



The Torch

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER 2023 – OCTOBER VOLUME 68 NUMBER 1

Pastor's Pen

You may have read in one of the emails we send out weekly that I received a grant from Duke Divinity School in Durham, North Carolina. The grant was written to give me an opportunity to reflect on the transition from pastoring First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill to retiring from that position. Though there is no stipend I would get with it, it will take care of expenses to hire a retirement coach, attend some conferences and to talk with other pastors who have retired. It has not been too common for Black pastors to retire from churches. Most either die as pastor, walk out, or get put out of churches. In my looking at the history of First Baptist, I don't think any of my predecessors retired. I am looking forward to making the transition.

This week I am at Duke for the orientation for the grant. It has been a good experience. Each person wrote his/her own proposal to receive the grant. It is a mixed group of people male and female and from varied ethnic backgrounds. The key is trying to get ministers in various aspects of ministry to either reflect upon where they are, where they are going, or where they are coming from in their ministry. But one of the underlying themes is for ministers to reflect and rest, as well as focus on the road ahead whatever that may be, trusting that God is guiding us there.

One of the devotions we did was to look at and reflect on a portion of Psalm 46:10. I would like to give you an opportunity to reflect upon this one portion of the verse as we did. As you finish reading each line I want you to pause and reflect upon it as I have suggested under each line. See if you can hear God speaking to you.

Be still and know that I am God

When you think of God as the "I am" what comes to your mind?
(pause; reflect)

Be still and know

What knowledge do you gain from your unique faith journey?
(pause; reflect)

Be still

How can being still help you in your spirituality and your Christian maturity?
(pause; reflect)

Be

What does it take for you just to "be", not based on anything else you may "be" or have obtained or have become through schooling, work, and associations. Who are you as you stand barren before the Lord?
(pause; reflect)

Kelly M. Smith Jr.
Pastor

DISCIPLESHIP MOMENT

YHWH Roie

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” ~Psalm 23:1

Submitted by Rev. Joe Ella Darby, Assistant to the Pastor for Discipleship

Many of us memorized the 23rd Psalm as children but maybe we were adults before we really understood the significance of God being our shepherd. Psalm 23 is power packed with verses that should guide our understanding of God’s heart for us and God’s desire to lead us on our Christian journey.

Psalm 23 is attributed to King David, who was a tender of sheep as a young boy, and later called to be the Shepherd King of Israel. As he penned this psalm, I imagine him drawing from his own experiences, having much to draw from. Being a shepherd, recognizing the need to be shepherding, and allowing God to be his shepherd, invites us into the intimacy of a shepherd with its sheep.

In Psalm 23:1, King David named God YHWH Roie, which means The Lord is my Shepherd. This is the only time in the Old Testament that this Hebrew name appears, though there are many references to God as shepherd. Note: I find it interesting that YHWH Roie, sometimes written YHWH Roi, and El Roi, are very similar Hebrew spellings both naming God. El Roi means the God who Sees, and this is the name Hagar gives God while feeling abandoned, rejected, afraid and alone in the desert. Hagar, seen as a lesser prominent biblical character akin to Abraham’s wife Sarah, is credited with experiencing intimacy with a God who “saw” her. Both Hagar and King David had the privilege to name God very intimate names. It is fitting that King David is the one to name and identify God as a shepherd, but not just as any shepherd, “his” shepherd.

The Lord is “My” Shepherd. In this statement alone, David expresses an intimate and personal relationship with God. A shepherd is intimately connected with its sheep—caring for them, providing for them, healing them, leading them, guiding them, rescuing them, and even protecting them at the risk of their own safety. This is how David sees God. David also sees himself as a sheep, needing a shepherd to care for him, provide for him, heal him, lead him, guide him, rescue and protect him. Sheep relationship with a shepherd is built on complete trust and followership.

Sheep learn the voice of its shepherd and depends on that voice. It will not follow the voice of another shepherd and will flee the voice of a stranger. Shepherds lead forward at the head of the flock and sheep follow because they know and trust the shepherd.

Understanding the relationship of a shepherd and its sheep brings an awareness and assurance of David’s declaration of the Lord as his shepherd. He is assured of the Lord’s willingness and ability to lead him. He is assured of his willingness and ability to follow Him. Naming the Lord as his shepherd in Psalm 23:1, David is confessing a definite trust in the Lord and when we read the rest of Psalm 23, we can glean a sense of this shepherd/sheep relationship and claim it for ourselves.

Have you considered what it means for you to have the Lord as your shepherd? Have you spent time in scripture cultivating an ear to learn God’s voice above every other voice, even your own? Are you willing to be completely trusting of God to lead and guide you, bringing you to places of safety and rest needed for your flourishing? Do you believe that having God as your shepherd you will not want for anything?

As I write these questions, I am challenged with my heart response of yes and my practice that doesn’t always align with my yes. Just as sheep, I get fearful of the obstacles I encounter on my way and tend to run from the safety of God’s voice and presence. Being reminded of God’s heart as shepherd brings comfort. God will come after me and draw me back to himself.

Take some time to reflect on your relationship with God. What do you need to trust God more as your shepherd? Be intentional about growing in intimacy with God as your shepherd, trusting that He longs lead and guide you, caring for your every need so you never feel in want. Trust the Shepherd’s love for you!

Prayer Request/Sick & Shut-in List

Deacon Richard Dinkins
 Sis. Jan Jones Carter
 Major Alicia R. Bodie

Bro. Derrick McDaniel
 Good Samaritan Health & Rehab
 500 Hickory Hollow Terrace
 Antioch, TN 37013

Sis. Rose McDonald
 111 N. Carolina Ave. #204
 Lexington, NC 27292

Alice Smith Risby
 Maple Cottage Assisted Living
 101 Maple Drive
 Hendersonville, TN 37075

Sis. Maggie Roper
 Riverview Health and Rehab
 1600 West Claiborne Ave.
 Greenwood, MS 38930

Sis. Leslie Williams
 2929 Old Franklin Rd.
 Antioch, TN 37013

BIRTHDAYS

OCTOBER	
1	Rose Busby Zelma Ewing Mercedes Faulcon Mia Washington
2	Sondra Dade
3	Imani Chatman Adena Smith Williams
4	Carmen Howse Aisha Westbrook
5	Ganeisha Rowe Celeste Williams
7	Mackenzie Wood
13	Florence Crawford
15	Nicole Alexander Joshua Ivory Chandra Pleas
17	Sheila Anderson Sean-Michael Coleman Vernell Neely
18	Gabriel Faulcon Brian Wood
22	Darryl Doughty Ariana Washington
23	Jeremiah Kirk
24	Armani Beasley Amari Beasley
25	Ty'Ki Beasley Ty'Kia Beasley Una Fenderson
27	Ebony Robinson
29	Henry Caudle Sr. Felecia Johnson Vincent Johnson
30	Martin Currie
31	Kyra Hayes

NOVEMBER	
1	Jamal Buchanan
3	Kamryn Cruson Karmyn Cruson Asalean Springfield
5	Terry Deas
7	Luke Molette
9	Evelyn Okediji
10	Robert Boone Jeffrey Santil
11	Alice Smith Risby
15	Lois Suttles
16	Clara Elam
17	Dawann Westbrook
18	Jasmine Easley
20	Aaron Powell Jr. Spencer Washington II
21	Titus Wootson
22	Carol Boone Adrienne Fancher Howard Smith Jr.
23	Skyler Washington
24	Kevin Copeland
25	Mary Jan Carter Melody Neely Allison Wootson
30	Fanchetter Ennix

DECEMBER	
1	Kayla Cruson Gary Faulcon
2	Barbara Doughty
3	Kelly Copeland Deborah Luter Ilee Wade
4	Torrie Washington Ashley Glotta
7	Bernice Barnes Tondrick Chandler Vicki Todd-Stubbs
8	Corey Grimes
14	Brenda Duff Nia Tolbert
15	Bettye Springfield
17	Leon Deaderick Barry Hobbs Myles Sydney
18	Vonda McDaniel
22	Ivan Davis Jr.
23	Christopher McGriff Gloria Westbrook
24	Breanna Grimes Cora Johnson
25	Valerie Smith Robinson
31	Jacqueline Knight

<u>DAY</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>SCRIPTURE</u>
<i>Keeping the Law Inwardly</i>		
Sunday, October 1	“God Looks at Your Heart”	Romans 2:17-29
<i>The Law Reveals Sin</i>		
Monday, October 2	“The Law Reveals Sin”	Deuteronomy 5:1-15
Tuesday, October 3	“Living with Others”	Deuteronomy 5:16-22
Wednesday, October 4	“Who Will Rescue Me?”	Romans 7:14-25
Thursday, October 5	“Outward Piety Earns God’s Wrath”	Jeremiah 7:1-15
Friday, October 6	“Dead to Sin; Alive in Christ”	Romans 6:1-12
Saturday, October 7	“Present your Bodies to God”	Romans 6:13-23
Sunday, October 8	“Dead to the Law through Christ”	Romans 7:1-13
<i>Justified by Faith, Not Laws</i>		
Monday, October 9	“The Lord Preserves the Faithful”	Psalms 31:1-5, 19-24
Tuesday, October 10	“Your Faith Has Made You Well”	Mark 10:46-52
Wednesday, October 11	“My Heart Trusts in God”	Psalms 28
Thursday, October 12	“The Gospel Sets Us Free”	Acts 15:22-25
Friday, October 13	“God Demands Justice, Kindness and Humility”	Micah 6:1-8
Saturday, October 14	“The Gospel for All People”	Galatians 2:1-10
Sunday, October 15	“We Are Justified in Christ”	Galatians 2:11-21
<i>The Superiority of the Gospel</i>		
Monday, October 16	“So Great a Salvation”	Hebrews 2:1-9
Tuesday, October 17	“Christ Destroys the Power of Death”	Hebrews 2:10-18
Wednesday, October 18	“Delight in the Law of the Lord”	Psalms 1:1-6
Thursday, October 19	“Blessed with Every Spiritual Blessing”	Ephesians 1:3-14
Friday, October 20	“The Hope to Which We’re Called”	Ephesians 1:15-23
Saturday, October 21	“Receiving the Spirit”	Galatians 3:1-5
Sunday, October 22	“Redeemed from the Law’s Curse”	Galatians 3:6-18
<i>Heir of God</i>		
Monday, October 23	“A Promise to Abram’s Offspring”	Genesis 12:1-9
Tuesday, October 24	“An Imperishable Inheritance”	1 Peter 1:3-12
Wednesday, October 25	“God Chose the Poor to Be Heirs of the Kingdom”	James 2:1-7
Thursday, October 26	“The Lord Is My Portion”	Psalms 16
Friday, October 27	“God’s Inheritance Is God’s People”	Deuteronomy 32:1-14
Saturday, October 28	“Heirs of God’s Promise”	Hebrews 11:8-19
Sunday, October 29	“Children of God”	Galatians 3:23-4:7
<i>What Is Required for Salvation?</i>		
Monday, October 30	“Welcoming God’s New People”	Acts 15:12-21
Tuesday, October 31	“Salvation Is from the Lord”	Psalms 37:27-40

MINISTRY OF STEWARDSHIP MANAGEMENT

August
13

Year of Revival
“True Religion”
James 1:26-27
Elder Albry Lockhart

Submitted by: Adrienne Fancher

There is a perception that Western religion has been more concerned with outer appearance than with internal transformation. The perception of God moved from a God the marginalized and brokenhearted to one of a God for the privileged, elite, and the powerful. The original intention of religion was to offer values and discipline for the growth of people, but it is perceived as indoctrination and condemnation. The intention of religion has been drowned out by rotten perceptions. Therefore, what is True Religion?

James is writing to dispersed Jewish Christians to have not just the appearance of religion, but a demonstration of religion: “faith without works is dead.” The nature of True Religion is found in our works and service to God.

1. True Religion edifies people.

To edify is to build up, to instruct in a way to elevate – to cause people to be better not bitter. A tight rein on the tongue shows the value of religion. The value of religion is misrepresented by those with no discipline over their words – speech like this repels people away from God. True Religion speaks Life to people and encourages them. We must be careful about what we say to people and how. The point of edifying people is not only to give them a truth but also to build a relationship with them and to connect them with the God we say we represent.

2. True Religion aids the disinherited.

James calls us to help the “orphan” [one without family or community to survive] and the “widow” [one without resources to survive]. The status of widow and orphan represented the disinherited because they are without the customary means of inheriting and are therefore at a disadvantage. James says make sure they know God is on their side. True Religion appears in our acts of assistance.

3. True Religion aligns with God.

Self is rooted in air and breath: self represents that which gives us Life. Encountering God awakens our reason to exist. James says keep yourself from being polluted: the material world hinders our awakening and pushes us away from alignment with God. God makes us whole. To be unpolluted is to be sold out to God. Everything about us acts, moves, and speaks in the way God would have us.

Jesus had True Religion. If we are to have True Religion, we have to be sure that our speech edifies, that we aid the disinherited, and that we are aligned with God.

August
20

Year of Revival
“The Rejected Christ”
Luke 8:35-37
Rev. Royal Todd

Submitted by: Kathy Harrell

Have you ever felt rejected? Rejection makes us feel excluded and unaccepted. Trying to navigate life wondering if we are “good enough” only fuels our insecurity. Everything we do today is under social scrutiny. We ourselves are often guilty of sharing our personal lives on social media where anyone can judge us and reject us!

Jesus faced His share of rejection. He was rejected by His family, the community, other leaders, and ultimately, he experienced rejection in the form of betrayal.

And yet, even on this side of the resurrection, Christ is still being rejected by spirit-filled, born-again, faith believing disciples of Jesus.

1. We reject Jesus even while professing Him. When we lose the ethic of “*if I can help somebody*”, but don’t help, we reject Jesus. We put law and order above love and sacrifice, we keep our blessings to ourselves, we know scripture, but don’t know how to treat people; all of these are rejections of who we profess Christ to be. When we lose the spirit to think and act differently, we reject Him. .

2. We reject Jesus, but Jesus will not reject us. Jesus loves us so that he will risk rejection by others just to come and save us. Jesus healed *Legion*, a man who had leprosy, was diseased ridden and out of his mind. He had been completely rejected by everyone who knew him. People tried to control him to try and be assured of keeping him away from others. But Jesus saw that Legion needed to be helped, not controlled. That is what Jesus sees in each of us. But when people saw that Jesus healed Legion and that Legion was sitting at the feet of Jesus “clothed and in his right mind”, they became afraid of Jesus and wanted Jesus to leave their town. It is a sad truth that not everybody is going to be excited when we get delivered from our *legion*.

3. We reject Jesus because Jesus calls in those who others have cast out. People expect God to give up on us because they give up on us. There is no place that Jesus will not go to find us and save us. Some of us met Jesus at the altar, and some of us met Jesus in the graveyard. Our graveyard is our darkest places of despair, fear, hopelessness, financial ruin, helplessness, broken and battered relationships, loneliness, uncertain health, or any time when we are ready to just give up.

Jesus offers us solace from rejection. Have a little talk with Jesus. He will answer by and by. He will make things right!

August
27

Year of Revival
“We Have to Do This Together”
Mark 2:15, 10-12
Dr. LaShante Walker
Submitted by: Beverly M. Brown

Dr Walker provided a historical perspective of the selected scripture by citing an example of Anita Alvarez, an autistic swimmer being rescued by her coach Andrea Fuentes in Budapest Hungary during a swimming championship. Once the coach assisted the swimmer, others jumped in to assist the swimmer and facilitated in saving her life. Furthermore, that means in church, all of humankind needs to work together to assist rather hurting, traumatizing, and creating problems for others.

1. When We Are Down - Get Help. When an individual finds them paralyzed by sin or wrongdoing or in controversy, the power of God/Christ Jesus is what can help a person to get up with the help of God/Christ Jesus’ children; just as He does for all of His people who find themselves in need. Another scripture cited to assist persons when they are paralyzed because of sin is John 8:36. Dr. Walker described three (3) types of persons, those excited about Christ Jesus, those who will carry you to Christ, and those who are just spectators. Lack of faith in a congregation can impact a church. Prayer meeting is a place where healing and change can occur in a congregation. Lack of awareness as to how to get to Jesus is an obstacle of interference.

2. What Ever It Takes, I Am All In.

Be a willing vessel for Christ Jesus and work together. Be willing to forgive, and know that God/Christ Jesus is a healer, protector, counselor; He demonstrates meekness, and humbleness as addressed in Ecclesiastes chapters 3, 4, 9, & 12. Faith in God/Christ Jesus is the resource which can make a person whole. Faith, hearing, and doing is another tool essential to making His people whole as referenced in Hebrew 11:1, 3, & 6. God’s people have to be intentional and be willing to help others to navigate challenges which could affect their experience.

3. When We Work Together We Will See Something Miraculous.

Do ministry together, walk in healing, forgiveness, and be willing to work together. Again, praying and being encouraging and casting one’s cares on God/Christ Jesus is necessary. It is important to invite others to come to worship with you. God can and does create a way when there does not appear to be a way. God/Christ Jesus is the source which can make an individual whole via prayer, all hands-on deck working together for the community and the church.

Amen, Amen, & Amen.

September
3

Year of Revival
“Where is Your Bethel?”
Genesis 28:10-21
Pastor Smith
Submitted by: Deborah Luter

Pastor Smith began by saying he always finds it a difficult challenge preaching from the book of Genesis because of all of what we would characterize today as disfunction. We see people in this story as the foundation upon which our faith and belief in God is based. And yet that is why we need to continue to preach from the book of Genesis. It demonstrates God’s desire to use people who are much less than perfect. He went on to say as a matter of fact some of us would fit right in with this story of faith. Jacob was guilty of the “one too many” syndrome. He crossed the line with his brother to the point his brother vowed to kill him. That is when Rebecca, Jacob, and Esau’s mother felt it was time for Jacob to leave.

Point 1-Your Bethel should be the place where you encounter God. Jacob doesn’t really discover God until his mother sent him to his uncle’s house. There, as he lay his head, tired from the journey God and angels came to him in a dream. Their God spoke to him and gave him the promise of him becoming a great nation. Jacob had been relying on the faith of his fatherland not necessarily of his own. But when he was heading to his uncle’s house he was tired and needed sleep. It is in the stillness of the moment, that he found the Lord. Sometimes we need to slow down to experience God.

Point 2-Your Bethel should be the place from which you cannot run. Because of all the foolishness in Jacob’s life he felt the need to run. He was running from his brother, father, and his past. But God needed to place something in his life that he could not run from and would anchor him no matter where he was. This was his Bethel. Psalm 139:7-10 Your Bethel should be there no matter what you are going through. Sometimes life throws us out of alignment. Things happen. Some because we are the victims of circumstances. Others are self-inflicted. But no matter what the circumstances our Bethel should still be there. We need that anchor in our lives that keeps us connected with God no matter what our lives may take us through. Jacob had that anchor.

Point 3-Your Bethel should be the place where you are willing to make sacrifice. Once Jacob discovered his Bethel he made a vow to the Lord of what he would do. He told the Lord that if he would watch over him, and care for him and provide food and shelter and give him safe passage to his uncle’s place and back home, then he would allow God to be his God and he would establish his Bethel and would give of his tithe to the Lord. If God is going to do all of these things then he would serve the Lord and sacrifice a tenth back to the Lord.

September
10

Year of Revival
“Difference Makers” (Part 1)
Luke 10:1-3
Pastor Kelly M. Smith Jr.
Submitted by: Adrienne Fancher

In his autobiography, *With Head and Heart*, the Howard Thurman recounts the life-changing story of a stranger who connected young Thurman with his destiny through a timely act of kindness. We must understand the importance of being a difference-maker in the lives of those we encounter. Jesus sent 72 people to prepare towns for His arrival. He sent them as lambs among wolves. If you have accepted Jesus as your Savior, then you must accept that you are called to be a POSITIVE difference-maker. Refusing to spend time and resources being a difference-maker is antithetical to being a Christian.

Point 1. Difference Makers are sent.

Jesus felt it was important for the 72 to be sent because they had the authority of the One who sent them. FBCCH has been sent to support the community through the KMS Towers, serving food at the Nashville Rescue Mission, hosting Room In The Inn, Tanzanian mission trips. Does sent mean I have to go places and physically participate? The “senting” includes supporting in other ways: making dresses, preparing meals, and financial contributions. What have you been sent to do?

Point 2. Difference Makers understand the need.

There is a specific need to be addressed. The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Fruits and vegetables must be picked at the right time. We are “fewing” when there are not enough people engaged to make a difference. If we don’t pick the harvest, someone else will [Gangs preying on young people].

Point 3. Difference Makers compensate for the wolves.

It’s a tough challenge to volunteer to be a lamb, to be vulnerable. (Wolves eat lambs for breakfast!) And yet, Jesus uses this analogy perhaps because He sees lambs as more useful than wolves. Lambs provide milk, wool, and meat. The world is filled with wolves who seek to take advantage, to diminish the marginalized, or to trick people into thinking they are lambs. In spite of wolves, lambs can show a better way. Our most celebrated holiday is about a Sacrificial Lamb! We don’t celebrate wolves. Sometimes, the lambs win!

A Lamb was crucified and overcame the grave – you ought to want to walk with the Lamb! Pray that the Lord of the Harvest will send out the lambs among the wolves. Don’t be afraid to go out among the wolves because you go with the Power of the Lord to make a difference!

September
17

Year of Revival
“Difference Makers” (Part 2)
Luke 10:4-12
Pastor Kelly M. Smith Jr.
Submitted by: Kathy Harrell

Christians are called to be difference makers. Just as Jesus Christ has made a difference in our lives, we are charged to go out and make a difference in the lives of others for His name’s sake.

In our scripture, Jesus sends out some 72 persons who have been following Him and know His task that is coming. He tells them to go to the cities ahead of Him and make a difference by preparing them for His coming. We must do the same thing today as we make a difference in preparing the way for Christ’s coming

Point 1. Difference makers are provided parameters.

In our scripture, Jesus does not tell his followers all the things they must do as they go forth. Jesus provides boundaries by telling us *what not to do*. We cannot get caught up in our own agenda and lose focus on the mission Jesus has for us. When we seek to make a difference in the name of Jesus, He will provide us with everything that we need. Even when it does not look like we will be fully equipped, we must remember that Jesus has already gone before us and prepared the way. People are watching what we do and prepared the way. We can’t just do what *we* want to do, we are bound by what Jesus needs us to do.

Point 2. Difference makers are peace purveyors.

Purveyors are merely traders. They provide something of value. Having peace of mind is invaluable. We must provide others with peace. Many different challenges cause people not to live in peace. They have been scammed, exploited, or defrauded. Whether internal or external to oneself or home, issues of ill-health, unstable finances, career inequities, abusive relationships, or no relationships (loneliness), can all lead to lack of one’s peace. Jesus commands us to always bless people in a way so they know there can be peace.

Point 3. Difference makers are people persons. We must know how to interact with people even though they may not be nice or kind in acceptance of us. We all want to know that we are appreciated and that we matter. “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” simply means to treat people with dignity and respect. Speak to others. Looking people in the eye when talking with them acknowledges they are human beings and not just things. It is simple. Just treat people right - the way God treats us! Whatever the environment, situation, or challenge exist, still...be a difference maker!

First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill

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Kelly M. Smith Jr., Pastor

Our Mission

First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill is Building, Restoring, and Revitalizing lives through Jesus Christ.

Our Vision

Love God, Make Disciples, Serve Community

Looking for a Church Home?

If you are looking for a church home, we encourage you to come and visit us! There are several ways to become a member of FBCCH.

Baptism - when a person is willing to initially express a belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and is willing to live one's life according to His will. Baptism is the symbolic initiation into the Christian faith.

Christian Experience - when a person who has previously been a member of another church chooses to unite with FBCCH, believing this to be the place for one's spiritual nurturing. These people have already been baptized and have committed a faith relationship with Jesus Christ.

Watchcare - when a person wishes to have his or her membership with FBCCH while he or she is temporarily living in the city.

Associate - when a person who has a membership in another church wishes to have a membership in FBCCH.

Restoration - when a former member chooses to rejoin FBCCH.

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