

WHITING COMMUNITY CHURCH BAPTIST LIGHT

From the Pastor

Unhurried Zeal, Can the Two Words Coexist?

Can we accomplish a lot? Sure. Will it matter, will it last? Well, that's another question altogether. It depends upon if what we're working for is near-sighted, or has an eternal perspective. Still another question is, will I have the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual energy to wake up and do it all over again tomorrow? We hope the answer is yes. For the sake of our sanity and long term well-being, it better be a firm and confident yes. Otherwise, we're in real trouble.

I have more questions, ready? When we lose an eternal perspective with a sense of urgency for the mission of God, will we fight to gain it back? Will our family and friends help us regain a gospel mindset? Who will help you? What are their names?

I sometimes find myself tired with sand running through my fingers. I am hurried. I am rushed. I have too many things going on, and I don't even have kids. Too many plates spinning. Too many things to balance. Too many things I've made a priority, so that ultimately nothing sticks out as the priority. I am losing the sand. I'm losing the time, losing the opportunities, losing the focus, and questioning every thing's significance. I sometimes lose Matthew 28:18-20, but it still sitting there in my Bible. Same page as before.

Sunday comes. Sunday goes. Another sermon to prepare. Sundays come every week. Pastors are keenly aware of this fact. Most people look forward to the weekend. I think pastors sometimes dread them. "Here comes another Sunday."

Some people come every Sunday. Some people seemingly rarely show. Does their church attendance matter to them? Should their church attendance matter to me? If connecting people to a faith community where God comes up as a normal and routine part of the conversation is one of WCBC goals, how should I feel when I see disconnection and aloofness? Somehow these questions with answers that elude me take a psychological toll. Pastors contemplate resigning on Mondays, discouraged by the people that fail to show up on Sundays. Somewhere zeal, meaning, and eternal perspective is lost, slipping between my fingers, in that psychological wreckage called Monday, and hopefully regained by next Sunday.

At WCBC I have to readjust my expectations. I now consider it successful if a third of people read this article. And, of those one third, if half actually read until the end. Many people who track church stats have redefined "regular church attender," not as every Sunday, but rather as twice a month. Apparently "regular" means missing fifty percent of the time. Seems different than what we learned in 3rd grade.

Does what I do matter? What's it all worth? Is sermon prep worth the time? Does preaching really contain a word that can transform the human mind and heart? Perhaps you ask yourself these same sorts of questions, but for your context, in your particular line of work. Perhaps you've found yourself there before, the sand slipping through your fingers. You know that this sort of hurriedness is not good for your health. You're becoming unglued. Perhaps you find yourself there right now.

Perhaps you see yourself there shortly, it's just over the horizon, unless you put a stake in the ground, and make different decisions. To accomplish much, and much that matters in light of eternity, focused attention needs to be given to time and priority management.

Life only has space for one God. We don't have time to also worship God substitutes. There is an awfully good looking God substitute staring at us in the mirror every morning, more than willing to usurp God's authority in our life.

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Financials

Our 2015 General Fund Approved Budget is \$80,710. Our goal is to raise a minimum of \$6,725.83 per month in order to meet this budget.

February:

Gen fund income: \$5465.33

Gen fund expense: \$6622.13

Missions

The mission project for April is Families Connecting with the Lord (FCL). The goal is to raise \$200

Women's Bible Study

April Ladies' Bible Study

Wednesday, April 22

6:30-7:45 PM

Mary, the mother of Jesus

James 1:13-18

Youth Volunteer Opportunities

Attention Middle and High School Students

Students are Serving WCBC and the Community on April 4th and 5th.

Need help:

1. Saturday, April 4th, youth are needed to help cut up fruit for a fruit salad, set up and decorate tables: 9:00-10:00am.

2. Saturday, April 4th, youth are helping to serve at the Community Table (200 N Commercial St, Neenah), 10:00am-1:00pm.

3. Sunday, April 5th, Easter: youth are helping serve food, drinks, and cleaning up. Please be at church by 8:30am. Worship starts at 10:00am. Any remaining clean up will be handled after worship ends.

Sunday Morning Child Care

Child care is offered for children between the ages of birth to 3 on Sunday mornings between 9:15 and 11:45 am. This is a safe, nurturing environment for your kids with a state licensed provider and volunteer church staff, as needed. Parents can attend worship and CEF (Christian Education and Fellowship). Parents are welcome to sit in and observe in the child care room at any time.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer to help on Sunday mornings, please see Roxane Kesselhon. The goal is to have six volunteers to help occasionally. There will always be a licensed provider in the room, the volunteers will assist when there are more than 4 children in the room.

Who's Who in the Pews

Bob and Becky Luebker have been attending Whiting for 19 years and have been married for 20 years. They have two daughters, Tori and Rachel. Both Bob and Becky have been involved with VBS and Becky has served on the Ministry Council.

Moo Khu Htoo and Hsar Say Paw came to Whiting from Thailand on April 24, 2008. They have been married for 17 years and have three children, Hsar, Mu Nay, and David. They want to thank the church for the support and friendship they have received since coming to Neenah.

Blessings, Mae (969-1005)

Families Connecting with the Lord (FCL)

In Families Connecting with the Lord (FCL), we are *intentional* about bridging the gap between church life and home life. From the moment of its conception, and every subsequent step, FCL's heartbeat is to see families equipped to continue on faith conversations in the home long after FCL ends. In FCL, we as leaders know that we cannot make FCL successful. That is up to the work of God and the parent(s)' willingness to integrate faith conversations into a normal part of everyday life. It's what the parents do at home between each Wednesday, and throughout the rest of the summer that will make the difference. FCL facilitates and coaches families through this process.

A) **Involve the parent(s).**

This summer we want to grow closer as families. Children and parent(s) will together examine what it means to pursue God together. Children and parent(s) will equally be challenged to grow in their relationship with God.

B) **Once a week.**

Families Connecting with the Lord will meet once a week for 5 consecutive Wednesday nights. (6/10, 6/17, 6/24, 7/1, 7/8)

C) **Length each night.**

Families Connecting with the Lord will meet for 1.5 hours, 6:00-7:30pm.

D) **Three elements.**

There will be three elements: meal time, Bible time, and activity time. Each will last approximately thirty minutes.

Volunteer Need: (sign up in the back of church, or talk to Pastor Nick.)

Volunteers:

Meal: Barb, Mae, Art, Ellen, Becky (need 4 more)

Bible: Christi, Pastor Nick (need 2 more)

Activity: Julie, Kristen, Diane (need 2 more)

Advertising/Registration: Kristen, Christi, Pastor Nick (need 2 more)

From the Pastor (cont'd)

If we say we are followers of Christ, our lives should reflect His. When we look at the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John), we see that Jesus' entire life revolved around reaching out to those in desperate need of His Father. They are found in our home, our neighborhood, and our workplace. They are here in Neenah and the Fox Cities. They might also be found in our mirror.

Jesus lived on mission. We are to live with a service-mission-mindset in our school and in our workplace. If you are retired, you better not retire from living on mission. God does not give us this exit ramp in Scripture. Whatever part of your body still works, still functions, give to spreading the greatness of God. Whatever that looks like for you in your context, however different that looks from me, no problem, God is still honored. We offer up to God whatever human faculties we still have control over, however little, and ask for God's fame to spread.

God's call in our lives is the same as it was for those who lived 2,000 years ago, "Go and make disciples." We join God on the mission to share the gospel of transformative grace. Over and over again, we hear Jesus' invitation to, "Come, follow Me."

Jesus is calling us to see what He sees. But we cannot see it buried under our own human initiated to do lists. We have to subordinate our thoughts of what we think needs to be accomplished to God's greater mission. If we are consumed with the temporary post-it notes of life, we miss out on an eternal perspective intended to anchor us in peace. I am preaching to myself. This is the sermon I need to hear on my Mondays.

Again, Jesus is calling us to see what He sees. He wants us to feel the passion He feels, to share His burden for reaching the precious, broken lives throughout the world. Jesus' life was marked by a focused zeal. Accomplishing certain things were mission critical. Yet, because His priorities were properly ordered, His life in balance with an eternal view, He was unhurried. **Earnest for mission, yet unhurried, that is how Jesus lived.** This is my Monday morning message.

I have much to learn from Jesus. His drive, His passion, His vision, His focus, His earnestness, AND His being unhurried. Jesus was in control of His life. Currently, I'm standing at a makeshift stand up desk, a filing cabinet stacked on top of an end table. I do this to keep myself standing, to keep myself awake. It's 4:45am. I've been up for a while already tackling administrative details. I'm coming to terms that admin work is how God's grows a pastor's patience. I'm eating the second half of a mint concrete mixer from Culvers (\$1 off because of St. Patty's week) that I purchased after youth group last night. I'm a sucker for deals.

I also bought the mint concrete mixer to reward myself for just, "making it through another day." My Monday blues seemed to have reappeared Wednesday night on into Thursday morning. So, I'm listening to peppy, upbeat, fast tempo music over headphones, as my wife sleeps in the other room. 9 hours ago with tears in my eyes, I was pleading with middle and high school students not to waste their lives, the main Scriptures being the first and last chapters of Ecclesiastes. Ecclesiastes is all about the sand running through our fingers, and us missing out on meaning, and instead grasping at meaningless items of life. Building sandcastles, and looking back and seeing them washed away. Ecclesiastes is supposed to leave that empty pit in the stomach. That's always been my feeling at least. I feel more rushed, more frantic, more hurried than I perceive Jesus to be on an average day. Yet, what I am accomplishing? Sandcastles? The sand runs through my fingers as well. Pastors are not immune. Ecclesiastes wasn't just for the teenagers in the room last night, it was for people in their thirties too.

Earlier in the day someone told me how I failed in a pastoral duty of mine. They were hurt by how I let them down. I could see tears forming in their eyes. And you know what? The person was right. I let them down. They did not feel loved and cared for by their pastor. They were kind towards me in their communication. They did not yell. But the pain I caused was clear. I failed in shepherding God's people. Give me 30 hours in a day, I bet the same would result. I miss opportunities to love.

I have more than 30 hours worth of priorities and temporary post-it notes filling my life. I have more than one God. My God substitutes require more than a 24 hour day. I therefore run out of time. I run out of energy. Maybe in this instance, I ran out of love, I don't know.

I can relate to you, and the busy seasons of your life. Well, I don't have kids, so maybe I cannot fully understand. But trust me, if you ever feel like sometimes you're just trying to tread water and survive, I can relate to that. Put one foot in front of the other. Keep moving. Hope it will be sunny tomorrow. Maybe it will lead to a deepened sense of trust and dependency on God.

Jessica is awake and up now. The sun rises to greet me and bring another day. The next time I lay my head on the pillow I suspect God will gently ask me questions to, *gasp*, keep the pastor accountable. God lovingly disciplines pastors too. God's questions will be different than my spiraling downward despairing unanswerable Monday questions, which seem to frequently come from a state of worry and distrust of God. God questions will be like this. "Did I use God's time in my hands for Kingdom purposes? Or, did I build a little bit of Nick's kingdom, Nick's world, accomplish Nick's narrow-minded near-sighted to do list today? If I'm hurried and things are left unfinished, is that because I'm trying to do both my agenda and God's agenda? In short, am I living on my mission or God's mission?" God's questions of accountability are full of grace, because they are asked with an eternal lens helping me prepare for my death and eternity. Pastors die too.

-Pastor Nick