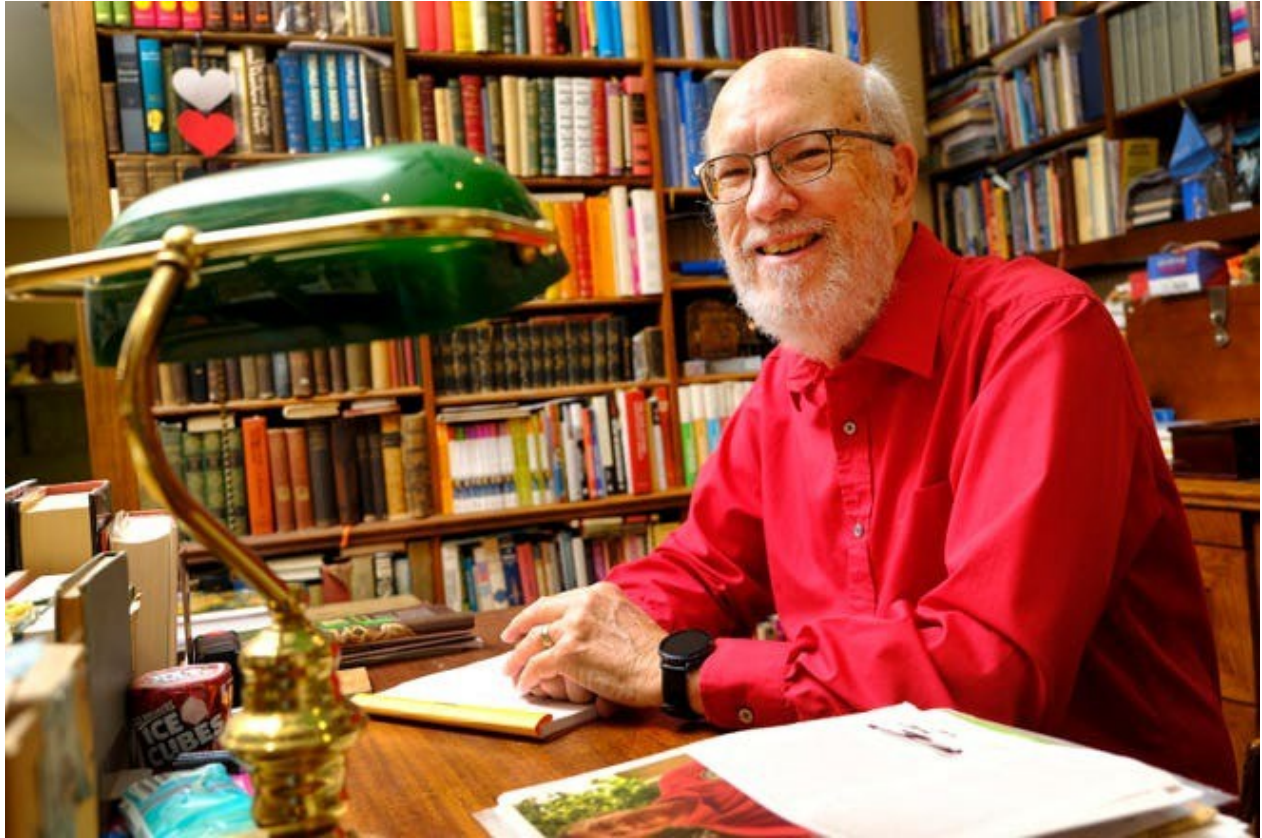


THE OKLAHOMAN



LIFESTYLE

'The Bible is true': Why the longtime Bible Lesson writer is retiring his column

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EDMOND — A local preacher volunteered to write an ongoing Bible study for *The Oklahoman* for one reason and one reason only:

"I believe the Bible is true and I wanted to make sure I had the opportunity to keep telling people that it is true," said the Rev. L.G. Parkhurst Jr.

That was 32 years ago, when friends at Parkhurst's metro-area church suggested he reach out to *The Oklahoman* to see if he could write the Bible Lesson column that had been a mainstay of the newspaper for many years. Parkhurst said their recommendations came after journalist Perry White died in 1989. White had been religion editor at one time and had continued to write the Bible Lesson even after retiring from *The Oklahoman*.

Parkhurst, 75, recently shared those memories as he discussed his next great adventure. He's retiring his column. His final Bible Lesson is featured in the Oct. 30 edition of The Oklahoman.

What prompted the decision to step away from writing the religious commentary he's written for newspaper readers for 32 years?

In a word, family.

And for Parkhurst, his family — and his faith — are everything. He and his wife Pat have been married for 53 years and they have a grown son, Jonathan, a daughter Kathryn, a son-in-law, Brian, and six grandchildren.

The Edmond preacher retired from pulpit ministry 10 years ago. In his more than 30 years of writing Bible Lessons, he's gone through portions of every book in the Bible at least five times.

Over the years, he tried to make the lessons appealing to people of different Christian denominations and easy to read for those who aren't Christians, particularly those seeking answers about the faith.

Parkhurst said he grew up in a Christian home and attended church regularly at First Christian Church of Edmond (Disciples of Christ) but he began to question his faith while in college. He earned a bachelor's degree and master's degree, both in philosophy, from the University of Oklahoma. He went to Princeton Theological Seminary, where he earned a Master of Divinity degree. Parkhurst was ordained as a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister in 1973.

The clergyman said he served in several pastoral posts in Oklahoma and other states but his home has been in Edmond for many years. Always a lover of reading and writing, he earned a Master of Library and Information Studies Degree from Oklahoma University.

Answering questions

The minister said he has always considered writing the Bible Lesson his ministry. He has enjoyed interacting with readers over the years and many often send him emails (letters when snail mail was the only way to go) to share their thoughts about a particular lesson or

to ask him questions.

In recent months, a few of those questions have focused on COVID-19. One reader asked him what the Bible says about vaccines, while another asked him if the COVID-19 vaccines were considered the "mark of the beast."

Parkhurst said he has taken readers' questions seriously. He said he told the reader asking about the biblical implications of vaccines that vaccines aren't mentioned in the Bible specifically.

And as far as the question about the COVID-19 vaccines being somehow tied to Satan, the preacher said the Bible states that people would be given a clear choice about whether or not they would take the so-called "mark" of the Antichrist or devil and it wouldn't be something that would be presented to them in a sneaky way or under false pretenses.

Still sharing

Meanwhile, he's still going to be writing about scripture.

That commitment to sharing the Bible is still there.

There will be more opportunities for readers to enjoy the minister's Bible commentary. He said people may go to ParkhurstBibleLessons.com for Bible lessons. He said the site also includes free lesson materials. The minister will also attempt to answer people's questions about the Bible, if they email him at lgp@lgparkhurst.com.

Smiling, he said he's taking a break for the fall and part of the winter, but he will be back to writing new commentary in January.

Live Faithful to the Truth — 3 John 1:1-15

For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth (3 John 1:3—KJV).

For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth (3 John 1:3—NASB).

I was overjoyed when some of the friends arrived and testified to your faithfulness to the truth, namely how you walk in the truth (3 John 1:3—NRSV).

Where did the Apostle John find his greatest joy? In 3 John 1:4, John wrote to Gaius, “I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my children are walking in the truth.” John wrote to Gaius because he had learned of Gaius’ faithfulness to the truth and how he spoke and practiced the truth. Throughout history, truth has often been difficult to find and even more difficult to learn from those we expect to tell the truth. Those who will say and do anything to achieve their goals will sometimes disregard the truth and fail to live as truthful people. In places where truthfulness is rare and where some people will not tell the truth but obviously and habitually tell lies and intentionally mislead people, what can the followers of Jesus Christ do? They must do what John commended. They must walk faithfully and according to the truth. They must practice living in the reality, in the world, that God has made. They must always say what they know to be true and do what they know to be right. Jesus’ followers must never tell lies. They must prayerfully follow the Holy Spirit to learn when to speak and when to remain silent. Jesus always spoke the truth, so He warned His followers in Matthew 7:6, “Do not give what is holy to dogs; and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under foot and turn and maul you.” In other words, do not throw your life away needlessly: those who are wise learn when to say nothing. — L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.