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ON BATTLING UNBELIEF WITH GOD’S PROMISES BY: HENRY KNAPP

This fall, we are focusing on “The Essentials of Our Faith,” with the intent that as a congregation we would believe all the more strongly on what God has revealed to us as Truth. “Essential” can mean important, crucial, central; but we also intend to use the word to mean influential, impactful, meaningful. The Essentials we are looking at should be essential to our daily lives—knowingly impacting all that we do. Something we firmly and consciously *believe* in.

Unfortunately, we have a very unbiblical understanding of “belief.” Far too often, we equate belief with the *intellectual assent* to a certain proposition—that is, we believe something if we think that it is true. Thus, I *believe* that $1 + 1 = 2$, because I *think* it is true; I *believe* in God, because I am convinced *in my mind* that He exists; I *believe* I can sit in a chair, because *my mind* knows from experience that (most) chairs hold me.

Biblically, however, belief is not equated with knowledge, but with trust and dependence. To be sure, there is an intellectual quality to belief; one cannot have true belief without knowledge, without the mind’s acceptance. Nevertheless, full, biblical, saving belief is not a function

of one’s intellect, but of one’s trust.

And the belief we are to have, the trust we are to exhibit, is not in the existence of God (that’s easy to do), but belief, trust, and dependence in His promises to us (and that’s much more difficult than the “casual Christian” realizes). If you know that God promises the best for us, yet you have a hard time living that promise, then you are exhibiting *unbelief*, no matter how convinced you are that God exists. Belief is not an awareness of God’s promises, nor even being convinced of their truthfulness. One believes, when one acts in faith, trust, and dependence in light of those promises.

Battling unbelief is not a matter of seeking and knowing *truth*, it’s a matter of confidently living in light of the promises of God. Thus, reworked from John Piper’s *Future Grace*,

***When anxious about some risky new venture or meeting...**

Battle unbelief with God’s promise of Isaiah 41:10 – “Fear not for I am with you, I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you.”

***When anxious about being too weak...**

Battle unbelief with God’s promise of 2 Cor 12:9 – “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.”

***When anxious about facing opposition...**

Battle unbelief with God’s promise of Romans 8:31 – “If God is for us, who can be against us?”

***When anxious about being sick...**

Battle unbelief with God’s promise of Psalm 34:19 – “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.”

***When anxious that I might shipwreck my faith...**

Battle unbelief with God’s promise of Phil 1:6 – “He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ.”

May you battle unbelief, trusting in His essential promises! “Lord, I believe! Help my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24). To the Praise of His Glory!

We are in the midst of an exciting time at Hebron Church. At the time of this writing, we are just starting to embark on a series on the “Essentials” of what we believe. This encompasses not only the sermon but also the Sunday School hour. In this vein, the Stewardship Team wanted to share what our “Essentials” are that are guiding the work we do on your behalf.

First, “The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein” (Psalm 24:1). Put another way, God has created a wonderful world and retains ownership of it.

Second, “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it”. (Genesis 2:15). We have been given the role of stewards over creation. We are called not only to maintain it but to make something of it. Think of the parable of the talents where the servant who hid his money away was chastised.

Third, God chooses to involve us in his unfolding plan of redemption. This applies to us as individuals, to Hebron as a church, and to the universal Church as a whole. He could do it all himself, but he chooses to have us be a part of His redemptive plan. So we are called to minister to our community, to our nation, and ultimately to the world. Part of those roles call for financial support, and it is incumbent on us to manage our households so we can support his work here on earth. So much has been given to us that we cannot help but to get involved and to give back so that others may, too, see the goodness of his grace.

Mike Tomashewski, Head of Stewardship Team

What do you have that you did not receive? (1 Corinthians 4:7)

Please prayerfully consider increasing your gifts by \$25/month in 2023 and another \$25/month in 2024 in support of Hebron’s ministries.

<u>Operating Fund - August 2023</u>	
<i>Year-to-Date Recurring Revenues</i>	\$ 580,475
<i>Year-to-Date Expenses*</i>	<u>(654,028)</u>
<i>Actual Surplus (Deficit)</i>	\$ (73,553)
<i>2023 Planned Transfers from Savings</i>	<u>50,000</u>
<i>Planned Surplus (Deficit)</i>	<u>\$ (23,553)</u>

CONGREGATIONAL EDUCATION TEAM UPDATE

The Essentials of the Faith initiative is off to a great start. As you know, we are examining 8 essential tenets of the Reformed Faith. These have been historically fundamental to the Christian faith. We, at Hebron, have long held on to these tenets and have become increasingly concerned that our denomination, the PCUSA, has not been upholding these for quite some time. This is what led to the Session spending much of this past winter and spring in a time of prayerful discernment as to where God is leading us. However, we do want it to be abundantly clear that the future of Hebron Presbyterian Church rests with the entire membership and not with Session. You, the members, will make that decision. So there is no “done deal” and there is still much that we need to continue to hear from the pulpit and to study in the classes, and to pray about. That is why it is so important for all members to try to attend as many of the upcoming Sunday worship services and the related classes as possible. There will be more events upcoming for all of you to ask questions. In the meantime, please attend and invite others to also come and worship our Triune God as we seek to remain firmly anchored in God’s Truth.

-Dan Brown, on behalf of Session

September 10, we began a new 8-week sermon series entitled “**The Essentials of Our Faith**” and offering corresponding Sunday school classes led by a team of Elders (with Jerry and Henry). These Sunday school classes are held from 10:15-11:00 AM in both the Barclay Building and in Fellowship Hall. The regular Adult Sunday School format will return in November.

**Here’s what it will look like! Each class will follow the sermon from the day (Barclay)
or from the previous week (Fellowship Hall).**

Date	Where	Class Topic	Facilitators
10/1	Barclay	The Holy Spirit– The Promise of the Father	Dave Mulock & Bruce Krogh
10/1	Fellowship Hall	Is Christ the Only Way to Salvation?	Bill Kear & Mike Tomashewski
10/8	Barclay	In Christ Alone!	Dan Gallagher & Dan Brown
10/8	Fellowship Hall	The Holy Spirit– The Promise of the Father	Dave Mulock & Bruce Krogh
10/15	Barclay	Why Does the Church Exist?	Mike Tomashewski
10/15	Fellowship Hall	In Christ Alone!	Dan Gallagher & Dan Brown
10/22	Barclay	What Is A Disciple of Christ?	Dave Mulock & Geoff Gehring
10/22	Fellowship Hall	Why Does the Church Exist?	Mike Tomashewski & Bill Kear
10/29	Barclay	What Will the Return of Christ Mean?	Bruce Krogh
10/29	Fellowship Hall	What Is A Disciple of Christ?	Dave Mulock & Geoff Gehring

How are Family Ministry Environments Structured?

Family Ministry at Hebron Church is set up with the following structure. We are all familiar with houses. We use the practicality and versatility of the home for imagery. We focus on 3 environments.

#1 The Foyer - The place where people enter in, get to know and become known.
(ex. gatherings and fun opportunities)

#2 The Living Room - The place where people get to come together regularly and share their day to day or week to week. (ex. Wednesday and Sunday programming)

#3 The Kitchen - The place where people spend intentional time together.
(ex. trips, retreats, small groups, and service opportunities)

What does it take to make Family Ministry happen?

Family Ministry at Hebron Church is an ALL HANDS on DECK situation.

Family Ministry is done by the families of Hebron with support of the larger church family, which is supported by the Family Ministry Staff. The purpose of Family Ministry Staff is to create and curate opportunities for the church family to engage, encourage and empower the families to fully live into the reality that they are the PRIMARY faith influence in the lives of their children and are primarily responsible for raising them in faith.

Everyone at Hebron Church has a role to play in Family Ministry.
It all starts with support through prayer. Everyone should be praying.
It then comes to being present. Opportunities need people to make them happen.

This is where we need people passionate about serving families and families committed to being served. You have to show if you want to grow.

What are the current needs? Simple as ABC and 123.

For Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings we need to make sure that we have at all times 2 adults in every room. This is not just a request, but it is what Pennsylvania expects us to have for proper safety coverage. Because of what it takes to do Family Ministry in these rooms, often we need 3 people.

Every (birth through 12th) room needs 1 Adult Primary Facilitator, 1 Adult Assistant, and 1 Adult/Student Helper as numbers dictate.

Think of it this way.
A - Adult Primary Facilitator
B - Adult Assistant
C - Adult/Student Helper

This requires a lot of people power to pull off. Which is why we need you to step up and become a part of what is happening every week.

What is the REALITY?

Kids need stability. They need people who are caring and consistent.

Primary Facilitators need to average 75%-85% being present to be effective in leading. 85% is a sneaky statistic because that is when BURNOUT sets in. God knows this. He set it up. Rest 1 Day, work 6.

If you are keeping score, $6/7 = 85.71428571\%$

We need to start getting people plugged in and serving so that we can have a more sustainable Family Ministry. One where people are engaged in what is happening with this next generation and providing respite to those who have been holding down the fort over the last year or more.

We have a lot of ministry opportunities that need to be filled. They range from behind the scenes preparations for weekly programming, to special event needs, to being present with kids during program and supporting them in the community by showing up to cheer them on at a game or activity.

What is the ASK?

We are going to ask that God would inspire you to serve. Then inspire you to get your clearances. Then inspire you to have a 15-minute orientation phone call, ZOOM call or in person meeting with Dan Bender. Then inspire you to be behind the scenes or be present as we look to inspire an everyday faith in THIS GENERATION. They always say it just takes 1. That is true.

We are going to ask that Family Ministry families who are not already serving fill 1 spot per semester.

We are going to ask that the greater church family who attend the 9:00 AM or 11:15 AM service and are not already serving, fill 1 spot per semester.

We are going to ask students (6th-12th) to be a helper 1 time a semester.

What happens NOW?

Welcome to EveryONE.

EveryONE is our New Volunteer Pipeline. This Pipeline is owned by the Connections Team partnering with the Family Life Ministry Team and partnering with other teams as things come to pass. As the staff liaison to both teams, it is good to launch it using Family Ministry because that is where the biggest needs are and biggest area of impact.

The need is apparent. It's time to plug in. Sign ups are coming.

We will begin to place those who already have clearances.

We will help those who do not have them acquire them. Some needs do not require clearances if they are behind the scenes, but the vast majority do.

We will offer an orientation to each type of need so you can be confident.

We will follow up with you after you serve. We will eventually create an EveryONE Board so you can see what the needs are in real time.

Much, Much, Much More to Come.

Ed. Note: Below is the contents of a letter received on 5/15/2023 from Dalton Dueck, Director of Member Services at Ethnos360 regarding the retirement of the Jordans, long-time Hebron mission partners.



“Dear Friends of Dave and Fran Jordan,

It is with a great deal of satisfaction that I invite you not only to share some memories with me of the service the Jordans have had with Ethnos360 (formerly New Tribes Mission), but also to look expectantly together to the future the Lord has in store for them.

Dave and Fran began their service with New Tribes Mission in 1977. When they retire this June, they will have served with New Tribes Mission/Ethnos360 for over 45 years.

In late 1977, after completing the New Tribes missionary training, Dave and Fran, with their three young daughters, traveled to the other side of the world to begin a life-long journey. Their hearts’ desire was to bring the knowledge of Christ to an unreached group of

people in Thailand.

The first step was learning Thai language and culture in the bustling city of Bangkok. From there they relocated to the mountains of a then remote corner of northern Thailand in early 1979. Learning the Prai language and culture in a war torn area occupied the next four years of their lives. They formed relationships, helped develop a Prai writing system, and began preparing literacy materials, Scripture, and Bible lessons for evangelism.

Despite a slow initial response, the first young girl believed in 1987. As the first village received consistent foundational teaching, a greater response slowly spread among numerous villages. During this time Dave kept on with teaching, lesson writing, and translation while giving time to serve on the field leadership team for most years from 1988-2010. He also served as a translation consultant. Fran homeschooled their four children for many of these years and also taught women and children.

By 2009 Dave was able to devote more full-time attention to Bible translation, most of which was completed by 2019. The joyful dedication of the Prai Old Testament portions and New Testament took place in March 2020.

God continues to bless the spread of the gospel to new villages and also across the border to Prai villages in a neighboring country. The Jordans certainly have no regrets for having spent their lives to reach the unreached! You as supporters have been such a vital part of their journey, and we now share the joy of this wonderful harvest.

On June 1, 2023, Dave and Fran will officially move to retired status with Ethnos360, but as the Lord allows, they plan to remain in their present location continuing to help equip the slowly maturing Prai church. Two of their children and their families are also in Thailand and contribute in significant ways to the Prai church.

Together with the Jordans, we at Ethnos360 are grateful for your years of love, support, and prayers. We would like to thank you for your part in helping see the Prai people reached with the gospel and now reaching out to others. Thank you for continuing to stand with Dave and Fran and supporting them with your prayers. You will be pleased to know that if you wish, your gifts for the Jordans may still be sent to Ethnos360, and they will continue to be tax-deductible. As is intimated in the status "Retired Member," Dave and Fran will be retiring but will continue as members of Ethnos360. They feel honored to continue sharing together with you in God's work among the Prai people.

Thank you for your desire to be a part of the work of Ethnos360 as we strive together to make Christ known to every people group."

You're Invited...

to join us at a fundraising event as
we celebrate 25 years of ministry

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2023

7:00 TO 8:30 PM IN THE BARCLAY

BUILDING

HEBRON CHURCH

10460 FRANKSTOWN ROAD

PITTSBURGH, PA 15235



RSVP to Jayne Shorthouse
at 412-979-9945 or
jayneshorthouse@cs.com

Hebron Church is encouraged to attend the celebration of 25 years of ministry in the Bahamas. We have supported their ministry financially and prayerfully since it's inception, and they would like us to celebrate this milestone with them. Please RSVP ASAP with Jayne Shorthouse. It will be an incredible night hearing and seeing what God is doing in the Bahamas.



Come meet and hear from 9 of our local Hebron-supported mission agencies and the work they are doing in our communities and the impact they are having on the community for the sake of the Gospel. Light refreshments will be served.