



*"The little church with a big heart"*

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## The 161<sup>st</sup> Letter of Lee to the Olivet Church

In the week that just passed, I was reminded once more about how good it is to stay with something until it is finished. If you are like me, sometimes in the middle of a project or extended activity, you get tired and attention begins to wane. It's often tempting to walk away before things are completely finished. Last week I attended what might have been the best conference I've ever attended, and I've been to a lot of conferences in my time. The preaching was extraordinary. The music was beyond great. The break out sessions for classes were lively and very informative. I was in the midst of many faithful Christians with great minds and humble spirits. The worship experiences were pure, sincere and powerful. It seemed like everyone I encountered was warm and friendly. It was an amazing time of learning, worship and fellowship.

Still, by the last morning of the conference I was tired. There was one more morning to go for the last and final part of the event that would be taking place on Thursday morning. But knowing I had to drive over 500 miles to get home and that the drive was going to be eight to nine hours long, I had convinced myself to skip the very last part of the conference. (I may have skipped a class or two in my time.) So on Thursday morning I checked out of the hotel where I was staying and was sure that the best parts were history. I set my GPS for home and braced myself for the drive. As I turned left out of the hotel parking lot and was instructed by the GPS to get into the turning lane to turn right to begin the journey back, I approached the cross roads where I should have turned in the direction of home. For whatever reason I just couldn't bring myself to do it. So I canceled the route and drove straight back toward the church where the conference was held. I ended up staying until everything was over, and I am so glad I did.

I was sitting in the lobby of the church drinking coffee after the last morning devotion, and one of the conference leaders walked by recruiting choir members for the conference choir. So I got up and went into the chapel and joined the choir. During rehearsal and after that rehearsal I met people who I had not yet met and was surprised to learn of connections I had with them that went back to my childhood years. Later that morning I heard what might have been one of the best sermons I've ever heard in my life. It was given by the President and Professor Emeritus of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. After the benediction and everyone was leaving, I went to my car and began the long drive home. At dusk -after hundreds of miles and almost eight hours of driving- as I crossed the state line from West Virginia back into Virginia on I64, I looked over and saw that the moon was full as it was brightly rising between two mountains. The colors surrounding it were so vivid and beautiful. It seemed so close that it almost looked like someone could reach out and grab it. If I had gone with my own plan of the morning I would have missed so much. I would have missed meeting more great people, being part of a great choir, hearing one of the best sermons ever, and I would have missed seeing that beautiful moon.

So for the newsletter for May of 2026, I am compelled to encourage us to always follow through to the end of what God leads us to. He has shown me in recent days that sometimes He really does save the best parts for last! Christian, be encouraged and stay the course.

*Grace and Peace,*