

At Ridgewood, we are nothing more than real people living in a real world serving a real God.

February 2, 2025

Ridgewood
CHURCH

Here are things that may be different from your previous church experiences:

No Age-Graded Ministries | All God's people - from infants to the elderly - are needed in relationships with each other. We worship together as one big family - the family of God.

Children are Welcome and Encouraged in the Worship Gathering
It is the parent's duty to train their children to participate in corporate worship, including singing, tithing, prayer, and active listening to the teaching of the Word of God. (Deut 31:12-13, Ezra 10:1, Matt 18:1-5, 19:13-15, Eph 6:1-4, Col 3:20) As part of this training process, children may make small noises in the service. These are a reminder "to such belong the Kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14). However, we also have the "Genesis Room" at the far end of the hall set up with video and audio feed for your convenience if you feel your child needs more attention.

We Partake in the Lord's Supper Weekly | We ask that the elements only be taken by professing, baptized believers who are in a good standing with their local church. (Acts 2:42-47, 1 Corinthians 11:23-24)

We Practice Systematic Exposition | The Bible is God's word and is our final authority in all matters of faith and practice. The music is prayerfully selected based on each week's text of Scripture. (Acts 2:42-47, Colossians 3:16)

Weekly Fellowship Meal | Families of Ridgewood have brought food for their own household and extra to share with visitors. Fellowship is one way we endeavor to 'encourage one another' in our Christian walk. (Acts 2:42-47, Hebrews 10:24-25)

Use this Bulletin Throughout the Week as a Home Worship Guide

God has called you to disciple your household. He has also called His church to encourage, equip, and expect you to disciple your household. Use this bulletin as a home-worship guide throughout the week.

The song of the month is a great place to start with family worship. The prayer guide is a tool designed to guide you and your family in prayer. The catechism/doctrine and home devotions are wonderful discipleship tools for everyone, especially for children of all ages. If you have any questions, the fellowship meal is a great time to get help and encouragement from others. That's what we are here for!

True Life Cards | We encourage you to pick up some True Life Cards in the foyer and give out a few every week. Pray for an opportunity of Gospel conversation with and the salvation of people in the following categories: Family, Friends, Neighbors, Coworkers, Community. Go to truelife.org for more information.

Announcements:

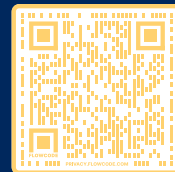
- » Wednesday Night Bible Study @ 6p Resumes February 12
 - Wednesday Night Bible Study will resume on Wednesday, 2/12 with a study on the Doctrine of the Church.
- » Night to Shine SETX 2/7/25 - THIS WEEK
 - No Work Night or Activity this Wednesday
 - TODAY - NTS Set-Up in Gym after Fellowship Luncheon
 - TODAY - Special Volunteer Training, 1-2:30p
- » Operating:
 - Please remember to be faithful in your tithes and offerings (2 Cor. 9:6-7)
 - Offering plates are at the back of the auditorium, or text "\$amount" to 409-239-0774
 - Annual Meeting Agenda:
 1. 2025 Budget Approval
 2. Leadership Affirmation: Elders: Paul Gerstenberg, David Gillespie, Dustin Guidry, James Roberts
Deacons: Cody Abshire, Jeff Book, Jonathan Breaux, Mark Davis, Brian Hill, Bennie Smith
Treasurers: Sarah Breaux, Bridget Phillips (Clerk), Shon Williamson
Trustees: Brandon Roberts, Bennie Smith, Jonathan Williams

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Our Purpose... To Belong to Christ

Our Mission... To Become like Christ

Our Vision... To Bear Christ's Fruit



Welcome Guests!



Order of Service: February 2, 2025

Sermon Notes:

Song "His Mercy is More"

Welcome

Catechism/Responsorial - Doctrine - God Revealed in Scripture

- 14. Where do you learn how to love and obey God? In the Bible alone.
- 15. Who wrote the Bible? Holy men who were taught by the Holy Spirit.

Memory Verse: 2 Peter 1:21 "For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

Pray for our Church Body (James 5:16)

Brandon & Haley Thurman Family

Pray for Kings and Those in Authority (1 Timothy 2:2)

Local | Ronald Burton | Port Arthur City Manager
State | Dan Patrick | Lieutenant Governor
National | J.D. Vance | Vice President

Pray for the Great Commission (Luke 10:2)

New Testament Scripture

Hebrews 3:1-15, page 1002

Songs

- "A Mighty Fortress"
- "Only a Holy God"
- "Yet Not I, But Christ in Me"

Old Testament Scripture

Exodus 2, page 45

Baptism

Home Worship Song of the Month | scan QR code for lyrics/video

"Come Behold the Wondrous Mystery" by Matt Pappa,
Matt Boswell - 2013

Message

Woe to Hard Hearts - Part 3 | Matthew 23:29-36, page 829

Confession/Repentance

Lord's Supper

"Come Ye Sinners"

Dismissal/Offering

"Doxology"

Fellowship Luncheon

Please join us in the gym for fellowship and food!



UNIT 1 – SECTION 5

God Revealed in Scripture

QUESTIONS TO LEARN:

- 14. Where do you learn how to love and obey God?**
In the Bible alone.
- 15. Who wrote the Bible?**
Holy men who were taught by the Holy Spirit.

* * *

For a time in Israel's history, God's people lost his Word. Judah's high priest, Hilkiyah, would have seen the effects of this loss on their hearts and behavior. With the Scriptures again in hand, the Jews learned—as did the seventeenth century English pastor and writer John Bunyan in the second story—that without knowledge of what the Bible teaches, we unwittingly violate God's commands and ignore his promises. Only with such knowledge can we ever hope to understand what it means to love and obey God.

Gift Amongst the Rubble

Tightly clutching the note he had just received, Hilkiah sped through the outer rooms of the Temple to his chamber. He was Judah's high priest, and he dared to hope that this letter was another of young King Josiah's proclamations to cleanse the nation of all worship of false gods.

"How could these disobedient Jews think that a doll carved out of stone or wood, or even cast in gold, could work miracles for them or answer their prayers?" Hilkiah wondered, shaking his head in disgust and sadness. "And how could they actually bring themselves to worship Asherah poles, while they turn their backs on the living God Almighty who has real authority over all creation?"

But Hilkiah knew only too well why they did such things. One of the main reasons was that they had forgotten much of what God had commanded them. Centuries before, God had instructed their forefathers in how to lead righteous and productive lives that were pleasing to him. He had presented these commands to Moses, who wrote them down and then read them to the Jewish people before they crossed the Jordan River and entered the Promised Land that God had given them.

To Joshua, who actually led the people into the Promised Land, God had commanded further: *"Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."* The "Book of the Law" was the portion of the Bible that existed at that time.

"If only we had obeyed this command," Hilkiah sighed. Instead the people had lost or disregarded the Book of the Law over and over throughout the generations. And in part because they did not know it to obey it, they repeatedly violated God's commands that were written in it, most especially his command not to worship any other gods. As far as Hilkiah knew, all copies of the Book of the Law were lost or hidden away, none having been seen during his lifetime.

"Lord, please give us your words again so we will know how to please you," Hilkiah whispered in prayer as he ripped open the letter and read the following order from King Josiah: "Hilkiah, now that we have purged Judah of high places, Asherah poles, carved idols and cast images,

I'm sending you my men to help purify the temple of God. I know you will receive this news joyfully. Your faithful friend—Josiah."

With all his heart Hilkiah worked side by side with the king's men over the next few months to restore the temple of God. It had been looted and misused during the reigns of several recent kings of Judah whose riches had gone to building altars to false gods and paying the salaries of wicked men who called themselves priests of those gods.

One day Hilkiah was working alone in a secluded corner of the temple, removing debris from where a portion of the wall had fallen in. Thinking he saw a leather flap of some kind just beneath one of the stones balanced on the edge of the hole, he heaved the stone onto the pile of debris and gazed upon the object now exposed—a parchment scroll.

Trembling, Hilkiah picked up the scroll and gently unrolled the first few inches. There, at the very top, it read, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. . . .*"

He hugged the scroll to his chest and stood for a long moment with his eyes shut tight. "Oh Lord God, all-knowing, faithful and merciful, you have answered my prayer! Thank you for your provision."

Hilkiah could barely contain himself. He rushed to the king's secretary, Shaphan, who was overseeing the restoration of the temple. "*I have found the Book of the Law. You must take it to the king immediately,*" Hilkiah urged him, handing him the scroll.

Shaphan did as Hilkiah asked and read the book to King Josiah. After Josiah heard God's commands and realized how seriously he and his people had violated them, he tore his clothes and fell to the floor weeping. The king repented of these sins, and by reading the Book of the Law to his people, he led them into repentance as well. During King Josiah's reign, the people of Judah stored God's Word in their hearts and obeyed it, and during this time God held back from them the punishment he would soon bring against his chosen people because of their many centuries of disobedience. The Holy Spirit thereafter led the Lord's prophets to record this story in the books of Kings and Chronicles to ensure that future generations could learn of the importance of God's Word.

Taken from 2 Kings 22-23; 2 Chronicles 34-35; Joshua 1:7b-8.

FROM THE BIBLE:

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 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. (Deuteronomy 6:5-7)

For it is no empty word for you, but your very life, . . . (Deuteronomy 32:47a)

And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:19-21)

TALKING IT OVER:

- 1. Why was it so important for the people in the story to have God's commands written down where they could read them frequently?*
- 2. When they had lost God's written commands, how did the Jewish people behave?*
- 3. When Josiah had God's commands, how did he respond?*
- 4. What do you think your life would be like without God's Word?*

The Professor, the Washerwomen and the Preacher

Three hundred years ago, in a tiny village in the English countryside, God began to prick the conscience of a young man named John Bunyan. On this sunny summer afternoon, John had tired of the repair work he did to support his family, and had gone in search of something more exciting. Soon he came upon his friend Tom in the churchyard. Tom called himself a "professor," because he professed to be a Christian.

The two made their way to the belfry to ring the church bells, a favorite pastime of villagers who were putting off doing their work. While they took turns pulling the coarse, heavy ropes to coax the bells back and forth, Tom told John about the exciting stories he had read in his Bible. Tom talked so pleasantly about the Scriptures, in fact, that John soon spent all his evenings poring through the Old Testament for himself, reading about Moses and David and Daniel, and all the other brave and righteous men that God had used thousands of years before to accomplish his purposes.

Seeing that his own behavior fell far short of these men of God, John began to imitate them in every way he could think of. He stopped cursing and swearing and even left off bell ringing and got busy with his repair work. After a time, John had changed so much that the other villagers began to think him a very fine fellow. This opinion he shared.

One morning as John traveled to nearby Bedford to do some repairs, he fell into his newfound habit of musing about how pleased God must surely be with him. While in that state, he came upon several poor women talking about the Bible as they took a short rest from their work. He drew near, aiming perhaps to shed a little light on their understanding of that holy book.

"When Pastor preached last Sabbath from Paul's letter to Rome, I thought my own wretchedness would weigh my soul down to the grave. My own righteous works were but dirt in his sight," related a stout, gray-haired woman, waving two rough, grimy hands. The others smiled and nodded their agreement with this pronouncement.

Surprised by such a humble admission, John looked from one calm face to the next, and was just about to set them all straight on the matter of personal righteousness, when a young woman said, "Thanks be to God for the mercy and grace he has shown us through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus!" And with that, she whisked her skirts around her in glee. The

other ladies clapped their hands for joy, and the one with dirty hands gave a hearty, "Amen!"

John listened as they talked of Satan's many attacks on them, and their resulting discouragement. But then, each one eagerly took a turn telling how God had borne her up under these temptations and given her strength to believe.

John soon realized that he had no wisdom of his own to offer on these subjects. All the way home he pondered the women's conversation and determined that he would go to hear for himself what the Bedford pastor had to say.

Returning from one of Bedford services, John met up with his old friend Tom the professor, who was bubbling over about a new group he had joined called the Ranters.

"Are these Ranters a holy group?" asked John.

"Why, to be sure, John. All the professors I know are turning to the teachings of the Ranters," Tom assured him.

"But the Ranters I know of have been accused of drunkenness, swearing and all manner of uncleanness," exclaimed John.

Tom laughed. "You are so straight and narrow, my friend. This new teaching reveals to us how we can do what we want and yet not sin."

"How's that?" asked John a little nervously.

"If we have the light of God in us, then doesn't it follow that whatever we do is really God's doing because he's in us?"

John considered this, then asked, "Does that mean you are always righteous, Tom?"

"To be sure, John. I do what I will, and trust that God's a leadin' me. Many a religion I have tasted, and only now have found the right."

"This teaching has an appeal to my senses," John confessed, worried.

"John, you are young yet! Do you think you will subdue your young passions? Live a life of freedom! Meet us at the barn north of town for the service tonight, and we'll bring you along."

"I'll consider it Tom," John said as he walked away, thinking about how nice it would be to do whatever he wanted and not have to worry about whether he was displeasing God. But the idea scared him too, and he went home and got on his knees:

O Lord, I am a fool, and not able to know the truth from error; Lord leave me not to my own blindness, either to approve of, or condemn this doctrine; if it be of God, let me not despise it; if it be of the devil,

let me not embrace it. Lord, I lay my soul, in this matter, only at thy foot, let me not be deceived, I humbly beseech thee.⁴

Then John began to read his Bible—all of it. He read all afternoon, all evening while the Ranters were meeting, and throughout the night. He kept reading and meditating on God's words whenever he could for days and weeks.

God answered John's prayer and showed him that Tom was wrong. The Ranters were teaching and living in a way that Scriptures condemned, and John soon understood that following the Ranters would be loving himself rather than loving God. The only way John could love and obey God was to know and follow God's teaching in the Bible. John Bunyan always remembered this lesson, and sought to shape his life wholly around the teaching of Scripture.

Later in John's life, God showed John that he'd been given the gift of preaching the Word. John read in Scripture that he was to practice the gifts God gave him, and so he preached even when the authorities told him to stop in 1660. He refused to disobey God even when the authorities threatened to put him in jail unless he stopped preaching. And for 12 years he sat in prison, studying the Bible, trusting its truth and writing books that would teach many others how to love and obey God.

FROM THE BIBLE:

You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you. (Deuteronomy 4:2)

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, . . . (2 Timothy 3:16)

TALKING IT OVER:

1. *Although John Bunyan wanted to please God, at first he didn't know how to. Why didn't he know how to please God? How and when did he learn how to?*
2. *When someone told John Bunyan how to act in order to please God, what did he do? What should you do if someone tells you to do something that they claim will please God?*
3. *Did God leave anything out of the Bible that we need to know in order to love and obey him? (See Deuteronomy 4:2.)*