



HOLY TRINITY *Reformed Church*

7542 E. Landersdale Rd.
Camby, Indiana 46113

Email: reformedholymtrinity@gmail.com

Phone: 912-978-0279

Rev. James Brown Jr.
Pastor

Devin Maddox
Ruling Elder

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Dear Holy Trinity family and friends,

With the disruptions of the last year and the conclusion of a busy winter and spring, we are now focusing our attention on reassembling, reconditioning, and resuming ministry that has deteriorated here at Holy Trinity. Why? Because you and I are failures!

I have stated my love for baseball and one of the reasons is because baseball is a game of failure. All sports have failure attached to them but in baseball, you can fail 7 out of 10 times and be considered for the Hall of Fame. Baseball is a game that is focused on defensive success rather than offensive success. And such is life...and yes, church life too!

We have weathered critical times and circumstances before and we are once again at a critical juncture. Of course, the truth of the matter is that we are always at defining moments. What it boils down to is focusing on different pivotal points based upon time and need.

We are currently at a stage where it is crucial to renew our covenantal commitment as members of the body of Christ, refocus on spiritual growth and maturity, and restore the things that we have let slip regardless of the reasons or circumstances. Many times our failures begin with good intentions and effort but the next thing you know they are just habitual reoccurring failures.

Anyone who thinks we, individually or corporately, have endured the last year unscathed is sadly mistaken. The strength we had helped us to face the challenges of the past year but we are now bruised and battered needing to heal and to recondition ourselves for challenges ahead.

During these battles, we have had some success and a lot of failures.

"Do not lie in wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; Do not destroy his resting place; For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, But the wicked stumble in time of calamity." –Proverbs 24:15-17 (NASB95)

The point of this passage is that the righteous persevere but let us also understand that perseverance

also involves a lot of falling. The good news is that even though "many are the afflictions of the righteous...the Lord delivers him out of them all" (Psalm 34:19). God never fails even in our failures!

How great is the sovereignty of God? David wrote in Psalm 37:

"The steps of a man are established by the Lord, and He delights in his way. When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, because the Lord is the One who holds his hand." –Psalm 37:23-24 (NASB95)

Our declining faithfulness is evidence of our failures and our fallings along with dissensions, schisms, marriage problems, and all those sins that easily beset us now more than ever. It is time to repair the breaches individually and corporately.

As bad as COVID was or could have been and as bad as our cultural, political, and financial fallout is, there is no comparison to the current spiritual fallout we are experiencing. We are thankful that God in his mercy preserved our church body from COVID and bankruptcy. Such has not been the case for many individuals, businesses, and churches. It is our hope is that we do not have any spiritual diseases or bankruptcy that brings catastrophe within our body as well.

Therefore, we must redouble our efforts. First, by attending! If you are a member you need to be at Sunday School and worship on Sunday mornings. It is impossible to receive the blessings and benefits of the church if you are not here. Every member is entitled to the church's care, love, fellowship, discipline, and training but you cannot receive these things apart from the body.

So, my point is that we have a lot of work to do in cementing our covenant relationships. If we value the church we will be here. If we love and care for each other we will spend time together.

"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near." –Hebrews 10:23-25 (NASB95)

"These are they that separate themselves from others, natural, having not the Spirit." –Jude 1:19 (1599 Geneva Bible)

"They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that [a]it would be shown that they all are not of us." –1 John 2:19 (NASB95)

Second, by submitting! Submitting to Christ, His Word, His Church, His ministers, your leaders, and your covenant oaths. We pledged to be faithful members of a faithful church. We need to set in order the things that are lacking.

When we take up our cross to follow Christ by seeking first His kingdom this is not an issue. It only becomes an issue when we seek our desires, our profit, or our recognition. Reneging on promises and rebellion are both the results of self-worship, which is another word for self-conceit, arrogance, narcissism, or pride. Therefore, to default is to disobey.

"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain. But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. You too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me." –Philippians 2:3-18 (NASB95)

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." –Hebrews 13:17 (KJV)

"The power (of the Church or of the keys) should be laid down as threefold, of ministry, of order and of discipline." –Samuel Maresius

Third, trust the process! We can either fight it or we can trust the process knowing that God is working in us to will and do of His good pleasure. It is always messy, difficult, and prolonged but always necessary. Just as gardens must be cultivated so too must Christ's vineyard be worked. Trust where God has placed you and those whom God has placed over you in the Lord to do the work so that you can be equipped and built up in love to do your work in the body effectively.

"He gave some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, for the equipping of the saints, for the work of service, and for the building up of the body of Christ, until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, into a complete man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so we may no longer be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the trickery of men, by craftiness with deceitful scheming. But, speaking the truth in love, we may grow up in all things into Him, who is the head, Christ Himself, from whom the whole body is joined together and connected by every joint and ligament, as every part effectively does its work and grows, building itself up in love. Therefore this I say and testify in the Lord, that from now on you walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their minds, having their understanding darkened, excluded from the life of God through the ignorance that is within them, due to the hardness of their hearts. Being calloused they have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. But you did not learn about Christ in this manner, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off the former way of life in the old nature, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in

the spirit of your mind; and that you put on the new nature, which was created according to God in righteousness and true holiness. Therefore, putting away lying, let every man speak truthfully with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. Be angry but do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your anger. Do not give place to the devil. Let him who steals steal no more. Instead, let him labor, working with his hands things which are good, that he may have something to share with him who is in need. Let no unwholesome word proceed out of your mouth, but only that which is good for building up, that it may give grace to the listeners. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you are sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, outbursts, and blasphemies, with all malice, be taken away from you. And be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you." –Ephesians 4:11-32

"God has work to do in this world; and to desert it because of its difficulties and entanglements, is to cast off His authority. It is not enough that we be just, that we be righteous, and walk with God in holiness; but we must also serve our generation, as David did before he fell asleep. God has a work to do; and not to help Him is to oppose Him." –John Owen

Here is what you can expect for the summer and fall of 2021 at Holy Trinity:

Sunday School – We will be finishing up our church government class and then we will move on to two new topics.

First, Church Reformed, which is based on a book by Tim Bayly. Although the book will serve as a guide and extra reading, our Sunday School lessons will be fresh and new.

Here is a short description of the book:

"In this book, Pastor Tim Bayly exposes the lies the American evangelical church has believed and calls us to a simple, humble pattern of church that is clearly rooted in the Bible. It is a call to reform—a call to repent of the ways we have left God's design for the church, and a call to embrace what we see modeled for us in the Bible and in those places in church history where our fathers in the faith have been careful to show us what the Bible teaches."

Second, Building a Godly Home, which is based on William Gouge's "Domestical Duties" republished by Reformation Heritage Books in three volumes. Again, these books will serve as a guide or discussion starter and extra reading, but each lesson will be new and fresh while following the flow of the book.

Pastor Derek W. H. Thomas from First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, South Carolina wrote:

"Few issues spell countercultural Christianity as does a biblical view of the home and its various relationships and responsibilities. Those like the seventeenth-century Presbyterian William Gouge, who attempted a lengthy exposition of domestic life as outlined in Scripture, got themselves into trouble with those who viewed biblical teaching burdensome (Gouge was vilified by wealthy city women, for example). But domestic reform is essential if we are to reflect godliness in the home, and Gouge's once enormously popular *Of Domestical Duties* is without equal in describing what it looks like. A masterful guide, Gouge is pastoral, clear-headed, thoughtful, and eminently Bible-focused as he writes about the tasks, ideals, and problems of Christian family life. Once as popular as Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and

Matthew Henry's Commentary, Gouge's Of Domestic Duties deserves a central place in the modern Christian home."

The Sunday School lessons for both of these studies will present Biblical lessons, discussions from the books, and time for questions and answers. Although we will encourage everyone to purchase the books and read them, it is not required or necessary to participate and benefit from the Sunday School classes. Sunday School is currently a family class each Sunday at 9:30 am.

Sunday Morning Worship Service – Our Sunday Morning Worship will continue in the same worship format, order, and with the same elements we have been practicing and observing but our sermons will be from the book of Jeremiah and Galatians. We will be preaching through these two books with the occasional break due to special days to be observed or special topics needing to be addressed.

Jeremiah will not only teach us the facts of Jeremiah's day but make application of those warnings against sin and apostasy with calls to repentance. We will also learn what we should expect in our day by analyzing Jeremiah's day. There is nothing new under the sun.

A couple of years ago or so, we dealt with the topic of antinomianism in our study through Jude. In Galatians, we will focus on legalism as we go through this epistle. We will consider how the dangers of legalism are assaulting us today and how to contend for the faith by knowing and standing for the truth of God's Word. Our weekly Divine Service begins each Sunday at 10:30 am.

Wednesday Evening Prayer Service – Wednesday evenings will continue to be focused upon prayer but our devotional or homily, which is a religious discourse that is intended primarily for spiritual edification rather than doctrinal instruction, will be based upon Warhorn Media's reprint of two of Horatius Bonar's books, God's Way of Peace and God's Way of Holiness. This combined reprinted, titled Peace and Holiness, "lays out the truths of how we come to God and find our peace in Him—and how His sanctifying work changes us." Again, we will be following the structure of the book but it is not going to be a reading or restatement of the book. Wednesday Evening Prayer is every Wednesday at 7:00 pm.

Men's Group – Once we can reestablish these meetings we will begin by reading and discussing the book "Daddy Tried" by Tim Bayly. We will use this book as a springboard to fatherhood, sonhood, and manhood. The date, time, and frequency are still yet to be determined.

From the description of the book:

"Every father knows failure. It comes with the territory. One generation to the next, imperfect men chip away at God's original design for daddies, leaving a flawed pattern for their sons to follow. Overwhelmed by their failures, it's easy for fathers to feel they have blown it for good and can't redeem themselves.

"Within these pages, Tim Bayly offers a frank and hope-filled path to overcoming the inherent failures of imperfect fathers—and to reclaiming manhood and dignity for the man called Daddy. Drawing from decades of his own journey as an imperfect son, father, and pastor, Bayly makes it clear there are no quick fixes. The road to recovery is paved with blood, sweat, and tears, but our Savior walked this path before us.

"Daddy Tried makes no apologies for being a book for men. Its subject is fatherhood, and it takes the only perfect Father as our guide. Bayly stares the sins of fathers past, present, and future squarely in the face and clears a path to overcoming them—a path that begins with faith in our heavenly Father who tells us He knows our weaknesses."

Women's Group – Details along with the date, time, and frequency are still yet to be determined. This is not due to a lack of priority and attention but in finalizing the details.

October Anniversary Celebrations – October seems to be the month of definition for Holy Trinity and we have some celebrating to do! First, Holy Trinity will be celebrating its eighth year! Second, this will be our two-year anniversary as a member of Evangel Presbytery. Third, this is the 504th anniversary of the beginning of the Great Reformation. This October we will mark, remember, celebrate, and renew the vision of the past.

May we not grow weary in well-doing knowing that we will reap if we faint not (Galatians 6:9). Rather, let us press on in the work that is before us trusting in God's providence and means to make us vessels of honor.

Love,

James Brown Jr.
Pastor
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