



The Potter’s Hand: How the Sovereignty of God Both Comforts and Terrifies

Jeremiah 18:1-6 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD saying, ² “Arise and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will announce My words to you.” ³ Then I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was, making something on the wheel. ⁴ But the vessel that he was making of clay was spoiled in the hand of the potter; so he remade it into another vessel, as it pleased the potter to make. ⁵ Then the word of the LORD came to me saying, ⁶ “Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter does?” declares the LORD. “Behold, like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel.

In the days of Jeremiah, much calamity had come upon the nation of Israel. The northern ten tribes had fallen to the Assyrians. The southern two tribes, Benjamin and Judah, were reduced to the city of Jerusalem and a few surrounding rural communities. The once great nation just three centuries prior had become a mere shadow of itself. God continued to allow trouble in the nation as a means to bring repentance from sin, a type of continuous warning system that was generally ignored. Israel had fallen under the influence of the idolatrous nations around them. Much of the idolatry involved sexual immorality and at the worst extremities even child sacrifice. Much of the idolatry brought a worldview that allowed the rich to abuse the poor. God brought calamity in increasing and successive waves. Each wave of trouble was higher and more intense. By the time of Isaiah and Jeremiah the divine hand of justice had allowed the entire nation of the northern kingdom, Israel, to be completely destroyed. From the pinnacle of Solomon’s empire to the annihilation of the north some two centuries had passed. As Jeremiah provides the prophetic voice for the

remaining southern tribes, the clarion calls for repentance to continue to go unheeded. Skepticism of Jeremiah’s message made him a target of rather violent assaults. He was one of many persecuted prophets. False prophets came to refute the message of Jeremiah. By the time Jeremiah’s ministry came to a close he had been essentially ignored for decades, the lone prophetic voice in a sea of lies and despondency. In contemplating the ministry of Jeremiah it is devastating to imagine such an unsuccessful ministry from a human perspective. He said and did what God asked him to say and do. However, no one listened, no one repented.

In the midst of all of these trials, God sent Jeremiah on a fieldtrip. He sent him to the home of a local artisan, an expert in pottery. As he worked with the clay on the potter’s wheel, it became clear to the potter that his current clay pot was an inferior vessel. The potter smashed the clay back into a lump and started all over again. In this moment, God communicated to Jeremiah His plans for the nation. As the Creator of the universe and the Establisher of Israel as a people, God can do what He wishes in order to produce His desired outcome. In the case of Israel, He was working toward a new nation and a renewed relationship. Fifteen times in the Book of Jeremiah God says to Jeremiah, “Behold, days are coming.” Something new was on the horizon. In the future, at the discretion and direction of the Sovereign Ruler of the universe, He was going to bring about the salvation of Israel. The means of salvation is a King from the lineage of David who will rule in ways never possible before. He will usher in an everlasting kingdom. It will be a righteous and peaceful place. Out of the ashes of Israel’s destruction will emerge an everlasting hope for all nations.

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As God told Jeremiah, “Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely; and this is His name by which He will be called, ‘The LORD our righteousness.’” (Jeremiah 23:5-6)

We learn several truths from this text. First and foremost is that this life is not about us but about the God who made us. In an anthropocentric world (a world that is all about us), the Biblical language seems so foreign. The Bible communicates a theocentric worldview (a world that is all about God). More specifically, the Bible communicates the theocentric worldview. The Bible then encounters people who are obsessed with making God’s world about themselves. Second, God can and does sovereignly intervene in history, nations, families, people, places, nature, and all time and space, in order to bring about His design for the created universe in general and human history in particular. Third, humanity wars against this sovereignty. Since we want a world that is all about us, when God brings His will to bear on our lives, we complain as if we are in charge. We reject His will and seek to subjugate Him. Which leads to the fourth truth communicated in this text, it is just as absurd to reject the sovereign work of God as it is for a lump of clay to reject the potter’s authority over its outcome. God makes us in His own image and we decide to return the favor. We attempt to create a God in our own image. If we want the universe to be about our own desires, we simply usurp the rightful authority of God with our own authority. In the process we falsely believe that our wishes have caused God and history to adjust to us instead of the rightful design of humanity adjusting to the authority of God. This metamorphic fantasy causes us to think that our wishes project onto God and makes our desires to be the new reality. This fantasy of reading back into the Scripture what we want God to have said has become the cause of a great number of Protestant and Evangelical churches to so adjust the truths of God as to make them no longer distinguishable from human constructs.

This was the great sin of Israel during the time of Jeremiah. The prophet warned of impending judgment and the people simply replaced Jeremiah with a prophet who spoke in a manner consistent with their own desires. They believed whichever prophet made the message correspond to their own earthly desire. However, the wishing did not overwhelm divine reality. It cannot. Our wishes have no power and we are as foolish as the lump of clay to claim power over our Potter. Despite the promotion of false prophets with a message that everything was going to be fine, judgment still came. God still brought about His sovereign will. By the grace of God, His sovereign will went beyond the pending judgment of Jerusalem during the time of Jeremiah. His sovereign will transcended nations and earthly kings. His sovereign will brought about His promises from “behold, days are coming.” All sin is the rejection of the sovereignty of God. Sin places us in the position of ultimate authority. Sin is the act of claiming for ourselves what only can and does belong to God. Judgment follows rebellions against rightful sovereigns. However, God sent His sovereign Son to completely and perfectly submit His life to His Father’s sovereign will. God sent His Son into the world in order to pay the price of sin and death because of our rebellion. The message of the Gospel is that God has reconciled the rebel by giving the life of His only Son and made a way for rebels to be restored to the reason they have been made. We have been created to see the beauty of the God who is and to submit forever with unending joy to His glorious reign. This is the message of the Gospel. This is the work of God, the loving touch of the Potter’s Hand.

Women's Ministry



*Be a Sister of Strength! Take the
time to strengthen a sister!*

Make a phone call!

Send a card! Pray!

Let us walk this life together!!!

Have a prayer request? Need more
information about our Women's Ministry
classes or events? Need to get in touch
with our Women's Ministry Coordinator?
Then contact us at our email address:
womensministryofmatthewroad@gmail.com.



Wednesday Night Ladies Bible Study 6:45pm, Conference Room



Here and Now...There and Then by Beth Moore is a lecture series on the book of Revelation.

Beth presents many points of view, allowing women to decide for themselves when the interpretation varies among scholars. She teaches that God is as specific about what He does reveal as He is about what He does not reveal.

Join us for this amazing time of reading through God's Word. Led by Kim Sweet.

PAW Spring



It is a time for both you and your children to enjoy.

Schedule: We are a Monday & Wednesday preschool. Our hours are 9am - 2pm. We begin second semester on Monday, September 9th, and goes through Wednesday, May 14th.

Tuition and Fees: Tuition is \$130.00 per month. There is an annual supply fee of \$75.00 (prorated if enrolling during the school year) and a registration fee of \$35.00 (non-refundable). Supply and registration fees are due upon enrollment. (*Sibling discounts are available.*)

Pease call Cyndi King, at 972-641-7380, for more information.

**We have lots of growing room
for our 2 yrs old & under!**

Youth Ministry

January 4th

Youth Outreach Movie Night, MRBC Common Grounds, 5pm-10pm

January 5th

Sunday School Leaders Meeting, Common Grounds, 12:15pm

January 12th

Parent Meeting in the Sanctuary, 12:15pm (after 11:00am service)

February 6th-9th

Heartbeat: DNow Retreat

Cost: \$55 - Friend Rate

\$65 - Early Bird Rate (Before January 19th)

\$75 - Rate after January 19th

Heartbeat is upon us! This year's theme is Multiply! We're encouraging our students to make disciples through personal evangelism and discipleship, to answer the call of Jesus to multiply themselves as bold followers of Christ Jesus! Matthew 28:18 emphatically says to "Go and Make Disciples," an epic calling by Christ Jesus to spread the gospel. May our students take this retreat and minister to their friends. Please join us February 6th-9th as we engage our culture for the Lord. ~ Zach

Men's Ministry

Men's Winter Retreat 2014
Steaks, Fellowship, God's Wisdom!
Cost:\$20

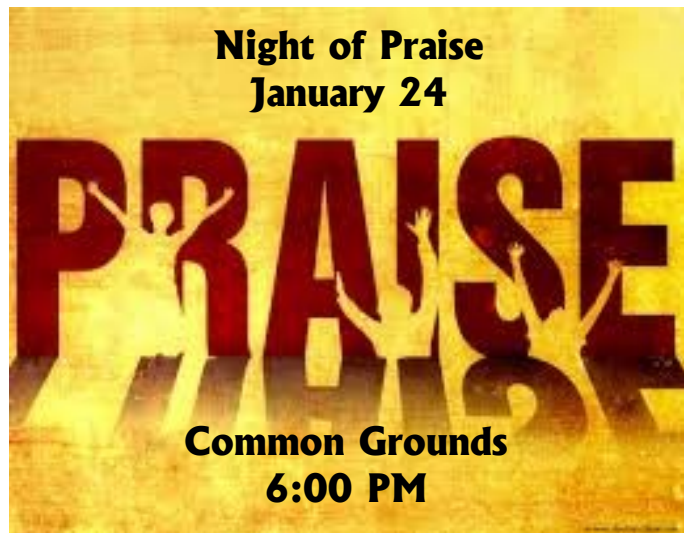
For more info, please contact
Joshua Lemmon @ 817.680.4889
or fishcreekcomputer@gmail.com.



20Somethings



Who are we? We are... sinners in need of God's Grace, part of God's plan for the future, going to make an impact on the world for Christ; we aren't children any more, we are making the decisions that will effect the rest of our lives. We matter to God.



When: January 30th, Thursday
What: Dallas Stars Game
Time: 6:15PM
Where: Meet at church
Cost: \$15.00

Please give your money to Rachel or mark an envelope: Hockey game, your name and the amount - then drop it in the plate. If you have questions email rachel@matthewroad.org or call 972.641.2717.

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Changes Ahead

Sunday Nights we will do a snack supper at 5:30PM. At 6:00PM we will learn how to Evangelize.

Wednesday Nights we will be working through Culture Shock by Chip Ingram. There is a video portion followed by a small group portion.

20somethings Leadership Meeting

January 5th in Fellowship Hall at 11:00AM. Pot Luck Meeting to discuss upcoming 20something events/schedule/literature. Please attend either the 8:30AM or 7:17PM worship service.

Weekly Activities

Sunday: Bible Study at 9:45 AM and 5:30 PM

Wednesday: Discipleship 8:30 PM Common Grounds

One Friday Night of the Month: Night Of Praise

January 2014 Events & Activities

For more information, please see our website, www.matthewroad.org, or call the church office at 972-641-2717.

- January 2nd:** Church office reopens
January 4th: Youth Movie Night, 5:00pm, CommonGrounds
January 5th: Youth Adult Leaders Luncheon, 12:15pm, CommonGrounds
MD² leader Meeting, 5:15pm, Library
January 12th: Youth Parents Meeting, 12:15pm, Sanctuary
January 17th: Parents Night Out, 6:30pm, see Cyndi for reservation
January 24th: 20Somethings Night of Worship
January 24th - 25th: Men's Winter Retreat, see Josh Lemmon for more information
January 30th: 20Somethings Dallas Stars Game, see Rachel for more information

Discipleship

Sunday Nights:

- ◇ Trek Journey - CommonGrounds, 4:30pm
- ◇ The Study of Acts - Sanctuary, 6:00pm
- ◇ Ladies Bible Study - Fellowship Hall, 6:00pm
- ◇ Adult Bible Study - Library, 6:00pm (ongoing)
- ◇ 20Somethings - 2nd Flr, Ed. Building, 6:00pm (ongoing)
- ◇ Guy Talk for youth - CommonGrounds Bldg., 6:00pm (ongoing), see Zach for exact location
- ◇ Girl Talk for youth - CommonGrounds Bldg., 6:00pm (ongoing), see Zach for exact location
- ◇ MD² - Education Building, 6:00pm (ongoing)

Wednesday Nights:

- ◇ AWANA, 6:30pm, Ed. Building
- ◇ Collide (for youth), 6:30pm, CommonGrounds
- ◇ Adult Bible Studies, 6:30pm, Worship Center
- ◇ 20Somethings Bible Study, 8:30pm, CommonGrounds

Please note: The last day to turn in offering for the 2013 tax years is Sunday, December 29th. Statements will be mailed at the end of January to the address we have on file for you. If your address has changed, please email the church office at crystal@matthewroad.org.

Regular Weekly Calendar

Sundays	
Morning Worship	8:30 & 11:00am
Morning Bible Study (all ages)	9:45am
Trek/Journey (Jr. & Sr. High)	4:30pm
Evening Bible Study (all ages)	6:00pm
7:17 Service	7:17pm
Mondays	
PAW Program	9:00am
Tuesdays	
Young @ Heart Activities	9:45am
Wednesdays	
PAW Program	9:00am
Wednesday Night Dinner	5:15pm
Collide (youth)	6:30pm
AWANA Club	6:30pm
Adult Bible Study	6:30pm
20Somethings	8:30pm
Saturdays	
Men's Coffee Group	7:30am

3rd Quarter Financials

Budget Income	\$691,227
Budget Expense	(715,542)
Net Budget	(24,315)

Average Morning Attendance for November: 422
Average 7:17 Service Attendance for November: 193