

Harmony Newsletter

Web Site: www.harmoniypbchurch.org

HARMONY PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

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“Come thou with us, and we will do thee good...”-Numbers 10:29

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THE CENTRALITY OF THE CROSS

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”-Galatians 6:14

The cross was the single greatest event in all of history. The universe changed forever when our Lord died for His people. Satan, and his army were defeated. The shackles of the law that held God’s people in bondage were broken in pieces. The captives were set free. At the cross, heaven was made sure for all of the elect: “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect?...It is Christ that died.”

Paul would glory in nothing else. The once proud Pharisee, who had the world in the palm of his hand, saw the cross as his North Star, the light that would guide his ship through dark nights, and stormy seas. Glory in his pedigree? No! Glory in his education as a Pharisee of the Pharisees? No! Glory in his worldly accomplishments? No! No! And a thousands times no! He would glory in the cross!

When Paul saw Christ’s cross through the eye of faith it changed him forever. He became dead to the world, and the world became dead to him. It changed his worldview. It changed his desires. It changed his personal pursuits. It changed the way that he looked at himself. He counted everything that the world had to offer as “dung” that he might win Christ. The center of his life changed from self, to Christ. That is what we mean by the term, *centrality*. It is a change from a self-centered life to a Christ-centered life.

Is this experience unique to the apostle? Is he the only one that glories in the cross? Surely not! I have found his experience true in the life of countless others who have seen their suffering Lord through the eye of faith, peering at them with loving eyes from His cross. It is then that Christ, His church, and His people become the center of their lives.

When the cross of Christ becomes the center of a person’s life, all *actions* are measured by it. All *hopes* are fastened to it. *Purpose* in life is defined there. *Personal worth* to God is understood by Christ’s suffering love. Yes, the whole world, yea, the whole universe revolves around it.

The cross keeps us focused on who we are, why we are here, what we are supposed to do while we are here, where we came from, and where we are going. The cross is the common denominator that makes all saints equal: sinners saved by grace.

There is also a *motivating* force found in the cross that activates a person’s faith. If their Savior suffered so much for them, they will suffer so much for Him. They will give their time, their assets, and their hearts, to serve Him. This is faith that worketh by love.

Yes, a suffering Savior enables a person to accept the unacceptable, to be abused, hated, defamed, reviled, reproached, even unto death. It must have been our Savior’s cross that enabled the early Christians to die for Him...for He died for them. Yet, He did nothing amiss.

It is the cross that enables us to *forgive*. At the cross, God the Father forgave us for Christ’s sake. If we were forgiven so much, surely we can forgive so little.

When we measure our *offerings* to God, to His house, to His people, to the poor, the cross is, once again, the center. When Paul encouraged the church at Corinth to support the saints he pointed them to the cross: “Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.” Paul was simply saying this to the Corinthians: “That is His gift to you. What is your gift to Him?”

By all of this, we understand the concept concerning the centrality of the cross.

Did you know that the word *cross* is not found in the Old Testament? Though it was referred to in types and shadows, the actual word is not found. How God would deliver His people was not fully revealed at that time. So, what was their motivating force? What was their guide? The law, of course. Strict, stern, severe, impersonal, yet a guide it was for those who obeyed. And though we have the law today to use as a guide, we have something much better: we have a cross. The cross is love in action, personal, and powerful. It accomplished its intended design, and implores us to suffer by love’s example. Oh, what comfort we find at the cross! Our hopes of seeing our loved ones who have departed this life are seated at the cross. Peace is found there. For the sins that stain our conscience were washed away by the precious blood of the cross. The strength we need to overcome temptation is found at Christ’s cross, who never gave up.

So, what do you see when you survey the cross? Is it nothing to you?

“Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.”(Lamentations 1:12).

“When I survey the wondrous cross;
On which the prince of glory died;
My richest gain I count but loss;
And pour contempt on all my pride;
Forbid it Lord that I should boast;
Save in the death of Christ my God;
All the vain things that charm me most;
I sacrifice them to Harm me most”

-Isaac Watts

A PRECIOUS SISTER HAS GONE HOME

Our hearts have been saddened by the death of our precious sister, Virgie Sandage. Yet we know that our loss is heaven's gain. Though she will be missed by all, we know that she is with our Lord, and the redeemed family of God.

My memory of Sister Virgie goes back to my childhood for she and Brother Charles lived upstairs from my family when I was born. She was involved in the ministry of our churches from her earliest days for her father was a minister as well as her husband. Her favorite times were those times in God's house, sitting under the sound of the gospel.

There is no telling how many Primitive Baptist preachers she has fed. Their home was always open to them, and she was always delighted to put another one up for a meeting... sometimes many others up.

I am reminded of what the writer of Hebrews said in his fond remembrance of other precious saints: "Seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses...". Her faith was a wonderful testimony in her life, and she will be greatly missed by all.

Let us keep Brother Charles and all of their family in our prayers in the days to come. -NMP

BIBLES TO AFRICA

I have been very pleased with the response we have had received from our church website. At this time we are hosting 175 sermons. We have had 3,414 home page visitors and 14,903 sermon page views. As of June, our audience covers 29 states and 12 countries. China downloaded 105 messages in June.

I recently received an email from a minister in Nigeria. He found us on the web. He has access to a computer, and the inter-net only one day of the week. He emailed me a beautiful picture of himself, with Bible in hand, standing under a palm tree with his congregation. During the course of our visits, he informed me that they were in need of Bibles.

Last week Marilyn and I mailed his church several Bibles along with the booklet I did on the "Birthmarks of the Infant Church." When I sent him a message to let him know the Bibles were on their way he replied with the following message:

Dear Friend in Christ,

Greetings in Jesus lovely name. Thank you for all of your love, concern and encouragement. They mean a lot to me. We have continue to pray for you and all yours. Thank you for your advise on Dake Bible. I just believe you and have to abstain from it. I never knew the teachings were like that. Please send us the plain King James Version. We would need them in super giant print due to reading difficulty. Let me know what the Lord is doing as we keep praying and please let me know when you send the bible.

Pray for us to overcome all challenges here. As I often tell my congregation, no matter what is going on, good or bad, everything is always better when we focus on the Lord. Colossians 3:1-2, "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." I have learned that everything in life, including my marriage, all relationships, jobs, etc are the best when God is my first priority. When I dwell more on Him than anything else--everything is better. Everything is good!

Looking unto Jesus,
Brother John

He also added a P.S.:

"P.s, Please pray for the persecuted Christians attacked by Muslims in Nigeria. Also, I want to send you two of our pictures by attachment in email and the person assisting me to do it has assured me it would go through. If not let me know and let me have you postal address so that I can send them to you by post office. I am the one standing extreme right holding my red bible."

As I read those words I was made to realize the blessings we have in our country. We can go to church without fear of molestation. This man has counted the cost. He realizes his testimony for Christ could result in death for him or one of his family members. Surly, that should make us more appreciative of what we have.

I encourage you to pray, not only that the Bibles will get to their church safely, but also for those who are being persecuted. Let us also pray that this little band will come to the knowledge of a successful Savior, and His amazing grace.-NMP

MEETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Our fellowship meeting in September
- Singing at the Crossing on 3rd Sunday after lunch
- Saturday, July 28th, benefit for Sister Cindy Hughes at Sandage Reunion site

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Norma Phelan
- Buford Newman
- Lori Carlisle
- Brenda Stafford
- Elder Charles Sandage and family
- Ella Boen