

Pain and Purpose

Pearls are unique. While diamonds, sapphires, emeralds and other precious jewels are formed in the earth, pearls are formed inside shells found in water. Not every mollusk contains a pearl, and their rarity makes them precious. Even the Bible mentions their value as we read about “the pearl of great price” in Matthew 13:46. And Revelation 21:21 tells us the holy city, the new Jerusalem, will have twelve gates, each one a single pearl!

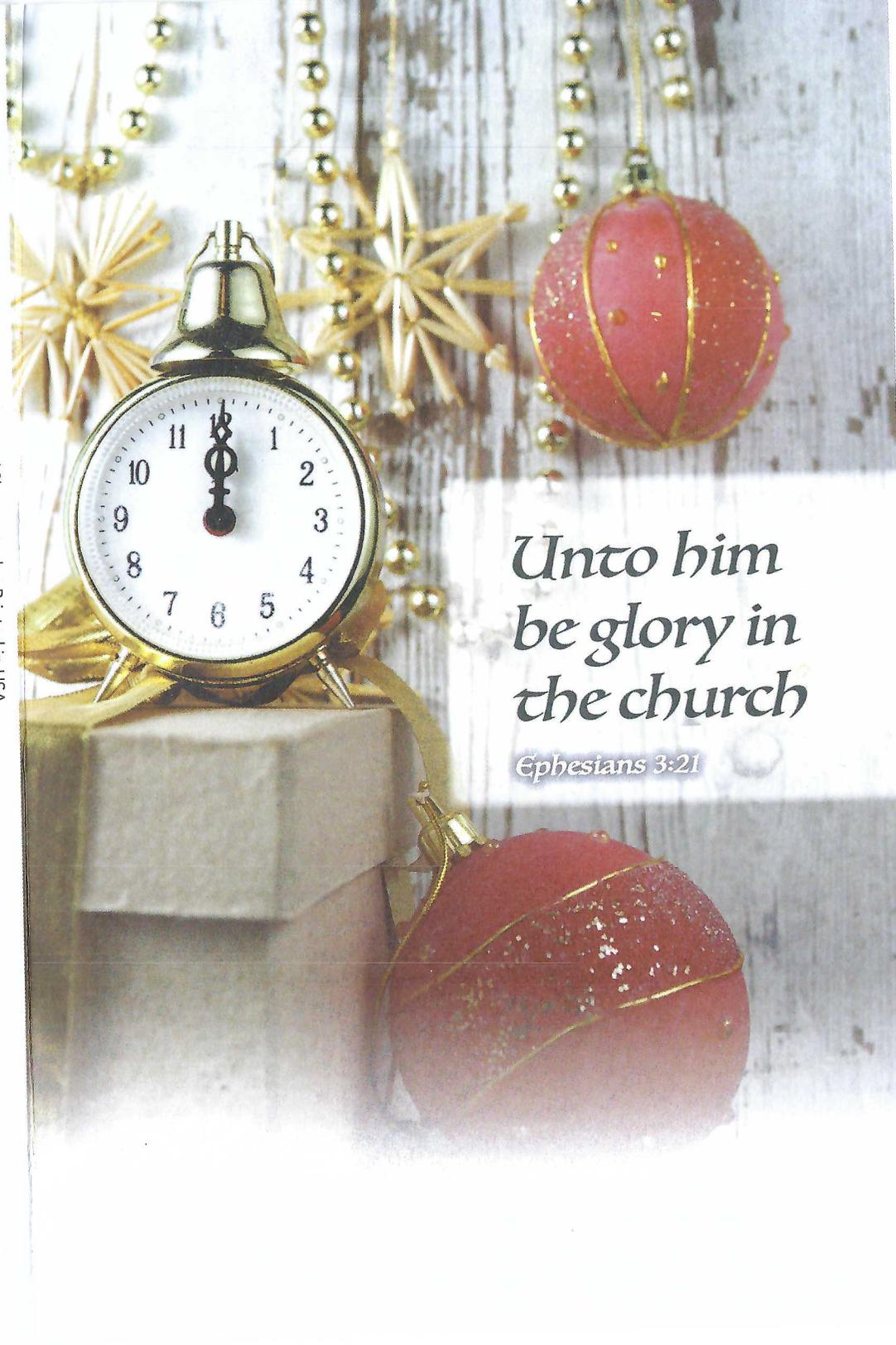
Oysters and other mollusks pay a great price to produce a pearl. When an irritant, such as a bit of food, sand or bacteria becomes trapped in the mollusk, the mollusk secretes a mineral called aragonite and a protein called conchiolin to protect itself. Together they are called nacre, or mother-of-pearl, the same substance that formed its shell. Over time, layers of nacre form around the irritant, forming a white, pink or black pearl. They have a variety of surfaces, depending on how the aragonite arranges itself, and they are not always round. Those found in fresh water may be shaped like puffed rice.

Some pearls are cultured by humans who insert an irritant into a three-year-old oyster and wait a few more years for the pearl to form. Because hundreds of mollusks would have to be opened to find one wild pearl, cultured pearls are more common, but whether a pearl is wild or cultured, the mollusk that produces it experiences pain. This illustrates the pain we suffer when “irritants” enter our lives. But just as the mollusk’s pain has a purpose, so, too, the pain God allows us to experience has a purpose. Often, our greatest ministry to others comes out of our greatest hurts. And the hard things we experience now are nothing compared to the glory God has prepared for us in heaven.

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:16–18).

K.E. Horsley

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Unto him
be glory in
the church

Ephesians 3:21

Covenant Church

3115 N.W. 16th Avenue Gainesville FL 32605

December 29, 2024

Call to Worship

Sounds of Hope

Invocation

Ron Marks

Sing Unto the Lord

Hymn #258 Go Tell it on the Mountain

Welcome and Announcements

Ron Marks

Recognition of Guests

Mission Moment

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Worship in Song

Hymn #271 Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee

Offertory Prayer

Craig Alexander

Offertory

Rose Morgan

Special Music

Sounds of Hope

Sermon:

Scripture:

Don Mauldin

Benediction

Hymn # 260 Worthy, You are Worthy

Pastor Don Mauldin

352-262-5349

Covenant News

Our ministry for December is Helping Hands Clinic.

Since there are 5 Sundays in December, we will also end the year collecting for Pine Grove and Newberry High School.

Happy New Year Poem

How can I use the New Year to better serve my Lord?
I'll read my Bible every day, and be more in accord.
I'll find new ways to serve others; I'll love my neighbor, too.
I'll focus on "give" instead of "get" in everything I do.
I'll forgive the people I'm mad at; angry feelings I'll discard;
I'll try to love my enemies, even though it's hard.
In the New Year, I'll lift people up, instead of putting them
down.
I'll fill my heart with love and joy, and never wear a frown.
I'll let go of my worries; put it all in His hands;
I'll repent and try to sin less, and obey all His commands.
These New Year's resolutions are difficult, at best.
Yet, here's what I can do each day that will put my soul at
rest:
I'll love my Lord with all my heart, with all my mind and
soul;
If I do that essential thing, I'll leave the rest in His control.
- Anonymous

Happy New Year!