

# SOUTHSIDE

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BAPTIST

**WE HAVE  
TO KEEP  
OUR EYES  
FIXED ON  
JESUS.  
2 CORINTHIANS 4:18**

July 2020

## Stay Focused on Jesus

The year 2020 has been the strangest year of my life (I realize this may be a gross understatement) and it is only July. It seems that the minute the clock struck midnight on January 1<sup>st</sup> someone flipped a switch labeled “Chaos” and everything began to go crazy – you know the details of all that has/is happening in our world and country so I will avoid sharing the details. Like many of you, I am tired and often find myself discouraged and depressed over all that is happening. Nearly everyday presents something new and stranger than the day before. How do we, as followers of Christ, walk through this without going crazy? I want to share some things from God’s Word that will help you walk through these days with grace, strength, stamina and focus. Look below at 2 Corinthians 4:7-18...

*Now we have this treasure in clay jars, so that this extraordinary power may be from God and not from us. <sup>8</sup> We are afflicted in every way but not crushed; we are perplexed but not in despair; <sup>9</sup> we are persecuted but not abandoned; we are struck down but not destroyed. <sup>10</sup> We always carry the death of Jesus in our body, so that the life of Jesus may also be displayed in our body. <sup>11</sup> For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus’s sake, so that Jesus’s life may also be displayed in our mortal flesh. <sup>12</sup> So then, death is at work in us, but life in you. <sup>13</sup> And since we have the same spirit of faith in keeping with what is written, I believed, therefore I spoke, we also believe, and therefore speak. <sup>14</sup> For we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you. <sup>15</sup> Indeed, everything is for your benefit so that, as grace extends through more and more people, it may cause thanksgiving to increase to the glory of God. <sup>16</sup> Therefore we do not give up. Even though our outer person is being destroyed, our inner person is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory. <sup>18</sup> So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*

Paul begins by declaring that our lives are “clay jars.” Clay jars were ordinary, inexpensive and unassuming pieces of pottery used in everyday tasks. There was nothing special about the clay jar in and of itself. The contents of the clay jars make the jars important and valuable. In verse 6 Paul reminds us that our lives, our ‘clay jars’ hold the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as a result of our salvation. Our life has meaning and purpose not because of who we are but because of whose we are – we belong to Christ and even though we are “ordinary, inexpensive, clay jars” we are valuable and precious in God’s sight. We are endowed by the extraordinary power of God – God’s strength, God’s stamina, God’s grace is ours through faith in Jesus Christ. In our weakness, in our ordinary, unassuming self, God’s power is perfected.

Next, Paul will walk us through the normal Christian life – a life of challenges, obstacles, suffering and persecution. The challenges we are facing in 2020 are nothing compared to the challenges the early church faced but I want to look at some parallels to encourage you in these days.

- We are afflicted – this language references sufferings brought about by pressure of circumstances. We may liken this to the pressure on coal that produces diamonds. At a minimum, the challenges we are facing from all that is happening have caused a great deal of pressure in our lives - anxiety, stress, uncertainty, and distrust among other things. Allow this pressure in your heart and mind produce “diamonds” in your life.
- We are perplexed – this language references confusion. This pressure causes us to ask the question, “What in the world is going on, what do I believe, what is true, which way do I turn?” As I look around, as I read the newspaper and watch the news, I often find myself asking these questions. In some ways it doesn’t feel real. Admittedly, I am confused, I am perplexed, I am at a loss – I can’t find a logical explanation most days.

## Stay Focused on Jesus (Continued)

- We are persecuted – this language references assaults from the outside, attacks resulting from our faith. Think about this – in today’s mainstream America every religion is tolerated except for Christianity. Everyone is entitled to their beliefs and convictions except for Christians. This isn’t by accident – darkness has never valued light. As long as this world continues this will be the norm and it will only get worse.
- We are struck down – this language references being thrown to the ground over and over. We are knocked down over and over but never knocked out. This reminds me of the early Rocky movies. Rocky Balboa was always the lesser boxer and he regularly would get knocked down, over and over, but he never allowed himself to be knocked out – he kept getting back up and he kept fighting to the very end. Look with me at 2 Corinthians 11:22-27 and pay attention to all that Paul endured for the sake of Christ and the Gospel. He was regularly knocked down but never knocked out...

*Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the descendants of Abraham? So am I. <sup>23</sup> Are they servants of Christ? I’m talking like a madman—I’m a better one: with far more labors, many more imprisonments, far worse beatings, many times near death.*

*<sup>24</sup> Five times I received the forty lashes minus one from the Jews. <sup>25</sup> Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning. Three times I was shipwrecked. I have spent a night and a day in the open sea. <sup>26</sup> On frequent journeys, I faced dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my own people, dangers from Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers at sea, and dangers among false brothers; <sup>27</sup> toil and hardship, many sleepless nights, hunger and thirst, often without food, cold, and without clothing.*

How do we walk through the craziness that surrounds us today? We focus on Christ and Christ alone. Paul challenges us in verses 11-15 of 2 Corinthians 4 to focus on His death and His resurrection as we journey this uncertain road called life. Paul challenges us to find our strength, our hope, our power, our stamina in Christ. As a Christian if we are looking to this world or anything this world offers to bring us hope or joy or peace or contentment, we will never find it. Hope, joy, peace and contentment can only be found in the death and resurrection of Christ. Stay focused on Christ. Stay close to Christ during these strange days. Find your hope in Christ, find your joy in Christ, find your peace in Christ.

Paul will close his thoughts with these words, “Therefore we do not give up...” Don’t give up child of God, don’t give in. Keep moving forward in Christ. Allow the challenges we are facing to grow you in Christ, to push you toward Christ. In verse 18 Paul encourages us to keep our eyes on Jesus and focus on eternity. Why? Because Paul knows the uncertainty of this life. He knows and understands that the foundation of this world and the systems of this world are built on sand and will not last. Paul also knows that Christ is a rock, Christ is a certainty, Christ is eternal.

During these difficult and uncertain days let me encourage you in the same way Paul did the church at Corinth – Don’t give up. Stay focused on Jesus. Stay close to Jesus. Hold on to Jesus and never let go. Prayer, Bible study, personal praise and adoration should be a greater priority in your life today as a result of the craziness we are in the middle of.

Blessings,  
Pastor Matt

## Signs of the Times = not just waiting on the signs of the “End Times”

I felt inspired to share this perspective after reading a message from “A sign for the times” by Sandy Wisdom Martin, Executive Director of national WMU, March 27, 2020.

[www.wmu.com/?q=article/associational-church/wmu-blog/sandy-wisdom-martin/sign-times](http://www.wmu.com/?q=article/associational-church/wmu-blog/sandy-wisdom-martin/sign-times)

Laura D. Brown

### 4 SIGNS that I need to remember:



**Stop:** sometimes we want to just yell STOP at the next person who wants our attention or to what is going on all around us in our society so intensely right NOW. *PSALM 37:7 Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!*



**Go Ahead:** has limited use right now as we are waiting on our lives to go back to our old normal or to adapt to our new normal. We need to move forward with less bravado and more confidence by letting God lead us in His direction for us..

*Deuteronomy 31:6 Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you."*



**Calm Down:** let us speak peace and calm into the lives of everyone we encounter and in our lives...remember to just calm down

*John 14:1 Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.*



**Quiet:** Remember to just be quiet and listen to God.

*Exodus 14:14 The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent."*

**If you need a sign from God ~ Open His Word  
(and cry out in prayer, He is waiting to hear from you)  
Philippians 4:6**



# July 2020

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	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p><b>Vacation Bible School</b>            July 27-30 (9 am - 12 pm)            Ages: 4 years (must have turned 4 by 09/19 - 6th Grade)</p> </div>																																																																																																	





**July 1**  
Gavin Orr  
**July 2**  
Kenneth Coker  
Lisa Smith  
**July 3**  
Sandy Fuhrman  
**July 4**  
Keith Abernathy  
Jerry Chandler  
Delynna Foster  
**July 5**  
Hudson Beddingfield  
J.B. Wells  
**July 6**  
Barbara Abernathy  
Jane Cox  
Janice Hatley  
Jon Millhoff  
Kaylee Rich  
Lindsey Rich

**July 7**  
Teresa Brothers  
Barry Hathcox  
Taylor Weeks  
**July 8**  
Bobby Campbell  
Andrea Dutton  
**July 9**  
Reece Guess  
Jay Knowlton  
Amy Stringer  
Geer Weeks  
**July 11**  
Ronnie Bleas  
**July 12**  
Jordan Halbrooks  
Kaylee Nelson  
Kelly Stephens  
**July 13**  
Tristan Bass  
Joey Hudgins

**July 15**  
Glenn Brewer  
David Sewell  
Carolyn Smith  
**July 16**  
Judy Coker  
Faye Thornton  
**July 18**  
Harold Burton  
Deborah Lankford  
Richard Ledbetter  
Chad Lincoln  
Robert Nichols  
David Richardson  
Dana Sharpe  
**July 19**  
Sharon Dasinger  
Autumn Hamm  
Whitney Hamm  
Barbara Jones  
Cheryl Whited

**July 20**  
Carey Dempsey  
**July 21**  
Frank Ballard  
Lee Daniel  
Jackson Nix  
Tena Strawbridge  
**July 22**  
Blaise Abernathy  
Cade Estes  
**July 23**  
Bill Fuhrman  
**July 24**  
Aubrey Bedwell  
Kathy Jordan  
Fisher Thornton  
**July 25**  
Angela Sloan  
Darryl Vincent

**July 26**  
Beverly Hicks  
**July 27**  
Summer Gregory  
Rick Hester  
**July 28**  
Sylvia Jones  
Lee Vinson  
**July 29**  
Sam Bender  
Arnold Norton  
Myra Pentecost  
Karter Phillips  
Donna Thornton  
**July 30**  
Carole Nichols

## Financial Statement

	May	Year To Date
Total Receipts (Budget & Interest)	\$ 112,607	\$ 550,796
Actual Expenses	\$ 88,055	\$ 461,297
Income (+/-) than Expenses	\$ 24,552	\$ 89,499
Actual Expenses	\$ 88,055	\$ 461,297
Budgeted Expenses	\$ 109,523	\$ 547,613
Actual (+/-) than Budget	\$ (21,468)	\$ (86,316)

### Cash Balances:

	Apr-20	May-20	May-19
Operating Cash	\$ 258,603	\$ 283,994	\$ 222,401
Designated Cash	\$ 334,491	\$ 342,639	\$ 85,130
Total Cash	\$ 593,094	\$ 626,633	\$ 307,531

Long Term Debt Balance: \$ 1,768,755

## Congratulations

**Andrew & Kayla Minor** on the birth of a son, **William George**, and to grandparents Ray & Tena Strawbridge.

**Nick & Caitlin Beard** on the adoption of a son, **Jackson Cash**, and to great grandparents, **Jack & Marilyn Carter**

**Kip & Lauren Williams** on the birth of a son, **Baylor Ray**, and to grandparents, **Jeff & Lori McRae**.

## Sympathy

The following deaths occurred in our church family during the month: Leigh Croley Gray, Stan & Nancy's daughter; Keith Echols Madison, June Madison's son. Our sympathy is expressed to these families.