

# **Voices: Mining the past for who we need to be today**

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Recently, I have spent more time learning the history of First Baptist in Brenham, where I am pastor, and about the first Baptists in our area.

Washington County played a major part in the early work of Baptists in Texas. Churches were started, missionaries were sent, Baylor University and the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor were started, and leaders were formed who would shape the history of Texas and Texas Baptists.

It is truly amazing to see what God has done with such humble beginnings.

The fact that there are Baptist churches in almost every town in Texas, that there are Baptist institutions impacting thousands at this very moment, and—most importantly—that there are generations of people who have come to know Christ through all of these testifies that God is not limited by the size or resources of humble beginnings.

I know those first Baptists would be amazed at all that has taken place from where they began.

## **Honoring the past today**

As I learn about these Baptists, I ask myself, “What is the best way to memorialize those who went before us?”

One of the ways to memorialize them is to remember them.

This is important, and I want to encourage you, if you come to Washington County, to go to the Texas Baptist Historical Museum in Independence. It is

an informative and inspiring resource for Texas Baptists.

A second and more important way to memorialize them is to learn from them and apply our learning to today.

## **Past faith, vision & boldness for today**

When I read about these first Baptists in Texas, there are three characteristics among many that stand out to me: faith, vision and boldness.

The first Baptists in Texas were women and men of faith. They trusted and depended on the Lord and sought to obey him.

They were women and men of vision. God gave them vision to start churches, support missionaries and start schools.

They were women and men of boldness. They faced many challenges and difficulties but nevertheless boldly sought to obey and persevere in who God called them to be and what he called them to do.

Texas Baptists today face our own unique set of opportunities and challenges.

While many of our opportunities and challenges are different from what Texas Baptists faced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we still need the characteristics of faith, vision and boldness.

We need to be people of faith who depend upon on the Lord and seek to obey him.

We need to be people of vision who are willing to seek the Lord for his vision, which may be a vision only realized long after we are gone.

We need to be people of boldness who do not back down or cower in fear and bitterness about our current challenges but instead become people of prayer-initiated, persevering action.

If the Lord tarries, I wonder what will be said of us 170 or more years from now? Will it be said of us, "They would be amazed at all that has taken place from where they were in 2019?"

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