

The Good News

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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)

Father God we come before you united in Holy Spirit by faith in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior ; We thank you for redeeming us through the willing sacrifice of your son and the position we now have in Him before you ; We praise you God for the many blessings of today, for your sovereign hand, Your mighty works and your eternal love, grace and mercy; We thank you for the opportunity to come before you today; Holy Spirit we ask you to search our hearts here today leaving no stubborn stone unturned, to continue creating in us a clean heart and mind as we yield daily to your instructions, we ask you Holy Spirit to open our ears and eyes to your Word, that we may be sanctified, equipped and encouraged; renew us Holy Spirit with a steadfast and willing spirit able to sustain us so we may better serve as ambassadors of your will Father God; we ask You to use us as vessels of your light and glory as we make ourselves available to you Lord Jesus; May your word flow throughout this prison and to the ends of the earth so that all those still lost may be found and those still running the race may be encouraged by the hope that is You Christ Jesus. Father God we lift up our families to You, we ask that your will be done in their lives and that you continue to watch over them and keep them, blessing them in all the ways you know they need; We lift up the prison officials here, may you protect them, may they make decisions that make peace, bring change, and ultimately Your glory O’ God; we will lift up our President and all government agencies, may you use them to fulfill Your Will Father God, we ask that you watch over them and their families; we lift up all those that are sick or suffering Lord, we ask you to comfort them and use Your faithful servants to meet their needs; Father God, we place ourselves on the altar before you and ask that you consume us so that the world may see your glory Lord, we give all reverence and worship to you in the precious name of Christ Jesus, Amen

February Prayer
The Dog Pen Church In Christ

*Note from a UBC scribe who copies/edits letters for *Good News*) I would like to personally congratulate those inmates who have felt called to band together as a church body (*The Dog Pen Church In Christ*) within the walls of their prison to identify themselves with the body of Christ in the world by joining for encouragement and support of each other in their unique environment with its many trials and tribulations.

Chosen

I ran throughout my life, anytime that pressure got too much, or exposure of my actions, you must know, that most on Death row have very difficult past, recently a man took his life on other zone, I am housed on A side, as I have wrote to your church, who has adopted us, I truly cherish the Christmas Cards sent, I have been missing my part in news letter, I strive to do better.

Chosen to be a Christian, is 2 edged sword, critics look and use anything to create negative, if anyone wants to they could find fault in me everyday, I will never be perfect, I do learn to do better, I am one of those Yankee Irish man, who fed into St Patrick's day, like Hockey is really big up north, the title is about that, I choose to be were I am, by bad choices, I remember a very important teacher, told me to always seek to learn, i.e. learn new words in the dictionary, I now see the importance in that, plus I am learning proper sentence structure, plus I now get to heart of "Chosen", in 1976, my grandmother Evans came down with Cancer, commonly called Beast Cancer, and I went to see her 3 times a week, at the beginning, I watched effects of chemo then radiation, grandma played 9 holes of golf 2 times a week, she pushed me to stop drinking, everyone else had their head in the sand, big deal then was cocaine, heroine - so if a young man didn't do that, alcohol wasn't big deal, wrong. She taught me how to learn, how to plant garden, cut lawn, weed eat, as to say, back when hand held trimmers that were not electric or gas, how to shovel snow and after that, thus I learned how to go, out, earn money to buy Christmas and birthdays, grandma had a bible that she read everyday, I was so busy then, that I didn't know God was knocking back then, she told me when my mom and dad broke marriage up, how parents don't know that children will inadvertently blame themselves especially at the tender age of 6 going on 7. I was so head strong, I told my mom, dad is lost mom, he needs me truth be told, both were full blown alcoholics and it was very contributing factor in divorce. My grandmother told me not to listen to bad, to see good in both, I believe that I was being shown tools to deal with broken up households, now this was back in 1965, now fast track to 1977, the chemo and radiation changed my grandmother, and 6 months later, they detected more cancer now in stomach, also told her that, inoperable, it would metastasize, so 9 months later, in early 1978, everyone flew up to Michigan to bury her, were she wanted to be buried in cemetery Grosse Ile, suburb off Detroit river, to this day, I see her outside with a broom, (raised planting) huge flower bed with so many flowers and the spring time were I would be labor to pull hay off garden, bulbs would pop up and then the planting would be started, so that winter was shaken off, the snow up there is tremendous and when the blooms hit the sunshine, what a sight, I also to this day remember all the life lessons she had taught me, how to finish a job, to make sure the customer was always satisfied, to seek to be better, smarter, I didn't always do that, yet I believe grandma was "Chosen" to show me, because no one else wanted to spend time with her, no one else wanted to spend summer with grandma, I did, ulterior motive, she had swimming pool, yet going to A&W root beer stand-ole school drive up like the sonic is now, that was popular back in 50's & 60's were real Hot Rods used to cruise to show off there car's, I will always remember first tigers baseball game, grandma loved Detroit Tigers, I close with this, my hope & prayer is for this story to reach 1 person & they see what Jesus has for them, I see now as I will be 60 March 21st and you will be reading this early April, may everyone at University Baptist have a truly beautiful Easter, and every-day someone may come to you- thru the fellowship- you maybe the person who becomes ambassador for Christ. I see men here on Death row now doing just that. In Jesus name- peace.

Timothy N. Evans

Don't Cheapen Grace

"Does not our preaching contain too much of our own opinions and convictions, and too little of Jesus Christ? Jesus invites all those that labor and are heavy laden (Matt. 11:28) and nothing could be so contrary to our best intentions, and so fatal to our proclamation as to drive men away from Him by forcing upon them man-made dogma (doctrines). If we did so we should make the love of Jesus Christ a laughing stock to Christians and pagans alike. It is no use taking refuge in abstract discussion, or trying to make excuses, so let us get back to the scriptures, to the Word and call of Jesus Christ Himself. Let us try to get away from the poverty and pettiness of our own little convictions and problems and see the wealth and splendor which are vouchsafed to use in Jesus Christ." The above was taken from the introduction in Dietrich Bonhoeffer's book "The Cost of Discipleship" and that's just the introduction.

Recently God brought His attribute of grace to bare on my understanding of communion. Christ ordained communion, instituting the Lord's Supper at His last supper. (Matt. 26:26-29) "We observe it between the first and second coming of Christ, it involves symbolic elements—bread that broken (portraying Christ's broken body), a cup wine/grape juice (portraying Christ's shed blood. Thank you, Jesus!) And the distribution of both to the Church (portraying the church appropriation of Christ's work). It proclaims the gospel, fosters remembrance of Christ's sacrifice, signals the new covenant relationship, unites Christians with Christ, and portrays unity in the church." (This is from the Baker Compact Dictionary of Theological Terms)

Needless to say by the cheapening of grace starts a domino effect of sorts. We cheapen grace by the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. We should be careful to never lessen the significance of anything His grace covers. Communion in particular. Communion offers us the strength where we once knew only weakness, through unique, personal fellowship with our Savior as we recall and also benefit from His loving sacrifice. We lessen the significance of communion through failing to take seriously the very covenantal commitment that comes through the cross. It warrants our remembrance that, the significance of communion is tied to the significance of the cross whose aim was these e defeat of Satan, the forgiveness of sin, the transformation of life, and the flow of blessings. Beloved, this all comes wrapped up in the new covenant through what we call grace communion, is God's ordained channel for spiritual well-being. Paul states in 1 Corinthians 11:30 the consequences of taking communion improperly, which denotes the "lessening" or "cheapening" of grace and all it covers. These consequences being weaknesses, sickness, and early death. But then there are benefits that come to the believer in these same areas. Costly grace is the kingly rule of Christ for whose sake a man will pluck out the eye which causes him to stumble; (Matt. 5:29, 18:9) it is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows Him. (Luke 5:27-28; 14:26-27) It is costly because above all, it cost God the life of His Son; "For you have been bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:20) and that which has cost God so much cannot be cheap nor cheapened for us or by us. Praise Him right now for His costly grace!

Tony B.
Parchman

After Fasting

After fasting, my spirit was recharged and I thanked God for His mighty hand that strengthened me and guided me through out the journey. As I sat there at the Light, I waited patiently for His direction and his order of my steps (Psalm 37:23). I realize that in today's world we just up and go without any sense of spiritual direction. And we blame it on everything but ourselves. We're so caught up in the TV, the radio, on cell phones, playing video games, and every other distraction that serves no true purpose.

It does however serve a purpose. I think that we've really underestimated how witty and crafty the devil really is. Just think about it – the more time you spend in these extracurricular activities the less time you have to pray or think about praying. The devil knows that the more you pray and spend time in the Word, the more we'll hear God's voice directing our way. Too often, we ignore His voice and opt to go our own way. As believers, I think sometimes we forget that we are no longer free but his servants submitting to the Ways of the Lord. We are only free to do what's right and acceptable to God. To be a believer, we have to humbly walk as one and be as obedient as one (James 4:6-10, I Peter 1: 14-16).

Each and every day our first priority as believers is to connect with God in prayer and to let Him lead us. He must be the focal point of every choice and decision we make so that He order our steps. (Proverbs 16: 9). Jesus said in John 20: 21: as my father has sent me, even so I send you. He came in to the world as a humble servant doing the will of the Father and so He sends us in to the world likewise (Hebrews 5: 8-9). We have to invoke purpose that best represents Almighty God in to that we do so that all things will be possible with His mighty Hands (Mathew 19:26, Mark 10: 27). We can't complain about not receiving the fullness of God's blessings when we are not willing participants to receive the fullness of his blessings. We have to learn abstain and not become lazy or entwined in all the things of the world. I want everyone to be mindful of what they do every day. Exactly how much time do you give to god and how much time do you spend caught in the world? (1John 2: 15-17). We have to do better everyone. We have to give just as much as we receive. He gave us the ultimate gift; the ultimate sacrifice out of love so that we can have everlasting life (John 3: 16). I don't know about you but I desire everlasting life and I pray that you will also. There's no shame in being a servant of the Lord so serve Him well and be rewarded plentiful.

Psalm 31: 23-24

Isaiah 28:16

Read Isaiah 58: 6-12 and Mathew 6: 17-18—God Bless Everyone!

Justin Underwood

After fasting, I sat patiently at
the light
Figuring whether He wanted me to
go left or right

Consulting with Him first must be our
number one priority
For He said, "things impossible with you
are possible with Me" - Luke 18:27

After fasting, I thanked Him humbly for
recharging my battery
I thank Him humbly every day for His
Spirit indwelling me

Shining brighter and brighter before a word
held with the cords of sin
For He said, "Let your light so shine
before men" _ Matthew 5:16

After fasting, I truly understood through abstaining
all that He sacrificed
A willing and able servant for 33 years
of His life

12 hours for 40 days in the stillness of His
love and peace (Yahweh-Shalom)
To move mountains, He must increase but I
must decrease—John 3:30

Importance of Praise

Eric M. - Dog Pen Church

The Bible often exhorts God's people to praise the Lord. The writers of the Old Testament used three basic words to call the Israelites to praise God: the word "Barak" (Gen 9:26) which can also be translated "bless"; the word "halal" (Chron. 23:20) from which hallelujah, meaning "praise the Lord"; and the word "Yadah" (I Chron. 16:34) sometimes translated as "give thanks".

The Bible's first song, sung after the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea, was essentially a song of praise and thanksgiving (Exodus 15:2) Moses later commanded the Israelites to praise God for His goodness in giving them the promised land. (Deut. 8:10) Deborah's song specifically called the people to praise the Lord (Judges 5:9). David's desire to praise God is recorded both in the story of his life (2 Sam 22: 4, 47, 50; I Chron. 16:4,9,25, 35-36 29:20) and in the Psalms he wrote (Ps. :9;1-2 : 18: 3; 22:2s3; 52:9; 108:1,3; 145). Other psalmists also call God's people to live their lives praising God (Ps. 33:1-2 47:6-7; 75:9 ; 96: 1-4; 100;150). The old testament prophets instructed God's people to praise Him (Is 42:10, 12; Jer. 20: 1; Is. 12:1-6; 25:1 Jer. 33: 9; Joel 2:26; Hab. 3: 36). The call to praise God reverberated throughout the new testament. Jesus Himself praised His Father in heaven (Mat. 11:25; Luke 10:21) Paul expects all the redeemed among the nations to praise God (Rom. 15: 9-11; Eph 1: 3,6, 12), and James calls us to praise the Lord (Jas. 3:9; 5:13). In the end the picture in Revelations is that of a great multitude of elders (Saints) and angels praising God continually (Rev. 4:9-11; 5:8-14; 7:9-12; 11:16-18). Praising God is one of the main functions of angels (Ps. 30:4; 148:2) and is the privilege of children (Mat 21:16: cf, Ps8:2) and adults (Ps 30:4 135:1-2 19-21). God calls all nations to praise him (Ps 67:3-5; 11: 7; 148:11-13; Is 42:10-12; Rom 15:11). In other words, everything that has breath is called to shout out the praise of God's people (Ps. 150:6). As if that's not enough, God also commands inanimate nature to praise Him. -- Such as the sun, moon, and stars (Ps. 148: 3-4 Ps 19: 1-2); lightning, hail, snow and wind (Ps.148:8) mountains, hills, rivers and seas (Ps. 98: 7-8; 141:9; Is. 44: 23); All kinds of trees (Ps. 148:9 Is. 55: 12); and all kinds of living creatures (Ps. 69: 34; 148:10).

Methods of Praise:

Praising God can take place in a variety of ways. Praising is a keynote in the corporate worship of God's people (Ps. 100: 4). Both in the corporate worship setting and in other places, the singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs is a way to express praise to God (Ps. 96:1-4; 147:1; Eph. 5:19-20; Col. 3:16-17). Praise can be sung with mind (i.e. In known human languages) or with the spirit (i.e. In tongues; I Cor. 14:14-16). Musical praise can be expressed through various instruments (Ps. 150:3). Pipe (I Sam. 10:5; Ps. 150:4) harp and lyre (I Chron. 13:8; Ps. 150:3) tambourines and cymbals (Ex. 15:20; Ps 150: 4-5). We can also communicate God's praise by telling others about our God's wonderful deeds. For example, having experienced God's forgiveness, David was eager to tell others about what the Lord had done for him (Ps. 51:12-13, 15). Other Bible writers urge us to declare God's glory and praise in the congregation of God's people (Ps. 22:22-25 111: 1; Heb. 2:12) and among the nations (Ps. 18:49; 96:3-4, Is. 42: 10-12). Peter calls on God's chosen people to " show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9) A life lived in God's glory is a way to praise the Lord. Jesus reminds us that if we let our light shine, people will see our good deeds and give glory and praise to God (Matt. 5:16 John 15:8). Similarly Paul observes that a life filled with the fruit of righteousness praises God (Phil. 1:11).

Reasons for Praise:

Why do people praise the Lord? One of the obvious reasons is because of the splendor, glory, majesty and beauty of our God, the One who created the heavens and the earth (Ps. 96:4-6; 145:3; 148:13) the One who is to be exalted in His holiness (Ps. 99:3; Is. 6:3). The experience of God's mighty acts, particularly His acts of salvation and redemption, is a key reason to praise His name. (Ps. 96:1-3; 106: 1-2; 148:14; 150:2; Luke 1:68- 75; 2:14; 20); in doing so, we praise God for his unfailing mercy, grace and love (Ps. 57:9-10; 89: 1-2; 117; 145:8-10; Eph. 1:6). We will also want to praise God for any specific acts of deliverance in our lives, such as being rescued from our enemies or healed of our sicknesses (Ps. 9: 1-5; 40:1-3; 59:16; 124; Jer 20: 13; Luke 13:13; Acts 3: 7-9). God's continual providential care and provision of us day by day, both physically and spiritually, is a powerful reason to praise and bless His name (Ps. 68:19; 103; 147; Is. 63:7).

Will You Believe that Lie?

(The following piece 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.) Hebrews 6:18; “That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.”

As believers we must rely on the unchanging truth of God’s holy Word and His oath. God has given His children an unfailing hope based upon His Word and His oath. This hope is our anchor, our truth as Christians. We read this truth in Hebrews 6:19; “This hope we have as an anchor of the soul.” There is a sea of lies that desires to steal this hope. In John 8:44 we learn the truth about the devil’s words, “ whenever he speaks the lie he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.” In John 10:10, we learn the truth behind the devil’s words, “The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy.” There are three words in the Word of God that possess great power for the believer when being challenged with lies. There three words are “It is written.” This is not only how we expose the lies, but it is how we stand firm against them. Whether the devil is trying to twist the Word to deceive you as you read or if he is using man to do it. We as believers challenge these lies with God’s holy and unchanging Word, just as Jesus Christ did against it in the Wilderness. In Jesus Christ’s name we pray, Amen and Amen.

Brother in Christ,
Stephen Elliot Powers
DPC

Am I Good Enough?

How good do you have to be to get into heaven? God is holy and requires holiness. To be holy means to be pure. Even though you many think you are good enough, even one sin disqualifies you from being in the presence of God. WE could never be good enough, which is why we need Jesus. To say you are good enough means you have done everything right and perfect. It means you have never sinned or done any wrong. This is the only way you will be good enough for God to accept you. Goodness Is not based on comparing ourselves to other people, but according to God’s standards. The Bible says that there is none good enough (Romans 3:10-12). The Bible states that if righteousness can come by good deeds, then Christ didn’t need to die (Galatians 2:21). But He did. Which means being good isn’t enough, and if righteousness is based on how good we think we need to be, then how do we know if we have done enough? God takes sinner like me just as they are and places His Spirit inside them to begin cleaning them up. Our own self-righteousness is like a dirty rag in the eyes of God (Isaiah 64:6). We cannot make ourselves better until Christ is in us all the way—not half.

Sherwood B.