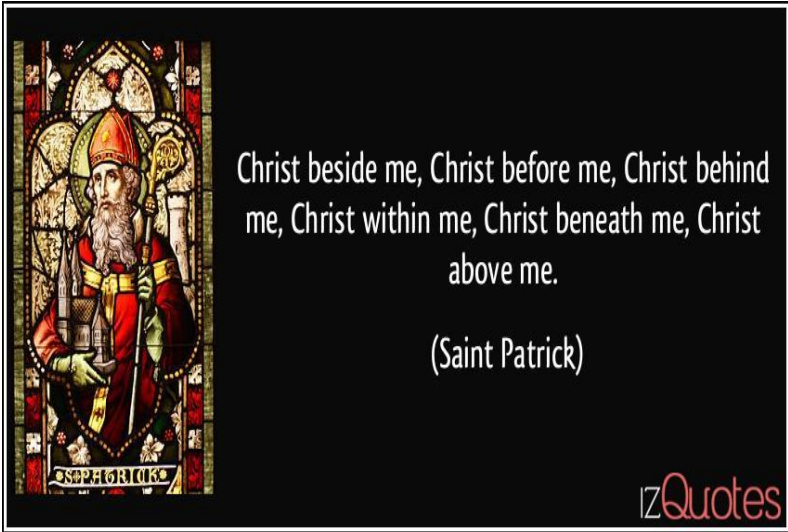




MT. OLIVE
BAPTIST CHURCH

March 2022 Church News



Upcoming Events

March 2: Family Night, Meal provided by Ladies Group #1. North American Mission Study

March 6: Church Conference, 6:30

March 18: Youth Movie Night, 7:00



Mt. Olive,

We've all heard that saying "I'd give my right arm" to have that job or "I'd give my right arm" for those Super Bowl tickets or even "I'd give my right arm" for a date with that girl. Well for the past couple of weeks I've had to live without the full use of my right hand. After my carpal tunnel surgery, I've had to learn how to live without the full use of one of my hands. It seems like nothing quite gives you pause like having something not work right. It got me to thinking what else in my life do I take for granted? My answer may surprise you, but I think we tend to take God's presence and influence over our lives for granted.

I would give my right arm to know that my prayers are being heard. That blessed assurance we have as Christians, knowing that God is listening to our prayers is irreplaceable. Unlike other religions who have to worry about living perfect lives of absolute obedience we can trust that God has heard our prayers, because it is not based on my goodness, but his already lived perfect life. Like most truths of the Christian faith this may seem like a simple concept, however, nothing can be further from the truth. When I know that God hears my prayers it reduces my anxiety, increases my positive outlook, and creates thankfulness. It's like having my dad to talk to on the phone. When I was deployed, I couldn't just pick up the phone to call him, but now I can! I shouldn't take that for granted but should use it. Call your heavenly father today, tell him your hopes and dreams, your plans for the future and your desire to do his will. For that openness and willingness helps us not take him for granted.

I would give my right arm to know that God is present during our church services. Now I have to tell you, in my opinion, our church services have been wonderful lately. I found myself asking why is that the case, because the truth is we have the same musicians, the same deacons praying over our church services, the same youth pastor, and the same pastor. So, if indeed God has been present in a unique way during our church services what is different? I honestly think it's our attitude and our emphasis. For the month of January many of us prayed, fasting from something in our normal life to show our dedication to God. From November through early January, we also had a special prayer emphasis during our Wednesday night Bible study. Instead of merely studying the topic of prayer, we prayed for each other, our nation, and our congregation. We also had a special night of prayer for our association. I believe that God not only hears our prayers but responds to the cry of his people accomplishing his purposes on the earth.

I would give my right arm to know that God is influencing our lives. One thing about being a pastor is that it's good for your prayer life. I pray nearly every day but certainly multiple times a week asking God if I'm being obedient as your pastor. Over the years, one of the clearest indications of God's blessing in ministry is the movement of God over his people. I am overjoyed to see new families joining the church and to sense in our worship a new movement of God's spirit. Please continue praying with me that we value the presence of God in our services. Pray that God would draw us to himself. Is God calling you to return to church? Either way know you are on my heart and lifted up in prayer.

Dr. Josh Peeler



Mt. Olive,

In a recent class I had to write a message on an Old Testament passage, naturally I went with one of my favorite stories, that being the story of Samson in the book of Judges. I have always found Samson to be such an interesting character in the book of Judges, he is one who we always look at as such a figure of strength because of his great physical might. When people teach on him, they always identify him with his failures and yet they tend to fail to highlight his inclusion in the “Hall of Faith” of Hebrews. A problem in our teaching can be that we view him through the lens of either a hero or a villain, when in reality he is neither. Samson was a man, used to begin to deliver the Lord's people from the oppressive hand of the Philistines. He was a sinful man nonetheless, but we see his final act is one of sacrificing himself to take out more Philistines than he had in his entire life. While he's not a villain he also isn't the hero of the book. As I said, Samson is a sinful, sinful man, just reading his story in the book of Judges highlights this alone, his life is one that is marred by sin and disobedience.

The true hero of the story is who the story is pointing toward. The stories of the book of Judges highlight Israel's sin and disobedience, the Lord then provides judges to deliver them from the oppression of foreign nations, but these judges, these saviors are broken people. These men are sinful people, but they point us to the savior who is perfect. These men point us to Jesus, the perfect savior who will save his people from the oppression of sin and death. All these heroes of the Old Testament, the Davids, the Gideons, the

Boazes, the Moses, they all point us to the true hero of all of scripture, Jesus.

Wil Lowery

March

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If you have any corrections/additions to this listing,
please email suzanne@mtolivebaptist.com.

Faith---Finding Meaning in the World We Live In

I want to thank John Green for giving us a story of faith and testimony last month. If you have ever spent time talking with John, you can see his love for our Lord Jesus Christ and how much he cares for others. John is a faithful member of our church, and we appreciate his service. What a blessing he is. If you get the opportunity to talk to John, ask him how he met his wonderful wife Donna and how they became inseparable.

This month, I want to take some time to write about purpose and responsibility as Christians. Many of us have struggled at times to find our purpose in life. People sometimes feel burdened with “religion”, many thinking that their life won’t be as fun, or they will lose control. Most people like to have a good time and don’t want to answer to anyone or anything. Americans love their independence. With independence comes responsibility. As a Christian, we do bear responsibility to witness and disciple others who might not know Jesus. The responsibility is huge. How we handle that responsibility shows our faith in Jesus Christ.

I have read that people most often ask three questions when they want to find purpose. Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going? I searched for my answers in religion, fame, jobs, partying, and education. All of these brought temporary meaning to my life. None of these brought lasting peace and joy. After many years of trying and failing to find meaning, Jesus Christ was my answer. Hebrews 11:1 states, “Now Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” If we are honest and read the Bible, along with studying other documents, we

will see that Jesus is exactly who he claimed to be. We don't have to "see" him. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament point to Jesus being God in human form. The evidence is as clear as the sun rising every day. We should strive to be like Jesus and tell others about him.

Christianity is not a religion. It is a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Religion is a burden...most people think they can earn their way to heaven. I don't think I could earn enough good now to balance the sin in my life. We will all go through periods of turmoil and uncertainty. Health problems, death, job loss, divorce, family problems...all of these can become too much for us to bear. God is there to pick us up when we fall by providing the Holy Spirit to empower us. I remember running alongside my sons when they were learning to ride a bike. If they fell, I picked them up. God does the same when we fall. Thank goodness Jesus has been there to pick me up when I fall. How about you? Don't be burdened down by the world around you.

Once we realize that Jesus provides the meaning for life, we bear the responsibility of telling others. It is difficult to discuss religion, especially today. However, it's a lot easier to describe your relationship with Jesus. Every person has a unique story to tell others. Dr. Josh has spoken about telling others how Jesus changed your life. That is your testimony. Let's take the time this month to tell others about the transformation of our life and how Jesus changed us when we placed our trust and faith in him. Choose one person this month to witness to. Pray that Jesus will transform their life.

Joe Godfrey

