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COLLEGE PARK

collage

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College Park Baptist Church • Greensboro, NC

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This year's theme is "Handle with Care". We'll have Bible stories, activities, crafts and music focusing on caring for our planet. VBS is for Pre-K through 5th graders. Drop-off begins at 8:30 with VBS from 9 am until 12 noon. Interested in helping with VBS? Please email: leann.rodgers@gmail.com

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

PRE-K - 5TH GRADERS

AUGUST 10 - 14 9 - NOON

CALL 273-1779 TO REGISTER



HANDLE WITH CARE

Passport Focus

Growing up in a Southern Baptist church, I spent at least two weeks of every summer at various Vacation Bible Schools, retreats, or church camps. I fondly **remember my Bible Study leader “Bob” who was also the camp preacher and had a wickedly subversive sense of humor.** I also remember sitting through a sweaty evangelical preacher at another camp who preached a **terrifying sermon about the dangers of “backsliding” to a room full of teenagers who were really just getting started on their “sinning careers”.**

Camp helped me make lots of friends, and gave me lots of strong, strange, funny, and emotional memories that helped make me who I am today. I remember sharing a canoe with an inmate who had been given a day pass with several others to come and speak to campers about prison life. **I remembered thinking, “Maybe this wasn’t the best idea,” as the two of us cast off in the small boat, but ended up having a good conversation with him.**

When I was older, I would go to “Centrifuge”, a series of camps around the country with high energy college age leaders who would offer Bible study in addition to more traditional activities like hiking and arts and crafts.

I was relieved when I learned about Passport, a set of camps with a similar structure, but with a theology more in line with the progressive and inclusive ideals of our church and family. Former College Park ministers, Marnie and Daniel now work for Passport, and if they spoke so highly of it, I knew it would be a great experience for my son, Isaac.

Passport was one of many camps that we had signed Isaac up for this summer. It was just a few weeks before the end of school when I was suddenly laid off from my job. In the first few hours of shock and grief, I decided that one of the guidelines I was going to live by during this transitional phase was that **I would keep an open mind about new experiences and say “Yes” to any opportunities that presented themselves.**

I had sincerely hoped that opportunities like working as **Scarlett Johansen’s sunscreen steward, or getting paid to watch someone’s beach house would be the ones that would present themselves.** Instead, Michael asked if I wanted to go to Passport Kids.

Didn’t he know that I don’t like kids? They are loud and don’t listen to their parents and are always looking at their screens. Oh, I know, I have a kid and I really like him a lot, but he does all of those things as well. The difference is, I have some measure of control over him. **I didn’t know if I could handle living in a house with nine children without accidentally teaching them some new colorful phrases to take home to their folks.**

Still, I had made the decision to say “Yes” and I knew that this opportunity may never come my way again. The boy will only like being around me for a few more years. I reluctantly agreed to go with the kids to Passport.

We arrived and negotiated who was getting what room in our cabin. The kids went to opening night worship, and I sat outside and nervously checked my phone where I learned that one promising job interview had been cancelled and another required more information that I **didn’t have access to.** I started to panic, but realized that there was nothing I could do. As the worship service ended, I slipped in so I could attend the adult Bible study. One of the Passport staff informed the room that they still needed two volunteers to be assistant Bible study leaders.

My hand was raised before I even thought about it, a **side effect of my new “Just say yes” policy.** As I got up to meet my new Bible study group, I realized I had just forfeited hours of napping and reading time to sit with **kids I didn’t even know.**

The Bible study class didn’t have any College Park kids in it. The Bible study leader, an energetic, enthusiastic, young seminary student welcomed me and gave me a **handout with instructions for the day’s Bible study.** I started to check my email for news of any job prospects **when I noticed a suggestion in the flyer “Do not spend the Bible study looking at your phone. Be attentive. It lets the kids know that they are important to you.”**

I was struck. I put the phone in my backpack and helped the leader take up forms where the kids signed up for activities they wanted to do during free time. I **deadpanned to the kids as I was collecting their forms, “If you signed up for the skydiving class, please turn in the notarized permission slips that your parents sent with you.”** Most kids chuckled, but some asked if their was really a sky diving activity.

“Not without a notarized permission slip there isn’t,” I responded. The Bible study leader, who clearly regretted **having “assistance” at this point, nervously assured the kids that I was only joking.**

The theme for the week was “Revolution” and the first day’s key word was “Flip” as in “To look at something from another perspective.” One example of changing **one’s perspective on life is to go from having a full time job for 18 years, to not having any idea where or when your next job will be.**

When the time came for lights out that night, evidently none of the children at this church ever had to brush their teeth, shower, or even put on pajamas at night because **when we called for “Lights Out” you would have thought we asked the kids to map the human genome in Cantonese. “No you don’t need to find your Kindle case, brush your teeth.” “Yes we really are turning off the lights, go to bed.” “No, you are not drinking a Mountain Dew. You can have water.”**

What surprised me was that the kids actually listened to me. **If I said, “Go to bed” they would start to protest, but any response other than “The house is on fire,” was met with the refrain “Go to bed,” and within 15 minutes it was quiet.** Thus the first Passport miracle.

The second morning’s key word was “Stand”, and the kids talked about standing up for and beside the broken,

the unpopular, and the overlooked people. It was then I realized the difference between this camp, and the ones I went to when I was a kid. These kids were not learning that being a Christian was about being well-behaved, and not swearing, and showing up for Acteens on Wednesday nights. They were learning about a two thousand year history of defying rules set to oppress the weak. They were being told that they were a part of the bigger story of the church every time they offered kindness to a kid at their school who sat alone at lunch.

I knew this was not the same kind of church camp that warned me of the grave dangers of Dungeons and Dragons and Def Leppard. This was important.

Michael encouraged us to sign up to help with activities during the day. I offered to help run the ultimate frisbee game, thinking that the kids would be amazed at the skills I learned from our weekly games. Instead, after the first game, the kids insisted that all of the adults sit out. So instead I ended up throwing a frisbee with a little girl named Emily who had not worn closed toe shoes and **couldn't play with the others**. For the rest of the week, whenever I saw her, she would pantomime throwing a Frisbee to me, and I would pantomime catching it. It was these small holy moments that struck me how important it was to connect with people, no matter who.

Back at the cabin, during free time, I got to share some of my favorite games with the kids from College Park, Pit, Aquarius, and Befuzzled. I assumed that I would spend the whole time being referee, but the kids understood the games quickly and helped each other follow the rules.

On the last night, there was a talent show. I had been to enough camps to know that talent shows usually made me feel bad about my inability to hide how funny I thought awkward situations were. The night started off promising with a few show tunes, a poetry reading, and an impressive display of tap dancing.

Then a little boy in a Spiderman costume walked out on stage alone to the single microphone and dedicated his act to Adam West and Burt Ward. What followed was a once in a lifetime event as the boy proceeded to sing a semi-improvised, three minutes song about Batman, a cappella to a completely silent room. It was a wonder to behold. There was a palpable tension in the room as **people didn't know whether to laugh or kindly escort him off stage** as each new verse revealed more background to **the Dark Knight's history**. The song eventually ended and the room sat for a few seconds in confused silence before erupting in enthusiastic applause. This kid was a rock star for one night. Passport campers embraced him for doing his thing with his heart on his sleeve.

The last morning came with a great deal of cajoling. It was like herding housecats, trying to break up games of wall ball so rooms would get cleaned up and sleeping bags rolled up. I was tired and wanted to see my wife, use profanity, sleep in my own bed, and drink a beer, but at the same time, I knew that something very special was coming to an end.

As adults, we take vacations with our immediate

family, but it is rare to wake up and say good morning to our friends and good night to them as we go to sleep. We **often lament the loss of freedom that today's children** have compared to our own childhood, but there are still glimpses of it at camp.

When the kids would ask me if they could climb on rocks, my response was **"Did any other adult tell you not to? No? Then I say 'Go for it!'"** One girl from another church seemed surprised that I was a parent at all. She **asked why I wasn't watching over my son**. I reminded her that her parents were at home and not watching her, trusting her well being to strangers like myself.

I know that Passport is engineered to help nurture children, but the week I spent taught me a great deal about who I really am. You will never hear me say **"Everything happens for a reason."** I believe that we make what we can of the situations we are in. For that, I thank Michael, this church, and my family for the opportunity to spend a week at Passport camp, and offer this challenge to everyone who can hear my voice. What are you going to do to nurture the children and youth around you this week? Every single one of you is welcome and fully equipped to be a positive force in the life of a young person at this church. **Will you say "Yes"?**

Matt Cravey
28 June 2015



Helping Hands Ministry Team

We are getting back to doing the things we love to do in warm weather: lawn mowing, hedge trimming, gutter cleaning, trash removal, etc. The point is the Helping Hands team wants to hear from you about projects that we can take on that can help our members. We will be expanding on a suggestion presented by Brian Carden **recently to compile our own "Angie's List" of handymen** (church members or others), electricians, plumbers, etc. that can be a reference source for our members. If requests are outside our level of expertise or manpower, we will be glad to offer advice and direction in tackling the project.

Team members: Wayne Jones, Tim Lowrance, Donna Gregory, Caryanne Story-Bunce, Joel Rieves, Sterling Suddarth, Jenny Ward-Sutherland, Jerry Elkins, Kevin Short, Mike Kirkman, and Ronnie Brannon.

Chapel Renovations

Chapel Renovations began on Tuesday, July 7th and much progress has been made in a few short weeks...



Underdogs Among Us

Hollywood knows well that we love a good underdog story. Think of all the sports movies that rely on this motif: *Rocky*, which really needs no introduction; *Rudy* — the undersized walk-on for Notre Dame's football team; *A League of Their Own* and women's professional baseball; *Miracle*, the US Hockey team's stunning defeat of the Soviets in 1980; *42* and the *Jackie Robinson Story*; and of course, *Hoosiers* — to name only a few.

We like underdog stories — especially when they win — because they win so rarely. The surprise victory, against all odds — whether on the athletic field or in life — inspires us and gives us hope that maybe we, too, can overcome our obstacles. But of course most underdogs do not win. Most are not even named or noticed.

Our text today from Mark is what I like to call an **underdog passage of scripture**. That is, it's a difficult passage that we rarely notice or think about — overshadowed by far more popular stories of Jesus feeding the 5000, walking on water, or calming the sea. **The passage itself is an underdog of sorts, and it's about some notable underdogs in the ancient biblical world.** The woman is an underdog — as a woman, as a Gentile, as a Syrophenician. In Hebrew biblical perspective, the whole region of Tyre and Sidon is an underdog, as well as Galilee and Nazareth — the backwater home of Jesus. **But today's text also draws attention to perhaps the first and original underdog (at least linguistically) and that's actual dogs, the four-pawed faithful companions that we now so often champion as “man's (and surely also woman's) best friend.”**

The Bible does not speak favorably of dogs. “All dogs go to heaven?” That sentiment is not found in scripture. There are, according to my internet search, around 40 references to dogs in the Bible. Not a single reference is positive. In the Jewish law, any meat defiled by beasts is given to dogs. The most ignominious death is to die unburied to be eaten by dogs. In the Sermon on the Mount, **Jesus tells us, “Do not give what is holy to dogs; and do not throw your pearls before swine” (Matt. 7:6).** Paul warns us to beware the dogs or evil doers who seek to mutilate our flesh (Phil. 3:2), and in Revelation, the dogs are outside the heavenly city with the fornicators and idolaters (Rev. 22:15).

In the ancient biblical world, dogs are unclean, disease-ridden outcasts — and for the ancient Israelites, dogs are associated with the impurity and idolatry of the surrounding peoples. Some of this reads like pure bigotry to me — although (to be honest) the idea of domesticated dogs with dog tags, grooming, and up-to-date shots had not yet taken hold — but as a dog-lover myself, I fully recognize the truth behind the proverb... **“Like a dog that returns to its vomit is a fool who reverts to his folly” (26:11).** Yes, indeed, dogs and drunk foolish college students often do that.

All of this is to set-up the observation that this exchange between Jesus and the Syrophenician woman in Mark 7

is deeply disconcerting. Suggesting a woman is a dog (today) is insulting, but in biblical context, even more so. At least today dogs are often seen as cute and loveable, but not in the ancient Middle East.

Here at College Park, I've appreciated the way this church seeks to welcome everyone, to practice what we often call the radical hospitality of Jesus. But here in this passage, Jesus is not seeking to welcome *anyone*. He enters this house to get away from the maddening crowds who have flocked to him, to escape notice, most likely to enjoy some much needed rest, and then this woman — who is not even Jewish — intrudes to plead for her daughter and to ask this charismatic healer for one more miracle.

And what does Jesus do? He refuses to help her. He says, in all seriousness — for there is nothing in the text to suggest he's being ironic — **“Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.”** Here Jesus uses an insulting metaphor to tell this bothersome woman — **“Get out. I don't help your kind. My gifts are not for you.”** Okay. Maybe Jesus doesn't go that far. He doesn't tell her to leave, but he doesn't agree to help her either. Here *The Message* translation is being more generous than the actual Greek, which says the children must be fed first, but with no promise that there will be something left over later. But at this moment in the text, Jesus refuses the woman, and **he refuses her because she's not Jewish.**

The miracle that follows is extraordinary, but Jesus performed lots of miracles. The truly extraordinary action in this passage is the response of the **Syrophenician woman. She doesn't get angry; she doesn't leave in a huff. Maybe Jesus doesn't actually say, “Get out, you filthy cur,”** but that's surely how most people in this situation would have heard him. To her credit, this woman responds to the challenge: *she* gives Jesus the chance to overcome ethnic, religious, and gender bias.

Regardless of how we read Jesus in this encounter — Is he testing her? Is he testing us? — the passage clearly challenges the bigotry of the region. You see, at this time, Tyre was a Gentile (or non-Jewish) urban center just north of Jewish Galilee, and there was lots of bad blood between Jews and Gentiles in this region. Most of the food produced in Galilee went to feed Gentiles in Tyre, while many of the Jewish peasants were near starving. So here we have a striking reversal: the Jewish teacher and miracle-worker speaks metaphorically of denying food to this Gentile woman from Tyre.

We can rationalize and contextualize what Jesus says, but make no mistake — it is an insult. There is not a single positive reference to dogs in all of scripture — except, I dare say, in this passage. If there is any hope for dogs in scripture, it is here in the Syrophenician woman's clever response. Jesus evokes the common saying *not* to throw good things to the dogs, but this woman invites dogs into the house, domesticates them under the master's table, and reminds Jesus that even dogs can become part of the family.

Continued on pg. 6

Of course, none of this is really about dogs. At stake is **whether Gentiles have any place in God's kingdom, or does God's favor and blessing extend only to Israel?**

While Gentiles are often viewed as filthy dogs to be kept at a distance — at this time, a Jew does not eat with dogs or Gentiles — a more positive (though less common) notion also develops: the idea that the wild dogs will one day be tamed and cleansed, such that even the Gentiles **will one day sit at the banquet table in God's kingdom.**

Admittedly, the image is still not very flattering, but in the context of the time, it is radically inclusive. The idea of eating with dogs or Gentiles was unthinkable for first century Jews. In truth, the audacity of this woman entering a Jewish house and addressing a Jewish teacher was also unthinkable. But here, the woman insists that dogs can be included at the banquet without disruption and without displacing the other guests. Maybe Gentiles are not as good (or as clean) as Israelites; maybe they still have a great deal to learn about faith and righteousness; but surely they can still enjoy the crumbs that fall from the table — especially if they have the good sense to recognize that this is good, wholesome food.

The Syrophenician woman's response is radical and courageous. If we take the text at its word, Jesus rejects her with a striking image, and she then persuades this male authority figure with her wit. In one breath, the cursed dog outside the gates enters the domestic space to **sit under the master's table.** **The evangelist here is not Jesus:** it is this unnamed Syrophenician woman.

This woman risks further rejection and humiliation, and Jesus responds favorably to her courage and faith. If the



PE Equipment Needed

Peck Elementary School is in need to PE equipment. If anyone no longer needs jump ropes, balls, etc., please contact Tammy Shaney. She will pick them up. Phone or text: 336-340-3593 or email:

Gentiles are to be identified as unclean dogs, this woman reminds the Jewish rabbi that even Gentiles are promised **a place in God's Kingdom.** **The prophets foretell this future — this future banquet when God's kingdom is fully revealed and all nations praise God's anointed in Zion.** Even the Gentiles, even the dogs, are loved by God and to be included in the blessing of Israel. Remember, from the very beginning, when God first chose Abraham, God promised to make Abraham a great nation, but God also promised that all nations (all peoples) will be blessed by these favored children of Abraham.

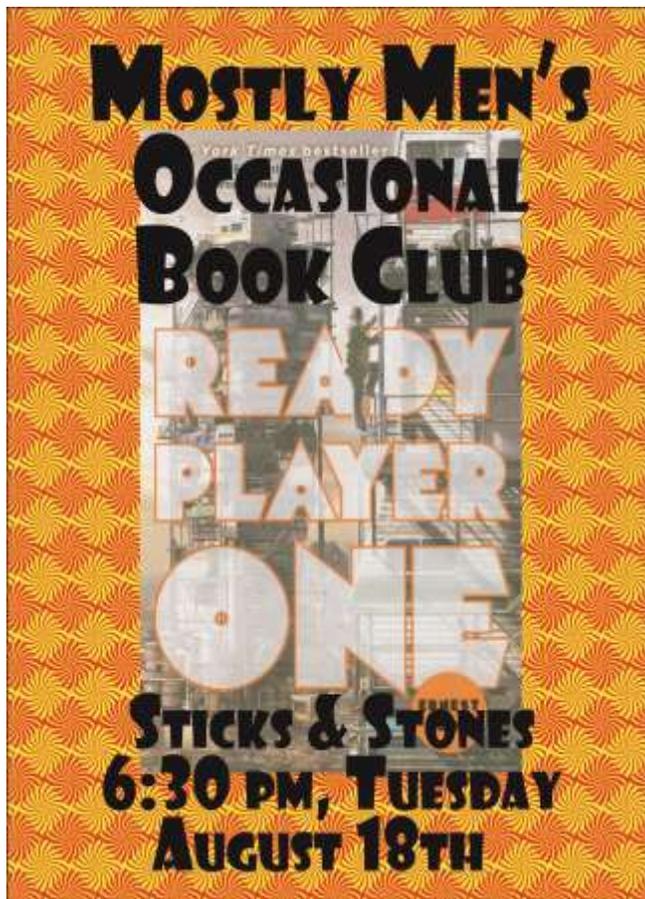
It's hugely significant that our gospel account includes this story. It doesn't portray Jesus in the most favorable light — at least, it doesn't quite fit our tendency to over-glorify and over-spiritualize Jesus. If anything, for me, this story humanizes Jesus. He gets tired, like us, perhaps even overwhelmed at times, like us, and wants to be left alone. Like us, he has limits and needs rest.

To borrow Henri Nouwen's phrase, Jesus is *The Wounded Healer.* Jesus heals us through his wounds, and calls us to follow him, to pick up our cross, and to **discover that God's grace works through our wounds, as well.** God does not wait for us to get it all together and then start using us. No, quite the contrary. God works through our weaknesses and in the midst of our failures and demons.

You see, when we know we're weak and broken, when we know we're at the end of our rope, that our cup is nearly empty, that's when God can really use us, because that's when we know that we need grace. This woman knows **she needs Jesus, and she's not leaving without his help.**

This unnamed woman is a true underdog and unlikely **hero.** **Martin Luther praised this mother's faith: she continues to trust in God's grace, even when it appears that Jesus has turned his back on her.** She refuses to assume the worst about Jesus, and instead, she shows us how to move beyond the prejudices that so often divide us. With the audacity of hope, she proclaims the gospel truth that **all are welcome at Christ's table.**

What can this underdog teach us today? I conclude with **two lessons.** **First, do we feel unworthy? That's okay. We, too, are underdogs.** Remember, it's in Mark's gospel, only a few chapters earlier, when the scribes and Pharisees are complaining that Jesus is hanging out with tax collectors and sinners, that Jesus reminds them (and us) that **it's the weak and sick who need healing.** We're not called to be perfect, but to be wounded healers, who are being made holy, and who contribute to the world's healing, even in the midst of our own brokenness. Trust me, in many ways I'm a mess myself — for example, I've struggled with



depression for pretty much all my adult life — **but I'm also** a better chaplain, better able to minister to others, because of this. That grace is available to all of us.

Second, this woman challenges us to recognize our own prejudices and to ask ourselves — Who are the unnamed underdogs among us? Who are the outcasts? Who **doesn't feel welcome in our community? Who do we avoid?** We can ask ourselves that question in any context — at work, out in the community — who are we less likely to greet in passing? Who are we not noticing? To whom are we basically saying — verbally or non-verbally, individually or as a society — **not now, we're too busy,** maybe later?

Every year, Elon University has a common reading that **(in theory at least) we're all supposed to read together. This year, the book is Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's** collection of writings *Why We Can't Wait*. It is humbling how relevant this book remains today. In the 1960s, Dr. King and other civil rights leaders, were told (continually) to be patient and moderate, not to rock the boat, to just wait, and that things would get better eventually. Oppression is never overcome that way. Prejudice never just dissipates. We must speak truth to power.

The Syrophenician woman does that here in Mark 7, and we need to do that today — to speak out against racial profiling and police brutality, to declare that #BlackLivesMatter and #BrownLivesMatter, and yes, LGBTQ lives matters. Who are we treating as less than think also of the hate so often directed towards immigrants — documented and undocumented, who are often among the hardest working members of our society, the working poor — and I wonder why our bible-invoking politicians never acknowledge the command in Leviticus to welcome the foreigner and to treat them as native-born.

Now here's the real challenge. In Dr. King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail," he reminds us that it's not the white supremacists and hate-mongers who are the real obstacle to justice and equality — it's the good natured moderates who do nothing. Dr. King was not perfect — far from it — but he trusted in God's grace and in the change that could come from a small mustard seed of faithful action, and not primarily his action, but the action of so many nameless women, men, and children who joined him and preceded him, who like the Syrophenician woman insisted that we all have a place at God's table. May we have the same faith in ourselves, in others, and in the power God's redeeming grace. Amen.

Joel Harter
19 July 2015

Parking Permit Renewal



Member Parking Tags were valid until July 31, 2015. If you would like to renew your tag, please notify the church office. You will be issued a new tag at no charge.

David's Distress & Deliverance

This past week, I was one of very few educators to have been given an opportunity to visit the headquarters of Apple in Cupertino, California. I, along with 10 colleagues from Chapel Hill, collaborated with six Apple reps from around the world in the famed Apple Executive Briefing Center. As we talked, we explored ways to revolutionize the world of education. Throughout the day, I met and had conversations with John Couch, the 55th **employee hired by Apple's late co-founder Steve Jobs** and I was star struck.

I have always been a fan of Apple products and when I received my first computer, an Apple IIc at 10 years old, I had no idea how this equipment and this company would play such a significant role in my life. Within a field of technology-Goliaths, Steve Jobs founded Apple in his **parent's garage at 20 and in 10 years it grew to become a \$2 billion company with 4,000 employees.** After leading his company to tech victory after tech victory, Steve and his board started to head in different directions and before long, the former underdog of a CEO was publically fired from his own company. Despite his rise from obscurity to tech warrior, Jobs was ousted by the very people he mentored, inspired and led.

For me, a true underdog is *not* someone who simply overcomes obvious adversity or succeeds when the odds are stacked against them; an underdog is one who rises from nothing, falls from grace, and then picks up the pieces and continues the fight. My favorite biblical underdog follows this process of rising and falling throughout his life.

David is introduced as a biblical underdog in the recounting of his unexpected call to the throne. In **1 Samuel 16 we learn that God sent Samuel to David's house to anoint the next king. David's brothers thought that they would be the one that would be chosen. Even Jesse, David's father,** saw David as an unlikely candidate.

Samuel anointed David right in the midst of all the other brothers in Chapter 16 and just one chapter later; David encountered Goliath. Even though David was the **underdog in people's sight, God saw him as a victor. I'm** grateful that although the rest of the world only sees our current ability, God sees our capability.

David's transformation from underdog to victor is not the end of his story, however.

David was a voyeur, who spied on Bathsheba at her bath, and an exhibitionist who exposed himself to a crowd of Jerusalemites.

Once he seemed a coward, feigning madness to avoid conflict. In one of his most sordid episodes, he conspired to have Bathsheba's husband killed, and he lied and murdered many times in his life. For a time he was an outlaw, who led a rebel gang in defiance of King Saul. He even collaborated with the Israelites' archenemy, the Philistines.

Continued on pg. 8

David's Distress & Deliverance, continued from pg. 7

Despite all this, David was the chosen of God. His name actually means "beloved," and the Bible says he was "a man after God's own heart." How can such a compromised man be chosen by God as the progenitor of the line that will lead to the Messiah?

According to Biblical scholar, Jonathan Kirsch, "David illustrates the fundamental truth that the sacred and the profane may find full expression in a single human life."

In our text for today, we find David once again embodying the sacred and profane. After a short time of acceptance in Saul's court and a glorious ministry of victory upon victory, he was forced to escape for his life. The giant killer ended up hiding in a cave, wondering what he had done to endure such rejection and difficulty.

Running from a crazed king...Hiding in hills... Leading a ragtag group of soldiers...And feeding more than a thousand mouths... David is a far cry from standing next to his brothers with anointing oil running down his face. Since David believes that Saul will kill him one day, he decides that the best thing to do is to go to the camp of the enemy, so that Saul will stop searching for him. David defects into the hands of the enemy, and Saul calls off the hunt. He leads his men into the land of idols and **false gods and pitches his tent in Goliath's backyard.** Hiding out with the enemy brings temporary relief.

The once-proud son of Israel and Conqueror of Goliath **appoints himself as the king's servant and King Achish** welcomes the deal. He grants David a village named Ziklag, and asks only that David turn against his own people. As far as Achish knows, David does what he was asked: but David actually raided the enemy of the Hebrews instead. Although David was ready to continue fighting on behalf of Achish, the Philistines turn their backs on him and he was not allowed to join them as they went off to battle. Forced to take a break from war, David and his men traveled to their temporary home of Ziklag to kiss the kids and love on their wives.

As they neared Ziklag, it was clear that something was wrong. While they were fighting for Achish, David and his men left Ziklag unprotected and when they returned, their homes had been destroyed. Their city was burned, meaning that their industrial ability was wiped out. They no longer had the capacity to make weapons of war; they were left only with what was in their hands and the skill they had acquired through battle. But above all else, the Amalekites had kidnapped all of their women and **children including two of David's wives. David's men** were overcome with anger and grief when they saw what had been done. The bible says that they were worn out with grief and over time, their sadness turned into **anger...and despite his rise from obscurity to warrior,** David was ousted by the very people he mentored, inspired and led who threatened to kill him.

Leaders at times can catch the brunt of it when it comes to the blame for failure and David was no exception. Champion boxers have an expression that goes "You're only as good as your last fight," and this seems to be the case with David. With all the past battles he has won in

proving the hand of the Lord was with him, he still faces mutiny among his men.

I can only imagine what was going through David's mind at that time. As the smoke of Ziklag rose, David came face to face with himself.

He came face to face with his personal failure as a father and husband whose choices allowed his family to be stolen by the enemy; He came face to face with his professional failure as a warrior who naively left the most vulnerable people unprotected while fighting a war that was not his; He came face to face with his leadership failure as the hero **who let down the men he'd led to previous battles.** David had already run for the caves once in his life when threatened by Saul and if I were him, I would have made a mad dash as soon as I smelled smoke.

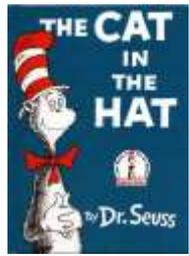
David, however, began to replay the movie of his life in his head. He remembered *God's love*. Even at the point of total loss, David now saw the love of the LORD in the rejection of the Philistine leaders. If the Philistine leaders had allowed David to continue fighting, it would have been months and months until he returned and the situation would have been far worse.

David remembered *God's promise and calling*. He was able to shake his head, clear the fog and say, "I am a man anointed by God, called by God, and promised by God to be

**2 NEW PROGRAMS
SEPTEMBER - JUNE**

**1st
Wednesdays**
Dinner at 5:15 p.m.
will benefit special
mission project.

**3rd
Sundays**
Refreshments
after the 11 a.m.
Service on the
playground.
(12-12:30 pm)



Children's Book Drive for YWCA

Please join the Olsons in celebrating Brooks's first birthday by donating a gently used children's book to the YWCA's Healthy Moms Healthy Babies program. A collection box is located in the church side entrance by the nursery. YWCA staff will use the books as rewards for fathers who attend childbirth classes, as incentives for parents who attend meetings, and to support in-home visits. Reading encourages attachment, bonding language development, and eye contact.

the next king of Israel. I have a high calling and promise from God, and He hasn't taken it away. I need to start living according to that destiny."

Finally, David remembered *God's past deliverances*. He could say, "This is a terrible spot, no doubt. But I remember all the times when the LORD delivered me out of bad spots before? If God did it then, He will do it now.

I remember growing up in a small Baptist church in New Jersey where we would have testimony service. Testimony service was a time when people would stand up and recount the goodness of God in their lives. Often, Sister Jackson would stand and feebly begin singing "Victory is Mine"... She would go on to other verses and as she sang, her voice got stronger and stronger. It was as if she was convincing herself of something. As a kid, I remembered wondering why someone with such a bad voice chose to sing the lyrics instead of simple reciting the words. But as I grew older, I understood why. Sometimes, in the face of adversity, when surrounded by the rubble and black smoke of your own bad decisions, when those who were once your cheerleaders become **your critics, it's easier to hum a melody than it is to say a word.**

David Encourages himself

Perhaps David, known for his music ability, began to hum a tune in verse 6 of our text. The bible says that in the midst of so much adversity and surrounded by friends turned foes, David was *greatly distressed (literally, he was in a "very tight space")*, And what follows is one of my favorite phrases in the bible: But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.

Here is one of the many eloquent 'buts' of the Bible. On one side there is heaping pile of calamities, loss, treachery and peril; and across from them is only that one clause: But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God. Have you ever had to encourage YOURSELF in the Lord?

There was only one possession in all the world, except his body and the clothes that he stood in, that he could call his own at that moment. Everything else was gone; his property was carried off by raiders; his community was a shambles, his home was smoldering embers, his **wives and his family were gone...** But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.

As the came over the hill and saw Ziklag in the distance,

Maybe he sang Psalm 34. I would find it hard to believe that this particular song did not come to David's mind as he sought to encourage himself. David had written it just two years earlier when God had delivered him from the Philistine king Abimelech.

I can easily imagine David sitting in the ashes of what was once his home with harp in hand singing these words: "I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make its boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear of it and be glad. Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears".

David may have sang, "I will bless the Lord at *all* times." All times—good times, bad times, great times and terrible times. Even on the worst day of your life, God is worthy of praise. David sang praises to God from the ashes of Ziklag.

He sang the amazing lyric, "His praise shall continually be in my mouth." Praising God is part of the path to encouragement. When praise is in your mouth, there can be no grumbling, no complaining and no negative speaking. Praise is the language of faith. If you want to strengthen your faith, begin to praise God.

Encouraging yourself in the Lord is part of how you go about recovering your joy—not the shallow, mercurial feeling of happiness, but deep, abiding joy, which can be present even in the midst of sorrow. I know the idea of having joy in the midst of sorrow may seem paradoxical, but truth is in the paradox. If you are going to recover from the worst day of your life, among the first things you have to recover is your joy. Recovering your joy gives you just enough space to reflect on the times God has pulled you through in the past.

Apple's founder Steve Jobs looked over the wins and losses of his own life shortly before his death and talked about having faith: "Again, you can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backward. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something — your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. This approach has never let me down, and it has made all the difference in my life."

Steve Jobs talks about trusting in "something", but David reminds us to trust in the Lord our God. He relied on and recounted the many promises and commitments given to him by the Lord his God and we also have promises that God has given us.

Some of you may be in Ziklag right now.

Some of you may still be standing among the rumble of your lives with the stench of burning hopes and dreams is all around you.

Some of you may be in Ziklag surrounded by frenemies who blame you for their circumstances.

Some of you may have had had your family and loved ones stolen from you, and have lost the things and the

Continued on pg. 10

David's Distress & Deliverance, continued from pg. 9

and the people you loved...but today is the day for you to encourage yourself in the Lord your God, and remember God's promises and listen for God's voice.

And for those of you who are still victorious in battle, life experience tells us that a Ziklag moment is coming... What are the promises you will hold on to as the smoke rises and the very friends you worked to support and offer love begin disparaging your name?

What is the song that will reside in your soul, that will remind you that we serve a God of restoration, even when you are experiencing unfathomable loss?

If we are going to encourage ourselves in the Lord, we have to have something to cling to...a word, a song, a memory that can remind us of God faithfulness.

Almighty God, in times of struggle, in times of loss, and in times of silence, help us to encourage ourselves in the Lord our God. Help us to inquire of the Lord and most of all, help us to wait to hear from you. Amen.

Rydell Harrison
26 July 2015

Promotion Sunday Breakfast August 23, 9:45 am

Each year we kick off the new year of Sunday School activities with a breakfast celebration prepared by some of our own College Park chefs. During the breakfast we recognize the children and youth who are promoting to the next class. If you have a child who is moving into Toddler Room (2-yrs), PreK (4-yrs), 1st grade, 3rd grade, 6th grade, or 9th grade, please contact the church office. We also offer a brief introduction to the adult Sunday School classes. Come and join us for this time of food and fellowship!

SUMMERSAULT

Sunday Morning Kids' Hangout

Our kids will take a break from their regular Sunday School classes this summer. On Sunday mornings, 9:45 -10:45 am, the kids will meet on the playground for playtime, refreshments and a bible story. We hope you'll bring your kids for some Summersault fun.

We need volunteers to help lead the Kids' Sunday Morning Hangout for PreK-5th graders. Please sign up to help (2 volunteers needed per week).



Thank You

To Our College Park Family

Thank you for your endless love, generosity and support – in anticipation of Loukas and in the months since his arrival. You have enveloped us with your love through phone calls, cards, gifts, visits, prayers, well-wishes. We thank you especially for gifting Lin with the opportunity to spend these first few months at home. We are so grateful to be raising our son among this remarkable community of people. Thank you just **doesn't seem adequate** - but it's all we have. We love you and are all three glad to be back with you.

Lin, Caryanne and Loukas

All Church Summer Read - *Wearing God*

Book discussion group will meet in the Fellowship Hall, 10-10:40 am, each Sunday during the summer.

Summer All Church Read "Wearing GOD" Begins June 7th



Announcements

Ultimate Frisbee

Ready to get out and run? Join us for Ultimate Frisbee Monday nights, 6:00 pm, at Lake Daniel Park (corner of Radiance and Mimosa). No experience necessary. Bring a red shirt, a white shirt, some water and you are good to go! You will learn as you play! Or just bring a chair and relax and chat with your friends and watch the game. Find us on Facebook at "College Park Frisbee."



August GUM Donation:

Rice (any size, any kind)

Place donations in the wicker basket in the side foyer entrance (beside the bookshelves).



ZUMBA® Classes

Thursday nights 6:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Cost: \$5.00.

Exercise Bikes Needed

Erwin Montessori is looking for used exercise bikes to start a Read and Ride program (readandride.org) next school year. If you or someone you know has a bike that can be donated, or questions about the program, please contact Nancy Cravey. Tax receipts can be provided for any donations and pickup can be arranged.



4 Ways 2 Give

For added convenience, we now have four ways for you to give to the church general budget or special offerings:

- Write a check or give cash at one of our Sunday services or at the office during the week. If you don't have envelopes with an assigned number (for better record keeping), contact Annette in the church office.
- Set up bill pay through your bank online. It's a favorite since there are usually no fees to you or the church, and it's very easy.
- Pay at either church service with a credit or debit card via tablets available for use (church pays fees).
- Pay online with a credit card at www.CollegeParkChurch.com. Choose the option to cover the credit card fees or let the church pay them.

5G Prayer!

Well, not exactly. But the Prayer Team would love to be part of your prayer network. On the Prayer Team bulletin board, across from Michael's office, you'll find prayer request cards.

Write your prayer request and leave it in the envelope. We'll add it to the weekly list of concerns the team holds up in prayer.

Also, you are always welcome to use the Prayer Room, inside the third-floor classroom next to the choir room. It's a peaceful place to pray, meditate or simply be still to listen for God.



College Park Women's Retreat

Women of College Park, please save the date for the annual women's retreat, Oct. 9-11 at Blowing Rock Conference Center

in Blowing Rock, NC. Thank you to all past participants for feedback on last year's retreat. The retreat planning committee has taken your suggestions to heart and is planning a great weekend for College Park women. The cost will be less than \$150 each and will include all meals, lodging and a retreat facilitator. Details to come on carpooling and housing options. A link will be sent out for the signup genius site once plans are finalized. No action is needed now, except to save the date. <http://www.brccenter.org/>

Margaret Bell: margaret@inhousemedia.us
Monica Harrison: wmonica1976@aol.com

NEW YORK CITY

Do you want to go to New York City this summer? Apartment is available again this year with dates in July and August and some other holiday weekends. Close to Times Square and Broadway. Contact Angela Brady-Fleming by phone: 336-501-0270, text, or Email: fleming1301@yahoo.com



About Meditation

Sunday afternoons 4:00 pm in the Parlor.
Everyone welcome.

General Budget Update 7.26.15

YTD Giving:	\$159,867
YTD Budget:	\$181,363
Difference:	-\$21,496



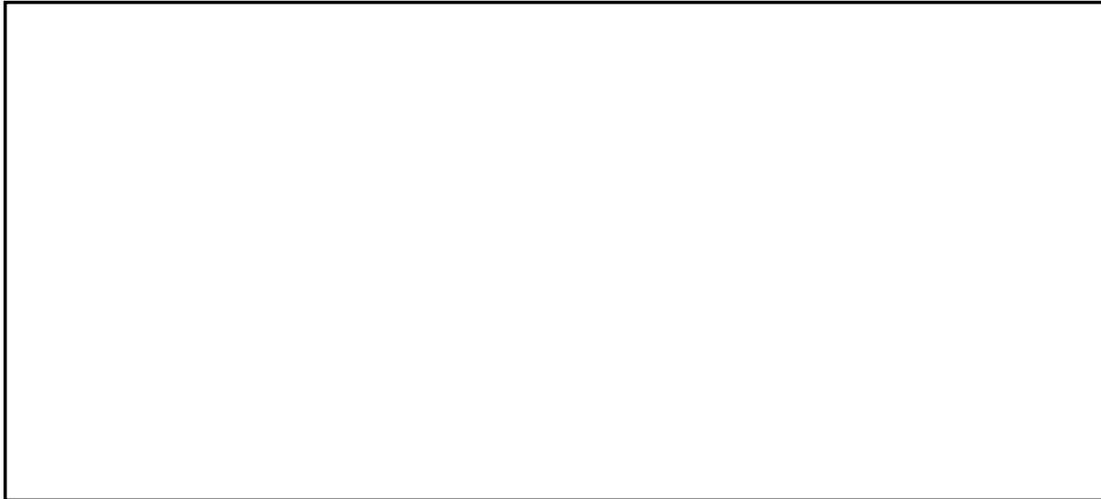
Capital Campaign "Access for All"

Financial Report as of 7.26.15:

Donations needed to complete the final two projects: Chapel & Kitchen \$392,000
Cash balance available for next two projects: \$204,496

College Park
An American Baptist Church
1601 Walker Avenue,
Greensboro, North Carolina 27403-2318

Return Service Requested



Looking Ahead-August

- 2 Sunday Activities
Meditation 4 pm, Parlor
- 3 Frisbee 6 pm, Lake Daniels
- 4 Narcotics Anon Noon, Chapel
- 6 AI-Anon 10 am, FH
Narcotics Anon Noon, FH
Zumba 6 pm, FH
- 7 AI-Anon Noon, FH
- 9 Sunday Activities
Meditation 4 pm, Parlor
- 10 VBS 9 am—Noon
Frisbee 6 pm, Lake Daniels
- 11 VBS 9 am—Noon
Narcotics Anon Noon, Sanctuary
- 12 VBS 9 am—Noon
- 13 VBS 9 am—Noon
AI-Anon 10 am, Sanctuary
Narcotics Anon Noon, Sanctuary
Zumba 6 pm, FH
- 14 VBS 9 am—Noon
AI-Anon Noon, Sanctuary
- 16 GUM Sunday
Sunday Activities
Meditation 4 pm, Parlor
- 17 Frisbee 6 pm, Lake Daniels
- 18 Narcotics Anon Noon, FH
Pendergraft Meeting 5:30 pm, Parlor
PFLAG 7 pm, FH
- 20 AI-Anon 10 am, FH
Narcotics Anon Noon, FH
Zumba 6 pm, FH
- 21 AI-Anon Noon, FH
- 23 Sunday Activities
Meditation 4 pm, Parlor
- 24 Frisbee 6pm, Lake Daniels
- 25 Narcotics Anon Noon, FH
- 27 AI-Anon 10 am, FH
Narcotics Anon Noon, FH
Zumba 6 pm, FH
- 28 AI-Anon Noon, FH
- 29 Ginny Olson Event
- 30 Sunday Activities
- 31 Frisbee 6 pm, Lake Daniels

Church Telephone: (336) 273-1779; Fax: (336) 273-9637
www.collegeparkchurch.com cpbcgbo@bellsouth.net

Alliance of Baptists - American Baptist Churches -
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

July Food Donations = 42 Pounds
2015 Total Food Donations = 631 Pounds

Every Member a Minister

Lindy Beauregard—*A Beautiful Piano Given in Her Memory*

Phyllis Calvert, Treasurer

Brian Carden, Minister to Senior Adults

Rydell Harrison, Minister of Music & Worship

Darlene Johnson, Sexton

Keith A. Menhinick, Wake Forest Pastoral Intern

David Soyars, Organist (*on Sabbatical*)

Ralph & Tammy Stocks, Missionaries

Lin Story-Bunce, Associate Minister

Andrea Turner, Deacon Chair

Michael S. Usey, Pastor

Annette Waisner, Office & Media Manager

www.collegeparkchurch.com
cpbcgbo@bellsouth.net

www.facebook.com/collegeparkchurch