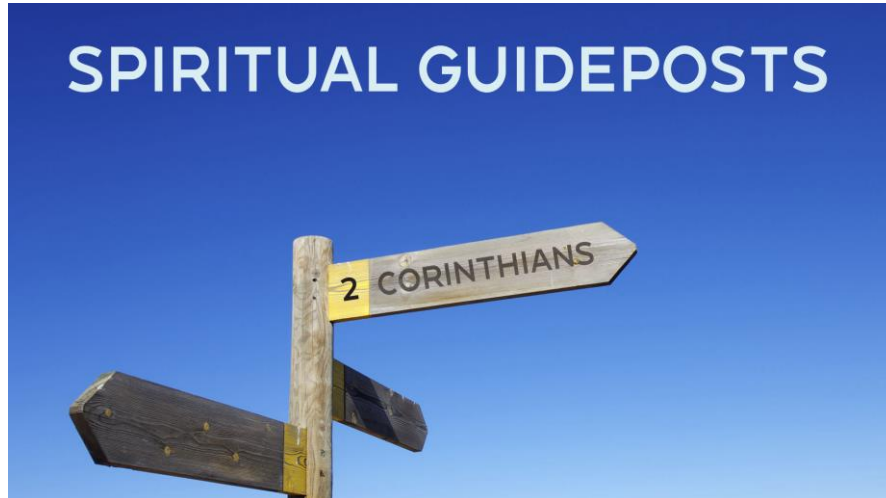


This morning we continue in our series we've called:



"Spiritual Guideposts," we've been seeing the Apostle Paul's amazing leadership skills from afar. He's in Macedonia, some 450 miles north of Corinth and he's written this second letter to the church at Corinth to encourage them to decide/make a decision, whom will you follow...who has the TRUE GOSPEL...me or the false teachers who had infiltrated the church. Who will lead them?

Leadership...that's what we're talking about today. The title of the message this morning is "Following Godly Leadership." Now, we all know leaders, lead. That means they (in the case of pastors in a church) point to greener pastures and seek to lead the flock there. So, in that vein...I want to take a few moments and share a bit of a "State of the Union" address as we seek to point to the future and what we believe the Lord has given to us as vision for our future.

Bottom line church family...we've been IMMENSELY blessed! We continue to see people come to Christ, families strengthened, lives touched and that shows up in our attendance, which continues to grow. Currently we're averaging about 625 people each Sunday. Our giving has been truly amazing...thanks to you and your sacrifices, we're in the best financial shape we've ever been. We're blessed! And to whom much is given, much is required. As many of you know, we've been given a house...



of late, you've been giving toward that as part of our Leave a Legacy GIVING! We've got the survey in hand and it will soon be deeded to the church...AND we have name for it!



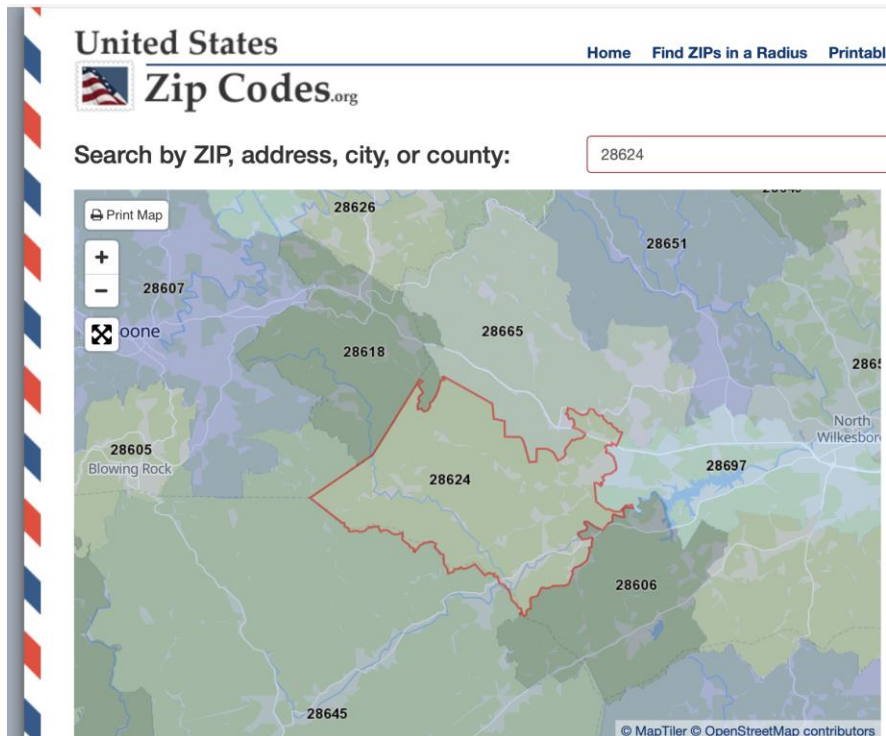
Center 5:20. Center...like Reach Center and notice the "T" in center...that's the cross from our logo and the circle from our logo. 5:20. What is that? That's this verse:

**2 Corinthians 5:20**

**20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.**

That's what we want to say to our community...come to Jesus! Come to Christ! Church, we've been given a house by a generous family, and we've also been given funds by another generous family to reach out into our community...last year, at Christmas, you may remember we bought coats for many children in one of our local elementary schools. But, there is **so much to be done**...AND in our vision for the future, we're going to be partnering with a group called Saturate USA to help reach our community. I want to show you a 2 ½ minute video from Saturate USA...let's watch:

We have applied for and received approval through Saturate USA to canvas two zip codes,



28624 Ferguson and 28665 Purlear with 1900 packets...representing the 1900 homes in those TWO zip codes. We want to utilize some of the funds we've been given from what I mentioned earlier to pass out small bags along with the Saturate USA packets (which are free) to the community, to show the love of Jesus, and we'd like to do this around the Thanksgiving Season. We believe that we can do this on a couple of Saturdays if we have enough people to volunteer, TO CARE. And this work, in concert with "Center 5:20," we can get the Gospel out to a hurting world.

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Church, the times in which we're living are so strange, almost dystopian...and yet, we have the Good News of Jesus. Church...it's time we get our minds off of all of the chatter and the noise of everything that's going on around us that seeks to divide us and get our focus on Jesus and getting out the Gospel! We need TO FOCUS ON JESUS! Amen?

So, we've got a lot to do! And we need the staff to do it. As you know, we're still short one staff member. We are SO thankful to have Tim on board and he's doing a fantastic job...but, to do all we're talking about is going to mean that we need to fill that last position. We've been patient...we've prayed as a Staff and pulled the Personnel Committee together and we believe we have the person we need.

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BTW, we have a great Personnel Committee, chaired by Randy Brooks and made up of Brent Edmiston, Kim Parsons, Blair Eddins, Debbie Thomas and Jason Willens. They've done a great job and to describe the process...the Staff met all the way back in December, right after Tim was elected and we went into the FH and we wrote down on the board what we thought we needed for this remaining position and when we were finished, it was as clear as what was on the board. This is a person who can help us in our outreach, coordinating volunteers for our various teams: Hospitality, Greeters, Parking, Security, etc...reach out to our school, help coordinate and administrate our sports leagues and coordinate a ministry to our widows, widowers, and shut-ins. AND we believe we had this person in our midst.

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And that's the way it works around here...we hired Jacob Church from within...Dale Jennings started here helping out one day a week as a Ministry Assistant. Matthew did the same and that's how Justin Gourley started...one day a week and we eventually brought them on as staff.... The only position we've had difficulty filling from within is Worship Director and for that skill set we had to go outside the church. Otherwise, we've hired from within. Now, some might say, why didn't the Pastors and the Committee open this up to the entire church.

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Well, for four reasons...#1 what I just mentioned...it's not our practice #2 we didn't want to make a bunch of people mad when we got 30 applications and didn't call everyone for an interview, but #3 just like with Jacob, Dale, Matthew, we believe we have whom God would have to serve in this position right here among us and #4 this person doesn't even have to be trained...because SHE has already been doing the job without a title and without pay for years.

I want to invite up Gena Ellis. Gena, you come... Pastor Dale, you come as well. We believe Gena Ellis is the final piece in the puzzle for all the Lord is doing. As I shared this news with the Deacons, Seth Rhoades told me, "Brother...it sounds like all the pieces are coming together...you got a house, you've got funding and now you've got the person. Just snap 'em together." I love that! I'll also tell you that GENA is currently working second shift at Samaritan's Purse in the Donor Ministries area, which kept her from being here on Wed. nights, (she attends third service on Sundays), BTW she has told SP about this opportunity and they fully support her. I love SP!

So church family, you will have the opportunity to vote Gena on Wednesday evening Sept 29<sup>th</sup> at our church conference. That night we will also present the church budget for the new year, along with the Nominating Committee report and you will vote on Gena (requires a 75% vote) to become to our newest staff member. To say that we are excited is understatement! We are thrilled! There is so much to be done and we need the people to do. Please be in prayer for Gena and for us as we seek to move forward with the vision and the resources the Lord has given us! ☺

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### **Turn in your Bibles to 2 Corinthians 10. The message now:**

"Following Godly Leadership" The Apostle Paul was seeking to do that in Corinth and his greatest concern for that church was his fear they would fall into theological error. And that's always the issue with any church. The role of the church of Jesus Christ is to be a pillar and buttress for the truth, (Paul told that to Timothy, 1 Timothy 3) and here in chapter 10, he seeks to remind the Corinthians of the same:

#### **2 Corinthians 10:7-11**

**<sup>7</sup> Look at what is before your eyes. If anyone is confident that he is Christ's, let him remind himself that just as he is Christ's, so also are we.<sup>8</sup> For even if I boast a little too much of our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be ashamed. <sup>9</sup> I do not want to appear to be frightening you with my letters. <sup>10</sup> For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account." <sup>11</sup> Let such a person understand that what we say by letter when absent, we do when present.**

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What we've just read is a rich text for the instruction of believers today, a day when Christianity is awash in a flood of supposed "truths" about Jesus that simply aren't true. DC Talk's 1995 hit "What If I Stumble?" starts with someone reading these lines:

**"The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians who acknowledge Jesus with their lips, then walk out the door and deny Him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable."**

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I guess we could say that there are many Jesuses out there! Which one is the REAL one? It reminds me of the 1956 TV show that's been spun off many times, "To Tell the Truth."



A panel of four people would try to determine who...in this case...



The real Bank Executive is...ultimately, after a series of questions from the panel, they would have to make a pick. The host of the show would then say, "Would the real Bank Executive, please stand up." They would kind of look at each other and start to stand and finally, the real one would stand up.



In this case #2. I believe we could have a similar show today that asked that same question about Jesus.

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We could have three seats and have at least three Jesus'. **Jesus #1** would say I'm okay with everything, because I love you, I'm the Jesus that fits any and every lifestyle. You want to sleep with your girlfriend...that's okay...you're in love...that's fine. **Jesus #2** would be the one who says, "You've got to only read this version of the Bible, women can't wear make-up or pants...and if you don't do it like this as a Christian...then you're not a Christian." **Jesus #3** would say, "You must deny yourself, take up your cross and surrender everything to me. People will know you if you follow me in obedience, because if you love me, you will keep my commandments. I require everything! I am to be your Master."

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Now who is the real Jesus? Would the real Jesus please stand up? Is He #1, #2 or #3? Well, according to the Bible, (the Biblical Jesus) is #3. But, as we discussed last week, unfortunately, most Christians are illiterate in the Bible and they just don't know...and that's why they can be tricked.

Dear Church family, this was what was happening in Corinth and Satan loves using false teaching to lure, deceive and draw people to his fortress/prison of lies, and once there, he dooms their souls to his final domain: HELL. Yes, in Paul's day, these Judaizers were Satan's emissaries, and their goal was to lie about Paul and seek to deceive the people by assaulting his character...even having the audacity to say that he wasn't saved.

**2 Corinthians 10:7**

**Look at what is before your eyes. If anyone is confident that he is Christ's, let him remind himself that just as he is Christ's, so also are we.**

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Think about it. If Paul's not a believer, how can the Corinthians claim that they are... After all, it was Paul who had led them to Christ. Think of all the evidences for Paul's Apostleship...all the miracles that had been performed...raising people from the dead, casting out demons, healing the sick. But, what about these guys. They had no such miracles or credentials, outside of some recommendation parchments from Jerusalem. And so, Paul drops the hammer and he finally had to use his Apostolic authority, so as to protect the true Gospel! The stakes were too high to say nothing. So, he nails them:

## 2 Corinthians 10:8

<sup>8</sup> For even if I boast a little too much of our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be ashamed.

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What Paul was doing is what true spiritual leaders do...they grow the saints. The word for “building up” in the Greek is: “**oiko-do-mēn,**” and it’s the word used for building a house...from the foundation up! Paul was building up...the false teachers, TEARING DOWN! Paul says, “Don’t believe their lies,” because watch what they were saying...

## 2 Corinthians 10:9-11

<sup>9</sup> I do not want to appear to be frightening you with my letters. <sup>10</sup> For they say, “His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account.” <sup>11</sup> Let such a person understand that what we say by letter when absent, we do when present.

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This is a repeating of what we saw last week...they accused Paul of an abusive, overbearing and intimidating leader! “**He browbeats you. He wants to crush you into submission. He’s trying to frighten you to respond to him!**” No! Paul never tried to bring fear... Instead, he sought to bring repentance. Remember from chapter 7...

## 2 Corinthians 7:9

<sup>9</sup> As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us.

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Paul wanted to see the people repent, for without repentance, there is no salvation. That’s what Jesus #3 would say! That’s denying yourself...dying to yourself. That’s the true Gospel. And Church I tried to describe that to you last week, when we talked about two fortresses... Remember, one is Satan’s fortress/prison and the other is God’s fortress. I want to show you an 11-minute presentation of “The Gospel,” that plays off of this. It’s by Eric Ludy, and it’s fantastic.