



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH FAIRDALE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Less than a week ago, our team of 9 returned from Ecuador after a week of serving with Steve and Carol Thompson at Camp Chacauco near Patate, Ecuador. Our church has been able to participate in camps here for over a decade, and each year it is always so encouraging to hear reports of how God is working in this part of the world. Our Director of Missions, Chris Harrod, shared some highlights of the trip.

While there, the team worked at a Kids Camp with about 150 kids in attendance. The kids had a chance to play games, sing songs, memorize scrip-

ture, hear Bible stories and testimonies, and listen to multiple gospel presentations. Our team also got to help hand out Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes. This was met with much excitement from the kids and was another great opportunity to share the gospel.

Beyond serving the kids at camp, our team got to meet with three different churches and worship with them. Four people preached throughout the week, they heard how God is working in these churches and in Ecuador, and they spent time praying together. Chris said, "Each time we met,

we all found encouragement in having different languages and cultures, but being united in Christ and worshipping the same God."

Please continue to pray for the work of Camp Chacauco in Ecuador. Pray that Steve and Carol Thompson would be strengthened and encouraged in their work. Pray that the gospel seeds planted in the hearts of kids this week would grow into saving faith. Pray that the believers in Ecuador would continue trusting Jesus, growing in godliness, and laboring to share the gospel with those around them.

The Joy of Christian Friendship

Josh Wamble | Pastor

I wonder if you have any deep, meaningful, real, close Christian friendships—friendships that go beyond the surface level or mere sentimentality. I have been thinking of this lately, because I was recently able to reconnect in person with a dear old friend that I had not seen in about 20 years. Not only was I able to reconnect with him, but in God’s mercy and kindness, He allowed us to minister together, serving and encouraging some South American pastors. As I have been reflecting on this time, I have been drawn to Psalm 133. This is a short psalm - only 3 verses - but it is loaded with truth.

*Behold, how good and pleasant it is
when brothers dwell in unity!*

*It is like the precious oil on the head,
running down on the beard,
on the beard of Aaron,
running down on the collar of his robes!*

*It is like the dew of Hermon,
which falls on the mountains of Zion!
For there the LORD has commanded
the blessing,
life forevermore.*

There is a unity that comes from the gospel. How good and pleasant it is when we can recognize our own deep flaws, brokenness, and sinfulness and see the same in those that we know well. How good and pleasant it is when we offer and receive forgiveness and acceptance without excusing sin or needing to justify ourselves. This is a unity that comes from accepting and loving one another as deep sinners saved and forgiven by God’s deeper grace!

There is life and refreshment that comes from being known and having a history full

of ups and downs, good and bad, kindnesses and jealousies that have been overcome. There is joy when reconciliation prevails over division. There is safety in a friendship that has surmounted challenges and endured through difficulties. David says it is like oil running down the beard or the morning dew or a cool drink of water in a hot, dry desert.

Let’s make no mistake - this type of deep Christian friendship is a blessing from the Lord. We do not deserve these types of relationships, but God in his mercy and kindness supplies them. This is one of the benefits of the gospel. Jesus’ work of grace and mercy in our lives reconciles us to God and to one another. 1 John 1:7 says, “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another...” Our fellowship or unity with one another comes from our fellowship or unity with Jesus and walking in the light - not “walking” perfectly but “walking” openly and honestly, acknowledging and confessing our own weaknesses and failings and seeking reconciliation with and from one another.

I hope that you have some deep Christian friendships like this - that you have experienced this blessing from the Lord. If not, seek some out. Make an effort to be a real friend to other believers in your life and watch true deep friendships develop over time. This is one of the ways that God works sanctification in the lives of His followers and in the life of His church. In the long run, you will be more like Christ because of it.

The Glory of God in Creation

Mary Catherine Anderson | Director of Nursery

Over the last couple years, our family has become more “outdoorsy.” I grew up hiking all over the Cumberland Plateau in Tennessee and Marshall was a Cub Scout and camped often, but it has only been recently that we as a family have renewed our interest in enjoying nature. We have explored areas from Florida to Wisconsin, hiking and camping and just being outside. Through this exploration, I have gained a deeper understanding of the truth of Psalm 19, *“The heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.”* Some of the truths about God that have been made clearer to me through this time outdoors are that:

We worship a creative God.

We have been able to experience a vast landscape of creation in just the last year. We have hiked the thick forests of Kentucky, relaxed in the pristine sands by the crystal clear Gulf Coast, driven through the gentle peaks of the Appalachian Mountains and the rolling fields of Illinois, and camped among the rivers and dells of central Wisconsin. Beyond the variety of geological landscapes, we have seen a wide range of flora and fauna – all the creatures and plants that God has designed to thrive in these different environments. And the areas we have explored are just a tiny portion of the entire universe our God has created! There are animals and landscapes and entire galaxies that I could never fathom in my wildest imagination, and yet our God has designed and created them all. As Psalm 104:24 declares, *“O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.”*

We worship a providential God.

In observing God’s creation, I have seen how carefully He cares for that which He has made. The sun rises every day, rain waters the earth, tides sweep in and out. The cycle of seasons continues to provide time for germination, growth, and rest. Plants and animals have all that they need provided to them by their creator. When I am tempted to fear for my own provision, I can look to the world around and see how God has always cared for and will continue to provide for all of creation. As Jesus reminds his followers in Matthew 6, God feeds the birds of the air and clothes the lillies of the field. How much more will he care for those He calls His children?

We worship a powerful God.

Staring up at a clear night sky and seeing all the stars scattered across the heavens is a humbling experience. Beyond that, there are galaxies upon galaxies that we can’t even see without the aid of a powerful telescope. There are stars and planets and moons that have existed for millennia and will continue to exist long after I am gone. Hebrews 1:3 tells us that Jesus *“upholds the universe by the word of his power.”* The son of God is the one who created all things, and He is the one who holds it all together. There is nothing in creation that is outside his power and control. Truly our God is a great and powerful God.

I would encourage you to take some time to enjoy God’s creation. Whether it is a simple walk around the block or a weeklong backpacking trip, if you slow down and look around, you are sure to see so much in creation that declares the glory of God.