



Cross & Spire

Newsletter of First Baptist Church

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October 2017 Volume 34, No. 9

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

Upcoming Events:

*Saturday, October 14
at 7:30am, Men's
Breakfast*

*Tuesday, October 17
at 6:30pm, Women 2
Women*

A Word from Pastor Rick

I want us to think about what a gift it is for us to have the moral commands of the Bible. It has become common place to say that modern people no longer believe in absolutes of right and wrong. From the time the Gospel and the Christian faith got a grip on the Roman world and then spread through missionaries to all of Europe after the fall of Rome, Western Civilization was built on the foundation of Christian view of morality. Right and wrong were considered absolute because they came from God our creator. The Enlightenment changed this by saying that human beings could arrive at final truth about reality and morality by human reason alone; but people still believed that moral truth was external to us and binding on all human beings. For four hundred years there was profound faith in Western Culture in human reason's capacity to arrive at final truth and create a just society. This confidence collapsed, and by the latter days of the 20th century it became normal to think of truth and morality as relative. In the 1970s Francis Schaeffer a Christian apologist, theologian and philosopher warned that the modern world is coming to a place when people will no longer have a basis for drawing a distinction between what they can do and what they ought to do. It has happened.

Our word for moral commitment reflects this profound shift. We no longer talk about morals. Morals are truths that stand outside of me and judge my behavior. We talk about values. Values are moral principles that have their power in my life because I value them. We consider ourselves on our own in this thing. When anyone talks about teaching children values, the question immediately comes: "Whose values?" Of course we are not left alone because God in his grace writes his law on the hearts of every person (Romans 2:14f), but you can see with the modern view of things there is nothing to keep us from profound shifts in commitments and nothing to keep us doing right when no one is watching.

I know something about this on an experiential level. I grew up in a non-Christian home. Right and wrong were not explicitly taught. I was told not to break the law because I would get caught. As a self assured young man I thought I wouldn't get caught and my behavior reflected this. For reasons that are not important to this article, I read the Bible in search of a relationship with God. When I was about 16 years old I got to the place in Exodus where God gave his people the 10 commandments. That chapter was life changing. Suddenly I was confronted with moral principles that I felt vaguely coming out of the mouth of a holy God -- my creator and king. I was never the same. My conscience sprang to life and certain things like shop lifting and lying for personal advantage almost disappeared from my life. I remember the night after I read the commands. My friends and I went to the bars as usual (The drinking age was 19 there and I looked a lot older). We got pretty well hammered as usual. When we left the bar before closing time we started the same wild behavior: ripping antennas off of cars. I didn't participate and told my friend to stop. He looked at me a bit confused and then I really shocked him. I said, "God says, you shall not steal." I guess he would have been less surprised if I had begun to speak fluent Russian.

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Absolutes, which are absolute because they come from the mouth of God and because they are based on the nature of God! That's what the Bible teaches us. I know what is right because God has spoken! And here is something else. The world may talk about values and may bend the morality God writes in our hearts and call Christians haters and say we can't judge; but the words of those commands have power. They have power because they come from God and correspond to our nature as human beings made by God. They also correspond to the writing God has done on our hearts. No matter how much we may efface the writing by our philosophies and our sinning, God's commands have power. They especially have power when they are lived out.

We can't depend on our culture to teach our children or grandchildren right and wrong. God has already told us that the proper relay for this truth is the home: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates, (Deut. 6:4-9)." God has given us the task of passing these commands on to our children and grandchildren. Our lives are so to reflect the love of God and obedience to him that they are like symbols on our hands and foreheads. Our houses are to be so dominated by love for God and obedience to his commands that they are like signs on our door frames. But more than that we are to talk about them, pass them on verbally.

I believe our culture's moral decay is a trial we will have to endure, but it is also a profound opportunity. We were made to find our joy in loving God and obeying him freely and until we do this we are not right. If our lives and homes reflect this commitment imagine how beautiful they will appear before the eyes of a culture blind and groping for light.

Your partner in the great work,
Rick Pinilla

MEN'S BREAKFAST

The next Men's Breakfast will be held on Saturday, October 14 at 7:30am. Please see

Chris Scholtz or Jim Newcomb for more details.
We hope to see you there!

WOMEN 2 WOMEN

The next Women 2 Women meeting will be Tuesday, October 17 at 6:30pm. Please see Karen Scholtz, Ruth Newcomb, or Anne Pinilla for more details. We hope to see you there!

TIME FOR OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

It is time again to start thinking about Operation Christmas Child. For those of you who may not know what this is, it is a mission project put on by Samaritan's Purse (You can check them out at samaritanspurse.org). This mission project sends Christmas gifts to children in less fortunate countries. These gifts are usually sent in shoeboxes. It is a great way to further the work of God's Kingdom. We are asking for a more hands on approach from you this year.

Please note

We are asking YOU to fill your own shoeboxes! You can choose to give to a boy or a girl, and what age group you would like to give to. Simply fill a shoebox with items from this list, and please include a check payable to Samaritan's Purse for \$7 for shipping.

The children receiving these boxes come in 3 age groups: Girl 2-4 years old, Boy 2-4 years old; Girl 5-9 years old, Boy 5-9 years old; Girl 10-14 years old, Boy 10-14 years old. When shopping, please be mindful of the age you are giving to. In order to ensure items are age appropriate.

In your box, you may also include a personal note for the child who will receive the box. It will add a nice personal touch. We also ask you please pray over your shoe box before returning it to FBC. We will need you to please return your filled shoeboxes on Sunday, November 12.

For more information, you can visit: samaritanspurse.org/occ

Items to include:

Hygiene Items (please make sure to include all these items with your shoebox):

Toothbrush, Toothbrush Holder, Bar of mild soap (in a plastic ziplock bag), Soap Holder, Washcloth, Comb, T-shirt, Hair accessories, Clothing line and clothespins *School supply items:* Pencils, Pencil Sharpeners, Solar Calculators, Writing Pads, Crayons, Coloring Books *Toys:* Little Dolls, Toy cars, Jump ropes, Soccer Ball & pump, Light up toys with extra batteries, Slinky, Etch-a-Sketch, Plastic Dinosaurs, Play Jewelry, Musical Instruments (Harmonica, recorder, mini guitar) *'Other' Items:*

An outfit of clothing, Stuffed animal, Plastic bowl & cup (good quality, no designs).

DO NOT INCLUDE:

Candy; toothpaste; used or damaged items; war-related items such as toy guns, knives, or military figures; chocolate or food; seeds; fruit rolls or other fruit snacks; drink mixes (powdered or liquid); liquids or lotions; medications or vitamins; breakable items such as snow globes or glass containers; aerosol cans.

CE BOARD UPDATE

The Adult Discipleship Committee wing of the Christian Education Board is happy to offer our Church Family some amazing opportunities for study. The 9:00 a.m. Sunday School class at LMS is doing a DVD series by Chip Ingram called Culture Shock. It is a thought-provoking study which addresses the issues we face as believers in today's society while maintaining our faith.

Wednesday mornings at the parsonage there is a study called The Power of Praying for your Adult Children. Stormie Omartian presents truly Biblically-based reasons why this is vital today for the well-being of our children who are grown. She reminds us that parenting never ends, and it is the Lord working in their hearts who will bring forth good changes in their lives. We meet at 10 a.m.

How is your witness for Jesus progressing? Do you need tools to help you know how to spread the Good News to family, friends and coworkers? There is an opportunity to learn. Chris McMillan is teaching a class on Evangelism at the home of Carol and Dave Rataj. He is a missionary who chose New England as his area to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If you think this is a good opportunity, please join us on Thursday evenings at 6:30. Call 802-296-2040 for directions.

These studies were the top three rated areas from the survey presented over the Summer.

Deb and Steve Girdwood have opened their hearts once again for Youth Group. They meet Sunday evenings at different locations, always providing a great time of fun and fellowship. If you are in grades 6 to 12, please consider joining them.

Finally, get your shoeboxes ready! Operation Christmas Child is upon us. Details coming soon.

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me. John 14:6
Grace to all,
Carol Rataj

UPDATE FROM JANET HALL

Hope Force Texas deployment

I am currently in the Bridge City area of Texas, staying at the Bridge City First Baptist Church with a Hope Force team. We have reservists from Tennessee, Ohio, California, New Jersey, and Michigan. Of course that may change tomorrow as people come and go.

Media attention has moved away from the continued need here in Texas because of Irma and Maria. Between these 3 events, there is so much need out there. We have been removing carpets, drywall, cupboards, and whatever else needs to come out of a home in order for it to dry out. We will be starting on a house today that had over 6 feet of bayou water in it. This particular neighborhood was totally flooded and only about 20% of the homeowners had flood insurance. For those of you who don't know about flood insurance, it is extremely expensive and many cannot afford their home and flood insurance.

The emotional aspect of this devastation can be overwhelming. We were at a house yesterday where the lady of the house could not even give us basic packing instructions. We had to pack up her dishes and pots and pans so the workers could remove the drywall from behind her base cabinets.

I will be here until October 5th. Please keep us in prayer and if you can help financially, make a donation to Hope Force and designate to which area you would like it to go, Texas or Florida. I do not have any information on Puerto Rico at the present time. Thanks. Janet Hall