



Newsletter - July 2015

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)

Being Content

Paul said, when writing to the Philippians, “Not that I am referring to being in need; for I have learned to be content (and at peace) with whatever I have. I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances, I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

That is an enviable and almost unbelievable position to be in. Being content with what we have when that isn’t enough has been on my mind a lot lately. For some reason, I have been prevented from buying stationary and hygiene products during the entire month of May, now going into June. I found out today that it will be yet another two weeks before I am able to try to get stationary again.

This place has effectively cut me off from all but a very few people that I rely on to keep me connected to life beyond the steel door that restrains me. How can I be content and at peace with that? I began to think about the warning against allowing concern for our basic needs to supersede God’s rule. I looked around my tiny cell and saw that even at my worst, I am doing better than almost everyone in this jail. My basic needs—food, clothing, shelter—are in hand. So what if I don’t have any deodorant or soap to wash my cloths? I have a roof, food and clothing. Right?

The reason for my discontent is that what I am used to having and doing, stamps and writing, I no longer have. I see it and I have given it to God to strengthen me. I would warn any of you readers to be careful lest your contentment with what you have make you complacent, because if your stuff is taken away, that feeling of contentment will be hard to find again.

I have also been thinking about people that don’t have enough to pay their basic bills or feed their children. If a person has worked and still has to decide between paying the light bill or having insurance on the car, or whatever hard choice needs to be made, how can they be content and at peace with that? If a parent has to fast so his or her child can eat a tiny bit, where is contentment to be found? Paul says it is in Jesus. Jesus says to seek God’s kingdom and righteousness in order to obtain the basic human needs. Right?

We are Christians so we must do what we can to help others find God and the contentment of God’s peace and substance in this life. James 2:14-26 means a lot more to me today than it has ever meant before.

Heavenly Father,

If I see a need, please help me to supply it. If I feel discontent, please show me a need to be supplied. If I have too much, bring this to my attention as well, so I can give to those with too little. Righteous Father, please forgive my discontent, lack of trust in you, and complacency in this situation and life that is passing away.

In Jesus’ Name,
Amen.

Roger Gillett
Forrest County Detention Center

This chapter in the Gospel of John highlights the fact that people seek after the Lord from many different motives. For a lot of people, Christ is seen as a miracle worker (6:2), able to meet them at the point of their need and do the impossible. These people come to be reliant upon the Lord and what He can do in their life, and they seek after Him as their Lord and Savior. For others, however, following Christ is not based on any spiritual work He has done in their life, but on having their natural appetite appeased (6:26). For them, their so-called faith is a matter of convenience—so long as its demands are reasonable. These people look to Christ in a superficial sense for the benefits they receive among the people of God.

It is in the second scenario that we have an important principle to use in examining our own motives. Do we seek to serve Christ because we know Him as our Lord and Savior, or do we find ourselves simply going through motions, the aim of which is to satisfy ourselves? The answer reveals the glory we give to God, and our blessedness therein.

The apostle Paul discussed this same principle when he made mention of the preaching motives of others. Among these motives were envy, strife, contention, insincerity, but also good will and love (read Phil. 1:15-17). Brother Paul summed up his own feelings regarding the motive of others' preaching in the next verse: "What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice" (Phil 1:18).

The fact is that many preachers and 'Christians' were operating with the wrong motive. Sadly, the same thing can be said in the church houses of today where nominal Christians 'believe' everything but do not stand for truth. While Paul rejoiced in the fact that Christ was being preached, it is inescapably true that those preaching with the wrong motive will be dealt with by God (James 3:1). This is true as well for the glory seeking followers of Christ in John 6. Scripture teaches us that their heart was not right with God, and so they were reproved for their spiritual blindness: they had no perception of the miracle as it was done in multiplying the loaves, but rather then admonished them to labor for spiritual nourishment—meat which endureth unto everlasting life" (Jn 6:27)—that can only come from Christ Himself, who is the Bread of Life (v. 35).

Still unfazed by this reproof, these glory-hungry, but spiritually blind individuals miss that Jesus is the secret to working the miraculous works of God. The answer Jesus gives to them reveals their unbelief, and shows the Sovereign hand of God in salvation: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." These people considered themselves to be followers of Christ, even asking to exercise the Power of God to do mighty works. But like so many nominal Christians today, they were completely oblivious to the working of the true miracle within them. Only God can give you a new heart, giving you new desires as you are made into a New Creature. This is God's working in us (Phil 2:13).

Have you experienced the true work of God in a regenerated heart? Or do you seek to serve Him as a means of fulfilling fleshy lusts? God is not mocked by our outward expressions of religion but looks upon the heart to discern our true motives in service. His is the Glory, and our blessedness is known when we bring glory to Him rather than ourselves.

Christopher Lee

Mark 11:1-11

I was reading this section and something new was revealed to me about the owner of the colt. It made me think of Eph 2:10: "we were created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand." The unknown owner of the colt is a perfect example of this. I bet it never crossed his mind that God had planned for him to lend his colt to Jesus. The owner of the colt followed the law: love your neighbor. And look what that one act of obedience did. We focus so much on trying to figure our purposes and Eph. 2:10 tells us what we were created for—to do good works—like the owner of the colt. Who knows if the owner of this colt realized that his purpose was to do this one good deed in this life. Imagine his surprise when he died and was praised for that one thing. And that he would be remembered for that instead of all the other things he accomplished that he probably thought was his purpose in life. I hope this helps you try to find you purpose and reminds you how important it is to love your neighbor.

Michael Sullivan Jr.

July Good News

O'Lord, Pour out your Spirit on me.



By Michael Sullivan Jr.

But _____ (read Daniel 1:1-9)

The Bible is amazing! Which shouldn't surprise anyone; after all it is the unchanging Word of God. One of the things that fascinates me the most is the fact that the same instructions and principles given by God thousands of years ago are just as relevant today and tomorrow as they were when they were first spoken. I guess this is yet another reason it's called the Living Word. Now, let's get into the book of Daniel. Hopefully by now you have read Daniel 1:1-9, but if not, then please take a few minutes to do this now. Don't worry, we will wait for you. Okay, where were we? In the first chapter of Daniel we have King Nebuchadnezzar taking over Jerusalem. In this piece, King Nebuchadnezzar will represent the secular society, the world we live in today.

When King Nebuchadnezzar took over Jerusalem, his goal was to influence and teach the people the ways of the Chaldeans (or society today) rather than the ways of God. The people would go to school and partake in the events, entertainment, and culture at the King's palace. Often times, these things were profane and always in opposition to God. Just like then, we have all kinds of things in our society that are trying to influence and teach us how to fit in—ultimately leading us away from God and hindering our spirits in the process. The participation and acceptance of this world's agenda means compromising God's standards. Daniel was confronted with these profane influences of song, dance, and entertainment. Daniel was told to live as a Chaldean and not as a follower of God, but instead of partaking in these acts, he chose to "seek ye first the kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33). Every day we, as followers of Jesus, are confronted with people, places, and things that are all about the culture, society's views and our flesh. In 1 Corinthians 10:31, we learn our purpose. "So whatever you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God." I really like how the late great Nelson Mandela said it, "we were born to manifest the glory of God."

It seems we have forgotten all about His glory and are only concerned with pleasure and gain. We want God to bless our lives, but we haven't decided in our hearts that we will continue to follow Him after the blessing. God will only be a blessing to you if He can be a blessing through you. It may come as a shock, but it's not about us, it's all about Him. We have been saved to serve. "Seek ye first" "Everything for His glory" "We were born to manifest the glory of God" Notice a trend here?

We all want God's favor, God's blessings, and God's compassion, but we have yet to commit to Him. We want a "now God, I want you to help and bless me now but I'm not ready to put you first God." Let me ask you something, brothers and sisters. What do you do that in no way brings glory to God and is not helping you grow spiritually? Whatever it is, I encourage you to get rid of it. "But it's only a tv show." "It's just a song." "But everyone else is doing it." "Man, it's 2015!" It's not about everybody, it's about God, and 2015 doesn't hold a candle next to eternity!

Daniel knew this truth very well and so should we. If you look at the title of this piece, you will notice there is a blank space to fill in. I want you to take another look at Daniel Chapter 1, specifically verses 8-9. Earlier in this piece I spoke about how we often want a "now God" (v.9), but we seem to skip over the "but Daniel" (v.8). My challenge to you is this: write your name in the blank and the next time you're confronted with a person, place, or thing aiming to hinder your growth and lead you away from God's glory, I want to encourage you to say, "But _____ purposed his/her heart that he/she would not defile himself/herself with portions of this world's culture and traditions that do not give glory to God and His Kingdom." The name of this piece is about you, but the purpose of this piece is all about Him. God Bless.

Song of the month: Da Truth, "Table Talk"

With Love in Christ,
Kingdom Kid

Don't Look Back

Phillippians 3:13-14: Brothers, I do consider that I have made it my own, but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

As a beginner in Christ, or a veteran in Christ, one of the basic rules of following Jesus is, "Don't look back!" When we look back on our past, Satan uses these situations that we went through against us. No matter what we've done in our past lives, we have to realize that the evil one knows these things and will use our past to hinder our walk with Christ or life period! Our main goal should be keeping our eyes on Jesus. Matthew 14:30-31—Peter began to sink because he took his eyes off of Jesus, worrying about the distractions going on around him. That caused him to doubt, which caused him to take his focus off Jesus. Christ wants us to have full faith in him regardless of what kind of situation his followers are in. Ezekiel 18:21-22— "But if the wicked turn away from all the sins they have committed, and keep all my statutes, and do what is lawful and right, they shall surely live; they shall not die. None of the transgressions that they have committed shall be remembered against them; for the righteousness that they have done, they shall live." So with this being said, we know it's a stamp of approval that came from the mouth of God and God's word endures forever! Now don't listen to anyone who brings up your past, don't even listen to yourself, because "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." The devil knows our past, but he doesn't know our future! Don't look back! Luke 17:32—Remember Lot's wife. Don't look back! Luke 9:62—Jesus said to him, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." So stand strong in the Lord Jesus Christ and remember... Don't look back!

Brother in Christ,
Pedro Alvarez Jr.

Free From the Curse

You know the story. Satan came to Adam's wife in the form of a serpent and deceived her into disobeying God. Adam, although he was not deceived, followed suit. When Satan came into the garden that day, he didn't have any power at all. He had to come in like a sneak, not even talking to Adam directly, but to his wife. Now Adam was standing there, and he should have kicked him out right then, but he didn't. He set aside the command God had given him and did what Satan told him. And when he did that, he made Satan his lord. In bowing his knee to Satan, Adam gave Satan the authority that God had given him. He made Satan the illegitimate ruler of the earth. Immediately, things changed. Through one man's trespass, death passed to all men (Romans 5:12).

The earth and everything in it was suddenly cursed. But there was something God could do and he did it! He sent Jesus. Through Jesus he set us free from the curse (Gal 3:13). The moment you made Jesus Christ Lord of your life, you were delivered from the lordship of Satan. You were redeemed from the curse. I didn't say the curse isn't out there anymore. It is! You can see it all around you, but now you have a choice. You have authority over it in the name of Jesus. So you can stand against it. God's done everything that love can do. He sent Jesus to redeem you from the curse. The rest is up to you. Now you must appropriate what has already been done for you. (Scripture Reading: Rom 5:12-21).

J. Keller

His Home is Open to All

Acts 28:30 Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him.

We as believers read about how Paul rented a house and invited people to come to his home to hear about Jesus. And we should welcome all who will listen about Jesus into our homes as well. We as believers need to tell everyone we meet that Jesus' home is open to all who will come. We also need to tell them that Jesus has prepared a home for all of us. We need to watch out for those who will tell us that Jesus is not the best home for us. We need to decide if we want to make our home with Jesus or the devil. The choice is ours. But remember that the home Jesus has built will never be torn down. It will stand forever. The devil's home will be torn down and burned forever. So let's continue to tell everyone that Jesus' home is open to all.

Your Brother in Christ,
Stephen Elliott Powers

*The following was written by Stephen in 2001. Since then, he has had two strokes and currently has a brain aneurysm.

I Believe

I'm sure people want to ask me, "Why do you believe?"
Like I believe in magic or have something up my sleeve;
that someone died for me, that someone took my place.
I could never earn that benefit—I'm saved by his amazing grace.

Not that I deserve this, it was given to me free.
Although this gift is priceless, the price wasn't paid by me.
How can I not be grateful and give praises to God's son?
He had no other options to fight or choose to run.

Instead just for our benefit, he was beaten although innocent.
I, myself, am guilty but can be cleansed if I repent.
What I believe is not a mystery or some other mystic trick;
it's the internal changing love of God that heals the hurt and sick.

How has this miracle happened—it was brought about through blood.
It took the hate of Jesus Christ to show his depth of love.
My life used to be worthless; it would make my mother grieve;
But I had a change of heart the moment I first believed.

Errol Mumby
Florida

LIFE STORY

Hello everyone. This is another great day that the Lord has made. My name is Devonta La'Shun Coleman and this is another small piece of my life story. I truly hope that my sharing myself with you all helps in some way and draws you closer to Jesus. Most people used to think that I lived a perfect life. Let me tell you that that is so not true! When I was four months old I was taken away from my mother. I had lost my daddy when I was just two months old. It hurts me a lot when I think about it. My father left this world on 12/24/94, and it hurts that I never had a chance to lay eyes on him. Some say that a man is not supposed to cry but I cry for not having a father in my life.

I have come to realize that I do have a Father. He is my Heavenly Father and He will never leave me or forsake me. Psalm 27:10 tells us, "If my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up." We need to believe God's word and take comfort in His promises. I was finally able to get baptized and it has made me feel closer to our Lord. My live has changed completely. It's still not perfect but I thank the Lord for everyday that I get closer to it.

I have a few tips for you that have helped me. Believe in things not seen. Believe in miracles. Believe in the higher power of our Lord. Believe in Jesus Christ and His blood shed for you. Believe in repentance and forgiveness. Believe in God's love for you. Believe in prayer and PRAY!

May the Lord be with you all.

Devonta Coleman
Forrest County Jail

Dear Good News Brothers and Sisters,

I prayerfully write to you about something we all struggle with at times: "Words and Actions!!" Words are often downplayed next to actions (Luke 4:22—the gracious words that come from his mouth, Luke 18:14—Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.)

As the saying goes, "Actions speak louder than words!" Even great saints are quoted as saying that words should only be supplemental to the way we live our lives. Proverbs 18: 21—Death and life are in the power of the tongue and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof. Proverbs 15:26—The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord, but he words of the pure are pleasant. Psalm 34—My soul shall make her boast in the Lord, the humble shall hear thereof and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt His name together.

If you ever doubt that your words, even the smallest comments have great power, think about the effects that negative words have. Did anyone ever make an offhand remark to or about you that still stings? These negative comments can fall so carelessly from our lips! Would we be so quick to criticize or judge without remembering how deeply words can hurt and limit a person's potential! If negative speech can have such a profound impact, imagine how much more power your words of encouragement, appreciation, and affirmation can have! (Zephaniah 3:17—The Lord thy God in the midst of these is mighty, he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in love, he will joy over thee with singing).

As we move from season to season, our priorities change. We may need to put aside what we did in the past and funnel our energy into something else... Proverbs 3:6—promise that as we acknowledge him in all our ways, he will guide us in the way we should go!! 2 Corinthians 11:10-12, 30—Since Christ's truth is in me, I won't stop telling the entire area of Greece that I'm proud of what I did. Why? Is it because I don't love you? God knows that I do! But I'm going to continue to do what I'm doing. I want to contradict the claims of the people who want to be treated like they are the same as us because of what they brag about. ..If it's necessary to brag, I'll brag about my weaknesses. 2 Corinthians 12: 5&6—I'll brag about this man, but I won't brag about myself, except to brag about my weaknesses. If I did want to brag, I wouldn't make a fool of myself because I'd tell the truth. I'm holding back from bragging so that no one will give me any more credit than what anyone sees or hears about me. Galatians 6:3&4—If anyone thinks they are important when they aren't, they're fooling themselves. Each person should test their own work and be happy with doing a good job and not compare themselves with others. Ephesians 4:29—Don't let any foul words come out of your mouth. Only say what is helpful when it is needed for building up the community so that it benefits those who hear what you say. Philippians 2:13 & 14—God is the one who enables you both to want and to actually live out his good purposes. Do everything without grumbling and arguing.

Everyone reading, I tried to Biblically cover examples in a variety of areas which our words speak. I'm speaking to myself equally! My humble prayer would be—make all our words gracious. You never know, you might give the only encouragement that someone receives all day! I am praying each of us would hear God. Spirit speak to our conscience, help us listen to others with humility and restraint as they share their hearts with us! Never use criticizing words upon hearing their emotions. God bless and keep each and everyone. 3 John 2—Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. Be blessed!

With His Love and Fellowship,
Roger Thorson

Jesus is Alive!

From the cross, our Heavenly Father built a bridge over which mankind could pass from the rivers of sin to the land of glory of life through Jesus Christ. The darkness of Jesus' death brought forth a light of redemption for all those who believe and walk with one accord with Him. Through His death on the cross, He paid the ultimate penalty for the sins of all mankind once and for all. He was the supreme sacrifice; the Lamb that was slain. His blood did not cover sins—it did away with them. In God's eyes, the sins of every person on earth are paid for. But nothing that Jesus did will do any of us any good unless we accept Him as our Savior and Lord. Jesus Christ lives through the believers who have shed the old skin to make a start with the new skin. II Corinthians 5:17.

Our bodies are the same, but it is our spirits that have become recreated. I John 4:4. When we put on our spiritual garments, the Lord covers us like new clothing. We have to be careful that we won't revert back to that old clothing of spiritual heaviness. We have to continue to get down on our knees and praise God for His blessings so that we will continue to receive into our spirits His spiritual vitamins that'll energize us and put a new spring in our step.

The power of God will make our hearts joyful and give us a victorious life. When the praises go up, the blessings come down. Through praise, we enter into the very throne of God. Praise is the vehicle that puts us in touch with our Heavenly Father through Jesus. So, let Jesus live through you and He'll radiate your life with eternal life in the kingdom of heaven. John 10:9-11.

I've run across that bridge a
many of times
Being chased for all of my
guilty crimes

My head hung low; I feel so
much shame
I've been caught with only
myself to blame

I stand before the judge with
his gavel in hand
Ready for my sentence to a
far-away land

I stand with others that greet
me with high fives
In a world on concrete, barbed wire,
and teary eyes

My spirit keeps screaming and that
keeps me awake at night
With Jesus and Satan bouting in
a heavy-weight fight

I fell asleep when He was wading
in the third round
When I awoke, Satan was sprawled
unconscious on the ground

The sun rising brought new life to
another long day
With old things being placed out
of my way

He, who represents me, is one
trusted and tried
Hear ye, Hear ye—Jesus
is alive!

Justin Underwood
Parchman, DR

Love—Greetings

Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus; may our heavenly Father, through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, bless you with joy and love, guided by His Holy Spirit of truth, Always.

A few weeks ago in Forrest County jail, I asked God for His greatest gifts: a stronger prayer life that will shake the heavens, the gift of encouragement to give hope and peace, and the gift of love that will allow me to love everyone abundantly. And... it seems like the more I grow in Christ, the more I find myself attacked by my own sinful nature, Satan and unclean spirits. Praise God! Jesus is my source of power and strength. Philippians 4:13; 2 Corinthians 12:9.

Please note, brothers and sisters, Jesus is everywhere and can be found in all things. Read John 1:1-5, 14:6, 12-14, 15:16-17. We must endure all hardships, carry our cross and plant seeds as fishermen of men. We have been commanded to love everyone; what does this mean? As believers, we have life through Christ, saved by grace through faith, given repentance and peace, and shine as lights in this world of darkness. Jesus is love, the way, the truth, the life, and everything else we will need him to be. Telling others about Jesus gives one Love. He is the fulfillment of all things and gives to all that ask. Let us not hide in our hearts (as believers) the joy of being free from sin and given eternal life, that comes only from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The true love gift from God, freely given to all is Jesus! John 3:16, 6:47, 8:12, 1 John 4:7-21.

Spread the Word Joyfully & Pray about Everything through Christ, Always and Forever!

Brother Joseph King
Prisoner of Christ



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Some suggested topics for the Newsletter

Thank you for the continued letters, thoughts, and poems you send in to us each month. We want to know more about who you all are. Story seems to be one of the best ways to get to know who someone really is and so we encourage you all to look at some of these suggested topics to see if any inspiration comes as we seek community with one another. Please know that these are not to restrict your writing; you are certainly welcome to choose to write on another topic or in another form. They are simply some ideas as all writers need somewhere to start. Thank you for your continued contributions to this publication and happy writing!

- Choose a story or a character from the Bible and tell us how it speaks to your life or how you connect to it.
- Make up a short story.
- Tell us about a character you've read in a book or watched in a movie that inspires you and why.
- Tell us your favorite song. What is it about this song that draws you to it?
- Write a song or send in a piece of original artwork.