



The *August 2017*
Anchor



We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul...Heb.6:19a

**First Baptist Church , 215 Ann Street, Ravenswood, WV 26164 ~ 1-304-273-9910
Pastor Mark Gerstell ~ 1-304-377-2812 ~ www.fbcravenswood.org**

In the book of *Luke 19:40* we read, "***But He answered and said to them, 'I tell you that if these should keep silent, (referring to His disciples), the stones would immediately cry out!'***" This is a response Jesus is making to the Pharisees. The Pharisees are rebuking Jesus' disciples for proclaiming that Jesus is the King who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hardened hearts like those of the Pharisees find it more difficult to accept the promises found in living a new way so the desire remains to hold onto what is familiar. What is familiar can become nothing more than tradition; this is the way we have always practiced our beliefs in the past.

While at the beach much thought was given as to what it means to proclaim Jesus as Messiah. The first thing which comes to my mind is that He is our Savior. Life, at times, has safe harbors that when in them we feel secure. There are times that even when our desire is to stay close to Jesus, we find life has a way of putting us into various storms.

A wonderful hymn we know and love has lyrics which state, "*If it wasn't for the lighthouse where would this ship be?*". How true this statement is. **It is important to keep our eyes on Jesus Christ no matter what the storms of life might be throwing our way.**

We each are also called to let our light shine out into a world that is darkened. Our light is better seen when there is a storm. Others who are caught in the same currents of life might experience a personal witness and testimony that will strengthen and give them the courage to face tomorrow.

Jesus truly is King Messiah. His kingdom has been established here on earth and steadily continues to bring in new citizens. For now, there is no Garden of Eden. Humans have been banned but there is a promise that we once again have opportunity for personal relationship with Him. This opportunity begins when you accept Jesus into your life. The Holy Spirit understands righteous living and the positive energy that comes from making wise choices and decisions. **To have the Holy Spirit present in your life is a powerful life companion which only comes by way of faith in Jesus.**

On earth every government has rules and statutes to follow and live by. We know and understand that God desired to first give us the expectations He has for righteous living. These rules and expectations are ones we stand reminded, at times, can be met, however at other times we can't meet them.

Jesus is King and Messiah. Nature truly does have ways of proclaiming the attributes of God. *The beautiful sunshine reminds us of Him smiling down on His creation. The sound of the sea and its size reminds us of His power and glory. The rainbow reminds us there will be calm after the storm has passed.*

Blessings,

Pastor Mark



The month of August is upon us and that means time for our children to be returning to school for the fall. I can remember the excitement and fear I had when it was time for me to go back to school after a long summer break. The idea of having new teachers, new classmates and even new classrooms, can elevate anxiety in some of the most brave kids. It's the same kind of anxiety for those of us who have had new employment opportunities and the fear of new job responsibilities, new coworkers and new bosses. Simply put, new things can make us uneasy because it takes us out of our comfort zone. We have to remember, *God is with us and is there to help us when we are uncomfortable.* We need to remind our young people that God is with them.

As a youth pastor, I would encourage all parents to talk to their children and ask them about any hesitations or nervousness that they may have about the upcoming school year. Reassuring our young people that nervousness is normal, but meeting new teachers, having a new classroom and making new friends can be exciting. Let them share with you their concerns and be open to your counsel. Offer to have prayer with your children before the start of the school day. Then, at the conclusion of the day, make time to ask your young person to tell you something good about his/her day. These kinds of relationships can help build family bonds and open lines of communication that can be difficult. *Explain, this kind of conversation is what Jesus wants to have with us in our daily walk with him.*

Having a relationship as parent and child, and as child and God the Father, are similar in so many ways. It's about a relationship. As we embark on a new school year, let's take time to pause and ask... **How can we strengthen our relationship with our children? How we can help them strengthen their relationship the Jesus?** Perhaps, youth groups are one of those ways. We are fortunate that First Baptist has many programs available for youth of all ages. Consider getting your kids involved in one of our programs this fall. Having a peer network that is supportive, encouraging and based on Christian principles can help support their journey this school year.

Stay tuned for some exciting events coming this month. Watch the youth bulletin for exciting news. *Remember, if you have a young person in need of a call from me for support, encouragement, or just because he/she might be feeling blue, just let me know.* You can reach me by cell at 304-377-6796 or by email at tobywagoner@gmail.com. I also have Facebook and Messenger if that works better for you. Thanks for your continued support of our Youth Ministry. ***Keep praying for our young people as they head to school later this month.***

Love and prayers,
Pastor Toby