

Faith

Follow in Jesus' steps

1 Peter 2:19-25

This is one of those scriptures where we do not want to do what it says, "...that you should follow in his steps." Jesus set the example, and he expects his followers to actually follow in his steps.

When I was a little kid, I lived up north where it snows. When there were several inches of snow on the ground it was hard to plow through because it came up well above my knees. If I was walking with my dad, I would walk behind him in his footsteps because that made the way easier. Similarly, Jesus has led the way and left his footsteps for us to follow. Why do I say that we do not want to do that?

This letter was written to churches in Asia that were surrounded by a pagan culture. These churches were being oppressed because of their Christianity. The churches disrupted society because they taught practices that were contrary to the accepted morals, behaviors, and beliefs of the majority.

Christians had the audacity to insist that people should be guided by love of their fellow human beings. This strange, new religion threatened the status quo of a structured and rigid society.

Individual Christians and the church were subjected to slander, persecution, and abuse. Many today are also slandered, and in some places abused, for standing up for Christ. But how should we respond to the slander and abuse?

According to the scripture, Jesus' response was the following: "When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly."

If we are to truly follow in Jesus' footsteps our own response to violence is not violence but trust in God. Jesus could have avoided crucifixion in many ways, but instead he "bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed."

We love the story of salvation, but do we really follow in his footsteps?

Joe Miller Jr. is pastor of First United Methodist Church in Newton.



JOE MILLER JR.

Coffee for a cause



Newsboy photo/ Charles Kerr

BRYAN SOUTH, pastor of First Baptist Church, tries to talk tea drinker Winnie Maclin into a cup, but H.P.R. Smith knows better; the Elijah's fundraiser will help support the Honduras mission.

Bits of Faith

Pleasant Hill

Pleasant Hill Baptist Church will conclude their revival April 30 at 7 p.m.; James Hale 429-3415.

National Day of Prayer

National Day of Prayer is May 1 and will be celebrated at the First United Methodist Church Chapel on College St.

Mt. Olive musical

The annual musical at Mt. Olive Baptist Church will be May 2 at 7 p.m.

Belgrade Cemetery

The Belgrade Cemetery Association will have their clean-up day May 3 at 7 a.m. with a meeting after. Refreshments will be served and tools to work are asked to be brought. Jerry Walter, 423-3809.

Dan Keeton Quartet

The Dan Keeton Quartet will perform May 3 at the First Church of God, 3800 Jimmy Johnson Blvd. in Port Arthur, free, at 7 p.m.

Ford Cemetery

The Ford Cemetery Homecoming workday will be May 3. The homecoming will be May 18.

Scholarship service

Call Community Center COGIC will have a scholarship service May 4 at 2:30 p.m. Guest speaker will be Judge Tom Gillian.

HisSong

HisSong will be in concert at Hillcrest Baptist Church, Hwy. 190 W. - 3 miles west of Jasper, May 10 at 7 p.m. Call 384-3371.

Jasper's Relay for Life keeps breaking records

That roar you heard from anywhere downtown Jasper Friday at midnight was when event chair Lloyd Persons announced that the *Relay for Life* fundraiser had just topped \$100,000.

"And they said it couldn't be done in Jasper," Persons said, "and here we are only halfway through the night."

Team coordinator Sandy Flores says the final total was \$121,701.19.

"It's very exciting to know that we are picking up more and more supporters each year," Persons said. "I know this event will continue to grow by leaps and bounds. We thank everyone for their participation."

Relay raises funds to fight back against cancer and help survivors celebrate the victory. Teams compete to raise the most money, any way they can.

Originally, the idea was that the fight against cancer never rests, so at least one person walked with the team baton all night long. Now, teams hold pre-events, like an all night softball tournament or selling plate lunches or chances for a prize.

The Relay itself began April 25 at 7

p.m. with the first lap around the courthouse going to survivors and their caregivers. Then the music cranked up and the games began.

Flores says these are some of the big winners from the 2008 *Relay*:

Most dollars raised by teams—Latch Oil's Saddle Up for a Cure, \$15,648; Sherry Tracy's Sparklers, \$11,324; First National Bank's Walking with Interest, \$6,600; Raymond's Cutters, \$6,398; Few Primary's No Deal to Cancer, \$5,903.

By individuals—Sherry Tracy from Sparklers, \$5,791; Paula Tyler from Raymond's Cutters, \$3,169; Mona Barbay from Sparklers, \$1,943; Nicole Womack from Few Primary, \$1,695; Margie Saulsbury from Charlie's Angels, \$1,500.

The number one youth team was Hollywood Divas from the Kirbyville High School FCCLA, \$2,777.

The most funds raised online by a team was the Falkner Family and Friends, and the most funds raised by online pledges was Tara Faulkner.

The best decorated campsite was Sparklers. Best team t-shirts were the Pink Pals.

UM ARMY seeks projects in Newton

The UM ARMY is coming to Newton for summer projects, and Joe Miller, pastor of First United Methodist Church, is looking for projects to keep them occupied.

The UM ARMY is the United Methodist Action Reach-out Mission by Youth. According to Miller, it "is a mission-oriented organization" that recruits youths from many churches to help people in need.

"The types of work include minor home repairs, painting, cutting grass, yard work, and wheel chair ramps," Miller said. "I need help in finding projects for the group to work on while they are here, projects within a five

mile radius of Newton... We would like to find the ones most in need."

Miller says his church will provide accommodations for approximately 100 high school-aged youths and the Newton High School will provide shower facilities. The UM ARMY brings their own supplies and tools.

The type of projects they are looking for, and seeking recommendations from the community, are painting houses for the elderly, repairing plumbing, yard work or cleaning for handicapped, or building a wheelchair ramp.

Call Charlet Meyer at 379-4831 to recommend a project.



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