

First Baptist Regina Weekly News

For the Week of June 14th, 2020

Heart, Habits, and Fruits of the Spirit

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control.

The fruit, the signs of God's presence and work within us and among us are mixed with our feelings. Our feelings are indeed part of our nature, they too are caught up in salvation and redemption. Feeling peace, joy, and love is a gift from God. It is legitimate to desire them.



However, I find often enough that the Holy Spirit changes me first in my habits. I mean that instead of waking up and finding suddenly I feel more gentle, I find instead that God prods me each day to change my behaviour. In prayer or reflecting on a bible passage, I will suddenly think of how I spoke to someone or of something I meant to do but didn't. Other times, the conviction comes right in the moment. I have found that I have to continually cry to God to save me because I cannot change on my own. It is a long, slow process we work at until our death.

We must be careful when we open ourselves to this kind of examination. Shame is powerful and deadly. We need discernment. As Jesus taught us, we should judge a tree by its fruit. What fruit does the conviction produce in you? If the conviction is from the Holy Spirit, the fruit should be transformation, healing and restoration. God's conviction leads to repentance and life. However, if the conviction is from the enemy the fruit will be despair, withdrawal, anger, addictions.

Therefore, daily confession is an essential habit. Confession keeps us honest and keeps us growing. Proper confession also means we hear God say to us each day, "You have confessed and repented. You are my child. I love you. I will not remember your sin." God's love and direction is the only rock that we can safely build our identity and self-worth upon. God's love must be the daily starting point for a life pursuing the fruit of the Spirit.

With love,

Pastor Joel

Covid 19 Update

The provincial guidelines for places of worship were changed this past week. However, the consensus among the board and pastors remains that we wait on re-opening our Sunday morning worship. For the time being, we will continue to meet online on Sundays. Learning for Life will continue all summer and the service start time will remain at 11. A committee has been created to plan the restart of in-person Sunday worship services but they are considering possibly September or earlier. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak with one of the board members or pastors.

Our phone team will be in touch as well. We wish to hear how everyone is doing and how many of us are ready to take part in in-person gatherings (following all the health guidelines).

This could also be an opportunity for us to grow in friendship and in prayer. Contact Pastor Richard if you would like to be part of a small group or take part in one of the studies that are underway.

Katepwa Lake Camp AGM

As members of First Baptist Church, and especially as supporters of the ministry at KLC, you are invited to attend our virtual AGM. Please join us Tuesday June 16 (tonight) at 7 pm. You will hear stories and information about last year, opportunities for this summer, and will have the opportunity to join with us to shape this vital ministry for the future. To get the Zoom link, please RSVP to Cam Mohan (cammohan@katepwalakecamp.com) or contact Rosemary or Collin or leave a message at 306-359-1450. We will send you the information package and instructions about how to connect via Zoom.

Live From Lebanon

Thank you to all who have given so far to our "Live from Lebanon" fundraiser. Currently, \$8,503 has been received which means our goal of \$8,500 has been reached. It would be great to surpass it. If you would like to help support our Lebanese mission partners and Syrian refugee children in Lebanon please see below.

Ways to give:

1. Online with a credit card: <https://www.givetogo.org/team/FBCRegina>
2. Mail, or drop off, your donation to First Baptist Church, 2241 Victoria Ave, Regina SK S4P 0S4. (Please do not leave cash in the mailbox.) If you require an in-person pick up, call the church at (306) 359-1450.
 - Make cheques out to "CBM"
 - Note "SENT Lebanon" in the memo line or on the envelope

Church Garden Request

Our head gardener has been working to beautify the church garden, and would like some day lilies to add to it. If anyone has plants to divide or donate, please call Rosemary or leave a message at the church at (306) 359-1450 or by email at fbc_main@sasktel.net. She will even come and dig them up!

What have YOU got growing?

Do you like to grow things? Take a photo (or two) of whatever you have growing in your yard, balcony, deck, (or wherever,) and send it to main_fbcregina@sasktel.net. If you and/or your family is in the picture, that's all the better. We will share them with your church family in a future newsletter so that everyone can enjoy them.



Beginning a Journey in Spiritual Disciplines

We have been made to worship God, but we don't always do this well. Our desires have been turned to worship things other than the God who made us. How do we reorient ourselves around the Triune God? How do we learn to live a life that loves God with all of our heart, mind, strength and soul and loves our neighbours well? While we are saved by grace through faith, and this a work of the Holy Spirit, there are things we can do to aid in this reorientation of our very lives around the heart of God – practices which enable us to partner with the grace of God and the work of the Spirit.

One area that needs reorienting is the way we think – what we choose to put our mind to. Two habits which can help us immensely in reorienting our thinking around that which is true, honourable, just, pure – things worthy of praise – are the habits of Bible study and memorization. Adele Calhoun explains the practice of Bible study like this: "The Bible is divine revelation. God's own word to us. It reveals who God is, who we are and why we are here. Through Bible study we gain insights into God, human nature and creation. Studying the Scripture can equip, guide and reveal how to live in life-giving ways that deepen our friendship with God and others" (Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*). Some practical tips for studying the Bible:

- Pick a passage of Scripture to read and use the suggestions for study given by Richard Foster: repetition (read the passage several times, perhaps twice a day for a week); concentration (as you reread the passage, begin to concentrate more on the words you are reading); comprehension (as you read and reread, intentionally

concentrating on the words you are reading, watch for moments when you gain new insight into the passage); reflection (ask what the significance is of what you've learned for your own life). You may want to use a few different Bible translations to read from.

- Pick a book of the Bible to read (perhaps one of the Gospels or Epistles). Read slowly, only a chapter a week (reading it more than once), and to go along with your reading of a book of the Bible, read a commentary on this Bible book and/or listen to a sermon series on it.
- As you read the Bible, here are a few other things you can do to enhance your study of what you are reading: Write down observations or questions that you have as you read; look up any cross-references your Bible may suggest; do a word study on key words, seeing how they are used elsewhere in Scripture; create your own outline of the passage you are reading.

A second habit which can help us reorient our thinking is Bible memorization. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17 we read that “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.” This being the case, memorizing verses or passages of scripture is a great habit to get this Word of God inside of our minds. Church Swindoll stated: “I know of no other single practice in the Christian life more rewarding, practically speaking, than memorizing Scripture... No other single exercise pays greater spiritual dividends! Your prayer life will be strengthened. Your witnessing will be sharper and much more effective. Your attitudes and outlook will begin to change. Your mind will become alert and observant. Your confidence and assurance will be enhanced. Your faith will be solidified” (Chuck Swindoll, *Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life*). Here are some practical steps for memorizing scripture:

- Decide which verses or passages you would like to memorize.
- Have these verses nearby (either printed out or in an app).
- If you are a visual learner, include images to help you remember verses/passages.
- As you memorize a verse also memorize where it is found (book, chapter, and verse).
- Regularly review the verses you've memorized.

This video series on spiritual disciplines can be found online via our church website: <https://firstbaptistregina.ca/spiritualdisciplines/>. Join us!

What's happening at First?

Morning Prayer

Join us each morning, Monday to Friday at 7:15 am to begin your day with scripture and prayer, via Zoom. Visit our website at firstbaptistregina.ca for the link.

Children

All FBC Kids: Tuesday, June 16, and Thursday, June 18, will be our last times together before we take a short break. Don't miss it!

Youth

For youth we will be hosting several face to face gatherings before July. We are excited to be able to visit with one another in person. Summer will see us reduce our gatherings but we will still plan to get together in smaller groups, or over Zoom, semi-regularly. Zoom has allowed us to be in contact, and will hopefully become a tool that we can continue to use both in the short and long term to stay connected and build relationships.

Gospel of Mark Small Group

In May we had a new small group get underway with two different meeting times: The 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month at 7pm and the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month at 10am. We are reading through the Gospel of Mark at about a chapter a week, discussing twice a month. This is not an in-depth study of Mark, but more a slow reading of Mark with informal discussion. We meet online via Zoom in light of the ongoing COVID situation and our conversation, along with highlights from Mark's Gospel, includes visiting to get to know each other better and we also take some time to pray together. We invite you to join us! Contact Pastor Richard Hovey (richard.fbcregina@sasktel.net) and he will get you connected.



Interestingly, according to modern astronomers, space is finite. This is a very comforting thought—particularly for people who can never remember where they have left things. (Woody Allen)

Why do they call it rush hour when nothing is moving?

The reason computer chips are so small is that computers don't eat much.

“The Fruit of the Spirit”

Pastor Joel Russell MacLean’s sermon from June 14, 2020

Galatians 5:13 – 26

I wonder if you could think with me about what it is that unites the people of Saskatchewan. About what it is that unites the people of Canada.

What are the things that we look at in one another to know that we are all part of Saskatchewan or that we are all together in Canada?

What are the practices that define us?

One of the things that unites us, of course, is the Roughriders, isn't it? But it's not just that I'm thinking of. What about parties? The pursuit of sex? Shopping? Outrage, anger and complaining. And war - especially our peacekeepers and the World Wars.

Now I know there are plenty of other things that we might point to. Many of them are good and a few of them are ugly. But I've chosen these practices, these habits that I think society relies on for unity for a reason.

If you open your Bibles and look at Galatians 5:20, Paul offers a list of vices. Now it's possible that these are not just a random list of vices. Some of the words, if you look into them a bit, are connected to Greek religious practices. And possibly, some of the other words hint at the Galatians cultural background. It is possible that this letter was written to a region, in what is now called Turkey, that was populated by descendants of Celtic warriors that had invaded from France hundreds of years before this. Well into the first few centuries after Christ's death, there was still a Celtic language spoken in that region.

Regardless, the main question for the churches of Galatia that Paul is asking in this letter is this: What is going to be the culture that binds you together now? What is going to define you? What will you say that it means to be a Galatian Christian?

The question for us today is the same. What is it that defines First Baptist as a church family?

It could be that with this list of vices in verse 20, that Paul is reminding the Galatians that once, before meeting Jesus, their identity and their unity with their neighbours came from their religious celebrations, as questionable as they may sound to our ears, and their history of being war-like mercenaries. And now they're being tempted by other Christians

to turn to the Jewish laws as a means of identifying themselves and as a means of setting themselves apart as a group.

Paul urged them, throughout this letter, to choose something else. Something else far better, something else far more challenging. Paul was convinced that the options available to humanity for unity and for identity had changed, thanks to Jesus Christ. A new age had been inaugurated, had been started, for humanity and creation. In this new age, the Jewish law and serving your own self-interests and passions no longer belonged. Those things belonged to the old age that was passing away.

Paul therefore exhorted the Galatians, "The new age is the age of the Holy

Spirit, so walk in the Spirit. The evidence that the Holy Spirit is living in your new church family, this will unite you."

So look for love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control. And when you see these things, you will know that God is with you.

Do we see signs in our family, our church family, that the Holy Spirit is among us?

Our AGM is going to follow the morning worship. It is always a time for us to look back on the year that is behind us, and I am so grateful to God as I do that. I am so grateful for each one of you. I see so many signs of the Holy Spirit at work among us. I know there are ways that we can improve. I know that there are ways that we can continue to grow.

I have seen joy, so often, when we are together. Everyone is so quick to be generous. Whether it is to meet needs around our world, to meet needs in our city, or to meet the needs that we each have. People are quick to be part of prayer.

It is a strange thing when you love someone that you feel joy and pride in seeing them thrive. That is the joy that I have, watching people and watching this community that I have the privilege to be a part of, as they evidence that they are filled with the Holy Spirit.

In other words, I have seen that you love each other, that you have a deep affection for one other. It has been exposed especially during this crisis. Instead of holding back, instead of letting the restrictions keep us away from each other, everyone has looked for ways to take part, to stay in touch, to provide where it's needed.

Again, it's tempting to say that I'm proud of you. But, it's more than that. It's a sign that God is indeed real, that God is indeed present and among us. It is by God's grace that we do these things. It is by God's grace that we love each other in this way. We continue to give thanks to God.

We know we are following Jesus when we love each other. Paul emphasized that four times in chapter 5 of Galatians. In verse 6 he wrote, "The only thing that counts is faith working through love." In verse 13 he wrote, "Through love, become slaves to one another." In verse 14 he wrote, "The whole law is summed up in a single commandment: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'." And in verse 22, he wrote, "The fruit of the Holy Spirit is love." The foundation for this love is the love that Jesus has for you, for he gave his life for you.

Let's continue to be known for our love for one another.

If we have a clear vision of the age of the Holy Spirit, this can also become a way of looking at how we interact with Canadian culture.

Will the story of Canadian unity and identity that we choose to re-tell with one another, in our communities, and in our neighbourhoods, will that story be centred around being forged together in the world wars, or that we were born through our leadership in war?

Or will we be united around choosing to sacrifice – especially if there is a coming financial crisis that we must endure – choosing to sacrifice to ensure that everyone has equal access to health services, to a basic income, and to education? Will that be the story that we tell others about our identity?

In Regina, will we be known for ghettos and segregation, or will we seek simple, gentle, kind, and peaceful means of resolving reconciliation as it has been described in the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission? Which will we choose?

Now as Christians in a secular age, we can make a subtle mistake here. We must not separate the fruit from the source of the fruit. Love is a fruit of the Spirit, and therefore, humanity must begin by seeking to be connected to the Holy Spirit. The attempts to love others by seeking justice will once again prove tragic and disastrous to communities and to our environment if we pursue it without connection to being reconciled with God first.

The goal of a better world, of a better political or economic system, the goal of having a better life, can be worked toward without any reference to God as our Creator, without recognizing that we are God's creatures and are dependent upon God. In other words, if the goals that we have are primarily agnostic or atheistic in their approach, we can see the track record over the last few hundred years, how consistently this has led western nations to commit atrocities in the name of justice and progress. It leads to the abuse of people and of the land. People who are in the way of this progress end up being hated, and their suffering, and even their death becomes acceptable to us. This is just the price

that must be paid for the “greater good.” The land itself can end up being used up, again, for the “greater good.”

In God's economy, the “greater good” is a person, Jesus Christ. We are not led by an ideology or a philosophy or a system (as maybe you're getting tired of me saying) but we are led by a person, by a being: in today's passage, by the person of the Holy Spirit.

Now, for example, if we want apples, we know that someone has to go and plant an apple tree and nurture it. Apples aren't manufactured – yet. Lord have mercy upon us! And so, we can't have apples without an apple tree. That is true of any fruit, of course. You simply cannot have the fruit without the source of the fruit. If you want a kind of fruit, you must seek the source, a connection to the trees themselves. And similarly, if you see apples, you know that somewhere there is an apple tree that has provided them.

Wherever we see the fruit of the Holy Spirit as Paul has listed them, wherever we see these things at work in our world, what we are seeing is a sign of God's grace. God remains faithful to humanity and creation. God continues to work, even where people oppose God. God continues to send sunlight onto everyone. God continues, in some parts of the world at any rate, to send rain, and likewise, God continues to send and nurture peace, and kindness, and gentleness, and love – again, even in many places where God is not acknowledged.

Efforts for justice, however, that refuse to seek God will inevitably fail, at best.

First of all, we know that the source of the fruit is God. This means that if we wish to love more, if we wish to have more patience, if we wish to be kinder and gentler, if we wish to have more self-control, the place we begin is by drawing close to God, by being reconciled to God, and by being filled with the Holy Spirit.

To the consternation of many, Christianity does not have an inflexible set of rules, but instead, responds to each person, to each individual, to each situation. As Paul puts it very clearly, we are not under law but under the Holy Spirit.

When we ask the Holy Spirit, “How should I live?”, the Holy Spirit treats us individually, wanting each of us to be saved. Since we do not have the law, therefore, there is a responsibility in our lives for us. Life in the Holy Spirit requires direct and regular communication and obedience to the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, we not only draw near to God, we must draw near to one another. We are all in this together. The true measure of a faithful people is not personal or individual piety,

but a pious church family. After all, Paul's primary concern in this letter to the Galatians is the division that is occurring in the community.

As well, if you look at the list of vices, all of them take place in relationship. And again, if you look at the list of virtues, all of them that are listed in verse 22, all of them take place in relationship.

Freedom, then, is not found in absolute independence. Freedom is not found when you serve your own identity or your own truth. Freedom is found when you are in a loving community, in Christian fellowship.

Today at our AGM, and through the coming year, which appears to be full of uncertainty, let us seek to be led by the Holy Spirit, privately in our own lives, but especially as a church family. Let us ask God what it is that God wants us to do in the midst of the needs that are arising. In the midst of opportunities that are arising. And we will experience another kind of freedom—joy. We will find that our greatest desire is not success, after all, or everything going well. Our greatest desire is to know that God is with us. Amen.

Website

The COVID-19 crisis has impacted our church events and schedules in every way. The church website (firstbaptistregina.ca) is a valuable source of information that can be used to keep you connected and up to date with how our church leadership and pastors are responding.

We are currently holding Sunday worship and Learning for Life (L4L) via Zoom meeting. The links to these meetings can be found on the home/sermon page of our website. As well, there are bi-weekly small group meetings, and daily prayers that are utilizing Zoom.

You will also find links to our Facebook page and YouTube channel, where we are presenting video reflections and devotions by a number of our members and pastors.

**Stepped on my scale
this morning and it
said: Please use social
distancing, one person
at a time. 🤔 🤔**

Did you hear about the director of the Department of Motor Vehicles who resigned on Tuesday? He tried to resign on Monday, but discovered he'd been standing in the wrong line.

A man is on trial for armed robbery. The jury comes back with the verdict. The foreman stands, clears his throat and announces, "Not guilty." The defendant leaps to his feet. "Awesome!" he shouts. "Does that mean I get to keep the money?"

Tithing during the pandemic

With the COVID-19 crisis limiting contact with others and restricting meetings of groups, please do not neglect the financial needs of our church.

We have several ways to provide your regular tithes and donations to the church:

1. Mail your gifts to the church or call and leave a message at (306) 359-1450 to arrange for an in-person pick-up. Please place your cheque in your regular offering envelope (or any envelope marked "Offering"), and seal that inside another envelope addressed to the church:

First Baptist Church
2241 Victoria Ave, Regina, SK S4P 0S4.

2. Establish a **Pre-authorized Remittance (PAR) Plan**. This will automatically transfer funds from your account into the FBC Regina account on a regular basis. Please email the church or contact the Treasurer if you would like to set up PAR, or change your commitment.
3. Make an online donation:
 - Use **Interac e-Transfer** to donate from your phone or computer to FBCRegina@gmail.com *(no fee or cost to the church)*
 - Use a credit card with a PayPal account via the **PayPal Giving Fund** *(no fee or cost to the church... 100% of your donation reaches us and contributes to our mission)*
 - Use a credit card or PayPal via **CanadaHelps** *(a fee of 4% is deducted from the donation)*
 - Use a credit or debit card via **FBC ChurchTrac** *(the church is charged a fee of approximately 3% for each donation)*

PLEASE refer to our website at firstbaptistregina.ca for more specific information on these contribution methods. You may also contact the treasurer at (306) 775-1497 or email the church at main_fbcregina@sasktel.net for further details.