

FIRST SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCH

January 11, 2022

Volume 3, Issue 1

Pastor's Word

"His Love Carries Us Through"

This phrase caught my attention; "Our love carried us through." I read it on the cover of *People* magazine Dec. 20, 2021. It is referring to an article on Tim McGraw and his wife Faith Hill. The cover hook to entice you to want to read the article is: "Married 25 years, the superstars open up about supporting each other through heartbreaking losses and his struggle with alcohol..." The losses were their three daughters leaving home, and the death of three of their parents.

In the article in responding to staying with her husband when he struggled to deal with alcoholism Faith said "When you love someone, you commit to being there for them for the highs, the lows, anytime." Tim echoes this when he comments: "We made a commitment to each other a long time ago that we are not going to give up." thus "Our love carried us through." Isn't this true for the Christian life? Love will carry us through.

I wonder if this is why Jesus commands us: "You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment." Matthew 22:37-38 NLT

Is this why the first gift listed as being a gift given to us by the Holy Spirit is love?

"But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!" Galatians 5:8-9 NLT (emphasis added)

The Bible says that of the things that last forever the greatest of these is love.

"Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love." 1 Corinthians 13:13 NLT

The Bible reveals to us that **love** is the essence of who God is.

*"Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. ⁸ But anyone who does not love does not know God, for **God is love.** ⁹ God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. ¹⁰ This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. ¹² No one has ever seen God. **But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.**" 1 John 4:7-12 NLT (emphasis added)*

God is love. Because of His love for us He "sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins". Our response to receiving His love, receiving Jesus as our Savior, receiving the removal of our sin, is that we love... we love God and we love each other. As we do this God's love lives in us and through us! **Our love carries us through.** We get through the difficulties and challenges we face in life.

The writer of the Book of Lamentations understood God's love for us; "I will never forget this awful time, as I grieve over my loss. ²¹ Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this: ²² the faithful love of the LORD never ends! His mercies never cease. ²³ Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning." Lamentations 3:21-23 NLT

Hymn writer Thomas O. Chisholm expresses this so beautifully in verse 1 of *Great is Thy Faithfulness*:

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father
There is no shadow of turning with Thee
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not
As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be

Chorus:

Great is Thy faithfulness, Great is Thy faithfulness
Morning by morning new mercies I see
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.

Why is this true? Because God is love and He loves us, **His love carries us through.**

Pastor Jerry

A Pinned Note from the Pastor's Wife



What to share at the beginning of a new year? I guess just to remember that **God is faithful!** It's been a rough couple of years with the pandemic, losses of all kinds, health issues, all sorts of things. In the midst of it all we can lose our focus on what's truly important.

I have this saying posted on my computer monitor at work which says:

COURAGEOUS FAITH IN UNCHARTED TERRITORY

I wrote it as a reminder to myself when Jerry was facing his surgery in 2020 and I was studying in the book of Joshua. In the first chapter of Joshua it says this:

- v. 6 - **"Be strong and courageous,..."**
- v. 7 - **"Be strong and very courageous."**
- v. 9 - **"This is my command—be strong and courageous!"**
- v. 18 - **"So be strong and courageous!"**

Do you see a pattern here? I do – not just a pattern but a command. So whatever we as a church and as individuals are facing this year, let's do it with courage.

Courage to trust the One **"who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think."** (Ephesians 3:20b NLT)

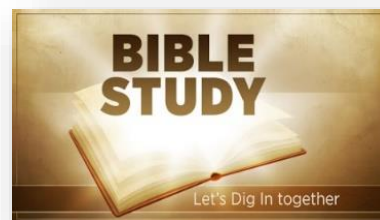
Let's choose that this year we will be like those described in the words of the hymn *"Onward, Christian Soldiers"* verse 3 and chorus:

*Like a mighty army
moves the church of God;
Brothers, we are treading
where the saints have trod;
We are not divided;
all one body we,
One in hope and doctrine,
one in charity.*

Chorus

*Onward, Christian soldiers,
marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus
going on before!*

And we do this with courage through the power of the Holy Spirit working within us.



Opportunities available at FSBC to study God's Word together:

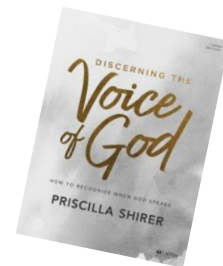
Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. both in-person and on FB

Fridays at 11:00 a.m. - Women's Bible study

This group will be studying:

"Discerning the Voice of God"
by Priscilla Shirer



For questions about the women's Bible study, please see Debbie Lovelady

JOIN US

For more information call the church office at 784-1641.

Follow us on the church's Facebook page at **First Southern Baptist Church:**

- *"Worship and Word"* broadcast at 10:30 a.m. on Sundays by Pastor Jerry; upon viewing you are encouraged to **Share** and **Like** so that it will be available to your friends on FB



- Also, *"Wednesday Bible Study with Pastor Jerry"* broadcast on FB at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesdays



Thank you for your faithfulness in giving over this last year of 2021. As an end-of-year update, here are the giving and expenditures for the General Fund:

Giving:	\$131,990.45
Expenditures:	\$124,307.50

Please be in prayer for the Stewardship Team as they give oversight to a 2022 budget – may it be a FAITH budget as we seek God and His vision for this church in 2022.

LOTTIE MOON CHRISTMAS OFFERING 2021

Thank you for your generous giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. Together we can make a difference in our world.



January Verse of the Month

*I long, yes, I faint with longing
to enter the courts of the Lord.
With my whole being, body and soul,
I will shout joyfully to the living God.*

Psalms 84:2 NLT

There is a **'prayer' opportunity** taking place on Sunday mornings following the worship service

AND



to join us!

Following the morning service, we gather briefly at the front for a season of prayer. We are praying for our church, and for God to reveal His vision for our church this year. We would love to have you join us.

ALL ARE WELCOME!!



Sundays at 5:00 p.m.

**Building E
(2-story building)
Room 3**

It's not too late to join. If you have questions, please see Janice at church on Sundays or Wednesdays. Or call the church office at 784-1641 to speak with the pastor.

**First Southern Baptist Church
1641 W. Henderson Ave.
Porterville**

PRAYER NET

Prayer requests can be submitted by a phone call or text.

The first contact is: Barbara Harness
783-1016 phone
339-8353 cell

If Barbara is unavailable, the second contact is:
Pastor Jerry Lanford
661-703-2514 cell

If neither of the above is available, please contact the church office at 784-1641 between the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon, Monday – Friday.

Please note that Barbara and/or Pastor Jerry will be responsible for getting the prayer requests out to those on the Prayer Net. We are requesting that you use this process only to put prayer requests on the Prayer Net.



First Southern Baptist Church

1641 W. Henderson Ave.
Porterville, CA 93257
559-784-1641

office@fsbcport.org

Office Hours are Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon

North American Mission Board

Prayer Requests – January 2022

Justin McKay

Church Planter
The Local Church
Arvada, CO
justin@thelocalchurchco.org



Pray the people of Arvada will have hearts that are soft and receptive to the gospel. Pray their spiritual apathy would transform into a spiritual awakening. Pray our launch team will grow numerically in size and spiritual hunger. We launch publicly February 20. Please pray many would attend this special service and that we will soon add three to four small groups. Pray we can maintain a good relationship with Cornerstone Church of God, from whom we currently rent space. Pray our partnership with them will remain solid and favorable.

Cedric Lauchner

Church Planter
Dream Church Jacksonville
Jacksonville, FL
info@dreamchurchjax.com



Pray that resources will be provided to us as we continue to share the gospel and serve within the Springfield community of Jacksonville. Pray that God will give me vision and wisdom in shepherding God's people as we move into 2022.

Debi Sharkey

Chaplain
Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women (LCIW)
St. Gabriel, LA
debisharkey@gmail.com



Our warden is retiring. Pray that our new warden will be God-fearing and will continue the prison reforms started by our previous warden. Pray the new warden will value faith-based programs (ministries).

Jonathan and Joy White

College Ministry
Grizzly Christian Fellowship
Missoula, MT
jonathanandjoywhite@gmail.com

Please pray for the salvation of Victor and Emma. These students have heard the gospel clearly and continue to hang around our ministry with some interest but are unwilling to commit and surrender their lives to Christ. Pray the Holy Spirit will do what only He can do. Also pray the upperclassmen leaders in our ministry will be bold in sharing Christ and making disciples among their peers. Thank you!

