



NEWS & NOTES

First Baptist Church of Long Prairie, MN
April, May, June 2018

PASTOR'S PAGE

Matthew 6:11 "Give us this day our daily bread."

I regularly fight with an old companion and antagonist known as greed. He has been a part of my world for as long as I can remember; if I had 2 nickels there was something for 20 cents I couldn't live without.

God has confronted me about it several times. I remember coming home from a mission trip to Cameroon Africa, where I had observed real poverty and real joy. I came to realize that summer that a) I had way more stuff than most people in the world & b) they were happy even without the stuff that "I couldn't live without". Coming home from that summer trip I knew "I was never going to fall back into that trap of needing all that stuff". That lasted almost to my birthday in October.

Greed is a powerful magnet and stuff is pure steel. The more stuff I acquire, the more power it has over me and the more stuff I "can't live without". There is no "enough" it seems. Having only opens my desire to have more. The more I get the stronger the pull for more.

How much is enough? When the cabinet is full? When the deep freeze is overflowing? When there is no room in the garage so I need a storage space as well? I have a bit of a penny pinching farming background in my blood... do you know how much stuff you can keep in barns??!!

And then I hear again the Word of God and the Spirit convicting me...

1 Timothy 6:8 "If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content."

Luke 3:14 "Some soldiers were questioning him, saying, "And what about us, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your wages."

Hebrews 13:5 "Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"

You can also look up 2 Corinthians 12:10 and Philippians 4:11.

That word "content" is only used these five times in the Bible. But they are enough to convict me yet again. Jesus teaches us to pray for "our daily bread"... which I think can easily be applied to our basic daily needs. What do I actually need? What do I need Him to provide? The things that I have been praying for... do I really need them?

Now of course God does care about things beyond our needs. He is concerned about us and so He cares about all the things that concern us. But quite honestly, the things I am concerned about may often be cause for concern! Do I pray more for toys or a disciple's heart? If I am wanting to be a good disciple, if I am wanting to be an obedient son of my Father, than perhaps what I really need is for Him to break the magnetic pull of greed, helping me to be content.

Perhaps our prayer needs to be "Father give me today a heart content with the good things You have given me; because that is what I really need today. And lead me not into temptation, especially the temptations to put stuff before You."

Assignment: Along with the prayer...

- > Rejoice... Count your many blessings & thank your gracious Father for providing them
- > Release... what do you have that can go to a good home? Or Goodwill ... I Tim. 6:17, 18
- > Refuse... not today, I don't need to buy that today, I really can live without it!
- > Relax... God knows us, loves us and is working in us. Allow Him to do His work.

God Bless, Matt s

Deacon's Corner

Six years ago, I had a very bad event occur in my life. I want to share a little of my personal understanding of why bad things happen and who is responsible. During periods of this trying time, I yelled at God, got mad at Him and blamed Him. Please understand that my sharing is a process of my relationship with Christ and is subject to change directed by the Holy Spirit.

So, when bad things happen it is natural to ask questions. It is human nature to want to place blame and ask God why did this happen? What happened that God would punish/discipline like this? Why would a good God allow this bad thing to happen to a good person? We wrestle with these questions and other questions related to bad events.

First of all, my premise is that God is good. The ultimate source for good in creation is "I Am". In Genesis 1: 31, "God saw all that He had made, and it was very good. In this verse when it is recorded as "very good" to me that means, His creation, in the beginning, was perfect with nothing bad or associated to sin. A perfect God creates a perfect universe. Make's sense? There was no cancer, no colds, no natural catastrophes, no bad weather, no diabetes, no hunger or pain. Best of all Adam and Eve had an intimate relationship with God and His perfect creation. They communed with a good God, physically and spiritually.

In God's perfect world Adam and Eve had choice. With this choice, there was "do not" choose to eat the fruit from the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Gen. 2: 15-17. Now in Gen.3:6 when Adam and Eve chose to eat the fruit, they separated themselves from God. When the choice was made to disobey God, sin entered into the world. That is to say, bad things and the consequences of bad things entered the world. Now we, the descendants of Adam and Eve, have cancers, colds, natural catastrophes, bad accidents, bad weather, health issues, jealousy, hate, shame, pride, and death. We inherited all the bad things and characteristics that we associate with sin. Remember my premise is in the beginning everything was perfect so there was nothing bad in Adam and Eves world until they made the original bad choice. Call the bad choice, "bad free will", if you will.

So, what is "bad"? Are bad things really bad or are they just good things that have bad or evil out comes. Rain is not bad until it causes a flood. Cells dividing are good until they divide too much and then it is a cancer. A virus is not bad until it cause's an illness. Our thoughts or actions are not sinful or bad until they are contrary to a perfect God and we put them into action. James 1: 13-18. My faith understanding is that satan, the deceiver, (Gen. 3. 1-4, Job 1:1-12, Zach. 3: 1, and II Cor. 11: 13-15) is an angel that made the choice to put himself above God. You can read this in Is. 14: 12-15. Now I do not understand how an angel can make a choice. Matter of fact the concept of the Spiritual realm is baffling to me, but apparently satan did defy God and still defies God to this day, along with some other angels. Now satan is in the roll as the instigator of evil/sin and is in opposition to a perfect God and His sovereign good will and desire. Satan made the choice to be bad.

What God created is good. (I Tim. 4:4). What is evil, bad, sinful is contrary to God. This evil originated from satan's choice to defy God. Adam and Eve's choice to disobey God, separated them from God and gave us the consequences of their original sin. We make bad or sinful choices that separate us from God. From bad choices: satan's; Adam and Eve's and ours, we have the consequences of bad in our life. The Good News, is that we can accept Jesus and God no longer recognizes the bad or sinful side of us. Bad still happens in our life, because there is still the consequences of sin in our life, but it no longer has to have an eternal bad result.

In life I like things to make sense. I try to embrace God as a loving and good God and He is. Having a God that perpetrates bad is hard to live with. Recognizing that bad things have root causes has solidified my relationship with God. These bad root causes are:

- Satan defies God and will be eternally separated from God. Satan's desire is to have us/me defy God and be eternally separated from God.
- Adam and Eve chose to disobey God and from this disobedience bad consequences entered God's creation. We suffer because of their original disobedience.
- We have choice, call it Free Will. God gave us choice. He wants us to choose Him and have a relationship with Him. We can make choice's that have bad consequences. Call this bad free will.
- Accidents happen, and these accidents can have bad consequences that have a root cause back to the original sin.

In summation, when bad things happen it relates back to satan and his basic evil character. We have choice, just like Adam and Eve. Bad things happen because of original sin. When bad things happen God wants us to choose Him and trust Him for good. This is where Jesus comes in and the Good News of the Gospel. So, when bad things happen and you want to place blame, blame satan, blame original sin and yes you may have to blame yourself for the bad choice you made, but do not blame God. God is good, and he wants nothing but good for you and me. Trust Him.

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to **prosper** you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jer. 29: 11.

And we know that in **all things** God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. Rms. 8:28.

The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom. To Him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen II Tim 4:18

I thank you for this forum to share this with you.

Steve Brunswig

Youth Page

It blows me away when I think about how fast time moves by. It is crazy to think this will be my 4th completed school year at First Baptist Church. It is crazy to think that Erin and I are already closing in on our two-year anniversary. And now there is a baby coming in August! Time stands still for no one.

The last few months have been incredible though. I am beginning the process of becoming a daddy and it is indescribable in many ways. I keep finding myself drawn to all the places in Scripture where God is described to be our Father. But today especially the story of the Prodigal Son has gripped my heart.

In this brief letter I could share with you all the nuggets of truth hidden throughout this story, but I would not be able to do it justice. I implore you, read it for yourself today. You can find it in Luke 15:11-32. Read it as if you didn't know how it was going to end.

After spending time animating this story through your mind, spend some time with these questions:

- Which son in the story do you relate to the most and why?
- How do you think the father felt in the story?
- How did you expect the father to react when the younger son returned?
- How does it make you feel to know that God loves you no matter what you do?
- Think of someone you know who may be running from God. Take a moment to pray that they would turn back to God.

I hope you find this beautiful portion of God's words as encouraging and life giving as I have.

Go bless,
Pastor Jonathan Finke

April, May, June

Birthdays & Anniversaries

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

04/17 Judy & Vern Matheson
04/17 Diane & Larry Brandes
04/21 Diane & Bill Hollenbeck
04/28 Jim & Lori Larson
04/28 Cheryl & Matt Junkin

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

04/01 Danielson Betty
04/06 Marissa Lentz
04/07 Hazel Warner
04/08 Ray Schneider
04/12 Cheryl Schneider
04/14 Roxanne Bergman
04/14 Elsie Puck
04/16 Don Peterson
04/23 Carol Peterson
04/26 Dan Johnson
04/27 Sara Gustafson
04/28 Finley Gustafson
04/29 Jim Larson
04/29 Alice McMurray

MAY ANNIVERSARIES

05/02 Tracy & Jonathan Kemper
05/05 Roxanne & Scott Bergman
05/16 Lisa & David Wright
05/21 Dorie & Steve Twist
05/21 Erin & Jon Finke

MAY BIRTHDAYS

05/01 Karli Gustafson
05/04 Iris Galligan
05/04 Judy Matheson
05/06 Dave Petersen
05/10 Glen Park
05/13 Luke Gustafson
05/15 Elyse ffitch
05/27 Logan Kemper

JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

06/06 Vicki & Ross Munson
06/07 Gretchen & Ron Hibbs
06/08 Anne & Arnie Rocholl
06/13 Diane & Bob Gustafson
06/14 Jeanne & Byron Cook
06/17 Faith & Dave Petersen
06/23 Anna & Dennis Pastian
06/26 Cathy & Randy Swanson
06/26 Beth & Marcus Nelson
06/29 Iris & Jack Galligan

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

06/03 Bob Gustafson
06/05 Steve Brunswig
06/05 Tanya Hesse
06/08 Nancy Ruby
06/12 Jack Galligan
06/12 Barb Copley
06/12 Luke Stacey
06/16 Connie Sonsalla
06/19 Jeanne Cook
06/21 Adelyn ffitch
06/24 Jim Fisher
06/25 Paul Stacey
06/26 James Ruby
06/27 Mike Brokke



Remember -
our fallen heros.
They are the reason
that we are free.

Welcome
Spring

coloringpage.eu

SUMMER
FUN!