

The Wild Man

Members of the First United Methodist Church of DeLeon's "Wild at Heart" Study Group.

Upcoming Events

- We're skipping a couple of Sundays to allow everybody to enjoy Spring Break.
- Next meeting will be March 25 – wear your hiking clothes!
- We're a little short on pictures this time – Sorry.

Individual Highlights:

God's Adventure2

God's Beauty 2

Next Meeting 2

Website:

www.cctc.net/~ccoan/

brothers

Forum:

<http://deleonfumcbob.i>

nforme.com/

Fourth Meeting

Once again savoring the fragrance of used jockstraps, the Wild at Heart Group met March 4 at the high school fieldhouse.

Members began gathering at 6 p.m., and griller extraordinaire James Morgan produced what seems to be becoming our standard fare – grilled sausage and tortillas. James added sautéed onions to the mix, and everyone seemed to

partake equally of the food and fellowship.

Moving inside, we watched a news report on the "Men's Church Movement," noting that our church – at least in the early service – seems to avoid the stereotype by being nearly half male in attendance. But some of the concerns rang true about the way that church seems to have a reputation among some men as being for "wimps,

weirdoes and women.

We then moved into the second half of chapter two of *Wild at Heart*, "The Wild One Whose Image We Bear."

Discussion ranged over how Eldredge's three desires apply to God – a battle to fight, an adventure to live, and a beauty to rescue.

Plans for the next meeting (March 25) include a hike along the Sabanna River.

God's Battle to Fight

Although, as we talked about last meeting, Jesus is often depicted as a gentle man – "Mr. Rogers with a beard" – there is a fierce side to the Lord.

When the "spirit of the Lord" comes upon Samson, he kills a lion with his bare hands, beats the snot out of 30 Philistines, and kills a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass.

Virtually every book of the Bible tells us about God's warring activity.

It's somewhat different to

look at the Bible that way – as an account of a great battle that God is fighting – but it seems that God's great battle is not to get people to stop sinning, or to silence heretics, but he's fighting for our souls and our love.

Although there is a peaceful, comforting side to the Lord, that one-dimensional view seems to lack something brave and intentional.

God has the strength to be kind, and comforting, and gentle when we need

it, but he also has the power and the fierce determination to fight for us when we need it.

The Jesus depicted on Sunday school walls is not the only aspect – yes, he's Mr. Rogers with a beard, but he's also William Wallace at the battle of Stirling, calling us up into the great adventure, the great battle for our very souls and to live a life not lived in fear.

"What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?"

God's adventure to live



It's a dangerous world – filled with risk and uncertainty. But never forget that after God made the world, he pronounced it “Good.”

Not safe, but good.

In the readings, Eldredge presents the idea that God prefers adventure, danger, risk, the element of surprise. The world God created, he says, tells us much about the character of God himself.

We discussed the idea that, if God already knows everything that's going to happen, where's the risk?

Even though we all try to reduce the element of risk in our lives, our work and our relationships, God seems to tell us we should go the other direction – remember the story from Genesis where God turns over the world to Adam and Eve, giving them the freedom to reject Him and knowing that, if they do,

they will plunge the whole world into evil?

Remember also the stories we wrote for ourselves as boys – where, at the last minute, we came through and showed we had what it takes?

God writes the same kind of stories for Himself – He loves to come through in the end, He loves to show us He has what it takes, He loves to show us how much we matter to him.

“So often, we tell boys ‘Don’t.’ Don’t climb on that, don’t break anything, don’t be noisy, don’t be messy, don’t take such crazy risks. But God’s design is ‘Yes.’ Be fierce, be wild, be passionate.”



God's beauty to rescue

“Let’s say that sex had never been invented . . . and somebody comes up with the idea. What kind of person would you expect him to be?”

That’s the question we opened our discussion of God’s Beauty to Rescue with. (And, by the way, thank you very much to the person who piped up with “Hugh Hefner!” I’m still trying to get the image of God as Hugh Hefner

out of my mind!!!)

But God *is* romantic – everything from foreplay to orgasm was His idea.

The Song of Solomon (would the “Christians” you know have included this relatively erotic, explicit book in the Bible?) is both a celebration of passion in marriage and a metaphor for Christ and his bride (the church).

How does this image

affect your image of God?

Using it as a basis, what lengths will God go to rescue his bride? How long will He pursue her? Does He play it safe?

Even though He gets angry at our rejection (see Hosea, or the place where he calls the church “a she-camel in heat”), his goal is to win us back, and he will go to any lengths to do so.

Coming up – our first hike

Although we decided not to meet for next two weeks (Spring Break will have many of us scattered), the suggestion to have our next meeting be a hike was met with great approval.

The plan – such as it is at

this point – is for us to meet Sunday, March 25, at “Vampire Bridge,” at 4:30 p.m. We plan to take off upriver, and eventually arrive at a cabin in the Nunnely Bottom.

Once there, we’ll eat, watch a short video, and

begin our discussion of Chapter Three of *Wild at Heart*, “The Question That Haunts Every Man.”

It’s a chapter that deals with naked self-assessment . . . and reveals why we do some of the things we do.