



Baby Dedication

One of the greatest joys of ministry over the last six years has been to see so many little ones born to the families of our church. We've seen a lot more babies around our church in recent years. In fact, I've often teased young couples engaged to be married that they should be careful because there is something in the water at our church. When I think about these little ones I'm reminded that some are loud and some are quiet. Some smile a lot while others are more serious. Some have a head full of hair while others have none. Some have cute pudgy cheeks while others do not. Regardless of their differences every single one of them is a heritage and blessing from the Lord. It should bring us great joy and burden to realize that God has entrusted such an abundance of children to us.

Just as we have seen an increase of babies so, too, have I received an increase of questions concerning various issues involving child rearing. One question that often comes to the forefront is, "May I have my child baptized?" or "May I have my child dedicated?" This question is important and I hope throughout this article to shed some light on these issues.

Infant baptism is practiced in many churches today. We have many genuine brothers and sisters in Christ who hold to this practice. It is important to note that I don't believe that this should be a matter of separation. I, personally, have many friends and family who hold to this view. I love them, yet I kindly disagree with them. The Bible is very clear on what baptism is, who it is for, and what it accomplishes. Biblically, once a person puts their faith in Christ they are then baptized which identifies themselves with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Baptism, in essence, presents a public testimony of one's faith (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4). Water baptism by immersion is a step of obedience that should occur AFTER a person puts their faith in Christ. When this view of baptism is clearly taught in Scripture it becomes obvious, in my opinion, that infant baptism is not a Biblical practice. An infant cannot fully comprehend their ABC's much less place their faith in Christ. Nor can an infant understand the realities of baptism. To further this truth, the Bible doesn't record a single infant who was baptized. In addition to these truths, even the method of infant baptism, sprinkling or pouring, contradicts the principles of Scripture. How would such a method illustrate the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ? Many Christians who practice infant baptism see baptism as the new covenant equivalent of circumcision. In this view, in the same way that circumcision joined a Hebrew to the Abrahamic or Mosaic covenants, now baptism joins a person to the New Covenant of salvation through Jesus Christ. In my humble opinion, this view isn't biblical. I don't believe that the New Testament clearly explains that baptism is the New Covenant replacement for the Old Covenant symbol of circumcision. There is a lot more I'd like to say here, but there simply isn't the space to do so.

Baby dedication is widely accepted and practiced among most protestant churches and denominations. Unlike infant baptism, there is a biblical example of one dedicating their child to the Lord. 1 Samuel 1:11 tells us that, "She (Hannah) made a vow and said, 'O Lord of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and a razor shall never come on his head.'" God did remember this precious lady and blessed her by giving her a son. Soon after the child, Samuel, was weaned she remembered and honored her vow to the Lord. 1 Samuel 1:26-28 says, "She said, 'Oh, my lord! As your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you, praying to the Lord. For this boy I prayed, and the Lord has given me my petition which I asked of Him. So I have also DEDICATED him to the Lord; as long as he lives he is DEDICATED to the Lord.' And he worshiped the Lord there." Without question, this Scripture gives every parent a great example to follow. Each of us should have a desire and a burden to dedicate our children to the Lord. As Christian parents God has given us a tremendous responsibility to raise our children in the ways of the Lord. He has entrusted us with the calling of establishing, for them, a foundation built upon Jesus Christ.

Because so many have asked about "baby dedication" it is important to know what it is and what it is not. To have your child dedicated doesn't mean that your child will be saved. You cannot choose Christ for your child or anyone else. They must personally believe in Him. This dedication truly should be given another name. Perhaps a more fitting name would be "Family Dedication" or "Parent Dedication" because it is really a public statement by the family or the parents of a child in which they commit to raise that child according to God's Word and God's ways. Parents who dedicate a child are making a covenant with the Lord to do everything within their power to raise the child in a Godly way, prayerfully, until the child can make a decision on his/her own to follow Christ.

If you are interested in learning more about this topic or if you are interested in dedicating your children to the Lord I invite you to attend a class on **Sunday, March 15, at 3:30PM**. There will be childcare and refreshments provided. If you would like to attend but this poses a conflict of schedule please email me at pastorkirkland@verizon.net and we'll set up another time. This class will be very informative, helpful, and encouraging. Also, on **March 29**, at the conclusion of both morning worship services we are setting aside time for you to dedicate your children, up to five years of age, to the Lord. If you'd like to dedicate your child on this day you must attend the class that is previously mentioned. I look forward to seeing how God will use us to raise our families according to His will.

In Christ, Pastor Matthew

PRAYER CHAIN

Anyone wishing to be added to the internet prayer chain can sign up via the website...prayer@gsbcfamily.org or by calling Penny Kouns at 382-4647. You can use these two means of communication to have a prayer request posted.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

We need your articles.....Is your Bible Fellowship having a gathering? Would you like to share about your area of ministry? If so, email them to newsletter@gsbcfamily.org so that we can put them in next months newsletter.



ATTENTION LADIES.....



The Extraordinary Women's Conference "Free to be Real" is coming to the Roanoke Civic Center on Friday, September 25th and Saturday the 26th. Speakers include: comedian Anita Renfroe, author Karen Kingsbury, Stormie Omarian, Nancy DeMoss, singer Natalie Grant and many more! If you are interested in attending, please use the sign up sheet in the back of the sanctuary by the sound booth. Tickets are \$49 or \$59

if you would like a boxed lunch. We are registering early so that we can get the early bird discount saving each lady \$20. Deadline to sign up is Sunday, March.29. Please see Heather Kirkland or email her at mhkirkland@verizon.net for further information or questions.

WHAT IS FPU? (Financial Peace University)



"Financial Peace University is a life-changing program that teaches you how to make the right decisions with your money. You'll be empowered with the practical skills and confidence needed to achieve your financial goals and experience true financial peace!" Dave Ramsey

FINANCIAL PEACE COURSE begins March 18 at 6:45 pm. There is a sign-up sheet on the table near the sound booth. There will be two preliminary meetings to discuss the course. They are scheduled for Wednesday, March 4 at 6:30 pm and Sunday, March 8 at 4 pm. The cost for the kit is \$90. If you have any questions please contact church office.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH..... What was Paul's Thorn in the flesh?



Paul said in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, "Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me – to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong."

From this, it is very clear to see that Paul did have a "thorn in the flesh" and that he prayed on three different occasions for it to be removed. So what or was this "thorn" exactly? The truth is that Scripture doesn't tell us exactly what or who it was. Many have suggested that this thorn was his own personal temptations, a speech disability, Alexander the coppersmith who did him much harm (Acts 19:33; 1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 4:14), or perhaps poor eyesight. While we can't be certain, I believe that this "thorn in the flesh" was most likely Paul's poor eyesight. I believe this for two primary reasons. First, that is what the Scripture implies. A "thorn in the flesh" was most likely a literal statement referring to something within his physical body that was ailing him. Second, within one of his letters he makes two references to some sort of eye problem. In Galatians 4:13-15 he says, "but you know that it was because of bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time; and that which was a trial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus Himself. Where then is the sense of blessing you had? For I bear witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your EYES and given them to me." To the same church he says in Galatians 6:11, "See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand." I don't know exactly what his condition was, but it seems that his eyes were ailing him and it, no doubt, affected his reading, writing, and normal everyday life.

While we may debate on other possible explanations for this "thorn in the flesh" it is most important to see how Paul responded to this situation. It is important to note that he didn't whine or complain. Instead, he took it to God in prayer and relied on God's goodness and omniscience for what was best. Then He submitted to the will of God. When he knew that God wasn't taking it away he had wisdom to understand the purpose behind the ailment. The purpose was to keep him humble. Anyone who had the experience with Christ that Paul had and anyone who had written the direct revelation of God as Paul had would continually face the temptation to be proud. But, this condition kept Paul from "exalting" himself. This "thorn in the flesh" also lead Paul to experience one of the greatest blessings from God: That His grace is sufficient for us, and His power is perfected in our weakness. The reality is that God's power is best displayed against the backdrop of human weakness. So remember when you are at your lowest moment of disappointment it is really just God's greatest opportunity to show Himself to you and through you.



FELLOWSHIP MEAL



Join us every Wednesday at 5:30pm for a wonderful time of food and fellowship. There is a suggested donation of \$4 per adult, \$2 per child and/or \$10 per family.

PRE-SCHOOL MINISTRY

The Children's Ministry is looking for a few volunteers who will minister in the pre-school class on Wednesday evenings from 6:45-8:30pm. If you are interested, please contact Ruthie Bellman.

CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING



There will be Church Business Meeting on March 15 at 7:15pm. All members are invited and encouraged to attend.

UPCOMING BAPTISM

On March 15 at the 11am service several of our children will be baptized. If you need to be baptized, please contact the church office at 382-0719

Children's Baptism Class

The remaining baptism classes will be:
Saturday, March 7th at 12:00p
Saturday, March 14th at 12:00p

If you have any questions please contact Ruthie at rbellman1@peoplepc.com

SUMMER YOUTH MISSION TRIP....

Plans are progressing for our trip to inner city New York, June 7 - 13. Youth and leaders will be participating in Christian service by construction projects, food and clothing help, and "street church". A Fund-raising for this effort will begin after the first of the year, so each friend of GSBC and member should pray about how they might support us in this Great Commission. Contact Dee if you have questions.

NURSERY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



The nursery needs several more people willing to be an emergency back up for Sunday mornings. Every so often a volunteer is unable to serve on a Sunday morning because of family needs, sickness, snow, etc... We need some folks willing and prepared to step in at the last minute to help take care of the little ones downstairs. The more we have on the list, the more we are able to help each other out. Please contact Marianne Rolfs at (540) 250-6405 if you are willing to help serve.

MEN'S SOFTBALL...SIGN-UP NOW



It's time to sign up for men's softball again! Anyone interested in playing on the Blacksburg Men's Softball League should sign-up by Sunday, March 15th. There is a sign-up sheet on the back table. If you have any questions contact Steven Poole at 540-449-1441 or poole33@yahoo.com.



MEN'S BREAKFAST

There will be a Men's Breakfast, **March 28, at 7:30am.** We will have a guest speaker to bring a brief word of encouragement. If you would like to volunteer to setup or to help cook please contact the church office at 382-0719



THANK YOU



Good Shepherd Baptist Church, your kind expression of sympathy is gratefully acknowledged and deeply appreciated. We sincerely thank you for the flowers, food and prayers. May God bless each one of you. Sincerely, The Sowers Family

CICI's PIZZA~ Relay for Life

Take the family to CiCi's Pizza on March 10th from 5-8pm, and 10% of all profits will go toward the Relay for Life team!



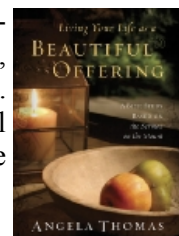
RELAY FOR LIFE FUNDRAISER



The Relay for Life team is now selling tickets for Roast Beef Dinners. They are \$6.00 and can be picked up on Saturday, March 21st from 11am-2pm. It's a great deal so get your tickets now! We are also selling Chocolate Easter Eggs. These are 2 oz. eggs and you can choose from four fillings for only \$1.00 each! Please see any relay team member to order dinners or Easter eggs.

NEW WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Living Your Life as a Beautiful Offering by Angela Thomas will begin THIS Wednesday night, March 4 from 6:45-8:15pm in the first annex. Don't miss out on the beginning of a wonderful study based on the Sermon on the Mount. See Heather Kirkland for further details.



PRAISE REPORT FROM MARK ROLFS

A Mission Trip Like No Other...

Mark was asked to write up a little report on his recent mission trip to Guatemala with International Christian Resources (Medical Missions lead by Dr. Joe Cacciopo). Because he's a swamped medical student with little time to write even a to-do list, here's what he dictated to me (his wife) a few evenings ago:

According to Mark, most everyone had been on mission trips prior to this one. But he thought it was safe to say that this trip stood out as either, one of if not "the" top mission trip they had all experienced. When I asked him what made this trip so different, his response was this: "because of the unanimous surrender to the Spirit's leading to do whatever God wanted to do. Even those who had joined the team who weren't sure about where their faith was at, saw an authentic faith in the rest of the team that made them want what we had. Everyone just wanted to be used by God however He wanted to use us."

"The emphasis wasn't just on offering physical healing to the people. We could only give them a short supply of the meds that they needed anyway. Sometimes we didn't even have the right meds to offer them that would heal them for the long term. We just tried to listen to our patients, touch our patients and continued to direct them to our prayer station where they could receive healing from The Great Physician."

"We had an outreach station with the mindset of continually reaching out to the people with the Gospel. Because of this mindset (of outreach and surrender) and all of the prayer that went into the trip beforehand, I believe God honored our efforts by reaching 1/3 of the people [we came in contact with for Christ]. About 470 people came to Christ out of the 1491 patients that were seen!"

"Follow-up was done by a local church that went with us most of the days we ran the clinic. The local church was so amazed by God's work and the outpouring of love to the people that they asked us if we could come back in June and do another clinic like it. On the last day the Mayor of Sanjacinto (where the orphanage is located where we ran the clinic) came and thanked us personally for the work that was done."

"How did the trip impact me personally? I think I had the privilege and opportunity to encourage, love and challenge the other medical students as a group leader and to reach out to them spiritually as well as professionally."

When we surrender to God's will and HIS ways, we become the vessel that He is able to work through. Many are impacted for eternity and GOD gets the glory! Thank you so much for praying for Mark as well as Eric and Tawanna Lisic and Arl





**GOOD
SHEPHERD
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March 2009

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1) 8:30a Worship 10a Bible Fellowship 11a Worship 3:30p Sparks-A-Rama Practice 5-7p AWANA & Youth 7p Youth Leaders Meeting	2) 6:45p Men's Ministry	3) 7p Deacon's Meeting 6:30p Youth Praise Band Practice	4) 6:45-8:15p Youth & Adult Bible Studies, Children's Choir 8-8:45p Youth Council Meeting	5) 10a Senior Saints Fellowship 6:30p Choir Practice 7:30p Praise Team Practice	6)	7) 9a Prayer time in Sanctuary 12 noon - Children's Baptism Class 2-4p Sparks-A-Rama Practice
8) 8:30a Worship Service 10a Bible Fellowship 11a Worship Service 3:30-5p - Sparks-A-Rama Practice 5-7p AWANA (<i>Dimes for Missions</i>) & Youth	9) NO Women's Ministry	10) 6:30p Youth Praise Band Practice 5-8pm CiCi's fundraiser for Relay for Life	11) 6:45-8:15p Youth & Adult Bible Studies, Children's Choir 6:45p Meeting to discuss Financial Peace Class	12) 6:30p Choir Practice 7:30p Praise Team Practice	13)	14) 9a Prayer time in Sanctuary 12 noon - Children's Baptism Class Sparks-A-Rama in Madison Heights
15) 8:30a Worship 10a Bible Fellowship 11a Worship Service 4p Meeting to discuss Financial Peace Class 5-7p AWANA and Youth Worship 7:15p Church Bus. Mtg	16)	17) 7p Deacon's Meeting 6:30p Youth Praise Band Practice	18) 6:30p Financial Peace Class 6:45-8:15p Youth & Adult Bible Studies, Children's Choir 8-8:45p Youth Council Meeting	19) 10a Senior Saints Fellowship 6:30p Choir Practice 7:30p Praise Team Practice	20) 7p Women's Ministry Movie Night	21) 9a Prayer time in Sanctuary Relay for Life Fund-raiser
22) 8:30a Worship Service 10a Bible Fellowship 11a Worship Service 5-7p AWANA (<i>Twin Day</i>) and Youth Worship	23)	24) 6:30p Youth Praise Band Practice	25) 6:30p Financial Peace Class 6:45-8:15p Youth & Adult Bible Studies, Children's Choir	26) 6:30p Choir Practice 7:30p Praise Team Practice	27)	28) 7:30p Men's Breakfast 9a Prayer time in Sanctuary AWANA Games in Lynchburg
29) 8:30a Worship Service 10a Bible Fellowship 11a Worship Service 5-7p AWANA and Youth Worship	30)	31) 6:30p Youth Praise Band Practice				