

Family Bible Series for Dec. 4: Manger and Mission: Why Care?

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Family Bible Series for Dec. 4

Manger and Mission: Why Care?

- Jonah 4:1-11

By Donald Raney

Explore the Bible Series for Dec. 4: Need for Mercy

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Explore the Bible Series for Dec. 4

Need for Mercy

- Romans 9:1-6,14-24

By Trey Turner

Canyon Creek Baptist Church, Temple

Sometimes it would be great to get 'this patience thing' finally worked out. Most of the people this minister knows are impatient. That would include the he himself. The clock is always ticking, there are too many things to do to be patient. Sometimes the prayer is, "Lord, help me not get behind this week so that I can keep up next week." After some defeats November 8th, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger admitted to his supporters how he is expecting too much too soon in California politics. The unsigned little rhyme says:

Patience is a virtue,

Possess it if you can.

Found seldom in a woman,

Never in a man.

Patience may be a virtue, but impatience drives the American psyche, not to mention its economy.

What if God was intolerant with Christians' impatience? Maybe he is, after all a part of Christian fruitfulness is 'patience.' Christians are much more accepting of impatience than other Christian failures. Why does it get a free pass? Does it give the illusion of seriousness— people who are ready for business?

The earliest Gentile Christians were at various stages of frustration with the Jewish Christians and vice versa. Ironically, while personally taking an offering from the Gentile Christians to the Christians who live in Jerusalem, Paul takes the occasion in his letter to the Romans to talk about God's

patience with all people. Today it seems Christians try to have patience with people who are not Christian. They will try to have patience with ignorance, but that patience comes in small quantities and only in short-lived bursts. Some may ask about a person who commits the same crime multiple times, “Why does God allow him to live?” Or if a person has had multiple opportunities to respond to the gospel but does not, “He does not deserve another chance.” But, God’s longsuffering is perplexing. It is also an example which calls believers to patience.

Reflect God’s Concern (Romans 9:1-5)

Paul lets the believers in Rome inside his thinking about the Jewish people. He could be frustrated with his people, after having been rejected and the attempted murders on his life. His expression of belief shows his great emotions for them as well. Paul loves the Jewish people. He has great compassion on them, going so far as to say that he wishes he could somehow take their blinders off so they could see his Lord, Jesus Christ. As it stands, they only have a great heritage. It seems their advantage of having received the covenants, the temple, the law have not served to make receiving Christ easier, but harder.

This is to Paul’s credit. The Lord’s compassion toward his people beats now within Paul’s chest. Paul reflects God’s concern for them too.

Remember God’s Mercy (Romans 9:6, 14-18)

The reason for Paul’s concern is nothing less than the hope he sees in scripture. Israel’s history demonstrates God’s patience. God’s word reflects it too. God is sovereign. He will decide when to close the book on each person. Paul sees God’s mercy toward his people and is content to wait in eager expectation for God’s plan to be fulfilled. These same Jews who are rejecting the message of Christ now, will find their ultimate purpose in Jesus Christ making them “true Israel” (6) Paul holds out expectation that

God will complete his people as they receive Christ. Paul helps his readers to remember God's mercy.

Recognize God's Patience (Romans 9:19-24)

Paul anticipates that when he says "he [God] hardens" their hearts (18) there are those who say, "Aha!" God hardens people hearts, then who can blame them when they reject God? God's sovereignty does not do away with human responsibility. Paul answers this question with four of his own questions. (1) Who has the right to question God? (2) Who can ask, 'Why did you make me like this?' (3) Who can ask, 'Why are you doing this with me?' (4) What if he did this to make himself known to others too? God does not use his sovereignty for judgment, but demonstrates his love and patience with people. If God's purpose for hardening Jewish hearts is to allow time for Gentiles all over this world to receive Christ, then he has demonstrated his patience. He could have judged Jewish unbelief, but he chooses instead to show mercy and salvation to Gentiles and Jews. Paul helps his hearers to anticipate the result of his plan through his patience. That is Paul's hope, it is biblical hope, watching God's plan unfold in an awe inspiring future of fulfillment.

Christians show patient expectation in hope of God's continued work—without pronouncing judgment that God is finished with people. Jonah saw that God had a plan for Nineveh; he wrote the people of Nineveh off before God was done with them. People show they are children of God when they believe with hope and love people expectantly.

Discussion questions

- Describe God's patience with you. Does your patience look similar? How do you show mercy while holding convictions?
- What is difficult about letting God have his time with people who are not living toward God's standards?

- What are some possible ways to respond to them? What do you pray while responding to them?

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.

Texas Baptist Men involved in 'God's activity'

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Texas Baptist Men involved in 'God's activity'

By Emily Row

AUSTIN—God has placed Texas Baptist Men squarely in the middle of his activity in the world, TBM Executive Director Leo Smith told a rally prior to the Baptist General Convention of Texas annual meeting.

Volunteers at the Nov. 13 event shared stories of ministering around the globe through TBM, focusing particularly on encounters with the victims of hurricanes Emily, Katrina, Rita and Stan. The vast needs spread disaster relief teams thin, leaders said.

WMU board cancels Texas Leadership Conference

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Newly
elected Texas
WMU officers
are (left to
right) Nelda
Tayor-Thieda,
president;
Shirley
McDonald,
first vice
president;
Nina
Pinkston,
second vice
president;
Frankie
Harvey, third
vice
president;
and Edna
Wood,
recording
secretary.
(Photo by
Eric Guel)

WMU board cancels Texas Leadership Conference

By Teresa Young

AUSTIN-After more than a half-century, Woman's Missionary Union of Texas has held its last annual statewide Texas Leadership Conference in Waco.

The Texas WMU board of directors voted Nov. 12 to cancel the conference-originally known as the WMU House Party at Baylor University-along with the WMU Associational Summit for 2006 and 2007 in favor of conducting regional training events around the state.

BGCT officer elections reflect convention's diversity

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BGCT officer elections reflect convention's diversity

By Miranda Bradley

AUSTIN-The Baptist General Convention of Texas elected Michael Bell, pastor of Greater St. Stephen First Baptist Church in Fort Worth, as president-the first African-American to hold the position.

Bell defeated Rick Davis, pastor of First Baptist Church in Brownwood, 1,278-310 in a ballot vote. Annual meeting messengers responded to the result with a round of applause.

BGCT approves sweeping change in governance structure

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Messengers to the Baptist General Convention of Texas annual meeting overwhelmingly approve changes in the convention's constitution and bylaws that streamline governance.
(Photo by Robert Rogers)

BGCT approves sweeping

change in governance structure

By Teresa Young

AUSTIN-Messengers to the Baptist General Convention of Texas annual meeting overwhelmingly approved a revised constitution and set of bylaws that streamline its governance structure and make the convention's Executive Board more directly involved in the decision-making process.

The decisions set in motion “the most sweeping changes in BGCT governance since 1959,” said Wesley Shotwell, pastor of Ash Creek Baptist Church in Azle and chair of the Executive Board's Governance Committee.

Rogers kept SBC's steering wheel turned to the right

November 21, 2005

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Rogers kept SBC's steering wheel turned to the right

By Bob Allen

EthicsDaily.com

MEMPHIS, Tenn.-Three-time Southern Baptist Convention President

Adrian Rogers, whose 1979 election sparked a revolutionary leadership change in America's largest Protestant denomination, died Nov. 15.

Texas WMU celebrates 125 years of missions service

November 21, 2005

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Texas WMU celebrates 125 years of missions service

By Teresa Young

AUSTIN Woman's Missionary Union of Texas celebrated the mission organization's 125th anniversary with a program weaving history and service.

The program relayed much of Texas WMU history through dramatic vignettes presented by Janna Walker and her daughter, Caroline, of First Baptist Church in New Braunfels.

Historic Texas Baptist church 'still alive and growing,' pastor reports

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Historic Texas Baptist church 'still alive and growing,' pastor reports

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

AUSTIN-Texas' oldest continuously active missionary Baptist church is "still alive and growing," Butch Strickland told the Texas Baptist Historical Society.

Ministers, layman honored at banquet

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Baylor
University
President
John
Lilley
(left) and
Truett
Seminary
Dean Paul
Powell
(right)
present
Texas
Baptist
Ministry
Awards to
(left to
right)
Alejandro
Camacho,
Jack
Green
and Butch
Peters.
(Photo by
Robert
Rogers)

Ministers, layman honored at banquet

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

AUSTIN—A retired children's home administrator, a dentist involved in missions construction and a bivocational pastor committed to helping immigrants gain legal status in the United States received Texas Baptist Ministry Awards at a banquet held in conjunction with the Baptist General Convention of Texas annual meeting.

Varied evangelism methods can be effective, Shuffield says

November 21, 2005

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Varied evangelism methods can be effective, Shuffield says

By Emily Row

AUSTIN—When he was 8 years old, Wayne Shuffield thought becoming a Christian was all about going to heaven. He was ready for Christ to welcome him into heaven at that very moment. Only later did he realize that God leaves people on earth to help bring others to know Christ.

Shuffield, director of the missions, evangelism and ministry team of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, believes God creates divine appointments for Christians to share their faith with non-Christians.

Worship should unify, not divide, educator insists

November 21, 2005

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Worship should unify, not divide, educator insists

By Craig Bird

AUSTIN-The one thing that should be the most unifying feature of congregational life-worship-often becomes the most divisive element, because churches ask the wrong questions, an East Texas educator told participants at a seminar held during the Baptist General Convention of Texas annual meeting.

Thomas Webster, dean of the school of fine arts at East Texas Baptist University, led a session on how to develop creative worship.