

BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

5 Day Chronological Bible Reading Program WWW.FIVEDAYBIBLEREADING.COM

Week One: December 29– January 4

- Day 1: Genesis 1-2; Psalm 19; Mark 1
- Day 2: Genesis 3-5; Mark 2
- Day 3: Genesis 6-8; Psalm 104; Mark 3
- Day 4: Genesis 9-11; Mark 4
- Day 5: Genesis 12-15; Psalm 148; Mark 5

Week Three: January 12-18

- Day 1: Genesis 28-29; Mark 11
- Day 2: Genesis 30-31; Psalm 11; Mark 12
- Day 3: Genesis 32-34; Psalm 145; Mark 13
- Day 4: Genesis 35-37; Psalm 12; Mark 14
- Day 5: Genesis 38-40; Mark 15

Week Five: January 26-February 1

- Day 1: Exodus 1-3; Galatians 5
- Day 2: Exodus 4-6; Galatians 6
- Day 3: Exodus 7-9; Psalm 105; Ephesians 1
- Day 4: Exodus 10-12; Ephesians 2
- Day 5: Exodus 13-15; Psalm 114; Ephesians 3

Week Two: January 5-11

- Day 1: Genesis 16-18; Mark 6
- Day 2: Genesis 19-20; Psalm 1; Mark 7
- Day 3: Genesis 21-23; Psalm 107; Mark 8
- Day 4: Genesis 24-25; Psalm 4; Mark 9
- Day 5: Genesis 26-27; Mark 10

Week Four: January 19-25

- Day 1: Genesis 41-42; Mark 16
- Day 2: Genesis 43-44; Psalm 24; Galatians 1
- Day 3: Genesis 45-46; Psalm 108; Galatians 2
- Day 4: Genesis 47-48; Psalm 25; Galatians 3
- Day 5: Genesis 49-50; Galatians 4

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We need not even be so dramatic. We know of neighbors, family members, close friends who are seemingly impervious to the gospel. Paul's experience with the Praetorian Guard should serve to give us hope and courage. We take courage in this: the gospel prevails in unlikely places.

This article was written by Stephen Nichols and originally published April 25, 2015. on Ligonier.com

WE STAND FOR

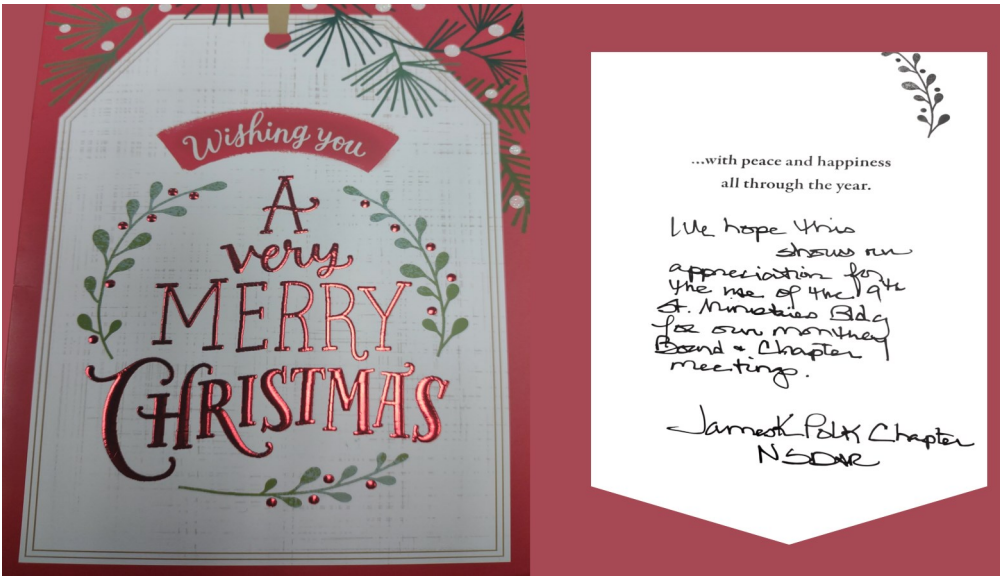
SANCTITY
OF
HUMAN
LIFE



SUNDAY, JANUARY 19, 2025

On January 22, 1984, President Ronald Reagan issued a presidential proclamation designating the third Sunday of January (or close to that) as National Sanctity of Human Life Day. Pastors, churches and life organizations across the United States use this day to bring awareness to the attacks that are daily waged against human life through the abortion industry. One of the best ways we can protect unborn lives is by bringing into the light the darkness of abortion, and supporting local Pregnancy Help Organizations who daily reach women and families with messages of hope and life.

A lovely note we received from the DAR chapter that uses our 9th St. building.



Happy New Year! God has blessed us with another new year when it honestly feels as though the last one just started! Regardless, we always approach each new year with excitement and anticipation of what lies ahead. It is fun to consider what waits for us as we transition into the unknown. No matter what happens, we as believers look forward with the assurance that our sovereign God is in control of all things. Speaking of the new year, so many will outline resolutions for the upcoming months. Studies tell us that most will be focused on personal fitness and financial health. Statistics from YouGov tell us that around 37% of

Americans will make some sort of resolution each year with three being the average number of resolutions set. Most resolutions are established by younger adults and parents with children still living at home. All of these are interesting facts but there is a sad side to making resolutions. A recent Forbes Health/One Poll found that the average resolution lasts for only 3.74 months with most lasting less than that. As a leading player of the First Great Awakening here in America, Jonathan Edwards pastored his first church at the age of 18. He did something else remarkable, that he is well-known for, as a teenager. He wrote down a series of carefully thought-out lists made up of 70 resolutions

that were contemplations and practices meant to help foster his spiritual growth. After creating the list, he would reread it weekly to keep his mind focused and his resolve fresh. His resolutions included commitments like, “Resolved: Never to do anything which I would be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life.” and, “Resolved: Never to allow any pleasure or grief, joy or sorrow, nor any affection at all, nor any degree of affection, nor any circumstance, but what advances the gospel.” These are only two, and while I would encourage you to read all of them, they are a great example of his mindset.

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Gospel Irony: Prevailing in Unlikely Places

What better symbol of Roman strength and power than the awe-inspiring Praetorian Guard. These were the Navy Seals of their day. These were the renowned Seal Team Six. So powerful were they that the Caesars feared a military coup by them at any time. Ironical, since the Praetorian Guard was established to serve as the personal protection team for the Caesars in the first place.

If you want a symbol of Roman power and strength look no further than the Praetorian or Imperial Guard. We could take this one step further. It was this world of Roman power into which Christ came, in which the Apostles ministered, in which the New Testament authors wrote, and in which Christianity came into being. And to all of those things, Rome stood opposed, violently opposed.

How delightfully ironic, in light of all of this, are the words of Paul in Philippians 1:12-13:

But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ.

We can take this one step further still. Paul himself is a delightful gospel irony.

I suspect any early Christian would shudder at the mere mention of the name Saul. In fact, they precisely did. And yet the gospel penetrated Paul's stone-cold heart. Paul's rage-filled eyes were opened to the truth, beauty, and joy of the gospel.

Is there a lesson in this for us today? There are ardent, veins-popping-in-their-forehead, opponents to the gospel today. They do not wear the uniform of a highly trained, elite force. But they write op-ed columns, hold forth in lecture halls, and occupy seats of power. Do we sometimes think that the gospel is not powerful enough to prevail? It is interesting to see the ripple effects of Paul's witness and the gospel's inroad to the Praetorian Guard. We take courage in this: the gospel prevails in unlikely places.

Philippians 4:22 references fellow believers in "Caesar's household." The Caesar at the time was Nero, one of the most notorious megalomaniacs ever to rule upon the earth. There in his very household were followers of Christ. Philippians 1:16 declares, "and most of the brothers in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear." Paul's boldness was contagious.

These Christians were in Rome, the seat of power. They were directly under the shadow of Nero. Yet, stirred on by Paul's example, they were bold in the preaching of the gospel. Of course, Paul takes the time to tell the Philippians of what is happening in Rome so that the believers there in Philippi will also be emboldened to proclaim the gospel. These are the ripple effects of Paul's confidence in the gospel as he boldly declared it to the Praetorian Guard. There are many who are telling us the time is coming in our American context that might very well resemble the times of the first century for the first-century church. The opposition is mounting. The foe is formidable. Many of our brothers and sisters in Christ around the globe already find themselves in situations not unlike Paul and the first-century Christians. Their "Praetorian Guard" is a force to be reckoned with. Despite that, they preach the gospel. The question then is, what about us? Will we cower? Will we think the gospel is not powerful enough, that the gospel is not able to prevail? Will we think the opposition and the persecutors don't need, or worse, don't deserve the gospel?

Continued on back

Continued from Pastor's Desk

What does this have to do with the start of a new year? As Christ's church, we need to be resolved to be obedient to our Lord's commands. As with Edward's practice of reviewing his resolutions weekly, part of the reason we gather for worship weekly is to be reminded of the things in God's Word. Our time in Bible studies serve the same purpose. Personal Bible readings assist as well. We are in constant need of reminders to what Jesus had called us to do and be. One of the things the church must also resolve to do, and be reminded about, is the command to share the gospel and make disciples. We ended 2024 with this focus according to the Scriptures and we will endeavor to fulfill that command in 2025 and beyond. Plans are being put in place and resources are being made available for each of you to engage in life-changing evangelism. Let us join together in the new year, reminded of what Christ has done for us by His ultimate sacrifice and commit ourselves to undertake the Great Commission with the purpose of furthering God's Kingdom all for His glory.

Many blessings in the new year,
Bro. Jim Tenmery



January 27-28
2025

Evangelism Conference 2025
Geyer Springs First Baptist Church in
Little Rock

Jeff Iorg♦Ted Cunningham♦JJ Washington
Lee Strobel♦Nick Floyd♦Tom Richter
♦Worship led by David McKinney and
Cross Church Worship

Music Notes

I appreciate all who came to the Christmas musical service presented by our worship choir. A big "Thank You" to all those in our music program who worked hard to be able to present the program that we entitled, "The Heart of Christmas", adapted from the musical by that name, from which the choir presented four songs. One of the songs was "Love Came Gently". Lyrics from that song included the following verse: "Love came gently, sweetly to save us, knowing the price He'd have to pay. And to all who trust in the Savior, Love comes gently still today." Jesus isn't Savior just because He was born. He can be our Savior because He died for our sins and was raised to new life. Jesus lives today and offers salvation to all who will accept His free gift of eternal life through faith and repentance. He desires to infill us with His resurrection kind of life. If you have never done so, start the New Year by committing your life to Christ, to live through the power of Christ. Speaking of our Worship Choir, we will suspend Sunday evening rehearsals for the present. However, for Sunday morning worship, we still need all who will to help fill the choir loft. Most of the choir chairs have been empty lately that could be filled by those who sing for the musicals and who present special music in our services. The choir is important on Sunday morning for several reasons, including the following:

1. Helps inspire congregational singing. It helps the congregation, especially when singing a less familiar song, when multiple people are leading the way.
2. Helps the worship leader when he is not the only one leading the songs.
3. Increases the number of members utilizing their gifts to serve the congregation.
4. Provides opportunity for multi-generations to serve together.

We invite our teens who like to sing to join with the choir on Sunday mornings (and we have had several in the past sing in the choir). I believe it honors God, and I know it blesses the congregation to see young and old praising God together, side-by-side. I have heard comments from several members as to the blessing it was when they have seen the youth involved. I appreciate the five or six who have been sitting in the choir loft on Sunday mornings. We can develop a "praise team" of a few strong voices to be "out front" (so to speak) to sing with the choir that can lead the way, but I want every person who has a desire and will to sing with a choir to have that opportunity. We want to avoid the look of "entertaining" by having "single stars" being the focus. So, join us on Sunday mornings, whether or not you've been part of our Worship Choir. I'll announce when we resume choir rehearsal to prepare for Easter.

Blessed to serve,
Bro. Vernon