



Church Newsletter

First Baptist Church of
Niles

Volume 2/Issue 20

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 96, titled Worship in the Splendor of Holiness

Oh sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth!² Sing to the LORD, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.³ Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!⁴ For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods.⁵ For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the LORD made the heavens.⁶ Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.⁷ Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength!⁸ Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts!⁹ Worship the LORD in the splendor

of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth!¹⁰ Say among the nations, “The LORD reigns! Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity.”¹¹ Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it;¹² let the field exult, and everything in it! Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy¹³ before the LORD, for he comes, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness, and the peoples in his faithfulness.

This Pastor Brandon Myers will continue his series on the “Gospel” from the book of Galatians.

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.

Pastor Myers' sermon series from the book of Galatians, challenged me and caused me to meditate on the word "Gospel." Gospel is the 'good news' because it addresses the most serious problem that we have as human beings, and that problem is simply this: God is holy and He is just, and we aren't. And at the end of my life, I'm going to stand before a just and holy God, and be judged. And I'll be judged either on the basis of my own righteousness—or lack thereof. The Bible makes it clear that we are justified not by our works, not by our efforts, not by our deeds, but by faith—and by faith alone. The Bible has much more to say about faith and how important it is, which lead me to back to the Bible and how important it should be to us.

"For Jews, the people of the book, sacred text is more than law; it is our friend." Rabbi Meir Soloveichik

"Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day." (Psalm 119:97)

I read an article recently from which the opening quote is taken and it gave me pause to contemplate if we, as Christians, are that rabid about the Bible. Is it our friend? According to the King James Bible Dictionary "friend" is defined as, "One who is attached to another by affection; one who entertains for another sentiments of esteem, respect and affection, which lead him to desire his company, and to seek to promote his happiness and prosperity; opposed to foe or enemy. *"A friend loves at all times."* (Prov. 17:17). Is this how you feel about God's Word? Or do you sometimes struggle with having a real desire to read His Word and to keep listening faithfully to what He says? Perhaps your time in God's

Word feels a bit dry or maybe confusing. You keep reading the Bible, but more out of duty than love.

Let's look at this word friend. It's one who is attached to another by affection. Love or zealous attachment leads to a desire to be in its company. It was mentioned this past Sunday that a number of our members that have not been attending because of the virus and are craving the "personal" fellowship of worshipping and fellowshiping together. This overwhelming emotional experience, i.e. craving, this lack of sufficient connection is dangerous because social connection is a "primal human need." If social connection is such a "primal human need," then as Christians our craving for God's Word should be a "primal need."

Our human cravings are the sum of our minds, our wills, and our affections. Using these then, love, (our affections), is rooted in knowledge; love is exercised in a willful decision; and love is experienced in the affections. To love someone involves all of this. To love someone means that you also love the things about someone. This is most true of our love for God. We love Him and that leads us to love everything about Him. One of those things is His Word. To love God is to love His Word, as is referenced in Psalm 119:97.

There should be a longing and joy every time we open the Bible just as when we are reacquainted with someone we love not as an intruder or as an imposter.

"The biblical priority is not 'reading before feeding,' but the primacy of God's Word in the life of the Christian." Tim Challies

Our desire to open the bible everyday should take precedence over everything else. Leland Wang (1898-1975), who formed the Chinese Foreign Missionary Union, committed to the task of evangelism and mission endeavor to the scattered Chinese in the South Seas of Asia. He is credited with the phrase, "No Bible, No Breakfast." He explains its origins, *"As time went on, I yearned for a way to become well versed in the Scriptures. I needed a plan of study, and God led me to Acts 17:11, 'Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.'*

Daily! To systematically study the Word I determined to read a portion each day. But when? I realized my trouble was that I liked to sleep late and then rush into my daily activities. When evening came, I was too tired to read and continually postponed my study until the next day. Again God led me to several verses in Proverbs, one of which. 'How long will you sleep, O sluggard?' (Proverbs 6:9).

So I decided to rise each day at 6 a.m. to read my Bible. I began this discipline when I was twenty-one, while studying at the Naval College in Nanking. There was no central heating; the cold winter provided little incentive for my plan.

After some time I faltered. So, I prayed for dedication and disciplined myself by hitting my hand with a stick once for each minute I was late in rising. I think the longest I

overslept was thirty minutes — which was a painful experience! My wife and others thought this punishment a little crazy. But it got results. I overslept only a few times.

Later I found an even more effective means of ensuring my early reading. If I did not read at least one chapter to start the day, I did not eat my breakfast. 'No Bible, No Breakfast' became my motto.

The Bible has been my daily companion. With no Christian schooling it was the only way I had to gain knowledge of the Word. Needless to say, the reading has helped immeasurably to strengthen my faith. Very early in my Christian service I found answers in the Bible to meet the problems that arose.

Three things have greatly helped my daily Bible reading: First, carrying a Bible or New Testament in my pocket wherever I go. Verses can be read in spare moments. I always have the Word of God within easy reach. Second, establishing my motto. I have lived by 'No Bible, No Breakfast' for forty-four years; not as a law to bind me, but as a motto to remind me. For 'man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'

A man in Pennsylvania said to me one day, 'Brother Wang, I know where you got your motto 'No Bible, No Breakfast': you must have learned it from your Chinese laundryman, 'No checkie, no shirtie!'

I replied, "No, sir, I learned it from Matthew 6:33: 'But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you.'"

And since two negatives make a positive, I not only get my Bible but my breakfast, too. He stipulated that he established and followed this motto 'not as a law to bind me, but as a motto to remind me.'"

This was *his* rule to address his conscience and *his* weakness. He recommended it to others but seems to have understood that he would have been overstepping his authority to demand it of them."

"Because the Word is the means that God uses to speak to us, we need to love it and use it." Daniel Hyde

We are to love God by loving His Word. The article that the opening quote came from was about the Jewish Holiday called Simchat Torah or "The Joy of the Torah" when they celebrate the annual completion of the reading of the Torah scroll. The celebration takes into account not only the that the reading of the Torah is completed but that they will begin again on the following Sabbath. The Torah scroll is the most sacred object of Jewish life and the centerpiece of every Sabbath service and it is on this day of celebration when jubilant songs are sung, and dancing spreads through the sanctuary as their beloved Torah is passed from Jew to Jew. Harvard theologian Harvey Cox described it as "gamboling, (frolicking), with God." This celebration of dancing with their sacred scrolls indicates that, for the People of the Book, sacred text is more than the law; it is their friend. It's not a last dance but a realization that they can't tear themselves away from it and they will begin reading again. Remember what Acts 17:11 says, 'Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the

Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.'

"...the Jewish people continue to exist because their covenant...is the foundation and glue of their relationship with one another, with their past, and with their future. And the more faithful they are to God's Word, the more certain they can be of their survival." Charles Chaput

We are to love God by loving His Word. Like the Jewish celebration, we as Christians, should view the Word as a gift, an act of grace that we receive not because we deserve it, but because it was given to us as an expression of love.

Psalm 119 has eleven verses that praise God concerning the receiving of His Word.

"In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches." (Ps. 119:14),

"I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word." (Ps. 119:16), Your testimonies are my delight; they are my counselors."(Ps. 119:24

"Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it." (Ps. 119:35),

"for I find my delight in your commandments, which I love. I will lift up my hands toward your commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on your statutes." (Ps. 119:47-48),

"their heart is unfeeling like fat, but I delight in your law." (Ps. 119:70),

"Let your mercy come to me, that I may live; for your law is my delight." (Ps. 119:77),

"If your law had not been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction." (Ps. 119:92),

"Trouble and anguish have found me out, but your commandments are my delight." (Ps. 119:143),

"I long for your salvation, O LORD, and your law is my delight." (Ps. 119:174).

The Word is the living Word of the Lord to us, His people. The psalmist also describes his delight in the Word in comparison to other delightful things. He compares the Word to gold and silver, saying in verse 72, *"The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces"* (cf. v. 127). He compares the Word to honey, saying in verse 103, *"How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"* Elsewhere in Scripture, we read of the Word being compared to other things such as these. The Word is compared to a sword that defends against spiritual enemies, *"and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,"* (Eph. 6:17). The Word is compared to a lamp that guides us, *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."* (Ps. 119:105). The Word is compared to milk that nourishes our souls, *"Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—"* (1 Peter 2:2).

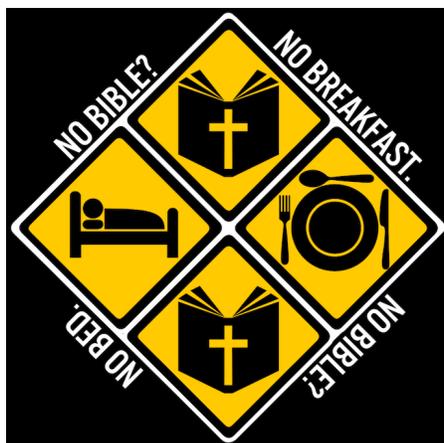
If you love God, it is your duty to read the Word and your delight to receive it as the very Word of the true and living God. How does the Word work in your life? The Holy Spirit uses the Word to validate our realization of sanctification. When we read the Word and hear it preached to us, the Holy Spirit works to sanctify us.

This is why we, as Christians, need to read the Word personally daily

and hear the Word read publicly weekly. It is the way the Spirit speaks to us through the living and active Word of God, *"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."* (Heb. 4:12).

In the words of the Puritan Thomas Watson, "The word is both a glass to show us the spots of our soul, and a laver to wash them away. The word has a transforming virtue in it; it irradiates the mind, and consecrates the heart."

When all else fails, the Word of God will sustain us.





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, Kurt Pazdra II, Pastoral Intern at The Orchard.
- ✓ 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. Mikaelle (Mikey) at Olivet Nazarene College.

Remember our 30 days of prayer for Pastor Brandon Myers his wife Kaiti their daughters Eva and Audrey, and son, Patrick.

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