



Church Newsletter

First Baptist Church of
Niles

Volume 2/Issue 23

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 99, titled The LORD Our God Is Holy

The LORD reigns; let the peoples tremble! He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!

²The LORD is great in Zion; he is exalted over all the peoples.

³Let them praise your great and awesome name! Holy is he!

⁴The King in his might loves justice.

You have established equity; you have executed justice and

righteousness in Jacob.⁵ Exalt

the LORD our God; worship at

his footstool! Holy is he! ⁶Moses

and Aaron were among his priests, Samuel also was among those

who called upon his name.

They called to the LORD, and he

answered them. ⁷In the pillar of the cloud he spoke to them; they kept his testimonies and the statute that

he gave them. ⁸O LORD our God, you

answered them; you were a forgiving God to them, but an avenger of their wrongdoings.

⁹Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy mountain; for the LORD our God is holy!

This week Pastor Brandon Myers will continue his series on the from the book of Galatians. If you can’t join us in person I highly recommend watching his messages on one of the two FBN channels.

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. And don’t forget to restart the 30-day prayer challenge as we

bring Pastor Myers and his family before God’s throne.

You see, there are some things you just can't borrow and some things you just can't lend. You can't lend your readiness to meet God to someone else. You can't borrow someone else's intimacy with God. Charles Pope

"And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. ¹¹ Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' ¹² But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' ¹³ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour." Matthew 25:10-13

I was challenged by the parable of the ten virgins and it started me thinking about a discussion I had with Al Nuzikowski. Al was reflecting on the idea of worship and if we are not worshipping God today in our daily lives what will it be like when we are in God's presence for eternity and worship will be the norm? But before we can address that question we must first address, if I know that I will be in God's presence for eternity. For God to know us, we must first know God. Not know of him but know him as Lord and savior. It's a close bond, it's love.

"We love because he first loved us." I John 4:19

This sums up the Gospel message. It is God who reached out to sinful humanity displaying His love for us by going to the cross. There is no goodness in us capable of being the starting place of our love for God. Our love comes from God, Himself, it is a result of His love poured into us.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

Let's take a moment to consider the love of God which is manifested in the person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Herein is love! But many choose not to receive God's love, and reject His gift of everlasting life through faith in Jesus Christ. Don't be misinformed. You do not earn salvation by "good" conduct, membership in any organization, adherence to any creed, or by any ritual or sacrament. Salvation is a free gift of God which you receive through personal faith in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast." Ephesians 2:8,9

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'" John 14:6

God in His love and grace offers you salvation from sin and death. This is step one and your response to the Gospel message will determine whether you will spend eternity in heaven or in hell. This is a promise to those who realize that God's love reaches down to us, and was made possible through the payment of Christ, and is received by grace through faith alone; believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Love is a two-way street and there are many phases of love. It's not only a declaration but it takes work.

C.S. Lewis describes the problem with love this way, in *The Four Loves*:

"To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket—safe, dark, motionless, airless—it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable . . . The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers . . . of love is Hell."

In dissecting this quote by C.S. Lewis it starts out with the idea of vulnerability. It's a fact of life that you can't truly form a relationship without at least some degree of vulnerability. You have to open up at some point or another and this requires trust. Being vulnerable and taking steps to trust someone is something that comes with time. And to be truly vulnerable with someone comes down to two things, continuous exposure and a shared struggle.

To believe does not mean to simply give intellectual assent to the claims of Christ. It means to transfer our trust to Him alone for our salvation. Dr. O.S. Hawkins

Continuous exposure means that you see them regularly. The conversation builds over time until you find yourself discussing intensely personal things, things you'd normally never tell another soul. Every tiny insecurity is eventually on the table and the test is whether or not they leave when it gets intense.

Trust is a big word. There's so much meaning behind it and it's something with which I think we all struggle. If we have trusted Christ for our salvation then we need to trust Christ in every aspect of our lives. Knowing we can tell Him anything and He'll be there no matter what. That we won't have to worry about finding a place to hide our sins and ourselves from God, for He will have been with us through our entire struggle and He's seen us at our absolute worst.

In order to be victorious, we need to work at carving out the time in our daily lives to spend time in the Word, prayer, and quiet meditation. As the Puritans used to say--to "keep short accounts with God and men." It's a phrase that I heard and have adopted in my own life. But what does it mean? In a personal finance context, keeping short accounts means that you should keep your accounts payable on a "short basis" which simply means to keep them "paid up", or not to let them become extended. An example of this would be to pay off your credit card balance every month so that you don't incur interest which puts you further in debt.

In the spiritual sense, when looking at the theology that prescribes this practice, it always refers to confession of sin(s) (the equivalent of a liability or debt in accounting terms), and requesting to be forgiven of sins on a daily basis. I see it as much more than that. To me its confession plus conversation with vulnerability. These elements are essential when maintaining a relationship and are the core concepts of this article.

So, what do short accounts look like in the Christian life? It begins with

confession. In the New Testament, "confess" means to "agree or say the same thing as." So, when we say the same thing about any subject as God says about it (our behavior, our sin, or the Lordship of Jesus, for example), that's confession. In its simplest terms, confession is the acknowledgement of our sin, or the affirmation of God's truth, or both.

"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."
1 John 1:8

There are two types of sins any human can commit: Sins of commission, are sins that we commit by "doing something" we shouldn't do and sins of omission are sins we commit by "not doing something" we should do. This is a sin that is easy to hide from others. Three omission questions we should ask ourselves are:

- What have I done for Christ?
- What am I doing for Christ?
- What ought I do for Christ?

Where do we begin to prevent ourselves from falling into spiritual bankruptcy? To help explain this I've taken excerpts from a piece that Nick Batzig, who is the Organizing Pastor of New Covenant Presbyterian Church in Richmond Hill, Ga.

"1. Confess Your Sins. As believers we need to be aware, and ready to confess our sins. After all, that is what it means to be a Christian. If we never confess our sin, it reveals that we do not believe that we are sinners in need of a Savior.

2. Confess Your Sins Particularly. The *Westminster Confession of Faith* has an intriguing statement about this in its chapter on

repentance. "Men ought not to content themselves with a general repentance, but it is every man's duty to endeavor to repent of his particular sins, particularly" (WCF 15.5). In short, we must never conclude that it is sufficient to confess that we are *generally* sinners or that we have *generally* sinned. When we confess our sin to God and men, we are to confess our sins specifically. We are to own the guilt of the particular sins that we have done.

3. Confess Your Sins Quickly. One of the sure signs that there is something out of alignment in your soul is that you do not go to the Lord and confess your sins as soon as you recognize that you have sinned against Him. Pride is our biggest sin in keeping us from uninhibited confession of sin. We must learn to confess our sins quickly. "Keeping short accounts."

4. Confess Your Sins Continually. We must continually go to God and men in confession and contrition. We must resist the temptation to give into sin and stop confessing it. Confessing and seeking to forsake sin is one of the means of Christian growth in grace.

5. Approach Others When Sinned Against. Part of keeping short accounts with others is going to them when you believe that they have sinned against you. Jesus taught us to do so when he said, "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother." (Matt. 18:15). It is just as much our responsibility to humbly and forthrightly address what we believe to be the spiritual debt of others to us as it is for them to come to us and confess their sin. This has

got to be one of the least practiced, yet most important, parts of the Christian life. In a culture that essentially says, "Live and let live," believers need to learn what it means to go to and lovingly confront a brother or sister when they believe that he or she has personally sinned against them. Often, one believer is oblivious to the fact that he or she has sinned against another. Telling a brother or sister your fault is part of helping them keep short accounts with God and men.

6. Forgive Others

Indiscriminately. We must guard against only forgiving those we like. To do so would be to show affinity not forgiveness. No matter who comes to us and asks us to forgive them, we are to stand ready to extend the forgiveness for which they are coming. We have no right to hold faults over the heads of those who have come to us because we don't like their personality. I have seen some of the roughest of persons come to a place of deep brokenness over their sins--only to hear those they have sinned against criticize them for that roughness. We are not called to only forgive our friends. We are called to forgive any who repent and seek that forgiveness from us.

7. Forgive Others Continually.

As noted above, Jesus taught us to forgive and unlimited number of times (*i.e.* the sense of "seventy times seven"). We are all ready to write others off when they sin against us a certain number of times. One of my friends often reminds me that most relationships--because of the self-righteousness in our hearts--can only handle one or two offenses. However, when we remember how much God has forgiven us, how can we not

repeatedly forgive others. If we set a certain limit on how much we forgive others, we are in danger of having God hold our offenses against us."

As Christians, we need to be on high alert for sin in our lives. We need to remember that sin is sin, and God hates any and all sin. Sin will keep us out of fellowship with God, therefore the need for keeping short accounts.

After confession we now have an unhindered path to God. A colloquy is an intimate conversation between you and God the Father, between you and Jesus. Let this conversation naturally develop in your prayer.

In the colloquy, (conversation), we speak and listen as the Spirit moves us: expressing ourselves, for example, as a friend speaks to a friend, or as a person speaks to one whom he or she has offended, or as a child speaks to a parent or mentor, or as a lover speaks to his or her beloved.

Whatever the context, we need to be speaking from the heart. As in any meaningful conversation, making sure to leave times of silence for listening.

What we have just looked at is what the life of a real, actual, true, effective, functioning, definite, existent, clear, verified and confirmed Christian life should be. We can with confidence be assured that our voice will be familiar to God. The latter part of Matthew 25 where we began says,

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious

throne. ³² Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? ³⁸ And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? ³⁹ And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' ⁴⁰ And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'" Matthew 25:31-40

What is the opposite of living a real, actual, true, effective, functioning, definite, existent, clear, verified and confirmed Christian life? The opposite would be to live as a nominal Christian. What are nominal Christians? They are church-goers or otherwise religious people whose "faith" does not go beyond being identified with a church, Christian group, or denomination. They are Christians in name only; Christ has no bearing in their lives. Nominal Christians may attend church and Christian functions, and they self-identify as "Christians," but it is just a label. They view religion primarily as a social concept, and they do not

allow it to require much of them in terms of morality or responsibility. Nominalists take a minimalist approach to their faith.

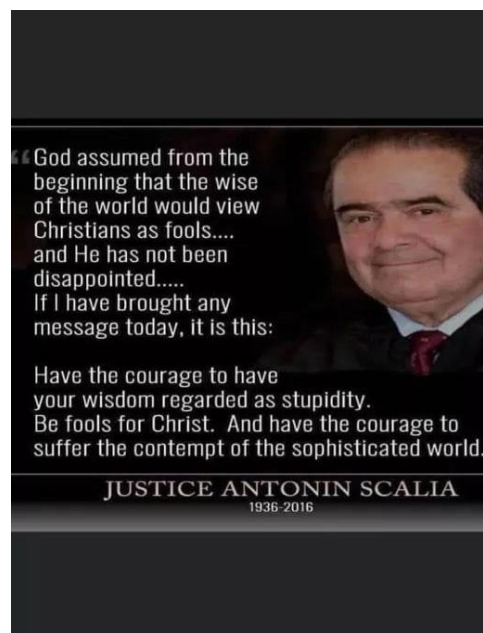
But what causes nominalism? Why do people prefer a nominal or in-name-only type of Christianity? One possible reason is that nominal religion is easy. It does not require a changed life. A nominal Christian can point to membership in a church as evidence of his salvation. Church attendance and participation in routines, activities, and programs become the measuring stick rather than a changed life, a new heart, a love for God, and obedience to the Word.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” 2 Corinthians 5:17

“Jesus answered, him, ‘If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.’” John 14:23

Jesus dealt with nominal Christianity in one of His letters to the churches. The church in Sardis wore a Christian label, but Jesus saw the truth behind the label: *“To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead”* Revelation 3:1. Or, as the KJV says, *“Thou hast a name that*

thou livest, and art dead.” God is not interested in the labels with which we tag ourselves. Having a “name” that we belong to Christ is not enough. Nominal faith is not faith. *“Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.”*



“ God assumed from the beginning that the wise of the world would view Christians as fools... and He has not been disappointed.... If I have brought any message today, it is this: Have the courage to have your wisdom regarded as stupidity. Be fools for Christ. And have the courage to suffer the contempt of the sophisticated world.”

JUSTICE ANTONIN SCALIA
1936-2016



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) Lardizabal at Olivet Nazarene College. George Sargis. Continue to remember the Benliro Family as they work through self isolation due to Ardi's Covid 19. The (Dewain) Karnes family as they grieve the loss of a relative to Covid 19. Pastor and Sue Vitel as they fight the effects of Covid 19.

Remember to start over the 30 days of Prayer for Pastor Myers his wife Kaiti their daughters Eva and Audrey and son Patrick. Put this on repeat for the upcoming year.

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