

JESUS TAKE THE WHEEL

Rev. Chris Meier

I know a whole bunch of y'all will have heard that saying: "Oh, Jesus, lead me and guide me, just take the wheel and drive me." Well, we're here during these Resurrection Holidays for me to share a different saying, especially for those of you who only visit once a year cuz you've got to bring Momma to church: "Jesus doesn't need to take the wheel, dang He needs to pull over and spank some of y'all with His flip-flop!"

I know, I hear the rest of you: "Preacher that isn't even theologically accurate!" I agree; I didn't say it was theologically accurate: But it is quite human. I never read anywhere in the Gospels where Jesus ever slapped anyone, except when He made a whip out of cords and chased out the money changers from the Temple area; but, that's a different sermon.

No, this isn't that kind of sermon. I want to see a bunch of raised hands of anyone who has never messed up in life: Please, and you better be under the age of seven if you have your hand up! What's going on in this country right now and with what's going on with some of y'all, Jesus needs to pull this whole thing over and just give us all a good-ole spankin! My momma didn't need a flip-flop; never saw her in a pair, ever. If she even hinted they were pulling the car over we knew we were D-E-A-D: dead! We didn't say another word. We got quieter than a bunch of church mice in the back seat of that car.

We all rail at Peter for being a mess-up. But you know what? I am not going to heaven and meeting Peter on a golden street and have him come up to me and say, "*So I was the screw-up?*" Nope, sorry;

there have been far more mess-ups in history than Peter. I know, I can hear the rest of you: “Pastor, this isn’t exactly an Easter sermon.” Hang on, I’m getting there. Read the Psalm up on the board. It’s in two different versions:

NET Bible: “Psalm 17:3: You have scrutinized my inner motives; you have examined me during the night. You have carefully evaluated me, but you find no sin. I am determined I will say nothing sinful.”

King James Version: “Psalm 17:3: Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.”

Show of hands: Those who know those verses apply to them, raise your left hand. Okay. Now, those who aren’t sure or feel it doesn’t, raise your right hand.

Okay, now I’m going to prove to the right-handers how it can apply to all of us. And you left-handers who know the answer, sit still, I’m getting to you! We didn’t forget communion, we’re just doing things a bit differently today. Singers, come on up. Ushers, pass the elements.



FOR THOSE READING THIS ONLINE, TAKE A BREAK, GET A BIT OF GRAPE JUICE AND A PIECE OF MATZA OR NON-YEASTED BREAD, copy and paste and listen to a song— it is not the one sung in services. I thought you might enjoy a song sung by folks who can sing on-key. We The Kingdom are great singers. Church folk don't always sing on-key. But, they don't have to. All they have to do is make a joyful noise. Here is We The Kingdom, who both make a joyful noise AND sing on-key.

“We The Kingdom: Holy Water”:

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=AfY7CGU8sck>

For the Right-Handers

For those of us who read our Bibles regularly, we all have favorite writers. Don't get me wrong, I like them all, but some of them the Lord speaks to us quite often when we read them. It's okay, like I said before some people have an opinion about Peter. But frankly, I think we're all a little like Peter from time to time. You've got to put yourself in his shoes— or flip-flops! More importantly, we've got to realize he lived during both the time of The Law and after our Lord was sacrificed, or during our timeframe of grace.

It must have been somewhat confusing for them. One minute you're killing sheep to pay for your sins and the next minute, they've been totally paid for. Following The Law with all its rituals is not necessary because Jesus fulfilled all of the rituals The Law demanded. And then there's the time period where we Gentiles get grafted into Jesus' family tree where we live by the Holy Spirit and not after The Law. So cut Peter some slack.

I doubt I would have done better. In fact, I'm thrilled to be born now: running water with sinks and toilets, electricity. Oh, and dang,

that pesky nonsense about women being under The Law. The early church had women pastors, apostles and some early Greek historians let us know that they were also evangelists and prophets. No restrictions as long as their own husbands were fine with whatever work the Holy Spirit gave them to do for the church. Can you imagine me living then? Yeah, I don't think so either.

But I'm getting off track here. My favorite writer is John. No offense to those of you who like Peter, Paul, Luke or another. We know so much about John. Of course we know quite a bit about Peter and Paul as well. But John holds this kind of awe for me. I just love the way he puts stuff. Like: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (KJV: John 1:1).

Here's the apostle as an elderly writer: "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment" (KJV: 1 John 3:18-23; see also John 15:16-17).

Did you read that? First the elder statesman calls believers his little children and then he says even if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our feelings or thoughts which go against the Gospel. Read down a little further and he tells us how we can obey the only true commandment in the New Testament: "That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another..."

How awesome is that? No ifs, ands or buts. Paul fills in the “believing” questions in his epistle to the Romans, who, by the way, had similar questions as we do today. Questions about exactly what should we believe and exactly how we should live. Paul tells us this: “The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (KJV: Romans 10:8-9).

I know, you “Right-Handers” can’t believe how simple it is to get saved. Just believe that Jesus is who He says He is, God Almighty come in the flesh, the Son of the Living God, and that He died, was buried and is coming again? Yep, it’s that simple. In fact, the Apostle Paul explains it a little further: “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (KJV: Romans 10:10-13).

Remember how I shared before that the Gentiles were being included in the Jewish Messiah’s salvation? And that it was a changing time period? It’s kind of a changing time period in America, but that’s a different sermon as well. Anyway, Paul makes mention of it by saying there’s no difference between Jew and Greek. He says that the same Lord is rich or gracious to all that call upon Him. And that’s exactly what you are doing when you believe in Jesus and ask Him to be your Lord and help you with this life: You are calling on the Name of the Lord, and you are then saved. That’s it. No rules, or extended rituals or anything else.

Now, as we grow in the Lord and read His word to learn more about Him, we then realize we want to change some things about how we might be living or some of the things we believe that may not be true or have anything to do with what the Bible says. I always tell folks to begin reading in one of the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. I guess you can figure out that I'm going to encourage you to start in John. But I know many pastors and other Christians who started in one of the other three. Whichever floats your boat, and whichever one you sense the Holy Spirit is leading you to, do that.

Oh, and yes, when you ask Jesus to come into your heart and be your guide, the Holy Spirit will also come into your spirit and start to lead you and guide you. Jesus told us that would happen. What Gospel, you might ask? Of course, it would be the Gospel of John!

John 16:12-16: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you. A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father."

When Jesus ascended, He gave us the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us. The disciples were having a hard time understanding the reality that Jesus would die, rise from the grave, visit them before He went up into heaven. That's the last sentence above, that they would not see him, then they would see him before He went up to the Father. Then He did something different, because it was the first time the Holy Spirit would come to reside inside believers: "And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the LORD. Then said Jesus to them

again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost” (KJV: John 20:20-22).

Here are the scriptures from what we celebrate as Good Friday, all the way to Resurrection Sunday— of course from the Gospel of John!

(FOR THOSE READING THIS ONLINE: Reading from John 18:3-20:22 in two readings on Good Friday, and then finishing on Resurrection Sunday.)

And Now for the Left-Handers

For those of you who raised your left hands when I asked the question, “Who knows that Psalm 17:3 applies to you?” The Lord puts nothing on us that religion does. You know that we are not good or righteous or saved because of anything we have done, but because Jesus did it all (Ephesians 2:7-9). We receive Christ’s righteousness when we believe. Our faith is belief in what Jesus did on the cross when He bought our redemption. I’m not saying we don’t mess up. But when we do, we can look towards Jesus and ask Him to help us believe for better next time.

“Next time” might be someone doing you wrong. So by faith, and as a choice, we choose to forgive that person. No, we might not *feel* like forgiving them, but we choose to. “Next time” might be a time of anger; maybe we might get mad at a loved one. Well, we ask Jesus to help us with these issues. We ask the Holy Spirit to show us when we mess up, to help us recognize these issues and why we might be responding the way we do. It is the Holy Spirit who gives us the desire to become more like Jesus. Works or great human effort, doesn’t work. Only the leading desires of the Holy Spirit help us to change. Paul said it this way:

Ephesians 6:11-18: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (King James Version).

When you read the words in the verses above: amor, shields, breastplates and swords, these things are not what a soldier makes for themselves, but what is given to that individual as part of their ability to fight. In like fashion, the Lord gives us His word, the Bible. It is because of what He did that we have righteousness and because of what He did that we even have faith. We have to choose these things, but He gives them to us freely so we can accomplish all we are destined to do in this lifetime. Everything comes to us because Father, God accepted Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross. All we do is walk in what He has already done. Blessings to all in Jesus’ Name. Enjoy some scenes in the life of Christ:

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