

The GoodNews

Newsletter — Summer 2020

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)

Lessons From The Bees



Scientists say Bumble bees should not be able to fly; they aren't made for it. Their bodies are too big and their wings are too small. Yet they do. They possess what is necessary for their purpose. Even though, to us, it makes no sense and should not be possible.

As I watched the bees on the flowers in my garden, I was reminded of a few things. I was reminded that God makes sure everything is fed. Matthew 6:26-29 speaks of this. The bees eat the nectar of the flowers. And they use their food to make honey, but that's not all—in the process of their eating, they also pollinate the flowers, fruit and vegetable plants. Without the bees, there would be no fruits or vegetables, no honey for us to enjoy either. So I'm not going to bother the bees. Instead, I will say thank you to the bees for their work and thank you to God for this amazing creation of Yours.

Job 12:7-8 tells us, "But now ask the beasts, and let them teach you; And the birds of the heavens, and let them tell you. Or speak to the earth, and let it teach you; And let the fish of the sea declare to you." In addition to being reminded of God's providence and creativity, I have received wise counsel and instruction by observing them. I was shown four lessons that are principles we would be blessed to strive for and live by. Let us "observe their ways and be wise" (Proverbs 6:6b).

1) **No Fear** Most insects and animals are much bigger than bees, but the bees do not let that stop them, and they are not afraid to contend for a place in the garden. 2Timothy 1:7 tells us, "God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power and love and a sound mind." We as children of God must also fight the good fight and contend for the faith. We, like the bees, must feed off the sweet nectar of God's Word, that we may be sustained and pollinate the hearts of man. It is in this we bring glory to God. We cannot let persecution and the world scare us away from the garden that is mankind.

2) **Faith** "I can fly, and so I will!" Nothing about a bee says they can fly, but they do. In a sense, they have faith. They believe they can fly, and so they do. Nothing about your circumstances may sow hope, but that is okay. We are not called to look for hope in our circumstances. We are called to look for hope in Jesus Christ. He is the hope within a hopeless situation. God can deliver you out of anything, but that may not always mean what you think it does. Sometimes, His deliverance allows us to endure that which seems insurmountable, but one thing we can rest assured of—whether He delivers you from or keeps you within, His grace is sufficient. Remember, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13). This is a faith mindset. Faith is an outlook cultivated by the Word of God. By faith we see things as God declares them—not how the world understands them and not how our circumstances depict them.

3) **Love Yourself** "So what my legs are short, my body too wide in comparison to my length, and my wings are too tiny." Human beings are the crown of God's creation. You are created in the image of God. I realize evolution can make our existence seem like chance. To some people, we humans are the equal to or less than animals. But when you ignore the image of God within us, you diminish the sanctity of human life along with our inherent worth and purpose. God's Word tells us, "You are fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:13-14). Believing this—really trusting it—could change the way we see ourselves and others. Let us look and determine our worth through the eyes of the One who made us and loves us and calls us His own. It is my hope that in this, you will find the validation, love, and acceptance we long for.

“To the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved” (Ephesians 1:6).

4) **Work Hard** “You are as busy as a bee!” Without a doubt, bees are busy, busy, busy. They eat and work. All day long they eat nectar, pollinate, and make honey. Bees work hard, and they are faithful to their calling. Throughout the Bible we learn that work brings to us a sense of joy, satisfaction, dignity, and respect. We are also encouraged, even commanded, to labor faithfully, honestly, and fruitfully with a view to please God more than those in authority over us. Diligence receives praise while idleness draws rebuke. If we neglect our affairs and responsibilities, we will not only not prosper, but we will go backward. “And your poverty will come in like a vagabond. And your need like an armed man.” Hard work and integrity is something that has gone unappreciated in our get rich quick society. Solomon has some wise words for those who seek virtue in the vanity of wealth. Let us aspire to work hard, with responsibility, honesty, diligence, and faithfulness. Great rewards await the faithful servant.

Though we are taught more than the beasts of the earth and made wiser than the birds of the air, there is much wisdom to be gained from even the tiniest of insects. When we observe the wonderful ways and works of those creatures, we must not only give God the glory for their creation, but in humility and awe, receive lessons from the bees. God Bless.

By: Vanzetta Williams and Kingdom Kid

Dog Pen Church Prayer

Heavenly Father,

As we acknowledge and celebrate your presence in our life, we thank You for your grace, peace, forgiveness, and freedom as we enjoy a loving family relationship with You. Help us to rely on Your Spirit each day to be our Helper, Teacher, Guide, Comforter, and Protector. We trust in Your faithful and unfailing love as we humbly forgive ourselves as Your living sacrifices and as vessels to share Your light and Your love with others.

Blessed is the man Thou chastenest and teaches him out of Thy law. For the Lord will not cast off His people, nor will He forsake His inheritance. When we said, our foot is slippeth; Thy mercy held us up. In the multitude of our thoughts within us, Thy comforts delight our soul.

We thank You for Your promises in Your Word that assure us that You planned our path and that You will remain with us through the roughest waters and through the steady waves. We thank You for the path You have tread before us and we thank You for the footprints You have left for us to follow.

We thank You for all things through Christ Jesus – Amen!

Watch Your Heart

“And there shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all they soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength...” - *Mark 12:30*

Throughout the Bible, we are commanded to love the Lord with all our hearts. Only in God will we find the true satisfaction and fulfillment that our hearts desire.

One of the profound tragedies in life occurs when someone gives away their heart to a person who hurts them. When love goes sour, lives are often damaged permanently. Christians, too, can ruin their lives by loving the wrong things.

The problem is that we live in a world system that opposes God. The world is attractive because it seems to offer us what we want without the accompanying demand of obedience and commitment to God. The world tries to tempt us to shift our allegiance and our devotion away from God. Christians at every stage of spiritual development need to recognize and resist temptation. Obedience to God's Word gives us power to overcome the efforts of the wicked one, who is trying to drag us down. - *1 Peter 1: 6-9; John 10: 9-10*

Disobedience will lead to disappointment, because what the world offers will pass away, - *1 John 2: 17*

and only what God gives is permanent.

Living for God in the world is hard, but we have no alternative. When Jesus prayed for his disciples in *John chapter 17*, He recognized that they would have to live in the world (v. 11) and so He went to ask that the Father protect them from the evil one (v. 15).

Our spiritual vitality and victory are really matters of the heart. If we give our hearts to the delights of the world, we will stumble into spiritual darkness. If we love God through our obedient lives, we will walk in the light with him.

Watch your hearts, my brothers and sisters in Christ. Although we have to live in enemy territory in this world, we must live in the Lord, not the world. - *1 Thess.5: 5-10*

God Bless!

Justin Underwood

Watch Your Heart

*Feelings come and feelings go, and feelings
are deceiving*

*Watch your heart that the power of Satan
no longer has any meaning*

*As the Holy Spirit works in you to show
you your heart in illumination*

*He will give you a detestation for yourself
and sin as you're brought before
Him in humiliation*

*Love heals the broken hearted, delivers those
who are captive, and recovers the
sight of the blind*

*Love is longsuffering and love is kind -
By all His love gifts to my soul, He has won
my heart; He has won my heart
with His active affection*

*With His dying love He has won my heart;
He has won my heart with the power
of His resurrection*

*Let us draw near with a true heart and in
full assurance of faith*

*Let us fall into the hands of the Lord that
we may be exalted by His truly
amazing grace*

*What gold of His amazing grace has been
poured out upon us*

*Watch your heart dear children of God that
the Holy Spirit may give you the
glory of Christ Jesus*

God bless, – Justin

My Exposition of James

Faith and Endurance: James is probably one of my most favorite books in the Bible. It tells you about how to come to Christ, having an inheritance in His Kingdom, enduring faith, and rewards for overcoming temptation. That's not all I could tell you about James. How he was a disciple and follower of our Lord Jesus Christ and also His brother, but lets talk about his lesson on faith and endurance. Brothers none of us are perfect and Satan will try to use this to lure us into sin. I, myself, go by trials day by day; God on one shoulder and Satan on the other. Satan will try to tempt us into things that are not of God and when we give in, Satan prevails. But our faith in Jesus Christ will not allow that; our faith will endure. The more we are tempted by Satan and have victory over him, the more our endurance grows stronger. (James 1:4) tells us, "Once that endurance reaches full maturity, it will be perfect and complete needing nothing."

Listening and Doing: And so in (James 1:9), it says, "We must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry." When we come around situations that cause a reaction, think about that reaction. Our human desires might not give the right reaction that God wants. So we have to clear all of our mouths and hearts of filthiness and firmly plant the seed of the word of God. But we can't just listen to God's word, we must do what it says, (James 1:22). God is always at work around us and He uses His word, His people (us), and circumstances; to speak and do for Him. He might lay it on your heart to tell someone "It'll be okay," and those three words might change that persons life because He spoke those three words to that person through you. We need to watch what we say and do because we want people to see God in us. The Lord rewards those who recognizes His voice, do what He says, and remembers what they hear.

Being prejudice, showing favoritism over others: My brothers, How can you claim to have faith in Christ if you favor some people over others? The law says, "Love your neighbor as yourself." So if you favor some people over others, you are committing a sin and you are guilty of breaking the law. (James 2:8-9) How then will people see God in us when they look at us? Here's an example. A rich man walks into a restaurant and you place him at the best table. Then a poor man walks in and you place him in a corner booth. You are guilty of sin. We should not judge others based on their appearances. A poor man's riches in heaven will be far greater than that of a rich man's on Earth.

Faith without good deeds is dead: We say we have faith, but what good is that Faith without applying the good deeds needed to make it genuine. "Faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless. I see people all the time professing to be followers of Christ, that they believe in one God. Well that's good but demons also believe in one God. Your faith without your good deeds are useless. You show your faith by the good deeds that you do. We are only right with God by our actions. So you see, when your faith and actions work together, your actions make your faith complete. (James 2:26) tells us, "Just as the body is dead without breath, so is faith dead without good works."

Controlling the Tongue: In as much as we should watch what we do, we should also watch what we say. The tongue can be cruel and without God, untamed. There is not limit to the damage that can be caused by the tongue. Let's look at (James 3:3-6) “We can make a large horse go wherever we want by a small bit in his mouth. And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong. In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. And the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself.”

True Wisdom Comes from God: True and righteous wisdom comes only from God. If you have any selfishness or jealousy in your hearts, you are not right with the Lord. (James 3:15-16) says, “For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, nonspiritual, and demonic. For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind.” True wisdom comes from God. It is the wisdom that is gentle, shows mercy, and is full of good deeds. It is these good deeds that make you righteous with God. Your faith without good deeds is dead.

Drawing Closer to God: Now there is a reason for this disorder and lack of wisdom and it comes from the evil desires at war within you. You want things that you do not have and you fight or kill to get it. This goes back to being jealous and selfish and it is displeasing to the Lord. You can ask the Father for these things, but you will not get them because your motives are wrong my brothers. Worldly desires make you enemies of God. He will not find you righteous if you cling to this world. But (James 4:7-8) says, “Humble yourself before God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Come close to God, and He will come close to you.” So let go of this world brothers. There's a much bigger prize on the other side.

Patience and Endurance: And so I'll conclude this message with Patience. We must be patient in waiting for the Lord's return. For the coming of the Lord is near. He rewards those greatly who are patient in suffering and endure. Job is a great example here. You see how the Lord was kind to him in the end. In (James 5:12), we are warned to never take an oath, by heaven or anything else. Just say a simple yes or no so that you will not jinx yourself into being tempted into sin and be condemned. But we are not unarmed. God gave us the power of prayer so that we can go directly to Him with our problems. If you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven if you confess and ask for forgiveness. (James 5:16) says, “Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has power and produces wonderful results.” My brothers, Jesus will be back very soon. He tells us this in His word. If you are not right with God, now is the time. Do not wait. Have peace in Jesus and may God forever have all the glory. Amen!

– Alex Mead

Prayers for Ourselves and Others
Let us pray.

Because you, God, love the world,
because in Christ you walked it, we dare to pray:
God, send your spirit; renew the life of the earth.

To connect the words of ancient scripture
to the life of the world today;
to let the urgent summons of Jesus
surpass our reticence to respond,
God, send your spirit; renew the life of the earth.

To awaken the minds of those in power
to the realities of those they govern;
to confront the arrogance of the privileged
with the vulnerability of the poor,
God send your spirit; renew the life of the earth.

To engage the fragile state of the planet
with those who carelessly abuse it;
to let the pain of those who are hurting awaken
the caring potential in the healthy,
God send your spirit; renew the life of the earth.

To eradicate the distance between
our convictions and commitments,
our potentials and our performance,
our prayers and our politics,
our faith and our discipleship,
God, send your spirit; renew the life of the earth.

Convince us, gracious god,
that matter matters
and that all is up for redemption.
And since in Jesus you
destined all to be changed
and made new,
enable us to be agents of your purpose.
We pray in Jesus' name.
Amen.

