



Church Newsletter

First Baptist Church of
Niles

Volume 2/Issue 16

WHAT WE ARE DOING? AND WHAT WE SHOULD DO?

IN THIS ISSUE

WELCOME

Welcome to Volume 2 of the FBCN Newsletter or the “current new normal” editions.

This week’s reading will be Psalm 92 titled, How Great Are Your Works A Psalm. A Song for the Sabbath.

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High;² to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night,³ to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre.

⁴ For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy.⁵ How great are your works, O Lord! Your thoughts are very deep!

⁶ The stupid man cannot know; the fool cannot understand this:⁷ that though the wicked sprout like grass and all evildoers flourish, they are doomed to destruction forever;⁸ but you, O Lord, are on high forever.⁹ For behold, your enemies, O Lord, for behold, your enemies shall perish; all evildoers

shall be scattered.¹⁰ But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox; you have poured over me[a] fresh oil. ¹¹ My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies; my ears have heard the doom of my evil assailants.¹² The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.¹³ They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God. ¹⁴ They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green,¹⁵ to declare that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

This Sunday we will vote as a church to call Pastor Brandon Myers as Senior Pastor of Niles Baptist Church.

We invite you to Join us for a virtual prayer meeting on Wednesdays at 7:00pm.

Wednesday Bible Study ([Click Here](#))

Meeting ID: 899 2251 1230

Password: 409807

One tap mobile

+13126266799

Meeting ID: 899 2251 1230

Password: 409807

Make sure you view the updated prayer list. There are so many needs.

Pray for decisions regarding our pastoral candidate, Pastor Brandon Myers. Pray that the LORD will anoint the one selected with wisdom and desire to accomplish His goals for the First Baptist Church of Niles.

"When Jesus called his disciples, he didn't tell them, 'Lead others.' He told them, 'Follow me.'" Sarah Sumner

"Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.'" Matthew 16:24

We are living in unprecedented times when scores of Christians are letting their "walk" be influenced by prominent evangelical pastors, best-selling books and Christian conferences which are nothing more than staged events that instill an unholy need for a busy, success-oriented, me-centered gospel. As I mentioned in the last Newsletter, when describing us as sheep. "... a majority of the time our conclusions are formed by our own ignorance. It's an ignorance that comes from laziness, laziness to search out the scriptures, laziness to sit back on Sunday morning and listen. But we are required to do more. We are required to re-act, to walk-the-walk."

I have to wonder if we have lost the ability to think and question. Why have we lost the ability to confront ideas and teachings that are contrary to scripture? Are we allowing ourselves to be led to a precipice where we throw the Word of God in favor of a charismatic voice? What I see today is a Christianity that is being influenced by emotions and a me-centered gospel. And why is that? I see it as being influenced by today's American culture, we seem to be thriving on confrontation at the surface in the form of gossip and politics, yet 46% of Americans report feeling lonely, left out, and/or disconnected from others. And that discontentment feeds our love of self.

I hear the comments today from Christians voicing "their rights" "their freedoms" and I am reminded of the passage in Genesis 3:1-5, *Now the serpent was more crafty than any*

other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"² And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,³ but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." This was the turning point: the "fall of man," the transition of the first man and woman from a state of innocent obedience to God to a state of guilty disobedience. Have we not learned from that initial fall that we can be easily deceived? Rebellion was at the core of the fall and rebellion is at the core of our problems today. I feel Michael Horton sums it up very well in his book "Christless Christianity, the Alternative Gospel of the American Church." In it he says, "Here we are in the North American church-conservative or liberal, evangelical or mainline, Protestant or Catholic, emergent or otherwise-cranking along just fine, thank you. So we're busy downsizing, becoming culturally relevant, reaching out, drawing in, making disciples, managing the machinery, utilizing biblical principles, celebrating recovery, user-friendly, techno savvy, finding the purposeful life, practicing peace with justice, utilizing spiritual disciplines, growing in self-esteem, reinventing ourselves as effective ecclesiastical entrepreneurs, and, in general, feeling ever so much better about our achievements." He then asks the question, "Notice anything

missing in this pretty picture? *Jesus Christ!?"*

"Discipleship is faith expressed in real life, every day, in every way," John Kiessler.

Let's revisit the opening quote and scripture. In it we have the word "disciple. If we truly believe Jesus Christ is not only the Son of God, but also our Savior and Lord, it is reasonable for others to expect to see proof of our commitment to Him in the way we live. That evidence is what biblically-minded Christians call discipleship. But there is more to it than merely watching your language or dropping a few coins in a charity donation box. Discipleship implies a living relationship with the Christ we love, serve, and seek to imitate. For most of us there is room in this relationship for considerable improvement.

Following Christ is an active and personally costly submission. And unlike attaching ourselves to the voices of today, following Jesus can be the hardest voice to follow. As we saw in Matthew 16:24, Jesus told his disciples, to deny themselves, take up their crosses and follow Him. In other words, Jesus told his disciples that if they were sincere about wanting to "come after" Him, they would have to do so on His terms. Following Jesus is simply dying to ones-self, it is weighing the cost of following Christ as opposed to simple blind loyalty to the voices of today. Let me share a personal example from my life. I was a deacon in a church that was dealing with a serious sin issue of a former deacon. In an effort to resolve the issue so the church could move forward, the pastor preached a message that did not reflect the intent of the scripture passage. He used in an effort to save face of the former deacon and his family. I had to make

a hard decision of what to do. The easiest least costly decision for me and my family would be to fall behind the pastor and continue to serve out my duties to the church. I had been a part of that church for over 15 years; it was instrumental in my conversion to Christ. I decided to leave the church. After I left, I was asked by the associate pastor, who was also a close friend, what the motive was for my leaving I presented him with my rationale in detail. I told him that if he stayed he was compromising his beliefs. He stayed and a few weeks later I learned that he preached a message on blind loyalty. Following Christ will have a price but the rewards are greater than the loss.

Only our heavenly Father can help us out of our trials and troubles.

Many people feel that confrontation is being too outspoken, perhaps “stirring the pot.” What we must remember, though, is that confrontation is not simply “stirring the pot.” At its root, confrontation is a sign of love and bravery. 2 Timothy 1:7 says, “For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love and self-discipline.” When we feel the need to confront something or someone, it is because we feel a passion stirred within ourselves. That is good! That is of the Lord. God is passionate as well. What happens, though, when it comes down to it and we know what we need to do? When we know the only way to get over this thing is to go straight through it? But we are often stopped because of fear. We talk ourselves out of it. We do this at our own and others’ expense. It is far more rewarding to fight that fear and press through relying on the Spirit of God. We should not shy away from confrontation but proceed with love and compassion.

Confrontation is a powerful tool of resolving conflicts with ourselves and those around us. It can lead you to a place of higher understanding, connection, confidence and respect. But you must engage in it. We are of the belief that Christians need to claim the role of “peacekeepers” but by doing that we suppress our own convictions and remove Christ from our priority list. As a disciple of Christ we are to submit fully to His leading and direct and deny our own self will.

Dr. D. W. Ekstrand defines it beautifully, *“The essence of a being's 'existence' has to do with the fact that he is a 'living reality' - if one no longer has or the functions of vitality, they are said to 'no longer exist.' So, the essence of 'death' is the absence of 'life' – therefore when one dies 'one ceases to exist.' To carry the argument into the spiritual realm, when someone 'spiritually dies to self,' self ceases to exist – that is, 'self is no longer the reason for one's existence.' As such, the individual is no longer concerned with 'his own will or happiness,' because he is no longer in the picture... he is no longer the center of his own little universe... he no longer continues to arrange the world around himself.”*

He goes on to say, “We need to ‘humble’ ourselves by stating that serving ourselves is not good. In a sense this is what “dying to self” essentially means. In order to be able to be in God’s will, we have to be out of our own. We recognize that ‘serving self’ is not good, so we choose to ‘serve the Spirit.’ Our commitment to saying “no” to the old nature comes only to the degree that we are sure of the old nature’s total rebellion against God, and we ‘desire’ to serve the Spirit. The Christian life is based on ‘humble living’ – when we are willing to

humble ourselves by looking at the facts of what self-service does, then we are willing to walk in the ways of God. Our spiritual growth comes as we recognize the complete rebellious nature of the flesh, and the power of the new life through the life of Christ. The Christian needs to acknowledge the flesh, declare its lousy nature, rejects if promptings, acknowledge the Lord’s presence and the beautiful nature of the Spirit, and surrender one’s total heart and will to the Spirit’s leading.”

C. S. Lewis’ literary demon “Screwtape” has something insightful to say. He tells his young nephew that humans rarely pray for the thing God wants them to pray for — they simply want enough grace to see them through some moment or time of trouble... they conjure up a vision of the future they want and appeal for that outcome. They persist in wrapping their anxious hands around life’s steering wheel as if “it’s going to work this time if only they clutch it more tightly.”

George Muller, known for his great faith and ministry to orphans in 19th century England, was asked the secret of his fruitful service for the Lord. He said, “There was a day when I died... utterly died.” As he spoke, he bent lower and lower until he almost touched the floor. “I died to George Muller — his opinions, his preferences, his tastes, and his will — died to the approval or blame even of my brethren and friends — and since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God.”

Bill Bright, founder of “Campus Crusade for Christ,” had this to say about “dying to self”: “Everyone I know who has been greatly used by God has gone through an experience of ‘dying to self’ as described in Galatians 2:20” — *‘I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer*

live, but Christ lives in me. He goes on to say, "that it is not until we know the reality of 'death to self' that we can live for Christ, allowing God to truly use and bless us." "My Galatians 2:20 experience," writes Bright, "happened in the spring of 1951 when Vonette (his wife) and I signed a contract to become 'slaves of Christ' – I daily reaffirm this contract. Holy living involves a daily decision to surrender to the 'lordship of Christ.' It involves yielding our will to God and adopting His perspective. If you want to see what it looks like to live a holy life, examine the life of Jesus – He is the visible expression of God's holiness. God wants our minds and hearts to be filled with His holy qualities. As our lives are transformed, we will project the light of His holiness into the darkness of our evil world. Real life – abundant life – begins with dying to self. 'Dying to self' is a liberating action that produces joy and peace."

Humility is the path to death, because in death it gives the highest proof of its perfection.

"And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Philippians 2:8

The key to a sold-out discipleship is humility. Humility means the giving up of oneself, our pride, and the taking of the place of perfect nothingness before God. It is when we turn over our RIGHTS that we experience TRUE freedom.

Paul starts out Galatians 5 with the following, *"For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."* What is this freedom that Paul is talking about? It's the power rooted in reason and will to act or not to act, to do this or that, and so to perform some deliberate actions on one's own responsibility. Human freedom... attains its perfection when directed

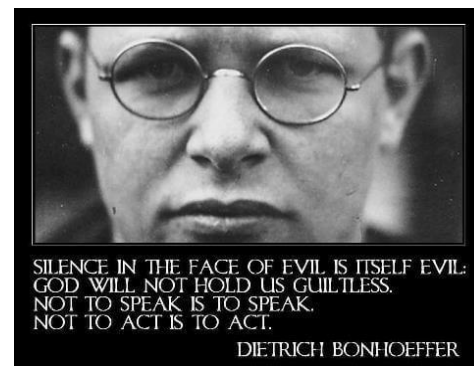
toward God, He continues in verse 16 to the end of the chapter with, *"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.*

If we are truly free, we will always choose the good. We will always choose the will of God. That is what it means to be a disciple. That is what it means to follow Christ, to always seek the will of the Father and not our own will. We cannot rid ourselves of the flesh on this earth. This is what Jesus referred to in Romans 6:10 when he says, " So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin ." It is still there. If we are not careful, we will serve it. But we don't have to. By voiding our allegiance to our flesh, we can, by Christ's grace, be set free to serve Christ. How do we void our former allegiance to our flesh? Paul says death is the only means and explains it carefully in Romans 7:1-6.

The point is that unless we are absolutely convinced the flesh is a

destroyer, we will continue to listen to and follow it. We will, in essence, continue to serve it. As Christians we are technically free from its ruling over us, but we still could serve the old self. The follow up question is whether we really hate the flesh.

Are we really convinced? Are we really free? Are we willing to die to self?





PRAYER LIST

- ✓ Continuing Prayers for loss: All the families that have lost loved ones this past year. Remember those who continue to lose loved ones due to COVID 19.
- ✓ Continuing Prayers for physical needs: Rita McManus, Maria Hatfield, Gloria-Lynn Fernandez, Betty Matson, Ronaldo Claveria, Alex Figueroa
- ✓ Continuing Prayers for our Ministry Needs: Pastor Brandon Myers, Our Deacons, Financial support.
- ✓ Continuing Prayers for our Sister Ministries: BIEM Ministries, Orchard Church, Pastors Davis, Billow, Eddy, Vitel, Ebi and Esther Perinbaraj, Gaetano and Krista Paolino
- ✓ Continuing Prayers for Spiritual Needs: Leonard Hatfield, Carol Pelfrey's family, Daniel Ruehlman, George Bizadellis
- ✓ Continuing Prayers for: The spread of the Gospel, Our Government, Our Nation, Our Community, Our Neighbors, Our Families, Pray for our members that have lost employment and for those who still have jobs and need to interact with others on a daily basis. Pray for those still working that God will protect. Lift up all our health professionals and their families who are on the front line of this pandemic especially Mylin and Errol Lardizabal and Liza Mitchell. Erwin Lickmann pray for wisdom regarding future living arrangements for Elizabeth and himself.

If you have prayer requests or updates on your family, we encourage to submit them to the Newsletter email address at the end of this newsletter.

IMPORTANT DATES

- **Sunday, October 4, 2020**
A vote to call Pastor Brandon Myers as Senior Pastor of First Baptist Church of Niles and approval of Church budget will follow the morning service.
It is important that all members vote. Your attendance is extremely important.

Special provisions are being made for eligible Church Members who have not been able to attend services due to Covid-19. No Touch Absentee Ballot Collection will take place on Sunday, October 4, 2020 in the parking lot between 10:00am and 1:00pm.

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