



**APRIL 29 - MAY 5, 2020**

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH - - TYLER, TX [WWW.FCCTYLER.ORG](http://WWW.FCCTYLER.ORG)

## DEAR FRIENDS OF FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH,

YOU...are in my thoughts and prayers. YOU...are what's missing from my life. YOU...are so kind and supportive in this crazy time of sheltering at home and worshiping online. Thank you for being YOU...for who YOU are, and for all YOU do to make our First Christian Church Family so amazing.

To date, we are 7 Sundays into this grand experiment of COVID-19 and worshiping off campus. While worshiping from home is not what any of us prefer, I am so glad we were in position to provide such high quality digital worship services. Travis Boles, Rob Mason, Ginger Brandt, Mike Hazeltine, Dave Hill, and Tricia Anderson (among other contributors) have done heroic work in this effort to connect with not only you but our community and world too!

Earlier this year, our average worship attendance was just over 250 (with another 100+ online), last Sunday, we had 343 views on YouTube and 1592 views on Facebook. Within every challenge lies opportunity! How exciting to know our brand of following Christ is being experienced by nearly 2000 people each week...and we are trending upward (more are watching each week).

As of today, Carolyn Wallace and our MDO staff are working to see what it will take to reopen for a summer session. They have missed ministering to the children and are developing a plan to put MDO back on track. Our Ad Hoc Committee (focusing on Youth and Children's Ministry) continues to meet Sundays online. They have come up with a solid job description for the person(s) we are seeking to lead these two important ministries. Special thanks to Larissa Smith for her leadership and commitment as well as to her team.

We are working on ideas for Sunday School, Mother's Day, and a Youth & Children's Sunday, too. More information coming.

Finally, as I walk through the church building and I'm reminded of the time after my knee surgery 20 years ago...how I longed to get back to running, jumping, and moving about. Similarly, the halls of FCC seem to be longing for the crowds to return, for the singing, praying, and fellowship, for the laughter and activity of young and old. Some day. Some day we will return. Many of you may be wondering when we are going to return now that Gov. Abbott has released the stay at home order.

Given the limitations that will apply to "houses of worship," we are not in a big hurry to return to worship on campus. However, we will be discussing (and potentially deciding) that very thing at our **BOARD MEETING Wed, May 6 @ 7 p.m.** on Zoom. (See back for details).

Join me in praying for our world, our nation, our community, our church and our church family. Join me in lifting up those who are sick (virus and/or otherwise), those who are on the front lines of responding to the virus, and those who are doing all they can to "keep it together" while shored up at home alone...or at home with a lot of family!

"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7).

Your friend and Pastor,  
Chris Pulliam

## JOYS & CONCERNS

**JOYS:** As far as we know, no one in our church family has tested positive for COVID-19. We can also celebrate the growing reach of our online presence on Facebook and YouTube. Our number of views and audience continue to rise. Thanks for participating and sharing our content!

**PRAYERS FOR OUR CHURCH FAMILY:** Jennifer Diotallevi, Charlotte Halbert, James Hardage, Bill Hughes, Bob Hunt, Ray Hunt, Aliece Keithly, Michael Lewis, C.R. Ritchey, and Bob Zinzser

**PRAYERS FOR FRIENDS & FAMILY:** Daniel Garcia (Weskamp), Chris & Becca Saunders (Grahams), Ronald Smtih (Richard Smith), and the family of Don Watkins (C. Watkins)



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First Christian Church is inviting you to a scheduled Board Zoom meeting. Board meetings are open to all FCC members. We will be discussing (and potentially deciding) the reopening of our campus.

Link to join Zoom Meeting

[https://zoom.us/j/95694003709?](https://zoom.us/j/95694003709?pwd=cDJEeW1XUDJhbHc1OHAYQVRxNnRhZz09)

[pwd=cDJEeW1XUDJhbHc1OHAYQVRxNnRhZz09](https://zoom.us/j/95694003709?pwd=cDJEeW1XUDJhbHc1OHAYQVRxNnRhZz09)

Meeting ID: 956 9400 3709

Password: 277203

One tap mobile

+13462487799,,95694003709#,,1#,277203# US (Houston)

+16699006833,,95694003709#,,1#,277203# US (San Jose)

## SUNDAY SCHOOL OFFERINGS

After worshipping online, we invite you back for either of 2 offerings: A new Children's Ministry Moment video will air at 10:40 am on our main Facebook page. And, an all-church Adult Sunday School meeting opens on Zoom at 11 am. The Zoom platform is NOT one large group -- it's a way to get connected with just your existing adult class, in a breakout room from our general meeting location. Here's the Zoom link for this Sunday -- more instruction in this Sunday's "how to worship with us" email.

[https://zoom.us/j/93154444625?](https://zoom.us/j/93154444625?pwd=dIBzckMwY0IUSXNKYjdsUnUzMGhqZz09)

[pwd=dIBzckMwY0IUSXNKYjdsUnUzMGhqZz09](https://zoom.us/j/93154444625?pwd=dIBzckMwY0IUSXNKYjdsUnUzMGhqZz09)

## SUBSCRIBE ON YOUTUBE

One final note! We're just a few people shy of 200 subscribers on YouTube. When you visit our YouTube page for worship, please hit the subscribe button to help us reach this milestone number. Once we hit 200, our videos pop up more often on the suggested videos list. That means spreading a Good Word to more and more people. That's exciting!

“Whole Lotta Beggin’ Goin’ On”

Mark 5:1-20

Dr. Chris Pulliam

May 3, 2020

A couple of weeks ago, I preached about our “Best Moments”...that God sees us as we are in our Best Moments not our worst.

Then I headed into the theme of Jesus having “authority”...“authority” over life and death (the healing of Jairus’ daughter) and over “all we need” (feeding 5000/4000). God can and will provide. Do you believe it?! Believe it!

Today, we are back in the gospel of Mark... chapter 5. We are going to look closely at the character of God thru a crazy story in that chapter.

Listen carefully to these 5 readings from Mark 5 (the “Gerasene demoniac”) that Rev. Bill Nowell read for us, and see if you hear what they have in common.

SLIDE: “The **demons begged Jesus earnestly not to send them out of the country**” (Mark 5:10).

SLIDE: “...and the **unclean spirits begged Jesus, “send us into that herd of pigs”**” (Mark 5:12).

SLIDE: “**Then the Gerasene people began to beg Jesus to leave their neighborhood**” (Mark 5:17).

SLIDE: “**As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by demons begged Jesus that he might go with him**” (Mark 5:18).

SLIDE: “**Then one of the leaders of the syna-**

**gogue named Jairus came and, when he saw Jesus, fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly, “My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live”** (Mark 5:22-23).

Did you get it? Right! There’s a whole lotta beggin’ goin’ on in this story. I haven’t heard that much begging since 15 years ago when my family begged me to get a pet rabbit. I’ll just say, that didn’t end well. “Poor Cotton! He didn’t stand a chance!” (emotional).

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This morning I want to talk to you on the subject of begging (that’s a new one!). Yes, begging. And, no, I don’t recommend it... especially when it comes to God. Let me explain.

Have you ever witnessed serious begging? I’m not talking about the kids begging for ice cream (although sometimes that can get pretty serious). I mean people begging literally for their lives.

Early in my ministry, we hired a woman to work in our pre-school. Her home life was a mess and it affected her work considerably. When I spoke to her about it, she begged me not to fire her saying, the pre-school was the only thing holding her life together.

Years ago when I traveled to Ethiopia, a little village there called Bantu. Our group of 10 was “touring” around the village landmarks, when a man approached us begging for... anything! When I say, he was begging...He wasn’t holding out his hand...he literally crawled into our midst and put his face on the feet of our leader as he spoke.

To our leader, this man was nothing new and he brushed him off knowing the man's history, but to those of us who were new...it was awful...to see what appeared to be a soul groveling to such depths.

SLIDE: (pic of family) Then in Jerusalem on our free day to wander about the city, I nearly tripped over a woman sitting in the crowded walkway just outside the Damascus Gate.

SLIDE: (pic of Damascus Gate sign) I thought to myself, "that woman has been there for 2000 years."

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Mark 5 gives account of the Gerasene Demoniac...I know, it's a mouthful isn't it. Jesus goes to "the other side" of the sea (of Galilee)...meaning the Gentile side (the non-Jewish side). Big picture, on that side its rougher...for Jesus...for everyone. They say, "everything's bigger in Texas," well, "everything's rougher on the other side!" Not your church going crowd over there.

The pattern holds...as soon as Jesus gets out of the boat, he is met by a demon possessed man (unclean spirit). The man was out of control. No one could subdue him. Fortunately he had moved out to the tombs (edge of town) and there he lived howling at whatever and nursing his self-inflicted wounds.

The man runs at Jesus, bows down, and shouts, "What have you to do with me... don't torment me!"

Jesus calls the demon (demons really) out of the man. Then the demons beg Jesus not to send them out of the country, and in fact to send them into the herd of pigs. Jesus does and the herd, becoming pos-

sessed, runs into the water and drowns. ?!

Next the townspeople come out to see what's going on. They see Jesus and the previously demon possessed man "clothed and in his right mind" (Mk 5: 15) and they were afraid. So, they too begged Jesus...to leave their neighborhood. "We don't know what to think of you (Jesus), so we just want you to leave."

Finally, as Jesus is getting back into the boat after a very short stay, the previously demon possessed man (now dressed and in his right mind) begs Jesus to let him go with Jesus in the boat.

After reading that story a few times, I commented,

SLIDE: There's a whole lotta beggin' goin' on...!!!

...in this story. In fact, everyone who says anything to Jesus begs it of him. First the demons, then the neighbors, and then the healed man. Later...several others begged Jesus to heal (or be healed).

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Can you imagine being the person people are always begging? If you're the person everyone is always begging, what does that say about you? It says, you're the one with all the power...the one who has what others need and cannot get for themselves...the one who has control of/over others, who can make them or break them.

So whether that's money, a job, a place to stay, or a healing touch...if everyone's begging you, it's because you have the money, job, home, or healing touch...you have the power.

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To give us some background...and to make me sound intelligent, I called Jackie Littleton to have her research this word, translated as "beg" in the N.T. Greek.

She looked here and looked there...we didn't come up with much. I said, "Come on Jackie, I'm desperate here...I need something to make this message pop!"

"We" (meaning "she") came up with several words the Greek word,

SLIDE: "para-kah-LAY-son"...to beg, beseech, entreat, implore, exhort, or persuade.

Of those other possible translations, persuade has a bit of a different feel to it. Much less desperate if one is persuading rather than begging.

I think Mark in his gospel just kind of got stuck on a word...para-kah-LAY-son (to beg...or persuade) and used it over and over. Like that kid in your honors English class who would learn a new big word and wear it out.  
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In the story, the only way anyone talks to Jesus is thru begging. Does anyone ever just ask Jesus for something without begging? Begging rings a note of desperation or intensity.

The person begging recognizes, "I cannot pressure you to do this, but I can beg you... to show mercy and do as I ask...to leave, heal, save, or take me with you.

Why do people beg? In my life, people beg to get an undeserved favor...for that which they cannot achieve/get on their own.

In the introduction, I recommended that we not beg God. I want to explain why I say that.

Begging like the begging that we read about in our story for today only happens outside of relationship.

I know I visited this story not long ago ("Best Moments" message), but remember the story of Jesus reinstating Peter after Peter had denied Jesus those 3 times? Remember "Peter, do you love me?" "Yes, Lord, you know I do." ...3 times

Why didn't Peter beg Jesus for forgiveness? Jesus had all the power. Peter had nothing...no rights, no leg to stand on...he could only beg for mercy...

...except that Peter had a relationship with Jesus. Peter knew Jesus and knew his character...knew that he cared and that Jesus was in fact merciful...and that Peter could count on Jesus to be merciful. Therefore, no begging necessary!

We, too, can count on Jesus to be merciful. We, too, have a relationship with him

It's not that we have rights before God. It's that we know we are God's...and that God loves us.

We can be completely confident that we belong to God and that God is for us...that God is merciful to us and to all. Therefore, we need not feel that desperation...we need not beg.

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SLIDE: Bottom Line: this sermon is not about how to ask for things from God. It is about our standing before God. It is about the character of the God we stand before in asking anything.

SLIDE: What to do: We don't have to beg... not because we have any rights, not because we have any special privileges, not because we deserve anything at all, but because we are loved by a merciful...and awesome God.

So, while there's a whole lotta beggin' goin' on in the world. We don't have to be among them. We know God...we know who we are dealing with...merciful...awesome.

And, let us remember that when we go to the other side (to those who don't know God and God's character), they may need us to show them how "not to beg"...but how to trust in our merciful and awesome God.