The Good Word

"Exalting the Savior, Equipping the Saints, Evangelizing the Sinner"

December 2018, January & February 2019

Christmas RED and the Precious Blood of Jesus

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things…but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." I Peter 1:18-19

There are lots of colors of Christmas, but the most common and the most original and the most traditional is the color red. In fact, some of the historical uses of red and its' meaning come from western/northern European customs celebrating Christmas. Red at Christmas were apples on the paradise tree, and they represented the fall of Adam. Red also is the color of the holly berries, which are said to represent the blood of Jesus when he died on the cross. We associate red with the suit worn by St. Nicholas…adapted from the color of robes wore by priests/bishops who were associated with the sacrifices of blood.

Whichever way you look at it, may it remind us of the blood of Jesus Christ as we celebrate His birth. He was born to die. He came to earth to seek and to save that which was lost. He was sent to be the Lamb slain for our sins. *"Indeed, under the Law all things are purged with blood; and without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin." Hebrews 9:22*

The shedding of blood to deal with sin is a central theme of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. A sacrifice was made to cover Adam and Eve. Abel sacrificed animals from his flock in Genesis 4. Over the next 4,000 plus years, people sacrificed countless animals to atone for their sins. But these sacrifices provided only a temporary covering. They pointed forward to the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross as *"the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world." John 1:29*

The blood of Christ is "precious," which means it is very costly, valuable, and rare! Many Scriptures have been written to explain its' great importance. Without Jesus coming to earth in the "fullness of time," we would all be still in our sin. He came to purchase us with His blood. We have redemption and forgiveness through the blood (*Colossians 1:14, Ephesians 1:7*). We are justified freely by His blood (*Romans 5:9*). We have peace with God through His blood (*Colossians 1:20*). We are purchased by His blood (*Acts 20:28*). We are washed from sin by the blood (*Revelation 1:5*). We overcome Satan by the blood of Jesus (*Revelation 12:11*).

When we take communion, we remember His suffering and death, and we are to repeatedly consider the precious blood needed for our salvation. All preaching should be based on Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and what this means for those of us who are His followers. May this Christmas season not leave a baby in a cradle nor skip to an empty tomb…BUT may it help us to see Jesus lifted up and cause us to realize the precious blood of Jesus Christ. His love ran RED!

Contact Information

Hermitage First Baptist Church ~ PO Box 165 ~ Hermitage, MO 65668

Phone: (417) 745-6611 ~ Website: www.hermitagefbc.com

Office Email: office@hermitagefbc.com

Records

	Sept	Oct	Nov
Sunday School Average Per Wk	241	247	246*
AM Worship Average Per Wk	339	341	368*
PM Worship Average Per Wk	103	126	167*
Total Income Average Per Wk	$6,683	$6,655	$12,225*

N/A: Not Available
* : Incomplete Information

"I've heard him preach. How is he able to hold himself to only 140 characters on Twitter?"

Bob VOJTKO 18317 Walnut Drive Strongsville, OH 44149 # RY23

Vision 2020 Information:

Seed Goal ($2,020): MET!!

Faith Goal ($20,202): MET!!

Action Goal ($202,020): $21,863.70

Roof Fund: $17,434

Q & A

QUESTION: **Why should I forgive?**

ANSWER: There are many different facets and really many different reasons to forgive. But, usually the most obvious and absolute reason is often overlooked or considered after all the fleshly reasons are exhausted. You should choose to forgive because God says so in His Word.

"Forgive one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you." (Ephesians 4:2) "If you don't forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your sins." (Matthew 6:15) These are very straight forward and serious commands with very important qualifiers. You are to forgive as God forgave you…which is complete, without strings and merit. And, if we choose not to…we stand unforgiven before the only One who can help us when we fail. That is pretty intense. So, we should forgive because God says so. This forgiveness or the lack thereof also has rewards and consequences. Our fellowship with God, our prayers being heard and answered, our peace, our mercy that we offer, and the list goes on are just a few of them. It can also affect our health mentally, emotionally, and physically. It can affect relationships that are not even directly involved. It hurts our productivity and our energy. And, yet none of these things should move us compared to the simple obedience we should offer because God has said so.

QUESTION: **Reformed Theology?** (*Often stated in the question of whether I am reformed or if I am a Calvinist etc., etc.*)

ANSWER: This is just yet another camp of theology or movement. While I believe all of us benefit from the Reformation and that much of what Calvin taught is good…I believe we should be Bible Christians. This was the title given to those who followed Jesus the way He instructed us. *"…the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch." (Acts 11:26)* I suppose there is no harm in studying great men or great movements to help us better understand The Greatest Man and His kingdom movement. However, I think we do great harm when we place these "camps" and men above Jesus. These were mere men used of God. I like how a preacher friend of mine puts it when asked if he is reformed? He states, " *I was reborn, am being transformed and trying not to be deformed."* This says it well…so when asked about whether we are reformed or what movement we follow…simply be a follower of Jesus Christ and His Word. None other man nor movement has the power to save nor has defeated death, hell, or the grave.

WARRIORS FOR CHRIST

"Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong"
1 Corinthians 16:13

Nehemiah 8:4 – Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up.

We are all familiar with the story of Nehemiah returning to rebuild Jerusalem. After the completion of the wall we tend think he had finished all his tasks. While he may have rested in his accomplishments, Nehemiah's work was far from finished. In chapter 8, Nehemiah now works to bring the Jews back into a relationship with God. Remember, the Jews had been in exile, separated from God and their relationship with the Lord needed to be restored. Nehemiah's plan was simple. He would use the Word of God, nothing more and nothing less. The people desired the Word so much, that at the sight of the open scroll, the entire assembly stood. What desire! What a longing the Jewish people had for God! What follows can simply be described as a great revival. Ezra, the priest, prayed to God, the people started worshiping "*the Lord the great God*" and the Word of God was read. The reading and understanding of the Law of God brought about a change to the people's hearts. The Jews praised God and then they mourned as their sin was revealed to them through the Word of God. The people celebrated a feast commanded by the Law and then repentance washed over the nation. The repentance reminded the Jews of God's faithfulness and they praised God, again. The responses of the Jews had one common starting point, The Word of God. Ezra did not read to the people a self-help book. He did not incorporate a catchy 10 step plan. He did not use large, complex and confusing words and ideas. Instead, we see the plan was simple "*they read the book, from the law of God…so that they understood the reading*". Nehemiah's plan was to let the Word of God change the lives of the people. The priests added nothing to the Word and they took nothing away from the Word. All to often today, we like to try everything but the Bible to change our lives. We will buy the best-selling self-help book or try to work a 10-step plan into our daily life. We strive to use the latest and most popular terminology in our vocabulary. However, all we need is the Word of God. Men, as we reach the ending of yet another year, we need to follow Nehemiah's plan. We need to be intentional about reading the Bible and let the Word of God sink deep into our hearts. Deep enough to change us, to change our very core. A change that will drive us to: worship, rejoice, repent, and then worship some more! Our families need us to be changed and to lead them into revival. A revival driven by the Word of God. A revival that will flood over our families and spread throughout our nation. Leading our great nation back to God!

Merry Christmas! John

Warriors for Christ

Men's Bible Study

Hard to Believe:

The danger of watering down the Gospel

Begins January 17th

6:00-6:45 am

Fellowship Hall

Breakfast and coffee provided

WARRIORS FOR CHRIST WINTER ACTIVITY

Couples Game Night

Invite your wife or significant other to a fun night of games and fellowship.

February 16th, 6:30 pm

Fellowship Hall

Childcare provided

Women's Ministry

"Be Still, and Know that I am God"

-Psalm 46:10

Wisdom written by Mrs. Wanda Holland

We are not easing but bulldozing into a season of helter-skelter, on-the-run busyness. During this period, we can all agree that life gets pretty loud, and seemingly out of control. Yet, God whispers, "Be still and know that I am God." Have we become so overwhelmed by all the noises of everyday life that we are deaf to God's whispers? Have you sat down for a so-called moment to maybe catch up on a Bible study only to be interrupted numerous times and finally just give up. You lay it aside with good intentions to get back to it a little later. Phone rings, clothes dryer buzzes, the dishwasher hums, kids cry, dog barks… there is noise everywhere.

The noises of life that heap stress upon our souls don't just consist of the day to day sounds of life, but are compounded with anger on the internet, the drama constantly unfolding on the news, and sadly the discord in our church pews. In addition, there are neighbors and families who don't get along, those who refuse to forgive, and the constant need to judge. All of these things become repeated noises that can hide His gentle whisper, "Be still and know that I am God."

What is the answer to turning down some of the unnecessary noises in our heads and hearts so we can better hear from God? For one, we can choose better background noise. We need to be intentional with our choices. Remember the saying, "What goes in comes out." That's not just good advice for our children, but that also includes us as adults. More times than we would like to admit our first choice noise is the television. As you well know, the TV is full of negative influences and emotional upheaval. It certainly does not have a calming effect. Better choices would be listening to Christian music, a gospel radio station or a podcast.

Sometimes the loudest noise is in our heads. Like Martha, we are anxious and troubled about many things (Luke 10:41). Jesus didn't say that Mary didn't have things which could have caused her to feel troubled. The difference was that Mary chose the better to focus on, Jesus.

The choices that we make help define who and where we are in our relationship with Christ. Let us also choose worship over worry. When we begin to feel the pressure and demand of our schedule closing in on us, we need to stop, take a deep breath, and seek the stillness and peace that only God offers.

At the end of the day, we must ask the Lord to teach us to filter out the negative noises in our day so that we are better positioned to hear His Voice. He beckons, **"My child, be still, and know that I am God."**

Resting in the Presence of God
Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him
Psalm 37:7

JoySeekers Christmas Party

December 4th
Wanda's Home
9:00 AM
Bring individually bagged cookies for care packages & an inexpensive crazy gift to exchange.

Joy Seekers Bible Study

New Study Starting January 15

Tuesday Mornings

8:30 am-10:00 am

Breakfast, Study & childcare

Sign-up on the main board for child-care & to guarantee a book by December 30th.

Thank you!
To all those who helped with the Fall Retreat