

**The words I read in a recent journal, TRINITY CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY IS HAVING LARGER THAN USUAL LUNCH-TIME WORSHIP SERVICES captured my attention.** First, I was intrigued because over the years I've read stories about Trinity Church, located in the heart of Manhattan, and secondly because it talked about "lunch-time worship services." I've heard of "lunch-time Bible studies," but never lunch-time worship services. Also I was curious because it indicated that a much larger number of people than usual were attending these unusual worship services in the heart of New York City.

Started more than three centuries ago, Trinity Church has ministered to everyone from runaway slaves to European refugees to rescue workers after 9/11. Now, it is helping Wall Street workers weather our country's worst financial crisis in 80 years. Wedged between the skyscrapers of lower Manhattan, Trinity Church is surrounded by the banks, investment houses, insurances companies, and lending institutions that have been impacted by (and perhaps contributed to) our nations economic crisis.

The reason that Trinity Church is having larger than usual lunch-time worship services is because the pastor, Mark Bozzuti-Jones, is teaching people that there is always "hope with the Lord" regardless of the circumstances of life. Speaking to financial workers who are filling the worship center, the pastor first holds up copies of *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, telling the people "this is news." Then he holds up a copy of the Bible and says, "this is good news." The central message Pastor Mark teaches is Romans 8:28 which reads, "*God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God, and who are called according to His purpose for them.*" This passage reminds them that God can take every difficulty, turn it around, and utilize it for our good and His glory, and people are packing out the church building on a daily basis to hear and learn this message of hope.

**If any group of people should know and believe the truth of Romans 8:28, it would be the people of Celebration Church.** We've been through so much these past three and one half years emotionally, financially, physically, relationally and spiritually, and yet we constantly are receiving wonderful testimonies about how the Lord has reversed circumstances, met needs, answered prayers, and performed miracles on behalf of His people.

Therefore, when we are facing difficulties in life – whether they are physical, emotional, financial, relational, or vocational challenges – we shouldn't become discouraged or defeated. Instead, like the people who are flocking to Trinity Church in Manhattan, we should be anticipating and looking for the "good" that the Lord is going to bring to us because He is our God, we are His people, and "He always causes everything to work together for the good of those who love Him."

**Roger Babson, at one time America's foremost statistical expert and adviser on financial affairs, was a member and attendee of Trinity Church.** He wrote the following words:

Sometimes I think of Trinity Church at the end of Wall Street, New York City, as an exchange like the stock exchange at the corner of Wall and Broad Streets. In Trinity Church I can exchange my fears for courage; my worries for faith; my nervousness for patience; and my selfishness for justice, kindness, and the things which really count. Trinity Church is an exchange for the eternal things of life such as wisdom, serenity, kindness, justice, and beauty, while the stock exchange deals only with the fleeting and temporal things such as stocks, bonds, money, and materialism."

I hope that you feel the same way about our church – Celebration Church. I pray that you realize that, regardless of your life situation, you can always find love, acceptance, encouragement, peace, strength, help, hope and healing when you worship and fellowship with the Celebration Congregation in *Life Groups* and in Worship Services. In fact, I want to encourage you to plan to attend worship services with us this weekend, particularly if you are going through some sort of difficult time, so that you can experience and receive the wonderful encouragements that come from being a part of the Celebration Church.

**In this month of March at our Celebration Church campuses, we are learning from Jesus' *Sermon On The Mount* how to *ELEVATE OUR GAME*, and we are also learning what the Lord has been doing through our **A CITY TRANSFORMED: INVESTING IN ETERNITY EMPHASIS**. Last weekend the Holy Spirit moved in powerful ways during our worship, fellowship, teaching and ministry times, and we are anticipating even "greater works" this coming weekend as we celebrate the Lord's Supper together. This coming weekend is also the *Time Change Weekend* where we move our clocks forward, so don't forget to set your clock (and alarm) forward before you go to bed on Saturday evening.**

Our pastors and I and the other Celebration members look so forward to seeing you this coming weekend.

Pastor Dennis