



Cross & Spire

Newsletter of First Baptist Church

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"Not a perfect church, not a perfect people, just a simple desire to follow Jesus."

Upcoming Events:

*Youth Group begins
Sunday, September
10 at 6:30pm*

*Men's Breakfast –
Saturday, September
16 at 7:30am*

*Adult Sunday School
begins Sunday,
September 17 at
9:00am*

A Word From Our Pastor

Most of us have been gripped by the news and images from the disastrous hurricane spinning around in Texas. Our hearts go out to the people who are facing all the dangers involved and we know enough to recognize that the rain stopping will only mean that a long, expensive and arduous recovery will begin. The question, "Why?" comes easily to our minds in times like this. This is especially true for us who believe in a loving God who rules the world. This is no place for a full answer, but there is an interesting story in the Gospel of John which gives comforting insight and positive direction for our compassion.

In John nine we read about Jesus running into a beggar who was born blind. The why question was asked by Jesus' disciples in a way that fit their understanding of the world and tragedy: "Who sinned so that this man was born blind, He or his parents?" Of course they were operating on a simple idea that you get what you deserve in this life, or on the Karma view of life. The Bible in no way endorses this view, but many of the Jews in Jesus' day made a misapplication of the Sovereignty and Justice of God, just like Job's counselors. Job's counselors got a rebuke from God for their folly, Jesus answers his disciples in four short sentences in a way that demonstrates his fathomless wisdom: "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened that the works of God could be manifested in him. We must work the works of the One who sent me while it is yet day. Night is coming when no one is able to work. While I am in the world I am the light of the world."

The tragedy was under the sovereignty of God but given not to punish individuals; but to manifest God's work to and through the tragedy. In the case of this blind man he was healed by Jesus and then his healing led to his coming to faith and eternal life and many others were saved as well (check out the rest of the chapter). For him to know that his salvation came because he suffered 40 years of blindness and that his blindness and healing was the means of others faith and salvation, made the suffering worth it. We remember that Paul said, "I consider the sufferings of this present life not worthy to be compared to the glory that will be revealed in us (Romans 8:17)." In eternity this will be remembered and celebrated. Disasters have always been a means of people who had up to that time been complacent coming to faith in God (see e.g. Romans 8:28-31; Ecclesiastes 3:1-14, the story of Naaman's healing from leprosy in 2Kings 5, or the story of the plagues in Egypt and the response of the Egyptians and the surrounding nations). We know a lot of stories like this. My own limitations and scars have been great gifts to me because they have forced me to greater dependence on Christ. The insights I have gained and the intimacy I have experienced with Him because of these limitations have made me see them in this way. We know he means good in Texas because of the cross. Whatever else God is doing through Harvey you can be sure that his work is being manifested.

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There is another sentence in Jesus' response that should arrest our attention: "We must work the works of the One who sent me while it is yet day." Of course if you read the whole chapter you see that Jesus healed the man and then revealed himself to him. But you should notice the word "we." He includes us. We have been appointed to be the instruments of the work of God in the tragedies that he allows to happen. We shine his light there and on sight we may get a chance to speak for him, like the blind man did with the Pharisees. My point in all of this is to say I am sure that Jesus wants us to respond with prayer for the people in Texas, but also to contribute to the recovery financially and with hands and hearts when the time comes. We have a long history of this kind of help. As part of our prayers for them, we should be praying about our part in helping them to recover.

Your partner in the great work,
Rick Pinilla

MEN'S BREAKFAST

The next Men's Breakfast will be held on Saturday, September 16 at 7:30am. Any questions, feel free to contact Chris Scholtz at 603-242-2323 or Jim Newcomb at 603-448-2782. See you there!

YOUTH GROUP

Youth Group begins again on Sunday, September 10 at 6:30pm. This is open to all kinds in grades 6-12. Please join us! It is a time of fun, fellowship, and a short devotional.

Adult Sunday School

September 17, 9:00 sharp to 9:50

"CULTURE SHOCK: A Biblical Response to Today's Most Divisive Issues", by Chip Ingram

Are you Rested, Refreshed and Ready to delve into what God has to say about some very controversial and polarizing issues?

Our recent church survey indicates that you are! Over the next several weeks, our Adult Sunday School will be benefiting from the teaching of Chip Ingram, teaching pastor of "Living On the Edge" ministry. Using a DVD/workbook format, he brings research, reason and biblical truth to some of the most divisive topics we encounter in today's culture. We will discover the power of bringing light -

not heat - to the core issues we face in this age of confusion.

Please join us starting September 17 at 9:00 for our introductory session, entitled "What Ever Happened to Right and Wrong?"

August Update

Board of Deacons

Greetings Fellow Congregants,

I pray you all enjoyed the blessings of a restful and rejuvenating summer. We have a lot ahead of us this fall and winter so I pray the summer has been a welcomed respite for all.

The deacons met once a month in the summer months of June, July and August. Each meeting starts with a time of prayer and devotion followed by Congregational Care report and working through the Worship Service Support. Our meetings often close in a corporate time of prayer for members of our congregation as well as our leadership, boards and committees.

Our meetings also have a time of leadership development led by Pastor Rick. The focus of August's leadership development time was spent on Shepherding the Church of Christ—Preliminary Reflection and Proposal. Pastor Rick highlighted several words that are used interchangeably for the role of shepherd demonstrating the scope of the role. He also used scripture to describe each role. The words are as follows with just a few scriptures of the many the Pastor highlighted...Elder (Acts 20:17-35), Overseer (I Timothy 3:1-7), Shepherd (John 21:15-17) and Leader (Hebrews 13:7). We also discussed with Pastor Rick's leading the duties of a shepherd and the qualifications of an elder.

We as a board thank you for your prayers and ask that you continue to keep all leadership in prayer as we reflect on the Pastor's preliminary proposal of Shepherding the Church of Christ. Please pray that we as a board and as a congregation are able to follow the teaching of the Holy Scriptures concerning the topic of shepherding.

Respectfully and prayerfully submitted by
Marjorie Olson

Regenesis Project Haiti update

I returned to Haiti June 21st to the 28th. This trip involved checking up on old projects,

developing projects, and exploring possibilities of other opportunities. Spent time with each person who makes craft items for us to sell to fund projects. Had some serious discussions about investing the money they make into something they can do to generate income for a future time when Regenes Project is no longer. This is such a hard concept to get across to those whose main focus is to get through today. But, we will keep talking about this agenda. New concepts and ideas take time.

Madam Badin's laying chicken project is moving along. I inspected the coop that she had built with the micro loan I had given her in December and suggested a couple of changes. The changes were made and it looked good to go by the time I left. We didn't get her initial 10 chickens until the first part of August. Something as simple as laying chickens shouldn't be that hard, but finding 10 laying chickens wasn't an easy feat. The next step is to see if Madam Badin can budget her money from her eggs to buy feed and to pay back her micro loans. She actually is a school teacher, but she only makes \$50.00 a month. There has also been a little bit of resistance from her husband over this project. Time will tell how this project works out.

A trip out to ECCA school was uplifting. School Sessions, an organization out of Canada and Hope Force, are in the process of raising money and building a new school. One building has been completed and a second one is well under way. They still need funds to build the 3rd building. Regenes Project presented the school with 3 new laptop computers to help them with their establishing a financial education program. We have already provided them with new 1-6 math books to help boost their math program. We have also provided funds for a building "slush fund" for any minor unexpected expenses for the building project. We will continue to work side by side with ECCA school to establish a financial education program for Haitian children. It will be through educating these children that changes will come to Haiti.

A local mission, Christianville, has started a vocational school that is accredited by the government of Haiti. They are currently running agriculture, auto mechanics, culinary, and English programs. Along with the vocational part of the programs, they

teach the financial aspects of owning and running your own business. To enter this program, an applicant must have finished 10th grade in good standing. Regenes Project has its first scholarship student. The young lady's name is Elan and she will be taking the culinary course. She had to leave high school because she got pregnant and had to care for her baby. Her mother has agreed to care for her child while she goes to school. This is no easy task for the mother since she is already caring for other grandchildren who were left behind when their mother left the village and just left them with the grandmother. I personally hope that we can send a lot of students to this school.

I also had several conversations with individual people about any aspirations that they had to provide an income for their families. One lady, whose husband died all of a sudden, was a particular focus. She had, at one point, sold clothing in the market: jeans, polo shirts, t-shirts. There is a lady connected with Hope Force who runs a consignment shop, that was interested in bringing clothes down for someone to start a shop in the village. Possibly, Regenes Project could help with providing a shelter for these clothes. Will be something to look at when the December trip happens.

Regenes Project's wish list at the time being is: gently used men's dress pants-size 36 waist or less, dress shirts- long and short sleeved, polo shirts, fabric, scrapbooking paper, wallpaper, suitcases. We are still looking for a small box truck or bus to convert into a mobile store. If anyone can help with these items, email me at contact@regenesproject.org. Thanks so much. If anyone would like to join the trip in December, please contact me or Steve Girdwood.

OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE

Cheril and Josh Maynard need help moving Saturday September 23 starting at 9 a.m. If you can't help with moving they could also use a hand cleaning their house after they move. For more information or other ideas on how you can help please call Cheril at (H) 603-632-5820 or (C) 603-236-9725.