

June 10, 2017

Reflections

DEFYING GRAVITY

59 They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

60 Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!"

Having said this, he fell asleep.

Acts 7:59-60 (NASB)

In this world, we will face conflict because of our faith. Cultural choices available to everyone else aren't available to us. Choices we make often produce conflict with our culture. This conflict may lead us to throw up our hands and let go of our convictions, resigning ourselves to defeat. But God calls us to defy gravity—to resolve to rise above conflict as we persist, holding fast to our faith.

We are not the first ones to face that choice. Stephan had to make that choice right from the beginning, as we read in Acts 7:54-8:3. When he met resistance, Stephan chose resolve. He chose to defy gravity—to rise above conflict and those forces which pulled him down toward the world as he persisted, holding fast to his faith. Resistance didn't bring about resignation, leading him to surrender. Resistance brought about persistence, leading him to hope.

Stephan faced a much more difficult choice than most of us ever will: he could deny Jesus or die. I don't know what I would do. But I know Stephan chose death over denial. Even as the stones rained down he prayed, asking for God to receive his spirit and forgive those throwing the stones. *His* actions in the crowd reflected *Jesus'* actions on the cross, revealing God's glory. The crowd throwing the stones wanted to defeat the church. Instead, they made it more dangerous.

When we face difficulties because of our faith, we have a choice to make. When we meet resistance, we can choose resignation, surrendering to sin or the sin which saturates our culture, or we can choose resolve, holding fast to our faith and thus finding hope.

When you choose that resolve, you will discover that resistance brings about persistence, just as Paul writes in Romans 5:3-5: "And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

In the week ahead, as that same old sin rolls around, don't choose resignation, surrendering to your sin. Choose resolve. And, if you fall, choose to resolve again, and again, and again, knowing that resistance brings about persistence. When our culture presents a choice contrary to our faith, don't choose resignation, surrendering to their sin. Choose resolve, holding fast to your faith, knowing that resistance brings about persistence. Defy gravity, rising above conflict as we persist, holding fast to our faith and thus finding hope, which moves us from defeated, to dangerous. Amen.

*Pray for our church plant
in Clifton Park, NY.*

Pray With Us

Craig Mosher: His dad, Bruce, had a heart attack and is at Albany Med. He is to have a heart catheterization done and then a course of treatment will be determined. Pray for his healing and for Bruce's wife, Diane. Pray also for Ian and Katherine Norfolk, who are having marriage trouble, and for Ian to find a job.

Ellen Olson: Becca is taking her nursing exam on Monday, June 19. Pray for her to do well. Pray also for Juliet, who is taking a couple of college math courses which involve word problems, which she has a very hard time with.

Trish Gerstel: Her uncle Richard is nearing the end of his life. Her mom and others in the family are traveling to Colorado this week to say goodbye. Pray for peace and comfort for all.

Jen Bonesteel: Pray for the family of Carrick, a toddler with cancer we prayed for previously. Carrick passed away this week.

Chantel Bink: The student we prayed for last week with a hole in her palate and bacterial infection is much better and is attending school. Also, continue to pray for the staff that will be at camp as many of the campers do not know Christ. May the Holy Spirit be there and give words that will touch each heart in love to be accepting of the salvation message.

Ashley Strom: Thankful that Scotty, Destiny and Kaitlyn will be working with her in Berlin. Please pray for Montana and her brother Aaron as they are not attending school.

Melinda Goodermote: Her friend Cindy Minkler, who has cancer, is having some tests done. Pray for a good result. Pray for peace for Cindy as her mom was laid to rest Saturday.

Cindy Capasso: Her sister Tina is asking for God's guidance as she looks for a suitable rental place for her family Pray she is successful in locating a home soon.

Becky Bonesteel: She is thankful for the prayers, food, and support this church family has given her recently. She is glad to be able to worship with us today. Pray that she continues to heal and will have guidance regarding her future at work.

Casey Greene: She is traveling to Milton WI for dedicated service for six weeks. Pray that she is a witness for God as she serves there.

Youth Fellowship,

Monday, 6:30-8:00 pm

(grades K-12)

Weekly Events

Women's Bible Study, Tuesday, June 13, 7 pm at Bethany Manning's home

Men's Bible Study, Thursday, June 15 at 7 pm in the church library.

Upcoming Events

VBS Meeting, June 14, 4 pm, First Baptist Church of Berlin

Prayer & Praise Service, June 9, 7:00 pm

Family Fun Night: "Hello Summer!", June 17, 7-10 pm

Primary Camp, June 24-27, God's Little Campground, Ghent, NY

Junior Camp, June 27-30, God's Little Campground, Ghent, NY

Senior Camp, July 9-16, Camp Harley Sutton, Alfred Station, NY

Community VBS, July 10-14, 6:30-8:00 pm, First Baptist Church of Berlin

June Operation Christmas Child Collection Items

Sunglasses, jewelry, hair accessories. We are collecting items for the women of the church to pack in October for Operation Christmas Child. You can pick up items at your local dollar store and drop them off in the bin to the left of the double glass doors in the fellowship hall foyer.