

Paul and Kaelin



December 2008 Update Letter

Merry Christmas to you! I hope you have a wonderful holiday! We'll be in Portland over the holidays. If you are there we'd love to see you!

This is my third Christmas as a Christian. Every year I (Paul) realize even more how INCREDIBLE Christmas is. It is one of the most radical days in history because something totally unexpected happened: God Himself came down to earth. Jesus loved us so much that He left the place of glory in heaven to live humbly among us. He lived a life completely for us chose to give his life up by dying for our sins. In Isaiah it says "I look, but there was no one to help, I was appalled that no one gave support; so my own arm worked salvation for me, and my own wrath sustained me" (63:5). The name Jesus means "in God is salvation" or more simply "God saves". Christmas is a celebration of how we are helpless, and yet God helps us out.

Before God saved me two years ago, I was a slave to my pride and my lust. I lived my life selfishly for my own pleasure, for my own comfort, and for my own glory. I wasted myself with alcoholic binges, drugs, porn, and inappropriate relationships. My heart's only ambition was to make as much money as I could to fuel my desires. I hated God and did not believe in a Creator. I was hopelessly lost. I was dead.

But God saved me! Through at times I had "sought God" it was always for outward appearance. I knew how bad I was, but I wanted others to think I was good, so I went to church. But one day God truly showed me how terrible my sin is and how much I hurt Him, how much I hurt my friends and family, and how much I hurt myself.

God showed me that He did not care about my "good works". He did not require me to "do" anything. He did not care about my past. He simply wanted me to recognize how much He's given me and what He's done for me. He simply wanted me to believe in Jesus. He wanted me to believe that Jesus was raised from the dead, and I too could be raised to new life on earth and eternal life with God. That realization changed my life.

That is why Christmas is so amazing. Because God did all this for someone so undeserving, for someone who hated Him. Remember that the gifts we give reflect the FREE GIFT Jesus offers all of us.

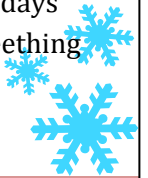
Want to be a blessing this Christmas?

Give to Feed My Starving Children (fmssc.org) or Urban Homeworks (urbanhomeworks.com)

Prayer Requests:

- Health and Safe Travels for the Holidays
- For relief of pain for Luke, who is teething
- Being a witness of Christ's Love
- A warm winter ☺

Email us to join our e-mail prayer list



Us getting ready to go for a walk. When its real cold, Luke wears his bear suit and a snowsuit.



Making Christmas donation materials for First Care, a pregnancy and family support center



We regularly serve at Community Emergency Service, a food shelf and family support ministry

Children are a blessing!

God blessed the world when a virgin gave birth to baby Jesus. Children are a blessing (see Psalm 127)! We have been realizing this more and more. Luke has really been a huge blessing in our lives. He is a joy to sit and play with or watch as he fiddles. We've been talking a lot about our family and having more kids. Right now we both are strongly desire to trust in God with it. God says children are a blessing, so we should be willing to accept as few or many blessings as He wants to give us. We both know from experience that His ways are better than ours!

Kaelin loves being a mom. She is starting to get involved in Mom's ministry at church. She'll be helping with prayer times and weekly outings to walk around the mall during the cold winter months. She is passionate about family. A healthy world, a healthy nation, a healthy community, and a healthy church all depend on healthy families.



My wife is lookin' good! God is so good.

I lost a big check and learned a big lesson

So a few weeks ago I lost a big check. On a sunny, brisk day Kaelin and I walked to church. We were happy to be out on such a nice day. We picked up my check so we could pay rent. I wrote "deposit into" and our bank account number. I stuffed the check into an envelope and put it in my back pocket. We then walked toward the bank, enjoying the day.

A block away from the bank, I checked my back pocket. The envelope was gone. I searched all my pockets. Nothing. My face got hot. I told Kaelin the envelope was gone and then ran back the way we came. I ran across the street, by the Hospital, and back through the church parking lot. I looked frantically as I ran. My heart was pumping and my face was hot. I looked in the church. I ran back to where Kaelin was. I prayed over and over for God to give me the check back. We looked everywhere - under cars and in trash cans - for about an hour.

At the end of that, I was disappointed in myself and depressed. We got back home and I declared that I was done for the day and was going to bed (it was about 4pm). I laid down and pouted.

Then God spoke to me: "Clearly, you do not trust me". I said, "I do, I'm just upset at myself". He said "you do not trust that I am in control and that I am good. You



"Lost in Transition: Seeking God's Will in Times of Change".

A class I designed and taught aimed at college students.

do not trust that all things work for your good." (See Romans 8:28). Oddly enough, in my Lost in Transition class earlier that week, my two main teaching points were "God is in control" and "God is good". My main message was that we don't actually believe that and don't live reflecting that, which is why we struggle with knowing what to do in life and how to make decisions. And here I was, disbelieving.

I struggled between that thought and my self-pity. Finally, I conceded my lack of faith, admitted that it will probably end up good, and asked God to help me trust Him more.

Right then, the phone rang. I was hesitant to answer it. I felt convicted to get it, so I answered it. It was Jon the church maintenance guy. He said a woman was there with my check. I went and got it and deposited it. Clearly God is in control. Clearly God is good.

We Love you all! Please let us know how we can pray for you. Or feel free to call or e-mail us to hear how we are doing. And please visit our website: <http://www.paulandkaelin.com/>

Paul and Kaelin Ireland (and Luke!)