



The Scroll

Spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ and equipping the People of God through the written word.

Word of the Quarter—Moving Beyond Our Comfort Zone

The Editing Team

In the last issue of *The Scroll*, we began a new overarching theme, “Interrogating Our Defaults,” with the topic “Moving Beyond Fear.” In this issue, we continue with the subject, “Moving Beyond Our Comfort Zone.”

When the editing team met to talk about the theme, we agreed that this is a timely subject. Due to the current political climate, we know people who will be “parked” in discomfort for the next four years. This is not only just because of the election results but because of how divided we are as a nation. As we navigate the vulnerability some are feeling and the division in the country, we are left with little choice but to move out of our comfort zone.

We must be mindful that, if we choose to seek comfort, there are people around us who do not have that option and do not feel safe. To put a cocoon around ourselves is a disservice to those around us (our neighbors). You may ask yourself what it looks like to be proximate to those who are on the margins and don’t have a place of comfort during the times we are in. You may further ask yourself if God is calling you to walk with those who are comfortless. If you have these questions, look at the life of Jesus and who He walked with. Furthermore,

do a study on what the Bible says about ministering to those who are marginalized.

There comes a point in time when comfort no longer serves us. The editing team talked about when a woman is about to give birth. Some positions that feel comfortable prevent delivery. Then there is a point where no position feels comfortable. Giving birth in the natural and spiritual is uncomfortable but needed. Birthing is painful, and growing can feel awkward (just think back to your teenage years).

This is a new era. What worked in the past might not work now because we are in a different season. We must move to where God is taking us to. We must keep growing. God has called us to mature, and our potential in Christ is unlimited. God wants us to use all the gifts and talents He has given us. Move out of your comfort zone and stretch to your full potential.

In the end, our hope and trust must be in God. We must not be shaken because of the times we are in and go into our shell. Psalm 62:6 says, “*He*

only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defense; I shall not be moved.” Being rooted in God should give us the courage to stabilize and engage instead of retreating to places of comfort.

God will do things in His way and in His time. In our culture of convenience and comfort, we don’t like to be stretched or to wait. We make decisions for power, comfort, and convenience. Moving from the desire to escape pain and reality calls us to courageously engage in the world we are in with our hope and trust in Christ.

Instead of seeking a comfort zone, we encourage you to become rooted, grounded, stable, and anchored in God. This does not mean you won’t face tests and trials. It just means you are rooted in God and secure in your faith to step up and face the challenges.

It is time for us to step up even more and use our gifts and answer our calls. Ask yourself how you can use your gifts in a different way this season. Moving differently can revolutionize many things. This is not the time to hideout. God is calling for more. Stretch. Come out of your comfort zone. We can expect to be challenged, but God is with us.

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Editor's Corner—Moving Beyond Our Comfort Zone

Sister LaTonja Brown

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The birth of one of your gifts could be what is needed for someone else to begin the next leg of their journey.

When I contemplated the subject “Moving Beyond Our Comfort Zone,” I thought about Bilbo Baggins. Bilbo is the protagonist in the novel *The Hobbit* by J. R. R. Tolkien. At the beginning of the book, Bilbo was a hobbit who craved the comfort of his home in the Shire. By the end of his journey—having encountered a wizard, dwarves, elves, goblins, men, giant spiders, a dragon, Gollum, and more—he had proven himself to be a resourceful and dedicated companion and braver and more capable than even he knew.

If you know me, you know I love to travel. While I have never encountered the same creatures as Bilbo, I have had some adventures. The first trips I traveled completely by myself took me well out of my comfort zone. Like Bilbo I discovered parts of myself that would have remained dormant had I never ventured out, and I have met some amazing people along the way who I am still in contact with today.

Each trip matures me and increases my confidence. I know the first day will be the toughest as I navigate public transportation to find my hotel while jetlagged. Once homebase is set up and I become familiar with my neighborhood, the days get easier. By the end of the trip, I am quite at home in the city. But I must start.

Bucket List

I recently purchased a journal called *My Ultimate Bucket List: All the Things I Want to do in This Life*. The book has sections on travel, experiences, skills, and milestones. For each item, you give yourself a timeframe (deadline), budget, and plan. It helps put things into perspective. Think about one thing you want to do. Write it down, and plan on how you will get it done.

Stability vs. Stagnation

An ongoing conversation I have in my mind is about whether I am stable or stagnant. To combat stagnation, I try to learn new skills and read as much as possible. If you feel you are in a rut, try something new: read a new author, take a class, or learn a new skill. Make sure you are keeping your mind sharp and that you are growing and developing.

Use Your Resources

I mentioned finding my hotel the first day in a new city. Today it is easy to navigate unknown places because of my phone. With

the Internet, we have a wealth of information at our fingertips. There are how-to videos, podcasts, and courses online for free. The University of Washington has certificate programs as do local community colleges.



Community

In *The Hobbit*, Bilbo did not journey alone, and we don't either. When I travel, I talk to people who have gone where I am going, and I read whatever I can to learn about where I am going. Bilbo's companions believed in him, and, from the beginning, Gandalf saw something in Bilbo that Bilbo himself did not see. Let people speak life into you.

Use Your Secret Weapon

All of us have a not-so-secret weapon in God. God has placed dreams in your heart for a reason. God has plans for you that you can't even begin to imagine. Go after the vision God has given you. He will provide the provisions. Remember to use your resources, which includes your community, who can see things in you that you may not see in yourself.

Please join me in my quest to move beyond my comfort zone. There is so much more I want to do and more that I am capable of. When faced with the unknown, remind yourself that because something is new doesn't mean you can't do it. You just haven't done it yet.

We all have so much potential. We need to challenge ourselves past fear, insecurity, or whatever is holding us back so the gifts that lie dormant within us awaken. Each time we push past a limit we have placed on ourselves, we become more confident in our abilities and closer to becoming the best versions of ourselves. Speaking of time, time is a gift. Let us all be great stewards over it.

Bilbo Baggins' adventures laid the groundwork for his cousin Frodo Baggins' adventures in *The Lord of the Rings*. Remember we are a body. The birth of one of your gifts could be what is needed for someone else to begin the next leg of their journey.

Finding Hope—Blessings in Disguise

Sister Amy Pemberton

A few months back, I climbed into my truck and turned the key. Nothing. After repeated tries created identical results, my son came to the rescue and gave my truck a jump start. He then followed me to a dealership in Kirkland where I had sought assistance before.

As I made the trek, my initial thoughts revolved around what might be wrong and how much it would cost for the repairs. Stress began to churn within me until I realized how far my emotions were distancing me from God. The situation was upsetting enough. Allowing myself to be separated from God was a poor choice. But how would I subdue my concerns? And then I remembered a quote by Patrick Henry Reardon, which I had read earlier that morning.

“Suppose for a moment that God began taking from us the many things for which we have failed to give thanks. Which of our limbs and faculties would be left? Would I still have my hands and my mind? And what about loved ones? If God were to take from me all those persons and things for which I have not given thanks, who or what would be left?”

Just south of Woodinville, I glanced in the rearview mirror and saw my son. He had left work to help me. I knew when I reached the dealership, I would be met with familiar faces as well as people with skills to keep me driving the 25-year-old truck I had inherited from my dad. My mother had

already offered me the use of her car so I wouldn’t miss work. God’s blessings have always outweighed the negative in my life. From clean running water to a warm bed to food on my table, God has blessed me from every direction. Sometimes, finding blessings has required a bit of digging, but I have never had to dig far. And the reason I had to dig? Because I had forgotten how to look for blessings in the first place.

At the dealership, I was put into the care of a young man named Nick who would keep me abreast

No matter what troubles come our way, God creates endless avenues for His blessings to flow.

of the necessary repairs and their costs. I would like to say I remember our conversation well, but I don’t. I just remember feeling at peace about the whole situation.

More than a week passed before I received a call from Nick letting me know my truck was ready. After I paid my bill and received my key, Nick said, “On the day we met, I got the feeling you’re a Christian.”

I smiled. “Yes, I am. How could you tell?” He said it was the way I navigated myself in the midst of a trying situation. Again, I smiled.

We spent nearly an hour talking about our faith. We shared some of our struggles and the ways we lean into God during those times. We spoke of His steady and



unconditional love for His children and wondered, “Who are we that He, the King of kings, should make a place for us at His table?” Tears fell from both of us before the question was fully uttered.

I hadn’t anticipated an intense conversation about God taking place in the middle of a busy dealership, but it shouldn’t have been a surprise. No matter what troubles come our way, God creates endless avenues for His blessings to flow.

Recommended Reading:

- John 12:1-8
- Luke 19:1-10

Women of the Bible—Mary of Bethany

Sister La'Shandra Perkins

Name: Mary

Meaning: Beloved

Her Character: She was a true worshipper, courageous, devoted, and insightful.

Her Triumph: Her selfless act was received.

Key Scriptures: John 12:1-8

What would you do if you were hosting a gathering in honor of Jesus. The food and drink were flowing, and your sister came in with an alabaster jar filled with pure nard, a perfume that cost a pretty penny, and she poured it out. I imagine the room fell silent with a pregnant pause...let's dive deeper.

Mary's devotion of the anointing with the oil is one of the most symbolic acts in the Bible. It highlights Mary's deep love and reverence for Jesus and shows a powerful symbol of sacrifice. Mary has always been insightful when it came to Jesus. In Luke 10:38-42, Mary ignored helping prepare and serve food, and Martha asked Jesus to tell Mary to help. Jesus gently told Martha that Mary chose the better part by focusing on His teachings. Mary knew that Jesus was the real thing. Even when her brother died, and Jesus didn't come immediately (John 11:1-44), Mary wasn't angry with Jesus. Her brother's loss grieved her, but she still trusted Jesus.

Back to the gathering. I imagine Mary walking in that room with nothing but confidence and resolve, knowing what she was doing was foresight into what was getting ready to happen. Was she scared? I'm sure, but she didn't let fear stop her. She should have been cooking, serving, and pouring drinks with the other women, so she was already out of place. Let's return to that pregnant pause; everyone knew she was carrying pure nard, one of the rarest and most costly perfumes from the Himalayas.

Mary poured this oil on Jesus' feet and showed her profound sacrifice. By pouring out the oil, she offered something of immense value. She showed that her love for Jesus transcended material wealth. This selfless act reminds us of the true cost of worship and devotion.

Mary not only poured the expensive perfume to anoint Jesus' feet. She also wiped His feet with her hair. Using her hair was significant. In that era, hair was sacred, and a woman's hair was always covered in public. Mary broke social norms when she uncovered and let down her hair in public. Now you know there's always one judgmental hater in the group.

Judas looked at Mary's blessing as a pure waste. John 12:4-6 talks about Judas' anger and he said that what Mary had done was wasteful and that the jar could have been sold to feed the poor. Even though Judas walked with Jesus and listened to

Mary's story is a beautiful reminder that acts of love, no matter how small or extravagant, are never wasted.

Jesus' teachings, Judas still lacked spiritual insight and couldn't see past his greed. Unlike Mary, Judas couldn't appreciate the anointing's symbolic and prophetic nature. He failed to recognize it as a preparation for Jesus' burial and an expression of devotion.

Jesus rebuked Judas. John 12:7-8 NIV says, "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me." Jesus' defense of Mary's act of devotion highlights the significance of His impending

death and burial. He emphasized the importance of her gesture and the unique moment they were experiencing.



Mary of Bethany's act of anointing Jesus' feet with expensive oil is a powerful example of love and devotion. By using something so valuable and wiping His feet with her hair, she showed just how much she cared for Jesus. This wasn't just about the oil but about her willingness to give up something precious to honor Him. Her actions remind us that true worship and love often come with a cost, and they challenge us to think about how we show our own devotion.

Mary's story is a beautiful reminder that acts of love, no matter how small or extravagant, are never wasted. Today, we can apply these lessons by prioritizing our spiritual lives, making sacrifices for our beliefs, and showing humility and devotion in our daily actions. Whether through acts of kindness, giving of our time and resources, or simply being present for those in need, we can honor the spirit of Mary's devotion in our own lives. Her legacy encourages us to live with a heart full of love and a willingness to serve others selflessly.

Men of the Bible—Zacchaeus

Sister Cassandra Broomfield

Name: *Zacchaeus*

Meaning: *Pure or innocent*

His Character: *He was a tax collector who cheated people of their money.*

His Triumph: *He received salvation.*

Key Scriptures: *Luke 19:1-10; Revelation 3:20*

Zacchaeus represents all of us. He shows us that no matter how low we are and how sinful we become, Jesus still recognizes us, and He calls us by our name and not our nature.

Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector. He lived and worked in Jericho. The Roman Empire, which ruled over that region, had placed a tax on all its citizens. Tax collectors were notorious for taking more from the citizens than was needed. He was hated in his community. No one liked or respected him, nor did they trust him.

I believe every one of us has a part of Zacchaeus in us. We do things that society deems wrong. We hurt those who care about us, and we make enemies of those who once loved us. In our pursuit of fortune and fame, we lose concern for those that are in need. We become greedy and self-righteous. I believe, like many of us, Zacchaeus still had that small voice buried deep within him that told him that there was more to living than this. He must have been lonely.

One day Zacchaeus heard a whisper in the city that this man Jesus, who was known throughout the land as a healer, prophet, and teacher, would be passing through his town. He wanted to see

I believe, like many of us, Zacchaeus still had that small voice buried deep within him that told him that there was more to living than this.

Jesus. He began to follow the crowd, but he had a problem. He was short, and everyone was taller than him. So, he had an idea; he would run ahead of the crowd, and he would climb a tree that was in the path of the crowd that was surrounding Jesus. He saw a sycamore tree, and he hurried up it in order to gain a better view of Jesus.

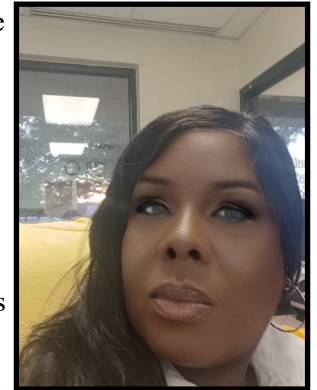
He was staring into the crowd; he had a perfect view of Jesus. Jesus was so close to him; he must have been filled with awe and pride. He had accomplished something fantastic. I am sure that he was going to brag about how he had the best view. Then something strange happened. All of a sudden, this man they called Jesus, stopped under the tree in which he was sitting, looked up at him, and called him by name. Can you imagine? Jesus knew his name! Not only that, but Jesus also ordered him to come down from the tree and told him that He was coming to dine with him at his house. This was monumental. This was affirmation. This would give him the recognition that he wanted.

The crowd grew angry. How dare this man of such esteem and superiority go and enter into the house of a sinner. The most despised amongst them.

Isn't that just like the church? We are so filled with self-righteousness and scripture that we look down on the people that we think have nothing to offer in the kingdom: drug addicts, drug dealers, homosexuals, adulterers, politicians, bankers, and whoremongers. We separate and divide people by their nature and stature rather than allowing God to call them by their name.

Then once they are called by God, we still hold them to their old nature.

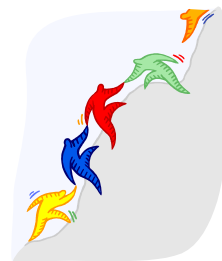
Zacchaeus heard all that was being said



about him and Jesus. He confessed to Jesus that he had taken more than what was due to him. He told Jesus that he would repay four times the amount that he had taken from others, and he would give half of his possessions to the poor. Jesus told him that on that day salvation had come to his house. Jesus also made a confession. He told him that because He is the son of Abraham, He came to seek and save the lost.

The book of Revelation tells us that Jesus extends to us an invitation; He said that He is standing at the door knocking. If we hear His voice, He will come in, and He will sup with us and us with Him. Jesus came to where Zacchaeus was; Zacchaeus answered the call, and Jesus went to his home to sup. Zacchaeus gained more than he offered. He gained eternal life.

Empowered by God to Empower Others



Your Money Matters—Trying New Things

Sister LaTonja Brown

People use the new year as a time to reset areas of their lives, including their finances, so now is a great time to examine what is working and what is not working regarding your financial habits.

If it's working, keep doing it. While things can always be improved upon, as the adage says, "If it's not broke, don't try to fix it." I am not a big fan of change for change's sake, so I don't see a reason to overhaul what is working. Tweaks here and there to improve the process are always worth considering. If things are not working, it is time to try something new.

Evaluate

Before you try something new, evaluate the current process and try to pinpoint what is not working. Is it not working because it's not realistic? For example, having a goal to direct half of your income toward saving and retirement accounts is not realistic for most people. If saving and investing is your goal, evaluate your budget to determine how much you can save and invest. Then, as you get pay increases, tax refunds, unexpected cash flows, etc., direct the money toward those accounts.

The Psychology of Money

Knowing how your emotions impact how you handle finances is a key piece of the puzzle. Are you a person who shops when you feel down? In the last decade or so, I have learned that a "shopper's high" is a real thing. You get that momentary high, only to feel bad when the bills come. Know that about yourself and find different ways to direct that energy. Call a friend for a walk or to meet for coffee.

Education

It is easy to label ourselves as "good"

or "bad" when it comes to money management. If you were not taught how to manage money, you may struggle at first. However, money management skills from budgeting to saving to investing can be learned by reading books, listening to podcasts, researching topics, or speaking to a financial advisor.

Create Goals

When creating goals, begin with the end in mind and work backward. Whether you're in your early 20's and just getting started, midway through your career, or in retirement, think about how you want your life to look like over five-year periods. Then make decisions around this. For example, if you want to go on a vacation in the late summer, you may need to cut back on eating out in the short-term to save for the trip. Knowing your goals and your "whys" can motivate you to make different decisions on how you spend your money.

Knowing how your emotions impact how you handle finances is a key piece of the puzzle.

Automate

If you are struggling with saving, the "Out of sight, out of mind," philosophy may work for you.

Begin by setting up a savings account with a different financial institution than your primary bank and have funds directly deposited into it monthly. Automation is also key for money going into your retirement accounts. Then, as you are able, increase the amount going into the various accounts.

Cutting Back

Are there areas, no matter how small, that you can cut back on? The first area that comes to mind is streaming services. Review all your automatic

payments a few times a year to make sure you are still using what you are paying for.

Seeking Help

While the internet is filled with a wealth of information, seeking help from a trained financial advisor can give insight into where you are now and help you plan for where you want to be (and what you want to do) in the future.

Seek a Side Hustle

If your current salary is not enough (but you want to keep your current job), think of things you can do on the side to supplement your income.

Estate Planning

While uncomfortable to think about, having a will in place is needed no matter how young or old you are.

Need Help Brainstorming?

Some common financial goals include:

- Creating a budget
- Paying off credit card(s)
- Saving six to 12 months of monthly budget
- Buying a new car
- Going on a family vacation
- Home improvement projects

Throughout 2025, reset as many times as needed. Your financial progress is a journey, not a destination.

We would like to extend our warmest, most sincere welcome to the newest members of PCC. †

Fit for the Kingdom—Trying New Things

Minister Demetrius Robinson

Comfortability is the enemy of trying new things. If you're comfortable in doing what you've been doing, it's hard to move into the unknown. This is a new year, so what will we do differently from last year? Will we maintain the status quo, or will we come out of the box? Will we take a leap into the unknown?

My husband and I are similar in most things and yet different with how we feel about adventure. I am the one who is hanging upside down on a zipline and ready to go. My husband, however, is holding on for dear life and has his eyes closed. What I appreciate about him is that he is willing to try even though he really doesn't want to.

Sometimes in life, we don't want to try new things because it's uncomfortable. We have become comfortable with our routines. Now, there's nothing wrong with a good routine. A good routine makes you reliable; it makes you steady; and it holds you accountable. And yet, despite all these benefits, the real reason we resist trying new things and prefer routine is fear. Yes, fear of the unknown. Scientific studies suggest we fear an unknown outcome more than we do a known bad one. What if I don't like the new job? What if that foreign country is dangerous? What if I don't like this new recipe? What if this new exercise makes me sore? What if I don't enjoy the gym? What if I can't?

Opening our minds to a new thing or a new way of thinking is often frightening because it's unfamiliar. Unfamiliarity often rings the alarm bell, "Warning: Potentially unsafe. Danger. Danger. Danger." But if you think about it, most of the things we fear don't actually come to pass. "Fear: False Evidence Appearing Real," we said this quite a bit in my twenties, and it's still true.

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind," 2 Timothy 1:7.

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right had of my righteousness," Isaiah 41:10.

What do we have to fear when God has our backs? Nothing! Go ahead and try something new. Go ahead and step out of the box. A few things to remember when trying new things while working on your physical fitness goals:

1. **Don't compare yourself to others.** This gets us in trouble every time. Workout and do what is best for your body. You can challenge yourself! Don't let what someone else is doing deter you from becoming the best version of yourself.
2. **Workout with friends.** Working out with friends helps with accountability, and it's just fun to have someone to laugh, struggle, and get better with.
3. **Use your strengths.** Whether you're at home, work, or the gym, most people generally like to do

things that they're good at. Do what you're good at until you're able to stretch out and try something new.

4. **Rethink it.** If you view exercise as a reward for a hard day of work or as a time for stress relief, you begin to build the mindset for the best enjoyment. Enjoy it!
5. **Turn up the tunes.** This might be the easiest way to give your workout enjoyment an instant boost. Find something that gets you moving!
6. **Mix things up.** It's important to regularly change things up to ensure you keep liking it.

When trying something new, it often requires courage. It opens the possibility for you to enjoy something new. It keeps you from becoming uninterested, and it forces you to stretch. This year, reach out. This year, move more than you did last year. This year, enjoy the challenges and grow. This year, focus on trying something new. You can do it!



The Scroll Editorial Policies

- Members and friends of PCC are encouraged to submit original work, including but not limited to, Testimonies, Book Reviews, Creative Expressions, and Healthy Recipes.
- Please limit your submissions to original work.
- Please submit your material electronically. The preferred format is a Word document.
- Please limit your word count to 650 words or less.
- All submissions will be edited by *The Scroll* Editing Team.

If you would like to receive an electronic version of the newsletter, please send your request to latonjab@hotmail.com.

Creative Expression
Sister Ursula Lovely

Reach Out

When you stumble and fall, reach out. There may be someone that will offer a helping hand. This person will encourage you and help you to fight and again stand. You may run into problems as long as you are alive. With God’s help (and those that He has placed around you), fight and continue the journey to thrive. Reach out when you are filled with a loss of faith because of self-doubt. When you reach out to others, find the courage to again stand and fight your way out.

Happenings and Events

Bible Study—Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. preceded by prayer at 6:30 p.m.

Family Prayer—Saturdays at 9:00 a.m.

Prayer Requests:

- ♥ Pastor and Minister Jo Ann
- ♥ National and local leaders
- ♥ Military and their families and veterans
- ♥ Youth, families, singles, and marriages



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