

BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

5 Day Chronological Bible Reading Program WWW.FIVEDAYBIBLEREADING.COM

Week Forty-five: November 2-8

- Day 1: Ezekiel 31-33; John 11
- Day 2: Ezekiel 34-36; Psalm 86; John 12
- Day 3: Ezekiel 37-39; Psalm 87; John 13
- Day 4: Ezekiel 40-42; John 14
- Day 5: Ezekiel 43-45; Psalm 135; John 15

Week Forty-seven: November 16-22

- Day 1: Ezra 1-2; John 21
- Day 2: Ezra 3-4; Psalm 92; 1 John 1
- Day 3: Haggai; Zechariah 1; Psalm 138; 1 John 2
- Day 4: Zechariah 2-5; Psalm 93; 1 John 3
- Day 5: Zechariah 6-8; 1 John 4

Week Forty-six: November 9-15

- Day 1: Ezekiel 46-48; John 16
- Day 2: Daniel 1-3; Psalm 88; John 17
- Day 3: Daniel 4-6; John 18
- Day 4: Daniel 7-9; Psalm 91; John 19
- Day 5: Daniel 10-12; John 20

Week Forty-eight: November 23-29

- Day 1: Zechariah 9-11; 1 John 5
- Day 2: Zechariah 12-14; Psalm 94; 2 John 1
- Day 3: Ezra 5-6; Psalm 95; 3 John 1
- Day 4: Esther 1-3; Psalm 139; Revelation 1
- Day 5: Esther 4-6; Revelation 2

The Christian Virtue of Thanksgiving

Gratitude is the heart's response to grace, or at least it should be. Take Psalm 117, the shortest psalm in the Psalter and thereby the shortest chapter in Christian Scripture. It reads:

"Praise the Lord, all nations! Extol him, all peoples! For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord!"

The psalmist cannot help but be overcome by gratitude and praise. And this is for a single reason only: God's never-ending, covenant love which endures toward His people forever. Two elements of this petite psalm should jump right off the page at us. First is the scope of those who should be grateful. Does the psalmist believe that Israel alone should shout in acclamation? Is it limited to those who have Hebrew blood coursing through their veins?

No. It is all the nations! All peoples!

The psalmist in a moment of jubilant thanks seems to peer from the old covenant into the eschaton, presaging the words of John in Revelation 7:9-12, which read:

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" 11 And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen." (Emphasis added). As the plan of salvation comes to fruition, all, including the heavenly host, cannot help but fall down in praise and thanks to almighty God. It is the instinct of redeemed creatures when they receive .

blessing without merit And that is the second element which is apparent in Psalm 117: That for which the psalmist is so grateful is not something which he earns or deserves.

It's not something he believes he is owed.

In fact, it has nothing to do with him, other than the reality that he is a recipient of this matchless gift. It is God and what He has done, without reference to our worthiness, which elicits such incredible and intense proclamations of thanks. More than that, expressions of genuine heartfelt thanks seem to point others in a palpable way to grace. For instance, take the following description of gratitude published not by evangelicals, but by the American Psychological Association in a book titled, *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*: "What marks gratitude is the psychological response to the gift, whatever its nature, and the experience, however briefly, of the transcendent emotion of grace—the sense that we have benefited from the actions of another."

It appears that even those writing in the purely secular sphere recognize that grace is the central feature of the experience of gratitude, though they fail to apprehend the One whose gracious nature stands behind such experiences (Eph. 2:8). Furthermore, gratitude is not merely passive and reflexive. It is also active and willful. For example, Paul, when he writes famously to the Philippians (4:4-7), states: *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

According to Paul, when we willingly choose to focus on those things for which we are thankful in the Lord, it has a heart-shaping effect. Even when our hearts and minds would rather be focused on the negative. And what is that effect? When we steward our minds to meditate on the gracious gifts of God, then peace from God, which surpasses all ability to cognitively work out, seems to rule in our hearts.

I often tell my counselees that "Help!" is a perfectly acceptable one-word prayer. So too is the twice as long "Thank you!" The former is for the languishing soul, the latter for the exultant. One begs for grace, the other acknowledges grace already received.

One last point on the virtue of gratitude for this Thanksgiving: *thanks* is one of the major tributaries which finds itself terminating in that beautifully deep and wide river we know as awe. As we become those who intentionally transform our lives to recognize the nearly innumerable gifts given to us by God, our hearts are taken by the currents of gratitude and become those which so easily and often find themselves in awe and wonder simply worshiping at the throne of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

This Thanksgiving as we sit around with our families celebrating and rehearsing the gifts for which we should be thankful, may our praise not be platitudinous, dim, and drowsy, but rather earnest, vivid, and energetic. Coming, as for the believer they do, from grace-inundated lives, pointing toward a generous and gracious Giver, with the hope of the glorious grace we will have in its fullness one day when Christ returns and our feast of thanks finds its richest fulfillment (Isa. 25).

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THE BROADCASTER

From The Pastor's Desk

Greetings Church Family,

It is the time of year when we see all the bright and beautiful colors of Autumn. We see the trees bring forth an abundance of shades that excite the eyes as they dance in the wind of the season.

People make special trips to visit the wonderland of changing colors and take in the sights as the vibrant transformation takes hold until these trees lose all their green and yield to the varying hues of this time of year. Among the beauty, we recognize there is a downside to the shades of Autumn.

Soon, the leaves that provided such enjoyment, will become a blanket for the earth as they fall from their lofty abodes and drift tranquilly to the ground leaving the once well-dressed trees barren and lifeless. The trees prepare themselves for winter and take on a static condition that by all indications looks like death. We know from years of experience that the trees merely appear lifeless as they are preparing for another year of growth. We can consider them sleeping giants that will be awakened again with new dressings in the spring in which they will again stretch toward the sun that sustains them. They will dig deeper into the ground that nourishes them.

They will soak up the water that gives them life. In another wonder-filled transformation, the trees that once appeared lost are abounding with life. It is not so different for the believer. Death comes for us.

None are immune to it as we know how each life comes to an end and we deal with the bitterness of that loss. When life has escaped a loved one, we can only observe helplessly while acknowledging the brevity of this existence and how precious each minute is. Even Jesus was affected by the impact following the loss of His friend Lazarus, when death overcame him, to the point that He cried.

The gospel of John chapter 11 and verse 35 tells us of Jesus' tears that flowed from the hurt He felt. However, we know there is much more to the story. Earlier in the passage, despite Lazarus' obvious death, Jesus tells His disciples that Lazarus was asleep and needed to be awakened. Obviously, this caused confusion amongst the disciples from their lack of understanding. When Jesus arrived at Bethany, there was quite a scene of sorrow and mourning. Lazarus was absolutely dead, and this was attested to by all who had been there. Much like the trees at this time of year, Lazarus was lifeless.

Jesus makes one thing clear to those who were nearby; He is the Resurrection and the Life. The New Testament is clear about the condition of those who die in Jesus. It is described as sleep because death has no hold on us.

Jesus called Lazarus out of that grave to new life just as our trees in Spring. In speaking to Martha, Jesus said, *"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" John 11:25-26.*

This is a question we each must answer. In fact, it is a life and death question. For those in Christ, death is no more impactful than sleep, because we will live on. Just as the trees return, we too, continue on into eternal life. Reaching towards the Son, digging deep into the Rock of our salvation and soaking up the water of life that flows from His hand. All this, if we can respond as Martha did when Jesus asked her the most vital question about her belief. In an amazing declaration of her faith, *"She said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.'"* May we all testify in the same manner.

Grace and Peace to you all,
Bro. Jim Tennerly

FBC church family,

In the last Broadcaster, I made mention that over the next six months I would share with you Amber and I’s passion, vision, and desire to minister here in Mena. Our passion and desire is for others to know God, intimately and internally.

How does one go from knowing things about God to knowing God personally?

God does not leave us in the dark on this. Paul says in Romans 10:17 that faith comes from hearing and hearing through the Word of Christ.

The Word of God is what God uses to lead us to knowing Him. So, how do you personally view the Word of God?

Is it enough to just have knowledge of Scripture, or is it causing you to seek after Christ Jesus in your life?

I want to share a passage of Scripture that has shaped my life. It is Isaiah 40:8, and God is speaking to His people. He says this,

“The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God will stand forever.” – Isaiah 40:8

God has Isaiah tell His people this powerful statement. That all mankind is like the grass of the field, and all our strength, intelligence, and might is like the flower of the field.

You and I are like the grass of the field that one day will pass away, and our intellect and strength is like the flower of the field that one day soon will fade away like the passing of a season, but the Word of our God will stand for all of eternity.

Here in Isaiah 40, the Israelites had rebelled and sinned against God.

Though they went after lesser things, He is still merciful to them. He wants His people to know that their lives are here for just a season. That they will wither away and be no more.

Instead, they are to trust Him and His Word. That those who trust the Lord and wait upon Him, He will lead like a shepherd leading his sheep. But for those who continue to rebel, there is a day coming when God will repay them for their sin.

What is your life? You may be young today, but one day soon, you will grow old. Like the passing of a season your life will be no more.

Church member, you will one day breathe your last breath and enter into eternity. Your life is like a vapor, but God’s Word will stand for all eternity. You will either rejoice with God’s Word for all of eternity or it will stand in judgement against you for all eternity.

My encouragement is for you to spend your life not seeking the treasures of this world but seeking Christ through His Word. Everything in His word is true and eternal. Everything you’ve accumulated will one day be forgotten, but God’s Word is eternal.

Do you know God and have you responded to the Gospel through faith and repentance?

-Jeremy Martinez

Dr. Mark Dance selected as next executive director of Arkansas Baptist State Convention

Dr. Mark Dance has been selected as the next executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. The ABSC Executive Board unanimously approved the recommendation of the Operating Committee, which served as the search team, during a meeting held Tuesday, Aug. 19. The decision makes Dance the 36th executive director in the 177-year history of the Convention that began in 1848. The executive director leads the ABSC staff in serving the needs of and assisting the Convention’s nearly 1,500 churches and encouraging missions cooperation among them. The search for the next executive director began in the spring, following Dr. Rex Horne’s announcement that he would begin the process of transitioning out of the role. Central Baptist Church in Jonesboro, Senior Executive Pastor Dr. Bill Panneck, led the search at the request of Operating Committee Chairman Eddie Morgan. Panneck called it a “tremendous honor” to serve on the search team. “Each man on the team would tell you what a blessing it was to have a front row seat as we watched God direct us to Dr. Mark Dance,” Panneck said. “Every recommendation we received, every reference we interviewed, and every moment we spent in prayer confirmed that Dr. Mark was God’s choice for this position at this time. When we had the face-to-face interview one of the team members exclaimed, ‘Today’s visit has brought 100% clarity and confirmation.’” Dance comes to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention from GuideStone, where he served as director of Pastoral Wellness. Prior to that he was an associate vice president at Lifeway and served as a local church pastor for 30 years and 10 as a pastoral ministry leader. Additionally, Dance is the co-founding leader of the Care4Pastors Network and author of “Start to Finish.”

He earned degrees from Howard Payne University, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Dance said his prayer is that God will use what he has learned to “help Arkansas Baptist pastors, churches, and various ministries fulfill their mission” “Dr. Mark Dance has been a faithful advocate for pastors and local churches throughout his ministry. His work at GuideStone built on a lifetime of service, and his leadership in pastoral wellness has helped strengthen the very people who strengthen our churches,” said GuideStone President/CEO Dr. Hance Dilbeck. “I’ve had the privilege of serving alongside Mark both at Oklahoma Baptists and here at GuideStone, and I’ve seen firsthand his heart for shepherds and his commitment to helping them finish well. Arkansas Baptists are gaining a leader who understands the weight and joy of ministry — and who will serve them with wisdom, energy, and grace.” Throughout his four decades in ministry, Dance has had the privilege to pastor churches in four unique contexts: a revitalization, a replant, a relocation, and two interims. He served as the lead pastor of Second Baptist in Conway for over 13 years. His adult children, Holly and Brad, were both Conway Wampus Cats. They grew up attending JoyWorks, PraiseWorks, and Super Summer. Dance grew up in Tyler, Texas, at Green Acres Baptist Church with a father who was a faithful deacon, and a mother who was a Baptist Collegiate Ministry secretary. The BCM building at University of Texas at Tyler is named after her. At 15 years of age, Dance gave his life to Christ at Camp Ozark in Mt. Ida on June 12, 1980. One year later, God clarified His call to ministry in the solitude of Dance’s bedroom. Dance and his wife, Janet, met in college and were a “Bonafide BCM couple,” he said. She has helped him lead about 120 marriage events for ministers in the last decade. Dance shared with the search team that his heart would be to minister to pastors and their churches in such a way that they would feel like the most important church in the Convention. “It seems that with Dr. Mark’s leadership, the ABSC and its churches are poised for great things in the future,” Panneck said.

As we turn the calendar to November, Thanksgiving comes to mind. I take this opportunity to express thanks for the privilege you have allowed me to lead the music program of our church.

Thank you, too, for the generous “Pastor Appreciation” check presented to me a couple of weeks back.

The music program would not be possible without committed servants who give of their time and energies to make it happen. I extend special thanks to them. Thank you Linda Gandy, Donna Hendricks, Dana Bowers, and Loretta Lesley for using your talents at the organ, piano, and keyboard. Donna also directs our children’s choir program. Thanks also is due to Jonathan Welch for his beautiful trumpet accompaniment.

We have more recently enlisted Tom Tinnesz, Andy Maguire, Caleb Bowers, and Nick Williams to join our team of musicians. Tom, Andy, Caleb and Nick not only contribute to our morning worship services, but are also leading worship with the teens on Wednesday evening and helping develop a youth praise team. I also must say thanks to those who are committed to the Worship Choir. It is a great help to have them behind me on Sunday morning, especially when technical difficulties cause the screen to be blank and not all the songs are in the hymnbook. The choir always has the music printed and help carry the worship. So, “Thank you” to all who are involved in our music program.

In all your activities in the Thanksgiving season, with meal planning, family visits, and other things, I challenge you to set your focus on actual thanksgiving. I’m listing a scripture passage related to giving thanks that you can read each day of November to set that focus:

1 - I Chronicles 16:8, 9	16 - Psalms 95:1-3
2 - I Chronicles 16:34	17 - Psalms 100:4-5
3 - I Chronicles 29:11-13	18 - Psalms 105:1-4
4 - Psalms 7:17	19 - Psalms 108:3-5
5 - Psalms 9:1, 2	20 - Psalms 111:1-3
6 - Psalms 28:7	21 - Psalms 118:19-24
7 - Psalms 30:10-12	22 - Psalms 118:28-29
8 - Psalms 50:14-15	23 - Psalms136:1-3
9 - Psalms 54:6	24 - Isaiah 12:1-2
10 - Psalms 56:11-13	25 - I Corinthians 15:57
11 - Psalms 57:9-11	26 - 2 Corinthians 9:15
12 - Psalms 75:1	27 - Ephesians 5:18-20
13 - Psalms 79:13	28 - Philippians 4:6-7
14 - Psalms 86:11-13	29 - Colossians 3:16-17
15 - Psalms 92:1-4	30 - I Thessalonians 5:16-18

I pray you’ll take the time each day to turn your attention for a moment to thoughts of thanks to God for who He is, what He has done, and all that He does each day in our lives.

Blessed to serve,

Bro. Vernon