



Church Newsletter

First Baptist Church of
Niles

Volume 2/Issue 8

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 84 (ESV), Titled, My Soul Longs for the Courts of the LORD.

TO THE CHOIRMASTER: ACCORDING TO THE GITTITH. A PSALM OF THE SONS OF KORAH.

How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts! ² My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.³ Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at your altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God. ⁴ Blessed are those who dwell in your house, ever singing your praise! *Selah*

⁵ Blessed are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion.⁶ As they go through the Valley of Baca they make it a place of springs; the early rain also covers it with pools.

⁷ They go from strength to strength; each one appears before God in Zion.⁸ O LORD God of hosts, hear my

prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob! *Selah*
⁹ Behold our shield, O God; look on the face of your anointed!¹⁰ For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.
¹¹ For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.¹² O LORD of hosts, blessed is the one who trusts in you!

We have the word Gittith in the title again, as a reminder the word Gittish signifies belonging to Gath. It probably denotes either a musical instrument or a kind of music derived from Gath, where David sojourned for a time during the persecution of Saul, 1 Samuel 27:1-7. The word Gath also signifies in Hebrew a winepress. Hence not a few have supposed that it denotes either an instrument or a melody used in the vintage. It is prefixed to Psalm 8:1-9; 81:1-16; 84:1-12, all of which requires an animated strain of music. .

Our guest speaker this month is Rev. Ebi Perinbaraj. He will be bringing a series he entitled “Gospel Church.”

Join us for a virtual prayer meeting on Wednesdays at 7:00pm.
Wednesday Bible Study ([Click Here](#))
Meeting ID: 899 2251 1230
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Through our individual conscience, we become aware of our deeply held moral principles. We are motivated to act upon them and we assess our character, our behavior and ultimately our self against those principles.

Giubilini, Alberto, "Conscience", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.),

Recently we have seen the world-wide impact that a death of one man has made. It has caused a mobilization of people from every social background, ethnicity, and age to unite and join forces over a single cause. This cause can best be described by the word "persecution". Persecution is the systematic mistreatment of an individual or group by another individual or group. The most common forms are religious persecution, racism and political persecution, though there is naturally some overlapping between these terms. The inflicting of suffering, harassment, imprisonment, in ternity, fear or pain are all factors that may establish persecution, but not all suffering will necessarily establish persecution. The suffering experienced by the victim must be sufficiently severe. In watching these events unfold I ponder why Christians have not taken up the cause for Christ with the same fervency. This is not meant to diminish the current world-wide reaction to the death of George Floyd but to question why Christians do not have the same fervency for the cause of Christ. According to Open Doors USA, a non-profit organization that supports persecuted Christians worldwide:

- 260 Million: In the top 50 World Watch List countries alone, 260 million Christians in the world experience high levels of persecution for their choice to follow Christ.
- 1 in 9: Christians worldwide experience high levels of persecution.

Closer to home we are witnessing an uptick in violence to churches and congregations this increase on top of the violence enacted on statues, memorials and civic buildings. An article in the July 23 *Wall Street Journal* reported on the growing vandalism on Catholic institutions in various U.S. cities between July 10 and 16. It was reported that, "The underlying motive of these sacrilegious attacks is clear: to intimidate and instill fear in the hearts of those who worship Christ." Will these type of attacks be enough to shake our faith?

I have to wonder if we, who call ourselves Christians, have selective memories or are allowing ourselves to fall in line with the general consensus of the population? Where is our voice? Historically we have we have seemingly let our religious freedoms be suppressed or totally annihilated. We have been given numerous opportunities to retain our voice.

In 1948 The United Nations Charter... fundamental human rights, and dignity and worth of the human person" and committed all member states to promote "universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion".

What has happened since then? The United Nations held an event on religious persecution recently, specifically focusing on Christians — now the most persecuted religion in the world.

As was mentioned in previous Newsletters, are we following the call of "we the people" or "in the beginning God?" What we have is a failure of governments which are instituted by man, the "We the People." This is the basis of all persecutions today. Galatians 5:17, *For 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.* What is guiding our

decisions? If we are determined to follow God, then how can we know what God wants us to do? What are the Godly principles, needed to direct my life with moral character? Past Newsletters addressed "core beliefs" and "core values," that are ideals or philosophies that we need to hold very strongly and very deeply.

Adding three more 'C' words to help address how we can regain our Christian voice. We have the word compass, a need to create a moral compass that can guide our decisions throughout our lives. Ideally, there is a balance between what's good for you and what's good for society as a whole. Although over time a person's moral compass may evolve as it's shaped by various religious, societal and experiential forces, it should retain some core principles – like seeking peace and integrity and not being detrimental.

The most important part of having a moral compass is using that moral compass. If we develop a moral compass and then ignore its readings, it does us absolutely no good. What is this moral compass?

A.W. Tozer wrote in *Echoes of Eden*, a chapter entitled, *The Ground of Human Conscience: Christ's Presence in the World*. That the foundation of the human conscience is "the secret presence of Christ in the world." To support his conclusions, he points to John 1:9, "There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man." This inward moral awareness is simply the "secret inner voice" of the Lord "accusing or else excusing him."

We see the connection in our moral compass and our conscience. What is the human conscience? According to Vine's Dictionary, the Greek word for conscience (*suneidesis*) literally means to possess "co-knowledge" of something resulting in one's "sense of guiltiness before God." Thus, we were created with a unique and intrinsic faculty that gives us a kind of third-

person perspective on the rightness and wrongness of our actions. The apostle Paul had a clear understanding of the damaging effects of sin on the human heart. He spoke insightfully of those who were "through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared," (1 Timothy 4:2), and those who, "They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. 19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. (Ephesians 4:18-19). Both metaphors- the seared conscience and the hardened, calloused heart- describe the same condition.



"As his heart becomes increasingly calloused, the spiritual system God constructed within him slowly loses its ability to detect the damage being done to it."

What we are currently experiencing in society is in stark contrast with the American Dream. That dream is measured by what a person has acquired, as measured by the person's material wealth and material assets; by what a person has accomplished, in terms of their professional expertise or know-how; or by their fame, power or authority within their "polite society circles."

The emphasis on humility in religious texts show that it's a trait and principle that deserves to be revered. While humility is often regarded in today's culture as being unassertive and passive, it's something that we can all stand to emulate. Mike Austin, Ph.D., professor of philosophy at Eastern Kentucky University refers to studies that have associated humility with healthy adjustment, good leadership and other positive emotions -- demonstrating that in order to reach total success, we could

stand to benefit from getting in touch with our modest side. And this doesn't require as much self-deprecation as one might think. In an article in the Huffington Post, Austin says, "Many people think of humility as ... thinking very little of yourself, and I don't think that's right. It's more about a proper or accurate assessment. A big part of humility is knowing our own limits, our strengths and weaknesses, morally or otherwise."

But beyond just knowing ourselves, humility can also build upon other positive traits we already have, Austin says, "In general, most traditions, religious or philosophical, believe that certain character traits make up a good person -- and a lot of those attributes are enhanced by humility."

A person with a tender conscience is keenly aware of every infraction against the Lord. He recognizes sin for the ugly thing that it is. Immoral deeds, though seemingly insignificant to others, are viewed by him as monstrous crimes against a holy God. Their importance, while not exaggerated, is internally magnified so that their true, insidious nature may be clearly seen. The person with a soft heart also remains consistently open to the Holy Spirit's conviction.

Which brings us to our third 'C' word. Conviction. Conviction is an influenced conscience. Some may say that all we need is the Bible; the conscience is thereby made superfluous. Yet, it is the Bible that tells us that God uses the conscience. Our convictions will not always agree because they are personal. They do not carry the authority of Scripture and may be faulty. But, as we submit to God and exercise ourselves in His word, we are to keep our consciences clean by establishing convictions in our lives and by avoiding offense to our consciences.

Conviction is the work of the Holy Spirit where a person is able to see

himself as God sees him: guilty, defiled, and totally unable to save himself (John 16:8). Conviction functions differently for the Christian and non-Christian. For the non-Christian, conviction reveals sinfulness, guilt and brings fear of God's righteous judgement. Whereas, conviction in the believer brings an awareness of sin and results in repentance, confession and cleansing.

Theologically, conviction is produced by the Holy Spirit (John 16:8), the Gospel (Acts 2:37), conscience (Rom. 2:15), and the Law (James 2:9). Conviction of sin brings man to the cross and shows the need for forgiveness.

Now that we have an idea of how we should act, how do we confront the injustices and persecutions impacting our lives today?

Where do we find the answers? The search begins and ends with God speaking to us through the scriptures and only through the scriptures. The 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith states this very well. "The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience." The basis of this is found in the Bible and is based on a number of passages of scripture, particularly 2 Tim. 3:16. *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,*²⁷ *that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.* In the first part of the verse we have the authorship that is, all holy Scripture; that means the whole of it; the books of the Old and New Testaments. And through the Scriptures is how God communicates with us. When God speaks to us. He doesn't offer suggestions. He commands, and His commands must be obeyed. Through these writings we can, with absolute certainty know what God commands us to do, because He has recorded His commandments in scripture. God tells us what we are allowed and not

allowed to do in His word. If we are living in accordance with the moral law of God and what scripture commands us to do and forbids us from doing, then we can do anything we like within this framework.

The second part of verse 16 provides three valuable insight that we are to use when confronting, any persecution we may face.

The first is.

profitable for teaching;

for the discovering, illustrating, and confirming any doctrine concerning God, the being, persons, and perfections of God; concerning the creation and fall of man; concerning the person and offices of Christ, redemption by him, justification by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, reconciliation and atonement by his sacrifice, and eternal life through him, with many others. The Fall of Man explains why sin and misery exist in the world today. Every act of violence, every illness, every tragedy that happens can be traced back to that fateful encounter between the first human beings and Satan. From that moment on, from that time on, the Bible records a sad history of humanity disobeying God. It now falls on us to confront it and we accomplish this by the next command:

for reproof;

the confronting of errors and heresies; this is the sword of the Spirit, which cuts all down. There never was, nor is, nor can be any error or heresy broached in the world, but there is a sufficient contradiction of it in the Scriptures; which may be profitably used for that purpose, as it often has been by Christ and his apostles, and others since in all ages:

for correction;

of vice; there being no sin, but the evil nature of it is shown, its wicked tendency is exposed, and the sad effects and consequences of it are pointed out in these writings: for instruction in righteousness; in every branch of duty incumbent upon men; whether with respect to God, or one another; for

there is no duty men are obliged unto, but the nature, use, and excellency of it, are here shown: the Scriptures are a perfect rule of faith and practice; and thus they are commended from the usefulness and profitableness of them. Lastly.

for training in righteousness;

There are two very important words that form this insight. The first is the word training. This refers to the chastening, instruction, and nurturing of children. This is the way the Lord deals with us through His word. A quote attributed to Saint Jerome says, "the Bible is deep enough for a theologian to drown in and yet shallow enough for a child of God to wade in." Certainly, it is true that God tutors us, in His Word, on a level that any of us can understand and benefit from. In order for us to benefit from training it is going to require discipline. "*It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?*" (Hebrews 12:7).

That the man of God may be perfect

We see the result of this training in verse 17, it is that we might have a perfect knowledge of the will of God; that we might be a complete minister of the Gospel, and that nothing might be lacking in our understanding. We need to be men/women who decide to let God control our lives by applying God's word to our everyday activities, by obeying God's lawful commands in all of his doings, and by serving God and showing the love of Christ to others through both words and actions.

thoroughly furnished unto all good works,

or "every good work"; or simply works, are a person's (exterior) actions or deeds, in contrast to inner qualities such as grace or faith. They are the sign of a sincere and grateful faith. They include actions for the Great Commission, that is, evangelism, service in the Church and charity.

We need to allow the Scriptures to give directions as well as show us where strength is to be had to perform them. Referring back to the opening

quote, "Through our individual conscience, we become aware of our deeply held moral principles, we are motivated to act upon them, and we assess our character, our behavior and ultimately our self against those principles."

We have been called to be on a mission with God. This can only happen if, and only if, all God's people are prepared for this mission. We may profess that we believe the classic Christian doctrines, but are we successfully endeavoring to multiply those values into our communities? As Christians, are we equipped to disciple society and bring cultural values back to it for God, for the world, and for us?





PRAYER LIST

- ✓ ✓ Continuing Prayers for loss: All the families that have lost loved ones this past year. Remember those who have recently lost loved ones due to COVID 19.
- ✓ ✓ Continuing Prayers for physical needs: Rita McManus, Maria Hatfield, Erwin and Elizabeth Lickman, Gloria-Lynn Fernandez, Betty Matson, Ronaldo Claveria
- ✓ ✓ Continuing Prayers for our Ministry Needs: The Pastoral Search Committee, Pulpit Supply, Our Deacons, Financial support
- ✓ ✓ Continuing Prayers for our Sister Ministries: BIEM Ministries, Orchard Church, Pastors Davis, Billow, Eddy, Vitel
- ✓ ✓ 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.
- ✓ URGENT Erwin Lickmann is requesting prayer for decisions to be made regarding the future living arrangements for himself and Elizabeth. A decision needs to be made soon as Elizabeth's health and mental faculties are failing.
- ✓ Alex Figueroa, (relative of Al Nuzikowski) Final year medical student coming to Chicago for a second opinion regarding necessary eye surgery.

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

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