

The GoodNews

Newsletter — December 2019

A Publication of University Baptist Church, Hattiesburg, MS

The purpose of University Baptist Church is, through the 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)

DogPen Church Prayer

Heavenly Father,

We come to You in the name of Jesus, by whom alone we may approach You, and by the moving and directing power of the Holy Spirit. We ask that the Spirit take us all in hand, remove the pride from us, and give God His true place in our hearts and in our thoughts. We ask that the Spirit restrain the flesh within us all so that whatever we do, we do all to the glory of you.

We ask that you humble our hearts so that we may be brought into the place of dependence in order that we may develop within us a sense of our helplessness by owning that without You, we can do nothing. We ask that You help us all to see that we are all just mere beggars upon Your charity for everything we are and have.

We come before You earnestly seeking grace for deliverance from all that displeases You and causes you to groan. We come before You sincerely for strength to do all that pleases You - our blessed Redeemer!

We thank You in the precious name of Jesus,
Amen.

Gifts of Grace

Romans 12:3-8 “For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.”

I've been thinking about who I am as a Christian lately. We are all headed for the end of this world. Those of us who are saved will spend eternity with Jesus, those who refuse him will get what they want and suffer without Him. It is a fact that time as we know it will end. What do we do while we wait for Jesus to return? What is our purpose? I'm not talking about the overreaching purpose of man, which, I believe, is to glorify God and our Savior Jesus Christ, and to be like God in universal benevolence, unconquerable goodwill, and in seeking the highest good of every person by loving saint and sinner alike.

It is within this definition of purpose that I feel lost some days. How does what I do each day reflect this grand purpose? What “gifts” have I been given by God to move the Kingdom forward and am I using them to do so? I've written in the past about spiritual gifts but two things have occurred recently that has me expanding what I believe about them and at the same time questioning my purpose, or role in the Body of Christ.

The first incident that occurred and is ongoing is witnessing and being the beneficiary of the gift of exhortation. There is a young disciple here, Blake D., who has this God given gift. With God's gift He gives the understanding of when and how to use it. I have been struggling some days in a few words from Blake, perfect words at the perfect time, have lifted me up and brought praise for God to my lips. If this was an isolated incident then I wouldn't think much of it but it has happened at times when only God knows I am struggling, every single time.

The second incident is restudying Romans. I didn't begin Romans by conscious choice. Everything I've been reading lately (Watchman Nee, Miles J. Stanford) and my neighbor, Roger W., have been Romans centered. While reading Romans 12 I noticed for the first time that verses 3-8 are titled, “Gifts of Grace”. Verse 6a says, “Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them.”

How do we obtain this grace and what is the outcome? Scripture never leaves us wanting. If we begin at Chapter 12:1 we see that we are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Through this self-sacrificing, spiritual worship we will be given gifts of grace. The purpose or at least one that is stated in 12:9-21, is to witness to the world by leaving the marks of a true Christian which can only occur by the grace given to us by God. “Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own

sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

Are you being given gifts of grace? Are they being used to strengthen you as an individual? I am seeing more and more each day that I can best build up the body of Christ when I am strong in the Lord myself. It is only by God's grace and the grace gifts He gives that it is possible for me to be strong in him. It's a funny thing that our individual strength is often helped by God's grace gifts to others. Blake is a perfect example.

I'm just musing. Have a great month in Jesus.

Peace is only in Christ,

Roger Gillett

Parchman, MS

Do You Yield?

"But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." Luke 19:27

Do you yield and give way to other drivers when you approach a yield sign while driving or do you ignore proper driving procedures and keep your foot on the gas? I have seen and known of car accidents because people refused to yield, and I have been one who has refused to yield. Though I neither had an accident nor received a ticket, I was wrong.

There's a reason that rules are in place, and the Bible teaches us to respect them (Romans 13; 1Peter2). True obedience is impartial and partial obedience is no obedience at all. A renewed heart does not pick and choose from God's commandments: the person who does so is not performing God's will, but their own. A holy mind declines whatever God forbids and then chooses to practice all He requires without any exception. If we do not sincerely desire to please God in all things, then we do not truly wish to do so in anything (James 2).

A willful allowance of any known sin breaks the whole law. If our minds submit not unto God in all His commandments, we submit not to His authority in anything He enjoins. Self must be denied; not merely some of the things which may be craved, but self itself (Psalm 119)! A person who has no principle of holiness in him may yet be disinclined to many vices and be pleased to practice many virtues, as he perceives the former are unfit actions and the latter are, in themselves, comely actions, but his disapproval of vice and approval of virtue arise not from any disposition to submit to the will of God.

Simply said, "If we are not His friend (John 15) then we must be His enemy, for there is no other alternative (James 4, Romans 60).

God Bless!

Justin Underwood

Do You Yield?

Do you yield to His Word or are you living
in willful disobedience
Ever learning yet unable to come to the knowledge
of Truth or even attain a practical
and vital acquaintance

Reality in life, not glowing words from the lips,
is what Christ requires
To be completely conformed to the image of Christ
should be what every Christian desires

Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law
of the Lord; that loves Thy commandments
above gold
The heart's compliance with the voice of Christ
is the foundation of all practical
holiness that saves the soul

The grand and glorious miracle of salvation is
that the saved are regenerated
It's the complete yielding of the soul to the
blessed yoke of Christ that's being
communicated

The language of our soul accepts the fervent
longing and cordial endeavor of
discovering a True Friend
When we yield, our heart recognizes His
lordship and His right to
command

Be Still and Know. . .

Did you know that the word “still” used here is actually a verb? It comes from the Hebrew word “yaw-faw” and it means to relax, to cease, to become slack. Who would have thought it requires action and intentionality to do nothing? This action of being still is among the most difficult things for us as human beings to do, especially in the world we live in today. Everything is now, now, now and go, go, go. Very rarely do we just slow down and be still. Yet it is when we do this that we experience the most action. Psalm 46:10 tells us, “Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted in the earth.” Be still and know. . . . The word “know” comes from the Hebrew word, “yaw-dah” it means to know by observing and reflecting, and to know by experiencing. This verse shows us that our initial experience, with God and of God, is conditioned on us being still. I believe James 4:10 says it better, “Humble yourselves in the presence of the LORD and he will exalt you.” A great example of this is found in Luke 10:38-42; the story of Martha and Mary. Let me ask you, dear reader, as I ask myself, do you find your actions more like Martha or more like Mary? “Be still and know.” Know what?

Let’s explore the three descriptions used to describe the word “know.” 1. Observe; In His presence, humble and still at His feet, we can observe His righteousness, His love, His mercy and His power. 2. Reflect; As we observe Him it allows us to reflect on our wickedness, our selfishness, our pride and our weakness. It is only as we understand the latter that the former can even begin to be appreciated by us. It is only as we come to understand how frail and faulted we are that we can begin to appreciate His love and grace. When we realize we are lost once we have accepted this, it is then we will be still and ask for directions. It is then we will begin to 3. Experience Him, to know Him. To be still before the Lord like Mary, is to reverence Him, to trust Him. To be still before the Lord requires humility, patience, and trust. At the core of impatience, not being still before God, is pride and mistrust.

Without a doubt, my dear brothers and sisters the greatest example of pride and mistrust is our not being still before the Lord. I am talking about prayer, people of God! Why is it we will plan everything but a time to be still before God in prayer? How is it we do not have 10-15-20 minutes each morning to be still before Almighty God? I’m not talking about doing a devotional on your phone while you wait for your mocha-latte-cappuccino. I’m talking about being still! I’m talking about decreasing; being still. I’m talking about you knowing God; Him increasing. John 3:30; We must do better. Not just because we have to but because we want to. We have way too many Marthas and not enough Marys.

I want to challenge you. For the next 30 days be intentional about prayer. Each morning make a time and place to be still before God in prayer. I realize some of you reading this may struggle with prayer. Do not allow this to discourage you. Remember He cares more about our availability than our ability. To help encourage you along, I will share something my brother, Justin Underwood, shared with me. It’s the Prayer Circle. There are 12 parts to the Prayer Circle. They are:

1. Praise the Lord
2. Wait on Him
3. Confess your sins
4. Read the Word
5. Intercession
6. Petition
7. Pray the Word
8. Thanksgiving
9. Singing
10. Meditation

11. Listen

12. Praise

I want you to, as you do this, to find Scripture in support of each one. To write down people you want to intercede for you, petitions you may have, things you're thankful for. I want you to personalize it. During the first week try to spend at least a minute on each part of the Prayer Circle. In weeks two and three, try a minute and a half. For the last week, which I pray will be the first week of a new daily thing, try to spend two minutes on each part. If you desire to go longer, great! I promise you, if you do this you will deepen your experience of God. But you don't have to take my word for it, take His, "Be still and know that I am God. . . ." It's time prayer be our first response and not our last resource. Let us hold him to His Word dear brothers and sisters. Philippians 4:6-9; Job 28:28.

Song of the Month: Pat Barren, "The Way"

Kingdom Kid, DPC

The Crossroads

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9)

I hope this finds you all well today, prayed up and knowing me and God loves you! As I get closer to my release if it be the Lord's will, I have found myself at the crossroads up against what seems to be a giant. It led me to thinking of the little shepherd boy, David. David being a little more than a boy (1 Sam 17:4, 33, 42) found himself up against a giant. Goliath the giant champion warrior stood somewhere between 8 and 10 feet tall – and strong. May have weighed 400 pounds or more, he wore a solid bronze helmet and a coat of bronze scale armor that weighed about 125 pounds. His spear at hand was about 2 to 3 inches in diameter and around 6 feet long, the tip of the spear alone weighed about 15 to 20 pounds. Due to these facts, most would say David the little shepherd struggling in his flesh alone didn't stand a chance against the massive, fully armored giant. Which is probably true enough. So how did the little shepherd boy defeat the giant? Only one way, he stood in faith with all his confidence in the Lord to help him win the battle at hand. Therefore, fearlessly he said bring it on big boy, I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty (1 Sam 17:45) and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Praise God, that's just what little David did. He killed the giant warrior simply because he relied on the Champion Himself (God) to help him. He trusted and obeyed. Now my giant is the crossroads. One way leading home to family that loves me and wants me home. The other to a Halfway home, then home in due time. Here's the deal : my family loves me, wants me home and means well, but are not so well themselves. They are still riding shotgun with the devil driving, so to speak. Now some of you may be going if he knows this, why consider going home at all? Well because I have three kids, Drake, Shay and Shane that love want and need Daddy home, where I should be. They are by far well taken care of, but that's my job. They are my heart and the reason I want to go straight home. I find myself in a hard spot, go on home try to depend on family to help me or go to a halfway house where I know I can depend on staff to help me for sure, then go home. My heart says go home son but my mind says that's not smart, so I turn to the Lord for guidance and due to much prayer letting

the Lord, the Word and my mentor (P.T.) lead the way, I will be smart to go to where I know I got solid help, get myself together legally, work save some money and go home on my own two feet and depend on me and the Lord, which I know I can trust. However, this still don't change the fact that I want to go home. If you have done any time at all, let alone many calendars, you fully understand this. This is where we have to man up, pray, think it through and make the right choice. Depending on God to lead us through the Word and prayer to grant us the power and wisdom to make the right choice. What we want to do may not be what we need to do. (Pr. 16:9) says, "In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps." This is true, this He will do for all who trust and obey. He will be with us to the very end of the age. (Matt 28:20) So remember if you ever seem to be at one of life's crossroads we will only be successful if we remain loyal to the Lord and lean not on our own understanding but submit our ways to the Lord, and allow Him to direct our paths (Pr 3:5-6) We all know that life can be complicated, but following the Lord is not complicated at all. I'm not saying it's easy, but it can be summed up in two words: trust and obey! As we commit ourselves to this path we can be sure that the Lord will take care of our every need. Jesus said, to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all else will be given to us as well (Matt 6:33) In (Rom 8:28) it says that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, therefore when put to the test at one of life's crossroads stand firm in faith, seek guidance from the Lord through prayer, the Word and trust worthy people and all will come clear as in what to do. It may not be what the self, the flesh wants to do but it will by far be the right choice. I urge you all to pray and be very careful of all you say and do. The Lord has blessed me so much and in so many ways lately that the devil is really mad and eased up from behind and done his best to set me up for the kill. Praise God, he failed! The Lord is faithful and will lead, guide, protect and provide for us in all we do as long as we remain loyal to Him and obey at all times, He will by far be there with every answer we will ever need leading the way but it's up to us to: trust and obey! In (2 Sam 22) we find a song that the little shepherd boy David sang to the Lord when he had been delivered from the hands of his enemies, he said : The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; My God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my Savior – from violent people you save me. I called to the Lord, who is worthy of praise, and have been saved from my enemies. Praise God, this is a reminder that Jesus is our power source, we can make right choices, resist sin, overcome temptation, and be more than conquerors through Him that loves us (Rom 8:37) However, the greatest hindrance to receiving Christ's power is to think we have some power of our own. So stay on course, be connected to the right source of power, continue in prayer, and diligently work for the Lord! Brothers and sisters remember we are engaged in a very real spiritual battle between two opposing kingdoms. I urge you to study, seek to understand this because those least in the know are often the first casualties. Remember Jesus is our spiritual armor, He is our truth our righteousness, our peace, the object of our faith, the source of our salvation, and the living Word of God. Therefore when we clothe ourselves with Jesus Christ (Rom 13:14; Gal 3:27), we are protected by the only person Satan has never nor will ever defeat. Praise God, love you all!

-Blake Dempsey