

Sheryl Milliken

From: on behalf of Sheryl Milliken

To: The Branch

Subject: 12.16.2009

From the Pastor.....

Church Family,

A WORD

The Lord gave this to me yesterday. I hope it speaks to you as much as it has me. As followers of Jesus, we are to **pursue perfection and practice grace**. Jesus teaches us in Matthew 5:48, "*Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*" This statement comes after a chapter on righteousness. So we are to pursue perfection in righteousness with God. That means we are to be sinless – morally pure, resting in the Lord, following His will for our lives, reaching the lost, ministering to the needy. As followers of Jesus, we must be pursuing perfection. And we are also to practice grace. Jesus says in Matthew 18:22 that we are to forgive those who sin against us up to "*seventy times seven.*" **The implication is that forgiveness in Christ is limitless.** Practicing grace is, in part, forgiving those who sin against us.

Now, you must understand the nature of sin and offense to see the power here. Someone offends you. Someone does something to you that hurt you. The hurt could be minor but it can also be to the core. Jesus is not talking about superficial issues. He knows the condition of man. He knows man is not perfect and will not be perfect until He returns. He will lose His life because of man's condition. He knows man offends/hurts/sins against/angers/tears down man. That is why He came. He came to forgive us and redeem us. And He has done so by grace. "*For it is by grace you have been saved.*" So we are to forgive those who have sinned against us. We are to offer them the grace we have received.

I think if you understand this right your first response will be, "I can not do this. I can pursue perfection but I am not sure I can practice grace." Jesus knows we can do neither. **The call to perfection and the practice of grace are far too high for man to do on his own.** Both show us our limitations, our own sin, and our need for Jesus. Only when we are yielded to the work of the Holy Spirit – living on His power – can we be faithful to pursue perfection and practice grace. Paul prays in Ephesians 3:14-19 that "*God would grant us... to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man...*"

May it be so according to His will.

Pursue perfection. Practice Grace.

PASTOR RANDY

As I announced this past Sunday, Pastor Randy will be leaving our church this Sunday. As we continue to build a family in this fellowship, it is always hard when we lose those we love. We are very thankful to the Lord and to Randy for the time we have had together. We know according to Scripture that his life and our church are in good hands. Please continue to pray for the Strain family and our church as we walk through this.

2 SERVICES

Super Sunday – February 7th – is 8 Sundays away!!! The survey response from this past Sunday was 79% in favor of the sandwich. So, beginning Super Sunday, our worship schedule will be the following:

8:00-9:15 Blended Worship

9:30-10:30 Bible study

10:45-12:00 Progressive Worship

We want people to enjoy worship and we want to see people come to Jesus. We are excited about what God is doing through this new direction He is leading us in. I know change can be difficult. As He has been faithful in the past, God will faithfully walk each one of us through this. He is good! Please do not

hesitate to call me or email me if you have questions about our 2 Services.

Have a great day in the Lord. May He use you to offer words of peace in Christ to your friends, relatives, associates, and neighbors.

Pastor Jim

Christmas Eve Celebration December 24th from 6:00-7:00

Youth Ministry.....

Students, tonight is Axis "Study Hall". Bring your notes and homework to Checkpoint and work with one another to prepare for finals. We will have a designated study area for those who need to study, and help will be available so bring your questions. Also, we will have our own "history class" as we study the historicity and symbolism of the Messiah's birth.

Please note: we will have Checkpoint next week but we will ***not have Checkpoint the Wednesday after Christmas*** (Dec 30th).

For More information about Pecan Grove Baptist Church
Please visit our website: <http://www.pecangrovebaptist.org/>
To unsubscribe please call the church office at 281-342-7979 or
reply to this e-mail requesting to be removed.