

A Word from the Pastor

Greetings family and friends,

Grace, Mercy and Peace be unto you from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

I thank you for participating in this season of challenge. As many of you know we are using for the food/health portions of this season of challenge the 31-day health Challenge that the Friendship West Baptist Church of Dallas, TX under the leadership of my friend and brother the Rev. Dr. Frederick D. Haynes, III are utilizing in their health challenge for 2019.

The flyer from Freddy Haynes says 31-day challenge ***but we are challenging ourselves to grow closer to God and discipline ourselves for about 14 days***, from 6pm Sunday January 20 to 1pm Sunday February 3rd.

When I saw what Dr., Haynes was doing I said that just might work for us also. Please remember that fasting is not required in the scriptures, but it is practiced in the scriptures. In the Old Testament when the people of God faced critical crisis the leaders called a fast. In the New Testament our own Lord Jesus began his earthly ministry after a 40 day fast. By the way during the Lenten season churches all over the world will engage in fasting and praying for 40 days just as our Lord did in the sacred text.

In addition to the food challenge we are encouraging each of you to engage in some form of physical exercise. Please note the food challenge and the physical exercise should be done in consultation with your primary physician. The physical exercise portion will be assisted by our member Larry “Yang” Young, Jr. He has done expert physical training and can offer guidance as you engage your body in exercise. “Yang” will share with you how you don’t have to have a health club membership to get in shape. I have asked “Yang” to be available at the church on Wednesday January 23rd and Wednesday January 30th to offer guidance with meal planning and exercise training. Those Wednesdays will start at 6:30pm and end at 7:30pm just 1 hour.

Finally, because all of this is in an effort for us as both individuals and as a congregation to grow closer to God, we will offer short devotionals each day of our Spiritual, health and Christ commitment challenge to help us focus on a deeper commitment to our Lord and Savior.

Therefore, I am also asking that each of you would commit to a “Social Media Blackout,” during these two weeks. That means no social media activity for two weeks. I am also asking that you refrain from making purchases unless it is a necessity during these two weeks. Why am I asking this? It is because for many if not most of us social media is closer to us than our scriptures are. And many of us engage in “retail therapy” as a coping mechanism. I’m asking that we use the time we would be on social media or our shopping to read scripture, read books about scripture, read Christian inspirational meditations and books and pray with intention.

This is about removing any impediments to our listening to and communing with our God. Think of it like this, if we can’t put down social media and not shop for things that are not a necessity for just two weeks then it reveals that we are too dependent on those things.

Please try and intentionally set aside 5-10 minutes each day reading the meditations provided for each day of the spiritual health challenge and being in silence with God in prayer for God’s voice to speak to

your spirit. There is a powerful reason why Jesus told his disciples in Mark 8 these words “*If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.*”

As a congregation and as individuals we are striving to be disciples of Jesus and thus periodically, we should deny ourselves to recalibrate our spiritual compasses toward our Lord and Savior and what God’s will is for our lives.

I look forward to hearing the great testimonies of revelations that you will begin to receive about your life, your destiny and your purpose as a member of our great church and as a follower of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

God Bless you and God keep you in God’s perfect peace as I remain,

Yours Because of Christ and Calvary,

Pastor John E. Jackson, Sr.

Sunday, January 20th, 2019

The Champion's Creed

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: (2 Timothy 4:7)

Never underestimate your opponent. Work on your weaknesses until they become your strengths. Remember that great effort is usually the result of a great attitude. Dedicate yourself to a mighty purpose; know your “why”.

Talent is God given, be humble.

Fame is man given, be thankful.

Conceit is self-given, be careful.

Don't ask to be deprived of tension and discipline; these are tools that shape success.

Do what must be done, as well as it can be done. Remember that when you're not working to improve, your competition is. Amateurs practice to be perfect, Professionals practice to stay perfect. Study to show thyself approved! Be great, be a champion!

By Rev. Charles Dockery

Monday, January 21st, 2019

Just Do It!

As we begin this two-week journey to better mental, physical, and spiritual health, I Borrow the slogan from Nike, "***Just Do It***".

Start each morning by spending time with God. Take time each day for some physical activity, and finally learn something different each day, read a book.

Here is a two-week formula, start with two minutes on the first day and add one minute each day. At the end of the two-week journey you will be up to fifteen minutes of devotion, fifteen minutes of physical activity, and fifteen minutes of reading. However, you will never get to fifteen minutes if you don't take the first step (two minutes). **Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? Run that you may obtain it. (1 Cor. 9:24)** You can't win the prize if you don't run the race. Just Do it!

By Rev. Charles L. Dockery

Tuesday, January 22nd, 2019

In today's society it is often easy to get confused, causing us to wonder which way we should turn. We hear so many conflicting ideas on what is right.

But as Disciples of Christ, we have been given a written guide that removes any confusion on which way we are to turn, and by following that guide, each of us is allowed the blessing of being set free from the Wages of sin.

John 8:31-32 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "*If you hold to me Teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, And the truth will set you free.*"

By Rev. Dena Holland-Neal

Wednesday, January 23rd, 2019

“Be an Overcomer”

John 16:33 *33" I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*

Overcomer definition

verb (used with object), o·ver·came, o·ver·come, o·ver·com·ing. to get the better of in a struggle or conflict; conquer; defeat: to overcome the enemy. to prevail **over** (opposition, debility, temptations, etc.); surmount: to overcome one's weaknesses.

I want us to think positively about the challenge we have before us. Change is not easy. Don't let anyone tell you it is. All the disciples had a problem with change. They had to change what they had been taught for years by their traditions, parents, family, friends and community in order to follow new leadership that gave them an opportunity to be recognized eternally.

This challenge that each of us are committing to do, is for our own good and glorifies God. Don't take it lightly, plan your work and work your plan. Be encouraged so you won't give up, give in or give out. The victory is already yours if you does the work. Jesus intends for us to be better and do better! Yes, you are already equipped to meet the challenge; so, do it.

By Rev. Emmett K. Mosley

Thursday, January 24th, 2019

“Dear Friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.”

3 John 1:2 (NIV)

God desires that we take care of our spiritual health which nourishes our souls. It is the light to the path of our lives.

But it is important that we maintain our physical bodies as well. The body is a vehicle that allows us to do good work for the Lord. As we enter 2019 with expectations of the goodness of God, we must diligently, to the best of our ability, preserve good spiritual and physical health in order to do the good work God has called us to do.

By Rev. Charles “Chuck” Pettis

Friday, January 25th, 2019

Psalm 148:7-13 (NIV)

Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths,
lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding,
you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars,
wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds,
kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth,
young men and maidens, old men and children.

Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens.

Where and when do you pray or speak of the majesty of God? At a certain time? In a certain place? Do you wait till you are behind the pulpit or in ministry? Do you explain yourself before praying? Do you sit or stand a certain way?

Jesus prayed as he walked along a dusty road with strangers. Jesus was enjoying himself at a wedding in Cana and stopped to speak with authority. Jesus was questioned by the elected leaders and he continued to praise God.

He prayed while with the throng of crowds into Jerusalem, while reclining among friends, while gathering children around him, while by himself in a garden, trying to sleep in a boat, and as he walked among the trees and rivers of all creation.

DO NOT limit your prayer to a pew, or posture, or person.
Pray without ceasing and see prayers manifested in new ways.

By Rev. Marie Siroky

Saturday, January 26th, 2019

In a Powerless Predicament....

Genesis 37 “What happens to a dream deferred?”

Do our youth still dream anymore? Have they been so psychologically paralyzed by the sickness of society that they don't believe anymore in the power of dreaming? Or better yet, are they imprisoned by the notion that dreams don't come true, so why waste time even dreaming in the first place?

In personality and human development, the act of dreaming is very powerful.

Psychologist Alfred Adler once explained that when children take a moment to dream, a phenomenal feat occurs. What is it? Children will automatically unconsciously begin to act out or live that dream. This gives way to that old adage, "what one thinks is what he will become."

Using Adler's definition then:

-what happens when young boys dream about living healthy lives instead of living lives riddled with gang violence? What happens when little girls dream of becoming famous in their mind and intellect instead of for their breasts and gladiolus maximizes? ***There is power in DREAMING!***

In Genesis 37, we meet a young man who wasn't afraid to dream even though he was in a powerless predicament. Powerless predicaments still occur today. Lack of power or powerlessness takes many shapes or forms today.

According to a psychologist named Valerie Miller, there are three types of powerlessness:

Visible powerlessness - what is done to you? The second type of powerlessness is called ***hidden powerlessness***, what others think about you. The third type of powerlessness is called ***invisible powerlessness***. What is most harmful to a person is what their own psyche tells them about themselves.

But there is hope - how does one combat visible powerlessness, hidden powerless and invisible powerlessness? What does Joseph do in his powerless predicament? Resolution: psychologists suggest one shift their invisible powerlessness to an invisible power! In other words, if what one thinks about themselves are all that really matters then what if one dreamed hope? What if one dreamed peace? What if one dreamed joy? What if one dreamed love? Even while in the midst of his powerless predicament about the bottom of the pit, Joseph started dreaming that he was still loved by God. Joseph started dreaming that God wasn't finished with him yet! Joseph started dreaming that this ain't how my story's gonna end....

Joseph realized that he had an invisible power.

You may be wrestling at the bottom of your own pit, you may be experiencing a living hell, but if u just holds on a little while longer, I promise that an Invisible Power will show up at your door and say, Peace be still!

What is this that I feel deep inside?

That keeps setting my soul afire

Whatever it is, whatever it is, whatever it is, it won't let me

Hold my peace

By Rev. Dr. Danielle Buhuro

Sunday, January 27, 2019

Romans 12:12 (The Message translation)

Mindfulness

We think it's some ethereal other worldly concept

But it has concrete implications for our everyday lives

Live in a world of mindlessness which means wears out of touch with ourselves and any moment in which we find ourselves

Distractions

Lack of awareness Internal and external

Questions: how does mindlessness look like?

Do you feel like you get angry quickly?

Do you quickly become impatient?

Are you too reactive – negatively respond to challenges in your life rather than proactively address and wisely solve them?

Are certain feelings and emotions too overwhelming for you?

Do you get defensive?

Does your anxiety inhibit you?

Do you judge others unfairly?

Are you critical with yourself?

This has consequences for our psyches, minds, emotions, spiritual lives

We can never stay plugged in long enough to live with whatever

We easily distract ourselves because it avoids pain, disappointment, fear, anxiety

Now distractions serve a purpose,

At any given moment of distress, we can utilize it to our benefit

While distractions are helpful to get us through an immediate moment of distress, they are not good for long term success, effectiveness, wholeness

We can't just distract ourselves every time we encounter difficulties

The blessings of mindfulness include the following (name them)

How do we practice this?

There are different ways including

The following mindfulness exercises

(Have a script about noticing internal stimuli)

If we look at mindfulness within our Christian lens, it is prayer

Affirmation

I will pay attention in any given moment to what I am thinking, feeling and so that I can

I am transformed by paying attention in any given moment to what I am thinking and feeling which leads to better choices and greater insight.

By Rev. Gina Sourelis-Smith

Monday, January 28th, 2019

Micah 6:8, *“He has told you, O mortal what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?”*

By His righteousness, we shall be judged.

What God requires of us seems so simple. It seems basic to our nature, to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God. How difficult can that be? But, how often is it done by us? To achieve that which God has for us requires of us the simplest of things. Be intentional about how we focus and practice what God requires of us. Be devotional and humble as God walks with us to show the way, and above all let our love be known to all we meet as we seek the face of God in them.

We Pray, O heavenly Father we thank you for the simplicity of that which you require of us, for the salvation you offer us. Amen

By Rev. Attorney Timothy Wright, III

Tuesday January 29, 2019

James 1:4 (NIV) “*Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*”

When we care for our own well - being as we would an honored friend, we begin to feel differently about who we are and who we can become.

We shift from “I should” or “I have to” to “I get to” and that caring for ourselves isn’t a chore; it is a privilege.

When we treat ourselves with compassion, we learn to value ourselves. It is a way of showing gratitude to God for being alive!

By Deacon Ruth Wilson

Wednesday, January 30th, 2019

ENCOURAGEMENT

When we find ourselves in the valley of life's hardships, we look for a helping hand, someone to pick us up. If we find no one is there it can bring on great distress.

David found himself in a similar situation when his wife and children and others were taken, and his own men wanted to stone him. The Bible says David encouraged himself in the Lord his God. He got up and rescued everyone that was taken (1Samuel 30:6, 18, 19)

Remembering what God has done, is doing, and what He will do in our lives will bring us to the point of encouraging ourselves in the Lord and living a Victorious Christian Life.

By Deacon Jerry Wiggins

Thursday, January 31th, 2019

My beloved sisters and brothers,

As we come to the end of our challenge and contemplate our journey and opportunity to shake off those things which weigh us down, consider this thought we all know well:

With God, all things are possible. Matthew 19:26.

What shall we do with this new life? Take a moment and reflect on these words of prose from a very dear friend of mine.

My Purpose

My purpose in life is to die daily to my will that Christ's will may grow

To lift him up wherever I go

To show others the love of our savior

To bring others to his love and his favor

To point all to my Lord and my Savior above

What a joy it is to experience Christ's love

~Beatrice Clayborn

Give God all the praise for your fresh new outlook on life and share the joy and peace you've gained wherever you go! All my love, Kathalene

By Dr. Kathalene Harris

Friday, February 1st, 2019

Encouragement from a Chiropractor!

So, I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. But the pot that he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so, the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as it seemed best to him. (Jeremiah 18:3-4)

I made the decision to visit a chiropractor. I was ignorant about chiropractic care, but I decided to go to the initial consultation anyway. After the initial tests, I met with the doctor who gave me my diagnosis and the treatment plan.

The doctor informed me that I had a condition called subluxation. Subluxation occurs when there is blockage that prevents the message generated by the brain from reaching the central nervous system. This leads to poor posture and other ailments. For that message to get to the central nervous system, the doctor must adjust your neck and spine. Once your neck and spine are properly adjusted, the message can get through and holistic healing can occur. He went on to tell me that power comes from the top down; from the brain to the central nervous system. Then healing comes from the inside out; inside from the central nervous system outward to the organs.

There is another condition that we all suffer from; this condition is called sin. Sin like subluxation cause a blockage from our source of power. But the good news is that if we call on the almighty doctor, he can adjust us and put us back together again. Power does come from the top down. ***I look to the hill from where my help comes, my help comes from the Lord.*** Healing comes from the inside out. There is a Holy Spirit who dwells inside each one of us that provides healing for the soul.

Don't block your blessings, call on your "Holy Chiropractor" He's still in the healing business and she does make house calls! As this two-week journey concludes I thank the potter for reshaping my mind, my body, and my soul as it seemed best to her.

"The potter wants to put you back together again".

By Rev. Charles Dockery

Saturday, February 2nd, 2019

Psalm 6:3

“My soul is in deep anguish. How long, LORD, how long?”

Life has a way of throwing some painful punches. Some that may seem like the final knockout blow...loss of a job, death of a loved one, breakup of a relationship.

These and so many other difficulties can lead us to cry out, asking how long this pain will go on. Sometimes, that is simply our prayer, not for deliverance from the pain, not to ask God, “*Why did you allow the pain?*” But only to ask, “*How long?*”

Our faith teaches us that we serve a God, who with the creation of Time, provides that nothing in life is Eternal.

So, we can carry on through our pain knowing that With God, change WILL come!

By Rev. Dena Holland-Neal