

BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE

NOVEMBER 2012 | VOL. 63 NO. 3

...HE CHANGETH THE TIMES AND THE SEASONS...
...WISDOM AND MIGHT ARE HIS...
...HE REMOVETH KINGS, AND SETTETH UP KINGS...
I THANK THEE, AND PRAISE THEE, O THOU GOD OF MY FATHERS...
...HE REVEALETH THE DEEP AND SECRET THINGS...
...THE LIGHT DWELLETH WITH HIM...

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ON THE TABLE

Thankful for what and to whom?

by Keith Bassham | Editor

A couple of years ago during the Thanksgiving season, it came to me that a lot of people in media were talking about thankfulness and being thankful and the need for being thankful, and I began to ask, "To whom or to what are these people being thankful?" Since a growing percentage of the population claims not to believe in God, who do they intend to thank? Add to that the larger group who acknowledges some form of deity yet deems that deity to be mostly irrelevant or hobbled, and the same question applies. Who are these people thanking, and for what?

One atheist writing on the subject claims that those of his "faith" can and should be thankful. To whom? People — farmers, soldiers, veterans, engineers, doctors, friends, family. That is plausible, and we believers can echo those thanksgivings, but some time back Al Mohler at Southern Baptist Seminary had a column that laid out the atheist's quandary. He noted a professor of humanities without a belief in God had written this paragraph:

Hiking through a nearby woods on a late summer day recently, I followed the turning path and suddenly saw a pristine lake, then walked down a hill to its edge as birds chirped and darted about, stopping at a clearing to register the warmth of the sun against my face. Feelings welled up: physical pleasure, delight in the sounds and sights, gladness to be out here on this day. But something else as well, curious and less distinct, a vague feeling more like gratitude than anything else but not towards any being or person I could recognize. Only half-formed, this feeling didn't fit into any easily discernable category, evading my usual lenses and language of perception.

Mohler's observation is my own: the professor wants to be grateful — you can hear it in the writing — but he does not believe in God, so who may receive that thanks he wants to much give? The cosmos is not the product of farmers, soldiers, veterans, engineers, doctors, friends, and family. To paraphrase President Obama, they "didn't build that." The farmer may provide labor and toil, but not the soil nor the life bound in the center of the seed. The soldier may guard your freedom, but freedom itself is bestowed upon us by the Creator according to the deists who founded our country. Thank the engineer for the bridges and dams, but not the water they seek to overcome and control. I think you can see the point.

Only a believer can give meaningful thanks for all things.

Remember to vote in the election November 6. Millions of Christians fail to do so every election. Pray. Prepare. Participate.

Keith Bassham

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PRESIDENTIAL PERSPECTIVE

A prayer for revival



by Linzy Slayden | President | BBFI

Revival is a season in the life of the church when God causes the normal ministry of the gospel to surge forward with extraordinary spiritual power. Revival is seasonal, not perennial. God causes it; we do not. It is the normal ministry of the gospel, not something eccentric or even different from what the church is always charged to do. What sets revival apart is simply that our usual efforts greatly accelerate in their spiritual effects. God hits the fast-forward button. Christians are empowered and refreshed and this blessing spills out from the church to wash over the nations with the result being a gathering of many new converts to Christ.

“Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?” is what the psalmist pleads in Psalm 85:6.

But the teachings of the Bible go beyond its words. The Bible’s ideas are full of revival theology. The Scripture is clear. God is able to rend the heavens and come down with unexpected demonstrations of His saving power and more. When we see that God is the great life-giver and that we sinners are by nature the living dead, the whole biblical story stands as a thrilling account of reviving mercies!

However, it seems that we are living in the shadows of the great moving of revival. I, for one, want to see the power of God upon the church I pastor, I want to see it in your church, I want our missionaries to experience it and every endeavor we are involved in for the Lord’s work. We live in strange but exciting times. We see the church today awash in experience-seeking ministries. And as doctrinal and moral standards are eroding, people connect the dots and know something is missing. We live in an entertainment culture and our churches seem to want to be event churches every Sunday. And the quietness of communion with God, the dedication and heroism of Christian obedience, the delights of Christian thought and service and balance in ministry are privileges not encouraged by the mood of our times.

The modern world needs to see authentic, biblical Christianity that is exciting and fulfilling under the power and direction of the Holy Spirit of God.

Often we can feel like there is no hope. But time and again we are reminded to defy despair and pray for renewed enjoyment of God’s love and power.

Francis Schaeffer once prayed in public, “O God, we thank you that you exist.” Our hope is that God is there. He may withdraw from us the enjoyment of His nearness but He is still there. And as long as He is there, He can renew our experience of Him here.

We are grateful for God’s reviving mercies in the past. But I am not content with past blessings. My prayer is for the Lord to rend the heavens and come down again in these last days! Let’s have courage to pray boldly for a revival sent from God.

WORLDWIDE MISSIONS

World Mission Service Center



by Jon Konnerup | Mission Director | BBFI

The World Mission Service Center, commonly known as the BBFI Mission Office, was set up in the early years of our Fellowship to assist our churches in sending the gospel around the world. To this end, the mission statement of the World Mission Service Center is: “Serving churches and their missionaries as they endeavor to fulfill the Great Commission.”

It is not our desire, purpose, or vision to ever take the place of the local, sending church as the mission agency set before us in Scripture — Acts 13. We are here to assist the local church in any way possible with the Great Commission given to the church by our Lord Jesus.

Following are the services and some of the benefits that the Mission Office provides to the churches of the BBFI:

- Thorough screening of missionary applicants for approval
- Contact Directory – online and printed copy
- Contribution Services
 - Process and receipt contributions averaging \$3 million a month
 - Expedite emergency funds for churches to the missionary
 - Provide various donor contribution reports
 - Manage compliance with U.S. tax laws
- Promotional materials
 - Mission conference supplies: faith promise cards, faith promise devotional, placemats for banquets, posters for foyers and classrooms, brochures, and videos
- Support Services
 - Assist with mission conference bookings
 - Provide information and assistance to field representatives
 - Assist sending churches with missionary care
 - Provide assistance and set-up for mission trips
- Website Services
 - Detailed missionary contact information, downloadable missionary pictures and videos, and PowerPoint backgrounds
- Other Services
 - Mailing labels for churches and missionaries
 - Furlough list of missionaries
 - Missionary email list
 - Monthly Missionary Connection newsletter
 - Weekly Connection Point - a missions-focused email

The BBFI World Mission Service Center does not charge approved missionaries, colleges, or the *Tribune* for handling contributions. They receive 100 percent of every dollar that comes in for them. Just like individual missionaries, we are financed by faith — through the voluntary giving of churches, individuals, and missionaries. As you choose assistance for your worldwide mission endeavors, let the BBFI World Mission Service Center be your vehicle to help you accomplish the Great Commission!

Report from Hilliard, Ohio



by Wayne Guinn | Director | NCPO

God is doing great things in Hilliard, OH. Here at the NCPO reports like this thrill our hearts and drive our motivation for the work we do. Let me introduce to you Ben York, pastor of Guide Church Baptist and share his report with you of what the Lord has been doing in the hearts of his people in Hilliard.

Guide Church Baptist had their first public meeting October 30, 2011, in Hilliard, OH, a suburb of Columbus. Pastor Ben York and three other families moved 1,000 miles from Oklahoma to begin this church from scratch. Since moving to Hilliard they have seen God do the impossible from 160 people at their first service to 1,500 people showing up to their Easter event, with 406 returning for their first Easter service and over 30 saved.

Guide Church Baptist is now just under a year old and God has done so many amazing things in such a short amount of time. They have witnessed over 100 people give their lives to Christ in just under a year. From the time of writing this article there have been over 50 first-time visitors in the last seven weeks! But God is just getting started in Hilliard.



Guide Church Baptist's current location at Hilliard Crossing Elementary is not renewing their contract to use the building. More importantly God has something greater in mind. In just a month of searching for a new location, God placed a building for lease right into their laps. The cost of leasing this building all week is the same as the cost of renting out the school just one day a week. Plus, their offices can also be moved into the new building. God is good! Guide Church Baptist is excited about the new move and new opportunities for services during the week. What might have seemed like a stressful situation for a young church has turned into a much greater blessing.

Find out more at the church's website, www.guidechurch.com.

With this great opportunity comes some cost. Would you pray about helping out in one of the areas below?

- New building security deposit - \$1,300
- Building permit fee - \$600
- New building interior improvement (paint, carpet, stage, dry wall, cleaning supplies, chairs) - \$1,100



The *Tribune* is thrilled and honored that Founding Editor Noel Smith had his portrait placed in the Christian Hall of Fame housed at Canton Baptist Temple, Canton, OH along with a biographical sketch.

Just a few months before his death in 1974, Editor Smith used an entire page of the newspaper to publish this message:

The Baptist Bible Tribune is the only place on earth where all the churches, pastors, missionaries, evangelists and laymen and laywomen of the BBFI can meet together ...

What was true nearly 40 years ago continues to be true today. The *Tribune* provides a vital connection for our Fellowship – connecting us with one another and connecting us with the rest of the world.

Remember the *Tribune* and its vital role when it is time for the February Tribune Offering.



DIGRESSIONS

Digressions incontestably are the sunshine; they are the life, the soul of reading.

-Laurence Sterne

Some NYC school nurses authorized to distribute “morning after” pill

NASHVILLE (BP) — More than 1,100 New York City students have received from public school nurses in the last year types of contraceptives that can cause abortions.

The program in 13 public high schools provided 567 students with the “morning after” pill and 580 students with Reclipsen, a birth control pill, since it began in 2011, Reuters news service reported September 24. New York City apparently is the first city in the United States to distribute hormonal contraceptives, health officials said.

Parents had the opportunity to opt their children out of the program after it began, but only 1-2% has done so, according to the New York City health department. The *New York Post* was the first news outlet to report on the program in its September 23 edition.

Some critics of the program said parents were not being given the information needed to make decisions for their children.

“It is unconscionable for New York City’s government to implement any program that gives medication to students without the prior authorization of parents,” New York State Assemblyman Marcos Crespo said in a letter to Mayor Michael Bloomberg, according to Reuters. Crespo, a Democrat, urged Bloomberg, a Republican, to end the program.

Source: Baptist Press, www.bpnews.com

Oldest message in a bottle found

Skipper Andrew Leaper came across the bottle while hauling in his fishing nets in the North Sea off the coast of Shetland. He later learned that the message in the bottle had been adrift for 97 years and 309 days. This surpasses the previous record by more than five years.

Labeled as drift bottle 646B, the record-breaking bottle contained a postcard asking the finder to write down the date and location of the discovery and return it to the “Director of the Fishery Board for Scotland.” The postcard promised a reward of six pence.

The watertight glass bottle was released on June 10, 1914, by Captain C.H. Brown of the Glasgow School of Navigation. It was one of 1,890 scientific research bottles specially designed to sink downwards and float close to the seabed. Each bottle contained the same postcard with the reward offer.

Of the batch released in 1914, 315 bottles have been found so far. Captain Brown’s original log, now held by Marine Scotland Science in Aberdeen, is still updated each time a bottle is tracked down.

Source: Discovery News, www.news.discovery.com



Elliot’s daughter writes children’s book about growing up in Ecuador jungle

Valerie Elliot Shepard was only ten months old when Ecuadorian Indians killed her father, 29-year-old Jim Elliot, and four other missionaries. But Valerie and her mother returned to the jungle later, and the former spent several years with the tribe that had killed her father. Now,

the Auca Indians are predominantly Christian.

“[I] picked up the Auca language, just immediately started playing with the kids, had a ball in the river, and they taught me to do the things they did, which was spearing little

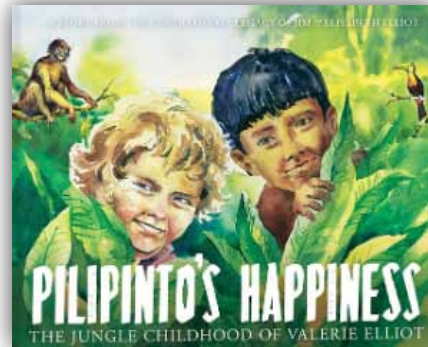
insects or catching little fish with their hands or catching crawfish,” she recalls. “I was just generally happy as a clam, if you could say that. I was perfectly happy with the jungle.”

Shepard was given the name of *Pilipinto*, which means “butterfly,” because “she was flitting around from one thing to the next.” Based on those experiences, she wrote a book, *Pilipinto’s Happiness: The Jungle Childhood of Valerie Elliot*.

“One of the main things I want to convey is that God took care of us there,” she accounts. “He absolutely was a kind and tender Shepherd to us, and I only got bee stings one time and nothing more dangerous than that ever bit us or hurt us. So, the Lord was protecting us, and that’s a big theme in the book. But just the contentment that I had, and my mother did learn, too, from the Indians. She saw that they never complained. They were perfectly happy with whether it rained or the sun shined. That was life.”

Since then, Shepard has returned twice to visit with the Auca Indians.

Source: Charlie Butts, www.onenewsnow.com



In the NEWS of the WEEK

Dr. G. Beauchamp Vick, pastor Temple Baptist church, Detroit, held a highly successful series of meetings with Kansas City Baptist Temple, Kansas City, Mo., Wendell Zimmerman, pastor. "The meetings with Dr. Vick of Detroit," says Mr. Zimmerman, "have proved a great blessing and it is expected as a result of these meetings God's work will be enlarged and souls will be saved."

Rev. Parker Daily, pastor Calvary Baptist church, Columbia, Tenn., recently conducted a 10-day series of meetings for the Kenney Heights Baptist church, Kansas City, Kas., Bob Winegar, pastor. During the meetings Mr. Daily conducted the broadcast for Kansas City Baptist Temple.

Rev. James O. Combs, pastor Tabernacle Baptist church, Joplin, Mo., was one of the special speakers at Baptist Bible College during the last week of November.

The sermon of Rev. Paul F. Donnelson, pastor Park Avenue Baptist church, Lynchburg, Va., "What's wrong with the New Bible?" has been published in pamphlet form.

Bible Baptist church, Enid, Okla. had a Sunday school attendance of 474 Nov. 9, and an offering of \$677.12.

Last Sunday was observed as "Gratitude Sunday" by Twin City Baptist Tabernacle, Mishawaka, Ind., Victor E. Sears, pastor. Twin City Tabernacle is working toward a goal of 600 Sunday school attendance. The Tabernacle also has a goal of \$6,000 special offering for Easter.

SEDGWICK COUNTY
Wichita, Kansas
Office of
TY LOCKETT
Sheriff

Walter J. Mohr
Undersheriff

October 16, 1952

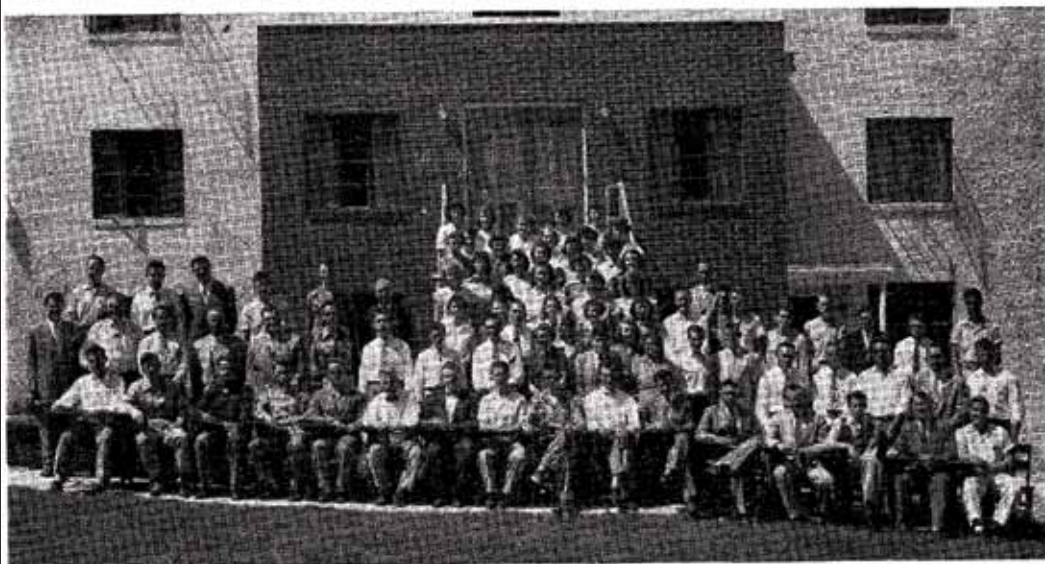
Dear Rev. Wilson:
Wichita Baptist Tabernacle
405 Cleveland,
Wichita, Kansas.

girls, saw three of her girls accept Christ; the other five came from the Young People's department. The Sunday school offering for that day was \$420.25.

From the Bulletin of Tabernacle Baptist Church, Carthage, Missouri:

SECOND ANNIVERSARY
Sunday, Nov. 9, 1952, marks the second anniversary of the Tabernacle

Second Year Class of Baptist Bible College



(TRIBUNE Photo: by Craig)

THE OFFICERS OF THE CLASS are: President, Sidney E. Phillips, South Bend, Ind.; vice president, John R. Morgan, Roswell, N. M.; secretary, Dorothy Hooze, Springfield, Mo.; treasurer, Franklin Wood, Detroit, Mich.; song leader, Don Gresh, Tulsa, Okla.; pianist, Helen E. Johnston, Lubbock, Texas; chaplain, Eli Harju, Detroit, Michigan. Dr. R. O. Woodworth is sponsor.

The age of instant information does not seem to be affecting the length of sermons

Internet marketers speak of having as few as three seconds to capture the attention of a generation used to texting, Twitter, and other forms of social media.

But one place pastors seem to be drawing the line on this accommodation to secular culture is in the time they spend preaching. Sermons are staying the same length, if not getting slightly longer, research indicates.

The percentage of congregations reporting sermons of 20 minutes or less decreased, from 41% to 36%, from 1998 to 2006 in the National Congregations Study. In the same period, the percentage of congregations reporting sermons of 21 to 45 minutes increased, from 52% to 56%.

Whether holding the line on sermon length represents a positive affirmation

of the value of the pulpit message or a stubborn resistance to change is a matter of diverse opinion.

And there always have been plenty of opinions on the subject of sermon length.

In an 1882 review in *The Nation* of J.P. Mahaffy's "The Decay of Modern Preaching," the critic agrees with the author's lament about the dullness and length of sermons. "No congregation now would beg the preacher to reverse his hour-glass and give them another hour."

But that was back in a time when preachers would routinely talk for an hour or more.

Today, less than 10% of congregations have sermons longer than 45 minutes. And religious consumers have many choices if sermon length matters.

The desire to hold the line on ser-

mon length amid the latest technological assault on attention spans may be in part a reaction to the trend over the last half-century for churches to give ground on offerings such as Sunday evening services and weeknight Bible studies in deference to the greater demands on the time of contemporary churchgoers.

The sermon is seen as the last remaining opportunity for pastors to reach many in their flocks with Christian education and religious messages. No wonder they would be reluctant to pare down their preaching time, said Scott McConnell, associate director of LifeWay Research.

"It does not surprise me that the [sermon] length is the same or slightly more," McConnell said.

Source: David Briggs, www.faithandleadership.com



CANTON MEETING FILLED WITH HIGHLIGHTS

BY THE TRIBUNE

For BBFI President Linzy Slayden, the Fall Fellowship Meeting held in Canton, OH, September 17-20 was “a time of celebration and a time of challenge.” Host Pastor Mike Frazier and Canton Baptist Temple repeated their first-class handling of the needs of the Fellowship pastors, missionaries, and members who attended the meeting, just as they did three years ago. Attendance swelled Wednesday evening to nearly fill the church’s 1,800-seat auditorium

Highlights of the meeting included:

- Fellowship Faithfulness Awards were presented to veteran missionary Elmer Deal, to BBFI church planter and pastor Parker Dailey, and to long-time Baptist Bible College professor James Sewell. This was a first for the BBFI.
- BBFI missionaries were approved for ten fields (see inside front cover of this issue).
- Friends of the BBFI David Gibbs and Elmer Towns were evening speakers.
- President Slayden hosted his first BBFI State Chairmen luncheon and discussion.
- Music groups Soul’d Out and Selah sang for

the meetings, with Selah giving a full concert Wednesday night.

- Boston Baptist College students presented an original live musical drama about pioneer missionary Adoniram Judson.
- Noel Smith was inducted into the Christian Hall of Fame, and the portrait was unveiled in the Wednesday evening service.
- Seminario Biblico Bautista (Baptist Bible Seminary) of San Jose, Costa Rica, joined Baptist Bible College Asia as an approved international school of the BBFI upon the recommendation of the Education Committee of the National Directors.
- Series of testimonial videos were presented throughout the week with the theme “I am BBFI.”

Preachers for the week were Larry Upchurch, Archie Emerson, Russell Johnson, Nathan Smith, Mel Brown, John Reilly, Col. Steven Keith, Jason Kratochvil, Jesse Parnell, Jon Konnerup, David Gibbs, Elmer Towns, and Linzy Slayden. Angela and Sheena Walton addressed a meeting of fellowship women.

John Arnold of Pennsylvania said, “The Canton meeting was a breath of fresh air

for me. I was greatly encouraged in pastoral ministry and also for the future of the Fellowship. Many thanks to Pastor Mike Frazier and Canton Baptist Temple for their red carpet treatment.”

Recently approved missionary Esteban Alvarez says, “My family has not been the same since my parents became believers thanks to a BBFI missionary, and now we have the opportunity to be second-generation BBFI





missionaries to Uruguay. One thing I know — I am BBFI and have no issues saying it. Let's move forward together!"

Although the results of the bi-annual election of officers was announced earlier, in September the new officers take their place for business. Newly elected secretary Bill Carter joined reelected officers Linzy Slayden, Mike Frazier, Keith Gillming, Dan Lamb, and Howard Braymer as the Executive Committee met. Business items included review and approval of audits for the BBFI Mission Office and the *Baptist Bible Tribune*, ratification of Baptist Bible College Trustees Rohn Boone, Eddie Lyons, Don Elmore, Doug Cox, and Mark Carter. Mission Director Jon Konnerup, with the assistance of Pastor Lewis McClendon,

announced the phasing out of the Annual Missionary Projects Offering in favor of a new program for Missionary Care, and Konnerup reported updates to the Christian Conduct Statement for missionaries.

Pastors attending the business meetings also heard reports from the presidents of Fellowship colleges, the Tribune, and the National Church Planting Office. President Slayden asked for updates for several projects, including the Bible Distribution Project (churches far exceeded the goal of 100,000), the Holy Land Tour, BBFI Cruise, Prayer and Fasting Day, and an explanation of the Fellowship Faithfulness Awards.

Linzy Slayden summed up the attitude of most when he said, "A great big 'Thank You' to

Mike Frazier and his staff and the good people of Canton Baptist Temple for the great work in organizing this national meeting. There are some great things happening in the BBFI. I am glad and happy to be a part of it.

Future meetings of the BBFI scheduled are:

- **February 18-20, 2013** Shiloh Hills Baptist Church, Kennesaw, GA
- **May 13-16, 2013** Baptist Bible College, Springfield, MO
- **September 16-18, 2013** Tri-City Baptist Temple, Gladstone, OR
- **February 17-19, 2014** Temple Baptist Church, Albuquerque, NM







SPEAKERS

FROM LEFT

JESSE PARNELL

DAVID GIBBS

MEL BROWN

JOHN REILLY

RUSSELL JOHNSON

JASON KRATOCHVIL

LINZY SLAYDEN

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

COL. STEVE KEITH

NATHAN SMITH

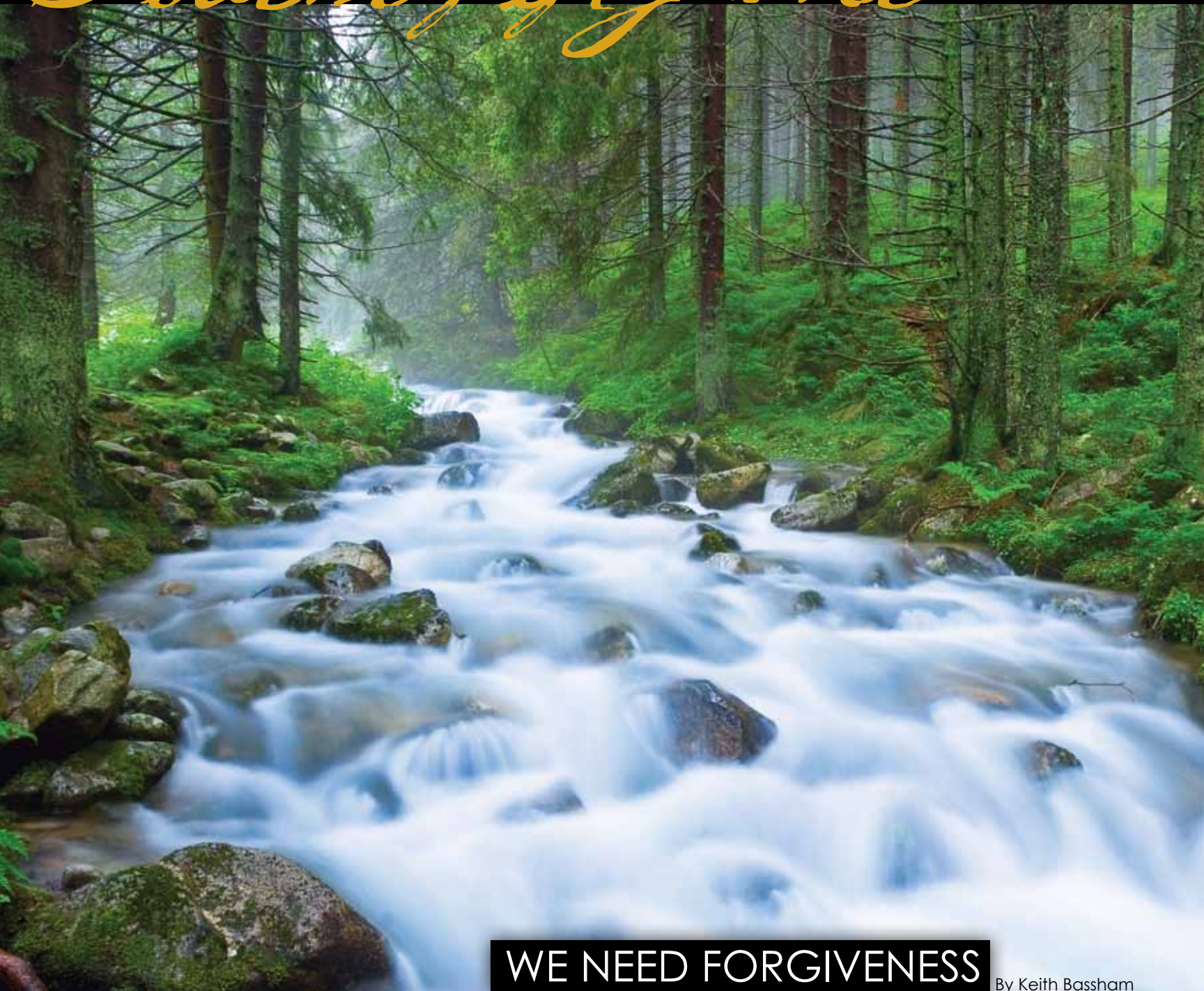
ELMER TOWNS







Psalm fifty one



WE NEED FORGIVENESS

By Keith Bassham

Second in a series of studies of Psalm 51

- 1 **Have mercy upon me, O God,** according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies
- 2 **Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,** and **cleanse me from my sin.**
- 3 **For I acknowledge my transgressions:** and my sin is ever before me.
- 4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest,
- 5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.
- 6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.



In the first article in this series, I wrote that Psalm 51 stands out for a few reasons. First, it is one of seven penitential psalms, that is, the words are those of a person who is sorry for moral or covenantal failure — it is a prayer for forgiveness. Another thing is that the psalm has a backstory identified in the inscription: “To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.” This was David’s asterisk on his record book. And we also looked at 1 Kings 15:5, where the Bible record is, “David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.”

And then we looked at the episode in detail, nearly a chapter and a half from II Samuel that tells us all about what David had done, and how his sin was exposed. And now, we see the extent of David’s penitence.

Three words for sin

In verses 1-6, the psalm begins with a cry for forgiveness, emphasizing the urgency with a series of cries for God to do several things: have mercy, blot out, wash, and cleanse.

Mercy and blotting out for the transgressions, washing for iniquity, and cleansing for David’s sin.

Hebrew poetry often uses parallel elements to stress a point. You see it in the Proverbs where the first line of a couplet makes a statement, and then the second line makes a similar statement using synonymous language.

Here is a good example. In Proverbs 1:14, evil companions seek to lure a young man, telling him:

(Statement 1) *Cast in thy lot among us;*

(Statement 2) *let us all have one purse*

While this is a fairly transparent statement, often it can be helpful when dealing with an obscure text with an unclear meaning. Hebrew poetry can also work the other way, with the second line expressing an anti-statement, the opposite of the first. For example, here is Proverbs 10:1:

(Statement 1) *A wise son maketh a glad father:*

(Anti-statement) *but a foolish son is the*

heaviness of his mother.

This is called parallelism, and there is an element of poetry here in the beginning of Psalm 51, but actually the psalm is not just piling on words as synonyms in parallel. There are distinct reasons why certain words are being used here, and one reason I believe David uses language the way he does here is to express the complete and utter moral failure he has committed. By coming at his sins these different ways using different words, he is in effect saying that we need to know there is no wiggle room for sinners, and if you try to squirm away from one way of looking at sin, another way will step into your path. Using these three words is a way of saying you have sinned in every possible way.

And what David has done here is not unique. There are some other examples from Scripture that use these words in parallel to express complete failure:

Daniel 9:24 “*Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity,*”

Exodus 34:6-7 “*And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,*”

Leviticus 16:21 “*And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins,*”

There are others, but that is the idea. If you want to say you are sorry for your sin, really sorry, without trying to wiggle out, you have to have all these things in mind.

Another reason for using these synonyms is that the words *transgressions*, *iniquity*, and *sin* are all slightly different.

Transgression

Take the word *transgressions*. The picture behind the Hebrew word translated “transgressions” in verses 1, 3, and 13 is one

blot out my transgressions.

and **be clear when thou judgest.**

of rebellion, as when children rebel against parents (see also Isaiah 1:2). It represents a deliberate departure from the proper and known path. This is no error, no mistake, no sin of ignorance. It is a step taken after a clear decision to do so.

Iniquity

Iniquity also has a unique idea behind the word. The literal sense of the Hebrew word translated “iniquity” (verses 2, 9) is “to be bent out of shape.” For example, in Psalm 38:6, where the KJV uses the phrase, “I am bowed down greatly,” the Jewish Publication Society Bible gives the translation “I am all bent.” It carries with it something about an underlying tendency, something deeply embedded that cannot be fixed until it is completely removed.

Sins and transgressions are primarily actions, but iniquity is more of an attitude, or a construct: idolatry, racism, hatred, covetousness — these are internal problems of the heart — hard, if not next to impossible, to govern by written laws, ordinances, and statutes. I think that is part of understanding what Paul meant in Romans 7 when he says that he had been a follower of the law all his life, but he said what caught him was the tenth commandment given at Sinai:

- 7 *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*
- 8 *But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence (lusting, and not merely sexual lusting). For without the law sin was dead.*
- 9 *For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.*
- 10 *And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.*

What was it about the tenth commandment? The text is, “Thou shalt not covet,” and coveting is a matter of the heart. Paul found he could control his actions, and thus follow the law nearly in its entirety, but he could not control his heart. I don’t know what it was specifically that tripped him up, what it was that he chose to covet, but when he realized that he was capable of sin within as

well as without, he confessed: “I died.”

He found the practical truth of Proverbs 5:22: “The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him,” and Psalms 28:3 “[T]he workers of iniquity ... mischief is in their hearts.” Iniquity represents a sin that becomes like cords that wrap around you. You get caught in the entanglement and just cannot break free.

Sin

The word translated “sin” (Hebrew *hata’* in verses 2, 3, 4, 9) or “sinner” (5 and 13) in non-theological contexts means “to miss the target.” Judges 20:16 tells of 700 left-handed sling warriors who could “sling a stone at a hair and not miss (*hata’*).” It’s the all-purpose word for sin, and corresponds roughly to the New Testament word, *hamartia*, that also means missing a target.

Balancing these words for sin are three Hebrew picture-words for forgiveness. The Hebrew translated “blot out” in verse 1 is also used to “wipe” a dirty dish (2 Kings 21:13). To “wash” in verses 2 and 7 could better be translated “scrub,” as one scrubs dirty clothes (Exodus 19:10, 14). “Cleanse” in verse 2 and “be clean” in verse 7 is the same word used for washing clothes in a river (Leviticus 13:6, 34, 58).

Let’s start some application here.

First of all, if David is going to be forgiven for his sin, he must acknowledge guilt. This is one of those cultural price tag changes. Sin is over-valued, while guilt for sin is devalued. Our culture does not like guilt, and we are constantly warned about feeling guilty. The fact is, though, people are guilty, and acknowledging the guilt is step one toward getting rid of it. Guilt, painful as it is, is necessary.

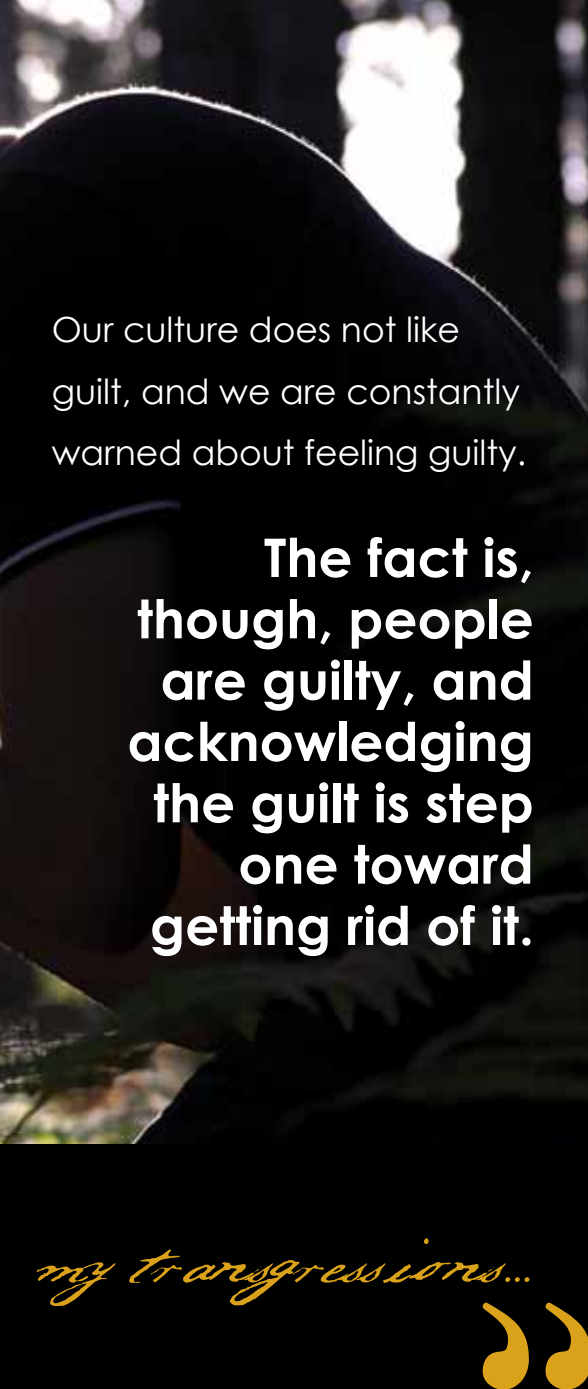
Paul Brand spent much of his life as a surgeon working with leprosy patients in India. Before his death in 2003, he contributed many lectures and pages on the subject of hand surgery and therapy. Near the middle of the 20th century, he became curious about deformities in those with Hansen’s disease, or what we call leprosy. The medical community had long believed that the limbs of those with Hansen’s disease just naturally led to a need for amputation. He soon was convinced that leprosy victims did not lose body parts due



“*For I acknowledge*”

to rotting or the disease itself, but because they lost the sensation of pain through nerve damage caused by the disease. They did not know they were injuring themselves through cutting or burning, or that the very poor among them were being bitten by rodents in their sleep.

This led him to see the positive value of pain and the need for sensitivity to pain for tissue to be normal and healthy. And so Dr. Brand learned that a life without pain is a dangerous life, because we need that warning system to tell us when something is wrong. In the spiritual realm guilt is exactly the same kind of warning system that pain is.



Our culture does not like guilt, and we are constantly warned about feeling guilty.

The fact is, though, people are guilty, and acknowledging the guilt is step one toward getting rid of it.

my transgressions...

It's a warning sign that helps us know that something needs to change. When Nathan came to David with that made-up story about a rich man stealing a poor man's lamb, David flew out of his chair in rage, but when he realized Nathan was talking about him, he went right back down again. *I am wrong*, he said. *I have sinned*, he said. The opening of the psalm is the dramatic restatement of David's guilt.

So the first step to forgiveness is to admit guilt. Second, We have to appeal to God's mercy. Notice that David is not asking for justice. David had committed crimes worthy of death. So if he started out this psalm by saying, "Lord, please treat me with justice, let me

receive what is fair," if God was a God of justice only, he would have to just instantly kill David, or you, or me the moment we sin.

You want your enemies to receive justice. You want them to get what they deserve. But when you're talking about yourself, you don't want justice — you want mercy. Mercy withholds the punishment we deserve. Mercy withholds justice. So we are fortunate that God is not only just, but also merciful.

And then there is the idea of grace, which is not the same as mercy. No, Hebrews 4:16 tells us, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." You need both mercy and grace. Mercy to escape the bad, and grace to be given the good.

Mercy is the action God takes when He doesn't give us what we deserve — in other words, he doesn't give us punishment when we sin. But grace is what God does give that we do not deserve. Salvation is a product of both His mercy and grace.

And that brings up a question. Do believers have a continuing need for forgiveness? The Hebrews text says, "Let us come boldly ...," implying that we should seek to obtain mercy and grace. Do we Christians need forgiveness? Is it proper for us to pray this psalm the way David wrote, asking God for mercy, for blotting out, for cleansing, and so on?

One text that comes to mind immediately is 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

It appears from this that we do not always need to be asking God for forgiveness, *per se*. When we place our faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, all of our sins are forgiven. That includes past, present, and future, big or small. I think that is within the meaning of the term *justification*. Believers do not have to keep asking for forgiveness or repenting in order to have their sins forgiven. Jesus died to pay the penalty for all of our sins, and when they are forgiven, they are all forgiven (Colossians 1:14; Acts 10:43).

What we are to do (a lot, I think) is confess our sins. The word "confess" means essentially "to agree with." It translates the Greek word *homologeō*, the word from which we get our own word homiletics. I teach preaching students that the idea of homiletics is that we say in the pulpit what God says. When we fail to

say what God truly says, then we are no longer preaching biblically.

When we confess our sins to God, we are agreeing with God that we were wrong, that we have sinned. It's almost the same thing that David says when he says to God, "Against thee, thee only ..." He does not deny that others were hurt and betrayed, but he keenly felt that his ultimate sin was betraying God, and that is the basis for his confession. God forgives us, through confession, on an ongoing basis because of the fact that He is "faithful and just." How is God "faithful and just"? He is faithful by forgiving sins, which He has promised to do for all those who receive Christ as Savior. He is just by applying Christ's payment for our sins, recognizing that the sins have indeed been atoned for.

Confession of sin, saying what God says about our sin, is a signpost of true conversion. Continuing in blatant sin is a signpost that we have not been truly converted. Refusal to say what God says is a signpost, as 1 John 1:8 says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

Therefore, I don't believe we actually need to say to God, "Please forgive me," every time we sin, but we do need to keep saying what God says about it, and not justify ourselves and make excuses. And it wouldn't hurt probably to reiterate the opening words of this psalm as we confess. It is a way to remind us that we remain children of Adam as long as we are in the flesh.

Some things to think about.

1 Children (and other immature people) sometimes try to wriggle out of responsibility by using a technical ploy or some other device to escape. For instance, "I did not hit my friend. I threw a ball at him." How do the words *transgression*, *iniquity*, and *sin* make it harder to escape judgment on a technicality?

2 Is it more accurate to say that a Christian is a sinner saved by grace, or that a Christian is a saint who sins?

3 When you experience unusual or unexplained pain, or otherwise feel something is wrong, even for a long time, do you tend to ignore it or do you have it checked out? Why? How does this relate to the way we handle sin and guilt in our lives?

HISTORY

BAPTIST

JESSE PETER — He chose slavery instead of freedom

In order to study the amazing life of Jesse Peter we must begin with Wait Palmer, pastor of First Baptist Church North, Stonington, CT. Palmer was renowned for his regular and extended preaching tours into Virginia and North Carolina, but in 1773 he expanded his itinerary to include South Carolina. His travels took him to George Galphin's Silver Bluff Plantation which was located on the Savannah River about 12 miles from Augusta, GA. Palmer sought and obtained Galphin's permission to preach to his approximately 125 slaves. His preaching produced almost instant results. He baptized about eight converts including Jesse Peter.

Before Galphin departed, he organized the converts into a Baptist church with David George as pastor. The church under George's leadership grew from eight to 30 members. Both David George and Jesse Peter had committed their lives to preach the gospel. Both men preached to the Silver Bluff slaves and the slaves on other plantations up and down the Savannah River. The year 1773 was a memorable one in the lives of the Silver Bluff slaves. The British invaded and occupied Savannah and Augusta, GA. The British offered freedom and protection to any slave who would abandon their slave owners. David George and Jesse Peter and about 90 Silver Bluff slaves fled to Savannah in response to the British offer. Savannah was overflowing with runaway slaves and white loyalists.

Interestingly, there was in Savannah at this time four of the greatest black Baptist preachers in America — the renowned George Lilie, Andrew Bryan, David George, and Jesse Peter — these men helped shape black Baptist history. Jesse Peter was extremely active during this time, preaching in Savannah and the surrounding plantations.

In July 1782, the American forces retook Savannah. George Lilie, fearing he would be re-enslaved, fled with the British to Jamaica. David George and about 60 slaves sailed

to British Nova Scotia; however, Jesse Peter and a number of Silver Bluff slaves chose to remain. Unfortunately, Jesse Peter did not explain his reason for this decision. It is highly probable that with the departure of David George, he felt a responsibility to minister to the scattered Silver Bluff congregation. Whatever his reason, one thing is certain — he was convinced that remaining was God's will.

In about 1783, George Lilie, writing from Jamaica to John Rippon of London, states that Jesse Peter had 60 members at Silver Bluff, "and a great work is going on there." Abraham Marshall, one of the most successful and highly esteemed pastors and evangelists in Georgia, described Jesse Peter saying, "His countenance is grave, his voice charming, his delivery good, nor is he a novice in the mysteries of the Kingdom."

In 1793, Jesse Peter moved the Silver Bluff Church to

Augusta, GA, and the name was changed to Springfield Baptist Church. The church under Jesse Peter's leadership experienced phenomenal growth. The records reveal that ten years after relocating in 1803, Springfield Baptist Church had 505 members.

The only insight we have into the thinking of Jesse Peter is gleaned from a letter he wrote in

about 1798 to Baptist historian Isaac Backus. He expressed sorrow that his situation prohibited him from traveling and meeting his fellow ministers. In describing his situation, he states, "... though our burdens and responsibilities are great and our labors during the week are so burdensome that on Sunday we can hardly get to our appointment. But, thank the good Lord, though our troubles and sorrows be great, when we are weak, He is strong."

When you are discouraged with your situation, remember Jesse Peter, the slave who rejected freedom and chose slavery that he might serve the Lord in the place he believed God had called him. Jesse Peter exchanged his earthly burdens for heaven's freedom and glories in about 1806.



Plantation slave quarters

by Thomas Ray





URBAN CURRENT

You live in an urbanized world

You can run but you can't hide. These are the words I used in my first "Urban Current" in February 2005. I told of sitting in an outdoor café in Kyrgyzstan with pounding beat accompanying the rhythm and rhyme of 50 Cent, American rap star. The decimals took the whole intersection by storm. Urbanization has taken the world by storm.

To the people who have fled cities as well as those who haven't lived in a city, declaring they never will, I have an announcement: You Live In An Urbanized World!

"Cities represent the worst humanity has to offer," is the protest of the anti-urban crowd. They speak of the crime. They bemoan the corruption. They shake their heads at the jammed expressways and the gridlocked intersections. They frown with disapproval at the poorly performing schools. They "tsk tsk" over the gay political muscle centered in cities. "Dangerous, dirty, and completely undesirable," grimacing city-shunners say. Okay. Maybe that's all true. And, maybe there is even more bad stuff you don't know about.

In America, billions have been spent trying to escape the city. Ironically, all over the world, several billion people have risked everything to move to cities. Why? To these hopeful masses the city represents opportunity, a better life, maybe a new life.

Cities also showcase people at their best and most noble. Cities are centers of technological wonder, medical miracles, architectural splendor, majestic and moving visual and performing arts, heart-stopping, crowd-pleasing sports, and some of the best educational institutions known to man. There is much to ooh and ahh over.

In the city, everything is magnified, multiplied, and intensified — the good, the bad, and the ugly. Urban towers stretch into the sky. Streets run for miles. Our hospitals are bigger. Our school system's larger. Budgets are ridicu-

lous. Our jails are vast. Our attractions are more numerous. Our problems and challenges are innumerable. Our stuff is bigger. We have more of everything. We tend to have more of everything in less space. Cities have more sinners per square inch, so cities have more sin per square inch.

Urban centers are seas of humanity; centers of human activity, pursuits, experiences, and yes, sin. They are whirlpools of business, entertainment, media, and politics. They are swimming pools for the rich, famous, powerful, and colorful. They are wading pools for the young, the hopeful, the explorer, and the experimenter. They are reflecting pools of academia, literature, art, and religion. They are cesspools of hubris, envy, greed, lust, hate, and hurt ... and did I mention, more opportunity for sin.

Cities are incubators. Cities are amplifiers. Cities are distribution engines. What the city thinks today, the rest of the world ponders tomorrow. What the city does has the rest of the world reacting and interacting. What the city produces, the rest of the world consumes. Think President Obama, Lady GaGa, Prince Harry, 50 Cent.

Come to find out, it's not about geography. The city can be made to live within its limits. However, its life, ideas, dynamic, and influence cannot be contained. Here are a few random headlines I pulled out of my file:

"The Myth of Rural Safety," *Associated Press*, January 26, 2000

"Chicago Gangs Find New Turf in Rural South." *Chicago Tribune*, June 1, 2004

"UNDER THE SUN — A NEW WAVE OF IMMIGRANTS IS TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES NOWHERE NEAR THE BORDER." *U.S. News & World Report*, June 20, 2005

"Hip Hop Nation After 20 years — How It's Changed America." *Time*, Feb. 8, 1999

A little over half the world lives in cities. The other half lives under their influence.

Just because you don't live in Manhattan doesn't mean you don't deal with urbanization on a daily basis.

Urbanization shows up in a variety of ways outside city limits. Everything is magnified, multiplied, and intensified with a few more trees and a little more grass, ... maybe with a little less political corruption. Witness the density of many suburban regions with accompanying traffic jams. See the toxic clouds of porn and gambling seeping from the cities, contaminating the land. The welfare state and the entitlement mentality, handcrafted and finely tuned in center cities, now burdens the whole country. Homosexual political clout began in cities. Now everybody everywhere contends with it. The media, centered in cities, pumps out its agenda-driven flow, coloring and influencing thought and action coast to coast. AIDS clinics in rural Mississippi. I have relatives living in small towns among cornfields whose lives are as harried as any urbanite.

Jesus' command to His disciples was never to run. It was always, "Go." To the people still trying to escape the city and urbanization, I simply beckon with Jesus' words: "Follow me." Just as surely as God prepared the 1st century world for evangelism, He has prepared the 21st century world. How does God expect us to marshal and maximize the opportunities urbanization affords?

You may not live in a city — you do live in an urbanized world.



by Charles Lyons, Pastor
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God still writes stories



by Mark Milioni | President | Baptist Bible College

There is great power in a story. Jesus recognized this and taught through the power of stories. In fact the Bible is a collection of stories God uses to teach us about Him and His ways — great stories of men and women that gave their lives to make a difference in the world for God.

God is still writing stories — with every student there is a story of God's call and purpose. Please let me introduce you to a couple of stories God is currently writing.

"I love this place." Those are the words of 39-year-old freshman Shannon Mulford. Shannon grew up in the home of his pastor and father, George Mulford. It was hard for Shannon to jump into the ministry because it seemed like so many in the family already had, so he didn't want to do it just because they had. After getting married at 19 to Tonya, the two started their own journey. Still active in their church, Shannon began in the insurance business and experienced great success at a young age. But God would not leave him alone and there was always something missing. Shannon went on to work as a financial adviser, again finding great success but still not the satisfaction one would think. He had everything this world desires — great family and large home — but his heart was still not satisfied. He knew God wanted him, but he just kept putting it off.

Shannon started his own business so he could spend more time with his family and this business also made it possible for them to move closer to their families. They moved about one year ago, enjoyed being near family and friends and even the involvement in church — but there was still something missing.

Shannon's father began a series of messages on the seven churches in Revelation. One church a week was discussed and with each church these words were shared by Jesus, "I know thy works." These words, Shannon said, convicted his heart each week. He knew that even though he was busy serving his church and his family, God wanted his life in the ministry. He simply could not escape the conviction and the call God had on his life. On that last Sunday of these messages, he could not wait to come forward and finally surrender his life to full-time ministry.

Shannon knew he needed training and looked at the options available — there were some options that would even allow him to stay in Florida. But he knew God wanted him to fully commit and that

Baptist Bible College was the place to be trained for full-time ministry. This past August 2012, Shannon and his family made their move to Springfield.

Looking at his life with much less income, a much smaller home, but with greater peace, joy, and satisfaction than he has ever known, Shannon without hesitation says, "I love this place." He says, "Following God's way is the best way. I love BBC. Being here is so much better than I ever imagined. The professors really know the Bible and are world-class teachers. It really is a hidden gem in the world."

We are so glad to be a part of the story God is writing with Shannon's life.



Shannon and Tonya Mulford

A.J. Watson recently said something that confirmed my belief in BBC. A.J.'s story begins with a pretty tough background — a life that would never fit in with the rules and atmosphere of BBC. A.J. recently told me his intention for BBC was all about basketball, but while he was here something happened. One day while studying, things just seemed to make sense and A.J. received Christ. His life, which had been all about himself, suddenly changed. He now lives to make a difference in the lives others. A.J. says, "If Christ hadn't found me, I would be a mess." He lovingly says, "When I came I didn't like the rules but now I love this place. This place changed my life. If it weren't for BBC I would be lost. Now I have a new direction and motivation."

Now, A.J. is excited to use basketball to reach children for Christ. We are excited about the story God is writing with A.J.'s life.



A.J. Watson

It could be that you are not pleased with the story your life is writing, but that can change. God wants to use our lives to make a difference and every life has an opportunity to make a difference.

Thank you for being involved in the stories God is writing. Your gifts, your prayer, and your friendship mean everything.

What students taught me



by David Melton | President | Boston Baptist College

Early on Wednesday morning of the recent BBF meeting in Canton, I had an appointment — at a truck stop! I was meeting the bus of Boston students as they headed back to our campus after performing a drama on the ministry of Adoniram Judson entitled “Devoted.” I got up and met them at the truck stop to throw my suitcase in with them (that’s a \$30 bag fee saved!). But I really wanted to personally tell our students thank you. That morning I stuck my head in the door of the bus, while the 18-wheelers roared engines all around us, and thanked them for how hard they worked, how great they did, for making my job so good, and for showing what Boston-quality heart and skill is.

The truth is that Boston students not only acted, and sang, and set up props, and worked hard, and made a pretty long bus trip. They also taught. They taught me. That dawned on me as the bus pulled away from that truck stop with about 35 of the best young people you ever saw. I didn’t think fast enough to say it then, so I’m saying it now.

The whole project, from Pastor Mike Frazier’s gracious invitation, to our faculty, to the amazing team at CBT (John McCaw and Robert Hagy and all the gang were incredible!), to Pastor Tim Taylor and Victory Baptist in Vergennes who loaned us their shuttle bus, to Dan and Tim for literally going the extra mile ... the whole experience was such a fun, energizing, inspiring team effort. I could say so much about them all. But since I have only a few lines, I will just thank the students for what they taught me as they recreated the lives of the Judsons and their missionary saga.

Students, you taught me once again that so much more is possible than we usually imagine. We couldn’t even tackle the idea until students returned for the fall and the performance was September 18! I privately agonized over my desire for the Judson

story to be told, and for our students to have that opportunity — I was horrified that I was asking too much. Thanks students. You taught me that committed young people can do amazing things.

Students, you taught me with your creativity. Actors, set designers, costume designers, stage crew with creative strategies to move the scenes along (“men in black”), all contributed to “Devoted: The Judson Story.” All across our campus as the preparations intensified you could feel the energies swell. Boston students taught me to never sell them short! They took the Judson story and owned it. Nowhere was that more evident than the original score, written by Boston students in a music composition class with Professor Jason Cross. I thought it would just be cool if they wrote an instrumental score. Then I heard they were going to write lyrics, too! Then, Jason popped into my office with this chirpy grin and said, “You need to hear this.” He read me the lyrics our students had written, drawn from the long-neglected journal remnants of Adoniram Judson ... “I will plant the cross. Lord, now send the rain!”* Neither of us said anything. Just couldn’t. We knew we had been schooled.

After the Tuesday night in Canton I was wandering around backstage high-fiving and fist-bumping everybody I saw. I was proud of Boston, proud to say with all of them that “I am Boston,” proud to work hard for these young people. But what I know now is that I was better educated, too. Our students had taught me again how much history matters, how inspired we can be from one another, how much fun you can have while you work incredibly hard. Around the corner, backstage, came one of our students, Jacqui. With hesitation she asked, “Did we do okay?” “Nope,” I replied momentarily masking my joy. “You didn’t do okay, you hit it out of the park, Jacqui!”

Make that, Professor Jacqui.

Incidentally, if you would like to hear “I Will Plant the Cross” or have a free copy of the music as written and performed by our students, just go to boston.edu/devoted



Raquel Avila | **Peru**

After band practice one evening, Daniel asked if I would speak with Antonia as he felt that she was ready to accept Christ. Antonia and I went to the back room to talk and before we were done I was convinced she understood the gospel and was ready to be saved. She prayed and asked Christ into her heart.

Another time during the invitation, three people came forward and I dealt with Elsa who also accepted Christ. It was quite humbling to speak with Elsa as she had tremendous guilt over past actions. Personally, I know that I am forgiven for my past misdeeds, but every so often my brain brings them to the forefront and all I can do is claim God's promise of His having forgotten them. Sharing this with Elsa lifted a big weight off of her shoulders and helped her to make a decision.

Pray for all of the new converts in Peru!

Larry & Tammy Allred | **Mexico**

The new church plant in the village of San Jose Tzal had its grand opening with 23 children and 20 adults from the village attending. Around 50 from North and South Merida Baptist Churches were there to assist with teaching the children, setting up chairs, serving food, cleaning up, etc. It was a very exciting night! Pastor Jose and his wife, Marifer, are already praying that the Lord will call another couple to help them in the new church plant. Please pray for many souls to be saved and lives changed as a result of this newest church plant in the Yucatan!

Sabrina Shangle | **Iceland**

On a recent visit to the States, I was able to purchase some Bible verse stamps to use in card making. Just like show and tell, I had to show all of my purchased treasures to my classmates. As my teacher was looking through all the stamps, she was reading them out loud! God's Word was being spoken in our class! May His Word not return void. Please pray for further opportunities to share the gospel in Iceland.

Lonnie & Martha Smith, Jr. | **Mexico**

We recently received a phone call from a lady who was our former neighbor here in Guadalajara. We had the joy of leading Vicky and her son to the Lord before they moved to Chicago. Her call was to let us know that she and her son are active members in their local church and to thank us for sharing the gospel with them. She was able to share that same gospel with her mother this past summer before she entered into the presence of the Lord on August 4th.

Russ & Faye Ivson | **England**

A young lady in our Droitwich Sunday school approached us and asked how to be saved. Faye took God's Word and showed her the way. That evening, news was made in Heaven as Elizabeth's name was written down in the Lamb's Book of Life! That is what it is all about. Taking every opportunity to sow the seed in this hard, rocky ground and rejoicing when we are privileged to glean some sheaves.

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Bill & Cindy Hargis | **USLG**

Angela started coming to church at the invitation of a friend. She likes the ministries we have for her children and has attended faithfully in spite of the fact that her husband refused to come with her. Recently, she came to the realization that the void she was trying to fill by attending church was not enough and she accepted Christ as her personal Savior.

Jeanette Gillespie | **Peru**

Leslie is a 10-year-old girl who attended our school for four years until this past year. Recently her parents told us she was having problems at her new school. It turns out that when the teacher was teaching evolution in science class, Leslie told her teacher in no uncertain terms that God created her and she didn't come from some monkey. This landed Leslie in the office. She also has been refusing to say the Hail Marys in class. She told the teacher the Bible says to only pray to God and that is the only one she will pray to. It has been so uplifting to know that even though Leslie is no longer at our school, what we taught her from God's word is still with her.

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It all began with a friend recommending a book. Jeremiah Zeiset owned a cabinetry business with a partner. Jeremiah was not a Christian, but his partner recommended some books to him when he had some questions about Christianity. Jeremiah read the books, realized his need for Christ, and became a believer.

Since books helped him, he reasoned that using books to communicate the message for Christ was something he should do. He initially bought books from a publisher and had them shipped them to a prison ministry in Florida who distributed them. That soon became a national, and then a worldwide, endeavor.

Jeremiah says, "God showed me, however, that I was limiting myself — the only books I was able to distribute were the books I paid for myself. One thing led to another, and I sold my share of the cabinetry business to my partner as my faith ultimately led to us not having an equal partnership and needing to part ways. LIFE SENTENCE Publishing was incorporated, and as we met great Christian authors, we started partnering with them to reach more people with great Christian messages."

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ATLANTA, GA

Chick-fil-A's Cathy still backs 'biblical families'

ATLANTA (BP) — Chick-fil-A still supports “biblical families,” company president Dan Cathy said Wednesday (October 3) during a brief interview with an Atlanta TV station.

“Families are very important to our country,” Cathy told WXIA-11. “They’re very important to all of us that are concerned about being able to hang on to the heritage that we have. We support biblical families, who’ve always been a part of that.”

The TV station asked Cathy about the company’s position on marriage during an interview at Cathy’s Rock Ranch in Georgia. The station said it was invited to do an interview about the ranch and its fall events, and that Cathy knew ahead of time the station was going to ask about his marriage views that have stirred nationwide controversy.

“Chick-fil-A’s focused on families,” Cathy said. “We’ve always been that way. We’re a family-owned business. We’re led by a family and our restaurants are operated by families,

and we serve millions of families every week at Chick-fil-A.”

During the summer, gay groups and some mayors criticized Chick-fil-A after Cathy told the *Biblical Recorder* newspaper the restaurant is “very much supportive of the family — the biblical definition of the family unit.” A radio interview then surfaced in which he had said, “I think we are inviting God’s judgment on our nation when we shake our fist at Him and say, ‘We know better than You as to what constitutes a marriage.’” Chick-fil-A’s donations to groups that support biblical marriage also became an issue.

The criticism became so great that hundreds of thousands of Chick-fil-A supporters — looking to speak out for the restaurant and for religious liberty — took part in a Chick-fil-A Appreciation Day organized by Mike Huckabee, which became the most successful single day in Chick-fil-A’s history.

In September, media outlets reported

that Chick-fil-A had agreed to stop funding pro-family groups in order to get approval for a restaurant in Chicago. That led to more outcry from the very supporters who stood in line for Chick-fil-A Appreciation Day and led the company to say its corporate giving had “been mischaracterized” for many months and that it will continue to fund programs that “strengthen and enrich marriages.”

Cathy released a statement telling Huckabee, “There continues to be erroneous implications in the media that Chick-fil-A changed our practices and priorities in order to obtain permission for a new restaurant in Chicago. That is incorrect. Chick-fil-A made no such concessions, and we remain true to who we are and who we have been.”

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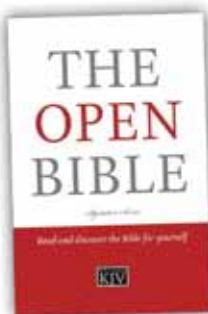
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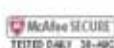


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AUSTIN, TX

Austin students take road trip to Boston

By Mike Marcellus
Pastor, First Church

In late August, we took 22 people from First Church, Austin, TX, and traveled 4,294 miles (round trip) in seven days to transport eight students to Boston Baptist College, two returning and six freshmen. Don Ledbetter and Heritage Baptist Church of Georgetown allowed us to use their nearly new people-mover van and we stayed in a couple of church gyms, Temple Baptist in Murfreesboro, TN, and North Ridge Baptist in Friedens, PA, (thanks pastor Scott Zediker) to help with the expenses.

While in Boston, President Dave Melton and the college took care of our accommodations, and we were able to take our group around to see the city. On our return trip we had a miscommunication with a church, and BBC President Mark Milioni and First Baptist Church of Medina, OH, graciously housed us. We had scheduled a stay with Pastor Linzy Slayden and Friendship

Baptist in Owasso, OK, but a little car trouble allowed us only to make it to St. Louis that day where Pastor Keith Gillming and Lighthouse Baptist put us up for the night in their gym.

We took our group on to Springfield, MO,



where we toured BBC, and President Milioni had lunch with us, spending about an hour out of his busy schedule to meet with our group. We also received two unsolicited financial gifts to help us from Dan Brown of LIFT Ministries

and interim pastor at Canyon Creek Baptist in Richardson, TX, and David Melton, who is also pastor of Metro West Church Boston, MA.

What a great fellowship — when a smaller, not very well-known church can travel half way across the country and obtain the assistance of sister churches in order to visit fellowship schools to help future students and eventual servants of God prepare for ministry. Several have asked me how we send so many into full-time service. It would not be possible without the help of men like these and the network of the Baptist Bible Fellowship, our colleges, and the men who lead them. We have five more students preparing to go in January and three more next August, the Lord willing.

The trip was a once-in-a-lifetime event for me and proved very effective to those who went with us.

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DALLAS, TX

How ministers can avoid facing an unprepared future

By Dixie Beard

The trend is clear. And it's less than encouraging. As reported by the Employee Benefit Research Institute in March 2012, 84 percent of American workers have little to no confidence they'll be able to meet their expenses when their years of paid service end. And ministers are no exception.

According to a 2010 report from the Associated Press, the majority of clergy are financially ill-prepared for vocational retirement — the time when paid service ends at a church or ministry.

While ministers are never called to retire from their duty to serve God, retirement from paid service is all but a certainty for most. In fact, the majority of ministers can expect to live an additional 20 years after their years of paid service have ended. These years should be a cherished time when ministers are able to access prepared savings and retirement funds to fulfill their call to provide for their families and pursue post-employment ministry endeavors. However, because of the ongoing trend to put off saving for the future, many ministers could face re-entry into the workforce just to receive enough income for living expenses.

For this reason, having adequate funds available in the future is a valuable goal, and

early preparation is a major key to achieving it.

Historically, one of the most reliable ways to financially prepare for the future has been through an employer-sponsored retirement plan, like the one offered by BBFI through GuideStone Financial Resources.

GuideStone Financial Resources President and Chief Executive Officer O.S. Hawkins noted that a minister earning \$40,000 annually who contributes only five percent of his salary toward a church-sponsored retirement plan each year starting at age 30, when he reaches age 65, assuming an eight percent annual rate of return, he will be on track to have more than \$517,000. If he starts saving that five percent at age 35, he would end up with around \$330,000 (nearly \$190,000 less). The point being that the longer a minister waits to start preparing for the future, the less potential income he is likely to build. Compound interest is what makes starting as soon as possible so essential.

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JOHN BLUE

John F. Blue, pastor emeritus of Mountain Springs Fellowship Baptist Church, went home to be with the Lord September 16, 2012. Born August 21, 1929, he attended Bible Baptist Seminary in Fort Worth, TX, and received a doctorate from Great Plains Baptist Seminary, Sioux Falls, SD, in 1989. He served as associate pastor to his father-in-law in Pampa, TX, before serving as associate to Bob Stewart, pastor of Hillcrest Baptist Church in El Paso, TX.

Pastor Blue became pastor of Fellowship in 1961, and after a merge with another congregation, continued serving the church as pastor until his retirement in 1997.

He was preceded in death by his wife Suzanne in 2010, to whom he was married for 62 years. He is survived by his son and a daughter, four grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

Memorial services were held September 21, 2012 at Mountain Springs Fellowship Baptist Church.

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• **North Park Baptist Church**, 4401 Theiss Rd., Humble, TX 77338. 281/821-2258 *Pastor John Gross*

• **Berean Baptist Church**, 302 N. Town East Blvd., Mesquite, TX 75182. 972/226-7803 *Pastor David Mills*

• **Cypress Creek Baptist Church**, 21870 Northwest Freeway, Houston, TX 77429. 281/469-6089 *Pastor Bill Campbell*

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• **Faith Baptist Church**, 3768 S. Amherst Hwy., Madison Heights, VA 24572, 434/929-1430 *Pastor Brian Hudson*

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Windows of Thanksgiving

By Kevin Carson, Pastor, Sunrise Baptist Church, Ozark, MO

If you were asked to define Thanksgiving, it might go something like this. “Thanksgiving is a holiday in the United States, celebrated annually on the fourth Thursday of November which commemorates the Pilgrims’ celebration of thanks in 1621.” However, for many of us, this definition misses many of the nuances of our personal celebrations. To see those, let’s look into a few windows of a traditional Thanksgiving.

Window 1: We see a big table all set — plates, glasses, napkins, beautiful tablecloth, a ready table. Against the wall it looks like a buffet: several pies, some jam cake, and other types of goodies.

Window 2: We move just one window over and realize the window is cracked open. The aroma, oh the aroma! As we peek through this window we see a kitchen bustling with activity — several ladies all busy, sounds of much talking and laughter. The kitchen counters are bursting with plenty. It looks like the range top is full as well. The stove looks crammed. And did I mention the aroma?

Window 3: We turn the corner of the house and look through a window where there are children everywhere. These children are close to the same age as each other and filled with energy. We notice toys, hear stories, see imaginations at work, chuckle at the laughing, and there is fun all around.

Window 4: This room looks like the family room or living room. Regardless, men and older boys are everywhere. Not a whole lot of in-depth talking. Instead, it looks like maybe the Detroit Lions or Dallas Cowboys playing on television.

There are other traditions — the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade, traveling, the special Thanksgiving prayer at dinner. Mere talking about Pilgrims, Indians, and the Mayflower fails to capture the depth, the nuances of tradition and memories, or the special place this day has in so many people’s lives.

Consider the Bible

I also think this is true when you hear someone say that the Bible is important for every Christian. It is easy to think in terms of reading a few verses each day, taking your favorite Bible to church with you, memorizing some verses special to you, and occasionally telling someone else about a particular verse or passage. However, for the Christian, the Bible is so much more. It would be a missed opportunity to overlook the nuances, depth, richness, and blessings of the Bible this Thanksgiving season.

To help us fill in the blanks, we need to look no further than Psalm 19. David writes:

*The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul:
The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.
The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart:
The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.
The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever:
The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether
(vv. 7-9).*

David teases out the character of the Bible. He describes the Mosaic Law by using several synonyms for it; however, this is true for the rest of the Bible as well. God’s Word is perfect (v. 7), sure (v. 7), right (v. 8), pure (v. 8), clean (v. 9), enduring forever (v. 9), true (v. 9), and righteous (v. 9). If we are not careful, these terms can roll off our tongue without considering the value of the resource God provides. There is reason to rejoice and to be grateful. David describes these characteristics and emphasizes the significance, quality, uniqueness, and reliability of the Bible.

David also describes the complete benefits of the Bible for the believer. Since the Bible is perfect, it restores life (v. 7). The Word of God preserves, renews, and refreshes the inner man or life of the one who studies it.

As a trustworthy, reliable, sure Word, the Bible makes the simple wise (v. 7). Here, David refers to the morally naïve or the one who is still young in the faith without understanding the difference between wisdom and folly, glory and shame, light and darkness, or right and wrong. The Bible provides a way to understand life, God, themselves, and others.

As guidelines and principles for living, the precepts of the Lord are right, just, fitting and appropriate to all of life’s circumstances (v. 8). They make the heart of the one who follows them happy. The believer’s inner man is full of joy and satisfaction because of obedience to God’s desires.

As morally and ethically pure, the commandment of the Lord opens man’s eyes (v. 8). The Bible sheds light on the purpose of life, reveals how to live in a Christ-honoring way, exposes how to apply wisdom in tough circumstances, and helps with discernment and insight.

As true, entirely righteous, and enduring, God’s Word helps produce the right kind of thinking and living (v. 9). The Bible, as used by the Spirit, changes the believer’s character and conduct.

Your Response This Thanksgiving

David appropriately reminds us that the value of the Bible is much greater than gold or the best food (v. 10). The Bible provides good warnings and promises great rewards (v. 11). David’s response: repentance and gratitude. May our prayer this Thanksgiving be similar to David’s: “May the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer” (v. 14).

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Jesus Christ was Born Without Sin.

"...But (Jesus) was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Hebrews 4:15

Jesus Christ is the sinless Son of God.

Jesus came to earth as a baby, born of a virgin. He faced temptations but never sinned. He lived a perfect life.

We are all sinners.

Sin began to affect humanity when the first man God created, Adam, chose to disobey. The Bible calls **sin** any action, thought, word or attitude that does not please God.

"Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Romans 5:12

The payment for our sin is death.

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23

The **wages** or payment of sin is eternal separation from God in a place the Bible calls Hell.

Do you understand that Jesus Christ never sinned, but you are a sinner and your sin must be paid for?

Jesus Christ was Born to Die.

"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt name him JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21

God provided a way for your sin to be forgiven through His perfect Son, Jesus Christ.

Jesus came to earth to die for you.

"But God commendeth (proved) toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

Jesus did not deserve to die, but he died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sin in your place!

Jesus did not remain dead. He rose again!

"...He (Jesus) rose again the third day according to the scriptures." 1 Corinthians 15:4

Do you believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross to pay for your sin and rose again three days later?

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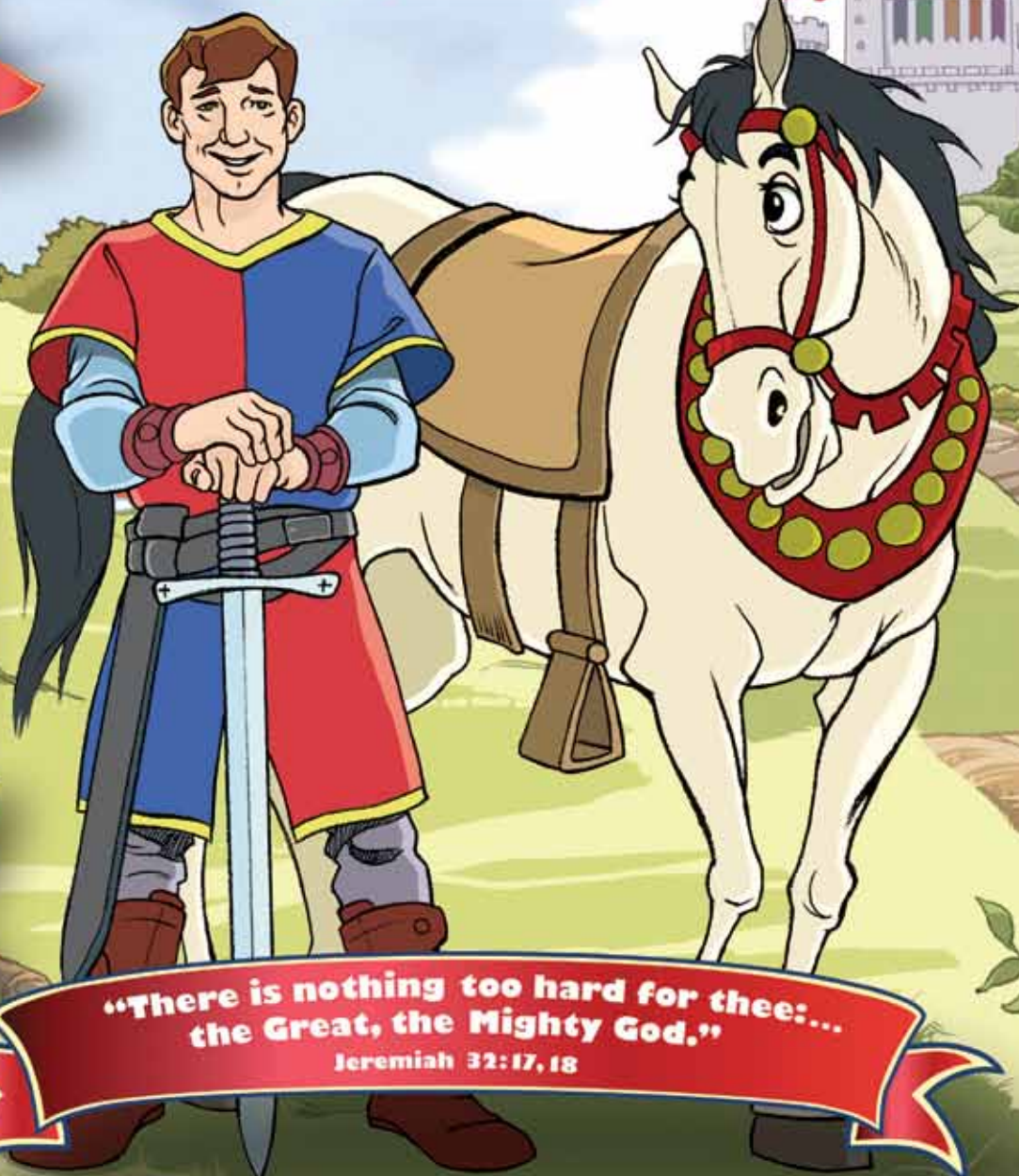
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the Great, the Mighty God."

Jeremiah 32:17, 18

