

MVCC Voices

The Monthly Newsletter Of
Moraine Valley Community Church

For the Month of June 2016

From The Pastor's Desk

By Pastor Derek
MASON



With the presidential election coming up and all the turmoil in the news, I continually hear people commenting about how crazy and hopeless these times are. I also have had many people recently coming to me with incredibly overwhelming issues of: darkness, sickness, death and hopelessness and they say, "I don't know what to do!" It is sad to see so many people (including Christians) validate a truth which is exposed by their reactions – **this world (as a whole), like never before, severely lacks faith in Jesus.**

The Bible is packed full of stories in which God's people face overwhelming odds, annihilation and/or extreme injustice. When people turn with all their heart, soul and minds toward the LORD, He shows up in incredible ways (Deut 11:22-26). People nowadays think prayer is all that is expected ("I pray all the time!"). Though this is a start, it is far from sufficient. God calls us to return to Him **with all our heart** (Joel 2:12-13). And in Jeremiah 29:13, God says, "You will seek me and find me, when you seek me **with all your heart.**" "*All your heart*" means all of your being (everything that we are – in all areas of our life). This calls for repentance (changing our ways to walk with God). When the LORD had

brought me to a place of devastation, and I recognized that He was behind it, I did not know what I was supposed to do. Therefore, I went to the places that did know – the church and His Word (the Bible). And get this – I read it! Yes, believe it or not, I actually picked up the Bible and read it! Before, I despised reading the Bible, but I knew that this was God's instructions to His people, therefore, I read it and begged Him to give me guidance. I went to church, I prayed continually and allowed myself to be consumed by Jesus in all areas of my life. And you know what? He met me in that place, He healed me and He showed me the way out – just like He promised that He would in His Word (the Bible).

Unfortunately, our tendency (as humans) is to seek healing (earnestly) so that we can go back to doing what we were doing before. That is not an option with God and it is why our healing from Him is often very slow, if at all. He wants us to learn to develop new habits over time and to lean on Jesus all the time. Our culture just wants quick fixes (a text message, an immediate answer on Google, a drive thru or microwave dinner) – not an intimate relationship (which takes a lot of time). Therefore, we fight God as He attempts to heal us (with lasting results – in truth) and bring us close to Him. His Way is perfect, eternal and non-negotiable. He will bend to meet us where we are but He will never leave us in that place. His instructions will continually be moving us towards implementing His Ways into our life (transformation). When we are ready to learn from God, He is ready to teach

(Prov 2:1-5). Our hearts have to be primed in order for us to hear and see God (the Teacher). Unfortunately, we are ready to listen when we reach a place of extreme humility, submissiveness and desperation. Our world and our lives have wandered so far from Jesus that we often think we are ready to follow but often we are not. We feel abandoned, but it is not God who has abandoned us but rather us who have abandoned Him.

If we really have the faith that Jesus calls us into, we would be reading His Word every day (even if for only 15 minutes) because its value far surpasses anything on earth. It is the food of the Holy Spirit and essential for true life (John 6:35-51; 14:15-24). Then we would know that God is always in control – no matter what we experience or see. His goodness and trustworthiness would be deeply rooted in us. We would have the peace of His Spirit emanating authoritatively from within – even in overwhelming times of trial. And we would live every moment of every day knowing that we are in foreign/enemy territory now but one day soon we will be called to our true home in heaven. All that we have here on earth is temporary (1 John 2:15-17). Even our very life is a gift from God. May we remember these things and commit all of our being to Jesus – who has all authority over all things. May we have strong faith in our LORD and Savior – Jesus Christ! Amen.

Many Blessings,
Pastor Derek Mason

Birthdays Etc.

Kimberly Healy	June 10
Jillian Lewellen	June 18
Chris DeBauche	June 23
Clarence DeBauche	June 24

Church Signs

Those little pearls of wisdom found in front of America's Churches

Get off Facebook and take out faith book.

Get rich quick. Count your blessings!

God is like Coca-Cola, he's the real thing.

God Sent the first text message...The Bible.

The Elder's Table

It's hard to believe that it's been two years since Pastor Derek joined us here at Moraine Valley Community Church as our pastor. The elders decided it might be interesting to interview him now that he has gotten a chance to better know our church and its church family. Here are some questions we have put to him and his answers:

If you knew then what you know now, would you still have wanted to pastor our church?

(Pastor's answer): The short answer is, "absolutely!" I have always loved the people at Moraine Valley Community Church (MVCC) – even from the very first day I guest preached here. When I was originally asked to consider the "long term pastoral position," I knew that this church had a very hard road ahead of it. There was a lot of work to do. However, the challenge did not really intimidate me. I knew that if Jesus was calling me to MVCC, nothing would be too much for Him and we would overcome. I just wanted to be certain that this was in fact my call. After a lot of prayer and listening for God's direction, He made it very clear that it was. The trials we face,

keep me continually relying on Jesus. And that is absolutely where I always want to be.

What has been the biggest surprise you've encountered in your ministry here?

(Pastor's answer): I have had many – too many to list here. But one would definitely be how much the LORD has used my musical gifts in this church and how He has grown our worship ministry. As you know, I did not even list these skills on my resume. The LORD made it very clear to me that teaching and preaching was to take the priority in my ministry. Music was to be a secondary gift. We have been very blessed by all the musical talent that the LORD has brought to us and it was amazing to watch how He did it. It is nothing shy of a miracle.

What is the biggest challenge you've encountered?

(Pastor's answer): I can sometimes want people to experience the fullness of the victory we CAN have in Christ more than they do. People have to be ready (prepared) for the call that the Gospel has on their lives. It is very frustrating to watch people suffer when they are not living in harmony with God. Don't get me wrong. I do not have all the answers in life – by any means! But, no matter how much I try to guide people in the things which I am certain about, many are unwilling to follow. I hate watching people struggle so much when they do not have to. This is still one of my greatest challenges as a pastor. I cannot control these things. I simply need to teach the Way of the LORD, watch for those who respond to it and continue to feed those who are hungry for it. I have to continually remember to give it to Jesus.

What is the most gratifying result of your work here?

(Pastor's answer): I love teaching and preaching God's Word and seeing people legitimately come to Jesus. I love watching people develop a thirst for the

Bible and a desire for the Holy Spirit. I love witnessing a person's transformation from darkness into the Light. I can feel the overwhelming joy and presence of our LORD every time. I love watching our community continue to be transformed into the likeness and image of Jesus Christ. To sum all this up: I absolutely treasure more than anything - the presence of the Holy Spirit in my life and in the lives of those around me! I have continued to see this happen more and more in our church. I have seen more miracles happen here than anywhere else in my life.

If you could change something about our church, what would it be?

(Pastor's answer): We need more Godly and mature leaders. Don't get me wrong, I love and deeply appreciate all of our current leaders. We just need more of them! There is a harvest that I can already see coming to MVCC. Our world is getting darker and people are scared and seeking answers. The churches which truly embrace the Holy Spirit and God's Word will be light in this dark place. People will recognize these churches and people and be pulled in. I know that a wave of people is coming. Many are already sniffing around the edges. We need to be ready for them.

If you could ask one thing of our congregation, what would it be?

(Pastor's answer): Plug in to the church community. Whether it be sitting in on our prayer meetings Sunday morning at 9:30 am or Women's or Men's ministry, the Children's program or Youth program, the Care Team, Communion Team, Elsie's Pantry, the Worship Team or Technology Team – plug in somewhere! You do not have to be involved everywhere but find at least one thing you would like to get involved with and plug into it. Here is where the Holy Spirit can do wonderful things and I guarantee that He will be at work in this one, around them and will

illuminate incredible things. Please plug in to the Moraine Valley Community Church community.

If you had the chance to re-do something you've done here, what would it be?

(Pastor's answer): Nothing. Not because I am (or we are) perfect, by any means but rather, because even the mistakes and challenges have brought maturity in our relationships and our faith. As long as we learn from our mistakes – so not to continue making them, then we are moving in the right direction. I continue to see Jesus protect us, guide us, humble us and provide for us in many ways and I would not change any of it!

Is there a goal you have set for yourself or for our congregation for this next year?

(Pastor's answer): I have many regarding Christian maturity, leadership growth, delegation and duplication but all of those are ultimately working towards us getting our own building again. I would love to see us move into our own building by next year. I am absolutely very grateful for all of Savior Divine's generosity and their very warm hospitality to us. I have never experienced two churches from two different denominations get along so well! This is truly a praise to God – reflecting His love. However, it is also very difficult for us to develop our own identity with any kind of strength when we are hidden within another church. Having our own location will definitely bring on more responsibilities but it will also give us a lot of freedom to really grow and reach out into the community in bigger ways. Again, I would love to see this happen by this time next year. However, I am not willing to force this before the time is right.

What do you see as the future for our church?

(Pastor's answer): I see our church being a place which brings many people into a strong life-giving relationship with Jesus. This will be done through: solid teaching and preaching; a loving biblical community; strong discipleship, youth and children's programs; a mature and talented worship/music ministry; a commitment to evangelism, missions and continuing efforts through Elsie's Pantry. We will be partnering with other local churches and Christian organizations in outreach and mission efforts. Our Counseling and Deliverance programs will continue to develop and grow as the need continues to increase. We will always be looking for new ways to bring healing to those who are hurting and needy. And we will always bring the Gospel into these places. We will continue to learn how to live in harmony with the Holy Spirit and submit to the transformational process into the likeness of Jesus Christ. And all that we do will always be for God's glory – not ours. I know the presence of the Spirit of God will continue to increase in strength, if we are dedicated to these things. I believe these are our gifts which He has given to us and they absolutely have the ability to meet the needs of our community around us while glorifying Jesus.

Have you considered continuing your theological studies to work for a doctorate?

(Pastor's answer): I do not feel that the LORD is pulling me in that direction at this time. I have a deep passion to use what He has already given me to participate in the advancement of His Kingdom. We have a lot of work ahead of us right now and I do not see (at this point) how any further education would be a necessary part of that equation. However, I would not rule it out for a possible future venture.

What are you currently praying for?

(Pastor's answer): More workers for the harvest. We need reliable people who have put Jesus as Lord in their lives and are committed to following His Spirit. As I said before, the LORD is bringing people to us already in some really incredible ways. There is an increasing awareness of darkness among us and we have the only solution to this problem. I pray that we are ready for the incoming tidal wave.

Tell us about your spiritual advisor. How often do you meet?

(Pastor's answer): His name is Pastor John Carlini. He recently retired from a church on the north side of Chicago. John is a graduate of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (as I am) and he has many other degrees – one of them as a certified Spiritual Formation Director. I meet with John once a month. His insight and assistance has been essential to my balance and walk with Jesus, my peace and self-understanding. His pastoral experience has also been extremely helpful in avoiding unnecessary pastoral mistakes. John continues to play a vital role for me and I am very grateful for him. I am pretty sure that he will be in attendance at my Ordination Service on July 10th.

And let us end this article with: Thank you, Pastor Derek, for being all that we expected and so much more. We are grateful that you chose our church to pastor.



Food For Thought

The Graduation Gift Story

A young man was getting ready to graduate from college. For many months he had admired a beautiful sports car in a dealer's showroom, and knowing his father could well afford it, he told him that was all he wanted.

As Graduation Day approached, the young man awaited signs that his father had purchased the car. Finally, on the morning of his graduation, his father called him into his private study.

His father told him how proud he was to have such a fine son, and told him how much he loved him. He handed his son a beautiful wrapped gift box. Curious, but somewhat disappointed, the young man opened the box and found a lovely, leather-bound Bible, with the young man's name embossed in gold.

Angrily, he raised his voice to his father and said, "With all your money you give me a Bible?" and stormed out of the house, leaving the Bible.

Many years passed and the young man was very successful in business. He had a beautiful home and wonderful family, but realized his father was very old, and thought perhaps he should go visit him. He had not seen him since that graduation day. Before he could make arrangements, he received a telegram telling him his father had passed away, and willed all of his possessions to his son.

When he arrived at his father's house, sudden sadness and regret filled his heart. He began to search through his father's important papers and saw the still new Bible, just as he had left it years ago. With

tears, he opened the Bible and began to turn the pages. His father had carefully underlined a verse, as he read those words, a car key dropped from the back of the Bible. It had a tag with the dealer's name, the same dealer who had the sports car he had desired. On the tag was the date of his graduation, and the words...PAID IN FULL.

How many times do we miss God's blessings because they are not packaged as we expected?

Living Water Youth Group

Summer is always an exciting time, but for students it is even more exciting than it is for adults. For students summer is a break from school and all that goes with it. It's a season of no homework, no test to study for and no teachers to tell you what to do. This shift into summer also means a slight shift in the way Living Water Youth Group operates.

This summer we will continue meeting together in the same set up we have done during the school year except we will do so every other week. These times together will be focused on building our relationships with each other and more importantly with God. The youth have been growing in some pretty amazing ways over the school year and we want to continue meeting together in our normal setting and structure to help us continue to grow.

Although we are keeping some things the same over the summer there will be some changes too. As a group we will be attending more events and participating in more activities to make sure our summer is as much fun as possible. We are planning a trip to Great America, maybe local water

parks, serving with Feed My Starving Children, attending local concerts and fairs together and going to the mall. The goal is that by adding in some new and fun events into our youth group schedule students will feel more comfortable to bring friends and we can start to reach out to new students and families.

Our summer festivities will kick off on Friday, June 10 with a "Start of Summer Cookout" for youth and their families. If you know of anyone that would be interested in learning more about the youth group please invite them to join us for good food and a fun time. As always I am eager and exciting to see how God is going to be at work over the summer.



CHANGE OF PLANS ... DROP AND GIVE ME FIFTY!

Give Thanks For.....

- Renee Wronecki, Julie and Maygen Stork and Ricky Lopez = coming forth for baptism
- Plus Jen Zappa accepting Jesus Christ as her LORD and Savior
- The completion and approval of Pastor Derek Mason's Ordination

Remember in Prayer...

- Elsie's Food Pantry: provisions/wisdom/protection
- MVCC: wisdom/guidance/protection from all evil
 - Wisdom and guidance in our new location
 - Discipleship/transformation/leadership
 - Youth and Children's Ministry growth and development
 - Women's and Men's ministries to mature and grow
 - Wisdom and guidance for an end-of-summer event
 - That our financial giving would pick back up
- Pete Delgado – dementia (Sarah – strength)
- Vi Wagner – hip/arm/eyes/strength
- Mark DeBauche: cancer healing / strength /pain
- Roy Beehn – provisions, healing from his open heart surgery
- Tony Juarez – closer job and provisions at home
- Russ McGurty – job, family & insurance situation, surgery and pain relief
- Dan Tabert – foot recovery, cancer healing, peace, guidance, provisions
- Harriet – strength in her legs, walking
- Becky Lewellen – employment
- Herb Mohn - prostate cancer recovery
- Bill Clemente – family healing and provisions
- Doreen DeBauche – continued healing and recovery
- Dolly Gambill and her family – the loss of Don (her son)

- Gary Rizza – back issues (pain relief and healing)
- Megan's Aunt (Dawn) – ovarian cancer (healing)
- Renee, Julie, Maygen, Ricky – blessings in their baptism
- David Skowronski – his loss of Linda Nunez
- Denise DePaul – cancer healing

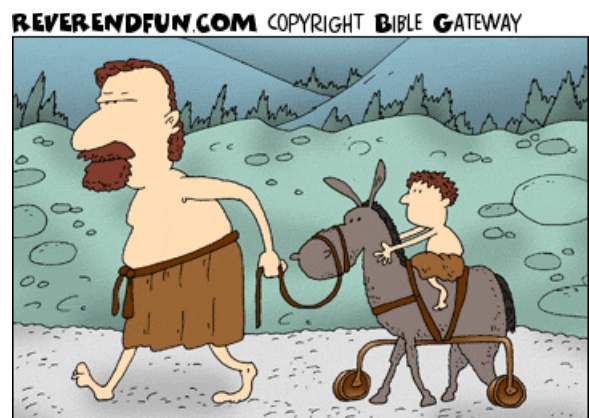
Famous Last Words

That was the best ice-cream soda I ever tasted.
~~ Lou Costello, comedian, d. March 3, 1959

It is very beautiful over there.
~~ Thomas Alva Edison, inventor, d. October 18, 1931

What is the answer?...
[Silence]

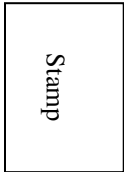
...In that case, what is the question?
~~ Last words of Gertrude Stein



LEARNING TO RIDE

Moraine Valley Community Church
10040 S. 88th Ave. Palos Hills, IL 60465

Dated Material
Address Change Requested



MVCC Voices

The Monthly Newsletter Of
Moraine Valley Community Church
10040 S. 88th Ave. Palos Hills, IL 60465 708-598-4434