

First Christian **Caller**

First Christian Church, Baton Rouge

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Intentional Faith



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INTENTIONAL FAITH



Snipped from Rev. Dr. David Chisham's sermon delivered on Sunday, July 26:

Just after I moved here, back in 2013, I was invited to a really cool luncheon in which the guest speaker was none other than LSU Football coach Les Miles. But, to be honest with you, after listening to Coach Miles talk for about 45 minutes (and I think many of us have had this experience with Coach Miles), I didn't have a clue as to most of what he was talking about. Anyone remember that? It always felt like you came in on the last two minutes of a conversation he had been having in his head for about an hour. Lacking context, you just did not understand what he was saying.

As we come to these parable of Jesus, this morning, I must admit I had kind of the same feeling: mustard seed, yeast, pearls, treasure in a field, a homeowner who likes to show off his possessions. Let's take that last one, and update it a little bit.

The kingdom of heaven is like a homeowner who brings out treasures to show off to his guests. "Y'all, come over to my house this afternoon, and I want to show you the brand new fly rod that I got. I'm taking it on vacation with me. And, let me also show you the old school bell that I salvaged from my pack-rat aunt's basement." The Kingdom of God? Come on! What is that about? What does that mean?

The thing with Jesus' parables is that there is not always just one interpretation. I think as we dig deeper, we can often find more and more layers that lead us to spiritual insights.

I actually learned a lot about yeast during this whole COVID crisis. Some of you may remember that one of the original crises was that everyone went to the store and bought up all the yeast, and we couldn't get commercial yeast. So you had to grow your own by mixing flour and water and changing it out, day over day over day. What I learned is that if you're going to use homegrown starter to make your bread, it's going to take a lot longer!

One of the other challenges I faced as I was learning how to bake this bread was the crisis over flour, itself. All the flour was disappearing from the shelves along with the yeast, and I got worried a time or two about finding the flour that was needed to bake this perfect loaf of bread I was in pursuit of. That's like one of the little details in this parable that if we don't dig deeper, we miss.

Jesus said there was a woman who took leaven and she hid it inside three measures of flour. In our minds, we may think three cups of flour; that would make a good size loaf of bread. The word "measure" is not the generic term for three equal portions. In Greek, that word "measure" is a specific amount: one measure is three gallons. This woman used three measures of flour – nine gallons of flour. You might imagine how much bread that would make! One person broke it out this way:

That's about 1.125 bushels of flour or 144 cups of flour. Assuming a basic bread recipe calls for five and a half cups of flour, that's 26 batches of bread, and at two loaves each equals 52 loaves. You can get 16 slices out of a loaf, so 832 slices. Turn that into sandwiches, and you'd have 416 peanut butter-and-jelly sandwiches.

This woman didn't just wake up one morning and think, "Oh, I'm in the mood to make bread." She takes that leaven and hides it in nine gallons of flour, and she has a plan. She's not just feeding her family; she's feeding a village. She has **intent**.

Think about the mustard seed. A single mustard plant can throw off thousands of tiny little seeds, and those seeds get scattered around, and they start growing themselves. If you've ever seen a growing mustard plant, it gets thick, quickly. It'll take over a whole field without much effort.

If that farmer intentionally plants a mustard seed, he has to have a plan for that. He's not going to scatter that seed willy-nilly, because if he wants to grow anything else, but he's not careful, that mustard will take everything over. That farmer has to be **determined**.

Jesus is telling us the Kingdom of God is not just happening around us. We are called to actively live into our faith.

Jesus is telling us this morning, "The Kingdom of God isn't easy. It isn't automatic." We are called to live our faith even in the face of challenges.


I think about Solomon's prayer we read this morning. Solomon, son of King David, was just about to take the throne of Israel. He's a young man; youngest of all his siblings, and he's thrust into a position of power, and what would a young man want at that age? If I was thrust into that position, I probably would have asked for all sorts of things that wouldn't have mattered in the end. But, Solomon, drawing upon a wisdom already deep within him, prays that God would give him wisdom to be a good leader. Solomon was **intentional** as he took hold of the power that God was giving to him. That is the kind of spirit we need in our lives.

In Romans, chapter eight, the apostle Paul describes the energy behind this intention in our lives. He begins by saying, "We do not know how to pray as we ought." [and] goes on to say, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Church, we need to say that together, this morning: "If God is for us, who can be against us?" If God did not withhold his own son Jesus, but gave Him up for all of us, will He not give us everything else? If God allowed the most precious thing that He had, His son Jesus, to come and live and die for us, why would God suddenly give up that project because of fill-in-the-blank: because of COVID? An economic challenge? Because of a change in life circumstance? Why would God give up that project of redemption when he has already given us so much, invested through His son, Jesus?

Paul says this, "I am convinced that neither life nor death, angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Amen, church?

Whatever challenges we're up against, there is **nothing – nothing – nothing past, nothing present, nothing future – that can separate us from the love of God we have in Jesus Christ**. God has given us the most precious thing; God has given us his own Son; God has given us the Spirit. Let us have confidence that nothing can separate us from God's love.

Christ's peace,



Rev. Dr. David Chisham
Senior Minister

[Click here to view the sermon in full.](#)

Let's Come Together

Even as we continue with adjustments based on the latest health reports, let's not give up on the habit of meeting together!

Wednesday Noon Bible Study on Zoom

Rev. David will begin a Wednesday lunchtime Zoom-hosted Bible study after his time away, starting on **Wednesday, August 12, from 12:15 p.m. until 12:45 p.m.**, hoping this time frame will allow some who might not otherwise be able to join in person, to perhaps gather their lunch at home or office (or home office!) and gather with us. [Please give us feedback or suggestion on this timeframe](#) — do you think that works for you, or is there something else we should consider?

Each week's study will be a preview of the Sunday lectionary texts. You can check the readings for each week online at the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, here: lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/

We'll set up a recurring Zoom meeting, and send out a reminder link on Wednesday mornings. [Please let us know](#) if you're interested in attending, and need any assistance with setting up Zoom, or receiving the meeting link.



Reach Out This Week to ...

Several members of our community remain largely or entirely isolating, so we'll share a few names with each newsletter, and ask that you **take just a moment to share a note, a card, or phone call with one or more of those listed:**

- ◇ *Melissa & Jarod Sullivan and girls, 12235 N Oak Hills Pkwy., Baton Rouge 70810; 913-645-0231*
- ◇ *Ray Acardo & Presley Hutchinson, 2522 Inverrary Dr., Baton Rouge 70816; 225-241-2651*
- ◇ *Ann Achord, 30667 Anderson Dr., Denham Springs 70726; 225-335-1575*

Office Hours & Thank Yous

The church office remains open at our regular hours: 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. You will notice safety protocols in place, if you come by to visit.

We offer heartfelt thanks to those who are maintaining their giving in these times. If your circumstances have changed, please let us know; both to support and encourage you in difficult times, and so that your pledge is not an undue matter of concern to you. We also thank those who have been able to give beyond their pledge. Our ministry continues, and needs in our area, to which we as a church will respond, are likely to increase in the days ahead.

Offering plates are **not passed during Sunday services, but are near each entrance/exit.** In addition, you can make your offering by:

1. **Mail your check** to *First Christian Church, 8484 Old Hammond Hwy., Baton Rouge LA 70809.*
2. **Drop off your check** through the mail slot on the church office door. At least one of the staff is going by daily to check the mail and the property.
3. **Sign up for *Bill Pay***, a free service offered by just about all banks and credit unions, and they'll issue payments based on your account instructions and schedule.

In Memoriam

We thank donors who gave in honor of the following
by whose generosity our Livestream Project has been funded.

Ann Thompson

Ann Gresham

Madison Rankin

Margaret Andrews

Claude "Sonny" Balentine

Sally Balentine

Don Seiwel

Wade McNeill

Carol Cassano

Greg Carle

Patsy Naley

In case you missed it: We shared in last week's EXTRA that **Sue Grigg and family** are finally in their new home, following the damage suffered from Hurricane Barry. Sue says "Louisiana disciples know that it is like to lose everything during a storm, and truly demonstrate their love when it happens to someone else. Thank you for all the prayers, help, and outreach."

SERVING SCHEDULE

August 2, 2020

10:00 a.m. Worship Service

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <i>Church Opening</i> | David Fennell |
| <i>Sacraments</i> | Donna & Glen Tetrick |
| <i>Ushers</i> | Greg Taliaferro Sherry & Dak McInnis |
| <i>Liturgist</i> | Carol Madere |
| <i>Youth Reader</i> | Anderson Krupala |
| <i>Children's Sermon</i> | Leatus Still |
| <i>Elder</i> | Mary Thompson |
| <i>Video Tech</i> | Anderson Krupala |
| <i>Sound Tech</i> | Tony Fatta |
| <i>Livestream</i> | Ted Baldwin |
| <i>Program Builder</i> | Jill Brian |
| <i>Church Closing</i> | Ashley Bourgeois |

SERVING SCHEDULE

August 9, 2020

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Church Opening</i> | David Landry |
| <i>Sacraments</i> | Donna & Glen Tetrick |
| <i>Ushers</i> | Jeff Cody Chris Culp |
| <i>Liturgist</i> | Charlene Landry |
| <i>Youth Reader</i> | Joshua Dotts |
| <i>Backpack Blessing</i> | Rev. David Chisham |
| <i>Elder</i> | Yvonne Taylor |
| <i>Video Tech</i> | Callie Cody |
| <i>Sound Tech</i> | Joshua Dotts |
| <i>Livestream</i> | Ted Baldwin |
| <i>Program Builder</i> | Yvonne Taylor |
| <i>Church Closing</i> | Joshua Dotts |

CHECK OUT OUR MASTER ASSIGNMENTS SHEET, [HERE](#) or at fccbrla.org



Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. —John 6:11

FCCBR Food Drive - Donations left at church are delivered weekly to Southeast Ministries:

Suggested donations: *Jelly, instant potatoes, Jiffy cornbread mix, mac & cheese, crackers, bags of apples, oranges, onions, or potatoes, rubbing alcohol or other anti-viral cleaning agents.*

EMPTY EGG CARTONS ARE CURRENTLY NEEDED, TOO!

Southeast Ministries - Checks can be made out directly to Southeast Ministries and brought to the church during food drop-off times, or mailed to 476 Sharp Road, Baton Rouge LA 70815. *Be sure to mark the memo line with "First Christian Church."*

Prayer List

The following people represent some of the current concerns at First Christian Church. If you would like to have a name added, update a current prayer request, or remove someone from the prayer list, please fill out one of the prayer cards in the attendance books and put it in the offering plate, or contact us at churchoffice@fccbrla.org, or 225-926-4175. Names will rotate off after two months without an update.

Members in our prayers:

JD Albin, Ann Baskin, Rita Brian, Dora & Ron Blackburn, Linda Burns-Sanders, Norma Carr, Jody Chrisope, Pam Culp, Lorrinda Dickinson, the Grigg family, Rich Griswold, George Gullett, Lee Gullett, Dawn & Craig Harvey, Ruth Horn, Barbara Knight, Marie Ladner, Allen Lax, Dak McInnis, Helen Mitchener, Jerry Moses, Bob & Jennifer Netterville, Helen Rankin, Ruth Riddle, Gladys & Kelly Runnels, Yvonne Taylor, Bill Trotter, Mary Jon Turner, Toni Wilson

Friends & Family of Members in our prayers

Rev. Dwight Bailey, Donna & Don Bohlcke, Angela Maria Avansi Casarotti, Roger Clites, Patricia Cornelius, Jimmie E. Dugas, Frances Durham, Johnny Durham, Paul Foster, Judy Heacock, Lindsey Himmel, Patty Hubeny, Ray Hutchinson, Mike Keene, Grandma Frances Krupala, Lee Lambert, Melody, Scott, Jr Larsen, Stephen Major, the family of Pat McAdam, Terri McIlwain, Chelsey Miguez, Judy Olson, Bobby Phillips, David & Kimber Pittman, Tallu Schuyler Quinn, Cherry Quin, Debbie Riddle, Dayna Coupel Simoneaux, Claudia Wagner, Jim Williams

Members in Active Military Service:

PVT Gage Goodspeed

CONTACT INFORMATION AND ONLINE LINKS:

Church Office Phone: 225-926-4175 Email: churchoffice@fccbrla.org

Rev. David Chisham: 703-220-6011 Email: david@fccbrla.org

Website: fccbrla.org

YouTube Video Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/FCCBRLA/featured>

Facebook: <https://facebook.com/fccbrla>

Facebook Worship at Home: <https://facebook.com/fccbrlaworshipathome>

Instagram: <https://instagram.com/fccbrla>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/fccbrla>

Rev. Dr. Michael Elmore Preaching Sunday, August 2



Rev. Dr. Michael Elmore, a retired minister with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), will be preaching here this Sunday, August 2, while Rev. Dr. David Chisham is on a well-deserved vacation.

Rev. Dr. Elmore retired as Regional Pastor of the Great River Region (Louisiana, Mississippi and Arkansas), after serving congregations in Virginia, North Carolina and Louisiana, as well as serving as Director of Pastoral Care for Mercy Health System of Northwest, Arkansas. He and his wife, Peggy Bourgeois, reside here in Baton Rouge.



First Christian Church

Disciples of Christ

8484 Old Hammond Hwy.
Baton Rouge, LA 70809-1317
225-926-4175 | fccbrla.org

SERVICE AT 10:00 AM EACH SUNDAY - IN PERSON OR LIVESTREAM

JOIN US ONLINE FOR WORSHIP, PRAYER AND DEVOTIONALS: fccbrla.org