



June 2023

Church Press Newsletter

Dear Julie,

Welcome! Please come in. Eternity will not be long enough to thank Jesus for dying on the cross for me. Really? Oh, yes, really! Eternity will not be long enough to thank some friend who introduced me to my best Friend, Jesus. You think? Yes! Oh, yes! But in eternity I will not be able to introduce anyone to Him; the time for that is now. Oh, may I do my best to introduce someone to Jesus. Can I hear an "Amen" to this?

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The Pastor's Preaching Is Key

By Pastor Don Ginkel



A recent Barna study indicated that *"The consistent practice among growing churches was well thought out and executed with people on their contact lists."* Congregations that added a lot of new members tended to speak of a robust system to maintain connection with those who were prospects. After the initial connection was made, the congregation intentionally nurtured the relationship with the hope that eventually the contact would consider their congregation their spiritual home.

This process is critical. A congregation can be excellent at connecting to the community and even have a cultural outreach, but if they are not intentional about keeping track of these new friends and intent upon strengthening ties leading to discipleship, the congregation (and the Kingdom) will likely see little growth. Barna: *"The second set of behaviors that was common to all exemplary churches revolved around very persistent follow-up with visitors. These churches were excited to see new people, and they made sure to let these people feel valued. They made sure to do this in a non-intrusive way that would not make their guests uncomfortable."*

Barna: *"These pastors talked and talked and talked about the importance of reaching their community for Christ. They talked about it from the pulpit and in smaller settings. They communicated unequivocally to their people an expectation to be reaching those outside the church, and they provided concrete steps to do so. These conversations, over time, established a missional culture within the congregation."*

In a congregational survey, when lay members were asked what helped them be effective in outreach, the preaching of their pastor was often mentioned. The power of the pulpit should not surprise us. Just as critical was when they saw their pastor personally bring folks to Christ and the congregation. Important conclusion: The people will imitate their pastor.

Stack of Stuff

Pastor friend -

Sometimes only eternity will reveal the fruits of your ministry, perhaps hidden now, but they will come to light soon. Keep up your good work for Jesus and His people and for those who are not yet His people.

Genuine love

People want to know that their pastor loves and cares about them. They want to know that he has compassion for those who are hurting and patience for those who struggle. People want to know when a pastor genuinely loves them - they can feel it. And over time, actions reveal it.

Two tips

One: If you spend a lot of time on the road for hospital visits, redeem the time with audio books or podcasts.

Two: Some church staffs meet too often. Many meetings could be emails or a quick hallway conversation.

Preacher -

What if at the end of your sermon next Sunday, your congregation asked you: "So what?" - what would you tell them?

Who is it about?

A big error some young leaders make is thinking leadership is about the leader. It's not about you. It's about serving others.

Important

Never idolize others. They will never live up to your expectations. And, don't give people the idea that they should do so.

Sam Rainer

"Concerning your unchurched neighbors: Surprisingly, many people who are not currently attending a church are receptive to going. The reason they do not come is that they have yet to be invited. If invited and accompanied, 82% of the unchurched are open to attending church with a friend or acquaintance."

Is it time to change the format of your worship bulletins?

Perhaps the content is fine, but often the layout can be improved. One way to get ideas is to ask people to bring back the bulletin when they are worshipping out of town.

Watch out for the following:

ISIS, Iran, China, Russia and some Muslim countries. They do not wish America well.

A monolog can be boring

Pastor, don't be afraid to ask questions in the sermon and ask the congregation to respond. They will love it, and you will, too! It's much more effective than just a monolog.

Special Paragraphs



When was the last time you really studied the

Epistles of Peter?

We have it in a digital format. Eight Lessons. Verse-on-verse. Written by Pastor Don. Discussion questions help apply the text to everyday living. Each Lesson concludes with three application points for your life today and for the

days ahead. Has both Student Guide and Leader's Guide. Only \$12.95. Just [email](#) us. Ask for #170. Include your address.

There Is No God

"Is hell-fire physical or hyperphysical? As a rule our old theologians concluded their presentation with the remark: 'It is wiser to be concerned about escaping this eternal fire by true repentance than to engage in an unprofitable argument as to the nature of this fire.' One thing is sure, hell contains no atheists because the damned actually experience

7 Ways Grace Can Show Up in Your Marriage

By Ron Edmondson

After years of working with marriages, including my own, I've come to a conclusion. A struggling marriage is often lacking one key ingredient – acts of grace. When applied appropriately, that missing ingredient is amazing. So, if your marriage is struggling, one remedy is to apply more grace. Of course, it ultimately takes two people to make the marriage work, but one way to improve things is to interject more grace. When both parties are grace-giving to each other, the marriage can soar.



7 ACTS OF GRACE IN A MARRIAGE

1. Recognize differences.

You first have to know them, but you have to give grace for your uniqueness. No two people in the world are alike and that's never realized as more true than in a marriage relationship. The more you understand those differences the better you'll be able to grow the strength of the marriage. If you live in the grace of marriage you'll spend a lifetime in discovery. You will never assume you've got your partner completely figured out, so you'll always date, always explore new dreams together, and always be learning about each other. [\[read more\]](#)

10 Tips for Using This Summer to Prepare for the Fall

By Chris Surratt



Summer provides an excellent opportunity for church leaders to reflect, plan, and prepare for the upcoming fall season of ministry. For most pastors and church leaders, summer means having more flex time in their schedules. It is an excellent time to prepare for the upcoming fall ministry season when many churches experience a surge in attendance and activity. The summer months provide an opportunity to work not just in the ministry but also on the ministry. Here are 10

things every church leader should do in the summer to prepare for the fall:

1. Reflect on the past season

Take some time to reflect on the past year in ministry. What worked well? What didn't? And what lessons did you learn? Use this time to evaluate your ministries and make any necessary changes. Don't be afraid to ask for feedback from your team to get an honest assessment of how things are going. This might be a good time to schedule a day or two away from the church with your leadership team to reflect and plan together without the distractions of the office. [\[read more\]](#)

Couple of Practical Ideas for Pastors (and others)

By Pastor Don

Idea # 1: Something everyone loves

Have a men's chorus sing once every quarter - something most all churches can do, the men love it - worshipers really love it. It's easy to do. Invite all men to a one hour rehearsal before the service. Plan to sing a minimum of two hymns. Consider "Rise Up, O Men of God" for the first hymn. Make a note to put someone in charge of it. Did you make a note

yet? Excellent!

Idea # 2: For your worship bulletin

Some of us may be hesitant to attend our Adult Bible Class led by Pastor (last name) lest they be called upon to answer a question. This is a needless fear. If you wish, you may simply listen. The practical lesson for Bible Class this morning is ". . ." Please come. We'd love to have you with us, and we know, you will be happy, too.

Exercise for People Over 60

Begin by standing on a comfortable surface, where you have plenty of room at each side. With a 5-lb potato bag in each hand, extend your arms straight out from your sides and hold them there as long as you can. Try to reach a full minute and then relax. Each day you'll find that you can hold this position for just a bit longer. After a couple of weeks, move up to 10-lb potato bags and eventually try to get to where you can lift a 100-lb bag in each hand and hold your arms straight for more than a full minute (I'm at this level). After you feel confident at that level, put a potato in each bag.

Canine Comfort Ministry

Nadra Kareem Nittie

When a May 2011 tornado wiped out portions of Joplin, Missouri, Immanuel Lutheran Church used comfort dogs to soothe traumatized community members. Also known as crisis response dogs, comfort dogs receive training to console people in a variety of settings, including schools, libraries, health-care facilities, disaster zones and mass shooting sites.

"We had never heard of comfort dogs before. [We] didn't really know what they were," recalls Jason Glaskey, youth and family minister at Immanuel Lutheran, which has an average weekend attendance of 200. "But we invited them in, and we saw how much of an effect they had on the people who were coming to our church's relief center after the tornado. People would stop and pet the comfort dogs who were there, and you could see the relief and the release in their emotional state."

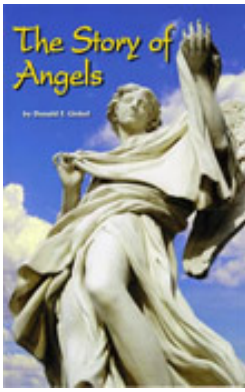
By the end of summer 2011, the Immanuel Lutheran staff decided to start a full-time comfort dog ministry. With comfort dogs Louie and Jackson, the church not only helped community members recover from the tornado, but also visited public schools, nursing homes and hospitals with the animals. Today, their latest comfort dog, Daniel, is a young Golden Retriever.

"Our ministry is all 100% purebred Golden Retrievers, because they're a very calm breed," Debra Baran, communications director for Lutheran Church Charities, says, "They love to be petted, and they're very trainable. Our dogs, they just want to be there next to you." Daniel turned two in January and is named after Daniel 12:3: "Those who are wise will shine as bright as the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness will shine like the stars forever."

About a dozen people at the church manage Daniel. The dog also has two families that care for him when he's off duty. So far in his young career, Daniel has visited hospitals, nursing homes and schools. "We get to begin our work of visiting with people and sharing the mercy and compassion of Jesus with people who are suffering and in need," Glaskey says.

The Story of Angels

By Pastor Don



Ten exciting and in-depth lessons from the Holy Bible which will impact your life now and in eternity!

One: Their creation and purpose, their home, and their properties.

Two: Their fall, their names, their power, their knowledge, on the attack, and their defeat.

Three: Their titles, names, and activities.

Four: The Angel of the Lord. You will be amazed at who He is and what He did in the O.T.

Five: Guarding and Avenging angels.

Six: Watching and Communicating angels, their purposes and functions.

Seven: Angels and Jesus, before His birth, at His birth and many other times.

Eight: Evil angels today, the occult, witchcraft, Mormonism, New Age, demon possession, Satan and Satanism, and our victory.

Nine: Angels and believers today. Four categories: rejoicing, watching, guarding, and delivering.

Ten: On Judgement Day and forever. Executing, our privilege and honor, closing thoughts.

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7 Things to Not Say at a Funeral

By Aaron Earls

Some of the most difficult moments of our lives are after the death of a loved one. Some of the most awkward moments are when we go to comfort friends after the death of their loved one. Though we all are confronted with death and must deal with personal loss, we never seem to know what to say to someone else going through grief.

Sometimes, even if we have the best intentions, we can say something that is emotionally hurtful or theologically off-base. Here are seven things to avoid saying at a funeral or to someone grieving the loss of a loved one.

“They’re an angel now.”

No, they’re not. Nowhere in Scripture does it teach that deceased humans become angels. Don’t let cartoons and pop culture ideas influence your understanding of death. Not only is it wrong, it can be insensitive as well. Don’t try to diminish the grief of someone by spouting off trite (and inaccurate) sayings. [\[read more\]](#)

Don't Be A Goldfish

By Clarence Harvey

When I was a little child, I had a pet goldfish. One summer as I was packing to spend three months with relatives at the lake up north, my Dad said, "Take the gold fish with you. I don't want to take care of it for the Summer.

One day after we got up to the lake, I decided to become a liberator. I went down to the dock with my fishbowl and gave my fish a little talk. "I am going to throw you in this lake," I said. "You will be free. You can eat well here and grow up to be a big fish."



But when I put the goldfish in the water at the end of the dock, it stayed right there. I backed off, thinking the fish was attracted to my shadow. But when I moved back to be sure it was gone, it was still right there. I even threw a stone into the water to scare it

away, but the goldfish just swam around it.

When I came back after lunch, the goldfish was still there, swimming in the same spot. I sat down and thought, "That fish should be free. It's got the whole lake to swim in." Suddenly, I saw a big ripple in the water - a huge ripple. Whoop! A big bass swallowed my little goldfish.

Later in life someone told me that a goldfish, once it has lived in a circumference of a certain size, has been conditioned to think small, it will stay there until it dies - swimming around in that small circle.

The Benefits of Suffering

By Martin Luther (Faith Alone - 365 Devotional Readings)



Joseph prepared his chariot and went to meet his father Israel. As soon as he saw his father, he threw his arms around him and cried on his shoulder a long time. Genesis 46:29

Israel, or Jacob, didn't despair even though he faced many troubles. He appeared to be rejected, but God didn't abandon him. He remained God's child, but God didn't abandon him. He remained God's child, and God remained in him in a hidden and wonderful way. Much later, when the events played themselves out, Jacob saw his son Joseph was still alive and become an important leader in Egypt. Then Jacob was happy to have gone through so much suffering. He thought, "I wouldn't have experienced this much happiness if my family had been taken care of the way I had planned. Joseph would've been just a shepherd like the rest of my sons. But now he has been elevated to a position of royalty, and he will save many people."

So, when we are being disciplined and feel sad, we shouldn't fight against our troubles, but rather remind ourselves, "I will not die, but I will live" (Psalm 118:17). Even when the opposite seems to be true, we should say, "Whenever I feel helpless, I can put my trust in God, who is able to make everything out of nothing. When I am totally devastated, no one can lift me up again the way He can."

The more severe the suffering, the greater the wonderful benefits to God's holy people. Being tested through suffering is a sure sign of God's kindness and mercy to His faithful people. When they faithfully cling to God's promises, unbelievable blessings result. James says, "Blessed are those who endure when they are tested. When they pass the test, they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him" (James 1:12).

When Isaiah saw the Lord God seated on His throne in Chapter six, he was overcome with joy. Oh, what an infinite majesty was God's majesty. Oh, what a glory. Oh, what a throne. Oh, what a sight! Soon you will see what Isaiah saw.

No More Night

By the First Baptist Dallas Choir & Orchestra. Beautiful and comforting. Go full screen. Please take time for this. Just click no more night.

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