



Notes from the Pastor

The following article, "The Gospel & Prayer" was written by Donald S. Whitney and first appeared in the March 2011 issue of Table Talk Magazine. May God give you a renewed passion for prayer as you consider the timely words of Dr. Whitney!

Because I teach and write about spirituality, occasionally I'm asked to comment on scientific studies about the efficacy of prayer. The research always seems to include the assumption that one person's prayers are essentially as acceptable as another's. One of the flaws with such studies is that they do not associate prayer with the gospel. No one can begin to understand prayer until he grasps what the gospel teaches us about prayer.

The Bible, rather than assuring everyone that God hears their prayers, slams heaven's door against all who think God will hear them despite their sins: "But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have his face from you so that he does not hear" (Isa. 59:2). In one sense, of course, God hears everything. But in this text we're told that God does not hear with a view to answering those who sin against Him. And, of course, since every person except Jesus has sinned against God, the hopes are dashed of everyone who thinks all it takes for God to hear is for them to pray.

In fact, the bible is even more shockingly counterintuitive in Proverbs 15:8: "The sacrifice [which includes the prayer] of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord." Many people seem to think, "It's true, I'm not a dedicated Christian; but if I get into a difficult situation and humble myself to pray, and I'm really sincere, surely God will accept my prayer." Or they believe, "Even though I'm not really a follower of Jesus, if God is merciful and loving, He will look favorably on the prayers of those who come to Him when they're in real need and pray hard enough."

But this text tells us that, instead of being impressed, the Lord actually abominates these prayers. Why? Because such people believe God should hear their prayers based upon their temporary humility and piety. In other words, they believe their own righteousness – in this case, expressed in a short-lived acknowledgement that they need God's help – obligates God to answer.

Instead of being honored to receive the momentary sincerity of those who want something from Him, God is insulted by their prayers, for they imply that the work of Jesus wasn't necessary. It's as though they're saying, "The life and death of Your Son weren't needed in my case; it was all a big mistake. I believe you should hear me based upon what I have done – especially in these prayers – and I don't need what Jesus did in order to be heard by You." Could anything be more offensive to God?

When it comes to knowing God and being heard by Him, Jesus was unequivocal: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Confidence that our prayers are heard cannot come from our sincerity, humility, or need; rather "we have confidence to enter the holy places [the presence of God] by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. 10:19). Until people come in repentance to God through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ – who alone can remove the sin that separates us from God – their prayers will not be answered.

Does God ever answer the prayer of a non-Christian? Many stories claim He does. In reality, are these "answered prayers" simply God doing in His providence what He was going to do regardless of the prayers? The clearest ground biblically is this: except for those prayers leading to salvation, we can give no assurance to

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Church Happenin's

- Saturday, Apr. 2 Baby Shower for Trisha Lee, 2:30 PM in the Fellowship Hall
- Wednesday, Apr. 6 Upward Bound Share-A-Dish Meeting at 11:30 AM at the Dillon home (1404 Dillon Rd).
- April 8-10 Summit-to-Summit Men's Camp at the Washington Family Ranch in Antelope, OR.
- Sunday, Apr. 10 1st Quarter Business Meeting, meeting briefly after the Service.
- Monday, Apr. 11 Council Meetings, 7 PM—If you would like to participate in the ministries at FBC, please join us. Elders & Deacons meet at 6:30.
- Saturday, Apr. 16 Men's Breakfast, 8 AM in the Fellowship Hall. Spring Clean-Up, 9:30 AM to 1 PM around the building.
- Wednesday, Apr. 20 Upward Bound Trip — Tulip Fields and Woodburn Shopping area. Leave from the Church at 8:45 AM.
- Friday, Apr. 22 Good Friday Service, 7 PM
- Sunday, Apr. 24 Easter Breakfast, 9 AM in the Fellowship Hall. No Sunday Schools meeting.
- Monday, Apr. 25 Elder Meeting, 6:30 PM

Future Events

- Saturday, Jun. 25 Church Picnic at Toll Bridge Park
- Aug. 12-14 Family Camp at Camp Morrow
- Oct. 14-16 Women's Retreat at Cannon Beach
- Oct. 21-23 Men's Camp at Camp Morrow



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|------------------|----------|
| Rachel Weatherly | April 1 |
| Tonya Aldrich | April 7 |
| Doris Kahler | April 10 |
| Amanda Hodson | April 11 |
| Kara Yates | April 12 |
| Judith Johnson | April 15 |
| Rose Olson | April 17 |
| Kathleen McCarty | April 28 |



** If your birthday doesn't appear on the list, that means we have no record of it. Please let Lora know in the Church Office, and we will add you to our lists.



Men's Breakfast

Saturday, April 16, 8 AM
Meeting in the Fellowship Hall.

Church Library

Our Church Library has books available in fiction, children's, biographies, Christian Living, and Bible Studies and Devotionals. Have you checked out the library lately?. The display on the table in the foyer also has some of Pastor Bruce's recommended books. Please sign the card on the back page of the book and place it in the blue box in the library, which is in the back half of the classroom at the end of the upstairs hall. See Marian Warrenka for more information.

Help for the Needy

Our Church Deacon fund is a means of ministering to people in our church family and community who are in financial distress. The Deacon fund is not a part of our general budget, but is funded by special offerings. The fund has seen a great deal of use this year, and needs your support to continue ministering to the needy. Please prayerfully consider how you may be able to help those in distress. There are small envelopes in the church pews which can be used for this purpose, or checks may be marked for the Deacon fund and submitted in the Sunday morning offering.



Notes from the Pastor

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anyone outside of Christ that God will answer his prayer. It is only through the gospel that we truly begin to pray, for only then – after Jesus has made us and our prayers acceptable to the Father – do the promises of prayer in the Bible apply to us.

Once we respond to the gospel in repentance and faith and are adopted into God's family, our newly begun relationship with our heavenly Father becomes markedly prayerful. No longer is prayer just an obligation or a hoop to jump through to get what we want, for the gospel makes prayer a desire and not a mere duty. Through the gospel we receive the Spirit who causes us to cry, "Abba! Father!" (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6) with a new heavenward, Fatherward orientation. In other words, the Spirit of God causes us to want to talk to God.

Prayer should still remain a discipline, for even with the God-given desire to pray, it's easy to be distracted from habits or prayer by the crush of responsibilities. But thanks to the grace of God in the gospel, our prayers are always welcome.

Dr. Donald S. Whitney is senior associate dean of the school of theology and professor of biblical spirituality at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is also founder and president of The Center for Biblical Spirituality.

One addendum I would make to the excellent commentary provided by Dr. Whitney concerns the address and attitude of our prayers. While it is not blasphemous to pray to Jesus or to the Holy Spirit, in Matthew 6:9 Jesus taught us to pray to the Father. The Lord's Prayer is the pattern for all believers to follow: "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.'" In John 16:23 Jesus gives further instruction: "Truly, truly, I say to you, if you shall ask the Father for anything, He will give it to you in My name." The biblical record describes prayer as a spiritual discipline that is directed to the Father. While all members of the Trinity are one in essence, they perform different functions. The Holy Spirit would direct us to pray to God the Father through Jesus the Son, who is now seated at the right-hand of the Father.

Therefore, as Dr. Whitney has demonstrated, prayer without the gospel is an abomination to God. No sinner has access to God the Father, except through the mediatorial sacrifice provided by the Son. Jesus is the only Name under heaven by which sinful man can be reconciled to God. It stands to reason, then, that we must also come to the Father in prayer - through the atoning sacrifice provided by Jesus the Son - before any of our petitions will be heard. *For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*" (1 Tim 2:5). As the only Mediator, we must go through Jesus alone to get to the Father ...

"that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you" (John 15:16).

I've noticed a troubling trend emerging from the prayers of many post-modern "saints?" Praying in the name of Jesus appears to be "out of season" for many who lead public or corporate worship. Leaders will pray openly to God the Father while they intentionally avoid coming to Him through the Son. Why the change? Are they timid; not wanting to sound formulaic; or actually ashamed of the name Jesus Christ? There is an unhealthy pattern of prayer developing within the evangelical church today; one that omits the name of Jesus as the God/Man who intercedes for the saints. As I've been listening, I've noticed that a growing number of professing Christians who simply conclude their prayers with a hearty "Amen."

When we approach God by praying in the Name of Jesus we accomplish two things: First, we come on the basis of the authority granted to Jesus. Even as a Christian, saints have no inherent authority to approach the Almighty. Our lives are hidden in Christ! It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. In Matthew 28:18 Jesus declared that He is the One who possesses "all authority." Therefore, if we expect to have our prayers received and heard by the God of the universe we must come through the Savior to the divine throne of grace. Only Jesus has the authority to grant me access to God's holy throne, and, therefore, every believer must come in His Jesus NAME!

Secondly, saved by the blood of Jesus through faith in the finished work of Christ, we have also been adopted into God's family as one of His children. Clothed with the righteousness of Christ, the Father now listens to His redeemed child as if He were hearing from His very own Son. God hears the saint in the same way as He listens to Jesus, His beloved Son! Through Christ we can now approach God and call Him "Abba! Father!" [which translated means "daddy."] Yet, we also know that we are totally unworthy of receiving anything from God, and that the only reason He should grant our request for intimate prayer is that we come humbly in Jesus' name. Beloved, praying in Jesus' name is not a magic formula, but a heart attitude of gratitude that we now have access to God at all! It's true, only because of our relationship to Jesus!

This month I will be praying that our fellowship with the Triune God will be sweeter than honey because of renewed prayer. And we know that God the Father will hear our prayers when we confess sin, come to Him in the name of Jesus, and confidently pray that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven!

Praying for you in Jesus NAME!

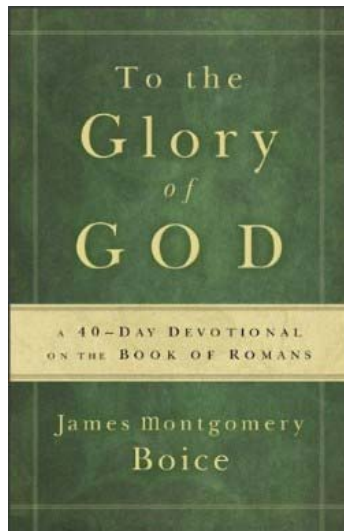
Pastor Bruce



Book of the Month

by James Montgomery Boice

The book of Romans has long been a study to which believers have looked for both doctrine and encouragement. Many Christian readers have long trusted beloved pastor and author James Montgomery Boice to guide them through the Scriptures through his ministry and his writings. Now these two much-loved sources of wisdom come together in To the Glory of God, a devotional drawn from Boice's commentary on the book of Romans. Offering rich reflections on Romans, this book contains forty commentary selections, devotional challenges, and the complete text of the book of Romans. It will be a great companion to the completion of our small group study in Romans.



From 9:15 to 10:15 Sunday Mornings

Children & Youth Classes:

- Nursery**—We're looking for helpers to cover the Nursery during the Sunday School hour
- Pre-K**—Downstairs Hall, 2nd door on the right; learning about the "Love of God", led by Sandy Parker
- K-5th Grade**—Downstairs Hall, last two doors on the left; "God's Bib Picture" Genesis to Revelation Bible survey, led by Tom Yates & Marian Warrenka
- 6th-8th Grade**—Downstairs Hall, 2nd door on the left; studying Israel and the Patriarchs, led by Tony Clark
- 9th-12th Grade**—Downstairs Hall, 1st door on the right; studying the book of Romans, led by Carol Yates

Adult Classes:

- Luke, Deuteronomy**—Upstairs across from Sanctuary; led by Ned Chestnut
- DVD "The Reason for God"** - Downstairs in the Fellowship Hall; led by Hal Ueland
- Revelation**—Downstairs, NW corner classroom off Fellowship Hall; led by Ray Kulper



Good Friday Service

Friday, April 22, 7 PM

Please join us as we remember the death of our Lord.



Benefit Auction

April 16, 2011, 10 AM
1400 US Hwy197, The Dalles

Please contact Camp Morrow if you have items you would like to donate for the auction, or would like to participate in their matching Penny Drive.

Contact Camp Morrow for more details: 541-544-2971 • office@campmorrow.org • www.campmorrow.org



Easter Breakfast

Sunday, April 24, 9 AM

Join us for our Annual Easter Breakfast at 9 AM in the Fellowship Hall on Easter morning. Please sign up in the Church foyer to help us know how many to plan for and to let us know if you can help by bringing an egg-dish, casserole, or quiche.



Church Workday

Saturday, April 16th
9:30 AM to 1 PM

Please come and help us spruce up the grounds and building for Easter!

Summit to Summit Men's Camp

"GET OUT OF THE BOAT"

-Matthew 14:29

April 8-10, 2011

With Guest Speaker Dave Brown. Brochures are available in the Church Foyer. The Cost is \$115 after March 1st.

Upward Bound



Trip to Tulip Fields • April 20th

Leaving from the Church at 8:45 AM. Stopping in Woodburn at the Outlet Mall. See Gary & Dee Dillon for details.

FIDELIS

NOTES

By Doris Kahler

Fidelis Missionary/Pastoral Supply is a designated fund in our Church budget, totally dependent on free-will offerings. Our group makes items requested by mission hospitals and our local nursing homes, and collects various items needed by missionaries, Christian schools, and other Christian organizations. We also raise funds and collect items to assist with local area ministries such as the Pregnancy Resource Center (PRC), Child Evangelism, and Columbia Gorge Young Life.

We use:

- Lots of old, part-cotton sheets of any color or design for roller bandages and wipes for mission hospitals.
- New or good used baby clothing and blankets for the PRC and mission hospitals.
- Fabrics for making clothing protectors, neck pillows, and walker bags for nursing homes.
- Health care items such as cotton balls or rolls, sterile and non-sterile exam gloves, 4"x4" gauze pads, and adhesive tape for mission hospitals.
- Cancelled stamps, which will be sent where they can be sold to collectors to raise funds for missions.
- Christian literature, such as daily devotionals, magazines (please no *Guide Posts*), biographies, books, teaching materials, Bibles and Concordance. These will be sent to Christian Resources International, which will distribute them to missionaries all over the world.
- Monetary Donations. (Please make any checks out to First Baptist Church, and mark any funds for Fidelis.)

Roller Party! - As soon as we can have strips of old sheets prepared we will send out an invitation to at "Roller Party" at my home. This party will introduce the process of how to make roller bandages to those who might be interested in helping out with this valuable ministry to mission hospitals. Please prayerfully consider if you would be able to help our ministry in this way. More details will be coming soon!

If you have any questions about our work, or would like to find out how you can help, please contact Doris Kahler at 541-386-5388.



Spotlight on Missions

By Marian Warrenka

We have two young women who are now raising support to go on the mission field fulltime: Nadine House and Callie Yates. Nadine House is preparing for work in Taiwan through Child Evangelism Fellowship. Callie Yates, a nurse and midwife, is preparing to return to Bethesda Hospital in Borneo, Indonesia.



Please pray for these young ladies as they prepare, and prayerfully consider whether you may be able to participate in their support.

The Church also supports Christian Resources International, by sending boxes of used Christian literature, Bibles, and study helps. Last year we were able to send 12 boxes, totally 190 pounds, of literature and Bibles. Thank you for your help in providing these resources! These items are included in containers for shipment overseas to Pastors, churches, and other Christian workers who do not have access to these materials. A container was recently shipped to Hong Kong. This year their goal is to send containers to the Congo, India, and the Philippines. Please pray for safety and funds for these shipments, and that each container will be received without difficulty and distributed where there is greatest need.

First Baptist also supports the Christian Law Association. This group helps churches, Christian business, employees, and students by providing free legal counsel and defense for those facing persecution for their Biblical faith.

TEENS—Christian Youth in Action, with Child Evangelism Fellowship, will be holding a training camp on April 8th through 10th at Camp Morrow. Come learn how to teach children about Jesus, host Good News Clubs, and VBS, and more. For more details, please see Marian Warrenka.

First Baptist Church

1889 Belmont Dr.
Hood River, OR 97031



1st Quarter Meeting

Sunday, April 10th

Directly following the morning Service, upstairs in the Sanctuary..

Baby Shower



Please join us as we celebrate with
Chris & Trisha Lee
in welcoming baby Nathaniel!

Saturday, April 2nd at 2:30pm
FBC Fellowship Hall



- Need size "1" diapers (No "2"'s needed)
- 3-6 mo. clothes (Please no TV & entertainment characters on clothing)

AFTER EDEN

by Dan Lietha



If there is an animal in your 'Easter story' this year, make sure it's a serpent rather than a bunny.