

August Newsletter 2017

To Know Christ,
To Make Him Known,
To Build His Kingdom.

From The Pastor's Desk:

Do you ever feel as though something is not quite right? Deep in your soul there is angst. You are unsettled. Why is that. One possible answer is that you have never experienced the New Birth promised in John chapter 3.

Nicodemus was a morally up right, biblically savvy, well off, well connected man. He came to see Jesus and repeatedly Jesus tells him "you must be born again". It wasn't even the question he is asking, and yet Jesus makes it clear that new birth is doorway to living in His Kingdom. In every way, Nicodemus was a success in their culture and yet Jesus was telling him that yes even he needed new birth. Why do we need to be born again? Nicodemus even jokingly asks "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" It seems to be a radical solution, but Jesus is clear it is the ONLY way we can be made right with God. Paul reminds us that before we believed we "were dead in the trespasses and sins". New birth is new life and we need it because we were spiritually dead.

This concept of being born again smashes our self-salvation strategies. It flies against what our natural mind views as self-justifying activities and statuses in our life. Success does not equal closeness to God those who are winning at life and those who are failing need to be born again. Wealth does not equal acceptance before God those who are rich and those who are poor need to be born again.

Even your religious observance does not make you right before God the highly religious and the irreligious all need to be born again. Your gender does not give you access to God men and women both need to be born again. You need to be born again regardless of your level of Education. You need to be born again no matter your race. Everyone needs new birth. It

begins with a recognition that all of our self-salvation tactics are futile.

How then will things be made right if I can't rely on my identities (rich, well connected, educated, etc.) to justify myself? Jesus tells us in John 3:14-15 that only when we believe in Jesus- the one who was lifted up (on the cross) to make us right with God. "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him" John 3:17. New birth through Christ is nothing less than salvation. Yes, we are saved from judgement day, but we are also saved from all of those judgements by which we have for so long judged ourselves, and allowed the world to judge us. The only judgement that matters is that which comes from God and he says we are a new creation, he says we are loved, he says we are righteous before him all because the finished work of Christ. We are saved from judgement and saved to a new life born of the spirit and lived unto God. How is this new life lived unto God? JC Ryle explains in his classic book Holiness; "To be born again is, as it were, to enter upon a new existence, to have a new mind, a new heart, new views, new principles, new tastes, new affections, new likings, new dislikings, new fears, new joys, new sorrows, new love to things once hated, new hatred to things once loved, new thoughts of God, and ourselves, and the world, and the life to come, and salvation".

I have seen the most profound successes in pastoral counseling when I am able to get people to understand that the only judgement that ultimately matters is Gods and in Christ that judgement is Righteous, Beautiful, Loved, and Born Again.

Grace and Peace

Pastor Jason Ford

Sunday Morning Schedule

Worship Service

10:30 - 11:30

Fellowship following service

Second Service

St. Paul Evangelical plans to kick off a second worship service this fall! We are excited about the possibilities that this brings us. This is born out of both necessity and out of strategy.

Earlier this year we formed an action team to consider the feasibility of a second service and whether it was even needed. After several meetings and much prayer the action team overwhelmingly recommended that we move forward with plans to implement a second service. Here are some of the factors that we considered.

70% rule: This is actually where the discussion started. You may have notice we have had quite a few more people visiting and attending regularly. Our attendance numbers have been averaging at or above 90-100 most months. But, it hasn't pushed past that on a regular basis. In part we believe this is because of the 70% rule. If you are 70% full (which we are) it is very difficult to grow past that. People like their space and if they feel crowded they are less likely to come back. A second service will provide more space for us to grow.

Healthy things multiply: St. Paul is a healthy church and we should be seeking to see our ministry multiply even more. Tim Keller explains in his guide to sustained healthy church growth that pushing beyond your attendance barriers require dividing and multiplying things that are healthy and working, and he specifically mentions the worship service. As we advertise and invite people to attend our new services we will be reflecting to our community our health and desire to grow.

More opportunity: This seems basic, but providing new times for people to participate in worship usually means more opportunity for people to attend.

Serve one Attend one: A second service will also provide an opportunity for those who serve to worship in a service without serving. This is very important. One of our core values is the necessity of worship and some of our volunteers have not been able to regularly worship in some time. It also provides new opportunities for others to serve.

It Reflects our desire to reach our community for Christ: This is perhaps the

most compelling of the reasons we considered. The goal of a new service is not first and foremost for the comfort of our membership, but an opportunity to reach the unchurched. We will now have more space, opportunity and motivation to fulfill the great commission of making disciples. Research shows that the primary way churches grow is through their membership inviting friends, families, and coworkers. The same research shows that in nongrowing churches people don't invite others because they don't think their friends would find the services interesting, exciting, or relevant. It is our hope that we can make both services just that.

It is important to note that this is a trial. We will Kick off the services on August 27 and will reconsider it's effectiveness by November 19th. We believe this will succeed, but we also believe that while our Theology is set and unchanging our Methodology must be flexible. We are willing to move where the Holy Spirit moves and pull back where the Holy Spirit pulls back.

Sunday Morning Two Service Schedule (August 27-November 26)

9:30 am	Worship Service - Nursery Available
10:30 am	Fellowship Youth Devotional and Fellowship
11:00 am	Worship Service - Nursery Available, Children's Ministry (second half of worship service) available for children ages 4 years-6th grade

***No adult bible study on Sunday morning, adult bible study available on Wednesday night.**

Thanks to Andrew Clemmensen, Emily Cox, Don Denson, Jason Ford, Stephanie Ford, Nancy Hinze, Elaine McIntyre, Brian Parks, Debbie Weigand, Scott Wolston, and several others that contributed ideas throughout the process.

Wednesday Night Bible Study
Bible Study does not meet on the first Wednesday of the month.

Adult Bible Study will resume Wednesday, August 30 at 7 pm. Childcare available.

Excuse our Mess!

One of the guiding principles for our worship and ministries at St. Paul has been the idea that our faith is ancient, but it has profound truth for the present and the future. Our worship reflects this ancient/future principle in some of the liturgical and musical choices we have made over the past two years. We have seen great success with this principle and we hope to have our building match this concept as well. By now you have all noticed that we have begun an update and refresh of our building. St Paul Evangelical is very blessed to have a wonderful facility and just as many of you want to keep your home fresh and inviting we desire to do the same at St. Paul.

The biggest and most obvious updates will take place on the altar where we are painting and opening up the stage. We will have a center oriented pulpit to match up with where (for several years now) our pastors have preached. And we are opening the stage area to accommodate a new Baby Grand Piano which is graciously being paid for by very kind and generous givers. We will also remove the carpet and stain the concrete floors. This is beneficial in several ways; first, it will serve to give our sanctuary a much more up to date look. Secondly, it will be easier to care for the stained floors. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly it will put the acoustic focus in the Sanctuary on the congregational singing. Congregational singing is a principle and priority in our worship services and it will really help to amplify our voices and foster it even more. Many of our pews are in bad disrepair and so the plan is for us to take the most damaged out and replace them with comfortable chairs. The chairs will be on the last two rows (the chairs in the back will have arm rests for our mobility challenged members) and on the first few rows.

The rest of the building in the coming months will also have separate projects to freshen paint and fixtures. We also hope to truly highlight the history of our church by making our décor tell the story of St. Paul Evangelical Church.

Our beautiful church building will be even more beautiful and up to date as these updates

continue, and most importantly the building will continue to provide comfortable spaces for ministry and discipleship to take place.

Save the Date ~ Reformation

Conference. September 29th and 30th.

We will have a weekend Conference about the lasting spiritual impact of the Reformation.

Youth News

Summer is flying by! We've truly enjoyed our Terrific Tuesdays this summer. In June, our group played at Fischer Park in New Braunfels and visited the Witte Museum in San Antonio. In July, we met for a Backyard Bible Club to eat, play games, and hear a gospel message. Next, we celebrated with a Kids' Night Out including pizza, games and a bounce house. It's been a great time together and we greatly appreciate all the volunteers that helped make these events possible. As we get closer to our school year schedule, look for other ministry opportunities including our children's ministries on Sunday mornings and our Fall Festival. Our youth group has enjoyed hanging out together as well. In June, we had a blast at Summer Camp. We also met up for Game Nights, practicing our skills at ping pong, basketball and kickball. In July, our students were able to provide service to our younger kids during the Terrific Tuesdays. We really appreciate their participation with our youngsters. In August, we'll resume our monthly activities plus adding other opportunities for study and fellowship. Each season as our ministries grow, I like to stop and reflect on how we are reaching our community with the gospel. Our methods might vary, but the message stays the same. I'm grateful to all of you as we try new things with our children, youth, and other ministries. Enjoy these last few weeks of summer!

Sincerely, Stephanie Ford

Upcoming Events

SPEC Supper Club ~ Wednesday, August 2nd at 6:00 pm.

Women's Fellowship ~. Thursday, August 3rd Outing to Garcia's on FM 3009. They will eat a 11 so arrive a little early. For more information, please contact the church office at 210-658-5874.

Installation of Council and Committee Persons ~ Sunday, August 6th during worship.

Theology on Tap ~ August 11th and 25th. For more information, contact Pastor Jason at 210-382-6596. Locations to be announced soon.

The Sewing Sisters ~ August 10th and 24th. They meet on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month in the parsonage from 9-11 am. All are welcome to come and enjoy good fellowship and ministry. If you have any questions, please contact the church office at 210-658-5874.

Conference Action Team Meeting ~ Sunday, August 13th after worship.

Council Meeting ~ Monday, August 21st at 7:00 pm.

Second Service Begins ~ Sunday, August 27th.

General Announcements

Liturgy Sign Up ~ If you would like to contribute to the worship service by reading the liturgy, there is a sign-up sheet on the table in the hallway.

Ushers and Greeters ~ If you can help usher on Sunday mornings, please sign up on the sheet in the Fellowship Hall or contact the church office at 210-658-5874.

Service Opportunity ~ If you are looking for a way to serve the church and like working with computers, we have the perfect spot for you. The A/V Team runs the computer and sound for the service on Sunday mornings. You would be able to serve the church and not miss

worship. Please consider sitting upstairs for a Sunday or two, to find out what all is involved. For more information, please contact Beth Johnson at 210-658-5874 or by e-mail at BethJ@StPaulCibolo.com.

SPEC Supper Club ~ Community Outreach Preparing and serving a meal for the needy of the community once a month on the first Wednesday. Donations as well as volunteers are always welcome. Please see Rich A, Don & Marion D, or Willie & Ann S.

Women's Fellowship Recycled Card Program ~ In Support for St. Jude's Children's Homes ~ Used greeting cards, front cover only, can be dropped off in the designated box located in the Fellowship Hall. They will then be sent to St. Jude's Children's Home, for use by Kids' Corp. The children participate in making the new cards by attaching a new back and then selling them. For information on purchasing of cards go to http://www.stjudesranch.org/help_card.php. For more information, please contact the church office at 210-658-5874.

Prayer Team ~ If you are willing to receive e-mails or phone tree messages with prayer requests, please give Pastor Willie S your e-mail address or phone number.

Women's Fellowship Cookbooks Available The cookbooks are available in the church office or after church in the Fellowship Hall. They are \$15.00 each and have over 800 recipes. They would make a wonderful gift for family and friends.

GREAT NEWS!! RACAP now has a new drop off location for nonperishable food donations!! Schertz Cibolo Emergency Clinic, 4825 FM 3009, Ste. 200 Schertz, TX 78154, On 3009 next to Bush's Chicken.

R.A.C.A.P. Pantry Needs ~ Spaghetti Sauce & Spaghetti Noodles / Tomato Products (Diced, Whole, Sauce, Paste, etc.) / Dried Beans (Pinto, Black-eyed Peas, etc.) / Canned Beans (Baked Beans, Ranch Style and Pork & Beans **ONLY**)

Reminder: Due to health regulations R.A.C.A.P. is not allowed to accept any donations that are not in their original container or have been opened.

Notification of Events - If you would like to be notified of St. Paul events, via Google calendar alerts, please send your e-mail to admin@stpaulcibolo.com with a notation for e-mail alerts.

If your church organization needs an announcement put into the Newsletter, the cutoff date is the 23rd of the month and if you need an announcement put into the bulletin, the cutoff date is Tuesday of that week at noon.

Church Office Hours ~ Monday - Friday
8:00 am to 12:00 pm

Heidelberg Catechism

117 Q.

HOW DOES GOD WANT US TO PRAY SO THAT HE WILL LISTEN TO US?

A. First, we must pray from the heart to no other than the one true God, who has revealed himself in his Word, asking for everything he has commanded us to ask for. Second, we must acknowledge our need and misery, hiding nothing, and humble ourselves in his majestic presence. Third, we must rest on this unshakable foundation: even though we do not deserve it, God will surely listen to our prayer because of Christ our Lord. That is what he promised us in his Word.

118 Q. WHAT DID GOD COMMAND US TO PRAY FOR?

A. Everything we need, spiritually and physically, as embraced in the prayer Christ our Lord himself taught us.

119 Q. WHAT IS THIS PRAYER?

A. Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our debts,

As we also have forgiven our debtors; And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

LORD'S DAY 46

120 Q. WHY DID CHRIST COMMAND US TO CALL GOD "OUR FATHER"?

A. At the very beginning of our prayer Christ wants to kindle in us what is basic to our prayer- the childlike awe and trust that God through Christ has become our Father. Our fathers do not refuse us the things of this life; God our Father will even less refuse to give us what we ask in faith.

Read Through the Bible in a Year program from Tabletalk daily devotional

(Tabletalk is \$23/year and can be ordered at 1-800-435-4343)

August

Old Testament: Psalms 65-147

New Testament: Romans 2-1 Cor. 11:16

September

Old Testament: Palms 148 – Isaiah 23

New Testament: 1 Cor. 11:17-Ephesians 3

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