



# God Centered Growth

First Baptist Church of Norton

June 5, 2018  
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(This week's devotional is from ruralrev.net)

## In the Office: What “Therefore” Is There For

One of the principles that was emphasized repeatedly during my seminary education was the importance of context. So often, when we read the scriptures, we don't take time to get our bearings and develop even a rudimentary understanding of the setting in which our passage appears. We don't clarify its cultural and historical roots. We don't place it within the broader arc of God's Story. Sometimes, we don't even place it within the flow of the specific biblical book in which it appears; and as a result, we miss out on the fuller picture that the passage could paint for us.

Today's New Testament reading (**Hebrews 3:1-6**) is a case in point. Sticking to the “assigned verses,” we read: “Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest” (verse 1). Of course, the reminder that we should “fix our thoughts on Jesus” is a helpful one — and one that might encourage us, regardless of how well we contextualize it. But as a preacher I once knew used to say: “Whenever you see a ‘*Therefore*’ in the Bible, you should stop to see what it's ‘*there for*.’” And if we back up just a few verses, we find the *reason* that we should fix our thoughts on Jesus:

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. (2:14-18)

It is my sincere desire that all of us would fix our thoughts on Jesus today. *But not just because He is worthy of our attention.* No, I pray that we can fix our thoughts on Jesus because He has broken the powers of sin and death that enslave us. In a world that is all too familiar with darkness, He is able to make us light. And no matter what trials and temptations we might be facing, He has embraced and experienced our condition — and is therefore able to help us.

May *you* fix your eyes on Jesus today; and in so doing, may you discover that His face is turned toward you to grant you faith, hope, and victory.

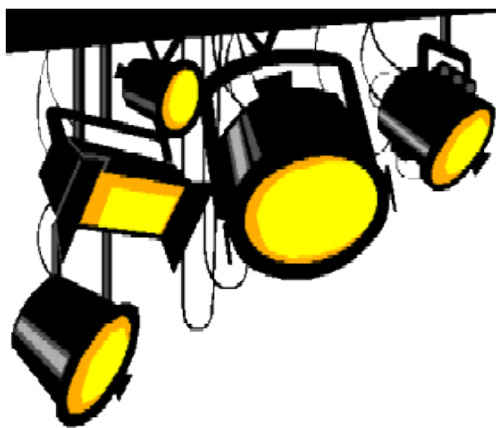
## Prayer requests for this week:

- Charlie Osborne is at Heritage Hall in Big Stone Gap, recovering from foot surgery.
- Helen Bass and Alana Hash for health concerns
- Carol Howard is doing well after surgery, and told Mark she felt better than she has in a long time.
- The wife of a *Trail of the Lonesome Pine* cast member will have surgery this week.
- Pray that our church continues to grow with God at the center.



to Pastor Mark on receiving a scholarship from the Baptist General Association of Virginia!

The Ministerial Education Fund helps to support pastors in their study; Mark is pursuing a master of divinity.



Robert Gipe's play "Needle Work" about substance abuse will be performed at the UVa-Wise Gilliam Center for the Arts on Friday, June 8, at 7:30 and again on Sunday, June 10, at 4 p.m. at the Jettie Baker Center in Clintwood. Robert is also a member of the cast. The play is free and open to the public. (Robert is the brother of Rev. Will Gipe.)

*"As we know Jesus better, his divine power gives us everything we need for living a godly life. He has called us to receive his own glory and goodness! And by that same mighty power, he has given us all of his rich and wonderful promises. He has promised that you will escape the decadence all around you caused by evil desires and that you will share in his divine nature."*



*2 Peter 1:3-4*

**As you pray this week,  
please remember the  
following.**

David & Jewell Ball  
Helen Bass  
Charlene Bates  
Libby Bowman  
Gail Buchanan  
Jim Campbell  
Jim & Sherry Collie  
Linda Cooke  
Tim Cox  
Rhonda Elliott  
Family of Tyler Flanary  
Rue Gembach  
Wayne Harrison  
Emma Harrod  
Alana Hash  
Mary Haynes  
Sue Hobbs  
Carol Howard  
Rosalind Hunt  
Elee Large  
Maddie Lewis  
Family of Lann Malesky  
Jim & Wanda Manicure  
Eugene Mullins  
Tracy Ott  
Donna Owens  
Robertta Owens  
Wilma Redman  
Leah Riley  
Margaret Riner  
Bea Simmons  
Tammy Sturgill  
Marilyn Teasley  
Joseph Thomas  
Beverly Viers  
Susan Gillenwater Wells  
Brenda Whitaker  
Little Ed Withrow  
Our country's leaders  
First responders, volunteers  
Armed Services men and women  
Missionaries  
Nursing home patients



Please send prayer requests to  
[lindawellswalker@yahoo.com](mailto:lindawellswalker@yahoo.com)

# HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

June 9 ~ David & Jewell Ball  
June 12 ~ Bill & Rue Gembach  
June 25 ~ Shawn & Amber Burke

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

*June 2 - Susie Bradley*  
*June 5 - Brianna Stallard, Mary Jo Stallard*  
*June 7 - Connor Walker*  
*June 9 - Jared Pugh, Tanya Riner*  
*June 10 - Jackie Withrow*  
*June 11 - Diane Cornett*  
*June 14 - Derek Mullins*  
*June 16 - Sharon Hamblin*  
*June 17 - Chris Hamblin*  
*June 20 - Peyton Stallard*  
*June 22 - Mary Hagy*  
*June 27 - Kyle Redman*  
*June 28 - Jewell Ball*  
*June 30 - Barbara Collins, Penny Osborne*

**First Baptist Church of Norton** gives anyone the chance to come together and worship with like-minded congregants as members of a strong, loving community. Whether you're looking for peace of mind, a way to give back, or simply want to be a part of a loving family — First Baptist Church of Norton welcomes you. Join our community, and start your journey to God-centered growth with us!

### How to join FBC Norton

- Baptism—You desire to express faith in Christ through baptism.
- Transfer—You wish to transfer membership from another church.
- Statement of Faith—You are a baptized believer and come on statement of faith.
- Watch Care—You would like to be connected to our church family without official membership.

### Deacons

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Visit us on the web at  
[www.fbcnorton.com](http://www.fbcnorton.com) or  
connect with us on  
Facebook.

Or better yet, come and visit  
us in person!



This newsletter is published every Tuesday morning on the church's web page. Please send news, photos, and announcements to [cornettdiane@gmail.com](mailto:cornettdiane@gmail.com).