

the Vision

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF SHALLOTTE | MARCH 2021

2021 Challenges Continue!

It's time for the next challenge! Starting March 1, you can participate in the 21 Chapters in 2021 Bible Challenge. We will commit together to reading the same chapters in the Bible over the next 21 weeks, one chapter each week. For instance, you can add this to your quiet time, do it another time during the day, or read the chapters together as a family. Here are the 21 chapters for this challenge:

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| 1) 1 John (5 chapters)
Weeks of March 1- April 4 | 5) Jonah (4 chapters)
Weeks of April 26-May 23 |
| 2) Philemon (1 chapter)
Week of April 5 | 6) Malachi (4 chapters)
Weeks of May 24-June 20 |
| 3) Psalm 23 (1 chapter)
Week of April 12 | 7) Philippians (4 chapters)
Weeks of June 21-July 18 |
| 4) Psalm 51 (1 chapter)
Week of April 19 | 8) Proverbs 1 (1 chapter)
Week of July 19 |

In addition, we will be posting some study guides to complement your reading. The week of March 1 you will be able to find these study guides on our website's 2021 Commitments page!

So join us, commit to one or more challenges, and let's get 2021 started off right!

fbcshallotte.org/commitment

Church Events

- **Mar 7th at 6pm**
Church Family Chat
In Person and Online
Sign Up for Online at fbcshallotte.org/church-chat
- **Mar 10th at 12pm**
Wednesday Reset: Noon
Bible Study w/ Pastor Bob
Starts In Person and Online
- **Mar 14th at 9:30am**
First Kids Up Worship
Experience
- **Sundays Small Group Bible
Studies Online Only**
fbcshallotte.org/small-groups
- **Sundays at 11:00am**
Worship Service
In Person and Online
- **Wednesdays at 6:00pm**
Fusion and Youth Meet in
Family Life Center

What Happens When We Let Isolation Lead to Erosion, and What We Can Do About It

At the south end of Charleston Harbor, the historic Morris Island Lighthouse still stands sentry over the sea. She has guarded the coast since 1876, and earlier, if you count the predecessors of the current structure. At one time her striped brick tower ascended in the sand from a comfortable 1600 feet behind the ocean. But no more. Now she stands in the midst of the water, like a lonely warrior awaiting a rescue, a testament to the destructive power of erosion.

And as if the encroaching sea were not enough of a concern, not long ago the very foundation was in trouble. Worms had nibbled on the base of the majestic lighthouse for so long that the great structure was in danger of simply toppling over from a weakened foundation.

Isolation. Erosion. Worms. A triple threat that could have brought down an historic masterpiece.

But help came. The peril of the lighthouse caught the attention of politicians and private organizations alike and in 1999 they took drastic action to save the isolated light station from its certain demise. In 2010 they rallied together and secured funding to shore up the worm-eaten base with concrete. But even so, the old structure still stands alone in the sea, a strangely isolated reminder of what she once was.

Christians face similar threats. Isolation and erosion can lead to our spiritual demise. We have always faced these threats, but even more so during this crisis in our culture and in our faith.

Isolation: Our health concerns are legitimate, and I believe we should do our best to keep the virus at bay until we have it under control. But that doesn't mean that being alone or isolated for extended periods is a good thing. We were designed for relationships, and we need other believers in our lives to strengthen our faith.

With that said, I am glad to see some of this isolation lifting. My objective this Spring is to make more intentional efforts to pull us back together as a church family. We may have to adapt to some creative ways of doing things, but, barring no extenuating circumstances, our goal will be gradual and complete regathering in 2021. As a first step in that regathering, I am surveying ministry and committee leaders. I want your input. Why? Because it is impossible to plan to regather or have events without



ministry leaders in place. So, I need to hear from you. Look for that survey in an email from me the first week of March. It will only go out to ministry and committee leaders, so watch for it. And complete it promptly. The results of this survey will help me prepare for the Church Chat on March 7.

But the truth is, when it comes to isolating ourselves, Covid has not always been the culprit. Sometimes our isolation is self imposed. We pull away from the church and from other Christians, and before you know it, we find ourselves in a place we would rather not be. As the book of Proverbs says, "One who isolates himself pursues selfish desires; he rebels against all sound wisdom" (Prov. 18:1).

So, if you find you are intentionally isolating yourself from other Christians, or from those who know you and hold you accountable for righteous living, be careful.

Because if you are isolated too long, soon the second threat will show up.

Erosion: When we are distant from church and from other Christians, and if we do not take care of the foundations of our faith by staying close to Christ and His Word, our walk with Christ is compromised and our spiritual life begins to erode. Maybe a little at first. Maybe we don't even notice it right away.

But soon we realize that the ground we thought was safe and secure under our spiritual life has slipped away, corroded by the cares of this life and the careless neglect of our relationship with Christ.

That's why it is so important to always stay close to Christ and His Word. We are battered by the cares of this life and hammered by temptation and sin, and we need the strength that He gives to

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help us stand firm and even thrive. Otherwise, that inner life erodes and you become more and more like the world around you (Gal. 5:16-26).

But what if isolation isn't checked, and erosion is ignored? What comes next? Well, it may sound weird, but—worms.

Worms: That is to say, when you stay isolated from the church and your siblings in Christ, and you let your walk with Christ erode, you start to adopt destructive habits and behaviors. At first you might try to justify them, telling yourself that God doesn't mind this or that—this worm or that worm. But He does. And you know it. And pretty soon you find that the very foundation of your faith has been eaten away by the bad stuff you have let into your life.

So what should you do? If you

find yourself in that place, is it hopeless?

Of course not! God is kind and gracious and knows that we are foolish, frail, and fragile. If you feel like the lighthouse whose beam has dimmed a bit, feeling alone, and even hampered by the sin you have permitted into your life, do three things:

First, repent of your sin and ask God's forgiveness. And He will cleanse you and forgive you! "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Second, reengage in Bible study and prayer. Get with God and stay close to Him. Rebuild your

spiritual strength so you can stand against the sea of temptation and the pressure to conform to this world. "Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2).

And **third,** reconnect with your siblings in Christ. Covid is not an excuse to disconnect, and even if you feel isolated, you

have no reason to stay in that lonely place. Reach out. Call, text, write. And when you can, return to church. "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing" (1 Thess. 5:11).

We are here for you!

With Love in Christ,
Pastor Bob



NEW TO OUR FAMILY



Ron & Lea Powell
joined Jan 31



Vernon & Martha Abney
joined Feb 14



Kelly & Barbara Holden
joined Jan 31

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF SHALLOTTE

LOVE GOD. LOVE ONE ANOTHER. LOVE THE WORLD.

4486 Main Street
Shallotte, NC 28470

910.754.4048
fbcshallotte.org

Office Hours:

M-Th 9am—3pm

Closed Friday

Sunday School—Online
Worship—11:00am



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52 Bible Verses to Memorize Weekly

These scriptures are powerful, inspiring, yet short, easy and simple verses for everyone.
Take time each week to focus on memorizing the weekly verse.

- Week 10 – “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” – Jeremiah 29:11, NIV
- Week 11 – “You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.” – Isaiah 26:3, ESV
- Week 12 – “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.”- James 1:5, ESV
- Week 13 – “Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!”- Psalm 107:8, KJV