



# FIRST CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY

*WELCOME to First Christian Assembly, an independent church whose mission is articulated by Jesus in Mark 16:15 when he said "...Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature". Following this great commission, First Christian Assembly preaches and teaches the gospel of Jesus Christ. In so doing, we trust that God, working through His Holy Spirit will draw souls to salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

## Willing Spirit, Weak Flesh

Just before His arrest, Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, and He said to His disciples, "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt 26:41). The command came after Jesus had been praying to the Father and had found the disciples sleeping instead of praying. He had admonished them to stay awake and pray with Him, but "their eyes were heavy", and they kept falling asleep.

The disciples' spirits were willing to do what was right. In fact, just a few minute earlier, all of them had pledged their lives to Jesus. But, as it turned out, they couldn't even pray with Jesus for any length of time. They fell asleep because of their physical human weakness. By affirming that "the spirit is willing," Jesus was saying that He knew the disciples *wanted* to stay awake and pray, but the weakness of the flesh had overpowered the spiritual desire to pray and watch. Jesus was not scolding them but exhorting them to beware of the weakness of the flesh. The Lord Himself was fighting the same struggle against the flesh, but He had overcome it.

The story of the disciples in Gethsemane rings true for all of us. We can so easily be distracted from prayer, worship, or a kind act by hunger, exhaustion, sexual desire, feeling too cold or too hot, thirst, pain, and even a persistent itch. The flesh shouts loudly when it wants something and even when the spirit is willing to do whatever God asks, the flesh remains weak. The answer is just as Jesus said: watch and pray. Prayer is straightforward. We know that we can ask God for whatever we need. When we feel the weakness of the flesh about to overpower us, we can always pray.

Watchfulness is the other weapon we have against the weakness of the flesh. The apostle Paul said, "No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it" (1 Cor 10:13). We should watch for the "way out." Spiritual watchfulness sees the temptation coming and prompts prayer.

The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. All believers know the struggle. But when we watch and pray—when we remain spiritually alert and appeal to God for help—we can find strength in the time of need (Psalm 46:1, Heb 4:16).

## Are you a Biblical Thinker?

"... I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts" - Hebrews 8:10

I am convinced that the struggle of the Christian life is to think biblically. I believe every deficiency in my walk of faith is birthed out of failing to see as the Bible sees.

Why do I sometimes chase after carnal delights? Because I fail to see God as the inexhaustible source of pleasure that he is.

Why am I sometimes paralyzed by fear when I ponder the possibility of future suffering? Because I fail to see God as a loving Father who is committed to working all things for my greatest good.

Why do I sometimes lack a sense of urgency to share the gospel with my lost friends? Because I fail to see them as treasonous rebels who, if they refuse to repent, will be righteously crushed by a wrathful God. I live wrongly because I think wrongly.

I've noticed that some Christians tend to minimize the role of the mind in the life of faith. I understand that these folks want to avoid "over-intellectualizing" walking with God and point people instead to the supernatural power available to them in the person of the Holy Spirit. However, I believe it is inaccurate and perhaps even detrimental to disconnect biblical thinking from Spirit-filled living.

We can all agree that there has never been a man more full of the Holy Spirit than Jesus Christ. Let's take a second to look at how the inconceivable amount of spiritual power within him manifested in the face of temptation.

1. When Satan tempted him to break his fast and use his power to turn stones into bread, Jesus said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

2. When Satan tempted him to needlessly throw himself in harm's way in order to provoke the Father to saving action, Jesus said, "Again, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

3. When Satan tempted him to commit idolatry in exchange for power and authority, Jesus said, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'"

The One in whom all the fullness of deity dwells bodily (Colossians 2:9) lived a faithful, impactful, God-glorifying life by thinking biblically. It goes without saying that we should probably follow his lead in this. If we want to live victorious lives of faith in a world that is chock full of faith-opposing forces, we must, as Jesus did, possess a Scripture-saturated perspective of reality.

(Moore, "Christ Died to Make You a Biblical Thinker," Christian Post Online, 11/27/16)

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|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
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| <b>First Christian So Jersey,</b>  | 123 Egg Harbor Rd. Sewell NJ 08080                      |              |
| <b>Philadelphia Access Center,</b> | 1832 S. 11 <sup>th</sup> Street, Philadelphia, PA 19148 | 215-389-1985 |

*The Philadelphia Access Center* is a ministry of First Christian Assembly. Our mission is *revealing Christ through compassionate service*. Services available at PAC include social services information and referrals, biblical counseling, support groups, volunteer training, and community outreach. All services are free of charge and available to anyone. To learn more, visit us in person (across the street from FCA) or online at [www.philaccess.org](http://www.philaccess.org) or [www.facebook.com/philaccess](http://www.facebook.com/philaccess).

**WEEKLY SERVICES /MEETINGS**

|           | Meets at FCA                                                                                                                                                                  | Meets at PAC                                                 |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sunday    | 9:45 AM <i>Bible Study – Phila -location</i><br>10:00 AM <i>South Jersey Worship Service</i><br>11:00 AM <i>Phila Location Worship Service &amp; Children’s Sunday School</i> |                                                              |
| Monday    |                                                                                                                                                                               | 7:00 PM <i>Stepping Stones</i>                               |
| Tuesday   | 6:30 PM <i>Prayer (Sanctuary)</i><br>7:00 PM <i>Worship (Fellowship area)</i>                                                                                                 |                                                              |
| Wednesday |                                                                                                                                                                               | 1:00 PM <i>Women at the Well</i><br>1:00 PM <i>Coram Deo</i> |
| Thursday  |                                                                                                                                                                               | 6:00 PM <i>Prayer Service</i><br>7:00 PM <i>Bible Study</i>  |
| Friday    |                                                                                                                                                                               | 7:00 PM <i>Right Path (on a hiatus)</i>                      |

- *Coram Deo*: A men’s Bible study and Christian fellowship.
- *Right Path*: A Christ centered support and recovery group for people whose lives have been affected by drug and alcohol addiction. In a warm and friendly atmosphere, we provide loving support and fellowship; in genuine confidential sharing, coupled with a Biblical twelve step model of recovery.
- *Stepping Stones*: A Christ centered support group for men and women impacted by a loved one’s addiction. In a warm and friendly atmosphere, we provide loving support, fellowship, confidential sharing, and intercessory prayer.
- *Women at the Well*: This group is Biblically based and promotes hope, healing, and fellowship for women impacted and struggling with brokenness.



**PRAYER REQUESTS**

- Ministries at First Christian (Phila.& NJ) and the Philadelphia Access Center
- Christians around the world being persecuted for their faith
- Our supported missionaries
- For our Pastor and his family
- Paula Grazulis
- Ongoing collection for Tel A Village

**“When we pray for the Spirit's help ... we will simply fall down at the Lord's feet in our weakness. There we will find the victory and power that comes from His love.” – Andrew Murray**