

The Good News

Newsletter— November 2016

A Publication of University Baptist Church, Hattiesburg, MS

The purpose of University Baptist Church is, through guidance of the Holy Spirit, to assemble and worship God, to love and encourage one another, to proclaim the gospel of Christ, to minister to all people, and to live in peace.

In a world where difficult issues remain, University Baptist Church continues its commitment to be a church where “there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male or female, for (we) are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28)

Missed Opportunities

Read I Corinthians 13

I keep hearing the sad words from men and women around the world about the many differences among people – race, sex, sexuality, religion, cultures, classes, and so forth. I recently read a devotional by Randy Kilgore that touched the very heart of the subject and I would like to share a bit of it with everyone. Two believers in Christ were discussing an issue about which they had differing opinions: (The older of the two seemed smug as he wielded scripture like a weapon, chopping away at the things he saw wrong in the other's life. The younger man just seemed weary of the lecture, weary of the other person, and discouraged.

As the exchange drew to a close, the older man commented on the other's apparent disinterest. “You used to be eager,” he started and then abruptly quit. “I don't know what it is you want.” “You missed the chance to love me,” the young man said. “In all the time you've known me, what has seemed to matter most to you is pointing out what you think is wrong about me. What do I want? I want to see Jesus—in you and through you.”)

After reading this devotional I realized that the Holy Spirit was telling me that there were people that I missed the opportunity to love and that there were people who couldn't see Jesus in me either. What does this story tell you? The apostle Paul tells us that love must be the underlying motive in anything we do; in everything we do. – I Corinthians 13: 1-4

Let's not miss any more opportunities to show love to everyone despite their differences. We are all brothers and sisters and we should all treat one another accordingly.

Love beats lectures every time ... God Bless!

Justin U.
Parchman, MS

Missed Opportunities

I recall of many times
before,
As I stood tall through that
open door.
In the dark, I refused
to see.
And missed out on the
opportunity
I want to trash what blocked
the light,
And walk toward the path
that's right.
I want to share His love
with you,
It's what He taught us all
to do.
Out of the dark, I can't
wait,
To share His love before it's
too late;
Too late to cause you any
harm,
And let disappointment pierce with
dread alarm.
Into the light, with all that
He's done,
He knows what's right as we serve
the Just One.
With His love given abundantly and
unconditionally,
Treasure every moment and love every.
Opportunity.

- Justin U.

Do You Mind If I Pray?
(Main Line Under Attack) Matthew 6:9-15

There's a commercial that I've heard on a local Christian radio station that starts with the sounds of a crowd of fans just before the start of a sporting event. Then comes the booming voice of an announcer over the public address system telling all spectators that, "There will be no brief moment of prayer before tonight's game because it could offend the person next to you!" Beloved understand this, Satan does recognize the undeniable connection between prayer and Divine providence. I can remember my grandmother often referring to the believers intimate relationship with his Father God in prayer as the "Main Line." A direct line of communication straight to the Creator of the universe! And you can believe Satan has pulled out all the stops in his attempts to disrupt this very critical asset for the believer. The "main line" is without a doubt under demonic attack. Two things in the life of a believer that are inseparable are prayer and providence (which is termed as the divine superintendant over the earth and its affairs by Almighty God) while providence is the result of and belongs to prayer, all answers to prayer are but the intervention of the providence of God in the affairs of men. Beloved, Satan knows providence has to do specially with praying people. E.M. Bounds relates it in these terms: "Prayer, providence, and the Holy Spirit are a trinity, which cooperate with each other and are in perfect harmony with one another. Romans 8:26-27. Prayer is but the request of man for God through the Holy Spirit to interfere on behalf of him who prays." Only when we admit that El-Shaddai is creator and preserver of all men and concede that He is wise and intelligent will we be driven by the Holy Spirit to the conclusion that God has a direct superintendence of those whom He has created and whom He preserves in being. Creation and preservation suppose a superintending providence. Beloved what is called divine providence is simply Almighty God governing the world for its best interest... "on earth as it is in Heaven." And overseeing everything for the good of mankind. Who wouldn't want that? Really, who?

Tony B.
Parchman, MS.

LORD OF ALL

Death row is the world's definition of sterilization. I've been convicted by society's perspective view of legalism drenched in contradiction. My past is dressed in woes. I am new as a forgotten dog, a number now stamps my name. Parchman perches the greenest leaf and tenders no thought for humanity. Times meter for many here on the row is near spent. The scent of execution is ever present, the verdict of so called civilized peers has charged me a sentence of death. I have been omitted from society's population due to the lack of sobriety within self-control my inquiring mind ponders the notion at just how many ills they've executed and never gotten caught?

The judiciary system in today's world is a poison to my vein. The past frowns but my future blooms, for I have a vindicated hope in my soul—Jesus Christ, the One and only Messiah! The death penalty is a soured preservation of soiled culture, dominated by municipalities—the fingerprint of “the fall” the world's hypocrisy holds governmental murder by way of the execution chamber, and abortion clinics a binding positive...what makes them any better than me???

In night visions, as my mind frames pictured thoughts, I feel execution's chilling breeze still, but I have a dream of ruins refreshed, a divine assurance with mansions made of grace, a Ruby six sided in shape, forged in redemption, each side speaks a day of His creation and the gem itself being the 7th day as perfection, a frontier where no folly dwells—a territory made not of human hands, species of mammals and a thousand different kinds of winged creatures singing tunes to ten thousand melodies, but first glorified life began with a death sentence, our dear sweet Lord Jesus fleshed himself in compassion and mastered death just so that we wretched pilgrims, may in praise, partake in looming, heavenly life—as my king's royal blood the earth did drink, within the helmet of salvation the voice of His atonement drums loud—Lord of ALL.

By: Jesus and David C.
Parchman, Ms U.S.A.
Death Row

The Belly of the Great Fish

The following was inspired by the Word of God through Stephen Powers and written by a fellow Brother in Christ. Stephen Powers has suffered two strokes and currently has a bleeding aneurysm in his brain.

Jonah 1:12 “Now the LORD has prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.”

One of the things we see in the Bible is that disobedience is met with divine reinforcement and even though it is for our good, it rarely feels like it. We see this from the first sign of disobedience with Adam and Eve and we can see it today. Jonah is no exception. God called Jonah to go to Ninevah which is the capital of Assyria. At this time Assyria was threatening the northern kingdom Israel. Jonah was reluctant to go to Ninevah, fearing they might repent and be spared. Assyria was a very cruel nation. Instead of obeying the Lord’s charge to go to Ninevah and preach repentance to the Gentiles, he instead took a ship headed to Tarshish which was about 2000 miles in the opposite direction from where he was commanded to go. Isn’t that a clear picture of so many of us today? The Lord calls us to action and we run away from Him. At least we try to run. So here is Jonah on a ship headed in the opposite direction and guess who he encounters—Omnipresent Himself! The God he was trying to escape. God surely does have a way when He’s trying to get our attention.

Most of the time we, like Jonah, realize why we are in trouble. Yes, it is safe to say that when we end up in the belly of that great fish, we have some idea why we are there. However, arriving at this realization is only half the battle. Like Jonah, we still have a choice to make. Examples are found in Jonah 2:1-9 “...I called out of my distress to the LORD” and Psalm 3:8 “Deliverance belongs to the LORD.” Jonah was spit on to dry land. He was shown mercy and given another chance. The Lord recommissioned Jonah and this time he obeyed. This obedience to God by Jonah was not in accordance with a desire to save the people of Ninevah, but from his desire to please God--Not my will but Your will be done. When we see God’s commandments in Bible reading, prayers, and circumstances, we are to obey. God loves you and He wants His best for you. This is why He gives us His commands and instructions. Obedience brings joy and uninterrupted fellowship with God. As the old hymn says, “When we walk with the Lord in the light of His word, what a glory He sheds on our way.” Amen and Amen.

Brother in Christ
Stephen Elliot Powers
Parchman, MS

What Is In A Name?

What is in a name? In scripture the name of a person means several things. For this study I confined my observations of a name, especially those of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, to the character, authority, and power that a name carries and stands for. There are as many examples of the names' importance as there are names in the Bibles. A few of the better known human examples which show my point are: Abram to Abraham (exalted ancestor to ancestor or a multitude) reflects the promises made to him by God. Jacob to Israel (supplanter to one that strives with God (and with humans) reflects the change in Jacob's character. Simon to Peter (tiny, easily moved stone to an immovable foundation rock) reflects the fundamental change in character. Saul to Paul (Saul is his Jewish name, Paul his Roman name) reflects the change in vocation as he went out as an Apostle to the Gentiles. We can see from just these four examples that the names matched the character and attributes of the person and was changed to reflect that person's growth in understanding and/or a change in vocation. If this is true of man then we must pay special attention to the names of God.

Let's look at God the Father. Throughout the Bible His attributes, character, authority, and power were slowly revealed to mankind in order to give us a deeper understanding of who He is. There are way too many names for the Father to list and that fact makes a dramatic point. The Father is named by His people according to their understanding of Him or how He wanted to be understood by them. Hagar, for example, understood Him to be a God that sees everything, El-roi. The Father describes Himself to Abram as God Almighty, El Shaddai. This was to bring Abram to the understanding, and give him the peace of knowing, that He has the power to do what He says He can do in making the very old man into a great nation. God is named by our understanding or names Himself in order to be better understood. The seven compound names for God clearly reveal who He is in a variety of ways. Jehovah-Jirah, the Lord will provide (Gen. 22:14); Jehovah-Rophekha, the Lord who heals you (Ex. 15:26); Jehovah-Nissi, the Lord my banner (Ex. 17:8-15); Jehovah-Shalom, the Lord our peace (Jud 6:24); Jehovah-Roi, the Lord my shepherd (Ps. 23:1); Jehovah-Tsidkenu, the Lord our righteousness (Jer. 23:6); Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord is present (Ezek. 48:35). In each of these situations God presented Himself in a new way which brought His people to a deeper realization of who He is. Why is it important for us today? It is important to know the names of God, to meditate on His names in order to know Him personally and to increase our faith. Our prayer lives will be greatly altered as well. God knows our hearts and thanks to His Holy Spirit living inside of us, He knows what we are really praying for when we call out to Him. While this is a wonderful reality, I suggest that knowing God the Father by the name of our need and our desire to praise and worship, we can truly tap into His power. I listed just a few of the Creator's names above. I encourage you to seek more out, meditate on who the Father is to you, and begin storing His names in your heart.

Our Lord Jesus also has many names and we call out to Him according to our need. When you cry out to Jesus do you ever consider what aspect of His being you are reaching out to? For example, when we cried out for salvation our hearts called to Christ the Savior. Would we ever need to address Him in the same way for the same purpose again? I think not because we would be saved already. Do you see my point and the reason it's important to truly know the Lord? By which names do you know Him? He is the Alpha and Omega, Christ of God, Faithful and True, God's Son, Head of the Body, the Church, Immanuel (God with us), Christ our Lord and Savior, King of kings and Lords of lords, Man of Sorrows, Son of Man, Righteous Judge, the Way, truth and life, and the Word (logos) of Life and God. He is all of this and so much more. There are simply too many aspects of Jesus to list but they are all contained in the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

How about Holy Spirit? How do you know Him? He is our Counselor, Breath and Voice of God, Holy One, the Spirit of Christ, of counsel, of power, of faith, of fire, of glory, of grace, the Spirit of supplication and prayer, of holiness, of justice, of judgment, of knowledge, of life, of wisdom, of revelation, of understanding of truth, the Spirit of the Sovereign Lord our Living God.

What's my point? I simply want everyone to understand that God is all in all. When He told Moses that His name is "I AM," He was stating such a profound truth about Himself that we will never come to terms with it this side of Paradise. God is inexhaustible and if we spent every minute of a million lifetimes meditating on Him we couldn't even begin to scratch the surface of comprehending the fullness of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. When God said, "I AM," my human mind asks, "I AM what?" God's response blasts out through the life of Jesus into our hearts by His Holy Spirit and remains ever before our eyes in the pages of His Book. When God says He is "I AM," He is telling us that "I AM EVERYTHING!"

Now this brings me to one of the reasons I began studying this in the first place. When Jesus told us that He came in the name of the Father what did He mean? When Jesus told us that the Father would send the Holy Spirit in Jesus' name what did He mean? (John 5:39-47; 14:25-31). What does it mean to be baptized in His name?

We have two camps of thought here. Some believe that the Lord's teaching in Matthew 28:19-20 gives us the correct baptismal formula. Others adamantly disagree and cite the Book of Acts (2:38, 8:16, 10:48, 19:5, 22:16) and baptism in Jesus' name as the only acceptable baptismal formula. It is interesting to note that Acts 22:16 doesn't actually mention Jesus but only "the name." But I digress. Anyway, how do we reconcile the seemingly contradictory words of Jesus with those of His disciples? I say that there is not a contradiction at all and that both are correct ways to baptize when understood correctly. We must first understand that like a person's name, their title is very significant and can be used in place of the name. In Exodus 3:13-15 God not only told Moses His name is "I AM" and "YHWH" but He said, "This is My name forever, and this is My title for all generations" (vs. 15). I believe that Jesus' title as Son of God carries the weight of His names in all of their fullness and power. When Jesus was praying to God the Father He didn't address Him in any of the myriad of names the Father possesses. Instead, Jesus the Son addressed God as Father and that "title" carried all of God's names (attributes, character, authority, power, etc.) within it.

Imagine an ambassador. When he travels to a distant land he represents his country, his people, and his leader. King David sent men saying "God up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name..." Once the men let it be known that they represented David they were to handle his business. They had all of the backing of a King because they went in his name (1 Samuel 25:1-42. Notice also that Nabal's name matched his character vs. 25). If an ambassador says he comes in the name of the King then he represents not only the King but the values, morals, power, etc of the King. Everything can be summed up in the title of the king. We are ambassadors of Christ (2 Cor. 5:16-21).

God applies this principle to Himself too. Jesus came in the name of the Father to show us all that the Father is. Jesus is the ambassador from Heaven and represents the Father here on earth. Since no human can possibly know all the names of God or apply them distinctly and correctly in any given situation, it only makes sense why using His title as Father, Son, or Holy Spirit is by far the most logically reasonable choice. Using a specific name such as Jesus is the same way when understood correctly. All have equal power. When Jesus commanded us to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, He was telling us to do so in all that those titles encompass. Jesus Himself used the titles when praying and speaking of the Spirit so we can follow His teaching examples and commands and rest assured that baptism in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy spirit, who properly understood, is a legitimate baptismal formula.

I would also point out one of the reasons Jesus gave us this command is so that His followers would learn, understand, and be able to communicate to others what the roles of each of the members of the Godhead (trinity) are in our salvation process. The Father's role is distinctive from the role the Son, Jesus, plays and both are different from that of the Holy Spirit, yet all three roles are unitedly crucial for the continuing act of salvation. So when Jesus commands us to baptize in their names, He is showing us the importance of their distinctions while at the same time stressing the unity of the Godhead. Therefore I see no contradiction with the disciples baptizing in Jesus' name in Acts. Both are equally valid. If you are interested, here are a few of the hundreds of examples of the points I made above. I encourage you to look them up and see where they take you. Ex. 6:2-3; Ps 68:4, 83:18; Prov. 18:10; Isa. 7:14, 8:8, 10; John 5:43, 8:28, 42; 10:25, 14:7, 13-14, 25-26, 15:26-27, 17:6, 25-26... Enjoy the study. I always welcome responses. We can't grow if we don't communicate in peace and love. Have a great month.

In Christian Solidarity,
Roger G.,
Parchman, DR

