

First Baptist Church of Eatonton Messenger

FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST SHARING GOD'S LOVE AND GRACE WITH ALL



FROM THE PASTOR

It's not a story. It's not poetry either. I'm not sure it is metaphor. More than any of these it is praise – almost line after line, phrase after phrase put together in inordinately long sentences. And thus, it is a labor to read them.

I'm talking about the book of Ephesians, especially the first three chapters, which is half the epistle. It's not an epistle that tells the story of ancient Ephesus. It is a collection of praises praising the glamorous work of God in Christ.

It's like listening to someone tell you about their ingenious grandchild who they believe to be a prodigy of some kind. They just can't quite put their finger on it, but they are sure the child will be world renown someday. Ephesians is filled with words like ingenious, prodigy and renown – words meant to enlarge and extrapolate with hyperbole.

Thus Ephesians is not easily read. But it makes for some great refrigerator postings –

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!”

“Blessed in Christ with every Spiritual Blessing!”

“Praise the glorious grace God freely bestowed on us in the Beloved!”

“In Christ we have redemption, forgiveness and grace lavished upon us!”

And those are all in just the first few verses of chapter one. And by the time you add an exclamation mark to each of the phrases you are exhausted with the drama. But that is Ephesians. It consistently engages exaggerated images of the glamorous, magnanimous work of God in Christ. Who knew it was so glamorous! And who can proclaim it with so much drama! I find myself lost in the glam! It is so over the top.

Were I listening to anyone other than the Spirit I would say, “Ok. Ok. Get over yourself!”

But I dare not say such a thing to the Spirit, in which the writer of the epistle is so overwhelmed. I try to listen. I try to stay focused.

And finally, with the help of my friend Eugene Peterson, I am caught up myself in the certainty of the epistle writer. God has been active “in Christ” doing a work of grace that is beyond any glamour we might ever imagine. Apart from the writer himself, or anyone else; before the beginning of time and at the beginning of time, until now God has been present and at work “in Christ” for the sake of all people. God has “broken down the dividing wall(s) (2:14)” that so easily separate people and too easily remain for centuries. God in Christ overwhelms the upstairs downstairs divisions to reconcile people to live together in the love of God for all people.

Such walls are alien to the heart of God. People experience the inclusive heart of God in Christ. For Paul, it was about his calling to the Gentile people. For others like us it is a host of dividing walls God is working in Christ to destroy.

And the greater truth is, often unbeknownst to us God is working in Christ to do these things. Easter proclaims God is resurrected in Christ doing God's work of raising people up into being a body of Christ that will be God's dwelling place forever and ever (2:22).

It is easy to turn a blind eye to such. Because such is so often intangible, pragmatists like us don't see the glam the epistle believes is always present in the work of God in Christ. But Ephesians dares me to believe such work of grace is present! Thus, support it, proclaim it, embody it, celebrate it, etc.

*Peace,
Craig*

FAIREST LORD JESUS: A HYMN OF BEAUTY AND DEVOTION

As a minister of music, I have the privilege of leading congregations in worship through song. Among the many hymns that have stood the test of time, *Fairest Lord Jesus* holds a special place in the hearts of believers. Its lyrical beauty, rich melody, and deep theological significance make it a cherished piece in Christian hymnody.

The origins of *Fairest Lord Jesus* are somewhat shrouded in mystery. Some traditions suggest that the hymn was written by German Jesuits in the 17th century, while others trace its roots to the Crusaders of the 12th century. The hymn was later translated into English by Joseph A. Seiss in the 19th century, and the melody we sing today is most commonly associated with the tune *Crusader's Hymn* or *Schönster Herr Jesu*.

One of the reasons *Fairest Lord Jesus* resonates so deeply with worshippers is its poetic depiction of Christ's beauty, both in creation and in His divine nature. The hymn opens with:

*Fairest Lord Jesus, Ruler of all nature,
O Thou of God and man the Son,
Thee will I cherish, Thee will I honor,
Thou, my soul's glory, joy, and crown.*

These words express both admiration for the beauty of Christ and a personal commitment to cherish and honor Him. The hymn continues to compare Christ to nature's finest displays—the meadows, the woodlands, and the shining heavenly bodies—yet proclaims that Jesus is fairer, purer, and surpassingly glorious. Beyond its poetic beauty, the hymn is an invitation to deep worship. It calls us to lift our eyes beyond the grandeur of creation and fix our hearts on the Lord Himself. While creation reflects God's handiwork, the hymn reminds us that Jesus is the source of all beauty and the greatest object of our devotion.

Generations of believers have found comfort and inspiration in *Fairest Lord Jesus*. Whether sung in a traditional choral arrangement, a simple acoustic setting, or even a contemporary interpretation, its message remains timeless. As a minister of music, I find that this hymn helps congregations engage in heartfelt worship, drawing them into awe and reverence before Christ.

Fairest Lord Jesus is more than just a hymn—it is a testimony of Christ's supremacy and beauty. As we sing these words the first Sunday in April, may our hearts be drawn closer to the One who is truly fairest, our Savior and King. May we never cease to cherish and honor Him, for He alone is worthy of our highest praise.

Dylan

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NO WEDNESDAY
NIGHT SERVICES OR
ACTIVITIES
ON APRIL 16, 2025

CLOSED
EASTER MONDAY
APRIL 21, 2025

The church office is closed for
Easter Monday. We will resume
normal hours on Tuesday, April 22.

CHANGE SOMEONE'S LIFE

WE ARE CALLING YOU TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY
TO BLESS FIRST CALL PREGNANCY CENTER BY PARTICIPATING
IN OUR BABY BOTTLE CAMPAIGN FOR 2025.

OUR BABY BOTTLE CAMPAIGN PROVIDES AN EASY AND FUN WAY
FOR CHURCHES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO SUPPORT OUR CENTER.
BY TAKING A BABY BOTTLE AND FILLING IT WITH YOUR CHANGE,
YOU CAN HELP US CHANGE SOMEONE'S LIFE.

WE WILL BE COLLECTING CHANGE IN THE BABY BOTTLES
APRIL 6-27. TURN IN YOUR BABY BOTTLES BY SUNDAY, APRIL 27.



We will be decorating
a living cross
on Easter Sunday.
Please bring flowers
to place on the cross,
Sunday April 20.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

WELCOMING FOR APRIL

Kay Stevens

USHERS FOR APRIL

David Stickley, Jarred Camp, Jim Hall,
Walt Rocker, John Wojtas

DEACON FOR APRIL 6

Bill Sharp

DEACON FAMILIES

Tammy Baker Family, Mary Jo Balas,
Linda Copelan Family, Jim Hall Family,
Jim Kauffmann Family, Ben Leverette Family,
Jeff Russell Family

DEACON FOR APRIL 13

Tracy Stickley

DEACON FAMILIES

Lauren Brown Family, Jarred Camp Family,
Tim Camp Family, Jo Ann Clay,
Christian Keiser Family, Stew Rich Family,
Andrea Wolverton

BIRTHDAYS

04/03 - Emma Willis
04/07 - Sharon Haney
04/08 - Sylvia Cheney
04/11 - Hunter Giddens, Sonny Turner
04/12 - Aidan Rainey, Parker Rainey
04/15 - Tanner Peebles, Tucker Peebles,
Jennie Sharp
04/16 - Libby Rainey
04/17 - Winn Self

ANNIVERSARY

04/08 - Harris and Janette McCollum

WORSHIP REPORT

Sunday, March 23 123

Sunday, March 30 115

THANK YOU

I want to express my gratitude for all the support, prayers, and meals during this past year. Continue to keep me in your thoughts and prayers.

Thank you,
Sheryl Alford Murphy

Your presence and support during the loss of our Dad were a true comfort. Thank you so much for the meal. It was perfect.

Love,
Julie Harper and Dean Adams

Dear Church Family,

First let me say that you are indeed family to me. My family of origin is spread from Florida to North Carolina to Idaho to California. So your understanding of who I am, your care of me and appreciation is very important since you are my current family. This brings me to a HUGE Thank You for your gifts on "Pastor's Spouse Sunday". The thoughtful card, heartfelt prayer, beautiful fern and generous cash are so appreciated and thankfully received.

Each week you are gifts to me with your openness, concern, hugs, smiles, handshakes, pats on the back. YOU are already my gifts and I am so thankful to have you in my life. May God continue to work through us to be the hands and feet of Christ to our hurting world.

Love,
Catherine

FOOD DRIVE THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who helped with the Putnam Christian Outreach Food Drive.
What a blessing to serve our community!



First Baptist Church
P.O. Box 3400
Eatonton, GA 31024
Return Service Requested

EXPERIENCE EASTER



**Experience
EASTER**
At First Baptist Church Eatonton

PALM SUNDAY
April 13 at 10:50AM

HOLY WEEK SERVICES
April 14 – 18 at 12:00pm
Lunch to follow

**MAUNDY THURSDAY
EVENING SERVICE &
COMMUNION**
April 17 at 6:00PM

**COMMUNITY EASTER
SUNRISE SERVICE**
April 20 at 7:00AM
THE PLAZA ARTS CENTER

**CHILDREN'S EASTER
EGG HUNT**
April 20 at 9:45AM

EASTER SERVICE
April 20 at 10:50AM



Easter Egg Hunt
APRIL 20 AT 9:45AM
BRING YOUR BASKET!



glow
IN THE DARK
EASTER EGG HUNT
HOSTED BY STEPPING STONES
HOP ON OVER TO CELEBRATE

**THURSDAY
APRIL
17**

FBCE FRONT LAWN
115 NORTH MADISON AVE
EATONTON, GA 31024

**7 PM
ACTIVITIES
7:30 PM
EGG HUNT**

FOLLOWING THE 6PM MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE
PROVIDED BY FBCE