

CURRENT

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LUTHER'S DEATH
AND LEGACY

CHRISTIAN
PRIORITIES

CHURCH
NEWS

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FALL 2023

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**LIKEWISE THE SPIRIT ALSO HELPETH OUR INFIRMITIES:
FOR WE KNOW NOT WHAT WE SHOULD PRAY FOR AS WE OUGHT:
BUT THE SPIRIT ITSELF MAKETH INTERCESSION FOR US
WITH GROANINGS WHICH CANNOT BE UTTERED.
(ROMANS 8:26)**

PRAYER BLOCK

FROM THE EDITOR

According to an article on a university's website, writing expert Mike Rose stated that writer's block can be defined as "the inability to begin or continue writing for reasons other than a lack of basic skill or commitment." As much as I enjoy editing *Current*, I acknowledge recurrent writer's block when it comes to this editorial. Although I may question my skill, I don't doubt my commitment. But the words just don't come! Ideas don't arise and when they do, they are slow to develop.

Rose's definition of writer's block is a fitting parallel to the spiritual block that can afflict the prayer lives of believers. There can be commitment to pray. There is the skill or ability to pray that comes from the Holy Spirit whose presence enables us to cry "Abba Father" (Romans 8:15). But the words don't come. We find ourselves struggling with "prayer block." In such times we should be greatly encouraged by the ministry of the Spirit as outlined in Romans 8:26.

It is not an easy text, but there are some pointers to help us grasp its meaning. The unuttered groanings arise in our inability to know what to pray for. These groanings occur in our hearts as we see from v.27. Due to our spiritual weakness we find ourselves ignorant of the right prayers. In deep trials, saints of old have recorded times when they couldn't express the words in prayer but simply fell before God and sighed. Our text should encourage us with the thoughts that in those times, the Spirit comes as our

helper and intercedes for us. He works in our heart to produce the groanings and then, as intercessor, brings those groanings to the Father.

Those spiritual prayers are prayers according to the will of God. The Spirit, as God Himself, cannot pray outside the revealed will of God. Hence these prayers are wrought in the form of the prayers mentioned as being heard in 1 John 5:14—prayers according to His will. B.B. Warfield wrote that the Spirit's intercession, "is not an intercession through us as mere conduits, unengaged in the intercession ourselves; it is an intercession made by the Spirit as our helper and not as our substitute . . . The Spirit intercedes for us then by working in us right desires for each time of need; and by deepening these desires into unutterable groans. They are our desires, and our groans. But not apart from the Spirit. They are his; wrought in us by him."

We often think of the Lord as our helper. Isn't it a blessing to think of this very specific form of help? We ought to try and form words in prayer. But in times of heaviness and perplexity remember that the Spirit works in us and helps us as we encounter prayer block.

FROM THE PAST

It is an entirely false deduction to say that the highest form of prayer is just a groan or a sigh. Such is not the Apostle's teaching. He is saying that there are times when, in exceptionally difficult circumstances, amidst trials and tribulations—the sufferings of this present time—we really are in such perplexity that we do not know what to pray for. This is unusual; this is not common; this is not the general condition of the child of God. This is a very special case; and in respect of it we can do nothing but "groan" or sigh. But this is not to be the norm of the Christian life. As a child of God the Christian is to talk to his Father, to commune with his Father, to speak with Him and to listen to Him; that is prayer, that is true worship."

D.M. Lloyd-Jones on Romans 8:26



CHRISTIAN PRIORITIES

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Matthew 6:33

Priorities. We all have them. Whether consciously or not, we prioritize things, plans, events, and even people every day. We begin our day with some kind of mental or written list that arranges things according to their importance to us. In the average home, matters of top importance at the start of the day are getting dressed, having something to eat, getting the kids up and ready for school, getting ready for work, etc. We don't even think about them as "top priorities" but our actions plainly show that they are. Things that fall farther down the list are there because we believe they're not as critical. Keeping that doctor's appointment is more important than cleaning the windows, which can wait until some later time in the day, week, month, or even year. Establishing and acting upon our priorities is something we will do all our lives, and it has a tremendous impact on the kind of lives we lead, especially when it comes to Christian priorities.

When Christ said to His disciples, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you", He was addressing this very subject of Christian priorities. The Lord states three fundamental truths about it. First, we learn from the word that the Christian's priorities must be quite different from the world's priorities. Second, the Christian's priorities must be focused on matters of spiritual rather than temporal importance because it's the "kingdom of God and His righteousness" that we are to seek first. Finally, there are promised blessings that come when we get our priorities right. Let's look more closely into these three truths.

From that little word *but*, we see that

when it comes to getting our priorities right, there are serious challenges and dangers that face us. Christ is contrasting the priorities of the pagan world with those who belong to the kingdom of God. The danger for Christians is adopting the world's priority list as their own. Christ deals with a very real problem that Christians have had to struggle with in every age: worries about the temporal necessities of life. Five times in the closing verses of Matthew 6, Christ uses the word *thought*, a word that denotes anxious thought, to show that these worries stem from unbelief.

When you doubt that God will take care of your temporal needs (food, clothing, housing, etc.), it is easy to begin thinking that the most important thing in life is to lay up earthly treasures for yourself rather than to lay up heavenly ones. You can easily fall into the trap of serving mammon instead of God. But that's exactly the world's thinking, and such thinking is unworthy of a child of God. The worldling has no Father in heaven who has promised to care for him and to supply his every need, but you do. Christ assures you that your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. When the proverbial cupboards are bare, God sees it. He hasn't forgotten you. He will supply just what you need exactly when you need it. Fearful fretting about temporal matters is a real hindrance to getting priorities straight.

Christ gets to the heart of the matter when He tells us to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." That is to be at the top of the list. To give a full exposition of what that means is impossible in this article, but the obvious point is that the most important things to you as a Christian are relating to your spiritual life, not your temporal life. The term *first* implies that there are seconds, thirds, fourths, and so on. Many things clamor for the top spot

on our priority lists. We need to know how to assess their value so that we don't give first place to things that are secondary.

We need to take a serious inventory of what is important to us, *why* it's important, and *how* we show the level of importance it has in our lives. Otherwise, we end up majoring in minor things and minoring in major things which only compounds our difficulties in putting the kingdom of God first in our lives.

But what does this look like in real time? It simply means that our chief priority in life is to seek the extension of God's rule in this world. More specifically, when seeking the kingdom of God is our top priority, nothing is more important to us than Christ ruling over everything.

It means that we will seek the promotion of Christ's rule *in the church*. He is the only King and Head of the church, and therefore, His will trumps every other will. We may have our opinions about what is right or wrong for the church. We may have our own ideas about what our church should or shouldn't do in its various ministries. But the thing that must be foremost is to know the mind of Christ—to know what Christ wants, what Christ deems best, and what Christ declares is good or not good for His church. To seek the kingdom of God is to seek the will of Christ for every decision, every detail, and every endeavor of His work. When God's people have the promotion of Christ's rule in the church as their top priority, it will have a powerfully positive effect on the harmony, usefulness, and happiness of the church. If they don't, the reverse will be true.

Seeking first the kingdom of God also means that the promotion of Christ's rule *in our homes* is top priority. There is an intimate connection between



.....IS CHRIST YOUR FIRST LOVE?.....

this point and the one I've just made. When families live under the rule of Christ as they ought, when they honor Christ as the head of their homes, they bring that same spirit into the life of the church. They become a powerful influence for good in God's work!

But homes where the rule of Christ is given very little place—where wives rebel against their husbands, where husbands treat their wives as chattel, where children disregard the Word of God and their parents do little to correct it—such homes have a very different effect on the life of the church. Those families become a powerful influence, not for the good of the church, but for its ill.

Who is running your home? Is Christ given His rightful place in your marriage, in your finances, in your plans? As a family, do you consistently meet around the Word of God and the throne of grace? Is His law the law of your home? Is obedience to His rule a matter of the highest importance?

Seeking first the kingdom of God

also means that your chief priority is the promotion of Christ's rule *in your heart*. Putting God's kingdom first really begins on the personal level. When you earnestly seek something, it's because your heart desires it. The more important it is to you, the deeper will be your desire. The moment the apostle Paul was converted on the Damascus Road, he said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" His heart's desire was to know and do the will of Christ, and it became his top priority the rest of his life. Paul put first things first, and so must we.

If something comes into competition with seeking God's rule and righteousness, we know what should have first place. Martha got her priorities upside down when she thought her sister Mary should be helping her serve their guests instead of sitting at Christ's feet to hear His Word. Do you spend time sitting at Christ's feet each day? What do you give first place to at the start of the day—the television, internet, or radio, or the reading of God's Word and the place of prayer? What is it that gets your best thoughts and holds your deep-

est interest—your job or the work of God? When something comes into competition with your attendance at the house of God, what wins? When something competes for your tithes and offerings to the Lord's work, what gets preference? What is it that concerns you more than anything else? There's only one answer to these questions if Christ is your first love.

The final thing to see is the blessing that the Lord promises to those who put first things first: "all these things shall be added unto you." Matthew Henry sums this up beautifully: "O what a blessed change would it make in our hearts and lives, did we but firmly believe this truth, that the best way to be comfortably provided for in this world, is to be most intent upon another world!" Let us all, by the grace of God, strive to put first things first.

.....
Rev. John Wagner
Retired FPC minister,
(formerly Columbia) SC
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Luther's Death and Legacy



On February 22, 1546, the funeral procession for Dr. Martin Luther progressed toward the gates of Wittenberg. Luther died four days earlier, and the news of the Reformer's death spread rapidly over the German countryside. In his *History of Protestantism*, J. A. Wylie said, **"Few kings have been buried with such honours."** People from every class and occupation joined the procession along the German roads and lanes. The heavy lead casket covered in rich black velvet sat on a carriage drawn by four horses. Behind stretched what appeared to be a huge army of princes, nobles, magistrates, and peasants. In every town along the route, the citizenry thronged the streets and sang. The people, their faces wet with tears, blessed the Reformer's memory with psalms and hymns. As Wylie put it, **"Luther was returning from a great battle-field, where he had encountered the powers and principalities of spiritu-**

al despotism, and had discomfited them by the sword of the spirit."

Such an outpouring of emotion was the tribute to a man who stood against the corruption of the papal religion and gained an enduring victory. The previous month, Luther received a request to travel to his native area to resolve a dispute over boundary lines between the holdings of two of the Counts of Mansfeld. He became ill during his journey, but recovered and declined to turn back toward Wittenberg. When he approached Eisleben, more than one hundred men on horseback escorted him into the town, where he took lodgings at their expense. One wrote that he **"entered the town more like a prince than a prophet, amidst the salute of cannon and the ringing of the bells in all the churches."** It was his final journey in this life. He did the business for which he traveled and remained in the town to

preach and partake of Communion. On February 17, he had dinner with his friends and his three sons: John, Martin, and Paul. Justus Jonas, a friend from Wittenberg who had accompanied him, joined them at the table that evening. After dinner, Luther began to suffer his customary pain in his stomach. After a short nap, he retired to his room and lay on his bed. Before very long, he awoke, feeling tremendous pressure in his chest, and sensed that the hour of his death was at hand. Having summoned assistance, he then prayed to God, **"I beseech thee, my Lord Jesus Christ, receive my soul. O heavenly Father, though I be snatched out of this life; though I must now lay down this body; yet know I assuredly that I shall abide with thee for ever, and that no man can pluck me out of thy hands."** His breathing grew shallower, and three times he uttered the words, each time a little more faintly, **"Into thy hands I commit my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, O God of truth!"**

Luther's death marked the end of the first major era of the Protestant Reformation. After that point, the emphasis shifted away from Germany, where his successors frittered away much of what he accomplished.

Luther was an advocate of education for all children. He taught children and urged that all children should learn to read and write so they could read the Bible and transmit it to others. He also led the way in the establishment of Protestant seminaries. It was always his objective in teaching young boys to be aware of those who could become preachers of the Word. The man who lived in the liberty of the gospel of Christ died in that same liberty. He had no second thoughts. The gospel triumphed in his soul, and his death was a testimony to it. The Scriptures Alone. Grace Alone. Faith Alone. Christ Alone. For the Glory of God Alone. The gospel he preached was free justification, a gospel that

set people free to serve God.

In the Castle Church in Wittenberg, the congregation sang some funeral hymns, and then, Pomeranus, one of Luther’s colleagues, climbed the steps of the pulpit to deliver the funeral sermon. Dr. Philip Melancthon delivered a separate oration in which he said of Luther, **“He elucidated the doctrine of Paul which says, that man is justified by faith; he showed the difference between the law and the gospel, between spiritual righteousness and the moral law; he pointed out the nature of true prayer, and he called back the church universal from that heathen madness which teaches that God, is to be invoked even when the mind, oppressed with metaphysical doubts, is flying far from him: he enforced on us the conviction that prayer is to be made in faith, and in a good conscience, and he led us to the one mediator, the Son of God sitting at the right hand of the Eternal Father, and interceding for us.”**

In the stillness of the church, sobs arose from princes, magistrates, pastors, and other citizens who were gathered around Martin Luther’s open grave in the floor of the church. The pallbearers lowered the casket into the grave. They filled the grave and fitted the gravestone into place. Martin Luther was at rest in Jesus.

Few people had the impact on the history of the world that Luther had. Sadly, Luther’s legacy is in

disrepute, even by those whose denomination bears his name. They judge him by the standards of their compromise and ecumenism and find him, in their view, sorely lacking.

But in Calvin’s Geneva, in Knox’s Scotland, in Northern Ireland, and in North America, that legacy has gone forth. It is the legacy of the preaching of Christ and Him crucified.

The legacy of Martin Luther appears in three areas that are the core of Protestantism.

Literacy—the reading of the Bible and education of children and adults to that end. Luther understood that the Bible alone was the foundation of the Christian faith. He underscored the doctrine of the infallibility of the Scriptures, pointing to the impact of their miraculous inspiration. Luther argued that the Scriptures are without error, meaning that they have inherently divine authority on every subject on which they speak. He argued for the doctrine of the perspicuity of the Scriptures, meaning that what anyone needs to know for salvation appears clearly and directly in the Bible. Luther maintained the truth that the Bible contains things that require study, but that the book is clear and open to everyone.

Liberty—the priesthood of every believer. Luther’s position was that every Christian may approach God individually, and

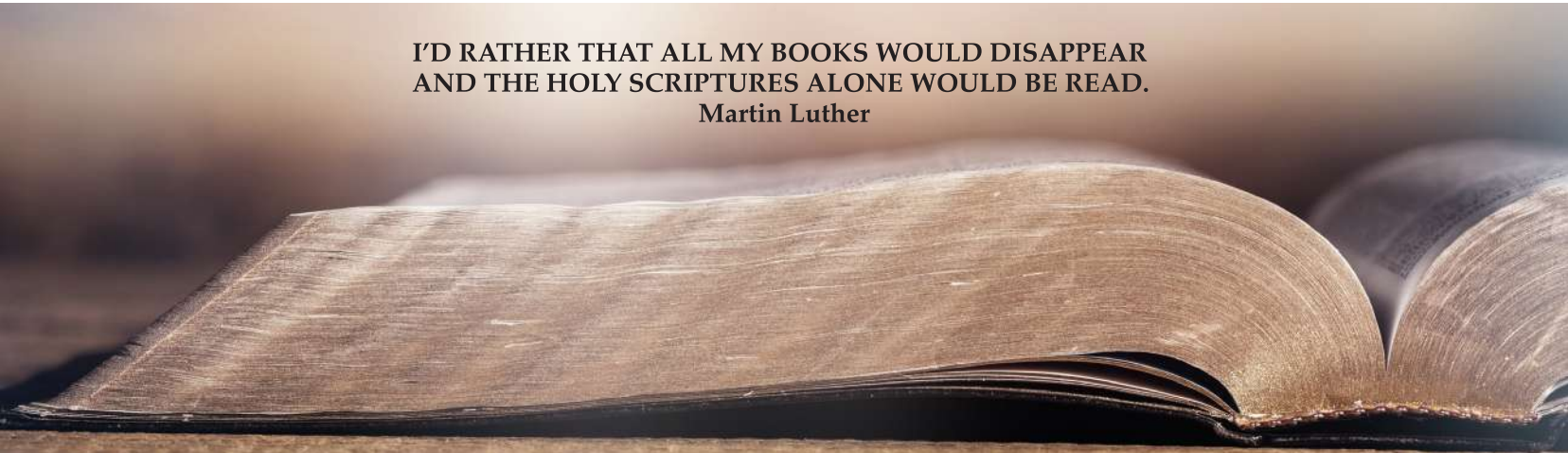
may interpret the Scriptures according to the conscience that the Holy Spirit informs and directs.

Liveliness—the joy of family life and the heritage that must pass from one generation to the next. Luther grasped the truth that true Christians have their eyes on the generations that follow them, and that the joy of their upward look must impress those generations with the truth of gospel doctrine.

Melancthon, on receiving the news of Luther’s death, interrupted his lecture to say, **“It was not human brilliance that discovered the doctrine of the forgiveness of sin and of faith in the Son of God, but God who raised him up before our very eyes, who has revealed these truths through him. Let us hold dear the memory of this man and the doctrine in the very manner in which he delivered it to us.”** Luther’s works occupy more than a hundred volumes, but he said, **“I’d rather that all my books would disappear and the Holy Scriptures alone would be read.”** Luther’s lasting legacy is the doctrine of justification by grace through faith alone in Christ alone, but he asserted the truth that the doctrine of free justification, like every aspect of gospel truth, rests on the foundation of the Scriptures of Truth.

.....
Rev. David Mook
Retired FPC minister,
(formerly Phoenix) AZ
.....

**I'D RATHER THAT ALL MY BOOKS WOULD DISAPPEAR
AND THE HOLY SCRIPTURES ALONE WOULD BE READ.
Martin Luther**



REV. ANDREW FITTON: GOD SENDS A MAN TO CLOVERDALE

The Word of God reminds us in Isaiah 55:8–9 that “my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Often we have our own plans and our own thoughts concerning our lives. These plans may not be the will of God for us. Proverbs 3:5–6 instructs us to “trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

As I reflect upon the recent years of my life, these verses from the Word of God stand out as a vital message that every believer must heed. May you be open to His will, though it be different than what you want or expect.

I was born into a Christian home and I trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as my own and personal Savior at the age of four. In my teens the Lord began to challenge me about serving Him and attending Bible college. As a consequence, I could not settle on what to do with my life as the Lord’s call was pressing upon my heart. I was happy and zealous to serve the Lord in my local church, but going to college to train for the gospel ministry was not in my thoughts.

As time passed, the Lord challenged my heart, but I placed several excuses before Him. In a sermon in my home congregation dealing with the excuses of Moses, the Lord dismantled all of my excuses. In 2005, while I was working nightshift in a supermarket, and stacking the shelves with baked beans, I listened to a sermon by Dr. Alan Cairns about discipleship. He was challenging his listeners to serve the Lord and he said, “You may be stacking beans on the supermarket shelf and the Lord could be calling you to serve Him!” In that same year, the Lord laid Jeremiah 1:4–10 upon my heart and I realized that I could do nothing else, but surrender it to serve the Lord.

After graduating from the Whitefield College of the Bible in 2013, I had opportunities to minister and assist in several churches under the Ulster Presbytery during the next few years. I spent a year pastoring the Free Presbyterian Churches in Port Lincoln and Lock, South Australia. Rev. Ian Goligher contacted me on several occasions about preaching in Canada and I preached in Cloverdale, BC in February 2017 and then spent five weeks preaching in Victoria, BC. I enjoyed that first trip to Canada—however, I had no intention of moving to Canada or ministering in Canada. The Lord’s ways are not our ways.

In September 2019, I arrived in Calgary to preach for one month. Here I met my future wife, Hannah. We believed that the Lord had brought us together and Hannah visited Northern Ireland in November and December 2019. New Year’s Eve marked our engagement, and our wedding date was set for August 2020. We then had to seek the Lord as to whether we would live in Canada or Northern Ireland. I was able to obtain a visa to live and work in Canada for two years, which would greatly help if I were to move to Canada. We would have to wait until we were married to make a visa application for Hannah to live in the United Kingdom. It was during this time that I began to realize that I may need to leave home and emigrate to Canada. This thought caused concern about my future and the call of God in my life, but I knew that all things worked together for good, and that God was in control.

I arrived back in Calgary in March 2020 for a short vacation to make plans for our wedding. I had also been persuaded to activate my visa just in case I needed it! It was good advice because in a matter of days the

first lockdown of the COVID-19 pandemic hit Canada, including travel restrictions. Therefore, if I left Canada to return home, even with my visa, I had no guarantee of reentry before our wedding. I also was permitted to work in Canada. Despite many applications for work in Northern Ireland, I received no offers, even though I had previous experience. My first application in Canada for a similar position was accepted and my experience was noted as being of benefit to my new employer!

So, we believed that all of these circumstances were clearly guiding in relation to the Lord’s will for us to live in Canada. Hannah and I were married on August 15 that year and we had a little window of opportunity to have our wedding with minimal restrictions.

Believing that the Lord had brought me to Canada for the purpose of serving Him here, I prayed to Him regarding future ministry. The pandemic had hindered any possibility of traveling outside Canada to preach and therefore I began to pray regarding opportunities to preach in Canada. The Lord also reemphasized to me those verses which He had used to call me to train for the gospel ministry. He answered prayer regarding a smooth process for my application for permanent residency in Canada which I received in July 2022.

The Lord gave many opportunities to preach the Word in Calgary FPC and in Cloverdale FPC during the vacancy after Rev. Goligher’s retirement in 2021. I was also able to preach in Heritage FPC, Prince George and in William’s Lake, BC. The Lord burdened my heart for the work in Cloverdale. I quietly kept this to myself and prayed for the Lord to lead, and in His time and



according to His will, I received and accepted the call from the congregation to be their pastor. The Lord placed the words spoken to the church at Philadelphia upon my heart, "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name" (Revelation 3:8).

Please pray for me as I preach the Word of God to the Cloverdale congregation. May I experience what the Apostle Paul prayed for in 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5, "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you" (2 Thessalonians 3:1).



Rev. Andrew Fitton was ordained and installed as pastor of Cloverdale Free Presbyterian Church on Friday, June 23, 2023. Pictured are Mr. Verne Hanson (Deacon), Rev. Stephen Pollock, Rev. Andrew Fitton, Rev. Larry Saunders, Rev. Andrew Foster, Rev. Reggie Kimbro, Mr. Alan Samuel (Elder) and Mr. Andy Roersma (Elder).

THE LORD LEADS A MAN TO FREDERICTON

I was born into a loving Christian home where the Lord provided for our every need. My father ministered for thirteen years in Fredericton, New Brunswick. During that time, I attended the church and always remembered the promise of Matthew 18:20, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." I knew that, even though the church was small in number, the Lord was still at work.

In Luke 12:48 the Lord Jesus makes a statement, "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." This word spoke to my heart many times when I would witness to friends and people that I have known throughout the years. I felt the Lord placed responsibility on me to spread the gospel message. Not everyone had the same upbringing that I had with a godly mother and father. Many were brought up in darkness without any direction from their parents and left alone to live a life apart from God. I thank the Lord wholeheartedly for the opportunity to preach the gospel to the lost. I understand the power of His Word, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword."

When my father accepted the call to Barrie in 2008, Pastor Neil Samson, a Baptist minister who faithfully attended the church, took up the responsibility of preaching in the morning service. He continued to do this for sixteen years and helped preserve the work in Fredericton. The church is greatly indebted to his diligent ministry over all these years.

Fredericton is a liberal city that has many churches that have compromised the Word of God. The church is in dire need of reformation and a determination to stand for the Word of God instead of public opinion. During multiple trips to Fredericton throughout the last couple of years, we were pleased to hear of the interest of many visitors and locals



who are looking for a sound, biblical church. The population in Fredericton has seen steady growth since we left in 2008 and many visitors come by in the summer months. Fredericton also has an outreach on radio CJRI-FM that broadcasts *Let The Bible Speak* programs every Sunday morning.

As the Lord has guided my heart to move back to Fredericton, please pray with me that the Lord will bring people in, not just to visit, but to commit to the work of God for His glory and

for the advancement of the gospel. I do believe that the Lord has many people in Fredericton as it was in Acts 18:10, "For I have much people in this city." Do pray that others will come out to hear the gospel and that the Lord will visit us in His mercy and pour out His Spirit upon us.

.....
Rev. Frank D'Addurno
Licensed minister, Fredericton, NB
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CHURCH CONSTITUTION



On July 09, 2023, Coram Deo Free Presbyterian Church, Córdoba, Mexico was constituted under the Free Presbyterian Church of North America. A brief history of the work was reported in *Current*, Volume 13, Issue 4.

Revs. John Wagner, Reggie Kimbro, Myron Mooney, Jason Boyle and Ramón Sosa represented the presbytery. Along with the constitution, Rev. Lalo Peña was ordained and installed as the minister of the church.

The Lord has answered prayer for the works in Mexico and this landmark day is another reason for joyful thanksgiving. Please pray on!





KEY VERSE - 1 Corinthians 4:6

That ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.

SUMMARY OF FIRST CORINTHIANS CHAPTER FOUR

Finally, the apostle got to the root cause of the looming Corinthian catastrophe. Three times in this chapter, Paul the apostle referred to Corinthian Christians as “puffed up.” From chapter one to chapter three, Paul addresses the issue of divisions over leadership in the church. Some wanted to follow Apollos, some Paul, some Cephas, some Christ.

With great skill, Paul lovingly approached the explosive issue of pride in the church. He held up his own gracious ways of dealing with fellow believers in church fellowship. Then he pressed home the need for everyone in the church to change their carnal ways insisting that such proud attitudes would no longer be tolerated. It was tough love, but exactly the medicine required to bring this fevered church back to health.

OBSERVATIONS FOR CONGREGATIONS AND MINISTERS

In the previous chapter, Paul had strongly advised, “Let no man glory in men” (1 Corinthians 3:21). God, of course, uses men in the work of the ministry, but it is folly to become obsessed with individual men. The key thing is that we exalt the Lord and rejoice when a minister, though he has a different personality and different gifts, strives to glorify the Savior. That is the thing to look for. In love, yet with the thoroughness of a father in the faith, Paul drove this point home to the Corinthians in several ways.

A minister glorifies God when he is seen as the minister, or servant, of Christ. See Paul’s opening statement in this chapter:

“Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ” (1 Corinthians 4:1).

He is not his own man for he is sent by the Lord to herald the Lord’s message. His whole ministry, therefore, is to be conducted as the servant of Christ. When the minister serves in the church with this conviction, the people will recognize that their minister is a God-fearing man, sent among them by the Lord for the good of their souls. They will happily enjoy God’s blessing through his ministry.

A minister glorifies God when he is a faithful steward of the doctrines of the gospel. The apostle said:

“Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Corinthians 1:2).

A steward is like a housekeeper, who runs the home for the good of the

family. There is attention to detail and sufficient food is provided for all. The good minister of Christ is marked by his faithful feeding. He proclaims all the doctrines of the gospel. He knows he is called to “feed the flock” and to “watch” against dangerous teachings (Acts 20:28). Fidelity to truth is the faithful minister’s trademark by which he glorifies God.

A minister will glorify God when he is constantly aware that he is accountable to God for his ministry. After brushing off men’s judgment of his ministry and his own judgment about his own work, Paul stated:

“...he that judgeth me is the Lord” (1 Corinthians 4:4).

Only God can read hearts to know a

man’s motives. Paul refused, therefore, to bow to men’s whimsical criticisms. He refused even to judge or assess his own ministry. What minister would dare to say, “I have been faithful in all things”? Only the Lord can so judge, and many matters must be left to that great day when the Lord shall judge the hearts of men.

This surely teaches us to be exceedingly slow to judge another man’s ministry. Do we know all the struggles of God’s servant to fulfil the office of preacher? Have we walked in his shoes? We must leave such matters where Paul left them. He said: “Therefore, judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God” (1 Corinthians 4:5).

This leaves no room for glorying in men, or judging men in a carnal manner before that great day.

The minister glorifies God when he and his people resist being puffed up with pride. Pride in the church is the great danger. Three times in this chapter Paul warned the Corinthian Christians as being “puffed up” (1 Corinthians 4:6,18–19). This prideful spirit was at the heart of the divisions in the Corinthian Church, and it was tearing it apart.

Paul constantly practiced self-denial. His life was a living rebuke to proud believers. He called them to see the error of their ways and to embrace his ways. He wrote: “That ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another” (1 Corinthians 4:6).

As to Paul’s reference to “that which is written”, the whole Bible is a

veritable library of the evils of pride in the heart of man. The Bible reader will find it impossible to name a man or woman in the Old Testament, or the New, who was not delivered from a life of pride, or fell because of pride. The exception of course is our sinless Savior, and what an example of humility our Lord displayed all His life and in all His ministry, even unto death. There is just no place for “puffed up” attitudes in a Bible-believing church. Pride is always a curse, never a blessing.

Failure to practice self-denial is really God-denial. How wicked for a man to boast in himself, or for people to boast in a minister when all his gifts are given to him by the good grace of God? Paul exposed this carnal thinking by asking: “For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? (1 Corinthians 4:7)

Ouch! That ought to have burst the egos of the puffed-up Corinthians.

The minister glorifies God by a life of self-denial, being ready to suffer the ridicule of this world and even to suffer the loss of life’s luxuries. While many Corinthians spoke of being full, of being rich, of reigning as kings, Paul spoke of his hunger, of his thirst, of being naked, of being buffeted, and of having no certain dwelling place, and many other things that made him be considered as the filth of this world, or as the offscouring of all things (1 Corinthians 4:13). The minister is not out to win a popularity contest, nor should every congregation expect to have “Mr. Popular” in their pulpit.

As a loving father, Paul sought to turn the Corinthian believers around by calling them to follow his example of

self-denial. He pleaded with them: “Be ye followers of me” (1 Corinthians 4:16).

To press home this demand to cease from glorying in men, Paul planned to send Timothy to counsel them in his ways, which were to be practiced “in every church” (1 Corinthians 4:17). And it could be no different in Corinth, if divisions were to be avoided.

Paul let them know that he planned to visit them to check up on their ways. He would look for the very opposite of a people puffed up with pride. He would look for Christians living in spiritual power.

“For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power” (1 Corinthians 4:20).

Paul wanted to see the true effects of the gospel in their lives, which would be very different from haughty words and self-gloating attitudes, which had been so rampant in the Corinthian church. He further warned that upon his visit his findings would make the difference between using a rod to correct, or extending love to encourage. He left them with a clear decision to make. He wrote: “What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?” (1 Corinthians 4:21)

Paul had found the real cause of divisions in the church and called for a speedy response. This is the decision that every Christian must make, for there is no place for puffed up attitudes in any church. Everyone must cease from pride and adopt the apostle’s example of self-denial. Blessed is that people who know and live by the reality that the gospel of a crucified Savior cannot prosper among a body of people who will not practice a life of self-denial. This decision will change your life and the life of your church.

To Do:

- Read 1 Corinthians 4 every day for a month, and memorize the key text or verse 6.
- Pray for gospel power in your soul to renounce pride and to adopt a life of self-denial.
- Pray that your example of self-denial will motivate others to pursue a life of self-denial and so become a blessing in your church.

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Rev. Ian Goligher
Retired Minister, formerly Cloverdale FPC, BC

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TEEN CONNECTION

By Rev. Derrick Bowman

Gospel Thinking

Maybe you have heard your pastor or another preacher use the phrase “Gospel Thinking”? Do you understand what it means? The essence of this phrase means that we understand and think about the gospel in such a way that we apply it to every area of life. Gospel truth needs to permeate our thinking which leads to gospel truth permeating our actions. It stands to reason that the opposite of gospel thinking is worldly thinking. Look at these comparisons:

WORLDLY THINKING	GOSPEL THINKING
I have to earn love.	God loves me unconditionally.
You have to earn my love.	Grace enables me to love you.
I deserve good things.	I deserve hell because of sin.
You must earn things from me.	Grace enables me to give freely.
I don't need anyone's help.	I must have God's help.
My inward strength is enough.	I have no strength in myself.
I'm no good.	I am complete in Christ.

Each of those comparisons needs some explanation: gospel thinking is a complete paradigm shift and can only happen after a work of grace has been done in the heart. An unregenerate person cannot think rightly because his nature has not been changed to think gospel thoughts. Let's look at an example in Romans 10:1–3.

The people had zeal. “They have a zeal of God.” We could say that they were passionate.

Their zeal was for God. They would defend God against “unbelievers.” Paul knew this because, before his conversion, he had great zeal and

thought he was doing God a favor by killing Christians.

Their zeal for God was not based on right thinking, (“not according to knowledge”). They did not have gospel thinking. As one author puts it, “The furnace of their hearts is burning, but the fuel is not the fuel of truth. The mind has failed to provide the fuel of truth. And the heart is aflame with a false view of God.”

They are not saved. “My heart's desire . . . is that they might be saved.”

It is possible to have a zeal for God and yet be unsaved.

Let's look closer at the text to try to understand why these with such zeal for God were not saved. What is the crux of the matter here? Simply put, they did not understand the gospel. They were not thinking gospel thoughts about God and by consequence, they were not thinking gospel thoughts about themselves. Verse 3 of the passage reveals their problem: “For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”

You see, the central issue is the doctrine of justification by faith alone in

Christ alone and an understanding of imputed versus earned righteousness. They were trying to earn righteousness. That is really the summary of the whole column above labeled "Worldly Thinking." Understanding the implications of an imputed righteousness summarizes the whole column labeled "Gospel Thinking."

Gospel Thinking in Practice

1. Your eternal welfare depends on gospel thinking.

If you think you will be accepted by God in some way other than the way revealed in the Bible, you are wrong. Your eternal welfare depends on your understanding of the gospel.

2. Your view of God depends on gospel thinking.

Many think about God as if He is standing in heaven just waiting for one of us to mess up so that He can beat us over the head with His heavenly hammer. If you understand the gospel correctly, you will know that you stand before God in the merits of Christ. You know that God accepts you the same way He accepts His Son. Therefore, God is not watching you with a condemning eye because "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

3. Your prayer life depends on gospel thinking.

If you understand the gospel correctly, you know that God does not accept you or your prayers because of your own merits. Likewise, He does not reject you or your prayers because of your own demerits. You and your prayers are accepted because of Christ. Therefore, we pray, "In Jesus' name, Amen!"

4. Your relationships depend on gospel thinking.

All of your earthly relationships would be greatly benefited if you sought to apply the truths of the gospel to them. In a relationship, one side often feels self-justified in his or

her anger or displeasure toward the other. How often are you upset with your friend because he or she has not fulfilled your expectations in every detail? How different might your relationships be if you tried to treat your friends the way God treats you?

5. Your counseling depends on gospel thinking.

When your friends come to you with a problem, your understanding of the gospel will play an important role in how you counsel them. If you counsel them to work off their own guilt, you will lead them to more bondage, but if you point them to the fact that if they have Christ as their Savior and that they are righteous before God, you will help them. The truth of imputed righteousness is a powerful tool for the Christian counselor.

6. Your evangelism depends on gospel thinking.

A weak view of the gospel will lead to weak evangelism. A proper understanding of the gospel will greatly benefit you as you seek to win souls for Christ. If you understand justification correctly, you know that God "justifieth the ungodly." You will not evangelize people by telling them that they have to be better people before God will accept them. A proper view of the gospel emboldens you to tell the very worst of sinners that they simply need to come to Christ just as they are. God will save them and change them. Justification teaches us that men do not have to take a bath before they get in the shower. That is, they don't have to clean themselves up before they come to God for cleansing.

Gospel thinking is accomplished by a work of grace in the heart, plain and simple. It requires a knowledge of God and the gospel. It requires great humility to see ourselves as God sees us and rejoice in a justifying righteousness that gives us peace with God. We translate that understanding to how we deal with others around us and how we respond to circumstances that come into our lives. May the Lord help us all to truly have gospel thinking.



June Hamilton: Missionary, Minister's wife, Mother



At 22, shortly after graduating from Bob Jones University, as a shy Iowa farm girl, Mom set out for Scotland to be a children's missionary. For almost ten years she conducted Bible Clubs, teaching hundreds of children in the Borders area of Scotland and in Edinburgh.

In 1981, she moved to Northern Ire-

land to marry an Ulsterman, studying for the Free Presbyterian ministry, whom she had met in Scotland. In her role as pastor's wife in Northern Ireland, Scotland, and the U.S., she faithfully served as a Sunday School and Bible Club teacher, youth worker, musician, event organizer, and counselor.

My mother was usually quiet and reserved, but became uncharacteristically animated when she taught Bible stories! She was a gifted actress, holding children in rapt attention right up to teenage level, as she vividly acted out Bible narratives.

Mom was also an accomplished pianist and accordionist, often playing her accordion for open air services. She was the pianist in Dr. Paisley's church, Martyrs Memorial, for several years and then in each church where Dad pastored. Passionate about missions, she served on the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster Missionary Council for a number of years.

Her first ministry was to Dad and her two daughters. We were the main recipients of her wise, steady, biblical counsel. We saw firsthand her meek

and quiet spirit (1 Peter 3), her selflessness, her diligence, and her strength of character. She was the epitome of a Proverbs 31 and Titus 2 woman.

She didn't like being in the public eye, but preferred to serve unnoticed in the background. A few weeks before she went to Glory, I told her she was the humblest, godliest woman I had ever known. She couldn't speak, but she shook her head, "no." Humble to the end.

Mom's life verse was "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:7). God certainly began a good work in her. We were privileged to watch how He performed it right to the end.

Mrs. Rachel Huffman
Daughter



Free Presbyterian International Congress Northern Ireland: July 1-5, 2024

If you plan to attend, please inform your minister or email malvernfpcc@yahoo.com.



NORTHERN IRELAND

Reformation Women

Before the Reformation in the 1500s, life was very dark, especially for women because the Roman Catholic church dominated all areas of life. Young women and even girls, rich and poor, were handed over to the church and entered convents. Although it was thought to be special, convent living was not glamorous. The women went to bed by 8:00 p.m., were awakened at 1:00 a.m. to gather for prayer, and returned to bed until 6:00 a.m. Some were not allowed to talk, and some lived in cells alone. The church governed so much of life which revolved around the church calendar, confessions, penance, and much fear. The convent lifestyle was considered more prestigious than marriage and the duties of loving husband and children, and keeping a home were minimized compared to “holy,” celibate, convent living.

The Reformation brought many revolutionary changes to women’s lives and circumstances. God saved and raised up men like Martin Luther, John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli and others who preached truth—the truth of God’s grace to sinners sunken in sin. They brought the Bible to the people in their own language. They preached the forgiveness of sins by Christ’s sacrifice. They taught people to love God and their neighbors. They taught the truth regarding marriage, vocation, and motherhood.

Written sermons made their way into convents where the nuns read them and believed. When a group of twelve nuns escaped a convent in Wittenberg, they left with no money and no other provisions. Families in Wittenberg housed them, fed, and helped them.

Three returned to their families while most married and one began a school for girls.


Katharina von Bora was the last nun left unmarried in Wittenberg. She refused to marry any of the possible husbands. After a change of his own mind, Martin Luther determined to marry Katharina (Katie), and they soon tied the knot. They set up housekeeping in an abandoned monastery with forty bedrooms! After whitewashing all the walls with lime and making many repairs, the Luthers extended hospitality to ex-monks and preachers, to refugees of all kinds—orphans, tutors, scholars, students. Katie managed to grow vegetables, keep livestock, and catch fish for the meals. Martin’s health improved under Katie’s care and cooking. Together they raised six children besides four orphans and several nieces and nephews. With the help of her aunt and a couple of servants, Katie managed her household, two farms, and the family finances.

Martin’s table talks were so popular that people were on a waiting list to attend dinner and the table talk at the Luthers’ home. Martin would discuss

subjects of interest—the Reformation, academic subjects, and even current news. Katie fed, clothed, housed, loved, nursed, and supported people, thus freeing Martin to follow his calling. Martin highly valued Katie, who was his comforter and companion. Katie was only one of many women who turned to Christ during that time. Some were pastors’ wives like Katie while others were royalty. The women of that day feared God, believed the gospel, embraced salvation by faith alone, through grace alone, in Christ alone as they learned it from the Bible in their language. They lived out the biblical freedoms of marriage, having children, managing a home and supporting the poor and needy. They were hearty, steadfast, courageous first-generation Reformation believers who saw the diminishing of the Roman Catholic system they had grown up in. What examples they are for us today! May we love and serve God, doing good to others both in our own homes and communities, as fervently as those women did in their day!

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Mrs. Barbara Mooney
Trinity FPC, Trinity, AL
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A Pattern For Prayer

The Bible is full of thrilling stories about God's care for His people. One of my favorites is in 2 Kings 18 and 19. Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, had sent his vast armies against Jerusalem. The Assyrians had conquered many other nations, and Sennacherib was confident he could defeat Judah as well.

Sennacherib's chief spokesman, Rabshakeh, sent messengers to King Hezekiah, telling him to prepare to be taken over. He warned Hezekiah that he should not trust in God to save his people because the gods of other countries had not been able to save them from the Assyrians. He said the God of Israel would be no different.

Hezekiah knew they were in serious trouble. He immediately did two things: he went into the house of the Lord (the place of prayer), and he sent messengers to the prophet Isaiah to seek for a word from God. Isaiah sent a message right back. He said that Hezekiah should not be afraid because God was going to take care of the Assyrians.

That was great news and surely it did much to comfort Hezekiah, but then Rabshakeh sent a letter to Hezekiah with more threats. Again, Hezekiah acted quickly and correctly. He took the letter into the house of the Lord, spread it before the Lord, and prayed.

God answered Hezekiah's prayer in a wonderful way. That very night the angel of the Lord killed 185,000 of Sennacherib's soldiers as they slept. In the morning, when they discovered all the dead bodies, Sennacherib and the rest of his men retreated to their own country. God delivered His people without their having to fight at all.

Take time to read the whole story in 2 Kings 18:17–37 and 19:1–37. Look for things that would be good to practice in your own life. Notice first that Hezekiah rent or tore his clothes and put on rough clothing or sackcloth (19:1). In his time, that was a sign of sorrow and mourning. Hezekiah was approaching God with humility, recognizing his great need and his inability to do anything about it.

Next, Hezekiah spread the letter out before God in the place of prayer (19:14). He began his prayer with praise to God for who He is, the sovereign Creator who is in a special relationship with His people (19:15).

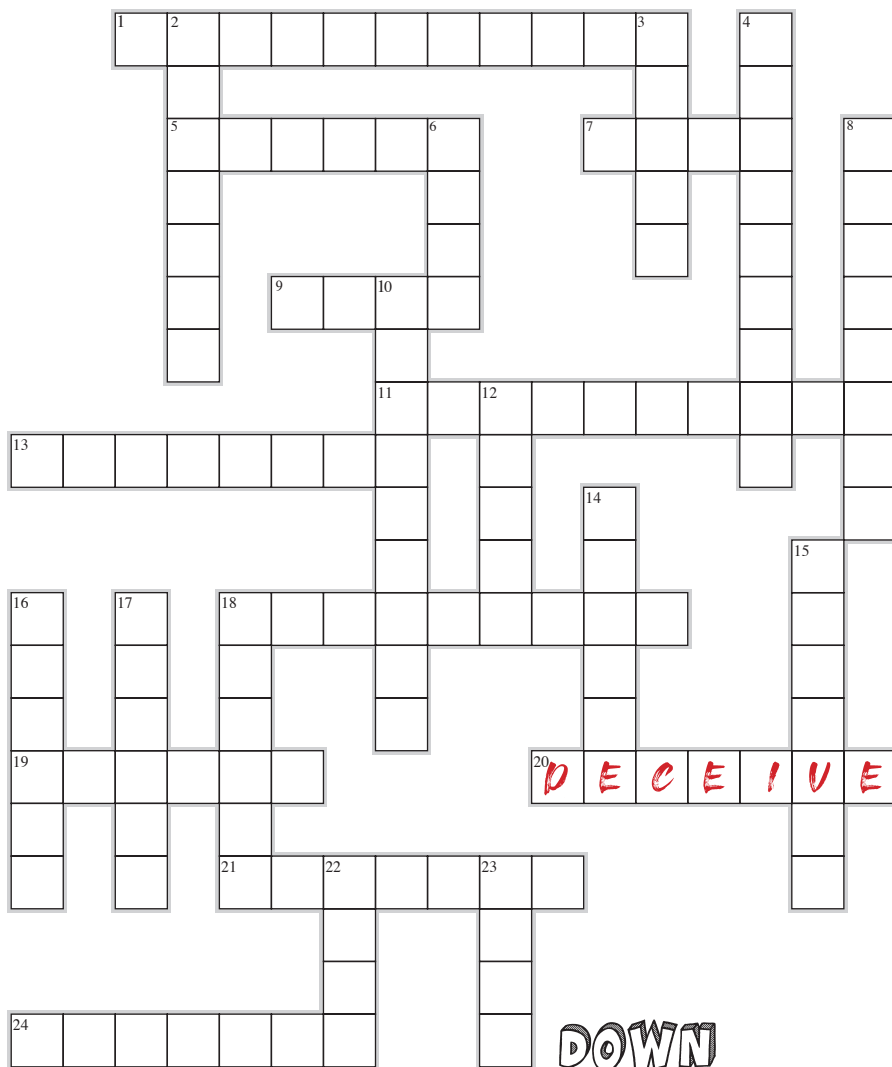
Then he told God all about their need. He laid out the letter of threats and said, "Lord, here is our problem. We can't save ourselves, but we know You can." Hezekiah was confident that God would take care of things because he had gotten a promise from God through Isaiah (19:16–19). Finally, Hezekiah had the right motive behind his prayer—He wanted God to be glorified by delivering His people (19:19).

What a good pattern to follow in prayer: approach God with humility and praise and then lay out your needs, keeping in mind God's promises in His Word and desiring that He would answer in the way that would best glorify Him. Such prayers will always have good answers!

.....
Mrs. Judy Brown
Faith FPC, SC
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This article is the third in a series about spending time daily reading God's Word and praying. The first article suggested you use a notebook to write down things you learn from God's Word. Make a section in your notebook for prayer also.

- List the things you want to remember to pray for on a regular basis.
- Make another list of urgent requests or ones that are connected to a specific timeframe. Make a note of the dates when you start praying for things and then again when the Lord answers.
- For a bonus, make a section for copying down verses that are specific promises you want to pray over (Psalm 32:8; Phil 4:19; Prov. 29:25; etc.)
- Another section could be for verses that are Bible prayers you want to pray for yourself (Psalm 51:10; Psalm 119:133; Psalm 19:14; etc.)



ACROSS

1. King of Assyria
5. Prophet who gave Hezekiah God's word
7. God said he would save the city for His own ____.
9. Hezekiah said the gods of other nations were the ____ of men's hands.
11. God said the servants of the king of Assyria had done what to Him?
13. Hezekiah wants them to know that God is the only God.
18. Rough clothes worn to show grief and repentance.
19. Isaiah's message was, "Be not ____."
20. Rabshakeh said God would do what to Hezekiah?
21. Sennacherib's god
24. Dead bodies

2. He was over the king's household.
3. God said He would send a ____ upon the king of Assyria.
4. God dwells between them.
6. God says He will put this in the "nose" of the Assyrian army.
8. Joah's job or occupation
10. Messenger of the Assyrian king.
12. Killed the soldiers while they slept.
14. Hezekiah's desire that God would be glorified was the right ____.
15. Sennacherib's home city
16. A city whose gods could not save it from the Assyrians.
17. To rend or tear one's clothes showed ____.
18. The language Eliakim wanted Rabshakeh to use.
22. They killed Sennacherib.
23. God did not let the Assyrians come where?

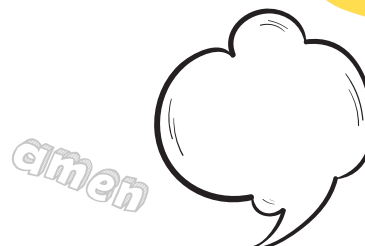
DOWN

WINNERS
of the summer crossword puzzle:

Roger Burns, Faith FPC
Erica Fulton, Faith FPC
Janel Li, Toronto FPC
Alana Rose, Toronto FPC
Liam Rose, Toronto FPC



Use the article
on page 18
and your Bible
to solve this puzzle



amen



Kids' CORNER



PLEASE NOTE: Send your completed puzzle to *Current Kids' Corner*, c/o Judy Brown, 651 Ponden Dr., Greer, SC 29650 or to ljsbrown2@gmail.com by **November 03, 2023**.

Include your name, address, age, and the name of the church you attend. Please also include an email address in case we need to contact you about your entry. Five winners will be drawn from all correct submissions received. **The contest is open to young people ages 5-12.** Winners will receive a \$10 cash prize.

Youth Camp 2023

Fifty-eight young people along with ministers and staff gathered at Rock Mountain Bible Camp, July 15–22, 2023. The Lord was pleased to give safety and a sense of His presence in the times of Bible teaching. The theme of the Bible studies was “God at Work.” From Genesis 37–50, the ministers presented the various ways in which God was at work in, through and for Joseph. Please keep our young people in your prayers.



Summer Young Adult Conference: Toronto

During August 2–6, Toronto FPC hosted a young adult conference with Rev. Andrew Simpson as the guest speaker. Meetings were held each evening and each day trips were made to various tourist locations, like Niagara Falls, where the young people engaged in tract distribution and outreach before enjoying a time of fellowship and fun. Packed lunches and meals were provided each day by the ladies of the church.

The theme of the week was “Spectator or Servant—From the Sideline to the Starting Line” and the messages centered on being an active participant in the local church rather than a passive one. We were delighted that young adults came from our churches in Mexico, Winston-Salem, Czech Republic, Prince George, and Toronto. It was a time of rich blessing for everyone involved and there was an evident movement of the Lord among the group. Please pray that the seed sown will bring forth much fruit for the glory of God.

