

## LIFE POINT CHURCH INTERNATIONAL SERMON JOURNAL 2023

Matthew 5:13-14

You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.



# 20 Be the Difference 23

**MATTHEW 5:13-14**

“YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH...YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. A TOWN BUILT ON A HILL CANNOT BE HIDDEN.”

## MONTHLY THEME & DIRECTION

### **JANUARY**

### **SALT AND LIGHT**

➤ **DEFINING THE DIFFERENCE!**

JANUARY 1<sup>ST</sup>

SERIES LAUNCH

JANUARY 8<sup>TH</sup>

THE VALUE OF SALT

JANUARY 15<sup>TH</sup>

VALUE DIRECTS DECISIONS

JANUARY 22<sup>ND</sup>

THE SEPARATION OF LIGHT

JANUARY 29<sup>TH</sup>

CONFIDENCE IN THE WORKS OF LIGHT

### **FEBRUARY**

### **CHANGING MY HABITS**

➤ **CHOOSING THE DIFFERENCE!**

FEBRUARY 5<sup>TH</sup>

CHANGING MY MIND

FEBRUARY 12<sup>TH</sup>

CHANGING WHAT I DESIRE

FEBRUARY 19<sup>TH</sup>

CLOSING DOORS

FEBRUARY 26<sup>TH</sup>

OPENING DOORS

## MARCH

## BECOMING THE CATALYST FOR CHANGE

- **BEING THE DIFFERENCE; A LEPER'S LOOK AT  
TRULY LIVING : USING OUR WEAKNESS!**

MARCH 5<sup>TH</sup>

SERIOUSLY! LEPROSY? PART 1

MARCH 12<sup>TH</sup>

SERIOUSLY! LEPROSY? PART 2

MARCH 19<sup>TH</sup>

SERIOUSLY! LEPROSY? PART 3

MARCH 26<sup>TH</sup>

SERIOUSLY! LEPROSY? PART 4

## APRIL

## BECOMING THE CATALYST FOR CHANGE

- **BEING THE DIFFERENCE; A SHEPHERD'S STABLE  
STORY : USING OUR SITUATION!**

APRIL 2<sup>ND</sup>

HOLY SHEEP!

APRIL 9<sup>TH</sup>

EASTER SUNDAY

APRIL 16<sup>TH</sup>

MUSICIAN? I THOUGHT I WAS KING?

APRIL 23<sup>RD</sup>

THE BIGGER THEY ARE, THE HARDER  
THEY FALL – PART 1

APRIL 30<sup>TH</sup>

THE BIGGER THEY ARE, THE HARDER  
THEY FALL – PART 2

**MAY**

**BECOMING THE CATALYST  
FOR CHANGE**

➤ **BEING THE DIFFERENCE; A SHEPHERD'S STABLE  
STORY : USING OUR SITUATION!**

**MAY 7<sup>TH</sup>**

**A BITTER & BROKEN 1<sup>ST</sup> MARRIAGE**

**MAY 14<sup>TH</sup>**

**MOTHER'S DAY**

**MAY 21<sup>ST</sup>**

**A MIGHTY FRIENDSHIP – BEING A  
TRUE FRIEND – PART 1**

**MAY 28<sup>TH</sup>**

**A MIGHTY FRIENDSHIP – BEING A  
TRUE FRIEND – PART 2**

**JUNE**

**BECOMING THE CATALYST  
FOR CHANGE**

➤ **BEING THE DIFFERENCE; SMALL BEGINNINGS; BIG  
DECISIONS : DECIDING ON VALUE**

**JUNE 4<sup>TH</sup>**

**COUNTING THE COST – PART 1**

**JUNE 11<sup>TH</sup>**

**COUNTING THE COST – PART 2**

**JUNE 18<sup>TH</sup>**

**FATHER'S DAY!**

**JUNE 25<sup>TH</sup>**

**ASKING HARD THINGS!**



**JULY**

**BECOMING THE CATALYST  
FOR CHANGE**

➤ **BEING THE DIFFERENCE; NEHEMIAH, THE  
STIRRING : STOPPING THE ATTACK**

**JULY 2<sup>ND</sup>**

**THE GREAT RETURNING!**

**JULY 9<sup>TH</sup>**

**THE SANBALLAT SPIRIT – PART 1**

**JULY 16<sup>TH</sup>**

**THE SANBALLAT SPIRIT – PART 2**

**JULY 23<sup>RD</sup>**

**THE SANBALLAT SPIRIT – PART 3**

**JULY 30<sup>TH</sup>**

**REJECTING SANBALLAT – PART 1**

**AUGUST**

**BECOMING THE CATALYST  
FOR CHANGE**

➤ **BEING THE DIFFERENCE; NEHEMIAH, THE  
STIRRING : STOPPING THE ATTACK**

**AUGUST 6<sup>TH</sup>**

**REJECTING SANBALLAT – PART 2**

**AUGUST 13<sup>TH</sup>**

**REJECTING SANBALLAT – PART 3**

**AUGUST 20<sup>TH</sup>**

**MENTAL HEALTH BEGINNING TO  
DETERIORATE**

**AUGUST 27<sup>TH</sup>**

**THE JOY OF THE LORD**

## SEPTEMBER

## MENACING MENTAL HEALTH

### ➤ ENDURING IN THE DIFFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 3<sup>RD</sup>

CHURCH PICNIC – NO SERVICE

SEPTEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup>

AHITHOPHEL – STOPPING  
BITTERNESS DEAD IN ITS TRACKS

SEPTEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup>

JUDAS – LIVING FOR THE MOMENT –  
PART 1

SEPTEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup>

JUDAS – LIVING FOR THE MOMENT –  
PART 2

## OCTOBER

## TURING OUR HOME AROUND: THE HOUSEHOLD ATMOSPHERE

### ➤ MULTIPLYING THE DIFFERENCE

OCTOBER 1<sup>ST</sup>

WORKING FOR GOD

OCTOBER 8<sup>TH</sup>

THANKFUL PRAYER

OCTOBER 15<sup>TH</sup>

THE GOSPEL DOOR

OCTOBER 22<sup>ND</sup>

OPPORTUNITY JUMPER

OCTOBER 29<sup>TH</sup>

SALTY SPEECH

## NOVEMBER

## TURING OUR HOME AROUND: LEARNING FROM THE NETWORK

### ➤ MULTIPLYING THE DIFFERENCE

NOVEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup>

TYCHICUS – STEPPING INTO  
STRATEGY

NOVEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup>

ONESIMUS – GIVING IN TO GOD'S  
PURSUIT

NOVEMBER 19<sup>TH</sup>

MARK – MISTAKES DON'T DEFINE  
YOU

NOVEMBER 26<sup>TH</sup>

EPAPHRAS – SHOULD I PRAY FOR  
YOU?

## DECEMBER

## TURING OUR HOME AROUND: LEARNING FROM THE NETWORK

### ➤ MULTIPLYING THE DIFFERENCE

DECEMBER 3<sup>RD</sup>

LUKE – GOD'S MEDICAL ADVICE

DECEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup>

DEMAS – WHEN FRIENDS LEAVE

DECEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup>

ARCHIPPUS – SEEING WITH NEW  
EYES

DECEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup>

CHRISTMAS EVE!

DECEMBER 31<sup>ST</sup>

BE THE DIFFERENCE!



COME ON...JOIN US...!



January

20

Be the Difference

23



Salt & Light : Defining the Difference

## MONTHLY MESSAGE DIRECTION:

JANUARY 1<sup>ST</sup>

BEING THE DIFFERENCE

JANUARY 8<sup>TH</sup>

THE VALUE OF SALT

JANUARY 15<sup>TH</sup>

VALUE DIRECTS DECISIONS

JANUARY 22<sup>ND</sup>

THE SEPARATION OF LIGHT

JANUARY 29<sup>TH</sup>

CONFIDENCE IN THE WORKS OF LIGHT

# 20 Be the Difference 23

**Date:** January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023

**Speaker:** Dr. Rai Papparatti

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**Sermon Title:** Being the Difference!

**Text:** Matthew 5:13-20

Being the difference is about sharing the hope of Jesus in our home and in someone's life this year.

Matthew 5:20 is the foundation of the Sermon on the Mount.

## **1 – We must actively live out the righteousness that Jesus gave to us. Verse 20**

- The righteousness of Jesus is always producing. It is never stagnant.
  - Philippians 3:9; 2 Corinthians 5:21
- A. Our righteousness must be active.
  - B. Our righteousness must be visible.
  - C. Our righteousness is always transformative.

## **2 – The stakes of salt and light are extremely high in what we gain or give up and lose.**

**Verse 20b**

- The Kingdom of Heaven is at stake.

Salt and Light have extreme consequences because they are both qualities and resources given from the Kingdom of Heaven.

**3 – The intention of His active righteousness is that we become loudly visible. Verse 14b**

- Christian visibility is Jesus visibility.
- Christian activity is Spirit activity.
- Christian movement is Spirit movement.

When we live out our righteousness we walk in step with the Spirit and are led by the Spirit.

Galatians 5:16-25

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1 – We become the difference of Jesus to the extent that we desire Him to be seen.

2 – Decide and write down, how will Jesus be seen in and through my life?

At work? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

At school? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

At home? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

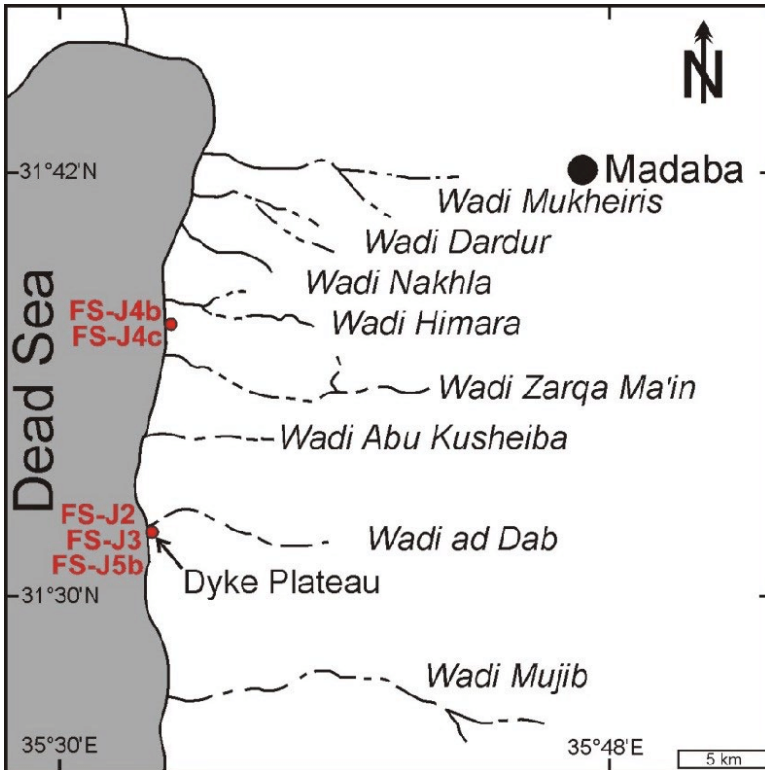
In the marketplace? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

At church? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Map of Dead Sea







Wadi's are canyons, valleys, or ravines. These all dump into the Dead Sea.

**Sermon Title:** The Value of Salt!

**Text:** Matthew 5:13-20

*“In everything that Jesus says, His redemptive purpose shines through. Jesus’ conversation about salt describes the “why” of His death for us.”*

Our oceans are about 3.5 % salt.

The dead sea is about 34%

- It is the lowest place on earth. 1,414 ft below sea level. Everything drains in and nothing drains out.

For us, salt is cheap. In the first century, salt was so valuable that people paid people in salt.

- Soldiers were paid in salt. It was known as *Solarium Argentum*, from where we get the word *salary*.
- A soldier’s salary was often cut if he “was not worth his salt.” Romans and Greeks often bought slaves with salt.
- A soldier carried salt in a pouch. In the dryness of the environment, he would eat some salt to replenish missing electrolytes from his body.

The Wadi’s without topsoil, provide the dead sea with salt each time it rains. They are all full of salt mines. It is stated that one salt vein from the dead sea can provide the world with salt for 60 years.

Jesus declares, “*You are the salt of the earth!*”

- We are valuable.

## **1 – We are the value of the world.**

### **Verse 13a**

- The tasteless nature comes not by failing to “do”, but by failing to recognize Christ.

We fail at this often by:

1. Embarrassment,
2. Pride.
3. Worldly people pressure,
4. Conflicting views. We are often apprehensive to contradict the world.
5. Desire for the valueless.

## **2 – We are granted permission to attend God’s friendship covenant without having to paying an entrance fee.**

**Leviticus 2:13; Numbers 18:19; Ezekiel 43:24; 2 Chronicles 13:5**

- God commanded salt with every sacrifice. A sacrifice without salt was not a sacrifice.
- God provides the salt. The value. Jesus declares, “*You are the salt of the earth!*”

The world can never value us. Our only value is in Him and through Him.

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**Moving Forward**

Spend a few moment tonight expressing gratitude before God for the value He has placed over your life.

Use this time to rededicate yourself to Him and yield to His plan for you.

**Sermon Title:** Value Directs Decisions!

**Text:** Matthew 5:13

*“People don’t enjoy salt. They enjoy what is salted. We are the salt of the earth. We do not exist for ourselves.”*

John Piper

**1 – Tastelessness has to do with lack of Christ acceptance. Verse 13b**

➤ *But if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again?*

This is a symptom of Spiritual Covid.

➤ We lose our taste.

Ways that salt loses its saltiness, according to *Koyuncu Salt Company*:

A. It has additives in it. The salt does not deteriorate, but the additives do (iodine & anti-caking agents). *If we add to Christ any other saving method (our own works) they eventually deteriorate and our saltiness become tasteless.*

B. It might have absorbed humidity and eventually evaporated and left behind a substance that looked like salt, but it did not taste like salt. *If we absorb the humidity (sin desires) of the world, we lose our saltiness.*

*“Salt cannot lose its saltiness unless exposed to certain conditions or additives.” Koyuncu*

What are we adding to our faith?  
What are we absorbing from this world?

## **2 – Knowing the value within keeps us from the desires without.**

- The more we value Christ in us, the more the world around us loses value.
- What is it in our life that holds value?

If the eternal within is our utmost prize, the transient cannot hold us down.

The transient includes:

- A. Our emotional health,
- B. Our physical health,
- C. People of value in our life,
- D. Careers,
- E. Place or condition of living,
- F. Material accrements or the lack thereof.

## **3 – Using the value within, emphasizes the power behind our saltiness. Verse 13c**

- If lack of saltiness is not good for anything, it is safe to conclude that saltiness is good for everything.

*“Our Christianity is the benefit to every aspect of our life. We must be decisive and intentional in letting Christianity’s influence take over our life’s expressions.”*

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**Moving Forward**

1 – We emphasize our saltiness by what we place Christ on. It is about time we add Him to everything in our life and see His difference!

20 **Be the Difference** 23

Date: January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023

Speaker:



**Sermon Title:** The Separation of Light!

**Text:** Matthew 5:14-15; Genesis 1:1-5

In Genesis, There are striking descriptions that God gives to the words light and darkness.

**Darkness** is described with the words:

- 1. **Formless and** **Verse 2a**
- 2. **Void.** **Verse 2a**

**Light** is described with the words:

- 1. **Good,** **Verse 4a**
- 2. **Separated,** **Verse 4b**

In Matthew, Jesus brings the separation of light and darkness to all those that would follow Him.

**1 – We must live a life that distinguishably separate from any form of darkness.**

**Genesis 1:4, Matthew 5:14**

- Our separation must be evident!

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**Sermon Title:** Confidence in the Works of Light!

## **Opening Illustration**

The *Phoebus Cartel* was a cartel that existed to control the manufacture and sale of incandescent light bulbs by appropriating market territories and fixing the useful life of such bulbs. It was founded on December 23, 1924; originally intended to last for thirty years (1925 to 1955), it was suspended in 1939 owing to the outbreak of World War II. The cartel included manufacturers Osram, General Electric, Associated Electrical Industries, and Philips, among others.

The Phoebus cartel is a notable landmark in the history of the global economy because it engaged in large-scale **planned obsolescence** to generate repeated sales and maximize profit. It also reduced competition in the light bulb industry for almost fifteen years, and has been accused of preventing technological advances that would have produced longer-lasting light bulbs.

Thomas Edison's first commercial bulb in 1881 lasted for 1,500 hours; soon, bulb-makers were proudly advertising 2,500-hour bulbs. But in 1924, the main bulb manufacturers in America and Europe secretly formed a cartel to limit the average life of lamps to 1,000 hours. By the 1940s, 1,000-hour bulbs became the standard. Eventually, the cartel was exposed, and in 1953, General Electric and other industry leaders were banned from limiting the light bulb's life span.



**Sermon Title:** Confidence in the Works of Light!

**Text:** Matthew 5:16; Ephesians 5:6-11

*The centennial bulb. Since 1901, Livermore CA*

➤ *122 years – The Phoebus Cartel*

Through the “good works” of the Gospel, we must be confident in:

### 1 – The fruitful quality of light.

**Ephesians 5:8-10**

- If we are fruitful in our light we will demonstrate goodness, righteousness, and truth. Verse 9

So often we disqualify our attempt to follow God. Yet there is grace given.

Our Christian walk is a process. Verse 10

- **Ask Him.** (*Lord, what is pleasing to you in this?*)
- **Listen to Him.** (*Lord, show me what I need to do.*)
- **Obey Him.** (*Lord, I obey what you are telling me to do.*)

### 2 – The expelling quality of light.

**Ephesians 5:7, 11**

- As we strive to please Christ we find that we cannot please God while connected to sin.

- A. **Do not be partakers with them. Verse 7a**  
The wrath of God is associated with disobedience (vs. 6), therefore, our approval of things disobedient to God's word, bring God's wrath.
- B. **Do not participate with their deeds.**  
**Verse 11** Participation sets us up for humiliation, which is the plan of the enemy.
- C. **Expose the deeds. Verse 11b**  
The devil cannot exist in the brightness of light. Exposing sin reveals the darkness and secrecy of sin and therefore breaks its stronghold. Sin flourishes in secrecy and darkness.

### 3 – The attracting quality of light.

**Matthew 5:16; Ephesians 5:13-14**

We must become comfortable in the exposing of sin. Exposing sin becomes an attractant for those who are dead in sin.

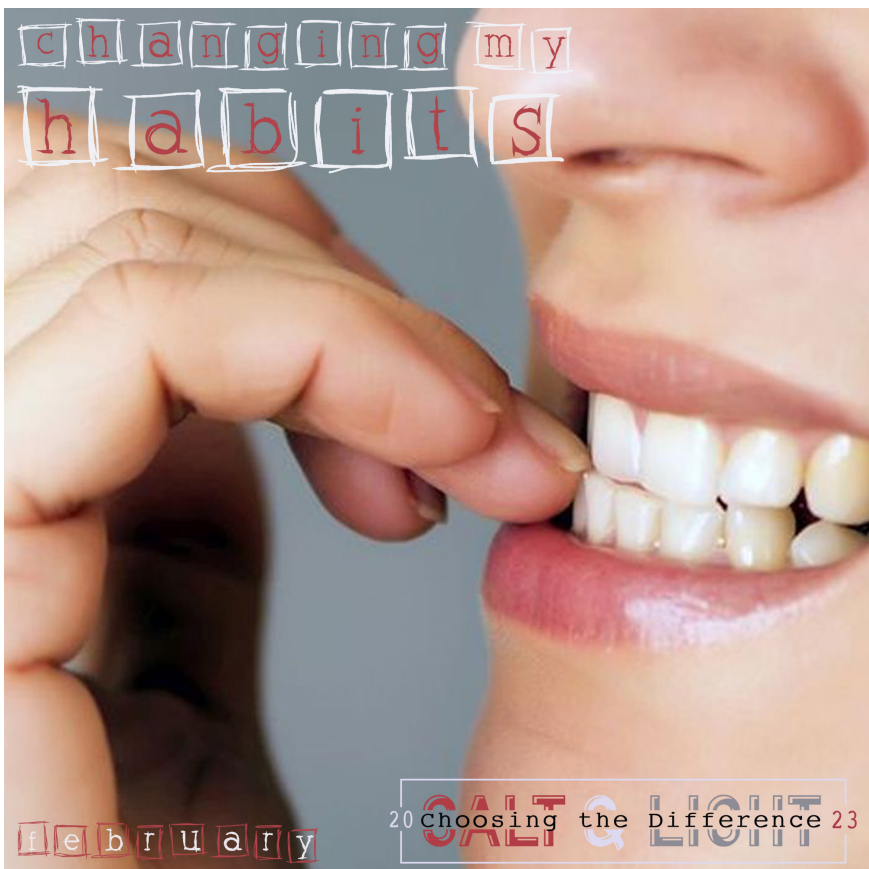
We often think the opposite. If we do not expose sin, people will come to Christ. What will they come to Christ for?



Respond to the Lord this morning by having a session of prayer. God will certainly prompt your heart in these questions:

1 – Is there sin in my life right now? List it \_\_\_\_\_

2 – How can I shine Your light, Jesus, through my life? \_\_\_\_\_



## MONTHLY MESSAGE DIRECTION:

FEBRUARY 5<sup>TH</sup>

CHANGING MY MIND.

FEBRUARY 12<sup>TH</sup>

CHANGING WHAT I DESIRE.

FEBRUARY 19<sup>TH</sup>

CLOSING DOORS.

FEBRUARY 26<sup>TH</sup>

OPENING DOORS.

**Sermon Title:** Changing My Mind!

**Text:** 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Our thoughts are the gateway to consequence or prosequence.

- Proverbs 23:7
- The Hebrew word for *think* is the word *shaar* and means *to act as gatekeeper*.

Our actions are rooted in our thoughts.

*Neuroscientists say that we have over 60,000 thoughts a day.*

- Also, every 3-4 minutes our minds *sweep and change*.

**1 – The changing of our thoughts must be intentional.** **Verses 3-4**

- We are given weapons to use to combat against wrong thinking.
- If we are given weapons, we ultimately must decide to use them.

We must intentionally use a weapon. Using weapons takes:

- Discipline, Training, Repetition, and Courage.

**2 – We cannot change our thoughts through the flesh.** **Verse 3**

- It is a Spiritual battle.
- All of our thoughts have *Spiritual Roots*.

Our flesh itself cannot think. Our thinking comes from our Spirit and Soul.

- Our Spirit and Soul were created outside of our flesh.
- Jeremiah 1:5

Every thought that comes to us will either be from God or from the enemy of our soul. Every thought is spiritual in nature.

### 3 – We have divinely powerful weapons to change our thoughts. Verses 4-5

- The weapons that we have are given so that we can destroy *speculations* (reasoning) that try to lead our flesh to a fleshly conclusion.
- Those speculations **always** raise themselves up against the knowledge of God.

What is our weapon? Galatians 5:16

- Walking by the Spirit.
- If we walk with the Spirit of God it produces for us the effects of Galatians 5:22-24

Galatians 5:17 is the warning. We must be:

1. Led by the Spirit, Galatians 5:18
2. Live by the Spirit, Galatians 5:25a
3. Walk by the Spirit. Galatians 5:25b

WE MUST CHANGE OUR INFLUENCE!!!!!!

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Increase in our life begins with the increase of things that magnify the presence of God. What can I decrease? \_\_\_\_\_ What can I increase? \_\_\_\_\_

**Sermon Title:** Changing What I Desire!

**Text:** 1 John 2:15-17; 1 Peter 1:13, 2:2

*“We are motivated when we feel desire.”* Justin Taylor

We have evil desires by nature.

➤ Ephesians 2:3

*“The deepest longings of the human heart can and must be changed if mankind is to become all that God designed us to be. Our deviant longings are illegitimate masters; even where the object of desire is a good thing, the status of the desire usurps God. Our cravings should be recognized in order that we may more richly know God as the Savior, Lover, and Converter of the human soul. God would have us long for Him more than we long for His gifts. To make us truly human, God must change what we want; we must learn to want the things Jesus wanted. It is no surprise that psychologists can’t find any biblical proof texts for their view of human motivation. The Bible teaches a different view.”*

Justin Taylor, Gospel Coalition.

How do we come to the place where we change what we sinfully or even repetitively desire?

**1 – We must prepare our minds for action.**

**1 Peter 1:13a**

- This means that we must break complacency with Gospel-Centered-Action.
- More accurately, *girding up the loins of one’s mind.*

Girding up had to do with the *tucking in* of ones tunic so as to prevent its hampering in the affairs of life.

*“Our mind must not be overcharged at any time with...the cares of this life: our affections must be placed on proper objects...and especially set on the things that are above, which are our portion and felicity forever.”*

Benson Exposition

We prepare ourselves through our hearing.

➤ Romans 10:17

Philippians 4:6-7 is in direct relation to the hearing of verses 8-9.

1. Whatever is true, (truth of the Word)
2. Whatever is honorable, (Majestic)
3. Whatever is right, (just in the eyes of God)
4. Whatever is pure, (holy, separated)
5. Whatever is lovely, (worth the effort)
6. Whatever is of good repute, (uttering words of good omen)
7. Whatever is excellent and worthy of praise

**DWELL ON THESE THINGS!**

**2 – We must keep sober in spirit.**

**1 Peter 1:13b**

- Sobriety always takes drastic measures.
- Sobriety is the opposite of irrationality.

Soberness of spirit takes drastic measures (*which are almost always uncomfortable and painful*) to ensure that the Word of God has supreme placement in our struggling life.

*“Sobriety never happens with one decision made in one particular time in an addicts life. Sobriety becomes moment-by-moment decision making, minute-by-minute influence.”*

- If I am encouraged this very hour, I must fight again and re-affirm the same encouragement the next hour.
- Drowning out the voice of defeat through strategic mental bombardment.

**3 – We must fix our hope completely on the grace of Jesus. 1 Peter 1:13c**

- The grace of God becomes the strength of everything that we do.
- We declare it, *“I endure by God’s grace!”*

**4 – We must long for the Word of God.**

**1 Peter 2:2**

- We build appetite by first eating what we should.
- We build appetite through mental stimulation.
- If it works on our flesh, we must remember that the flesh always steals from the spiritual. We are first spiritual, then physical.

*“Why do we still allow food advertising when children can sit in front of TV cartoons, and in between they get exposed to burgers, fries, chocolate – things we know are nutritionally not the best? Those ads lead them to ask and want to eat those foods, and that’s something we need to think about really seriously.”* Hedy Kober Yale University



We must remember these truths about the Word of God:

1. It is sharper and more powerful than any other instrument. Hebrews 4:12
2. It is the source of our freedom. John 8:31-32
3. It becomes our daily sustenance. Matthew 4:4
4. It is the source of victory over temptation. Psalm 119:11
5. It is our guidance through the unknown. Psalm 119:105
6. It is our source of answered prayer. John 15:7
7. It is our source of healing. Psalm 107:20
8. It is our source of joy. Psalm 119:111



Release yourself to the power of God's Word.  
Meditate on these aspects each day of the week.

Monday:	Freedom,	John 8:31-32
Tuesday:	Sustenance,	Matthew 4:4
Wednesday:	Victory,	Psalm 119:11
Thursday:	Guidance,	Psalm 119:105
Friday:	Answered prayer,	John 15:7
Saturday:	Healing,	Psalm 107:20
Sunday:	Joy,	Psalm 119:111

**Sermon Title:** Closing Doors!

**Text:** Ephesians 4:25-32 Key Verse 27

*“Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires.”* James 3:4

**1 – One of the largest open doors for the devil’s opportunities comes through our open mouth.**  
**Verses 25, 29, 31**

**A. Falsehood (lies).**

**Verse 25**

In the Christian context, a lie is anything that goes against the Word of God. Not only an untruth in regards to our life, but an untruth in regards to what God has determined.

*“Did God really say... no tree?”* Genesis 3:1 - The devil’s falsehood twists the words of God to cause us to question what God said.

*“You surely will not die.”* Genesis 3:4 - The devil here promotes to Eve that situational experience (what the fruit looks like) is more true than believing God by faith (the disobedience of eating it brings death.) Eve could not see the spiritual part (death). But she did see the natural part (good for the eyes). We are encouraged to walk by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7).

“For God knows that you will be like God...”

Genesis 1:5 - Falsehood will always make God in us out to be a liar. This statement from the devil was a direct attack on the trustworthiness of God.

He is making God out to be insecure, neurotic, and full of vanity.

**B. Unwholesome words. Verse 29**

The Greek word for *unwholesome* is *sapros* and it means *rotten, over-ripe, putrid*.

How do we know if the words we are speaking are *unwholesome*? The room will stink of it. In the same way a rotten food fills the air, so too unwholesome words will immediately bring darkness and depression to the room. So much so, that people will feel it and sense it immediately.

**C. Bitter conversation. Verse 31a**

This bitterness come from a resentful root. This is exactly what the devil was doing to Eve. He wanted her to resent God for not making the situation ideal.

Remember, all of these words give the devil a foothold. Every foothold means an increase of his presence.

**D. Slander. Verse 31b**

*Slander* is the Greek word *blasphemia* (from which we get the word blasphemy) and means *slow or sluggish to call something good (that really is good) – and slow to identify what is truly bad (that really is evil). Blasphemia switches right for wrong and wrong for right. It exchanges the truth of God for a lie.*

The slowness in which we take for bringing and declaring the truth of our situation is a form of blasphemy.

## **2 – Falsehood gives the devil opportunity while grieving the Holy Spirit.**

**Verses 25, 30; Acts 5:3**

- The very words that we say, not only speak to our situation, but they speak to God who has prepared all things for our life.

In Acts 5:1-5, the plan of the devil was to bring falsehood in, for the purpose of consequence.

The falsehood of our situation grieves the Holy Spirit, which means we let the enemy have the place that God should be keeping.

- As we declare destruction, we invite the enemy in to destroy that which the Holy Spirit protects.
- We trade the work of the Holy Spirit for the work of the devil and then get upset that God is not doing what He promises in His Word to do.

## **3 – The falsehood we let in will manifest in many ways. Yet, in all of its ways it desires secrecy.**

- The devil's opportunity are always shrouded in darkness.

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**Moving Forward**

We must start breaking the footholds of the devil in our life. The first place to start is our speech. What will we say? How often will we say it? Will we declare it out loud? Will we shout it out loud? Break the stepping stones of the devil!!!!

**Sermon Title:** Opening Doors!

**Text:** James 5:13-18, Key verse 16

*Effective prayer and the influence of righteous people is what we need open in our life.*

**1 – We must open the door of confessing sin (strongholds) to righteous friends. Verse 16a**

- Connectivity and Christian companionship breaks habits that need solitariness and seclusion to grow.

*Therefore, confess your sins to one another.*

- This is not for forgiveness; for only Jesus offers that!
- This is for the gifts present in the body to be manifested in our life.

We must be careful that the *confession* part does not become the *counseling* part without the intention of the *praying* part.

- It must always be confession for the sake of prayer for the sake of healing.

**2 – We must open the door of praying for one another. Verse 16b**

- This must not be done alone if we have the opportunity to be near the person.

We must actively pray out loud for people with personal touch. Verse 14

- Prayer *in person, for* another person brings a reliability and trust on God heal.

### **For the receiver:**

- Sin is exposed to be prayed for and strongholds are broken. Remember, sin hides and then festers.
- Acknowledgment of the giftings present in the church. The more the body individually and personally prays for an individual, the more different giftings operate and are made manifest.

### **For the one praying:**

- Expectancy is not left to be questioned later when we are alone to pray. Immediate prayer anticipates God and places the burden to touch upon Him.
- Causes us to be convicted and righteous so that God's gifts can easily flow.
- It stirs the atmosphere for faith. If there is a change in countenance when we are encouraged or around people of faith, how much more when we pray for one another by faith!

### **3 – These open doors release God's healing.**

#### **Verse 16c**

- *Healing* in this verse is *iaomai* and means *supernatural healing bringing attention to the Lord.*

The effectiveness of pray is as a wire being energized and bringing the electricity to the light bulb!



**PRAY ONE FOR ANOTHER!**

20 **CALT & LIGHT** 23  
Being the Difference



Becoming the  
**Catalyst**  
for  
**Change**

A Leper's Look at Truly Living:  
"Using our Weakness"

march

## MONTHLY MESSAGE DIRECTION:

MARCH 3<sup>RD</sup> (FRIDAY ONLINE) SERIOUSLY, LEPROSY? PART 1

MARCH 5<sup>TH</sup> (SPECIAL GUEST) BISHOP ADAMS LWESYA,  
MALAWI, AFRICA.

MARCH 12<sup>TH</sup> SERIOUSLY, LEPROSY? PART 2

MARCH 19<sup>TH</sup> SERIOUSLY, LEPROSY? PART 3

MARCH 26<sup>TH</sup> SERIOUSLY, LEPROSY? PART 4

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**Sermon Title:** Seriously Leprosy? Part 1

**Text:** 2 Kings 7:3-11

**1 – God seems to use that which is completely broken to bring about the greatest display of grace to a world far removed from Him.**

**Verse 3a**

Give examples of broken things that God uses.

Weakness is always power in the hand of God.

- 2 Corinthians 12:8-10

**2 – We must use the burden that we carry as the catalyst for change.**

**Verse 3b**

- This is when we must truly fight through our weakness and yield that weakness to God.
- What is it that we want to see from God and yet our weakness is standing in the way?

As we use our weakness, we find that our initiation is only the beginning movement of that hand of God.

Our weakness produces decisions of risk that we would normally not take.

- If they did not have leprosy, they would not have taken the chance to put their life on the line.



**3 – We must use our weakness to take a risk with God. Verse 3c**

➤ *Why do we sit here until we die?*

How long will you allow suffering or situation or weakness slowly take your life?

We can either decide to hold on to our weakness, internalize it, and slowly be consumed by it...

Or..

We can decide to use our suffering or situation or weakness to plow through to a better place and standing.

How to use our weakness for deliverance?

1. Boast in the strength of God! 2 Cor. 12:9
2. Look at the people surrounding you and thank God that He has placed them there.
3. Stop resisting help. The 4 lepers encouraged one another to go through with the plan.
4. Accept the probability that God is leading you moment by moment and give up the expectation of tomorrow. There is something He desires you to experience in this moment.
5. No matter what the enemy may throw at you and how bad the situation becomes, realize and confess that he is still defeated and losing. He cannot come one-up on you. He is in a losing position.
6. Accept what God is showing you and that He is allowing you to go through this season.



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What is God is speaking to me / How do I respond:

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**Sermon Title:** Seriously Leprosy? Part 2

**Text:** 2 Kings 7:3-11

*“Leper colonies have endured, even into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, despite the fact that the W.H.O. declared leprosy officially “eliminated” as a public health problem in 2000. In many cases, leprosy victims continue to isolate themselves due to traditional ostracism in their communities.”* – J. Suzdaltsez (seeker)

#### **4 – Our weakness in the hand of God is always greater than the excuses of fear.**

**Supernaturally greater!**

**Verses 5, 7**

The excuses of fear are always degressive:

1. “I can’t” leads to “I won’t” which lead to a stagnant complacency waiting for things to get worse.
2. “God didn’t” therefore “God won’t” which leads to a belief that “God can’t.” This brings a dangerous faith directed questionability in which we almost always lose the battle against our minds rational.
3. “How do I get out,” leads to self-trust which always lets us down.

Out anticipation should always be God.

- Not, our way out,
- Not, our own feelings,
- Not, our own expectation.

Our way out, our feelings, and our own expectation should always be yielded to God’s plan for where we are!

The lepers arose to go at twilight (5a) and the Arameans fled at twilight (7a).

- God caused 4 leper's tiptoeing to sound like a fierce driving army to the Arameans (6a).

## 5 – Our weakness is actually a door opener.

### Verse 6a

- Whatever door our weakness has opened, through faith in Christ, God responds to the situation: "*For the Lord has caused...*"

Faith comes into practice knowing that the lepers had not seen or experienced the deliverance yet.

- We see what God had done for the lepers but they had not yet experienced it.

Could it be that in our life, God has already declared the deliverance and the answer for us. But yet, we are still traversing the road, working out our faith and trust before God.

- The lepers still had something to learn in their trial even though *we* knew that they were delivered.
- God was leading them to experience His conviction and purpose before they truly knew they were set free.

God desires us to know Him and hear His ever convicting voice though our difficult journey.

- Trials always imprint into our lives. We never forget them. God wants us to imprint His presence leading through the trial and hardship.

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**Moving Forward**

Let's pray, "God, I want You to be lifted up through this situation. Let me see You and Your plan." Amen!

Sermon Title: Seriously Leprosy? Part 3

Text: 2 Kings 7:3-11

## 6 – We are only victims to ourselves.

### Verse 9a

- It was not the Aramean army that the Lepers needed to conquer. It was their feelings of being owed something in Israel.
- It is the ever increasing and creeping ideology of a victim mentality.

*“It is a dangerous game to play the victim when God has sacrificially made you the victor.”*

*“I was a refugee from communist Eastern Europe...I grew up in a subculture that was overly aware of its suffering. Being a victim was core to our Hungarian identity – like goulash and paprika.” - Akos Balogh (Gospel Coalition)*

While there is no *formal* psychological definition of a victim mentality, a useful working definition is as follows:

*“You will see your entire life through a perspective that things constantly happen ‘to’ you. Victimization is thus a combination of seeing most things in life as negative, beyond your control, and as something you should be given sympathy for as you ‘deserve’ better. At its heart, a victim mentality is actually a way to avoid taking responsibility for yourself or your life. **By believing you have no power, then you don’t have to take action.**” – A.B. (Gospel Coalition)*

The Bible does not encourage this type of mentality! In fact, looking at Jesus, it encourages the opposite:

1. In response to suffering, Jesus served. Philippians 2:7-8
2. He endured, through the joy which He was expecting. Hebrews 12:2
3. He actively entrusted God through the ordeal. 1 Peter 2:21-23
4. His heart was open to a depth of forgiveness. Luke 23:34
5. Jesus gives us the ability (choice) to rejoice instead of receive the angst of trial. 1 Peter 1:6, 4:16

For the Lepers, their actions of celebration were not in question. Their mental depravity was what needed correction.

- They needed to break out of the issue of *constant acceptance of suffering*.
- Their leprosy did not change.
- Yet, their mind did!

**7 – Private interests and personal resentments must always be sacrificed for the good of others.**

**Verse 9**

- Why is this so important? This gives us mission.
- When our focus is put on others, it allows the power of God to flow through us to meet needs. When it flows through us, it will always have effect on us as it passes through.

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**Moving Forward**

Pray for power. Release Power. Receive Power.  
Repeat!

Sermon Title: Seriously Leprosy? Part 4

Text: 2 Kings 7:3-11

**8 – The only obstacles that cannot be conquered are those that are bigger than our commitment to God.** **Verse 9b**

- *“Let us go and tell the kings house.”*
- That one action alone opened up for them a world of hurt.

*How does a person experience the grace and victory of God when they seemingly have to “go back” to a place they did not want to be in?*

Some points to remember when facing the situations from which we are redeemed:

1. **Everything may be stripped away; but God remains.** In the emptiness of the Aramean camp, the lepers met the Holy Spirit speaking to their hearts.
2. **Just because they returned to Israel did not mean a return to that life.**
3. **We must declare freedom, even if that freedom is not what we want it to look like.** They were still lepers and they still desired to be reconnected to their own people. Yet, they were free.
4. **The freedom that God brings sets us up for a completely new life.** And that new life begins with freeing others while we ourselves are walking through the freedom process.



## 9 – Our suffering is completely redeemed when it is no longer the highlight of our life.

### Verses 10-11

- The highlight of the lepers was no longer their leprosy. It was the freedom they had just experienced.

These men began the journey with leprosy being the motivating factor. They ended with Israel's freedom being the motivating factor of what they did.

We must change our motivating factor. How?

1. **In our trial experiences, look for the voice of the Holy Spirit.**
2. **Declare that God alone determines what our deliverance looks like.**
3. **Make movement only on the words of God and not the fears around us.**
4. **Walk in deliverance especially when it looks different than our own version.**
5. **God's deliverance usually involves many people in our situation.** Look for them and pray for them.
6. **God will completely break the mental cycle of doubt.** The lepers were free from the spirit plaguing the city in verse 12.



1 – Moving forward from weakness is not about waiting for the weakness to disappear. It is taking that weakness to God, declaring that weakness a strength, and actually moving forward. Determine it in your life today. Move Forward!



Becoming the  
Catalyst  
for  
Change

april

A Shepherd's Stable Story:  
"Using our Situation"

20 **GALT & LIGHT** 23  
Being the Difference

## MONTHLY MESSAGE DIRECTION:

APRIL 2<sup>ND</sup>

HOLY SHEEP! (PALM SUNDAY)

APRIL 9<sup>TH</sup>

EASTER SUNDAY

APRIL 16<sup>TH</sup>

MUSICIAN? I THOUGHT I WAS KING?

APRIL 23<sup>RD</sup>

THE BIGGER THEY ARE, THE HARDER  
THEY FALL. PART 1

APRIL 30<sup>TH</sup>

THE BIGGER THEY ARE, THE HARDER  
THEY FALL. PART 2

Sermon Title: Holy Sheep!

Opening Illustration:



### 5 facts about sheep you might not know

1. Sheep, like goats, have rectangular pupils. Their rectangular pupils allow them to have a 270 to 320 degree field of vision. This means that they can see almost everything around them, except for what's directly behind them, without having to turn their heads. This is especially useful for sheep as they are a prey species and need to always be on watch for predators.
2. Lambs are born around 145 days (or about 4.5 months) after the ewe falls pregnant. Lambing can start as early as December and go on to as late as June. Specialist breeds will lamb all year round, satisfying demand for the Christmas and Easter trade.
3. Sheep have an excellent sense of smell. They even have scent glands in front of their eyes and on their feet!

4. Sheep are emotionally complex animals. Sheep are capable of experiencing a wide range of emotions, just as humans do. Many studies have highlighted the ability for sheep to feel afraid, angry, bored, sad and happy. Not only are sheep able to feel basic emotions, but their feelings can be very complex and include interactions between emotions and cognition. For example, believe it or not, scientific studies have shown that sheep can be pessimists and optimists!
  
5. Sheep do not have teeth in their upper front jaw. Instead, the lower teeth press up against a hard upper palate to breakdown food.

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**Sermon Title:** Holy Sheep!

**Text:** 1 Samuel 16:3-13

Sheep...Amazing, but not my kind of pet.  
(Illustration)

**1 – Our current situation is not insignificant.**

**Verse 7**

- Our situation is tailored to us, so that in it, we can seek God and develop a heart for Him.

*“No part of our story is ever for naught. Every part of our story is always intended for usability in the hands of God.”*

**The visible “facts” of David’s Shepherding:**

1. **Hard work.** Look at Psalm 23 through the eyes of a Shepherd. Working hard through a situation in the first step in preparing for a season of favor.
2. **Solitude.** David was alone with his thoughts and with his work. Family was only an added pressure.
3. **Forced bravery.** 1 Samuel 17:34-36

**The invisible “facts” of David’s Shepherding:**

1. This was a season of **cultivation.** David was cultivated musically, poetically, spiritually, Faith-fully, and bravely.

2. The lack of people's voices caused him to **hear God clearly**. David's season taught him to attribute strength to God; 1 Samuel 17:37, *The Lord who...*
3. **Right timely recognition**. David's family didn't remember him as a son worth anything in 1 Sam. 16:11. Yet, at the right moment, a young man in King Saul's service noticed him; 1 Sam. 16:18

From the mouth of a bystander, this is what he noticed from David's insignificant season (vs. 18):

1. He is a skillful musician.
2. A mighty man of valor.
3. A warrior.
4. One prudent in speech.
5. A handsome man.
6. The Lord is with him.

## **2 – Do not listen to the closest voice. Listen to what God is saying. Verse 11**

- Age does not define our life, nor does position.
- What people say and what they do not say must not be the defining push of our life.

### **God had already defined David.**

- It is not that Jesse forgot about David. It is that he did not see any quality of worth in David. *He is only the youngest and he is with the sheep.*
- This was the *Holy Sheep!, Moment!*
- God defined value in David in Verses 3, 7, 11, 12, 13.

**God had been with him in the fields. (Declare it)**

***“God has been with me in the fields!”***

**3 – Our current position is not the end result of our life. Verse 13**

- God desires to anoint us for a greater purpose.
- We must come to that realization that the current situation is not where we are intended to remain.

Our current situation is to prepare us to be the difference for others.

In our current season, the plan of God is always favorable towards His children. His plan is to bring about: Verse 13

1. An anointing in the midst of the season.
2. The Spirit of God coming down mightily upon us which will propel us to the next season.

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**Moving Forward**

Declare you season Holy! Go ahead. Do it right now. Speak it out, “My season is holy.”

Spend some time this week defining the seasons of your life and take notice of the threads of grace which God has woven through them. It is amazing to see what God has done!

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**Sermon Title:** Living as Easter People!

**Text:** John 20:1-26

*“Resurrection means the worst thing is never the last thing.”*  
Frederick Buechner

The Easter accounts are all about people not being able to figure out the tragedies of their life and coming up with their own explanations.

- Mary thinks that Jesus’ body was stolen.  
John 20:2b
- Peter sees the linen body wrappings and cannot make sense of it. John 20:6-7
- The disciples did not understand the scriptures. John 20:9
- The angels question Mary, but she doesn’t understand what is happening. John 20:13
- Mary thinks that Jesus is the gardener.  
John 20:14-15
- Once Mary recognizes Jesus, she attempts to cling to Him and He denies her. John 20:17

There is so much confusion in these short paragraphs that cause one to think that there was no more hope.

- Yet, our confusion is not a cloudy weight of not being able to make sense of our situation.
- The confusion manifested is usually a lack of belief to the words that Jesus said.



**1 – Through the resurrection, Jesus brings His peace to us in the midst of closed doors.**

**Verse 19**

- Doors were shut and fear was circulated.

**2 – Through the resurrection, Jesus invites us to become personal with His sacrifice. Verse 20**

- Interesting to note that the rejoicing came when they realized His sacrifice for them.

**3 – Through the resurrection, Jesus releases His peace through His purpose. Verse 21**

- Christianity becomes an automatic calling.
- Christ's calling is always filled with Christ's power to accomplish His will.

**4 – Through the resurrection, Jesus promises power for the Believer. Active, tangible, life-directing power. Verse 22; Acts 1:8**

- There is no occupation or career greater than the Christian Witness.

The Holy Spirit rested on people in the past periodically and for a specific purpose, time, and reason. Now, it is permanent for every Believer.

The Holy Spirit's work is:

- Permanent,
- Daily; moment by moment,
- The power producer / accomplisher of God.

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**Moving Forward**

Jesus' Resurrection really does propel us forward.  
Name an aspect of moving forward \_\_\_\_\_

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and actually do it through the strength of the Holy Spirit.

**Sermon Title:** Musician? I Thought I was King?

**Text:** 1 Samuel 16:13-23

*“Many people do not like the idea that God is in control even of evil and that He is involved even in the bad things that happen to us—even though the Lord never does evil Himself. Yet God’s sovereignty over evil is good news. Because He controls even those things that can harm us, we can be confident that He can work them for our final good. We can trust that He is able to deliver us from our enemies.”*

-R. C. Sproul

**1 – God’s greatness for us does not take away from our being faithful in menial things.**

**Verse 18**

David’s faithfulness in shepherding, produced a man who was:

1 – A skillful musician;

2 – A mighty man of valor (1 Samuel 17:35-36).

This valor probably stemmed from fear of losing a sheep and disappointing his hard father.

3 – A warrior;

4 – Prudent in speech;

5 – Handsome;

6 – Being known as having the Lord with him.

**2 – When the situation seems to worsen, God is only promoting us.**

**Verses 20-21**

- David moves from living with an unloving family to living with a manic depressive, unstable leader.

- David's father didn't even accompany him, nor send anyone else to take David to Saul. He sent him by himself. Verse 20

So often we view promotion as a change for the better in every part of our story. Yet this is never the case.

- Even though David went from one seemingly bad situation to the next, God has taken him out of the pasture and placed him in the palace.
- Never disdain palace positions. We may hate the place we are in life, but look at where God has taken us from.

### **3 – David worshipped in Saul's presence which brought in the Presence of the LORD.**

**Verse 23**

- Never underestimate the power of worshipping the Lord when the situation is terrible.
- Saul was in severe depression and tormented by a spirit. David worshipped and the spirit left.

Worship is of utmost importance for the betterment, favor, and positioning of our lives.

*A prominent figure complained about the impact of music upon our young people. This "new music," he said, "is promoting the moral degeneracy of our adolescents." We might think this statement was made by someone within the past one hundred years. However, even though this sentiment has been echoed numerous times in recent history, it is actually a quote of the ancient Greek philosopher Plato.*

Let's tell where we are by some lyrics from the top songs pumping through homes in the majority of the USA:

- If we think that there is no power in worship we are forcefully and shamefully deluding ourselves.
- Just reading the lyrics of the songs on the top of the chart causes a stirring and creates a straying and vivid sinful mind.

If music so easily invites a spirit in, so too worship quickly rebukes a spirit out.

**4 – David's kingship was prepared by shepherding, playing the guitar, and being a close protector of an evil man.**

**Verses 21-23**

- God was positioning David! God is positioning us!

Our situation is not "unfair." God is placing us with new people even though it may look like new challenges. We must look for what is "new" in our situation instead of looking to what is "bad" about our situation!

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**Moving Forward**

What difficult situation are you facing right now?  
Sum it up in a few words: \_\_\_\_\_

What is NEW from God in or through this difficult situation? \_\_\_\_\_

**PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT IS NEW!!!!**

**Sermon Title:** Musician? I Thought I was King?

**Illustration:** Top Song Chart Today

### 1. Last Night by Morgan Wallen

Last night we let the liquor talk  
I can't remember everything we said but we said it all  
You told me that you wish I was somebody you never met  
But baby, baby somethin's tellin' me this ain't over yet  
No way it was our last night

I kiss your lips  
Make you grip the sheets with your fingertips  
Last bottle of Jack we split a fifth  
Just talk about life goin' sip for sip  
You, you know you love to fight  
And I say shit I don't mean  
But I'm still gon' wake up wantin' you and me

### 2. Kill Bill SZA

I'm so mature, I'm so mature, I'm so mature,  
I got me a therapist to tell me there's other men  
I don't want none, I just want you  
If I can't have you, no one should  
I might

I might kill my ex, not the best idea  
His new girlfriend's next, how'd I get here?  
I might kill my ex, I still love him though  
Rather be in jail than alone

Uh, I just killed my ex (my ex)  
Not the best idea (idea)



Killed his girlfriend next, how'd I get here?  
I just killed my ex (my ex)  
I still love him, though (I do)  
Rather be in Hell than alone

### 3. Flowers by Miley Cyrus

We were good, we were gold  
Kinda dream that can't be sold  
We were right 'til we weren't  
Built a home and watched it burn

Mm, I didn't wanna leave you  
I didn't wanna lie  
Started to cry, but then remembered I

I can buy myself flowers  
Write my name in the sand  
Talk to myself for hours  
Say things you don't understand  
I can take myself dancing  
And I can hold my own hand  
Yeah, I can love me better than you can

### 4. Creepin' by Metro Boomin

I don't wanna know, if you're playing me  
Keep it on the low  
Cause my heart can't take it anymore  
And if you creeping, please don't let it show  
Oh baby, I don't wanna know

Did he touch you better than me?  
Did he watch you fall asleep  
Did you show him all those things that you used to do to  
me?  
If you're better off that way  
Baby all that I can say  
If you're gonna do your thing, then don't come back to me  
Ooh



**Years:**                      **Season: 1**

**Effect:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Thread of Grace:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Years:**                      **Season: 2**

**Effect:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Thread of Grace:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Years:**                      **Season: 3**

**Effect:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Thread of Grace:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Years:**                      **Season: 4**

**Effect:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Thread of Grace:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Years:**                      **Season: 5**

**Effect:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Thread of Grace:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Date:** April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023

**Speaker:** Dr. Rai Papparatti

**Sermon Title:** The Bigger They Are, The Harder They Fall – Part 1

**Text:** 1 Samuel 17:1-17; 20-27, 31-50

*“Do I learn through dark providences, or simply seem relieved when they are over.”* Sinclair Ferguson

**1 – Difficulties are the opportunities to give our abilities to God. Verse 9**

- Goliath was an unconquerable enemy.
- Standing at: 9’6”, armor at 78lbs, 9lb spearhead.
- The only one with notable presence to fight goliath would have been Saul (1 Sam. 9:2)

Not only was Israel in difficulty, so was David.

- Verses 13-15
- David spent his time between an unstable, manic-depressive man (spirit-afflicted), and an unloving father.
- David could have gone back to the sheep because there was solace in the pastures.

**2 – Without difficulty our ability will always remain limited to the natural.**

**Verses 17-18**

David is summoned as a servant would be.

- Verses 17-20

David is longing for love and acknowledgement.

- Verses 25-26
- David wanted to be more than a psychopath's musician.
- David wanted to have his family free in Israel...maybe they would love him then.

**Voices / actions we face in the middle of our difficulties: Verse 28**

1. Anger from those close to us.
2. Questioning in regard to our motives.
3. Prioritizing that which is of lesser importance. (*With whom did you leave the sheep?*)
4. Having our motives questioned and rebuked.

(Interesting that Eliab judges the *intentions* of David's heart, when God had judged his heart in 1 Samuel 16:6-7.)

We can tell this type of experience has happened before with David and his brothers. Verse 29a

**We must use our difficulties and not be used by our difficulties.**

- David never answered any of the slander against him. He only wanted to be used by God.
- He answered to movement towards God. He never stayed stagnant.

David desperately wanted any movement towards God because staying in the situation he was in was too depressive.

- We must not stay stuck where we are.
- **Choose to move forward.**

We often feel the *pressure* of difficulty. But do we feel the *push* of difficulty to make *choices* towards a better experience for our lives?

- We either collapse under the difficulty or we conquer because of the difficulty.
- Stop looking at the difficulty. We cannot change it. We must look towards the decision we now make because of the difficulty.

### **How to handle the pressure of difficulty.**

**Verses 31-37**

- 1. We must purpose that our situation will not cause our heart to fail. Verse 32**

➤ Declare Psalm 118

- 2. We are surrounded by armies of heaven and by the Living God. Verse 36b**

➤ The closer we come to God the more we realize His place, stance, and power through us.

- 3. We declare deliverance continually even before the test of the trial. Verse 37**

➤ *Because He has delivered me in the past, He will deliver me in my future.*

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**Moving Forward**

Confess and Read aloud Psalm 118 each day this week. Determine to live it out in your trust with God.

**Sermon Title:** The Bigger They Are, The Harder They Fall – Part 2

**Text:** 1 Samuel 17:1-17; 20-27, 31-50

*“If I fail to spend two hours in prayer each morning, the devil gets the victory through the day and I have so much business, I cannot get on without spending three hours daily in prayer.” – Martin Luther*

**3 – Our ability used for the Lord and through His Name, produces power. Verse 45**

- Goliath relied solely on his ability. David relied solely on God.

In this verse (45) there is both natural truth and supernatural truth.

When both are present, supernatural truth always supersedes natural truth.

- And the one thing that releases and allows for the supernatural truth to be made manifest: our confession of it.

Luke 8:52-54

- There is always a “however,” when spiritual truth is present.

**4 – God will take our ability further and with more power than we could have ever gone on our own. Verse 49**

- Can we forsake our feelings and yield ourselves over to borderline absurdity for the sake of our breakthrough?

- One stone compared to Goliath's weapons was completely laughable.
- Yet David worshipped God by throwing that stone.

David picked 5 stones remembering the brook he wrote about: "*He leads me beside still waters...*"

This verse is a beautiful merge of:

1. **Our effort.** (David made a purpose to strike down the giant in Israel.) He endured ridicule and exemplified courage to face something great.
2. **Reliance on God.** (David relied on God, yet, he was not idle.) He fought hard and took every opportunity to trust on God.
3. **God's power.** How often we beg for power but do nothing to position ourselves in the rivers of that power. Our excuses often rule: *too deep, too cold, too uncertain, too unpredictable, too much, etc.* God's power is not separate from His person. He is power.

**5 – God desires to use our abilities, plus His power to drop giants in our life so that people will be transformed.                      Verses 50, 52**

- Israel, whom was terribly afraid and fearful, now: arose, shouted, and pursued their enemy.
- It takes only one person to receive a victory that will liberate a family...a nation!

If someone else fall can cause another to fall, someone's victory has more power to resurrect another.

- Press in for a victory.

## How do we press in for a victory?

1. The normalcy of our day must be strategically broken. We must have specific and deliberate time for God in moments that we are not accustomed to.
2. We must unmistakably speak out what defines us in and through Christ. If something is not right, declare it. Lift relationship with Jesus above all other relationships.
3. Speak with purpose and not with curses. This is a big one. Speak what is righteous and do not stop. God will do it, God will do it, God will do it.

## Psalm 118 shows the power of repetition.

- *His lovingkindness is everlasting (5x)*
- *The LORD is for me (2x)*
- *It is better to take refuge in the LORD (2x)*
- *In the name of the LORD I will surely cut them off (3x)*
- *The right hand of the LORD (3x)*
- *The right hand of the LORD does valiantly (2x)*
- *I will give thanks (2x)*
- *O Lord we beseech you (2x)*

Remember, David's victory was not his own. It was for someone else!



Fast and pray this week for someone else's victory! Ask God *how* to participate in the victory...and do it!



## MONTHLY MESSAGE DIRECTION:

MAY 7<sup>TH</sup>

A BITTER AND BROKEN FIRST MARRIAGE

MAY 14<sup>TH</sup>

MOTHER'S DAY

MAY 21<sup>ST</sup>

A MIGHTY FRIENDSHIP – BEING A TRUE FRIEND – PART I

MAY 28<sup>TH</sup>

A MIGHTY FRIENDSHIP – BEING A TRUE FRIEND – PART 2

**Sermon Title:** A Bitter and Broken First Marriage!

**Text:** 1 Samuel 18:17-28; 19:9-18

*“Don’t break up, don’t break down – Break through!”*

**1 – Before David is even married, Saul spoke over his daughter that she would be a snare in life. 1 Samuel 18:21**

- When we speak words over our situation, we program and tell our mind going forward to fulfill that scheme.
- Saul spoke that his daughter would be a snare, and then everything he did with his daughter revolved around trickery.

**2 – There was an unfortunate one-sided love story. 1 Samuel 18:20**

- It only mentions that Michal loved David. It was not reciprocated.
- David did not love her. He won her!
- She was a prize for a challenge well completed (1 Samuel 18:25-27)

This is the story of many marriages today.

- She was enamored with David.
- David was an addict to the rush from a fight.
- David was intent on kingship and sonship (remember, king was promised and the status of son was never given), that he ignored relationship.



It is terribly easy to mismanage relationships for the pursuit of happiness and fulfillment.

- Yet, the marriage relationship is of utmost importance because it was the only thing in which God determined that Adam being alone was not good.

### **3 – There was idolatry in his home.**

#### **1 Samuel 19:12-13**

- Although it was probably not an idol to worship, it was more likely a fetish which encouraged sexual activity.
- Regardless, sin is sin and David's first marriage did not start well.

The idolatry in David's home seems to have been something that removed reality and encourages fantasy.

- What in our life does this?
- Can it be books, our phones, the internet, conversations, etc.

### **4 – Instead of running with David, Michal chose to stay home in comfort and lie to Saul.**

#### **1 Samuel 19:12,17**

- The decision to stay in a situation because of comfort, brings an individual to the place where they are set up for failure and placed in situations that become compromising.

This very decision brought about heartache each time thereafter she is mentioned.

1. 1 Samuel 25:44 – She is given to another man, and quickly.

- David deals with this blow not by faith, but by spite. He marries two women instead to deal with the hurt. (1 Samuel 25:42-43)
  - 2. 2 Samuel 3:14-16 – She is emotionally connected now to an illegitimate man.
  - 3. 2 Samuel 6:20-23 – She becomes more interested in sensuality because it has taken over her life. She cannot recognize God’s presence. She lives a barren life.
- 

## **Moving Forward**

### **Lessons from David’s First Broken Marriage:**

#### **1 – Relationship is always more important than position or placement.**

- Relationship with God first.
- Relationship with others second and a priority.

#### **2 – We cannot fill our space and relationships with “things” outside of God and His Presence.**

- Idols in our life only convolute relationships.
- We must purposefully grow our relationships in our life with and through the presence of the Lord.

#### **3 – When comfort is chosen rather than what is right to do, it always increases issues.**

#### **4 – We cannot fix our heartaches through our own rationale. We need the knowledge of Christ.**

- Psalm 19:7-11

**Sermon Title:** Mother's Day!

**Text:** Matthew 15:21-23; Mark 7:24-30

*Moral excellence is not only defined by what sinful things we omit from our life; but in the active drive to seek God for the fulfillment of all our needs.*

- If we omit a sin and do not fill it with a touch from Christ, we only increase the perpetual hold of previous temptations.

### **The Power of an Aggressive Mother:**

This mother had all of the wrong stereotypes listed against her.

- She was a woman. Probably alone.
- She was Syrophenician.
- She lived in cultural, economic, and political oppression.

Yet, when Jesus is in the picture, people gain freedom and are immensely empowered!

**1 – The power behind her receiving came through the unashamed display of her need for Christ. Matthew 15:21b**

- Her action of coming to Jesus for help was not hindered by what she might have looked like in the eyes of other people. Matthew 15:23b

People's perception and even their conversation of us must not dictate our experience with Christ.

## **2 – The power behind her receiving came through her display of humility.**

**Mark 7:25b**

- The house was full, the atmosphere charged, and the disciples annoyed.
- Yet, she still came to Jesus humbly.

While the disciples complained, she yielded in humility against the innate temptation to vindicate herself and defend her actions due to her condition.

## **3 – The power behind her receiving came through her unmoving display of persistence; knowing that Jesus alone was her answer.**

**Mark 7:26b**

- We often only ask once and then become discouraged in our lack of receiving because we do not believe in our core that Jesus alone is what we need.
- James 4:2-5

This should push us to grow in:

1. Knowing the love of Jesus in all of our situations.
2. Knowing His love for that which matters to us.
3. Knowing that what matters most is not our society fit, but our place as children of God.

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**Moving Forward**

Name your need \_\_\_\_\_

Know your answer: JESUS!

**Sermon Title:** A Mighty Friendship – Being a True Friend – Part 1!

**Text:** 1 Samuel 18:1-4; 19:1-7

*“Nothing is friendlier than a wet dog.”* Dan Bennet

**1 – A true friend will rejoice and celebrate victory especially when it’s not their own.**

**1 Samuel 18:1,4**

- David had just conquered Goliath. Everyone’s eyes were on him.
- This could have been seen as an incredible threat to the kingdom. In fact, this is how king Saul viewed it.

There is something that happens when we take our eyes off of ourselves and celebrate another person’s life.

- We connect ourselves to their victory.
- We connect ourselves to the work that God has done in their life.
- We connect ourselves to the strength of God that they have experienced.
- God connects us to His plan for their life.
- God uses our life in a strategic and specific way.
- We become a powerful channel.

**2 – A true friend knows how to delight in another.**

**1 Samuel 19:1**

- In its context, Jonathan’s delight in David was always about restoration.

Jonathan and king Saul needed David. Jonathan wanted David near him because he saw the presence of God working in Him

- 1 Samuel 19:4b-5
- Jonathan recognized that God through David was beneficial for them.
- Proverbs 13:20

We must find the presence of Jesus active through those who are near to us and stay near them.

- This does not mean run from one ministry to another.
- God sends a group around us. We must see what He is doing and be a friend to them.

**3 – A true friend speaks well of another even if they will not personally be advanced.**

**1 Samuel 19:4**

- Jonathan did what Michal did not. He stood up for David.
- The decisions made in the beginning of this friendship, caused powerful effects for generations to come.

**4 – A true friend always desires redemption, not separation.**

**1 Samuel 19:6-7**

- Separation is not good in friendship even though many of us feel like we thrive when friendships are our own.
- We hold on to them and want no other person to come in.
- Jonathan knew the entire kingdom needed David. This did not mean that he lost friendship with David. He instead solidified his friendship.

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**Moving Forward**

Be a FRIEND!!! Don't wait or delay. Celebrate another!!

**Sermon Title:** A Mighty Friendship – Being a True Friend – Part 2!

**Text:** 1 Samuel 20:30-42

*"Today friendship has fallen on hard times. Few men have good friends, much less deep friendships. Individualism, autonomy, privatization, and isolation are culturally cachet, but deep, devoted, vulnerable friendship is not. This is a great tragedy for self, family, and the Church, because it is in relationships that we develop into what God wants us to be...Friendships...are there to be made if we value them as we ought – and is we practice some simple disciplines of friendship."*  
 Kent Hughes

**5 – A true friend is not offended when facing the approach of shame. Verses 30-31**

- Jonathan was facing the prospect of shame.
- Yet, he was not shamed.
- Shame was only evident in the mind of someone who was already living out of shame (Saul).

Because Saul was living out of shame, he was weighing Jonathan down with the prospect of shame. Verses 30-31

1. Saul strikes hard at Jonathan’s mother.
2. Saul implies that Jonathan’s mother will be disgraced and known as a harlot.
3. Saul ties kingship as being the only direction for success for Jonathan.
4. Without kingship, Saul declares Jonathan’s children will be nothing.

So often, like Jonathan, we are pressed to choose sin as the comfortable choice over:

- God and His will,
- God's people and His plan.

It always comes down to relationship with God and relationship with His people.

- John 13:34-35

**6 – A true friend is not selfish and is aware at the onset of a selfish spirit. Verse 41-42**

- Jonathan chose to do what was best for David knowing that what was best for himself, God would do in His future.

Imagine if we lived as friends that cared for and tried implicitly to advance the other person.

- We would be dream releasers.
- Jonathan released his future to God.

**7 – A true friend will always look ahead to the plan of God and not the dilemma of their lives.**

**Verse 42**

- Encouragement accomplishes more than excitement.



How to become a true friend and be the fulfilment of God's plan for someone's life:

1. Choose to stop making your current situation about you! Make it about someone else.
2. Help someone in your life with something that takes effort and sacrifice to do.
3. Make the relationship about God's plan for that person's life. Pray for them, encourage them with the Word, and pray some more.



Becoming <sup>the</sup>

Catalyst

for

Change

Small Beginnings; Big Decisions :  
“Deciding on Value”

june



20 **CALT & LIGHT** 23  
Being the Difference

## MONTHLY MESSAGE DIRECTION:

JUNE 4<sup>TH</sup>

COUNTING THE COST – PART 1

JUNE 11<sup>TH</sup>

COUNTING THE COST – PART 2

JUNE 18<sup>TH</sup>

FATHER’S DAY

JUNE 25<sup>TH</sup>

ASKING HARD THINGS

Sermon Title:

Counting the Cost! – Part 1

Text: 1 Kings 19:15-21

Elisha's calling was a depressed man's answer to prayer.

## 1 – God's call became the greater responsibility.

### Verse 20a

- *“He left the oxen...”*
- Elisha allowed God to interrupt what he was doing.
- These are very special times.

## Interruption will allow for conversation.

- When our normal is interrupted, God is looking to redirect our lives.
- Life's interruptions are really open doors.

Open doors for our:

1. Character,
2. The words we speak,
3. The level of faith we profess and express,
4. New direction.

## 2 – Elisha had a running reflex after hearing the word of God.

### Verse 20b

- *“...and ran after Elijah...”*
- Elisha must have sat there for some time contemplating the gravity of the matter.

Yet, one thing became clear. He put action to the interruption immediately.

- He was quick in not missing the opportunity that became available.

### **3 – Elisha accepted the sacrifice of personal relationships. Verse 20c**

- *“Let me kiss my father and mother...”*
- It is not as much as we release those that are close to us, but that they become the partakers in the ministry that God has given us.

We see the sacrifice of:

- Productivity, Finance, Care, Future.

Remember, God’s calling is always about *His* calling not our “new experience”.

- Before Elisha accomplished anything of note and wonder, he was a depressed man’s servant.

### **4 – Self-sustenance must be yielded to God’s call. Verse 21b**

- *“He took the pair of oxen and sacrificed them...”*
- The sacrifice was a sign of abandonment to God in the presence of family and community.
- *Why not leave the oxen alone? Why not leave them for his family?*
- It was a declaration of his very own name: Elisha – My God is Salvation!

**Moving Forward**

Thank God for your interruption. Ask for insight and respond to Him: I will do what you want me to do.

**Sermon Title:**

Counting the Cost! – Part 2

**Text:** 1 Kings 19:15-21

*“Authentic discipleship may exact from you the highest price relationally and the highest price physically. The cost is total in principle and may be total in actual experience”*

– John Piper

### **5 – Life becomes people oriented.**

#### **Verse 21c**

- *He sacrificed them, boiled their flesh with the implements of the oxen, and gave it to the people and they ate...*
- Elisha’s first action following the call of God was to sacrifice from his own means and feed others.

There is something to be said about self-sacrifice, attention on others, that solidifies our future.

- This was a deposit into his future.

### **6 – Major adjustments and sacrifices always precede our destined season.**

#### **Verse 21d**

- *Then he arose and followed Elijah and ministered to him.*
- Elisha was called to be the next prophet. Yet the in-between was difficult and costly.

### **Can we pay the cost of following Christ?**

- Luke 14:28-30; Luke 14:26-27; Luke 14:33

How do we count the cost when we don’t know what’s coming in our life?

*“Jesus requires, upfront, a commitment to the highest possible cost. And nothing later is going to surprise you then because you’ve already totally sold to the highest, most excessive cost.”*

John Piper

## **Major adjustments and sacrifices that Elisha walked through:**

1. Disconnecting from family and friends.
2. Using his inheritance/livelihood for others.
3. Choosing to place serving before power.
4. Dealing with the elapse of time. (many scholars believe that Elisha served Elijah for 6 years before he became prophet.
5. Enduring ridicule (2 Kings 2).

Yet, in all these adjustments and sacrifices one thing remained consistent with Elisha: he knew Who he was following and he knew that because of that, everything else was ok.

## **7 – We can rest in knowing that the uneventful in our lives and the chaos around us, is the preliminary stage before power falls.**

### **1 Kings 20 – 2 Kings 2**

- God will always do what is promised in His word to do. We will experience the seasons of power, levity, and encouragement.
- What we cannot do is lose our mental stability through the seasons of hardship.

*“We can’t change the inevitable. But we can change how we respond. After all, life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react.”*

– Chuck Swindoll

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**Moving Forward**

**Confess and speak out loud Philippians 3:8,**

***“I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord...”***

Sermon Title:

Father's Day!

Text: Joshua 24:14-22 Key verse: 15

*A righteous man who walks in his integrity – How blessed are his sons after him. Proverbs 20:7*

**1 – We must release the attachments of Egypt that desire our attention. Verse 14**

- *...Put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt...*

How is it that Israel could have seen the power of God and still travelled with idols?

- It may not have been necessarily a physical idol as much as the idolatry of their hearts.

The people were stubborn in following God. They followed Him outwardly but remained distanced inwardly.

Releasing the attachments of Egypt is all about allowing God have control over each area of our life.

Egypt is all about our labor and production. Following God is all about His labor and production.

Verse 13

**2 – We must reject the call of culture to assimilate. Verse 15b**

- Current culture does not offer anything remotely in comparison with what God offers.

- It is not that the world can compete with what God offers us.

The issue is that the world assimilates us through:

- Shame. If we do not do what the world does we are frowned upon.
- Consequence. The world will penalize whoever does not sin.
- Ostracization. The world clusters together and makes us feel alone.
- Isolation. The world creates circumstances of loneliness and fear.
- Pressure. The world pressurizes our life until we can no longer handle the situation but yield.

*“In science, the concept of pressure in relation to volume also applies to the spiritual world; the more the volume, the less the pressure, and the less the volume, the more the pressure. This is what it means; increase the volume of your prayers, and see the pressure in your life go down.”*

Richard Bediako

### **3 – We must redeem our household in the face of society.**

**Verse 15c**

- *But as for me and my house, **WE WILL SERVE** the LORD.*

Our declaration produces a definitive and narrowly directed journey where eternity consumes and our hearts break for what is ungodly.

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**Moving Forward**

Our declarations are always proved by the decision we make. What decisions will you make this week that will prove that you are serving the LORD? \_\_\_\_

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Date: June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Speaker: Dr. Rai Papparatti

Sermon Title:

Asking Hard Things!

Text: 2 Kings 2:1-15

Key Verse 10

*“It is not a “hard thing” for God! It was hard because it would cost Elisha. It was a hard life; yet one full of power.”*

Places in the Bible were named because of their meaning. Elijah and Elisha travelled to specific places before Elisha became prophet.

### 1 – They came to Gilgal.

Verses 1-2

- Gilgal is known as the “place of beginning.”

Joshua 4:19-24

- Gilgal’s name literally means *circle of stones*.

Here the Israelites were safe and secure just before they began their invasion of enemy territory.

- It was in essence a *place of remembrance*.

Elijah warned Elisha to stay in the easy place.

While it is good and beneficial in our life to remember past events and victories, it is not God’s will for us to stay there.

- Remembrance is always used as a catalyst for deeper commitment and greater experience.
- Revelation 2:5



God gives us memory for growth not for stagnancy.

- Elisha's response in verses 2, 4, & 6 is telling of his decision making process.
- *As the LORD lives...*
- Because God is always living, the experiences of our life are always in progression and never in recession.

**2 – They came to Bethel. Verses 2b-4**

- Bethel is known as the “place of prayer.”
- Genesis 12:8

Abraham frequently returned to Bethel where he first worshipped and communed with God.

- This important place in life should be frequented so often.

Elijah warned Elisha to stay at the place of prayer and communion with God.

- This does not sound bad!
- Yet from the company there, we see the danger of not “doing” for God but continually “waiting.”

A group of prophets were stationed at Bethel. They had become so accustomed to the usual of their walk with God that they:

1. Ridiculed Elisha,
2. Questioned his calling...*do you know?*
3. Really did not believe God was big enough to take Elijah away. Verse 16

Has our Christian experience currently left us cynical?

- Our cynicism is often a great indication of our inactivity.

Remember, Elijah was depressed because he thought he was alone!

- Prophets that only speak but never do, always create the atmosphere of a God that has abandoned His people.
- They promote abandonment when in fact, doing for the gospel promotes connectivity and a greater experience of belonging.

### **3 – They came to Jericho.                      Verses 4b-6**

- Jericho is known as the “place of battle.”
- Jericho had never been rebuilt (Joshua 6:17)
- Jericho literally means, *fragrance*.
- Joshua 6

It is so fitting that, for Israel, the fragrance of this city came through its crushing.

- The area was desolate and full of ruins.
- Yet, what is stunning to note is that although it was a desolate battleground, there was one part of Jericho that stood erected as a covenant promise: Rahab’s home, Joshua 6:20, 22

*Archeologists (1990) found in excavating the city of Jericho that part of the city wall with attached houses was left standing on the north side.*

As Jericho housed prophets in its ruins, it became a place of hiding for them and not of motivation.

- In our Christian walk, we will either see and focus on the ruins that are there, or the favor of God in the midst of ruins.

- The image of what one person could do in Jericho must have spurred Elisha to keep going.

#### **4 – They came to the Jordan.                      Verses 6b-7**

- The Jordan is known as the “place of death.”
- Jordan means *to come or go down, to descend*.
- Amazing that this is where Jesus was baptized when He began His ministry (Matthew 3:13).

This is the hard life to cross.

This river had so much meaning for the two prophets.

- Crossing for Elijah meant ending his journey.
- Crossing for Elisha meant beginning his journey.

“Once we die in the Jordan river; once we truly lay down all that remains; once we grasp and embrace the “hard thing” (*hard life, narrow way, full commitment, sacrificial life, servant way, taking up our cross*), once we die to self, the same Jordan situations moving forward, become empowered by God – the waters in our life will split at our word!”

This is what it means to: BE THE DIFFERENCE!

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**Moving Forward**

Don't live as the prophets did. Walk Elisha's way!  
Embrace the “hard thing” that God is calling you to do! What is it? \_\_\_\_\_



## MONTHLY MESSAGE DIRECTION:

JULY 2 <sup>ND</sup>	THE GREAT RETURNING
JULY 9 <sup>TH</sup>	THE SANBALLAT SPIRIT PART 1
JULY 16 <sup>TH</sup>	THE SANBALLAT SPIRIT PART 2
JULY 23 <sup>RD</sup>	THE SANBALLAT SPIRIT PART 3
JULY 30 <sup>TH</sup>	REJECTING SANBALLAT PART I

Sermon Title:

The Great Returning!

Text: Nehemiah 1:1-11 Key verse: 9

*“Until God is your chief concern – until sinning against Him is what makes your heart break – you will never turn the corner.”* Heath Lambert

**1 – If you return to Me.**

**Verse 9a**

- What does it truly mean *to return*?
- We can never *return* with without the conditions of our life being drastically different.

*“When we are forced to deal with drastic change that is imposed upon us, we make do and even adopt policies as inevitable. Yet, when we think about drastic change as a choice, we fight against it and would rather choose complacency over conversion.”*

**Drastic conditions to consider:**

1. Releasing of Pride. We cannot make it on our own.
2. Releasing of Convenience. So often the flesh and our world offers convenience in return for compromise.
3. Restructuring of Time. Time is not money! Time is our prelude to eternity.
4. Redirecting of Purpose. Christ must be the center and purpose of our life. Therefore, our life must not only Christ oriented, but Christ driven.

## 2 – If you keep My commandments. Verse 9b

- We must not mistake *keeping commandments* as rules to follow. But rather see them as *benefits to be gained*.
- John 14:21

Keeping commandments is about love and disclosure.

- God the Father and Jesus display their love towards us.
- They disclose their Presence to us.

Disclose in John 14:21 is the GK word, *emphanizo* and means *to make visible or manifest, to come into view*.

- Jesus offers us realism. We don't have to *only* trust blindly through "faith." We can experience Jesus' Presence actually.

## 3 – If you do them. Verse 9c

- Matthew 22:37-38
- It is one thing to love God. It is another things to show love.
- In fact, without the display of love, love is self-pleasing and not really love.

## 4 – God will restore and return. Verse 9d

- While this verse is intended for Israel, Isaiah gives us portion to the verse as well.
- Isaiah 56:8 (Isaiah 56:6-8)
- The primary manifestation of His restoration is always joy. (Isaiah 56:7b)

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**Moving Forward**

Be the difference! Make the change. The hurt of the change only lasts through the decision process.

Sermon Title:

The Sanballat Spirit – Part 1

Text: Nehemiah 4:1-2

Once we make the decision and take the first action to rebuild with God, our enemy takes notice and the following is what happens in the *Spiritual Realm*.

**1 – Sanballat (being a *type* of devil/spirit) becomes aggravated when he is first disturbed in our life. Verse 1**

- He becomes furious, very angry, and begins the attack with mocking.

His first attack of mocking is our first test of feeling inadequate to even rebuild.

- Inadequacy's primal declaration: "I can't do it!"
- This spirit tries to discourage the motivation to fight and to move forward.

Yet, as a Believer, inadequacy becomes the stage for our blessings. 2 Corinthians 3:4-6

1. Our insufficiency drives us to God.
2. Our inadequacy relieves us of the burden of self-effort and self-reliance.
3. Inability motivates reliance on divine power. God will do in us what He never intended that we do on our own.

4. Inadequacy challenges our faith. Those who focus on the reliability of this promise and step out in obedience will grow in faith.

Dr. Charles Stanley

## **2 – Sanballat confers with other spirits to bombard us on multiple levels. Verses 2-3**

- When we accept and speak out our inadequacy, we declare an open invitation for multiple attacks.

Each spirit brings a strategic and targeted attack:

1. Accusation. *Feeble Jews*. Verse 2a
2. The dilemma of many questions. Verse 2b  
If we give in to many questions (what if), we waste time for growth with debilitating, inaccurate, worry. We actually invite another spirit. (This is the spirit of fear, 2 Timothy 1:7).

*Sanballat's questions each come with a specific target. Over the next few weeks, we will be breaking apart his questions.*

### **The questions that we must contend with:**

#### **1 – What are these feeble Jews doing? Verse 2a**

- He highlights our current and evident weakness – *feeble*.

#### **2 – Are they going to restore it for themselves?**

**Verse 2b**

- He highlights the lack of our own strength!
- This is true, yet we have Nehemiah 6:16

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**Moving Forward**

*“God is not calling us to do something that we can do with our own power. He is calling us to do something that we cannot do, unless He does it through us with His power.”*



**Date:** July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Speaker:** Dr. Rai Paparatti

**Sermon Title:**

The Sanballat Spirit – Part 2

**Text:** Nehemiah 4:1-2

*“Unless there is within us, that which is above us, we will soon yield to what us around us.”* Alfred Gibbs

**Continuing the questions from a Sanballat Spirit:**

**3 – Can they offer sacrifices? Verse 2c**

- Sanballat highlights the greatness of our sin and unrighteousness before God.
- We are not worthy to offer sacrifices to God!

This spirit desires to play on the emotional barrage we feel through a guilty conscience.

- He will always resort to condemnation.
- The Jews were in exile because of their sin. Sanballat knows this. Therefore he pricks the heart that is condemned.

**Ways that our life has been influenced by the Sanballat Spirit through condemnation:**

1. We will think about the past continually! Philippians 3:13
2. We will not be able to easily forgive ourselves. 2 Corinthians 5:17
3. We will have a judgmental and critical spirit. Matthew 7:2
4. We will feel unworthy and ashamed. Unworthy of God’s love and unworthy of someone’s love whom has hurt us. Romans 5:8

Romans 8:1; Psalm 34:22; 1 John 1:9; Isaiah 43:25

#### **4 – Can they finish in a day? Verse 2d**

- Sanballat wants to disrupt our beginning efforts so that we do not continue.

This one is all about the disappointments as we strive to progress.

- The task becomes too big to follow through.
- Can we finish in *one* day? No! It takes longer than that!

We often face disappointments right from the start as we begin to use our spiritual muscle.

- *God is not answering me! He doesn't hear me! Everyone else's' life is better than mine! God is not there!*
- If we have been relying on the flesh for so long, our mind is accustomed to think in the flesh. The flesh will take every spiritual stride and call it a failure and disappointment. This is simply not true.

#### **5 – Can they revive the stones from the dusty rubble, even the burnt ones? Verse 2e**

- Sanballat emphasizes the extent of our sin and consequences. He wants us to feel very discouraged. *Look at the destruction you have brought!*
- Can we revive the stones? No!
- But we can build with them. And it is not the stones which bring the city to life. It is the Spirit of the One living within.

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### **Moving Forward**

Our life may look burnt and charred on the outside, but as we renounce the Sanballat Spirit, and discipline ourselves to yield entirely to the Holy Spirit, we will come to life from the inside out! We must YIELD. What will you yield? \_\_\_\_\_

**Sermon Title:**

The Sanballat Spirit – Part 3

**Text:** Nehemiah 4:1-12

*“We are evidently no friends of Satan. Like the kings of this world, he wars not against his own subjects. The very fact that he assaults us should fill our minds with hope.”*

J.C. Ryle

**Continuing the questions from a Sanballat Spirit:**

**6 – Even what they are building, if a fox should jump on it, he would break their stone wall down. Verse 3**

- This spirit wants to accentuate the desperation of living through consequence, and desires that we feel as if our efforts are weak and cannot stand.

But, even in the enemy’s mocking, there are words of truth we can pull out.

- Stone & Wall!
- A fox cannot break down discipline that we lay down for Christ. It is a stone wall.

Why does the attack over our relationship with God have to be so extreme?

- It all has to do with verse 7b, “...*the breaches began to be closed.*”
- This spirit is losing access.

Our relationship and effort in relationship with God, makes the enemy so angry because it closes access points for the devil’s work.

- Breaches must be repaired.

As a result of his questions and their continuation to build, Sanballat:

**1 – Sanballat conspired with others once the breaches were being closed. Verses 7b-8**

- The plan was for spirits to bring a disturbance on every front.

The attack may first be upon us, but then it will move through our family, work, and any situation that we are connected to.

- Matthew 12:43-45; Luke 11:26

***“If Satan can’t defeat you by a frontal attack, he will defeat someone whose defeat will defeat you.”***  
Bishop Adams Lwesya

- We are NOT only in relational difficulties. These are attacks from spirits whose intention is to bring defeat. Ephesians 6:12

**2 – Sanballat desires to come into our life through those close to us. Verse 11**

- His effort is all about wearing us down.
- We will often feel bombarded in every area of our life: mentally, relationally, spiritually, socially; until we are cornered to give up!

Verse 12b

The greatest rejection of the Sanballat spirit is the first part of verse 13, ***“Then I stationed...”***

- What will our positioning be? What will we declare? *I give up? I can’t do this anymore? I want something different?*



Declare and resolve: *Then I stationed...*

**Date:** July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Speaker:** Dr. Rai Papparatti

**Sermon Title:**

Rejecting Sanballat – Part 1

**Text:** Nehemiah 4:1-17

*“To conform to a sick society is to become sick.”*

Richard Foster

## **1 – We must run immediately to God in prayer.**

### **Verse 4a**

- *Hear, O our God, how we are despised...*
- This will set the perspective of our emotions.

When we run immediately to God in prayer, we make our problem, His problem.

Between verse 3 to 4, Nehemiah wastes no time to process, complain, or to foster anger and disappointment. He turns to God.

## **2 – We must not stop our spiritual disciplines no matter what.**

### **Verse 6**

- Nehemiah did not stop building.
- We must not stop building our relationship either.

The enemy always wants there to be breaches in the wall. We must continually build up the wall and strengthen the areas that are weak.

*“A farmer is helpless to grow grain; all he can do is provide the conditions for the growing of grain. He*

*cultivates the ground, he plants the seed, he waters the plants, and then the natural forces of the earth take over and up comes the grain...This is the way it is with the Spiritual Disciplines – they are a way of sowing to the Spirit...* Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline

Do we realize that every step we take to build in our relationship with Jesus has the power in it to accomplish the:

1. Building of our life, (2 Peter 1:3)
2. Defeating of our enemy, (2 Cor. 10:4)
3. Manifestation of joy, (John 15:10-11)
4. Restoration of man's inescapable plight of brokenness. (2 Cor. 5:17-18)

### **3 – We must become “breach inspectors” in regard to our life. Verse 7**

- We must strive to look for open spiritual and temptation active gaps and close them.
- i.e. Phones, magazines, locations, media.

*“Mice do not leave on their own. Getting rid of mice takes frustration, initiative, sleepless nights, money, effort, and courage.”*

Holes in our life, no matter how frustrating they are, will never be closed until:

1. Relationship with Jesus is first place,
2. The desire to grow is greater than the desire to stay the same,
3. We give all control patterns to God.

Each of these builds on the next. We cannot have one without the previous.

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**Moving Forward**

Discipline outside of the normal this week. Change up your schedule for the sake of relationship with Jesus.



## MONTHLY MESSAGE DIRECTION:

AUGUST 6<sup>TH</sup>

REJECTING SANBALLAT - PART 2

AUGUST 13<sup>TH</sup>

REJECTING SANBALLAT - PART 3

AUGUST 20<sup>TH</sup>

MENTAL HEALTH BEGINNING TO DETERIORATE

AUGUST 27<sup>TH</sup>

THE JOY OF THE LORD

**Date:** August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Speaker:** Dr. Rai Papparatti

**Sermon Title:**

Rejecting Sanballat – Part 2

**Text:** Nehemiah 4:1-17

*“We can be tired, weary and emotionally distraught, but after spending time alone with God, we find that He injects into our bodies energy, power, and strength.”*

Charles Stanley

*“We are too busy to pray, and so we are too busy to have power. We have a great deal of activity, but we accomplish little; many services but few conversions; much machinery but few results.”*

R.A. Torrey

#### **4 – We must put safeguards in place.**

##### **Verse 9**

- Nehemiah made sure that there were safeguards in place both day and night.
- Safeguards are the action steps of faith.

Verse 9a, (they prayed). Verse 9b, (they did).

Safeguards can be certain people in our life or even specific times of devotion that we do not stray from.

Safeguards are not difficult to install. They only take the initiative to do so.

1. We must set up guards on purpose.
2. Guards set may feel inconvenient. *Day & Night...*
3. Inconvenience of ease is always worth it when it builds character and strength.



**5 – We must focus on the weakest area for a specific victory. Verse 13**

- We take the weakness in which the enemy has had access, and we target it on both defensive and offensive fronts.

1. **Defensive Front** (*having swords*). This is the guarding stage where we make sure that the gaps that have been opened are closed.

- We starve the flesh in this initiative.
- Starvation of the flesh follows this progression. Determination (O.P.) – Starvation (O.P.) – Rebellion (F.R.) – Defeat (O.P.) – Victory (G.P.)!

**(O.P. is Our Part, F.R. is Flesh Result, G.P. is God's Part).**

2. **Offensive Front** (*having spears & bows*). This is the stage in which we do more than just sit back and close gaps. We advance in relationship with God to deeper levels.

- Hebrews 5:12, 14

**6 – We must strengthen our emotional weakness caused by fear. Verse 14a**

- We do this by remembering that God alone is the power and strength of our situation.
- **We rely on the time we spend with God and not on our strength to make it through a situation.**

*“Time with God equates to manifested situational power.”*

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**Moving Forward**

Create safeguards that will cause your flesh discomfort. Let it be evident, expressive, and purposeful. Write it down and let's pray for it!

**My Safeguard** this week of August 6<sup>th</sup> will be:

**Safeguard:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Joined together in prayer with my Church this day!**

**My Safeguard** this week of August 6<sup>th</sup> will be:

**Safeguard:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Joined together in prayer with my Church this day!**

**My Safeguard** this week of August 6<sup>th</sup> will be:

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**Joined together in prayer with my Church this day!**

**My Safeguard** this week of August 6<sup>th</sup> will be:

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**Joined together in prayer with my Church this day!**

Date: August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Speaker: Dr. Rai Papatatti

Sermon Title:

Rejecting Sanballat – Part 3

**Text:** Nehemiah 4:1-17

*“Much sickness - physical, mental, and emotional - surely must come from disobedience. When the soul is confronted with an alternative of right or wrong and chooses to blur the distinction, making excuses for its bewilderment and frustration, it is exposed to infection. Evil is given the opportunity to invade the mind, the spirit, and the body, and the sick person goes off to an expert who will diagnose his trouble. Sometimes the patient knows well what his trouble is and for this very reason has not consulted the Lord, fearing what He will say: Confess. Turn around. Quit that indulgence. Do not pity yourself. Forgive that person. Pay back what you owe. Apologize. Tell the truth. Deny yourself. Consider the other’s well-being. Lay down your life.”* **Elisabeth Elliot**

## **7 - Our spiritual battle has specific repercussions on our family. Verse 14b**

- When we give in to weakness, we allow a spirit to enter in and torment our family.
- When we grow our walk with God, our family is strengthened by the same.

James 5:15-16

- If the prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much in the life of another, it is safe to conclude that the sin of one man causes suffering to another.

*“If you step on the devils territory, he has every right to harass you, hurt you, and torment you.”* Vladimir Savchuk

When we allow sin to enter, it is as keeping our home door unlocked. Even though **we** may have been the one to leave the door open, the enemy will attack **anyone** under the protection of our home.

Nehemiah encourages the people to fight for their brothers, sons, daughters, wives and houses.

- There is more at stake in our relationship with God than our own self-absorbed personal interest.

**At stake, according to the Cambridge Bible, is:**

1. Christianity's brotherhood (brothers),
2. The blessings of family (sons & daughters),
3. The ties of personal affection (wives/husbands),
4. Cherished ancestral inheritance (houses).

**Fight the battle for those we are connected to!**

**8 - As we persevere in the rebuilding of our walk with God, the plans of the enemy become frustrated. Verse 15**

- God reveals the enemy's plan to us if our eyes are on Him. Ephesians 6:11

Our relationship reveals revelation which brings about the enemies resignation and allows for our restoration!

**9 - Once we experience a victory, we must always live with the discipline of living life (building the wall), and relationship with God (sword in hand). Verses 16-17**

- *From that day on...*
- Our life of victory is dependent on our relationship with Jesus!

It was a rejection of this pattern that landed Israel in exile with their walls broken down.

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**Moving Forward**

Confess the open door. Renounce the open door. Reject the open door. Our uncomfortableness in this is only the rebellion of a spirit that wants to remain active. But we are FREE!

Date: August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Speaker: Dr. Rai Papatatti

Sermon Title:

Mental Health Beginning  
to Deteriorate

Text: Nehemiah 5:13-6:1

Key verse: 19

*"The time has come to turn to God and reassert our trust in Him for the healing of America - our country is in need of and ready for a spiritual renewal."*

Ronald Reagan

Nehemiah was God's choice man, yet the pressures of life began to weigh heavy on him.

- He was appointed as their governor. (vs. 14)  
He held responsibility through position.
- He held that position for 12 years. (vs. 14b) He held responsibility through commitment.
- He personally worked on the wall. (vs. 16) He held responsibility through example.
- He fed and cared for 150 people plus those from visiting countries. (vs. 17a) He held responsibility through empathy.
- He did so out of his pocket because the Jewish people were suffering in their exile. (vs. 17b) He held responsibility through personal sacrifice.

**1 - Sometimes the burden of doing good seems to be too much pressure.**

**Verse 19a**

- Nehemiah is asking God to remember him for what he has done for *this* people.

It is so easy to allow the good that we do to affect our emotions that we develop a skewed view of God and our situation.

Nehemiah began to look at what *he* was doing rather than what God was doing.

- *According to what I have done.*

Nehemiah began looking at his given situation and responsibility as hardship instead of renewal.

- *Remember me...for good.*

Nehemiah began to look at the people receiving from his life as empty takers instead of timely friends.

- *For this people.* Not *my* people, but a disconnected *this* people.
- It is easy to miss the value people can add to our life, when all we see is what *we* are doing for them.

Our mental health begins to deteriorate when we:

1. Miss what God is doing,
2. Are blind to renewal,
3. See our God given circle as a burden.

**2 - The pressure of doing good should never stop us from continuing to do good.**

**Nehemiah 6:1**

- Inactivity is an indication that the Sanballat spirit has gained entry through the guise of mental health.
- Nehemiah felt unstable in a moment of weakness. Yet he did not stay there.

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**Moving Forward**

We must not stay there. God is moving for us, for our families, for our brothers and sisters, and for our nation.

**Renewal is always on the upswing from mental instability**...if we only hold on, remain active through it, and tightly hold the word of God!

**Sermon Title:**

The Joy of the Lord.

**Text:** Nehemiah 8:5-12; Zephaniah 3:14-19

*“Joy is the experience of knowing that you are unconditionally loved and that nothing - sickness, failure, emotional distress, oppression, war, or even death - can take that love away.”* Henri Nouwen

The power of God to restore us in totality and liberate us to the place where we recognize our victory, is found in:

1. Placement of God’s Word. (Neh. 8:5).
2. Agreement to God’s Word. (Neh. 8:6a).
3. Visible acceptance to God’s Word (Neh. 8:6b)
4. Longing to understand and be taught God’s Word. (Neh. 8:7b-8)
5. Conviction of God’s Word / Allowing our emotions to be convicted. (Neh. 8:9b).

When all of these took place, God reacted in a mighty way. Nehemiah 8:10b

- *The joy of the LORD is your refuge.*
- This is not to be confused as inward joy that God gives to us. This is entirely external to us. Undeserved. Outside of our control.

Therefore, when God’s Word is elevated in our life, what we truly need is recognition. We must *know* what God has done for us. This is where life transformation happens.

## 1 - The joy of the LORD is our refuge.

**Neh. 8:10**

- *Refuge*, Hebrew *maoz*, literally means a place or means of safety and protection.
- God's Word reveals His joy which reveals our safety.

## 2 - The joy of the LORD is restorative.

**Zephaniah 3:17-20**

- He will gather. Vs.18
- He will deal with our oppression caused by sin / He will stop the oppressors attack. Vs.19a
- He will save those who are limp. Vs.19b
- He will gather the scattered. Vs.19c
- He will turn shame into praise and fame. Vs.19d
- He will bring us in. Vs. 20a
- He will restore our means. Vs. 20b

## 3 - The joy of the LORD is His and His alone.

**Isaiah 63:1-5**

- We can never initiate restoration from God. We can only receive it and participate in it.
- Zechariah 4:6

Isaiah 63:1: *Who is this who comes...with garments of red...This One who is majestic in apparel?*

Isaiah 63:2: *Why is Your apparel red...*

Isaiah 63:3 *I have trodden the wine trough alone...Their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments and I stained My clothes.*

Isaiah 63:5 *I looked, but there was no one to help...so My own arm brought salvation...*

Isaiah 63:1b *It is I, the One who speaks in righteousness, mighty to save!*



## **4 - The Joy of the LORD connects the attributes of heaven into our mortal existence. Luke 15**

### **God seeks and rejoices. Verses 4-5**

- In this rejoicing, God does not lead the lost sheep, He picks it up. He removes the responsibility of finding home.

### **The angels do not start the party initiative. It is God who initiates. Verse 7a**

- Verse 6, 9, the initiator gathers friends and neighbors. The friends and neighbors are rejoicing with God in verse 7.
- Rejoicing of angels, is God's releasing of them to participate in His redemptive work over our life.

### **God is waiting for us to realize His power and victory. Verse 20**

- Our realization of what God has (verse 17), produces the actualization of His kingdom.
- God's provision becomes secondary when we realize that what we only want is our Father.

*It was not the Father's provision that changed the boy. It was that the Father was willing to give the provision.*

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**Moving Forward**

Can you revel in the love and provision of God. Sit back for some time and allow the Father to dance over you in joy at what He has done for you!

It will set you free!



20 Enduring in the Difference 23  
CALI & LOUI

# Menacing Mental Health

September

## MONTHLY MESSAGE DIRECTION:

SEPTEMBER 3<sup>RD</sup>

CHURCH PICNIC / NO SERVICE

SEPTEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup>

AHITHOPHEL: DEALING WITH BETRAYAL

SEPTEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup>

JUDAS: LIVING FOR THE MOMENT  
PART 1

SEPTEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup>

JUDAS: LIVING FOR THE MOMENT  
PART 2

Date: September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Speaker: Dr. Rai Papatatti

**Sermon Title:** Ahithophel: Dealing with Betrayal; Stopping Bitterness Dead in its Tracks.

**Text:** 2 Samuel 17:23;

Supporting texts: 2 Samuel 11:3-5, 14; 23:8, 34

*“Bitterness starts out small. An offense burrows its way into our hearts. We replay it in our minds, creating deep ruts that will be hard to build back up. We retell our hurts to any available listener, including each sordid detail. We enlist support, pushing us further into our resentment. We hear the offending person’s name and cringe. We decipher the offense as intentional and our offender as full of spite. We look for other reasons, both real and imagined, to dislike our villain. With each new piece of information, we form another layer of bitterness. We fool ourselves into thinking no one will know, but anger and resentment have a way of seeping into everything. Resentment is like a beach ball we try to submerge in the water. No matter how valiant our efforts, it pops up with all its vitality, splashing everyone around.”*

Anne Peterson

A lot of mental health issues stem out from deeply rooted addictions.

Bitterness kills!

**1 - Ahithophel traded wisdom for foolishness once he allowed bitterness to consume his mind.**

**2 Samuel 16:20-23**

- His advice used to be like advice from God. But now, it was like advice from hell.

- Why did he give the advice for illegitimate sex on a rooftop?
- It was sexual vengeance towards David.

Yet, the problem is that bitterness has no satisfaction. It is spiritually initiated. It cannot be conquered by physical actions.

Once we begin to make decisions that appeal to the flesh (emotional satisfaction), we find that we become more and more ensnared.

In her book *Discipline*, Elisabeth Elliot shows how strongholds develop: *“They begin with a thought. One thought becomes a consideration. A consideration develops into an attitude, which leads them to action. Action repeated becomes a habit, and a habit establishes a “power base for the enemy,” that is, a stronghold. When we find ourselves wondering why we continue to do a thing we despise, here is the explanation. The enemy has made use of an area of weakness as his power base, and he hits us again and again. The only weapons adequate to deal with such strongholds are those that are mighty through God. They are spiritual weapons.”*

**2 - Ahithophel’s bitterness caused him to rejoice in the abuse of others for the sake of those he was angry with. 2 Samuel 16:22**

- Interesting that Ahithophel did not care about the women who were just raped.

Mental health problems stemming from bitterness cause us to become so self-absorbed that we

cannot see the hurt in and of others. Only our hurt is ever before us.

**3 - Ahithophel's bitterness did not end with a hurt-for-hurt satisfaction. 2 Samuel 17:1-3**

- David took one girl - Bathsheba.
- Ahithophel encouraged Absalom to take many women... Yet Ahithophel was not satisfied.

Bitterness will never be satisfied in doing what was done to us. It goes much deeper. Once Ahithophel accomplished the defilement of those close to David, he was not satisfied. He wanted David to die.

Bitterness causes such mental anguish (mental health problems), because it is spiritually initiated. Therefore, the only solution to bitterness is to have it spiritually satisfied.

**4 - Ahithophel's bitterness told him that he needed David dead. Yet, his bitterness caused him to take his own life. 2 Samuel 17:23**

- The target of bitterness is to destroy the person whom it possesses. Not to bring retribution.
- It is a spirit masquerading under the guise of empathy for what we have faced.

**Lessons that we can learn:**

**1 - God does not fight in agreement with our bitterness. In fact, God fights against bitterness. 2 Samuel 17:14**

- If we find that we are continually battling the same emotional feelings of not being satisfied because of what someone has done to us, we may be hitting a brick wall because God will not allow our bitterness to go further.

## **2 - When we release our bitterness to God, we invite His healing and restoration.**

*“I have found it necessary sometimes deliberately to refuse thoughts of what someone has done to me and to ask for help to dwell on what Christ has done for that person and wants to do for him and for me, for I am sure that my treatment of people depends on how I think about them...if the feelings and thoughts are wrong in themselves, how can expressing them verbally add up to something good? It seems to me that they add up to three sins: wrong feeling, wrong thought, wrong action...the natural mind prefers argument to obedience, solutions to truth.”* Elisabeth Elliot

## **3 - Our hurt will never disrupt God’s plan. Therefore, we must submit ourselves to His plan and watch for His deliverance.**

Submitting to God causes us to take the responsibility to release the holds of the past.

- The devil deals with the past. He cannot go further than a single hurtful event.
- God orchestrates all the events of our life so they bring Him glory and redeem our lives.

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**Moving Forward**

Take the responsibility for your actions. Release all its implications to God who is in control. Choose obedience rather than argument. Choose truth rather than solution!

**Sermon Title:**

Judas: Living for the Moment, Part 1.

**Text:** Matthew 27:1-5

*“You know how addiction works. It starts like this: There’s some kind of disappointment or distress in your life. As a result you choose to deal with that distress with an agent; it might be sex, it might be drugs, it might be alcohol. The agent promises transcendence. The agent promises freedom, a sense of being in control, a sense of being above all this, a sense of being liberated, a sense of escape. And so you do it. But when you do it, when you take the addicting agent as a way of dealing with life, the trap is set.”*

Tim Keller

Judas desired money and ease of life over commitment to Christ. In fact, it was an addiction he had. Judas was addicted to “things”.

**1 - Judas nursed his addiction even though he followed and “served” Jesus. John 12:3-6**

- Judas was keen to have the luxuries of the world within his grasp.

For those who say that Judas was not a true follower:

- A. Jesus picked him and rejected others. Such as one willing to follow Him: Luke 9:57-58
- B. Jesus sent them out two by two. Matthew 10:1-15, Mark 6:7-13

This addiction reveals itself in many ways:

- Demonic and influenced intentions against those placed in leadership positions over our life. Verse 4
- A lying tongue. Verse 5
- A false but highlighted concern for others. This was only for show. Verse 5b

Yet, everyone knew his intentions and his secret actions. John writes this Gospel.

- We cannot hide the manifestation of love for something other than Christ.

## **2 - Judas' addiction opened the door to begin hating people that were truly coming to Christ.**

**1 Timothy 6:10; Matthew 26:6-15**

- The disciples opposed the perfume being opened in verse 8.
- But only one was committed to the frustration in verse 9.

It is interesting to note that Paul says the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil.

- It causes wandering from the faith, and
- Causes a piercing of many griefs.

It causes the attachment of the world to consume the disciple of Christ.

## **3 - Eventually, addiction leads to betrayal.**

**Matthew 26:14-15**

Judas not only betrayed Christ, he betrayed:

- Himself,
- Others close to him,
- And the work of Jesus he was connected to.



Unchallenged addiction will make the vice of addiction spike at times so we act irrationally.

- Judas went to the chief priests because of costly perfume.
- This spike can cause us to reject Christ in moments of passion.

**4 - Any rejection of Christ in our life, will highlight emotional frailty and will lead to terrible outcomes.                      Matthew 27:3-5**

Because Judas held to the addiction of this world, he faced:

- Uncontrollable remorse and condemnation. - verse 3
- Rejection by the very world he tried to be a part of. - Verse 4
- Emptiness through the vice which was supposed to fulfill him. - Verse 5a Once the money was in his possession, it revealed itself as empty and condemned him all the more.
- No way out except through self-destruction. - Verse 5b

The depression caused by condemnation...

The depression caused by rejection...

The depression caused by emptiness...

The depression caused by a seemingly no-way-out outlook... Was entirely self-inflicted by a heart that valued what everyone else had instead of that which Christ offered.

What Jesus offers us will never be like that which He offers others (aside from salvation). We must

take our eyes off of other people and deal with the calling that Jesus has for us!

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## Moving Forward

Accept your life! That's it! Accept it...not the weakness portion, but the part of your life where you are trying to get ahead of everyone else.

Your trying to get ahead of everyone is causing such conflict, that you have lost sight of Jesus and His will.

Psalm 144:15, *“How blessed (happy) are the people who are so situated. How blessed (happy) are the people whose God is the LORD!”*

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Sermon Title:

Judas: Living for the Moment, Part 2.

Text: Matthew 27:1-5

Judas succumbed to dealing with vices through his own means.

But Jesus always offers us hope and redemption through His sacrifice.

### How to be released from a rooted vice:

#### 1 - Recognize open sin doors. 1 John 2:15-16

- What is it that we love which the world offers us?

#### The lust of the flesh

- Temptation in the desire for immediate **gratification** for something in which God says no.

#### The lust of the eyes

- Deception in perception!
- Our eyes are always bigger than our appetite.

#### The boastful pride of life

- Conceit that anything in our life can be possibly produced by ourselves.

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## 2 - Recognize God's open doors.

### 1 Corinthians 10:13-14

- God will always provide the way of escape.
- The way of escape always becomes available when we have the mentality of verse 14 - Flee.

*To Flee* is the Greek word *pheugo* (*fyoo-go*) and means *to seek safety by flight*.

- 1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22

God's open door is to run. But not just run away...we must run to Him!

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## 3 - Cut out the wrong influences.

### 1 Corinthians 15:33

- The wrong people in our life will prompt bad decisions.
- Even if we are lacking people in our life bad decisions will happen.

We need the body of Christ. We must grow closer to God's people.

- If we do not have relationships with God's people, we are placing ourselves in a position to suffer and easily fall.

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**4 - Break through with resistance. James 4:7**

- We often submit to God but struggle in resistance.
- Resistance implies that the attack comes repetitively. It desires to wear us down.

We must resist.

*Resist* is the Greek word *anthistemi* from the 2 Greek words *anti* (against) and *histemi* (to stand). It means, *to forcefully declare one's personal conviction and to publicly establish ones position.*

- Addictions are always in secret.
- Flowing Christ is always public.

As we publicly follow Jesus, we break strongholds through our resistance.

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**5 - Don't just pray...but Pray! Psalm 50:15**

- Pause and take the vice to God.
- Worship and pray!

Take the time to pray. Stop in the moment we are in to seek God. The reflex of stop-and-pray will turn the situation around. Don't wait. Pray!

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## 6 - Walk with Jesus.

Titus 2:11-15

- The more we speak, exhort, and reprove these things the more we walk with Christ.

**Speak** - Jesus continually.

**Exhort** - Offering up evidence.

**Reprove** - Exposing what is sin. Do not let sin in our life and in our world remain hidden!

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## 7 - Let the hardness of heart fall down.

Psalm 95:8

- Hardness of heart is none other than pride.
  - As we allow Christ to have complete reign, we find deliverance from vices that are sent to destroy us.
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## Moving Forward

*“If we allow the Bible to reveal the unseen spiritual realities behind addictions, we suddenly realize that addictions are more than self-destructive behaviors. They are violations of God’s laws: His laws that call us to avoid drunkenness and immoderate self-indulgence (Rom. 13:13), His law that calls us to love others (1 John 4:7), and His law that calls us to live for Him rather than ourselves (1 Cor. 10:31). This means that addiction is more about someone’s relationship with God than it is about biology. It reveals our allegiances: what we want, what we love, whom and what we serve. It brings us to that all-important question, ‘Will you live for the fulfillment of your desires or for God?’ ” Edward Welch*

# Turning our Home Around

"The Household Atmosphere"



## MONTHLY MESSAGE DIRECTION:

OCTOBER 1<sup>ST</sup>

WORKING FOR GOD

OCTOBER 8<sup>TH</sup>

THANKFUL PRAYER

OCTOBER 15<sup>TH</sup>

THE GOSPEL DOOR

OCTOBER 22<sup>ND</sup>

OPPORTUNITY JUMPER

OCTOBER 29<sup>TH</sup>

SALTY SPEECH

Sermon Title:

Working for God.

Text: Colossians 3:23-24

*“What you do in your house is worth as much as if you did it up in heaven for our Lord God... We should accustom ourselves to think of our position and work as sacred and well-pleasing to God, not on account of the position and work, but on account of the word and faith from which the obedience and the work flow.”* Martin Luther

The only way we are able to turn our homes around, is to change the perspective of why are for whom we are doing all things.

### 1 - Whatever you do...

### Verse 23a

- Every one of our actions need to be committed as doing it for the Lord.

Our *daily* life needs to be committed. Look at what the Bible stresses as *daily* needs:

- Daily search the Scripture. Acts 17:10-12
- Daily prayer.  
Psalm 86:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:17
- Daily take up the cross. Luke 9:23

We may view work as secular and leading a Bible study as spiritual. Yet, the Bible draws no such distinction. Everything that we do must fall under the category of spiritual...as unto the Lord.



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**2 - Temporal work provides a passing and temporal reward. Yet, working as “unto the Lord” produces spiritually birthed, but earthly manifested rewards. Verse 24**

These rewards are fulfilling and power-charged properties.

Matthew 6:33:

“Seek first His (*spiritual*) Kingdom, and all these things (*temporal*) will be added unto you.”

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*“If we look externally, there is difference between washing dishes and preaching the Word of God, but as touching to please God, there is no difference at all. That’s a biblical view of work, that there’s no difference when done to the honor of the Lord between preaching and washing the dishes.”*

William Tyndale

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**Moving Forward**

Honoring Christ in your work, just might have to do with being unashamed and outspoken as a Believer today.

**Sermon Title:**

Thankful Prayer.

## **Illustration**

Research at San Francisco General Hospital has revealed that victims of heart attack, heart failure and other cardiac problems who were remembered in prayers fared better than those who were not. Cardiologist Randy Byrd assigned 192 patients to the "prayed-for" group and 201 patients to the "not-prayed-for" group. All patients were in the coronary intensive care unit. Patients, doctors and nurses did not know which group patients were in. Prayer group members were scattered around the nation and given only the first names, diagnoses and prognoses of patients. The researcher said that the results were dramatic. The prayed-for group had significantly fewer complications than the unremembered group. And fewer members of the former died. The latter group was five times more likely to develop infections requiring antibiotics, and three times more likely to develop a lung condition, leading to heart failure. These findings were published in the American Heart Association.

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## **Improved outcomes associated with prayer**

(Journal of Reproductive Medicine)

Cha *et al.*[[32](#)] studied 219 consecutive infertile women, aged 26-46 years, who were treated with *in vitro*fertilization embryo transfer in Seoul, South Korea. These women were randomized into distant prayer and control groups. Prayer was conducted by prayer groups in the USA, Canada and Australia. The patients and their providers were not informed about the intervention. The investigators, and even the statisticians, did not know the group allocations until all the data had been collected. Thus, the study was randomized, triple-blind, controlled and prospective in design.

Cha *et al.*[[32](#)] found that the women who had been prayed for had nearly twice as high a pregnancy rate as those who had not been prayed for (50 vs. 26%;  $P < 0.005$ ). Furthermore, the women who had been prayed for showed a higher implantation rate than those who had not been prayed for (16.3 vs. 8%;  $P < 0.001$ ). Finally, the benefits of prayer were independent of clinical or laboratory providers and clinical variables. Thus, this study showed that distant prayer facilitates implantation and pregnancy.

(Journal of Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine)

Lesniak[[33](#)] described a study on the effect of intercessory prayer on wound healing in a nonhuman primate species. The sample comprised 22 bush babies (*Otolemur garnettii*) with wounds resulting from chronic self-injurious behavior.

These animals were randomized into prayer and control groups that were similar at baseline. Prayer was conducted for 4 weeks. Both groups of bush babies additionally received L-tryptophan.

Lesniak[33] found that the prayer group animals had a greater reduction in wound size and a greater improvement in hematological parameters than the control animals. This study is important because it was conducted in a nonhuman species; therefore, the likelihood of a placebo effect was removed.

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A 2005 study in the Journal of Behavioral Medicine comparing secular and spiritual forms of meditation found spiritual meditation to be more calming. In secular meditation, you focus on something such as your breath or a nonspiritual word. In spiritual meditation, you focus on a spiritual word or text. Participants were divided into groups, with some being taught how to meditate using words of self-affirmation (“I am love”) and others taught how to meditate with words that described a higher power (“God is love”). They then meditated for 20 minutes a day for four weeks.

Researchers found that [the group that practiced spiritual meditation](#) showed greater decreases in anxiety and stress and more positive mood. They also tolerated pain almost twice as long when asked to put their hand in an ice water bath.

Some scientists who study prayer believe that people who pray are benefiting from a feeling of emotional support. Imagine carrying a backpack hour after hour. It will start to feel impossibly

heavy. But if you can hand it off to someone else to hold for a while, it will feel lighter when you pick it up again. “This is what prayer can do,” says Amy Wachholtz, associate professor and clinical health psychology director at the University of Colorado Denver, and lead researcher on the meditation study. “It lets you put down your burden mentally for a bit and rest.”

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The only publications that deny the results of prayer are no surprise...media outlets.

The New York times claims there is no research concluding it helps as well as the Los Angeles Times.

Those publications are not research but agenda vomiters!

**Sermon Title:**

Thankful Prayer.

**Text:** Colossians 4:2

*“When we rely upon organization, we get what organization can do; when we rely upon education, we get what education can do; when we rely upon eloquence, we get what eloquence can do, and so on. Nor am I disposed to undervalue any of these things in their proper place, but when we rely upon prayer, we get what God can do.”* A.C. Dixon

*“The central significance of prayer is not in the things that happen as results, but in the deepening intimacy and unhurried communion with God at His central throne of control in order to discover a sense of God's need in order to call on God's help to meet that need.”* E. M. Bounds

**1 - Prayer must develop from a set time through to every situation. Verse 2a**

➤ *Devote.*

Devotion does not denote one moment in time. It denotes incorporation into every facet of life.

- In context, Paul is talking to masters and slaves and their daily responsibilities.
- We must bring prayer into work, school, and conversation.

*“Praying only as crisis enter your life would not be a pattern of devotion to prayer.”* John Piper

## **2 - Devoted prayer manifests through situational alertness. Verse 2b**

- *Keeping alert.*

God is not only a big picture God, but He is active in every situation and event.

- We must develop alertness.

The more alert we become in prayer, the more we see the hand of God moving.

- Alertness carries the idea of a reflexive motion in keeping prayer at the center of what we do.

It is not only about looking around and seeing where there is attack. It is more about bringing prayer into every situation reflexively.

## **3 - We must develop thankfulness to God for the opportunity we are in. Verse 2c**

- *Attitude of thanksgiving.*

We must always look and thank God for the opportunity we are in.

- This is to develop grateful language.

We must become opportunity seekers and not emotionally defeated situationists.

- We must be thankful no matter the situation because God is in control of our lives!

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**Moving Forward**

Purposefully invite an attitude of prayer into every part of your day. Then look. See God moving in the situation and begin thanking Him for it!

Date: October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Speaker: Dr. Rai Paparatti

Sermon Title:

The Gospel Door.

## Opening Illustration

*Dr. Herbert C. Jackson was a 20th-century American missionary who later became a seminary professor, publishing several articles for journals about theology in Christian missions, as well as mission strategies.*

In a seminary missions class, Herbert Jackson told how, as a new missionary, he was assigned a car that would not start without a push. After pondering his problem, he devised a plan. He went to the school near his home, got permission to take some children out of class, and had them push his car off. As he made his rounds, he would either park on a hill or leave the engine running. He used this ingenious procedure for two years.

Ill health forced the Jackson family to leave, and a new missionary came to that station. When Jackson proudly began to explain his arrangement for getting the car started, the new man began looking under the hood. Before the explanation was complete, the new missionary interrupted,

"Why, Dr. Jackson, I believe the only trouble is this loose cable." He gave the cable a twist, stepped into the car, pushed the switch, and to Jackson's astonishment, the engine roared to life.

For two years needless trouble had become routine. The power was there all the time. **Only a loose connection kept Jackson from putting that power to work.**



Sermon Title:

The Gospel Door.

Text: Colossians 4:3-4

*“How tremendous is the power available to us who believe in God. When we make firm our connection with God, His life and power flow through us.” J. B. Phillips*

**1 - We must specifically pray for one another that there be open doors of ministry. Verse 3a**

➤ Specifically in sharing the Word of God.

This is the only aspect that truly brings power into our life.

- The Power of God follows the Word of God, which empowers to live in the Will of God
- We often are powerless because we have no desire for the Word of God, and cannot realize the Will of God.

The more we look for **opportunity** for the Gospel to move forward from our life, we receive **power** for our **daily living** and especially for our **daily needs**.

### **The Power of the Word:**

- Hebrews 4:12 - Discerns thoughts and intentions.
- Romans 1:16 - Power of God for salvation.
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17 - Profitable for completeness.
- Romans 10:17 - Increases faith.
- 1 Corinthians 1:18 - Power.
- Psalm 119:105 - Lamp and light to darkness.
- Matthew 4:4 - Sustenance for daily living.

- Isaiah 55:11 - It can never return void.
- John 17:17 - Emotional stability.
- 1 Thessalonians 1:5 - The Word comes in power.

## **2 - We must pray for verbal clarity. Verse 4**

- There is often times too much confusion from what comes out of our mouth.

If what we are always speaking brings confusion, we are speaking the wrong things!

- We need wisdom.

## **We must become wisdom receivers. How to receive God's Wisdom: James 1:5-10**

### **1. Ask for it. James 1:5**

This is asking in light of verses 2-4. Wisdom does not remove the circumstance. It allows us to see the power of God through the circumstance and the will of God for us to be used in the circumstance.

### **2. Ask in faith without doubt. James 1:6-7**

The issue here is doublemindedness. Instability in the midst of circumstance. This is when the Word of God and the Work of God are not in the forefront of our mind.

### **3. Use the means we have as God ordained opportunities. James 1:9-10**

Small and great resources in our lives are both to be regarded as glory before the Lord. He uses both for His power. If only we can release them!



Stop dwelling on the current issue of your life. Start asking God for opportunities to share the Gospel and then start looking for them. Let the power of God flow from your life!

**Sermon Title:**

Opportunity Jumper

## **Illustration: Opening and First Point Illustrations**

In his autobiography, *Just as I Am*, Billy Graham tells about a conversation he had with John F. Kennedy shortly after his election:

“On the way back to the Kennedy house, the president-elect stopped the car and turned to me.

‘Do you believe in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ?’ he asked.

‘I most certainly do.’ ‘Well, does my church believe it?’

‘They have it in their creeds.’

‘They don’t preach it,’ he said. ‘They don’t tell us much about it. I’d like to know what you think.’

I explained what the Bible said about Christ coming the first time, dying on the Cross, rising from the dead, and then promising that he would come back again. ‘Only then,’ I said, ‘are we going to have permanent world peace.’

‘Very interesting,’ he said, looking away. ‘We’ll have to talk more about that someday.’ And he drove on.”

Several years later, the two met again, at the 1963 National Prayer Breakfast.

“I had the flu,” Graham remembers. “After I gave my short talk, and he gave his, we walked out of the hotel to his car together, as was always our custom. At the curb, he turned to me.

‘Billy, could you ride back to the White House with me? I’d like to see you for a minute.’

‘Mr. President, I’ve got a fever,’ I protested. ‘Not only am I weak, but I don’t want to give you this thing. Couldn’t we wait and talk some other time?’

It was a cold, snowy day, and I was freezing as I stood there without my overcoat.

‘Of course,’ he said graciously.”

But the two would never meet again. Later that year, Kennedy was shot dead. Graham comments,

“His hesitation at the car door, and his request, haunt me still. What was on his mind? Should I have gone with him? It was an irrecoverable moment.”

*Just as I Am*, Billy Graham

Taken from, Experiencing God Devotional.

## **College Campus Bible Studies**

A church I pastored began to sense God leading it to launch an outreach ministry to the university campus. Neither I nor our church had done student work before. Our denominational student-ministries department recommended we begin with a Bible study in the dormitories. For over a year we tried to start one, but it did not work. One Sunday I pulled our students together and said, *"This week I want you to go to the campus, watch to see where God is working, and join Him."* They asked me to explain.

God had impressed on my heart these two Scriptures:

- "There is no one righteous, not even one. There is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God" (Rom. 3:10-11).
- "No one can come to me [Jesus], unless the Father who sent me draws him" (John 6:44).

I explained, "According to these passages, people don't seek God on their own initiative. They won't ask about spiritual matters unless God is working in their lives. When you encounter someone who is seeking God or asking about spiritual issues, you are seeing God at work."

I also told the students, "If someone asks you spiritual questions, whatever else you have scheduled, cancel your plans. Go with that individual and look to see what God is doing in that person's life."

That week our students went out to see where God was at work on their campus so they could join Him. On Wednesday, one of the young women reported, "Pastor, a girl who has been in classes with me for almost two years approached me after class today. She said, I think you might be a Christian. I need to talk to you. I remembered what you said, I had a class at that time, but I skipped it.

We went to the cafeteria to talk. She said, Eleven of us girls have been studying the Bible, and none of us are Christians. Do you know someone who could lead us in a Bible study?"

As a result of that contact, we started three Bible-study groups in the women's dorms and two in the men's dorm. For two years we had tried to do something for God and failed. For three days we looked to see where God was working and joined Him. What a difference that made!

Sermon Title:

Opportunity Jumper

Text: Colossians 4:5

*“His hesitation at the car door, and his request, haunt me still...”*  
Billy Graham

### 1 - We must develop wisdom towards outsiders.

#### Verse 5a

- Wisdom in this context means to *know* the opportunity and how to *gauge* receptivity.

College Campus Bible Studies...

*“Watch where God is working and join Him.”*  
Henry Blackaby

#### How to see receptivity:

1. Break the pattern of dwelling on, *“How I Feel”* during the day. **Philippians 2:3**

If we specifically look at the needs of others around us, we will clearly see *how* the Holy Spirit is working in their lives.

2. Ask questions.

**Proverbs 25:2**

If we seek out where people are standing, we gain loads of insight into the work of the Lord. We usually cannot tell simply because we do not search out the matter.

### **3. Ask God to use our life and then walk in every opportunity.**

**Matthew 9:38; Galatians 6:9**

Once we ask God for opportunity, we must make the effort to take advantage of every opportunity.

- Asking God for opportunity does not mean doing nothing and waiting. It means looking and being very active.

We must activate opportunity!

### **2 - We must make the most of every opportunity. Verse 5b**

- Making the most out of every opportunity has to do with experiencing God in the moment in time.
- It is about redeeming the time!

If God is already drawing people in, our conversation then becomes “the experience with God moment!”

### **Ephesians 5:15-21**

- |                                   |           |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Have full days                 | Verse 16  |
| 2. Reject foolishness             | Verse 17a |
| 3. Understand God’s will          | Verse 17b |
| 4. Be filled with the Spirit      | Verse 18  |
| 5. Speak with a Believer’s agenda | Verse 19  |
| 6. Be thankful for everything     | Verse 20  |
| 7. Love the church connection     | Verse 21  |

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**Moving Forward**

Watch, look and listen this very week. The opportunities are there. Be aware and let God use you. Bring them to church!



# 20 Be the Difference 23

Date: October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Speaker: Dr. Rai Papparatti

Sermon Title:

Salty Speech.

**Illustration:** For Point #1 Quote.

Scientific studies actually show that positive and negative words not only affect us on a **deep psychological level**, but they have a significant impact on the outcome of our lives.

## **Words Can Hurt Me**

In their neuroscience experiment, “Do Words Hurt?”, Maria Richter and collaborating scientists monitored subjects’ brain responses to auditory and imagined negative words. During this process, they discovered painful or negative words increase Implicit Processing (IMP) within the subgenual anterior cingulate cortex (sACC).

**Put frankly, their study proved that negative words release stress and anxiety-inducing hormones in subjects.**

Additionally, a study found increased levels of anxiety in children associated with higher rates of negative self-talk. According to the study’s abstract,

*“These results suggest negative self-talk plays a role in the generation or maintenance of anxiety in normal children.”*

Ultimately, negative words, whether spoken, heard, or thought, not only cause situational stress, but also contribute to **long-term anxiety**.

### **Think Happy Thoughts**

Naturally, the recognition that holding negative thoughts in our mind is enough to induce stress and anxiety hormones begs the question, “What effect do *positive* thoughts have?”

In their jointly written book, *Words Can Change Your Brain*, Dr. Andrew Newberg, a neuroscientist at Thomas Jefferson University, and Mark Robert Waldman, a communications expert state, “***a single word*** has the power to influence the expression of genes that regulate physical and emotional stress.”

Furthermore, according to these two experts in their field, **exercising positive thoughts can quite literally change one’s reality**.

*“By holding a positive and optimistic [word] in your mind, you stimulate frontal lobe activity. This area includes specific language centers that connect directly to the motor cortex responsible for moving you into action. And as our research has shown, the longer you concentrate on positive words, the more you begin to affect other areas of the brain.”*

Newburg, Waldman

Thus, by exercising ***consistent positive thoughts and speech***, we not only change our self-perception, but how we perceive the world around us. Ultimately, this grants us the ability the shape our reality and change the world for the better.

# 20 Be the Difference 23

Date: October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Speaker: Dr. Rai Papatatti

Sermon Title:

Salty Speech.

Text: Colossians 4:6

*“The difference between being an offense or a blessing is sometimes just a manner of speaking.”*

Richard De Haan

## 1 - Our speech must be released with grace.

### Verse 6a

- Considering that our speech must be spoken with grace, it is safe to assume that each situation we find ourselves in, will not always be emotionally pleasant.

Our carnality will always want to respond, but grace must step in!

There is something to be said about emotional stability and that which comes out of our mouth.

*“By holding a positive and optimistic [word] in your mind, you stimulate frontal lobe activity...the more you concentrate on positive words, the more you begin to affect other areas of the brain.”*

Newberg, Waldman

If this is the study from a human psychological perspective, what happens then when we activate our speech from a spiritual standpoint?

- 1 Corinthians 2:10-13, Proverbs 15:4

- The very words we speak out to one another set the atmosphere of either emotional instability or emotional stability.

**2 - Salt is referenced as always having tremendous value. Verse 6b**

- Matthew 5:13

We must speak by bringing value to the hearer.

Once our speech changes to grace-filled-speech, we develop situational clarity in relational responses.

- *So that you will know...*

**3 - There is a lifestyle of spirit-filled power that manifests itself relationally when our words are grace-filled. Verse 6c**

- *...respond to each person...*

It is our portion as Believers to enjoy connectivity and blessing in every relationship that comes in our path.

- Acts 2:44, 47

Favor with Believers - Favor with unbelievers.

God is setting us up for advantage, through our Spirit-filled release of His words in and through our situation.



Take some time, read a Scripture, and speak God's Word over your life and situation. A great place to start would be Psalm 103.

# Turning our Home Around "Learning from the Network"



## MONTHLY MESSAGE DIRECTION:

NOVEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup>

TYCHICUS: STEPPING INTO STRATEGY.

NOVEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup>

ONESIMUS: GIVING IN TO GOD'S PURSUIT

NOVEMBER 19<sup>TH</sup>

MARK: MISTAKES DON'T DEFINE YOU.

NOVEMBER 26<sup>TH</sup>

EPAPHRAS: SHOULD I PRAY FOR YOU?

**Sermon Title:**

Tychicus: Stepping into Strategy

**Opening Illustration: Inventions that were created by accident:**

## POST-IT NOTES

A scientist named Dr. Spencer Silver was working to develop an incredibly strong adhesive in 1968.

By accident, he created the exact opposite — an incredibly weak adhesive. Silver relentlessly shared his invention with colleagues, but he couldn't get traction to make it into a product.

One of his colleagues, Arthur Fry, came up with the idea of using the adhesive on bookmarks. Fed up with little papers falling out of his hymnal at church, he determined that Silver's invention was the solution.

They worked on developing a bookmark and, after notes on them, decided to make the product a new way to communicate.

After a successful market test in Idaho, 3M began selling the Post-it Note in 1979, and it rapidly grew in popularity.

## CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

Kenneth and Ruth Graves Wakefield owned and operated the Toll House Inn, a tourist lodge located between Plymouth and Boston, Massachusetts.

Cooking and serving all of the food for the guests, Ruth went to bake chocolate cookies for the guests, but she found that she was out of baker's chocolate. To improvise, she chopped up a Nestle semi-sweet baking chocolate bar, thinking that the chocolate would melt and spread into the batter.

The chocolate didn't melt into the batter, however, but just softened. Although it wasn't what she was planning, Ruth served the cookies, and they quickly became a hit.

She reached an agreement with Nestle, whose semi-sweet chocolate bar sales were growing rapidly. The company was allowed to print the "Toll House Cookie" recipe on their packages while supplying Ruth with all of the chocolate she needed.

After trying to make the bars easier to cut, Nestle transformed the product by making bags of semi-sweet chocolate morsels (chocolate chips) in 1939.

## **POPSICLE**

Fittingly, an 11-year-old boy invented this cherished children's treat. In 1905, Frank Epperson was going to make his own soda, filling a cup with powdered soda and water and putting a stirring stick in it.

Leaving the concoction outside overnight, the soda froze to become the first Popsicle. Nearly twenty years later, after successfully serving the frozen treats at a ball and an amusement park, Epperson received a patent for the Popsicle.

First called the "Eppsicle," Epperson's children began calling it "pop's sickle," leading to the famous "Popsicle" name. He sold the patent to the Joe Lowe Company of New York, which expanded the flavors.

**Sermon Title:**

Tychicus: Stepping into Strategy

**Text:** Colossians 4:7-8

Tychicus is only mentioned five times in the Bible. (1) Acts 20:4; (2) Ephesians 6:21; (3) Colossians 4:7; (4) Titus 3:12; (5) 2 Timothy 4:12

Tychicus' name means *Fortuitous or Chance*.

- *Fortuitous means happening by accident or chance rather than design*

Paul gives three different descriptions of Tychicus.

### **1 - Paul calls him a beloved brother.**

#### **Verse 7a**

He was beloved because he:

1. Experienced God's love.
2. Displayed God's love.
3. He proved God's love through his display of being a strategic part of God's family.

Are we acting strategically in God's family or are we looking to be strategically cared for?

- The difference in mindset will determine the type of life which we live: a victimized life or a victorious life.

### **2 - Paul calls him a faithful servant.**

#### **Verse 7b**

- True faithfulness does not, or cannot happen without the first part of the word: faith!



If we understand the word *faithful* to entail a person who is *full of faith* we come to understand how involved the disciplines of *faith* must become in and through our life.

We often only understand *faithfulness* as *being "there"* for someone. Yet the etymology of the word means *one who shows the practice of their faith in everything they do*.

Tychicus served by bringing the presence of Jesus into every situation he was in.

- What an encouragement this was to imprisoned Paul!

### **3 - Paul calls him a fellow bond-servant.**

**Verse 7c**

Tychicus was sent so that the Colossians would know about Paul's circumstances (prison) and be encouraged.

**Verse 8**

- The cause of Christ is "more than worth" being imprisoned for.

### **The Encouraging Prison Situation:**

- What about prison should be encouraging to the Church?
- Philippians 1:12-14, 19-21

Our situation, no matter the outline of frustration, can and should be an encouragement to ourselves and to people because - For us to live is CHRIST and to die is GAIN.

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**Moving Forward**

You are so full of value and worth! Start looking at your life and realize that God has placed you strategically where you are. Step out by faith!

**Sermon Title:** Onesimus: Giving in to God's pursuit

**Text:** Colossians 4:9, Philemon 1

*"I used to ask God if He would come and help me. Then I asked if I could come and help Him. Finally I ended by asking God to do His own work through me."*  
J. Hudson Taylor

Onesimus became a fellow evangelist with Paul.

Onesimus' name means: *useful*. It was a common name for slaves which gives us the idea that he might have been born in slavery.

Where did Onesimus come from?

- Paul reached Onesimus and led him to Christ while in prison.

**1 - Where we are (our situations), is not as important as to the condition of our availability to God. Philemon 1:10**

Onesimus was not a believer at the time he stole some money (v. 18) from Philemon and ran away. Like countless thousands of other runaway slaves, Onesimus fled to Rome, seeking to lose himself in the population.

- Through circumstances not recorded in Scripture, Onesimus met Paul in Rome and became a Christian.

- By stealing and running away from Philemon, Onesimus had both broken Roman law and defrauded his master. Paul knew those issues had to be dealt with, and decided to send Onesimus back to Colossae.

It was too hazardous for him to make the trip alone (because of the danger of slave-catchers), so Paul sent him back with Tychicus, who was returning to Colossae with the epistle to the Colossians, (Colossians 4:7-9).

One powerful thing to note is that although Onesimus was a runaway slave, he immediately became available to God through service to Paul.  
Philemon 1:10-11

In verse 11, Paul is using a play on words to prove what Christ has truly done.

- *Useful* was formerly useless to you, but now *Useful* is useful to both you and me.

Availability always produces usefulness.  
Usefulness always brings fulfilment.

- This is how the Spirit of God encourages His children.
- Our usefulness to God through His Church brings us fulfilment and contentment.

Our willingness to accept and to serve God by serving people brings a fulfillment and enrichment in our life that is unparalleled.

- The greatest benefits and friendships that we have received in life have all happened through a willingness to serve people.

- **This is very hard especially when we are entitled. Just as Philemon was because he was the rightful owner of a runaway slave.**
- Yet, for Christ sake we ought to serve through willingness and acceptance.

If we are not willing with our service to God through serving others:

1. Bitterness is very close – Genesis 4:6-8
2. We will let our words justify us rather than release them to God – Genesis 4:8a
3. We will reject what God desires for our life and forfeit the blessing that can be ours and for others.

**2 - Onesimus became an incredible asset to Paul because he accepted the grace of God through Paul and valued the work of God.**

#### **Philemon 1:12**

- Could this be that Onesimus didn't see the characteristics of Christ in Philemon?
- He ran from a free leader to cling to an imprisoned one.
- The risk for Onesimus was greater than when he was with Philemon.

As Paul poured into Onesimus, he reproduced himself in another person. As he desired that Onesimus stay and become a help to him in his imprisonment, he released Onesimus and sent him back to Philemon so that Onesimus would become a blessing to him.

While all of this is exciting to read, we must realize that for us to change the Household

Atmosphere of our homes, we must make difficult and costly choices.

### **The Cost of a godly relationship from Philemon**

1. He lost a slave and his labor for a while, along with whatever cash and property that Onesimus had stolen. He had to bear these costs in order to forgive Onesimus.
2. There was the cost of his reputation in town when he forgave Onesimus. Other slave owners would have criticized him for setting a dangerous precedent.

### **The Cost of a godly relationship from Onesimus**

1. Onesimus had to bear a cost to return to Philemon. He had to part from his dear mentor, Paul.
2. He had to be willing to give up his freedom and perhaps work to make restitution.

Godly relationships always come with a price tag!



Much is to be said about our availability to Jesus. We all have hard situations to go through. Yet, we can ALL be available in and through them.

Look for ways to be available to God and to this church. What is God speaking to you? Write it down: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023 **Speaker:** Dr. Rai Paparatti

**Sermon Title:** John Mark: Mistakes Don't Define You!

**Text:** Colossians 4:10; Acts 13:13, 15:37-40;  
2 Timothy 4:11

*"Failure is an event. Never a person."*

William Brown

## **1 - Never discount the power of prayer!**

**Acts 12:12**

- Mark was a deserter, yet there were prayer meetings being held at his mother's house.
- John Mark may have felt the pressure of the journey and also the struggle of losing his brother. He needed to be near to his grieving mother.
- It is interesting to find that John Mark who had deserted the Apostle Paul, was now sharing in his affliction and greeting the Church 10 years later.

Prayer for Mark shaped his future and usefulness.

- 2 Timothy 4:11

## **2 - Our greatest mistakes will become the thrust of usefulness in our life.      2 Timothy 4:11**

- Mark became VERY useful.
- Of all the people in Paul's last moments of life, he wanted. John Mark to be with him.

He had known how to be close to a grieving parent. He now extended the same humility towards Paul.

### **3 - Messing up brought humility. Humility paves the way for usefulness. Humility increases faith!**

- Matthew 8:1-10 - The Centurions humility and need, became translated through great faith!
- Matthew 15:21-28 - The Syrophenician woman's humility and persistence was translated as great faith.

This often happens through tragedy and mistake!

### **4- God opened strategic doors for John Mark because he owned up to his failure and decided to serve. Acts 12:12; 1 Peter 5:13**

Biblical Scholars believe that the striking language and thought of correspondence to the churches between Peter's first epistle and Paul's letters to the Ephesians and Colossians suggest some special connection or a personal bridge through which we find John Mark.

- Leaving Rome after the dispatch of Paul's letter, Mark followed their track through Asia Minor and on to Babylon to meet Peter.

At the time of Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> imprisonment, Mark is again in Asia Minor around Timothy; Paul asks for him to come to him because of his value!

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**Moving Forward**

Own up to the failure of your life. Now, make amends and serve God with all your heart. Key word - Serve!

# 20 Be the Difference 23

**Date:** November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023 **Speaker:** Dr. Rai Paparatti

**Sermon Title:** Epaphras: Should I pray for you?

## **Opening illustration and context of Epaphras.**

While crossing the Atlantic on an oceanliner, F.B. Meyer was asked to address the first class passengers. At the captain's request he spoke on "Answered Prayer." An agnostic who was present at the service was asked by his friends, "What did you think of Dr. Meyer's sermon?" He answered, "I didn't believe a word of it." That afternoon Meyer went to speak to the steerage passengers. Many of the listeners at his morning address went along, including the agnostic, who claimed he just wanted to hear "what the babbler had to say."

Before starting for the service, the agnostic put two oranges in his pocket. On his way he passed an elderly woman sitting in her deck chair fast asleep. Her hands were open. In the spirit of fun, the agnostic put the two oranges in her outstretched palms. After the meeting, he saw the old lady happily eating one of the pieces of fruit. "You seem to be enjoying that orange," he remarked with a smile. "Yes, sir," she replied, "My Father is very good to me." "Your father? Surely your father can't be still alive!" "Praise God," she replied, "He is very much alive." "What do you mean?" pressed the agnostic. She explained, "I'll tell you, sir. I



have been seasick for days. I was asking God somehow to send me an orange. I suppose I fell asleep while I was praying. When I awoke, I found He had not only sent me one orange but two!" The agnostic was speechless. Later he was converted to Christ. Yes, praying in God's will brings an answer.

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**(Copied from the Standard Bearer;  
<https://sb.rfpa.org/the-story-of-epaphras>)**

Epaphras' name is mentioned three times in the Bible

- Colossians 1:7
- Colossians 4:12
- Philemon 1:23

Just a few brief descriptors are given in these verses to one who appears to have been an obscure companion of the apostle Paul. This is all the Spirit gives us, and yet it is enough to give us a small glimpse into Epaphras' faith and character. While his story involves some connections and conjecture, the truth about his spiritual character remains based on the truth of God's Word.

The story perhaps started when Epaphras, a native of the city of Colossae, traveled to Ephesus during Paul's third missionary journey during the mid-50s A.D. During Paul's long stay in Ephesus, the gospel went forth throughout Asia Minor (**Acts 19:10**), and during this time the gospel most likely would have spread to Colossae, located in the Lycus River Valley, some 100 miles inland from Ephesus. It seems likely that Epaphras was converted during Paul's time in Ephesus, and then

traveled to his native Colossae to bring the gospel. Epaphras, not Paul, became the founder of the church at Colossae (**Colossians 1:7**). Interestingly, the narrative of Acts gives no record of Paul traveling to Colossae on any of his journeys. He had never been there before writing to them (**Colossians 2:1**) but, in addition to the guiding hand of the Spirit leading him during the journeys, the reason for this absence may be found in the city's history.

With this in mind, understanding Colossae will be important for us in understanding the story of Epaphras. In Greek and early Roman history, Colossae was once a great and mighty city, located in a beautiful river valley with its neighbors Laodicea and Hierapolis nearby (**Colossians 4:13**).

In the centuries leading to the time of Paul's journeys, Laodicea and Hierapolis slowly surpassed Colossae in significance and population, leaving Colossae out of the main trade loop that connected the east and west. Politically speaking, Colossae represents one of the most insignificant cities to which Paul wrote a letter. But significance is never found in numbers, as Epaphras would no doubt testify.

What Epaphras brought back to Colossae was the true gospel, and he knew that God was able to work mightily in the hearts of those living in this small, "out-of-the-way" city to form a true church. Maybe you can imagine Epaphras making this long journey back to Colossae during the mid-50s A.D. He traveled difficult terrain, but no doubt had a spring in his step, for he was a new man,

renewed in his heart by the power of the cross that Paul had preached to him! We can imagine the excitement, but also the anxiousness he must have had for sharing that good news with those whom he knew and loved. He may have wondered if his native Colossae would be led to receive this gospel message, but, by the work of the Spirit through this man of faith, a Christian community was born. Interestingly, Philemon, a wealthy resident of Colossae, benefited either directly from the work of Paul in Ephesus or indirectly through Epaphras as he brought the gospel message to him in Colossae (**Philemon 1:19**).

Although a true church in Colossae was born, there may still have lingered in Epaphras' mind whether this newly established church would be free of the temptations of the surrounding false worship of that day. Unfortunately, a few years after the church was established, Colossae developed a mysterious heresy that was a melting pot of various religious influences—Judaism and superstition (**Colossians 2:16**). According to Paul's letter to the Colossians, the worship of angels was also mixed into this heresy (**Colossians 2:18**), and an early form of Gnosticism developed, which taught that material things are evil (**Colossians 2:23**).

So troubling to Epaphras was this influence-turned-heresy, that he left his fellow saints in Colossae and traveled to Rome to seek advice from Paul while he was under house arrest awaiting trial before Nero in the early 60s A.D. Now Epaphras, some five years or so after being converted in Ephesus, comes to Paul in Rome to give him a

positive report of the church's faith, love, and hope (**Colossians 1:4–5**), but also troubling news about the Colossian heresy (**Philemon 1:23; Colossians 2:8**). He arrives, elated to be reunited with Paul, yet saddened by the purpose of his visit to Rome. As the seasoned missionary listened to the young pastor, Paul put the words of instruction and advice on paper, being inspired by the Holy Spirit to write a letter to this Christian community in Colossae, of which he was not the primary founder. As Paul deals with the Colossian heresy with the truth of the supremacy of Christ over the whole universe (**Colossians 1:16–17**), his letter to them would be one of his more personal letters.

With regard to Epaphras, however, we can see remarkable commitment to the gospel message! Leaving his Christian community in their infancy and in an age of time-consuming travel, Epaphras seeks out the great apostle for his advice and instruction. He was seeking truth, and risked his life for it, ultimately ending in imprisonment in Rome. The words of **Colossians 1:7** may then have more meaning for us as Epaphras is described as a “dear fellow servant, who is for you [the Colossians] a faithful minister of Christ.” What spiritual courage this man possessed!

Furthermore, in the continued dialogue between Paul and Epaphras in the early 60s A.D., we see another spiritual characteristic of Epaphras: he was a man of prayer. Paul expresses in his letter to the Colossians that Epaphras was fervent in prayer for them (**Colossians 4:12**). Paul wanted the Colossians to know that their beloved pastor was concerned for their spiritual well-being, con-

tinually praying on their behalf. Is this not something we often say to those who are in a difficult way?—“*I’m praying for you.*” In this case, Paul is telling the Colossians that their faithful pastor is diligently praying for them while he is away. What added comfort for these new Christians!

But now the story of Epaphras comes to an end. As the letter to the Colossians is penned by Paul, it was time for delivery to this local church in Asia Minor. What better candidate to be the letter-carrier of this inspired letter of Paul to the Colossians than Epaphras himself. Sadly, this was not to be the will of God, for as was stated earlier, Epaphras, like Paul, became a prisoner in Rome (**Philemon 1:23**). And what became of Epaphras? We do not know his future, whether he was released from prison or died for the cause of Christ; but we do know that Epaphras risked his life for the gospel, traveling long distances to seek advice and instruction for the sake of truth in the church.

**Sermon Title:** Epaphras: Should I pray for you?

**Text:** Colossians 4:12-13; 1:7

*“I was asking God...to send me an orange...”*

There is always responsibility in the Christian’s walk to grow beyond their current plateau.

### **1 - Epaphras labored earnestly in prayer.**

#### **Verse 12d**

- *Laboring* is the GK word *agonizomai* from which we get our English word *agony* and means: *to contend as with an adversary.*
- This gives us the understanding of prayer!
- Daniel 10:12-14 (Daniel 10:2-3)

### **How Epaphras labored in prayer:**

1. He prayed against the specifics of the church’s sin and temptation. Verse 12e  
His desire was their perfection in Christ.
2. He prayed against the feelings of not being called or even saved. Verse 12f  
He saw their need to be fully assured.
3. He prayed for the revelation of every aspect of God’s will. Verse 12g

It is inspiring to see that although Epaphras was joining in the suffering of Paul, he was not praying for personal relief or reprieve but for the church to maintain the same attitude.

Paul prayed in this exact way in Ephesians 1:18-22

## **2 - Epaphras cared so much for their spiritual life as of foremost importance. Verse 13**

- We need people and ministry like this.

### **Laodicea and Hierapolis.**

- These were churches (small works) on the outskirts of Colossae that Epaphras founded.

One point to note is that Epaphras was very active in the work of Christ in many different expressions. He was a pastor, he travelled, he taught, he planted churches, he journeyed to reach Paul and seek council, he ministered to Paul, etc.

- His constant activity in the field of Christian work, gave him the full expression of Christ's power throughout his life to the extent that the Apostle Paul references him in such a way.

Our constant activity to our Christian faith and to our Christian responsibility of work will cause us to be focused on what *truly* matters and will bring a proper alignment of perspective.

Perspective in what? Perspective in every event and situation of our life. Christian Growth sets perspective in all things!



Can you battle in prayer? It is so hard because you often don't have direction in prayer. Make a prayer journal. Write down what you are praying for and pray around all aspects of that prayer. See what God will do!

# Turning our Home Around "Learning from the Network"



## MONTHLY MESSAGE DIRECTION:

DECEMBER 3<sup>RD</sup>

LUKE: GOOD MEDICAL ADVICE.

DECEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup>

DEMAS: WHEN FRIENDS LEAVE.

DECEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup>

ARCHIPPUS: SEEING WITH NEW EYES.

DECEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup>

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE.

DECEMBER 31<sup>ST</sup>

BE THE DIFFERENCE !



**Sermon Title:**

Luke: Good Medical Advice!

**Text:** Colossians 4:14; Acts 16:10-17

**Luke the Beloved Physician**

**Verse 14a**

- Acts 16:9-10.
- Luke takes responsibility for the work in which the Lord had called Paul.
- Paul had the vision, *we* immediately sought to go into Macedonia.

**Teaching Point: The going and preaching of the Gospel must take precedence in our lives.**

- We know that Luke was a physician by trade. Yet, his trade came in secondary to that of his Christian faith and responsibility.
- He owned the vision.
- Paul's conviction to preach the Gospel became Luke's conviction to preach the Gospel.

His being called "*The Physician*" suggests that he served the Apostle Paul in this capacity.

- Many scholars believe that Luke became Paul's personal physician during his second and third missionary journeys.
- What a privilege that God would connect Paul with Luke considering all that Paul went through and endured.

The Power of Biblical Pronouns! Acts 16-20

- Acts 16:40; *we* turns to *they*. Acts 20:4-5; *they* turns back to *we*.
- Luke pastors the Philippian Church.
- Philippians 4:3 may have referenced Luke.

The closeness of Paul and Luke comes through the hardships they faced together.

1. Ephesian Heart - Acts 20:17-38 (3yrs. Verse 31) Tears for the Ephesians (verses 37-38).
2. Trial in Jerusalem - Acts 21-26
3. Journey to Rome and shipwreck - Acts 27
4. House-arrest ministry - Acts 28
5. Dungeon and death - 2 Timothy 1:16; 4:6-8

*“He has his faithful companion, the one who refreshed Paul up to the end, giving him the spiritual medicine that he needs as he faces the reality of his death. He has someone with whom to reflect back on their past together; to see God’s preservation of them and faithfulness to them as together they spread the gospel to new lands.”* Bruinooge Kyle

## **Lessons from Luke:**

### **1 - Luke valued Christian Calling over worldly position.**

- Our position is always and only the platform for the work of Christ we are to do!

### **2 - Luke was faithful even in the midst of extreme persecution.                      2 Timothy 4:16**

- Difficulty is never a reason to stop. It is the motivation to continue.

### **3 - He extended himself to accomplish something greater than he was accustomed to do.**

- He studied and wrote an account of the Gospel and a play-by-play testimony of following Christ (Acts).
- His life became the open-book for anyone that was willing to hear!



## **Synopsis of your life:**

What is your current job and/or responsibility?

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What area of ministry is currently within your grasp?

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How can you multiply your effort in that ministry?

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**Sermon Title:**

Demas: When Friends Leave!

**Text:** Colossians 4:14b; Philemon 1:24;  
2 Timothy 4:10

*“When the present world holds more attraction than the eternal one, we are easily swayed by life’s pressures and unanswered prayers.”*

The only reference of definition for Demas is in 2 Timothy and it is negative.

*“Demas having loved this present world, has deserted me!”*

- This by far is our greatest struggle and area wherewith we must daily learn the discipline of separation.

**Who was Demas?** The name Demas is a short derivative of Demetrios. Demetrios means follower of Demeter which was the Greek goddess of corn and harvest.

- From his route of abandonment, many believe that he is also from Thessaloniki.
- While many believe that Demas deserted Paul because he loved his life, many scholars believe that he also abandoned his faith.

*“Having loved his own ease and security from danger, he has chosen rather to live luxuriously at home than to suffer hardships.”*

- John Chrysostom, 400AD

- It is concluded from archeological digs in Thessaloniki that Demas came from

- aristocrats in Thessalonica and thus had money and power to cushion his fall if he were to be in trouble in Rome.

Why go back to Thessalonica?

[While the Scripture is silent about this matter, *a copyist in the manuscript preserved in the Medici Library in Florence adds in the margin the information that Demas became a priest of a pagan temple in Thessalonica.*]

### Lessons from Demas:

#### **1 - We must always redirect our love *from* “this present world,” *to* that of our eternal world.**

We are able to learn the practice of redirection by:

- A. **Being moldable.** Jeremiah 18:3-6; Isaiah 45:90
- B. **Being changeable.** Acts 3:19. We find that we battle environment of change based on resistance, fatigue, or unbelief.
- C. **Resigning to godly influence.** Matthew 18:3. The most influenced people are children. It is because they are always under intense training. School is a must! We must take the advice and teaching of the godly and actually live it.

#### **2 - Difficult times always reveal what our heart is holding on to.      2 Corinthians 4:7-11**

- Learn from the balloons!
- Galatians 2:20

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### **Moving Forward**

The quantity of what comes into our life, and the sacrifice of that which should not be in our life, makes a solid disciple inwardly as well as out. This is where we find quality expressed from us as situations intensity. Increase the intake...forsake the \_\_\_\_\_!

**Sermon Title:** Archippus: Seeing with new eyes.

**Text:** Colossians 4:17; Philemon 1:2

Archippus is believed to be the son of Philemon.

- What is powerful is that the network of faith used to bless the churches was family based and inter-connected.
- Growth and encouragement happens from within our very family and friend network.

Archippus' name means, "horse ruler."

### 1 - Take heed!

### Verse 17a

- This word *heed* carried specific spiritual significance. It is the GK word *blepo* and means *to be observant and watchful suggesting "to see something physical, with spiritual results (perception)." It carries what is seen into the non-physical (immaterial) realm so a person can take the needed action (respond, be aware, be alert).*

Archippus needed to realize that he view life through eyes of faith rather than focus on limiting situations.

- Hebrews 11:1

Paul's lasting word in this letter is to *see what you cannot see so that you will be able to see.*

## 2 - Focus on the ministry.

## Verse 17b

- It is interesting to note that Paul's last instruction to the church through Archippus is that he focus primarily on the ministry.
- While there are many things in which we have need of the Lord in our lives, the most important is His ministry.

We all have received a work of ministry that must be cultivated.

Many times we think that our ministry is separate than the everyday work which we do to survive. But the opposite is true. The difference comes in our ATTITUDE towards the work which we do.

*“If you work an ordinary job or do an ordinary task with the mindset that you are working for the Lord; you will be keen to see, deal, and act in such a way that will allow the Living Spirit of God to flow through your life – changing ordinary to spiritually extraordinary.”*

## 3 - Fulfill it!

## Verse 17c

- *Fulfill* is the GK word *plreoo* and means *to fill to individual capacity and to cause to abound*.
- This is not so much a command to make the work of the Lord flourish as it is to be active in the work of the Lord while He causes it to flourish.
- 2 Timothy 4:5

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**Moving Forward**

End this year in a big way. Be used of God by serving and sacrificing in a way that you haven't before.

**Sermon Title:** Christmas Eve.

**Text:** 2 Corinthians 8:9

*“The Son of God became a son of man in order that the sons of men might become the sons of God.”*  
C.S. Lewis

The entire story of Christmas is in that single verse.

**1 - Though He was rich... Verse 9b**

Jesus wealthy in: Hebrews 1:3

**A. Glory Hebrews 1:3**

- Glory in this passage means the exact representation of the image and personhood of God.

**B. Order/Sustenance**

**Hebrews 1:3; Colossians 1:17**

- The meaning is, that they are kept in the present state; their existence, order, and arrangement are continued by His power.
- If unsupported by Him, they would fall into disorder, or sink back to nothing.
- Our very breath is on loan.

If this be the proper interpretation, then it is the ascription to Christ of :



- **Infinite power** - for nothing less could be sufficient to uphold the universe.
- **Infinite wisdom** - for this is needed to preserve the harmonious action of the suns and systems of which it is composed.

*“None could do this but One who is divine; and hence we see the reason why He is represented as the image of the invisible God. He is the Great and Glorious and ever active Agent by whom the perfections of God are made known.”*

### C. Purpose

### Colossians 1:16

Creation was established and build by the creator for a purpose in mind.

- The universe was built by the Creator to be His own property; to be the theater on which He would accomplish His purposes, and display His perfections.

### 2 - He became poor...

### Verse 9c

Notice the verb—He *became* poor. Not, He was *made* poor.

- That’s what happens to us.
- We are made poor by circumstances.
- But He himself, of His own free will, became poor.

To *become poor* is the Greek meaning of *becoming a beggar*.

- He voluntarily gave up the riches of heaven for the poverty of earth. He who was richer than any man has ever been gave it up freely and became poorer than any man has ever been.

Theologians also have a word for this.

- They call it the **incarnation**.
- John 1:14
- The phrase “became flesh” really means to wrap yourself in flesh. It has the idea of God wrapping himself in human flesh.

### **Why would he choose this way?**

**He sees us!!!**

**3 - That through His poverty, we might become rich!** **Verse 9d**

#### **Guilty-by-Association**

- All of sin and consequence is attached to us because of our association with the flesh.
- We cannot choose our connection to the flesh.

Yet:

#### **Grace-by-Association.**

- All the grace of God is available to me by virtue of my relationship with Jesus Christ.
- This is my choice!

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**Moving Forward**

As we worship together, give yourself to God and receive the richness that He has lavished over you!

# 20 Be the Difference 23

**Date:** December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023 **Speaker:** Dr. Rai Paparatti

**Sermon Title:**

Be the Difference. 

**Text:** Matthew 5:13-14

*“A believing man will be a zealous man. Faith makes a man zealous. Faith shows itself by zeal not by zeal for a party or a system or an opinion; but by zeal for Christ - zeal for His church - zeal for the carrying on of His work on earth.”*  
Horatius Bonar

**January: The stakes of salt and light are extremely high in what we gain, or give up and lose. Matthew 5:20b**

- Salt and Light have extreme consequences because they are both qualities and resources given from the Kingdom of Heaven.

**February: The changing of our thoughts must be intentional. 2 Corinthians 10:3-4**

- If we are given weapons, we ultimately must decide to use them.

**March: Our weakness in the hand of God is always greater than the excuses of our fear. Supernaturally greater. 2 Kings 7:5, 7**

- Our way out, our feelings, and our won expectation should always be yielded to God’s plan for where we are.

**April: Our current situation is not insignificant. 1 Samuel 16:7**

- Every part of our story is always intended for usability in the hands of God.

**May:** We cannot fix our heartaches through our own rationale. We need the knowledge of Christ. Psalm 19:7-11

**June:** We must redeem our household in the face of society. Joshua 24:15c

➤ ...WE WILL SERVE THE LORD.

**July:** We must not stop our spiritual disciplines no matter what! Nehemiah 4:6

➤ Nehemiah did not stop building.

**August:** The pressure of doing good should never stop us from continuing to do good.

Nehemiah 6:1

➤ Inactivity is an indication that the Sanballat spirit has gained entry through the guise of mental health.

**September:** When we release our bitterness to God, we invite His healing and restoration.

**October:** There is a lifestyle of spirit-filled power that manifests itself relationally when our words are grace-filled. Colossians 4:6c

**November:** Where we are (our situations), is not as important as to the condition of our availability to God. Philemon 1:10

**December:** We must always redirect our love from “this present world,” to that of our eternal world.

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## **Breaking Generational Curses:**

Exodus 20:5-6; Deuteronomy 30:15, 19

Evidences of generational curses that follow our life: **Deuteronomy 28:15-68, Key verse 46**

1. Unhappiness wherever you go. Verse 16
2. Unable to succeed with money. Verse 17
3. Children not being able to succeed. Verse 18
4. Unsettled feeling coming and going. Verse 19
5. Confusion in life. Verse 20a
6. Sickness and disease. Verse 20b
7. Praying but not feeling heard. Verse 23
8. Perpetual fear and defeat from addictions and attacks. Verse 25
9. Mental instability. Verse 28a
10. Panic attacks. Verse 28b
11. Inability to function in the light of day feeling that effort is useless. Verse 29
12. Relationships become stolen and any work done is in vain. Verse 30
13. Family relationships strained. Verse 32
14. Constant oppression. Verse 33
15. Life events cause panic. Verse 34
16. Mystic ways become attractive. Verse 36
17. People avoid you continually. Verse 37
18. Un-satisfaction in earning. Verse 38
19. Children stuck in sin bondage. Verse 41
20. Never advance in position. Verse 43
21. Unbreakable strongholds. Verse 48
22. Unusual outbursts of anger. Verse 54
23. Marital animosity. Verse 56
24. Chronic sickness. Verse 59
25. Hypochondria. Verse 60
26. Disparity of life. Verse 65
27. Suicidal thoughts and tendencies. Verse 66

**Highlight the ones that are evident in your life.**

Each of the above can be, but are not always the result of a generational curse, most have their root in idolatry and sin.

## **The Power in the Blood of Jesus. Hebrews 9:22**

1. A generational curse comes through the blood line.
2. A generational curse can only be cancelled through the blood of Jesus.

It is extremely important to note that we must appropriate (accept) Jesus' sacrifice through faith.

- His death on the cross paid the penalty and broke the power of sin for everyone from Adam to the last person at the end of age.
- However, salvation is not effective in our lives until we personally accept Jesus' sacrifice by faith for ourselves.

The same is true of deliverance from generational iniquities and curses.

- These are the "*sins committed beforehand*" mentioned in Romans 3:25, and just as salvation must be appropriated through faith, so must deliverance from generational iniquities and curses.
- Until you personally appropriate Jesus' sacrifice through faith, it is not effective in your life, and the curse can remain.

### **Pray this confession:**

*Thank you, God, that generational curses are broken through faith in the blood of Jesus. I put my faith in the blood. I believe Jesus is my mercy seat and that His blood cancels the curse and breaks generational iniquities. I believe, by the blood of Jesus, that the generational curse from the law is cancelled and broken off my family now, in Jesus' name. Thank you that sins, bondages and iniquities are cancelled and the curse is stopped by the blood of Jesus. Thank you, God, that the blood of Jesus on the mercy seat is a barrier and that a curse cannot pass the blood. Amen.*

## Choose Life and Blessing

In Exodus 20:5-6 God visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth of generations, **but did you notice the rest of that verse?** It says that the blessing goes, not only three or four generations, but up to a thousand generations – and the blessing is much stronger than the curse!

How do we pass this blessing on to future generations? By loving God and keeping His commands – and it starts by choosing life and blessing.

God, in Deuteronomy 30:15,19 says, *“See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity...I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse; So choose life, in order that you may live, you and your descendants.”*

Read Deuteronomy 28:1-14 and confess the greater blessings of God. They are greater in capacity and greater in longevity.