

First Baptist . . . (Cont'd from page 6)

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Unfortunately, there are many who are like the spy I read of who was captured and sentenced to death. The general who captured the spy had a practice of giving condemned criminals a choice between the firing squad or going through a big, ominous looking door. When it came time for his execution, the spy was given the choice. "The firing squad or the door," asked the general.

The spy hesitated a while before choosing the firing squad. Moments later, shots rang out confirming his execution. With the deed done, the general's new assistant said, "I'm curious. What is behind the door?" "Freedom," replied the general, "It's freedom, but I've only known a few brave enough to take it."

Jesus offers us freedom from sin and the liberty to be who God has called us to be. It is life-changing freedom. The question is, "Are you brave enough to choose it?"

The Declaration of Independence ends with these words, "And for the support of this declaration, with firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, we mutually pledge our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor!" History has proven time and again the old saying that freedom is not free, and most of those 56 men who signed the Declaration of Independence and thousands of others who stood with them for freedom would be called to live up to that pledge for they did indeed lay down their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor. Not surprisingly, the Bible has a lot to say about freedom and its price.

The Apostle Paul had much to say about it in his letters to the churches. Paul knew about freedom. He had been a man of status, of wealth, of influence among his people, but he was willing to lose everything to do what God called him to do (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

In Paul's day people often were subjected to considerable persecution and hardship when they became Christians. This was especially true for Jews who became believers in Jesus. Jews spent their lives learning and practicing the Old Testament and Jewish religious laws as the standard and burden for having a right relationship with God. This transition from being bound to the religious law to being free from it was a huge adjustment for the Jewish believers and caused tremendous confusion and contention within the church. This happened in a lot of places as Jews accepted Jesus and became part of the church, but it was especially a problem in Galatia. Knowing the issues in the church, Paul wrote to the church in Galatia telling them, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1). The bondage Paul told them they were free of is the bondage of the Jewish religious law. They were no longer under the law but had freedom from it through Jesus. Even with men such as Paul teaching them, this newfound freedom in Jesus was still hard to understand. Remember, the Jews grew up having their religious law engrained in them. Their entire lives and system of society revolved around their religious practices. Paul told the church they were free from religious laws, but then there were Jewish leaders in the church saying the Jewish believers must still follow the religious law.

Part of the reason for this was that the Jews saw themselves as superior to Gentiles, especially when it came to their religion and relationship with God. In many cases Jews did not even associate with Gentiles. This was a problem because the church was made up of Jews and Gentiles, and as Paul wrote in Galatians 3 and Romans 10, there is neither Jew nor Gentile in the church.

We are all equal and one in Jesus. Some Jews did not like the idea that the Gentiles could suddenly be religiously equal to them, so the Jews tried to use their knowledge and practice of their religious law to regain their perceived religious authority and gain control over the church. They tried to convince the church that faith was not enough to be saved, more had to be done than just believing. People had to do things the Jewish way, and the Jewish way said that salvation required following their religious law. This pull between the bondage of the law and freedom in Jesus was such an issue that Paul tells us in Galatians 2 that even Peter and Barnabas would separate themselves from the Gentile believers and practice the Jewish religious law when Jews from the church in Jerusalem came to visit them at the church in Antioch. This was something Paul says he confronted them about.

When we hear all this, our immediate thought may be, "Well, we don't have that problem today," but the fact is we do have that problem. Such happens all the time today. It has just gotten a lot more complicated than following Jewish laws and customs. We have come up with the prosperity gospel, the progressive or liberal gospel, the legalistic gospel, the works gospel, the lgbtq+ gospel, and the list goes on. We add to and take away from the gospel until it is what we want it to be.

To make matter worse in the church, on the other extreme there were some in Galatia who took Paul's teaching on Christian freedom to mean they did not have to obey God at all. They could claim faith in Jesus, be part of the church, and keep on living how they had always lived. There did not have to be any repentance or conviction of sin in their lives. The Bible teaches that our faith in Jesus covers all our sins, so what do a lot of us do? Like those Gentiles, some take that to mean we can say we are saved but still live however we want with no true repentance or conviction of sin in our lives. When it comes to people believing like that, the modern church has not done itself any favors for we have failed to teach people what Jesus meant when He said, "Take up your

cross and follow me." Christian freedom is not a free pass to do whatever we want. Surrendering our lives to Jesus frees and empowers us not to be who we want to be, but to be who God wants us to be, to love our neighbor as ourselves, to support and encourage one another, to give up our own comforts and securities to share the love of Jesus with others. To be sure the church at Galatia, and you and I understand this Paul wrote in Galatians 5:13-15, "For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!" Do you think Jesus died on the cross for us, so we can keep living an immoral and sinful life? Of course not. Our freedom, our salvation, is not a free ticket to do whatever we want. It comes with great responsibility.

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AMERICA'S 250TH BIRTHDAY
HONORING OUR **VETERANS**
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with Guest Speaker
SGM (R) CLARENCE "RAMBO" JONES
4TH INFANTRY DIVISION - VIETNAM

★ ★ ASKING ALL ★ ★
VETERANS
PAST AND PRESENT
TO BE IN ATTENDANCE
and
WEAR YOUR UNIFORMS

★ ★ Let's honor those who served as we celebrate ★ ★
★ ★ 250 YEARS OF FREEDOM! ★ ★

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IGNITE FAITH. FUEL PURPOSE. RECHARGE.

3 NIGHTS OF FIRE Revival

Pastor Eugene Love
HOST PASTOR

MONDAY
PASTOR GREGORY WILSON
MT. GROVE M.B. CHURCH
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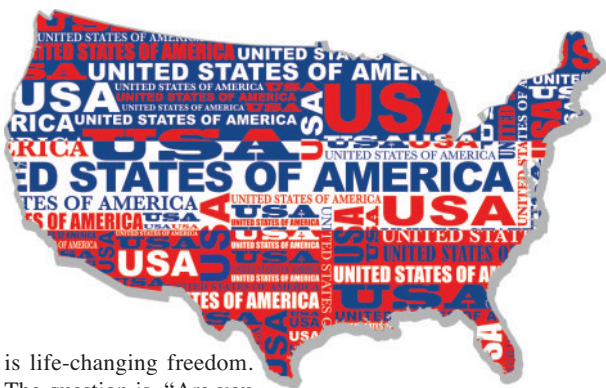
TUESDAY
PASTOR CLARA POPE
HARRIS CHAPEL AME ZION
WATER VALLEY, MS

WEDNESDAY
PASTOR SAMMIE PARKER
MT. ZION M.B. CHURCH
BATESVILLE, MS

OAK HILL M.B. CHURCH
1892 COUNTY RD 156 COFFEEVILLE, MS 38922

★ Send a gift ★

COME READY. LEAVE TRANSFORMED.



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Request for Proposals for the 2026-2027 School Year

The Coffeeville School District through the Department of Special Education is soliciting competitive written proposals from qualified service providers for the following Special Education Services:

- ♦ Psychological Evaluation Services
- ♦ Physical Therapy Services
- ♦ Occupational Therapy Services
- ♦ Behavioral Therapy Services
- ♦ Orientation & Mobility Services
- ♦ Psychometrist Evaluation Services

Request for Information

Questions concerning providing services for any of the areas listed above should be directed to: Dr. Natessia Jackson, Special Education Director, at 662-675-8941 ext. 2090.

Due Dates for Proposals

One (1) typewritten proposal must be received by 4 p.m. Central Time (CT) on July 10th at the following address:
Dr. Natessia Jackson
Special Services Department
Coffeeville School District
96 Mississippi Street
Coffeeville, MS 38922-2776

Note: Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered.

The Coffeeville School District offers educational and employment opportunities to all persons without discrimination and without regard to age, sex, race, or religion.



PILGRIM
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NEW LOOK SAME SPIRIT

TIMELESS IMPACT
"For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations." Psalm 100:5

Host Pastor
L.D. O'Bryant, Jr.

Guest Speaker
Superintendent
Michael C. Hickmon
Abundant Harvest C. of S. L.C.
Charleston, MS

PILGRIM REST COFFEE
1000 W. MAIN ST. • OAKLAND, MS

VOLUME
July 20
12th 2026
2:00 p.m.

Benefit for Pastor Willie Nichols

Calhoun/Yalobusha Outreach is sponsoring a benefit program for Pastor Willie Nichols who has been diagnosed with stage 4 pancreas cancer.

The program is July 11th at 5pm at Oak Grove in Bruce.

Please come out and support this Man Of God by song, praises and monetary donation.

We will also be selling fish plates from 12:30 until .
Call for more details
Thank You
Calhoun/Yalobusha Outreach.
6628005929

Church Announcement for Zion Grove M.B. Church

Everyone is invited to Zion Grove M.B. Church located at 2441 County Road 471, Coffeeville, MS for revival July 20-22, 2026, starting at 7:00 p.m. each night.

The guest speaker each night will be as follows:
Monday night - Pastor T.K. Townsend, Pleasant Grove M.B. Church, Coffeeville, MS; Tuesday Night - Pastor Eugene Love, Oak Hill M.B. Church, Coffeeville, MS; and Wednesday Night - Pastor Grady McKinney, Parish Grove M.B. Church, Oakland, MS

The Zion Grove M.B. Church family would enjoy and appreciate your presence and support during this revival.



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SESSIONS:

- READING STRATEGIES
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JULY 9TH
5:30 - 7:30 PM

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LOCATION:
FCM THE LIFE CENTER
(14273 Main St
Coffeeville, MS 38922)

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