

Tidings of Peace

SEPTEMBER

Newsletter of Peace Memorial EPC

From the Pastor...

Dear Friends,

For my September letter to you I wanted to share with you an article from one of my favorite spiritual leaders, Dr. R.C. Sproul. While he passed away last year, his teachings will continue to equip and edify Christians for generations. I hope you find his words both instructive and encouraging.

Blessings to you in Christ our Lord,
Pastor Aaron

The Mystery of Iniquity
by R.C. Sproul

It has been called the Achilles' heel of the Christian faith. Of course, I'm referring to the classical problem of the existence of evil. Philosophers such as John Stuart Mill have argued that the existence of evil demonstrates that God is either not omnipotent or not good and loving — the reasoning being that if evil exists apart from the sovereign power of God, then by resistless logic, God cannot be deemed omnipotent. On the other hand, if God does have the power to prevent evil but fails to do it, then this would reflect upon His character, indicating that He is neither good nor loving. Because of the persistence of this problem, the church has seen countless attempts at what is called theodicy. The term theodicy involves the combining of two Greek words: the word for God, theos, and the word for justification, dikaios. Hence, a theodicy is an attempt to justify God for the existence of evil (as seen, for instance, in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*). Such theodicies have covered the gauntlet between a simple explanation that evil comes as a direct result of human free will or to more complex philosophical attempts such as that offered by the philosopher Leibniz. In his theodicy, which was satired by Voltaire's *Candide*, Leibniz distinguished among three types of evil: natural evil, metaphysical evil, and moral evil. In this three-fold schema, Leibniz argued that moral evil is an inevitable and necessary consequence of finitude, which is a metaphysical lack of complete being. Because every creature falls short of infinite being, that shortfall must necessarily yield defects such as we see in moral evil. The problem with this theodicy is that it fails to take into account the biblical ideal of evil. If evil is a metaphysical necessity for creatures, then obviously Adam and Eve had to have been evil before the fall and would have to continue to be evil even after glorification in heaven.

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To this date, I have yet to find a satisfying explanation for what theologians call the mystery of iniquity. Please don't send me letters giving your explanations, usually focusing on some dimension of human free will. I'm afraid that many people fail to feel the serious weight of this burden of explanation. The simple presence of free will is not enough to explain the origin of evil, in as much as we still must ask how a good being would be inclined freely to choose evil. The inclination for the will to act in an immoral manner is already a signal of sin.

One of the most of evil is that set later by Aquinas, in independent being.

Evil cannot be as some kind of an action, an action goodness. In this of its being either a privation (*privatio*) definition of evil of the good. In this



important approaches to the problem forth originally by Augustine and then which they argued that evil has no

defined as a thing or as a substance or being. Rather, evil is always defined as that fails to meet a standard of regard, evil has been defined in terms negation (*negatio*) of the good, or a of the good. In both cases, the very depends upon a prior understanding regard, as Augustine argued, evil is

parasitic — that is, it depends upon the good for its very definition. We think of sin as something that is unrighteous, involving disobedience, immorality, and the like. All of these definitions depend upon the positive substance of the good for their very definition. Augustine argues that though Christians face the difficulty of explaining the presence of evil in the universe, the pagan has a problem that is twice as difficult. Before one can even have a problem of evil, one must first have an antecedent existence of the good. Those who complain about the problem of evil now also have the problem of defining the existence of the good. Without God there is no ultimate standard for the good.

In contemporary days, this problem has been resolved by simply denying both evil and good. Such a problem, however, faces enormous difficulties, particularly when one suffers at the hands of someone who inflicts evil upon them. It is easy for us to deny the existence of evil until we ourselves are victims of someone's wicked action.

However, though we end our quest to answer the origin of evil, one thing is certain: since God is both omnipotent and good, we must conclude that in His omnipotence and goodness there must be a place for the existence of evil. We know that God Himself never does that which is evil. Nevertheless, He also ordains whatsoever comes to pass. Though He does not do evil and does not create evil, He does ordain that evil exists. If it does exist, and if God is sovereign, then obviously He must have been able to prevent its existence. If He allowed evil to enter into this universe, it could only be by His sovereign decision. Since His sovereign decisions always follow the perfection of His being, we must conclude that His decision to allow evil to exist is a good decision.

Again, we must be careful here. We must never say that evil is good, or that good is evil. But that is not the same thing as saying, "It is good that there is evil." Again, I repeat, it is good that there is evil, else evil could not exist. Even this theodicy does not explain the "how" of the entrance of evil into the world. It only reflects upon the "why" of the reality of evil. One thing we know for sure is that evil does exist. It exists, if nowhere else, in us and in our behavior. We know that the force of evil is extraordinary and brings great pain and suffering into the world. We also know that God is sovereign over it and in His sovereignty will not allow evil to have the last word. Evil always and ever serves the ultimate best interest of God Himself. It is God in His goodness and in His sovereignty who has ordained the final conquest over evil and its riddance from His universe. In this redemption we find our rest and our joy — and until that time, we live in a fallen world.

DEACONS DOINGS

The Deacons wish to thank all of you who helped to make this year's Rummage and Bake Sale such a success. We were able to raise \$1,588.85! Those monies will be used by our Buildings and Grounds Committee to make needed improvements to our buildings and grounds landscaping. Those bare west side beds will receive attention first, so you'll soon see new shubberys (for all you Monty Python fans) and other improvements. A special thanks to the Peace Memorial Women's Missionary Group for all the help setting up for the sale, turning on your ovens in 90 degree weather, and working both days of the sale. We would not have been able to do this without you. And special thanks to Jim Zeller for helping box up the leftovers and taking to Jocelyn's.

And while we're on the topic of thanking people, we like to again thank Sharon Haddock for doing our card ministry. Sharon is not an actively serving deacon, but she volunteered to handle this ministry several years ago and is still doing it- even when she and Fred are down in Arizona. So thank you, Sharon. Your birthday, anniversary and "thinking of you" cards are bright spots for the members of our congregation.

WE'RE FORMING A BUCKET BRIGADE

Twice a year the Buildings & Grounds Committee organizes a Church Workday.

We gather to tackle the Herculean task of cleaning the church and doing yard work.

We do have a janitorial service to handle weekly cleaning of vacuuming and dusting (in some parts of the church), but they don't do the cleaning-cleaning that needs to be done. Many of you come to help, and we do get quite a bit done. But we leave the church with worn out bodies and a list of things that never got done. Since we weren't able to have a work day this past spring, the work has multiplied. There's simply too much to do in one, every six months.

We came up with this scathingly brilliant idea- rather than trying to do it all twice a year, let's get together once a month and do a limited area. The idea is to zero in on one room or area only, do everything that needs to be done in there, then have a cup of coffee with light refreshment and congratulate ourselves on a job well done.

Our first call to action for the Bucket Brigade will be MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, at 9:00 am. We'll work in the sanctuary area only (this will include the foyer). There's quite a list of things to do in there but with several people helping, we'll be able to do them all. In October, we'll pick another room or area, and just continue rotating around the church.

And please, don't feel that if you show up to help, you'll be locked into helping all the time. But if you enjoy the satisfaction of a clean house of worship, grab your bucket (or other favorite cleaning utensils) and join us!



Thoughts from an Elder: by Joe Riker

God's Love Song

Read Colossians 3:12-17. In this passage we hear Paul talk about the perfect bond. To the virtues and the graces, Paul adds one more – what he calls “the perfect bond of love”. Love is the binding power which holds the whole Christian body together. The tendency of any body of people is sooner or later to fly apart; love is the one bond which holds us together in unbreakable fellowship.

Have you ever wondered...

Just how much God really loves you?
If you can fall out of God's love?
Why you deserve to be loved so much?

Then read God's Word!

God's Word is the most beautiful expression of love ever written. Shakespeare's sonnets pale in comparison to the Bible's descriptions of love. His love transcends every kind of earthly love. His love is stronger than any bond between parent and child or husband and wife. No earthly image can accurately portray God's love for us. The New Testament repeatedly tells us that Jesus loved us enough to die in our place. He chose to accept our sins so that we could spend eternity with God the father. In His death, Christ committed the greatest act of love ever seen by human eyes.

With a love so devoted, so sacrificial, so extreme – nothing can squelch or diminish that love. We cannot fall beyond the reach of His love. We can't lose it. We can't change it, win it, or control it. His love extends before and beyond time, and he loved us before we knew him. When we accept His love, we begin the most amazing relationship of our lives.

But God never intended for us to struggle through life alone. Just remember Our Lord never promised us an easy road, but he did promise always to be with us on that road. You'll notice a pattern in the Scriptures that God provides faithful love for our support. God renewed His love for His people over and over as the people renewed their love.

God has been working in the lives of people ever since His creation. He is in people's struggles and in their joys. God is in their pain and in their relief from pain. God is in their experience of frustration and also in satisfaction. God took a risk in creating human beings, especially since His love for these creatures involves him in strong feelings about them. To love is most certainly to make oneself vulnerable. But God gave us freedom of choice and we do not always behave the way we are instructed. So God's love makes him vulnerable and he sent His son.

Jesus took a risk with His life of love. He ministered to the poor, the dispossessed, the sinful, the captives. What did he receive in return? A cross. Jesus knew that life was not fair. The rain falls on the just and the unjust, and the sun shines on the evil as well as the good. Jesus realized that anyone who expresses love would be taking up a cross in one way or another.

Thoughts from an Elder: Continued

C. S. Lewis has expressed it well when he said:

“To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal, Wrap it carefully with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket – safe, dark, motionless, airless – it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. The alternative to tragedy, or at least to the risk of tragedy, is damnation. The only place you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers of love is hell.”

It is certain that Love is vulnerable. Yet the fact remains that love is the spirit that gives meaning and power to life. Life, therefore, is grounded in a love that is so self-giving, so supportive, that we find a new strength, not to escape the struggle but to face life in love. Life’s meaning is found in that love

Here then is the source of our life: A Jesus who shares life so completely with us that there is nothing we experience that he has not already undergone himself. And he leads us to share life with each other in that same spirit of love. Therefore, make love your aim and earnestly desire this spiritual gift of grace.

Let’s face it — we need each other. We need to love one another as God loves us. And that’s just what God had in mind.

Sunday Bible Classes Resume on 9/13/20 9:00-10:00 AM Sanctuary

We are resuming our Sunday Bible classes before the worship services on Sunday starting on the 13th of September!

We will pick up where we left off last winter in our series called “From Jacob to the Wilderness” with Exodus 17. On September 13th I will lead us in an orientation that will set us up to continue the journey.

Of special note: We will begin our Sunday classes IN THE SANCTUARY as that will allow us to spread out a lot more and grant us the benefit of our sound system so everyone can all hear.

See you then!

FROM JACOB TO THE WILDERNESS

A study of Genesis, Exodus and Numbers





Music Notes

Have you ever wondered where the hymn lyrics and tunes that we enjoy come from? Early hymn writers barely looked further than the Bible itself for inspiration. For example, George F. Handel in 1728 took Psalm 34 and set it to music. Unfortunately that tune is missing, however it is unlikely that he used all 22 verses as text of that Psalm. Also, pastors of times past and as late as into the 1946-47's would select verses with the same tune of a particular psalm that complimented or expanded the sermon topic.

Greek or Latin words were often set to Aeolian or Doric modes. Tempos were stately and reverent, but gradually they changed from whole and half notes to a rhythmic beat. Psalm 25 printed in the CRC Psalter Hymnal (1934) has 3 verses. (In the KJV there are 22 verses. The 1st verse in the hymnal is equal to verse 1: verse 2 = text of verses 4 and 5; verse 3 = paraphrased verses 8 through 14. Bulletins/programs were introduced slowly, placards were originally placed near the front of the church with the Psalm number and verse(s). Slowly through the years hymn books in pews replaced personal Psalm books.

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1ST BEONKA TALLEY
1ST HANNAH TALLEY
17TH DON PERRYMAN

22ND SHARON HADDOCK
30TH SALLY HEATON

THANK YOU!! To everyone able to donate food to our Food Barrel.

In July we had the Food Bank pick up the food from our barrel. In June and again in August we were able to use our food barrel to directly help several folks that stopped by needing food.

Your help with this important ministry is greatly appreciated!!

Stewardship & Finance Committee

Financial Report

July 2020

At a glance

Operating Inc.:	\$12,351.00
Operating Exp.:	\$12,030.06
Monthly Net:	\$320.94
Ckg Acct Bal 7/31	\$29,963.13
MMkt Bal 7/31	\$54,383.49

July 2020

Here is our monthly update on finance:

July Operating Income: \$12,351.00

Expenses: \$12,030.06 Net: **\$320.94**

YTD Net: (\$513.62)

Greetings All!

Expenses in July beyond regular operations: Quarterly taxes \$785.84, Building Insurance-installment \$1,529.54, World Missions-qtrly; EPC world outreach \$150, Compassion International; Edwin Dela Cruz \$125.

Money Market: Money Market balance 7/31/20: \$54,383.49

As we get ready to enter into Fall, (yes, it's almost here) we will be gearing up to start the budget process for 2021. So, if you have any questions regarding the new year's budget or suggestions for a committee for their portion, please just ask one of the elders and we'll try to find answers for you. We have been very blessed during this strange time in our lives with a great group of congregants and friends of Peace Church, and have been able to keep our Church home open and operating comfortably. We thank you for your commitment, you are so appreciated! Thank you so very much, and may God bless you all.



Give



Serve



Attend



Grow

Stewardship
a way of life



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We're on the web!

www.peaceEPC.com

"like" us on Facebook

*"In all your ways acknowledge
Him, and He will make your
paths straight"
-Prov. 3:6*

The Minor Prophets

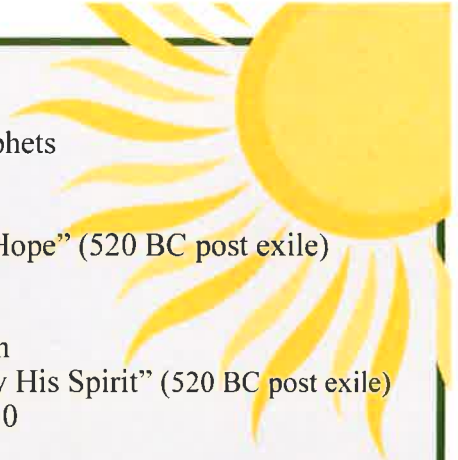
9/6 - Haggai
"Haggai is for Hope" (520 BC post exile)
Haggai 1:1-15

9/13 - Zechariah
"Empowered by His Spirit" (520 BC post exile)
Zechariah 4:6-10

9/20 - Malachi
"Because of His Love" (458-445 BC)
Malachi 1:1-3:1

Romans

9/27 - Romans I
"Righteousness and Judgement"
Romans I 1:1-2:11



Your **SESSION**

Elders

- Pastor Aaron Beaty- Session Moderator
- Noreen Rhoades- Clerk of Session
- Kathy Todd- Finance & Stewardship
- Don Perryman- Christian Education
- Linda Dart- Mission and Outreach
- Jim Zeller- Building and Grounds
- Sally Heaton- Worship

Your **DEACONS**

Geri Coker- Chair

- Bev Moulton
- Susan Orton
- Jocelyn Shellito
- Vicki Zeller

The Deacons meet the third Sunday of each month following worship.

Your

TRUSTEES

- Harold Heaton
- Stephen Goode
- Sharron Goode
- Sharon Haddock

*Session meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month
from 6-8PM.*

