



Evangelical Etchings

May 2021

Humility and the Mighty Hand of God

By Pastor Randy Anderson



We have been in uncharted territory for more than a year now. By uncharted territory I mean territory where masks have been mandated for entry into businesses – within my lifetime nothing like this had ever happened before. In certain parts of the country fines rising into the thousands of dollars might be inflicted on people for simply visiting a state within the United States, without having undergone the states testing protocols. Sports stadiums have sat empty, schools have shut down, aging parents have been cut off from physical contact with their children and grandchildren for months on end, and on and on we might go. We have been in uncharted territory.

The truth is, on the individual level we are entering uncharted territory all the time. Quite a number of people in our congregation lost parents this past year. When someone's mother dies, that is something that has never happened to them before – that is uncharted territory. It regularly happens that someone who has been healthy for decades suddenly finds themselves with a medical condition that is permanent – they will never be healthy again, not like they used to be – not like they remember. This is uncharted territory. Political shifts take place, within nations and within the world – the prominence of one nation diminishes while the prominence of another rises, and the people in each, look on helpless to do anything about it.

In and through and behind all the above is God. In and through and behind pandemics and social and political trends; in and through and behind our health and our relational happiness and otherwise is God – this is what Peter referred to in 1 Peter 5:6-7 as 'the mighty hand of God.' This is how he put it,

⁶ *Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,* ⁷ *casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.* (1 Pet. 5:6-7 ESV)

In these few words there is a perspective offered us that is of the essence of wisdom for people moving through unprecedented times. Let's just note a couple of insights that relate to this wisdom.

There is an attitude to adopt. 'Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God.' Humble yourselves. Technically speaking the Greek text behind this translation is in the passive – a passive imperative to be exact. ***'Be humbled, therefore under the mighty hand of God.'*** That is, don't forget that God is involved in everything you are experiencing. There are no random pandemics. There are no random illnesses. There are no random accidents. None. Never have been, and never will be. We are always living 'under the mighty hand of God.' And the attitude of wisdom toward that hand is 'humility.'

Be sure that your attitude toward the mighty hand of God is humility. Not anger. Not indignation. Not despair. Not confident resolve. But humility. *Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God.*

There is an aim to adopt. The aim to adopt is God given exaltation in God's own good time. The aim of Christian humility paradoxically enough is eventual exaltation. Notice how Peter expresses it,

"...Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you..."

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Library Updates

By The Library Committee

There will be a Summer Reading Challenge this year with Beginner, Junior, and Senior divisions. The Challenge will be from **Memorial Day to Labor Day weekends**. Packets can be picked up in the library on or after May 23rd. Reading can be started, and pages can start being counted on May 30th. For adults who would like to participate with their children, see one of the librarians for a packet. All packets need to be returned to the church on Sept. 5th.



Everyone, please come to the library to see the new additions, with more to come! A friendly reminder to check your homes, and cars, for library materials that need to be returned. Please check audios to be sure all disks are included.

Need to Update Your Information?

Have you or a member of your home moved recently?
Do you have a new cell phone or e-mail address?
Please call the church at 605-338-2077 or e-mail:
office@knowinggodsf.org to help us keep in contact with you!

Miss a Sermon? Wish to Hear One Again?

Please visit: <https://www.knowinggodsf.org/resources/sermon-audio/> to listen to sermons by the FEFC Pastoral Staff! You can search by keyword, date, speaker, scripture, series, or topic.



Youth Ministry Pillar: Relational Discipleship

By Pastor Dan Montgomery

In the Youth Ministry at this church, we hope to see young disciples develop deep roots and produce healthy fruit. Supporting us in that pursuit are five basic pillars or core-values. Those five pillars are 1) Gospel Centrality; 2) Theological Depth Through Biblical Teaching; 3) Relational Discipleship; 4) Partnership with Parents; 5) Intergenerational Integration. In the past I've explained the importance of the first two. Now it is time to explain why relational discipleship is so important.

Truth be told, the term "relational discipleship" is redundant. It's like a "round circle." Circles can't not be round and you cannot have discipleship without being a disciple of somebody. But, in this case, it is important to be redundant in order to be clear. Those of us who love gospel-centrality (pillar #1) and theological depth through biblical teaching (pillar #2) can be tempted to forget that discipleship that's really discipleship is always relational.

This seemingly silly problem can grow up through the metaphors we use. Do you ever pay attention to the metaphors we use to describe ourselves and our world? You should. Metaphors are more than just decorations we hang on the literal truth. The metaphors we use can shape how we see reality.

Think, for example, of the metaphors of "machine" and "computer" for our bodies and brains. Our attention-spans are our "mental bandwidth." When we rest, we say we need to "reboot." When we are confused, our "wires get crossed." We do not feast. We "refuel." Although these metaphors might be helpful in some ways, they can obscure more than they reveal. One of my favorite authors, Wendell Berry, put it this way: "If the body is 'a machine' for living and working, then it must follow that the mind is 'a machine' for thinking. [This is] the reduction of 'mind' to 'brain' and then of 'brain' to 'computer'. This reduction implies and requires the reduction of knowledge to 'information.'"

This matters for discipleship. Unquestionably discipleship is about truth. But what happens when someone who thinks with the metaphor of

"machine" and "computer" thinks of "truth"? They reduce it to information. Discipleship becomes "information transfer." Disciples, instead of following someone, download information.

But we are not computers, nor are we machines. We are relational beings made in the image of the One God who has eternally existed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So our discipleship of Jesus always happens through relationships with others. Discipleship of the youth in our church happens through their relationships with other, more mature disciples. Without question, disciples are taught. But all of the content being taught – the doctrine – is taught as part of a larger relationship. It is modeled. The goal of the youth ministry echoes that of Paul in 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8. "But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us." We share the news. We share ourselves.

The intimate connection between relationship and teaching is why partnering with and equipping parents (pillar #4) is so important. Even when it feels like your teenage son or daughter might be pulling away, nobody is better equipped for discipleship than mom and dad. But the teenage years are also the season of life when children begin to move out into the wider world. So it is the time when other relationships beyond your immediate family grow in importance. The influence of close friends and mentors like teachers and coaches grows. That is why the adults who help out with Youth Group spend time opening up and discussing God's word with students. That is why we want to connect our students to as many other mature disciples in the church as possible (sometimes called "intergenerational integration" – pillar #5).

At this church, we are becoming disciples of Jesus. That passion applies to the Youth Ministry as much as any other part of the church. In case there is any confusion, that does not mean the Youth Group is where students download the gospel. Instead, through relational discipleship, they have the gospel taught, modeled, and applied by other members of Christ's body, the church.



Women's Ministry News

By Mary Lynne Johnson



It is raining as I write this...what a welcome sound as we look to spring and summer! As some friends from across the country gathered in church parking lots to worship on Easter Sunday, I am reminded of the great blessing we have had to gather in person these last months to worship as well as study. Women's Ministry has continued with a pretty normal schedule during the fall and winter. To God be the glory! We have so much to be grateful for.

As we look ahead to the rest of the year we want to highlight dates for your calendar! There will be a short session of Bible Study offered on Thursday mornings beginning May 27th and meeting through the month of June. We will use a Kay Arthur Precept study: *Ecclesiastes - Life Under the Sun*. This class will be meeting in person at FEFC in the lower level. Unfortunately, childcare is not provided in the summertime. We encourage you to coordinate with other moms in sharing childcare. Childcare is a critical component of our study time on Thursday mornings during the school year. Would you be willing to consider serving in this ministry? We want to grow this program but cannot without our dedicated volunteers.

Our book club read for the summer will be *Idols of the Heart* by Elyse Fitzpatrick. We will meet Monday evenings, starting June 7th, from 7-8:30 pm. We will be meeting in person at FEFC, but you are welcome to join in by Zoom if you prefer.

We are already looking ahead to the fall with plans for our annual Women's Conference (date TBD)! The team will begin meeting in May. Many hands make for a light load! We would love to have you join us. If you have an interest in connecting with other women to plan this important event, please contact Mary Lynne at (612-209-0578) or by email (marylynne@knowinggodsf.org).

Reminder: The FEFC Freezer Ministry is an important way we show care to those experiencing a season of need—whether it is physical sickness, loss, a new baby or other family stress. We would love to know of those in our congregation who would benefit from a meal! Please contact Kimberly Caldwell by email (schollkj@gmail.com) or by cell phone (605-651-9843).

If there are ways we can come alongside you—whatever your season in life—the Women's Ministry Team would love to do that. We would be honored to pray for you, share a cup of coffee or encourage you any way we can. Please contact Mary Lynne at the email and phone listed above.



"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace."

1 Peter 4:10



The Life-Force of Christ

By Rick & Laura Leatherwood

Greetings brethren. So good to sense the Lord stirring me to write this short letter to you just before Easter. Taking in to account what it is that we are about to celebrate, this is an entreaty for each of us to put our faith into practice. What is Easter, this sacrament that many would say contains the very essence and meaning of what we believe? What is the value that we may experience in believing in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ? Some teenagers as well as adults who have not been born again and have no foundation in Christ might spread out their hands and shrug their shoulders as if to say, "What's the big deal? So Jesus rose from the dead, Moses went through the Red Sea, Caesar crossed the Rubicon, etc. What does that have to do with me? What is the big deal?" However, unbeknown to our friends just mentioned, there is an aspect to life that can make Easter worth every bit of effort that we will put into it.

This last year of 2020 and now 2021 has been a very real trial for many people around the world. There are crises at borders of countries and of families and people who have endured hardship and strife. Relationships have been strained between husbands and wives, friends and neighbors, relatives near and far, coworkers in the office, the factory, or the classroom, for there is a very real enemy who is trying to drive us apart. What can we do? We can understand exactly what happened at Easter, what it means and how we can put it into practice.

Laura and I attend a life group on Tuesday nights, normally numbering around 15-20 people. Anyone is free to share whatever it is that is on their heart that night. Last week a couple of people mentioned relational problems they were having within their family and I felt the Holy Spirit nudging me to share. "I'm having a real problem with my sister," I said. The room went quiet as it was Laura and my book of 100 Stories of God that the group had studied from for the last three years while we were in Pakistan, and as a teacher I was not one who normally spoke of personal problems. I only said what I've written above, and it

wasn't much so perhaps it was the tone in my voice, but as I opened up and shared my pain, there came an amazing outpouring of love from all present for both my sister and myself. I think it was probably because many could identify, having gone through relational problems themselves this past year and so they understood the seriousness of what I had just confessed. After the meeting a couple of men came up and shared Scriptures that were on the mark. "Do not try to defend yourself," one said, and the other's advice as he looked into my eyes after sharing a few verses was simply, "Love." And though Easter was still twelve days away, I suddenly sensed a new and deeper meaning of reconciliation than I had ever known before which left me thinking this is part of what Easter is all about.

A key Scripture turns out to be 2 Cor. 5:18-19, "that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." **This is the Big Deal.** This is what happened to us at the cross when God reconciled us to Himself and this is what God wants to happen between us, husbands and wives, friends, neighbors, relatives. May I encourage you to become proactive and intentional toward whoever it is with whom you are estranged and seek reconciliation. This is how we put our faith into action and experience the freedom of the forgiveness of Christ as we forgive and are forgiven. It does not matter if the reconciliation comes before Easter, or on Easter, or after Easter. The day is not what's important. This is not religion. This is relationship which moves in a different way than religion. The important thing is that the reconciliation happens, whether in person, or by phone, or even a letter. And so it is that we come together with the life-force of the agape of Christ and His resurrection. And though lost teens and unbelievers may shrug their shoulders, the Lord welcomes all to come to Him a peace that passes understanding. "For in this world we will have tribulation," Jesus said, "but take heart, I have overcome the world."





AWANA Updates

By Craig & Chris Herman

Only three regular club nights left of the 2020-2021 AWANA club year!

The first three weeks in March clubbers participated in the annual "Building a Lego-cy" contest. Last year we were raising money for the children in Mongolia and only got one week in before we had to end the club year so we thought it would be a good thing to "adopt" that country again for this year's contest. After three weeks of doing extra chores, breaking piggy banks, and donating birthday money (we always stand amazed at how the clubbers earn the money they choose to donate) the First E. Free AWANA club was able to send \$2,200 to AWANA clubs in Mongolia. This is enough to send an additional 220 children to club to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. Way to go clubbers!!

On March 31st, the Grand Prix races were held with 80 clubbers designing and racing cars. Two categories were held with speed and design trophies given in each category. In the T&T division top speed winners were, Jacob Baack in 1st place, Caleb Baack in 2nd place and Bruce Archambault took 3rd place. In the design category for T&T boys, Adryan Hofer took 1st, Justice Kutch took 2nd and William Weibrecht came in 3rd. Trophies for T&T girls design went to Mia Taubert taking 1st place, Addyson Moothart taking 2nd, and Norah Story came in 3rd.

In the Open class division trophies for speed went to Kenza Beck taking 1st place, Hudson Doohen taking 2nd, and Ethan Baack coming in 3rd. Design trophies in the Open class went to Jordan McMartin taking 1st place, Clara Giddings 2nd place and Genevieve Weibrecht taking 3rd. Congratulations to all the winners!

Awards night will be Wednesday, May 5th starting with a pizza party for clubbers and their families at 5:30 in the fellowship hall followed by awards at 6:25pm in the sanctuary. This year we will be giving a special award to Lacey Howe. Lacey has earned the Citation Award this year. The Citation Award is the highest award that AWANA gives out. A student earns this award for completing ten handbooks from 3rd grade through high school along with reading the entire Bible. Lacey has gone beyond this goal and completed eighteen books, plus seven "truth script" sections of memorizing chapters of the bible. She has completed everything that AWANA has in their catalog for student's, 3rd grade through the high-school years. In doing this she has memorized nearly 1000 verses! Her name will be on a special wall at the AWANA headquarters along with others who have received this award. She is also eligible for college scholarships at different Christian colleges within the United States if she so chooses. If you see Lacey please congratulate her on this tremendous achievement!

All for His glory,
Craig & Chris Herman
AWANA Ministry Directors

"Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law."

Romans 13:8

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...Continued from P. 1: Pastor Randy's Column

What is translated here as *'the proper time'* is simply *'in time.'* That is, *'in time God will exalt His children.'* In God's own good time – in His own promised time. It is just a reminder that the unavoidable humiliations of the present age won't last forever – they are not endless – they are in fact very limited, certainly limited, and always within the hand and the timing of our heavenly Father. Exaltation is sure to arrive. Resurrection and a New Heaven and a New Earth is where we are headed, and so if not before, surely on the last day, we will be exalted. Present humility aims at eventual exaltation.

There is an action to take. Humility doesn't come naturally to any of us. We are more prone to anger and rage than we are to humility. We are more prone to despair and painful anxiety than we are to humble trust. And so it is that we are given an action plan – the action plan of Christ driven humility. Here is the thing to do,

"....casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. (1 Pet. 5:7 ESV)

There are really two things to do here. The first one is that we throw our worries on God. The sources of our worries can seem endless. Some of us worry more than others, but we are all prone to worry – we are all prone to feel the weight of things we wish were other than they are. We worry about our health. We worry about our finances. We worry about the political direction of our nation. We worry about the destiny of

unbelieving parents or spouses or children. We worry. Peter says, *'but don't worry – but rather throw all your worries on God.'* But the thing that we have to do to make this experientially effective is to remember something, namely that God cares about us. A wooden translation of that last little phrase that I share with people in the hospital with some regularity might be expressed this way *'it matters to Him concerning you.'* *'It matters to God concerning you.'* Really? Peter says, really.

So, the bottom line might be expressed this way, *'when we find ourselves in uncharted territory,*

and we find it daunting and confusing and intimidating and maddening and discouraging, we are encouraged to remember these two things broadly speaking. First, this thing, whatever it is, it is operating under the mighty hand of God. And then secondly, and that God – the God of that mighty hand – 'it matters to Him concerning us.' It really does. That is for sure. If we are among the people of God in Christ, that is for sure.

Pastor Randy



"Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing."

1 Thessalonians 5:11

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First Evangelical Free Church
2601 W 69th Street
Sioux Falls, SD 57108
Phone: 605.338.2077
E-mail: office@knowinggodsf.org
www.knowinggodsf.org



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Upcoming Events at FEFC

May

- 1 Women's Ministry May Day Event | at FEFC
- 9 Mother's Day
- 30 Communion Sunday
- 27 Women's Ministries | Summer Bible Study Begins
- 31 Memorial Day | Church Office Closed

June

- 7 Women's Ministries | Summer Book Club Begins
- 20 Father's Day
- 27 6pm Church Picnic | Location TBD

July

- 4 Communion | Independence Day
- 11-17 Sr. High APEX Mission Trip to Kansas City
- 25-29 Vacation Bible School | at FEFC