



Watersprings
CHURCH

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THE "MONSTER" UNDER THE BED PT2

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THE "MONSTER" UNDER THE BED



A PARENT'S
GUIDE TO FEAR,
SCRIPTURE,
AND SPIRITUAL
WARFARE – PART 2

by Pastor Ty Orr

Putting our kiddos to bed can be a challenge from time to time. I would ask my dad for a glass of water every night, which would lead to a tear-filled bedtime power struggle when he said no. Then there were other times when I was just scared of the dark. Looking back as an adult, I can see that I was reacting to conflict at home and at school. As adults, we often rationalize nighttime fear, but Scripture does not dismiss the reality of spiritual warfare.

As we looked at last time, Ephesians 6 reminds us, **"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). Peter warns us about a spiritual enemy who seeks to intimidate. **"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).

Children might not, and do not need to, understand demonology. Nor should they, for that is the stuff of nightmares even for the most mature saint. They do not need to take those dark, scary roads to understand fear, and fear is one of the enemy's favorite tools. The good news? Fear collapses under the weight of God's loving presence and 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).

Spiritual warfare isn't something we should sensationalize, nor should we 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 to teach our children well. You can say: “Sometimes darkness can feel scary, but Jesus is stronger than anything in the world. When we speak His Word, darkness must leave.” In doing so, we gently, truthfully, and safely teach them spiritual authority.

TEACHING CHILDREN TO SPEAK TRUTH OUT LOUD

The Psalms reveal a pattern: fear speaks first, then truth responds. When David felt overwhelmed, he didn’t hide; he prayed and declared the truth. Our children can learn the same pattern.

Help them say phrases like:

- “Jesus is with me right now.”
- “God is my helper.”
- “I don’t have to fear; God is here.”
- “Jesus is stronger than anything scary.”

Now, speaking Scripture is not some magic formula; it is, for lack of a better term, a healthy spiritual discipline. It also helps children learn early that God’s Word is alive and authoritative. When a child speaks the truth out loud, they participate in the same spiritual resistance Scripture describes, and something beautiful happens: they gain courage not by pretending nothing is wrong but by trusting God even when they’re afraid.

YOUR ROLE AS A PARENT: PROTECTING YOUR HOME SPIRITUALLY

Parents do not meet only physical needs; we are spiritual guardians of our homes. God has placed us in authority, and one of our most powerful tools is prayer. Scripture calls us to pray without ceasing, resist the enemy, and take our stand.

Praying over your child’s room does not mean you expect something frightening to happen. It means you are establishing spiritual peace and setting the tone for your home. Some parents walk from room to room, praying Scripture, asking for God’s presence, and declaring His peace. Others lay a gentle hand on their child and pray before bed.

A simple prayer might sound like: “Lord, fill this room with Your peace. Drive out anything not from You. Let Your presence rest here, and let my child sleep in Your protection.” You could say it is like turning on the light

to dispel the darkness. This is spiritual warfare in its simplest form—calm, truthful, and assertive in the name of Jesus.

Spurgeon wisely said, “When you cannot trace His hand, you can trust His heart.”¹ When we faithfully pray over our homes, we trust God’s heart for our children and for ourselves. For we can find ourselves facing moments of fear, not from the monster under the bed but from the very real monsters of life. Remember, God loves us, and He loves our children more than we ever could.

CREATING A PEACE-FILLED BEDTIME RITUAL

Fear often grows in unstructured moments, but routines—simple, predictable, comforting habits—can help a child feel grounded.

Here are a few ideas:

1. A Scripture “Shield” Verse

Pick one verse each month. Repeat it together as the last words before lights out. You’re helping them internalize God’s promises, not to mention yourself.

2. A Short Prayer Together

Something as simple as “Jesus, thank You for being with me all night long,” builds trust and familiarity with God. Something we need to remember to do before we go to bed.

3. A Nighttime Blessing

Speak the truth your child can’t yet say on their own: “The Lord is your light and salvation. You don’t need to be afraid.”

4. Sharing Stories of Your Own Fears

Children love hearing that adults feel afraid sometimes, too, and that God helped you. It shows them that fear isn’t failure; it’s part of being human. Bedtime is an excellent opportunity for meaningful conversation with our children. These rituals do more than quiet fears; they train hearts.



¹ Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Mystery of Providence*, (London: Banner of Truth, 1963), 22.

DARKNESS IS NOT DARK TO GOD

One of the most helpful truths a child can learn is that God sees perfectly in the dark. Darkness is not frightening to Him. He is not confused, overwhelmed, or pushed back by it. His presence fills every room in your home, whether the lights are on or off. Helping children understand this reshapes their view of nighttime. You can tell them: “God can see everything at night. He watches over you the entire time you sleep. Nothing surprises Him.” When they internalize this, fear loses its loudest argument.

“He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep” (Psalm 121:3-4).

“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 it” (John 1:3-5).

CELEBRATE EVERY VICTORY

Growing in courage is not a one-night transformation. Some nights will be harder than others. But when your child sleeps peacefully, confronts fear with Scripture, or prays without prompting, celebrate it. Affirm the spiritual strength they’re gaining. “Look how brave you were with God’s help!” You’re not just praising behavior; you’re reinforcing their identity as a child of God who is never alone.

FEAR BECOMES A TEACHER

The “monster under the bed” becomes more than a childhood fear. It becomes a God-given opportunity to:

- Teach your child to run to Scripture,
- Train them to pray,
- Show them that spiritual battles are real but not frightening,
- Help them discover that Jesus is stronger than darkness,
- Remind them that God’s presence is constant.

In the end, the goal is not for your child to never feel afraid. It is for them to know exactly what to do when they feel afraid—to turn to God with confidence, truth, and trust.

Darkness may come, but God’s light always wins.



LEADERS WANTED!
PRESCHOOL - 6TH GRADE

Volunteer by filling out a
Ministry Volunteer
Application



Sermon to Sermon.
Stream teachings anywhere.
Follow us!

 WATERSPRINGS CHURCH PODCAST

 PASTORS LIVE

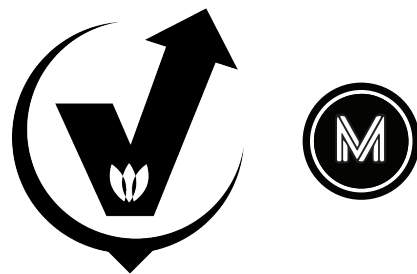




LIVE NATIVITY

Youth Outreach

by Ryan Fugh

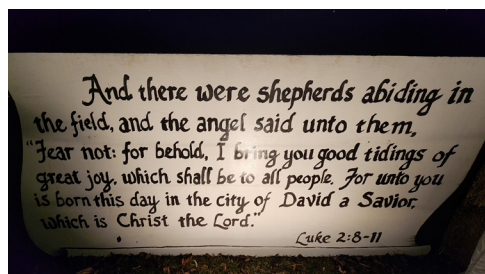


One of the great things about youth ministry is when God gives you fun opportunities to love our communities. Earlier this year the Blackfoot Chamber of Commerce reached out to Watersprings and wanted to know if we'd be interested in acting out a scene for the Live Nativity they were putting on. Naturally, when Pastor Shane brought it up to the youth group we agreed.

The weekend before Christmas a handful of High School and Middle School students had a great time dressing up as shepherds and angels to help share the story of the greatest news in all of human history, that the Messiah had come. We definitely had a blast coming alongside the Outreach Ministry for this event.

It was cold, it was rainy, but our spirits were high. With big smiles and frozen fingers we were able to do exactly what the shepherds we were portraying did and **"made known the statement which had been told them about this Child"** Luke 2:17b.

I'm excited to see what the future holds for Revive and Thrive's involvement with the Nativity. And hopefully next year we can make it even better.



Noise is the Enemy

by Laurie Orr

It seems like the world is spinning faster and faster. Things are coming at us more quickly than we can handle. Even our marginal time or space between tasks accelerates when we engage in scrolling, watching a show while checking texts, or multitasking. Information is so readily available, and we haven't learned to filter. We still live in fear of missing out, so we try to keep up and take it all in. It winds us up and makes us feel important, and we like it - until it turns against us.

It used to be when someone was frantic, they were thought to be on the verge of a breakdown or already there. Now, we live on this edge. When things in our lives are worrisome or out of control, we turn the noise up. We open Netflix on our phones or iPads to push back on the distress we feel. We distract ourselves with podcasts, TikTok, or YouTube, so we don't have to face what frightens us. Noise is the new drug of choice. It is how we cope. To turn it off is alarming - how could I sit still in the quiet for even five minutes? Would I start to twitch after two minutes or three? How uncomfortable would I become? When we are worried about going without and anticipate the symptoms of withdrawal, we should recognize there is a problem. When we are concerned that we could not unwind, sleep, or cope without the noise, it is not the security blanket we think it is. It is a monster eating away at our cognitive ability and peace that also isolates us from healthy relationships and living out our purpose. It can separate us from God.

Stillness is physical and often indicates a lack of action. It can be extended to our minds when we cease to plan or to fret. It can be applied further to halt the noise we make and that which we invite into our surroundings. The psalmist is asking us to stop everything. Stop. Be still.



Now do only one thing. Know.

Keep the stillness and with purpose, turn our minds to God. Know He is and look to Him. Know who He is and believe.

This same Psalm tells us He is our very refuge, strength, and help. He is with us. He stops the wars and weapons and then tells us to be still.

In 1 Kings 19, Elijah stood in a cave while chaos and noise reigned outside in the wind, the earthquake, and the fire. But God was not in those. He came in a whisper, and Elijah went out to meet Him. God spoke to him, directed him, and gave him hope. In the stillness, God commanded him to go and do. Then, Elijah moved. He acted from knowing God in the stillness.

Jesus often went to a quiet place to pray (Mark 1:35, Luke 5:16), sometimes on the hillsides above the Sea of Galilee. There is stillness there. The Bible describes it as lonely or desolate. Jesus was alone in the quiet and

prayed. He knew God and heard His voice. We often see this right before a pivotal event, such as calling the disciples. From the stillness comes clarity and direction.

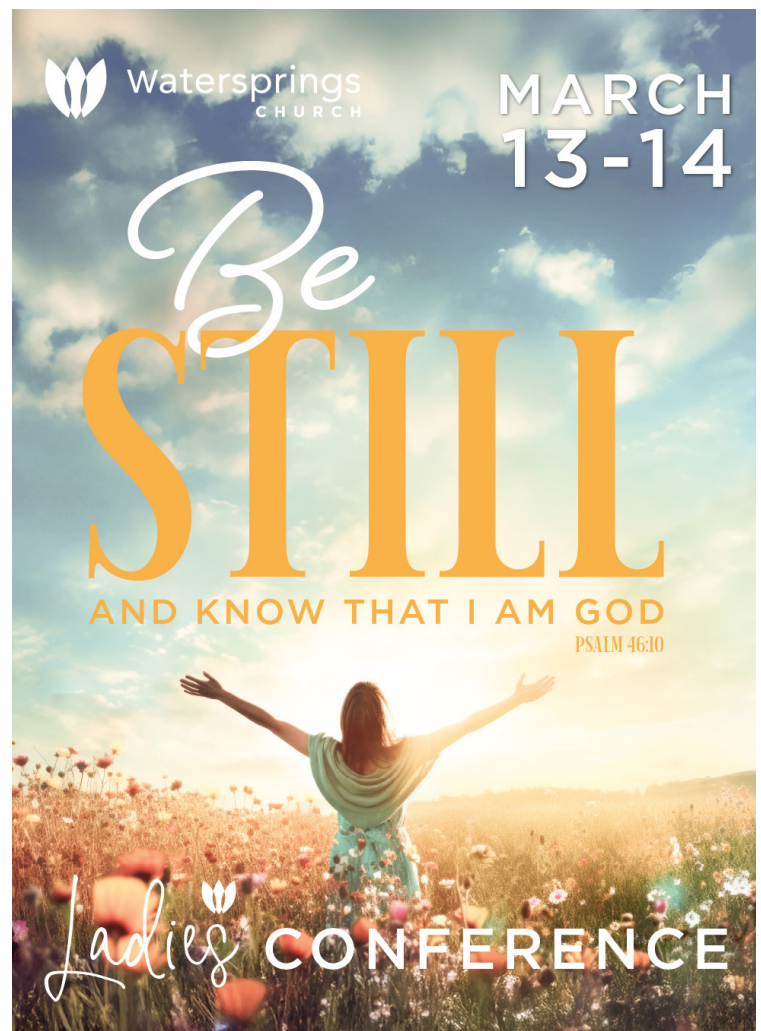
Stillness gives us the opportunity to meet with God, to commune with Him. This quiet helps us turn to Him and learn of Him. It provides space in our minds to consider Him and who He is. It helps us hear His voice.

We may need to invite the quiet in, pulling away from noise and busy surroundings for a bit and intentionally slowing our pace. We might write out our prayers in a journal, sit and meditate on a Bible verse, or stop everything to pray. All the while, we leave space for God to speak and consciously listen for His voice, His hope, and His direction.

Pushing back the noise helps us practice stillness. And He is there, with us, in the quiet.

If you are interested in learning more about Psalm 46:10, we invite you to register for the *Be Still* Ladies' Conference and join us on March 13th and 14th. We will be looking at this verse in depth.

REGISTER HERE!



Ladies NIGHT OUT
**GROUND
&
STEADFAST**

Study in Colossians

Feb 6 / 7 PM

Register at watersprings.net





Opportunities for Greatness

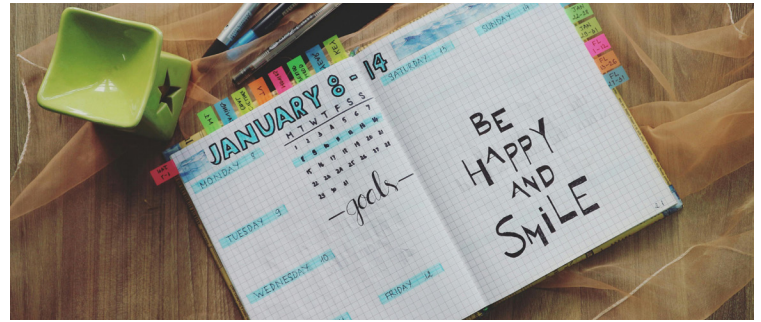
by Pastor Dave Coleman

*The one who wants to be great among you,
will become the servant of all.
~ Jesus Mark 10:43-44, paraphrased*

The second Friday of January is commonly known as “Quitter’s Day.” Why? Because traditionally, that’s the day most New Year’s resolutions are abandoned. Motivation begins to fade and old habits and routines return. In fairness, it’s probably because those new goals were unrealistic to begin with, and people are already feeling discouraged. Fatigue, cold weather, and the stress of returning to work has led to missed days at the gym or early failures, and this generally leads to people giving up rather than resetting and going at it again. By the third week of January, most – but not all – resolutions have been completely abandoned.

Still, as the initial excitement of the holidays and the New Year begins to wear off a little bit, the idea of doing something different – something truly meaningful – in the new year may begin to settle into many of our hearts. In truth, most gyms in town will not have to close their doors just because you do not show up two-to-three times each week, as you had resolved. The local health food stores will stay in business, even if you go back to eating junk food.

Nonetheless, experts in these areas tell us there are things we can do to help ourselves be more successful than the usual mid-January quitters. For one thing, do not be afraid to “reset” after failure. Some studies indicate that restarting after failure is more predictive of success than “never stumbling.” So, even if you’ve



already given up on your goals for the new year, that doesn’t necessarily make you a “quitter.” On the contrary, be a starter – or a re-setter. Allow yourself enough grace to reset and start again, rather than scolding the person-in-the-mirror. This time, however, set more reasonable – more doable – goals. Smaller, habit-based goals are more likely to last longer than the all-or-nothing resolutions. Also, consider setting a shorter time limit, like 30-days, rather than all-year or the-rest-of-my-life. Many times, shorter successes lead to lifestyle changes, but they seem more attainable. We can set our eyes on closer goals; like getting the 10-yard first down, and then we set ourselves up for the next set of downs, and the next, until we are within scoring range. Does that make sense? Everyone loves a home run hitter, but every successful coach will tell you, “base hits win games.” Be content with smaller successes, and you’ll end up winning in the long run.

All of that being said, many people set spiritual goals for the new year as well. Some resolve to read their Bible through in a year. That’s a doable goal – and a worthy goal, too – if you are willing to read four chapters each day. For many of us, that’s exactly what we do. For others, that seems like a lot of reading. Each of us has to do what we are capable of and willing to do. Watersprings’ “Truth For You” reading plan is a two-year, through-the-Bible reading plan, and it is very accessible and attainable. You can get your monthly paper copy of the reading plan in the church lobby or office. You can follow along online at watersprings.net under the Resources tab, or on the Watersprings App. (Psalm 119:105; 2 Timothy 2:15).



App Download



TFY Online

Others set goals for being more involved in the church. That is also a very worthy goal – and a very doable goal, as well – if you are willing to do a few things with us, (Hebrews 10:24-25). The pathway to discipleship and service at Watersprings Church is not difficult, but there are some necessary hoops to jump through, so-to-speak. (That’s just the world we live in.) For the sake of the security of the Body, we do vet all of our workers and those who serve the Body of Christ here, (Acts 20:29-31), especially those who serve with our children. Every parent should know that all of our volunteers in Children’s Ministry have been trained and have been cleared with a thorough background check.

Should you desire to serve in the Body here at Watersprings, the first thing to do is visit with Pastor Ty and his wife, Laurie, at “Coffee With The Pastor.” This takes place on one Sunday afternoon each month. Watch the announcements and the bulletin for details.

From there, we ask you to take our 5-week “LIFE Class,” also conveniently scheduled on Sundays, during



Coffee with the Pastor

the 11:00AM hour. Like the name implies, LIFE Class will introduce you to life and culture around Watersprings Church. You can visit the Connect Center for details and assistance in registration. After an interview with one of the assisting pastors, we can get you on your way to plugging in to your area of interest in serving, which will include a thorough background check. We are also happy to schedule regular times of meeting for discipleship.

Areas of service where we are currently accepting



more volunteers would include KidMin and AWANA ministry, parking lot attendants, and servant’s team (ushers and greeters). If you have particular gifts that you would like to put to use in service to the Body, please visit the Connect Center or see one of the pastors after each service in the front of the sanctuary, or call us at the church office, Monday through Friday, at (208) 524-4747.



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Trailhead of
the Watersprings
path to service
and discipleship.

MARCH 8

Register at
watersprings.net





The Philippines

Excerpt from Brad & Haley Dick's Newsletter

WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF IT ALL?

We have finally made it through the Christmas season! Congratulations! We've arrived on the other side. The stores will resume regular music. The decorations in businesses will disappear. The extended family will go home. If you are in Idaho, your Christmas lights will probably stay up for 4 more months. For those of us here in the Philippines, the great multitude of carolers will cease. Presents have been distributed, and now we resume regular life.

When I was a child, Christmas was so magical. As an adult, it feels like ads on YouTube. I pay my dues then move on. But is that the original intent of the whole thing? Was that what God wanted me to do, watch the ads then move on to better things? Or was there something deeper that we often miss?

Many of you may have gone to church on Christmas for some special Christmas celebration. They may have told the story of Jesus'

birth and the surrounding events during that time. They may have put on a play, or had a choir perform. Their intent was to point us to Jesus. But, like the ads on YouTube, often times we watch and then move on with our regular lives.

So, what's the purpose of it all? Well, just like birth is, in a sense, our beginning of the experience of living in this world, so too was the Christmas season. You see, Christ came to this earth with a mission in mind. To die a brutal, agonizing, death on the cross and come back to life. That snuggly baby that Mary held would one day be nailed to some wood and left to either bleed to death or suffocate. Christ came to save us. This fact can be overlooked in all the shopping, family visitations, holiday parties, and even church functions.

Paul explains here in Romans how we are no longer tied to the things of the flesh, and ultimately condemned by it, but are now free to live by the Spirit. Paul had just taught us the key difference

between Christian faith and every other world religion. That we are justified before the Father, by His grace, through our faith in Christ's redeeming work; not through our good deeds/works. This ends up refocusing our minds on that which is most important, Christ Himself. The only One who made it all possible. The central focus of our existence.

"Well," you might say, "isn't that who the whole season is about? The person we have been focusing on the whole Christmas season?"

To your fictional response, I would say, "Yes." But this focus isn't encapsulated in the Christmas season, instead it's a refocusing of the entire year. God, in His infinite wisdom, allowed us to continue the tradition of celebrating the birth of Christ, right near the end of the year. Guess what happens 6 days later? An entire new year begins, where we can practice focusing our lives on Him. And there is no way that we could even begin to do that without the influence of the Holy Spirit in us. The true Spirit of Christmas.

So, brothers and sisters, let us put off the focus on the fleshly things, the things of this world, that are blasted in our faces like YouTube ads. And let's instead skip forward to the focus of our entire existence, Jesus Christ.

Unlike the typical Christmas that we experience, our experience this year in the Philippines has been very quiet. Many of the pastors that we train and work with were busy with their own church functions. This put a temporary halt to many of our classes and ministries here. December was very slow for us. That doesn't mean that everything stopped. The slowness gave us time to reflect on what God had done in and through us this year and how He changed lives for so many. This also proved to be a time for regrouping and organizing our schedules for January. God may be keeping us very busy for 2026!

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- Mastery of the local language.
- The salvation of our neighbors here in the Philippines.
- Brad's older siblings are unsaved. Please pray for their hearts to soften and for their salvation
- Continued prayers for Jeremy's salvation.
- Please pray for upcoming ministry options in the city of Dipolog, Zamboanga City, and the Bagakay Bible Baptist Church College.
- Haley's and our child's health and safety. We are a ways away from quality healthcare here in Ozamiz City.
- Please keep Jim and Keitha in your prayers always. The work that God is doing through them is incredible. They are instrumental in our growth and maturity in the calling that God has called us to.

ROMANS 8:5

"FOR THOSE WHO ARE IN ACCORD WITH THE FLESH SET THEIR MINDS ON THE THINGS OF THE FLESH, BUT THOSE WHO ARE IN ACCORD WITH THE SPIRIT, THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT."



While attending the neighborhood Christmas party Brad was able to give the gospel while he prayed for the food. And he was able to join in with the games





Top 5 Ways Kids Learn Faith at School

(That May Surprise You)

by Jana Stepp, Elementary Principal

When parents think about how children grow spiritually at school, Chapel services, Bible class, and Scripture memory often come to mind. Those are important—and meaningful—pieces of faith formation. But some of the most powerful spiritual lessons our students learn happen quietly, woven into the ordinary moments of the school day.

Here are five ways your child is learning faith at school that might surprise you.

1. THROUGH HOW THEY ARE LOVED

Before children can fully understand God's love, they experience it through people. When a teacher listens patiently, offers grace after a mistake, or speaks truth with kindness, students are seeing a picture of Christ in action.

These daily interactions teach children that faith isn't just something we talk about—it's something we live. Feeling safe, known, and valued creates fertile soil for spiritual growth.

2. THROUGH CONFLICT AND RECONCILIATION

Recess disagreements, hurt feelings, and misunderstandings are unavoidable—but they are also discipleship opportunities. When students are guided to apologize, forgive, listen, and restore relationships, they are practicing biblical principles in real time.

Learning to say, "I'm sorry," and "I forgive you," may not look like a Bible lesson, but it is one of the clearest ways children learn what it means to live like Jesus.

3. THROUGH EVERYDAY CHOICES

Faith is built in the small decisions: choosing honesty when no one is watching, showing kindness to a classmate who feels left out, persevering through a

challenging assignment, or helping a friend without being asked.

These moments remind students that following Jesus isn't limited to chapel or prayer time—it applies to every part of life, even math class and the playground.

4. THROUGH WORSHIP AND PRAYER THAT FEEL NORMAL

One of the greatest gifts of a Christian school is that prayer and worship are part of the rhythm of the day, not something extra or occasional. Praying before a test, thanking God for a sunny day, or singing worship songs together helps children see faith as a natural and joyful part of life.

Over time, students begin to understand that they can talk to God anywhere, anytime.

5. THROUGH WATCHING THE ADULTS AROUND THEM

Children are always watching. They notice how teachers handle stress, speak to others, admit mistakes, and show humility. These examples often teach more than words ever could.

When students see adults living out their faith authentically—imperfectly, but faithfully—they learn what it looks like to follow Jesus in the real world.

A FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

Spiritual growth doesn't always happen in big, dramatic moments. Often, it takes place quietly—through consistency, grace, and countless small interactions. Thank you for partnering with us in the sacred work of helping children grow not only in knowledge, but in faith, character, and love for Christ.

Together, we are planting seeds that God will faithfully grow. It is an honor to partner with you in the faith formation of your children.



Mondays at 10:30am



Tune in weekly to learn about the ways scriptures connect.



Wonder



Dear Families,

When Jesus was on earth, one way He showed His power and care was through miracles. Through these instances, many people were healed, fed, calmed, and astonished at what Jesus could do for them. Jesus' actions flowed from who He is as Creator, healer, and Son of God.

As we grow older, we lose a bit of our ability to be astonished. But kids don't. They continually marvel at the world. They are less prone to doubt when something amazing happens.

Picture the last time you saw a child get excited or surprised. Hold on to that picture. Now think about how much more Jesus is able to do for us. Our Word of Wonder says, "We'll never completely understand Him" (Job 36:26). Who is this?

This is Jesus. The One who calms the raging seas, who provides more dinner than is needed, who heals and defeats death, who walks on water! He is the God of miracles.

And what is the response to these things? Worship.

Let's get started with this new series—Now That's a Miracle!—and praise Jesus with these words:

**Now to him who is able to do
immeasurably more than all we
ask or imagine, according to his
power that is at work within us,
to him be glory in the church and
in Christ Jesus throughout all
generations, for ever and ever!
Amen. (Ephesians 3:20–21 NIV)**

In this series, kids will encounter a Jesus who is fully loving yet unfathomably powerful, a Jesus whose words command nature to obey and whose compassion for the hungry crowds compels Him to do the impossible. Kids will hear about Jesus healing a man who was blind and a sick woman, commanding a girl who has died to get up, and strolling across storm-tossed waters. Kids will encounter a miracle-working Jesus who sees them, loves them, and will stop at nothing to be with them.



Age 2 - 12th Grade

REGISTER @ [WATERSPRINGS.NET](https://watersprings.net)

At-Home Bible Story Video

Spotify playlist

SERIES OVERVIEW

| Bible Story | Bible Passage | Wonder Truth |
|------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|
| Jesus Calms the Storm | Mark 4 | Jesus Has Power over Creation |
| Jesus Feeds the 5,000 | Matthew 14 | Jesus Shows Compassion |
| Jesus Heals a Blind Man | Mark 10 | Jesus Has Power to Heal |
| Jesus Heals Jairus' Daughter | Mark 5 | Jesus Is Powerful |
| Jesus Walks on Water | Matthew 14 | Jesus Is the Son of God |

Train up the next generation!

CHECK OUT the Children's Ministry Serving Opportunities

FAMILY SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

- Drawing Storms:** In Mark 4, we read about Jesus calming a storm with wind and waves. Read Mark 4:39-41 and give everyone paper and coloring utensils to draw what they envision as they listen. Then draw a picture of a storm or worry in your life that you need a reminder of God's power over. Pray and thank God for being powerful.
- Water Worship:** In Matthew 14, we read about Jesus walking on water. Afterwards, His disciples worshiped Him and said, "You really are the Son of God!" (Matthew 14:33). Sing a worship song and worship together as you think about Jesus and how amazing He is. While you worship, pour water into a bowl and think about how Jesus walking on water showed His power and His nature.

WORD OF WONDER

*How great God is!
We'll never completely understand him.*

—Job 36:26a

FAMILY WONDER QUESTIONS

- Which of Jesus' miracles is the most interesting to you, and why?
- What do you need Jesus' power for in your life?
- Share about something God has done for you or helped you with

by Pastor Tim Rupp

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT—AN ETHICAL DILEMMA

The use of force by law enforcement officers (LEOs) is constantly under scrutiny. Was it necessary to shoot the suspect? Did the officer have to use deadly force? Were there less-lethal options? The use-of-force actions our military takes (e.g., boats running drugs out of Venezuela) are also scrutinized. Some have accused the military of murder while others say the actions are justified to protect Americans.

The Air Force taught me that the use of deadly force against enemy combatants is restricted. These restrictions are called “rules of engagement.” Before any service member engages an enemy with lethal force, certain criteria must be met. These criteria are approved by the President and passed down through the chain-of-command. Law enforcement officers also operate under rules of engagement, generally called “use-of-force” rules—the rules are found in constitutions (federal and state), penal codes, and agency regulation manuals. These rules—whether for military or LEOs—are based on ethics. Ethics are guides that influence behavior—how we should live and how we treat others in society (including criminals and enemy combatants).



MORALS, VALUES, ETHICS, AND BEHAVIOR

Morals, values, ethics, and behaviors are often confused. Confusion is caused by unclear and overlapping definitions. Let me simply define and distinguish them. Behaviors are actions. Behavior is what we see. Ethics are guides. Ethics influences behavior and come from values. Values are priorities. Values are things a person (or society) believe are important. Values are derived from morals. Morals define what is right. Morals express what is right and wrong, good and evil, moral and immoral. Morals are foundational to a person’s values, ethics, and ultimately behavior. Morals are principles of justice.

Human beings are different from animals. We live our lives by moral codes. Morals shape our behavior or the way we live out our lives. Morals are principles of what is right—that which accords with reality. For example, one moral principle is that human life has meaning and purpose. Hence, we value the sanctity of life. Therefore, murder is wrong. So, we don’t murder people. A behavior is either right or wrong. Feelings have no bearing on what is right or wrong.

The Judeo-Christian belief is that moral (or natural) law is inherent to humanity. In other words, this moral law is written on our hearts, and our consciences bears witness that somethings are naturally wrong, such as murder, rape, and theft. This moral law is summarized in an ethical guide called the Ten Commandments. In other words, the Commandments codify what we know is inherently right.

This is the way it works. A moral law affirms ownership of private property. Value is placed on personal property. An ethical code states it is wrong to steal another’s property. The person doesn’t steal (behavior) because it violates his ethical code. If the person does steal, he knows it is wrong.

Everyone constantly makes ethical decisions, LEOs constantly make ethical decisions that have serious consequences for others and themselves. Hence, proper training is critical. This is one reason why the Strong Blue Line Foundation provides this critical training to LEOs across the country.

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 way we do this is by training chaplains. In the “Winning is More than Surviving” seminar and book, chaplains learn how to serve and minister to law enforcement officers by helping them understand the issues they deal with, their responses, and 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 have two “Winning a Gunfight” seminars scheduled. One is in Hot Springs, AR and the second is in Shelby, NC.

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ENGAGING UNIVERSALISM & ANNIHILATIONISM

by Pastor Ty Orr



The doctrine of *eternal punishment* has been consistently affirmed in the Christian faith. However, modern theology has increasingly proposed alternatives, most notably universalism and annihilationism, often to reconcile a perceived conflict between *divine justice* and *divine love*. When we are unable to understand the balance of divine justice and love, we should not impose our morality on God. Instead, we should let scripture speak and listen to what God is saying. Paul made that point at the end of three chapters in Romans, wrapped around the sovereignty of God, man's responsibility, and predestination. (Romans 11:33-36).

Both universalism and annihilationism raise significant moral concerns; nevertheless, neither does justice to the full witness of Scripture or to the traditional understanding and history of Christian doctrine.

UNIVERSALISM

Universalism, broadly construed, holds that God will ultimately reconcile all persons to himself, whether through postmortem repentance or a restorative process of judgment. Though appealing for its moral intuition, universalism faces significant theological challenges.

1. Scriptural Finality and Irreversibility

The New Testament consistently portrays final judgment as decisive and irreversible, not provisional. Jesus speaks of a "great chasm fixed" between the righteous and the wicked after death (Luke 16:26). Hebrews declares that "it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). These texts resist being read merely as pedagogical¹ or temporary.

Moreover, Matthew 25:46 juxtaposes "eternal punishment" and "eternal life" using identical language, suggesting parallel duration. Attempts to construe "eternal" [aiōnios] in this teaching of Jesus as a



qualitative ideal rather than a chronological reality selectively relinquish the meaning of the Greek text only when applied to punishment.²

2. Moral Agency and Coerced Redemption

Universalism often presupposes that, given sufficient time or corrective suffering, every person will eventually choose God. Yet this assumption subtly undermines the seriousness of our human freedom and our need to make our choices about God in life, not in death (Hebrews 9:27). If all human will and choice must ultimately converge on God, then final resistance to grace is, in principle, impossible. In other words, no one can say no to God. But it is imperative to note that it would be a tortured confession after suffering in hell, not one made for a heart of loyal love.

As Augustine³ argued against Origenist⁴ universalism, love that overrides human free will ceases to be love. Scripture's persistent warnings lose their force if damnation is not a genuine possibility but a temporary stage on an inevitable path to salvation.⁵ Love requires a choice made freely, without coercion or manipulation.

3. Justice and the Trivialization of Evil

Universalism also risks collapsing the moral distinction between good and evil. If perpetrators of extreme injustice and their victims ultimately share the same

eschatological outcome without any retributive distinction, then divine justice becomes indistinguishable from moral indifference. Our holy and just God is not indifferent to evil (Exodus 34:6-7).

The biblical vision of judgment includes not only restoration but also vindication, the public acknowledgment that evil is evil and deserves condemnation (Revelation 19:1-3). Without an irreversible judgment, this vindication is incomplete.

Join us next month as we continue with the second proposed alternative to eternal punishment by modern technology - Annihilationism. Then we will finish with the Coherence of Eternal Punishment.

¹A pedagogical method is the art and science of teaching, encompassing the strategies, techniques, theories, and practices educators use to facilitate learning, engage students, and achieve educational goals, moving beyond just delivering content to creating meaningful experiences.

²D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 528-30.

³Augustine was an influential Christian thinker who lived from AD 354-430 and served as Bishop of Hippo in North Africa. He profoundly shaped both Protestant and Catholic theology, and remains one of the most influential thinkers in history.

⁴Origen (c. 185-254) was an early Christian theologian and church father who became one of the most prolific writers in Christian history, addressing textual criticism, biblical exegesis, preaching, hermeneutics, and spirituality.

⁵Augustine, *Enchiridion*, trans. Albert C. Outler (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 112-13.

Living WATER

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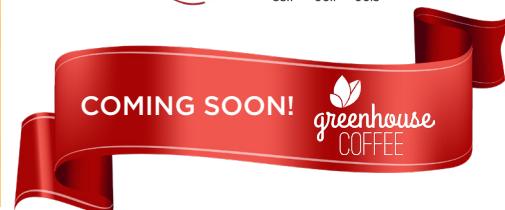
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| FEB 6 | Ladies Night Out - 7:00pm / Fellowship Hall |
| FEB 7 | Brothers Breakfast - 8:00am / Fellowship Hall |
| FEB 16 | Office Closed in Observance of President's Day |
| FEB 20 | Night of Hope - 7:00pm / Sanctuary |
| FEB 22 | Coffee with the Pastor - 1:00pm / Homestead |
| MAR 7 | Brothers Breakfast - 8:00am / Fellowship Hall |
| MAR 8 | Life Class Begins - 11:00am |
| MAR 13 & 14 | Be Still Ladies Conference - Register @ watersprings.net |
| APR 4 & 5 | Easter Services - Saturday @ 7pm, Sunday @ 9am & 11am |
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