

Navigator

Cause me to know the way in which I should walk, for I lift up my soul to You. Psalm 143:8b

Keeping the Gospel Central at NorthRidge



Jesus demands that His church be centered on and focused on Him (Colossians 1:18). Jesus intends to build His church and the truth that He intends to build it upon is the truth of His life, death, and resurrection for the salvation of sinners and the glory of God. Any other foundation than the Gospel is sinking sand and will not support a church.

Let me give you three reasons (we could consider thousands of more reasons!) why our church must revolve around and focus on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. First, because God is jealous for His glory. God declares that His glory He will not share with anyone else (Isaiah 42:8; 48:11) and His glory is most magnificently put on display in the Gospel. Nothing in the universe glorifies God more than the Gospel of Jesus Christ where He rescues and saves undeserving sinners by the death and resurrection of His Son. The Gospel does not speak of my worth; the Gospel speaks of the worthiness of God to receive all glory for my rescue from sin. The church exists for the glory of God (Psalm 115:1).

A few months ago I read an article by Frank Turk that illustrated this truth. It said in part, “Sunday morning ought to be about God and not about me personally. It’s like having a birthday party for your 87-year-old grandma, inviting a bunch of people who say they love her, and then having to bake a different flavor cupcake for each person to make sure they all come. They shouldn’t be coming for the cake: they should be coming for Grandma – because they love her and the party is all about loving her.” Church is simply to be the corporate expression of the truth that everything in life is about God. And the Gospel puts the focus where it must be: on God.

Second, Jesus will use a church that is centered upon and focused upon the Gospel. A church that ministers the Gospel to each other in loving relationships and spreads the Gospel in their community and to the far reaches of the earth and whose people bask in the Gospel in their own personal lives and have their lives anchored to the truth of who they are in Jesus Christ is a church that will be used by God. There is power in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul said in Romans 1:16 that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes. It is the Gospel that saves and transforms lives. So when a church is not bogged down in programs and schemes and agendas but is

focused on the life-giving and life-transforming truths of the Gospel, God blesses it and God uses it in mighty ways.

The third reason that we must be focused on the Gospel is that Satan wants to destroy our church (just like he wants to destroy every other Bible-believing and Bible-teaching church). He either wants to destroy NorthRidge in the sense that it no longer exists or he wants to destroy it in the sense that it no longer matters that it exists.

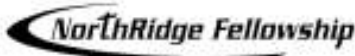
To do this he has a threefold strategy, with each phase of his plan building upon the one that has gone before it. Phase one is to distract. Satan’s major point of attack is at the level of a church’s focus. His main goal is to get the people of God to take their eyes off Jesus and the Gospel and to place them upon something temporal. If God uses a church that is focused on the Gospel of Jesus then Satan knows that the most effective thing that he can do to stop the work of God is to get us focused on something other than the Gospel. This is always his first step, so if he can be stopped here then he is rendered virtually powerless in the church. That means that our eyes must be fixed upon Jesus and the Gospel.

The second phase of his plan is to disunite and divide. Unity is broken when the thing that holds us together, the Gospel, is not front and center. When the Gospel is not center-stage then we no longer have a common purpose and goal and mission together. When this happens everyone seeks to come up with a new agenda because we are not anchored to the agenda of Jesus and the Gospel. When our eyes and focus are not on the Gospel then we no longer see what unites us and division ensues.

His third phase is to discourage. Once the people of God have taken their eyes off the Gospel and have looked away from what unites them then the work of God stops and there is an absence of spiritual life and vitality and vibrancy and passion. Everyone becomes discouraged, and discouragement leads to inactivity.

But none of this happens when everyone’s eyes are fixed on Jesus and the Gospel. May we ever be a church that is “looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2).

† Pastor Matt



newsletter@nrfellowship.org

Office Hours

9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Tuesdays & Thursdays

Staff

- Pastor Matthew Boyd 293-2841
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Worship Leader Chris Myhre 644-6421
Treasurer Kim Flick 536-4643
Education Leader Kevin Bickel 420-8048
Children's Leader Gina Bickel 420-8546
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Jay Gandiaga 324-9713
Jeff Hanni 539-4079
Tim Logan 358-3690
Chris Myhre 644-6421

Navigator PDF

To receive the newsletter as a PDF in email, please send a request to newsletter@nrfellowship.org and you will be added to the Navigator email list.

Children's Ministries

Helping Children Become God-Focused Believers Through Essential Christian Truth

Children's Ministries: F/S Wednesday evenings, 6:30pm to 8:00pm
Sunday School 9:15am-10:15am Bible Builders During the 10:30 worship service

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

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M K E M B G F T H D A F V M Y R S C P P B A Z G K R S S P D

- BETHLEHEM INN NAZARETH JOSEPH
CAESAR AUGUSTUS REGISTERED CENSUS JUDEA
DAVID LINEAGE SON ROOM
DECREE MANGER SWADDLING CLOTHS WIFE
FIRSTBORN MARY GALILEE

T2G TRANSFORMED TO GLORIFY
Teens transformed by Christ, to transform the world, for His glory.

Why Give? This time of year, we often hear the questions, "What do you want for Christmas?" or "What are you getting for Christmas?" While there is nothing wrong with getting presents, perhaps a better question might be, "What are you giving this Christmas?"

Jesus spent His years of ministry giving. His entire focus was on what He could give people. He gave His time and energy to teach, heal, feed, warn, protect, and care for people. Then, in the greatest act of giving, He gave His life by dying on the cross. Jesus' entire time of ministry can be defined by His willingness to give. Jesus said that what He did was an example for us to follow. In John 13:15 it says, "For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you."

However, we do not give without also getting. Every time we give we get. In fact, when we give we actually get more. Paul speaking of Jesus said in Acts 20:35, "In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Jesus said that the greater blessing comes from giving. So put God to the test this Christmas season. Look for opportunities to give. Maybe in doing so, we will find that we want to keep giving all year round.

Boise Shopping Trip - December 12th 8 am - 4 pm
Money will be needed for lunch (\$7-8) and for whatever gifts you intend to buy.

Grinch Christmas Party - December 16th 6:30 pm - 8 pm
Please bring a \$5 gift for a gift exchange. (e.g. candy, pop, etc.)

Shiloh Snow Camp - January 16-18, Donnelly, Idaho - Shiloh Bible Conference
Ice skating * Tubing * Sleigh ride * Feeding the elk
Cost approx. \$50 - more information will be given out in a couple weeks

Kevin and Gina Bickel



Meet Makala Bird

Where were you born and raised?

I was born in Twin Falls, raised in Jerome.

What year in school are you?

I am in the 8th grade.

Who are (or have been) the most influential people in your life?

The most influential people in my life are my mom and my Grandma Bird.

What is one of your favorite passages and/or books of the Bible?

My favorite passages are Proverbs 12:1, "Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge but he who hates correction is stupid," and Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Aside from the Bible, what are your favorite books?

The Hiding Place by Corrie Ten Boom.

If you were stranded on an island, what four foods would you most want to have?

Ice cream, cheesecake, pomegranates, tamales.

What are the three most interesting places you have been to?

The most interesting places I have been are the Oregon coast, South Dakota, Utah, and Washington.

Carols stir us. Holy words inspire us. The golden glow from the manger warms us. A little religion at Christmas is fine. But that glow in the manger comes from the Light of the world. It exposes evil and either redeems it or destroys it. The babe in the manger is far more than an object for sentimental sighs. He is the Son of God who must be accepted as ruler—or confronted as rival.

An Excerpt From The Classics



From "Christ is the Life of Believers" by Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)

"When Christ, who is our *life*, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."—Colossians 3:4.

"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear." Life here is, by a metonymy, put for the author of life.

We have shewed that Jesus Christ, He is *first* the *author* of a believer's spiritual life. In the 14th of John, 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,' (verse 6.)

Secondly, Jesus Christ, He is the *matter* of a believer's spiritual life in John 6:48, "I am the bread of life." The original hath it more elegantly, εγω ειμι ο αρωτος της ζωης, "I am the bread of that life," that is, of that spiritual life of which before the Lord Jesus Christ had spoken.

Thirdly, Jesus Christ is the *exerciser* and *actor* of the spiritual life of believers: John 15:5, "Without me ye can do nothing." ...

Fourthly, The Lord Jesus Christ, He is the *strengthenener* and the *cherisher* of a believer's spiritual life, Psalm 138:3, "In the day when I cried, thou didst answer me, and strengthen me with strength in my soul."

Lastly, The Lord Jesus Christ, He is the *completer*, He is the *finisher* of the spiritual life of a saint, Hebrews 12:2; Philippians 1:6.

...If the Lord Jesus Christ be a believer's life, then this serves to bespeak all believers *highly to prize the Lord Jesus*. Oh, it is this Christ that is thy life; it is not thy husband, it is not thy child, it not this or that thing; neither is it this ordinance or that, that is a believer's life. No; it is the Lord Jesus Christ that is the author, that is the matter, that is the exerciser, that is the strengthenener, that is the completer, of a believer's life. You prize great ones; the Lord Jesus Christ is great—He is King of kings, and Lord of lords. You prize others for their wisdom and knowledge: the Lord Jesus hath in Himself all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3). You prize others for their beauty: the Lord Jesus Christ is the beautifullest of ten thousand. You prize others for their usefulness: the Lord Jesus Christ is the right hand of a believer, without which he can do nothing. The believer may say of Christ as the philosopher said of the heavens, *Tolle coelum, nullus ero*—Take away the heavens, and I shall be nobody; so take away Jesus Christ, and a believer is nobody—nobody to perform any action, nobody to bear any affliction, nobody to conquer corruption, nobody to withstand temptation, nobody to improve mercies, nor nobody to joy in others' grace. Oh, prize Jesus Christ!

In the last place, remember a *Christ highly prized will be Christ gloriously obeyed*. As men prize the Lord Jesus Christ, so they will obey Him. The great reason why Jesus Christ is no more obeyed, is because He is no more prized. Men look upon Him as a person of no worth, no dignity, no glory; they make slight of Him, and that is the reason they are so poor in their obedience to Him. Oh, if the sons of men did but more divinely prize Christ, they would more purely, and more fully, and more constantly obey Him. Let this bespeak all your hearts highly to prize the Lord Jesus, who is your life.

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8

9:15 a.m. Bible Study
10:30 a.m. Worship

Sunday Services

www.northridge.org
314 West Ave J
Jerome, ID 83338



Place
Stamp
Here

To The Ends of the Earth



On Mission with a sovereign God

There is a great comfort and hope in the sovereignty and providence of God. From the very first mission trip that Pastor Matt and Gayle were called to in 2004, the fruits of what God was doing then are being seen in the mission work of NorthRidge today. As of now, we know of five believers in Diouloulou.

When Pastor Matt and I returned home from Senegal, Joseph sent a text message informing us of a new believer, Basiru Sonko. Basiru, whom we had not met personally while we were in Diouloulou, made the decision to follow Christ after being told of God’s plan of salvation from Joseph and Abdoulaye.

As we reflect back to the beginning of our ministry in Diouloulou, we continue to experience God’s sovereign love. We experience His sovereign love every day of our lives, even more when we as followers of Jesus continue to return to encourage and teach the men and women who have made the decision to follow Christ. In Acts 15:36, Paul reminds us not to forget our brethren whom we have met and witnessed to over time. We again are reminded of all the people we have met from the beginning of our mission in Diouloulou and the villages we have visited even before we met Abdoulaye and Joseph. Joseph and Abdoulaye reinforce the fact that we as follows of Jesus can never be too timid to reach out to the lost all over the world.

Think for a moment just how many opportunities God has given us to go and share His Word with others, and yet we remain

seated in our comfortable homes and do nothing. Again, we need to reflect back to all the previous trips and be reminded just how powerful one person’s testimony can be in the changing of an entire village. Remember when Kevin and Gina Bickel went to Diouloulou and stayed the three months? God used this trip to introduce NorthRidge to Abdoulaye. And then, God used Abdoulaye and Joseph to unite in such a way that the entire village of Diouloulou has been transformed forever.

Not just one village but three have heard the Gospel, the living Word of God: Badionkoto, Djibali, and now on this most recent trip Santiaba. Each village has at least 20 or more people, including children. These villages are several kilometers from Diouloulou, and it is highly possible that some of the people have heard the gospel for the very first time in their life. This has to be challenging yet exciting to most of us who desire to go and share the love of Christ with others. We should never underestimate the sovereignty of God! For the first time in their lives people will suffer persecution for believing in Jesus. To meet these folks and see and experience the faith that they have should be a great encouragement to each and every one of us.

We are told by Jesus to go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). Please continue to pray for our brothers and sister in Diouloulou and all of Senegal.

Dennis Cornwell

DECEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Year's Resolutions: Lose weight, exercise more, pray without ceasing, read Bible daily, and eagerly attend the **6:00 a.m. Bible study every Tuesday and Thursday** with really hip folks at the hip happening Jolly Bean. Seriously!

MEN's LEAD Bible study meets **every Wednesday from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.** All men are invited to study and eat lunch with us at the Wok and Grill in Twin Falls.

How to Develop a Powerful Prayer Life is an ongoing study held on the first Sunday of every month. Everyone is invited. Next study will be Sunday, December 6.

Good News Club meets every Tuesday at Summit Elementary School. Contact Gina Bickel if you would like to be involved.

Send **Prayer Requests** to Nancy Cornwell at 324-8980 or 320-1556.

HEY KIDS! What is the name of the hospital where Jesus was born? Tell Mrs. Brockway, and you will get a great Christmas prize!

Keep people in the know! Send your **bulletin announcements** to Robin Plank by Wednesday each week. Email robin@nrfellowship.org, or call 324-4962/324-5733.

Join a Sunday Morning Bible Study!

*The Fight Against
Worldliness*
Travis Flick

The Fight Against Sin
Matt Boyd

*How to Grasp and Focus
on the Will of God*
Jay Gandiaga

Bible Studies Begin at 9:15 am

Dealing with Discouragement

Why are you
cast down,
O my soul?
And why
are you
disquieted
within me?
Hope in
God;
For I shall
yet praise
Him, the
help of my
countenance
and my
God.

Psalm 43:5

Discouragement often hits us when we least expect it and attacks us in areas of our lives where we are least prepared to deal with it. Discouragement can be experienced in all areas of our lives, even crippling our spiritual walk. Discouragement is one of Satan's favorite weapons, and he has used it against God's people down through all the ages. Moses in Numbers 11:14-15, Joshua in Joshua 7:7, Elijah in 1 Kings 19:4, Job in Job 10:1, David in Psalms 43:5, and Jeremiah in Jeremiah 15:10, all show us biblical examples of discouragement. When discouragement attacks, recognize it as a tool of Satan.

The starting point in dealing with discouragement is to recognize that even the strongest of believers are prone to experience times of doubt and discouragement, and that we are often most vulnerable to discouragement after a great spiritual victory. While Jesus was on the earth, even He had to face discouragements. Whenever we feel that way, we should look to Jesus and follow His example (1 Peter 2:21).

When discouraged, many Christians drift away from the Lord, neglecting prayer, God's Word, and church attendance. God's Word admonishes, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (James 4:8). Jesus never drifted away or became disengaged. He never gave up, thankfully for us. We need to follow Christ's example of not giving up. This would mean returning to the Lord, reviving our prayer life, Bible meditation, and restoring our church attendance. Psalms 42:5 says, "Why are you cast down, O my soul? Why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God for I shall yet praise him." The healthy response to discouragement is to re-engage. Re-engage to service. Re-engage with God's people. Re-engage to the call that God has set before us.

When discouragement strikes, some Christians spread gloom and doom. They see only the bad in others, the church, and in circumstances. Once again, we need to

use Jesus as our example. Jesus saw things from God's point of view and that view is not discouraging. He encouraged His disciples to have that same perspective. In John 4:35 He told them to "lift up your eyes." No matter what happens in our lives, all will ultimately turn out well if we are faithful in doing the Lord's will. The promise is made to faithful Christians in Romans 8:28 that "all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." Replace negatives with positives. Look for the good, not the bad.

Many Christians fall into discouragement because they fail to offer praise to God. They are too involved with selfish pursuits. Their focus is on themselves. Jesus definitely was not into selfish pursuits. It is difficult, if not impossible, to rejoice in the Lord and remain discouraged at the same time. The psalmist said, "I will bless the Lord at all times" (Psalms 34:1). We need to rejoice in the Lord today. As Philippians 4:4 says, "Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice." Joshua 1:9 says, "Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

When we look to Christ as our example we see one thing Christ always did: Christ always prayed. When faced with a crisis situation, Jesus gained strength by praying to His Father (Matthew 14:23; Luke 5:16; 6:12; Matthew 26:36-42). We must be people of prayer (Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17). In times of discouragement, prayer is the answer.

In the midst of many discouragements, Jesus never gave up. He saw things from a Godly perspective, doing the will of God and praising God; so must we. "And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9).

Travis Flick