

April 2020



 Omega Baptist Church

*A circle of believers with Christ at the center.*

# BEACON

**“Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”**

Matthew 5:16

## Jack Be Nimble, Jack Be Quick

Wow! Who could have foreseen the disruption to our lives that has happened since the last Beacon? Seriously; who? If you answered, Our Heavenly Father, give yourself a pat on the back. Sometimes when disruption happens, we fail to remember that whatever has happened is not a surprise to God. He knows. He cares. He has a plan.

Those truths are true whether we believe them or not. As we Grow in Christ, we come to experience these truths and hopefully they become part of the lens through which we view reality.

But, God deals with us individually and God deals with us according to what he wants to accomplish in and through us. Therefore, even though God knows, cares and has a plan (there's a sermon in there somewhere), he doesn't always tell us in the kind of detail we want what the plan is. Let me use the recent sermons as an illustration which will also explain the title of this article.

I began laying out the plan for the current sermon series back in January. In February, after a couple of sermons in the series had been presented, I added a couple of talks to the series. As I look back now, I am convinced that God knew the disruption that would occur in our lives and directed me to present those messages. It's true that knowing and doing God's will is always relevant but how much more so when hardship and unexpected events happen. In helping me put together that series, God clued me in to my part of his plan without telling me what was going to happen.

Sometimes, however, God wants me to walk with a more immediate trust. In the summer of 2018, I was scheduled to speak at Crescent Lake Bible

Camp for a week of family camp. In past years, I had the talks for the week all lined up well before the event. That year, though, I couldn't settle on a book of the Bible or a theme for the week even though I had months to prepare. It wasn't that I had no ideas: I had too many ideas and didn't sense that I had heard from God yet. The closer the event got, the more intense my desire to know became and at times I gave in to anxiety about it. Why wouldn't God want me to know the plan like I had in previous years? Why wouldn't he tell me even though I was asking intently?

That week, part of God's plan was for me to experience a more continuous dependence on him. A day or two before the event I prayed and asked for confirmation of the first talk I was to give, instead of asking for the plan for the week. That prayer was answered pretty quickly. God also impressed upon me that he would direct me as the week went along and I was just to remain observant and responsive. I was to be nimble. At that point I relaxed. Even though I didn't know the details of the plan, I knew who had the plan and what my next step was. The week went very well but not how I had envisioned it. Oftentimes, the only step God gives us is the next one.

That brings me to the sermon plan for April. The short answer is I don't have one yet. The first two Sundays in April are Palm Sunday and Resurrection Sunday so that is a factor. Unfolding events are factors. I don't have a shortage of ideas. I'm sensing this is a time be nimble.

In His Joy,  
Pastor Rodney





# YOUTH MINISTRY



*So I was thinking...*

about grit. If you work with sand paper or chickens, you probably have a completely different definition of this word; however, if you were part of Spot 68 or Ground Zero in March you know exactly where this is going. Grit, as I defined it in youth group, is perseverance, endurance, courage, bravery, strength of character, spirit and determination all rolled into one little word. If you do a Google search on the word you will discover that it was coined by a psychologist who used it to describe the “ability to persist in something you feel passionate about and persevere when you face obstacles.” I recently told a room of high school students that our world needed more grit. Who would have guessed that the following week we wouldn’t be allowed to meet or that schools across this country would be closed and toilet paper scarce?

In my talk in March, I used running as my example of how I’ve learned grit. I told the students about my love/hate relationship with running and how until I was 30 I had avoided ever running a mile. It was my **passion** for working with high school students that eventually made me face this **obstacle**. You see, I don’t like hypocrisy. I spent a very large part of my life living one way and making it look like I was living it in another way. I was really good at it too. At this point, however, I was trying to make my actions, my beliefs and my words match and I wanted them to please God. In my job as a high school teacher I found myself working with students in some really stressful home environments. They were going through things that no person, let alone a child, should ever have to endure. During this time I realized something that changed my life. I know it’s not the same, running and a very personal hardship, but it occurred to me that I wasn’t willing to work at something I found “impossible” so how could I help walk with someone through something they felt was impossible? That’s why I started running. The biggest obstacle I faced was learning to work through the voice in my head that said it was stupid, that it hurt, that it was pointless, and that I couldn’t do it. This whole breathing and running at the same time thing was not something I could do. At first I had to drown out the voice with music and I had to pray. As I would run I would say, “I can’t do this, but You can.” It was my way of reminding myself that I might not have the strength or ability, but God did. As I started to apply this in running I was also able to apply it in other areas of my life. Eventually I didn’t have to say that chant anymore when running. I could have a joyful conversation with God or just process the day. I even caught myself smiling while running! After my first 5K I actually messaged my phy ed teacher from high school to let her know. I figured she’d be more surprised than I was. I told her I was slower than a turtle running through peanut butter, but I that I ran the whole thing without stopping. She told me, “I knew you could do it!” (I was only 15 years late!)

Running has actually taught me a lot about faith and what it means to have grit. One of my favorite verses is Romans 12:2 “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Running is a mental sport. You have to learn to control your thoughts and it is the one thing that has helped me learn to renew my mind the most. It’s easy to quit on things, especially when it’s hard or not something you enjoy. And it’s especially easy to hide those things that are embarrassing or shameful. The lesson we were supposed to do on the Wednesday we couldn’t meet was called, “Behind Every Hidden Corner” and it deals with the things we keep secret.

Pastor’s first message via YouTube during this time of quarantine mentioned the verses we would have used that night, 1 John 1:5-7 says, “This is the message we have heard from him (Jesus) and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.” Although he was talking about prayer, he even mentioned how it applies to our minds. We want to hide our sins, our failures, our fears, our secrets from everyone, including God. But it doesn’t do us any good. Grit, “the ability to persist in something you feel passionate about and persevere when you face obstacles,” is how we counter the desire to hide those faults. If you feel passionate about following God, persevere and face your obstacles, even the hidden ones. You are not alone.

If you’re bored and looking for something to watch, look up a song from For King and Country called, “Burn the Ships.” But before you watch the video or listen to the song, find the clip where Luke, from the band, explains the meaning behind the song. I believe it takes grit to “Burn the ships, cut the ties, Send a flare into the night, Say a prayer, turn the tide, Dry your tears and wave goodbye” and “step into a new day”! I don’t know when our “new day” is coming when we can return to normal, but I do know we can start to renew or even start our relationships with God today! So burn the ships and don’t look back!

*...until next time, Rebecca Anderson, Youth Director*

Explanation of song <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iXwrOK0PM5k>

Actual video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pOVrOuKVbuY>



**"Therefore, there is now no condemnation  
for those who are in Christ Jesus."**

Romans 8:1

Thank You, God, for Your Great Gift of Grace to us through Jesus!



Through Jesus Christ's sacrifice,  
our past is pardoned and our future secure.  
And "Since we have been made right with God by  
our faith, we have peace with God." Romans 5:1  
Salvation brings peace with God.  
Peace that begins today and lasts for eternity.

### **Social Distance Is Not the Best Way to Put It**

Communication is a challenge. Words are important and powerful. We need to be careful and precise with them. Sometimes I hear or see or read something and it doesn't quite sit right with me. Often it takes me a little bit to figure out why that is the case.

In the last several days we have been told to socially distance ourselves from each other to prevent viral infection. That's not really what they mean and a much better term should be used because we should NOT be distant socially. Some of our social activities should be curtailed or cancelled but the problem isn't that the events are socially dangerous. They are physically dangerous to a certain extent.

Last week I read an article that made the case for a different more accurate term. Gary Schneeberger's article was titled, *Trade 'Social Distancing' for 'Physical Distancing,' Stay Emotionally Close Via Tech.* It's a good idea, even if the technology you use has been around for a while. Old school voice calls can be awesome. We got one on Sunday from the first foster kids we had. They have been adopted by a pastor and wife couple and are doing great!

That's not to put down texts, emails, and social media. I got several messages through all of those methods following the video sermon that Sam uploaded on March 22. All those messages were encouraging and helpful. That's what we're going to have to do for a while.

A Walgreens email today had a crystal clear way of putting it; *Keep Distance, Stay Connected.* Let's do that and hopefully we can all be together again soon.

- Pastor Rodney

### **ROAD TO CALVARY**

by Max Lucado in *The Gift for All People*

Christ came to earth for one reason: to give His life as a ransom for you, for me, for all of us. He sacrificed Himself to give us a second chance. He would have gone to any lengths to do so. And He did. He went to the cross, where man's utter despair collided with **God's unbending grace.** And in that moment when God's great gift was complete, the compassionate Christ showed the world the cost of His gift.

Trace the path of this Savior, the God who swapped heavenly royalty for earthly poverty. ... He was ridiculed. His neighbors tried to lynch Him. Some called Him a lunatic. His family tried to confine Him to their house. His friends weren't always faithful to Him. He was accused of a crime He never committed. Witnesses were hired to lie. The jury was rigged. A judge swayed by politics handed down the death penalty.

They killed Him. And why? **Because of the gift that only He could give.** He who was perfect gave that perfect record to us. ... Jesus was "not guilty, but He suffered for those who are guilty to bring you to God." 1 Peter 3:18. As a result, God's holiness is honored and His children are forgiven.

### **April Birthdays**

- 1 Heather Olson, Teri Byrd, Isabelle Moore
- 2 Dan Mattson, Kyle Nussberger, Klara Swan
- 3 Tzeitel Jo Stolhammer
- 4 Ledger Jones
- 5 Sue Strombom, Brian Ulrich
- 6 Colby Winter
- 7 Talee Heisz
- 8 Steven Wear, Thomas Monroe
- 9 Meg Fox, Patrick Daniels
- 10 Ben Blomberg, Lance Mattson, Myra Grapa
- 12 Stephanie Karlik
- 13 Elizabeth Moore
- 14 Jennifer Blomberg
- 15 Kevin McIlhany, Barbie Monroe, Mark Winter, Will Rhody
- 16 Roger Bartoszewski, Karen Anderson, Dolly Hadden
- 19 Bradley Blomberg, Brian Mattson, Emily Espinoza
- 21 Sheri Archer, Jenae Mattson, Matt Temby, Jake Walcisak
- 22 Greg Donahoe, Josh Sarkinen
- 23 Lexi Blomberg
- 24 Randy Blomberg, Amita Elleman, Dylon Lind
- 25 Mark Wildberg
- 27 Jenna Meier
- 28 Derek Foster, Emily Blomberg, Jim Palmquist, Elizabeth Nelson
- 29 Pattie Swan



**Happy Birthday!**

Please contact us if:

- You or someone in your family has an address change
  - You no longer want to be on our Beacon mailing list
  - You would rather receive your Beacon by email
- Email: [info@ogemabaptistchurch.org](mailto:info@ogemabaptistchurch.org)

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[www.ogemabaptistchurch.org](http://www.ogemabaptistchurch.org)  
to listen to current and past sermons.



“For it is by GRACE  
that you have been saved,  
through FAITH  
—and this is not from yourselves,  
it is the GIFT of GOD—  
not by works, so that no one can boast.”

Ephesians 2:8-9

## Missionary Spotlight

### Dr. Pat, News Service 2000

“Remember those who are in prison  
as if you were in prison with them,  
and those who are suffering  
since you also are in the Body.”  
Hebrews 13:3

“News Service 2000 was founded in 1992 for the sole purpose of helping the Persecuted Church around the world. Our personnel have traveled extensively in communist countries in Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe, however, much of the work of News Service 2000 today is focused on the Muslim world with ongoing projects in the Middle East, and North Africa.”

“Soon after Dr. Pat became a Christian, she heard about the plight of the persecuted church through the ministry of Brother Andrew, leading her to take her first trip in 1982 smuggling Bibles into China. Still maintaining her veterinary practice, Dr. Pat took short-term trips traveling to communist countries. However, over time God made it clear that this would become a full-time ministry. She left her practice in 1988 and committed her entire life to serving Jesus by being His hands and feet to the persecuted church. In 1992, Dr. Pat established News Service 2000. For over twenty years, the focus of the ministry has been to the Muslim world in the Middle East and parts of Africa. As Founder and Executive Director, Dr. Pat still travels overseas several times a year meeting and encouraging persecuted brothers and sisters. During her travels, she also gathers information in order to start various programs to aid these Christians both physically and spiritually. She has built many long-term relationships with Christian leaders, which have opened many doors for ministry. Pat has worked closely with Bible Societies from around the world and has provided hundreds of thousands of Bibles to Christians in these areas. When not traveling overseas, Dr. Pat tells the stories of the persecuted at various Christian venues including churches, Bible Studies, prayer groups, and conferences to raise awareness and prayer support. News Service 2000 also encourages others to pray by publishing a monthly prayer letter and sending out urgent prayer needs via e-mail. The relationships she has built with these brothers and sisters around the world have opened her eyes to the reality of persecution. The persecuted Christians understand the power of prayer. In 35 years of travel, not once have they asked for prayer that the persecution end. They do ask for prayer that they remain faithful. Then they ask for Bibles.” ([www.newsservice2000.com](http://www.newsservice2000.com))

“Thank you for your prayers and generosity for me and this ministry. I am so encouraged and blessed to partner with you for the sake of persecuted Christians.”

**Please keep Dr. Pat and the entire ministry of News Service 2000 in your prayers,  
as well as persecuted Christians around the world.**