



THE MESSENGER

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH SPLENDORA

AUGUST 2024

*Who Worship Passionately, Love Extravagantly
and Witness Boldly*

Reverend Steven G. Lightfoot, Pastor

THE PASTOR'S MESSAGE



Heal Our Land

Rev. Steven G. Lightfoot

Prayer

Father God, You are worthy to be praised. Your sovereignty extends forever. There is no part of our universe where you do not reside. In fact, Lord, the universe in all its vastness cannot contain You in all Your greatness, yet You are here today, at First Methodist Church Splendor, within this holy place set apart for Your glory. Send Your Holy Spirit, Lord. Fill this place and our hearts. Fill me, Holy Spirit, so that I am speaking as if I speak the very words of God. Fill every ear with Your message, custom-tailored to each individual need as only You know what those needs are, Father. May these words glorify You... in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Message

When King Solomon dedicated the temple in Jerusalem, it was a big deal. All of Israel gathered for the celebration. Vast crowds of people. From the abundance God had given Solomon's kingdom, he offered twenty-two

thousand head of cattle and one hundred

~~and twenty thousand sheep and goats to be sacrificed on the altar... so many burnt offerings that they could not be burnt on the altar in the temple, but the courtyard outside the temple had to be consecrated so that the offerings could be burnt there.~~

And these offerings were not burnt in the usual way. No! Scripture says that fire came down from heaven and consumed the offerings and sacrifices and the Glory of the Lord filled the temple. The people stood as the musicians played praise music to the Lord on the instruments that David had made for that purpose and all of the people shouted, "He is good! His love endures forever!"

The people celebrated and praised God for 23 days until, on the last day, Solomon sent the people home. The Bible says that they went home "joyful and glad in heart for the good things the Lord had done for David and Solomon and for his people Israel."

Here is a picture of a nation in a good state of being. If King Solomon were to give a State of the Kingdom address, he would have nothing but good things to report to the people of Israel. The government leaders and the people and the religious leaders are all in harmonious agreement that the Lord God is the center of it all. As a result, there is abundance, so much so that they are able to offer huge tithes to God. They have peace and prosperity throughout the land and the people are joyful.

So, then, it is here, after the dedication of the temple, that the Lord appears to Solomon and we pick up the story in 2 Chronicles 7:11-22...

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The LORD's Response to Solomon

11 So Solomon finished the Temple of the LORD, as well as the royal palace. He completed everything he had planned to do in the construction of the Temple and the palace. 12 Then one night the LORD appeared to Solomon and said, "I have heard your prayer and have chosen this Temple as the place for making sacrifices. 13 At times I might shut up the heavens so that no rain falls, or command grasshoppers to devour your crops, or send plagues among you. 14 Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land. 15 My eyes will be open and my ears attentive to every prayer made in this place. 16 For I have chosen this Temple and set it apart to be holy—a place where my name will be honored forever. I will always watch over it, for it is dear to my heart. 17 "As for you, if you faithfully follow me as David your father did, obeying all my commands, decrees, and regulations, 18 then I will establish the throne of your dynasty. For I made this covenant with your father, David, when I said, 'One of your descendants will always rule over Israel.' 19 "But if you or your descendants abandon me and disobey the decrees and commands I have given you, and if you serve and worship other gods, 20 then I will uproot the people from this land that I have given them. I will reject this Temple that I have made holy to honor my name. I will make it an object of mockery and ridicule among the nations. 21 And though this Temple is impressive now, all who pass by will be appalled. They will ask, 'Why did the LORD do such terrible things to this land and to this Temple?' 22 "And the answer will be, 'Because his people abandoned the LORD, the God of their ancestors, who brought them out of Egypt, and they worshiped other gods instead and bowed down to them. That is why he has brought all these disasters on them.'"- 2 Chronicles 7:11-22

The Lord tells Solomon that His favor will remain with His people so long as the people are faithful and obedient to His sovereignty. But if they are not...bad things will happen.

The questions I present for your consideration are these: How are we any different from the people in Israel? Do we as a people, as a society, as a nation think that the rules as outlined here in 2 Chronicles don't apply to us? Do we think that we are exempt from obeying God's commands, decrees and regulations as stated in 2 Chronicles 7? Are the problems we face today in our country a result of our leaders, both secular and religious, disobeying and turning away from God?

What has happened in our society to make daily discourse so controversial? Is the rampant unemployment across this land, the hardship for farmers in our nation's heartland where much of our food is produced, the high cost of basic goods and services, the discord and division between the people of this country due to politics, religion, perceptions of class and the increasing frequency of violent attacks on innocent citizens perpetrated by thugs and Hamas sympathizers... are all of these things symptoms of a self-imposed separation from God brought on by our own disobedience? Have we turned away from God as a nation and opened up a Pandora's Box of affliction on ourselves?

I hear so many people complaining that God has abandoned His people. "Why would a merciful, loving God allow these things to happen? Why does God let bad things happen to innocent people? I submit to you that these are the wrong questions. These are questions asked from the wrong point of view. You see God has not abandoned His people. God has not turned away. God is still at the center of the universe. He is unchanging. He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. God is not the one who turned His back! We are the ones who walked away... I'm speaking collectively here... meaning we as a nation of people. Let's compare our nation to the nation of Israel under King Solomon where the people were full of joy. Here's our checklist:

1. Government leaders proclaiming the sovereignty of God and encouraging the people to praise Him? Solomon's Israel? Check! Present day America? Far from it. (Continued on Page 3)
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2. Religious leaders proclaiming the

sovereignty of God and encouraging the people to praise Him? Solomon's Israel? Check! Present day America? Present day churches? Questionable.

3. The People proclaiming the sovereignty of God and praising Him? Solomon's time? Check! Present day America? Not so much...

We as a society have separated ourselves from God. Separation from God... that's the definition of hell, isn't it? By definition hell is isolation and separation from God. We, as a nation have imposed on ourselves Hell on Earth!

But there is some good news. There is a solution. There is a way to get back to Solomon's Israel. There is a path to joy. There is a path back to God. His name is Jesus Christ. Amen?

Brothers and sisters, We as a people must go back to school. And the course of study is Christ 101. Basic Christianity, people! Basic Christianity boils down to this, my friends:

Matthew 5:1-16

¹⁻² When Jesus saw his ministry drawing huge crowds, he climbed a hillside. Those who were apprenticed to him, the committed, climbed with him. Arriving at a quiet place, he sat down and taught his climbing companions. This is what he said:

³"You're blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule.

⁴"You're blessed when you feel you've lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you.

⁵"You're blessed when you're content with just who you are—no more, no less. That's the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can't be bought.

⁶"You're blessed when you've worked up a good appetite for God. He's food and drink in the best meal you'll ever eat.

⁷"You're blessed when you care. At the moment of being 'care-full,' you find yourselves cared for.

⁸"You're blessed when you get your inside world—your mind and heart—put right. Then you can see God in the outside world.

⁹"You're blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That's when you discover who you really are, and your place in God's family.

¹⁰"You're blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God's kingdom.

¹¹⁻¹²"Not only that—count yourselves blessed every time people put you down or throw you out or speak lies about you to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and they are uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens—give a cheer, even!—for though they don't like it, I do! And all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company. My prophets and witnesses have always gotten into this kind of trouble. Salt and Light

¹³"Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You've lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage.

¹⁴⁻¹⁶"Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.

What you've just read is, of course, Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. What it is to be Christ-like is contained in this simple yet profound sermon. Christianity 101. Your purpose is to know Christ. And knowing Christ... to make Him known! You are the light of the world! Go live your life in the world as a shining example of what it is to be out of this world!

In my second book of *The Mikveh Scrolls Series*, [The Yeshua Sanction](#), the Reverend Geoffrey Proudman preaches a sermon that I think is most appropriate for the times we live in. He says:

In the 28th Chapter of the *Book of Matthew*, after our Savior was risen from the dead, he met his eleven disciples (Judas had committed suicide) on a mountain in Galilee. (Continued on Page 4)

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As he spoke to them, he reassured them

that he was, indeed, the Risen Christ. He asserted his God-given authority over creation; over heaven and earth; over all things and over all people. It was this authority, as the Exalted and Risen Lord, which gave weight to his command to the disciples to go and make disciples of the nations.

Jesus told them to make disciples of all people by doing three very specific things: He told them to *go*, to *baptize* and to *teach*. He told them to *go*, because *going* requires action, which results in momentum – a gradual building up of energy into an unstoppable force. He told them to *baptize*, because baptism points to transformation, of dying to sin, and of being reborn in the power of the Holy Spirit, making the baptized a new creation in Christ. And he told them to *teach*, because only through continued exposure to the Truth and proper observance of the Way, could the new disciples learn accountability to their Faith.

Jesus, with this command, launched the evangelical mission of the Christian church, beginning with his original eleven disciples, who made disciples, who made disciples, and so forth, over the vast expanse of years until the responsibility for disciple-making landed squarely on us, the present-day Christians. We are inheritors of a royal decree, a command issued by Christ himself, who did so by the authority granted him as a person of the Trinity. It is not by coincidence that Christ instructed us to baptize disciples “in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit...”

And, Jesus did not place the future of the church in the hands of disciples, then or now, leaving us on our own to accomplish this important mission without guidance, or by our own power. No! He promised us that he would be with us “*always, even to the end of the age.*” His presence, his power has remained and will always remain with us, giving us what we need to carry out the command.

Why is this relevant today? What does it mean to the church-going Christian, faithfully attending church on Sundays and Wednesday nights? What does it mean to the consistent member of the congregation, regularly sitting in the same pew week after week, warmly greeting fellow members of their community of faith in the comfort of

their own church, Sunday after Sunday, pot-luck after pot-luck, week after week, and month after month? The answer might astonish you. It might astonish you because, if, in the days that fall between the Sundays and the Wednesdays, between the pot-lucks and the small groups... if the church-goer is not *going, baptizing or teaching*, then they are stagnantly disregarding their duty as Christians. Their collective inactivity outside the walls of the church is the single biggest reason for the decline of the church in modern times. [The lack of action outside the church is the very reason the chairs are empty inside the church!] This may seem a bit harsh, but I say this to challenge each of you. I say this to make you aware, if you are not actively engaged in The Great Commission of our Lord and Savior, then you are part of the problem. I want you to wake up and be a part of the solution!

Get up, get going! Talk to people outside of your church about your Faith! Be an example to them with your life and the fruits of the Spirit that you demonstrate. Engage them. Invite them in to your church. Who cares if they end up sitting at your favorite table or in your pew! Let them sit there! Teach them so that eventually they can be teachers. It is our responsibility to not only know Christ, but to make him known!

In Paul’s second letter to Timothy, he charges the soldiers of Christ to “*preach the word*” and to “*be ready in season and out of season*” to “*reprove, rebuke, [and] exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come,*” he says, “*when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.*”

Paul warns us of the consequences of remaining huddled together behind the comfortable walls of our church, all the while letting the world receive its instruction from feel-good teachers, who merely say what makes the people feel good; true or otherwise. Paul tells us to “*be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill [our] ministry.*” In this way we secure souls for Christ and rescue
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people from eternal separation from God.

There is nothing more important. As Christians it is our mission, and the proper response to Christ's command. To wrap up... The companion course to Christianity 101 is Prayer 101. If we engage all of the basics of Christianity 101 and couple them with Prayer 101, then we have a method for reconciling with God. God has provided us a way to get back into the fold. If we go back to our scripture in 2 Chronicles 7 we see the solution to our problems as a nation, as a people... Verse 14 says, ***"Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land."*** God says that if we pray. If we humble ourselves and pray and seek His face instead of pursuing wickedness... then He will hear our prayers and forgive us our sins... and He will heal our land. Seek His face... How do we seek His face? In John 14:6 Jesus says, ***"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."***

Do you want world peace? Do you want to heal our land? Then you have to start here, at home. And you have to start with the basics. Christianity 101 and its companion course... Prayer 101. And the answer to all of the pop quizzes and the final exam is: Jesus Christ is the way.

Prayer

Almighty God, we are indeed a people who are called by Your name. We humble ourselves before Your throne. Abba, Father, we seek Your face, we seek to return to Your embrace and we rebuke and bind all that is unholy, unrighteous, evil or wicked. We stand here boldly claiming Your grace and mercy through the blood of Jesus. Your promise says that if we do these things, then You will forgive us our sins and that You will restore our land ...and our souls. We are prodigals returning home. Embrace us and wrap us in Your love, in Your abundance, in Your Goodness. Smile upon us, Lord for we are Your people. In the mighty name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 2nd- *Celebration of Life for Isabella Reed and Tom Reed 11:00AM*
Reception Following
- 4th- Holy Communion and Worship 9AM*
Communion Rail gifts go to the Good Samaritan Fund
Sunday School 10:15AM
- 6th-9th *Shepherd Revival 7PM*
First Baptist Church Shepherd
10850 TX 150
- 7th- NO dinner or class meeting
- 11th- Worship Service 9AM*
Sunday School 10:15AM
Board of Stewards Meeting 12:45PM
- 14th- Dinner & Class Meeting 5:45PM
- 17th- Food Pantry Distribution 9PM
- 18th- Worship Service 9AM*
Sunday School 10:15AM
- 21st- Dinner & Class Meeting 5:45PM
- 25th- Worship Service 9AM*
Sunday School 10:15AM
- 28th- Dinner & Class Meeting 5:45PM
*In Person & Online



AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES AND BIRTHDAYS

- 9 Pastor Steven Lightfoot
- 10 Diana LeBlanc
- 14 Leslie Bernard
- ♥ 17 Joe & Janette Melton
- 25 Jeremiah Johnson
- 26 Tracy Blake
- ♥ 28 Ellis & Linda Duke
- 28 Patty Lyons
- 29 Frankie Jones
- 30 Sherrie Johnson
- ♥ 31 Gene & Angie Ainsworth

Shepherd First Baptist Church SHEPHERD REVIVAL

There will be the Shepherd Annual
at Shepherd First Baptist
50 TX-150, Shepherd, Texas at
7P....

Our sister church Shepherd Methodist along with many other Shepherd churches will be part of the revival. On Tuesday, our own Pastor Steven will present the message. Our church is invited and welcomed to attend every night, but we surely will not want to miss his message on Tuesday night.

If ice cream is your passion (along with Jesus), there will be an ice cream social after the service on Monday and Friday nights.

Hope you can make at least one of the services!

CHURCH RENOVATIONS

Last month, the building has been experiencing a big change. The roof had been recently replaced.

The wood work trim and soffit had been replaced and new paint on the exterior of the building. It looks very striking. The work was an anonymous gift. Thank you to our very generous benefactor.

The interior of our building was in need of painting and updating. The entire interior has been repainted and the Sanctuary has a new look that is very eye-catching. The interior updates are a very generous gift from Brenda Storey.

The Fellowship Hall has new chairs which were purchased with gifts made in the Memory of Sean Keith. The new chairs are a lovely contrast with the new look of the Fellowship Hall.

The new Prayer Room is now completed. It was a labor-intensive change, but it is now a very tranquil room to have a private encounter with our Living God. Angela Lightfoot has gifted our church with the transformation along with the help of Pastor Steven and Gene Ainsworth. Please take time to visit our new Prayer Room found in the last room on the right at the end of the hallway behind the Fellowship Hall.

Our church may have a new look, but our hearts are still dedicated to serving our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER LIST

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. ---James 5:16

The Truitt Family – *Comfort & Peace*
The Reed Family - *Comfort & Peace*
Wally & Michele LeMaster – *Acceptance & Peace*
Zena Key – *Love, Peace & Faith*
Fred Schaefer – *Hospitalized – Undiagnosed at this time*
Ellen Cobine – *Peace*
Louis Dewey – *Pending surgery*
Dottie McCracken – *Surgery*
Kelly Gaudreau – *Cancer*
Sage Herr – *Cancer/Healing*
Sue Williams – *Cancer – Treatments*
Maryjane Poole – *Cancer*
Chantel Wilson- *Cancer treatments*
Patti Lyons – *COVID - Healing*
William Blake – *Health*
Caleb Barroso – *Health*
Jackson Morrow - *Healing*
Tony Morrow – *Healing*
Ken VanOstrand – *Healing*
The Smart Family
Karl & Sheila Keith
Barbara Martin— *storm damage*
Unspoken
The Jones Family
Debbie Szymanski Family
Gary @ Turbo Valves
Jolley Family
Our Leaders
War in Israel
Our Church
Pastor Steven & Family
Individuals & families dealing with storm damage
Those preparing for the 2024-25 School Year



A 40-DAY SEASON OF PRAYER AND FASTING

The Prayer Committee of the Transitional Commission on Convening General Conference (TCCGC) invites you to join a special 40-day season of prayer and fasting, running from August 7 to September 15, 2024. This dedicated time of spiritual preparation will lead up to our historic Convening General Conference.

The theme of this year's Convening General Conference is "So the World Will Know." Through this intentional period of prayer and fasting, we aim to empower the Lord's work within the Global Methodist Church, demonstrating our collective dependence on His guidance and strength.

To support you during this time, we have prepared a 40 Day Guide to Prayer and Fasting, authored by Terry Teykl with an introductory letter by Steve Seamands. This guide is available in all the official languages of the Convening General Conference and can be accessed at www.sotheworldwillknow.org/pray

We encourage you to participate in regional gatherings for prayer, which can be conducted individually, corporately, or as concerts of prayer, both in-person and virtually. These gatherings will foster unity and deepen our communal prayer experience.

Additionally, a 12 Day Guide for the days leading up to the Convening General Conference (September 16-27) has also been prepared and will be sent out closer to date. Thank you.



REMEMBERING

Isabella Reed 1930-2024

Our dear Sister in Christ, Isabella Reed went home to the LORD on July 10, 2024.

She will be greatly missed by her children, grandchildren, friends and her church family. She was a remarkable woman whose life was multifaceted. She earned her BA in Music in only 3 years and later earned her Master's degree. Music was a big part of her life, as she sang professionally. She was married to Tom Reed until his death in 1978.

Isabella had a passion for all types of animals and instilled in her children the love of caring for them. The family shared their home with many non-traditional pets.

Isabella joined our church in 1998. She served the church as pianist and organist, teaching Sunday School, VBS and later became known as the Prayer Warrior of Splendora. In 2009, Isabella began a public prayer ministry in front of Archie's Food Basket and remained actively praying with the community up to her death.

Tom Reed 1957-2024

Our dear Brother in Christ, Tom Reed went home to the LORD on July 19, 2024.

Tom will be sadly missed by his siblings, his nephew and niece, friends and church family. He was born in Summit, New Jersey and was the second child of Tom & Isabella Reed. Tom was an enthusiastic Boy Scout, earning the rank of Eagle Scout. Tom loved animals and had many exotic pets. As an adult he and his mother together bred and raised Macaw birds. Tom had an avid interest in American Native culture. He was very well known in the United States and Canada for his intricate quill and bead work. Tom joined our church in 2011. He served as a trustee and worked with the local Boy Scouts. Tom was very devoted to caring for his mother, Isabella. Tom surely had the heart of a servant and will be sorely missed.