



From the Pastor...

Paul; Appealing or Appalling?*

When we read Paul, we find some really beautiful stuff, such as; Gal 3:26-29 *You are all [children] of God through faith in Christ Jesus, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

Because of Christ and through Christ we are free to become what God intended us to be and sees potentially within us. Many of the members of the early church embraced this idea, especially woman. Ro 16:3-4 *Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. 4 They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them.* Notice that Paul mentions the wife Priscilla first. Without looking at all the details, women are regularly mentioned by Paul in thanksgiving for the leadership and support of his ministry and the development of the local church. But from Paul, we also get this... 1 Co 14:35 *As in all the congregations of the saints, 34 women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. 35 If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.* First, I am glad that we do not abide by these verses, because I do not know what we would do at Berean without the wisdom, support and leadership of many of the women who attend Berean. Some say Paul didn't really write this, but that it was inserted later. Some say that he did, but that we have to understand the social context behind the statement, lack of education for women, which doesn't apply today. Either way, this is but one example of how shocking 'Paul' can be. Here are but two examples of how Paul can be both Appealing and Appalling. Below is another example, and it is not clear exactly which these verses are. →

From the Pastor... (continued)

Ro 13:1-5 *Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2 Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. 4 For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.* Seems pretty straight forward doesn't it? Then we recall that these were the verses most often used by the Church in Germany in the 30's and 40's to explain biblically why they stood by and watched Jews get rounded up and taken away. Surely Paul was not suggesting that the Christ followers participate in or even stand idly by to watch genocide because of their respect of governmental authority. What exactly is Paul trying to say here?

Paul has never been my strong suit for Biblical studies. Give me narrative, stories. The story of Creation, the story of Abraham and Sarah, or the story of Jesus healing the woman who had been sick with a flow of blood for 12 years. I can sink my teeth into stories. But Paul writes letters, not stories. And the original problems that prompted the letters don't exist or still haven't been found, and the responses that the churches may have sent (or the arguments?) so it's hard to reconstruct the story. Plus Paul is really into rhetoric, so that reading Paul become more like a Sudoku puzzle for me. Which may peak your interest, but I'm not into puzzles, I like stories.

So I am devoting considerable time to studying Paul, since I have avoided him for most of my ministry. I'm not exactly sure what we will find together; probably some inspirational and uplifting language, some shocking challenges and some passages that leave us wondering. I hope that in the big picture we learn a couple of things (1) Bible study takes time, persistence and patience. →

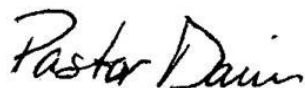
From the Pastor... (continued)

20 minutes once a week with the word of God will not produce the results that God intended for us in giving us this word. (2) Relevance is over-rated.

It is tempting to start looking for what the bible verses 'mean to me.' But the bible isn't about you or me. It is about God and what God is doing. So it trains us to think differently, look at the world differently, and act differently. If we only look to the bible to give us instruction for our own issues or interests we are not allowing the Bible to do what it is supposed to do... get us out of our own personal stories and into the story of God redeeming all of creation.

We will start looking at Paul and his letters in September.

I hope you will return to church rested and refreshed from your summer break, and ready to be inspired and shocked by the story of and letters of Paul.



**A phrase from John Dominic Crossan regarding Paul, found in 'In Search of Paul'*

Berean Baptist Church is proud to host Robin Lunn on Sept. 11th. She will be speaking on worship leadership. This will be an all day affair, starting at 9am with a break for lunch. Anyone that is a committee chair or a member and would like to attend, please let me know. I can be reached at 465-2048, or you can RSVP to anyone on the Worship and Fellowship committee.



Robin Lunn

Thank you.
Deb Ferland

From Our Mailbox...



Dear Members & Friends of Berean Baptist Church,
Prayer Team, Bible Basics & Pastor Darin...

Please accept my sincere thanks and appreciation to each one of you for your ongoing prayers, calls, cards, flowers, visits and words of Christian love and support. The last 3 months have put me through many trials and medical/surgical complications. However, with the constant love of family, neighbors, good friends, and my church family, my course seems to be straightening out. I am looking forward to God's other plans and purposes for me...my future. As I see a closer walk and relationship with God, it is my turn to ask Him what I can do for Him. I want God to know that I don't only love Him because of everything He does for me. I want Him to know that I love and reverence Him for who He is.

My prayer for all of you is that when you walk with God and believe that He answers prayers, you will have an awesome relationship with Him. Be still and allow God to come to you as he has to me. You will witness answers to your prayers like never before.

God Bless,

Bea Steere

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Thanks to Pam Winn 06-03-2004
I'LL TAKE THIS MILLION STAR MEADOW OVER
A FIVE STAR HOTEL ANY DAY

"May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."- [Romans 15:5-6](#)

"When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left, and could say, "I used everything you gave me".

Off The Beaten Path...

I have a question for you! Yes ..you! What lies beyond the boundaries of Harrisville? I ask this because as I sit on a glacial boulder deep in our woods, I am examining a patch of lichen, you know that green-gray growth that covers our stone walls and old gravestones. Perhaps you remember your high school biology class where lichens were the classic example of symbiosis where two organisms lived in a shared relationship where one could not survive without the existence of the other. In the case of lichens, exposed rock provides an inhospitable habitat wherein both fungi and algae combine to grow together and thus survive for thousands of years. The fungi provide a lattice like structure attaching to the rock and retains moisture while the algae contribute life-giving photosynthesis. Together, they weather the rock surface and release organic acids that make the rock minerals available for continued lichen growth. When you peel away a layer of lichen, you are removing a portion of the attached rock so that in a very real sense lichen eat rock. Lichens are everywhere in Harrisville!



Lichens exist in a dimension which I can visually see. Seeing is believing. But what about a dimension so small that my mind can barely comprehend? Craig Venter, a leading cataloger of the human genome describes the ubiquity of microbes within our world like this. In one-half teaspoon of seawater, there exists two million bacteria and more than twenty million viruses. When we meet in our Berean sanctuary, the air we breath during the one hour service, contains at least 10,000 different bacteria and perhaps 100,000 viruses. And we all ingest this aerial soup so that we exchange with each other a DNA swap even though we don't realize it. This is the microscopic world of a biology invisible to each of us, that we don't see, don't sense, and don't realize, so that an evolution is occurring by the minute totally oblivious to us. The life sustaining air we breathe we owe to these organisms...the future of the planet is owed to these organisms and so if you object, and find bacteria not to your liking, then you belong on another planet. Earth belongs to the bacteria, somehow we may not be overlords after all. Can this be so? →

Off The Beaten Path... (continued)

Where is God in all of this? It is so easy for mankind to gravitate to one end of the spectrum of science, so vast is its implications, so momentous its relevance to human existence. I guess it's why we should sit in a pew upon occasion to bring us back to our beginnings of origin. So swift is the scythe of science which slashes away at all belief in the divine. But remember this: the searching mind of mankind is forever able to explore in the first place. Is free to explore. No limits barred. No Vatican triumval to appear before. The magic of science is that we can only glimpse a step at a time an incomprehensible world. So whether it's the vastness of the universe or the microscopic world of microbes, we can retain sanity by perhaps simply remembering the wisdom of Walt Whitman captured best in "Leaves of Grass," when he heard the learned astronomer, heard the proofs and figures, charts, and diagrams, became tired and sick, and rising and gliding out into the mystical, moist night air and looked up in perfect silence at the stars. Need more be said!

The descending darkness is coming quickly so the trail beckons quickly. The vision of lichens fades, but thoughts of a starry sky and a sense of wonder remain. It's only by a quiet contemplation off the beaten path that you would read this.

Don Waterman

Tupperware Fundraiser

August 9, 2010

7:00 p.m. in the conference room.

Booklets available for those that cannot attend.

Hosted by the Christian Education Committee

To Benefit the Scholarship Fund.



Canonicus News

“ANYTHING GOES CHALLENGE”

SATURDAY, AUGUST 21, 2010

10:00 A.M. ~ 3:00 P.M.

Canonicus Camp and Conference Center

54 Exeter Rod, Exeter, RI

Teams of 10 from each church will participate in various timed challenges including: Running, Swimming, Sack-Race, Tug of War and Many More!!

Each church may have more than one team.

For full information and to register, please call

Mary Vo at 401-744-3746

Registration deadline is August 5, 2010

5th Annual ABCORI Family & Camp Alumni Day

Come celebrate summer at Canonicus!

Sunday, August 15

12 noon to 4 pm

RAIN OR SHINE

Pack picnic baskets, swimsuits & lawn chairs! Bring your friends, food to BBQ, musical instruments & friendly smiles! Enjoy swimming & boating. This family FUN event is for ABCORI churches, camp alumni & all families at no charge to say THANK YOU for supporting the many ministries of the ABCORI family! Grills will be available for cookouts.

*Lifeguards will be on duty.

NO RESERVATION IS NECESSARY.

August Birthdays

Aug. 6 - Shayne Garfield

Aug. 7 - Carolyn Ross

Aug. 8 - Janeen Rawson

Aug. 13 - Gordon Beckwith

Aug. 13 - Kathy Roberts

Aug. 13 - Roberta Collins

Aug. 16 - Evelyn Levesque

Aug. 19 - Alice Alger

Aug. 20 - Melissa Landry

Aug. 20 - Jean Wiberg

Aug. 21- Joy Lazo

Aug. 30 - Christine Laurent



**If I forgot your birthday,
please let me know
so I can add it**



REMINDERS

Flowers help beautify our Sanctuary
and can be given

“In Honor of” or “In Memory of”
a special someone or event or “Just Because”.

Next newsletter: September 2010

Committee Chairpersons:

Please submit your report to the
Church Secretary on or before **AUGUST 23.**