

# The Pastor's Quarry

First Baptist Church of Granite Falls, MN  
October, 2006

## The Joy of a Devout Life

One rule I learned when I got married was to never, ever forget a wedding anniversary. But as I contemplate my wedding anniversary a few days hence, I know that simply remembering it is not enough. Forgetting can be excused, but there are some things that cannot be excused.

Better for a loving husband to forget his wedding anniversary than for an unloving husband to remember it! Imagine that on my wedding anniversary I call my wife and say, in a brisk, businesslike tone, "Hello there. Today is our anniversary, I see. Nineteen years ago today we were married. Thank you very much. Please fix me something I like for supper this evening. Goodbye."

The warmest part of that phone call would be the *click* as I hung up.

Of course, it is difficult to imagine such a cold phone call on a wedding anniversary. This is a day to show devotion to one another. Not because it is expected, but because we *are* devoted to one another; we enjoy setting aside a day to indulge in that devotion a bit more than we do on other days. I ought to love my wife so much that I am compelled to tell her so; if she asks why, I even ought to have a ready answer. In such devotion is tremendous joy.

It would certainly be unthinkable for a newly-married groom to leave his bride just after the ceremony with, "I'll see you later, then. Don't stay up waiting for me, but stay near the phone in case I need you, OK?" If he showed such an utter lack of devotion, an eavesdropper might wonder, "Did they really just get married? He sure isn't acting like it!"

A husband and a wife ought to be devoted to one another. Just ask their children.

And a Christian ought to be devoted to God. Just ask the watching world.

Jesus loves you dearly, Christian:

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. (John 15:9-11, ESV)

*That your joy may be full.* As opposed to an incomplete joy, a joy that lacks something, a joy that is less than a full joy, a joy that is somehow *joyless*.

As a husband ought to love his wife so much that he can't help telling her how much he loves her, and why he loves her, so a Christian ought to love God so much that he can't help telling God how much he loves Him, and why he loves Him. As a husband ought not to be brisk and businesslike to his wife on their anniversary, so a Christian ought not to be brisk and businesslike to God in prayer.

As a husband ought to be devoted to his wife, and a wife to her husband, so much more ought a Christian to be devoted to God.

## First Baptist Church to Begin Podcasting!

My sincere thanks to the brethren who prompted me to consider podcasting sermons on the Internet. This week I set up a computer to digitally record our services, and hopefully it will be installed in the sound booth this weekend.

You may listen to sermons (and, if you wish, subscribe to the podcast) at <http://firstbaptist.podomatic.com>. As with any technological venture, it may take a while to iron out the inevitable wrinkles at first.

I also invite you to listen to my reading of William Law's *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, available very soon at the "Classic Christian Writers" podcast: <http://ryanjaredmartin.podomatic.com>.

## Bible Geography

I am pleased to have resumed our Bible Geography series on Sep. 24 with an introduction to the Hill Country of Ephraim and Samaria. Come join us for Sunday School at 9:30 A.M.!

## Book Study Series

Lord willing, we will complete our study of Colossians on Oct. 8. I plan to begin a study of First Thessalonians on Oct. 22. Come join us for the afternoon service at 1:15 P.M.!

## Business Meeting

Our third quarter business meeting is scheduled in place of our regular afternoon worship service on Sunday, Oct. 15. I look forward to this time as we work together for the glory of God.

## Fifth Sunday Biography

I look forward to presenting our third "Fifth Sunday Biography" in the afternoon of Sunday, Oct. 29.

## Pastor's Schedule

Underlined dates indicate times when I will be in town without my "better half."

In Granite Sep 30, Oct 1  
In Granite Oct 6, 7, 8  
In Granite Oct 13, 14, 15  
In Granite Oct 20, 21, 22  
In Granite Oct 28, 29  
In Granite Nov 3, 4, 5  
In Granite Nov 10, 11, 12  
In Granite Nov 17, 18, 19  
In Granite Nov 23-26

## Who Shall Deliver Me?

Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830-1904)

God strengthen me to bear myself,  
That heaviest weight of all to bear,  
Inalienable weight of care.

All others are outside myself;  
I lock my door and bar them out,  
The turmoil, tedium, gad-about.

I lock my door upon myself,  
And bar them out; but who shall wall  
Self from myself, most loathed of all?

If I could once lay down myself,  
And start self-purged upon the race  
That all must run! Death runs apace.

If I could set aside myself,  
And start with lightened heart upon  
The road by all men overgone!

God harden me against myself,  
This coward with pathetic voice  
Who craves for ease, and rest, and joys:

Myself, arch-traitor to myself;  
My hollowest friend, my deadliest foe,  
My clog whatever road I go.

Yet One there is can curb myself,  
Can roll the strangling load from me,  
Break off the yoke and set me free.

### My Contact Information

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### “Walk-in” office hours

10:00-12:00 each Saturday morning, in  
the church study. (Schedule permitting.)

## A Bit of History

Christianity has weathered many storms of controversy over doctrine. The Reformation led by Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli did not put an end to such controversies. If anything, controversy increased for a while after their break with Roman Catholicism; the Reformers had to work out many doctrines for themselves once they had rejected the authority of the Roman Catholic church.

Some people became frustrated with these arguments over doctrine. Two movements that rose up as a result were the *Spiritualist* movement and the *Pietist* movement.

The Spiritualist movement preferred a vague inner “spirituality” to interpretations of the Bible that caused debate over doctrine. Such debate was difficult for the unschooled to engage in, and some of these people resented the advantage that the higher, more educated, classes had. Others, some of whom were themselves among the higher, more educated classes, thought that strong positions on doctrine were narrow-minded and intolerant. Furthermore, some people thought the endless debate over doctrine got in the way of heart-felt spirituality.

One Spiritualist, an Englishman named George Fox, taught that an “inner light” existed in all people. Hymns, orders of worship, communion, baptism, creeds, and ministers just got in the way of this “inner light.” Those who followed Fox in abandoning these things called themselves “children of the light,” though he preferred the name of “friends.” When they gathered they would sometimes tremble as they felt their “inner light” bringing them spiritual illumination, so people began calling them “quakers.” By the time of Fox’s death in 1691 there were tens of thousands of Quakers.

The Pietist movement, unlike the Spiritualist movement, understood the importance of doctrinal debate. Orthodox doctrine was important, they held, but no less important than loving and obeying God devoutly.

A German Lutheran pastor named Philipp Spener was troubled that the doctrinal debate had led to a coldness of heart. In 1675 he called the church to a life of piety – to devotion and Bible study. His greatest follower, a university professor named August Francke, insisted even more than Spener that Christians should delight in God. Spener and Francke challenged Christians to do more than simply profess correct doctrine. However decent the average member of polite society might be, the Christian ought to live a much different, more devout life – a life of *piety*.