

“THE BELL”



BANGOR LIBERTY FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

Doubt and Unbelief

When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them.¹⁵ As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.

¹⁶ “What are you arguing with them about?” he asked.

¹⁷ A man in the crowd answered, “Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech.¹⁸ Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.”¹⁹ “You unbelieving generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.”²⁰ So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

²¹ Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has he been like this?”

“From childhood,” he answered.²² “It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.”²³ “If you can?” said Jesus. “Everything is possible for one who believes.”²⁴ Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!”²⁵ When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. “You deaf and mute spirit,” he said, “I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.”²⁶ The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, “He’s dead.”²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.²⁸ After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?”²⁹ He replied, “This kind can come out only by prayer.”

Mark 9:14-29

Usually, when dealing with this text the focus is on the healing of the young boy and the faith of the importance of prayer and fasting as noted in verse 29. I would rather talk about the actions of the disciples and the faith of the boy’s father. This episode begins actually at the beginning of chapter 9 when Jesus and His three closest disciples are on the Mount of Transfiguration. As they come down the mountain in verse 14, they find the other disciples in a confrontation with the scribes and Pharisees. When Jesus asks them what they are arguing about it isn’t with a tone like, “Gosh, what are you arguing about?”. It’s more like “Why are you bothering to argue with these people?”. By this time in His ministry the Pharisees have made it clear they are not interested in hearing or understanding what Jesus, or the disciples, has to say. We should also note that in the time the disciples have been away from Jesus they have fallen into a bit of chaos. They are arguing with critics,

unable to heal a boy possessed by a spirit. This is something they had been doing with regularity a few chapters earlier. But now they have been separated from Jesus for some time and their focus is now disturbed. Throughout the Gospels when the disciples have spent time away from Jesus or they are gathered together away from their leader their actions and talk turn to selfish and inconsequential things.

Anytime they are not focused on their leader they focus on themselves and turn selfish and judgmental of each other. In this way, we are so much like them today. When we aren’t focused on our spiritual life, when we fail to keep Jesus Christ at the center of our existence we tend to become self-righteous and very religious. By this, I mean we focus on examining others instead of examining ourselves and keeping ourselves on the narrow path. In place of spirit driven living we put in place rules and actions that define how spiritual we are. The disciples had become more focused on arguing with the scribes and Pharisees than on prayer and developing spiritual maturity.

The other element in this episode that is interesting is the father of the possessed boy’s actions. He had brought his son to Jesus and His disciples to be healed but now finds Jesus’ followers unable to help. When Jesus arrives on the scene, it seems as if the father’s faith has been shaken or at least troubled. He says to Jesus, “If you can do anything. . .” Instead of healing, the father seems to be happy for any amount of relief. His expectations have been diminished by the lackluster efforts of the disciples.

Jesus acknowledging this says in an exasperated or at least mocking way, “If you can?” In other words, “now you want to doubt me.” The father realizing where he has fallen responds with, “I believe. Help my unbelief.” Which is another way of admitting his own doubt. Even though he has faith there was at least a question in his own mind that held him back.

It has been almost two thousand years since these events took place and we are still so much like the earliest believers. We often display the same doubt and questioning that the boy’s father and the disciples represented that day. Like this father we allow setbacks and adversity to erode our faith. It doesn’t happen overnight, but slowly, bit by bit we forget all we have been promised and focus on our disappointment. Over time our disappointment leads to doubt, and our faith becomes stale.

Eventually, all we have to lean on are our religion, the external things of our faith. Then church attendance becomes more important than prayer and spiritual growth. Pretty soon we are on the wide path with the Pharisees. Eventually the disciples realized what power

they had and rid themselves of the doubts that plagued them. We should be just as powerful in our every-day walk as those men were. We must continue to focus on what is important in this life. Keeping Jesus at the center of our existence and living our lives in a way that glorifies Him and causes those we come in contact with to want the same hope for the future that we have

LIBRARY LEDGE – Donations

Thank you all for your donations to our library! New to our library this month are the following: **Creative Bible Studies for Young Adults** – Studies for 18-35 years old, **Rise and Shine, a Devotional, A Cup of Chicken Soup for the Soul, Chicken Soup for the Couple's Soul, The Monday Morning Church - Out of the Sanctuary and Into the Streets, The Victor Marx Story – With God, All Things Are Possible, A Young Woman After God's Own Heart** – A teen's guide to Friends, Faith, Family, and the Future, **Men Are Like Waffles - Women Are Like Spaghetti, Every Young Man's Battle, The Message of Hope and Lies at the Altar - The Truth About Great Marriages.** We have such a wide assortment, something for everyone. Happy reading!

Missions

For this Quarter our Mission collection will go to Turkana Friends Mission: The people are a semi-nomadic herders who are particularly vulnerable to drought and food insecurity, as well as to violent conflict with neighboring people-groups. Only 3% of Turkana adults have a secondary school education.

Samburu Friends Mission will also be in our collection on the 3rd Sunday of the month. The Samburu people are nomadic pastoralists who keep cattle, sheep, camels, and donkeys. Recently, huge swaths of collectively-range land in the Samburu region have been privatized, leading to extreme disruption of grazing and migration patterns. This, in turn, has led to increase in violent conflict with neighboring communities.

Christian Ed

We are looking for Sunday School/Deeper teachers, Children's message volunteers, and nursery workers. Please talk to Dani J if you would like more information or would like to help.

Kick Off

September 4 will be Fall Deeper Kick Off,

Bible Presentation

September 22 5th grade Bibles/Golden Ticket presentation.

Potluck

It was approved to move the potluck meal from September 15 to September 22.

Christian Social Concerns

The next two articles were submitted to Christian Social Concerns and are included here. The first is from Margaret Good and the second is from Rachel Bachman.

The Ministry at Little Rock

My involvement in the Little Rock Ministry at Pine Crest Mobile Home Park began in August of 2014. We moved to Eldora November of 2013 feeling it was God's plan but not understanding why. I now believe one reason God brought us to Eldora was to connect with Little Rock.

Sandy Rosenkranz, who at that time owned the Bible Book Store with her husband, was one of the people who started the ministry at the trailer park. She talked with me about it and asked me to consider starting a Girls Club for junior high age girls. After prayer and talking with John I decided to give it a try. At first I tried to stick to junior high age but parents wanted their younger girls to come also, so in time all ages were included. I'd originally planned to teach life skills such as cooking, budgeting, etc. But soon discovered they didn't want anything that formal and with varied ages it was too difficult. Within a few months we settled into a rhythm. They play and visit for 10-15 minutes after they come off the bus, then eat their meal. Several are willing to offer the prayer themselves now so I don't need to give the blessing. While eating I read a Bible story or lesson. When they finish eating we do a variety of craft projects which they either keep for themselves or to give to nursing home residents. Around the holidays I bake sugar cookies for them to frost and decorate. While they work on crafts we talk more about the lesson, their day or their families. Attendance varies from 2-10 with an average of 6-8 girls each week.

I prepare and serve the food on Mondays when both boys and girls can come for food, Bible teaching and activities. I have led the Bible lesson a few times, but prefer not to because of the discipline issues that occur when boys & girls are together. We're praying for someone to come forward to lead on Mondays this fall. (God has answered!)

Currently we have 29 kids from K-12th grade in the park. Only half of those are somewhat regulars at Little Rock activities. We provide school supplies and new backpacks for all, however. Most come from single parent homes or have a step-parent or grandparent. Many parents are not able to work for physical or mental reasons and rely on disability and government assistance. Many do not budget their funds well and are often behind with their rent. Mary & Ivan Jasper who are managers for the park have to evict families if they haven't paid for three months. Often they move to low

income apartments in Iowa Falls. Sadly, we lose most of our kids because of eviction or spousal abuse. Only a couple of families are still in the park since I started in 2014. Many come and go through the school year. Most kids find it normal to have a close friend one week and the next week she's moved.

I try to meet all the parents when we give out the school bags, but don't have a lot of involvement with them after that. My purpose is to be there for the kids who are in this situation by no fault of their own. Vi became involved a few years ago and the girls love her. We agree we can't blame the kids for the decisions parents make. We can only love them where they are. Some parents have said they "Don't like us talking about that Jesus stuff". However, they still let the kids come. But if they disobey, the parent may not let them come to LR knowing that is a way to punish the child.

We know some kids deal with physical and/or emotional abuse in their homes. Mary works closely with Human Services. The park can be a sad place but it is their home and they usually support and stand up for each other when needed. They see Little Rock like a church ... a safe place to be with an extended family.

Margaret Good

Are We a Community of Love?

Right now it's undeniable that immigration is a topic causing division. I wanted to share some of my experiences on the matter. This summer I have been working at a dual language elementary school. Suddenly, for the first time in my life, I was the minority. Parents and students would be around me speaking Spanish and, at best, I could only understand a few words here or there. It was overwhelming and distracting trying to keep up with an unfamiliar language. I know one complaint I've heard about immigrants is that they don't speak English. I find it vital that we look past what bothers us and think about the situations others may be in. For anyone who has tried to learn a new language as an adult, we know how challenging it can be. I had a student this summer who was born in Mexico. She would sometimes struggle to find the words she wanted in English. One Monday morning she said something to me in Spanish that I didn't understand. Her friend translated and told me that my student had said she had missed me over the weekend. Imagine wanting to express your feelings to someone and not being able to. Even after years of working on a language there are times that the right words aren't known or are used incorrectly. Learning a new language is time consuming and difficult. For me, I have had the time and resources to practice, but then when it comes to actually forming sentences and using proper pronunciation, it's daunting. Thinking of this in

terms of an immigrant coming to our country, we must consider the immense challenges they face in becoming a legal citizen. There is a language barrier, they may have a large family to provide for, they need to find work, etc. More recently they have become more fearful of the rhetoric and violence in our country. Families are literally being torn apart.

If you haven't already, I encourage you to read the stories of families coming into our country, or even better, discover ways to meet them. When we find ourselves feeling anything other than love for immigrants then we need to examine where our prejudices and anger are founded. I believe that if we don't establish a connection with people we can easily start to make generalizations when it is not our place to make judgments anyway.

The reason I mention all of this is to offer an insight into the other side of things. Immigrants are merely seeking the same blessings and life that many of us have in this country. I understand there are many more aspects to this debate, but we must remember to examine each of them through a Biblical view. Deuteronomy 10:18-19 says, "He [God] defends the cause of the fatherless and widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt." This world is not our home anyway, but while we are here we are to love. We are to reach out to those who are new in our country and love them as Christ does. It can be hard to put aside all of the opinions we hear, but if we don't view them with a careful heart we may miss what God wants us to see.

Mystery Friend

Our Mystery Friend for August was born in Marshalltown. He/She went to school at BCLUW. Their current job is to Design HVAC Diffusers. Our Mystery Friend has 1 brother, 1 sister, and 3 children. Favorite food are beef, potatoes, and cheese. He/She has only traveled to places you could drive to. Most people would not know that this person has had both legs cut in two. They commented that they especially like that everyone is always very friendly and willing to lend a hand at Bangor Liberty.

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Mystery Friend for July:

Neil Martin

Levi Willits

Levi is having a 97th Birthday on the 23rd of September.

He would love to hear from everyone. Address: 100 Village View Cir. Apt 111, Williamsburg, IA. 52361.

Coming Activities:

Deeper

Deeper will start Aug 21, there will not be a meal, but light snacks.

Fall Deeper meals will start in September.

Family Camp at Quaker Heights

September 13-15. If you register by August 31-cost will be \$35.00 per person if after that date cost will \$40.00 per person.

USFW Fall Retreat

September 20-21 CQH

Monthly Meeting

Next Monthly Meeting will be held on September 8

Queries

7. Do you avoid undue expansion of your business as to endanger your personal integrity? Are you truthful and honest in your business transactions, punctual in fulfilling your promises, and prompt in payment of your debts?

8. Do you make diligent effort to acquaint yourselves and those under your care with spiritual needs of the world? Do you support by prayer and systematic giving those who are laboring to extend Christ's Kingdom? Do you use your spiritual gifts in serving humanity as God grants you light to see such service?

More Queries to come...

Sunday School Teachers for Nursery:

August 4: Kay F & Chris S
August 11: Dani J & Mary D
August 18: Robin B & Diane T
August 25: Chris S & Amber S

Children's Message:

August 4: Amber S
August 11: Robin B
August 18: Dani J
August 25: Margaret G

August Birthdays

1 Larry Juncker
4 Chris Evertsen
6 Kris Young
16 Marcie Nichols
23 Paul Hammer
29 Charlene Martin
30 Royal Young

August Anniversaries

7 Jim & Diane Teske
10 Michael & Emma Chase
12 Loren & Jenessa Peters
16 Will & Jo Macy
20 Nick & Kathi Patten
24 Brad & Marcie Nichols
27 Bob & Veronica Daniel
Blake & Alicia Matney
29 Jack & Suzanne Lundy

August Ushers

4 Heath N & Kellen B
8 Michael C & Larry J
11 Paul H & Brayden E
25 Bob D & Chris E

September Birthdays

9 Mark Bradley
13 Reg Martin
14 Isaac Good
15 Ruth McDonald
17 Josie Evertsen
22 Parker Matney
23 Levi Willits
26 Keith McDonald
27 Don Davis
Ashlen Young
Jade Hammers
29 Lydia Butler

September Anniversaries

7 Nathan & Breanne Butler
12 Neil & Peggy Martin

September Ushers

1 Reg M & Bill P
8 Joe F & Rick H
15 Kellen B & Heath N
22 Chris E & Brayden E
29 Paul H & Bob D