



In Ephesians 1 Paul wrote down the specific desires he had been praying for the church in Ephesus—things like these:

- That God (the God of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory) may give them the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him
- That God would enlighten the eyes of their hearts so that they would 1) know what is the hope to which God had called them, 2) know what the riches of God's glorious inheritance in the saints are, and 3) what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward those who believe (according to the working of God's great might that He worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come and he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all)

Paul's primary prayers for the believers in Ephesus were that God would give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God and that the eyes of their hearts would be enlightened. Paul is praying this for believers! He's praying that believers would know God more and that they would see God more clearly. These verses (Ephesians 1:15-23) are a good reminder for us to be praying for each other. For health? Absolutely. For provision? You bet. For protection? Of course. For the Holy Spirit to move in such a way that we can know God more and see him more clearly—see the hope, the riches, the greatness of his power, his great might; to see that Christ has been seated far above all authority and that the church is his body and the fullness of him who fills all in all? Yes, and amen.

*Daniel Gardner*

### March 2017 Newsletter Message from the Pastoral Search Committee

#### Numbers 27:15-19 NAS

Then Moses spoke to the Lord, saying,

“May the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation, who will go out and come in before them, and who will lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the Lord may not be like sheep which have no shepherd.”

As the Pastoral Search Committee has been meeting, reading, praying, and discussing guidelines for searching and finding our next pastor, we came across Numbers 27:15-19 in one of our instruction packets. What a wonderful reminder it *was* for us, brothers and sisters in Christ! It was wonderful to be reminded that the search for our future pastor is *not* an administrative activity, but a *spiritual* activity: We the body are to come before our Lord as Moses did, requesting the man *our God* has *already appointed* “over the congregation!”

Keeping that in mind, we ask you to join us in prayer...

- 1) Pray that both we the body *AND* our future pastor daily speaks “to the Lord” to *seek HIS* will, *HIS* way, and *HIS* face (Psalm 27:8)...
- 2) Pray that the Lord *distinctly equip* and *call* this *already appointed* “*man*” to “lead (us) out and bring (us) in...”
- 3) Pray that the Lord would continue to *lead* our FBCN body and the Pastoral Search Committee (and make us *sensitive* to His leading!), so we are *not* “like sheep which have no shepherd”...
- 4) Pray that Jesus would prepare us to *recognize* and *receive HIS* appointed “man!”

We on the Committee humbly thank you for your prayers as we seek God's way, God's man and as we pray Numbers 27:15-19 over this church!

The Pastoral Search Committee

*Paul Marquez, Kurtis McWilliams, Linda Hughes, Cindy Perry, Dennis Salemi, Shannon Dalton*

### **THREE BIBLICAL TRUTHS ABOUT STEWARDSHIP & GIVING**

Your Finance Committee would like to share three biblical truths with you as a reminder of the responsibilities of those who are members, or otherwise regularly attend First Baptist Church of Newman (or any other Bible-believing church). We have placed a question in **bold** print after each of the three for you to pray about this week and answer for yourself.

The first biblical truth is that God, as the Creator of the heavens and the earth, owns everything. He owns our lives, our bodies, our welfare, and he owns our finances. In his wisdom, he has anointed us to be stewards of all he gives us. The Parable of the Talents (*Matthew 25:14-30*) demonstrates clearly that our duty of stewardship is to multiply the gifts God has given to us to manage. Ask yourself, **“What kind of steward am I?”**

The second biblical truth is that God expects us to give cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionally, and liberally to the Lord’s work (See *Matthew 6:19-21; 2 Corinthians 9:6-9*). Luke in his synoptic gospel instructs us that we can’t serve two masters, and then references our inability to serve both God and money (*Luke 16:13*). Ask yourself, **“Does my giving reflect a love of God or a love of money?”**

The third and final biblical truth we would like to share is that the motivation for our stewardship needs to be for the glory of God and the benefit of others. Our giving of our time, our talents and our finances is a form of worship. Yes, we need to provide for ourselves and our families, but we also need to give to our Heavenly Father’s work. That work is the Great Commission as found in *Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:7*. As disciples of Christ, we are to spread the Gospel locally, state-wide, nationally, and to the four corners of the earth. Ask yourself, **“Is my giving motivated by a desire to glorify God and to spread the Good News of Jesus to the lost wherever they may be?”**

*Your Finance Committee*

### **How Do We Respond as Christians to the Executive Orders on Refugees?**

As you know, President Trump signed in late January an executive order on refugees and immigrants calling for a temporary halt to admission and entry from seven Muslim-majority countries. There was much public debate, there were massive protests, there is currently a federal court order setting aside the president’s action, and a new executive order is pending. Let’s examine, not the impact of these orders on national security, but instead the impact on evangelism. In June of 2016, The Southern Baptist Convention reaffirmed to care and minister to refugees. Based on Psalm 146:9 the resolution simply states, “Scripture calls for and expects God’s people to minister to the sojourner.” To me, that means ministering to them in their country of origin, ministering to them during transit as a refugee, and ministering to them once they arrive. As a congregation, and during Mission Emphasis Nights in the past, we’ve viewed videos of IMB missionaries ministering to refugees abroad, and a significant part of Pastor Kurt’s youth ministry in Salt Lake City was to the Somali refugee population.

National Association of Evangelicals President Leith Anderson, in response to the president’s first executive order, wrote to President Trump, “Christians and churches have been welcoming refugees for 2,000 years, and evangelicals are committed to continue this biblical mission. Thousands of U.S. evangelicals and their churches have welcomed hundreds of thousands of refugees over the past 40 years through World Relief and other federally approved resettlement agencies. We don’t want to stop now.”

John Piper, at the Desiring God Conference in Minneapolis at the end of January, addressed the crowd with, “If the US government stays its course with barring them from entrance we must remember that the president is not our King. We are citizens of another kingdom. If they can’t come to us we must be faithful to go to them.” So, what can we at First Baptist Church of Newman do about this?

1. Be in prayer for those in those seven Muslim-majority countries seeking refugee status both here and in other nations.
2. Be in prayer for the relief agency workers assisting the refugees at intermediary points and at their final destination.

3. Be in prayer for President Trump and his decision-making team that they submit to God's guidance in both the initiation and execution of future executive orders regarding refugees.
4. Pray for our missionaries already in those seven Muslim-majority countries for safety, and for their spreading the Gospel of Jesus not to be impeded by any executive order.
5. Continue to give to the International Mission Board so that more missionaries can go into the field where oppressed populations live and need the intervention of faith in Christ.
6. Continue to give to the North American Mission Board so that refugee populations in the United States and Canada can receive the Gospel of Jesus.

*In Christ, Carl Hughes*

### TO GO OR NOT TO GO—THAT IS THE QUESTION

Back in 1995, Christian singer Scott Wesley Brown composed "*Please Don't Send Me to Africa*", a humorous look at a church members willingness to serve God if he could perform the service that was convenient for him—as long as he didn't have to leave his comfort zone.

Oh Lord I am your willing servant  
 You know that I have been for years  
 I'm here in this pew every Sunday and  
 Wednesday  
 I've stained it with many a tear  
 I've given You years of my service  
 I've always given my best  
 And I've never asked you for anything much  
 So, Lord I deserve this request

*I'll see that the money is gathered  
 I'll see that the money is sent  
 I'll wash and stack the communion cups*

*I'll tithe eleven percent  
 I'll volunteer for the nursery  
 I'll go on the youth group retreat  
 I'll usher, I'll deacon, I'll go door to door  
 Just let me keep warming this seat  
 Please don't send me to Africa  
 I don't think I've got what it takes  
 I'm just a man I'm not a Tarzan  
 Don't like lions, gorillas or snakes  
 I'll serve you here in suburbia  
 In my comfortable middle class life  
 But please don't send me to the ends of the earth  
 Where the natives are restless at night*

We don't know if God is calling our church to send a team to Africa for *Mission 2018*, or if He has some other destination in mind, but we do know that He is calling our church members to step out of their comfort zone on faith, through prayer, through giving, and to go if called. The Great Commission made that abundantly clear. *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."* (Matthew 28:18-20)

*Your Mission Committee*

### **Road Closure!**

The recent flooding has caused many of our local roads to close. For many of us it caused a panic...."how do I get to work?" "How do I get to Turlock or Modesto?" "What an inconvenience this is causing me!!" It's ironic because we all fervently prayed for rain, asking God to deliver us from this drought!! Well dear friends, He has heard our cries and delivered!! I was recently reminded of how much God is in control by a comment from a friend. She remarked that God had been preparing our rivers and reservoirs during the time of drought for this current time of plenty. Can you imagine if our water sources were already full? We may not always see or understand God's will or ways but He definitely knows what He's doing. Our times of drought and need both in our environment and lives is all in God's perfect will. He's preparing our hearts and minds during those times to fully enjoy and rejoice in the times of plenty. He is preparing us for such a time as this. Are you in a time of drought? Seek God's strength and direction to guide and if need be, push you across that dry desolation. Are you in a place of plenty? Rejoice and praise God for His provisions, do not squander it. I pray for you my church family as you each experience these times in your lives.

*Rejoice in the Lord, you who are righteous, and praise his holy name. Psalm 97:12*

*Blessings, Jennifer Lane*

## He Breaks the Bow and Cuts the Spear in Two

When I was a kid, maybe 8 or 9 years old, I was sick. My mom fed me on Saltine crackers and 7-up because of my upset stomach. She let me watch old movies on the television, which I did happily. One old movie I watched was *Zulu*. It was a movie based on the real 1879 Battle at Rorke's Drift, where the British were attacked by four thousand Zulu soldiers. Rorke's Drift happened to be a missionary outpost that was garrisoned by only about 139 British soldiers. During one of the movie scenes before the battle began, some soldiers were clearing grain bags from the storehouse behind the chapel when the missionary approached them. The missionary on station asked the men about turning to the Word of God and encouraged them not to fight. One of the soldiers replied with the following quote from a Psalm, and it was this: "He breaks the bow and snappeth the spear asunder, I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth". The soldier then replied that the Psalm was probably written for a soldier...I never forgot that quote. Some years later before I became a Christian, I found an old Bible and searched the Psalms to find it. I read each Psalm line by line until I found it in Psalm 46. Though I was not a Christian, I fell in love with that Psalm and memorized several portions of it. Looking back, it's amazing to see how God uses things to get our attention on Him and His Word. He was already working on me to draw me to Himself and I had no idea. Glory be to God in the highest.

Reflecting on the Psalm one must, by faith, know God and seek God as our refuge and strength, and a very present help in trouble. Whether the world is falling apart around us, literally or figuratively, it is God whom we must turn to. He is always with us, nothing can separate us from His love, and He strengthens us to get through whatever calamity we might face. His Holy Spirit is that "river" that makes glad the city of God. We are that city of God and He is in the midst of each and every one of us. We must be still and stop trying to save ourselves because God is Sovereign over all and He is on our side and He is victorious. Through Christ we have been saved from the penalty of sin, we are daily saved from the power of sin, and someday we will be saved from the very presence of sin - "He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire. The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold." Glory be to God in the Highest.

By the way, I do not know how many of the soldiers present at the battle were Christians, but the battle took place at a church. Out of the 139 men who fought, only 17 perished (t10 were wounded). That day the British won the battle. Also, I most likely had a relative there—his name was Commissary John Langley Dalton. Something to think about. Glory be to God in the Highest.

### **Psalm 46**

46 God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change

And though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea;

3 Though its waters roar *and* foam, Though the mountains quake at its swelling pride. Selah.

4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy dwelling places of the Most High.

5 God is in the midst of her, she will not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns.

6 The nations made an uproar, the kingdoms tottered; He raised His voice, the earth melted.

7 The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold. Selah.

8 Come, behold the works of the Lord, Who has wrought desolations in the earth.

9 He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two;  
He burns the chariots with fire.

10 "Cease *striving* and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

11 The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold. Selah