

# Faith Messenger

## Stepping OUT of the Past



*“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” – Rom 12:1-2*

In these words from Paul to the church in Rome, we hear from the pen of the Apostle what might be called the **CHARGE to CHANGE**. As believers whose faith is now in Christ, whose understanding of this world is now built upon a foundation of HIM and HIS WORK alone, and who are indwelt by that infinitely gracious gift of the Spirit of God who strengthens and enables us to live out this faith in the midst of a dark and spiritually dead world, we are now – at our very core – distinguished among men as those who are constantly moving forward towards that end goal of perfect holiness which we’ll someday know in God’s presence. Even now, however, as both individuals and as His body, the church, we must realize that if we’re not moving forward then we’re setting still, or – perhaps even more troubling - sliding *backwards* in our pursuit of glory. This constant need for movement forward is something that is at the very heart of our understanding of the Word of God which was recovered during the time of the Reformation. It is this understanding which is also reflected in one of the well-known mottos of the Reformation which indicates this constant need for change: *Ecclesia Reformata, Semper Reformanda*, or “*The Church Reformed and always reforming.*” As those who hold to a REFORMED understanding of Scripture, we know that in order to correctly move forward, we must always be looking back. We can’t possibly know who we want to be if we don’t even know who it is that we are and we can’t possibly know where it is we’re going if we have no idea where we’ve been. There’s an excellent article examining this in more detail on Ligonier’s website at the following link:

<https://www.ligonier.org/blog/reformed-always-reforming/>

This CHARGE to CHANGE is one that also involves a **CHOICE to CHANGE**. Simply put, change doesn’t happen on its own – the “*appeal*” of Paul in Romans 12 shows us that WE MUST MAKE A CONSCIOUS DECISION TO MOVE FORWARD. Some, however, may take the approach – “If it ain’t broken, then why fix it?” – but such an attitude clearly may well imply at least two false understandings. **1)** The idea that “it ain’t broke” – whatever we do, as individuals or as a church body, will be marred by the effects of sin until we find ourselves before the Lord in the new heavens and new earth. In our fallen state, there is ALWAYS room for improvement as we seek to follow that call towards ever greater purity, holiness, and godliness in our walk before the Lord. **2)** The idea that change is (at least usually) for the WORSE. We must be humble enough to acknowledge that change, however, is NOT NECESSARILY BAD. While we don’t seek out change purely for its own sake, we nonetheless want to be closer to that call to perfect holiness every day than we were the day before – as individuals AND as a church – which is something that we are both enabled and called by the Spirit to CHOOSE to do.

This CHOICE, however, is not necessarily an easy one – something we find in the many **CHALLENGES of CHANGE**. Paul equates this decision towards ever-greater holiness as one of offering ourselves up as “*living sacrifices*” in the course of that which he defines as our “*spiritual worship.*” Such sacrifice can be hard on a number of fronts. It can offer the challenge of our keeping our focus entirely on GOD and HIS glory, yet it should be THIS FOCUS which drives all we do – and every change that we ever choose to make. In our current culture, we find this challenge to be perhaps most visible in the duty of the church to OFFEND men in the right way. You see, the GOSPEL is itself inherently offensive enough. It tells men that they are utterly depraved – void of all that is good in the eyes of God - facing an eternity of suffering without hope in themselves apart from ONE PATH that can be found in ONE PERSON ALONE. We must be certain that the choices we make as a church as we seek to move forward are those which keep that focus upon CHRIST and offend men’s SIN with the GOSPEL and NOTHING ELSE just as surely as we offer them that which is an OFFENSIVE OPTION to the natural man: a HOPE found in CHRIST and nowhere else.

By His Grace,  
Pastor Justin

## Upcoming Events

### Wednesday, September 9

**6:30PM** – Faith Ladies’ devotional/fellowship time at the home of Dirk & Lynn VanderMeulen  
If you have questions, you may contact Lynn at (360) 815-5284

### Saturday, September 12

**7:30am** – Men’s Book Discussion Group at Denny’s (3040 NE Loop 286, Paris, TX 75460)  
Discussing “The Godly Man’s Picture” by Thomas Watson

### Sunday, September 13

**9:45am** - **Sunday school** - Adults and children will meet together in the sanctuary and continue our study of the Westminster Larger Catechism

**10:45am** – **Morning Worship** - We will continue our study of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians

- Picnic style “bring you own lunch” to follow worship
- Meeting after lunch to discuss changes in worship music

Please check the church calendar on our website [www.faithparispca.org](http://www.faithparispca.org) for the most up-to-date events.

## Praise and Prayer Requests for Week of September 6, 2020

1. Prayer that **God would be at work within the hearts of the men of our church** as we seek nominations for church leadership in the coming month.
2. Praise for **Linda Adds** who is feeling better and recovering from a number of recent health concerns!
3. Praise and continued prayer for **Faye Bates** who is recovering from her recent bout of pneumonia but still battling a number of health concerns.
4. Prayer for Larann Denison’s cousin, **Linda VanDeaver**.
5. Prayer for the family of **Jeff Baeza**, friend of David Murray (a recent visitor to our church), who recently passed away.
6. Prayer for Valerie Hilliard’s grandmother, **Betty Rhea**, who is struggling with a number of health issues as well as for peace from strife in her extended family surrounding her grandmother’s ongoing care.
7. Prayer for **Doug Morris** as he prepares to undergo surgery in September.
8. Prayer for salvation for Evelyn Ridley’s son, **Randy**.
9. Prayer for **Mike and Georgia Leddy**.
10. Prayer for our **nation** and our **leaders** during this time of unrest and difficulty.

If you have prayer requests, praise reports, or any items that you would like included in our newsletter - or if you have any other questions, concerns, or needs please feel free to email Pastor Justin at [faithparispca@gmail.com](mailto:faithparispca@gmail.com) or CALL/TEXT him at (903) 517-6315.

Sunday’s sermon and many others can be heard online on our church website at <http://faithparispca.org/sermons.aspx>