

Family & Friends..... May 10, 2023
Happy Mother’s Day to all our dear mothers! Hope all mothers have a beautiful Mother’s Day. To those who have lost their mothers, I hope your precious memories of them will be of comfort to you.

The hummingbirds are back in full force in our area. I have been feeding them for two weeks, and when they are out of hummingbird nectar, they let me know. They are a little feisty, but amazing, and I love to watch them. My backyard is a festive place right now with all the critters. They are showing off with their antics. My sliding glass door has become a picture show daily. One of the squirrels has been trying to get past the shield of the bird feeder, and finally made it. Thought he was going to kill himself trying. The neighborhood fox walked across the front porch in front of two ladies waiting for me to answer the door. He acted like he lived here. The deer are leaping and jumping through the woods, so be careful. Saw a small bird on the ground pick up some grass in his beak and fly to the top of the hummingbird feeder. He stood there like, “look what I did.” Needless to say the hummingbirds were not happy. Birds are serenading with their beautiful song. I am sure we are going to see lots of new mothers in the backyard soon. It’s a happy place around here! To God Be the Glory!

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our god endures forever. (Isaiah 40:8)

Those on our prayer list: Our heartfelt sympathies go to Abby Willis in the loss of her grandfather, and to Billy Helms in the loss of his brother, Ray. Please keep both these families in your prayers. Kelli Homeyer’s mother, June Jadwin, has been diagnosed with cancer. Roy Fanning remains in the hospital after his fall. Cheryl Blansett’s mother fell last week and cracked her pelvis. Homer Makinson is improving after a recent fall. Susan Duffy had a full-body scan on May 5th. Continue to remember and pray for Cameron Thorn, Jennifer Oxford, Mike Hale, our missionaries, military, police, and leaders.

Children’s home list: Popcorn, BBQ sauce, pickles, vinegar, and paper plates. Food Pantry: Mac & cheese, peanut butter, jelly, spaghetti, and pasta sauce.

Grace and forgiveness are unearned gifts. Love you, stay safe.

Karen

Bella Vista Church of Christ

Highway 71 and County Road 40
989 NW McNelly Road
Bentonville, AR 72712

Return Service Requested

Phone: (479) 273-2434

www.bellavistachurchofchrist.com

ELDERS

Tracy Bowman.....479-899-3089
DonButcher.....636-548-0458
Dallas Dobbs479-640-49439
Perry Johnson913-707-8379
Ray Reiss.....903-908-0203

DEACONS

Mark Bagwell John Bowman Chris Johnson Josh Porter Joe Hott Mike Spencer
Randall Hunt Terry Roberts Aaron Sloan Tyler White Mike Martin Jerry Snyder

MINISTERS

Jeff Grisham.....479-531-9135
Parker Willis.....615-587-3208
Cory Spruiell.....501-941-4525

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SUNDAY		8:15 AM
Early Worship		9:30 AM
Bible Class (Livestreamed)		10:30 AM
Worship (Livestreamed)		
WEDNESDAY		9:45 AM
Ladies' Class		7:00 PM
Bible Classes (Livestreamed)		

Bella Vista

Who Decides?

A friend sent me a title of a video and suggested that I watch it. The statement he made with that suggestion was, “It will make you wonder when the fire and lightning are coming.” Needless to say, I was curious. I searched for and found this particular video, which will remain unnamed in this article, as will the group that it represented. I will give a very brief description. It began in what looked like a church building of some kind where there was a panel of people giving their views concerning what Scripture has to say about a particular sin. That person made a comment to the effect that if we could ask Paul if he meant what he wrote about this particular sin that he would say, “Absolutely. This act is sinful” I think all of us would agree that Scripture makes very explicit statements about what constitutes sin. The problem was that this person’s statement didn’t end there. The next thing this person said was, “The Bible is just wrong on this subject.”

Let that sink in a minute. This person wasn’t saying that the reaction of Christians in the first century was based on the culture around them. They weren’t looking to find or exploit some supposed “gray area” in the text. They just stated that they believe the Bible to be wrong on this subject, and as such, it didn’t have any authority in this particular area. How does someone arrive at this conclusion? Have we ever been tempted to do this? What could be the motivating factor(s) for such a statement?

Perhaps it is that this sin is one that we don’t want to forsake. Jesus makes this observation about people as he spoke with Nicodemus in John chapter 3. “*And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.*” (John 3:19-20)



LIFELINES

Maybe it is because identifying a certain behavior as sin would alienate the people around them. Living as the people who follow Jesus will often put us at odds with the world. Sometimes “the world” is much closer than we would like. It could be that living as Jesus directed may put us at odds with friends of family. Jesus spoke of this in Luke 12. *“Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”* (Luke 12:51-53) We won’t follow Jesus and be universally popular. After all, we follow one who was rejected and crucified at the urging of his own people. James says it this way, *“You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”* (James 4:4)



It could be that we think we know best how life should be lived. There’s a statement that gets repeated four times in the book of Judges, *“In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”* (Judges 17:6, 18:1, 19:1, 21:25) That does not work well. As much as we would like to be the ones in charge and the ones who determine what is good or evil, we (humanity) are notoriously bad at determining on our own what is acceptable to God and what is not.

We fail to see what God wants for us. What God wants for us is to flourish. He wants us to live as he designed, in his own image. Sin has corrupted that image. Sin leads us away from flourishing as God intended. He doesn’t forbid certain behaviors or instruct us in other behaviors arbitrarily. He wants us. He wants to be with us. He wants for us to want to be with him. He wants that badly enough to send his son so that we can be forgiven and made holy. He wants what’s best for us. Will we trust him enough to take him and his word seriously?

--JEFF GRISHAM

Reacting to Anti-Christian Sentiment

When the apostle Peter wrote First and Second Peter (most likely in the mid-60s AD), Christians were facing anti-Christian sentiment. For Christians in the new millennium, we likewise should hear and embrace the following points from First Peter in view of the various trials of the present.

- 1. Remember who we are.** When Peter wrote to a people suffering for Christ's sake, he reminded them of their unique calling. In 1 Peter 1.1, he identified them spiritually, as the elect of God; socially, as temporary residents; and politically, as a people scattered throughout many provinces. Peter reminds us that even the precious Christ was rejected (2.4) and reviled. (2.23) We should not, therefore, be surprised if the world hates us because we are God's people. (1 John 3.13)
- 2. Remember what we possess.** To a people suffering for Christ, Peter reminds his readers of the great salvation awaiting those who are kept by God. (1.3)
- 3. Submit to authority.** Our pure manner of life can influence even our persecutors to "glorify God in the day of visitation." (2.12) Therefore, every Christian must submit "to every ordinance of man." (2.13); servants must be subject to masters (2.18); and wives submissive to non-Christian husbands. (3.1)
- 4. Return good for evil.** We should never render "evil for evil or railing for railing: but on the contrary, bless." (3.9) Christians must not react to the lower standards of their persecutors.
- 5. Be ready to give an answer** When called upon to defend the faith, a reason or explanation for our convictions should be forthcoming. (3.15)
- 6. Pray.** Peter instructs a persecuted people to pray. (4.7) We must cast our care upon God, knowing that He cares for us. (5.7)

7. Rejoice.. In 1 Peter 4.13-14, Peter tells his readers to rejoice in the midst of suffering and to be happy, because "the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." Indeed, the Christian has much for which to rejoice. We, above all people, know what life is about and about the life hereafter.

Dealing with anti-Christian sentiment is never easy; but God gives us a prescription for dealing with the diseases and evils of our society. By following the principles of First Peter, we can be strengthened and edified, even in the midst of a people who hate us and ridicule us.

John W. Moore
Dripping Springs, Texas



SUNDAY SERVANTS: 5/14/23

First Service

Welcome, Prayer & Scripture	Billy Helms	Song Leader	Anthony Christiano
Greeters	Jack Johnson, Phil Ward, Gary McCool	Communion Scripture & Prayer	Phillip Strickhausen
Closing Prayer.....		Mark Tucker	
Nursery Workers		Susan Cluck, Gay Lynn Welden	

Second Service

Welcome, Prayer & Scripture	Nathanael Green	Song Leader	Mike Martin
Greeters	Jack Johnson, Glen Myers, Steven Hunt	Communion Scripture & Prayer	Chad Dobbs
Closing Prayer.....		Curt LaPorte	
Nursery Workers		Jennifer Royer, Cheryl Royer	
Van Driver		David Ellison	

May Worship Coordinators

Worship Coordinator	Mike York	Streaming Coordinator	Aaron Sloan
Audio Coordinator	Jim Caylor	Video Coordinator	Marquis Elliott