



**Mount Olive**  
**BAPTIST CHURCH**

# Mt Olive Missionary Baptist Church

101 W. Clinton Ave. Fresno, CA 93705

*A place of Promise, Purpose, and Possibilities Vol. 3 Issue 4*

**Let the Holy Spirit Guide in 2025**

*December 2025*



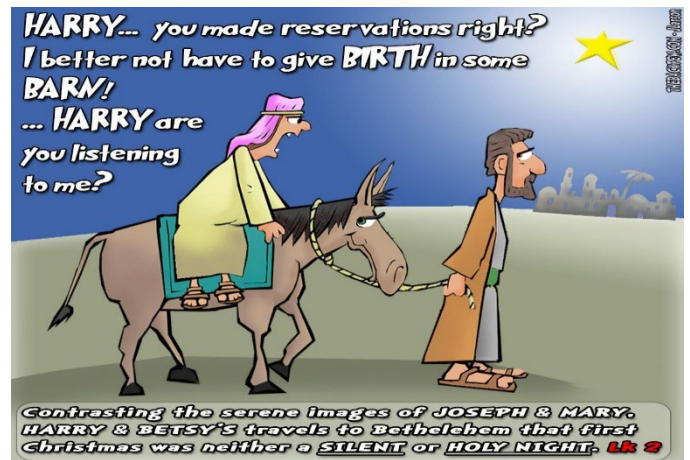
## Message from Pastor Norman

### Jesus is the Reason for the Season

We have just finished celebrating Thanksgiving. Many of us gathered around the dinner table with family, giving thanks for our meal. I hope we remember to give thanks for more than just the food—we should thank God for all the blessings He has given us this year. With the help of the Food Bank, Mt. Olive provided food to 136 families during November. The Mt. Olive church also distributed food boxes and 30 turkeys. We especially thank Deacon Ed Brown, whose help was invaluable in this effort.

Before Thanksgiving was even over, the world began to prepare for Christmas. Advertisements for Black Friday sales appeared, and stores extended their hours to encourage more shopping. There are even contests to see whose house has the most lights. In all this activity, we sometimes forget that we are celebrating the birth of our Savior. Jesus did not come for sales or lighting contests—He came to give hope to all. Just as we cared for each other during Thanksgiving, we should do the

same during Christmas. In Matthew 25:35–40, Jesus says, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." When asked when this was done, Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." Remember, **Jesus is the reason for the season.**



## PRAYER

Submitted By Elaine Mitchell

*Seven days without prayer makes one weak!*  
Prayer is the tiny nerve that moves the hand of God!  
Prayer is the key to what your city will be. Prayer is the spark that God uses to get a fire going.  
No one is greater than their prayer life.  
Prayers move the hand that moves the world.  
A praying man stops sinning; a sinning man stops praying.

Pray hardest when it is hardest to pray.

There have been revivals without much preaching, but there has never been a mighty revival without mighty praying.

Pray because of the brightness of the light, not the darkness of the night.

Life is fragile; handle it with prayer.

Public prayer can never replace private communion.

Even when they disagree, Christians should share the same position on their knees.



## Pray All Day

Lord, teach me to breathe prayers like oxygen... quiet, steady, all day. When washing dishes and checking email, tune my heart to Your voice. I'll pray small prayers often. Help. Thanks. Guide me. When busyness rises, anchor me. When worry circles, rope me close. Walk the grocery aisles with me. Ride shotgun. Keep me aware, moment by moment, that You're here and I'm held.

*Amen*



## Doctrine of Perseverance and Prayer

by Dr. Rev. Ray Howard, A.A., M. Div., D.D., J.D.

Why Pray? "And when he was at the place, He said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation," (Luke 22:40)

We need to pray because we do not know the nearness of the judgment day. (Read Mark 13:5—32)

Take ye heed, watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is. Watch ye; therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning.

Lest coming suddenly, he finds you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, watch. (Mark 13:33-37)

. There is an unbreakable link between faith and perseverance, and there is also an intimate connection between prayer and perseverance.

This connection shows clearly that perseverance is not something to be taken for granted. It is only understandable in the living fellowship between God and man, where there is a great need for prayer. It is inconceivable to think of perseverance without prayer. What is the relation between them? Just examining this question will give us new insights into the nature of perseverance. Prayer is not merely something psychological, where we receive a certain relief because we have expressed our need. Prayer is intended to be heard because it is an appeal to God.

In all of Israel's worship and praises to God with a variety of expressions, one of their deepest experiences was," Psalm 65:2 "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come."

So great is the power of prayer and so great is its accomplishments, that we might suppose that we could place it at our own disposal as an instrument of power.

The power of prayer is not a human potential, but prayer waits and is in complete dependence on God's mercy and power. Real prayer can have fire and power only if it is directed earnestly eagerly to God and looks only if it is directed earnestly eagerly to God and looks for everything from God in boundless confidence. Prayer is not applying a great number of words, as though words were magically changed with power, but it is a powerful appropriation for divine response, in faith and complete dependence on God. Therefore, the fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much; prayer is a request for divine response, as seen in James 5:18.

- (A) God in Response to prayer: We can see God's response breaking through human impossibilities by His saving miracles. There lies truly a divine answer.
- (B) The Power of Efficacy of Prayer: Sincere prayer has power from God to produce. (Rev. 8:4-5). Perseverance requires continuity in prayer. Paul said to the Thessalonians, "Pray without ceasing." (1 Thess. 5:17 and Col. 4:2-4)  
<sup>2</sup> Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart. <sup>3</sup> Pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to speak about his mysterious plan concerning Christ. That is why I am here in chains. <sup>4</sup> Pray that I will proclaim this message as clearly as I should. The practice of a never-ending prayer does not bring life to a standstill. 1 Cor. 15:10, herein we find the grace of God doing the work within us and through us. <sup>10</sup> But by the grace of God I am that I am: and his grace which is in me, was not in vain: but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which is with me.
- (C) The Bible speaks of a prayer of faith that gives greater assurance of an answer. James 1:6-7  
<sup>6</sup> But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup> For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;  
 Karl Barth said that based on God is "a conditioning of God by the power of prayer, in which God is not bound by the 'power' of human prayer, but in which He has bound Himself in the greatness of His compassion to His promise that He listens to the one who takes refuge in Him.

In this connection, we must consider the place that the scriptures go to intercession. (1 Tim. 2:1-2) I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. <sup>2</sup> Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity.

"To clasp the hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorders of the world".  
 Karl Barth

"I have read many books, but the Bible reads me." Karl Barth

"Jesus does not give recipes that show the way to God as other teachers do. He is himself the way. Karl Barth

## Welcome to the New Members

**Lavern Brown, Anita Washington, David Lopiccolo, Ruthie M Taylor, Sandra Trice**

## God with Us

One of Jesus' titles is "Immanuel," which means "God with us" ([Matthew 1:23](#)). When Jesus came into this world, He was truly, literally "God with us." Because God is with us, we know that we will never be separated from His love ([Romans 8:38-39](#)). God's presence assures us that we can accomplish His will for us ([1 Chronicles 22:17-19](#)). God's presence overcomes our fear, worry, and dissatisfaction ([Hebrews 13:5](#)).

The Holy Spirit in us is always praying for us ([Romans 8:26](#)). We are told to pray without ceasing ([1 Thessalonians 5:17](#)), which means we should maintain an attitude of prayer and receptiveness in order to verbalize prayer to God whenever He leads. He is near to His children, attentive to their cry ([Psalm 34:15](#)).

We should verify that we are indeed walking with the Lord our God by often consulting His Word, fellowshiping with other believers, and seeking godly counsel from pastors, Christian counselors, and Christian friends. We should have the attitude that we are at all times in ministry with the Lord. The Holy Spirit will lead us. We will see God at work. God is alive, and He is near. He wants to communicate and commune with us. That is the joy of the Christian life.



**Dietrich Bonhoeffer:** Those who follow Jesus' commandment entirely, who let Jesus' yoke rest on them without resistance, will find the burden they must bear to be light. In the gentle pressure of this yoke, they will receive the strength to walk the right path without becoming weary.... Where will the call to discipleship lead those who follow it? What decisions and painful separations will it entail? We must take this question to him who alone knows the answer. Only Jesus Christ, who bids us follow him, knows where the path will lead. But we know that it will be a path full of mercy beyond measure. Discipleship is joy.



## THE BIRTH OF JESUS Matthew 1; Luke 2

Joseph, the carpenter, felt troubled after hearing that Mary was pregnant. But God sent a dream to comfort him. In it, an angel told him Mary's son would be by the Lord God. The angel said, "You are to marry her and call His name Jesus, which means salvation."

Soon after their marriage, Augustus Caesar ordered all people to report to the cities of their families to be taxed and counted. Joseph and Mary went from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

The inns were filled to overflowing. The best shelter available was a stable. There, Jesus was born, lovingly wrapped, and laid in a manger. That same night, shepherds in the fields saw a wondrous light. Angels sang and announced the birth of Jesus at the stable. When the glory faded, the shepherds rose and went to Bethlehem. They found Mary, Joseph, and Jesus, just as the angels had said. Mary said nothing when the shepherds

fell to the ground and worshiped her newborn son, telling of the angel's song. She kept all these things in her heart, and the shepherds went back to their flocks praising God.

Mary and Joseph named the baby Jesus, and when He was eight days old, they took Him to the Temple to make an offering. A man of God named Simeon had been promised he would not die before seeing the Christ. When Simeon took Jesus in his arms, he lifted his voice in praise. He also prophesied to Mary, "Sorrow like a sword will pierce your heart." She did not know at the time that one day Jesus would die on a cross and her own heart would nearly break from the pain.

## Bible Trivia – Questions

**Who discovered that the Syrian army had fled in the night and had left their tents and their horses and their goods behind them in their haste to depart?**

Four lepers  
Joshua  
Ben-hadad  
Elisha

Answer : **Four lepers**

See: **2 Kings 7:3-7**

**Why was Philemon written?**

To deal with the problem of a runaway slave  
to deal with the problem of believers fighting amongst themselves  
to tell of God's love  
to tell of Christ's sufferings

Answer : **to deal with the problem of a runaway slave**

See: **Philemon 1**

**This is a city in Ammon.**

Beersheba  
Hebron  
Jericho  
Rabbah

Answer : **Rabbah**

See: **Ezekiel 25:5**

**If an Israelite did not give to the needy among them what would happen?**

God would expect a large sacrifice  
God would make that man poor  
the Lord would find them guilty of sin  
they would be stoned

Answer : **the Lord would find them guilty of sin**  
See: **Deuteronomy 15:9**

**When the children of God decided to build a tower to reach heaven God scattered them abroad and named the place “Babel” which means...**

confusion  
pride  
scattered people  
not to be understood

Answer: **confusion**  
See: **Genesis 11:9**

**According to Hebrews, the law is a shadow of what?**

The good things to come  
the evil things to come  
the rules and regulations of old  
the future rules and regulations

Answer : **the good things to come**  
See: **Hebrews 10:1**

**Who had Jeremiah the prophet beaten and put into wooden stocks?**

Pashhur, the priest and chief governor  
those who worshipped idols  
his own friends  
his father and brothers

Answer : **Pashhur, the priest and chief governor**  
See: **Jeremiah 20:2**

**What did Jesus tell Jarius when his servants told him that his daughter had died?**

“Be not afraid, only believe.”  
“Your faith has made her well.”  
“Peace, be still.”  
“The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.”

Answer : **“Be not afraid, only believe.”**  
See: **Mark 5:36**

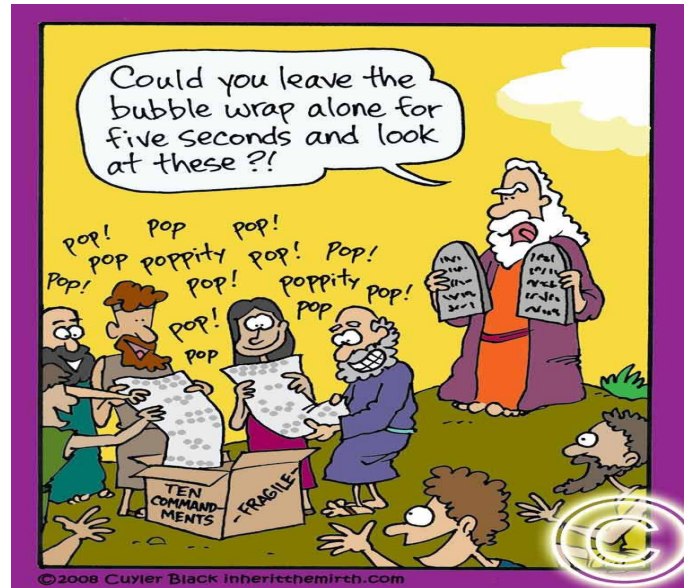
**According to 2 Corinthians, why did Paul fail to return to Corinth?**

Because he was in prison  
in order to spare the Corinthians  
because he could not walk

because it was winter

Answer : **in order to spare the Corinthians**  
See: **2 Corinthians 1:23**

Silence in the face of evil is evil itself.  
Dietrich Bonhoeffer



If I sit next to a madman as he drives a car into a group of innocent bystanders, I can't, as a Christian, simply wait for the catastrophe, then comfort the wounded and bury the dead. I must try to wrestle the steering wheel out of the hands of the driver.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

### **THE EMPOWERED CHURCH**

Acts 2:1-4

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. <sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

When the day of Pentecost had fully come, the fiftieth day of Pentecost had fully come. The period of penitence (repentance, remorse, atonement, shame) had not actually ended but was in the final period.

This occurred after the crucifixion of Jesus during penitence they were in one place and one accord. The purpose of their coming together was for prayer, as seen in chapter 1, verse 14 in the book of Acts. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with His brethren."

The new tongues did not only denote the speaking with new tongues only but it also speaks the fact that such speaking was accompanied with a New Life.

Not only the Apostles, but the disciples were empowered to speak with new tongues. It was the consecration of the whole church.

The empowering of the Holy Spirit upon the whole church is needed for the church to become a true WITNESS OF GOD'S KINGDOM.

Unity= **the state of being joined together or in agreement**

### THE LOCAL UNITY OF THE CHURCH

They were all together in one place. They were many in number, but all the many had come together, drawn by one common impulse, to merge their separate existences, their various pursuits, their divergent vocations, their several movements, their independent actions, into one common action, and by that action to come together to one place.

All the different reasons that would have kept them separated and different was overcome by the common reason and motive which drew them to one place.

In each of them, there was a desire to be with each other. The people in Jerusalem were in ways like we are. They were from every walk of life.

However, there were among them devout men; In other words, there were some God-fearing people. Paul revealed that our unity and individual contributions were dependent upon the working of the Lord through us. Just as the hand does not work independently from the arm, we cannot prosper in ministry apart from the working of the Spirit within us. As the Spirit works within us, developing our specific gifts, we share our gifts along with others, and the body functions as it should.

If you are saved by grace, you are gifted to serve within the body of Christ. All gifts are not the same, but all complement each other, and are necessary

for a healthy body. Our individual spiritual condition affects the overall health of the church. . The Need for Unity – Ephesians 4:16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth. "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." James 1:17.



*Christianity stands or falls with its revolutionary protest against violence, arbitrariness and pride of power and with its plea for the weak. Christians are doing too little to make these points clear rather than too much. Christendom adjusts itself far too easily to the worship of power. Christians should give more offense, shock the world far more, than they are doing now. Christian should take a stronger stand in favor of the weak rather than considering first the possible right of the strong.*  
*Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

### **The Divine Purpose Behind Jesus' Birth**

From Genesis to Malachi, the Old Testament is replete with prophecies that pointed to the coming of the Messiah. Jesus' birth was the fulfillment of divine foretelling, not human myth-making. The

protoevangelium in [Genesis 3:15](#) speaks of the “seed” of the woman crushing the serpent’s head. This first messianic prophecy finds its fulfillment in Christ, who was born of a woman, Mary ([Luke 1:31](#)), and who came to destroy the works of the devil ([1 John 3:8](#)).

The prophet Isaiah declared, “Behold, the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and she will name him Immanuel” ([Isaiah 7:14](#)). [Matthew 1:22–23](#) clearly affirms that this prophecy was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus. [Micah 5:2](#) foretold that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, which was realized precisely ([Matthew 2:1](#)). [Psalm 2](#), [Psalm 22](#), and [Isaiah 9:6–7](#) all predicted the nature and mission of the coming Messiah. The reason Jesus was born was to fulfill these promises, not only to validate Scripture but to establish His identity as the Messiah, the Anointed One of God.

## Men of Faith

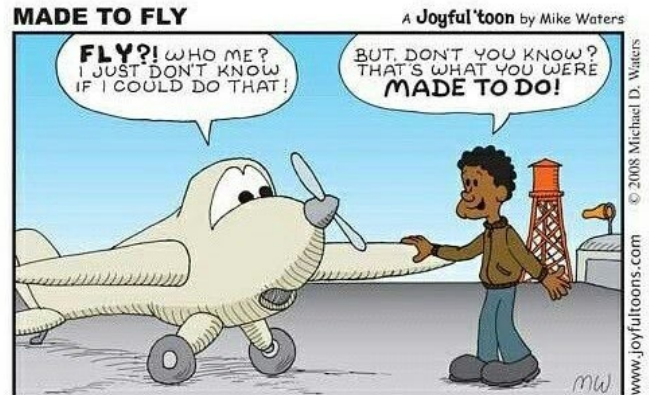
Hebrews 11 gives us a summary of the faith of men and women in the Bible. Hebrews 11:1-2 begins by saying “Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see. Through their faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation.” These were not perfect people by any means, but they were men who trusted in the Lord and were shown to be faithful.

We see men like Abel, who gave God first fruits and Enoch who walked with God. Noah remained steadfast and continued to obey God even when ridiculed by the world. Abraham journeyed to an unknown land out of obedience to God, and his wife, Sarah, believed God would fulfill his promise to her. Joseph trusted God even when he didn’t know what his life would become and knew that when he died, God would deliver the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses chose a life of hardship instead of riches.

Faith is what caused the people to venture through the Red Sea to escape Pharaoh. Faith brought the walls of Jericho down after the Israelites obediently marched around them. Rahab, a prostitute, was spared from disaster when she secretly helped the Israelites.

All of these people showed great faith because they looked forward to the rewards of God instead of the

temporary rewards of man. This is faith. It is the reality of everything we hope for in God and the evidence of what we cannot see in this life.



For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.  
– EPHESIANS 2:10 NIV

## God of the Dirt

### Prayer for good work

Reveal to us what our work mirrors the divine. Whether teacher or nurse, waitress or electrician, show us what virtues manifest in our labor, how we are being formed toward goodness or destruction. We confess that we have submitted to a system where one’s compensation is entirely uncorrelated with the difficulty of one’s labor. That the janitor and the CEO receive vastly different degrees of respect and compensation is our collective capitalist delusion.

We grieve all those who have been forced to work to survive, those who have been bound to their exhaustion, who work two jobs just to eat. Lay bare all the ways our society idolizes labor as salvific when often it is killing us. Make our work more than death to us. May we find an appropriate weight of meaning in our occupations, that we would delight in our doing without being reduced to our output. And if and when this balance is at stake, help us to realign or find work that we can both honor and be honored by. Amen.

*May you have the gift of faith, the blessing of hope, and the peace of His love at Christmas and always.*

*May your heart be lifted in praise this Christmas for the wonderful gift of Jesus and the joy He brings to our lives. Have a Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year.*

## MT OLIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

101 W Clinton Ave.  
Fresno, CA 93705



### Contact Us

Mt Olive Baptist Church

Telephone: (559) 228-1880

Email: [MtOliveFresno@Outlook.com](mailto:MtOliveFresno@Outlook.com)

Website: [mtolivechurch.org](http://mtolivechurch.org)