



The Baptist Bridge

July 2015

By the grace of God, the Philippi Baptist Church shall **Embrace, Model, and Share** the love of God through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Philippi Baptist Church ♦ 69 Church St. ♦ Philippi, WV 26416 ♦ (304) 457-3206



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Emily Casto— Interim Praise Team Leader
Michele Moore, Accompanist

Lucretia Moyer, Secretary

Marj Campbell, Organist
Zvezdana Vlastic, Custodian



A Word from the Pastor

Hello PBC Family! I was posed the question the other day that has taken me on a search for clarification. As a ministry leader, when I teach or speak before a group of people the way I say an idea matters. The question asked to me was, "As a Christian, is it right to say, 'I sin daily,' which seems to indicate that I can never stop and that I am implying that is ok." Special thanks to Rev. John

Ortberg, pastor of Menlo Park Presbyterian Church in Menlo Park, California, and editor at large of Leadership Journal for his contribution on this matter. The article was titled, "Sin Tamer," and published in the June, 2009 Edition of Leadership Journal.

How much sin should we expect in the church? We have gauges for other elements of church life. We generally monitor attendance. We know how many people are in small groups. Somebody counts the offerings. And often we don't just measure what we're interested in—we set goals.

Anybody hear of a church that set a goal for a 5-percent sin reduction next year?

I don't mean to be glib about this. Sin is, somehow, at the root of all human misery. Sin is what keeps us from God and from life. It is in the face of every battered woman, the cry of every neglected child, the despair of every addict, the death of every victim of every war.

Pastors have historically understood their primary battle to be not the battle to build a big church, but the battle against the power of sin. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood ..." Christians have measured the seriousness of the battle by the suffering and bleeding of Calvary.

And sin doesn't seem to be going away, either outside or inside the church. So how should we be thinking about sin, in our congregations and in ourselves?

"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:8-9, ESV).

It always helps to begin by identifying the boundaries over which error lies. Then at least we know what mistakes to avoid. And one boundary is the notion that we can be fully rid of sin in this life; that by enough vigilance and will-power and careful adherence to rules we can reach what used to be called sinless perfection (is there another kind?).

The problem with what might be called the "victorious Christian living" mindset is not that it takes sin too seriously. The problem is it inevitably becomes selective about which sins God hates the most, and they always end up being somebody else's sins. It misses the deeper layers of sin: sin not just as concrete acts of lying or cheating, but the sin of narcissism that infects my preaching and image-management that corrupts my conversations; the sin in my motives and emotions that is real but that I cannot simply turn off.

Jesus told the story about the tax collector and the Pharisee to a group of people "who were content in their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else." (Luke 18:9)

The irony is that "looking down on everybody else" is a violation of the law of love, which according to Jesus is the absolute essence of righteousness. Sin is protean. It is a cancer that keeps mutating, and just when you think you have killed off one form, it turns out a deadlier strain yet is threatening your heart.

There is a paradox about sin: it may be impossible to know how well you're doing at battling it. People who are in great physical shape usually know it. Musicians who have honed their craft could generally tell you how. But when is the last time someone whose soul you deeply admire said to you: "I have really been on a roll when it comes to overcoming sin lately"? Those souls among us who are doing the best in contesting it don't seem to think they're doing particularly well. Maybe this is more than just modesty or neurosis. Maybe they're aware of the insidious danger.

Somebody asked Dallas Willard once if he believed in total depravity. His reply was that he believed in "sufficient depravity." Never having run into that doctrine before, the interviewer asked for clarification. Dallas said, "I believe that every human being is sufficiently depraved so that no one will ever get into heaven and say, 'I merited this.'"

Perhaps we are sufficiently depraved that the more we grow spiritually, the more our awareness grows of the health and sanity of what a life freed from depravity would look like.

Psychologists who study incompetence say that the first result of incompetence is the inability to perceive my incompetence. Maybe spiritual growth involves an increased capacity to diagnose the true condition of my soul. On the other hand, almost every page of the New Testament letters includes statements, not simply about the change people will experience one day, but the transformation that seems to be expected now.



A Word from the Pastor

Peter says, "You have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other."

Paul says to the church at Thessalonica: "Your faith is growing more and more, and the love you have for one another is increasing."

A sobering observation about the battle against sin is offered in Hebrews: "In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood."

Whatever else the New Testament teaches, it is surely more than the hope that God will get a group of people into heaven when they die. Paul clearly believed that, with the power of the Holy Spirit, a new way of living was available to ordinary human beings in a new kind of redemptive community. And that they ought to expect this.

Imagine an alcoholic going into an AA meeting and hearing: "We're so glad you're here. We want you to know that you are loved and forgiven through nothing you have done. Of course, don't expect to change too much. Don't expect to actually stop drinking. We don't like it when people suggest sobriety is possible. We believe that trying not to drink breeds arrogance and self-sufficiency. We have a little bumper sticker: '12-steppers are not sober, just forgiven.'"

The whole point of AA (which morphed out of the Oxford Group's attempt to re-capture classic Christian spiritual practices in the early twentieth century) was to bring freedom from a spiritual power (what the Blue Book calls the "cunning, baffling, powerful, patient" enemy of addiction) that was destroying lives.

This is not to say that people in churches could expect to stop sinning the way people in AA stop drinking. Addiction itself is closely related to sin, and sin is infinitely more complex, subtle, and baffling. And more dangerous.

One advantage that AA has over most local congregations is this: people going to a 12-step group often know in their bones that their problem will destroy their lives.

For the most part, we simply do not have that understanding about sin.

I re-read Neal Plantinga's *Not The Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin* on a regular basis. In fact, if this article does nothing else, it will be worth writing if it convinces you to read his book once every few years.

He writes of how we have largely lost awareness of sin; how sin was once something Christians hated, feared, grieved, and fled; now when we see the word at all it tends to be on menus ("Sinful Chocolate Decadence").

However, the awareness of sin cannot be recovered simply by trying to crank up the volume when we talk about it. Merely saying loudly and often that sin is bad will not create the tectonic shift needed in our souls. We need to thoroughly understand what it is that is bad about sin, which is power to corrupt the goodness of life:

"Sin is both the overstepping of a line and the failure to reach it—both transgression and shortcoming. Sin is a missing of the mark, a spoiling of goods, a staining of garments, a hitch in one's gait, a wandering from the path, a fragmenting of the whole. Sin is what culpably disturbs shalom. Sinful human life is a caricature of proper human life."

We often speak of how people cannot comprehend the wonder of grace unless they grasp the badness of sin. And that is true. But it is equally true that people cannot grasp the badness of sin until they grasp the goodness of the life that sin corrupts. When we do not understand the destructiveness of sin, we are more concerned about getting punished for our sins than the way we are punished by them.

Does the persistence of sin in my life threaten my salvation? People don't generally ask aloud, but they wonder: How much sin can there be in my life before I need to start worrying? In other words, is there a level of sin that is in the acceptable zone for a Christian, but if you go higher, you're in danger—like the level of mercury in Lake Michigan? Is there a low tolerance for impurity—like FDA standards for homogenized milk? Or is it more like the purity standards for hot dogs—lots of room for junk?

The problem with these is that they are the wrong questions. The issue is not whether God will stop forgiving sins. Jesus told Peter he needed to forgive an offender not seven times, but seventy times seven. And he wasn't saying Peter could withhold forgiveness for transgression number 491.

Jesus' point was that forgiving is always the right response to sincere repentance. God is not worried that he might be taken advantage of. He is not afraid that some bad boy will use his charm to put one over on heaven.

The problem is that, eventually, I become as used to my sin as I am to the watch on my wrist. I habituate. It doesn't bother me any more. I stop even wanting to be rid of it.



A Word from the Pastor

Sin damages my capacity for God. Sin blinds. The danger is not that God won't respond to my repeated repentance; the danger is that I might become so ensnared that I become simply unable or unwilling to repent. This is the dynamic at work when Paul says, "And God gave them over to a depraved mind."

So the question isn't "How much sin am I allowed?" The question is "Am I moving toward the darkness or toward the light? Am I growing toward God, or away from him? Am I becoming more sensitive and responsive to Jesus?"

It is because of this that sin is to be taken so seriously. Paul says to the church at Galatia: "Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted."

He doesn't just say: "Invoke church discipline if there's a sexual scandal." He says we're to help one another move toward freedom from sin. From all kinds of sin.

It is interesting in our day that many churches speak much of Matthew 18:15 and the need for values around resolving conflict. But that is only one application of the larger need stated in Galatians 6:1, which is for Christians not just to confront conflict but more generally to confront sin.

This can be done in a way that is not judgmental, because the reality is that we are in no position to judge the actual amount of spiritual growth that has taken place in another person; we do not see the genetic material they wrestle with; we do not know the forces that have shaped them.

Frank Laubach preached the gospel to a tribe that had a long history of violence. The chief was so moved by Laubach's presentation that he accepted Christ on the spot. He then turned to Laubach in gratitude and said, "This is wonderful. Who do you want me to kill for you?"

That's his starting point.

I was raised in a church where the Scriptures were taught, given parents who loved me and each other, in a city where being a Protestant Christian was considered normal. So if I think I am superior to the chief because I'm less likely to kill somebody, I'm sadly deluded.

The question is: Am I moving toward the light, and helping others do the same? If I see someone trapped in sin and do nothing to try to help, that is not love. It is the sin of conniving. Conspiring to allow sin to flourish and human life to suffer.

As a leader I have to ask myself, "What are the sins in my congregation (and my life) that no one feels guilty over?" Do I have the courage to awaken guilt?

Taylor Branch wrote how in Montgomery, Alabama, in the 1950s bus drivers would accept money from African-American riders, but then would make them disembark and walk on the sidewalk to re-enter through the rear door lest they touch a white person going down the center aisle.

Sometimes, for the fun of cruelty, drivers would take the money and drive off while the person was walking toward the back door, leaving them without fare or transportation. There was a sin of anger here. But it was not that black people got angry. It was that white people did not.

Worse, it was that white people, who read the Bible and worshiped in church, did not rise up in fury to demand justice. Are we lifting up and recognizing and encouraging the sin-convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit?

At Willow Creek recently, Bill Hybels preached a series called "Enough." After one of the sermons, he challenged members of the congregation to raise their hands if they were willing to surrender their possessions and lifestyles fully to God and actually decide to use their resources to serve the poor and honor God. There was a time for public declaration of intent.

Then Bill said he wanted to have a word with all the folks who did not raise their hands. And this is what he said: "I hope you have a terrible afternoon. And then I hope you have a terrible evening. I hope the Holy Spirit keeps after you, and you have to keep thinking this one through, until you're able to raise your hand as well." Sins I know and sins I don't.

But what's most difficult about sin isn't so much what to do about sin in the congregation I serve. It's what to do about the sin in me! The hard part of sin is my sin. I get angry at people for not doing what I want. I avoid confrontation I know is needed because I want to avoid pain. I am apathetic toward injustice. I lust. I use other people. I manipulate. I get defensive. I am ungrateful for blessings. I withdraw.



A Word from the Pastor

Sometimes I am aware of my sin as I'm doing it. The other night my wife asked me if I had someone's number on my cell phone. I immediately said no. The truth was, I was pretty sure it was on my phone, but I didn't want to take the ten seconds needed to look. I didn't want to tell her that, so I said no. Then I felt bad. So I had to stop, look my wife in the eye, and tell her that I lied to her, and that the reason for my lie was that I didn't want to give up ten seconds. (It turns out the number wasn't on my cell phone after all. Hmm. Are you lying if it turns out by accident you were telling the truth?)

It was humiliating and embarrassing, and is so small that even in the telling, it makes me look more sensitive to sin than I really am. Sometimes my sin is so close to me, like my skin, I don't even know it's there. What matters most, I suppose, is not so much that I am trying to reduce the sin factor. It's that I come to love the life God has created, the shalom God cherishes, and hate the sin that corrupts it, not because I am so "righteous" but because that life is so good. Can my sin ever be totally tamed? Not in this life. Much of the sin that is in me I'm not even conscious of yet. As I grow more spiritually aware, I'll see deficits I don't have the sensitivity to see right now.

But even the sins I'm aware of are constantly tempting me. The Bible says, "We wrestle ..." We wrestle—not against flesh and blood. We wrestle—and as we faithfully wrestle, God allows us victories along the way. We wrestle—and as we wrestle, a Friend greater than we know is somehow at work wrestling in us and for us and through us."

Shalom Pastor Jon

Words From Our Forefathers

"The U. S. Constitution doesn't guarantee happiness, only the pursuit of it. You have to catch up with it yourself."

~Benjamin Franklin

"Always vote for principle, though you may vote alone, and you may cherish the sweetest reflection that your vote is never lost."

~John Quincy Adams

"Among the natural rights of the colonists are these: First a right to life, secondly to liberty, and thirdly to property; together with the right to defend them in the best manner they can."

~Samuel Adams



"Liberty cannot be preserved without general knowledge among the people."

~John Adams

"The Bible is worth all the other books which have ever been printed."

~ Patrick Henry

"In matters of style, swim with the current; in matters of principle, stand like a rock."

~Thomas Jefferson

"Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."

~George Washington



AB University, President Creehan,
 Faculty, staff, and students
 Barbour County Homeless
 Stephanie Bassel
 Lee & Sue Beuckman
 Jean Bowles
 Debbie Buntrock
 Camp Cowen
 Celebrate Recovery
 Church van
 Code Blue
 Ruby Cozad
 Shaquille Evans
 Andrew Kerr
 George Kratsas
 Local ministries
 David Lucy
 Detra McVey
 Men's Step Studies
 Debbie Mulneix
 Myers missionary family in Mexico
 Michael Perry
 Michael Perry's uncle Kirby
 Michelle Phenix
 Chuck Scheick
 Elody Shrader
 Sonya Stahl
 Liam Varghese
 Tom Ware
 Women's Step Studies
 PBC Youth

Unspoken requests for family members, unsaved people, community concerns, job and home loss, financial difficulties.

Also, in need of prayer: Our nation, state, and country leaders and officials. Please pray for victims of crime, war and violence throughout our country.



Pray for protection for military personnel and their families throughout the world and those serving our country:

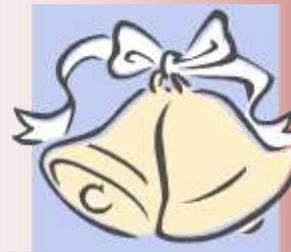
Captain Aaron Cross
 Tim Jenkins,
 Brian Lundell
 Corporal Anthony Perry, Sr.
 Major Kris Wood



Blair & Pearl Marks, Dr. Shearer, Mary Tamulitis
 Vangie Shaffer (Mansfield Place), Germaine &
 Austin Whitman



Dixie Barley
 John David Cobb
 Sharon Cross



Congratulations to:

Ashley Mace & Brandon Rinehart
 and
 Angel McCullough & Christian Stull

Both couples were wed on Saturday, June 20th.

Harper Brooke Summerfield was born June 15th, 2015 Congratulations to new parents Amanda & Mark Summerfield, grandparents J. D. & Linda Long and Great grandma Judi Funk.



Visitors Welcome!

The river murmuring over her shoulder, the swing swaying as she pushes with her foot, Janet Stephens says, “I wish people would just stop by to join me here on the porch, enjoy this beautiful view and appreciate what God has given us and just commune with Him and nature.”

Actually, Janet has more than her share of visitors, and they come from all over the country. She is the proprietor of Angel Band Farm, a bed-and-breakfast facility a few miles outside of Philippi. She laughs, suggesting that being a hotelier runs in her blood. She was born in Boothbay Harbor, Maine, where her grandparents ran a motel and restaurant that catered to the crews of large ships and to select celebrities. “Walter Cronkite was a frequent,” she smiles. “We all worked around the property—it was a family affair.”

Janet’s family eventually moved to Connecticut, and that’s where she was raised in a strict Baptist family—“We could only read religious material on Sundays,” she remembers, “and I never dated or went to a prom. We got TV when I was about twelve, but we had to have permission to turn it on, and we were allowed only one program per day—plus the news. And that was only if we had finished our homework and our chores.”

It was through her church that Janet learned of Alderson-Broaddus College and received a scholarship to enter the nursing program. While a student, working in the Cave (snack bar) and on the switchboard, she met Steve Weaver, whom she married. Eventually, she became the mother of three daughters and the stepmother of another daughter and a son.

“And I took care of several relatives—my grandmother and my mother and others.”

Having returned to Connecticut, Janet also nursed the wife of a construction magnate and, when he retired, she moved with them to Florida. After working in a retirement center for seventeen years, she spent three years in Georgia. And then, in 2008, she came back to West Virginia to manage the farm which had been inherited by two of her daughters from their Weaver grandparents. And that’s where she is today.

It was her neighbor, Marsha Smith, who invited Janet to join her at Philippi Baptist Church. “I had been attending the little Methodist church in Arden, but they had services only twice a month, and I wanted more than that. I just love this church—the great music, the warm hospitality, and the focus on community service. I feel very comfortable—and blessed at Philippi Baptist.” She smiles. “I guess I’d like it if we sang more of the old hymns, the ones so many of us grew up on, and I’d like to see a little more active participation in the worship—like with the old hymns—and I’m hoping I can join a membership class that meets some time other than early on Sunday. I just can’t get away from my guests before church time. But,” she says, “I’m very well satisfied. I’m here to stay.”

Weekly Events

Sundays	Men's Step Studies Sunday School AM Worship	7:30am 9:15am 10:30am
Mondays	Celebrate Recovery Praise Team Practice Celebrate Recovery	4:45pm 6:30pm
Tuesdays	Women's Bible Study (@ Sarah Cobb's house)	12:45pm
Wednesdays	Women's Step Studies Midweek Service	5:30pm 6pm
Fridays	Code Blue (ages 13-17)	6pm-9pm

Children's Volunteer Watch and Teach Calendar for July

	July 5	July 12	July 19	July 26
Nursery	Wanda & Jim Steele	Janet Baughman	Zvezdana Vlastic	Cheryl Wolfe & Bobby Villers
Wee Church	Rebekah Hicks & Chandler Poling	Hayden & Heather Cottrill	Koreen Villers & Sam Ferguson	Wes & Crystal Gray
Junior Church	Kelly Bracey & Gage Poling	Sara & Eddy Poling	Pete & Sarah Ferguson	Angel McCullough & Thomas Villers

Happy Birthday!

2- Bobby Villers	13- Bentley Meader	26- Shirley Keen
2- Thomas Villers	16- Bruce Blankenship	28- Roconda Daugherty
3- Josh Gilpin	20- Randy Moore	29- Taylor Smith
5- Cheryl Wolfe	22- Richard Hepler	30- Erin Davis
6- Pastor Don Walls	24- Carman Cline	31- Caleb Villers
8- Noah Casto	24- Madison Riffle	
9- Carol Ervin	24- Dorian Cottrill	



3- George & Marija Sommers
11- Gary & Brenda Price
16- Jud & Kelly Bracey
29- Pete & Sarah Ferguson
30- Bruce & Cheryl Blankenship
31- Wesley & Crystal Gray

Upcoming Events

Sunday, July 5th– Saturday, July 11th– High School Camp I at Camp Cowen

Sunday, July 5th– Tuesday, July—Children’s Art Camp at Parchment Valley

Sunday, July 5th– 10:30am– Communion & Deacon Relief Offering

4:30pm– Diaconate meeting

Tuesday, July 7th– Saturday, July 11th– Celebrate Recovery East Coast Summit in Tennessee

Sunday, July 12th– Saturday, July 18th– Junior High II Camp at camp Cowen

Sunday, July 12th– 11:45am– Board of Christian Education meeting

5:00pm– Board of Trustees meeting

7:30pm– Church Council meeting

Saturday, July 18th– Senior Day at Camp Cowen

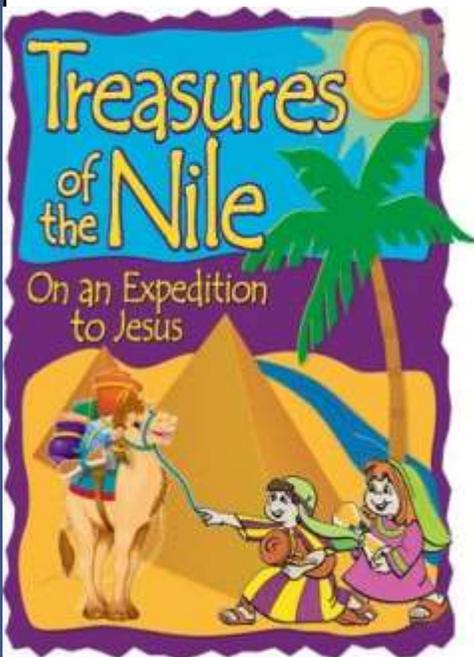
Sunday, July 19th– Saturday, July 25th– High School II Camp at camp Cowen

Sunday, July 19th– 4:00pm– Pastor Jon leads Chapel Service at Mansfield Place

6:00pm– Board of Missions & Outreach meeting

Thursday, July 23rd– 7:00pm– Blue & Gray Choir rehearsal

Saturday, July 25th– 9:30am– Vacation Bible School



Philippi Baptist Church Vacation Bible School

“Treasures of the Nile”

Come let your kids enjoy the “Treasures of the Nile”, at Philippi Baptist Church in Philippi on Saturday July 25th from 10:00 a.m. till 3:00 p.m. Registration starts at 9:30 a.m. Parents must fill out registration form the day of camp. Children ages three to Middle School are welcome. Activities such as crafts, games, music, and science lab are scheduled and lunch will be provided. At 2:30 p.m. you have the chance to come watch your kids perform their skits and songs they learned in their activities, and right after there will be a social time and light refreshments at 3:00 p.m. downstairs in our fellowship hall.



Suggested Heart & Hand donation for June:

Soup & Peanut Butter



Heart & Hand Christmas box donation suggestions:

Stuffing, Salt & Pepper



Philippi Baptist Church
69 Church Street
Philippi, WV 26416

Celebrate Recovery

Barbour County

A Christ-Centered Recovery Program

MONDAY NIGHTS
6:30-8:30PM

The Landing (6th– 12th grade)
Celebration Place (K-5th grade)
Nursery Provided

Philippi Baptist Church

