

# BROTHER'S KEEPER

THE COMINGS AND GOINGS OF THE PACIFIC  
NORTHWEST

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## Choosing the Kingdom

by Brother Brian Herren

### Regional Events 2023

- Winter Youth Retreat:  
Feb. 10-12
- Young Adult Group Retreat:  
March 31-April 2
- Women's Retreat: April 21-23
- Spring Youth Retreat:  
May 19-21
- Men's Retreat: May 26-28
- Summer Preaching Series:  
June 16-18
- Youth Camp: July 24-29
- Reunion: July 31-August 6
- Priesthood Retreat:  
September 15-17
- Fall Conference: Oct. 6-8
- Fall Youth Retreat: Nov. 3-5

### Inside this Issue

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One of the most cherished underpinnings of man's creation has been the divine principle of individual agency and the inseparable union between man's spirit and his freedom to choose. It was guaranteed by the Creator in the beginning, and every act of God since has both respected man's right to choose and directed him to choose well.

While personal agency is guaranteed by the Creator, and protected by immutable divine power, it is not in itself a guarantee of success. It is at once the potential to fulfill the measure of man's creation through intentional obedience, and at the same, an equal opportunity for complete and total self-destruction. God places no guardrails betwixt the two, making agency as dangerous as it is necessary:

*"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live...But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish."* - Deuteronomy 30

The freedom to choose is clearly not a freedom from consequence. While man has been issued the inalienable right to choose his course, he has been denied any say whatsoever in the consequence of that choice. He may choose obedience, and receive salvation; or he may choose sin and receive condemnation; but he may not arrange for himself any other relationship between his choice and his outcome. The freedom to choose is not a freedom from the consequence of that choice. Agency fits man the director of his destiny by guaranteeing his hand on the sails, but does nothing to change the inevitable end of the course he chooses.

To admit the freedom of man is not to admit that he is alone. In fact, God has not been neutral in the matter at all, but has spoken clearly through the ages, and reached so far as one can reach. In what defies the self-centeredness of sin, He willingly suffered the consequence of sin Himself so that man may try again, and choose a different course, with a different end. Having received the wages of sin, and having paid the price of our transgression, His gift is another opportunity to each. The debt was not forgiven, but paid in full. In "He Who Is", page 100, Brother Oakman wrote, "Our Lord Jesus Christ utterly and completely defeated sin, not by rejecting it, but by accepting all of its effects in His own body..." We are free to be different now, and God's commandments mark the course from death to life. Still, man is free to choose.

This year, our theme will remind us to choose God, His Son, His Church, His Gospel, His light, and His Kingdom. Not once, but many times, and many times each day. Man is tested at the point where God's will puts at jeopardy his own plans and securities. Peter failed the test when he admonished the Lord, "Be it far from thee, Lord", forbidding Jesus to die, and Christ showed His perfection in Gethsemane when he uttered, "not my will, but thine be done". Many will do the good they could while still preserving their own ways and securities. Who will do the good which puts those securities at risk? Many will say, "Lord, Lord...", but who will do His will? Everyday, we will choose our course. Choose God's Kingdom (not speaking of Zion) and serve the King. Each day. Every way. At each intersection of life, "which way is the Kingdom way"? This year: "Choosing the Kingdom".

# **2023 Pacific Northwest Women's Retreat**

**April 21-23, 2023 – Anderson Lodge**

**Regional Theme: “Choosing the Kingdom”**

## **Friday, April 21**

**6:15** Dinner  
**7:15** Welcome / Song Service  
**8:00** Evening preaching

## **Saturday, April 22**

**8:00** Breakfast  
**8:45** Song Service – Cessaries & Melissa J.  
**9:00** Morning Worship Service – Puyallup Ladies  
**9:30** Class  
**10:30** Break  
**10:45** Class  
**12:00** Lunch  
**1:00** Class  
**2:30** Free time – recreation – rest – craft (Sister Sharon)  
**4:45** Group photo  
**5:00** Dinner  
**6:00** Song Service – Cessaries & Melissa J.  
**6:30** Evening Worship Service – Vancouver Ladies  
**7:00** Prayer & Testimony Service

## **Sunday, April 23**

**8:00** Breakfast  
**8:45** Song Service – Cessaries & Melissa J.  
**9:00** Morning Worship Service – Salem Ladies  
**9:30-10:15** Communion  
**10:15** Break quietly – Please be mindful/respectful of the hour  
**10:20** Preaching Service  
Goodbyes and Departures

### **Registration Information**

**Please send \$125 to: Travis Clark**  
**4701 Rawhide Ct. NE, Salem, Oregon, 97305**  
(add \$7 if you plan to do the craft)  
**Make checks out to: NWRRC**



## Summer Preaching Series

by Brother Brian Herren

The Pacific Northwest Summer Preaching Series will be held during the weekend of June 16-18, 2023 in Vancouver and Salem. The series opens Friday evening at 6:45 pm at the Vancouver Restoration Branch. The series will continue Saturday evening at 6:45 pm in Vancouver, and conclude Sunday morning near Salem, Oregon. Sunday services will be held at Willamette Mission Park, beginning at 10:30 am, with a potluck to follow: 10991 Wheatland Road NE Gervais, OR 97026. Your fellowship is deeply appreciated. All of the Saints, near and far, are encouraged to attend the series. The Lord is sure to bless as we hold fast and press forward in Him. This year, Elder B.J. Schultz has been invited to preach the series. He is a medical doctor at the University of Missouri, mentor in the Restoration Campus Ministries program, youth camp pastor at Mountain Camp, frequent guest minister at reunions and retreats, and missionary to Rwanda. I asked Brother Schultz to provide some biographical information for the Saints in advance of his ministry here:



Dear Pacific Coast Saints,

Thank you for the opportunity to fellowship with you in the gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I am looking forward to our time together. Many of you have already been a blessing to me through your faithful support and nourishment of people I love. The kingdom is good.

The tree is nourished through its roots. God blessed me with good parents, Jim and Caryl Schultz, who dug around those roots by raising me, with my siblings, Brandon and Jami, to know, love, and trust Him - all this in Independence, MO. Despite my protests, they did their job well. He sent me on to Dallas, TX to meet his lovely daughter, Sue Lott. She has been my lovelier-by-the-day wife for 21.5 years. He has blessed us with 3 amazing children: Samuel (17), Joel (15), and Leisel (11).



What can I render unto the Lord for all his benefits? I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. We live in Columbia, MO and worship with the saints, among whom is one of those you helped raise: Ginger Murnieks. This week she brought morning devotions. Her father, Charles, preached the word of God to us concerning humility. Blessed is the name of the Lord who ties together all his wonderful works.

I trust God to bless us with the more complete revelation of his Son through the sharing of our faith and his gifts. He has much to teach us; even the whole world could not contain the books written as an account. I look forward to sharing with you in the best of His abundant life: to know Him the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent in the flesh and in the Spirit. He lives. He is my Savior and Lord.

Your Brother in Christ, B.J. Schultz





## Fall Youth Retreat

by Brother Michael Livingston

The fall retreat was our last retreat of the year. The different regional youth events leading up to this one was full of the spirit and blessings from God. This one was no different. The fall retreat's theme was humility. In some of our classes we spent time putting into perspective how big God is and how little we are compared to Him. We learned that we shouldn't think less of ourselves but think of ourselves less. Think of others first. It is easy for pride to enter into our hearts so we were taught to rid ourselves of pride. That Sunday in Vancouver, there was a guest speaker. Stu Gage from Missouri. He wasn't aware of our theme, he only knew that there was a retreat going on. His sermon was on humility. He spoke on exactly what we went over in all of our classes. This was confirmation to me that this is what God wanted us to hear, to think and to learn more about. Along with our classes we had a lot of wonderful fellowship and worship. We spent time singing songs, doing arts and crafts, and playing fun games. I can only speak for the boys but we were always excited to hear one of Brother Brian's bed time stories for devotions. The spirit was with us in abundance.





## Young Ladies Retreat

by Sister Melissa Johnson

Spending time with girls is so precious to me, so when I was asked to be a counselor at an all girls retreat I was thrilled! We had the honor of spending a weekend away at a beautiful home with a glorious view of the beach in Lincoln City. The Lord even blessed us with clear, sunny skies and brilliant sunsets in February! The theme came from 2 Timothy 2:21-22 which speaks of being vessels for the Lord. I was able to teach a class based on Proverbs 31. While preparing for the class I felt very blessed and God revealed to me many qualities of a virtuous women that can be applied to any phase of life. Cessaries was able to use our theme scripture in a different way and spoke about how sin can erode our vessel. I was so pleased to see the youth taking notes and pondering how to truly apply these things in their lives. Because of the nature of the retreat we were able to spend time doing crafts we may not have been able to do had boys been around, such as making sugar scrubs and pouring candles. We also were able to spend much time just sitting silently on the beach, communing with the Lord in different ways. All in attendance seemed very blessed in this as the Lord was revealing himself to us through the beauty around us. I left the retreat feeling refreshed with new vigor, and I know the girls who attended did as well. Building bonds with my sisters in Christ was such a blessing and I look forward to our bonds growing stronger and stronger.

Your Sister in Christ,  
Melissa Johnson



This winter retreat, the theme was taken from 2 Timothy 2:20-21: *"But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honor, and some to dishonor. If a man, therefore, purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."* This retreat was also a little bit different than other retreats. The boys and girls were separated into two different retreats at two different locations. I'll be writing about the boys retreat. The boys retreat was held in Newport Oregon in a beach house. It wasn't a big group of guys, only a few of us were there. But as the scriptures say, *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."*

I can confirm the truth in that scripture. God was definitely with us. With it being a much smaller group, our classes were much more like discussions, which made it more personal. We discussed and learned about being wise and seeking wisdom from the Lord. We learn what it means to be men of God, to be leaders. We learned that we should take care of our bodies and our spirits so we can be worthy vessels to the Lord. It being at the coast, there was a chance of poor weather. If it had rained, we would still have been blessed. But the Lord blessed us with beautiful weather. Clear skies and calm winds. We witnessed a beautiful sunset on Saturday night. It was amazing to think that we were one of the last people to see the sun in the continental United States. That morning we went and found tide pools. It was just such a blessing to witness God's beautiful creation. Though it was few in numbers, it was abundant in God's spirit and love. I am thankful I was able to attend and to serve.



## Young Men's Retreat

by Brother Michael Livingston