

INCREDIBLE is the only word I can use to describe the *Champions Men's Retreat* this past weekend, what God is doing through our Youth ministry, and our Celebration worship services these past two weekends. It is obvious that the Holy Spirit is moving in an unprecedented way in the worship services and ministry of Celebration Church.

I'm so looking forward to our TEAM WEEKEND services this coming weekend (January 31 – February 1), and I'm encouraging everyone to bring someone with them to at least one of our services. This coming weekend we will be:

- Experiencing encouraging and empowering worship at all 3 of our Campuses
- Participating in the Lord's Supper/Communion Service together
- Hearing a testimony from Kurt Warner, quarterback of the Arizona Cardinals
- Beginning a new series of messages titled, *The Biggest Losers*
- Breaking our *21-Day Fast* together
- Enjoying the fellowship of great people at our *Life Group Super Bowl Parties*

This past weekend we studied the story of four men bringing their paralyzed friend to Jesus. Although the names of the four friends in our story are not recorded in the Bible, I have given them names. I've labeled them *Frank Faith, Harry Hope, Larry Love* and *Dan Determination*. Here is my rendition of this wonderful Bible story.

Frank Faith, Harry Hope, Larry Love and Dan Determination were very concerned and stressed out about their paralyzed friend. "We would do anything to help him experience healing, salvation and restoration in his life." Harry Hope said to the others, "There may be hope for him. I've heard Jesus is able to heal people and transform them." Frank Faith said, "I've encountered the Lord, and I know Jesus can heal him." Larry Love said, "Since we all love our friend so much, let's do everything we can to get him to Jesus." Dan Determination chimed in, "We're going to get him to Jesus somehow, someway, and nothing or no one is going to stop us." So the 4 friends, working together, went to their paralyzed friend's home, put him upon a stretcher, and overcame great challenges and circumstances to get him into the presence of Jesus. We learned from Luke 5:17-26 that, in response to their faith, Jesus forgave and healed their paralyzed friend and gave him a new life. I believe that if we will have the focus and faith of those four men, the Lord will enable us to bring people with us who need to experience the healing and transforming power of the Lord in their lives, too.

We are also encouraging every Celebration member and attendee to bring one tenth of their weeks income (the Bible calls this a tithe) with them to a weekend worship service in response to our LIFE WIDE OPEN Commitments for 2009. As each of us rises to this challenge, we will be able to clearly understand what type of impact our Church could have on our city and world. Just imagine the impact that we could have together as every member and attendee tithes to the work of the Lord. Don't you miss out on the blessing of being a part of all God is doing as you join with the rest of your church family to bring your "tithe" as well as your friends for Team Weekend at Celebration Church. You *can* expect the Lord to do something miraculous once again.

Speaking of miraculous, you will enjoy reading the following story sent to me by one of the mothers of our congregation. *"Daniel's Basketball team won the Miley championship last*

night! Here's the scoop on victory: This week in preparation for the game, Daniel went on a hunt to find his "I need a miracle bracelet"--He wore it all week and to the game last night. He told all the kids at school that his team would win ---because he was wearing his bracelet. Admittedly, I was worried. This week and on the way to the game, Daniel prayed. He was confident of a win. Daniel's team was behind all of the first quarter and it wasn't looking good. In the middle of the 3rd quarter Daniel scored a 3 point shot putting his team in the lead. The opposing team---that had only lost 1 game all season--was never able to pull ahead. This final game was Daniel's best game of the season-he scored 10 of the 15 points scored by his team. Daniel got his miracle and we got a lesson in childlike faith." May we all learn to live with a "child-like faith."

Dennis Watson

P.S. Please pray for me as I speak today at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Chapel service. Pray that I will be empowered by the Lord to preach a message that will be encouraging, challenging, and life-changing for the ministerial students at the Seminary.