

First Light

First Baptist Church - Oak Ridge, Tennessee

Vol. XLIX No. 06

Website: www.fbcoakridge.org • Email: fbcoffice@fbcoakridge.org

March 18, 2025



Join us for an Easter egg hunt and cookout Saturday, April 12, at Mark and Liz Clary's farm, 100 Wiltshire Drive, O.R. Egg hunt at 11:30 and lunch at noon.

Hamburgers and hotdogs will be provided. Please bring a side dish and chair.

RSVP by April 5 to Liz Clary (865) 719-7326 or Jodie Johnson (865) 806-1121.

Liz will have food if any of the kids want to feed the Alpacas. Youth who would like to help set up and hide eggs please arrive at 11:00 a.m.

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REFLECTIONS

"Calling them like I see them"

This week's article will be the second episode in the not-so-regular series on what it means to be Baptist. The last time I wrote on this, I pointed you to Walter Shurden's excellent little book called *The Baptist Identity*. He writes about the 4 characteristics that have *historically* made Baptists distinct. I emphasize that because it's not always the case, and maybe less so today than ever. Also, last time I mentioned it, I explained the first of the 4 "Fragile Freedoms" that Shurden offers: Bible Freedom. If you need a refresher, I'm posting these on the church blog.

Today's Fragile Freedom is Soul Freedom. This has gone by several names that you may recognize if you hung around Baptist churches of yesteryear – "soul competency" or "priesthood of all believers." It's a full thought, so it'll take me a bit to fully explain it. Maybe as much as *two paragraphs*. Buckle up.

Soul Freedom means that you don't need another human to gain access to the Divine. Historically, we call those people "priests." They stand in the gap and appeal to God on behalf of people. People don't relate directly to God, they must have a priest intercede with God for them. Soul Freedom means you don't need that. To paraphrase the Book of Hebrews, Jesus Christ is our priest and he's so good at the job, we don't need another. You can see how that idea would set us apart from say, the Roman Catholic Church whose priests very much function as intermediaries. They hear confession & administer the graces of God in sacraments. Baptists believe that you just do that on your own.

The logical consequence is that no one can do faith for you. The priest can't forgive you. Your parents can't believe for you. The church can't do good in the world and credit it to your account. If you need no intermediary, then you have no cover. It's just you and God. This is why Baptists don't baptize infants or young children. They believe that it must be a person's own faith, their own volition. No one can choose that for you.

That's also the responsibility of Soul Freedom. You are indeed free to relate to God but that means there's a responsibility to do that. No one can do your faith for you. Not your pastor, not your Sunday school class, not anyone. Their faith doesn't count for more or less than yours. And it can't take the place of yours.

Peace, Rory

Before His Presence with Singing

But we make His love too narrow by false limits of our own

Keep trying, but know this: you'll never fully get there. Keep trying, nevertheless.

For the purposes of this discussion, God's love and God's mercy are one and the same. We'll talk mostly about his mercy, but it all applies equally to his love.

Can you visualize the metaphor here? "Like the wideness of the sea"? In the mid eighties, I took a couple of trips to the Bahamas on a small diving boat. I remember vividly the vastness of the sea, being unable to see anything on the horizon but more and more ocean. It helps me internalize this picture of God's mercy.

In our efforts to understand God's love, we have a tendency to set limits on it, to contain it to aid in our comprehension of it. In this hymn, Fredrick Faber admonishes us not to magnify God's strictness "with a zeal he will not own." Depending on how you grew up, strictness may be a realm of comfort for you, but don't project it onto God's mercy.

Think of that ocean, stretching beyond all that you can see with your eyes. God's mercy is like that. Lean into the mystery. Lay hold of the vast-beyond-comprehension aspect.

Turns out, the best way to understand the expanse of God's mercy is to expand our own. What can you tolerate? What can you forgive? Forgive some more. Consider that person and/or their behavior that you find intolerable and unlovable. Reconsider and accept. Simplify your own love. Embrace. You'll get a glimpse.

Keep trying, but know this: you'll never fully get there. Keep trying, nevertheless.

There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea.
There's a kindness in His justice, which is more than liberty.

There is welcome for the sinner, and more graces for the good.
There is mercy with the Savior, there is healing in his blood.

But we make His love too narrow by false limits of our own,
and we magnify its strictness with a zeal He will not own.

For the love of God is broader than the measures of the mind,
and the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.

If our love were but more simple, we could take Him at His word,
and our lives would be more loving in the likeness of our Lord.

In Christ, **Tim**

COPING WITH GRIEF

Coping With Grief is the topic of a 2-part series led by Dr. Richard Dew. The second session will be held March 23, at 3 p.m. in the fellowship hall at First Baptist Oak Ridge. Topics to be covered include how can God help, how you can help and how others can help cope with grief.

CHURCH RUMMAGE SALE

Attention all church members! We are currently accepting donations of gently used clothing, furniture, household items, and more to raise funds to replace our church windows. Donations can be dropped off at the church.

OAK RIDGE PHILHARMONIA WINTER CONCERT

We will be performing Romeo and Juliet by Tchaikovsky, the Piano Concerto in F by Gershwin, and Beethoven's 8th Symphony. The concert will be Saturday, March 29, at 4 p.m. in the Sanctuary of First Baptist Church.

CHURCH DIRECTORY UPDATE

We're updating our Church Directory! No membership is required; we just want to recognize you when we see you. On upcoming Sundays, we'll be at the coffee bar in the narthex before and after church to make appointments to take photos and update contact information. If your family has grown, your kids have moved out, or you want a new picture, stop by and see us!



Discussion Group

Movie: I Can Only Imagine (2018) starring J. Michael Finley.

Viewing: Streaming on many pay-per-view platforms for - \$4.

Time & Place: Friday, April 4, 6:30 p.m. at Joy Reedy's home - 109 Downing Drive, Oak Ridge

Questions: Contact Mike Crowell, Brandon Weaver, or Joy Reedy.

APRIL FBCFBC

On Monday, April 7, Johelen Stephenson will lead our book club in a discussion of *Kon-Tiki* by the Norwegian scientist Thor Heyerdahl. The book tells the story of when Heyerdahl and five others set sail in April 1947 from Peru to the Polynesian island of Puka Puka. During the three months on open sea on a balsa log raft, the voyagers encountered raging storms, whales, and sharks. Join us at noon in the library as we discuss this saga of men against the sea. Questions? Dianne May / (865) 414-9766.

----- LIBRARY LINES -----

We are in the season of Lent, and Easter is only a few weeks away. The following is an offering of some of the books the library has on the subjects of Lent and Easter:

- † *Lilies, Rabbits, and Painted Eggs* by Edna Barth (Call # 264 Bar), which traces the history of Easter symbols from their Christian and pagan origins to such present-day additions as rabbits and new clothes.
- † *Meditations on the Cross AND The Mystery of Easter*, both by Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Call # 232.96 Bon)
- † *Bread and Wine: Readings for Lent and Easter* (Call # 242.3 Bre)
- † *A Season for the Spirit: Readings for the Days of Lent* by Martin L. Smith (Call # 242.34 Smi)

In addition, there are a number of children's books on these subjects, including

- † *The Parable of the Lily* by Liz Curtis Higgs (Call # CE Hig)
- † *Mr. Washington's Traveling Music: A Joyous Story for Eastertime* by James H. Nelesen (Call # CE Nel)

Prayer Requests

IMMEDIATE: Miriam Griffin. John Jones. Karen McCall. Ulrika Leander (Charlott Bounds' friend). Paul May (Robert May's brother). Bobby Bowers. Linda Bunton. Mary Judith White (Glenn Northcutt's sister). Summer Miller (Bill & Johelen Stephenson's daughter). Roscoe Shipley. Jim Walls. Randy Glass (Paula sister). Becky & Eric (friends of Jonathan & Sarah Ray). Stoney Lowell (friend of Jodie Johnson). Jack Burgan (Jeff Burgan's dad). Larry Carter. Dave Bunton. Katie Emmerson (Ellin Ward's daughter). Debbie Pulliam (Carol O'Shaughnessy's sister). Heidi Rose Harris. Bruce Marshall. Sherry Bath (Gigi Naeve's friend). Tammy Lee (Kay Smith's sister). Adrian Flory. Sandra Burns (Johelen Stephenson's cousin). Wanda Vines (friend of Sandy Davidson). Carolyn Maples (Brandon Weaver's aunt). Joyce Dippel (Jan Stoutland's sister). Robert Darnell (Diane Qualls' brother). Frances Darnell (Diane Qualls' mother). Richard Evans. Cheryl King (Diane William's sister-in-law). Ben Davidson (Tom Davidson's nephew).

LONG TERM: Mary Jane Williams. Darla Sutton. Virginia Griffith (Lisa Bowers' mother). Bobby Cline (Mark Belvin's brother-in-law). Larry Fields. Scott Ethridge. Rick Nation. Jo Ann Tunstall. Theresa Bowers.

CHILDREN'S VOLUNTEERS

SUNDAY, MARCH 23

Nursery 11:00 a.m.....Tedi Newman & Angie Walls
Children's ChurchAmber Slessinger & Jackie Laney

SUNDAY, MARCH 30

Nursery 11:00 a.m..... Jackie Laney & Sandra Davidson
Children's ChurchLela Moore & Karen McCall

SUNDAY, APRIL 6

Nursery 11:00 a.m..... Karry Garcia & Amber Slessinger
Children's ChurchLinda Bunton & Hannah Simic

APRIL 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 8:30 AM -5:00 PM [ARC - M. Stanley/131] 11:00 AM Staff Mtg. 1:00 PM Pastor Study Time 5:00 PM -7:45 PM [Basketball/Abernathy] 5:30 PM -7:00 PM [ARC Mtg./RM. 105]	2 9:00 AM -11:00 AM [Pickleball/gym] 1:30 PM -3:30 PM [Fiber Friends/Parlor] 5:00 PM -7:00 PM [Pickleball/gym] 5:00 PM -11:00 PM M.Griffin organ rehearsal/sanct. 6:00 PM Prayer Meeting & Bible Study/FH 7:15 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal	3 1:30 PM -4:00 PM Agape Help Center 4:30 PM -6:30 PM [Basketball] 5:30 PM [ORCBand /FH] 6:00 PM -7:00 PM Chancel Bells 6:30 PM [Pickleball/gym]	4 9:00 AM -11:00 AM [Pickleball/gym] 6:30 PM Movie Discussion Group @ J. Reedy's	5 10:00 AM -12:00 PM [Adult Basketball]
6 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM First Christian Church/2nd FL. 11:00 AM Worship & Communion 2:00 PM [Pickleball/gym] 2:00 PM Finance Mtg./RM.105 5:30 PM Feast (Youth) 6:00 PM First Christian/Floor 2 Communion	7 8:30 AM -5:00 PM [ARC - M. Stanley/131] 9:00 AM -11:00 AM [Pickleball/gym] 12:30 PM FBCFBC/Library 6:30 PM -9:00 PM [ORPhOrchestra]/FH] 6:30 PM -9:00 PM [Scouts129/gym] 7:00 PM Trustee Mtg./RM. 105	8 8:30 AM -5:00 PM [ARC - M. Stanley/131] 11:00 AM Staff Mtg. 1:00 PM Pastor Study Time 5:00 PM -7:45 PM [Basketball/Abernathy]	9 9:00 AM -11:00 AM [Pickleball/gym] 1:30 PM -3:30 PM [Fiber Friends/Parlor] 5:00 PM -7:00 PM [Pickleball/gym] 5:00 PM -11:00 PM M.Griffin organ rehearsal/sanct. 6:00 PM Prayer Meeting & Bible Study/FH 7:15 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal	10 1:30 PM -4:00 PM Agape Help Center 4:30 PM -6:30 PM [Basketball] 5:30 PM [ORCBand /FH] 6:00 PM -7:00 PM Chancel Bells 6:30 PM [Pickleball/gym]	11 9:00 AM -11:00 AM [Pickleball/gym] 12:00 PM Fellowship Table	12 10:00 AM -12:00 PM [Adult Basketball] 11:30 AM Easter Egg Hunt & Cookout @ the Clary's Farm
13 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM First Christian Church/2nd FL. 11:00 AM Easter Cantata 2:00 PM [Pickleball/gym] 2:00 PM Church Council Mtg./RM.105 3:00 PM Deacons Mtg./RM.105 4:00 PM Personnel Mtg./RM. 105 5:30 PM Feast (Youth) 6:00 PM First Christian/Floor 2	14 8:30 AM -5:00 PM [ARC - M. Stanley/131] 9:00 AM -11:00 AM [Pickleball/gym] 6:30 PM -9:00 PM [ORPhOrchestra]/FH] 6:30 PM -9:00 PM [Scouts129/gym] ~First Light~	15 8:30 AM -5:00 PM [ARC - M. Stanley/131] 11:00 AM Staff Mtg. 1:00 PM Pastor Study Time 5:00 PM -7:45 PM [Basketball/Abernathy]	16 9:00 AM -11:00 AM [Pickleball/gym] 1:30 PM -3:30 PM [Fiber Friends/Parlor] 5:00 PM -7:00 PM [Pickleball/gym] 5:00 PM -11:00 PM M.Griffin organ rehearsal/sanct. 6:00 PM Prayer Meeting & Bible Study/FH 7:15 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal	17 1:30 PM -4:00 PM Agape Help Center 4:30 PM -6:30 PM [Basketball] 5:30 PM [ORCBand /FH] 6:00 PM -7:00 PM Chancel Bells 6:30 PM [Pickleball/gym] [Wichita Rowing-gym]	18 9:00 AM -11:00 AM [Pickleball/gym] Church Office Closed GOOD FRIDAY	19 10:00 AM -12:00 PM [Adult Basketball]
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27 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM First Christian Church/2nd FL. 11:00 AM Worship Service 2:00 PM [Pickleball/gym] 5:00 PM Spaghitti Dinner & Dessert Auction 6:00 PM First Christian/Floor 2	28 8:30 AM -5:00 PM [ARC - M. Stanley/131] 9:00 AM -11:00 AM [Pickleball/gym] 6:30 PM -9:00 PM [ORPhOrchestra]/FH] 6:30 PM -9:00 PM [Scouts129/gym] ~First Light~	29 8:30 AM -5:00 PM [ARC - M. Stanley/131] 11:00 AM Staff Mtg. 1:00 PM Pastor Study Time 5:00 PM -7:45 PM [Basketball/Abernathy]	30 9:00 AM -11:00 AM [Pickleball/gym] 1:30 PM -3:30 PM [Fiber Friends/Parlor] 5:00 PM -7:00 PM [Pickleball/gym] 5:00 PM -11:00 PM M.Griffin organ rehearsal/sanct. 6:00 PM Prayer Meeting & Bible Study/FH 7:15 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal			