

The Good News

Newsletter— September 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)

A Prayer

It was my privilege to pray for the Dog Pen Church during the month of July. This is the opening and closing prayer for 7/16/17, the same day the “Valley of the Dry Bones” was preached. You will be able to read all of the prayers, sermons, testimonies, etc. very soon on the DPC website being constructed now at: dogpen-church.com.

Opening Prayer

Revealing God, our Heavenly Father, You give wisdom to the simple and guide us along the everlasting way. It is in praise and humble petition that we gather before You on this beautiful summer morning. Thank You for uniting us and allowing us to meet in the Name of Your Son. Please search our hearts and clear our minds as we begin to meditate on and use the lessons in Your Word. Help us to reach out to all who are in need of Your compassion and love. Teach us to sacrifice for the good of others. God of Peace, fan the fire of Your Spirit within our hearts as we learn to be makers of disciples. We pray this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever—Amen.

Closing Prayer

It is our duty, always and everywhere, to give You thanks Father for everything in this life. We thank You for Your patience and peace; we thank You for Your wisdom, knowledge, and understanding; we thank You for Your mercy and joy. Most of all it is in the absolute confidence of Your love that we thank You for Your Holy Spirit and our Lord, Your Son, Jesus Christ. Thank You, loving Father, for restoring life to these bones and renewing our souls in times of trouble by filling our hearts with Your Word, Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is in Jesus that we thank you and pray today—Amen.

Roger Gillett-prayer
DPC-Parchman, Death Row

Are You Being Noticed?

By Matt Wilbanks

Matthew 5:10-12

“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in Heaven.”

Yes, blessed are you for proving faithful to our Savior. Blessed are you for making a noticeable change in your life; for casting aside the sin that enslaved you and putting forth a serious effort to develop the traits and the mind of Christ. Blessed are you for guelling the clashing valves of the world with those of Heaven. For dispatching pride and personal independence, fame and glory, happiness at any cost. For foregoing the immediate yet temporary for the eternal and everlasting.

Blessed are you for honoring your commitments at the sacrifice of personal wants and desires. Blessed are you for seeking the favor of God rather than the whims of men. Blessed are you for being honest even when it's inconvenient.

Blessed are you for being a light in the darkness. For being flavor to the tasteless. For seeking peace amidst chaos. For seeking mercy rather than revenge. Blessed are you for responding kindly in the face of insult.

Blessed are you for avoiding anger and hatred, for keeping your heart from lusting and for remaining ever faithful. Blessed are you for having a right and respectful relationship with God and others. Blessed are you for being a beacon of hope and joy, for radiating love. For refusing to stand down. For refusing to be silenced. For being bold.

Blessed are you for following Jesus. For leading the way. Blessed are you for being important enough to be hated.

Blessed are you for being noticed. The Kingdom waits.

I establish myself today in:

The heart of God to heal me,

The hand of God to hold me,

The wisdom of God to teach me,

The path of God to lay before me,

The Love of God to live within me,

The gifts of God to guide me,

The mercy of God to purify me,

And the power of God to propel me upward.

Always confident in God. Amen

The Offering of Obedience

Matthew 8:1-4; And when He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold, a leper came to Him, and worshiped Him saying, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.” And He stretched out His hand and touched him saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus said to him, “See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest, and present the offering that Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.”

Mark 1: 40-45; And a leper came to Him, beseeching Him and falling on his knees before Him, and saying to Him, “If you are willing, you can make me clean.” And moved with compassion He stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, “I am willing; be cleansed.” And immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. And He sternly warned him, and He said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone; but show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded for a testimony to them. But he went out and began to proclaim it, to such an extent that Jesus could no longer publicly enter a city...

In these two stories of men being healed we see the same sense of compassion, love and power in Jesus Christ, but we see two different responses from the men. Some may suggest that the two stories are of the same man, like Luke 5:12-14. And true these two stories are basically the same but there is one clear difference. Mark and Luke speak of the man disobeying Jesus while Matthew does not. So for the point to be made we will suggest that the man healed in Matthew's account did in fact obey the Word of God, unlike the men in Mark and Luke's account. To illustrate the difference between these two men I will use Luke: 8:14-15; please read these two verses now. Here is the illustration.

Mark 1:40-45;/Luke 8:14; The man in Mark heard the Word and was healed by the Word. Literally. John 1:14; but due to his _____ he was disobedient to the Word and as a result the word was hindered, or choked i.e. “Jesus could no longer publicly enter a city.”

Notice the blank line above, what do you believe caused the man not to obey the Word that just healed and save him? I would suggest, like the man in Luke 8:14, he was led astray by the “Pleasures of life,” (the word “pleasures” in this verse comes from the Greek word *hedone* which is where we get our word hedonism) in this case his desire to be celebrated by man. Or maybe, like me, he thought he knew better than God. I've definitely been guilty of doing that. Whether it was self gratification or self exaltation he allowed it to lead him astray. As a result the Word was hindered and his offering to God was disobedience. Now let's look at the other man.

Matthew 8: 1-4,/ Luke 8:15; This man also heard the Word and was healed by the Word but unlike the other man he was obedient to the Word. He did not allow his pride or desire to be celebrated lead him astray from the Word of God, the Word that healed his body and saved his soul. Like the man in Luke 8:15 he “held it fast and bore fruit with steadfastness.” In this case he bared the fruit of obedience as an offering to God. 1 Samuel 15:22b.

Can you identify with one of these men? Of course you can, we all can. Which person are you? And how are you responding to the Word of God that has saved you? “I urge you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, well pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.” Romans 12:1. In Jesus name, Amen and Amen.

Brother in Christ,
Stephen P. – D.P.C.

(The above 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)

Pieces of Me

Everyday, I'm trying my very best to give Almighty God a piece of me. And I'm hoping that everyone is inspired to give Him a piece of themselves as well.

My father once told me that myself and my siblings almost gave him a heart attack when we were younger. I didn't know what he was talking about until he told me about the events of a certain day that I was too young to remember. When we were all kids, we were in the car with my father. Apparently, he forgot something and had to run back into the house to get it. Us kids were playing like kids do and one of us accidentally knocked the car out of gear. The car slowly rolled down the street, but picked up speed as the street sloped.

My father said that he heard someone yelling and came running outside. He immediately began running after the car. At the end of the street was another busy street with fast-moving cars passing along. On the other side of that street was a deep, sloped hill with trees and a river at the bottom. Yes, it seems that we were headed for doom. If we didn't get hit by a passing car, we'd probably tumble town the hill - only God knows how that might have turned out.

Before we would succumb to either fate, the car turned on its own and sat sideways at the bottom of the street, parked parallel to the sidewalk. My father told me that was the hand of God that spared our lives that day.

As a young man, I've always felt that my life was accursed because nothing went right in my book. I had a happy family, and then my parents divorced. I was used to having things and then we struggled. I enjoyed freedom and then I was imprisoned. I just didn't feel like I was dealt a good hand in life. I felt like the deck was stacked against me.

As you get older, you realize that you have many blessings dealt to you but rarely do people acknowledge them. I think back to what my father told me, and I realize that I am blessed.

Here, on death row, I see God's blessings every day, and I'm thankful for them. I'm grateful that He's willing every day to take a piece of me as I continue my walk with Him. God Bless Everyone!

Justin H. Underwood

Pieces of Me

Piece by piece...
I give you a part of my soul

Driving down memory lane
In the bitter cold

These truths I tell
Stripped from the flesh of
My flesh

Are to inspire
I need no one to impress

He's been holding my hand
Ever since I can remember

He's been warming my soul
In the coldness of December

Born of Mary and Joe but
Not in a manger
I'm very familiar and no longer
A stranger

Piece by piece
He's accepted the pure in
My heart

He knew of my journeys
Each one from the very start

But for the life of me
He's restored my soul

Slice by slice
He's taken a piece of me till
I am whole.