

READ

James 3:13–18

CONSIDER

There are many aspects to my relationship with the English Ministry at Scarborough Chinese Baptist Church that have brought great joy to my life. One of those is the spiritual and intellectual stimulation of my heart and mind as I have come to know a number of your pastors. And with some of those, Pastors Amy, Julian and Tim, I have walked with them as part of their gaining credentials within our denominational family, Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec. The most recent one of those journeys was with Tim.

I think most people when they reach their seventies—I turn 73 this summer—look for ways to keep their minds engaged. Puzzles evidently do that for some people but I have never been a fan of jigsaws or Sudoku or the like. Preparation for today’s sermon is the sort of thing that is a joy to me and also the conversations I had on a monthly basis from August of 2022 to May of this year with Tim.

If one could boil down our conversations over those months into one subject, I think it would be this: how can we be Christians that are in the world but not of the world? I hope Pastor Tim was encouraged and engaged by those conversations as much as I was. The idea of my walking alongside Tim was that he would learn a few things from a “veteran” of the CBOQ. I hope that happened; I know that I learned much from hearing how Tim was working out his own faith and pastoral commitments. In the sermon this coming Sunday, you will hear me working through my sense of how we are to gain and then show the wisdom that is from above—pure, peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits. My hope and prayer is you will gain some insight into your journey of being in but not of the world.

It’s been a number of months since I saw any of you in worship and I am very much looking forward to it. More of you are back in person and for that all of us should be thankful. But, in person or on-line, see you Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

Pastor Bill Norman

P R A Y

O Eternal Light...shine into our hearts;
Eternal Goodness...deliver us from despair;
Eternal Power...be our support;
Eternal Wisdom...scatter our ignorance."
In Jesus's name. Amen.

*** Prayer, based on the words of Alcuin of York, c.735–804 ***

D I V I N G D E E P E R

What is your plan for changing the world? Has that plan changed as a result of the COVID pandemic? Are you still "retreating" from the world more than engaging with it?

Give an example of how you have tried to be in the world but not of the world. In your work or school or neighbourhood setting, is this becoming more difficult?

Would it be helpful to you to use James 3:17 as both a guide for your life and as a way of measuring your spiritual formation? Yes or no? Explain why you think one or the other.

Pastor Bill quotes the phrase "In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity." Is this 400-year-old "wisdom" helpful for our world? Yes or no?