



UNDER THE STEEPLE

October, 2009

Lake Osborne Presbyterian Church
Lake Worth, Florida

NEWSLETTER MAILING SCHEDULE CHANGE

We will be changing the mailing frequency of the LOPC newsletter from monthly to quarterly, with an additional newsletter for Christmas. The purpose is to provide you with a better newsletter. Copies of the church calendar will be available monthly in the narthex, as well as on our website www.lopc.org. So be looking for your newsletter in:

January, April/Easter, July, October, and Christmas

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

Prayer

Since I arrived at the church I have been using our time on Wednesday nights as an opportunity for us to pray together as a church. I am convinced that prayer is a vital part of the ministry of any church. Prayer is an often overlooked component of ministry plans. We tend to focus on vision and mission statements, outreach plans, discussions on styles of worship, and other important details of ministry, but we forget that at the foundation of all of these things is prayer. We come to meetings and begin with the obligatory prayer, or we come to Wednesday suppers and the "paid-prayer" asks for the Lord to bless our meal, but these at times feel more like items to be crossed off the agenda than anything else. If we want God to bless our efforts as a church, if we want him to use us to reach the lost, if we want him to help us live in unity, if we want him to make his kingdom known on earth as it is in heaven through us then we need to pray. Jerram Barrs, professor at Covenant Seminary, writes in his book *The Heart of Prayer*:

All of us, whatever our service to the Lord and to his people, are called to recognize that all our devotion and everything else we do will accomplish nothing unless we turn to the Lord in prayer, and unless the Lord blesses our efforts and establishes the labors of our hands. (p. 146)

If we fail to come to the Lord in prayer then we are seeking to build his church on our own strength. We can immediately see the problem with this. If I seek to save the lost on my own strength, my own ability to speak, I will never change a person's heart. The Lord is the one who saves. If we as a church want to seek and save the lost, we need to go to the Lord in prayer. If we as a church want to enjoy unity, we need to go to the Lord in prayer. If we want to see his kingdom grow through church planting, we need to go to the Lord in prayer. By going to him in prayer we are acknowledging that we are powerless to do anything we set out to do on our own strength. Prayer is very humbling.

I know that for some people public prayer is an intimidating task. I know that for others public prayer is an opportunity for them to flex spiritual muscle. May I suggest that both of those stances *may* come from a heart that says “I need to pray a certain way in order to be accepted”? The intimidated person often believes that the weakness of their prayer will show the weakness of their faith. The person flexing believes that by using large/spiritual words that they can wow the crowd (and perhaps even God?). Both are seeking the approval somewhere other than in the blood of Jesus. Both are looking to something aside from the work of Jesus on the cross as the measure of what makes the good in God’s eyes. Again I point you to Jerram Barrs:

Can we move beyond having to pretend to God, to ourselves, and to others that we are deeply spiritual; that we are good at praying; that we know how to live a good Christian life; and that we love God well and love our neighbor well? Will we rather be open and humble, and will we freely acknowledge to the Lord, to ourselves, and to others that we are blind and poor, and naked? It is liberating to do this, and it prepares us to be ready to learn from the Lord. (p. 15)

I would like to invite all of you to join us on Wednesday nights. We will be spending the first 20 minutes working through Jerram Barrs’ book. It won’t be a lecture as much as a conversation about prayer using his book as our guide. The second half of the meeting we will pray. Our model for the past several weeks has been the Lord’s Prayer.

Matthew 6:9-13 "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰ your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us today our daily bread. ¹² Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. (for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.) Amen. (NIV)

We have divided the prayer time into four sections: prayers of adoration (“Hallowed be your name”); prayers for God’s Kingdom work (“your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”); prayers for our needs (“Give us today our daily bread”); and prayers for forgiveness of sin (“Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors”). Some pray in all these different sections, others pray in just one, and a few don’t pray out loud at all. But all are welcome to join us as we plead with God to bless Lake Osborne, and to use Lake Osborne to bless our world.

Omar

YAKKING WITH THE YOUTH

When I was young, I had all sorts of questions. Questions about nature, about why things worked the way they did, questions about the Bible and God. What made the sky blue? Will we grow older in heaven when we get there? Does drinking coffee really stop your growth? My curiosity drove me as I sought answers to both simple and difficult questions.

As I grew, I learned the answers to a number of my questions. Listed below are questions that children have asked about God and His Creation.

Dear GOD,
I went to this wedding and they kissed right
in church. Is that okay?
Neil

Dear GOD,
In school they told us what You do. Who
does it when You are on vacation?
Jane

Dear GOD,
I read the Bible. What does 'begat' mean?
Nobody will tell me.
Love, Alison

Dear GOD,
What does it mean You are a Jealous God? I
thought You had everything.
Jane

Dear GOD,
Why is Sunday school on Sunday? I thought
it was supposed to be our day of rest.
Tom L.

Dear GOD,
Who draws the lines around the countries?
Nan

Dear GOD,
Instead of letting people die and having to
make new ones, why don't You just keep the
ones You have now?
Jane

Dear GOD,
Are you really invisible or is that just a
trick?
Lucy

Dear GOD,
Did you really mean "do unto others as they
do unto you"? Because if you did, then I'm
going to fix my brother.
Darla

Dear GOD,
Did you mean for the giraffe to look like
that or was it an accident?
Norma

But what about now? Some of us have grown a little; others of us have grown a bit more. Is it okay for us to still have questions about God? Sure, as a child, the questions were cute, and we still giggle about some of the things children say and ask about God and His Creation. But should we, who have been Bible-studying Christians for years, perhaps decades, still have questions about God, the Bible, our salvation, etc.?

The answer: Yes. Questions of such nature push us to discover God Himself and what He has accomplished by His will. While we do not exhaustively know God, we are told in Scripture to grow in "knowing God and Christ." Paul, in his epistle to the Philippians, explains that he counts everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus (3:8). Paul directs us to a deeper and deeper knowledge of Christ, for the more we know Him, the more we see His glory and the more we gladly give all to and for Him.

Because we have questions about God and our relationship to Him, we should not be embarrassed as to what others will think, or whether or not God will love us less. To this day, I am continuously learning about the Christian life. Last week I read that the fear of rejection causes us to focus on who or what we aren't, instead of exploring our true identity and developing the talents and abilities God has given us. By having questions about God, we are pointed more and more to the One who is able to answer those questions. I encourage you to do two things: 1) if you have questions, then ask away and 2) search the Scriptures to find answers and, more importantly, to find God Himself.

Jay F.

Reformation Day

The year was 1517. The man was Martin Luther. The action was nailing his 95 Theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany. The occasion was the doctrine and practice of indulgences by the Roman Catholic Church. Indulgences were sold by the Catholic Church, promising the buyer perpetual happiness in this world and eternal glory in the next for themselves or for loved ones who had passed away. The money from the sale of the indulgences went to pay for the renovation of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. The aggressive marketing practices of the Roman Catholic Church in promoting this cause provoked Martin Luther to write his 95 Theses, protesting against what he saw as the purchase and sale of salvation. One of the sayings attributed to those selling indulgences was: "As soon as a coin in the coffer rings, a soul from purgatory springs." Luther saw in the doctrine and practice of indulgences that the honor of God was at stake because the pardon of sin is in God's power alone, and the Catholic Church was claiming that power for itself. His 95 Theses sparked the fire of what became known as the Reformation, which called the church back to its Biblical origins of the authority and infallibility of Scripture, the priesthood of all believers, and the doctrine of justification by grace through faith in what Christ has done, not through works that we have done. We celebrate Martin Luther's stand for God's honor on October 31, Reformation Day.

Fall Festival

Saturday, October 31, we will hold our annual Fall Festival to celebrate our Reformed Christian heritage. We will have games planned for the children. We encourage everyone to come in costumes that evening. We will also plan to have our trunk-or-treat. We need people to volunteer the trunk of their vehicle. Please bring in candy for the trunk-or-treat event a week or two before the festival. Invite friends and family from your neighborhood to join us. We will give more information as we near Reformation Day, but reserve the date on your calendar today.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

In Children's Church, this will be our last month learning about Moses. We will also learn other great Bible truths about God.

Parents: Don't forget to go over the stories and lessons both before your children hear it at church and after they hear it.

Teachers: Don't forget to teach the gospel each week, no matter what lesson you are teaching.

Helpers: Write on your calendar when you are needed, so you won't forget.

Everyone: Pray for understanding of the lessons for our covenant children.

Oct. 4th – God Gives the Ten Commandments (Part 2) Exodus 19:16-20:21

We will learn that respecting others honors God.

Tatiana Cardona will teach and Melissa Myers will help

Oct. 11th – The Israelites Worship a Golden Calf from Exodus 32:1-25

We will learn that God alone is worthy of worship.

Lisa Lennon will teach and Michaela Grimmig will help

Oct. 18th – The Israelites Build the Tabernacle from Exodus 35:4 – 36:38
We will learn how God deserves our excellent service.
Carol Brandt will teach and Caroline Tate will help

Oct. 25th – Moses Sends Spies into the Promised Land from
Numbers 13:1 – 14:23
We will learn that God never fails.
Lisa Lennon will teach and Christy Gauger will help

Come join us and bring your friends to Awana on Wednesday nights from 6:30 to 8:15 to learn memory verses, play games, eat snacks, and participate in a catechism contest along with learn the meaning of one catechism question. Our Cubbies are reviewing the following great verses: Mark 11:9, James 1:22, Matt. 1:21, Luke 24:34, John 20:20, Mark 16:15, Rev. 19:16 and Psalm 104:33.

I challenge all of us to learn these verses. In November they will start their new book. The Sparks and T & T will learn about the meaning of the following catechism questions:

- Oct. 7th - #50 How could Christ suffer?
- Oct. 14th - #51 For whom did Christ obey and suffer?
- Oct. 21st - #52 What kind of life did Christ live on earth?
- Oct. 28th - #53 What kind of death did Jesus die?

Lisa