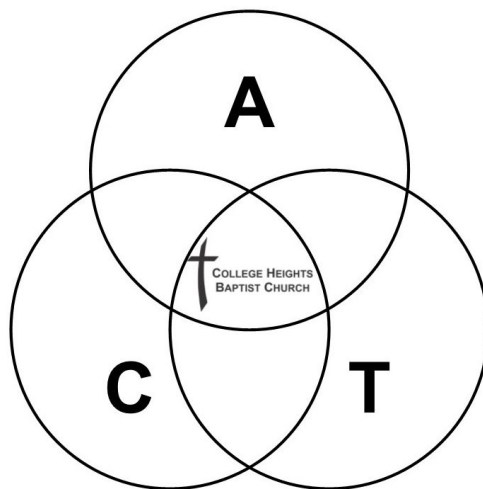


**COLLEGE HEIGHTS
BAPTIST CHURCH**

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ACT?



Daily Scripture Readings for
September 16 - October 6

What do we do at College Heights?

We ACT!

Dear Church Family:

This group of Daily Scripture Readings is part of the completion of nine months worth of work from the Long Range Planning Committee. I would like to give my sincerest appreciation to Rex, Janie, Amber, and Michael for their commitment to this process this year. These next three weeks will focus on the mission and vision that has developed out of prayer and discussion in the Long Range Planning Committee. In short, the mission of the church never changes. It comes straight from the Bible and will be timeless forever. The vision is how we take the scripture and explain it for our community, our mission field. You will start to hear the verb “ACT” as short-hand for College Heights’ mission. ACT is an acronym for Apply Yourself, Create Community, and Tell Others. We are calling for every member of College Heights to ACT. The readings and sermons that develop from these passages will help explain what that means. So College Heights...are you ready to ACT?

In Christ’s Love,

Pastor Josh

WEEK 1: ACT - APPLY YOURSELF

Monday, September 16 - Micah 6:8

This verse summarizes the mission of the church. I believe that the statement that the Lord requires seeking justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God must be at the forefront of our minds constantly. If we can summarize this verse even more, I think what it tells us to do is to ACT.

College Heights Baptist Church is not a building; it is not an entity that only meets three times a week. CHBC is a group of Christians devoted to God and to each other to serve God, serve one another, and serve others. Churches do not just meet and do programs. Churches ACT. Churches seek justice for all, love to give mercy to those in need, and walk with God knowing that God is the boss not you.

One commentator wrote that this verse concisely summarizes one hundred years of prophecy during Micah's time. These three things are required by the Lord. It is also important to note what is not said in Micah 6:8. What are some of the things we think the Lord requires, but they aren't? Nothing in these three ACTions suggests a worship service, but it reminds me of Romans 12:1-2 discussing being a living sacrifice and that ACTion being your ACT of worship. Nothing in these words suggests consistently evangelizing with your words, but it does remind me of how Jesus lived his life looking out for others while also teaching. Maybe the way we see the church is not what God intended. Maybe what God requires is what the Bible says in Micah 6:8: seek justice, love mercy, walk humbly with God. And it is to those ACTions you need to Apply Yourself.

Tuesday, September 17 - Matthew 4:18-22

What does Apply Yourself mean? It means be completely devoted to the work of God. Not kinda devoted. Not devoted when it's convenient. But wholly devoted to God always. What did the disciples do when they were called? Does it say that they went home to say goodbye or got their affairs in order and then followed Jesus? Does it say they followed Jesus when they didn't have to work? No. They immediately left to go. That is how you can apply yourself. Verse 22 shows us the level of commitment necessary to follow Christ. James and John left their boat and father. The two most popular excuses people have for not committing to Jesus and the work of Jesus on this earth (i.e. church) are work and family. Both are left in order to pursue Christ. That is the level of application we must have when following Christ. Being willing to abandon work and family in order to do the

will of God is necessary. To put those important facets of life below following Christ and doing his work is our call. Are you ACTing on that call? Have you fully applied yourself? Pray for God to give you the dedication to Him that allows you to abandon all else to serve God alone.

Wednesday, September 18 - Hebrews 12:25-13:9, 20-21

We will finish our study on Hebrews tonight with the author of Hebrews imploring us to not resist God's call to living faithful lives. Too often, we think we have everything figured out. Everything is planned out. All is fine. We don't need God to help us because we are doing just fine on our own. Let us not fall into that habit. Let us remember to faithfully follow God in all times and not be self-reliant.

Thursday, September 19 - 1 Peter 1:13-16; James 2:14-17

When it comes to our faith in God, there needs to be a balance between the commands seen in the two passages today. First Peter tells us to be holy, to be set apart. James tells us to work and show our faith. It feels as if it is difficult to stay blameless or unstained by the world and also be the hands and feet of Jesus by serving in an environment where the spiritual dirt and grime can stain us. This paradox may remind you of the phrase "be in the world, but not of the world." It is my opinion that while Christians say that phrase, they are much more "not of the world" than "in the world." We must apply ourselves to the cause of Christ by being ACTIVE in our local body of Christ (College Heights) in order to serve our community. The church cannot effectively serve one another or others if the body (the church) is missing body parts. It takes all of us preparing for ACTION and consistently putting our faith into ACTION. Are you applying yourself to College Heights Baptist Church?

Friday, September 20 - Joshua 24:14-28

Today's devotion will be short and sweet. It's time to choose. Are you in or are you out? That's the message Joshua is telling the people of Israel.

That's the message I need to be brave enough to ask you. Are you committed to the work of College Heights? Or are your commitments elsewhere? Let this be the day you choose. Church work is hard work. Be careful of the decision you make. As Joshua (not me) might say "I don't know if you can do it" (24:19). God does not accept half-hearted obedience. You cannot almost apply yourself. So are you in or are you out? Are you committed or is it time to do something else? Choose this day whom you will serve.

Saturday, September 21 - Ephesians 3:20-21

Because we delayed discussing being spiritually healthy last week, we will still be talking about not being a micromanager tomorrow night. Micromanaging is not trusting God. This passage explains what God can do. God can do so much more than we can. Give him control.

Sunday, September 22 - Psalm 19:7-10

Read these promises of who God is and prepare your hearts to worship that God today.

WEEK 2: A.C.T. - CREATE COMMUNITY

Monday, September 23 - Isaiah 58:6-7

A church is not a building. Our faith is not built on ritual but ACTION. These verses today are another example from the prophets of Israel that God does not just want us at church or going through the motions of religion. God is not all that interested in thoughts, prayers, fasting, or Bible study if it doesn't motivate us to do the work necessary. To be very blunt: God doesn't really care if you go to church on Sunday if Christ isn't living through you on Monday-Saturday. Read through the different ACTIONS found in these two verses. How are you participating in this work that God desires? This is what the church needs to do.

This week, we will focus on creating community as we ACT. How can you work together and create community by serving others? Allow me to give you an example. I have only been on one mission trip in my life. I truly wish it were more, but God has not opened those doors yet. Seven years ago I went to Guatemala with 20 other people. We all went to church together, but didn't really know each other until that week. All ages of people with different upbringing, but with a common goal for the week. We came together to serve others, and it was a fantastic week of hard work. To this day, I have nothing outside of this trip and a relationship with Christ in common with some of them, and we are friends. That is the power of serving others. The benefits far exceed the immediate physical and spiritual needs. It creates community forever.

Tuesday, September 24 - Acts 4:32-35

Was the early church socialist? Well, now that I've got your attention, let's start the devotion for the day. This passage summarizes how the early church in Acts operated. In summary, the church ACTed as one family, as one body working together for the common good among them. Do you want to create community at College Heights? Doing what the early church did is part of the solution. When one person has a problem, all of us have a problem. When one of us has a need, another person takes care of the need. When one of us celebrates an accomplishment, all of us celebrate. Having one heart and soul (i.e. the Holy Spirit leading them in unity) was what led the church in Acts to do incredible work. In Acts 2:43-47, there is a similar passage to this one and it ends by emphasizing that "daily" people were coming to know the Lord. Not weekly. Not only on Sundays. But daily. It was because the church worked together and emphasized being one *daily* that others saw God working and wanted to be part of this community.

Oh, I forgot to answer the question. Was the early church socialist? It's irrelevant. The early church was a community who worked together as one and took care of each other. That's all that matters.

Wednesday, September 25 - Genesis 1:1-2:4

We begin “in the beginning” tonight. For the remainder of the year, we will be in the book of Genesis on Wednesday nights. Tonight, we look at the six days of creation. When I see the creation story, I am in awe of what God can do. He created something out of nothing. If he can do that in the universe, how much more can he take care of you and I? See you tonight.

Thursday, September 26 - 2 Corinthians 9:1-15

In 1978, CHBC undertook a capital campaign in order to do some remodeling around the church. In order to do the desired work, \$75,000 needed to be raised (adjusting for inflation, this is equivalent to \$303,421.50 today). Many in the church were worried about needing to raise this type of money. However, the church moved forward. A quote from Bro. Bowman in the newspaper at the time said “...we started it on a Sunday afternoon, and we could have shut it off on Wednesday night and been safe.” This is an amazing example of the community that is created by coming together for one purpose and giving our money to the needs of the church.

This type of giving is what Paul is asking from the Corinthians. The church in Jerusalem needed help and Paul was taking up a collection for them. Paul asks for them to “give cheerfully.” I love to point out that it could be read “God loves a hilarious giver.” Laughing as they give. So happy, so overcome with wonder in who God is that they just laugh as they give. When you devote yourself to one goal as a community, there is no greater sense of joy that can overcome the group. In order to create community, we must be together in mind, body, and spirit. Let us come together like College Heights did, like you did, 41 years ago.

Friday, September 27 - Nehemiah 8:1-12

As part of the vision for the church, we are trying to ACT in five ministry areas: worship, missions, evangelism, fellowship, and discipleship. We are asking people to apply themselves, create community, and tell

others in these five areas. Our reading today is a beautiful example of how we can create community in worship. The walls had been rebuilt. In recognition of what God had done, they worshipped together. They heard God's Word (for the people in Nehemiah, God's Word would've been the Law found in the first five books of our Bible); they bowed in prayer; they met with God. Then, they realized how they were not obeying the Law. This led to the entire people of Israel to confess their sin together in Nehemiah 9. That is where community worship (sometimes called corporate worship) can lead us. Worshipping together can bring us into community with one another unlike anything else can because there is no one like our God. Start to prepare for corporate worship on Sunday. Be ready to share of yourself, so we can truly worship together.

Saturday, September 28 - Numbers 6:22-26

Tomorrow night we will be discussing the spiritual dysfunction of being a criticizer. Is your first reaction to somebody telling them what they are doing wrong? Do you constantly heap upon others negative comments and forget to give positive affirmation? This passage in Numbers concludes one long section of rules and commands for Israel from Leviticus 1 - Numbers 6. But the conclusion here is a blessing to the people. Let's learn how to be a blessing to people more than criticizing their every move tomorrow evening.

Sunday, September 29 - Psalm 20

May God give us victory and answer when we call!

WEEK 3: A.C.T. - Tell Others

Monday, September 30 - Amos 5:21-24

We have begun every week of this vision series with Old Testament prophecy that explains how we are supposed to ACT. This passage in

Amos is much harsher than the others. While Micah and Isaiah both clearly told us what to do, Amos tells us that God will reject our worship if we are not ACTing. Christians are supposed to be the voice of justice and righteousness in the world. We are supposed to be working to bring God's Kingdom to fulfillment on this earth. God does not want us only in our "solemn assemblies." God wants us in the world telling others about his love. This is the T in ACT. Tell others. Tell others is more than just evangelism, but it will need to incorporate all five ministry areas. Once again we see in this passage, God wants our Monday-Saturday just as much as he wants our Sunday. What are you doing to bring justice to the world and sharing a never ending stream of righteousness? Pray for God to give you that opportunity today.

Tuesday, October 1 - Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:18-20

When I think of evangelism or missions or discipleship, I think of these two passages. It amazes me how God has given us the responsibility to go and tell, to be his witnesses to the world. Did you know that for the majority of Christian history, these words were not considered instructive to all Christians? William Carey, who is considered the father of modern missions, was once told in a meeting of British Baptists in the late 1700s, "Young man, Sit down! When God pleases to convert the heathen, he'll do it without consulting you or me." Today, this would be considered unthinkable, but only 250 years ago this was the common thought.

In 2019, we do not even need to go to the far ends of the earth to tell others about Jesus. According to a 2012 article in the Cleburne Times Review, there are least 18 languages spoken in Cleburne ISD. We don't need to "go" far "to make disciples of all people groups." That second verb is important to remember. It's not just telling others by making that initial contact of sharing the good news about Jesus. It's telling others by teaching them to become disciples who follow Jesus in their every day ACTIONS as well. How are you going to tell somebody else about Jesus today?

Wednesday, October 2 - Genesis 2:4-25

Some of our Bibles call this another view of creation. Other Bibles will call this another account of creation. Do me a favor before you come tonight. Read this passage and match up what it says to the creation story we read last week. I hope you have questions after this exercise. We will start with those tonight.

Thursday, October 3 - Luke 2:8-14

No, it's not Christmas yet, but you do only have 82 shopping days left. What do you do when you are excited about something? You tell others. You can't contain yourself. That's what I picture the angels doing here. They are excited! The time has come! Jesus has been born. They want to tell somebody. "Who is awake in the middle of the night? Who can we tell?" the angels are asking. "Shepherds! Shepherds are awake! Let's go tell them."

How often do you get excited to share the news about Jesus' birth with people? Why aren't you excited? Why aren't you telling everybody you can about what Jesus has done with you? Let us be telling like the angels did "glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

Friday, October 4 - Luke 2:15-20

The angels were excited and shared immediately. That got the shepherds excited, so they went to see Jesus. Seeing Jesus got them even more excited, so they shared with people what had happened. Do you see how the message of Jesus is contagious? Do you see how you can make an impact, not by preaching to thousands, but by just telling a few people? That is how the Kingdom of God is going to grow, and that is how College Heights is going to make an impact on Cleburne. Each of us telling one person about Jesus and discipling them. Then we move to a second person when your first person is ready to disciple a person. Before you know it, 1 has become 2, which becomes 4, then 8, then 16...you get the

picture. It sounds so incredibly simple, but this is how churches grow. If each of our average of 45 on Sunday morning led one person to Christ this year, the church would double in size. If each of that new 90 led one more person to Christ, there'd be 180 people as part of the one body of College Heights. It's incredibly simple. When the angels were excited, the shepherds were motivated to go. When the shepherds told others, they were amazed. This is how evangelism and discipleship works. Tell others and never give up. Who is the one person you can talk to about Jesus today?

Saturday, October 5 - Proverbs 14:22-27

We conclude our discussion of how to be spiritually healthy by discussing the dysfunction of not being in community with others. In a family, this is the person who is more "married" to their work than their spouse. How can we put others (and God) first before stuff? The first step is Proverbs 14:22. Plan good and ACT accordingly. Let's talk more tomorrow night.

Sunday, October 6 - Psalm 22:22-26

NOTE: We skipped Psalm 21 because it is very similar to Psalm 20.

Are you going to tell the name of the Lord to your family? Will you be praising the Lord with us this morning?