

SEPTEMBER 4, 2025

First Baptist Church of Eatonton Messenger

FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST SHARING GOD'S LOVE AND GRACE WITH ALL



FROM THE PASTOR

I can't find where I read it recently, but it started off with the word sloth. Not the animal, but the aspect of being slothful. Slothfulness is to be inclined not to work or exert one's self in any significant way that requires energy, creativity or thoughtfulness. It is synonymous with being lazy.

Slothfulness is named as one of the seven deadly sins by those who make such lists as seven deadly sins.

Another word ancient fathers and mothers employed to talk about slothfulness, in the early centuries of monasticism, was *acedia*. Acedia was a choice one made not to be involved, either with one's mind or heart, or hands. You simply disconnect. Acedia is refusing to feel any empathy, any sympathy, any grief, any pain or anything. Life unfolds around you, but you refuse to be invested. You won't even consent to think about it. You refuse to feel one way or the other. You refuse to care – acedia.

There has even been some recent public dialogue that says that would be great! Some have said empathy, caring deeply is part of this generation's downfall. I understand the need to be detached at times, so you are not immobilized by massive amounts of grief and pain. But I also think it is to be slothful and lazy, guilty of acedia when we decide empathy is the downfall.

True, there is so much about which to be concerned. So many things need somebody's attention. Every device with which you connect breaks your heart with the stories! Critical information bombards you twenty-four seven. You can't solve all the problems. You can't even listen to all of them! You can get exhausted and immobilized by empathy.

At the same time it is simply lazy and slothful to just disconnect, to refuse to care what happens. It is hard work but necessary work, to stay on the field playing the game, in the church being a part of the solution, keeping faith in one another, loving even when it is costly to do so. But Jesus calls us to the work of caring, loving, believing and empathizing.

Yes, it is costly work. And it is the work to which Jesus calls us – to bear a cross of open arms filled with compassion – to do the work of Christ among us. Empathy and loving are the work of Christ we are called to do.

We do not want our hearts broken. We don't want to find out how disappointing someone has behaved. Nor do we always want to respond to how much people need the embodied love of Christ. And we can't help everybody with what they need. But, moved by God and standing with one another, we follow Jesus in this difficult work of being humane and human – Christlike.

Acedia, is not a choice. Sure, there are days when we wish it was, but the more we live the more we realize our innate love of life and our love of Jesus have bent us in this way of a broken heart and giving hands.

Let us go forward hand in hand with one another!

Grace and Peace,
Craig

THE SONG THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING

*"Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, praise his name;
proclaim his salvation day after day." - Psalm 96:1-2*

Music has always been the language of the soul. It transcends barriers, speaks to our deepest emotions, and has the power to transform ordinary moments into sacred encounters. In the symphony of creation, there is one song that stands above all others—Jesus Christ himself.

When we consider Jesus as "the song," we're not speaking metaphorically about music, but about the harmony He brings to our lives. Just as a beautiful melody can bring order to scattered notes, Christ brings coherence to our scattered hearts and broken dreams.

The Gospel accounts reveal Jesus as one who lived in perfect harmony with the Father's will. His life was a seamless composition of love, mercy, justice, and truth. Every word he spoke, every miracle he performed, every tear he shed was part of a divine symphony being played out for our redemption.

Throughout Scripture, we see that different seasons of life call for different expressions of worship. The psalmist knew songs of lament and songs of celebration, songs of confession and songs of thanksgiving. Jesus meets us in every season with the perfect song our souls need to hear. In times of sorrow, He sings over us with comfort. In moments of joy, He rejoices with us. When we're lost in confusion, His voice cuts through the noise with clarity and direction. When guilt weighs heavy on our hearts, His song of forgiveness lifts the burden we cannot bear alone.

To say "Jesus is the song" is also to recognize that we are invited to join the choir. We don't merely listen to this divine music from a distance—we become part of it. Our lives, transformed by grace, become instruments in God's orchestra. This means our daily choices, our relationships, our work, and our worship all contribute to the song being sung through the church. When we love our neighbors, we add harmony. When we forgive those who hurt us, we contribute a note of grace. When we serve the least among us, we echo the melody of Christ's own sacrifice.

The beautiful truth is that this song didn't end at Calvary, nor even at the empty tomb. It continues to be sung through every believer who chooses to live in rhythm with God's love. It echoes in hospital rooms where Christians care for the sick, in soup kitchens where the hungry are fed, in homes where children learn about unconditional love. As we gather in worship, we join our voices with countless others across time and space, all singing the same fundamental song: that Jesus Christ is Lord, that love wins, that death has no final word, and that every person is precious in God's sight.

This week, I encourage you to listen carefully for the song of Jesus in your life. Where do you hear his melody of peace in the midst of your stress? How is he harmonizing the different aspects of your life into something beautiful? And most importantly, how is he inviting you to add your voice to his eternal song? Remember, you don't need a perfect voice to join this choir—just a willing heart. The God who created music itself delights in every sincere note of praise, every whispered prayer, and every act of love offered in his name.

Let us go forth this week not just humming the tune, but living the song that is Jesus Christ, allowing his melody to flow through every aspect of our lives.

Blessings,

Dylan

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**MISSIONS
SUNDAY**

**Sunday, September 28
10:50 AM
In the Sanctuary**

**CHILDREN'S CHOIR
TUESDAYS AT 3:00PM**



SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

WELCOMING FOR SEPTEMBER

Scott and Amy Joris

USHERS FOR SEPTEMBER

Marvin Franklin

Chad Davis

Edge Farley

Luke Harvey

Clayton Lancaster

DEACON FOR SEPTEMBER 7

Charles Winslette

DEACON FAMILIES

Ralph Barclay Family

Sharon Haney

Paula Rossee Family

Grady Strube

Lynda Walker Family

Cary Walton Family

Sug Walton

DEACON FOR SEPTEMBER 14

Robin Benton

DEACON FAMILIES

Sean Bennett

Hunter Giddens

Carl Haizlip Family

Clayton Lancaster Family

Ennis Lankford Family

Gwen Ralston

Kyle Ralston

Joann Smith Family

Tom Thompson Family

BIRTHDAYS

09/07 - Joan Key

09/09 - Sabrina Carmichael

09/10 - Grady Strube

09/11 - Joann Smith, Christine Winslette

09/13 - Kay Stevens

09/14 - Nell Wright, Kathy Faulk

09/15 - Gage Rainey

09/18 - Lilly Kent Rainey, Casey Kauffmann

ANNIVERSARY

09/12 - Jeff and Gwen Russell

09/13 - Jeff and Alanna Davis

WORSHIP REPORT

Sunday, August 24 115

Sunday, August 31 94

PRAYER MINISTRY

PRAYER NEEDS

Please continue to call the church office if you have prayer requests or updates to the prayer list. An urgent prayer request can always be sent out to the church by way of email.

Men's Prayer Group
Thursdays at 8:00AM
In the Sanctuary

First Baptist Church
P.O. Box 3400
Eatonton, GA 31024
Return Service Requested

JOIN US FOR OUR WEDNESDAY NIGHT SERVICES

5:30 PM - Supper (with reservation)

6:15 PM - Bible Study, Youth Group, & Handbells

7:15 PM - Chancel Choir



**Come midweek to refuel, reconnect, and grow in faith.
Everyone is welcome — Invite a friend!**