

NEWS AND VIEWS  
MOUNT OLIVET BAPTIST CHURCH  
3500 Edwards Mill Road  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27612-5362

Phone... (919) 787-1910  
FAX... (919) 787-0085  
E-mail: office@mobic.org  
Web Page: www.mobic.org

*“Southern Baptists with the Full  
Gospel for the Whole World”*

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SAM GORE, Senior Pastor  
EDITH JACKSON, Prayer Coordinator

NANCY MCBRAYER, Office Manager  
MIKE KING, Maintenance Supervisor

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VOLUME 33

December 2011

NUMBER 12

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*What do you do with the things that you hear?* Some things I hear I try real hard to ignore. And some things I hear I wish I hadn't ignored. In the aftermath of one of these scenarios, I usually find that what I was intended to hear was for my benefit and God's glory. Some things that I hear seem to fit into a repetitive pattern. These things that are repeated seem to be designed to get my attention or remind me not to forget. I think God has given us His word through the ages to hear and decide what to do with what we have heard.

Just before Thanksgiving I attended a portion of a presentation of *God's Trombones* that was given by Rejoice Academy. In my limited understanding and subsequent research I learned that *God's Trombones* is a collection of poetic sermonic recitations reminding the hearers of the truth of God's word. Along with the oratory, the students also performed an arrangement of music that was ably directed by the teaching staff at Rejoice. As I listened to the presentation I was impressed to think about the things I was privileged to hear. The music moved us from section to section which began at *The Creation* and culminated at *Judgment Day*. The level of passion the students put forth fascinated me and I wondered if I convey the same amount of enthusiasm when I preach a sermon on any given Sunday. Motivation seems to have a lot to do with being passionate. It would be impossible for me to discern whether the students' motivation was to be pleasing to their teachers or their parents in attendance or if they actually believed the things they were saying and singing. Only the Lord can truly know the answer to that question. And He gives us His word so we can discover for ourselves the motives for all our actions.

Later as I reflected on the progression of the presentation I began to see something. I began to see what I was hearing. It was the gospel. Humanity was judged to death because of their sinful rebellion against God shortly after the miracle of Creation. Hopelessly lost in their effort to present themselves before a holy God and cleanse themselves of their sin they began to live their lives as banished rebels according to their self-destructive natures much like the Prodigal Son. Only by the death, burial, and resurrection of the One made flesh can humanity be restored to a right relationship before a holy and just God. Jesus came into this world to save sinners. His holy life and righteous sacrifice for sin restores those who agree, or confess, with God that we are lost and separated from Him. When we surrender to His will it is because we know He is right and we are wrong. When godly sorrow for sin leads us to repentance and forgiveness we are restored to a life that pleases God by the help of the Holy Spirit. Our very nature is converted or changed from those who are eternally dead to everlasting life. We are spared the ultimate judgment of a holy and just God because we can believe that *Jesus* is the only reason we live. This is the good news of the gospel. This is why we celebrate Christmas. God Himself became a Man to bear the Curse of sin so we could live blessed by God. *What do you do with the things that you hear?*

Christmas Blessings to you,

Pastor Sam