

At Ridgewood, we are nothing more than real people living in a real world serving a real God.

Here are things that may be different from your previous church experiences:

No Age-Graded Ministries | All God's people - from infants to the elderly - are needed in relationships with each other. We worship together as one big family - the family of God.

Children are Welcome and Encouraged in the Worship Gathering

It is the parent's duty to train their children to participate in corporate worship, including singing, tithing, prayer, and active listening to the teaching of the Word of God. (Deut 31:12-13, Ezra 10:1, Matt 18:1-5, 19:13-15, Eph 6:1-4, Col 3:20) As part of this training process, children may make small noises in the service. These are a reminder "to such belong the Kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14). However, we also have the "Genesis Room" at the far end of the hall set up with video and audio feed for your convenience if you feel your child needs more attention.

We Partake in the Lord's Supper Weekly | We ask that the elements only be taken by professing, baptized believers who are in a good standing with their local church. (Acts 2:42-47, 1 Corinthians 11:23-24)

We Practice Systematic Exposition | The Bible is God's word and is our final authority in all matters of faith and practice. The music is prayerfully selected based on each week's text of Scripture. (Acts 2:42-47, Colossians 3:16)

Weekly Fellowship Meal | Families of Ridgewood have brought food for their own household and extra to share with visitors. Fellowship is one way we endeavor to 'encourage one another' in our Christian walk. (Acts 2:42-47, Hebrews 10:24-25)

Use this Bulletin Throughout the Week as a Home Worship Guide

God has called you to disciple your household. He has also called His church to encourage, equip, and expect you to disciple your household. Use this bulletin as a home-worship guide throughout the week.

The song of the month is a great place to start with family worship. The prayer guide is a tool designed to guide you and your family in prayer. The catechism/doctrine and home devotions are wonderful discipleship tools for everyone, especially for children of all ages. If you have any questions, the fellowship meal is a great time to get help and encouragement from others. That's what we are here for!

True Life Cards | We encourage you to pick up some True Life Cards in the foyer and give out a few every week. Pray for an opportunity of Gospel conversation with and the salvation of people in the following categories: Family, Friends, Neighbors, Coworkers, Community. Go to truelife.org for more information.

September 28, 2025

Ridgewood
CHURCH

Announcements:

» Wednesday Nights at 6p

- Bible Study continues this Wednesday at 6p. We are continuing our journey through Systematic Theology by working through a series on Eschatology which is the study of last days. Title of the series is "End Times Made Simple." This week we will answer the question "How can everyone be so wrong?" while looking at end time charts.

» Night to Shine SETX Upcoming Dates

- Online Registration for Guests and Volunteers - 11/1/25
- NTS SETX Board Meeting - 11/12/25
- Prom Dress Boutique - 12/7/25
- Save the Date: "Passport to Paris" Night to Shine SETX - 2/13/26

» Extra-Cushion Diaper Ministry

- Outreach Port Arthur will be distributing diapers the second Wednesday of each month from 3-5p. Contact Savannah S if you would like to help.

» Operating:

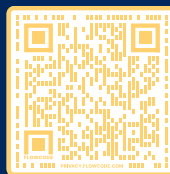
- Please remember to be faithful in your tithes and offerings (2 Cor. 9:6-7)
- Offering plates are at the back of the auditorium, or text "\$amount" to 409-239-0774

409.729.6000 • ridgewoodchurch@yahoo.com • www.ridgewoodchurch.us

Our Purpose... To Belong to Christ

Our Mission... To Become like Christ

Our Vision... To Bear Christ's Fruit



Welcome Guests!



Order of Service: September 28, 2025

Sermon Notes:

Prelude "The Church's One Foundation"

Welcome

Catechism/Responsorial - Doctrine - Prayer

101. How many petitions are there in the Lord's Prayer? Six.

110. What is the fifth petition? "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

111. What do we pray for in the fifth petition? That God will pardon our sins and help us to forgive those who have sinned against us.

Memory Verse: Ephesians 4:32, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

Pray for our Church Body (James 5:16)

Jonathan & Niondau Williams Family

Pray for Kings and Those in Authority (1 Timothy 2:2)

Local | Thomas Kinlaw III | Port Arthur City Council

State | Janis Holt | State Representative

National | Wesley Hunt | US Representative

Pray for the Great Commission (Luke 10:2)

New Testament Scripture

Romans 4:1-12, page 941

Congregational Singing

"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"

"Tis So Sweet"

"Grace"

Old Testament Scripture

Exodus 37, page 77

Home Worship Song of the Month | scan QR code for lyrics

"Grace Greater than Our Sins" by Julia Johnston - 1911

Message

The Gospel Explained: The Blessing of Abraham
Gal.3:6-9, p 973

Confession/Repentance

Lord's Supper

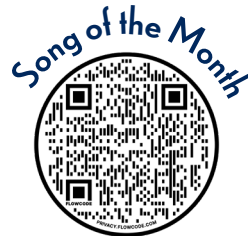
"Rock of Ages"

Dismissal/Offering

"Doxology"

Fellowship Luncheon

Please join us in the gym for fellowship and food!



UNIT 6 – SECTION 4

Forgiveness and Righteousness

QUESTIONS TO LEARN:

110. What is the fifth petition?

“And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.”

111. What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

That God will pardon our sins, and help us to forgive those who have sinned against us.

112. What is the sixth petition?

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

113. What do we pray for in the sixth petition?

That God will keep us from sin.

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Ananias, whom God called upon to minister to Saul in Damascus, struggled with his own bitterness toward the man who had come there to persecute the followers of Jesus. But God gave Ananias the grace to forgive Saul, just as Ananias himself had been forgiven by God. For years after Christianity had been declared the official religion of the Roman Empire, the people continued their horrid pastime of watching men kill each other for sport in gladiator contests. When the monk Telemachus asked God to forgive the people and deliver them from this sin, God sent him to Rome with a message.

Just as God Forgives You

Ananias was quite preoccupied with the grim warning he had only just overheard from one of the elders: "Saul comes to Damascus with orders from the high priest to take all the followers of Jesus as prisoners back to Jerusalem. He may arrive here at any minute, and then we will have to turn our brothers over to him, no matter how much we may like and respect them." This was the Saul that everyone had heard about – the one from Tarsus who had been imprisoning the followers of Christ in Jerusalem, including women. Many said this same Saul was responsible for Stephen's being stoned to death.

Apparently Jerusalem wasn't big enough for him any more. Now he was tracking Jesus' disciples to other towns, where many of them had fled to escape Saul. He was even coming over 150 miles to Damascus to pursue them. Ananias had heard the truth about Jesus from some of those who had already experienced Saul's persecution. And now, where would it end?

Wrestling with what he should do, Ananias cried out to God to deliver the Damascus Christians from Saul's violent rampage. Almost immediately, he heard a voice call, "*Ananias!*"

"Yes, Lord," he answered.

"Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight," said the voice.

This was not exactly what Ananias had had in mind. The Lord had specifically said "a man from Tarsus named Saul," so there was no mistaking which Saul he meant. But how could God wish him to help the one who had so harmed those who called on Jesus' name? "Lord," he ventured, "I hear that his man has greatly persecuted your saints in Jerusalem, and that he comes here with the authority to arrest us also!"

"Go!" said the Lord. *"This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."*

So Ananias arose and headed south toward Straight Street. With each shaky step, he puzzled over what the Lord had just told him. Was Saul now a Christian? Had God really saved such a wicked man? Surely not! How could God forgive Saul for killing his own dear people?

And yet, as Ananias marched silently on, he recalled what his own life had been like before he had known Christ. He too had devoutly

observed the Law and had been proud to condemn those who would not. He had hurt many others. He had at first rejected the teachings of Jesus. Yes, he too was a sinner. In his own way, hadn't he really been just as wretched as Saul?

Judas opened the door and welcomed Ananias. "Saul has been asking for you," he said, pointing at a small man bent in prayer several feet away. When the man looked up, Ananias saw tears streaming from beneath hideous scale-like coverings over his eyes.

Ananias reached out his hands and laid them on the one who had caused Jesus' disciples so much pain. "Brother Saul," Ananias began. "The Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came here to persecute us, has sent me to you that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Now receive your sight!" And as the scales fell from his eyes, Saul clasped Ananias' hand with joy and thanksgiving.

"The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth," Ananias told Saul. *"You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name."*

Ananias left, marveling at God's infinite mercy and power. For it was God's good pleasure to forgive even Saul, so that in him, *the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.*"

Taken from: Acts 9:1-19, 22:12-16; 1 Timothy 1:16b.

FROM THE BIBLE:

[A]s far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:12)

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32)

TALKING IT OVER:

1. *Were Saul's sins against the Jerusalem Christians too great for Jesus to forgive? Is anyone too sinful for God to forgive them through Christ?*

2. *Do you think God viewed Saul's sins as any worse than the sins of Ananias?*
3. *Why does God tell us to forgive those who sin against us? (See Ephesians 4:32.) How can we do it? (Pray; remember how he has forgiven our own many sins.) Will God forgive us our sins if we refuse to forgive those who sin against us? (See Matthew 18:32-35.)*

Rome's Last Game

Telemachus shifted his weight from one knee to the other and continued his prayer. *"Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil,"* he whispered, lifting his head to the first rays of sun filtering under the door of the empty cell in which he knelt. It was almost time for the day's work to begin. He sighed. "Lord," he prayed, "save me from mindless habit. Let my prayers be from my heart and not just my lips."

Each day, for years now, Telemachus had risen before dawn and had gone to the little cell to pray. Along with several other monks who worked hard to keep their bodies pure and to avoid temptations, he had chosen to cloister himself away from the pleasure-loving Roman society in which he had grown up. Within the cities of the Roman Empire, many had come to believe in Christ, and Christianity had even been declared the official state religion, but prosperous Roman citizens still flocked to the immoral and cruel gladiator games that had been held for many centuries. By now, the people were blind to the brutality and evil they had come to love.

On this very day, Telemachus knew, a grand celebration in honor of the Empire's recent victory over one of its enemies was to be held in Rome's Coliseum. Two by two, slaves trained as gladiators would be thrust out onto the sandy floor of the large arena and forced to fight each other with spiked shields and nets and swords, until one of each pair was killed. At the first sight of blood, the crowds would spring cheering to their feet, and their applause would swell until one of the men lay lifeless in the dirt. Then it would start all over again, and again, throughout the day and without shame. Telemachus shuddered that Romans thought of death as a game to be enjoyed.

He fell again to his knees. "Lord, you have led my friends and me here, where we are safe from such vile temptations as this. But Lord, please also deliver the Roman people from this great evil. O Lord, save! O Lord, deliver!"

Telemachus rose slowly. Yes, salvation had come to many in Rome, but had enough Roman consciences been pricked to stop these horrible games? As he reflected, Telemachus knew that today he must visit Rome. He would see for himself how God was working in the hearts of his countrymen.

Late that morning Telemachus entered the city gate and found himself immediately swept up into an excited crowd of people. He saw

that they were flowing toward the Coliseum, drawn, it seemed, like moths to a flame. Soon they fell into the shadow of Rome's tallest building, where the games were underway.

Once inside, Telemachus was horrified by the sight of an arena floor already strewn with fallen gladiators. Spurred on by the bloodthirsty cheers of those around him, Telemachus suddenly knew what he must do.

He threaded his way down through the mob to the Coliseum's lower level, filled with armored men waiting their turn to kill or be killed. A small and insignificant figure amidst the brutal chaos on the arena floor, Telemachus made it out to one of the ferocious pairs without being noticed. The first gladiator he stepped in front of was clearly confused by Telemachus' intrusion on his proud struggle with death.

"Get out of the way," the man growled.

Telemachus grabbed the man's arm. "In the name of Christ, stop!" he said. "You must stop!"

The man pulled away from Telemachus' grip, barely managing to fend off a sword thrust to his chest.

By this time, a few of the spectators had noticed the monk and were calling out to the gladiators. Quickly, Telemachus made his way to two men in the center of the arena.

"In the name of Christ, stop!" he shouted in frustration. "Don't you see what you are doing?"

Both gladiators paused and watched the monk approach. From the stands, a thrilled, quivering voice urged, "Stone him!" Others screamed, "Get him out of the way!"

Without any more reason than that, one of the spectators picked up a rock and hurled it at Telemachus' head. Soon, stones showered down on him from the stands and all parts of the arena, adding Telemachus' blood to that of the others. "In the name of Christ," he whispered just before he died, "please stop this."

After the last stone had thudded into the sand, the crowd grew oddly quiet. They stared down at the lifeless form of the monk they had just murdered with their own hands – someone they had never seen before, an innocent victim who so clearly did not belong here in this arena. And yet, there he lay, side by side with the muscular young bodies of men who had been bred and trained for the very purpose of dying on an arena floor. What had they done? What were they doing?

The Romans who filed silently out through the Coliseum's vast aisles on that day would never see a gladiator contest again. Before another could be held, the emperor Honorius declared Telemachus a martyr and

abolished the games forever. God had answered the prayer of Telemachus to deliver the Roman people from this vilest of sins to which they had so long been enslaved.

FROM THE BIBLE:

But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. (Romans 6:17-18)

Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting! (Psalm 139:23-24)

TALKING IT OVER:

1. In this story, what did God lead Telemachus to pray on behalf of his countrymen?
2. How did God use Telemachus to deliver Rome from this great evil?
3. If we pray and ask God to deliver us from evil, what might we expect to happen in our lives? (We can expect the Holy Spirit to convict us of our sin, and to help us to turn away from it and live purer lives.)