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JANUARY 2026

THE MONSTER UNDER THE BED PT1

Featured Articles

**Be Still & Know
That I Am God**

PG 6

Israel Bible Study Tour

PG 8

WonderInk

PG 16

Vindicated

PG 18

THE MÖRSTER UNDER THE BED

by Pastor Ty Orr

This should be a book, but we will start small. Most parents recognize the moment when the house is silent, the lights are dim, and suddenly you hear footsteps softly walking down the stairs, followed by a whisper, "Mom...Dad...there's something scary in my room."

Healthy children have active imaginations and don't need much to feel afraid at night. The darkness makes everything seem veiled, sinister, and more monstrous than it truly is. To a young mind, a moving shadow or a creaking floorboard can appear like a monster under the bed or a darkened figure in the corner, and if the wind is blowing outside, fear can capture a young mind and heart. My grandparents' cellar was something right out of *Stranger Things*. At least that is what I remember.

As with most of us, our parental instinct is to comfort our little ones. We turn on lights, check closets, tuck them back in, straighten blankets, and whisper reassuring words. But for followers of Jesus seeking to lead our children well, these moments can go beyond childhood fears—they're real opportunities for spiritual growth and a great moment to teach. Scripture reminds

us that *fear is real* in our humanity, but so is God's presence in every moment we are afraid.

The Bible also teaches us that we are engaged in a very real spiritual battle. Yet our children don't need to be afraid because the God who watches over them never sleeps (Psalm 121:4). Those nighttime fears give us, and parents, a chance to teach our children what to do when darkness feels overwhelming. Run to God, speak His Word, and trust in His presence and power over darkness.

"All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shined in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend [overcome] it."

John 1:3-5

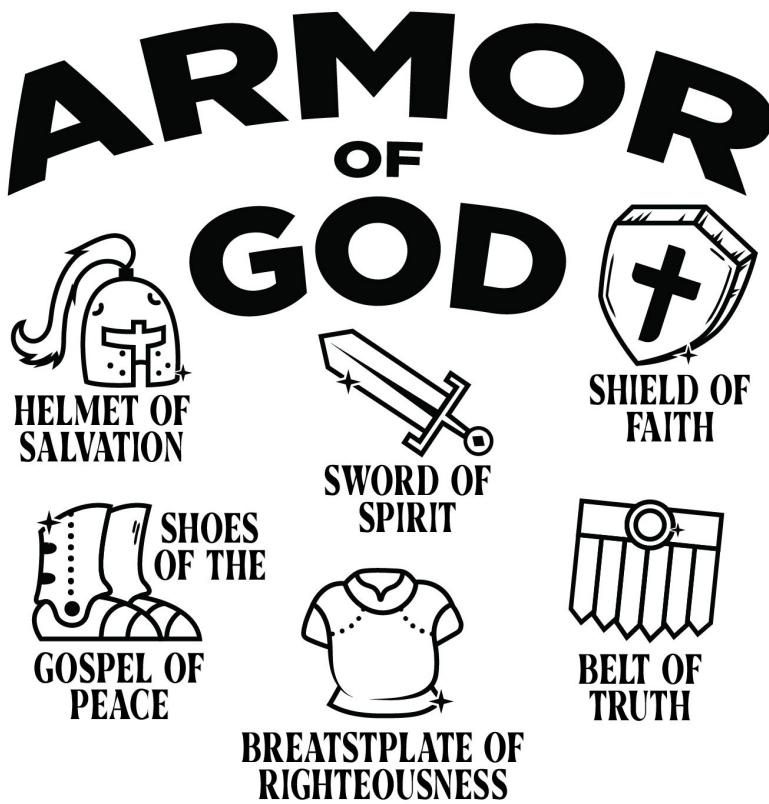


CHILDREN SENSE WHAT ADULTS OFTEN IGNORE

Children are perceptive. They feel tension in the home, sense the atmosphere, and often pick up on spiritual and practical realities long before they have the vocabulary to explain them. When a child says, "There's a monster under my bed," they may be describing imagination—or they may be describing the feeling of conflict in the home, at school, or *spiritual oppression* that Scripture clearly affirms.

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, [lit. blood and flesh] but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

Ephesians 6:12-13



The Bible speaks openly about the reality of darkness and the presence of an enemy who seeks to intimidate and disturb. But it says even more clearly about the God who is stronger, nearer, and fully victorious.

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world."

1 Peter 5:8-9

Therefore, our goal *should not be to scare children* with talk of spiritual warfare but to equip them for a life of victory in Jesus. What they feel is not abnormal—it's part of living in a broken world. Sometimes we do know what to say, because we are struggling too. What they, and we, *need* is the confidence that they are not helpless. *God is with them*, Scripture is powerful, and prayer is effective. Most importantly, they need to know that *Jesus is Lord over the night just as much as He is Lord over the day*.

GOD'S WORD SPEAKS STRONGLY TO FEAR

The Bible is filled with verses children can memorize and speak "out loud" (*this is important*) when they feel afraid. The following concept was first introduced to me after my children were grown, by my first professor of theology, Dr. Gerry Breshears. Below are some ideas from verses we can speak "out loud" with our kiddos when they are afraid.

Sometimes the simplest phrases speak the deepest comfort:

- "I am with you always." (Matthew 28:20)
- "God is our refuge and strength... therefore we will not fear." (Psalm 46:1-2)
- "The LORD Almighty is with us." (Psalm 46:7)
- "I will fear no evil, for You are with me." (Psalm 23:4)
- "The LORD is my rock and my fortress." (Psalm 18:2)
- "Do not fear, for I am with you." (Isaiah 41:10)
- "The LORD is my light... whom shall I fear?" (Psalm 27:1)

- “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.” (Hebrews. 13:6)
- “If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31)
- “Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.” (1 John 4:4)
- “Do not be afraid... I am your shield.” (Genesis 15:1)

Children don't need theological footnotes; they need simple, powerful truth. When they say these words *out loud*, they're doing more than calming themselves; they're engaging in the *spiritual battle God teaches us about*. Darkness loses its grip when confronted with Scripture.

Charles Spurgeon once wrote, “The presence of God is the best antidote to fear.”¹ That speaks directly to a child lying awake at night. Matthew Henry said God is “a very present help; we cannot desire a nearer help.”² These aren't abstract ideas. They're the reality behind every promise God has given us. The good news is that fear collapses under the weight of God's promises.

“Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment”

1 John 4:17-18.

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

2 Timothy 1:7

This does not mean we are never afraid; fear can often alert us that something is wrong. Spiritual warfare isn't something we should sensationalize or ignore. Instead, we should approach it biblically—with clarity, confidence, and prayer. When a child says, “Something scary is in my room,” it's okay to take that seriously—not as an emergency, but as an invitation. You can say: “Sometimes darkness feels scary. But Jesus is stronger than anything in the world. When we speak His Word, darkness has to leave.” More on this next time.

¹ Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, commentary on Psalm 23

² Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, commentary on Psalm 46

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MICHAEL



Old Faithful Christian Ranch Winter Retreat

by Ryan Fugh

January is an interesting month in our culture, with New Year's resolutions it is a time when a lot of people in the church, youth included, make a resolve to try and follow Jesus a little more closely. From dedicated times of prayer, and bible reading plans, it is a beautiful thing to see middle school and high school students committing themselves to some area of spiritual discipline.

One tool that is very useful in a young person's walk is camp ministry. Camp is valuable because teens can get away from the distractions that the world throws at them and spend time focusing on their relationship with God. It is a sacred time that is set apart for the purpose of teens growing closer to Jesus.

With that being said, Old Faithful Christian Ranch in Island Park is a wonderful ministry with a heart to

serve, every year they host the High School Winter Retreat. A weekend where high schoolers get to play in the snow and learn about Jesus. This year the retreat is February 13th through the 15th.



In other exciting news...

Winter Retreat isn't just for High Schoolers anymore. This year they are hosting their first ever Jr. High Winter Retreat. It will be on January 30th until the 1st of February. I'm looking forward to being there and I know the high schoolers always have a great time.

For registration and more information go to OFCR.org

Ladies MINISTRY



Be STILL

AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD

PSALM 46:10



Ladies
CONFERENCE

MARCH
13-14

BE STILL
AND
KNOW
I AM
GOD

by Laurie Orr

There is something about January. The snow-covered landscape glitters and muffles sound; it brings a gentle quiet. Early sunsets invite us into long evenings with candlelight and mugs of tea and honey. The crisp cold pushes us inside to the warmth and light of a crackling fire. Soup pots simmer, and books beckon.

This season of darkness and quiet can be an invitation to stillness. I love to curl up with a blanket in the lamplight, turn off my phone and media, and calm down the noise in my mind. When my thoughts are firing fast, it can be difficult to embrace the stillness. I open a journal and just write. It slows me down and helps me to focus. I cry out to God and pour my heart out to Him. Those swirling thoughts are tamed. Journaling can give way to a list of thanksgiving or writing out Bible verses. I can give in to the prompting of the Holy Spirit to turn to Him and just be with Him.

BE STILL, AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD; I
WILL BE EXALTED AMONG THE NATIONS,
I WILL BE EXALTED IN THE EARTH!

Psalm 46:10

As I purposely stop worrying and striving, I can hear His voice. I can notice His presence and experience His closeness. My breathing becomes slower, and my body relaxes. I do not need to solve all my problems or know the exact steps to take. I just need to listen. I find that Psalm 94:19 is true: **"In the multitude of my anxieties within me, Your comforts delight my soul."**

It is in these moments of quiet that His Spirit draws me in with His soft, sweet voice. He may challenge my thinking and show me where I was wrong. He may give me insight. He may ask me to trust Him more. He reassures me of His unfathomable love. I write these thoughts down since I am prone to forget. In these moments, He takes me to His green pastures and quiet waters that restore my soul.
(Psalm 23:2-3)

I am reminded that I am not alone. I am not the source of my own strength. I am not the answer to my difficulties. He alone is God. He is with me. (Deuteronomy 31:6) He will strengthen me. (Isaiah 41:10) He answers my call. (Jeremiah 33:3) He surrounds me and delivers me. (Psalm 32:7)

In the stillness, I hear His voice.

Ladies NIGHT OUT
GROUNDED
&
STEADFAST

Study in Colossians

Jan 9 | 7 PM

Register at watersprings.net





by Pastor Dave Coleman

WATERSPRINGS
BIBLE STUDY TOUR
OF ISRAEL AND JORDAN

with Pastor Ty Orr & his wife, Laurie
and Pastor Dave Coleman & his wife, Sylvia
8-20 June 2026



WHY A BIBLE STUDY TOUR OF ISRAEL WITH YOUR PASTORS?

Next June, we have the extraordinary opportunity to walk the Land of the Bible together with members of our church family - and we want to encourage you to prayerfully consider joining us. Our Bible Study Tours of Israel are purposely designed to be far more than merely overseas trips or historical, geo-political tours. They are deeply formative spiritual experiences that will shape how you read Scripture for the rest of your life. Experience the Land of the Bible, and you'll experience your Bible as never before.

The Bible is not an abstract or symbolic book; the Bible is God's living Word, (Hebrews 4:12). It is, in fact, the living, breathing record of God's redemptive work unfolding in real places, among real people, in real time, at real moments in history. When you stand on the very Land where those events occurred, Scripture comes alive in a new and powerful way. From the foothills and villages of the Galilee - like Capernaum and Nazareth - to the streets and active archaeological excavations of Jerusalem - like the newly excavated Pilgrim Walkway from the Pool of Siloam to the Temple Mount - the land itself becomes a teaching tool - one God has always used.

From the beginning, the Lord made it clear that geography matters to Him. He spoke of choosing "**the place the LORD your God will choose out of all your tribes to put His name there,**" (Deuteronomy 12:5). Later, He made that place unmistakably clear: "**I have chosen Jerusalem, that My name may be there,**" (2 Chronicles 6:6; cf. 1 Kings 11:36). Visiting Israel is not about elevating a place above Christ, but about encountering God's faithfulness where He chose to reveal Himself in history.

Imagine reading the Sermon on the Mount on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus preached it. Sit in the synagogue in Capernaum where Jesus preached and healed. Stand where He called His disciples and taught the crowds. Sail on the Sea of Galilee with us, where Jesus calmed the storm. Stand overlooking the Jezreel Valley, where the last great battle will be fought: the Battle of Armageddon. Picture opening the Psalms in Jerusalem, at the palace of David, or reading about the crucifixion and resurrection where these events occurred. Go inside the empty tomb. Pray in the Garden of Gethsemane. Stand on the Mount of Olives and pray over the Holy City, as Jesus did. Familiarize yourself with the Temple Mount from where our Lord Jesus will rule and reign. Come with us and experience these places, and many others - including a two-day excursion to Jordan, exploring firsthand the red rock city of Petra - and suddenly, distances make sense. Terrain explains parables. Context brings clarity. The Bible moves from black-and-white into living, vibrant color.

Traveling with your own teaching pastors, whom you trust and you know that we love you, adds a uniquely discipling dimension. This is not a generic sightseeing tour; not merely a vacation. It is Scripture-centered, prayer-soaked, and pastor-led. Teaching on-site, worshiping together, and sharing daily reflections as we break bread together often leads to spiritual conversations and friendships that continue long after returning home. Many have told us that even their prayer life deepened, as well as their love for God's Word increasing, because the life and ministry of Jesus became intensely personal.

For those who love Israel and feel a biblical affection for the Jewish people, visiting the Land and experiencing the Scriptures strengthens that love with understanding. Seeing modern Israel alongside

ancient biblical sites is a testimony to God's covenant faithfulness. It moves believing pilgrims far beyond media headlines and into informed prayer, obedience, and gratitude – just as Scripture instructs us: **"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem"** (Psalm 122:6).

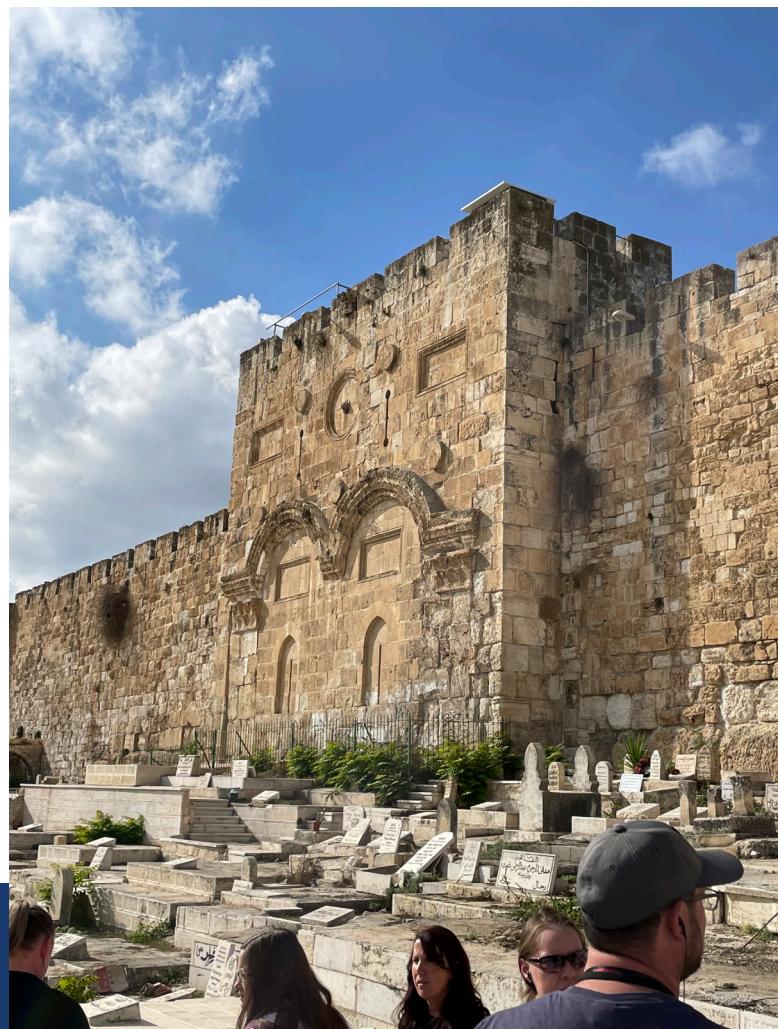
A Bible Study Tour of Israel is an investment – of time, resources, and heart. But the dividends are long-lasting: deeper faith, sharper biblical understanding, and unforgettable spiritual growth.

**Our tour takes place this June,
and registration closes February 14**

If you have ever felt the nudge to visit and experience the Land of the Bible where it happened, we encourage you not to delay. Consider joining us as we walk the Land God chose to put His name upon – and allow Him to deepen your love for His Word in ways you never expected.

Register today by scanning the QR Code and following the prompts. If you want more information, feel free to talk with Pastor Ty or Dave.

JERUSALEM



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LIFE CLASS TESTIMONIES

by Hollie Robinson

I was baptized when I was six. Raised in a godly family that saw miracles. My mother was diagnosed with stage-four breast cancer and given 45 days to live when I was 12 years old back in 1995. She lives today. My sister was 21 weeks pregnant when she became gravely ill. She lost the baby, Grace, and almost her own life. She was brought back from the brink of death numerous times. Lasting results are some hearing loss, memory trouble and the grief of losing Grace.

I tell you these things so that you understand my years of unbelief were not because family or God had somehow failed me, but that I was refusing to listen. Refusing to see his work in my life. I spent most of my adult life telling people that God and the devil don't exist and people sitting in a church pew were ridiculous.

Smoking, drinking, hanging out in the wrong crowds. Pulling the only good things that came out of that time of my life, my three children, along for the ride. One of those "rides" left me with trauma. Shirts were a constant reminder that hands had tried to kill me. Forget about necklaces of any kind.

In May 2012, I married a good man, and things were looking up. We stopped going to the bar and started living a more traditional lifestyle. I was happy to stay home with my kids for the time we had left. Happy to fold laundry and do dishes. Happy to go grocery shopping and cook dinner.

But something was still wrong in my mind. It never stopped. Never. I struggled to sleep at night. Struggled to focus during the day. I seldom worked, but when I did, I poured everything I could into the void, trying to fix whatever the emptiness was with work ethic.

I'm sure some of you have heard the analogy of browser tabs open in your mind. Those tabs were the only things keeping my mind going and active. A tab for my husband. One for each of my children. Three or four for household stuff. All day. Every day. TABS. Some tabs I tried to ignore...Why do I keep thinking about that ridiculous song I learned when I was part of the puppeteering ministry as a child? I wonder how Ms. Berg is? Is she still alive? (No.) Could I remember the sign language to "Our God is an awesome God?" (Yes.) I never let myself sit with those thoughts for long. I didn't believe, so why should I? The tabs

would never close, so I worked hard to quiet them with unbelief.

I was sitting at the dining room table with my husband and oldest son. They were talking about work. I was looking at my phone. Charlie Kirk was shot. I knew who he was. Had seen debates and heard him talk over the years. I had never met him, but his shooting was sitting on my heart. When the news announced that he had died, I cried. Hard. I cried while cooking dinner. I cried while brushing my teeth and making the bed. I cried while steam cleaning the carpet. I cried while driving. I was IN my emotions.

"Holy cow, babe. You're deep in this." My husband said on Friday evening. Charlie had been gone for two days, and I was still upset. I also felt a need to buy all the blueberries and ship them south. If you know, you know.

Saturday morning was no better, so when I read a comment on Facebook that said, "You feel like you've lost family because you did. You lost a brother in Christ," my mind, for the first time in my adult life, quieted a little as a lightbulb somewhere in the crevices of my gray matter came on.

"Oh...ohhh" I understood finally. Then the crying was for a different reason. "How do I walk back into a church after 22 years away?" "How do I tell God I am sorry?" "How do I make up for all the Peter, and Judas-like times I have forsaken him?" The obvious answer was just GO. Smiles on faces I had never seen greeted me. Not just at the



door, but throughout the church as I followed the crowd through the building. I stood and sang. I listened to the pastor teach from the book of Acts. I had a doughnut, refilled my coffee mug, and I went home. Then I cried some more. This time, because my mind was quiet. There were no tabs. None. For the first time, I felt at peace.

I have forgiven the man who once put abusive hands on me. Praying for him, wherever he is. I can now wear collared shirts. I have joined a couple of Bible studies and spent my time looking for God rather than avoiding him. Looking for proof rather than debunking. Worship music plays in my house, car, and freely in my head. I find beauty in the brief moments. Sunlight shining through the window. The last dandelion puff in my yard. The look of my daughter as she's doing homework. Even with my husband's

snoring at night. (I still nudge him to roll over, though.) Another beautiful part of my day is just how quiet my brain has become, and my ability to wear necklaces.

I picked a little silver cross.

Peace at last.



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The Philippines

Excerpt from Brad & Haley Dick's Newsletter

MYSTERY

Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines it like this:

1. something not understood or beyond understanding.
2. a religious truth that one can know only by revelation.

In a beautiful section of scripture, giving us a better understanding of our personal identities, and showing us what God did for us in the salvation plan, we run into this mystery. And what a mystery it is. Apparently, this mystery has not been solved in a really long time. Generations of people have not solved this mystery. The "generations" referred to are a few thousand years' worth of generations. Specifically, generations of Jews. Most had no idea what the mystery was, let alone how it was solved. Sherlock himself would not have cracked this case!

"So, what was the mystery?"
You might ponder.

"That the Gentiles are fellow heirs..."

"Heirs of what?"
You might ask yourself.

The promise.

Let's look back in scripture to find what was promised. And look no further than Genesis 22:15-18.

"And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, 'By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."

Worldwide blessing was promised to Abraham and his descendants.

The **mystery** that the Jews didn't understand was how this would actually happen. The general idea was that the Jews, being the people of God that inherited the

commandments and the sign of the circumcision, were the sole heirs of this future promise. They believed that the blessing was from them therefore it was for them. This blessing was Salvation. The Hebrew word for "Salvation" is "Yeshua." The very name that Mary gave to her child, our Lord.

"So, how are the Gentiles fellow heirs?" You might persist in asking me.

Through the Gospel. The Good News that all who believe in Christ Jesus are afforded salvation from eternal destruction to eternal life.

As Paul says, "This **mystery** is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel."

This **mystery**, this Gospel, this promise, is so great, that we share this with as many as we can. This has been our goal from the beginning. Praise His glorious name (Yeshua/Salvation) that we have been blessed in being granted to do much of this lately!

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- Please pray for Jeremy's salvation.
- Please pray for Brad's older sibling's salvation.

- Please pray that we will be able to grasp everything that we are learning and bury it in our hearts.

- Please pray that the Gospel would go forth and that the hearts that hear it would receive it.

- Please pray for Jim and Keitha's health to continue to get better. Also, pray for their families, that they would grow in Christ.

- Please pray for our marriage, this is where we are attacked the most.

- Please pray for Haley's health. She gets sick almost every time we go to do ministry together.

- Please pray for our trips to Zamboanga for DM2 training at the church. Pray for their growth and that they would go teach others also.

Thank you for your constant prayers! God moves every day and in so many undeniable ways. One of those ways is through the uniting of His church in prayer! We appreciate you. Lastly, we are so thankful for all the encouragement you send through whatever medium you choose. It fills our hearts and helps us to remember that we are never truly alone in all of this. God makes all of this possible, and He chooses to use you.

These children are at a park almost every night begging for money. We gave them the gospel, glow in the dark bracelets, and lollipops.

EPHESIANS 3:1-6

"FOR THIS REASON, I, PAUL, A PRISONER OF CHRIST JESUS ON BEHALF OF YOU GENTILES- ASSUMING THAT YOU HAVE HEARD OF THE STEWARDSHIP OF GOD'S GRACE THAT WAS GIVEN TO ME FOR YOU, HOW THE MYSTERY WAS MADE KNOWN TO ME BY REVELATION, AS I HAVE WRITTEN BRIEFLY. WHEN YOU READ THIS, YOU CAN PERCEIVE MY INSIGHT INTO THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST, WHICH WAS NOT MADE KNOWN TO THE SONS OF MEN IN OTHER GENERATIONS AS IT HAS NOW BEEN REVEALED TO HIS HOLY APOSTLES AND PROPHETS BY THE SPIRIT. THIS MYSTERY IS THAT THE GENTILES ARE FELLOW HEIRS, MEMBERS OF THE SAME BODY, AND PARTAKERS OF THE PROMISE IN CHRIST JESUS THROUGH THE GOSPEL."



Sometimes your neighbor asks you for a haircut



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A Word for the Year

by Katheryn King, Head of School

Does the Lord ever give you a word for the year? Many people carefully choose a theme word to help focus their ambitions and guide their decisions for the year. Words like purposeful, faithful, or growing can help re-center us after a setback or provide clarity as we move forward.

This year, however, the Lord placed not one—but three—words on my heart. In fact, our entire school year has been intentionally planned around them:

Chosen • Loved • Called

These words continually bring us back to what matters most. And what is most important? Jesus. He is our focus, our priority, and our hope.

1 Peter 2:9 tells us, **"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."**

We are chosen.

God chose us before the creation of the world to be holy (Ephesians 1:4). Before we were even born, he set us apart and has a very special plan for us (Jeremiah 1:5).

We are loved.

He loves us so much! He demonstrated his love for

us by dying on the cross for our sins (Romans 5:8). He loves to lavish His love on us and calls us children of God (1 John 3:1). He takes great delight in us and rejoices over us with singing (Zephaniah 3:17).

But our purpose in life is not to just bask in the fact that we are chosen by our Creator and loved beyond measure (Ephesians 3:18-19). There is so much more.

We are called.

We are called to tell others about Him (Matthew 28:19). We are called to love others in our actions and in truth (1 John 3:18). We are called to do everything in love (1 Corinthians 16:14). Everything.

We are called to work with all our hearts in everything we do as working for the Lord (Colossians 3:23).

We are called to be Christ's ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20).

We are also called to be free – free from guilt, shame and bondage – and serve one another humbly in love (Galatians 5:13).

Isn't this amazing? You and I are Chosen, Loved, and Called by God! Can you see why we couldn't choose just one word for the year?

Ask anyone from our school community and they will tell you what an incredible adventure it has been to dig into God's Word every day with our students, discovering what the Bible says about us being Chosen, Loved, and Called.

My encouragement to you is this: ask the Lord to guide you in choosing a word for this year. And my only advice—choose a word that continually points you back to the Word of God, the Bible. And who knows—perhaps the Lord may even place three words on your heart, just as He has for us.

As we step into a new year, I would also humbly ask that you keep our entire school community in your prayers—our students, families, faculty, staff, and leadership. We are so blessed to be a ministry of Watersprings Church and are grateful for your partnership, your prayers, and your support as we continue this journey of living out what it means to be **Chosen, Loved, and Called.**

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FIRST TRIMESTER WRAP-UP

by Wendy Putnam, Middle School/High School Principal

The first trimester was filled with meaningful milestones and memorable moments across our school community. One highlight was the Class of 2026 presenting the project portion of their Senior Capstone course. Each student identified a personal passion and used it as a way to serve their church, school, or broader community. The presentations were both inspiring and impactful, clearly reflecting the students' dedication, personal growth, and genuine heart for serving others.

We also celebrated community and school spirit through several special events. Our first-ever fall sports banquet, which recognized all fall athletic programs together, saw record attendance and was a wonderful evening of honoring our student-athletes and coaches. Additionally, our annual Veterans Day event was enhanced by an exciting new experience - the landing of EIRMC's helicopter on the football field. Students had the opportunity to ask questions, meet the flight crew, and get a firsthand look at the helicopter, making the day both educational and unforgettable.



Wonder



Dear Families,

Can you imagine what it would be like to hang out with Jesus? Can you imagine getting to be near Him, to observe Him healing those who are sick, and to listen to the sound of His voice as He teaches?

There is no one like Jesus! Early in His ministry, Jesus called a handful of followers to travel with Him and learn from Him. In other instances, He spoke with those who had been cast aside or were despised by those around them. Who else but Jesus could show them just the right amount of love, care, and patience?

We know from this month's Word of Wonder—John 3:16–17—that God sent Jesus to show the world His love. Part of that plan was for Jesus to die for our sin and to rise again. But, before those important acts took place, Jesus had a lot of work to do in the lives of those here on earth. Through His work in the Gospels, we get a glimpse of the tenderness and favor our heavenly Father shows toward us.

This month, your family is invited to hang out with Jesus. With each coming week, you'll see through God's

big story how Jesus calls us, cares for us, and is able to heal us. He came to seek us and to save us. He came to reach out His hand toward us because He loves us.

God sent His one and only Son, Jesus, into the world because of His deep love. Jesus extended that love to the people He hung out with as He traveled and taught. In this series, kids will be introduced to the love Jesus has for all people. He wants to be with us every day. Jesus offers love and care like no one else can, and He invites us to spend time with Him too!





At-Home Bible Story Video



Spotify playlist

SERIES OVERVIEW

Bible Story	Bible Passage	Wonder Truth
Jesus Calls the Disciples	Luke 5	God Calls Us
Jesus and the Woman at the Well	John 4	God Sent Jesus to Save Us
Jesus and the Children	Mark 10	Jesus Loves Us
Jesus and Zacchaeus	Luke 19	Jesus Seeks and Saves Us
Jesus and the People with Leprosy	Luke 17	Jesus Cares for Everyone
Nicodemus Visits Jesus	John 3	God Sent Jesus Because He Loves Us

FAMILY WONDER QUESTIONS

1. If you could hang out with anyone for a day, who would you choose?
2. If you could hang out with Jesus today, what would you do with Him?
3. What are you excited about this Advent season?

Age 2 - 12th Grade



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FAMILY SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

- **Living Water Prayer:** In John 4, we read about Jesus meeting a woman at the well. Jesus says, “I am the living water ... anyone who drinks the water I give them will never be thirsty.” Give everyone in your family a drink of water. As you drink it, pray and thank God for being the “living water” and giving us eternal life through Him.
- **Thank You, God!** In Luke 17, Jesus heals 10 men from leprosy and only one comes back to thank Him. He “threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him” (Luke 17:16). Jesus heals us from our sin, and we can thank Him. Use paper and coloring utensils to write “Thank You” cards and notes to Jesus, thanking Him for what He’s done in your life. Read the notes together and pray as you thank God.

WORD OF WONDER

God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world. He sent his Son to save the world through him.

—John 3:16-17



VINDICATED!

by Pastor Tim Rupp

It's Friday, and you show up for work like any other Friday, and your boss assigns you a task. You complete the task, just as you have been trained, then government officials show up, arrest you and charge you with a horrific crime. You are fired from your job and face a lifetime in prison. You have no job and no insurance, and the whole community knows that you have been accused of a terrible criminal act. But you're innocent. You were doing your job, just as you were trained.

Being arrested for a horrific crime that you didn't commit is a nightmare we think unimaginable in America. But America has changed and when people in power bow to political pressure innocent people end up behind bars, questionable investigations are conducted, and justice is in peril. In the August 2023 Blue Line

newsletter, I wrote about three San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) officers, who, for this scenario, was a reality.

On June 23, 2023, SAPD officers were dispatched to an apartment complex for a disturbance. When officers arrived, they found 46-year-old Melissa Perez had cut the fire/security alarm system (a felony offense) to the apartment complex in which she lived. Officers were concerned she might start a fire.

As officers approached Miss Perez to investigate, she fled into her apartment and ignored the officers' commands to stop. She was ordered to surrender and come outside. She refused, threw a glass candlestick at an officer, and yelled, "You don't have a warrant." One officer was hit by the candlestick. Sergeant Alfred Flores arrived on the scene and went to the back patio where Perez had assaulted the officer. Miss Perez swung a hammer at officers, officers fired and Perez was hit. Officers rendered first aid, but Perez died of her wounds.

The next day, in a press conference, Police Chief William McManus said the officers did not follow SAPD policy and "used deadly force, which was not reasonable given all the circumstances as we now understand them."¹ Only sixteen hours after the incident, three officers were arrested and booked for murder. The issue is the officers' intent. Was killing Perez the officers' intent? No, of course not. The officers immediately rendering first aid confirms the officers had no ill intent.



¹<https://www.ksat.com/news/local/2023/06/25/what-we-know-about-3-san-antonio-police-officers-charged-with-murder-in-death-of-melissa-perez/>

I wrote in 2023 that what concerned me about this case is the haste in which the officers were charged with murder. Why not do a more thorough investigation before charging the officers with murder and firing them? These men are not a flight risk, neither are they a danger to society. When I worked Homicide on the SAPD, we didn't always arrest a suspect right away. Unless there was a flight risk and/or further risk to the public, the best course of action was to take the time to investigate, rather than have a knee-jerk reaction to public pressure. Such is the case here. If arrests are warranted, they can be made later.

The trial was this past Fall. After four weeks of testimony, evidence, and arguments from both sides it took the jury less than two hours to find all three officers not guilty.² Clearly, the jury did not agree with Chief McManus and the District Attorney's Office. But it's not over. The officers now must fight to be reinstated to the SAPD. Continue to pray for the officers and their families.

LOOKING FORWARD

Big plans. We've been working on a new project that will offer people the opportunity to support our work and support officers through prayer. More to come soon! Much of our 2026 schedule is now set and we have events scheduled in Arkansas, North Carolina, Iowa, South Dakota, New Mexico, and Washington.

BRINGING HOPE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Strong Blue Line Foundation—at no cost to officers or their agencies—brings hope to LEOs with training seminars that help them navigate a myriad of issues they deal with. One issue is suicide. Statistics show that officers are much more likely to die by suicide than being murdered in the line of duty. In the “Suicide is Not an Option” seminar and book, officers learn not only why people who claim to be Christian opt for suicide, but where they can find real hope. Please partner with us to make strong officers with strong relationships by giving them real hope for complete victory! To help, go to TheStrongBlueLine.org and click on the “Donate” button.

ON THE ROAD

This month, we're traveling to Colorado and then down to Arkansas for strategic planning and preparing for the 2026 schedule. Next month we have events planned in Arkansas and North Carolina.

Pray for your police.

²<https://www.kens5.com/article/news/crime/melissa-perez-trial-verdict-sapd-san-antonio-not-guilty-acquitted-texas/273-be23105d-3a3f-4eb6-97de-552b00e1c0d6>



SCAN
ME





Hermeneutic for Reading Revelation

by Pastor Ty Orr



Continuing from December's newsletter...

HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLE 3: READ REVELATION IN ITS COMPOSITE LITERARY GENRE

Revelation is one of a kind. Mathewson notes that we must consider the unique literary genre of Revelation.¹ For Revelation is a complex blend of apocalyptic, prophetic, epistolary, and other forms. Some additional forms to consider include the narrative of divine biblical history and hymns placed throughout, which center the reader's focus back on the God of the creation, judgment, and redemption (See Revelation 4:8-11; 5:9-14; 7:10-12; 11:15-18; 12:10-12; 15:2-4; 16:5-7; 19:1-8.). Revelation, using heavenly visions, symbolic imagery (apocalyptic), while foretelling/foretelling a message of judgment and blessing for the present and future (prophetic) to those who are receiving this letter from John (epistolary). Recognizing these genres affects how we understand the metaphorical symbols and authorial intent.

The epistolary nature of Revelation runs in the background of every passage we are seeking to interpret. The occasion of the writing was to real people at a real time from Jesus, through a real person, John. Mathewson goes on to say that, as an apocalypse, revelation unveils the true nature of the world and the true nature of what the first readers were experiencing, noting that it "swims in the language of symbolism of metaphor."² For example, the beast from the sea in Revelation 13:1-9 should not be read literally as some otherworldly monster that belongs in the Godzilla franchise, but as a symbol of the political power of the Roman Empire or Babylon as the world systems.

There is an assumption that the first reader would have been familiar with the Old Testament allusion, referring to Daniel's interpretation of a similar beast in Daniel 7:17-18. Therefore, as Beale explains, "The symbolic nature

of apocalyptic imagery is essential for its interpretive framework."³ How does this help us today? We are called to make the same choice, being loyal to God and not the world's systems. Jesus said, "**No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon**" (Luke 16:13).

HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLE 4: READ REVELATION CONSIDERING THE OLD TESTAMENT TYPES AND ALLUSIONS

This approach is derived from the apocalyptic nature of John's writing, which heavily reuses motifs from the Old Testament as literary models of prototypes, echoes of the past speaking into the future. Beale notes, "John patterns his writings after...Old Testament contexts, themes, sequences, catch phrases, and the like, because they serve as models for what he is trying to communicate."⁴ For instance, Beale sees Daniel 2 and 7 providing the broad patterns for Revelation 1, 4-5, 13, and 17.

We note that there are no direct "as it is written" statements. Yet, there are three categories we should consider: (1) clear allusion, (2) probable allusion, and (3) possible allusion.⁵ As Duvall notes, "John pulls from a range of Old Testament books in Revelation...Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Psalms, and five prophetic books—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah."⁶

^{1,2} David L. Mathewson, *Uncovering the Treasures of the Apocalypse: Keys to Unlocking the Mysteries of the Book of Revelation*. (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2022), 109

^{3,4} G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (Eerdmans, 1999), 21.

⁵ J. Scott Duvall, *A Theology of Revelation: God's Grand Plan to Defeat Evil, Rescue His People, and Transform His Creation*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger, Biblical Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2025), 117.

⁶ J. Scott Duvall, 110.

Most of them come from Genesis, Exodus, and Deuteronomy. For example, those from Genesis include “Images as the garden of God, the tree of life, the ancient serpent, the great city, fire and sulfur (judgment and death), and the Lion of Judah are drawn from Genesis and figure prominently in the overall plot of Revelation (e.g., Rev 2:7; 12:9).”⁷ Craig Koester notes that “Revelation often assumes the reader’s familiarity with OT texts, not quoting them but echoing them.”⁸

Let’s consider the picture of the two witnesses in Revelation 11:3-12, an apocalyptic picture with a prophetic promise. As the church has been trying to figure out who these men are for years, they are often seen as reflecting Moses and Elijah, who represent the law and prophets, drawing on Old Testament imagery of their ministries (cf. Exodus 7-11; 1 Kings 17-19, also see Matthew 17:1-8). Their ministry mirrors that of prophetic figures who confronted corrupt powers. Moses stood up to Pharaoh, and Elijah took on King Ahab and his Queen Jezebel.

Revelation 11:4 reads, **“These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.”** As Mathewson suggests, we may note that only two of the churches received a good report: Smyrna and Philadelphia. The two witnesses may represent the church that is to stand up to Rome (or any other earthly empire), which may cost them everything—suffering martyrdom for standing up to the corrupt world systems. But in the end, we will know the power of the resurrection in the Kingdom of God when He judges the wicked.

HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLE 5: THEOLOGICAL PURPOSE OVER PREDICTIVE DETAIL (FORETELLING VS. FORTHTELLING)

It is essential to focus on the theological message, the reason for the letter, rather than attempting to decode a precise timeline of future events. Many have tried, and we have the charts and graphs to prove it. Revelation is not necessarily a chronological roadmap of the end times but a pastoral-prophetic vision offering hope, calling for perseverance and faithfulness amid suffering.

Drawn from the prophetic genre, which is often more about covenantal faithfulness, being loyal disciples, than mere sermons of prediction for some far-off time. For example, the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments (Revelation 6-16) are often best understood as repetitive, cyclical visions of God’s judgment and deliverance rather than a linear sequence of end-time

events. As Richard Bauckham argues, “Revelation’s structure is not linear, but recursive, presenting God’s judgment from different perspectives.”⁹

CLOSING THOUGHTS.

Although others are important that we do not have space for here, maintaining a strict first-century epistolary view of the apocalypse and prophecy does not negate the fact that there is a future hope. The fulfillment of all of God’s promises of the new creation. **“Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ And He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful.’ And He said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son”** (Revelation 21:5-7). Revelation is a book about our glorious future. What a tremendous hope and blessing that we have as we study the Book of Revelation.

⁷ J. Scott Duvall, III.

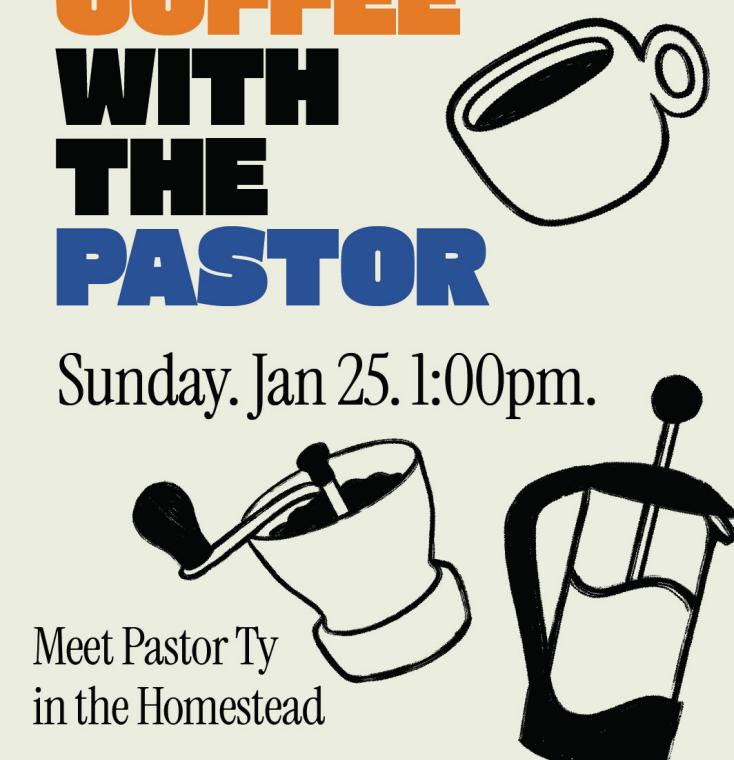
⁸ Craig Koester, *Revelation and the End of All Things*. (Eerdmans, 2001), 85

⁹ Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*. (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 7.

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**COFFEE
WITH
THE
PASTOR**

Sunday. Jan 25. 1:00pm.



**Meet Pastor Ty
in the Homestead**



by Paul Verhoeven

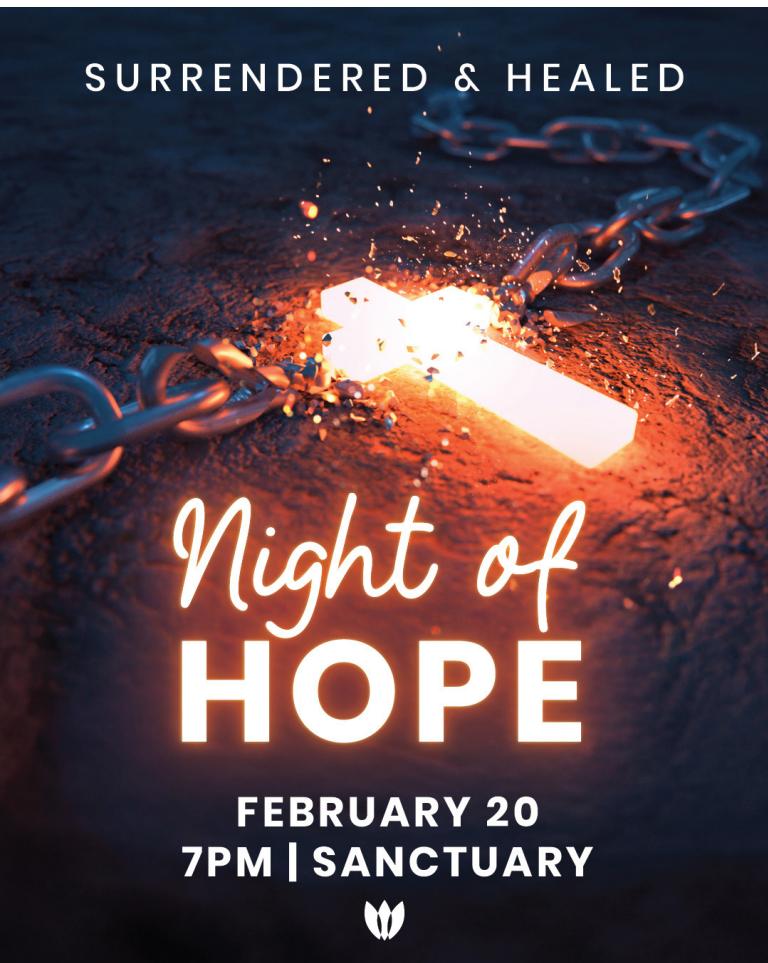
If you are between the ages of 18-30 and out of High School, you are invited to join us at Rooted. We meet in the Fellowship Hall on Monday evenings at 6:30 pm. We begin our evening with dinner, then spend some time singing songs and then a Bible study, which centers around group discussion. Everyone is encouraged to participate in the conversation. This has led to some very enlightening and lively conversations. It is great to see the wisdom and intellect that each person has been given by God, and this allows us all to learn from each other. This is a great way to meet new people, develop friendships, and help build a community of believers working and serving together.

Beginning in January we will be studying the book of 2 Corinthians. This is an exciting book. The apostle Paul wrote this letter, and it is the most personal letter he wrote. Through it we get a peek into the heart of the apostle. We learn much about him and how we can apply what he learned into our own lives. The letter is filled with grace as the apostle Paul instructs people who are struggling with different issues. Society in Corinth at that time had many similarities to our own culture today. One aspect that is dealt with in this letter is false teachers. False teachers are wolves in sheep's clothing that have one purpose, which is to lead believers astray so that they can devour them, because that is what wolves do. Paul shares strategies and ways to not be led astray by false teachers, and how to overcome their ways.

The people in Corinth had other issues that they were dealing with too. They dealt with things that we deal with today. Things like gossip, persecution, mistreatment, having lies told about you, sexual sins, plus struggles and difficulties in life. Then he talks about life for the believer, things that should be in our lives, like giving and serving. Throughout this letter we are witness

to the heart of Paul, and we learn that he has the heart of a pastor. A pastor's heart isn't just for pastors, but it is essential for every believer who desires to serve God and others. Paul sees the hurts and needs of others, seeing them the way God does, and looks for ways to meet their needs.

Through our discussions we will be discussing ways for us to have the heart of a pastor, to see people how God does, and look for ways to help meet their needs. In short, we want to see how God can and will use us to bring others to Him.



We will be baptizing during all services!

*If you plan on being baptized,
remember to bring a change of clothes.*

Invite your family & friends. All are welcome!

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BAPTISM

JANUARY
17 & 18

Weekdays
9am & 5pm



Podcast
drops at
10am



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UPCOMING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

JAN 1&2 **OFFICE CLOSED IN OBSERVANCE OF NEW YEAR'S**

JAN 9 **Ladies Night Out** - 7:00pm / Fellowship Hall

JAN 10 **Brothers Breakfast** - 8:00am / Fellowship Hall

JAN 11 **Pre-Baptism Class** - 1:00pm / Register @ watersprings.net

JAN 17 & 18 **Baptism Weekend** - Baptisms at each service

JAN 19 **OFFICE CLOSED IN OBSERVANCE OF MLK JR. DAY**

JAN 24 **Michael Jr. Funny How Marriage Works - NO 7PM SERVICE**

JAN 25 **Coffee with the Pastor** - 1:00pm / Homestead

FEB 1 **Life Class Begins** - 11:00am

FEB 6 **Ladies Night Out** - 7:00pm / Fellowship Hall

FEB 7 **Brothers Breakfast** - 8:00am / Fellowship Hall

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