

BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

5 Day Chronological Bible Reading Program WWW.FIVEDAYBIBLEREADING.COM

Week Thirty-six: August 31– September 6

- Day 1: 2 Chronicles 29-31; 1 Corinthians 8
- Day 2: 2 Kings 18-19; 2 Chron 32; Psalm 67; 1 Cor. 9
- Day 3: Isaiah 36-37; Psalm 123; 1 Corinthians 10
- Day 4: 2 Kings 20; Isaiah 38-40; Psalm 68; 1 Cor. 11
- Day 5: Isaiah 41-44; 1 Corinthians 12

Week Thirty-eight: September 14-20

- Day 1: Isaiah 64-66; 2 Corinthians 2
- Day 2: 2 Kings 21; 2 Chron. 33; Psalm 71; 2 Cor. 3
- Day 3: Nahum 1-3; Psalm 149; 2 Corinthians 4
- Day 4: 2 Kings 22-23; Psalm 73; 2 Corinthians 5
- Day 5: 2 Chronicles 34-35; 2 Corinthians 6

Week Forty: September 28– October 4

- Day 1: Jeremiah 11-13; 2 Corinthians 12
- Day 2: Jeremiah 14-16; Psalm 76; 2 Corinthians 13
- Day 3: Jeremiah 17-20; James 1
- Day 4: Jeremiah 22, 23, 26; Psalm 77; James 2
- Day 5: Jeremiah 25, 35, 36, 45; Psalm 133; James 3

Week Thirty-seven: September 7-13

- Day 1: Isaiah 45-48; 1 Corinthians 13
- Day 2: Isaiah 49-52; Psalm 69; 1 Corinthians 14
- Day 3: Isaiah 53-55; Psalm 128; 1 Corinthians 15
- Day 4: Isaiah 56-59; Psalm 70; 1 Corinthians 16
- Day 5: Isaiah 60-63; 2 Corinthians 1

Week Thirty-nine: September 21-27

- Day 1: Habakkuk 1-3; 2 Corinthians 7;
- Day 2: Zephaniah 1-3; Psalm 74; 2 Corinthians 8
- Day 3: Jeremiah 1-4; Psalm 130; 2 Corinthians 9
- Day 4: Jeremiah 5-7; Psalm 75; 2 Corinthians 10
- Day 5: Jeremiah 8-10; 2 Corinthians 11


Radically Ordinary

The ordinary Christian life is not the opposite of the radical Christian life. The ordinary Christian life *is* a radical life. The ordinary Christian life is a life of daily trusting Christ; daily repenting of our sins; daily abiding in Christ; daily loving Christ; daily dying to self; daily taking up our crosses and following Christ; daily loving God and neighbor; and daily proclaiming the gospel to ourselves, our families, our friends, and our communities. Every Christian is an ordinary Christian, and every ordinary Christian is a radical Christian. The ordinary Christian is not a complacent, passionless, nominal, or casual Christian. On the contrary, every ordinary Christian person—child, teenager, college student, father, mother, husband, wife, single man, single woman, retired man, and retired woman—every Christian is radical because every Christian is united to Christ by faith and will bear radical, life-giving fruit. And what about the "radical" call to foreign missions? It's true that not every Christian is a foreign missionary, but every Christian is on mission. We're on mission not just when we drive out of our church parking lots every week but when we roll out of bed every morning. As followers of Christ, we are on mission when we go across the globe, when we go across the street, when we sit at the kitchen table with our family, when we enter our

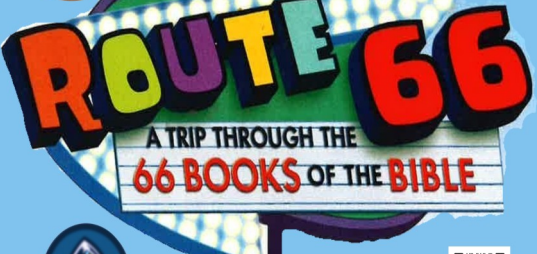
workplace or classroom, when we kneel to pray at the bedsides of our children, and when we discipline them and point them to our sinless Savior. Although not every Christian is called to serve God in a foreign country, every Christian is a foreigner in his own country—a citizen of heaven—and an ambassador of Jesus Christ. Every Christian is called out of darkness and into the light, and then called to go back into the darkness to shine—wherever God places him. And wherever He has placed us, we are called to be radically faithful, radically diligent, and radically shining as a light in our dark world. We are called to radically go wherever He calls us to go, or radically stay right where we are, as we radically send and support those whom He has called to go. All of this we are to do with the same commitment and passion with which we radically serve alongside one another in the ordinary way Christ has ordained. Throughout history, God has done extraordinary things through ordinary people. The ordinary Christian will always fight the status quo of lukewarm Christianity. The ordinary Christian will always fight nominal, passionless Christianity. Whatever we do,

wherever we live, whatever our income, whatever our vocation, whatever our education, whatever we do in retirement, whatever we drive, whatever we eat or drink—we are called to do all for the glory of God as ordinary, radical followers and proclaimers of Jesus Christ on mission to make disciples of all nations, in whatever place God has called us to live and serve.


This article was written by Burk Parsons and previously published in Tabletalk on Ligonier.org on July 25th, 2014



Begins September 3rd
5:00pm to 7:00pm



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VOLUME 307



A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF FIRST BAPTIST MENA

To my FBC Family, Imagine a woman who has devoted herself to personal education with an emphasis on biblical studies. She meets the man of her life, and they are blessed with eight children. Sadly, after 34 years of marriage, she is widowed and still has two children living at home along with caring for her aged mother. Her busy life never changed her devotion to God's Word and the drive to learn all she could. She was often admired for her in-depth biblical knowledge and devotion to the church and its mission. She also carried a burden for children in the church and worked tirelessly to introduce them to God's truth. Two years after her husband's passing and following years of dedication to the state WMU, she was asked to lead the organization as its Executive Director. She commendably filled the role for nearly 15 years faithfully reaching women to encourage and support them and the earnest desire to see missions go forward to reach the world. In her desire for missions, she pushed to establish an annual week of prayer for state missions, and the first one was held in 1926. This led to the start of a statewide mission offering that would support numerous mission projects to help countless people while sharing the gospel.

The impact she made is still felt today across state missions and in the lives of innumerable lives that have been changed. Who could have endured such things and still produce such an effect on state missions? Her name was Dixie Jackson. Her namesake is what we remember today as we pray for, encourage and financially support state mission work across Arkansas. Money raised during the annual collection goes to Arkansas Disaster Relief, the support of pregnancy centers, hunger ministries, medical/dental clinics, prison seminaries, and church planting. Certainly, it would have been difficult for Dixie to have imagined such an impact brought about by her devotion over 100 years ago. The reality is that faithful prayers and giving by members of Baptist churches across Arkansas are delivering a serious impact to advance the Kingdom of God. Lives are being changed, and the gospel is spreading, and this is why we want to be part of it. At First Baptist Mena, we want to be known as a mission-minded people because we are commanded to be a people of mission and the gospel by Jesus. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20

This command is for every believer and there are numerous reasons why we are given this directive. Remember, it is literally the last thing He said before returning to heaven. First, life is found in the gospel, and with 62 million people leaving this world for eternity each year, the mission cannot be more critical. Second, Christ has told us there is a plentiful harvest, the problem is a lack of harvesters. Third, sharing the gospel points forward to Christ's return and the eternal kingdom it proclaims. These are but a few of the reasons we need to understand how critical it is for the church to carry the gospel and fulfill the Great Commission. We will launch this year's focus on state missions September 7 and will continue through the end of the month. I want to exhort each of us to prayerfully consider our support for the Dixie Jackson State fund for missions. It desperately requires prayer, involvement and finances. Each of us is called to take the gospel and one powerful way it happens is through this annual mission concentration. May God bless this year with an outpouring of His grace on Arkansas that would spread the good news to every person in this state.

Many blessings,
Bro. Jim Tenmery

I've long been fascinated with those moments in Jesus' life when the veil of His human flesh gave way to a vision of His refulgent glory as the Son of God. What must it have been like to be one of His disciples and to know Him as a man but then to see with clarity His deity in an encounter of dazzling light?

The most spectacular of these encounters was His transfiguration, that moment when His transcendent radiance paralyzed Peter, James, and John with awe (Matt. 17:1-13). All they wanted at that moment was to bask in Jesus' glory forever—and so that is what they asked for.

It has always struck me that Jesus said no to that request. Instead, Jesus came down from the Mount of Transfiguration with His disciples and went back into the world. Jesus' going back into the world has served as a model for the church's ministry until the present day. When Christ calls people into His kingdom, He doesn't pull them out of the world forever. He sends them back out with the gospel.

Jesus did that with the Apostles just after His resurrection. He came to the upper room, where they were hiding in fear, and told them that they were to wait for the Spirit to be poured out. But at that point, there was to be no more waiting. Once the Spirit came, they were to go out into the world (Luke 24:36-49).

And that is what they did. The Apostles entered the marketplace with the authority of Christ behind them, and they upset the world. Paul is a model

for engagement with the world. We are familiar with his confrontation with the philosophers at the Areopagus in Athens, but these philosophers knew where to find him because he was "in the marketplace every day," reasoning with the people who were there (Acts 17:16-34). The marketplace in Athens was more than a mere shopping mall. It was the center of community life. It was the place where people gathered to play, shop, hear lawsuits, and attend events. It was a decidedly public location, the place where one could engage with the world. No one went to the marketplace to hide. Paul went there to find unbelievers and minister to them. During the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther preached that the church had to move out of the heavenly temple into the world. By this he meant that Christ has relevance not just for the community of believers but for the whole world as well. Jesus is not bound to the inner courts of the Christian community, and if we think that He is, then we are being disobedient or, perhaps, have no faith at all. His gospel is for all nations, and all of us are responsible to help fulfill the Great Commission to make disciples of all peoples (Matt. 28:18-20). Throughout church history, many have taught the idea of what we might call "salvation by separation," believing that we achieve holiness by avoiding contact with sinners. This doctrine predates Christianity, however, having been invented by the Pharisees, who were scandalized by Jesus' ministry to tax collectors, prostitutes, and

lepers. But if Christ's holiness did not require withdrawing from the world, then neither does ours. He came to seek and to save the lost, and the lost are gathered in the world—in our Father's world. To stay out of the public sphere, away from sinners, is never a permanent option for the Christian. I say "permanent option" because generations of believers have seen wisdom in having new Christians withdraw from the world for a season—not into monastic isolation but for a time of concentrated growth with fellow believers. Upon reaching spiritual maturity, however, they must see the world as God's theater of redemption, that place where He meets with sinners through the gospel witness of believers and calls His elect to faith. Martin Luther noted that it is the coward who flees from the real world permanently and hides his fear with piety. The church is not a ghetto or a reservation. True, the world wants to put us there, to force us out of the world into the four walls of the church building, outside of which we are never to speak of sin or the salvation that comes only in Christ. However, we don't have to let the world do that. I fear that all too often we blame the world for our failure to engage it when, in reality, we are more comfortable hiding from the world's hostility. Our fallen culture will do whatever it can to hide our light under a bushel. We dare not invent our own bushels to help them in their goal. Christ has commissioned us to be light and salt in this world (Matt. 5:13-16). We have no option but to obey.

The first chapter of Ephesians is one of my favorite passages of scripture. Verses 3 through 14 exhibit characteristics that suggest it may have functioned as a form of praise or liturgical expression in the early church. It's important to remember that early Christian worship practices differed from modern services. While we might associate hymns with specific melodic structures, the New Testament indicates a broader use of "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs," which likely encompassed various forms of communal expression, including those that were recited, chanted, or even spontaneously created. So, while these verses do not fit our definition of a song, the structure, language and themes strongly suggests that it became an element in the worship practice of the early church, perhaps recited or chanted in a rhythmic manner. First, note the structure of the verses. We hear an expression of praise to the Father in verses 3 through 6 climaxed by a refrain, "to the praise of the glory of His grace". Then, in the last phrase of verse 6, Paul introduces the Son, designating Him as "the Beloved". Following, in verses 7 through 12, Paul writes concerning the work of Jesus, the Beloved. That section is closed in verse 12 with the same refrain, "to the praise of His glory." Paul then recounts the work of the Holy Spirit in verses 13 and 14, again ending with the refrain, "to the praise of His glory."

As to the language, one writer states, "The language of Ephesians 1:3-14 is a rich, exultant, and rhetorically dense stream of praise, often cited as one single, long, complex sentence in the original Greek. Its style is characterized by overwhelming the reader with a single rush of ideas to express the magnitude of God's blessings in Christ."

The theme of the passage focuses upon God's activity in redeeming mankind and the world. Before the world was ever created, God had a plan for the world. Before man ever sinned, God already had a plan to remedy sin. Before the world ever became fractured and violent through a spirit of rebellion against God, God already had a plan to bring unity and peace and love to the human experience.

The worldly wise tells us that everything that is exists is by happen-chance. They hold that the structure and order of the universe are quite by accident as matter was flung into space by a great explosion.

From that big bang, natural, evolutionary processes have brought us to where we are today. The world is changing, to be sure, as the evolutionary processes continue. But it is going nowhere as far as a guided design or inherent purpose, for that would entail an intelligent being behind it all, and that, they cannot have.

The revelation of the wisdom of God tells us a different story. We are told that God, our loving, heavenly Father, is eternal. All things proceed from Him. He peopled the earth with human beings made in his image, reflecting his glory and wisdom. He gave them freedom to experience and enjoy their surroundings and to have intimate communion with Himself.

There was only one restriction, designed to demonstrate their trust and love for God. Before God ever created man, he knew precisely the actions man would take.

He knew they would disobey and rebel against Him. But He already had a plan in place to bring man back into relationship with Himself. Christ was slain before the foundation of the earth. It was in the Father's will and the Father's plan that the Son give His life for the redemption of sinners. The human story is headed somewhere, to an ultimate, final, predetermined conclusion.

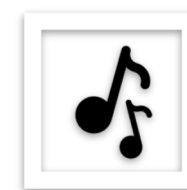
Everything will be summed up in Christ.

This reconstruction under Christ's administration had begun already. The Son had come into the world; the kingdom of God was among men; the price for redemption had been paid; sin had been atoned for in Christ's shed blood.

It was the beginning of the end.

Paul writes a little later here in Eph. 1:20-21 that Christ was raised from the dead, seated at God's right hand in the heavenly places, "far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come."

As the prophet John heard the angel declare, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and he will reign forever an ever." And we shall reign with Him. All things are being gathered together, restored, through redemption under Christ's headship. What a glorious future awaits us if our faith and trust rests in Jesus Christ, in the blood he shed, and the victory he won. Let's join our hearts and our voices in this praise song of the early church, "To the praise of the glory of His grace."



Blessed to Serve,

Bro. Vernon