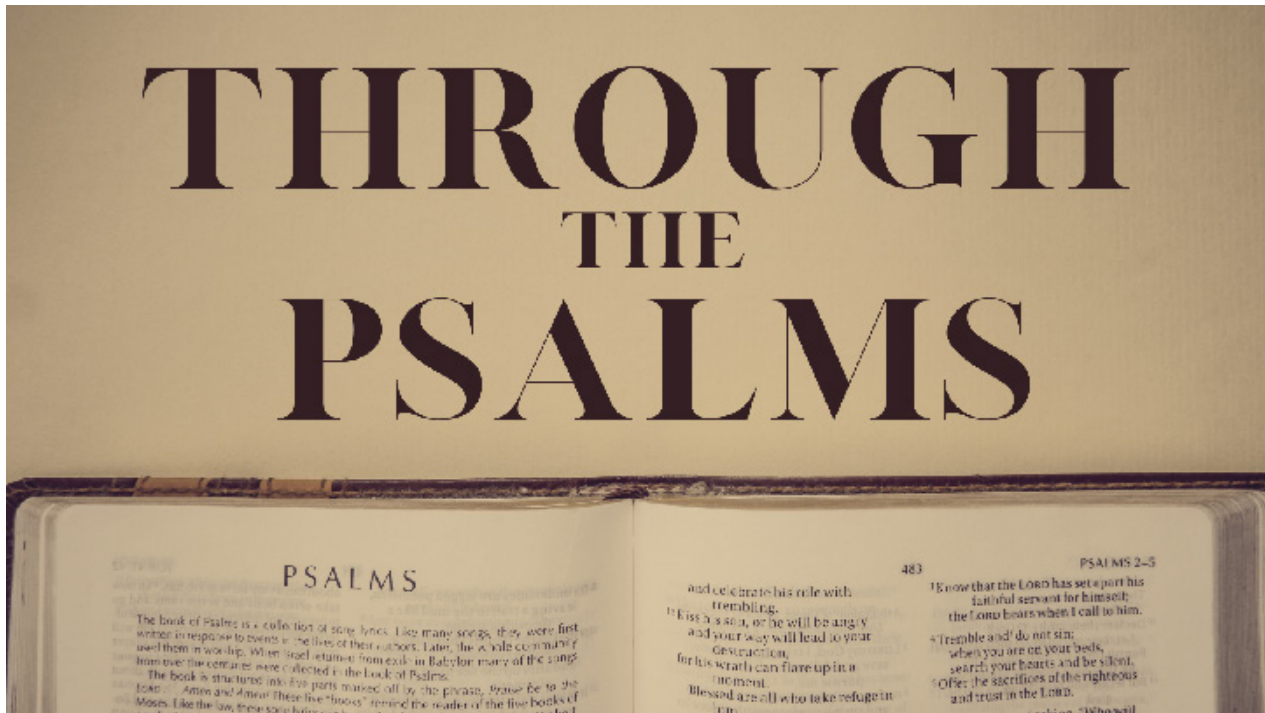




FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH FAIRDALE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Every Sunday morning, as our Call to Worship, we read a psalm. For the past few years, we have spent a dedicated 6 months in the same psalm, reciting it together. Starting this year, we are going to work our way through the Book of Psalms, reading a new one every Sunday. We will begin this Sunday with Psalm 1. By the time we get to Psalm 150, we will have spent nearly 3 years in the psalms as a church.

The Book of Psalms is traditionally known as the Bible's song book, and as such it should be an integral part of our worship. The psalms help instruct us in so many ways, so taking time to read

through them, either corporately or individually, will prove to be a great benefit to you and your family.

The psalms teach us how to praise God. This book is full of instructions on worship – how to praise God with instruments, with our voices, in the morning and in the evening. They are also full of truths about God – His mercy, steadfast love, kindness, protection – the list goes on and on! The psalms turn our hearts, minds, and bodies towards God in praise.

The psalms also teach us how to lament. Throughout the psalms, we see God's people cry out to

Him in pain, confusion and sorrow. The psalms help us understand that in the face of a difficult and broken world, we don't just have to hide from our problems or cope with them on our own. Instead, the psalms tell us to bring our grief, fear, and anger to God, trusting that He will care for us in the midst of difficulty.

The Psalms are beneficial to the life of the believer in so many ways and we hope that you will make a commitment to read through them with us on Sunday mornings. Pray that God would use His song book to draw your heart closer to His over the next three years.

Twenty Five and Counting

Matt McBroom | Pastor

Later this year (in June), Liz and I will be celebrating our 25th wedding anniversary. It's a big milestone for us and we certainly recognize that it is God who is to be given all the credit for bringing us together and keeping us together. Every marriage will have its share of ups and downs emotionally, financially, and spiritually but I believe the key to finding peace in all circumstances is for the husband and wife to remain faithful in their relationship with God and to remain faithful in their relationship to each other.

Through my years in ministry I have had the opportunity to counsel with some couples who were seemingly on a path to divorce. Unfortunately, not all of them were able to resolve their differences and be reconciled. The key difference maker in the reconciliation process resides in the sincerity and willingness of the husband and wife to follow Jesus Christ. When a couple is united in their love for Jesus Christ it is possible for them to work through any challenges that they will face.

Paul provides us with a beautiful picture of the love and personal sacrifice that are required in marriage in Ephesians 5:22-33. Rather than looking at these verses and simply seeking to establish authority in the marriage relationship (I'm speaking to you, guys), let's recognize that the husband and wife are to submit to the Lord first as they love and submit to each other. When we understand who Christ is, and what He has done for us by coming and dying on the cross, we can truly understand what it

means to lovingly submit ourselves to each other. Christ showed his love for us by submitting himself to death on the cross. This ultimate act of love is the one Paul sets before us.

Husbands, lovingly lay aside your life for the good of your spouse and care for her as your own body, because you are one flesh. Wives, lovingly submit to the leadership of your husband. If both the husband and wife are united in their following of Jesus Christ and have a right understanding of how they are to lovingly care and submit to each other, then there shouldn't be anything they can't face and remain united.

If we want to honestly pursue strengthening our marriages we must first begin by evaluating our own hearts and motives. Are we following Christ and loving and submitting to our spouse as Christ has told us in scripture? Are we allowing our own desires to drive our behaviors? Are there things we need to repent of to our spouse?

Regardless of how good or difficult your marriage relationship happens to be at the moment let's commit to making 2025 a year in which we strengthen it by humbly submitting ourselves to our Lord Jesus Christ and loving our spouses as Christ loved us.

Reflections on 2024: Learning and Growing

Mary Catherine Anderson | Director of Nursery

This time of year usually has most of us looking ahead. We may think about new habits we want to start or old habits we want to break. Often these habits or goals fall to the wayside by February, but sometimes routines stick and over time, we grow and develop new, healthier patterns of living. In addition to looking ahead, I also like to use this time of year to look back. I like to reflect on the previous year and observe how I have grown, made changes, learned, or become more aware of Biblical truth in my life. What follows are a few of my reflections on 2024.

Rest is necessary

This is one of those ideas that appears quite simple in theory but is often more difficult to put into practice. God himself rested, he created a day for rest, and he designed our bodies to spend a good portion of our lives sleeping. Obviously rest is necessary. But in our day to day lives, we often get so bogged down with productivity and our daily to-dos that we push rest off as much as we can. We drink more coffee and keep going. This year I have been dealing with some chronic pain that has often forced me to rest more than I want to. While this has certainly led to numerous moments of frustration, one thing I am thankful for about this time is that it has reframed how I view rest. Instead of always pushing myself to the limits of how much I can accomplish, I have learned that I need to prioritize times of rest in my schedule. It has allowed me to reflect on the wisdom of God in making us finite creatures who must fully depend on him.

The humility to be served is just as important as serving others

Along with the need to rest more this year, I have had many moments where I have had to put aside my pride and let others serve me. I often think I “should” be able to do it all, but that is pride in my own ability and strength. Rather, I’ve had to cultivate the humility to admit that there are times I need help. Although Jesus was fully God, he still had others who helped him throughout his life and ministry. If the Creator of the Universe allowed others to serve Him, how much more should I?

The church is vital to the life of the believer

One final thing I have been reminded of this year is just how important the church is in the life of the believer. Certainly good family or friends can be helpful during times of need, but the church is the specific group of people that God has ordained to help bear the burdens of believers (Galatians 6:2). We are to “encourage one another and build one another up” (1 Thessalonians 5:11-24) and “pray for one another” (James 5:16). It has been so good to look around during a Sunday morning service and realize that these people have been placed in my life for the sole purpose of us helping each other along as we pursue Christ-likeness together.

So this year, I would encourage you to look ahead to 2025 and make some goals and resolutions. But also, take some time to look back on the last 12 months. See how God has been using all the circumstances of your life to make you more like Him. Give Him glory for the growth and thank Him for all He has done.