

The Good News

Newsletter— January 2017

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)

2017 JUBILEE

The Hebrew word translated "Jubilee" means "to make a joyful noise /acclamation of joy." During the year of Jubilee which is the 50th year of the Sabbath year, debts were canceled, slaves were freed, and land was returned to its original family owners. Therefore it was a joyous time (Lev. 25:8-55).

The same can be said when a sinner accepts Jesus as personal Lord and Savior (Mark 1:40-45; 2:8-12) and (Luke 15:1-7. So make 2017 your Jubilee by admitting to God that you are a sinner (Romans 3:23), believe in Jesus as the Savior of the world and your Savior (John 3:16) and confess your sins from the heart to Jesus and ask for His forgiveness (1 John 1:9). It's as easy as ABC (Admit, Believe, and Confess) and your joy can begin!!!

This reminds me of my conversion when peace and joy overwhelmed me as I accepted Jesus as my personal Lord and Savior back in 1995. Oh how I cried tears of joy when my Lord told me, "I got you, Eric!" The closest thing to that joy I could remember is when I would assist my grandmother, whom I called Momma, with her flower-beds. She would have me weed, turn soil and plan. The part I loved most was the time we shared together. She was truly the love of my life. During those times of flowering with her, she began to call me Fernand, which she'd taken from a fairytale called Fernand the Bull. You see, Fernand was no ordinary bull. As you know, bulls love to charge at things, kick up dust and pretty much be rambunctious. Not so with Fernand! He loved to smell the flowers of the fields and lie around in peace off to himself. Now I was and still am a stocky guy and some may say I'm built like a bull, couple that with the flowers i.e. Fernand. Helping and spending time with my grandma was a joyous occasion for me (Yes, some people still call me Fernand). Think of that for a moment, then multiply it by infinity. That's the joy you will experience when you make Jesus the Lord of your life, and your Jubilee will have begun!!!

C.O.G

E. D. Moffett

Parchman, DR

Lost and Found

I remember the first time I ran into a “Christian.” A lot of people would ask, “how do you know?” Hence the following: I was 6 ½ years old, and my father, brother and grandpa who loved hockey were all in Detroit, Michigan. We were in the Olympic stadium, pre Joe Lewis arena days in 1963. It was wintertime, right before Christmas. The Red Wings were doing great that year and Gordie Howe, “Mr. Hockey”, was playing for them. I was already so familiar with the arena that I could go to the restroom on my own and pick up souvenirs for myself. I was on my way to the restroom when a fight broke out. When I saw a gun I took off running to where my family had parked the car.

A Doberman Pincher stopped me from getting to the car but when I tried to go back in, there were streams of people running out. So, I thought my option was to walk to my family’s business nearby and my dad would come pick me up there. After walking for about 2 ½ hours, I was cold and traffic was thinning out. I was only a little boy in a city big enough that it had 3,000 police officers. It was dark and cold and the reality that I was lost was settling in. I had never seen this part of the city at night. I finally found myself in front of “Rescue Mission.” It had a big white cross out front. I only knew of the catholic church at this time.

I walked up to the door and rang the bell. A large man in a red sweat shirt with a white cross on the front answered and said “we’re full.” He looked down at me. I looked up at him and said, “I’m lost. I thought I could walk to my family’s business.” I told him who my dad and grandpa were and asked if I could use the phone. He introduced himself, and told me to come on in. Then he asked another person to get some hot cocoa for me. I was so glad to be inside. I told him where I had come from and He couldn’t believe I had walked that far. He called the arena and learned that my dad was afraid I had been taken. Back then wanna-be thugs would kidnap kids for money. The man told him the police were coming to get me, and I told my dad about the place.

The police came. So did my dad, brother and grandpa. I told them all how I had dodged the bad people on the street and they asked if I had really walked all this way. I named all the bars I saw on my way and they began to believe me. I thanked the man for giving me a warm place to enter, donuts and hot cocoa. Then he invited my dad and family in for hot cocoa too.

I watched my dad make excuses about Jesus for many years, but in 1989, I saw my dad get saved. My dad later sold a van at cost to the reverend at the rescue mission – dad had remembered what he did to take care of me. He asked if I wanted to go by and help drop off the van. I was glad to see the reverend again. Now he had a big church and was married with three kids. When my dad was dying, he looked the reverend up again and spoke with him. My dad told me his last weeks that the reverend had brought me to safety. He wasn’t the kind of man to tell me he loved me – he was from the old school – I just knew. In closing, think back to your first intro to Jesus and where you are now. Happy New Year Everyone!

Timothy E.

What Does it mean to be Mature in Christ

Philippians 3:12-15

1. Encouragement V.12-15

2. Example V.16-19

3. Expectations V. 20-21

1) Encouragement Phil. 3- 12-15

There are several words of encouragement in these four verses for believers. We see this encouragement in words like "press on" and "reaching forward". Because these are verbs, we naturally associate them to the physical, and to an extent that is accurate, but as is with most things in the word of God, the implications and revelations are spiritual. Which is why the greatest encouragement is found in the promise of v. 15 where we read "God will reveal that also to you." You see, the question isn't can I know the will of God, it's do I want to know the will of God. Obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge (John 7:17). In v. 15 we see Paul recognizing the different levels of spiritual maturity and conviction in the lives of believers, encouraging them to continue to "press on" and "reaching forward" in faith and obedience, for "God will reveal that to you also." Our encouragement is to "press on" toward maturity in Christ Jesus by being an example of his example to the world. What a great encouragement it is to know as believers we can know the will of the Father. The question is do you want to? (Luke 22:42)

2) Example Phil. 3:16-19

As we move into the next area of our study the encouragement continues. In v.16 the encouragement is to "Keep living by the same standard (or example) to which we have attained" So what is the example? God's example, or standard has always been holiness (1 Peter 1:6-17.) We are to be examples of holiness to the world. In v.17 we are told by Paul to "follow my example." We as believers are examples for the world to follow, just as we follow Christ. We are to be known and read by all men (Hebrews 12:13, 1 Peter 2:12). Paul is telling us in v.17 "to follow his example and to observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us." Talk about accountability! Everyone is an example for someone, so we must be careful of the example we set. Luke 17: 1-2 emphasizes the power and responsibility our example has in the lives of others, and it brings us to the other type of example. In v 18-19 we are given descriptions of bad examples. These descriptions are:

- people whose God is their belly or appetite (Romans 16:18). A person that lives just for their appetite who does whatever feels good, is very similar to an animal. If we take an honest look at our gorging, garments, and gadgets we will see who our gods are.

-people whose glory is in their shame (Isaiah 5:20, Ephesians 5:12). A person that does wrong then writes a code to justify it. The code for an artist that sings sexually provocative or profane lyrics is "its only entertainment." The code for fornication is "everyone does it." The code for abortion is "it's my choice." The code for same sex marriage is "love" (Romans 16:19b).

- A person whose mind is on earthly things (Matthew 16-23). The center of their world is the world. We as believers are commanded to set our minds on heavenly, spiritual, and eternal things (Colossians 3:2). And this brings us to the last part of the study.

3) Expectation Phil. 3; 20-21

Colossians 3:2 is a great bridge to the last part of our study as believers and citizens of the kingdom is heavenly, spiritual, and eternal. The word hope comes from the Greek word el-pid'-zo - meaning expectation. The word hope in the NT is a sure thing that will happen at an unexpected time (1 Peter 1:3). In verse 20 we read "we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. The words "wait for" come from the Greek word ap-ek-dekh-om-ahee - meaning to expect fully. It literally means to thrust forward the head and neck as in anxious expectation of hearing or seeing something - or in believer's case, someone. The context of this is not in a physical sense, but in a spiritual sense we can hear and see the Lord Jesus coming. Luke: 10:23-24 helps us understand this better. Jesus is talking about spiritual sight. There were people seeing miracles in the physical yet unable to see them spiritually. The King and prophets of old saw spiritually, just like the blessed spiritual eyes of the disciples. It is with these same eyes and hope we eagerly wait for his second coming. John 8:56 tells us "Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad" as are we as believers! Amen. In verse 21 we learn "our lowly body will be conformed with the body of his glory." Our earthly is not all that it should be, can be for our lowly body, a body of humiliation, is subject to wrinkles, scars, pain, suffering, sickness and death. But when Lord Jesus comes He will transform our earthly body in to a heavenly body, "a body of his glory" (1 Corinthians 15: 48-50). He will transform our body with the same divine power He will later use to "subdue all things to Himself." For our Lord is able to save (Hebrews 7:25), able to aid (Hebrews 2:18), able to keep (Jude 24), in all the ways we need. He is our encouragement, our example, and our expectation, forever and ever. He will be these things even to death (Psalm 48:14). It is my prayer this study will enrich and equip you in the ways He knows you need. God Bless.

Bible Study 11-28-2016

The Dog Pen Church in Christ

By: Kingdom Kid

Face To Face
Curtis F.
Parchman

Face to face I long to see you, Lord
As I wait here all alone.
The world forgotten, vain and empty.
As I bow before your throne.

I'll reach as far as I can, Lord.
And I know you'll meet me there.
And let me look upon your beauty,
In the solitude of prayer.

There is no pretense, here in your presence.
My heart transparent before your eyes.
I yield my will, the earthen vessel,
To my Lord God only wise.

You're pure and holy, crowned with glory,
Oh that I could reach through time and space.
For I long to be near you always.

Focus on the Prize

(The following piece was written by a brother in Christ, Stephen Powers who has since suffered two strokes and currently has an aneurysm in his brain.)

Philippians 3:14 "I press on toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ."

When we were unbelievers, still living in sin, we kept our minds focused on the prizes of this world and not the prize of righteousness. Even as believers Satan and his demons are constantly trying to distract and discourage us as we press toward the finish line, our prize. The Christian life is not a fifty yard dash but is a marathon that requires discipline, endurance, and guidance. We must strip ourselves of anything and everything that would hinder us. "Pressing toward the mark" means keeping our minds on the things of God. Colossians 3:2 tells us to "set our minds on the things above and not on the things below." Ask yourself now, and throughout the day, what am I focusing on? If it's not the finish line of eternity and the prized crown of righteousness in Christ Jesus, then I want to encourage you to get back in the race. Remember you are not pressing on by yourself. In Jesus name Amen and Amen.

Brother in Christ,
Stephen P.
Parchman, Ms

Our Thoughts within Comparison & Obsession
(Romans 12:2 and Luke 18: 9-14)

With all the personal computers, mobile phones and the internet existing today we see with great foresight how our thinking is influenced in this digital age...the media supply the stuff of thought, but they also shape the process of thought. What the news seems to be doing is chipping away at the capacity for normal concentration and contemplation... On-line or not, the mind now expects to take in that information the way the Net distributes it, in a swiftly moving stream of particles.

Paul's message to the Christians at Rome: "Don't let the world around you squeeze you all into its own mold, but let God re-mold our minds from within, so that you may prove in practice the plan of God for your good, meeting all His demands to move toward the goal of true maturity..." Isn't this so relevant today as we find our thoughts and the way our minds process material affected by the world around us!

We cannot stem the tides of information that bombard us, but we can ask God each day to help us focus on Him and to shape our thinking through His presence in our lives... (Proverbs 31:10)

(Comparison & Obsession) – a disturbing trend today. "Comparison obsession" more so than ever before. From business executives, wall street analysts, lawyers, doctors, and other professionals, also among prisoners, all are obsessed about comparing their own achievements against those of others...this is bad for individuals and bad for companies. If you define success based on external rather than internal criteria, you've diminished your satisfaction and commitment.

Comparison obsession isn't news. Scriptures warn us of these dangers of comparing ourselves to others. Whenever we do so, we become proud and look down on them (Luke 18:9-14) Or we become jealous and want to be like them or have what they have (James 4:1). We fail to focus on what God has given us to do. Comparison obsession comes from believing that God is unfair, that He doesn't have a right to be more generous to others than He is to us (Matt. 20: 1-16). By God's grace we can learn to overcome this obsession by focusing on the life God has given us.

Define a motive. – the why behind the what! A motive is the reason we do what we do. Often we say we're doing things for God but sometimes we do not understand why we do them. We only know what we are but have not taken time to truly understand why.

Impure motives can cause many problems, one of which is being overcommitted, which results in unnecessary stress on our lives. Surely we won't live with extreme stress if we are obeying God and doing what He wants us to do. Never agree to do something in order to impress people or because you fear what they may think about you if you don't. God wants us to help bless people, but a "good work" done with wrong motives is no longer a good work. Don't say yes with your mouth if your heart is screaming no.

As you evaluate your motives, you will begin to see what is in your heart. Pass the test by making sure your motives are pure and right before God—even if that means changing the "what"...that motive test is a lifelong test. We must frequently evaluate our motives and discontinue things we find we're doing for the wrong reasons. Help us keep our priorities in order (Proverbs 20:27).

Prayerful closure thoughts—God has entrusted each of us with influence in the lives of others. We have a deep responsibility in those relationships, not only to spouses and children, but to friends, employers, and customers. Temptation to press too hard, to demand too much, to force progress, to orchestrate success, can lead us to harm others even when we don't realize it. This is the very reason followers of Christ are urged to be patient and gentle with one another (Colossians 3:12) Jesus, Son of God, came in humility, how can we withhold such kindness from one another? What God does for us we should do for others ...Thanking each person for love and prayers.

May God richly bless and keep each and everyone within his loving care.

Numbers 6:24-26 3 John 2

Zephaniah 3:17 Jude 1,2

Micah 6:8

Always in His love and fellowship,
Roger T.

What Motivates You?

I was asked a surprisingly simple question today that left me at a loss for words. “Why do you do what you do?” I immediately began to reply that I do everything for the glory of God but that near lie died before it even began its journey toward my mouth. I truly don’t know what my motivations are for the many projects and tasks that I devote my time and energy to. It would be lovely if I could say that I work solely for God’s glory but there is simply too much Self inside of me. Even after all these years of dedicated Christian service I am still competing with God for God’s position as Head of my life.

Being God is the desire that caused Lucifer to be cast out of Heaven (Isa. 14:12-14). Being our own god is the very root of our original parent’s fall (Gen. 3:1-7) and it is the desire that most of us struggle with but very few even realize that it is in our hearts and minds. We try to be the leader of our lives and the results are never pleasant (Ez. 28: 2-10). Don’t believe me? Take a minute from your busy schedule to examine your motivations for being busy. Why are you doing the things you do? What has first place in your thoughts and life? Who has first place in your life? You or Jesus? Don’t be too quick to give the “right” answer. Honestly examine your life and begin 2017 with a new and right perspective. Eliminate the things and the thoughts that keep you from Jesus and the busyness of chasing your own way of life. Please ask yourself why you do the things you do and if Jesus isn’t the honest answer then it is time for a change. There is not a better time than today.

Have a wonderful, Christ-filled 2017! Begin it with me by praying Psalm 51:10-12. Lord Jesus, create in me a clean heart and mind, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not allow me to grieve your Holy Spirit. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and sustain in me a generous spirit this year. In Your Name Lord Jesus we pray.

Amen.

Roger G.
Parchman, MS

Blank Paper

A blank piece of paper...well, actually the paper I am writing this article on is notebook paper with lines. However, those (outside of the poor soul who has to transfer my scribble to the newsletter format) who read my words will not see those lines. In fact, before the transfer and printing of the newsletter began, it too was a blank piece of paper. Before becoming paper, it could have been a tree in the forest, minding its own business. For years it had converted sunlight, water, and nutrients from the soil into a form that housed all sorts of God's creatures and provided shade to even more of them.

All the above ramblings are used to make a point. Before God entered our lives, we too could have been like a blank sheet of paper. Our lives could, and mostly did, have had line stains, colorations, and tears in them. Those lives, like the paper, were formed not by sunlight, water, and nutrients from the soil, but by experiences and choices we made. Some of those choices and experiences were good and provided benefits. Like the tree in the forest, but did not have their final form yet.

In modern times, we can use paper to spread our ideas and the words of God. We have even gone way beyond paper and used various electronic devices to do the same. Yet, all the paper and those devices are "blank" until information is fed into them.

God's words and plans for our life on this earth and in eternity has been put on stone, vellum, the walls of caves and maybe even scratched in the sand. Some of these forms are more lasting than others but when his word is written in our hearts and souls by the hand of the Holy Spirit, it is everlasting. Paper can be burned and turned into ash. Stone can be crushed and used for concrete. Spiritual messages in our souls can never be burned or crushed unless we allow it.

We have available to us now many translations and commentaries about those translations, of God's original words his followers were inspired to write. Endless arguments have ensued over one or two of those words and how they were translated. We must be open, or a blank piece of paper, so that when the Holy Spirit begins "writing" we can read the messages clearly. Having "lines" in our soul, like the ones on this notebook paper I am using, could channel our reception of that guidance from Him. There are no margins, lines, or other artificial constraints imposed upon his Spirit and how he conveys his messages to us. Let your soul be like a clean sheet of typing paper, not lined notebook paper.

Richard Jordan

Balanced Definition of God's Incommunicable Attributes

God's unchangeableness is defined as follows: "God is unchanging in His being, perfections, purposes, and promises. Yet God does act, and He acts differently in response to different situations. The second half of the sentence guards against the idea that unchangeableness means inability to act at all. Some people do understand unchangeableness in this way, but such an understanding is inconsistent with the biblical presentation of God's unchangeableness. God is completely independent of creation. God does not need any part of creation in order to exist or for any other reason. God is absolutely independent and self-sufficient. Read Paul's proclamation to the men at Athens (Acts 17:24-25). This implies that God does not need anything from humankind. Read God's question to Job in Job 41:11. No one has ever contributed to God anything that did not first come from God who created all things. His Word in Psalm 50:10-12 is similar.

First in John 17:5 and again in 17:24 shows that there was love and communication between the Father and the Son before creation. Let me refer back to the statement of God's unchangeableness and finish that definition as stated by theologian Wayne Gruden in his book *Systematic Theology*. We can define God's unchangeableness as follows: "God is unchanging in His being, perfections, purposes, and promises, yet God does act and feel emotion, and He acts and feels differently in response to different situations. This attribute of God is also called immutability." God causes the universe to change, but in contrast to this change He is "the same." In His Word, referring to His own qualities of patience, long-suffering, and mercy, says, "For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed" (Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8). God uses a general statement of which He does not change. He is unchanging—not in every way that we might imagine, but in ways the scripture itself affirms. In James 1:17, James uses the argument that since good gifts have always come from God, we can rest assured that only good gifts will come from God in the future, because His character does not change in the most minute degree. These two passages of scripture refer either to God's own being or to some attribute of His character. Unchanging in His purpose.

God does change His mind through. Withdrawing from threatened judgment is not unheard of. Examples of this can be found in. Exodus 32:9-14; Isaiah 38:1-6; Jonah 3:10. Other places in scripture God is said to be sorry. He carried out a previous action, Genesis 6:6; 1 Samuel 15. Understand the above mentioned scriptures are true expressions of God's present attitude or intention with respect to the situation as it exists at that moment. However be it the situation changes, then of course God's attitude or expression of intention will also change. God responds differently to different situations. Know that it is implicit to understand, in that warning that the purpose for proclaiming a warning is to bring about repentance. Once the people repented, the situation was different, and God "responded differently" to that "changed situation."

Simply, these scriptures imply that God's previous action led to events that, in the short term, caused God sorrow, but that nonetheless in the long-term would ultimately achieve His good purposes. This is comparable to a human father who allows his child to embark on a course he knows he will bring them both sorrow, but allows it anyway, because he knows that the greater long-term good will come from it. May you let the LORD keep you in all you do. God Bless.

Tony B.
Parchman, MS