

Lord, My Domain

Proverbs 18:24

Good morning, and again, it's my pleasure to welcome you to Easter Sunday at FCC. We're delighted that you've come out to spend this special morning with us – Resurrection Sunday - not so we can pat ourselves on the back and say, look at us, we have a well-attended, well-run church service.

Instead, what is infinitely more important to us is that you are given the opportunity to interact with the divine. We want you to engage with The Personal God of the Universe by the ministry of his Holy Spirit, through His Holy Word, the Bible, and through prayer and worship. And if, as a church body, we can somehow facilitate this activity even on some basic level, then our time together will not be in vain.

What would really make us happy is knowing that, through attending, you discovered the Lord afresh – and are reminded again of how much God actually loves you, how much he forgives you, and how He wants to guide and bless your life and give you a hope and a future that is so much better than anything this world can ever offer.

We live in a world that can be so full of excitement and adventure, but this earthly life is temporary, lots of times superficial, and often leaves us dissatisfied wondering if there is a greater purpose beyond this.

Perhaps, what's important for us to learn is that as we navigate this world, we don't want to become so enthralled with the temporary that the eternal is overlooked and ignored.

Another important thing to keep in mind is that the good folks here at FCC are genuinely concerned about your spiritual well – being. We're here for you because we've personally experienced the benefits of joining like-minded individuals who despite having weaknesses and faults and challenges and doubts, are truly desirous to seek God and to worship him and serve him.

And so, we invite you to come along on this ride – a ride that is so full of all sorts of stuff – highs, lows, great joy, the mundane, and even bitter disappointment - but one thing it is never full of: Regret.

Because following the One True God of the Bible is always the best choice – really the only choice.

Well, so much for my opening remarks. Now let's get to the main topic of my message: Magnets

I'm pretty sure we're all familiar with magnets. We probably have a bunch of them attached to our refrigerator at home holding up photos, calendars and drawings that your children or grandchildren made.

But what is a magnet and how does it actually work?

What, exactly, makes a magnet stick to certain materials and not others?

And why do they attract or repel each other depending on their orientation?

And what on earth do magnets have to do with God and Easter Sunday?

Well, let's get some basics out of the way first which means we may have to travel back to the days of our elementary science class. For some of us, this will mean reaching far back in time. For others, school may not even have happened yet!

Anyway, according to one general science article I read, a magnet is any material or object that produces or generates a magnetic field.

While this statement may be true, it creates more questions than answers, namely, what is a magnetic field and what causes a magnetic field?

Well, without going too far down the rabbit hole, let's just say that a magnetic field is an area around a magnet where a magnetic force can be detected.

So far so good? Sounds simple enough – and I want to keep this very simple - or I'll quickly be in danger of getting myself totally confused!

So, a magnetic field is the space around a magnet, and it is primarily caused by moving electrical charges. Which leads me to my next question:

What particle of matter are you aware of, from your time in science class, that could be an excellent candidate to meet these criteria? A tiny but fast - moving particle with an electrical charge.

Yes! Atoms - and more specifically – the electrons that orbit around the nuclei of atoms.

Now, I don't know if you detected this, but there was a subtle shift in the scientific terms I used. First, I started talking about magnets and magnetism, and now I've introduced electrons and electricity.

I didn't do this to confuse you, but to remind you that magnetism and electricity are very closely related forces, like two sides of the same coin.

In fact, you can make a simple magnet just by wrapping a conductor like a thin wire around a metal nail and then attach it to a battery.

Kids, I dare you to try this at home, but please ask your parents first.

Parents, you can thank me later!

So that was my presentation on magnets. I hope you enjoyed it.

Just kidding! I'm not done yet.

Here is the next question you might have already thought about:

If magnetic fields are made simply by electrons orbiting around the nuclei of atoms, then why am I not just one big magnet? And why isn't that tree over there a magnet?

Afterall, isn't my body made up of millions of trillions of atoms all with their tiny electrons orbiting about them? And yet if I reach out my hand over a pile of iron filings, those filings aren't jumping up to attach to my hand.

Good point.

Well, here's what I found:

While it is true that every little atom in our bodies acts like an itsy bitsy tiny little magnet because of the movement of its electrons creating their own little magnetic field, these magnetic fields are oriented in all sorts of random fashions and directions.

There is really no organization among them which creates a cancelling effect. They are effectively cancelling out each other's magnetic field because they are not aligned and therefore not working together.

But if all these electrons orbiting these atoms – or at least the majority of them in a particular object were somehow oriented to face and move in the same direction, then presto! Each atom's magnetic field would join forces with the neighboring atom's magnetic field thus multiplying the magnetic field force many times over creating one powerful magnet.

There. Now you have a better understanding of magnets. I hope you enjoyed my presentation.

Oops, just kidding. I'm not quite done yet. We're just getting to the good part!

I haven't yet mentioned something called magnetic domains. These are microscopic regions in the magnetic material itself which are part of the physical structure of the material like iron, cobalt and nickel.

Each domain is a tiny self-contained magnet with a north and south pole. If these domains are pointing in opposite directions, they cancel each other out and the overall effect of the magnetic field is null and void, but if these domains are facing the same direction, then we have our magnet!

Hurray! Are you excited about all the stuff you're learning about magnets?

So, I mention magnets and magnetic fields and electrons and domains this morning for one basic reason. I want to pose a couple of questions to you:

Why is it so hard for us to follow God and to be faithful to God ...
and what can we do to be a better follower of God?

Now hear me out for a moment.

I'm not trying to send anyone on a guilt trip this morning. We all know that if we're really honest with ourselves, we struggle following God and being faithful to him. It's the plain and simple truth. I mean, after all, if we were truly following God, and loving him with all our hearts and minds and soul and strength would we be experiencing lots of the things we experience like ... depression, anxiety, fear, jealousy, discontentment, emptiness, purposelessness, restlessness, dissatisfaction, boredom – just to name a few?

I think not.

On the other hand, if we were having a close loving relationship with God, we might experience a lot more stuff like joy and peace and contentment and love and purpose and meaning, and fulfillment.

Isn't this the stuff that God wants us to experience?

So why don't we?

Simple: Our domains are not all oriented in the same direction. These magnetic domains that are supposed to be attracted to an irresistible, loving, compassionate, understanding God are not pointing to him. Instead, these domains are being pulled and are

pointing to all these other things that promise us good things and satisfaction and a prosperous and fulfilling life.

But they don't deliver on their promise. Oh, they might do it superficially for a short time, but they are fleeting friends – not that they are necessarily bad friends. It's just that they can't deliver what only God can deliver, what he has delivered, and what He promises still to deliver.

You see, the sad thing about Easter Sunday is that when this service is done and your Easter dinner is digesting, nothing will have changed for many of us.

We will go back and do the same thing we did before, and engage in activities that will lead us to darkness and hopelessness and futility and despair, and think nothing of it.

But maybe, just maybe a few of us will stop and ask why?

Why do I keep going back to the things that harm me rather than the things that can give me life and contentment and joy and peace?

And maybe when you ask these questions, you'll think about my message today about magnets and you will be reminded that our domains are messed up. They're not facing the Lord, so we were not attracted to God – which we should be because God made us in his own image and has set eternity in the hearts of man.

But we're not sticking to God. Instead, we're like a thistle seed blowing around in a hurricane. We're a tiny cork tossed about in a sea of confusion. We have no anchor.

So, let's get our domains facing in the right direction to the Lord, shall we?

But how do I do this? You ask.

It's quite simple, really and at the same time it's very difficult. It's difficult because it takes humility and trust, and these things are hard to come by these days because humility and trust means we have to expose ourselves to the truth found in Scripture – but people don't read the scripture anymore.

We're too busy trying to find the next meme to roast our neighbors!

We must not only read the scriptures, we must submit to it and we don't like to do this because it might hurt our pride and our sense of invincibility – and our life goals.

We don't want God directing our lives. We want to direct our own lives without any interference from any outside force whether that be the government or God. And if this is what we want, then this is what we get: A life void of God's direction and blessing.

But it doesn't have to be this way. Jesus can change all that in a heartbeat. He says, *"Come to me, all who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

Jesus also said this just hours before he went to the cross: *"But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."*

Do not ignore the pull and tug you feel on your heart today urging you to once again to follow the Savior.

Maybe you're saying to yourself that you've tried this before, but it just didn't take, and you found yourself drifting away from God.

Don't despair or give up. Maybe what happened is that you relied too much on your own strength and not enough on God's. I don't know. Everybody's story is different.

So, whether you've been away from God for 10 months or 10 years, doing all sorts of crazy stuff, it doesn't matter.

He has never left your side.

Remember what Proverbs 18:24 says: *"A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."*

And His name is Jesus and He's alive and he's defeated death, and he's forgiven us our sins and He's in heaven right now praying for us and preparing a place for us so that we can be with him forever and ever.

And in the mean - time, he has sent his Holy Spirit to clean us, live in us, guide us into all truth and empower us.

He's here with us right now to set our domains straight so that our hearts will be set on him and his will.

Could there be any better news than this?

And it's our news and our reality and our life.

All we have to do is believe. Amen.