



On the Same Page

“And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;” (Romans 5:3-4 NAS95)

A Developing Direction

Forever-Family Fellowship

We will teach and practice truth-and-love relationships with brothers-sisters in Christ that must survive/thrive in the present because we believe that these relationships will last forever

All-Week-Long Worship

As the local body of believers gathers each Sunday for worship, **we will inspire a worship experience for all age groups that will travel with you all week long.** What we do on Sunday will assist you in your singing, in your praying, in your devotion, and in your witness.

Conversely, it is as you worship all-week-long that you will be prepared to enter into gathered worship on Sunday.

Day-to-Day Discipleship

As followers of Christ, we are disciples every single day. Respect for and commitment to Scripture is essential. **We will show you how to interact with and respond to God's Word, both as individuals, and in groups.**

Moment-by-Moment Mission

God, the Architect of the world and of our lives arranges appointments and interruptions. Each of us is called to represent His Son for the glory of His Name. **We will cultivate a mind-set for moment-by-moment mission, whether close to home, or far away.**

Counter-Cultural Counting

Sunday, April 2, 2017

I'm starting again in a one-on-one Bible study, going through James. Evidently, once was not enough.

James suggests several things that could safely be categorized as counter-cultural. For instance, his emphasis on the blessing of poverty or humility vs. the curse of riches - that does not sit well in downtown Milford. Or how about this?: “Watch what you say!” Clearly James was not on Facebook.

But it is James' **counter-cultural counting** that hits me hard. No, it is not $2 + 2 = 5$. That's not counter-cultural. Government does that all the time. James' brand of counter-cultural counting is found early in his little letter, chapter 1, verse 2: “Count it all joy, brothers, when you fall into all kinds of trials.” Sure, that's what you do. Right?

‘Counting’ is an accounting. It is a reckoning and placing in a proper category. So when ‘disaster’ strikes, we must account for it. Bad luck? Some would say so. It's not fair! Many would agree. But in a world where God reigns from the uncontested throne of the universe and is actively involved in the lives and affairs of men, we cannot resort to luck or arbitrary rules of fairness. The Bible teaches that God is keenly interested in the training and education of His children. And He often uses hardships in order to teach us what we could not possibly learn otherwise.

It is not a case of God using a big stick to whack us when we are wrong, or a feather to tickle us when we are right. This is not about punishment and reward. The Gospel instructs us that every day we live and breathe as a direct result of God's mercy, totally undeserved; and that every day we engage in and enjoy life as a blessing of God's grace, again undeserved. No, if we think a flat tire or broken nail is a result of God getting back at us for something, we have completely missed the point, and have trivialized both our sin and God's justice.

Hardships and trials and tests are evidences of God working in us and on us. If we desire to grow stronger and wiser, then we will welcome these experiences as divinely appointed opportunities. We will **count** them as such. And when we forget, we will find our frustrations and resentments returning. And then, you, like me, will need to return to James all over again, read the verse, “Count it all joy, ..” and repent of an attitude that pretends that the world is supposed to revolve around me, and then thank God for another chance to learn, and grow, and change. It's like learning to count all over again.

Martin Luther, writing while in hiding at the Wartburg Castle, hearing reports of popular unrest and revolts:

I ask that men make no reference to my name; let them call themselves Christians, not Lutherans. What is Luther? After all, the teaching is not mine (Jn 7:16). Neither was I crucified for anyone (1 Cor 1:13). St. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 3, would not allow the Christians to call themselves Pauline or Petrine, but Christian. ... Not so, my dear friends; let us abolish all party names and call ourselves Christians, after him whose teaching we hold.

Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings.
Augsburg Fortress, 2005, p. 6

News and Notes

Prayer Time: Sundays, 9 a.m., in the sanctuary

American House service this Sunday, 3 p.m.

Ladies Bible Study, studying 2 Peter, will not meet this week, resuming Tues., April 11, 10 a.m.

The **Couples Retreat is this weekend at Lake Ann**, April 6-8. Please see Deb Furline if you are interested in attending.

Circle of Grace ladies fellowship will meet Tuesday, April 4, at Val Anglemier's home, 6:15 p.m. Please bring a childhood picture and/or a wedding picture.

Weekly Worship @ 11:00 a.m.

This Sunday, April 2, we will listen to the stories of **Jesus' first day of public ministry**, and be challenged to desire Jesus' ministry in our midst (studying Luke 4:14-44). On this first Sunday we will observe **Lord's Table** in our worship gathering.



Last Sunday, March 26, Paul Conrad, brother of our worship leader, Joe Conrad, preached in our morning worship service on the truth that the God who judges has become our salvation. [You can listen to the message here.](#)

We have completed a 3-week mini-series on **the temptations of Jesus**, found in Luke 4:1-13, called "Learning Obedience." The first temptation (4:1-4), on the mis-use of words, [can be heard here](#). The message on the 2nd temptation (4:5-8), on the mis-use of worship, [can be heard here](#). The third temptation (4:9-13), on the mis-use of will, [can be heard here](#).

Sunday School classes resume this Sunday morning. Our adult class is studying "Hard Ministry," related to the morning message. Our youth class is looking to add some new members, and will spend two Sundays thinking about Easter and the Resurrection. Children are continuing to learn the Christian's armor, from Ephesians 6.

[Milford Baptist Website](#)

[Milford Baptist Facebook](#)