – her first. She was weak; there was infection; recovery took several weeks. As mom progressed in healing and regaining her strength, the nearness of God was our strength and our song and we are filled with praises unto Him. Storms tend to build our faith and reliance upon Him!



**In May, our beloved pastor** of 17 years answered God's call to another church. This left us with no senior pastor. As the elders searched for a new pastor, strife-disputes-gossip-and outbursts of anger erupted from various members of the congregation. It was a time of great turmoil and pain that eventually led to most of the faithful leaving the church in September now finding ourselves as sheep without a shepherd. But Jesus – the Good and Great Shepherd of His sheep – watches over the souls of His beloved sheep and is leading us all in His paths of righteousness as we seek a new shepherd and congregation. This has been a huge storm! But the nearness of God our Savior—the Lord Jesus Christ—is good and our cup overflows as we walk by faith with Him and He leads us in paths of righteousness for His Name's sake (Psalm 23).



**In July, Ray herniated two discs** in his lower back. Coupled with arthritis and stenosis, he was rapidly losing strength in his left leg. Shots were ineffective. On September 14<sup>th</sup>, he underwent surgery in the L4-L5 lumbar area. This was Ray's first surgery since his immunotherapy cancer treatments in 2019. While we praise God that the cancer treatments rendered Ray cancer free for now four years, the treatments greatly altered his immune system. Thus, **recovery from September's back surgery has been extremely difficult.**

Ray's recovery after surgery fluctuated; pain was steady; sometimes excruciating pain would flare up rendering him hunched over a walker. Long story short, an MRI done ten weeks after surgery revealed **infection in the spine (bone)**. On November 30<sup>th</sup>, Ray went in for another surgery to clean out the area and take cultures for data in treatment. By God's grace, we are now on a course of treatment. Currently he is on two oral antibiotics as well as a weekly infusion at the hospital – and his body is responding to treatment! The best part is that he is no longer experiencing excruciating pain. Of course, Ray's physical body is weak because of the inability to use his muscles for six months.



**HOWEVER, FOR BOTH OF US GOD HAS STRENGTHENED US SPIRITUALLY!**

**IT IS THE NEARNESS OF CHRIST THAT IS OUR GOOD  
AND IT IS IN HIS WORD THAT WE HAVE PUT OUR HOPE!**

Charles Spurgeon once said,

**"Do not look to your hope, but to CHRIST – the Source of your Hope".**



**LightHouse of Hope  
Ministries**

Ray & Tressa Shaw  
Gwen Comman  
P.O. Box 4213  
Clarksburg, WV 26302  
(304) 629-9471 or (304) 669-1787



A Flame  
for Christ

Visit us at: [www.TheLightHouseofHope.net](http://www.TheLightHouseofHope.net) OR E-mail us at: [TShaw@thelighthouseofhope.net](mailto:TShaw@thelighthouseofhope.net)

*Making Disciples Aflame for Christ filled with His Light and Hope.*

A Flame for Christ Ministries dba the LightHouse of Hope is a 501 (c)(3) Non-Profit Charitable Organization. Donations are tax deductible in accordance with IRS regulations.



LightHouse of Hope  
Ministries

# BIBLICAL HOPE HAS NO DOUBTS!

The Word "Hope" in the Bible has the meaning of a confident assurance based upon a sure foundation. It is reality, not feeling. Our hope in God is not filled with doubt, rather at its sure foundation is (1) the whole of Scripture, (2) the entirety of God's character, and (3) the finished, perfect work of Redemption by our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.



In 2023, through storm upon storm, by God's grace and power, both of us have continued to minister the Word of Life concerning Christ to His people through teaching, exhorting, comforting and praying. It is Scripture that God uses for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness so that His people may be complete and equipped for the work of God in their lives.

**In every circumstance of life, Christians have every reason to bless the Lord!** As the Apostle Paul said, the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us in Christ! (Romans 8:18) Therefore, **WE DO NOT LOSE HEART!** Though our physical body is decaying, God is renewing our inner man every day! The momentary, light afflictions we encounter in our short time on this earth, are producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison as we look not to the things that are seen (that are earthly/temporary) but we look to the things that are unseen (that are for all eternity)! (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)



**The nearness of God is our good and our strength!** This season of suffering has fueled and renewed our love and service to Him and to His people. He is our Master and we are His servants. As long as we have breath we will love and serve Him and His people. Therefore, we press on to 2024 as every day is a gift from Him and to Him and through Him for His purpose and for His glory.

We are *thankful* **We are thankful to God for each one of you that partner with us as we Make Disciples Aflame for Christ filled with His Light and Hope.**



## A BLESSED CHRISTMAS SEASON TO ALL!

Our prayer for you in 2024 is that the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely and grant you peace in every circumstance. (1 Thessalonians 1:23, 2 Thessalonians 2:16)

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen!

*Ray and Tressa*

## CLASSES WILL BEGIN AFTER THE HOLIDAYS THE WEEK OF JANUARY 8<sup>TH</sup>!

- Tressa will continue her study in the Parables with the young ladies on Monday evenings!
- Tressa will have a new study for the Ladies on Tuesday mornings and Thursday evenings.
  - Ray will continue the study in Zechariah with the men on Thursday evenings.
  - Gwen will have a new study for the Ladies on Wednesdays and Fridays.

**Please contact us if you would like to participate in any of these Bible Studies!**

**SEE YOU IN 2024!**

**A Flame for Christ Ministries dba LightHouse of Hope, PO Box 4213, Clarksburg, WV 26302 (304) 629-9471**

**Visit us at:** [www.TheLightHouseofHope.net](http://www.TheLightHouseofHope.net) Or E-mail us at: [Tshaw@thelighthouseofhope.net](mailto:Tshaw@thelighthouseofhope.net) or [Gcornman@thelighthouseofhope.net](mailto:Gcornman@thelighthouseofhope.net)