



The Way

August 2016

NEWSLETTER OF THE
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF
HOMESTEAD, FL



Steve Green
Live!

August 21, 6:30 PM
Free

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

In the previous month, it would appear that our world is on a downward spiral. On multiple occasions, police officers have been targeted and killed. We've seen cell phone videos of young men shot, for whatever reason, by police. We have seen protests spinning out of control. Add to this the shootings in Orlando and other terrorist attacks. The world seems to be a more volatile place. More and more people are gripped with fear.

As Christians, we have a unique opportunity to speak the truth in love.

We understand that we live in a broken world. We understand *why* this world is broken and *how* it became so. The world, on the other hand, does not have a clue. In moments like these, if believers are silent, the truth will not be heard. What *should* we say and *how* should we respond in light of recent events? What is our message? There is much that can be said, but I would like to emphasize three things.

#1 – Government is God's servant.

Recent police shootings are particularly troubling because without the protection of God-ordained authority, anarchy results. It helps to

remember that according to the Word of God, a government does not have to be righteous for it to be a tool in God's hand to provide order and stability within society. Paul said in Romans 13:4, "For government is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, because it does not carry the sword for no reason. For government is God's servant, an avenger that brings wrath on the one who does wrong." Notice that twice, government is called God's "servant." God is not the servant of government. Government is the servant of God. That means God uses government to accomplish His purposes. This is true even when government leaders are evil.

Yes, in many governments there is corruption. Injustice may flourish and many times, evil-doers prevail. And yet, even under a tyrannical government, the murderer is pursued and when found, punished severely. Even then, many laws are upheld and criminals penalized. While some may be persecuted for doing good, most of those who inhabit the world's prisons are incarcerated for doing evil.

This is why attacks against law enforcement are so heinous. An attack against law enforcement is rebellion against the authority established by God. When we fight those who are assigned the task of keeping us safe, we forfeit stability and peace. We should not need a reminder to express gratitude towards those in uniform, but we have received one nevertheless. As Christians, we should be the voice of our nation's conscience. That means we proclaim the goodness of God's plan to provide order by means of government.

Yes, there are those times when those in government, including police, abuse their authority. In those cases, we should call for justice, knowing that perfect justice will not be found in this life. But government, itself, is still God's servant. For that reason, we are to "pay...respect to those you owe respect, and honor to those you owe honor." (Romans 1:7)

#2 – The world does not understand the problem.

It has been interesting to watch the news and listen to the pundits in recent days. Everyone is trying to figure out, "What's going on?" Usually, we Christians have to persuade the unbeliever of the brokenness caused by sin. It would appear less persuading is now needed. The evidence is so compelling, even non-christians can look around and conclude that this world is not as it should be.

So what is the problem? As I said in a recent message, "We do not have a skin problem, we have a sin problem." This is mankind's fundamental problem. We have rebelled against our Creator. We have rebelled against His authority over us and His right to rule our lives. As a result, man is depraved. His heart is deceitful and he is incurably sick (Jer. 17:9). He is under condemnation (John 3:18) and he prefers darkness instead of light because his deeds are evil (John 3:19). He is a slave of sin (John 8:34). He is spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1). He lives according to the lusts of his flesh (Eph 2:3). He is alienated from God and even an enemy of God (Colossians 1:21). He is incapable of understanding spiritual truth (1 Cor. 2:14). He has been blinded by the devil (2 Cor. 4:4).

For this reason, sinful man acts violently towards his neighbor. This is why a man will judge another on the basis of the color of his skin. This is why man views life as cheap. It is a sin problem. And because sin is the problem, it is a heart issue. Because it is a heart issue, it requires a spiritual solution. That leads to my final point.

#3 – The gospel is the solution.

Because the world does not understand the problem, the world cannot offer an adequate solution. I have yet to hear anyone, in any realm of the media, offer anything that remotely resembles the one and only solution to the problem before us today. This does not stop them from trying, however. Consider the most oft-repeated solutions we are given from public figures today and let me explain why each falls short.

Dialogue is not the answer.

Listening to our public figures speak about recent events, one would assume that the problem is a lack of dialogue. Consider the amount of dia-

logue that is happening as a result of advances of technology. In days past, the typical person heard the news by reading the newspaper or watching the news on television. Now the typical person reads the news online. And beneath every article, there is a comments section in which readers can dialogue, debating the merits of the facts and/or opinions expressed in the article. Today, there are podcasts in which anyone with an opinion can make their opinion known. Then there's social media. People can spend hours per day on Facebook dialoguing with their "friends" about recent events. With a Twitter account, you have direct access to anyone else with a Twitter account. You can post your views to a congressman's Twitter feed and there is a very good chance he will read it. Throw in blogs and talk shows. The point is, there has never been a time in our nation's history in which we have dialogued more than we are right now. Some days, I think all we are doing is dialoguing! And yet, in spite of all of that dialogue, there is more racism, hatred, vitriol and violence than ever before. Dialogue is not the answer.

Education is not the answer.

Please understand, I value education. I would not have pursued a doctorate if I did not. We are to love God with our minds. And yet, there are many who believe that a lack of education is the cause of our current state of affairs. A lack of education for some can be a cause of any number of problems. A lack of education, however, is not the *root* cause for what we are seeing today. A person can be educated, yet be an educated bigot. Many killers have college degrees. Education without transformation may yield a smarter criminal, but a criminal nevertheless. Higher learning, as valuable as it is, does not have the power to bring unity or to cause us to love one another. Education is important, but it is not the

answer.

Elections are not the answer.

We have just witnessed the two conventions by the two major political parties. At each convention, the problems were reduced to the policies of the opposing party. "Why is our nation a mess? Because the other party has too much influence." At each convention, the solutions were reduced to the policies of the party at hand. "Elect us and we will solve the problem." Yet is there anyone else who truly believes that hatred, violence, racism, greed and bitterness will magically disappear from human hearts everywhere because one party was swept into office?

Don't get me wrong. Elections are important. The Bible says in Proverbs, 29:2, "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice, but when the wicked bear rule, the people mourn." I believe we are to vote for righteous candidates who "fear God, love truth and hate dishonest gain," (Exo. 18:21) whenever and wherever they appear. And yet, we can elect all of the right people and still wrestle with the same issues before us now.

If the answer is not dialogue, education or electing the right people, what is the answer? The gospel of Jesus Christ.

#3 - The gospel is the solution.

The gospel is the announcement that although man has sinned against God and the wages of sin is death, God nevertheless sent His only begotten Son, Jesus, born of a virgin, to come to earth and live the life we should have lived, only to receive the punishment we deserved. It's the good news that Jesus died for our sins and defeated death when He rose again. He is a living Savior. Therefore, whosoever will repent, believing in Christ alone for

salvation, confessing Him as Lord, shall be saved, by grace through faith alone.

When, by the grace of God, the gospel is received by a lost sinner, something amazing happens. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things have passed away. All things have become new." When a man or woman is saved, God gives them a new heart. They experience new desires. Their lives become a conduit for the love of God to flow through them. Only the gospel can cause man to see his fellow man as made in the image of God. Only the gospel can cause a man to love the one he once hated. Only the gospel can give a man peace with God. Only the gospel can turn a violent man into a peacemaker. Only the gospel can enable us to forgive.

Perhaps an incredible example of this is the story of Jameel McGee and Andrew Collins. In 2005, Andrew Collins was a crooked police officer. One day, he falsely accused McGee of possessing and dealing drugs. He would later state, "Basically, at the start of the day, I was going to make sure I had another drug arrest." He admitted to planting the evidence which caused McGee to spend four years behind bars for a crime he did not commit.

Eventually, Collins' activities were discovered. He was stripped of his badge and he too was sent to prison for falsifying police reports. Last year, Andrew Collins began to attend a church in Benton Harbor, Michigan. He then began to volunteer at a café run by that church. While there, he met and befriended another volunteer... Jameel McGee, the man he had framed in 2005. Once they realized who they were, Collins asked for forgiveness. McGee not only forgave him, but befriended him. He later told him he

loved him. Today, they have become close friends and brothers in Christ.

The world has no explanation for a story like this. How can a man sent to prison by the false accusation of a crooked police officer wind up becoming a close friend of that same individual? The gospel is the only explanation. Only Jesus Christ can do this. The gospel is the answer and we, the church, are the only ones who have it.

The gospel is good news and we must not keep it to ourselves. Many are searching for the answer. If they do not hear it from us, they will not hear it at all. "If our gospel is hid, it is hid to the lost." (2 Cor. 4:3)

On another note, words cannot express how excited I am about having Steve Green in concert on August 21. This will be a free concert, but we will receive a love offering, so please give as God enables you. This is a great opportunity to bring your lost friends. Whereas Steve Green is bilingual, it will be a bilingual concert. He will sing songs in both English and Spanish. But even if you don't speak Spanish, you will recognize the Spanish songs he sings and be blessed. Let's make this standing room only. And by the way, the best way to ensure that you will have a seat is to sing in the special choir we are assembling that night! See Pam for details.

Thank you, as always, for the privilege of being your pastor.

Pastor Howard



Happy Birthday!

8/02 - Kaleb Acree	8/08 - Andre Salas	8/18 - Lauren Padron	8/26 - Katie Davis
8/02 - Richard McCann	8/10 - Isabella Giraldo	8/18 - Lauren Smith	8/27 - Angelica Diaz
8/03 - Osniel Gonzalez	8/11 - Zoe Friman	8/19 - Pat Blake	8/27 - Nick Jimenez
8/03 - Craig Kossuth	8/11 - Oscar Giraldo	8/19 - Maria Ferreira	8/28 - Rodney Davis
8/03 - Iris Quinones	8/11 - Teresa Meurrens	8/19 - Eryn Melton	8/28 - Caleb Meurrens
8/02 - Jason Rodriguez	8/11 - Clara Ziegler	8/20 - Vivianna Sorensen	8/28 - Delia Rodriguez
8/03 - Jessica Rodriguez	8/12 - Rachel Rodriguez	8/21 - Kiara Gutierrez	8/28 - Troy Terry
8/03 - Joseph Roldan	8/12 - Davi Souza	8/21 - Cassie Tompkins	8/29 - Cynthia Almendares
3/03 - Sharon Shellhouse	8/12 - Margaret Terry	8/22 - Eva Godinez	8/30 - Sherry Ader
8/03 - Mary Van Ryn	8/13 - Darleen Barger	8/22 - Guodong Liu	8/30 - David Alvarez
8/04 - Valerie Congote	8/13 - Bill Morris	8/22 - Brandon Lopez	8/30 - Amanda Powell
8/05 - Levi Drury	8/13 - Vertilus Alteme	8/22 - Michael Willoughby	8/30 - Sheila Rives
8/05 - Katherine Jordan	8/15 - Gigi Cordova	8/23 - Ashley Whitney	8/31 - Hector Padron
8/06 - Bettie Cason	8/15 - Lillian Hudson	8/24 - Sabrina Fink	8/31 - Naomi Smith
8/06 - Michele Catlin	8/15 - Ava Nowicki	8/24 - Anthony Francis	
8/06 - A.J. Ohlsen	8/15 - Randall Quick	8/25 - Danny Gonzalez	
8/06 - Sadie Wallace	8/16 - Ruth Marosi	8/25 - Vanessa Hawkins	
8/07 - Graysen Bates	8/16 - Joel Silva	8/25 - Joy Hodge	
8/07 - Jaden Dixon	8/17 - Ana Maria Rojas	8/26 - Joe Cordova	



Music Ministry



It is August! The time we have been waiting for! All I need to write is *two words.....* STEVE GREEN!! Sunday, August 21st, 6:30 pm, right here at FBC. An evening of adoration and reverence where the Lord will be present. If you would like to join us in the choir you are guaranteed a seat. Practices are on Wednesday evenings following our prayer service at 6:30 pm. If you are not in the choir, make sure you arrive early to get a good

seat. This praise and worship experience is more enjoyable with family and friends.

August 28th, at 5:30 pm, all choirs will be in full swing! Mrs. Doris Philpot, Mrs. Lori Diehl and myself are faithful leaders who love the Lord with all our heart, as it shows in our music. I thank these two women, along with their devoted helpers, leading our little ones. The excitement of young singers shows and grows as the halls resonate His sweet melodies. From pre-

school to senior adults - there is a choir for everyone!

As always it is a pleasure to serve and minister here, at my "home grown" church. The talent exceeds beyond all measure as we continue in God's affirmation and declaration.

Singing for HIM,
Pam



Stewardship

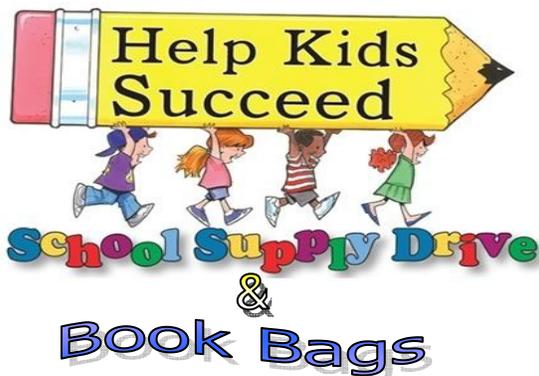
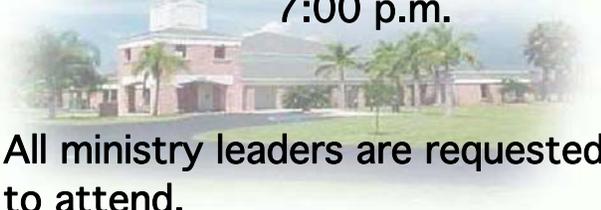
July 2016

Contributions for July 2016:	\$ 42,151.71
Monthly budget requirements:	\$ 46,595.00
YTD Contributions:	\$ 507,921.40
YTD Budget:	\$ 500,896.25

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Church Council
 Thursday, August 4,
 7:00 p.m.

All ministry leaders are requested to attend.



It's that time of year! We are collecting school supplies and book bags for children in our church and community who are in need of assistance. Please give generously!

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|------------------------------|---|
| Composition Books | Colored Pencils |
| Notebook Paper & Dividers | Glue Sticks, Rulers |
| Pencils, Pencil Pouches | Backpacks |
| Blue and Red Pens | Highlighters (Yellow, pink, blue & green) |
| Erasers | Blunt Tip Scissors |
| Spiral Bound Note Books | Graph Paper |
| Colored Folders with Pockets | Index Cards |
| Washable Markers | Construction Paper |
| Dry Erasers & Cleaner | Copy Paper |
| Hand Sanitizer | |



If you know of a child in need, please contact the church office (305) 247-1662.



All Cubbies®, Sparks®, and T & Ters are invited to join us Wednesday, August 24th. This includes everyone 3 years old through 6th grade. The fun begins at 6:30 p.m. You don't want to miss this night that will mark the beginning of our AWANA year.



28205 SW 125th Ave
 Homestead, FL 33030

Join us August 25, 11:30 a.m., as we serve meals and distribute Bibles to the homeless.



Senior Adult Pot-luck Luncheon

*Saturday, August 20th
 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
 FBCH Fellowship hall*

ONLINE:
WWW.FBCHOMESTEAD.ORG

NEWSLETTER OF THE
FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH OF
HOMESTEAD, FL

29050 SW 177th Ave
Homestead, FL 33030



August is here and that means that a brand new school year is just about to start! Now, depending on who you are, that sentence either brought about a cheer or a groan. Regardless of your response, my prayer is that this new school year would be one of the most productive you've ever experienced and that it is full of divine moments where God would use you in incredible ways for His kingdom! Our Student Ministry has had a busy but fantastic summer! As we look toward the fall, I am excited about the opportunities that God has for us to grow and serve. Here's a look at what's in store for the month of August.

First, our Wednesday night **ENCOUNTER** services will resume meeting in the youth room at 6:33 pm. This month we'll be beginning a new message series we're simply calling *Prepared*. We'll be exploring what the Scriptures have to say about being spiritually prepared for the new school year. My prayer is that in addition to gathering school supplies and all of the other things families will do to physically prepare for the new school year, that our students will take steps to be

spiritually prepared for all that God would have for them this year. I'd love to encourage all of our students to join us on Wednesday nights as we join together to worship.

Second, our Fall Kickoff event will take place at the church on Saturday, August 20 from 2 – 8 pm. This year at our Fall Kickoff students will be placed in teams and will participate in the **FAUXLYMPICS 2016**. Since most of us (ok, all of us) didn't make the US Olympic team competing in Rio this year, we're going to host our own "Olympic event." **FAUXLYMPICS 2016** will be composed of events that didn't *quite* make the cut to be included in Rio this year. Some of the possible events you may or may not see at **FAUXLYMPICS 2016** include Pizza Box Curling, Toilet Paper Archery, Pool Noodle Javelin Toss, Frisbee Discus Toss and much, much more! We'll compete, then eat supper while the scores are being tallied and end the event with a medal ceremony. Deadline for students to sign up to participate is Wednesday, August 17. There is a sign up sheet in the youth room or you can call the church office to sign up. I hope all of our students will join us for **FAUXLYMPICS 2016!**

I wanted to take one more opportunity this month to let all of our students and parents know about our text-based remind system. If you are a student or a parent of a student in our ministry and you are interested in receiving text message reminders of Student Ministry events, simply text the message "**@633sm**" to the number "**81010**."

Finally, this month, I'm highlighting the core value of *Maturing Discipleship*. This core value reflects the desire that our ministry has to train students how to maintain an active relationship with Jesus Christ that is based on the principles of Scripture and is demonstrated by a life that increasingly imitates the character of God. We strive to accomplish this core value through our small group discipleship opportunities, whether that is our weekly through Sunday School or Encounter services or special events like Renew Weekend and Metamorphosis.

As always, thank you for the opportunity to serve you and to serve with you for the glory of God!

Joe