



# Richland Baptist Association Newsletter

January 2024

From Your Director of Missions (D.O.M.):

Happy New Year! A time of new beginnings. Many people will make New Year's Resolutions, some will keep them while most won't. There is one resolution, a promise to our Lord, that each of us should make and keep and that is to be more faithful to our Lord in all aspects of our life.

As we begin the year 2024, let us spend more time reading God's Word and spending more time in prayer. If we do those two things on a daily basis, our walk with Christ will certainly grow to be more like him and our faithfulness in all things will increase.

I want to challenge our pastors and church families throughout the Richland Baptist Association to make more disciples for Christ and to baptize new believers. There is an urgency to lead as many to Christ as possible because the time of our Lord's return gets nearer each day. Only the Father knows when our Master will return for His Bride. God's Word tells us to be ready at any moment and to be faithful in all things so that when He comes, He will find us watching and faithful. My prayer is that each church will experience the greatest year in service to our Lord, seeing the fruits of their labor and honoring and glorifying our Father and our Lord.

I cherish your love and prayers as we encourage, advise and assist each of you. Our goal is to begin some new ministries that you will prayerfully consider supporting and partnering with us on. Also, we will be repeating special events this coming year that you seem to enjoy attending and being a part of that special time together.

I ask you to begin now praying for our Senior Saint revival in March and our Simultaneous Revival in October. Pray also for our churches without pastors that God will send someone to love, lead and pastor them. Presently we have six (6) churches without pastors. Pray for God to raise up men to preach the Good news as the amount of pastors in churches throughout our state and country are in short supply. Truly the fields are white unto harvest but the laborers are few.

What a privilege I have ahead of me in continuing to serve you. You are truly one of my Greatest Blessings!

Johnny

## Upcoming Events for the Month of January 2024

- Jan. 01: Happy New Year!
- Jan. 11: Pastor and Staff Conference and Luncheon 11 AM @ Big John's
- Jan. 21: Sanctity of Human Life Sunday
- Jan. 21: Richland Association Pulpit Exchange
- Jan. 22-23: LBC Evangelism Conference @ Temple in Ruston

## Upcoming Events for the Month of February 2024

- Feb. 02-03: College Evangelism Conference, Louisiana Christian University
- Feb. 08: Pastor's/Staff Conference @ Big John's 11AM
- Feb. 09-10: Pastors/Wives Pause Retreat @ Tall Timbers
- Feb. 19: Presidents' Day
- Feb. 29: Richland Men's Retreat @ Ranch Place

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## Opportunities to Serve

- Pastor: Bethel Baptist  
First Baptist Rayville  
Lone Cherry Baptist  
Newton Baptist  
Westside  
Zebedee
- Music Minister: First Baptist Archibald
- Youth Minister: Alto Baptist

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*\*If you have a need in your church, please let us know and we will post it in the Monthly Newsletter.*

# Something to Think About...

Recently this passage was brought to my recollection during those last moments of waking up and semi-lucid dreams:

27 Can a man embrace fire and his clothes not be burned?

28 Can a man walk on burning coals without scorching his feet?

**-Proverbs 6:27-28 HCSB**

These are a pair of rhetorical questions that are posed by the wise teacher/father in Proverbs. Of course the obvious answer is a resounding NO! The discussion continues to take this idea of embracing fire as allegory for the sin of adultery and/or sexual immorality. However, rather than focusing on just that one particular sin, my thoughts were drawn to the area of effect of the sin.

The first question speaks of clothing. While our modern world provides “exceptions to the rule” like the “fireproof” protective clothing of firefighters and stuntmen, the general truth remains that you cannot come into close contact with fire or heat without enduring some level of damage to what you bring with you to the fire. Clothing within the whole counsel of scripture also speaks as an image of one’s righteousness (borrowed as ours is this side of the new covenant) or witness before a watching world. So in a greater sense, while one may slip away from physical consequences of sin in their own body, they most certainly will marr or disfigure their “outer garments” of righteousness and a witness before the watching world. Haven’t we seen this truth played out at the national stage with some prominent pastors in the Southern Baptist Convention in recent years? I would dare say the implication then is that even if our sin hasn’t gone on long or strongly enough to injure us personally, it has an effect on us that will affect others around us.

The second question speaks of walking on burning coals and hurting one’s feet. I know I spoke of righteousness and alluded to Christ’s borrowed righteousness as our outer garment in the earlier question, but this second question would lead us to see a living organism not clad with the armor of God. If they will walk on burning coals, they will not have their feet shod with the gospel of peace as they go! So we can assume that in the first question, neither did they have on the breastplate of righteousness. But let’s dig a little deeper into this hurting one’s feet by walking on burning coals. Once again there is a sense in which the duration of staying in and continuing to embrace the fire or stand on the coals will exponentially increase the level of damage done and consequences endured. I know we have all seen or heard of the legends of the swamis and gurus doing “firewalks” and not getting burned (I even think there was a Mythbusters episode about that or at least Ripley’s Believe It or Not). However, for the common untrained person casually walking across a bed of coals, they are going to endure some damage to their feet.

Initially, the passage was solely directed to an individual as an expression of how sin will always have an effect on a person for a more general universal application. Later in scripture, the church is compared to a body and that our interrelatedness means that what happens to one part of that body affects the others. So if we expand that to sin affecting the “feet” of our church, isn’t that pain going to be felt throughout the whole body? Anybody ever stub a toe in the darkness or perhaps deal with the morning aches of plantar fasciitis or a bone spur? It’s pretty hard in that moment of pain to really effectively do much of anything but respond to the immediate pain in the body. Brings me to my final question: What sins embraced or evils walked in are destroying the witness of and resounding waves of pain throughout the body of your local church?

- Jonathan Young

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