

# First Baptist Regina Weekly News

*For the Week of March 7th, 2021*

## The Sin of Sloth

Years ago, a few of us were talking together about remaining healthy and active. Why is it that sometimes, without a clear reason, we go through long spells with a lack of energy? Is it a flu? A poor diet or lack of exercise? Spiritual attack? Mental illness? The buildup of stress? Or is it just our age? It may sound serious, but we were being lighthearted. In that spirit, one woman answered, somewhat flippantly (and echoing the Apostle Paul), “This one thing I do. I set my alarm. I get up. I make myself some coffee. Then I do one thing I need to do.”

Acedia (a loss of care), sloth, and sadness sometimes appear on various lists of “the deadly sins.” (Another translation might be “the deadly ‘attacks’, or ‘challenges.’”) The inclusion of acedia and sadness emphasizes that we are fighting more than just laziness in our effort to persevere, follow, and imitate Jesus.

A struggle to get going some days may be foreign for some or even most people. However, I face it often enough from month to month.

Many things wear away the human will to persevere. There is, therefore, no single answer to an ongoing attack of acedia. And now, fortunately, we can include medical help as part of an answer in some cases.

For me, another part of the answer to acedia is diligence. I continue to return to that woman’s words which chime like wisdom in the ears of my heart. Get up. Make some coffee (although, I’ve heard some don’t drink coffee!) Do one thing that needs to be done.

May God enable you to find enjoyment in your toil, and guard your hearts with peace.

With love,



Pastor Joel



*Sin? This is who God has called me to be! I’m calling my lawyer... shortly.*

## What's happening at First?

### Morning Prayer

Join us each morning, Monday to Thursday at 7:15 am to begin your day with scripture and prayer, via Zoom. Visit our [website](#) for the link.

### Children

Pastor Kayely: "Over the last few months, the children have been gathering for Godly Play (ages 2-6) and Oasis (ages 6-11) with Julie and Kayely. In Godly Play, Julie has been teaching stories about Jesus' life on the journey to Easter. In Oasis, Kayely has been teaching about the concept of "Shalom," using materials from our mission agency, Canadian Baptist Ministries.

"For Lent, the kids have been invited to consider their intentions for the Lenten season. They have also received art pages for 7 "Psalms of the season" and have been invited to colour their journey through these Psalms."

For more information on our children's program, please contact [Pastor Kayely](#).

### Youth

The youth are meeting alternate Fridays, on Zoom. Please keep them and Pastor Chris in your prayers. For more information, contact [Pastor Chris](#).

### Adults

**Learning for Life:** Pastor Richard is facilitating an online series: "Jesus' Earthly Ministry: Revealing the Heart of God." This class is focusing on the four Gospels, allowing them to shape the account of Jesus' life and teachings, and discovering how Jesus revealed not only God's heart toward humanity, but also how our hearts ought to be toward one another. For more information, visit [our website](#) or contact [Pastor Richard](#).

**Voice:** A small group for women who like to read and enjoy lively conversation. The group meets every second Wednesday from 7 to 9 pm, using Zoom. For more information, visit [our website](#), send an email to [the church](#), or contact Laureen S or Bonnie AW.

**Reading through the Old Testament:** In this online reading group, participants are reading through the Old Testament chronologically. The group meets every Thursday at 10:30 am, via Zoom. For more information, please visit [our website](#) or contact [Pastor Richard](#).

**Gospel of John small group study:** Pastor Richard is leading a small group online that is looking at the Gospel of John. There are two groups meeting, via Zoom. The first group meets on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month at 7 pm, and the second, on the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month at 10 am. For more information, please visit [our website](#) or contact [Pastor Richard](#).

## Our Condolences



We extend our condolences to the family and friends of Margaret Ziolkowski, who passed away on Saturday, February 27, 2021. Margaret, along with her late husband Erwin, was a member of First Baptist for many years. Her active participation and support was appreciated in many different areas in the life of the First Baptist community. As they welcomed person after person, she and Erwin were among those who have played a major role over the years in making the church "A Place to Belong."

We also extend our condolences to the family and friends of Ruth Johnstone, who passed away on February 24, 2021. Along with her husband, Lorne, Ruth shared her musical ability with First Baptist as a faithful member of the choir for a number of years. If you'd like to read her obituary, you will find it on the Regina Leader-Post website: [Ruth's obituary](#).



## AGM 2021

Our spring Annual General Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, March 21st, 2021, following the morning worship service. It will be held both online, via Zoom, and in person in the church sanctuary. Details about attending in person to come.

**Be sure to attend:** We have much to celebrate and much to discuss!

The 2020 Annual Report and other related information may be found on [our website](#). There will also be hard copies available by March 7th, 2021 in the church foyer.



Two elderly ladies had been friends for many decades. Over the years they had shared all kinds of activities and adventures. Lately, their activities had been limited to playing cards a few times a week.

One day when playing cards, one looked at the other and said, "Now don't get mad at me. I know we've been friends a long time, but I just can't think of your name. I've thought and thought, but I can't remember it. Please tell me what your name is."

Her friend glared at her. For at least three minutes she just stared and glared. Finally she said, "How soon do you need to know?"

## Without His Cross

Pastor John's sermon from Sunday, February 28th, 2021

Scripture: Genesis 17: 1-7, 15, 16; Psalm 22: 23-31; Mark 8: 27-38

In this Gospel passage filled with many LIFE LESSONS, Jesus poses a very enlightening question to his disciples: "Who do they say that I am?"

The American college football season was well under way and a dilemma arose on an American college campus on the eve of their team's most important game of the season.

The star quarterback of the team had been disqualified from playing in the upcoming weekend's big game because he had been caught cheating on exams. The football coach came to his star player's defense, insisting to the dean that his star player's character was above reproach and the player was just not capable of committing such action as cheating.

The coach pressed the dean, "What kind of person do you think my star quarterback is? Who do you think he is? Who do others say that he is?"

COACH: "What evidence do you have?" he asked the dean.

DEAN: "Well, he sat next to an 'A' student and his answers were exactly the same as the 'A' student's answers."

The coach reflected for a moment and then replied,

COACH: "With all due respect dean, that is only circumstantial evidence. Maybe the boy really crammed hard for the exam."

The dean did not hesitate to respond.

DEAN: "Well, I thought of that too, until we came to the examination's last question. The 'A' student had answered, 'I don't know.' And the football player answered, 'I don't know either.'"

In verse 27, we find Jesus and His disciples in Caesarea Philippi, an especially pagan city well known for its worship of Greek gods and its temples devoted to the ancient god Pan. Even though this was a pagan city, it seemed to be a fitting place for Jesus to ask the disciples to recognize Him as the "Son of God."

Jesus had been avoiding this region of Galilee for many reasons. The decision in part or in whole, seemed to have everything to do with the feeding of the 5,000 (Mark 6:30-44). Here are two reasons some scholars and commentaries have given for Jesus' decision:

1. It was Jesus purpose to avoid the opposition in Galilee and to secure opportunity to teach his disciples privately (Mark 9: 30, 31)
2. Jesus did not want to be known for merely being the “Miracle Man.”

Jesus asks a question of the disciples, “Who do people say that I am?”

In verse 28, the disciples respond to the question without hesitation. “Some people say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” It was obvious from the peoples’ responses that they did not know who Jesus was, nor did the disciples.

In verse 29, the disciples were not necessarily prepared for Jesus’ next question. Jesus asks: “Who do YOU say that I am?”

Might there have been a period of stunned silence? Would any of us have been confident enough to respond? But one confident disciple, Peter, speaks up and provides a profound answer...a confession of sorts. Peter says, “You are the Christ.”

We know that Jesus rarely used the name “Christ”. Why was this? It is believed that popular Jewish ideas were associated with the term “Christ” and these ideas were largely political and national.

Jesus second question was of even more significance than the first.

One cannot help but be moved by these LIFE LESSONS gleaned from Jesus’ second question:

1. It is not enough for us to know what others say about Jesus: we must know, understand, and accept for ourselves that He is the Messiah;
2. You and I must move from “curiosity to commitment, from admiration to adoration.”

The title, “Son of Man”, is Jesus’ most common name for himself.

We read about this in Daniel 7: 13, where the Son of Man is referred to “as a heavenly figure who, in the end times, has authority and power.” This name refers to Jesus as the Messiah, or “the representative man, the human agent of God, who is vindicated by God.” The significance of this passage is that the title, Son of Man, is closely connected with Peter’s profound answer, “You are the Christ”. This title confirmed its Messianic significance.

Following Jesus’ second question and Peter’s profound response, in verse 30, Jesus offers up a stunning response to His disciples, “Do not to tell anyone about me.”

Why did Jesus warn His disciples not to tell anyone the truth about him? Jesus knew that His disciples needed more instruction about the work He would accomplish

through his death and resurrection. He also knew that without more teaching, His faithful disciples would have only half the picture.

Matthew helps clarify this question for us in Matthew 16 and Matthew 8:

As one writer notes, “[In Matthew 16: 20,] Matthew uses the words “NOT TO TELL” and he did so because of the false concepts of the Jews, who looked for an exclusively national and political Messiah. Jesus told his disciples not to publicize Peter’s confession, lest it precipitate a revolution against Rome.”

In Matthew 8:4, Jesus says, “DON’T TELL ANYONE.”

There were, perhaps several reasons for this:

1. Jesus did not want to be considered just a miracle worker;
2. Jesus did not want his teaching ministry hindered by too much publicity for his healing miracles;
3. Jesus did not want his death to come prematurely, that is, before he had finished his ministry.

Scripture says that almost immediately following Jesus’ curious response to Peter’s confession, Jesus turns and calls the crowd to Him, along with His disciples, and begins to teach them. Jesus begins preparing them for what was going to happen to Him by telling them three times that he would soon die.

This new focus reveals two important points:

1. A change of location from Galilee, where Mark had reported much of Jesus’ public ministry, to Jerusalem. Now we move into the final days of Jesus’ life on earth. His teaching of the Son of Man’s suffering, persecution and death begins to unfold;
2. Jesus defines what the true meaning of “Christ” is as the title of “Son of Man” applies to him. We read in the Gospels that this is the most common title for Himself and is mentioned 81 times, but never used by anyone but Jesus.

Mark tells us in verse 32 that Jesus spoke in straightforward terms with His disciples about His death and resurrection. As the scripture says, “Jesus then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and, after three days, rise again.” (Mark 8: 28-31)

The questions arises, were the disciples able to comprehend everything that Jesus was teaching them? \*Keep in mind that when the disciples had confessed Jesus as the

Christ, they still did not know all that it meant. An answer to this question comes quickly, as witnessed in a dramatic moment following Jesus' teachings of suffering and death.

Remember, Peter had shown remarkable insight in his response to who Jesus was. But now, Peter steps across the line with his bold and brazen response to Jesus' teachings. Peter takes Jesus aside and without hesitation, REBUKES Jesus. Rebukes Jesus?

In verse 33, we read about how Jesus responded to Peter. First, we need to understand that Peter seemed to be the leader of the disciples, and was often the spokesman for all of them. Jesus had an immediate response. He turned around, looked at the disciples and rebuked Peter. JESUS REBUKES PETER: "Get behind me, Satan! You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of people."

Was Jesus singling Peter out for his action? Many writers feel that in singling out Peter after his rebuke, Jesus was taking the opportunity to rebuke all of the disciples indirectly. What we realize at this moment, is that the disciples' hearts were in the right place, but unknowingly, their compassion and concern for Jesus was preventing Jesus from going to the cross and thus fulfilling his mission on earth.

Poor Peter! Peter was a flawed individual who had suffered defeat many times. For Peter, there was no place in his understanding or his concept of the Messiah for suffering and rejection. Instead, Peter rebuked Jesus for teaching what to him seemed not only inconceivable, but also terribly wrong. Once again Peter was not seeing the whole picture, only a part of the whole.

LIFE LESSON: We definitely do not want to repeat Peter's mistake. To prevent us from going down the same path as Peter, we need to focus our hearts and minds on the good that God can create out of troubled seas, difficulties, and apparent evil, and focus upon the hope of the resurrection that follows the crucifixion.

There was another significant LIFE LESSON taken to heart by the disciples from this interaction between Peter and Jesus:

1. The disciples realized that their job was not to correct, guide, or protect Jesus, but to FOLLOW Him;
2. This life lesson *would* be grasped, but only AFTER Jesus' death and resurrection. Then, and only then, would the disciples, His followers, fully understand why He had to die.

It would be most understandable for us to have some sympathy for Peter, especially after being rebuked by Jesus. However, as one commentary expressed, "[I]n that moment, Peter was not processing God's purposes, but only revealing his own natural human instincts, desires and feelings. Peter's heart desire was for Christ to be king, but definitely not to be the suffering servant prophesied in Isaiah 53. Being a follower of

Jesus, Peter was only prepared to receive the glory of following the Messiah, but he did not want to experience the persecution that would result from being seen as a follower of the Messiah.”

LIFE LESSON: Our Christian journey is not a paved road to wealth and ease. We may experience hard work, persecution, deprivation, and immense pain and suffering.

After Jesus looking back at the disciples and rebuking Peter, he calls the crowd to Him, along with the disciples and speaks to them: “If anyone would come after me, they must deny themselves and take up the cross and follow me.” An interesting observation here is that, up to this point, Mark’s original audience had been the Romans, who knew what it meant by taking up the cross. Death on the cross was an extreme form of punishment...a method of execution used by Rome for dangerous criminals. A prisoner who carried his own cross to the place of execution, signified his submission to Rome’s power.

Jesus used this image of carrying a cross (cross-bearing) to illustrate the ultimate submission required of His followers.

Jesus is not against the experiencing of pleasure, nor is He saying that we should experience needless pain. Jesus was expressing that, being a follower of Christ takes “heroic effort moment by moment,” even more so to do His will when the work is difficult and the future looks bleak.

Peter played a significant role in this passage of scripture. How would you describe Peter?

1. Was he a doer of deeds? Absolutely! Was he proactive in the ministry or merely a sideline observer? Simon Peter stepped forward and was a man of action. He entered fully into the ministry arena of life
2. How would you capture Peter in a photograph? Some have described Peter as having a rugged face, covered with dust, sweat, and yes, even blood.
3. Was Peter brave and resolute in his actions? Yes, Peter was a valiant human being, but one who was flawed, imperfect and who required many course corrections.

Peter was neither timid, nor lacking in courage. He was neither meek, nor a timid soul. We see Peter’s life journey as a testimony of one who had experienced both the pain of defeat, as well as the joy of victory. Not only did Simon Peter’s life reveal error upon error and flaw upon flaw. Peter’s life journey was like peeling back an onion, layer by layer, revealing a man who would become a man of immense character and strength.

Jesus had referred to Peter as the “Rock,” but one writer referred to Peter as “a fallen rock”. Yet, no matter how many face-plants, defeats, and failures Peter experienced,



ultimately, this man became a firm, rock solid foundation in his actions to both proclaim and spread the gospel of the Good News of his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

This flawed individual, “the Rock”, was the man who, in the midst of the Roman persecutions, would become the one driving force who would singlehandedly hold the church together. This was a critical time for the early Christians who were being attacked on all sides and being eliminated by the thousands.

In verse 35, we find another LIFE LESSON: We should be willing to lose our lives for the sake of the Gospel.

This is not because our lives have no value...are worthless, but because there is nothing, not even life itself, that can compare to what we gain by being a follower of Jesus. He wants us to make the choice to follow Him, rather than continuing to lead a life of sin and self-fulfillment. Jesus wants us to hand over control of our lives, our destiny, and allow Him to lead and guide us.

Verses 36 and 37 convey that many of us expend a lot of energy seeking the pleasures of life. Yet Jesus makes it very clear that living a life focused upon attaining pleasure, possessions, position, or power, is ultimately worthless.

LIFE LESSON: Whatever you and I have accumulated on earth is only temporary.

Pleasure, power, possessions, or position, cannot be exchanged for your soul. You may work hard at getting what you want, and might even gain a “pleasurable” life. Yet, in the end, you will find your life to be hollow and empty.

The question you must ask yourself is this, ARE YOU WILLING to make the pursuit of God more important than the selfish pursuit of pleasure? If you ARE willing to become a follower of Jesus, you will know what it means to experience unspeakable joy, live abundantly now, and to have eternal life as well.

In verse 38, Jesus talks about first and last, saving and losing. Jesus turns our worldly view upside down. Here he gives us a choice. “We can reject Jesus now and be rejected by Him at His second coming, or you can accept Him now and be accepted by Him then.”

You may escape shame for the moment by rejecting Jesus, but rejecting Jesus will ultimately guarantee an eternity of shame later.

LIFE LESSON: There are times on our life journey where we must make significant and life changing decisions.

We are like potted plants being removed from the confines of the pots. As we prepare to plant them in the ground, they sometimes require the roots to be roughed up, shaken loose, so that their roots are able to grow. We may need a little shaking up in order to stretch our spiritual roots and grow stronger in the faith.

In this Gospel passage, we have many helpful LIFE LESSONS to reflect upon, and we experience many of them through the life journey of Jesus, His disciples, and especially Simon Peter. We can see in Simon Peter that making the presence of God immediate is an ongoing process of growth. Peter's life reflected times when his journey was rough and shook him up. We can see in Simon Peter that the process of growth included getting up off the ground after falling, failing, after defeat, and bouncing up every time to move forward.

Where are YOU on your Christian life journey?

1. Might this be the moment, when you are feeling His glorious presence in your life?
2. Do you sense that God is trying to shape you into the beautiful Christian follower that he wants you to be?
3. Are you like the plants that needed to be shaken before experiencing growth?

Reflect upon these words from a Gloria and William Gaither gospel hymn:

"Life was shattered and hope was gone – crushing the load that I bore; then out of the depths I cried, 'O God, give me something worth living for.' Something more than my yesterdays, more than I had before. Something more than wealth or fame – He gave me something worth living for."

LIFE LESSON: Someone once said, "The persons who try to do something worthwhile and fail, are infinitely closer to fulfillment than those who try to do nothing and succeed."

"O the joy of sins forgiven – nothing's the same as before; My life overflows since Jesus came and gave me something worth living for."

Are you willing to shake yourself off and do something worth living for? Yes, you might fall flat on your face a few times on your life journey. But this is not failure if you pick yourself up, shake yourself off, and move forward, and grow as a follower of Christ.

Take a moment and reflect upon the cross of Christ, and remember this, "[U]nder the judgment of the cross, we are given a choice: Love or indifference." "Love one another" is God's command. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are all on a spiritual life journey, and there can be no other choice for us but to trust and obey. When you and I make this choice, something beautiful grows within you –

"Something beautiful, something good;  
All my confusion He understood;  
All I had to offer Him was brokenness and strife,  
But He made something beautiful of your life." (Gloria Gaither)

God “spiritually shook” Peter like a gardener who shakes the plants before planting them in the rich soil to grow and flourish. We have witnessed God’s handiwork in shaping and molding Peter into something beautiful...something worthwhile – a courageous, determined, faithful, strong man, upon whose broad shoulders rested the early church.

If God could do what He did with an impetuous, impulsive, flawed, stubborn, stumbling fisherman like Peter, IMAGINE...just imagine what He can do through you! BUT, you must be willing to undergo an ongoing spiritual shakeup. The road may be long and dusty, but the end reward is heavenly!

Are you willing to carry His cross? REMEMBER, “[I]t is not enough to know what others say about Jesus. We must know, understand, and accept for ourselves that He is the Messiah. We must move from curiosity to commitment, from admiration to adoration.”

“You cannot bear His image, without bearing His cross.”

Let us recall Jesus’ two questions:

Who do they say that I am? Who do YOU say that He is?

Ask yourself the following similar questions:

Who do people say that YOU are?

Who does *He* say that YOU are?

Remember these partial lyrics from Joseph Martin’s piece, “Without His Cross” and then listen to the singing of this piece that follows.

“Without His death there is no life.  
Without His blood there is no pardon.  
Without His cross there is no crown.”

## 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: 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](http://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](mailto:main_fbcregina@sasktel.net) for further details.



Three boys are in the school yard bragging about their fathers. The first boy says, "My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a poem, and they give him \$25."

The second boy says, "That's nothing. My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a song, and they give him \$200."

The third boy says, "I got you both beat. My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a sermon, and it takes eight men to collect all the money!"