

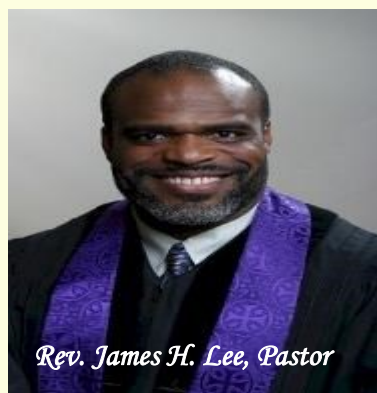
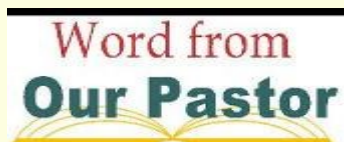
July 4, 2015



NCFA CONNE**X**ION!

WWW.NCFAUSTIN.ORG

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



Rev. James H. Lee, Pastor

Dear NCFA Family and Friends:

As we celebrate July 4th and our nation's Independence Day weekend, I hope that we will remember how precious it is to have the freedom to choose, as a child of God and a citizen of United States. I am grateful for my civil liberties like eating in restaurants, going to the movies, walking in the park, attending baseball games, and barbequing with my family and friends.

From a spiritual perspective, the apostle Paul reminds us that we can either use our liberties to bless the kingdom of God and others or in our liberties we can create mess. What will you do? "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable." (1 Corinthians 6:12)

Shortly I will head to Mo-Ranch to join the Multicultural Youth Conference. The text for this weekend is from Matthew 18:20 (NRSV): "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." As you know, God is present with us at all times; however, it is most critical to know that God is present with other witnesses when we have been hurt or betrayed. We are given the assurance of knowing that God will oversee the process so that all parties can experience grace and mercy. I believe that this is great news because no matter who comes to the table, we have all experienced pain. Out of our pain and fear of experiencing it again, we hurt other people. Yes, even when we don't intend to hurt other people, the unintended results of our actions could be hurtful to others.

*Lord, please forgive our sins of omission--
the wrong I did thinking I could handle the consequences
and the ones where I was oblivious of the impact of my
actions and decisions. Amen.*

Family and friends, I will not be worshiping with you for the next two weeks. Matthew Aldas, our seminary intern, will preach this Sunday at 10:15am, and the Reverend Bill Harris will preach on the 12th. Deacon Sam Mancillas will preach at the chapel this Sunday, and our chapel will serve as the neutral pulpit for Central Presbyterian on the 12th and the 19th.

Sherry Hester Kenney, Ministry Relations Officer from the Presbyterian Foundation, will be coming to talk about legacy giving and will planning on the 12th. It is intended to be informational, not a hard sell. Other marketplace ministers with this skillset are welcome at other times throughout the year.

On the 28th we were able to complete our 2015 Nominations Committee: Elders Randy and Mary Mojica, Co-Chairs; Elder Cathy Angell; Deacon Carol Saddington; Oliver Smith; and Grace Washington. Elder Charles Robinson will help with the transition, and I along with Rev. Trish usually serve as ex-officio members.

I have a team of fellows who will be helping to get my rose garden established. Pastor Trish is helping me to publish a poem or two. I am working to get things in order.

I urge you to continue to pray for all of our leaders, our world, and especially our enemies. Jesus would implore us to love our enemies and pray for those who spitefully use us and say all manner of evil against us. It could be our natural tendency to be like James and John, the "Sons of Thunder" who wanted to call down fire from heaven on those who rejected Jesus in Luke 9. Unfortunately, we have people who feel entitled to believe what they believe, and they will attack or demean you should you disagree with their point of view. There are people who feel that the family members associated with the Charleston 9 forgave too soon. Wow!!! What gives us the right to override Biblical principles and these family members' grieving process so that we can hijack or leverage the attention for "greater goods"? Anyone who has ever held a grudge or is carrying unforgiveness knows our "liberty and healing is in the forgiving" those who have wronged us. "Forgiving but not forgetting" still leads to pain. Our God so loved us that he gave everything so that we could be forgiven and we would forgive out of gratitude. Gratitude! Yes. The wages of our little sin would have been a DEATH sentence for all of us. Thanks be to God for the gift of life and liberty through Jesus Christ. Even from the cross he cried, "Forgive them for they know not what they are doing." My Lord! My God!

God Bless

Pastor James Lee

June 4, 2015



NCFA CONNE~~X~~ION!

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Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

NCFA CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRY



VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED YOU ARE NEEDED

PLEASE CONSIDER WAYS YOU CAN HELP SOLIDIFY OUR MINISTRY:

- ASSIST UTOPIA IN THE NURSERY
- ASSIST TEACHERS IN CHURCH SCHOOL
- BRING CREATIVE IDEAS
- SERVE WHEREVER YOU ARE NEEDED
- VOLUNTEER FOR OUR 2015 VACATION BIBLE
- SCHOOL (JUNE 14TH-17TH, 21ST)



Our very own Nikkie Shubitz is a volunteer at Green Gate Farms, which provides organic fruit and vegetables to our communities. As a result of her volunteering, the farm is offering a \$200.00 scholarship for Kids from NCF to attend their camp, which is usually \$400.00. Should you be interested in sending your child to camp, please contact Nikkie Shubitz or register directly at www.greengatefarms.net, using the code FARMFRIEND. The Children and Youth Committee are considering ways to work with families to ensure that interested children are able to attend the camp. Families and the committee will work together to address financial concerns, etc.

At Farm Camp, children ages 5-15 learn firsthand where their food comes from. **Every day, your campers will work with farm animals and eat freshly harvested organic food.** In addition, there are weekly themes with featured guest speakers and activities.



ARE YOU A MUSICIAN??
A pianist? A guitarist? A soloist?

**Our 8:15 am service at the NCFA Chapel
on the Perry Estate 4100 Red River
is in need of a musician.**

**If you can help, or know someone who might be able
to, please contact Trish Holland, 512-461-6250 cell
or 512-892-0680 home.**

June 4, 2015



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EXPERIENCE BREAKTHROUGH

SolarWinds Leadership Institute: Presentations of Learning

Friday, June 26, 11:30am-1:30pm, University of Texas at Austin and Applied Materials
(60 volunteers needed)

The SolarWinds Leadership Institute helps 10th grade students develop life skills that are essential to their success in college and beyond. At the end of the program, students participate in one-on-one interviews with community members, a unique opportunity to interact with professionals and gain valuable feedback on their communication and leadership skills. Training and lunch are provided for volunteer interviewers.

Middle School Summer Program: Visitors Days

Wednesday, July 8, 8:30am-10:00am, University of Texas at Austin

Thursday, July 16, 8:30am-10:00am, Decker Middle School

Tuesday, July 21, 8:30am-10:00am, St. Andrew's Middle School

The six-week, academically intensive summer program for middle school students is the cornerstone of Breakthrough's program. During Visitors Days, community members are invited to tour the program and meet Breakthrough students and teaching fellows.

Breakthrough Branches Out: Presentations of Learning

Tuesday, July 28, 11:30am-1:30pm, St. Edward's University (25 volunteers needed)

11th grade students spend their summers "branching out" with activities like volunteer projects, internships and camps that will build their college resumes. At the end of the summer, students will present their experiences, what they learned, and how it will help them on their journey to college, to a panel that will provide feedback on their presentation skills. Training and lunch are provided for volunteer panelists.

Middle School Summer Program: Presentations of Learning

Wednesday, July 29, 11:30am-1:30pm, St. Andrew's Middle School (24 volunteers needed)

Thursday, July 30, 11:30am-1:30pm, Decker Middle School (50 volunteers needed)

Friday, July 31, 11:30am-1:30pm, University of Texas at Austin (36 volunteers needed)

During the summer program, students in grades 6-9 work on in-depth academic projects, and prepare brief presentations for community members. This is a valuable opportunity for students to practice their communication skills and put their knowledge to the test. Training and lunch are provided for volunteers.

Future Focus: Presentations of Learning

Wednesday, August 12, time and location TBD (15 volunteers needed)

Future focus is a collaborative internship program for Breakthrough and KIPP Collegiate high school graduates to gain invaluable professional experience through paid internships at businesses in the Austin area. At the conclusion of these internships, students will give presentations on what the experience taught them to a panel of volunteers. Training is provided for volunteer panelists.



If you would like to participate in any of these events or invite guests, please contact:

Holly Wissmann
512.692.9444 x.35
holly@breakthroughaustin.org



**Breakthrough
Austin**

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

PRAYER AND PRAISE



2 Timothy 1:7

*For God has given us the spirit of fear; but of power,
and of love, and of a sound mind.*

- ⇒ Therefore, keep Jesus Christ as the center of your vision and focus. Let Him guide your life.
- ⇒ Praise for the double blessings of two solos by Michelle Walker—sung acapella!
- ⇒ Praise for the commissioning of Fortune to move to El Paso for Medical School.
- ⇒ Praise and thanksgiving from a member for the Movin' & Grovin' group which furnished her new home.
- ⇒ Happy Birthday Madisynn! Plus, her Granny came; a wish fulfilled.
- ⇒ Lift up a friend named Beverly for healing. Her heart is struggling.
- ⇒ Lift up Carter for decisions he is facing after completing the Outward Bound experience.
- ⇒ Praise for the pastor of Emmanuel AME church in South Carolina, turning a service into a sermon about faith, strength, and healing. It was a blessing to the whole country.
- ⇒ Praise from a visitor for our beautiful new cross. Lift up her family—God knows what the needs are.
- ⇒ Praise for travel mercies for Caly to and from a conference in Houston this past week. Lift up travel mercies as Caly travels to McAllen to visit her mother before she goes to the Dominican Republic. Lift up Caly's mother for safety in the D.R. and safe travel.
- ⇒ Lift up George's request that everyone take a stand to make a difference beginning with our families. Then let your influence spread from there.
- ⇒ A big NCF welcome to our newest member: Rex.
- ⇒ Lift up the Toposans--for health, effective leadership, and God's plan for their children.

July 4, 2015



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- 1st Ausley Trifiro
Grace Holland-Washington
3rd Aisha Adjei
8th Rev. Bill Harris
9th Ireland F. Sullivan
11th George Holland
Genevieve Booth
13th Jayvin Mojica
15th Chris Unegbu
16th Lara Tallman
Rachel Draper-Marion
18th Emily Smith
Ericson Stumberg
20th Naomi Jones
Uly Cox, Sr.
23rd Danita Nelson
Colton Sullivan
Ulysses Cox, Jr.
29th Bonnie Lew (Jacob's Mom)

Session Members

*Rev. James Lee
Pastor/Moderator
*Elder Kathy Smith
Clerk of Session
*Rev. Bill Harris
Administration & Personnel
*Elder Tim Lenz
Buildings & Grounds
*Elder Mary Jo Mojica
Congregational Life
*Elder Randy Mojica
Children and Youth
*Elder Cathy Angell
Discipleship & Women's Ministry
*Elder Caly Fernandez
Evangelism
*Elder Tracey Lenz
Finance & Stewardship
*Elder Robert Booth
Lay Ministry
*Elder Benton Hooks
Men's Ministry
*Elder Vernon Bailey
Missions
*Elder Charles Robinson
Worship & Membership

Deacons

Connie Jones, Chair
Kathryn Aldas
Ulysses Cox
Naomi Jones
Samuel Okyere Mireku
Lucy Oglesby
Ashley Phillips
Carol Saddington
Cathy Trifiro
Roxann Vallejo

- 4th Colton and Stephanie Sullivan
11th Robert and Genevieve Booth
22nd Richard and Nancy Tallman

JULY 2015

- 5th 14th Sunday after Pentecost
8:15am Waller Creek Chapel
Sam Mancillas, preaching
9-10am Adult Sunday School
10:15am Worship at
1507 Wilshire Blvd.
Seminarman Matthew Aldas, preaching
Sunday School –
K-5th during Worship
7th 6:30pm Men's Ministry
Dinner, Study at 7pm
8th 6:30pm Fellowship Dinner
12th 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time
8:15am Waller Creek Chapel
Central Presbyterian Interim Candidate, preaching
9-10am Adult Sunday School
10:15am Worship at
1507 Wilshire Blvd.
Rev. Bill Harris, preaching
Sunday School –
K-5th during Worship

July 4, 2015



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N C F A SUNDAY MORNINGS

NCFA Sunday Schedule

8:15am - Worship Service

Waller Creek Chapel
41st St. and Red River

10:15am - Worship Service

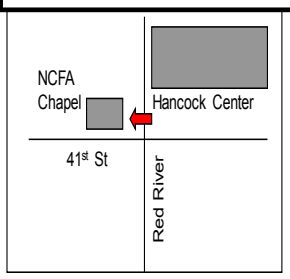
1507 Wilshire Blvd.
9am Adult Sunday School
10am Fellowship
10:45am - Children's Church

NCFA SUNDAY WORSHIP AT 8:15am -- Waller Chapel

Come rise and shine with us
at our **8:15am** chapel service
where we glorify God
through the Word, Prayer, Hymns,
and Communion.

41st and Red River, entrance gate on 41st.

In the words of Phillips, Craig & Dean,
"Come, just as you are, to worship."
All are welcome to this traditional,
intimate style of worshipping our Lord.



NCFA Waller Creek Chapel — Upcoming Preachers

July 5— Sam Mancillas

July 12 — Central Presbyterian Interim Candidate

July 18— Central Presbyterian Interim Candidate

Prayerfully seeking a musician called to join this worship service.

NCFA SUNDAY WORSHIP AT 10:15am

We would love to have you and your family
come share in the CELEBRATION OF
THE GOOD NEWS!



We are worshipping in the Fellowship Hall of
Genesis Presbyterian Church on the
Wilshire Campus starting at 10:15 a.m.

Real Church...
Real People...
Real Simple...

New Covenant Fellowship of Austin PC(U.S.A.) is a
racially diverse community informed by the Bible,
empowered by the Holy Spirit, and motivated to share
God's love with all. In response to God's love, we are
called to equip disciples to faithfully serve, to encour-
age seekers to joyfully commit, and to implore all to
worship our Lord, as we love our neighbors,
grow in grace, and live by faith.

JOIN US IN THE CELEBRATION OF THE GOOD NEWS

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

MISSION STATEMENT

New Covenant Fellowship is a racially diverse community informed by the Bible and empowered by the Holy Spirit. We are called to equip disciples to faithfully serve, to encourage seekers to joyfully commit, and to implore all to worship our Lord, as we love our neighbors, grow in grace and live by faith.

VISION STATEMENT

NEW COVENANT FELLOWSHIP IMPLEMENTS OUR MISSION BY EQUIPPING INDIVIDUALS TO LIVE FOR CHRIST AND MINISTER THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

FOUR AREAS OF FOCUS FOR 2015

1. **Retain and minister to visitors and members through personal contacts, strengthening families, ministry-driven events, and identifying and utilizing the numerous gifts of our members.**
2. **Better utilize social media and other modes of communication to celebrate our ministry, share resources, and organize ourselves.**
3. **Enhance our Children and Youth ministries through mentoring, attending their extracurricular activities, utilizing their gifts in worship, and assisting in the Nursery and Church School.**
4. **Continue emphasizing Marketplace Ministry, celebrating the various ministries within our church and community, and reaching out into the community like the Community Garden and our Health Fair in November.**

The Six Great Ends of the Church

The proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind; the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God; the maintenance of divine worship; the preservation of the truth; the promotion of social righteousness; and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world. (Book of Order G-1.0200)

July 4, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

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Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



Café Justo
IF YOU LIKE COFFEE OR
KNOW SOMEONE WHO DOES



Consider supporting the NCFA Evangelism Committee and its partnership with Café Justo to bless this coffee grower's cooperative.

Café Justo is a coffee grower cooperative based in Salvador Urbina, Chiapas, Mexico. They market a pure organic coffee which is grown, harvested, and marketed in the spirit of justice. Our goal is to provide incentives for people to remain on their family lands.

Orders will be arranged through NCFA's Evangelism Committee. Please see Caly Fernández to place an order. Coffee is available in 1- and 5-lb. bags. The cost of a 1-lb. bag is \$9 and a 5-lb. bag is \$35. Dark roast, medium roast, and decaf are available in ground or whole beans. Coffee will be delivered biweekly to NCFA

Contact Caly to make your purchase today! 512-228-4712

NCFA FOOD PANTRY

All are welcome to participate in our *FOOD PANTRY*, a crisis ministry initiative of the *Deacons*.



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“Love Thy Neighbor”

If you or someone you know needs food, please take some.

**If you can help replenish our supply,
*UNEXPIRED NONPERISHABLES ARE WELCOME.***

Presbyterian Women

August 15, Saturday Austin Cluster Gathering, San Gabriel Presbyterian Church, Georgetown. Details will follow in newsletter.

September 4, Friday Church Women United will celebrate with an Ecumenical Action Emphasis theme, meeting 9:30 AM-11:30 AM, New Covenant Fellowship of Austin, PCUSA, 1507 Wilshire Blvd.

July 4, 2015



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Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

MANOS
de CRISTO



Back-To-School Program

When: July 20 -24, 2015

Monday, July 20 - Thursday, July 23: 8:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

Friday, July 24: 8:00 a.m.—10:30 a.m. (or while supplies last)

Doors open at 8 AM on a first come first served basis.

Where: Allan Elementary School

4900 Gonzales Street, Austin, TX 78702

Bus options: #4-Montopolis or #350 Airport Blvd.

- Each child will receive a backpack, clothing and school supplies.
- Free dental screenings will be available for children participating in the Back-to-School program!

Pre-K— 5th Grade ONLY

The first 400 children are guaranteed to be served each day while supplies last.

Children **MUST** be present to receive their items. Parent must bring ID.

For more information call: **512-477-7454** or visit **manosdecristo.org**



www.facebook.com/ManosATX



@ManosATX



Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

MANOS de CRISTO



Back-To-School Program

Cuándo? 20 al 24 de julio, 2015

lunes, 20 de julio al jueves, 23 de julio: 8:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

viernes, 24 de julio: 8:00 —10:30 a.m. (o mientras haya existencias)

Servimos a los primeros que llegan empezando a las 8 AM.

Dónde? Allan Elementary School

4900 Gonzales Street, Austin, TX 78702

Rutas del autobús: #4-Montopolis o #350 Airport Blvd.

- Cada niño recibirá ropa, una mochila y útiles escolares.
- Evaluaciones dentales sin costo para los niños que participan en el programa de Back-to-School!

Para quiénes? Los niños de pre-kinder hasta 5to grado

Garantizamos servicio para los primeros 400 niños cada día mientras haya existencias.

Los niños tienen que estar presentes. Los padres tienen que presentar una identificación.

Para más información, llame al: **512-477-7454** or visite:



www.facebook.com/ManosATX



[@ManosATX](https://twitter.com/ManosATX)



July 4, 2015



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Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

"Visions, Virtue, and Validation"

Mark 5:21-43

New Covenant Fellowship of Austin

Pastor James H. Lee

June 28, 2015

Mark 5:21-43

²¹ When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. ²² Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet ²³ and begged him repeatedly, *My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live.* ²⁴ So he went with him. And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. ²⁵ Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. ²⁶ She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. ²⁷ She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸ for she said, *If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.* ²⁹ Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. ³⁰ Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, *Who touched my clothes?* ³¹ And his disciples said to him, *You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'* ³² He looked all around to see who had done it. ³³ But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. ³⁴ He said to her, *Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.* ³⁵ While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, *Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?* ³⁶ But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, *Do not fear, only believe.* ³⁷ He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. ³⁸ When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. ³⁹ When he had entered, he said to them, *Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping.* ⁴⁰ And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, *Talitha cum,* "which means, *Little girl, get up!*" ⁴² And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. ⁴³ He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Have you ever been told a secret and had someone say "Don't tell anyone"—and it felt like the moment they said it, something just burned in every part of your mouth and you just wanted to tell someone? It seems like every time Jesus said not to tell anyone, what did the folks go and do? They told someone! Then he tells us to go, and what do we do? Stop....

So many powerful things in the Word of God. Folks may say, "Well, James, why do ya'll put the Bible here on our seats and then read it from the bulletin or slides? Because we want to make sure if you ever need the Word of God, the Bible is close by so you can grab one. I want to make sure if you take notes, you have it. The Word is live and active like a double-edged sword, able to get in there and deal with the stuff that's a part of our lives.

July 4, 2015



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"Visions, Virtue, and Validation"

Mark 5:21-43

New Covenant Fellowship of Austin

Pastor James H. Lee

June 28, 2015

I am so full this week. As I was looking at the text and dealing with everything that was going on, I was saying "But Lord, how do I best pastor this church, this diverse church that I love so much?" The Lord reminded me that this is God's church and it ain't mine. Then I said "But... But... But" and he said, "This is my church, not yours. You just be the vessel." I will say I pray that whatever you need, you're able to hear outside of my voice, and outside of my words, and outside of me. And if there's any value, may it be a blessing to you.

I want to lift up some V's today. I want to lift up **Visions**. I want to lift up **Virtue**. And the last part, I want to talk a little bit about **Validation**.

Visions:

The pericope is before Jesus is trying to move them to the other side. They're concerned about what's happening in the area as they're in the seas and moving on. We don't have it in this text, but there was a person who was dealing with demons, and Jesus dealt with it. It was the stuff that was happening in their community; they knew about it, and it drove them with fear. There are things that are a part of our history, that are part of who we are, and they drive us with fear. We can see them as if they were real today and they happened years ago. And visions like that can either drive you to or drive you from, motivate you or paralyze you.

I want to remind us as I have done in the Newsletter and I must say it again: ***"The Lord has not given us a spirit of fear but of love and of power and of sound mind."*** (2 Timothy 1:7) I need that vision to be so deep in us that we are not driven by fear. Fear of succeeding because somebody is going to be upset. Fear of wearing our glasses because somebody might talk about it. Fear of loving someone because a heart might be broken. Fear of caring for a person of a different ethnic group because somebody might call me a lover. Fear of standing up for what is right because it is the right thing to do, and knowing that in doing so it could cause challenges for me.

I do hope, as we shared with the babies earlier today, that God didn't just give us the capacity to move just to move but gave us that for the purposes of God: Do not be moved by fear. What happened in Charleston, please understand that wasn't the first time that ever happened. Please also understand this about the A.M.E. Church that everyone is lifting up; go back to about 1796 and you'll see that it was birthed out of a prayer meeting that was interrupted, and out of that began the birthing of the A.M.E. Church. It's part of our history, and a lot of us are moving away from understanding that aspect of our history. Yet we're ever told if you do not learn from your history, you are doomed to repeat it; and it's ever being repeated before us.

I want us to be reminded of visions. Habakkuk was on the watchtower where he could look out, he could see, and he could also pray. We're supposed to be on our watchtower. As I was growing up, I didn't fully understand it, but the old folks would sing the song that we ought to ***"Watch, fight, and pray."*** It was a part of the culture. And that's what it meant to be in the church; that's what it meant to be a part of the community; that's what it meant to be a child of God. You would go into the churches, and as you walked in, you would see the American flag and the Christian flag on the right side. And one would sing, ***"We are soldiers in the army. We have to fight although we have to cry. We have to hold up the blood-stained banner. We've got to hold it up until we die!"***

July 4, 2015



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"Visions, Virtue, and Validation"

Mark 5:21-43

New Covenant Fellowship of Austin

Pastor James H. Lee

June 28, 2015

That blood was not about a theological term, not about atonement or all the ways in which we work it out. The Word of God said there had to be the shedding of the blood for the remission, the payment of sin. The blood of Christ was shed, and as a result, we were redeemed. And we became soldiers in the Army of God.

And a part of what we lift up when we say "Church Triumphant" for the glorious saints, for those that have gone on, is because this is the church that continues to battle. Go back into your confessions and you'll see both churches exist—but we don't focus on this one, we focus on *this* one (heaven). And I definitely want us focusing on the glory; but I also want us to know that church is not just for us to come to and have our feel-goods and go back. It is for us to get in here to learn to work together to disciple, and then out of that conviction go and live it out in our homes, in our jobs, in our community. That's the right vision. Make it plain, make it simple so that those who can see it will take it and run. ***"And though it tarries...it will not tarry."*** (*Habakkuk 2:3*)

Jairus over in the synagogue has a child that is sick. "I'm here; my baby is sick. I gotta work; my baby is sick and dying. Ah, but I see Jesus. Some people say he's crazy. Some people say he's just a man, he's Mary and Joseph's baby. But what I see in him, the vision I see in him is that my baby is going to be healed."

A woman with the issue of blood for 12 long years. Anybody been going through and you're almost to the point you want to give up? Go to the doctors—and I'm not going against doctors, I'm telling you this story as it is revealed. Even me and my doc, we get to talking and I tell him, "Yo, Doc, I've spent a lot of money and I want a complete healing"; and he says, "Well, you need to know that the majority of my patients that I have seen as long as I have seen you, they're not here with me...and so if you're not getting worse, you are getting better." He put things in the proper perspective. And then the smart aleck told me, "When your people come to church and they hear your sermons, their lives are not perfect—but they keep coming, don't they?"

Visions. Visions. Instead of the woman looking at "They said I'm unclean," instead of looking at "another physician to tell me my situation and tell me how bad it is and that is getting worse," instead of looking at "Aw, man, there's a whole lot of people out there"...what did she see? "If I could just touch the hem of his garment....Oh, Lord, have mercy!"

What are you looking at? Where is your vision? Are you seeing the things of God, or are you seeing the stuff around you, the stuff that could say "God, you are not true; you're not living; you're not active; and every other force is greater than you." Or are you saying "God, with you all things are possible." You get to choose where your vision is going to be.

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"Visions, Virtue, and Validation"

Mark 5:21-43

New Covenant Fellowship of Austin

Pastor James H. Lee

June 28, 2015

Virtue:

I love this part because she touched and he knew. ***"Who touched my clothes?"***
³¹***And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'"*** "Yo, come on, man; everybody is out here and you've been touched a lot." No virtue left from him and he knew it. I have so many people who are afraid to step up and step out because in their youth they don't want to fail; they don't want to experience pain; they don't want to experience suffering. "And so I might just touch, or I might just step out a little bit, just enough to say I did it." Coach used to say, "Son, are you going to do this thing?" I would say, "I'll try." One day he threw some keys on the ground. He said, "Son, pick up the keys. I want you to try to pick them up." I was like "Shoot, I can pick up the keys." He said, "No, you *pick up the keys*. You see, if you 'try to pick up the keys,' they are going to stay there because you're not going to do it. 'Try' should mean you are going to do it." If I could yet touch the hem of his garment, I know I'm going to be healed.

I need to say pastorally there are some illnesses that we have that God is going to walk us through from this side of glory to the next side of glory; we're going to walk with our illnesses. It's not about you lacking faith, it's not about you not being right and everything else; it is just sometimes we are going to walk with our illness. That doesn't mean that I'm not going to keep praying for my healing and my wholeness, and I'm not going to quit praying for yours. But I don't want to allow somebody else's theological thing to keep us from trusting God, believing God, and picking up the keys. Amen?

Virtue—a lot of people touched, but they didn't have the faith. They didn't believe. She believed. You say "But I believe, I believe, I believe!" That's good, but right now I am talking about the woman. But I am also saying, "Pick up the keys, keep faith, keep trying, keep walking, day by day, moment by moment, and year by year. Don't give up."

Validation:

"Who touched me?" He said, ***"Your faith has made you whole."*** He basically said, "You have had no name, but in essence, daughter of Abraham (father of faith), unclean one, I am going to validate you today. Your faith has made you whole—not a doctor, not all these people, not the synagogue, not the temple. Your faith in the God who can and who will has made you whole, and now you go from being an unnamed woman to being a daughter of Abraham, a child of the faith." I want you to remember that because we say "We are blessed to be a blessing" out of the Abrahamic Covenant.

The other thing of him validating her publicly is now as a rabbi, as a teacher, he can say, ***"You are clean; you are whole."*** And so now she can publicly serve. Amen?!

You see, I don't know about you, but I gotta recognize when I'm unclean so that the Lord can cleanse me and validate me and say, "You're clean now." Your righteousness is not yours. The Word of God would tell you ***"our righteousness is like filthy rags before God."*** (Isaiah 64:6) I don't care how good and how great we think we are in the presence of the Almighty God, the Preeminent One... ***"filthy rags."*** You say, "But you are going to ruin our self-esteem." If your self-esteem is in you and what you have, it's going to rot. The miles are going to eat it up. Ahh, but if your righteousness is in Christ Jesus, the Christus Victor, the One who reins, that's a validation like nobody's! *Fearfully and wonderfully made. God knows me so well my name's on the hands of God. God never forgets—God knows me even when I don't feel like it.* God, do you care? "Oh, baby, yes, I do." Validation.

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I don't know why you're all worried about Jesus coming to the house—the baby's dead....And what does he do? He validates Jairus's faith. *"Yo, brother, have faith, have belief, and let's go to the house."* Have you had faith and watched everything else kind of go in front of you, and you're like, "Wait a minute, what about me? And what about mine? Yeah, the woman's important, but my daughter. What about my daughter? What about the job? What about my family? What about my rights? What about my this? What about my that?" *"Have faith; believe; let's go."* I love it. *"Crowd, y'all got to go. Peter, James, and John, let's roll."* They go to the house and find a bunch of foolishness. *"Why are y'all weeping?"* Back in the day you had the professional mourners. *"Send them on out of here. She's not dead, she's asleep. Talitha, rise up! Get up, little one!"*

I know we have loved ones who go home to glory. That is not punishment, that is not a lack of faith. If you've been in the church, that battle's on this side. It is the Lord saying, *"Come on home to get your rest, to get your reward, put on your crown of righteousness, your robe washed in the blood of the lamb. It's time, baby, rejoice and rest!"* But if you deny the battle on this side and just talk about the triumph on the other side, it seems so minuscule; oh, but it is not! That is a validation for everything that was done on this side of glory on the other side. I want you all to know something. He said "Get up," and I want to encourage you to get up. I don't know what seemingly is dying within you, but *"Talitha cum,"* let it rise up. I know you're not a little girl, men, but let it rise up, *rise up!* "But I don't want to take a chance...." Rise up, rise up.

As I leave, my heart breaks for Sharon. I went to Charlotte to go and bring her here to go to Austin Seminary—went to her Presbytery, talked to her, cast the vision, told her who she could be, what she could do. Brought her to this community, and this church loved on her for a season of that time. When she couldn't come here, I made sure she had a church community in Dallas that this church helps me to support in Glendale Presbyterian Church. Now she is a chaplain helping others who are going through. But she knows that she is loved and part of the community of faith, and so as she lost her mother and her cousin, her heart was broken. But she has been upheld by the community of faith so that she can live. And will she grieve? Yes! Will she mourn! Yes. But will she be upheld by the body of Christ? Yes! Has her faith been validated? Yes. She told me, "I have to keep living because of the legacy of faith my mama instilled in me. If I don't live it out, I devalue what she lived for." So I want us to understand, we will go through some hardships and some great challenges. But let the love of God manifest through us and don't give up because of what's going on around you. Keep your eyes upon the One who created us and the one who calls us.

Vision: What are you looking at? What are you called to see? Is it leading to life or is it leading to death? Is it in line with what God's principles are?

Virtue: We're going to touch a whole lot of people. I love Passing of the Peace. There are some folks who are like, "No, don't touch; I don't want to go; I hate this." And there are people who say that we are surrounded by people and still alone. I want to make sure that if you walked in this place that you were touched by someone—so that you knew that if no one else knew you were alive and no one else cared, somebody told you that you matter.

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You say, "But I may not know him or her that very well." It doesn't matter. Your life matters. Virtue. Be touched and touch someone else because you've been touched by the Righteous Master. Amen?

Validation: I love wearing my team ring every now and then, but I don't wear it often because all it says is that I lettered and I have a degree. But if I hadn't been validated by the Almighty One, it means nothing. I love my Masters of Divinity that says I've studied...even though y'all can't always tell when I preach that I have it! The paper may be important for somebody else, but I already knew I was ordained and called when I started running and finally said "Yes." The degree was paper validation, but it was a God validation because the community said "Yes"—which is why we commissioned and sent Fortune out the way we did today. Do what we need to do, but know that nothing can separate you from the love of God. Your validation is the One who called you, who created you, and who claimed you in Jesus' name. Amen.

Let us pray:

Almighty God, to you be glory, praise, and honor for all that you have done, all that you're doing right now, and all that you will do. Almighty God, we ask that you would continue to work in and through us. When fear rises up in us, move us beyond fear to faith, to hope and love in you that we won't be driven by what the world says, we'll be driven by what you say and that we'll know that this church is established on you. God, right now we are at a time when people say, "If it isn't what I want right now, I don't need the church, it's not relevant." It is the very church that for so many who embattled the worst of times in this nation over 500 years, who called upon the church, and it wasn't the church that met their needs. It was you working through the church and making us the church that made a difference. So I pray that you will prick our hearts, that you will stimulate our minds beyond ourselves so we are no longer conformed of this world, but we are renewed and transformed by you, the work of your Spirit, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

