

UNTIL CHRIST IS ALL

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2017

THE CORNERSTONEPIQUA CONNECTION

Welcome to the newsletter of CornerstonePiqua. This periodical is meant to inform you of upcoming events in our church community, to discuss community matters, and to address issues relevant to the culture. Each letter includes a personal letter from Pastor Jamie, an article or two on theological matters, as well as an occasional article from a special guest. These newsletters are also available in digital form online at CornerstonePiqua.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

:: **PRAYER & COMMUNION SERVICE** | November 26th, 6:30-7:30pm | @CornerstonePiqua

:: **CHRISTMAS EVE BREAKFAST** | December 24th, 9:30-10:15am | @CornerstonePiqua

:: **CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE** | December 24th, 10:30-11:30am | @CornerstonePiqua

[We have intentionally kept our church calendar open this holiday season to slow down our lives and allow our church family to spend extended time with their loved ones. Please use this extra time to invite members of your church to your home for food and fellowship and enjoy the good gifts God has provided us.]



CornerstonePiqua exists to proclaim the excellencies of Jesus Christ through gospel-centered preaching, Christ-exalting worship, Christ-forming discipleship, and Christlike service in Piqua, Miami County, and the world until Christ is all and in all.

From Pastor Jamie

One thing I love about Jesus' disciples is they often say and do dumb things. We share that in common. Sometimes they asked Jesus for dumb things. Like, to have their own thrones right next to His. Once they asked Jesus to call down fire from heaven on some people they didn't like (something else we have in common). But sometimes, they asked for good things. One of the best things the disciples ever asked Jesus is found in Luke 11:1, "**Lord, teach us to pray.**"

Prayer is learned. When the disciples asked how to pray, Jesus—always so gracious—gave them the model prayer. The Bible is full of instructions on how to pray. The model prayer is one great example (cf. Matt. 9:9-13; Luke 11:2-4). Another way we learn how to pray is by studying and applying the Apostolic prayers in the New Testament. Praying the prayers of the scriptures has revolutionized my prayer life.

One of my favorite Apostolic prayers is found in Colossians 1:9-12: "**And so, from the day we heard, we have not**

ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light."

There much to learn and apply from the Apostle Paul's prayer. Notice that prayer is ongoing, "**from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray**" (v9). This tells us that we are to pray often. In 1Thessalonians 5:17 we are told, "**Pray without ceasing.**" While prayer is not rote incantation (see Matthew 6:7), it is ongoing.

Paul prays the Colossians would be "**filled with the knowledge of [God's] will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding**" (v9). When you pray for others, pray they would have complete, full understanding of God's purposes in their life and that He would grant them wisdom

(continued on next page...)

to walk it out. You're asking God to reveal His will to them, which He does through His Word.

Do you see that Paul is asking God to teach the Colossians theology? Theology is the study of God. He prays for an increase in knowledge about God. Rather than asking God to change their behavior, He prays God would correct their theology! Paul knows that right knowledge about God will bring about right behavior.

What we believe determines what we do. Often it seems our emotions drive our actions, but emotions are driven by beliefs. What we believe determines how we feel which determines how we act. What we believe about God will determine how we live for God, how we worship God. You see this in how Paul prays next.

Paul expects theology rightly applied will produce a manner of life that is **"worthy of the Lord"** and **"fully pleasing to Him"** (v10) The more a person knows who God is and what God has done, the more he/she will desire to live for Him. If you want your children to become more grateful, teach them how God is a Giver, show them how much God has given to them in Christ. If you want your friend to be forgiving, pray she would learn how God has forgiven undeserving sinners like her.

How many of us long for our lives to be fully pleasing to God? Pray God would reveal Himself to you as you seek Him in His Word. Without the Scriptures, we can't know how to please God, how to live a life worthy of God. Left to ourselves, we will create lives that are pleasing to us, that seem right to us. The scripture reveals Jesus Christ, who is the perfect embodiment of a life that is fully pleasing to God (cf. John 8:29). If you want to please God with your life, study Jesus' life and message, and do likewise.

The Apostle expects a life aimed at pleasing God will produce **"fruit for every good work"** and cause an even greater increase in the **"knowledge of God"** (v10). Again we see a connection between fruitfulness and right theology. Good works done for their own sake have no lasting value. Even unbelievers are capable of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and digging wells in Africa. Only that which is done for God's sake pleases God.

If I bought my wife a hunting rifle for Christmas, she would not appreciate it. Sara does not hunt. Unless she developed an interest in hunting, a hunting rifle—regardless of how nice—would be lost on her. Some wives might appreciate such a gift, but not mine. I know this, because I know her. It's the same with God. The gifts we give to God are fruitful only when they are done for His sake and according to what we know pleases Him.

Paul goes on to ask God to give His strength to the Colossians so they would endure with patience and joy (v11). Notice that he asks for strength, not deliverance. He doesn't ask God to remove the hardships they are enduring, he asks for strength while they endure. He prays **"for all endurance and patience with joy."**

In Paul's mind, endurance and patience (even joy!) are God-glorifying fruits that come *through* hardship. We should not be so quick to ask God to remove our hardship. How much more glory would God bring to Himself by granting us joyful patience while we endure suffering? Instead, we should pray like verse 11. Ask for God's own strength to equip us to endure suffering well. We say it all the time, *"The only way to produce the fruit long-suffering is to suffer for a long time!"*

Lastly, Paul prays the Colossians would give thanks God. Through Christ, God has made us **"to share in the inheritance of the saints in light"** (v12). The inheritance Paul speaks of certainly refers

to many things, not least of which is an eternity free from sin in the presence of God. Though this world gives us many reasons to pray, we know that whatever God orders us to endure, He is good. His purposes for our lives are good. Therefore, whatever He asks us to endure is for our ultimate good.

Do your own study of Colossians 1:9-12. Let what you learn inform your own prayers. Take the principles and pray them over yourself, over your family, over your brothers and sisters in Christ, and (if I may be so bold) pray them over your pastor, who is learning to pray just like you.

Until Christ is All. ❖

THE GOSPEL IN 60 SECONDS

We often talk of being gospel-centered. We seek to have gospel centered worship services, we seek to have gospel-centered discipleship. We want the gospel preached. We want the gospel lived. But what *is* the gospel? Is it a noun or an adjective? Is it a style of music?

Consider how the Apostle Paul refers to the gospel in 1Corinthians 15, **"Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved..."** From this we learn the gospel is something preached, something received, something upon which we stand, by which we are being saved. This is why Paul later calls the gospel a matter of "first importance", **For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures..."**

So, what is the gospel? Could you articulate the gospel in 60 seconds? If you had a minute to share the gospel, what would you say?

The word gospel means "good news". It is the good news of what God has done for sinners. Foremost the gospel is about what God has done. It is the good news of God's demonstration of His glorious grace to sinners through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The message of the gospel can be summarized in four parts: creation, fall, redemption, consummation.

Creation. There is one God. He is the Creator of all things and is infinitely worthy of all praise. In the beginning, God created man and woman in His image. He placed them in a garden, gave them everything to enjoy and freedom to rule the earth.

Fall. The first man and first woman rebelled against God's commandment. Their rebellion forced them out of the garden and they passed on their sin nature to their children. Since God is good and just, He will punish sin. He is a righteous judge who will not sweep injustice under the rug. And this is bad news for sinners like us. Rebellion against a holy, just God is unimaginably bad. It means all sinners deserve eternal, conscious torment under God's wrath in hell.

Redemption. But God, who is also rich in mercy, had a plan to punish sin and yet forgive sinners. He sent Jesus Christ, His co-equal, co-eternal Son, wrapping Himself in humanity. Jesus lived a perfect life without sin. Though sinless Himself, He stood in the place of sinners, taking the punishment of their sins. He bore the full strength of God wrath for sin. His sacrifice absorbed the penalty of every sinner who would turn to God and trust in Him. God showed His acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice by raising Him from the dead. Amazingly, God holds out to all who trust in Him a promise of forgiveness and inclusion into His family as His adopted sons and daughters.

Consummation. One day, Christ will return to earth to undo what sin has done. He will restore what was lost in the garden. Through Christ, God's people from every tribe, people, language, and nation will enjoy unhindered, joy-filled fellowship with their Creator. All of this to praise of the glory of His grace.

This is the gospel. And may it always be a matter of first-importance in our lives, in our worship, in our songs, and in our church.

"Are You Politically Correct?"

By Ethan Hines

Have you ever been in a riot? These happened a lot when we were in Congo. Recently we had a clear example in the news surrounding the matter of free speech at Berkeley. Like a rushing river a mass of people get swept up into a frenzy though they often can't explain what has caused the outrage. Our culture is often like this, though in a manner less intense than a riot. Very strong opinions about seemingly everything are promoted and fought over like a bunch of alley cats. It seems that we are seeing an intensified energy toward individualistic/relativistic ideas with very little careful (let alone Biblical) reasoning going on. The only thing that seems to matter is one's own opinion or feelings on a matter. Recall with me that opinions always have underlying motives, and those motives are often hidden to those who own them. Both the actions and the motives that drive them must be examined. As a follower of Jesus you and I have a clear and consistent motive of honoring God in every circumstance because of the mercy and grace He has given us. We need to systematically examine our responses to current events and submit them to the clarity of Scripture rather than getting swept up into the current of cultural chaos. (Ephesians 4:13-14)

What is the array of responses to recent events?

For starters let's just consider what the "unbiased" news outlets frequently cover: President Trump, Russia, the economy, taxes, gender issues, racism, climate change, North Korea, health care, immigration, free speech, the national anthem, etc...

There are typically one or two very strong opinions about each topic—we are usually told directly or indirectly that one of these views is "politically correct". Have you noticed how polarizing two opposing views usually are? Emotions flow freely. Anger, frustration, delight, fear, confidence, indignation, pessimism, despair, etc... And the resulting actions are equally discouraging. Boasting, slander, cowering, hoarding, overworking, laziness, violence, indifference, etc... Do you feel the force of these emotions and actions threatening to carry you away with the masses?

Why don't we see very many responses of love, optimism, hope, kindness, and generosity? Could it be that the "politically correct" opinions don't flow from God and thus don't produce anything resembling the character of God?

What motivates emotions and the actions that follow?

Jesus taught that "out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks" (Luke 6:43-45). Where we place our trust and hope determines our responses to current events. It's hard to determine the object of our trust...until we take a look at our responses to stress. Our emotions and actions point to what we long for and depend on. Who we are inside consistently produces what we see on the outside, just like an apple tree predictably produces apples. We need to remember that every individual is living consistent with their beliefs, their hopes, and the object of their worship. The "world" is ruled by a dreadful master, the Devil, resulting in self-worship. Believers are ruled by the Lord and Savior of our souls, Jesus, resulting in the selfless worship of God. Though there is no one yet perfect in holiness, we should be seeing ourselves and other believers responding very differently than those who yet live enslaved to the Devil.

Can God's Word through Isaiah help us?

Isaiah was a prophet of God, bringing God's words and will to the southern Kingdom of Judah over 2700 years ago. Israel as a nation was in a time of decline and tumult. There was great concern of being attacked by the surrounding nations, and over the course of about 50 years and the span of 5 different kings we are able to observe their responses to their day's current events. They responded poorly, putting their hope and trust in various objects to support their desires and expectations in life. They relied on their own abilities (29:10-16), other nations (31:1), gods of their own making (2:8), their own unfaithful leaders (3:1-3). The book of Isaiah is about how the Kingdom of Judah rebelled against God (1:2-4) and the Lord's severe mercy in disciplining them. Isaiah's 66 chapters reveal that all the events that occur are directed very carefully by the hand of God for His own glory and the good of His people—though that good is often presently painful. The Israelites had their hearts and thus their hope and trust trained on everything except God. Had they sought God through His own revelation, they would have placed their hope and trust in Him and not been led astray as they were (40:18-25). The painful corrective course of discipline would have been avoided and their joy would have been full in God. The focus of Isaiah is not on physical blessing, but on the eternal blessing brought about by the Promised Messiah, Jesus (9:6-7). God shows His faithfulness to an unfaithful people.

How does this affect us?

You and I live in times very much like the Israelites of Isaiah's day. Tons of turmoil, emotions and opinions. If we would desire to not be led astray, swept up in the strong currents of cultural opinion, motivated by selfishness, misplacing our hope and trust, then we must learn to run to God's Word for God's own clear self-disclosure. He has a clear plan for this universe and a particularly marvelous provision for His children. But we get so easily off track, placing hope in leaders, our own ingenuity and abilities, the strength and position of certain surrounding nations, or the simple deadly distractions of self-absorption and entertainment (among other false gods).

As we encounter current events, let's encourage one another to trust and hope in God rather than getting swept up in the hysteria. We do that by encouraging one another with God's Words, recalling His gracious plan in Jesus Christ, rejoicing in His sovereign reign over every single event, and delighting that Christ redeems a people who are decidedly distinct from pervasive cultural ideas and practices. As a practical encouragement, read and meditate (think deeply) on 1 Peter chapter 1 to further engage some of these concepts. ❖

>> ANNOUNCING A NEW SERVICE <<

Beginning in November we are launching a new worship service at CornerstonePiqua. The **last Sunday evening of every month** is being set aside for a special time of prayer and communion. The service will include time of worshipping the Lord through song, through corporate and individual prayer, and through remembering the gospel in the Lord's Supper. Take an hour out of your evening on the last Sunday of the month to worship the Lord and celebrate communion with your church family.

Haven't You Heard?! Get the Inside Scoop on FOMO!

Have you heard about FOMO? It's a **disorder virus disease** condition experienced by many. FOMO stands for "Fear of Missing Out". It's anxiety brought on by the fear that events are happening about which we are unaware. It's a serious condition even essential oils can't cure.

FOMO is an old fear. The triune God is a social being, eternally existing in community as Father, Son, and Spirit. When He created humans, He gave them His communal nature. He built our brains with systems that reward community. When other people know us and love us and rely on us, it feels good. When we're being ignored or excluded, it hurts. Accordingly, there is a part of our brain which is keenly attuned to feeling left out. Social isolation is a deep fear for many.

When the Tempter tempted Eve in the Garden, he appealed to her FOMO. Genesis 3:5, **"God knows that when you eat of [the forbidden fruit] your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."** The enemy lied to Eve, making her think God is withholding from her. There is something He knows that you don't know. She feels she is being excluded. FOMO is an old problem.

In the age of social media, FOMO has a modern twist. Social media has people more connected than ever, yet studies show people are feeling more socially isolated than ever. This is probably because social media appeals to our desire for community, but cannot deliver it. Community is created by sharing ourselves with one another in face-to-face interaction. Social media scratches the itch, but cannot satisfy it.

FOMO is a very real condition. The side effects can be detrimental to Christian mission. Therefore, Christians need to identify the symptoms and side effects, and seek the cure. *(Spoiler alert: It's the gospel.)*

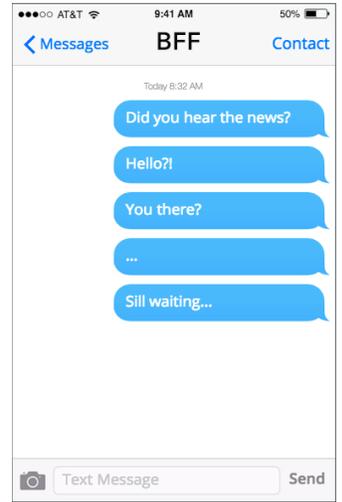
What Are the Symptoms and Side Effects of FOMO?

One of the symptoms of FOMO is an addiction to social media. Constantly checking Facebook and Twitter aggravates the condition. Studies have shown the more time a person spends on social media, the more socially isolated they feel. The state of hyper vigilant "checking" is the opposite of the peace FOMO seeks. Furthermore, this addiction prevents us from God's way of creating the real community we desire—vis-à-vis face-to-face, give-and-receive connections.

Another symptom is the pain associated with not being "in the know". Some people will go to extreme lengths to ensure they have the inside scoop. They'll make sure others know what they know and are quick to give an opinion. They'll even use "biblical" language. "_____ has been on my heart recently. Do you know how I can pray for him?" "We should pray for _____, She's struggling with _____."

Gossip is one serious side-effect of FOMO. Gossip is the sin of passing along of false information *unknowingly*, or the passing along of true information *unnecessarily*. Its a sin involving three people: the person being talked about, the person being talked to, and the person talking. Gossip is a dangerous sin that destroys unity, halts a church's mission, and divides the closest friends. (See Proverbs 17:9)

Like with all sin-fueled conditions, the cure for FOMO is the gospel of Jesus Christ. FOMO feeds on a shortage, so we must train our hearts to remember the fullness of God in Christ.



Four Ways To Treat FOMO With the Gospel:

- Recognize FOMO for the sin it is.** The fear of missing out is fundamentally a denial of the blood-bought privilege God has granted to His people. Jesus' death on the cross paid the penalty of sin and removed the wall of separation between God and man. 1Peter 2:10, "Once you were not a people, now you are God's people..." Through Christ, the regenerate Christian has the ultimate inside scoop. FOMO denies this and looks to others to feel like an insider. FOMO is sin because it denies that Christ is all-satisfying and seeks satisfaction elsewhere. Call it what it is and repent.
- Turn from FOMO to Christ.** The fear of missing out is fundamentally unwarranted. If you are in Christ, you have been given all things. Colossians 3:3, "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." The Christian man's/woman's life is tucked safely inside Christ, who is the fullness of God, and through Christ we have access to all we could ever possibly want or need. When you feel FOMO rising, confess the sin, and remember the infinite blessings of God that you have been given in Christ.
- Look to the future.** If Christ had not been raised, FOMO would have the last word. But Christ has been raised and eternal life secured. Our potential for joy and delight is limited in this life. However, God's people have been guaranteed a future of endless pleasures at God's right hand (Ps. 16:11). What's a moment of missing out compared to an eternity of infinite delight?
- Deepen Christian Community.** Ephesians 2:11-22 is fundamental for the FOMO sufferer. Those who were far off and separated from God have been brought together by Christ. From many people, He made one people—His people, the community of faith. The community of faith—the church—is God's gift to His people. Every believer has a position of privilege with God and with God's special people. The growth of FOMO is impossible in the life of a person nourished by Christian community. God has created Christian community for His people to strengthen, encourage, and stir up our satisfaction and affections for Christ. The church is a foretaste of heaven. Taste and see.

I would love to hear your thoughts on the matter. Email me at pastorjamie@cornerstonepiqua

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

BIRTHDAYS

- 01 :: Grant Flora & Sarah Mowrey
- 02 :: Autumn Ponchillia
- 06 :: Jessica Powers
- 08 :: Todd Lehmann
- 09 :: Brooke Ruiz
- 10 :: Pete Binkley
- 13 :: Lilian Wellman
- 21 :: Pilot Deeren

ANNIVERSARIES

- 06 :: Ed & Kim Wellman
- 22 :: Brent & Jane Phillips

BIRTHDAYS

- 7 :: Liam Deeren & Matt Flora
- 11 :: Bonnie Creager
- 12 :: Micah Wellman
- 17 :: Steve Creager
- 22 :: Addie Mowrey
- 23 :: Josh Binkley
- 24 :: Nick McMillen & Steve Mowrey
- 27 :: Ed Wellman

ANNIVERSARIES

- 01 :: Nick & Stephanie McMillen
- 31 :: Sean & Courtney Gradel