

# The Final Word

## Pastor's Corner

One of the great joys of each week is to come together as men and study God's Word on Wednesday evenings. As many of you know, we are currently studying Paul's letter to the Galatians. We are currently in chapter 3, but I would like to share with you some thoughts from our study in chapter 1. It is upon these following words in chapter 1 that I will reflect and share some of our insights:

"For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when He who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by His grace, was pleased to reveal His son to me, in order that I might preach Him among the Gentiles." (Gal. 1:13-16)

Just as we have recently discussed in a series called "The Gospel Changes Everything", we see that Paul mentions he had a former life. Paul speaks this kind of language often. 2 Corinthians 5:17 he says that we are "new creatures in Christ, old things pass away and all things become new". Also in Gal. 2:20, Paul says 'I have been crucified with Christ. I no longer live, but Christ lives in me'. When Paul speaks of a former life, he does not have in mind re-incarnation but regeneration. Paul is saying that there has been a volume I and a volume II in his life. Volume I would be his life before Christ and volume II would be his life after Christ. What was his life before Christ like? He tells us that he persecuted the church. Paul had done many terrible deeds and he was filled with hate. He had been part of the killing of innocent people (see Acts 7:54-8:1). Paul was a Jew who lived according to the Jewish customs and traditions and yet it had not made him right with God (see Phil. 3:3-11).

So, what changes the course of Paul's life? Paul becomes a Christian. But listen to how he describes becoming a Christian:

- God set me apart before I was born
- God called me by His grace
- God was pleased to reveal His Son to me

Notice that it is all about God! God set me apart and called me and was pleased to reveal His Son to me. What is obvious here is that Paul did not seek out God or take any initiative in turning to Christ (that would be impossible!). If you read the story of Saul/Paul's conversion in Acts 9, you know that Paul did not call out to Christ but Christ called out to Paul. Jesus appeared to him and spoke to him on the road to Damascus. Paul had been resisting God – but God worked to turn him from a persecutor to a preacher. Paul, in looking back, recognizes that his new life is all a result of God's sovereign grace and pleasure. God was working in his life long before his conversion – so that even his rebellion and failures were being used by God to bring him to the point of conversion. You and I know this to be true as well if we have received God's grace. Why did God choose and call Paul or anyone else for that matter? Not because we have pleased God, but because God is pleased to do so!

So what is Paul's life like after coming to know Christ? Well, it is completely opposite from his former life. His new life in Christ is marked by no longer living for himself or any man, but living to please God especially by preaching the very gospel that he used to try and destroy. Don't you love that? The very gospel he was once trying to destroy is the same gospel that he loves to proclaim. This too is true of all God's people who have received a new life through Christ.

We may not think that our salvation is as dramatic as this testimony of Paul's, but nothing could be further from the truth. If God has saved you, then he has raised you from being a spiritual corpse and given you life. That can never be boring!

Here at First Baptist, we have spent much of the past month considering the Reformation and how God used Martin Luther to reform the church of the 16th century and preserve for us the good news of the gospel. While that is true and Martin Luther is a great individual in the life and history of the church, let us never forget that God is truly the One who preserves the gospel and His church. Whether it was through Saul/Paul, St. Augustine, Martin Luther, John Bunyan, John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Spurgeon, J. Gresham Machen, or anyone else, the truth remains that it is by God's sovereign grace that He chooses and uses any of us for His purposes and pleasure!

Recently I read an article by Russell Moore discussing the state of Christianity and the church in 2013. Moore reflects back on an answer that Carl Henry gave at Southern Seminary when many of the leaders were lamenting of the miserable shape of the church at that present time. Henry's response:

"Why, you speak as though Christianity were genetic," he said. "Of course, there is hope for the next generation of evangelicals. But the leaders of the next generation might not be coming from the current evangelical establishment. They are probably still pagans. Who knew that Saul of Tarsus was to be the great apostle to the Gentiles?" he asked us. "Who knew that God would raise up a C.S. Lewis, a Charles Colson? They were unbelievers who, once saved by the grace of God, were mighty warriors for the faith." (here is the link to the whole article: <http://www.russellmoore.com/2012/01/02/>)

May this be a reminder to us that we have no idea what God is doing and how He is going to once again show Himself to be faithful and powerful! We, as Christians, should be the last people on earth to look around at present circumstances and believe that we can predict future outcomes as a result. And we do not have to look back to Saul becoming Paul for this reminder – all we have to do is look back and remember that we too have a volume I and a volume II. Thanks be to God who "set us apart before birth", "called us by His grace", and "was pleased to reveal His Son to us".

## Ladies Ministries



**Craft and Hobby Night**  
November 8 at 6:30 p.m.

We will not have **Craft and Hobby** night in December.

The ladies **Card class** will be held November 22 at 6:30 p.m. The cost for the class is \$5.00. Please bring your basic supplies such as glue, scissors, colored pencils, etc.

We will have a **traditional Thanksgiving Dinner** on Saturday November 23 between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. We will need people

to donate and bake turkeys, as well as sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes, green beans, rolls, stuffing, gravy and pumpkin pies. If you can help with the meal please check the bulletin board for the sign-up sheet or contact the church office.

We will have a **cookie exchange** December 14 at 1:00 p.m. Please bring an appetizer as well as one dozen cookies per person signed up plus one to share. We will have a special presentation by Phyllis Eschment a Pampered Chef consultant

that day. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board so please be sure to sign-up indicating what type of cookie you are bringing and what type of appetizer. If you have any questions, please contact the church office.

Our December **Community Dinner** will be held on Saturday December 28 between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. We will serve ham, potatoes, green beans, rolls, desserts, and a beverage.

## Prayer Ministries

### MORNING GLORY EVENING GRACE

For some time now, I have been unable to attend the bible study at the church. Always enjoyed it so, and the interaction with the ladies of our church. If you have not attended one of these, I would encourage you to do so. They will do a lot to enhance your spiritual life.

In lieu of not being able to go, I am doing a Bible study "Lord, Is It Warfare? Teach Me to Stand" by Kay

Arthur. I am really enjoying it.

This all to say, if you are in a position of not being able to attend the church's Bible study, there are many to purchase. I like Kay Arthur, because I know she teaches truth.

Should you have trouble deciding, there are ladies at the church that can steer you in the right direction.

Most of the time, you not only can purchase the book, but you can buy them for your

Kindle, computer, etc.

The main thing is to have a study going on in your life.

You will find your prayer life benefiting also.

There is a Ladies Bible Study on Wed. 10:30 am, and a Men's and Ladies Bible Study on Wed. at 6:00 pm.

Till next time, keep praying.

*"Study to show  
thyself  
approved unto  
God, a  
workman that  
needeth not to  
be ashamed,  
rightly  
dividing the  
word of truth"  
II Timothy 2:15*

## Ramblings from Pastor Ron

A co-worker sent a link to several of us and asked for our thoughts. Perhaps you have already seen the story or heard the buzz from ABC television news. A billboard in Lubbock Texas advertises a web address called "Jesus Tattoo." I watched the video. It is an attempt to present a gospel message by showing a Jesus-figure removing "labels" that have been tattooed on people and taking these labels upon Himself.

The "hook" at the end of the video announces that people have made mistakes, and if these mistakes are realized and given to Jesus, then He will make our lives better and meaningful. I understand the attempt at creatively presenting the gospel message, but this is not quite gospel; it is gospel-ish. This illustrates the modern view of Christianity that says salvation in Christ is salvation from aimlessness, failure, heartache, and self-loathing. In other

words, the gospel is all about me – about how much I am loved, about how I will benefit from allowing Jesus to be my Savior. Salvation from sin, slavery, and the wrath of God are old fashioned notions that do not appeal to modern hearers. The message of Christ needs to be updated for contemporary listeners, hence the "Tattooed Jesus."

I read this quote recently and it is surprisingly relevant to this issue. The author was speaking about the church at the end of the 1st century; "The process of accommodation to the values of the dominant culture continued unabated for the next several centuries" (Embracing Shared Ministry: Power and Status in the Early Church and Why it Matters Today by Joseph H. Hellerman) His point was that the early church was known for its counter cultural message, but things

began to drift as their distinctiveness was set aside to accommodate the contemporary culture. There is no question that the gospel of Jesus Christ is being diluted in modern times because it contains objectionable notions like sin, wrath, righteousness, and abandonment of self to the cause of Christ.

But this is not the gist of the objections to this billboard. Most of the objections are aimed at the picture. Some feel that the image is derogatory and tasteless. I am puzzled that people are upset because their favorite rendition of Jesus is being defaced. Since when do we know what Jesus looked like? And when did it become OK to violate the 2nd commandment and revere images as representations of God? This is what gets some people upset?

## The Final Word

### Out of the Ordinary

#### Worship at the Feet of Jesus

The risen, victorious Jesus comes to His disciples and says "Greetings." What is their response?

"They came to him, clasped his feet and worshipped him." Matthew 28:9

Note, they are not scrabbling in the dirt at His feet. They clasped His feet. They gripped, and clung onto, His feet. Is this something we have done in our worship of Him?

We have a beautiful picture of this in the story of Ruth. Her mother-in-law Naomi, says to her "My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well for you?" (Ruth 3:1) To find rest and provision, she points Ruth to her Kinsman-Redeemer, and tells her "go uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do." (Ruth 3:4) Uncover his feet, lie down at his feet. Have we uncovered the feet of Jesus? Have we lain down at His uncovered feet and waited for Him to tell us what to do?

These feet...feet of which we first read in Genesis 3:15...where we find out that His heels will be bruised by Satan. We read in Psalm 22:16 that His feet will be pierced. We read in Revelation 1:15 that the feet of the risen, victorious, ascended Jesus are "like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace." Does this not remind us of the brazen altar in the tabernacle, with its grate where the fierce fire of the Lord would burn up the sacrifice to enable the worshippers to be put right with God? But was it not bronze which was able to withstand the fiery judgment and wrath of the Lord when the rebels brought their own incense before the Lord (See Numbers 16:35-39)? Does this not all point to the cross and the way in which He suffered for our iniquities—it is because of our sin that these feet have suffered, it is because of our sin that these feet have been bruised and pierced, it is because of our sin that these feet have been through the fires of the furnace of God's wrath.

Oh, clasp these feet and weep, you who would worship Him! Cover them with your tears! Then wipe His feet with your hair. Wipe the tears away. For He was not defeated by the sacrifice He made—look, He is robed in splendor, and strides forward in the greatness of His strength! "It is I, proclaiming victory, mighty to save!" (Isaiah 63:1). Replace your tears with kisses: "Kiss the Son!" (Psalm 2:12). And then pour out your perfume on His feet and fill the room with its beautiful fragrance—the perfume He has given—the prayers of the Holy Spirit, who intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express—these prayers which rise like incense before Him.

Now that you have uncovered His feet, wait and He will tell you what to do. Listen: "Your sins are forgiven...Your faith has saved you: go in peace." (Luke 7:48, 50). Allow Him to wash your feet—yes, Him, your Creator!—allow Him close enough to wash your feet that you might not only be forgiven, but cleansed. Allow His Spirit to come into you and raise you to your feet, and you will find that He makes your feet like the feet of a deer, enabling you to stand on the heights. Then allow Him to put sandals on your feet that you might be ready to go forth and proclaim the full gospel truth as He wills. And you will find that the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet—as He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet, when they will become the footstool for those most precious of feet.

Diana lives in England with her husband and their 8-year-old son. A part-time bookkeeper, tea is her drink of choice and she loves nothing better than when her guitar is in her hands so she can praise her God. She loves writing, and deep one-on-one chats with close friends. She blogs at *Waiting for our Blessed Hope*.

#### Golden Ambassadors

Meeting November 14 at 10:00 a.m. then shopping at Grove City  
Christmas Party December 12 at the Golden Corral PA. 11:00-4:00 p.m. We  
will meet at the church at 10:00 a.m.

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We're on the Web!

*See us at:*

[www.fbchowland.org](http://www.fbchowland.org)

## Upward Basketball & Cheerleading



Upward Flag Football Awards night will be held on Sunday November 3 at 6:00 p.m. in the church sanctuary. We appreciate all the time, effort and prayers that have gone into making this a great year.

We will have our evaluations for Upward basketball and cheerleading on Saturday, November 16 between 9:00 and noon and

Tuesday, November 19 between 5:00 and 7:00 p.m.

Registration is open to boys and girls first –eighth grades. The cost is \$65.00 without the shorts and an additional \$20.0 with the shorts. If you are participating in Cheerleading the cost is the same only the turtleneck is an additional \$20.00.

We will need help with registration, sizing, drills, refreshments, setting up and clean-up. If you can help out please contact the church office or check the bulletin board for the sign-up sheet.



## Operation Christmas Child

Once again we are participating in Operation Christmas Child. Wrapped shoe boxes are available as well as detailed instructions making

participation in this event very easy. Simply pick up a shoe box, fill it according to the directions and return the filled shoe box to the church on or

before November 17 with a \$7.00 check to cover postage. If you have any questions, please contact Renae Blair or the church office.



**Bake Sale  
November 24  
Proceeds  
benefit camp  
fund**  
Please contact Karen  
Wensel at 330-534-  
5417 for more  
information.

## Missions

Thank you to everyone who helped with the recent Missions dinner. We were able to send Walter Stevens \$360.00 to help with the "Moses" project; Robert Mickey \$400.00 to help with the purchase of land; Russ Dean to help with Haven of Hope and Darrell Champlin elderly missionaries to Suriname that are in financial need.