



# HILLSIDE MONTHLY DISPATCH

Hillside Baptist Church, Pembroke, NH

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Modeling the Truth of God's Word

May 2020

## GROW IN MATURITY OF FAITH

### From the Pastor's Desk

#### Allowing Christ to Prune Us for Maturity

James 1:2-4

Just the other day I tackled a small landscaping job in front of the parsonage. There is a wall made of large rocks that had overgrown vegetation in which was a mix of delicious black raspberry vines with gnarly prickly vines. To boot, the local woodchuck took many pieces of old sticks and built up a fortification around his entrance that even the Army Corps of Engineers would be proud of. It has been years since I have done anything with the overgrowth. Because of the neglect, the two types of vines had melded into a large briar patch of pain to anyone who dared to stick their hand anywhere near it. I know, I tried last year and paid the price.

In years past, we just let both vines grow wild and it has produced a plethora of berries to enjoy, but eventually the vine, like kudzu, overtook the berries and choked them out last year. So this year I decided to approach the whole matter with a "scorched earth" mentality and obliterated the whole thing. No playing around with it this time, the entire patch needed to be completely removed. FYI, the stuff was so dry that I contemplated getting some lighter fluid and thought of torching the thing, but I thought the better of it and ripped out the whole patch with my bare hands and some large shears. What followed? Two days of some not-so-fun aches and pains.

In case you are wondering, I'm not worried about the berries not coming back or that I may have destroyed the potential of more berries in years to come. The reason why I am not worried is that years ago one of my nephews needed to earn some community service points for high school and I accidentally told him to clear off the rocks of all branches not knowing at that time that they were black raspberry vines. He dutifully took care of the task and wouldn't you know it the next year they grew back with a vengeance.

As I consider that briar patch of vines, thorns, and sticks, it reminds me of the way our lives are in our Christian walk. Our very hearts and lives is much like the briar patch in that we have some good moments (the berries) and some bad moments (thorns) that are comingled together. As these two aspects of our lives collide, they bind together in such a way that it becomes the make-up of our beings which we learn to embrace together.

### Upcoming Events and Meetings

#### May. 2, 8:00 a.m. – Men's Breakfast

This event has been cancelled.

#### May. 3, 10:45 a.m. – Lord's Supper

#### May. 25 – Memorial Day

A day to remember our fallen military heroes

#### Weekly:

#### Sundays at 9:30 a.m. – Sunday School and Bible Discussion

#### Sundays at 10:45 a.m. – Worship Service

#### Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m. – Weekly Bible Study

To add to this, we take up the dead sticks (painful and disappointing memories) in our lives and use them to fortify ourselves so that nothing can get past our defenses in the hope that we will never be vulnerable to difficulties in life that may try to overtake us. And though we are saved in Christ, it is human nature to try and make it on our own energy and resources in the hopes that our Lord will help us along the way, all the while allowing the briar patch to grow larger.

However, Jesus is the master gardener who desires to come alongside you and not allow the chaotic nature of a briar patch develop within your heart and mind. Instead, He wants us to think of every event in our lives as a source of potential growth – good and bad. That is why we are told in James 1:2 "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds." (ESV) Thus if we approach both good and bad moments in our lives not in a manner of defense, but in a heart of acceptance and expectation, we will see that the Lord will come along pruning us and removing the dead sticks from our lives enabling us to embrace all that He has for us.

The Bible tells us here that as Christians, we are to have joy in the difficult times because each event in life is a teachable

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On the web at <http://www.hillside-sbc.org>

### Pastor's Desk (from p. 1)

moment from God that we then can embrace. Why? Because we are told in James 1:3-4 says "For you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." (ESV)

With the Apostles' writing, we see that both triumphs and trials are ordained to exist in our lives, for no life is one of complete good moments or bad, but in all the things that happen to us, we are to consider them pure joy and allow Jesus to come along and prune us so that we develop a steadfast nature about us. Why does He painstakingly do such work? To produce in us a maturity that lacks nothing in character or personhood.

I know that it is hard to consider the difficult moments of life as something to be one of joy, especially during the current pandemic of COVID-19, but even in these bleak times of uncertainty and pain, the Lord is right now pruning you into a mature person. Hard times are not pleasurable, and that is why James doesn't tell us to be happy. Instead he tells us to have joy. What is joy? It is a fruit of the Spirit that enables us to see the Lord's divine hand in all matters and accept that no matter what comes our way we will trust and abide in Him, that we are in the center of His will during difficult times for we know it is in those times He does His greatest work in us.

Let me encourage you today not to fret over that which you cannot control. Right now there are a lot of things happening around us such as an economic downturn, loss of income, potential job loss, lack of resources such as food and other necessities, isolation, sickness, and yes, even death But we are the people of God and He will sustain us and care for us during these trying times. Through every trial, through every tribulation, through every frustration, through every fear, lean on the Lord and receive His joy to help you thrive during the trials of life so that you can be the witness for Christ that He intends you to be in the midst of this current trial. It is the joy of the Lord that will enable you to accept all trials as a means to grow in maturity of faith, as a means to grow closer to Him.

God Bless,  
✠ Pastor Jim

### Men's Breakfast

The May 2nd Men's Breakfast has been canceled due to the ongoing virus pandemic. We hope and pray that June provides a more favorable opportunity to meet.

### Property and Space Patrol

Snowing is gone and the grass is growing.

Pretty soon it will time for mowing.

There's a little poem for you.

If you can help with the mowing, please give me a call.

✠ Pastor Al

## New, Looser Corona Virus Guidelines for New Hampshire

On Friday May 1st, Governor Sununu released new, looser guidelines that take effect on several dates in May.

WMUR.com reported the following.

"Outdoor seating at restaurants, drive-in theaters, golf and haircuts will be allowed -- under strict guidelines -- under a new stay-at-home order issued Friday by Gov. Chris Sununu.

"Campgrounds, manufacturing services, and state parks can open immediately if they follow the guidelines.

"Golf courses, barbers, and hair salons, retail stores and drive-in theaters can open May 11, under certain conditions.

"Restaurants can begin serving customers May 18 in outdoor dining areas, as long as tables allow parties to sit at least 6 feet apart, among other conditions.

"Time-sensitive hospital services can begin as soon as Monday May 4.

"All retail establishments can reopen May 11."

One missing topic was places of worship, so you are probably expected to stay away or attend services via a streaming web service if available. There have been protests across the country that this restriction violates the First Amendment freedom of religion clause.

The full news story is available from [WMUR.com](http://WMUR.com).

Official New Hampshire Stay-at-Home 2.0 Reopening Guidance documents are available from [the Governor's site](http://theGovernor's.site).

## Memorial Day 2020

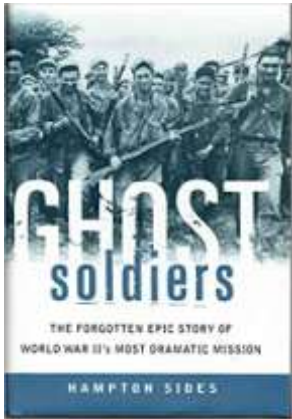
Memorial Day is an American holiday, observed on the last Monday of May, honoring the men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military. This year Memorial Day occurs on Monday, May 25.

Originally known as Decoration Day, it originated in the years following the Civil War and became an official federal holiday in 1971.

Many Americans observe Memorial Day by visiting cemeteries or memorials, holding family gatherings and participating in parades. Unofficially, it marks the beginning of the summer season.



## Remember the Ghost Soldiers



On a visit to the Goodwill store in Concord back in February, I scanned the used book shelves for something interesting. I picked up a book entitled, *Ghost Soldiers, The Epic Account of World War II's Greatest Rescue Mission*.

It recounts the experiences of the U.S. and Filipinos soldiers who were defeated at the Battle of Bataan in the Philippines in April 1942, endured the Bataan Death March, survived three

years of brutal captivity, and were finally rescued by Army Rangers and Filipino guerillas in January 1945.

This Memorial Day, it is fitting to remember and thank God for the 2,656 Americans who died at Cabanatuan Camp. A memorial wall of white marble erected on that site bears their names.

## Jesus and the Bigger Story

The following story comes from the *Our Daily Bread* devotional booklet for December 14, 2019. For starters, read Ruth 4:13-17 to get the background story.

13 So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife, and he went in to her. And the Lord enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. 14 Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed is the Lord who has not left you without a redeemer today, and may his name become famous in Israel. 15 May he also be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him."

16 Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her lap, and became his nurse. 17 The neighbor women gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi!" So they named him Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

A generous friend offered to babysit our kids so my wife and I could go on a date. "You should go somewhere fancy!" she gushed. Being practical people, we decided to go grocery shopping instead. When we returned, grocery bags in arms, our friend asked why we hadn't done anything special. We told her that what makes a date special isn't so much what you do, but who you're with.

One of the few books of the Bible that doesn't record God directly saying or doing anything, the book of Ruth could seem to be pretty ordinary. So some read it as a touching but largely human drama of two people coming together in a relationship.

But in truth, something extraordinary is taking place. In the final chapter of Ruth, we read that Ruth and Boaz's union results in a son named Obed, the grandfather of David (4:17). And as we read in Matthew 1:1, it's from David's

family that Jesus was born. It's Jesus who unveils the ordinary story of Ruth and Boaz and reveals the extraordinary story of God's amazing plans and purposes at work.

So often we see our own lives in the same way: as ordinary and serving no special purpose. But when we view our lives through Christ, He gives eternal significance to even the most ordinary situations and relationships.

✠ Peter Chin, ODB Writer

## Hidden Books of the Bible

Cynthia Ward sent in this intriguing puzzle.

No, this is not an article about a new archeological discovery but a grammatical puzzle to test your deciphering skills. In the following paragraph, there are 16 names of books of the Bible. As part of your sleuthing, here is a hint: ignore any kind of punctuation. The names are not all that obvious.

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I once made a remark about the hidden books of the Bible. It was a fluke. Kept people looking so hard for facts and for others it was a revelation. Some were in a jam, especially since the names of the books were not capitalized. But the truth finally struck home to numbers of readers. To others, it was a real job. We want it to be a most fascinating few moments for you. Yes, there will be some really easy ones to spot. Others may require judges to help them. I will quickly admit it usually takes a minister to find one of them, and there will be loud lamentations when it is found. One little lady says she brews a cup of tea, so she can concentrate better. See how well you can compete. Relax now for there are really sixteen names of books of the Bible in this story.

## Tune in to Gospel Radio

In the Concord area, get more of God's Word by tuning into New Hampshire Gospel Radio at 99.1 FM or 104.3 FM. For example, on Saturday nights at 6 p.m. the locally produced "Saturday Night Gospel Hour" offers a wide variety of southern and country gospel music. During the week, tune into well known speakers such as Alistair Begg, Chuck Swindoll, Dr. David Jeremiah, and Dr. Jim Daly.

Learn more at <http://www.nhgr.org/>.

## Birthdays and Anniversaries



Hillside wishes a happy, happy, happy birthday to the following people who are celebrating another orbit around the Sun:

5/22 Rachel Page

5/26 Michael Frascinella



Hillside also wishes God's blessing on any people who will celebrate a wedding anniversary this month. If that's you, please let us know.

### Prayer Requests

If you need us to pray for a physical, spiritual, financial, marital, or other need, contact Pastor Jim, Pastor Al, or Michael Frascinella and they will get the word out to the membership. It is our duty and privilege to lift you up in prayer to Jesus Christ our Lord.

### Hillside on the Web

Go to the Hillside web site <http://www.hillside-sbc.org/> for more information about our fellowship, including this newsletter in PDF format.

### Submissions for Next Issue

Deadline is May 25. Send news items to News Wrangler and Editor, Michael Frascinella, mfrascinella at comcast dot net.



Hillside Baptist Church is a member of the New Hampshire Baptist Association, part of the Southern Baptist Convention.



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