



And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Luke 1:30-33 (ESV)

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Hands on Parenting

Equipping Moms and Dads to Help Challenging Children to a Dynamic Life

Saturday, October 26th
9:30 AM - 3:00 PM

When: October 26, 2013
9:30 AM - 3:00 PM
Where: New Hope Chapel
804 Windsor Rd.
Arnold, MD 21012
This event will also be live-streamed online.

Cost: \$30/Person or \$40/Couple
Lunch Included

Information & Registration
marchforthfamily.com



Scan to Register

Meltdowns, temper tantrums, disorganization, sleeplessness, sassiness, socialization problems, learning difficulties... Every parent struggles with the challenges that come with raising children. Gain the skills and tools to motivate your child, develop their learning, and improve your loving relationship with them.

Hands on Parenting will equip you - Moms and Dads to raise your children for success today and tomorrow!

Tom and Julie Meekins are the founders of March Forth Family, LLC. As experienced parents and certified child development specialists, they partner with parents in equipping them with valuable tools to nourish and assist children with particular challenges.

EPistle

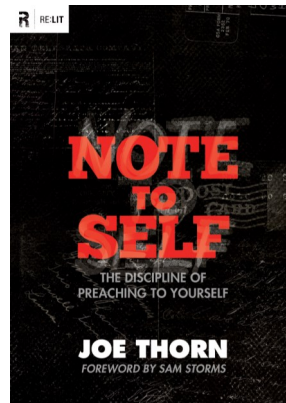
November / December 2013

Preaching the Gospel to Yourself

by Pastor Bruce

I am always looking for good devotional books for myself and to recommend to others. One I want to recommend to you is called “Note to Self” by Joe Thorn. Joe is a pastor of Redeemer Fellowship Church in Saint Charles, Illinois. “Note to Self” is a gospel-centered devotional. Each chapter is a short reflection on the gospel and Thorn applies its implications to the problems we face.

I found the introduction to this little book most helpful. I am often asked about the importance our church places on the gospel, especially for the Christian. Often someone will say, “I thought the gospel was for those who don’t yet believe.” And then they will follow up by asking, “Why do we preach the gospel to those who already believe? Should we get on to the ‘deeper truths?’” The truth is we never get beyond the need for the good news of what Christ has done for us. We need to preach the gospel to ourselves every day.



Joe Thorn writes, “The idea of preaching the gospel to ourselves is getting more press these days, but the actual work of preaching to ourselves seems to be slow in coming.” What is meant by preaching the gospel to ourselves? Preaching the gospel to ourselves is “the personal act of applying the law and the gospel to our own lives with the aim of experiencing the transforming grace of God leading to ongoing faith, repentance and greater godliness.”

The law shows us what is right. It is the revealed will of God. It is the standard of righteousness and what God requires of us. Though the law is not grace, it is grace that God has revealed to us in a clear and understandable way, what he requires of man. The law is also a problem for us because we are sinners.

(Continued on page 2)

Short Term Missions Trips

by Tom Beall

- Teaching English as a Second Language to Muslim women in London in May.
- Help put on a VBS week-long ministry in Dundee Scotland as a part of starting a new church there next summer.
- Be a part of a childcare team at a week-long retreat in Spain or South America to allow some of our missionary families to be fed and refreshed spiritually.
- Be a part of a childcare team in Scotland in the fall to allow parents to participate in a marriage/spiritual growth retreat.

Do the above bullet points sound like what you think of when you think about short-term mission trips? Well these are a few of the options that our Short Term Missions Committee is considering for 2014. There are some exciting opportunities for you to serve for a week

or 2 next year on the mission field and to get a glimpse of what Missions is really about.

We will be announcing specific trips and dates in January, so begin praying about whether God would have you take some of your time this next year to serve Him in this way.

Paul and Liz Meiners from England and Larry and Sandy Trotter from Mexico are here with us through mid-December. They would love to get to know you and share what the Lord is doing through them on the field. Invite them to your small group, Sunday school class, or home for dinner and get to know these folks with whom we partner in ministry.

(Continued from page 1)

The law, therefore, not only reveals what is right, it also reveals what is wrong; what is wrong with us. We cannot keep the law, no matter how hard we try.

“So in a sense,” Thorn writes, “the law functions like a window opening up the truth of God’s will for us, but, it also works like a mirror reflecting our own failure and corruption back to us.” We do not and cannot keep God’s law (Romans 7:7). The moment the law shows us what is right, it immediately shows us what is wrong—we are lawbreakers. It exposes our sin and unbelief. It makes known to us our guilt.

And by showing us what is wrong with us, it then enables us to see what we desperately need. The law exposes our guilt and points to our need for redemption. We are lawbreakers in need of forgiveness. “In a sense,” Thorn writes, “the law serves as a guide in leading us to the gospel.” He goes on and writes, “The law is not, therefore, good news; it merely leads us to the gospel. The law prepares us for it. It is the bad news that makes the good news of the gospel so relevant. In this way, the law prepares us for the gospel by showing us our need for it.”

Then what is the gospel? At its core, the gospel is Jesus as the substitute for sinners: His life for our lives, His death for our deaths, and His resurrection as the first fruits of our own resurrections. Jesus lived perfectly obedient to all of God’s commands. He kept all of the laws and thereby accrued a record that is transferred to his people and is received by faith. When God looks upon us he sees the perfect record of his Son. We are accepted by a holy God because we are holy and we are made holy by carrying an “alien” righteousness. It is alien because it does not originate with us.

On the cross Jesus paid for the sins of his people. For God to be just he had to extract justice for law-breaking. Sin is a debt that must be paid. We know this instinctively because when someone does us wrong or we see someone do someone else wrong we immediately want the offender to pay. In our justice system the accused goes to court and, if found guilty, he is punished. God is just and demands payment for our law-breaking. In love, God sent his Son, Jesus, to earth to pay the punishment for sin. We are forgiven and guilt is cleansed not because God lets lawbreakers off, but because their punishment was emptied on a substitute.

God did not leave his Son in the grave but raised him from the dead as a first fruits for all those who have been redeemed through Jesus’ finished work. It is because our Redeemer lives we now have hope, and not just hope that one day we will be made new like our Savior, but hope for the here and now. For in Christ we have been raised to a new life and given the power and motivation to obey and be like our Savior.

Joe Thorn writes in this introduction, “The law is given to show us God’s way and our brokenness, so that we will see our need for redemption. In the gospel we find our redemption, but we are then eager to look afresh at the law. Now we see it as a delight to carry out, because even though we cannot keep the law perfectly, Jesus has kept it perfectly for us.”

Preaching the law and the gospel to yourself is not so much uncovering a new truth as much as it is reminding us of the truth we tend to forget or is washed away from our brains and hearts by the waves of messages that our world gives us, “Try harder, try better, and try more often.” In the midst of all the shouts of “Do, Do, Do” comes the proclamation, “Done, Done, Done.”

I found this introduction helpful and I commend the whole book to you.

The Angels are Coming

by Dee Chalfant

EP Church will again be participating in the Angel Tree Project this Christmas 2013. In case you are not aware of the project, the Angel Tree is a unique ministry which gives our church an opportunity to share Christ’s love at Christmas by helping to meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the children of prisoners. Participating in Angel Tree is a great way for our church to lovingly answer the biblical call to minister to “the least of these”. Angel Tree works by connecting parents in prison and their children through Christmas gifts. Soon a group of church ladies will be phoning caregivers to find out what the children need or would like for Christmas. Hopefully, on the first and second Sundays in December (December 1 and December 8), a tree will be set up in the Fellowship Hall with Angel Tags for members of the congregation to choose from and begin shopping for their “angels”.



Won’t you consider participating in this wonderful project? Will you be willing to take an Angel tag and jump into the Christmas crowds to shop for a little child who may very well find these are their only Christmas gifts from Mom or Dad, who won’t be there with them at this special time of year? Thanks for considering this project. If you have any questions call Dee Chalfant, 410-674-5621. Please also pray that many lives will be touched by this important ministry.

Fiftieth Anniversary

by Tom Beall

Next year, 2014, we will celebrate fifty years of God’s blessings and ministry to His people at EP. We are putting together a calendar that will be available in December with great pictures and a schedule of events for our celebration. Put Labor Day weekend 2014 on your calendars now and invite your friends that may no longer be worshipping with us to come and join us. Help us plan reunions with the groups that you have been involved in over the years.



We are also planning a “reunion” concert in the spring with many of the groups that have served us in our music/worship ministry over the years. Look for a “Memory Book” that will reflect on the past fifty years to see where our Lord has brought us, and to give us a vision for where He will be taking us in the future. Would you be willing to be a part of the celebration by bringing us pictures and stories of the ministries, small groups, Sunday schools, etc., in which you are currently involved or were a part of in the past? We are looking for these from all five decades of the history of EP, not just the beginning. Please contact Tom Beall, Sarah Elder, or Natalie DeVries.

Advent Workshop: Preparing Your Hearts for Christmas

by Linda Cate

Mark your calendars for Saturday, November 23, 10:00am to 12:00 noon. Join us in the Fellowship Hall for a fun filled schedule of activities to help your family prepare for Jesus’ Birthday.

Bring friends and family with you to share the true joy of the season. There will be activity stations, advent wreath idea table, Christmas music, refreshments, and gifts for your family. Contact Linda Cate, lcate@epannapolis.org or 410-266-8091 x 126 to reserve a spot.

