



NEWSLETTER

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Acts 2:42 ESV



DISCIPLESHIP IN OUR HURRIED AGE

Josh Kines

What does discipleship look like in our hurried age? That is a question I believe many of us struggle with in our time sensitive, information filled, progress driven society. Are we growing in our faith? Are we faithful to God's call upon our lives? How do we measure our growth in grace and our faithfulness to His commands?

The answer may seem straightforward enough to us as Presbyterians. We use terms like "normal means of grace" and "catechism". As a confessional denomination we have standards that guide us in what we believe, what we confess. These are glorious truths and are without a doubt a major part of the discipleship process. However, what I mean by discipleship has more to do with how we apply what we confess. More than simply growing in knowledge, how do we assimilate and apply truth in our hurried age. That is what I believe is at the heart of the *shema* that we all know and love.

⁴ "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.

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SUNDAYS

Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship, 10:45 a.m.

⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”
Deuteronomy 6:4-9

The heart of the law was the command to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and might. This God who is singular in His power and might and worthy of our full allegiance demonstrates His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. These truths strike a chord in the depth of our souls; however they can be hard to hold on to at times. This world in all its allure, temptations, and prospects pulls at us at every turn. The *shema* reminds us that if we are to hold these truths in our hearts it will be because we have made time to teach them DILIGENTLY to our children. We cannot place the burden of the discipleship of our children on schools, the church, or others alone. We must teach our children these sacred truths for our own sake as well as theirs.

We will also talk about them as we sit in our house. I love how Acts 2:42-47 talks about the conduct of the early church regularly breaking bread in one another's homes. Their sanctification depended on it! We are also called to talk about it as we walk along the way, which marks our witness and desire to speak of the hope within us. And just in case we haven't gotten a clear picture of discipleship, we are called to speak of the truths we hold dear when we rise up and when we lie down. These truths are to be on our hearts and therefore on our lips all hours of the day and night.

What I find intriguing about the call to discipleship here is how what we know to be TRUE is coupled with the measure and manner in which we appropriate those truths. In fact, they

are inseparable. This is what discipleship must return to in our modern hurried lives. How can we love the Lord our God with our heart, soul, and might when we live our lives at such a hurried pace? John Mark Comer in his convicting book, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, writes, “Corrie ten Boom once said that if the devil can't make you sin, he'll make you busy. There's truth in that. Both sin and busyness have the exact same effect—they cut off your connection to God, to other people, and even to your own soul.” He goes on to write, “Our time is our life, and our attention is the doorway to our hearts...Hurry is violence on the soul... Many have noted that the modern world is a virtual conspiracy against the interior life.”

If discipleship is to take place in our lives, we are going to have to confront our hurried pace and cultivate a counter-cultural path of life that affords us the time and attention necessary for discipleship. Comer writes, “Here's my point: the solution to an over busy life is not more time. It's to slow down and simplify our lives around what really matters... Because what you give your attention to is the person you become. Put another way: the mind is the portal to the soul, and what you fill your mind with will shape the trajectory of your character. In the end, your life is no more than the sum of what you gave your attention to..”

Certainly, there is much more to say about the *shema*, discipleship, and our hurried pace of life today. However, in our distracted, hurried, and information filled age, it is safe to say that something has to give if Christ is truly to be at the center of who we are and what we do. That is a process of discipleship that we have to figure out how to engage with our heart, soul, and strength! We must slow down, simplify our lives, and give our attention once again to God's ordained means of grace.



Rev. Josh Kines
is Director of Discipleship
at First Presbyterian Church

HARVEST CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Arrington Rhett

The members of the **Facilities Planning Committee** have been working diligently to refine concepts for the interior and technology “refresh” of church buildings planned for later this year!

We are deeply gratified by the response from the saints of FPC to the **Harvest Fund** appeal thus far. Since the inauguration of the campaign three months ago, nearly \$600,000 in gifts and commitments has been received from 70 member families!

The planning committee’s focus is to create beautiful and welcoming spaces for worship and fellowship that will glorify God and benefit His people in the years ahead.

Based on our recent experiences during worship, there’s an evident need to replace **sound and lighting systems in the Sanctuary**. (For perspective, Rob King and Lee Norman were in Kindergarten when those systems were originally installed in 1990!).

Design objectives for the project include new flooring, updated lighting, and fresh wall treatments in each of the original buildings. We are planning for new furnishings in Taylor Hall and the Parlor and Narthex, along with updated audiovisual systems in Taylor Hall and McIntosh Hall. The original kitchen and several restrooms throughout the facilities are also in need of refurbishment.

We believe these objectives to be attainable as the Lord honors the prayers and giving of our people for the Harvest Campaign. Our goal is to raise \$1,000,000 in gifts and pledges to supplement a generous lead gift commitment from the Payne Family. For those who prefer to contribute on the installment plan, pledges to the Harvest Fund may be fulfilled over the next two years.



Harvest Campaign Headquarters



If you would like more information or have questions about the campaign, please contact me or another member of the Facilities Planning Committee.

Click here to donate online:

<https://onrealm.org/fpcpca/give/harvestfund24>

INSTALLATION SERVICE FOR DARWIN JORDAN

At its stated meeting on January 23, Teaching Elder Darwin Jordan was examined and received as a member of **Grace Presbytery** so that he might accept the Session's call to become Assistant Minister of First Presbyterian Church. Darwin comes to Grace Presbytery via transfer from North Texas Presbytery, where he previously labored for 17 years as Senior Pastor of Fort Worth Presbyterian Church (PCA).



Pastor Darwin has served as our church's stated pulpit supply in the position of Interim Senior Minister for 18 months. He will be installed as Assistant Minister of Leadership and Preaching on **Sunday, March 2 at 6:00 p.m.**, with a reception following the service in Taylor Hall.

The Session believes that the new arrangement will—

- strengthen the commitment between Darwin and First Presbyterian Church
- give clearer direction and continuity for his ministry among us
- provide an opportunity for him to transition to a different role when a Senior Minister is called by the congregation.

We rejoice that the Lord has led Darwin and Kaye to “put down roots” in Hattiesburg, and we eagerly anticipate His blessings on First Presbyterian Church through their ongoing ministry among us!

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. II TIMOTHY 2:15

TOKYO TABERNACLE PROJECT

Thanks to the **FPC Missions Committee** and to our missionary guests who participated in the Global Missions Conference in February!

The conference special offering will benefit Grace City Church in Tokyo, Japan, where our missionary, Roger Lowther is on staff. The **Tokyo Tabernacle Project** is helping Grace City Church obtain a dedicated space for worship and ministry.

If you wish to contribute to the project, make your check payable to First Presbyterian Church and designate for the Tokyo Tabernacle Project. You can also make an online gift by following this link: <https://onrealm.org/fpcpca/give/tokyo>



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