

Dear Family,

We have much to be thankful for as we reflect on the goodness of God to each and all of us in 2008! I'm reminded of the road sign that declares, "Get rich quick; count your many blessings!" I hope you are counting, today and always.

We are not members of the Hollywood fashion elite who are here today and gone tomorrow (you know, like Paris Hilton, Brittany Spears, and that fellow who was married to Jessica Simpson . . . at least I hope they're gone tomorrow). No, we are not even members of an intellectual or financial hierarchy (although I do play monopoly every year at McDonald's). Brothers and sisters, we are the *most highly favored elect children* of the one true living God.

And just how did we achieve this literally unfathomable and everlasting status?

God, and God alone through the gospel of Jesus Christ!

*Behold, what manner of love the Father has given unto us,
that we should be called the children of God! (1 John 3)*

How much did *you* contribute to this?

And **you were dead** in your trespasses and sins
in which you once walked,
following the course of this world,
following the prince of the power of the air,
the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience-
among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh,
carrying out the desires of the body and the mind,
and were by nature children of wrath,
like the rest of mankind.

But God,

being rich in mercy because of the great love with which He loved us,
even when we were dead in our trespasses,
made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved-
and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him
in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ,
so that in the coming ages

He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace
in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
For by grace you have been saved through faith.
And this is not your own doing;
it is the gift of God,
not a result of works
so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2)

This Lord's Day

morning our worship will be at **Fitz and Ann Caudle's at Wrightsville Beach** (Point Place) at 10:30. (NOTE: we are NOT meeting at St. Thomas this Sunday only)

This should be a delightful time **of praise, thanksgiving, testimony, and prayer**. I have asked a few people to prepare less than 10 minutes each in regard to some event of grace and mercy in their life. The theme will be, "This is the LORD's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes." (see Margaret, *marvelous* is a Biblical word!). Come with your own first hand account of God's love, mercy, power, and faithfulness.

Fitz and Ann have graciously provided for lunch as well! This will truly be what John Bunyan calls "an arbor of sweetness". Come and see. Come and worship.

. . . And rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing!

Windemere Bible Study

will be back at Windemere on Eastwood Road this Sunday evening and continuing, 6:00 pm.

Christmas Candlelight

I AM THRILLED ABOUT THE UPCOMING CHRISTMAS CANDLELIGHT SERVICE ON THE TUESDAY, THE 23RD, AT 6:30 PM!!

We have a **string quartet** from the Wilmington Symphony, Nancy Brennand, **harpist** for the South Carolina Symphony, and Beth Bell, **soprano**. And of course, our *very special guests*, **Gary and Linda Bender**, all the way from Phoenix!!! It certainly has all the potential for the people of God to gather and, "make His praise glorious!"

Allilson, Anne, and Jenny have been putting together some great plans for décor and refreshments, as well!

This is the time to invite, invite, remind, and invite some more.

Please pray for this service, for God's glory, and for outreach.

Please pray for me. I desire to shepherd each of you with the love of Christ, by the Spirit of God. Please help me help you; pray for me.

Special thanks to **Craig and Marilyn Hale** for their loan of a much needed sound system! This is really a God-send, and perfect timing! Thank you! Thank you!

I love you all; continue to love one another!

Merry Christmas,

iBob