



FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH  
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## *Enduring Truth* BY JAY POUND

By the time we move on to Matthew 8, we will have spent six Sundays walking through the Sermon on the Mount. We could have easily taken longer. Through the past few weeks of preparation, I have been reminded (again) of the unique and remarkable quality of Jesus' teaching—especially considering the relatively modest quantity. If you gather together all of his teachings as we have them recorded in the gospels, you could likely read through them in about an hour. And yet, I have never met the person, Christian or not, who has either exhausted the wisdom of these few teachings or perfected their practice.

As followers of Jesus, we know that we are supposed to find them profound and significant. People tell us they are before we have even read them for ourselves. And so, when we do read them, we are not often surprised to find them insightful. We were told they would be. Because we know we are supposed to find them remarkable, we may lose sight of just how incredible they actually are.

Over the past few weeks, as I have been preparing, I keep wondering how exactly these same few, brief teachings can continue to challenge, convict, and awe me. They are thousands of years old, they

are rooted in a culture widely different from my own, and I have already spent countless hours reading, hearing, and thinking about them. How is it that they can still speak so powerfully to me? How is it that they speak so powerfully to everyone, across so many centuries and places?

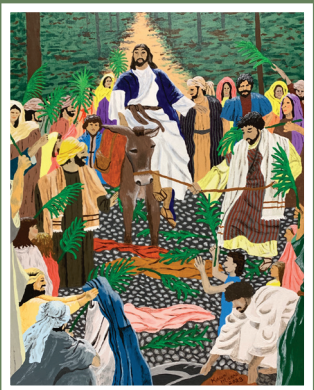
I have two thoughts on that. First, I think these teachings retain their power because they hold the unique and unmistakable insight of the creator for his creation. In Matthew 7:28-29, after Jesus finishes this time of teaching on the mountain, we read a note about how that teaching is received. Matthew tells us that, "the crowds were amazed at his teaching because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law" (emphasis mine). I know exactly what they mean. I see in all of these teachings the incisive wisdom of someone who knows me better even than I know myself. And so, no matter where I am in life, how I have changed or grown, the sermon on the mount still meets me where I am and then calls me forward.

Second, in this teaching Jesus casts a uniquely resonant vision for human life that has in fact resonated with people across all times and cultures. What we see in Jesus' teaching is not just remarkable

insight into our nature, but the truth of who and what we were all created to be. When we hear Jesus call us not just to turn aside from adultery, but to refuse to treat others as objects (5:27-28), we not only see this as true righteousness (which it is), we actually glimpse the way God created us to relate to each other. When we hear Jesus' call to be careful not to do our good works in order to impress others (6:1), we see this not only as right worship (which it is), we glimpse the genuine partnership with God for which we were created. No matter our time and culture, this vision strikes a chord that resonates at the level of our very nature as bearers of God's own image.

How is it that this teaching still speaks so powerfully to so many? It speaks to us, it convicts us, it challenges and inspires us because it is the truth. In this extraordinary message, Jesus provides us with the truth about who God is, who we are, and who God has called us to be. 2,000 years later no one has yet laid a firmer foundation, nor found another path that leads to life. Nor will they. These are the words of our author and creator, the music we were created to sing, and those who put them into practice will know the truth when they live it.

## CALL FOR ART



Artists of all ages and skill levels are invited to submit works to our annual **Lent & Easter art gallery.**

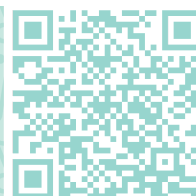
*Pieces can be dropped off in the church office.  
Contact Pastor Paul Anleitner for more info.*

### YOUTH SUMMER TRIP REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

**NEW ORLEANS**  
SUMMER TRIP



Velocity will be traveling to New Orleans to assist John Gerhardt's ministry: Urban Impact! On this trip students will be given opportunities to serve a community in need as well as time to develop their own faith.



Current 6th-8th graders are invited to go camping and attend the Lifest music concert in Oshkosh, WI. Lifest is a Christian music festival that features a number of different groups performing across multiple days.

*Would you like to receive the newsletter via email?  
Contact the office at [info@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:info@firstfreechurch.org)*

*Don't forget to **SPRING** forward!*

**DAYLIGHT SAVINGS ON MARCH 9**





## Our Mission:

TO HELP  
INDIVIDUALS BECOME  
CHRIST-CENTERED &  
CHRIST-SENT TOGETHER

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# SIGN UP FOR CAMP!

First Free loves supporting kids going to camp. We offer summer camp discounts for students in elementary school through high school. Discounts are for students who regularly attend Creekside activities or Velocity student ministries.

For more info, check out our website at [firstfreechurch.org/camp](http://firstfreechurch.org/camp)



MOMCO

### OUR MOMCO FIRST FREE FAMILY IS GROWING THIS FALL!

We are excited to offer TWO MomCo meet-ups starting this fall! We are starting a Thursday night (no childcare provided) group, and continuing our Friday morning group with childcare! Each will meet twice a month.

#### Why add Thursday nights?

- *Over 75% of moms in the United States work full-time*
- *Parental stress has been named a major public health issue*
- *71 percent of moms say they are desperately lonely*
- *79 percent of non-Christian moms say the church doesn't address their life in a real or meaningful way*

Let's change that. MomCo is a huge outreach! We have moms walking in our doors that are agnostic, burnt out by the church, or skeptical of all organized religion—but they are here! Our prayer is that moms will come, feel welcomed and safe, and meet a bunch of women who are living out a practical tangible faith in a God who offers peace, joy, and hope in a desperate world. We want them to meet Jesus.

We are stepping out in faith knowing that God will provide church family members as leaders, mentor moms, and members to reach even more moms in our community.

# Outreach Weekend RECAP



## THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR VOLUNTEERS!

### AROUND 30 PEOPLE VOLUNTEERED AT THESE LOCATIONS:

**Legacy Thrift:** We helped to sort and organize items to get ready to sell; the proceeds go to mission work in Eastern Europe.

**Dorothy Day Center:** We prepared and served the lunch meal and cleaned up—being a blessing to those most vulnerable in our cities.

**Union Gospel Mission:** Set up, served, and cleaned up the noon meal—being a blessing to those most vulnerable in our cities.

### ABOUT 50 PEOPLE VOLUNTEERED AT CHURCH, WORKING ON THESE ACTIVITIES:

**VEAP Birthday Bags:** We assembled birthday bags which will be given to VEAP. Every week, VEAP gives away 100-150 birthday bags to families that visit their food shelf. These special bags have a cake mix, frosting, candles, plates, napkins, and a personalized birthday card that our younger volunteers can help design.

**Chinese Student Welcome Bags:** These bags will have things that a student would like to receive (gum, mints, ramen, gift cards, etc) with the goal of helping make our Chinese students feel welcome. Phil and Cindy Reed will be distributing these bags to newly arrived students at the U of M.

**Prayer Shawl:** We made prayer shawls that our Faith Community Nurses will be giving out to people that would benefit from them.

**Cleaning Nursery & Preschool Rooms:** We had the opportunity to help deep clean our nursery and preschool rooms. It's a great opportunity to bless the little ones in our church.

**It is such a blessing to spend time serving others while meeting and getting to know others in our congregation!**

