

JULY 3, 2025

First Baptist Church of Eatonton Messenger

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



FROM THE PASTOR

Jesus once said, *"Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:38)."* That sounds like a tall order—until we look more closely. Eugene Peterson, a trustworthy pastor and Bible translator, offers this interpretation in *The Message translation*.

"In a word, what I'm saying is, Grow up. You're kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God-created identity. Live generously and graciously toward others, the way God lives toward you."

I know that is different from the Old School translation. But Peterson doesn't change the text, as much as it tries to clarify the text. And the truth is all translations offer some interpretation as they translate. The Common English Bible, renders Jesus' words this way.

"Just as your heavenly Father is complete in showing love to everyone, so also you must be complete."

Jesus sets a high standard—but not the kind of perfection modern media demands. He's not talking about flawless skin, ideal bodies, spotless resumes, or perfect relationships. He calls us to live love—the generous, gracious love God lives out toward us.

Jesus, in fact, teaches something close to what Asian cultures call *Wabi Sabi*. No, not wasabi. *Wabi Sabi* is not even a cousin to wasabi. Joyce Rupp explains *wabi sabi* as a way of valuing the imperfect. It finds beauty in what's worn, chipped, or irregular—the very things our culture often tosses aside.

In my own view each day, I see beauty in an old oil can, a bent photo, a tea canister from a vintage kitchen set, a wooden-handled pipe wrench, and an old wooden ruler. These things aren't perfect, but they are rich in history and meaning. They are complete, in their own way.

Taro Gold writes, *"The wish to improve life is real and attainable, but the desire for a perfect life ... is the desire for something non-existent. ... Unfortunately, the hard-to-escape barrage of 'perfect' images in the media would have us believe otherwise. We all know the marketing mythology: 'Buy this perfect product, get that perfect life.'"*

Joyce Rupp says it plainly: if we expect to find a faultless mate, a blameless friend, a perfect love, a colleague who never makes mistakes, a child with impeccable behavior, and a teacher or physician who knows everything we will be disappointed. *Perfect love* is rare—if it exists at all.

But *some love*, some *very good love*, does exist. And that is enough.

Jesus hopes we will love—not perfectly, but *well*. Let us value that kind of love. Rupp almost guarantees doing so will restore your mental outlook and reset your heart.

Practice Resurrection,
Craig

"REFLECTIONS ON "PRAISE TO THE LORD, THE ALMIGHTY"

"Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation! O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation!"

There are hymns that whisper, and there are hymns that shout. "Praise to the Lord, The Almighty" belongs firmly in the latter category. Written by Joachim Neander in 1680, this magnificent hymn has called God's people to uninhibited worship for over three centuries.

The opening line presents us with a fascinating paradox. Neander addresses his own soul directly: "O my soul, praise Him." Before we can lead others in worship, we must first convince ourselves. How often do we find ourselves in worship services going through the motions while our hearts remain distant? This hymn reminds us that praise begins as an internal discipline—a choice we make to recognize God's worthiness regardless of our circumstances. The psalmist understood this internal dialogue. "Bless the Lord, O my soul," David writes in Psalm 103. Praise isn't always spontaneous emotion; sometimes it's a deliberate act of will, a conscious decision to acknowledge who God is when our feelings lag behind our faith.

"All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before Him!"

After calling his own soul to praise, Neander expands his vision to include "all that hath life and breath." This isn't merely poetic flourish—it's a profound theological statement about the scope of God's reign. When we gather on Sunday mornings, we're joining a cosmic chorus that includes every living thing. The sparrow's song, the whale's call, the wind through the trees—all of creation participates in this grand symphony of praise. In our individualistic age, we sometimes forget that worship is fundamentally communal. We're not just individual believers having personal encounters with God; we're part of something infinitely larger.

"Hast thou not seen how thy desires e'er have been granted in what He ordaineth?"

This hymn doesn't promise that life under God's care will be free from storms. Instead, it assures us that His presence transforms our relationship to those storms. The phrase "what He ordaineth" acknowledges both God's goodness and life's complexity. This isn't easy theology, but it's honest theology. Throughout the hymn, Neander employs a crucial spiritual discipline: remembrance. "Hast thou not seen..." he asks, pushing us to recall God's faithfulness in our own experience. When present circumstances cloud our vision, we need the testimony of past experiences to anchor our faith.

"Let the Amen sound from His people again; gladly for aye we adore Him."

The hymn concludes with a vision of God's people united in worship across time and space. When we sing this hymn today, we're joining our voices with Joachim Neander in 17th-century Germany, with countless saints who have gone before us, and with believers around the world who will sing it long after we're gone. This perspective transforms our understanding of Sunday morning worship. We're not just gathering for an hour of inspiration; we're participating in the ongoing worship of God that spans centuries and cultures.

"Praise to the Lord, The Almighty" endures because it speaks to the full range of human experience. It begins with the struggle to praise, acknowledges life's complexities, celebrates God's intimate care, and culminates in corporate worship that transcends individual circumstances. It's a hymn for doubters and believers alike, for those whose souls readily sing and those who must consciously call themselves to praise. When we sing it together, we're not just making music; we're participating in the ongoing praise of God that began before the world's foundation and will continue long after its final note has faded. In a fragmented world, this ancient hymn offers our congregations an invitation to find their place in the grand story of God's people, lifting their voices in praise to the One who is truly worthy of all our adoration.

Dylan

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

OUR MEMBERS:

Terry Blanton, George Dissmeyer, Norman Holle, Gwen Ralston, Kyle Ralston, Scott Sharp, Tom Thompson, Jimmy Williams, Nell Wright, Unspoken

FRIENDS AND FAMILY:

Nancy Banister, Martha Benner, Lynn Butterworth, Warren Camp, Neile Chambers, Gloria Covington, Michael Homiere, Nancy Joiner, Cathy Ledford, Zellie Marbury, Everett Marsh, Lisa Morgan, Eleanor Moyer, Sheryl Murphy, Owen Nauert, Walt Rocker Jr., Earnest Rogers, Steven Sharp, Ted Sills, Linda Stowe, Kristy Trice, Emmett Vining, Wayne Waddell, Katherine Warner, Leigh Ann Willis

ASSISTED LIVING, NURSING HOME, & HOMEBOUND:

Mary Jo Balas, Jo Ann Clay, Maxine Godin, Luceil Harrison, Mary Ann Heath, Gaye Lankford, Sug Walton

MISSIONARY FRIENDS:

Trey and Kaitlyn Lancaster in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe & Matt and Michelle Norman in Catalunya, Spain

YOUTH EVENTS

Middle and High School Students
are invited to our summer events!
For more information contact Madison.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF EATONTON - FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF EATONTON - FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF EATONTON



FBCE YOUTH

SUMMER 2025 SCHEDULE

JULY 16

POOL PARTY!

JULY 23

MACON BACON GAME NIGHT

JULY 30

BACK TO SCHOOL PARTY



FOLLOW US ON IG @YOUTH_FBCE
FOR MORE DETAILS



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SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

WELCOMING FOR JULY

Guerry and Joan Key

USHERS FOR JULY

Cary Walton, David Giddens, Scott Joris,
Ben Leverette, Jesse McMillen, Charles Patten

DEACON FOR JULY 6

Mollie Harvey

DEACON FAMILIES

Tara Bushmiaer, Russell Davis Family,
Marvin Franklin Family, Sheryl Hall,
Scott Joris Family, Steve Marshall, Pat McDade

DEACON FOR JULY 13

Clayton Lancaster

DEACON FAMILIES

Terry Blanton Family, Maxine Godin,
Walt Rocker Family, Lois Schell,
David Stickley Family, Ellen Trice, Nell Wright

WORSHIP REPORT

Sunday, June 22 118

Sunday, June 29 110

BIRTHDAYS

07/04 - Frank Thompson, Rebecca Prance

07/06 - Karen Ricketson

07/07 - Alanna Davis, JoAnn Clay

07/08 - Ellen Trice

07/12 - Beth Walton

07/17 - Stew Rich

ANNIVERSARY

07/14 - Edge and Esther Farley

ANNOUNCEMENTS

JULY MISSION PROJECT

SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

Collection Dates: July 6-27

Drop-off: Bins in the Narthex and Fellowship Hall

Delivery: July 31

- PRIMARY (PRE-K-2): UNDERWEAR & SOCKS (SIZES 3-12)
- ELEMENTARY (3-5): MECHANICAL PENCILS, COMPOSITION NOTEBOOKS (WHITE/BLACK), COLORED PENCILS, ZIPLOCK BAGS (ASSORTED SIZES)
- MIDDLE (6-8): HYGIENE ITEMS FOR GIRLS, SOCKS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS
- HIGH (9-12): HYGIENE ITEMS FOR GIRLS, SOCKS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

Help us bless students with a strong start to the school year!

SPONSORED BY R2T AND PARTNERS FOR ALL AGES WHO HAVE NEEDS TO PREPARE TO EDUCATE IN 2025/26!



Back To School

HEALTH FAIR

SATURDAY July 19th
10 AM - 2 PM

**New Life Outreach
Christian Center**
206 Agnes Drive

FREE Community Event

Health screenings, education, resources, and more!

- ➕ Free School Supplies
- ➕ Overdose Prevention
- ➕ Education Literacy
- ➕ Hygiene Care Packages
- ➕ Senior Life Literacy
- ➕ Nutrition Assistance
- ➕ Blood Pressure Checks
- ➕ Free Hot Meals
- ➕ Free Games
- ➕ Vaccine Literacy

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

An American flag is shown on the left side of the image, partially visible, with its stars and stripes. The background of the entire image is a dark blue gradient with a bokeh effect of light blue and white circles.

HAPPY INDEPENDENCE ★ DAY ★

THE CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED
ON JULY 4TH IN OBSERVANCE OF
INDEPENDENCE DAY.
WE HOPE YOU HAVE A BLESSED DAY
WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS!