

PERSPECTIVE

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF MOUNT VERNON BAPTIST CHURCH



True
Repentance



Welcome to Mount Vernon!

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SERMON SCHEDULE

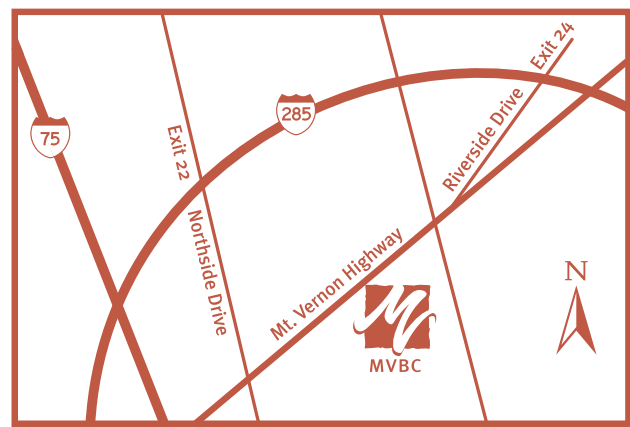
Nov. 2*The Power of a Queen*
Esther 2:19-4:17

Nov. 9*The Power of God*
Esther 5:1-10:3

Nov. 16*An Ideal Person*
Matthew 5:1-16

Nov. 23*An Ideal Law*
Matthew 5:17-48

Nov. 30*An Ideal Appearance*
Matthew 6:1-18



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New Members



KEVIN & ANGI BEMISS
Atlanta



RICHARD & ANNA CARRON
Atlanta



BOB & SUE CRANFILL
Roswell



MARK & CALLIE HENDERSON
Atlanta



CHERYL KNIGHT
Atlanta



SCOTT & JOY SULLIVAN
Lilburn



CANDACE THAYER
Marietta



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9
9:15-10:15 AM IN THE MOUNT VERNON ROOM
JOIN US FOR A FIRST LOOK AT MOUNT VERNON!
COME AND LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR CHURCH AS
YOU MAKE YOUR MEMBERSHIP DECISION.



Thomas Scott was converted in an unusual sequence: it happened after he had become a pastor. He was ordained to the ministry in England in 1772. He aspired to the pastorate because he wanted “a less laborious and more comfortable way of procuring a livelihood.” He enjoyed resting and reading but had no taste for actual pastoral work. In 1777 everything changed. On Good Friday of that year he entered the pulpit to preach on Isaiah 53:6. Apparently he saw himself in this text, “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” He announced to the congregation that he now believed that “Christ indeed bore the sins of all who should ever truly believe, in all their guilt, condemnation, and deserved punishment, in his own body on the tree.” Scott had professed to be a Christian—even a pastor for years—but he had never been gripped by the truth of the Gospel. He had never truly believed the Good News, and he had never truly repented of his sins.ⁱ

Scripture is clear that it is not enough to offer mere mental assent to scriptural truth. Jesus warned His disciples, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21). James noted how even the demons believed there was one God but had neither saving faith nor true repentance (James 3:19). Saving faith (true belief) is always accompanied by sound action (true repentance).

Billy Graham referred to repentance as “a launching pad where the soul is sent on its eternal orbit with God at the center of the arc.”ⁱⁱ When true repentance takes place, a person’s life is oriented away from himself and toward His Creator. Our own statement of faith (the summary of biblical teaching agreed to by our church) makes the same point: “Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God.”ⁱⁱⁱ This is a biblical definition. God has always required those who would be His people to turn to Him. God spoke through the prophet Joel to the people of Judah, “Even now . . . re-

turn to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning” (Joel 2:12). The command was to “return” to God. Evidence of this turn could be seen in fasting and weeping and mourning. Peter’s preaching contained the same message, “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord” (Acts 3:19). Again, “The most basic idea of repentance seems to be turning from sin to God.”^{iv}

It is, thus, imperative that our proclamation of the Gospel include both a call to believe and a call to repent. This is, after all, the message of Jesus, “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:15). Some have called repentance and faith the negative and positive aspects of salvation. Negatively, the sinner is supposed to actually renounce sin. Positively, he or she is to believe in Christ. Both acts must take place. Both are found in Paul’s words to Timothy. A faithful servant of God patiently teaches God’s word to unbelievers “in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim. 2:25).

The Bible speaks of repentance as both a responsibility and a gift. The duty is clear: God “commands all people everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30). The gift is clear as well: “God exalted [Christ] to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel” (Acts 5:31). Repentance is more than mere mental assent to the notion that Jesus is Lord (though it is no less!) However, true repentance must not be considered to be a work performed to earn forgiveness. Any theology of penance whereby acts of repentance actually earn forgiveness is a denial of the truth that we are justified by faith alone. The reality remains that the faith by which we are justified is never alone—it is accompanied by an evident turning to God, a profound submission to Christ.

Repentance should affect the church. First, repentance molds our presentation of the Gospel. The Good News demands a response, a redirection of our will. It is a turn that will lead to holiness. So when we share the Gospel with others, it is important to communicate, as the German pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer did, that the grace

^{iv} James Leo Garrett Jr., *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical* (North Richland Hills, TX: Bibal Press, 2001), 2:251.

ⁱ See “The Pastor is Converted—Thomas Scott (1747-1821),” *The Kairos Journal*.

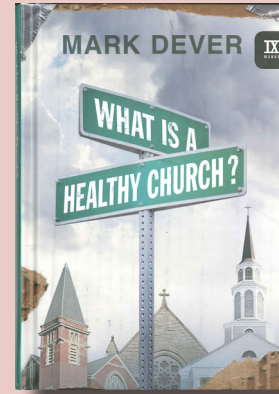
ⁱⁱ Billy Graham, “The New Birth,” in *Fundamentals of the Faith*, ed. Carl F. H. Henry, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1975), 195.

ⁱⁱⁱ Article IV: Salvation, *Baptist Faith and Message* (2000).



What Is a Healthy Church? by Mark Dever

Reviewed by Brad Thayer



What are you looking for in a church? To put it another way, what do you value most in a church? Most Christians choose a church based on how they answer those questions. Some may desire lively small groups while others look for active social ministries. (Neither of which are inherently bad.) In *What Is a Healthy Church?*, Mark Dever encourages Christians – churches and pastors – to aspire to have “congregations that increasingly reflect God’s character as his character has been revealed in his Word” (40). Healthy churches are not sinless or perfect, but rather are congregations that “continually seek to conform itself to God’s Word” (40).

Dever’s concern is that too many Christians do not realize how their relationship with God necessitates the secondary relationships that Christ establishes in his body, the church (22). Such neglect or ignorance is evidenced among Southern Baptist Churches by an average membership of 233 with only 70 attending on Sunday morning (96). Thus, the question becomes where are the other 163 people that claim to be members.

Dever addresses his concern by clearly defining what a Christian is. A Christian is “someone who, first and foremost, has been forgiven his sin and been reconciled to God the Father through Jesus Christ. This happens when a person repents of his sins and puts his faith in the perfect life, substitutionary death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (22). Furthermore, “a Christian is someone who, by virtue of his reconciliation with God, has been reconciled to God’s people” (24).

With a right understanding of a “Christian,” we can now have a better understanding of the church. The church is not a place or a facility; it is God’s people committed to exercise love and good deeds toward one another. This is a corporate testimony of the Gospel – sinners loving one another (26, 34-36). That is the basic biblical principle that governs our understanding of a local church.

How are such healthy congregations fostered? By listening to God’s Word and following it. “Only two steps,” Dever notes, “listen and follow. By listening and following God’s Word, we image and display God’s character and glory” (49). Furthermore, the Bible clearly teaches that what separates God’s people from unbelievers is that God’s people listen to God’s Word and heed it” (50). The great challenge to the church is “figuring out how to be faithful” (56).

What should mark healthy churches? Dever gives nine marks, three “essential” and six “important,” that should mark a “healthy” congregation. They are expositional preaching (ch. 5), biblical theology (ch. 6), a biblical understanding of the Good News (ch. 7),

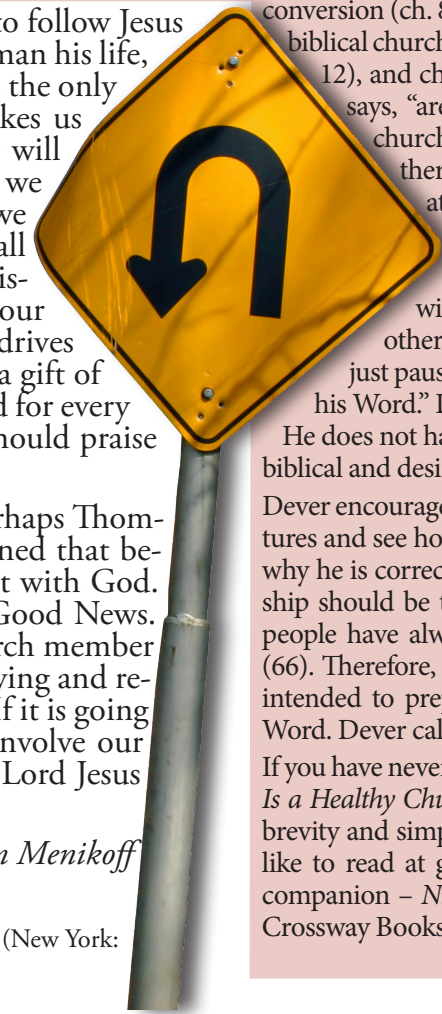
conversion (ch. 8), evangelism (ch. 9), and membership (ch. 10), biblical church discipline (ch. 11), discipleship and growth (ch. 12), and church leadership (ch. 13). “These marks,” Dever says, “are not everything one would want to say about church. . . . However, they are found too rarely and are, therefore, in special need of being brought to our attention and cultivated in our churches” (61-62).

Response
With pastors and churches being bombarded with one growth method and gimmick after another, it is refreshing to be told, “Pastor, congregation, just pause for a minute and listen. Listen to God speak in his Word.” Dever does not seek to be innovative or creative. He does not have the latest program to market. He seeks to be biblical and desires the same for churches all around the world. Dever encourages pastors and congregations to search the Scriptures and see how God wants his people to live together. That is why he is correct to say that at the very heart of a church’s worship should be the expositional preaching of the Bible. “God’s people have always been created by God’s Word,” says Dever (66). Therefore, the singing, praying, and Scripture-reading are intended to prepare God’s people to hear and respond to his Word. Dever calls it going “back to the heart of worship” (67).

What does repentance look like? Perhaps Thomas Scott is a great example. He learned that being a pastor did not make him right with God. He had to repent and believe the Good News. The same is true today. Being a church member is no guarantee of conversion. Believing and repenting is. We have one life to live. If it is going to be lived for God’s glory it will involve our faith in and repentance toward the Lord Jesus Christ. †

Aaron Menikoff

^v Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1959), 47.



If you have never read about what a church should be then *What Is a Healthy Church?* is an excellent place to start because of its brevity and simplicity. Once you whet your appetite and would like to read at greater length and detail then I recommend a companion – *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* by Mark Dever, Crossway Books, 2004. †

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Daylight Savings Ends 9:30am Fall Into Parenting 6:00pm Lord's Supper	9:15am First Look 4:15pm Small Group Training	5pm Fall Into Parenting		7:30pm USO	10:30am Cagle's Dairy Farm	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
9:15am First Look 4:15pm Small Group Training						A Change of Seasons 10am
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
4:15pm Small Group Training	12:00pm RW & A Luncheon					9am Youth Service Project
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
5:00pm Quarterly Church in Conference		5pm Wednesday on Tuesday		Thanksgiving Day Church Office Closed		
30						

Events Key

- Churchwide
- New Members
- Preschool
- Youth
- Children (1st-6th grade)
- Women's Ministry
- Recreation
- Missions

Happy Birthday!

1 Stacey Heald Kyle Blackburn	17 Elaine Johnson Steve Kaplan
2 Margie Arnold Ann Johnson Lollie DeFreese	18 Brandi Payne
4 Nathan Pillsbury	19 Hap Schultz Leslye Wilkins
5 Debbie Burkhead Valerie Williams	20 Patricia McDaniel Jenn Odell
7 Carolyn Shaw Sandi Korthals	21 Susan Wheaton
9 Eddy Oliver	22 Karen Frantz Jake Garland
10 Kathy Smith Sarah Pillsbury	23 Connie Heiskell
11 June Dever Marsha Whelpley Andy Merl Jordan Brundage	24 Hala Mayers Toni Winters Jane Vanderzee Dan Taylor Tiffany Peon
12 Larry Luttrell	27 David Nash
13 Nathan Payne	28 Searcy Garrison Violet Thompson
14 Anne Zimmerman Jane Hall Kathleen Ford	30 Jo Davidson Suzy Kauffman
16 Byron Rogers	

Fall Into Parenting

Join Pastor Menikoff as he shares the biblical truths of parenting. We will learn from the Bible about the calling of a mother, father, and the church family. The last session will be held on November 2 from 9:30am to 10:30am in the Fellowship Hall.

DON'T FORGET!

Remember the end of Daylight Savings Time! Set your clocks back one hour on the evening of November 1st, so that you're on time to Bible Study or the service on the 2nd.



Wednesday on Tuesday

For the week of Thanksgiving, all regular Wednesday evening activities will be on that Tuesday, November 25. After dinner, we will be having a special service of Thanksgiving.

Cagle's Dairy Farm

All preschool families are invited to come take a tour of the dairy on November 8. It's bound to be lots of fun! RSVP to Sweden Swilley at sweden21@comcast.net by November 2.

USO:

Ukrainian Salvation for Orphans
The USO event will be held on November 7, at 7:30pm. The Truett-McConnell Jazz Band will be back this year, and we will have a great time of music, dancing, and fellowship—all to help Ukrainian children know the love of Christ! This year you can contribute to the Bible & Blanket Project, which will provide the Good News and a blanket to a child who is in desperate need.

A Change of Seasons

Ladies, join us for a series bringing together the women of Mt. Vernon. We will pray, share, and encourage one another as we each travel through the individual seasons of our lives. We will be meeting on Saturday, November 15, from 10:00am to 12:00pm in Room 211.

First Look

Join us for a First Look at Mount Vernon! Come and learn more about our church as you make your membership decision. No need to RSVP—just come! The next First Look class will be held on November 9, from 9:15am to 10:15am in the Mount Vernon Room.

RW & A Luncheon

This month's RW & A Luncheon is hosting a special guest from the American Heart Association of Atlanta. Instructor Mike Willingham will be offering Bystander CPR/AED training from 12:45 - 2:00 pm on Monday, 17th. If you are interested in attending the training, please RSVP Jo Anne Padgett at 770-393-3574 or dounjoanne@yahoo.com. (An accurate attendance count is needed so that there will be ample training kits.)

Parents, do you need
a little bit of...



this christmas season?

Bring your kids to

PARENTS' DAY OUT

December 7

12:00 pm - 3:00 pm

*Register online at mvbchurch.org by 12/01/08

A CHANGE OF SEASONS

Saturday, November 15th
10:00-12:00 in Room 211

Sign up will be available Wednesday
nights during dinner and on The Edge.

Small Group Training

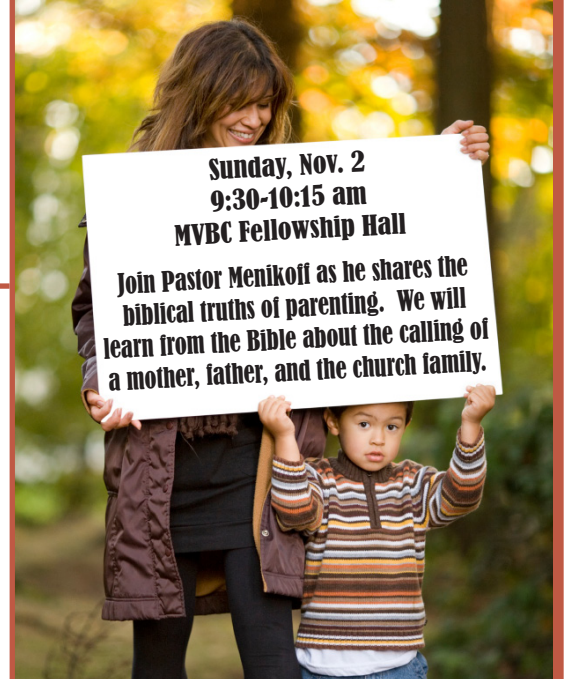
In the midst of busy and passing schedules, it is hard to find the time to invest in the lives of others. Nonetheless, as members of a local church it is our joy and responsibility to do just that—encourage and disciple one another in the faith. If you are interested in knowing more about how to disciple and lead small groups then we invite you to a training session on Sunday, November 9 and 16. The talks will be given by Aaron Menikoff, Bryan Pillsbury, and Brad Thayer in room 211 A & B. Please contact Brad Thayer at 404-255-3133 or Carolyn Roberts at 770-951-1160 with questions.

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

SUNDAYS FROM 4:30~5:30 PM IN ROOM 212

Have you ever had questions like: What is the difference between saving grace and common grace? What does it mean to be called? How do we know if we are really saved? What is the difference between the baptism in the Holy Spirit and filling of the Holy Spirit? Can we lose our salvation? What happens to us when we die? If you would like quality Biblical answers to these questions, this class is for you. You don't have to be a scholar to attend, you just have to be present with an open heart to God's Word. Contact Bryan Pillsbury at 404-255-3133 x224 for more information.

FALL INTO PARENTING



Sunday, Nov. 2
9:30-10:15 am
MVBC Fellowship Hall

Join Pastor Menikoff as he shares the biblical truths of parenting. We will learn from the Bible about the calling of a mother, father, and the church family.



850 MOUNT VERNON HIGHWAY NW
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