

THE WINDS OF CHANGE

BEWARE OF THE LULLING, GENTLE BREEZE; A STORM IS COMING

Dr. Rick Bickelhaupt | founding pastor

The past ten years have been hectic and overwhelming for many. Technology, meant to simplify our lives, has instead made us feel rushed and distracted. We're constantly busy and overwhelmed, trying to do too much. In the past, before the information age, life was slower and less chaotic. It was a time spent with family- personal family and church family-and friends. It was a time when "the south wind blew softly (Acts 27:13)." Those days seemed easier-not that it was absent of hard work and labor-just the opposite. Even though there was much work, the days were a lot less complicated and less stressful.

Those days of ease, however, can be dangerous for the believer. It's then that many will let their guard down and become apathetic concerning the times in which we live. Over the course of time, the winds of change have blown many Christians off course and have destroyed many individuals and families. Many thought to be steadfast and dependable have fallen under the powerful force of the winds of change.

At times, the deceptive south wind blows softly upon us all, just as it did during the Apostle Paul's account in Acts 27. And as that gentle wind blows, we tend to drift along carelessly, unaware of the approaching storm. Christian, the winds of change are beginning to blow, and it's time to pay attention!

"AND WHEN THE SOUTH WIND BLEW SOFTLY, SUPPOSING THEY HAD OBTAINED THEIR PURPOSE, LOOSING THENCE, THEY SAILED CLOSE BY CRETE."

~ACTS 27:13

In Acts 27, we find the Apostle Paul on his voyage to Rome. His voyage began with calm seas and a light breeze from the south. The Bible states that they "had sailed slowly many days (v 7)." It was during this time-a time of calm-that the Lord revealed to the Apostle Paul that the dangerous winds of change were coming (v 10). Verse 11 tells us that the centurion trusted the shipmaster's experience over Paul's divine warning. While experienced professionals offer valuable insights, their guidance should always be evaluated in light of biblical principles. If the professional advice contradicts biblical advice as revealed through God's chosen messengers, we must prioritize the latter.

In this passage, the reader will find many parallels between the voyage of the Apostle and the journey of the end-time Christian. We have had our days of ease; we have drifted along carelessly, sailing along with the soft, gentle south breeze

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EXPANDING THE VISION

OPPORTUNITIES ARISE TO GET THE GOSPEL TO PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

Brandon Weber | youth pastor

GraceTeens continues to grow gaining several students since Promotion Sunday. We also launched a new incentive program, which allows students to redeem points for prizes. Attendees earn points through attendance, bringing their Bible, Bible memorization, and bringing visitors.

God has also impressed upon me to start a Bible outreach at the Oak Harbor High School. I am looking at a few options, and Lord willing, we will have it up and running in the spring semester. We also have an opportunity to be involved in the *Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA)* at the school, which will give us a point of contact and allow us to be a source of encouragement.

The start of two new series has been an encouragement as well. One entitled, "Making My Choices," taught in Sunday school, studies

the lives of major Bible characters and the examples they left for us to follow—ensuring we make good, Godly choices.

The other entitled, "War a Good Warfare," taken out of 1 Timothy 1:18, is taught on Wednesday nights. As we all know, we are in a spiritual warfare, and this series seeks to teach our teens the importance of being good soldiers for the Lord. My prayer for this series is to prepare our teenagers for the spiritual battles they will face in their lives.

As we approach the end of this year, I look for the Lord to do a great work in the lives our youth, as well everyone in our church and community. Please pray with me that the Lord will give us, as a youth group, a desire to see others come to church, be saved, and live for the Lord. (Josh 1:7-9)□

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

WE'RE THANKFUL FOR THOSE WHO HAVE RECENTLY JOINED THE GBC FAMILY!

- KENT KOEFLER - August 18 (Statement of Faith & Baptism)
- DARRIEN KOEFLER - August 18 (Statement of Faith)
- CHASE FAIRALL - August 25 (Statement of Faith & Baptism)
- TIMOTHY SHEAHAN - September 15 (Statement of Faith & Baptism)

THE EARNEST CONTENDER

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STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

A BIBLICAL IMPERATIVE

by Jeremy Bickelhaupt, *Editor*

The pursuit of excellence is a cornerstone of many human endeavors. Whether in our careers, relationships, or spiritual lives, the desire to do our best often drives our actions. The Bible, as a guide for life and faith, offers numerous reasons why we should strive for excellence in all that we do.

Honoring God with Our Best

One of the most fundamental reasons to strive for excellence is to honor God with our best. In Colossians 3:23, the Apostle Paul instructs us: *"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men."* This verse implies that our work is a form of worship, and we should approach it with the same dedication and reverence we would give to any spiritual activity. By doing our best, we demonstrate our love and respect for God and His creation.

Fulfilling Our God-Given Potential

God has created each of us with unique talents and abilities. When we strive for excellence, we are fulfilling our God-given potential. As King David wrote in Psalm 139:13-16, *"For thou has possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in countenance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."* By pursuing excellence, we are honoring the Creator and fulfilling the purpose for which we were made.

Setting a Positive Example

As Christians, we are called to be salt and light in the world (Matthew 5:13-16). This means that our lives should be a positive example to others. When we strive for excellence, we demonstrate the transformative power of faith. Our hard work,

dedication, and commitment to quality can inspire others to do the same.

Contributing to the Kingdom of God

The pursuit of excellence can also contribute to the growth and development of the Kingdom of God. In Matthew 25:21, Jesus commends the faithful servant who invested his talents and produced a return. By doing our best in whatever we do, we earn rewards that contribute to the building up of God's kingdom.

Experiencing Greater Joy and Fulfillment

Striving for excellence can also lead to greater joy and fulfillment in life. When we rely on Christ (Phil. 4:13) to help us achieve our goals, we will surpass our own expectations. We then experience a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction knowing that—with Christ—we can exceed human limitations. This births a fulfilling joy that can be a powerful motivator to continue striving for excellence in all areas of our lives.

Leaving This Life with No Regrets

Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, offers a compelling reason to strive for excellence in Ecclesiastes 9:10: *"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, wither thou goest."* This verse underscores the brevity of life and the importance of making the most of our time on earth. By striving for excellence, we can minimize regrets and maximize our contribution to the world. We can look back on our lives with satisfaction knowing that we have given our best effort in all that we have done. As the saying goes, *"Life is short, but the memory of quality work lasts forever."*

The Bible provides numerous reasons why we should strive for excellence. By honoring God with our best, fulfilling our God-given potential, setting a positive example, contributing to the Kingdom of God, experiencing greater joy and fulfillment, we can live lives—without regret—that are pleasing to God, and beneficial to others.

THE PRAYER OF A SOUL-WINNER

MAKING PRAYER THE BEDROCK OF EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM

Joe Henderson | associate pastor

As Christians, we are called to share Christ with everyone. Sharing the gospel is just one of the outward ministries God has called us to, and our outward ministry is strengthened by our inward ministry of prayer. In fact, I'd venture to say that the greatest ministry we have is our prayer ministry for others. In Romans 10:1, we find three simple truths that we can apply to our prayer life in seeing people come to know Christ as their Savior.

First, prayer is born out of our desire. Paul prayed because he had a burden for his nation—for Israel. It was evident in the fact that everywhere he preached, he went to the Jew first. For us, it's America—a country that has long since lost her way and is in desperate need of the gospel. A need not just for America's leaders, but for the people who make up our great nation. Our family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers are all souls for whom Jesus has died. It should be your burden for their salvation that drives you to your knees in prayer.

Next, prayer shows our dependency on God. Many times, we think that salvation is based on how well we share the gospel; but the truth is, our skill level has nothing to do with it. Paul was praying to the One Who could save the souls for whom he had a burden. People's salvation is dependent upon the Holy Spirit working in their lives. If people in our communities are going to come to know Christ, it

will be because God was doing a work in their lives before we ever shared the gospel with them.

Finally, our prayer should be specific. I have learned that nothing is dynamic until it is specific. Paul realized that Israel's greatest need was Christ. If we are to be effective prayer warriors for those around us, we must identify their specific needs. And since everyone is in need of Christ, we should be praying for their salvation first and foremost.

Uncle John Vassar is a man the Lord used greatly to bring people to Christ. One of his friends said this about John's prayer for others:

"After visiting all day, he would give a detailed account of his visits, calling the name of every member of the families met, and their spiritual condition. He would then kneel and pour out his heart for them, one by one, naming each particular case in his petition. He was quick to detect the secret of a cold and half-hearted profession."¹

Dear friend, for whom are you praying? People need the Lord. How will they ever come to know Him if we aren't burdened for their souls and actively praying for them to come to Christ? Let's go further in our prayer life to see God save those for whom we have a burden. □

¹ Thomas E. Vassar, Uncle John Vassar; or The Fight of Faith (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1879, p. 182)

**“BRETHREN, MY HEART'S DESIRE
AND PRAYER TO GOD FOR ISRAEL
IS, THAT THEY MIGHT BE SAVED.”**

~ ROMANS 10:1

from "WINDS" pg. 1

thinking we have obtained our purpose of life, never stopping to consider the approaching storm. As the winds of change begin to blow, we can learn how to navigate our vessels by following Paul's example.

First, when the winds of change begin to blow, recognize and understand that a storm is approaching. Not long after Paul's shipmates thought they obtained their purpose, "a tempestuous wind" called Euroclydon (a Nor-Easter) beat upon them for weeks. With Bible prophecy being fulfilled right before our very eyes, understand that the winds of change are going to bring a tempest to this old world. A storm is coming! Our only Hope is the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ at the rapture of the redeemed! Are you ready to meet Him?

Second, as the winds of change come, determine what is truly important in life (see Acts 27:18-19, 38). While the storm raged for Paul, it was decided that they should "lightened the ship (v 18)." We see in verse 19 that they tossed all the tackling of the ship overboard. In verse 38, they threw the wheat overboard. When the storm comes—and it will— we must take inventory of what is of value in our lives. So much of what we work for and allow ourselves to be consumed by will be proved to be of little value at the moment we enter into eternity. Friend, value your soul! Value the souls of your family and friends. God values souls so much that He sent Jesus, His only begotten Son to die for the sins of

lost souls on the cross—paying the ultimate price to redeem lost mankind. Yes, *you* matter! Your friends and family members matter. Your neighbors and coworkers matter. Let's rid ourselves of the hindrances that keep us from reaching the souls of our loved ones before the storm makes landfall in our lives.

Next, listen to the preaching of God's man.. Paul wrote, "*And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away. But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss (vs 20:21).*" Had the shipmaster and crew heeded the man of God's warning, they would not have suffered such great loss.

Many times I have warned people of the dangers that lie along certain paths. Many times I have exhorted Christians to sell out to God. But most of my warnings have been disregarded as these people ignored godly counsel, embracing the world, the flesh, and the devil instead. Now, years have gone by and their decisions have resulted in broken homes and shattered families. If only they had listened! There is much deception in the soft, gentle breeze. Christian, don't

get comfortable. A storm brews beyond the horizon.

Up to this point in Paul's account, all seems to be doom and gloom. I'm glad that with the Lord Jesus Christ, it doesn't have to remain that way. God has a plan for us, even in the midst of the storm. In verses 22-24, Paul tells his shipmates, "*be of good cheer...*" He proceeds to tell them of the message he received from God, which assured him that no one was going to die. In verse 24, he tells them "*fear not.*" Again, in verse 25, Paul tells them, "*to be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.*" Even though the storm was raging, Paul's faith in God's purpose and plan was unwavering. He knew that God would not fail to see him through the storm.

Christian, a storm is approaching. Where does your faith lie? When the storm approaches, you better be anchored to the Rock (vs. 29). "*Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil... (Heb. 6:19.*" Our Rock is the Lord Jesus Christ. Don't let the soft breeze lull you to sleep. Prepare yourself and your loved ones for the approaching storm! Jesus is Coming Soon. Anchor yourself to Him until the trumpet sounds!



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DATES TO REMEMBER

OCTOBER 5

HARVEST FELLOWSHIP
3-7 PM

OCTOBER 8

LADIES' FELLOWSHIP
6:30 PM

OCTOBER 12

MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST
8 AM

OCTOBER 19

TEEN CONFERENCE
8 AM - 2 PM

OCTOBER 20

RANDY STARR
GUEST EVANGELIST
11 AM & 6 PM

OCTOBER 30

THE YOUNG LIONS' CLUB
YEAR-END CELEBRATION
7 PM

NOVEMBER 26

THANKSGIVING SERVICE
6 PM

DECEMBER 22

"CHRISTMAS AT HOME"
CHRISTMAS CANTATA
6 PM

MINISTRY NEWS

HARVEST FELLOWSHIP

Celebrate the arrival of autumn with a fun-filled afternoon of Christian fellowship. Enjoy delicious chili, hot cider, smores, hayrides, exciting cornhole matches, and a thrilling candy hunt for kids. Prizes and trophies will be awarded to the winners of our chili cook-off and cornhole tournament. Registration for these competitions is now open at the Welcome Center in our main lobby. Don't miss out on this fantastic event!

THANKSGIVING SERVICE

Give thanks with us on Tuesday, Nov. 26 at 6 p.m. during our annual Thanksgiving Service. All attendees will meet in the fellowship hall for a time of singing and scripture reading before feasting on a Thanksgiving spread. The evening will conclude with a short challenge by Pastor Bickelhaupt. This service will be held in lieu of our regular Wednesday evening Bible Study and Prayer Meeting. Please make plans to join us that evening!

TEEN CONFERENCE

GraceTeens, mark your calendars! We're excited to announce that you're invited to attend the Youth Conference in Akron, Ohio, on Saturday, Oct. 19. Bus transportation will be provided for all those who wish to attend. The bus will depart from GBC at 6 a.m. and is scheduled to return around 4 p.m. There's no cost to attend, but we encourage donations to help cover the fuel expenses. For more information or to RSVP, please contact Mr. Weber.

THE YOUNG LIONS' CLUB

Hey, Clubbers... Get ready for an exciting conclusion to The Young Lions' Club! On Wednesday, Oct. 30, we'll celebrate the year's achievements with our final gathering. Join us for a night of recognition, fun, and delicious pizza! We'll honor our top clubbers with awards and prizes, and the Trading Post will be open for all clubbers to redeem their hard-earned points. Don't miss this final opportunity to celebrate your accomplishments and have a great time with your fellow clubbers!

LADIES' FELLOWSHIPS

The *Ladies of Grace* have resumed their monthly meetings. At 6:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month, our ladies meet for a time of prayer, devotional encouragement, and fellowship. Each month is held at a different home. *More details regarding location is available at graceoh.com.*

GUEST EVANGELIST

Evangelist Randy Starr will be our guest speaker on Sunday, Oct. 20, during both our morning and evening services. Starr's ministry, Starr Publications, is dedicated to providing spiritually uplifting Christian resources to help believers deepen their walk with Christ. A display table featuring Starr's books will be available for purchase on that day.



OUR MISSIONARIES

Field report



THE FREYERS
To New Zealand



Hello Friends,

While the majority of you are entering the cool, crisp autumn season, the days here in New Zealand are getting longer and temperatures are beginning to get warmer as we approach spring and new beginnings.

Since our last update, we had the wonderful opportunity to host Pastor Gabe Ruhl from Chico, CA for a weekend. We had a marriage seminar on Friday and Saturday, and then he preached for us all day Sunday. He and his family were such a blessing and help to our church.

Another blessing that came in July was the opportunity to start discipleship with a young man in our church who was recently saved. Jason, who began attending

Community Baptist because of a friend's invitation, told me that—between hearing the preaching and reading the Bible—he knew [the Gospel message] was the truth. Since then, he has had a heart to learn more... even in the midst of a household that is steeped in Catholicism. Continue to pray for him as he was baptized yesterday and is hearing a lot of Bible truths for the first time in his life.

Lastly, Bekah and I have been praying about where the Lord would have us go to plant a church when our visa requirements are fulfilled. After much prayer, counsel, and guidance through God's Word, we believe that Gisborne, New Zealand is that place. We will still need to be with

our sponsoring church through this year, but we look forward to taking the next steps in preparation for that church launch. We have had the opportunity to visit the city a couple of times, and on our last visit, I had an opportunity to play golf with a few of the locals there and explain what it is we will be doing in the coming months. As I left, I was able to give them gospel tracts and thank them for letting me play with them. It's a small thing, but I was thankful for the opportunity God gave me to witness to them. We ask that you pray for more opportunities like this and for our preparations to move to Gisborne.

We are so thankful for your investment in our lives both through prayer and financial giving. We pray you have a wonderful season of ministry in the coming days.

Never Quit,
The Freyer Family

Email Greg & Bekah to let them know you are praying for them!



Christ2kiwis@gmail.com



Greg & Bekah visit with family (above). Greg baptizes a new convert, Jason, at Community Baptist Church.

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OUR MESSAGE COME. HEAR. SHARE.

WE POINT everyone who attends our services to Jesus Christ. Together, we dive into God's Word to #discovergrace. The grace of God that permits us to *come* to Him through salvation.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.

Ephesians 2:8

The grace that allows us to *hear* and learn of Christ's redemptive plan for sinful mankind.

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Romans 10:17

And the grace that commands the believer to *share* the Good News of Christ with a lost world.

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

Mark 16:15

WE DESIRE all to **COME** to Christ, **HEAR** His message, and **SHARE** it with the world.



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