



On May 21st we took the time to celebrate our high school and college graduates. We congratulate them on their achievements and pray for their continued growth in their faith. Our high school graduates are pictured above: James Beaty, Jack Hodge, Sarah Sloan, Reese Taylor, and Youth Minister, Parker Willis. Our college graduates are Brennan Fulgham, Landon Fulgham, Abby McCain, Hannah Sloan, and Mathew Grisham. Congratulations to all! We are very proud of you.

After a few weeks away, we are glad to be back home. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our elders and our congregation for sending Staci and I on the trip to Jordan, Israel, and Greece. We saw many wonderful sights and were able to be in an area of the world that really brought to life, many of the things we read of in Scripture. We are looking forward to sharing pictures and experiences with the congregation in the very near future. Thank you all again.

-JEFF AND STACI GRISHAM

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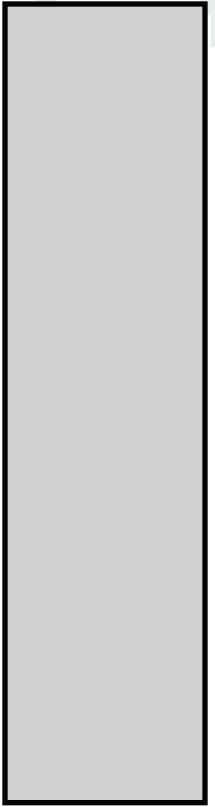
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Randall Hunt Terry Roberts Aaron Sloan Tyler White Mitchell Whittington

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



It's Complicated Until It's Not

You've heard it, and I've heard it. There are many variations of it: "kids these days...", "back in my day...", "I don't know what this world is coming to...." We've got a bad habit of looking back with deluded fondness, complaining about the present, and despairing over the future. For whatever reason the present seems worse than past. Our culture is in a steady state of decay, or maybe even freefall. But I don't believe this to be the case for many reasons. Let me highlight three:

First, every age is as different as it is the same. If you were to restore us to a previous era, what would you pick? Back when people could own other people as property because of color of their skin? Maybe when women could not vote? Perhaps should revisit the Vietnam era or the time of the sexual revolution? Ecclesiastes reminds us over and over again, "there is nothing new under the sun." Every age is good and every age is bad. Sin remains – it is only repackaged for a new generation.

Second, Scripture warns us against looking at the world as sunny only in the rearview mirror. Again, the writer of Ecclesiastes said it like this, "Say not, 'Why were the former days better than these?' For it is not from wisdom that you ask this" (Eccl. 7:10). Indeed, it is not from wisdom we ask this, but rather from amnesia. You look at the past with a certain amount of fondness because you made

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it through it. We often forget how we felt in the thick of the moment. The difference between then and now is that you know the hard place in your past didn't last forever. Now you know everything would eventually be okay, but you didn't back then and back then it may have felt like the end of the world. It wasn't, and neither is this and tomorrow you'll know that, too. Those things are true of your personal life, they are true of the culture right now, and they are true of the church. Jesus told Peter, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18).

Third, it is a lie from Satan to render us ineffective. Author Carl Trueman recently said, "We do not choose our time, and we must not waste energy lamenting our time. We need first and foremost to understand our time and then respond to it with informed wisdom." Time spent complaining that today is not like yesterday is time not spent on figuring out how to reach the people within our spheres of influence right now. When Paul entered Athens in Acts 17, he didn't spend a single minute complaining about Athenian culture. Instead, he observed what was around him and looked for an on ramp to teach the Gospel. In fact, the text says he was in Athens waiting for Timothy and Silas to join him.

Down time is usually prime time for complaining. But Paul engaged the culture, quoting their poets and philosophers and found a way to connect the Gospel to people with a very different worldview than his own. Of course, he was mocked by some but others came to believe.

Our cultural moment is a complex one to be sure, but it'll only be complex until we figure out how to connect it with the Gospel. Of all the people on earth, Christians should be the ones facing the world as it is today with hope and joy. After all, Jesus' resurrection is a historical fact, and at the end of all things our resurrection will be just as real as His. There is far more reason to joyfully proclaim this news and far less reason to despair over what's on the news.

-CORY SPRUIELL



The Way Forward

We've probably all been there at some point in our lives. We've been in those moments where we are at the end of our rope, not knowing what to do next. Sometimes these situations are caused by life happening to us: a relationship ends, we lose a job, the diagnosis is bad, or we lose a loved one. Those are incredibly difficult times. Other times, however, we find ourselves in difficult situations because of our own sins, our own poor decisions. We search and search for a way out but can't seem to find the way forward.

The good news is that God has made a way forward. There is no sin that God cannot forgive as long as we are willing to confess it. John tells his readers as much in 1 John 1:9. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." Great news!! There is a way forward. But there are things we need to do to find the way.

Moving forward means owning our failures. We can try and deny them. We can try to cover them up. We can act as if they never happened. But our sins always have a way of catching up to us.

The beginning of the way forward is found in owning our failures. We cannot hope to move forward, to find healing if we continue to hide our sins. We have to admit them.

The way forward includes not only confession, but repentance. Confession is a first step, but not the only. We need a change in direction. Acknowledging our sin means acknowledging what that sin has caused, which is a separation between us and God. Understanding that reveals our need for a change of direction. It means that we recognize where we have gone the wrong direction, and give attention to staying away from that path in the future.

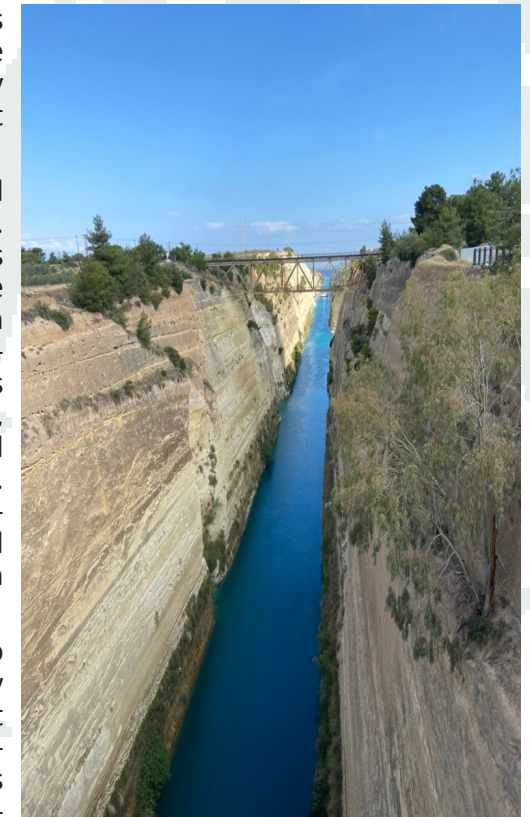
The way forward also includes dealing with the consequences of our actions. God forgives as we confess and seek his forgiveness. That does not automatically remove the consequences of our sin. *Confession and repentance lead to forgiveness, but it does not* erase the consequences of our actions. There is often collateral damage done by our sins. Others may be affected. We should, and repentance includes, trying to make things right. We may need to humble ourselves and ask for forgiveness from those we have hurt. Maybe it is not possible for us to make everything right again, but as much as it depends

on us, as much as it is possible, we ought to make every effort to repair what we have broken.

The way forward may seem difficult. It sometimes seems so daunting we wonder if it is even worth it. It is absolutely worth it. It is where restoration, forgiveness, and salvation are found. It leads us to a renewed and restored relationship with the Father.

It is also helpful to know that the way forward doesn't have to be navigated alone. God has put us in communities, families of his people who are there to help us along the way. Thank God that he has given us a way forward.

-JEFF GRISHAM



SUNDAY SERVANTS June 11, 2023

First Service

Welcome, Prayer & Scripture Kim Metheny Song Leader Mike Martin
 Greeters Mike Johnson, Don Cope Terry Roberts Communion Scripture & Prayer Randall Hunt
 Closing Prayer Joe Hott
 Nursery Workers Jerri Dobbs, Tori Hunt

Second Service

Welcome, Prayer & Scripture Chad Dobbs Song Leader Marquis Elliott
 Greeters Mike Johnson, Eric Gibson, Stephen Hunt Communion Scripture & Prayer Mitch Whittington
 Closing Prayer Perry Johnson
 Nursery Workers Robin Spencer, Jamie Fulgham Van Driver Stan Hankins

June Worship Coordinators

Worship Coordinator Mark Tucker Streaming Coordinator Elijah Johnson
 Audio Coordinator Homer Makinson Video Coordinator Chris Johnson