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PERSPECTIVE

THE MONTHLY JOURNAL OF MOUNT VERNON BAPTIST CHURCH

What to Expect When He's Preaching:

Why Listen to Preaching with the Church?





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- July 1** **He Taught with Authority**
John 7:14-24
- July 8** **The World Was Not His Home**
John 7:25-36
- July 15** **He Promised Living Water**
John 7:37-39
- July 22** **He Caused Division**
John 7:40-52
- July 29** **He Promised the Light of Life**
John 8:12-30

▶ **FIGHTER VERSE**

¹² “And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good?”

Deuteronomy 10:12-13

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Use the QR reader on your mobile device to sign up to receive each issue of *Perspective* by email.

Knowing THE BODY

a look at the Elder nominees

The Elders have nominated two candidates for the office of Elder at Mount Vernon Baptist Church. Please pray over these men, and if you know of any reason why either one should not serve as an Elder of this church, you may contact an Elder and let them know your concerns. A vote to call both men will be held at the quarterly Church in Conference on **Sunday, July 29, at 4:30 pm**. Each man will be voted on individually and must be approved by 75% of those voting in order to be elected an Elder. (The current Elder body consists of Gerry Chatham, John Hall, Jim Heiskell, Aaron Menikoff, Bryan Pillsbury, Hank Sturgess, and Brad Thayer.)



Rick Hutchins

Rick was raised in attending a Southern Baptist Church where he accepted Christ and was baptized around the age of 12. In college he gradually pushed God into the background, believing that he was comfortably in control. In early 1983, a friend re-introduced Rick to the Savior in a life-changing meeting that began as something altogether ordinary. Rick says, "Our God is faithful and never gives up on us, never stops loving us, and my life is my proof of that." Since coming to MVBC in 1985, Rick has served as a preschool teacher, Sunday School Director, Deacon, and on several committees. He has also served on the Worship Welcome team and the Leadership team. Rick is currently serving as the Deacon of Adult Sunday School.

Scott Sullivan

Scott was born and raised in a Christian home. His father served on the pastoral staff at their church in Decatur. It was during the spring of 1983 that God began a mighty work in his heart, and Scott came to fully understand Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and what it meant for him to turn from sin and believe in Jesus. He professed his faith and was baptized.

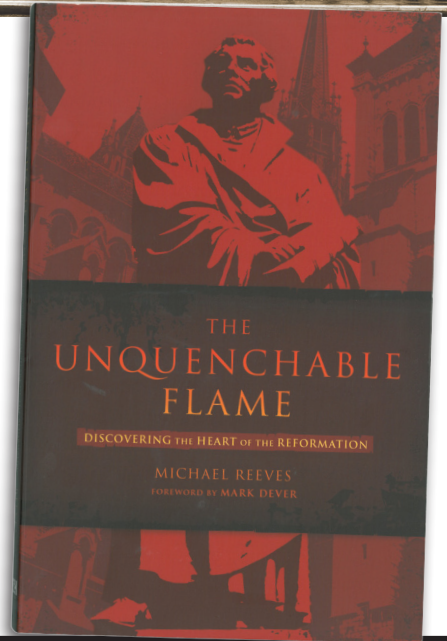
While there were times in his life that he strayed, God was always faithful to draw him back. After graduating from college, Scott began investing in the lives of young people in his church, teaching a college Sunday School class and working with the Student Ministry. Scott has taught Sunday School at Mount Vernon and is currently the Deacon of Youth Ministry.





The Unquenchable Flame

by Michael Reeves



Reviewed by Rodney Barry

THE UNQUENCHABLE FLAME: DISCOVERING THE Heart of the Reformation by Michael Reeves is an excellent introduction to the 16th and 17th century Protestant and English Reformation. Written in a fast moving, engaging, and entertaining style, it is a quick read that is hard to put down and will leave you wanting more. However, aside from the entertaining characters, events and humor, why should a Christian read this book? Isn't it just about people and events from long ago that have no real relevance to modern-day Christians? Wasn't the Reformation just about corruption and abuses within the medieval Roman Catholic Church, which the Reformers protested against, and are no longer an issue in the modern world? I would answer, "No!" As Reeves concludes, "the Reformation was, fundamentally, about justification; it was the Reformers' view of justification, as discovered in the Bible, that shaped and controlled almost every aspect of their disagreement with Rome" (184). It is the doctrinal clarity that the author presents that is most beneficial for reinforcing a deeper understanding of our faith.

Reeves covers a period of several centuries, in which God used theologians, humanists, rulers, ordinary people and inventions, such as the printing press, to bring about the truth of the Gospel. The common thread that tied these Reformers together was their commitment to the sole authority of the Scriptures during a period in history in which the Bible was inaccessible to most people because of the high rate of illiteracy and because the Roman Catholic Church forbid them to own or read the Bible. Those who tried to make Scripture more accessible risked being burned at the stake, as was the case in 1535 with William Tyndale, who dared to translate the Bible into English.

Chapter one begins by describing medieval Roman Catholicism prior to the 16th century. Accordingly, the Pope was Christ's representative on earth and all God's grace flowed through him and, aided by the clergy through the seven sacraments, to the

people. Since most people were illiterate, they were considered incapable of having "explicit faith" so they received "implicit faith" through the sacraments (18). No attempt was made to educate the masses in their faith; they only needed to look at the raised bread or body of Christ in the Mass to receive grace. In fact, all services were conducted in Latin, which neither the people, nor most of the priests could understand because priests found it more convenient to memorize their lines with little understanding of what they were saying, rather than to learn a new language (19).

The Roman Catholic understanding of salvation was that God's grace channeled through the sacraments made one more and more loving and therefore, more and more righteous. However, no one could become righteous enough before they died to fully merit salvation. Therefore, unless they died unrepentant of a mortal sin, they would go to purgatory, where they would be given the opportunity to have all their sins slowly purged before entering heaven, fully cleansed. In an effort to speed up and shorten the cleaning process, prayers and masses were said for the dead in purgatory. Indulgences could be earned or bought during a person's lifetime, or, in some cases, one could earn the ability to bypass purgatory altogether. Indulgences were spare merit from saints who had more merit than needed to go directly to heaven. The church collected and banked this spare merit, which it then offered to those who provided services or gifts of money to the church (21-22). Johann Tetzel, who was something of a 16th-century televangelist of indulgences, summarized the marketing value by saying, "When the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs" (41).

In 1378 John Wycliffe, a Roman Catholic priest and scholar at Oxford University, began publicly to identify the Bible, and not the Pope, as the supreme source of spiritual authority. He declared that the papacy was a human invention and the Bible was the sole authority on all religious beliefs and practices.

Wycliffe was able to be bold because all the popes had resided in France for the previous fifty years. This resulted in a backlash from Rome, which led to two men claiming to be Pope and an atmosphere conducive to questioning religious authority (29).

Some visiting students at Oxford took Wycliffe's teaching back home to the University of Prague, where it was embraced and defended by the rector of the University, Jan Hus. Hus publicly denied the power of popes to issue indulgences and expressed doubts about purgatory. For this, he was imprisoned and put to death. His death however caused a revolt among his followers that the church was unable to put down. After defeating a series of crusades, the Hussites were freed from papal control and began to teach the word of God freely. Shortly before his execution, Hus, whose name means "goose" in Czech, said to his executioners, "You may roast this goose but a hundred years from now a swan will arise whose singing you will not be able to silence" (31). A hundred years after Hus' death, Martin Luther declared the doctrine of justification by faith alone to the world. For this reason, Luther is known as "The Swan."

The second chapter is devoted to Martin Luther. It briefly describes the events that led Luther to become a monk rather than a lawyer and his dedication to religious rituals. Luther became a teacher of theology, which gave him permission and time to study the Bible, an activity that was forbidden for most monks. From his studies, he became convinced that the sale of indulgences as the means to be right with God was a spiritual scandal not requiring that people really repent of their sins. So on October 31, 1517, Luther nailed a list of ninety-five theses to the door of the church in Wittenburg. Such practices were a common means of soliciting public debate. Yet, Luther wanted to publicly debate a central Church practice and doctrine. Thus, the Protestant Reformation was formally set in motion.

It would be two more years before Luther would, while studying Romans 1:17, see that forgiveness is not gained through our own merit but is freely given through the promise of the Gospel. Luther wrote, "At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of the words, namely, in it the righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live.' There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel, namely the passive righteousness with which merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live.' Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates." (47-48)

Chapters three and four cover the Swiss reformer, Ulrich Zwingli, the French reformer, John Calvin, and various radicals. Although a contemporary of Luther with similar views, Zwingli claims to have come to his views independently. John Calvin was very different from Zwingli and the brash Luther. Calvin was described as a "timid scholar" who spent most of his life exiled in Geneva but expended great effort in evangelizing his native France through a network of safe houses, hiding places, and printing presses arranged so that agents of the Gospel

could slip across the border into France to plant underground churches (114). Calvin intentionally turned Geneva into an evangelistic international center by teaching the Gospel to refugees and by sending missionaries to Poland, Hungary, the Netherlands, Italy and South America (116). It's ironic that some people today view Calvin's teaching as non-evangelistic given his personal history.

The last chapter of the book poses the question, is the Reformation over? Many today seem to think so. In 1999, the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation signed a Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification "claiming that the subscribing Lutheran churches and the Roman Catholic Church are now able to articulate a common understanding of our justification" (185). While a mere assent to a common statement may appear to be agreement, a true understanding of justification could not be further from that of the modern Roman Catholic Church. Reeves points out that:

An easier way to determine precisely what official Catholic teaching on justification is today is to look at the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, an exposition of the Roman Catholic faith that carries the authoritative imprimatur of Pope John Paul II. This approves the Council of Trent's definition: 'Justification is not only the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the inner man.' It then goes straight on to explain, 'Justification *detaches man from sin* which contradicts the love of God, and purifies his heart of sin.' Since by this definition justification includes our growth in holiness, the Catechism is entirely correct to conclude that we can then merit for ourselves eternal life.

With complete consistency, the Catechism also goes on to affirm belief in purgatory and indulgences, sure signs that the traditional Catholic doctrine of justification is a work. Such doctrines simply cannot be squared with a Reformational understanding of justification, for if, as Luther argued, I am given the righteous status of Christ without that status being in any way dependent upon the state of my heart or life, then there is no place for a purgatory where I am made more worthy of heaven, or indulgences to speed me there. (186)

Reading this book will challenge you to explore your own understanding of justification. Are you tempted to place the confidence of your standing before God in your own good works? Luther once wrote to a young friend who was tempted to make his own good works the basis of his confidence before God, "Be a sinner and sin boldly, but believe and rejoice in Christ even more boldly, for he is victorious over sin, death, and the world. As long as we are here [in this world] we have to sin. This life is not the dwelling place of righteousness, but as Peter says, we look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. It is enough that by the riches of God's glory we have come to know the Lamb that takes away the sin of the world. No sin will separate us from the Lamb, even though we commit fornication and murder a thousand times a day. Do you think that the purchase price that was paid for the redemption of our sins by so great a lamb is too small?" (55). ■

What to Expect When He's Preaching:

Why Listen to Preaching with the Church?



The faithful had been looking forward to this day for weeks: people from all walks of life gathering together in one place for one purpose. Some of them waited all night, setting up tents so that they could be the first in line. It was a day that would change the world...

I am referring, of course, to Apple's release of the iPad on April 3, 2010. Technophiles all over the world longed to be the first in line to purchase the latest technological wonder of the day. We've seen it before. From the printing press to the telegraph, from the personal computer to the Internet, from the laptop to the smart phone, technology has revolutionized the world. Yet as impressive as all of these advancements may be, they pale in significance when compared to what the church celebrates each and every Lord's Day. One Sunday morning, the disciples discovered an empty tomb. I'm guessing the majority of Christians, if asked, would give their lives for the risen Christ. I can't name a soul who would give his life for an iPad.

Jesus' resurrection changed everything. His disciples began to preach and churches began to appear. These churches, founded

by the church-planting apostles, became ground zero for the Christian faith. Corporate worship moved from the synagogue to the Christian meeting house. Congregations of believers faithfully guarded and proclaimed and enjoyed the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul planted one such church around AD 50. He and his partners were traveling throughout Macedonia when Paul stopped in Thessalonica to preach in a synagogue. For three weeks, he proclaimed the gospel: the message of a crucified and risen Savior. When he was done, a church was born: "And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women" (Acts 17:4). Eventually, Paul and his friends had to move on, but they stayed in touch, and Paul wrote a couple of letters to this fledgling church. In the first letter, Paul thanked God for their

perseverance, “We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 1:2-3). This is the fruit of preaching: a church full of men and women loving and serving the Lord.

When we think about preaching, we must not forget what preaching is supposed to produce. When the crucified and risen Savior is rightly preached, churches are born and churches grow. To separate preaching from the church is like separating planting from harvesting. When the Word is preached the church will thrive. *In this article, I want us to think of local churches as the spiritual and material fruit of preaching. I am doing this because I want us to understand that preaching should normally take place within a local church.* Christians in the past took a point like this for granted. Today that is no longer the case.

Please recognize what I am *not* saying. I am not saying that every sermon must be delivered in a local church. Paul preached at Mars Hill. Whitefield preached in open fields. Just this morning I preached between games of pick-up basketball. I am not saying that a local church is a building or that sermons need to be delivered in the sanctuary of a steepled structure. No! In one sense, preaching takes place wherever believers present the gospel of Jesus Christ.

What I am saying is that an increasing number of Christians seem unsure that the church is even necessary. They value the Bible, study, and fellowship. However they are not convinced of their need to belong to a local church where they will regularly hear the Word of God. David Kinnaman, in his recent book, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church...And Rethinking Faith* (Baker, 2011) noted that an ever increasing number of believers are finding spiritual nourishment outside of the local church and are abandoning the local church altogether:

The research confirmed what we had already been piecing together from other data: 59 percent of young people with a Christian background report that they had or have “dropped out of attending church, after going regularly.” A majority (57 percent) say they are less active in church today compared to when they were age fifteen...

The conclusion: after significant exposure to Christianity as teenagers and children, many young adults, whether raised Catholic or Protestant, are MIA from the pews and active commitment to Christ during their twenties. (23, 25)

It appears that my generation has failed to make the case that God designed our spiritual growth to take place in the context of local churches of baptized believers. As a response, some congregations have decided to change what happens when Christians gather—some have even decided to jettison the sermon altogether or to reduce it to something far short of the genuine exposition and application of Scripture.

In short, there are believers leaving the church because they are not convinced that they need to be a part of a body of

faith. Furthermore, there are churches abandoning the sermon because they are not convinced that the preaching of the Word is central to their mission. In light of this, I want to argue that every believer should be part of a local church where the preaching of the Word is central. I want to do this, first, by elaborating on the growing problem of individualism among believers today. Second, I want to try and offer a biblical response.

We are facing a generation of Christians who are compromising the purity of the church to woo people in with trivialities and giveaways.



The Rising Crisis of Individualism

Individualism is the idea that personal interests and preferences are of the utmost importance. In America, individualism is sacred. The American Experiment succeeded, at least in part, because of the reality of Rugged Individualism—the idea that self-reliance fosters competition, which in turn fosters economic growth. There is a healthy stream of individualism, and this kind led many to promote religious liberty. Individuals should have the right to choose whom and how to worship. Christianity must not be spread through coercion.

Personal preference, however, is a poor guide to biblical faith. We are living in the age of personal preference. While exchanging emails with my siblings about a present for our dad, I noticed that my web browser was prompting me to click on the link, “Great gifts for dad.” This link took me to a website full of many, masculine gift possibilities. The advertisements on my email account had been customized to meet my present need.

As for me, I’m still surprised and a little annoyed when I can obviously tell that someone in Silicon Valley is watching what I’m buying and what I’m writing and is using that data to market products specifically to me.

In this world the customer is king. It would be naïve to think that Christianity is off-limits or that Christians are unaffected by the exaltation of personal preference. Julia Duin of the *Washington Times* wrote an article highlighting two new Bibles. First, the “Busy Moms Bible,” which comes in pink and hot pink. Besides the actual Bible, it is full of articles on topics mothers would care about: in-laws, kids, and even pillow-talk. Duin also mentioned a Bible that HarperOne has come out with, the “Green Bible.” Verses that relate to the environment are in green ink. There is a special appendix that tells readers what Scripture passages are environmentally friendly. And, not to worry, no trees were killed to print these Bibles; they are made from recycled paper with soy-based ink. Duin ends her piece with these words: “It used to be the Bible was a reflection of God. Now it is a reflection of us.”

The rise of individualism has become so commonplace that it affects how we go about “doing” church. Some are choosing to

market the church like any other commodity. I read of a church in Texas that gave out four million dollars in prizes to those who attended an Easter service. As best I can tell, the pastor's motives are pure. He told the reporter, "They are coming for the loot, and they are going to leave with Jesus." On another Easter Sunday, a pastor came on stage in a Superman costume, preparing to lead his people over the tall buildings of frustration and discouragement. Yikes!

What has happened to the church? David Wells in his book, *The Courage to Be Protestant*, explains that individualism has taken over:

Over the last three decades a consensus has emerged among the market-defined, market-driven, and seeker sensitive that the "traditional" church is like a product now rendered obsolete by the passage of time and the onrush of innovation...No one stays in business without taking account of their customers...Customers, after all, are sovereign...This is true in the church as it is in the mall. The church, then, plainly, must rethink itself. Indeed, it needs to reinvent itself.

By catering to the preferences of the masses, some churches have compromised robust preaching and sound doctrine. Like a seed that doesn't have enough soil to sprout roots, these churches don't have enough theology to deepen faith. So you see, some, seeing the writing of individualism on the wall, have chosen to flow with it. They are flocking to congregations that are committed to meet their needs. Churches, as a result, are tempted to ignore the mission to preach the Word.

Others, however, see the rise of individualism and have chosen to leave the church. This is a generation sick of the marketing, sick

giveaways. Meanwhile, another generation is cutting itself loose from the church altogether. Both are sacrificing their religion at the altar of individualism. One group may still be going to church, but they are not going for the gospel—they are going because the church has found a way to cater to their preferences: preferences for short sermons, glitzy music, and comfortable programs. This is individualism. Others have left the church because they don't think it has anything "real" to offer them. They decided to go it alone. This, too, is individualism.

If we are honest, we all struggle with individualism in one way or another. As a pastor, I am tempted to want personal respect more than I want to give God the honor he deserves. My flesh wants glory. This is individualism. As a husband, I know what it is like to want to be right more than I want to be a peacemaker. Such selfishness is individualism. Too often my own preferences seek to become the most important factor in my decision-making process.

What about you? Do you see individualism in your own life? We all have preferences that are not godly. But this is dangerous. It has produced many who claim to be Christians but who never fight sin, rarely confess sin, and simply do not submit their lives to the King. It has produced churches that have programs and services and meetings and meetings and meetings, but they have no Spirit and no life. Such churches are physically active but spiritually dead. It has produced Christians leaving the church in droves—tuning in to hear their favorite preachers on their iPhone in the privacy of their living room. This is the crisis facing the church today. It is a crisis of individualism. Those wrestling with this have probably already asked, "Why do I have to listen to preaching with the church?"



Individualism has produced many who claim to be Christians but who never fight sin, rarely confess sin, and simply do not submit their lives to the King.

of the slogans, sick of the slick brochures. They want authentic relationships. They want missions. They want service. They refuse to be a part of an institution. They want to be part of a movement. They are leaving what they call "brick and mortar churches" and setting up Christian shop on their own. One journalist, in an article asking the question, "Who are the De-Churched?" described this exodus as a loss of confidence in the modern church:

These Christians have simply lost confidence in the institutional structures and programmatic trappings of the church. For them the institutional church is not an aid in their faith and mission. Rather, it's become a drain on time, resources, and energy. It feels like a black hole with a gravitation pull so strong that not even the light of the gospel can escape its organizational appetite.

We are facing a generation of Christians who are compromising the purity of the church to woo people in with trivialities and

A Church's Response to Individualism

Do you remember the Thessalonian church Paul founded in AD 50? Those young believers knew a thing or two about individualism. But through the power of the preached Word, they turned from the desires of their own hearts and instead adopted the desires of God.

For we know, brothers, loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not

say anything. For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come (1 Thess. 1:4-10).

In this church, we see an example of how to respond to the crisis of individualism facing the church today. Notice three things.

First, they listened to the Word of God. The gospel came to them “not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction” (v. 5). This was a congregation of listeners. And when they listened, they changed. They didn’t just hear the Word; they obeyed it. And their obedience was not half-hearted. They received God’s Word “in much affliction” and with much joy.

When you gather with your church to listen to the Word of God, the Holy Spirit is at work, carrying the message into your hearts. The preaching of God’s Word, carried along by the power of the Holy Spirit, controls everything we do. The Word is the engine of growth. Something unique happens when God’s church gathers to hear his Word. In fact, the two cannot be separated. God designed his Word to be proclaimed in the presence of a body of believers. Martyn Lloyd-Jones put it well: “The very presence of a body of people in itself is a part of the preaching, and these influences begin to act immediately upon anyone who comes into a service. These influences, I suggest, are very often more potent in a spiritual sense than pure intellectual argumentation.”

Just as God worked in the context of that church in Thessalonica, we can trust that he will work in the context of our local churches today.

Will God work through his Word when we are reading the Bible in our bedroom, reading in our car, or listening to a sermon in a kitchen? Of course he can! But it is no coincidence that the majority of letters of the New Testament are not written to individuals. They were written to churches. And even those letters written to individuals were circulated among churches. God expects that his churches will listen to his Word. We can expect that preaching must take place in the context of a local church. Good sermons serve the church by identifying us as a people who listen to the Word of God.

Second, they modeled the Word of God. The Thessalonian church “became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.” Nobody was singled out. Collectively, they had become a model of Christian faithfulness. These believers had lives others wanted to follow, and rightly so. They identified Christ publicly and they lived for him consistently.

It is always a wonderful thing when an individual turns from his sin and toward God. But Paul is saying something else happens when one is converted. A process of magnification begins. All of sudden our lives are on full display for the entire world to see. A local church is like a magnifying glass allowing others to see the potency of your spiritual life.

Having heard the Word and believed the Word you are no longer alone. You are now part of a communion of saints; you are part of a group of people whose collective witness is more powerful than any

one Christian’s singular witness. Paul commended the Thessalonian church as a whole. The spotlight was on them *as a unit*.

The basic principle here is obvious, and we see the idea throughout the Bible. When God called Abraham, his plan was to build a nation (Gen. 12:2). When Jesus gathered twelve disciples, his plan was to build a church (Matt. 16:18). Therefore, we can be confident that preaching exists not merely for the edification of an individual soul but for the growth an entire community of faith. This community, walking with the Lord, sharing his values, putting their lives on the line for his glory, will be a much more impressive trophy of God’s grace than any single soul. Good preaching does more than change the lives of individuals; it changes the lives of communities.

This is why I am saddened to hear of brothers and sisters abandoning the church. The church is God’s plan for the salvation of the world and the exaltation of his name. The engine of this plan is the Word and the fuel is the Holy Spirit.

Third, they waited for the Word of God. Paul ended his train of thought by noting how the church chose “to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.” Jesus, the Word (John 1:1; Heb. 1:1), was their heart’s desire. They longed for his return. Waiting is something that God calls us to do *together*. We will one day stand before the Lord and give an account for our lives, but we are not called to prepare for that day alone. We are to get ready for that day by gathering together, by hearing and responding to the preached Word, and by longing for the arrival of the Word himself.

Did you ever stop to think what you are doing when you listen to a sermon in the church? You are waiting for Jesus’ return. My kids are still young enough that when my wife and I go out they try to stay up as long as they can so they can burst out of bed and greet us at the door when we come home. They talk and giggle, each in his own bed, wondering when we are going to get home and getting ready to tell us what they did while we were out. They feed off of one another until they are about ready to explode. They happily anticipate the return of their parents.

Anticipation for Christ’s return builds in the context of a church community. Through the week as we talk about the message we’ve heard, as we follow the teaching in the laboratory of our own lives, we are preparing ourselves for Christ’s return. This is a joint project, a community effort. It is one of the reasons the church is so important.

Therefore, I believe that we should all listen to preaching with a local church. We should enjoy the availability of so many good sermons online, so many good books available, so many good conferences to attend. Let’s face it, the best preaching in the world may be only a mouse-click away! But remember, God designed us to grow in community. The church is God’s plan, not ours. We ought to put ourselves under the authority of a local church, because the local church is God’s plan. We can trust that he designed us to hear his Word preached in the context of the body of Christ. We should believe that this design is for our good and, ultimately, for God’s glory. ■

~ Aaron Menikoff

July 2012

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
▶ 6:00 pm Lord's Supper			4 Independence Day Church Office Closed ▶ 11:00 am Family Fellowship Cookout			
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Camp Arrowwood ▶ MissionLab in New Orleans ▶ ▶ 9:15 am Knowing MYBC: Session 1 ▶ 12:15 pm Knowing MYBC: Sessions 2-4			▶ 6:30 pm Jude Bible Study Begins			
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	Youth Basketball Camp ▶ 9:00 am - 12:00 pm					▶ 12:30 pm Baby Shower for Jane Hall
29	30	31				
▶ 4:30 pm Church in Conference						

EVENTS ◀ ▶ BIRTHDAYS

Churchwide ▼

July 1 6:00 pm *Lord's Supper*

We encourage members to examine their hearts and relationships with one another in preparation for this celebration of Christ's death and resurrection.

July 4 11:00 am *Fellowship Family Cookout*

This will be a great time of food, family activities, and fellowship.

July 11 6:30 pm *Jude Bible Study Begins*

Pastor Aaron will lead a Bible study on the book of Jude that will run through the end of August. All are invited to attend.

July 29 4:30 pm *Church in Conference*

Members are encouraged to attend our quarterly Church in Conference as we consider many matters related to the life of the church.

Children ▼

July 8-13 *Camp Arrowwood*

The elementary ministry will be travelling to Sevierville, TN to attend Camp Arrowhead, an adventure camp sponsored by Wears Valley Ranch.

Youth ▼

July 8-13 *MissionLab in New Orleans*

The youth will be returning to New Orleans this year to do mission work in and around the city.

Membership ▼

July 8 9:15 am *Knowing MVBC: Session 1*
12:15 pm *Knowing MVBC: Sessions 2-4*

(See ad to the right.)

Recreation ▼

July 23-27 9:00 am *Youth Basketball Camp*

All boys and girls, ages 8-14 are invited to attend the MVBC Youth Basketball Camp. Cost is \$35 per camper. Come learn the fundamentals of basketball and receive a daily lesson from the Bible!

Women ▼

July 28 2:00 pm *Baby Shower for Jane Hall*

The Women's Ministry is honoring new mother-to-be, Jane Hall, with a church-wide baby shower.

BIRTHDAYS

2	Carolyn Davis	17	Cam Cherbonnier
	Gay Cooper	19	Hazel Kath
4	Ruth Edwards		Montine Alexander
6	Elsie Howard	20	Vic Moore
	Rob Meadows	21	David Carnes
7	Ann McCallum		Connie Moore
	Lisa Kubes		Paige Pattillo
	Michael Mosby	22	Rhonwyn Ryan
8	Joel Roberts		Mark Henderson
9	Tricia Carnes	23	Tom Howard
	Aaron Henderson	24	Andres Rivera
10	Bob Flint	25	Kevin Vaughter
	Andrew Armstrong		Jonathan Thurman
12	Marvin Dorsey	27	Dee Linker
13	Joe Drexler		Rita Caldwell
14	Suzanne Millen	28	Lena Hocker
15	Mel Wakefield		John McCoy
16	Jim Fleming		Anthony Blalock
	Yvonne Holtzclaw		Bradley Thomas
	Cory Blackburn	30	Steve Arnold
		31	Margot Dawkins

Knowing MVBC

Knowing MVBC is a four-session course that introduces you to life at Mount Vernon, covering the following topics:

- **Knowing Our Commitments: Church Covenant**
- **Knowing Our Beliefs: Statement of Faith**
- **Knowing Our Structure: Leadership**
- **Knowing How to Be Involved: Discipling & Serving**

All four sessions will be offered Sunday, July 8, during the Sunday School hour (session 1) and from 12:15-2:30 pm (sessions 2-3). Lunch will be provided. You may sign up on the edge of the bulletin, by contacting the church office at 404-255-3133, or by email at info@mvbchurch.org.



Mount Vernon

BAPTIST CHURCH

850 Mount Vernon Highway NW
Sandy Springs, GA 30327

www.mvbchurch.org