

May
2017

The News



*Therefore, if anyone is
in Christ, the new
creation has come: The
old has gone, the new
is here!*

2 Corinthians 5:17

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The Bible and Daily Life



by Pastor Rich McDermott

Christians believe that our faith in Jesus Christ and our saving knowledge of his Word in the Bible make a huge difference in our daily lives. Through 1) our personal trust in Jesus, 2) the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and 3) our discernment of God’s will in the Bible through a faithful community of Christians, we are able to understand and to live out God’s Word in Scripture.

Look at some of these important passages of the Bible that emphasize the practical effects of knowing the Lord and following his Word:

“This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to act in accordance with all that is written in it. For then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall be successful.”
– Joshua 1:8

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”
– Psalm 119:105

“Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.”
– Proverbs 30:5

“Everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.”
– Matthew 7:24

“They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”
– John 14:21

“I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”
– John 15:5

“Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.... And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he commanded us. All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them.”
– 1 John 3:18, 23-24

In each of these passages, it is clear that belief or faith involves a trusting relationship with God (or with Jesus), and that *acting in faith*, upon God’s words or commands is key to living the life of a

Christian, a follower of Jesus. Consider the promises that come with faithful obedience and action in the seven passages that were just cited: abiding in Jesus, bearing fruit, love from Jesus and the Father, Jesus revealing himself, wisdom, a life built on a secure foundation, being shielded by God, light for the journey, prosperity and success. These are some of the practical benefits of being a Christian.

Notice that *relationship* is the foundation of faithful action. Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. In order to bear fruit (live a life God wants us to live), we must *abide* (or live in vital relationship with) the vine. In other words, belief/faith or trust in Jesus Christ is the basis for learning how God wants us to act. In a play, if we don't listen to the director, we will not know how to act our part. In sports, we need to know and obey the coach if we are to be successful in the arena, on the field, or on the court.

Another way of saying this theologically is that we are *saved by grace through faith*. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works so that no one may boast." Being saved is not simply about the life hereafter, although it includes that. To be saved is to begin to live life eternal now, to live as a part of God's kingdom now, to live a life that reflects God's effective will in this life now. Not everyone realizes this. They think that salvation comes only after we die. But that is neither what Jesus taught nor believed. It is why we pray to God in the Lord's prayer, "...*may your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*" (emphasis added). We need the Lord to save us for this life as well as for the life that is to come.

This salvation is a free gift that comes to us by God's *grace* (or God's unmerited favor) *through faith* (a trusting relationship with Jesus). God's grace is a gift. We cannot earn it. We cannot work for it. We do not deserve it. It only comes to us through faith, or belief in the God who is revealed in Jesus Christ. We are back to relationship. So the gospel, or good news, is that our daily lives can be changed when we receive God's salvation as a gift of God's grace which we receive by faith in Jesus.

These are the truths that come from God's Word in Scripture. It is true that many people do not read the Bible, and that we may be the only "Bible" that some people ever read. That is another reason that we must, in our daily lives, live and speak in such a way as to express God's love to all people. And that requires that we remain engaged with the Lord, through prayer and through the reading and digesting of God's Word in the Bible. Here are some ways to do that:

1. Worship the Lord every week at First Presbyterian and listen closely to exposition of the Scriptures, writing down questions.
2. Find a daily devotional guide that helps you read small portions of the Bible daily, and to pray.
3. Join a Bible study, covenant group, huddle, missional community, or small group that focuses on the Bible and serves in the community or reaches out to new people. Be curious, ask questions, and grow in relationships.
4. Look for Bible applications to put on your phone, e-pad, or computer and use it for researching terms, ideas, and questions you have about the Bible.
5. Go to lunch with a pastor or a friend and ask them your questions about the Bible.

Imagine how the Lord might use you and others in First Presbyterian if nearly everyone were doing just a few of the suggestions above! Daily lives would change for God's glory! History would be altered! Arlington would be transformed! God's kingdom would be established!

Okay, my enthusiasm is a little over the top. But give it shot. It might make your day. ☺



Johnny Cash and Maundy Thursday

I trust that everyone who attended our Holy Week services was blessed through our times of worship. I'm really grateful for the feedback from our Maundy Thursday service where we listened to some special music from the end of Johnny Cash's life. The idea for the service came from Cash's recording of a song called "Breaking Bread." It's not a spectacular song but it has found a special place in my heart when it comes to communion.

For those who were there, I shared how producer Rick Rubin was looking for a comeback project in the early 90's and Johnny Cash was an ideal candidate. His recording career had bottomed out after being pulled in multiple directions with various record producers all promising a hit record if he just recorded music their way. The worst example of this is the song, "The Chicken in Black." YouTube it. It's terribly and incredibly illustrative. But Rubin approached Cash and told him (generalization, not a direct quote), "Come to my studio. Pick the songs you want to record and sing them how you want to sing them." A lasting friendship was formed, and Rubin's label released six albums plus an extra batch of unreleased songs. They are known as the American Recordings – the name of Rubin's label.

Listening through these albums, you can literally listen to Cash's health decline. His beloved wife, June, died between volumes 4 and 5. Cash's response was to get back into the studio and work through his grief through music. Volume 6 was released posthumously and the haunting opener "Ain't no Grave" is the perfect Easter song. "There ain't no grave that can hold my body down." When I listen, I am struck that Cash was facing his mortality and each song was chosen intentionally for a reason. He used his fading breaths to get these songs recorded and it almost sounds like his final testimony.

The movie *Walk the Line* did a wonderful job sharing the numerous ups and downs of Cash's life up to the point of him and June getting married. Happily ever after. But honestly, these final chapters of Cash's life really hit me in a significant way. The songs he chose were spiritual, comical, dealt with life and death, and he and Rubin chose songs to cover that he truly made his own. Most notably, his recording (and tear-forming video) for Nine Inch Nails' song "Hurt," originally about heroin addiction, goes to a whole other level and meaning when Cash sings the words.

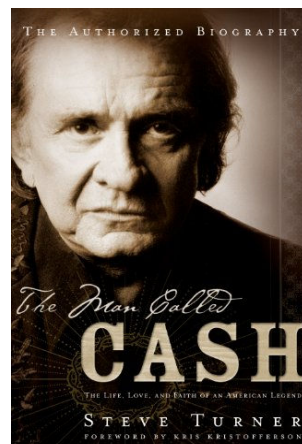
In Greenville, I spent five nights of an adult Vacation Bible School presenting Steve Turner's biography on Cash, which is where I was introduced to this music. It is a wonderful read and I would be more than happy to share the book and music with a Sunday school class or presentation some time. I hope you will stream, buy, or however you enjoy music these days, these wonderful albums especially the unreleased material. The names are:

- *American Recordings* (1994)
- *American II: Unchained* (1996)
- *American III: Solitary Man* (2000)
- *American IV: The Man Comes Around* (2002)
- *Unearthed* box set (2003)
- *American V: A Hundred Highways* (2006)
- *American VI: Ain't No Grave* (2010)

Enjoy and God bless!

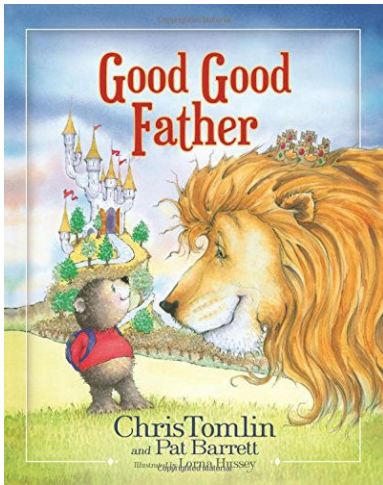
Live Forever,

Pastor Chris



Children's Ministry News

Preschool Sunday School



It's time to "Come to the Castle" and hear stories from the King. We can't wait to share both this theme and these stories with your children. This month's theme was inspired by Chris Tomlin's new book, *Good Good Father*, and we encourage you to get the board book version, *Good Good Father for Little Ones*.

As we travel through the stories of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Hagar, Gideon, and Daniel, your preschoolers will learn that . . .

- God is always with me.
- God hears me and gives me what I need.
- God teaches me the way to go.
- God protects me.

It's a fantastic month that is sure to help your preschoolers know that God is with them all the time, and God's got it.

Elementary Sunday School

Determination is a response of the character of God.

Throughout Scripture, we can discover that God has been faithful to His people. He rescued them from slavery in Egypt. He sent Jesus to rescue us from our sin. He remained faithful to the early church as they spread the message of Jesus throughout the world. When we see how God gave His people what they needed to continue following Him, we can respond with determination, believing that God will give us what we need to finish what we start.



Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to help us have determination.

When Jesus gave His disciples the incredible mission of spreading the message of the Gospel throughout the world, He didn't make them do it alone. Instead, He sent the Holy Spirit to empower them to show faith and determination in the face of whatever might happen along the way. When we put our faith in Jesus, the Holy Spirit empowers us to finish what we start.

We think it's important for us to help our kids and families discover more about **determination—deciding it's worth it to finish what you started.**

Our Memory Verse for May comes from Galatians 6:9 - ***"Let us not become tired of doing good. At the right time we will gather a crop if we don't give up"* (NIRV)**. When Paul wrote this verse, he encouraged the followers of Jesus to show determination and keep doing good. We may not see results right away, but in time, God will help us see that finishing what we started was worth all of the effort.

Let's see how determination shows up in the early church and the first followers of Jesus as they worked to accomplish the mission He had for them.

Important Dates

Kids Night Out

May 5 and 19, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., for children in grade 6 and younger

Vacation Bible School

"Gadgets & Gizmos," June 5 through 9 for children 4 years old to grade 6

Summer, Summer, Summertime!

I can remember it like it was just yesterday. The year was 1991 and I was a young 11-year-old almost-teenager then, but I remember turning on the radio and hearing a song titled, “Summertime.” This was a song put together by American hip-hop duo DJ Jazzy Jeff & The Fresh Prince. The song’s chorus went like this:

Summer summer summertime
Time to sit back and unwind
Summer summer summertime
Time to sit back and unwind
Summer summer summertime
Time to sit back and unwind



There was something about this song that got me excited when I heard it and I officially knew it was summer break. So every time I talk to our youth around this time of year I am reminded that for most of them this means a time to relax and recharge from a long year of school, exams, sports practices, school events, etc. But, as the summer moves along, summer break can begin to feel long, boring, and less than awesome at times. As the Director of Youth at FPCA, I hope to help our youth feel like it’s not just another summer break.

I am currently planning and putting together some events and outings that will hopefully allow our youth to have an epic summer break. My prayer is that this summer break will be filled with laughter, fellowship, tears of joy, and most of all a time for us to grow in our relationship with Christ. We will get things started with our two camp trips, The Great Escape (junior high) and Fun In The Son (high school). These two camp trips have been in place for our youth the last few years, and I look forward to continuing the tradition again this year.

In closing, I leave you with a word from the Lord. As I was doing my devotion here recently I was led to Genesis 6:9. What stuck out to me the most about this passage was where it says...*Noah walked with God*. My prayer and hope this summer is that we, as a youth group, *WALK WITH GOD!* Our walk may not always be perfect and we may encounter some falls along the way, but through our faith in God, we will learn that we are not alone. If we walk with God, we begin to realize that he is right there walking with us hand in hand. I look forward to helping our youth *WALK WITH GOD* during this summer break and beyond.

Please pray for us as we travel, begin and continue friendships that will last forever, worship, and walk with God this summer.

Blessings,

Adrian Rodriguez

P.S. Thank you so much to everyone who supported our t-shirt fundraiser! Your contributions will greatly help our youth make it to camp this year. Also, my wife and I thank you for all the wonderful gifts for baby Addie! We feel so blessed to have such a loving and caring church family!

Camp Dates

June 18 to 23 The Great Escape (junior high)
July 10 to 15 Fun In The Son (high school)

Seen Around the Building



Bazaarnival Luncheon, March 30



Bake Sale, March 30

Maundy Thursday, April 13



Easter Sunday, April 16

Bazaarnival Farewell

It's time to say farewell to the Bazaarnival. We had a great 28-year run, but all things must come to an end.

During a Stewardship meeting in 1989, Rev. Larry Spencer came to us and requested that we come up with some kind of fundraiser to help reduce our building debt. Of the original \$1.1M loan, the debt was still half a million dollars. Elaine Bahn, Gene Schrickel, and Sherry Wolfe came up with the idea of a Bazaarnival. Elaine Bahn took this idea and made it happen about 3 months later. John and Fran Slack directed it the following 2 years, Sherry Wolfe directed it for the next 23 years, and then the Belize team took over in 2015. In 2016, it was led by Lew and Claudia Johnson, Marge and Bob Dawson, and Sue and Jim Lavender.



There was something for everyone to do - whether you worked the week before the Bazaarnival, Bazaarnival day, brought goodies for the bake sale, donated items, cleaned or tested items, set up tents, hauled items, counted money, fixed food for the workers, priced, cashiered, made a quilt or sold tickets for the quilt, took pictures or purchased items, cleaned up, put up signs, printed flyers and quilt tickets, made arrangements for garbage pickup, arranged for permits, provided security for the parking lot, or advertised. In one way or another, the majority of our congregation, their friends, and families helped with this event. This was the event that brought all of us together. The fellowship we shared and the friends we made during this time were very special.

We had so many customers that came back year after year and really looked forward to coming. We made a difference to our customers and they made an impact on us.

Because of the Bazaarnival money earned and interest saved on the loan, we were able to help eliminate the church debt in 2000, which was 10 years early. The money since then has been used on some church facilities projects, but mostly it has gone to other local outreach and mission projects that could not be covered under our regular budget. The earnings have just kept on giving. The Salvation Army in earlier years and Mission Arlington in the last several years also benefited when we donated unsold merchandise to them.

Thank you to everyone who participated in this wonderful event over the 28 years we held the Bazaarnival. The total the Bazaarnival made over the years was \$509,368.93.

Since we will no longer have these funds for outreach and mission programs, the Mission and Evangelism Team will try to come up with some other fundraising events, although nothing will compare to the Bazaarnival. The first event, a dinner, will be held in July. Watch The News for the details.

Retirement Reception

Jim McCoy has retired from his “part-time” 7-day-a-week job as the church facilities manager.

Details are still pending, but the reception date is Sunday, May 21, the time is 12:00 noon, and the place is (probably) the fellowship hall.

Come wish Jim well!



Save the Date – June 4!

Pentecost Offering

This year, our Pentecost Offering will be received officially on the day of Pentecost, June 4, 2017. As with all special offerings, times before and after this date are appropriate for donations also.

On Pentecost Sunday, we join Christians around the world to celebrate God's gift of the Holy Spirit to the church. The Pentecost Offering benefits children at risk, youth, and young adults. Forty percent of the offering stays locally and this year will go to HOPE Tutoring as decided by the Mission and Evangelism Team with Session approval. The other percentage will support General Assembly ministries for youth development.

For more information on the Pentecost Offering, see www.pcusa.org/pentecost.

Offering envelopes are available outside the chapel and sanctuary the week of the offering and afterward for several weeks. Please use the Pentecost envelopes or designate on your check or other envelope if you are giving to the Pentecost Offering.

Please help aid youth programs in our city as well as our country and world.

All-Church Picnic

The Fellowship Team invites everyone to get ready for summer by coming to the all-church picnic on Sunday, June 4. The picnic will be in Fellowship Hall immediately following the second service. (This *is* Texas, after all, and our June weather can be tricky to predict.)



The Arlington Life Shelter will present the program, "Hearts of Faith." The presentation will bring us up to date on the Life Shelter and their plans for the future. FPCA was the first home for the Arlington Life Shelter, and it will be interesting to see how Arlington's churches continue to support and be a part of the future of this important mission in Arlington.

We will have barbeque, chips, potato salad, tea, lemonade, and - of course - dessert.

Plan to stay, learn more about the Life Shelter, and enjoy a time of fellowship with your friends!

Quilt Raffle



Allena Coburn has made a lovely full-size quilt from fabric donated to the FPCA Happy Quilters.

The Quilters are now selling raffle tickets for \$1 each, and the drawing for the quilt will take place at the all-church picnic on June 4.

The raffle money will be added to the Charlie Sheldon Parlor Update Fund and will be used to improve the appearance of our parlor.

Raffle tickets will be available in the Red Hall before the 11:00 service on Sundays through June 4. Contact Sandy Thomlinson, skt1943@aol.com or 817-522-2080, with questions.

Senior Exercise Starting May 15



A senior exercise group will begin meeting in the parlor on Monday, May 15. Sessions will be Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. Come and get fit with us!

There is no charge, but participants will be responsible for purchasing and storing their own exercise equipment.

For further information, please contact Thomas Dombrowsky at 817-287-9773 or tomasdom@sbcglobal.net.

Preschool Summer Camp 2017

Dates: Monday, June 5, through Friday, August 4

Times: Monday to Friday - 8:45 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.

Before and after camp programs available (open 6:45 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.)

Flexible schedule

Ages: 6 weeks through third grade

Cost: \$75.00 program fee

Register for the fall, and the summer program fee is FREE!



Financial Peace University

If you have never taken the popular Financial Peace University 9-week course led by the internationally recognized Dave Ramsey, then NOW is the time to sign up! Our new members, James and Katina Gifford, are offering their leadership to this great course which will begin on Monday, June 5, at 6:00 p.m. here at FPCA. The cost per family is only \$99, and this gives you a lifetime membership in Financial Peace University. Check how to register for the class at <http://www.daveramsey.com/fpu/classes/1040877>. You will be hearing more about this great opportunity, but mark your calendar for Monday evenings starting on June 5, and find out how to get your financial house in order using solidly biblical principles. For more information, contact Katina Gifford at katinap84@aol.com or call 817-565-3835.



Protestant Reformation Anniversary

The year 2017 will mark 500 years since the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. Grace Presbytery has created a page on its website for information and articles about this important anniversary. There will be articles and essays, including those that are part of the “Theological Conversation” series sponsored by the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Learn more by visiting: <http://www.gracepresbytery.org/community/reformation-500/>

This Month



Bible Studies

Men's Bible Study

The Men's Bible Study group meets every Wednesday morning at 7:00 a.m. in the parlor. Men of all ages meet to study the book of Exodus and enjoy great fellowship and a prayer session. All men are invited to join this study.

Women's Bible Study

The Women's Monday Night Bible study is open to all women. The next meeting is at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, May 15, in the parlor.

Tuesday Morning Bible Study

Men and women of all ages are invited to meet in the Bride's Room every Tuesday morning at 10:00 a.m. The current study is *Twelve Ordinary Men* by John MacArthur.

Music Ministries

Chancel Choir

This is the primary worship leadership ensemble for the 11:00 service. The choir also sings for special services around Christmas and Holy Week. It is more than just a great choir, it is a caring fellowship. Rehearsals are on Wednesdays from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. *Nursery care is provided during rehearsals.*

Ring of Praise Handbell Ensemble

This intergenerational handbell group rehearses Wednesday evenings from 6:15 until 7:15 p.m. If you are interested in ringing, please contact Russell Farnell (fpcmusic@yahoo.com or 817-274-8286).

Agape (Youth) Choir

This group of youth in grades 6 to 12 meets on Sunday, 4:30 to 6:00 p.m., in the choir room. This year the focus of our youth choir is to engage singers at Carter Junior High by inviting them to participate in the YouthCUE Choir Festival in Waco. This is a combined choir of 300+ singers from all over Texas and surrounding states..

Children's Music Ministries

The children's choirs meet Sundays, 1:30 to 2:30 p.m., during the school year. These choirs strive to impart God's love through His gift of music. The focus is on ministry to children rather than on performance. Children ages 4 (when school starts) through grade 5 participate in activities including music/singing and bells/chimes, instruments, and listening activities. There are two sections, divided by age, and both participate in the 11:00 worship service twice per year, usually in December and April.



Church Leadership

Deacon Meeting

Thursday, May 11, at 6:00 p.m., the Diaconate meets in the parlor to oversee the Congregational Care, Hospitality, and Fellowship ministries.

Team Meeting Night

Thursday, May 11, at 6:45 p.m., all teams meet for worship in the chapel with subsequent gathering into respective teams for ministry planning and coordination.

Session Meeting

Thursday, May 25, at 7:00 p.m., the Session meets in the parlor to oversee the ministry of the church. The work of the Diaconate, church administration, and all Discipleship, Worship, Facility Management, and Mission and Evangelism ministries will be discussed.



Discipleship

Library Team

The library team works the first Wednesday of each month, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Anyone interested is welcome. No particular skill is required, the work is easy, and we always have a good time as we process books to be added to our inventory. If you would like to be involved in library work but cannot come at that evening time, please contact Sandy Thomlinson and special daytime work sessions can be arranged.

Fellowship



Happy Quilters

This group meets Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. to quilt, sew, knit, crochet, embroider, and just enjoy being together. Bring your project and join in!

Saints Alive!

Church seniors will meet for a potluck lunch on Thursday, May 18, at 11:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Bring a casserole, salad, or dessert and enjoy a fun and interesting afternoon.

Contact Bev Koch (817-261-3202) for details.

**First Presbyterian Church
1200 S. Collins Street
Arlington, TX 76010**

Deadline for the June issue of The News is May 15!

Prayer Ministry

Prayers for those with health and other concerns: Esther Albright, Yvonne Babb, Polly Baugh, Parker Bjornson, David Boice, Shirley Bragg, James (Andrew) Bridges, Crystal Castaneda, Kevin Chin, Jerry Colleps, Lee Carol Copeland, Dorothy Curtis, Bunny Floyd, Tom and Bobbie Fowler, Lila Glenn, David Goff, A. Jack Gray, Dick Haney, Margery Harrand, Ken and Edna Harris, Bill Hayden, Doyle Malone, J. Fred Miller, Allen Miller, Mary Ellen Miller, Pat Mingle, Barbara Mooers, Ruth Moore, Bill Olsen, Cosme Pacot, Jim L. Quick, Albert Ross, Eulabel Sheldon, Linda Smith, Al Smithson, Bob Spriggs, Brooks and Connie Taylor, Kyle Terwilliger, B. J. Thomas, Jerry Thomas, Allen Underwood, Donna Vickers, Jessica Villarreal, Sherry Wolfe, and Mary Jane Wright.

Prayers for our family serving in the armed forces: Ben Boughton, Riley Curnutt, Austin Curran, Eric Dill, Jeff Grimes, Nathan Haerer, Damien King, Mike Mancini, Jack Murtha, Stephen O'Neil Sosa, Colin Peden, Jason Polk, Ryan Powell, Ryan Regalado, Christopher Young, and Robbie Wallace.

Pray for our homebound members.

Pray for those who do not know Christ!



Please contact Pastor Rich McDermott at the church office at 817-274-8286 if you have any congregational care needs. For questions about specific concerns of those listed above, please contact Juanice Young at juanicey@gmail.com or 817-794-5626.