

Just another reason for a party

Dan Nelson

Calvary Chapel of the Ojai Valley

This seems to be a time of reflection and memories. With Mother's Day just weeks ago and Father's Day not too far ahead, and graduation commencement ceremonies in the air, there is a lot to appreciate. This past Monday in our valley we held a Memorial Day parade and celebration with solemn honors toward our veterans and renewed vows to never forget their sacrifices. Did you know that God has a lot to say about the remembrances and celebrations of people, events, and divine blessings in our lives and history? In my life there is another invitation toward celebration that cannot pass by without a party.

When the children of Israel had left a life of slavery in Egypt and were on their way to "the promised land," they made some huge mistakes that would mark history and reveal the folly of humanity. As the people who were learning to follow God forgot to stop and throw a party to remember their amazing blessings, their children had no reason to ask the penetrating questions. Over time, the message of God's faithfulness and goodness was lost amongst the busyness of daily living. They still had religion but had misplaced its purpose.

This weekend commemorates a landmark anniversary in my own life and in those around me. Sunday, June 1, will be the 10-year anniversary of our ministry in the Ojai Valley. It is a time to remember God's faithfulness to us. We started with a rented game room at the Boyd Community Center at Sarzotti Park and a flier in the Ojai Valley News. It was June 1, 1998. There are so many stories to tell of blessings and hardship from this decade of presence here. And I will save those stories for another time. Right now, I want to reflect on the very gift that we exist at all.

There are very few things in my life that I have done for 10 whole years. Other than breathe and stuff like that, honestly, there are only a handful of things that I have voluntarily committed to for that long. Serving Jesus, marriage to Shelley, and being a dad are on a very short list of things in my life that have this kind of longevity. I had never been at one job or one school for that long. I had never lived in one place for that length of time either. Most of us have grown up in a transient mentality that gives broad range for mobility and little room for stability. But in ministry, I have learned that trust is critical and this takes time.

Please don't laugh at our landmark event. I know that as far as churches go, 10 years reflects infancy. I acknowledge that. To me, that is the excitement on the flip side of the coin. I am convinced that God has only just begun what he wants to do here. And Scripture teaches us that walking in future blessing is, in part, dependent on our acknowledging what we have already been given.

I want to thank the community. I hope that you feel that our presence adds to our valley and complements our uniqueness. Over the years, we have partnered with many local churches, nonprofit organizations, local civic leadership, and

area businesses to enrich the community through various outreaches. We have made many friends. I wish I could list you all by name. It seems that we have done services at every park, bowl, auditorium, and community center from the East End to the beach. Through diverse opportunities, we have had a chance to meet and get to know each other. And the good news is that lives are being saved, marriages are being rescued, addictions for some are but a memory, and hope in a life of purpose is part of the story that many can tell. I thank you for your support and friendship, and ask for your continued prayer, giving God all the glory in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.



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Sunday Worship:

9:00 & 10:45am
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View

Mid-Week Study:

7:00pm Thursday
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View

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