



FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH
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First Word

A CHURCH FAMILY PUBLICATION OF FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

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A Strange & Powerful Encouragement BY JAY POUND

On the surface, reading the Bible can feel like looking through a window at an alien world. And to some extent, the past is certainly a foreign land. But one of the remarkable things about scripture is that as you look deeper into the text and stories, you see people and communities that begin to look more and more like us. You find human beings living very different lives in very different cultures, but wrestling with the same temptations and rejoicing in the same great moments. Their daily lives may be wildly different, but their struggles, griefs, joys and triumphs are those common to all humanity.

I have been struck this winter by the powerful relevance of 2 Corinthians to my own world, church, and life. As we have walked through this ancient letter together, I have found—almost from the first week—a strange and powerful encouragement as we have studied this messy, intimate, and deeply Christian letter. Let me share just one example:

Ministry in general, but especially ministry in the past three years, has made me blindingly aware of my own inadequacies. I believe God has called me to ministry in the local church, and I know he has gifted me for that calling,

yet I regularly encounter situations and responsibilities that require wisdom or skills that are simply beyond what I have to offer. Sometimes this leads to worry, sometimes to frustration, and sometimes to failure. And I know I am not alone.

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Even when life is good, it is still often hard. Reaching out, being vulnerable and building community is hard—even at church, even with people you already know and love. In the same way, marriage can be a great and enduring blessing and still also require a lot of tough conversations, apologies, and forgiveness. Parenting is likewise both a source of great joy, and a source of worry, long labor, and occasional frustration. And of course from the very beginning, being a faithful follower of Jesus has been both a hard and narrow road, and also the only road that leads life.

But here in 2 Corinthians, as we confront these challenges in our own lives, we find a strange and powerful

encouragement: that God's power is made perfect in our weakness. None of us—alone—have the wisdom and skill to master all of life's challenges. None. But we were never meant to. In this letter, the apostle Paul not only acknowledges his own inadequacy as a minister of the gospel, he rejoices in it! Paul rejoices not because he enjoys failure, nor because he has given up, but because he knows that it is precisely when we obey in our own weakness that God's power is most clearly revealed.

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This is the strange and powerful message of 2 Corinthians: we are not are not self-sufficient, but in our weakness God is strong. We are not equal to every task, but in our inadequacy the power of God is more clearly visible to others. This is the great promise of the gospel, the mystery God revealed to Paul: Christ in us, the hope of glory (Col. 1.27).

VELOCITY BROOMBALL



CREEKSIDE SLEDDING



Would you like to receive the newsletter via email?
Contact the office at info@firstfreechurch.org

If your information has changed recently (address/email/phone number) please contact the office so we can update it in our system.

**OUR MISSION:
TO HELP
INDIVIDUALS
BECOME
CHRIST-CENTERED
& CHRIST-SENT
TOGETHER**

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NEW SUNDAY ADULT ELECTIVE

March 5th & 12th During Community Hour in the gym

Throughout the books of the major and minor prophets of the Old Testament, you see a running theme conveyed in all of their messages. The God that the people claimed to worship in their doctrinal professions of faith and in their singing wasn't the god that they were actually worshipping in the actions of their daily lives. The story of their lives demonstrated a different theological story than what they were merely professing with their lips.

How does our theology connect to what we do in our jobs, family life, hobbies, and daily decisions? How does the activity of our daily lives reflect what we actually believe about God and his story?

God made humans as storied creatures, meaning there is something unique about humans among all other creatures, where we see the world and talk about the world through stories. From childhood fairy tales to big box-office blockbuster movies, we consume countless stories that shape our beliefs about God, his world, and

our place in it all. This means that whether we are aware of it or not, there is theology in every story. So how do we step back and examine whether or not the stories we are following are true? What if there's a disconnect between what we say we believe is true and how we're living? Could we work through a process that would help us see the real story of our lives?

In this two-week interactive elective, we'll explore the connections between biblical theology, cultural theology, and even psychology to help us take inventory of whether or not our lives are based on a true story.

-Paul Anleitner



CURRENT SUNDAY SERMON SERIES



Good News for the Weak

March 5	A Treasure in Jars of Clay 2 Cor 4:7-18
March 12	Beyond this World 2 Cor 5:1-10
March 19	Ambassadors of Reconciliation 2 Cor 5:11-6:2
March 26	Faultless Ministry 2 Cor 6:3-13

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

- Happy Birthday to Marlene Ytterboe, who turns 90 on March 30th!
- Happy Birthday to Joyce Longfield, who recently turned 90!
- Welcome new church members, Jeff and Elle Strike!

We're updating the PHOTO DIRECTORY!
March 12, 19, and 26
in the gym
from 8:30-10:30 a.m.

WATCH SUNDAY SERMONS:
firstfreechurch.org/sermons
firstfreetv on YouTube

Camp Shamaineau's Retreat46 Motley, MN
APRIL 21-23 FOR GRADES 4TH-5TH

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

View past newsletters, listen to previous sermons, and check upcoming events.

firstfreechurch.org

PARKING UPDATE

Minneapolis has declared winter parking restrictions. No parking on the even side of residential streets.

PRAY WITH US

Contact the church office if you would like to receive our weekly prayer email, Pastor Joel's Friday Update, or join our zoom prayer meeting.

UPCOMING EVENTS

PHOTO DIRECTORY

Sundays, March 12, 19, & 26, 8:30-10:30 a.m.
We're updating the Photo Directory. Photos will be taken in the gym.

CALL FOR ART

Artists of all ages and skill levels are invited to participate in our annual Lent and Easter Art Gallery. New and previously submitted works of art from past years are welcome. Submit art that portrays the themes and story of the season to the main office.

EASTER SERVICES

Palm Sunday Service: April 2nd, 10:30 a.m.

Good Friday Service: April 7th, 7:00 p.m.

Easter Sunday Services: April 9th, 9:00 & 10:30 am No Community, Youth, and Elementary Groups Easter Sunday.

VISITATION CLASS

Visitation: A warm fellowship and a Bible verse

What is visitation? Visitation combines a friendly visit with a prayer or Bible verse to encourage someone who may be in the hospital or someone limited getting out of their home. The Faith Community Nurses pair visitors with those who would like fellowship with a fellow believer. Recently, Allie and I visited an older believer who was so glad we could come. She hasn't been to church in months. As we left, we asked if we could give her a hug. "Oh yes!" she replied, I don't get too many of those!" We left with light hearts and treasured moments with a senior who enjoyed a chat, a hug, prayer, and a Bible verse with us. If you are interested in learning more about having a fellowship experience yourself, please email nurses@firstfreechurch.org. or call the church office at 612-827-4705. We will walk you through the training and get you started. Our next meeting is April 23rd after church.

-Jeanine Bruen

