

First Baptist Regina Weekly News

For the Week of May 10th



"Paintbrush Pentecost"

by Timothy Long

This May, the sermons will be reflecting on the Holy Spirit as the source of life.

The Spirit is connected to:

- the beginning of life on earth and the ending of the flood
- our breath and the breath in all creatures.
- trees and plants flourishing
- artists, rulers, poets, leaders, and prophets.

As believers, may we cherish the work of the Spirit and join in!

Your church board is meeting this week to review all that has happened since isolation began and to look at the months to come. Thanks to technology:

- Chris has been meeting with youth on Fridays and individually
- Julie Hovey and Joel have been meeting with people under twelve for songs, stories, show and tell, and other activities
- John has coordinated the church keeping in touch with our entire directory on a regular basis
- Richard has prepared the creation of a few new small groups
- Missions have helped us serve the needy in partnership with other churches
- Learning for Life and Sunday worship have continued... with some adjustments... and some "bumps"... but meaningful nonetheless for many

So much to be grateful for! Thank you for your prayers. Let's press on together.

With love,

Funeral for Bill Silver

We extend our condolences to Hilary Ryan and to family and friends of Bill Silver who passed away early on Sunday, May 3rd.

Bill's funeral will be this Wednesday, May 13th at 2:30 p.m. at Faith Baptist Church, Regina. Hilary and a few others will be present but the funeral will be live streamed on Faith Baptist's website.

Bill Silver was a long time member of First Baptist and contributed in many ways. He was devoutly committed to prayer and obeying God through the scriptures, a faithful choir member, a board member and board chair. He had energy in all he did, working as a surgeon well into his retirement years, completing marathons into his eighties, and always asking how and where things could be improved.



Mission Commission: Annual Missions Fundraiser - Virtual Lebanon "Lunch"

Sunday, May 24, 12:00 Noon - via "ZOOM"

Prepare your lunch in advance and join us after worship to hear more about our Lebanon partnership.

Video chats with Canadian Baptist Ministries partners Emad & Almess Botros, & also a student from Arab Baptist Theological Seminary!

More highlights from our "SENT" Team's trip last June!

Opportunity to support our partnership with the seminary & refugee ministries in Lebanon.

Important Note: Please make cheques out to "CBM" and mail to the church.

Donations may also be made online at cbmin.org/donateonetimegift/

Please add a note "First Baptist Regina Lebanon Partnership".

Pledge forms will be available online so we have an idea of what we raise.

New Small Group (via Zoom)

Who is Jesus? Recognized by many as the earliest written account of Jesus' ministry, we will be reading through the Gospel of Mark as we look to answer this simple question. We will read slowly, a chapter a week, and meet twice a month to discuss our reading of Mark's gospel, apply what we've read to life, and deepen our relationship with our Lord and King and with each other. This group will run May through August at two different times: the second and fourth Wednesday of each month at 7pm and the second and fourth Friday of each month at 10am. The first Wednesday meeting will be May 13 at 7pm; the first Friday meeting will be May 15 at 10am. Please let Pastor Richard know if you are interested in joining us and if so at which time and he will provide you with the Zoom link. If you have any questions please let Pastor Richard know (~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~richard.b@regina@csaskto.net~~).

Daily Bread Devotionals

The Daily Bread devotionals for June, July, and August, have been dropped off at the church. If anyone would like one, please contact the church. We can leave them in the mailbox or mail them to you.

VOICE

Voice is scheduled to meet twice during the month of May, and will resume in the fall. There will be a meeting on May 6, studying chapter 11: "How Could a good God all so much Suffering?"; May 20th, studying Chapter 12: "How Could a Loving God send People to Hell"? These are two questions that people do ask a lot, and I hope we can find some responsible answers. Both meetings will take place via ZOOM.

Good jokes might be rare but the best jokes are like brown cane sugar: demerara.

I was in my car driving back from work. A police officer pulled me over and knocked on my window. I begged him, 'Could you give me a minute? I'm just on the phone.'" I hadn't had the best day to that point. I had looked to buy some camouflage trousers. I couldn't find any. I had also just been to the doctor's. I explained to him, 'I've hurt my arm in several places.' He suggested, 'Well, don't go there any more.'" The officer also stopped two kids. One was drinking battery acid, the other was eating fireworks. They charged one and let the other one off.



A cowboy asked me if I could help him round up 18 cows. I said, 'Yes, of course: that's 20 cows.'" As he left, I thought to myself, "To be or not to be a horse rider, that is equestrian."

Church Connection With You!

"I miss my church family!" I have lost count of the number of times that I have heard this phrase over the past few months. Many of you have also expressed the emotions of loneliness and heartache, especially when it comes to missing your immediate family (sons, daughters, nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, sisters, brothers, grandchildren, grandparents, fathers, mothers, best friends forever, etc.).

Phone calls, internet, facetime, Skype, and Zoom are wonderful connecting tools, but are inadequate substitutes when it comes to what we truly miss: feeling, touching, hugging, speaking to one another face to face, these are actions we have had to give up during Covid-19. Ah yes, there is no adequate substitute for a huge HUG from a friend and/or family member, but we make due with our connecting creativity.

A number of your church family have volunteered to establish a ministry of "Connection With You". A church list of over 160 names was divided up among 11 phone volunteers in the second week of covid-19 restrictions. Phone calls/emails were made over the course of two weeks, hopefully connecting with all of our church family. We have now added 5 new volunteers, thus lessening the number of people to be phoned by the original 11 volunteers.

What is the purpose of these calls? Yes, to update information (changes, additions), but most important, to ask how you are doing/do you require any help/do you have internet/have you been able to join us for prayer times/worship services using Zoom, etc./and more. If you have not been contacted, please email Pastor John at ~~john184@xxxxxxxxxx~~ and someone will follow up with a phone call. Each and every one of you is a KEY member of the FBC family. You are not alone during this time of isolation. Be of good cheer, for we will get through this challenging time together!

Be safe and Stay healthy! Blessings to all of you! Pastor John

“The Body Cannot Live Without the Spirit”

Joel Russell-MacLean’s sermon from Sunday May 10th, 2020.

Deuteronomy 8.1-3, Psalm , Romans 8.11-13, John 4.7-14

James wrote, “The body without the spirit is dead.” (James 2.26)

We know we cannot live without a heart, without lungs, without a brain, or without food and water. All of these can be seen and measured and studied. Not so our spirits. It is easy to be skeptical, even for Christians, that we have a spirit or that spiritual health might have an impact on our lives.

As an illustration of the sort of impact our spirit has on our bodies, we might consider the impact of emotions on our physical health and our bodies:

- Joy: we may say we feel more energetic, we have a “bounce in our steps”. It is as if our body can feed off of happiness and joy.
- Sadness: we may say we feel tired, empty, or weak.
- Anger or fear: our heart rate increases, breathing speeds up, our extremities get cold.
- Anxiety, stress: long term, medical studies continue to find that stress has a measurable, negative impact on our body.

Similarly, scripture and the church teach us that our spirit feeds our body.

One objection might be that people appear to do very well without paying any attention to their spirit or their spiritual health.

There are possible two answers we might consider.

First and foremost, a person continuing to do well without living well is a sign that God shows no favouritism. God doesn’t deny life to people who are not living right. God is patient, wanting to give everyone a chance to turn to God, to call out to Jesus before it is too late.

Scripture puts it this way: God makes the sun to shine on everyone, good and bad alike, and the rain falls on the lands of good and bad farmers alike.

To this we might add: the life of the Holy Spirit continues to come to everyone.

Therefore, some people neglect the Holy Spirit and their spiritual health and appear to be fine, solely thanks to the grace and patience of God.

A second observation we could make is that just as some neglect the Holy Spirit and their spiritual health and yet appear to be fine, the same can also be said for the way some people take care of their bodies. Some who pay no attention to their physical health, or even live unhealthily, never seem to pay the price. There are life-long smokers who seem to “get away with it” as it were, people who eat whatever they want without consequence, and people who never work or exercise but seem fine, late into life.

Regardless, we know those are all bad habits. For most of us, at some point, our health begins to suffer if we do not change. Similarly, perhaps some people can get away without taking care of their spiritual health but for most of us, at some point, our lives and our bodies will be affected if we do not change bad habits.

Our bodies require a healthy spirit but what does that mean?

First, healthy spirits require being filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was sent by the Father after the victory of God through Jesus’ life, death, resurrection and ascension.

This is what Paul wrote to the Romans, “If the Spirit of God is living in you, God will also give life to your mortal bodies.” The life of Holy Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead comes and lives within believers, an eternal life that is life within a person which ultimately cannot be ended by death.

Jesus explained to the woman at the well that this very thing would happen within believers: “The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.”

Last week, the Holy Spirit was described as a life-giving river. In this week’s gospel lesson, Jesus described the Holy Spirit as a spring of life-giving water.

There is no other source of life on earth. God may with grace and love feed people in many faiths and circumstances but that doesn't change that the Holy Spirit is the only source of life for mortal bodies.

Secondly, we heard in Deuteronomy 8.1-3, that "every word from the mouth of God" feeds your body.

Now, "every word from God" was not simply a reference to the Bible: it simply couldn't be given when it was said or written. In this section of Deuteronomy, what we have is Moses speaking to his fellow Hebrews, toward the end of their years in the wilderness.

"During the exodus", Moses asked them, "When we journeyed through the wilderness, what did we have?" Well, they didn't have the bible for the simple reason that it wasn't written yet. What did they have?

The Hebrews in the wilderness were living close to God: literally being led by God's physical presence. They heard God's voice. Their elders saw God.

Nor did they have food. Moses said, "At times, we went hungry in the wilderness. We went hungry in order to learn this: that receiving words directly from God provides life to our bodies in a way similar to food."

Where do you receive "words" from God? Not many hear God's voice audibly but God speaks to all of us through various means. When are you suddenly aware of God's presence?

For myself, when my son Xavier plays piano, God often ministers to me. God speaks to me through the grace and love of my family for me, when I step into nature, into forests or fields, or when my mind is engaged over an excellent book. I'm aware of God's presence Tuesday mornings when I'm while the children of First Baptist and on Sunday mornings when many from the congregations are able to join together online.

These moments, I'm usually suddenly aware that God is feeding my spirit. As C.S. Lewis frequently observed, God's presence is usually marked by life-giving joy.

Health spirits require receiving life giving words from God.

Health spirits also require healthy spiritual habits.

Morality is either life giving or toxic. For example:

- lying is toxic while honesty is life giving
- greed is toxic while generosity is life giving
- bitterness and complaining are toxic while gratitude for what you have is life giving
- controlling others is toxic while submitting to others in love is life giving

We have also been taught how crucial spiritual practices are.

Living lives of prayer, scripture reading, fasting, service, and giving (to name a few): these are all life giving means of drawing closer to the Holy Spirit living within us. Pastor Richard, who teaches these practices at Briercrest and through Renovaré, will be providing weekly descriptions of these through videos in the coming weeks.

But is there an unhealthy way to fast? Or for that matter, an unhealthy way to pray or to go to church? Eastern Orthodox teaching warns of a "devil's fast." This is fasting from food without turning to God for spiritual nourishment, so-called because the devil never eats and therefore fasts continually but refuses to come to God for life.

Therefore, everything we do must be about drawing closer to God the father, to Jesus, and to the Holy Spirit or it will be worse than a waste. Using practices alone is, as Jesus said, like kicking out one demon and cleaning the home of your heart, only to leave it vacant and open for the return of the same demon with its companions.

Jesus modelled a proper fast when he confronted Satan in the wilderness and quoted Deuteronomy 8.2-3, "A person does not live by bread alone, but by every

word that comes from the mouth of God.” Jesus was not just fasting, he was learning to depend on God for life.

Similarly, Jesus warned people of the wrong way to read the bible. In John 5.39, Jesus said to the crowds of Jerusalem, “You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; yet you refuse to come to me to have life.”

“Right living” and good spiritual practice are not enough, they are meant to connect us to Holy Spirit.

Good Christian theology rejects a sharp division between the natural and spiritual, as if one could do without the other.

Now maybe like me, you might expect the Holy Spirit to accomplish only spiritual things, intangible things, supernatural things. A super-peace, or special supernatural powers to heal, speak in new languages, see into the future, or to know things suddenly I didn’t know before. There can indeed be supernatural manifestations when the Holy Spirit comes but these are not the main effects of the Holy Spirit in scripture.

For me, what is so surprising, so wonderful, what is such cause for joy, is that the Holy Spirit primarily impacts the physical, natural world. As we saw last week, this means the life of plants, animals, businesses, nations, and to this we add today, also our physical bodies.

We can get away with things for a while. Some even get away with poor habits for their whole lives, never taking care of their spirits. However, most of us can’t do this for long before it begins to affect our lives and our bodies, and before it begins to show.

Instead of declining spiritual health, God’s gracious gift through Jesus is that we die only to our old life and are born again, being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Eternal life therefore does not begin after we die. Eternal life is not about going to heaven after this world. Eternal life is a gift that begins now.

Jesus said, "If you know the gift of God, and know who I am, you would ask me, and I would give you living water." This living water is the Holy Spirit who gives life to your bodies.

As you go, be filled with the Holy Spirit, as you sing among yourselves, and as you sing to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.



A punter was at the horse races playing the ponies and all but losing his shirt. He noticed a priest step out onto the track and bless the forehead of one of the horses. Lo and behold, that horse - a long shot - won the race.

At the next race, as the horses lined up, the priest stepped onto the track. Sure enough, he blessed one of the horses. The punter made a beeline for a betting window and placed a small bet on it. Again, it was another long shot. Again, the horse won the race.

He collected his winnings, and anxiously waited to see which horse the priest would bless next. He bet big on it, and it won. The punter was elated.

He made a quick dash to the bank, withdrew all his savings and waited to see which horse the priest would bless. Sure enough, the priest stepped onto the track for the last race. He blessed the forehead of an old nag, the longest shot of the day.

This time the priest blessed the eyes, ears, and hooves of the old nag. The punter knew he had a winner and bet it all.

He watched dumbfounded as the old nag came in last, in fact, barely finishing the race. He stormed off to confront the priest. "Father! All day long every horse you blessed won. Then in the last race, the one you blessed lost by a mile. I lost everything! What happened?"

The priest looked embarrassed. "Oh my Son," he said with sympathy, "I'm so sorry. You must be a Protestant. Couldn't you tell the difference between a simple blessing and last rites?"