

April 23, 2020

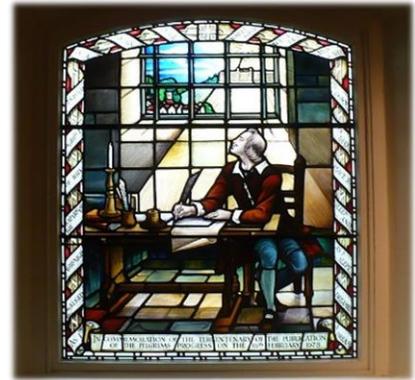
Good morning, Everybody.

Rainy days are generally my favorite kind. They make preachers stay inside and mind their business (smile).

So sorry that some of you had difficulty connecting for the live streaming last night. Thanks for letting the church office know about that. Our host had a data base server go down. We appreciate so much the folks who are working to provide that service for us. It would be good to pray for them and for the Lord's protection and use of all the equipment involved so that we're able to stream the services without hiccups.

For Our Missionaries

During a PowerPoint message last night, I showed this picture of John Flavel. Many, perhaps most of you, are at least somewhat familiar with his having been a 17th-century Puritan minister.



Almost all of Flavel's ministry took place during the decades in England when nonconformists were severely suppressed under the administrations of Charles II and his brother, James II. It was during these same years that John Bunyan languished in Bedford jail for nothing more than refusing to cease preaching.

Stouthearted non-conformists continued to meet clandestinely in barns and forests and private homes in the middle of the night. But gatherings dwindled, and it was increasingly difficult to get the gospel to sinners. It was a season of great discouragement for preachers burdened for souls.

Flavel died in 1691 at the age of sixty-two or sixty-three; a sufferer for Christ whose ministry had been fruitful but limited.

Some years later, in the early 1700's and far across the North Atlantic, there was a New England farmer by the name of Luke Short who had lived to be a full one hundred years old. He was still remarkably active physically, but was equally remarkable for his passivity spiritually. One day while sitting in his field, he began to reflect upon his long life. His thoughts migrated back and back and back, all the way back to his boyhood before he had immigrated to America. Incredibly, he recalled that while he was still a teenager in England he had heard a preacher named John Flavel. Sitting there in the field that day, Short's memory of the distant sermon expanded so acutely that he was seized with horror at the thought of dying under God's curse. The amazing result was that eighty-five years after hearing John Flavel's sermon, Short gave his heart to Christ.

So we really don't know the ultimate harvests of our ministries, do we? What we do know is . . .

So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding *in the matter* for which I sent it (Isa. 55:11 NAU).

Soup

Well . . . I'm just about ready to go in and heat up some soup in the microwave. In the fall, winter, and spring I eat soup pretty much every day but Sunday. Linda and my mother keep two or three kinds of their homemade soup in the fridge all the time. To cover emergencies (a technical word for *no homemade soup*), I load up on

cans of Campbell's when the stores have a three-for-one or some such irresistible sale. But happily, yesterday Linda pulled a gallon zip-lock bag of homemade chili out of the freezer. It's probably thawed out by now (**big** smile).

Praying

All of us on staff are praying for you, and we're so blessed that you're praying for us. Let's also intercede for at least a few **specific** missionaries every day. One of our families on the field is entirely confined to their small, city house except for three hours a week in order to buy staples. They have no yard outside in which to sit or recreate. They've been in this restricted situation longer than we've been sheltered in place here in SC. They and so many of our other folks on the field need much grace day by day. I've heard no complaints from any of them, but theirs is a significant trial, and we want to be sure to keep them before the Lord.

Prayer **does** decide many things. Don't ever doubt whether your prayer makes a difference. It's been just a few months ago that we considered the LORD's response to Hezekiah, *Because you have prayed to Me. . .* (Isaiah 37:21). There **is** a **return** to prayer. *The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much* (James 5:16).

Praying for You Today,

Pastor Minnick