

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”***

SAM GORE, Senior Pastor
EDITH JACKSON, Prayer Coordinator

NANCY MCBRAYER, Office Manager
MIKE KING, Maintenance Supervisor

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What in the world is a bivocational pastor??? I had to answer that question the other day when someone asked me why I worked as a construction estimator and served the church as a pastor. A *bivocational* pastor is someone that works in the secular world while fulfilling a sacred calling. Bivocational is a word that means two jobs, one calling...at least as I understand it. A few Sundays ago I shared a message to the congregation called *A Tentmaker's Testimony* where we explored how the Apostle Paul served the Lord in the marketplace. The sermon was a shorter version of a paper soon to be posted on the website. The paper is called *Is Bivocational Ministry A Part-Time Endeavor?* Certainly there are some disadvantages to bivocational ministry. But I would like to focus on at least one aspect that I see as a great advantage.

The reason that I had to answer that introductory question was that I was talking to a man who had discovered that I was a pastor. We had known one another in the construction context for some time. These kinds of things are always a heart check opportunity for me. I always ask myself if my conduct in the construction world has been honorable before the Lord. Someone is always watching in addition to Him. As the conversation progressed, he wanted to know the name of the church that I served. When I said I was the pastor of Mount Olivet Baptist Church he shared that he grew up in that church. I could see that it had meant something to him.

This is what I love about serving the church in the workplace. The avenues of ministry are always open and never closed to someone who sees you living and working in the same world they inhabit. What I want you to see today is that you have a ministry in the world as well. You are part of what God and His gospel are doing today in the world. I meet people from time to time who have a history of being ministered to by the church at Mount Olivet. Some have continued to stay connected in some form or fashion. To those, I encourage you to continue to seek God and His people and grow in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Sometimes I meet folks who only have a negative memory of the church. Often they can see that the enemy seeks to steal, kill, and destroy but only after the destruction has left its mark. But I am still excited to be a part of what God is doing in the life of this church. I've marveled at the influence the church has enjoyed in times past in this area. And I believe God is still at work in our midst.

The gospel is the difference that really makes the difference. If people have been impacted and have a desire to become more like Christ it is only because they have heard and seen the Word go forth. This is still the mandate...to know the gospel, live the gospel, and share the gospel. To the ones who I normally see on a weekly basis, faithfully seeking the face of God, the ones that love the Lord and one another, (and even me) I want to say thank you and I thank my God for you. In these difficult and sometimes very trying times for Olivet Nation, I still believe that God has a word to us and for us. How do I know this? Because of what the Lord has said.

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. (Isaiah 55:11)

If anything eternal is to be accomplished in the lives of people that have a history with Mount Olivet, it will be because the Word of the Lord has gone forth. So are we living out the Word?

Blessings to you this Thanksgiving,
Pastor Sam