

BETHEL MATTERS

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A TURTLE SITTING ON A FENCE POST

PASTOR BRIAN

Someone once asked me how I was able to be in two churches, now for 35 years. I am reminded of the old analogy that says If you see a turtle sitting on a fence post, what is one thing you know immediately? It did not get there by itself. That is the only answer I can give. I am like the turtle on a fence post. In His goodness, God has surrounded me with people who helped me overcome my shyness, weakness, and many limitations. I have learned that God not only sends us what we need, but who we need. He gets all the credit because He sends those who meet our needs. Of that I have no doubt.

First, of course, he gave me Ellen, the best earthly gift I have ever received. I was a single pastor for the first three years of my ministry. But three years was enough. The Lord knew I needed a wife to rescue me. So, he sent me Ellen. I

have often joked with Ellen that when I called her on the phone for our first date, if she knew what was good for her, she should have said No way, and hung up the phone. She could not in her wildest imagination ever have dreamed she would become a pastor's wife. But I soon learned God had equipped her very well. Her love for God's people, devotion to children's ministry, and support of me have made her a very special pastor's wife. I am sure that without her for these last 32 years, I would not have been able to make it very far beyond those first three years.

Then, I am so grateful for Pastor Hank and Ann. When we visited in May 2004 for the first time, Pastor Hank said one of the most helpful things I have ever heard. "I believe in the sovereignty of God," he said privately over near the organ in the sanctuary, "If you come

here, I believe you are God's choice for Bethel, and I will do everything I can to make you a success."

I had never heard it said quite like that. Such peace came over me that it was a major factor in believing that God was leading, and I could trust Him to provide. I have been so helped by Pastor Hank's friendship, as well as his strengths and gifts.

Ann often said her job as church secretary was to make me look good. That is an impossible task if there ever was one! But she worked at it anyway earning an A for effort. She has been such a help when I needed advice or a second set of eyes to see things clearly. Both she and Pastor Hank have been some of the first ones we have turned to when we needed advice or encouragement. Their empathy, wisdom and understanding have been invaluable.

All three of our staff were hired after I arrived in 2004, Becky, Julie, and Chris. They love the Lord, are gifted in what they do, are a blessing for people to work with, and provide ministries that people are attracted to for their families. I feel like each staff person has been sent to us by the Lord so that our choice was to just recognize what God was doing.

And then, I recently heard Pastor John Piper exhort pastors to become friends with their Elders. Immediately, I looked around the table in my mind and thought the Lord has blessed me with Elders like that. Each one has ministered to me, treated me as a friend, and helped me immeasurably. I know without

them I could not have pastored the church. A highlight of my life has been knowing them.

Then last of all, but not least, is the Bethel Church family. You have loved us, served alongside of us, counseled us, and blessed us in too many ways to count. Your generosity is seen in numerous ways, and that has enabled us, in God's goodness, to be here for these years.

Your friend, thanking God for you, Pastor Brian (:~j).



ON PRAYER

CHRIS MAUSER

The following excerpt is something I wrote back in 2015 as part of a project called Global Cross. During that time a group of students (of which I was one) and professors were asked to contribute to a short book that covered various aspects of Christian doctrine. These topics included issues on Bible, theology, etc. I decided to write my chapter on the topic of prayer. Since my sermon on June 12 was on Matthew 6:9-13—the passage of scripture which is commonly called "The Lord's Prayer" although I think the moniker "The Disciples' Prayer" is more fitting—I thought it might be helpful to include some of what I wrote (back then) in our Bethel Matters. Obviously I cannot include the entire chapter in this write-up. (Which, itself, is very brief, only 5 pages single spaced!) However, I can send it to our office, and if anyone would like to read it, just email us at office@bethelmarquette.com and we'll send it to you in PDF format. Thanks. Blessings to you all. - Chris Mauser

First of all, it is important to understand that any so-called "problems" with prayer must be one-sided. In other words, if there is any problem at all, then it must be with the Christian—the prayer. The problem cannot be with God for the simple fact that He doesn't change (Malachi 3:6). He is the same God who hears prayer the same way for the same reasons since the beginning of time (Isaiah 45:18; Psalm 51:17; Matthew 6:10; Psalm 33:11). So, if God answered prayer in the past, and He is the same today, then that means He will (and does) answer prayer today.

One of the problems, I think, is that many Bible-believing Christians today scarcely know what prayer is, what it does, what it's for, or how it works. They will tell you it's communication with God all right—and that's true as far as things go—but communication between two finite, imperfect human beings is quite different than communication with an infinite, holy God who already knows all of your thoughts and intentions (Hebrews 4:12). What do you tell someone who already knows everything anyway? And if He knows everything, what's the point of saying anything at all? These basic questions are enough to stump most Christians and stop them from pursuing the rich and abundant life God has for them; that is, if they would only seek Him through prayer.

Another problem, even more serious than the one just mentioned, is our lack of knowledge about the One to whom we're praying. A.W. Tozer said, "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us" (Knowledge of the Holy).

The truth of the matter is that knowing who God is makes all the difference in the world when it comes to prayer. For instance, if we don't know that God is all-powerful, why would we believe He is strong enough to help us? Or, if we don't know that God is all-loving, then why not seek love from friends or teachers first?

Our problem with prayer, then, is really two-fold: On the one hand, if we don't know who God is, then it is highly unlikely that we'll either spend significant time praying to Him or believing He will do what we ask of Him. On the other hand, if we do know who He is but do not know what prayer is, then we will surely be disappointed when our prayers are not answered in the way we were expecting. It is important for us, then, to focus our attention on each of these in turn. Let's begin with who God is. (...)

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*What comes into
our minds when we
think about God is
the most important
thing about us.*

— A.W. TOZER

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2022

DIRECTOR REPORT

In 2019 Bethel's Vacation Bible School had a record of 156 kids attend throughout the week. Bethel has been hosting VBS since 2006, and every year we see an increase in attendance. Our program has become well established with our own people as well as our community. As we were planning for VBS 2020, Covid arrived and changed everything. We could not hold in person VBS in 2020 and still weren't comfortable planning in person VBS for 2021. But by January of 2022, we were able to begin planning for another in person VBS. We still had material from Answers in Genesis, our notes from our first meeting, and we had even ordered our t-shirts and banners!

During our "Covid break" we realized that as VBS was growing, our planning team also needed to grow. We recruited some new members to help with our Backyard VBS in 2021 and some of these members were able to continue. So, we began VBS 2022 with a larger planning team. We were also able to recruit a couple others, and our planning team went from 7 people to 16!!

In our planning, we decided to invite Waters Edge Church to partner with us. Many Waters Edge families participate in

AWANA and have participated in VBS in the past. They provided us with a Decorating coordinator as well as several volunteers for the week of VBS.

The week of VBS was amazing. God has blessed us with amazing people who work so well together to make VBS fun, exciting and most importantly focused on Him. Throughout the week we had 128 kids attend, 52 adult volunteers and 27 youth volunteers. That is 207 people who were part of what God did at VBS this year!

So, what did God do? There were 4 kids who responded to Pastor Brian's invitation to talk with someone about accepting Jesus as their Savior. All these kids had accepted Jesus in the past but were seeking assurance of their salvation. These are normal and VERY important conversations for kids who grow up in the church. We will continue to pray that they remain sensitive to the Holy Spirit in their lives and that they grow in the knowledge and love of their Savior!

What else did God do? Here are some snapshots:

- Youth leaders who have grown up going to VBS were now leaders of small groups. Their maturity, passion, and love for the kids was incredibly special
- The Games Crew were boys who also grew up going to VBS as kids, then began helping in games when they were young - they continue to help in the games year after year, and this year we saw their maturity as they engaged with the kids, were laughing and smiling all week, and participated with enthusiasm in the closing

assembly.

- Overheard during small group time: Leader, "Can any of you tell me when you accepted Jesus as your Savior?" Child, "It was at VBS a couple years ago." Another Child, "Me too!" 3rd Child, "Me too... at VBS."

God uses VBS to begin a relationship with young children. It is often at VBS where a person's story of faith begins. But God also uses VBS to grow his children in their faith by giving them the opportunity to serve Him and learn to love Him more by being stretched and used by Him. It is such a blessing to be a part of all that God does in VBS.



GUATEMALA MISSION UPDATE

Praise God! Our Guatemala Missions Team is fully funded. We are amazed and in awe of our God who has shown us that He is faithful!

On July 16-23 Bethel's Guatemala Missions Team will be bringing VBS to possibly over 200 kids in Joyabaj, Guatemala. We will be working with SendMe and missionaries George and Tammy Roller. Please be praying for our team as we prepare to minister in Joyabaj.


SEARCH COMMITTEE

The wait for candidates is over! We just received the information for our candidates. P3 has completed the screening of candidates to find the ones that match our profile. Their screening process was quite rigorous and we expect good candidates as a result. The search committee will interview each candidate, then narrow the list to the top 2 or 3. We will follow up with the number one candidate until we either reject him or decide he's the one we want to call. If we reject the first one we will go on to the next candidate, one candidate at a time. This is a process where we get to know the candidate and he gets to know us. We are looking for the man who we see as the best fit for Bethel. Simultaneously, the candidate must also be convinced that we are a good fit for him.

Our prayer now as always is that God will lead through this process. We are praying for our own discernment and the candidate's as well. Please pray with us. The next few weeks will be busy.

Search Committee, Prov 3:5 - 6.

Pray for the Guatemalas Missions Team by Name



Jennifer Argeropolous	Emily Marker
Monet Argeropolous	Dan Nelson
Sonja Gilbertsen	Becky Nelson
Erica Griffin	Philip Nelson
Maya Griffin	Alina Nelson
Naomi Griffin	Micah Nelson
Bethany Jentoft	Dave Petrovich
Edith Jentoft	Brian Steede
Isaac Johnson	Caden Steede

MAILBOX

To our Bethel Family,

Thank you very much for the plant in memory of Tom Brown, son and brother, as he went home to be with our Lord and Savior on May 13. Thank you, as well for all of the cards and prayers in his memory. We rejoice that his suffering has come to an end and he is reunited with his dad, sister, and other family members. He will be greatly missed.

- Marj & Annette Brown

EVENTS

July 4 Office Closed

July 24 Quarterly Meeting

July 31 Wes White preach

WELCOME, PASTOR RICK!

Pastor Rick Lorenson is our new interim pastor. He will be giving his first message on July 10th. He and his wife, Pam, come from Grace Church in Gladstone.



BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

- 1 Spencer Johnson, Edith Leppanen
- 2 Jeff & Kathy Millin A, Jon Motta
- 4 Pastor Brian & Ellen A, Mary Wernholm
- 6 Jenny & John Hamel A
- 7 Debbie & Jerry Napier A
- 8 Bill Brondyke, Joe Mackey
- 11 Aiden Edge, Sandy Thomsen
- 13 Rhett Freeborn, John & Sandy Thomsen A
- 14 Nora Dale
- 15 John & Kathy Morabito A, Emily Thomsen
- 16 Georgia Linna, Sierra Lyons, Jane Noe, Ivory Pell
- 17 Kevin Busscher, Bob Wilkinson
- 20 Ruth Mauser, Pastor Hank Steede
- 21 Jaxon Lingle, Sally & Steve Lyford A
- 22 Bill & Jan Brondyke A
- 23 Lana VanderSchaaf
- 25 Julie & Mike Leppanen A
- 26 Bill & Dianne Kosa, Pastor Brian Oberg
- 27 Chase Thomsen
- 28 Eric Smith & Susan Syria A
- 30 David & Sandra Paul A
- 31 Roger Morrison