Many hold the view that God was once a God of wrath, anger, punishment, judgment, and condemnation. They hold that the New Testament shows that God is now a God of love – full of kindness, mercy, forgiveness, and grace. It is believed that God has changed, and that we should no longer fear but only love Him. It is this idea that we should only love God, and not also fear Him, which is wrong. He was always a God of love and is still a God of wrath.

“We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.” (1John 4:16-18)

The preceding passage teaches that we should mature in our faith, not that God has somehow matured. “For I, the LORD, do not change.” (Malachi 3:6a) Of Jesus, who is just as much God as God the Father, the scripture says, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” (Hebrews 13:8) We should come to know God’s will and obey it. This is the individual perfection (maturity, completion, finishing) that God requires. (Ephesians 4:14-15; 1Peter 2:2; 2Peter 3:18) When we grow as we should, we have confidence of our salvation in the day of judgment. There becomes no need to fear receiving His wrath or punishment, because we “abide in Him.” (1John 4:16)

Nevertheless, if we disobey Him, we will still receive His wrath. “But to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.” (Romans 2:8) Furthermore, those who know the truth, and what they should do, must do it. “Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.” (James 4:17) If we either do that which is wrong or do not do that which is right, then we are willfully sinning, and there is no forgiveness for either. “For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES.” (Hebrews 10:26-27) This verse immediately follows a rebuke for forsaking the church’s assemblies. One can be a hypocrite and guilty of willful sinning by being ever present in the assemblies and living elsewhere like a heathen. But one cannot be absent from the regular assemblies and try to somehow “live a righteous life” to make up for it.

Here are a few facts to consider concerning the fear of God. In the 1611 King James Version, forms of the “nice” words kindness, mercy, forgive, and grace appear 437 times in the Old Testament (OT) compared to 266 times in the New Testament (NT), which is approaching twice as often in the OT. Surprised? Well, forms of the “harsh” words wrath, anger, punish, judge, and condemn appear 1025 times in the OT compared to only 307 in the NT. This seems like a huge disparity, right? Not so! My OT is printed on 1010 pages and the NT on 317. The fact is, this works out to be about one “harsh” word per page in both the OT and the NT!

The NT, not the OT, says, “It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” (Hebrews 10:31) May we be as the church was in the beginning, “So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.” (Acts 9:31) They feared the Lord. The Holy Spirit comforted them. They grew. It’s simple, right?

“With fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12).

Bill Elliott
**WEEKLY EVENTS**

**TODAY, 09:00 – 09:15 PUPPETS** in the fellowship hall followed by Bible Classes for all ages. Puppeteers on duty next week: Shannon, Kristal and puppetmaster Hugh.

**LADIES BIBLE CLASS (After-Hours): Tuesday 19:00**
Lesson by Hannah Roberts at 2 Chambers Crescent, Gonubie.

**LADIES BIBLE CLASS: Wednesday 20 May**
Lesson by Paddy. Tea hosted by Gaby.

**MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY: Wednesday’s 19:00**
The book of John with Bill Elliott.

**Ladies**, after the service this morning there will be a short meeting to discuss this year’s Ladies Day.

We are looking for a **volunteer** to copy our sermons onto discs. The person volunteering to do this must have his or her own computer and the software to write to disc. Anybody interested to do this must please speak to one of the leadership.

We **rejoice in the baptism of Joshua Kumm!** On Sunday evening, he gave his life to Christ by passing through the waters of baptism. We welcome him to the family of God. Please Update your directories with his information.

Call: 073287430
Address: 82 Evans Road, Milner Estate

Congratulations to Mncedisi Rubushe on graduating with a B-Com in accounting.

**VISITORS**
All Visitors are to special to God and to us – we thank you for being here today and we would like to extend an offer to you, of Private Bible Classes at your convenience and invite you to avail yourself of this opportunity.

**PRAYER REQUESTS**
Please remember these few in your daily prayers:
**Health:** Noel Nyemba, Basil Baisley, Millie Crossley, Ray and Muriel Schultz, Ray Voogt, Penny Richardson, Rodney Share and Shan Kruger who hurt her back last week.

Maelin Piedad-StaMaria and her parents sends their regards to all at Keam Road. They are well and say they are missing us.

**BIRTHDAYS**
Cecile Kirby Today

**KOMBI ARRANGEMENTS**
May Kombi Driver – Justin Le Roux (072 277 3069)
Please contact him directly if you would like a lift to and from church!

I may never march in the infantry ride in the cavalry... I’m in the Lord’s Army!

**Bulletin Contributions**
All news items for the bulletin may be sent to Shannon Heath (082 4764 267), ilovepinkster@gmail.com
Info must be in by 16:00 every Thursday.