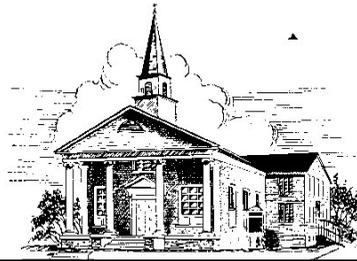


First Presbyterian Church
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Louisville, MS 39339

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Will Hill, Head Usher
Mike Boyles
Kevin Hudson
Terry Reynolds
Charley Moody



First Presbyterian Church

Louisville, Mississippi

Sanctifying Our Deepest Distress

*A Monthly
Publication of*

First Presbyterian Church, Louisville

.....

For I resolved to
know nothing while I
was with you except
Jesus Christ and
him crucified.
(1 Corinthians 2:2)

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January 2018

*By Ian Duguid, professor at Westminster Theological Seminary. The article is adapted from Dr. Duguid's book, *Living in the Grip of Relentless Grace: The gospel in the Lives of Isaac and Jacob*, and was published online at <https://faculty.wts.edu/posts/sanctifying-our-deepest-distress/>.*

Should we feel sympathy for Jacob when he is tricked by Laban (Gen. 29)? Perhaps we should not feel too sorry for him. Even though from his perspective events turned out in a way that was unjust and unfair, this too was part of God's good providence for him. This too is part of the "love that wilt not let me go," as the hymn writer termed it. Of course, it is sometimes not immediately clear that it is good news that God will not let us go! God in love wanted Jacob to experience what it was like to be deceived by someone he trusted. That lesson would give a depth and meaning to his repentance of his earlier sin that would never have been there without it. God's grace had laid hold of him and would not give him up. The rough, chiseling work of sanctification was in progress in Jacob's life.

At times it must have seemed to Jacob as if his life circumstances were an anti-fulfillment of Isaac's blessing that "you may become a company of peoples" (Gen. 28:3). Really, God? This Jacob is the one who is going to inherit the Promised Land and through whose multitude of harmonious descendants the world will be blessed? By the end of Genesis 29, he had worked his heart out for his uncle for fourteen years, and all he had earned were two wives who couldn't get along with each other or even with him. But grace is more powerful than we ever dreamed. Though when you're in the reality gap you may not be able to see how it will ever happen, God's promises stand secure and will prevail. As the hymn writer put it, he will "sanctify to you your deepest distress." He will use the most difficult and challenging experiences to polish rough diamonds such as Jacob—and you and me—until, in the end, we shine like stars. In all this, he will never waver from his promise to bless us and sanctify us—to forge in us a knowledge of our sinful hearts and utter dependence upon his grace.

(continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

Faith and Enjoying Fellowship with God

Did Jacob understand that at this point in his life? Could he have imagined that it would all work out in the end as God had promised? We don't really know. The text doesn't give us a great deal of insight into Jacob's heart at that moment. Yet what is interesting about this question is that in one sense it doesn't matter at all, while in another sense it matters intensely. In terms of Jacob's personal peace and happiness, it makes a great deal of difference whether he was living by faith. If his faith in the promise was strong, it would have given him a profound comfort and joy in the midst of his very challenging circumstances. It would have enabled him to rest in God's promise, to wait expectantly to see how God would nonetheless get his way in the face of the challenges of each day. It seems more likely, however, that Jacob's faith was still weak at this point, as evidenced by the schemes he continues to pursue in the chapters ahead. That weak faith would have robbed him of much of the peace and joy that he could have had; in that sense, his lack of faith mattered intensely. Yet in another sense, it didn't matter at all: God's purpose to bless him did not depend on the strength of Jacob's faith. God was going to bring him safely to the place of blessing at the end of his journey, whether or not he believed it right then.

It is the same way for us. The strength of our faith makes absolutely no difference to whether we will receive God's blessing. What counts is the one in whom our faith rests. If our trust is in Christ, and we are looking to him as our Lord and Savior, then God will certainly bless us, no matter how small and weak our faith is. Yet the strength of our faith makes a big difference to our enjoyment of that blessing. In large measure, our present peace and enjoyment of our relationship with God flows from how well we are able to put that faith to work in the face of our challenging circumstances.

2018 Church Directory update

It's that time of year again! We are now in the process of updating the church directory. If you have recently joined the church OR if any of your contact information has changed, please email the office at fpclouisville@msn.com

or

call 773-3146.

2nd Sunday Supper

Join us for 2nd Sunday Supper Sunday, January 14th, immediately following the evening worship service in the home of John and Rachel Brownlee.

**Church LIFE Night will resume
Wednesday, January 10th.
The meal will begin at 6:15p.m.,
followed by classes.**

Duty Deacon

1/7 John Brownlee
1/14 Dan Mittan
1/21 Jay McCown
1/28 David Willers

YOUTH HOSTS

A sign-up sheet for volunteers to host the youth will be passed around during Church LIFE Night, Wed., Jan. 10th.

*We will be observing the
Sacrament of the
Lord's Supper
Sunday, January 28th,
during the morning service.*

Church LIFE
Night Desserts

A Sign-up sheet for volunteers to provide desserts will be passed around Wed., Jan. 10th , during the class time.

***HAPPY
NEW
YEAR!!***

Women in the Church News

There will be a WIC council meeting will be Sunday, January 7th, at 5:00p.m., in the Family Life Building.

WIC Circle will be Monday, January 8th ,1:00p.m., in the Family Life Building. Mary Joyce Boyles and Betty Triplett will be the hostesses. Betty Triplett will be the lesson moderator.

January 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 Men's Prayer B'fast 7:00a.m.	3	4	5	6
7 WIC Council Meeting 5:00p.m.	8 WIC Circle Meeting 1:00p.m.	9 Men's Prayer B'fast 7:00a.m.	10 Church LIFE Night 6:15p.m.	11	12	13
14 2nd Sunday Supper	15	16 Men's Prayer B'fast 7:00a.m.	17 Church LIFE Night 6:15p.m.	18	19	20
21	22	23 Men's Prayer B'fast 7:00a.m.	24 Church LIFE Night 6:15p.m.	25	26	27
28 The Lord's Supper Observed	29	30 Men's Prayer B'fast 7:00a.m.	31 Church LIFE Night 6:15p.m.			