

*Teachings &
Sermon Outlines
by Pastor Jack*

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Chapter 1 “A”

Abortion—The Silent Holocaust

Texts: Psalms 139:13-16

John 10:7-13

INTRO: In the cartoon, Calvin is asking his father if he could go outside and play...his dad's busy...then father responds...”hears the request” (busy or self-centered?) Today speak to your heart and know there will be a response. Often we are “indifferent” . . . noncommittal about personal faith but never about issues like abortion.

ILLUSTRATION: In the Tulsa World there was an article about animal lovers in Aspen, Colorado, protesting against fur trades. They were inflamed about pain to animals, yet we not only approve of abortion, we fund it.

The call to Christians is to listen to the Lord and decide whether we will allow Jesus to control lives and walk in His teachings . . . homosexuality and abortion may just be the issues to test our mettle! What is our response as Christians? The determining factor in these issues is not ‘rights’ but ‘scripture’! The issue confronting us is that of God’s place in our lives in regard to choices...how about that!

ILLUSTRATION: The U.S. Army visited Dachau (the Holocaust) where six million Jews were put to death. What about the twenty-million unborn aborted children who die since 1973? This was made legal with the Roe versus Wade decision legalizing abortion (mostly for convenience and choice).

Never again, Dachau, but what about here? The USA? Our nation’s first black governor, L. Douglas Wilder of Virginia, won by 1/20/0 on the issue of pro-abortion! Out of bondage, into death!

Look Closely: Human rights—baby is not part of mother. They have different cells. Out of 86,000 abortions only 22 were performed on rape victims. In the case of incest, trauma is already done, so why take a life also. In hardship cases, that does not justify suicide or murder of the infant!

It seems odd that there would be a law approving of killing a child because of the actions of the mother and father, for a moments indiscretion ending in an unwanted child. What does Jesus say? Fire of Moloch—No!

What does Scripture say? The word abortion is not used in scripture, neither is rapture. When does life begin? First International Conference on Abortion in 1967...when the egg is fertilized. In Job 10:8-12 (*God has made me with His hands*), Jeremiah 1:5 (*before you were born...*), and Psalms 139:13-16 (*you created me together in my mother's womb*). In Genesis 25:22-26 (*The Lord declared two nations already struggling in Rebekah's womb, they had a prenatal personality*).

In Luke 41:44 *Elizabeth's baby leapt in her womb*, there was prenatal recognition, also the infant feels pain, heat, cold, and fear.

Leap for unborn babies not just for Jesus.

Tradition says Didache, a second Century document, forbade slaying of a child by abortion. In the Apostolic Constitution, an eight volume set of ecclesiastical literature compiled in the fourth Century, says not to slay a child, kill begotten, for everything shaped by Lord that is slain shall be avenged for being unjustly destroyed.

A baby is alive, not just a fetus, a blob of protoplasm. It has a right to life, protection, transfusions, benefits, inheritance, and to sue for injury.

Reason says that life, in a 1982 issue intrauterine medicine article, "The Unborn Patient". Patient is alive, Planned Parenthood, concerned with capacity to "improve fetus viability?" Why? It doesn't serve the desired end of Planned Parenthood...humanistic.

Experience says the rights of a woman, parents, child, or court?
In Tulsa the Reproductive Services, abortions with no parental consent for those under eighteen years of age!

Choice of abortion is not rights, but leaves the mother who had an abortion with long term difficulty & GUILT afterwards.

In 1983 on the Amarillo evening news told of an article on the Court upholding Roe versus Wade, but on the back page an article about a policeman found guilty of murder by firing a bullet that killed an unborn child. Murder, abortion, is done by suction, D&CD, inducing labor, saline, or hysterectomy. Body parts are for sale to use in cosmetics and collagen.

A solution is prayer, legal rallies, educate, help, spiritual, silent Holocaust?
Without a doubt these are some solutions. Ask yourself, "What would Jesus do?"

Anger

Text: Ephesians 4:31-32 *Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

In the Greek translation version of the bible the following words are used.

ORGE . . . originally any natural impulse or desire came to signify anger, the strongest of all passions. Used in reference to the “**Wrath of Man**” . . . Examples in the Bible are found in Ephesians 4:31, and James 1:19-20 . . . take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry, for man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.

Displeasure of human governments as in Romans 13:4-5 . . . *For he is God’s servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment, but also because of conscience.*

Sufferings of Jews from Gentiles as in Luke 21:23 . . . *How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people.*

Terrors of law as in Romans 4:14-15 . . . *For those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless, because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.*

Anger of the Lord Jesus as in Mark 3:5 . . . *He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored.*

God’s anger with Israelites in the wilderness as in Hebrews 3:11 . . . *So I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’*

God’s present anger with those who disobey as in John 3:36 . . . *“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.”*

God’s purposes in judgment as in Matthew 3:7 . . . *but when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?”* Also, in Luke 3:7. . . *John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?”*

THUMOS . . . wrath, not anger, agitated condition and outburst from inward indignation . . . sudden . . . expresses inward feeling. (judgment)

ORGE . . . settled or abiding condition of mind . . . frequently involves revenge . . . lasting in nature (does not subside easily) . . . involves emotion!

PAROGISMOS . . . Strengthen form of ORGE as in Ephesians 4:6 . . . *one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

CHOLAO . . . Gall, bitterness as in John 7:23 . . . *Now if a child can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing the whole man on the Sabbath?*

To harbor anger, to continue to hold resentment, to not forgive injustices but instead to actively contain them in the mind is like keeping a wound open and not allowing it to heal.

Anger can cause tension, hurt, ulcers, indigestion, bad attitudes in relationships, etc. What is needed is a form of healing which is “inner healing.”

How Christ Conquers Anger

Text: Ephesians 4:26

Anger is a part of every one of us . . . we came with it as part of our equipment . . . the ability to feel and express anger. Anger . . . distress, pain, rage, emotional agitation!

: Keep your temper, anger. No one else wants it!

As we look at our text, Ephesians 4:26, we can see how to handle our anger and that anger in and of itself is not bad!

Paul was writing to the people at Ephesus . . . it was an “Epistle” . . . a letter to them, and its main theme is that of **Unity** of all believers. Paul goes on to talk, in Chapter 4, about unity, new man, casting off the old, and specifically talks about lying, bitterness and corrupt communication! Later on, the talks are of grieving the “Holy Spirit” . . . this is quenching it, denying it, or rebelling against it!

But, for a few minutes let’s take a close look at anger, and how it affects you, and how a Christian is to deal with it.

I. ***There are some kinds of anger which are beneficial to a Christian.***

Anger involves a feeling of hurt, injustice, or injury in some form . . . but, for the Christian, should not be ***Personal!***

A. Righteous indignation

- 1) Don’t rationalize and be selfish here
- 2) Rightly used it is a powerful force . . .
 - a. Jesus/withered hand of man, Mark 3:5
 - b. Money changers in temple, John 2:13-17

B. Anger closely related to fighting instinct . . . “clean anger”

- 1) Prisons . . . John Howard
- 2) Slavery . . . Lincoln
- 3) Hospitals . . . Florence Nightingale
- 4) Work conditions in 19th Century . . . Shaftesbury

C. Selfish, passionate, uncontrolled, undisciplined anger is wrong and there is no excuse for it!

Illustration: Hindu woman converted to Jesus . . . when husband gets angry . . . cook better, sweep cleaner, speak softer . . . show became a better woman and wife!

D. Jesus ‘ anger

- 1) Blazed at injustice
- 2) Death not because of “lilies of field” but because “Pharisees, exploit widows and poor.”
- 3) Moved with indignation
- 4) Herod/fox . . . Pharisees/hypocrites!

Illustration: Called today to stand as well and serve Lord!

II. ***Most know the anger which is sinful all too well.***

A. Explosive . . .

- 1) Loud, hot, flash
- 2) Hurts both persons, you and the receiver.

Illustration: Anyone can become angry . . . but to be angry/person, time, place, and degree is most difficult!

B. Cold anger . . .

- 1) Bottled up/stored up . . . years back!
- 2) Hatred and anger . . . deep/needs cleansing!

Illustration: Think of the time past and something has happened to you— you still remember and often hold grudges . . . one by one let the Lord take care of it!

III. ***How does Christ help us conquer anger?*** Active presence of Guiding of the Holy Spirit . . . when we listen rather than try to act on our own!

A. By Directive . . . text for today

- 1) Anyone who nurses anger will be brought to judgment.
- 2) Dangerous, chain-reaction movement!

Trust in God’s Word that He can and will meet your needs and call on Him when angry and ask for needs to help heal wound . . . turn in ***Prayer*** . . . tension, anger, frustration, ***leave it with Him!*** Replace it with His Spirit and fruit thereof!

Have you let Christ work with your anger? Or are you still trying to do it your way? No need for ulcers, indigestion, heartburn and gas . . . no more heart attacks from tension . . . let Jesus work with you in your anger that it might serve Him!

Dealing with Anger

Biblical text reference: Jonah 4:4 *But the Lord replied, “Have you any right to be angry?”* 9 *But God said to Jonah, “Do you have a right to be angry about the vine?”*

Matthew 5:22 *But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ (an Aramaic*

term of contempt) *is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.*

Ephesians 4:26 *'In your anger do no sin.'* *Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,*

Anger Biblically means a strong feeling of displeasure both of God and man. For man anger holds hostility and hatred. In the Old Testament it means 'to breathe hard' is used 171 times, or 42 times as wrath as in Proverbs 15:1, 29:11, 30:33. In the New Testament the translation amounts to indignation or vengeance. Wrath is more explosive. **Anger and wrath** are compatible with **Love**.

Carnal anger is hatred.

Righteous anger is expressed against that which, and those who would destroy the object of His love. As in Isaiah 28:21 . . . *The Lord will rise up as He did at Mount Perazim, He will rouse himself as in the Valley of Gibeon—to do His work, His strange work, and perform His task, His alien task.*

The beginnings of anger start with thoughts, encounters, actions, and hurt. The manifestation begins slowly or instantly in word and deed! Types of anger are carnal or righteous. The basic cause is high expectations versus low response resulting in frustration, perhaps spiritually. Anger is directed toward others or oneself. If one does not correct the anger or express it in proper form, it can be destructive! Such as James and John, sons of Thunder, who asked Jesus to call fire down due to people not responding correctly.

We, as Christians, are supposed to **love, nurture, encourage, lead, assist, and minister** to people, and it often seems, instead, we become angry or distant when people do not respond as we think they should. The question to ask yourself is, 'Am I living up to God's standard, or mine? Is there a difference in what I expect, and what others think I expect?' *Judgment or conviction? Condemnation or self-condemnation?* Those are good questions. Personally, what angers me the most is when people say one thing and do another. Confess Christ but will not stand due to position, politics, economics, etc. **Honest doubt or fear**, we can work with, but **Indecisiveness**?!!! We must find some way to transmit God's Love through us to the person, but not, necessarily, his action; the fruit test again! The truth is what you do; the end result is what counts. **Think big, pray big, trust low** . . . the church, for example, as in finance, prayer, ministry, and expectations.

Let's see if our anger is scriptural. If not, then we need to change also! We want to choose to change before God corrects us as He did Jonah.

Let's look at the reasons we get angry. Bickering, apathy, lack of commitment, arrogance, and self-centeredness are just a few reasons we become angry. Unwilling to listen (learn), disrespect, murmuring, gossip, complaining, negative attitude, and fickleness are a few others. Peer pressure, disappointment, hurt, and frustration are still more. As humans we find many opportunities to become angry.

Usually, it deals with expectations not being met, even if there is a Biblical mandate to respond in anger.

Reasons Jesus got angry are irreverence as in John 2:13-22. In these passages it describes where Jesus ran the moneychangers out of the temple for the irreverent use of God's temple for material gain.

Also, hypocrisy as in Mark 3:1-6, *Jesus healed a man with a shriveled hand on the Sabbath; Pharisees were watching to see if Jesus would heal on the Sabbath. Jesus asked, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save a life or to kill?" When they remained silent, Jesus looked around in anger.*

Unbelief is another reason Jesus became angry. As in Matthew 11:2-24, in the cities where Jesus performed miracles, the people still did not believe in God and Jesus after witnessing the events.

We have a responsibility not to judge but to confront irreverence, hypocritical, and unloving actions, but as in Ephesians 4:26 "be angry and sin not". Actions by leaders shouldn't be violent, insulting, profane, or downgrading.

To deal with anger we must compare our will to God's. As we check God's priorities, not ours, we will see how to better handle anger as in Matthew 5:22. *Raca* meant ignoramus, a slight insult not to the point of calling a person a fool. Study the scriptures, Jonah was uncaring, Moses was difficult; and Elijah challenged God.

Also, in dealing with anger you can find a friend as in James 1:5. *If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.*

By striving to understand the other person, by putting ourselves in their place, it helps to diffuse anger.

When we stick to God's priorities, we avoid anger from frustration due to our priorities not being God's. It's not the multitudes, but those who stay who have to learn to deal with others' attitudes.

The main question is, "Do I understand how God deals with struggling people? Are my expectations too high? Are my priorities in order?" Be like Jesus. Allow righteous anger only. Love, lead, and give as He would.

Anointing

Our reference text for anointing is Mark 6:13 *They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.* Also, James 5:14 *Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.*

Anointing is seldom heard of, practiced less; we need to understand even if not practiced! It is available to all who believe.

The Greek term Aleipho is a general reference for anointing of any kind. In the bible anointing is done after refreshment as in Ruth 3:3, II Samuel 12:2, and Daniel 10:3,

Anointing is performed on the sick as in Mark 6:13 and James 5:14. Then the example of anointing a dead body as in Mark 16:1 when the women went to anoint Jesus body but found it gone.

Material used in anointing is oil or ointment as in Luke 7:38, 46, where a woman who led a sinful life anointed Jesus feet with tears and perfume.

The term Septuagint, LXX, seventy is Greek Old Testament, not Hebrew. Post-exilic Jews abandon Hebrew for Aram and then that for Greek, Alexandria. In Genesis 31:13. *“I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and go back to your native land.”*

Exodus 40:15 says, *Anoint them just as you anointed their father, so they may serve me as priests. Their anointing will be to a priesthood that will continue for all generations to come.*

The Greek term Chrio is for symbolic anointing as in Luke 4:18, *the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor . . .* And in Daniel 9:26, the bible refers to the Anointed One as Christ. the believers are referred to as the anointed ones in 11 Corinthians 1:21-22, *He anointed us, set His seal of ownership upon us and put His spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*

Enchrio is Greek to rub in, as in Revelations 3:18, instructs us to *“anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see.”*

Epichrio means to rub as in John 9:6-11, Jesus rubbed spit and mud on a blind man’s eyes, as a manner of anointing, restoring his sight.

Murizo is Greek to anoint a body for burial as in Mark 14:8, where the woman anointed Jesus body with perfume.

Chrisma (Chrio) means anointing with oil and aromatic herbs. As in 1 John 2:20, 27 *but you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. As for you, the anointing you received from Him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as His anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in Him.* Ingredients of Holy anointing oil as given in Exodus 30:23-25, liquid myrrh, fragrant cinnamon, fragrant cane, cassia, and olive oil. Luke 7:46 tells of anointing Jesus feet in oil (Elaion) and ointment (muron).

I. Application

A. Uncction . . . dead/RC

B. Objects . . . Exodus 29:36 . . . 30:26 . . . 40:10

Persons . . . Leviticus 8:30; I Samuel 10:1; II Kings 9:3

Guests . . . II Chronicles 28:15; John 12:3

Body . . . Ruth 3:3; Psalm 92:10; Amos 6:6

Remedy . . . Isaiah 1:6; Mark 6:13; Luke 10:34; James 5:14

Episcopalians, Brethren in Christ, Assembly of God, etc.

Not a Sacrament—sacred act—act of obedience similar to foot washing!

James 5:14-16 . . . Oil signifies the presence of the Holy Spirit the same as water, wind and fire! Hebrews 1:9

Symbol of promises of God . . . blessings found in Hebrews 8:5.

C. How used . . . poured, placed.

1) Method

2) Prayer

3) Results

D. Who can use . . . Elders James 5:14 and Laity—Mark 16:17-18

II. History

A. Hebrew . . . *Suk*—nine times/*Mashah*—Messiah anointed One— Jesus!

--Guests . . . Deuteronomy 28:40; Esther 2:12

--Prohibited during mourning . . . II Samuel 12:20; Isaiah 61:3

--Sacred Oil—Exodus 30:31-31—Pour

--Smear . . . Amos 6:6

--Painting . . . Jeremiah 22:14

--Shields . . . Isaiah 21:5—oiling?

--Of Spiritual power . . . Psalm 45:7 and Daniel 9:24 Holy Oil Mixture—Not duplicated!

III. Anointing the Sick—Prayer for oil

A. Those who want it—receiving—compare to doctors

B. Those who are seeking obedience—forgiveness—Roman Catholic

C. James 5:14

-will save—spiritual

-will raise up—healing physically

-will forgive—sin.

D. Compare to Sacraments and presence of God—obedience

IV. Practical Use . . .

A. First encounter for me . . .

B. Request—cross on forehead—willing reception—power of Spirit

Always a response from God! Verify healing.

Anointing with Oil

To anoint is to “apply oil or ointment; to place oil on as an indication of sanctification or consecration in a religious ceremony as defined in Webster’s Third New International Dictionary, Springfield, Massachusetts, Merriam-Webster, 2002.”

Anointing was practiced by the early Church and is meant to be practiced by the Church today, according to Scripture. Oil is a symbol of the presence of the Holy Spirit; similar to water, wind, and fire. Both people and objects were anointed. A list of people, items and activities in which anointing was used is found in Vines Expository Dictionary and listed in my book **Equipping the Saints** on page 184.

Oil was used along with prayer for the purpose of calling upon God to heal in Acts 3:1-10 and is still used in the same manner today. God is the healer, but the use of oil is a point of contact and encourages the person to receive.

I was asked many years ago if I believed in anointing with oil, and my reply was, “Yes, it’s Biblical.” But when asked to actually do it, I didn’t know what type of oil to use; crankcase, three-in one, or olive oil?!! Further, I did not know how much to use; a dab, a drop, or a quart?!! Then I did not know how to apply it or pray when using it. So, I asked God about it, studied Scripture, and asked a Holy Spirit filled Episcopal Priest, Father Ted Nelson.

Since God honors the heart and not legalism, the amount of oil is not the issue...obedience is. I purchased an oil cruse, a small metal container that I carry with me. It fits over the finger and twists open. In it is a small amount of cotton with olive oil on it. I press the cotton and use the dab of oil on the forehead. Another method is to use a small vile and pour a few drops on the individual’s head. I, also, have a small vile of oil in a wooden holder on the altar that is used during services when anointing and laying on of hands is done.

The type of oil used is olive oil which can be purchased at the grocery store, or a perfumed scented, oil can be purchased from most Christian book stores. I use frankincense and myrrh and anoint the injured part of the body as appropriate, eye, ears, throat, neck, arms, hands, etc., speaking the healing into the person’s body with the authority of Jesus.

God will honor your obedience; the Kingdom will be advanced, and the world turned upside down with people being set free.

Assurances—Easter Sunrise Service

Text: Mark 16:1-11

Intro: Spices—love and devotion

Stone rolled away so women could get in, Matthew graves opened in preparation.

Accept the truth—resurrection is a fact

Assurances—confidence, hope, and certainty.

- I. **Kept His promise to rise, so He will keep His other promises.** Ex. Life abundant!
- II. **Ruler of God’s Kingdom is risen Christ...**it is a reality not just a dream. Know there is life after life.

- III. **Assured that we will also be resurrected.** Prepare for His coming.
- IV. **Power of resurrection is available today.** Spiritual, physical, life over grave, death.
- V. **Resurrection is power of witness to world.** Make it a reality—explain.
- VI. **Part of daily life.** In confirmation not just in words.

Conclusion—resurrection is not a legend but fact!
 Invitation—apply to life (tell how specifically)
 Ministry, confirmation.

Anxiety

Care...**Meimna**...to draw in different directions. Matthew 13:22 *“What was sown among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.”* Mark 4:19 *“...but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.”*

Luke 8:14 *“The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by like’s worries, riches and pleasures and they do not mature.”* II Corinthians 11:28 *“A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.”* I Peter 5:7 speaks of anxiety. *“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”*

Care...**Merimnao**...to be anxious about ...a distracting care. Matthew 6:25 *“The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.”* 28 *When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at His teaching.* To care for as in Philippians 2:20 *“I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare.”*

- Distraction...draining of energy...worry, sin, lack of trust...
- Involves...self
- Condition...lack of trust
- Results...ulcers, frustrations
- Basic to healing...come as a little child.

Apostle’s Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:	Gen 1:1; Ne 9:6; Acts 14”15; Heb 11:3
And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord;	Matt 1:21; 3:17 17:5;

	Luke 1:35; John 1:14; 3:18; 9:35; Heb 10:29; I Jn 4:15
Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,	Isa 3:64; Matt 1:18; Luke 1:28-35
Born of the Virgin Mary,	Matt 1:23
Suffered under Pontius Pilot,	Isa 50:6; Matt 27:2, 13,24; Mk 15:2. 14,15; Luke 13:1; 23:4; Jn 18:35;19:35
Was crucified, Dead, And buried; He descended into hell;	Matt 27:35;Mk 15:24; Luke 23:33; Jn 19:23 Acts 2:32; I Pet 3:18
The third day he rose again from dead;	Matt 16:21, 16:32; Mark 9; the John 21:19; Acts 4:33, 10:39-41; Rom 10:9
He ascended into heaven,	Luke 24:51; John 6:62, 20:17; Acts 1:9; Heb 9:24
And sitteth on the right hand of God The Father Almighty;	Mk 16:19; John 17:5; I Pet 3:22
From thence he shall come to judge The quick and the dead	Matt 16:27, 19:28, 25:32; John 5:22; Acts 10:42, 17:31; Rom 2:16; I Thes 4:16-17; Rev 20:11-13
I believe in the Holy Ghost;	Ezk 36:27; Joel 2:28; Luke 11:13, 24:49; John 16:13, 20:21; Acts 1:5-8, 2:4, 2:38- 39; Rom 8:9, 8:11; I John 2:27

The holy Catholic Church;	Rom 12:5; I Cor 12:27; Eph1:23, 4:12; Col 1:24, 2:19
The communion of saints;	Acts 2:42; Phil 1:3 & 5; Heb 12:1; I John 1:7
The forgiveness of sins;	Ps 103:3 & 4; Matt 6:14; Acts 5:31, 13:38; Eph 1:7; I John 1:9
The resurrection of the body;	Dan 12:2; Ps 49:15; John 5:25, 5:28, 29, 6:40, 8:51, 10:10-11, 11:25; Acts 24:15; II Cor 4:14; I Thes 4:16, 17; Rev 20:13
And the life everlasting.	Dan 12:12; Matt 25:46; John 6:27, 10:28; Rom 2:27, 6:22; I Tim 6:19; Tit 1:2; I John 2:25; Jude 21

Amen

Acts 2:22-36—Biblical Basis—Peter’s Sermon on Pentecost

- Vs. 22.....Men of Israel, listen
- Vs. 22 & 30.....Jesus, Son of God
- Vs 23.....Crucifixion
- Vs 24.....Resurrection
- Vs 26-28.....Believer’s hope
- Vs 31.....Descended into Hell
- Vs 32.....Witnesses—Communion of saints
- Vs 33-34.....Right hand of God
- Vs 36.....Forgiveness and eternal life

Chapter 2 ‘B’

Baptism—Water Baptism

Text: Hebrews 6:1-2 “*Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.*”

I Corinthians 12:13—Entry into body of Christ

Water Baptism:

- 1) Sacrament—sacred act
 - 2) Commitment—sign of covenant
 - a) Cleansed by lamb's blood—Jesus
 - b) Standing for Christ
- “An outward sign of inward change,”

At water baptism—Spirit has already come into person. (Water baptism doesn't cleanse, save, or make whole).

Spirit baptism=power. Luke 24:49, *“I am going to send you what me Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”* And Acts 20:21, *“I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.”*

Romans 3:20—shows need-law insufficient

Romans 6:3—Baptized into death?

I Cor. 12:13—one spirit-bond

Gal. 3:27—Baptized-put in Christ-new heart

Gen. 17:10-14—Circumcision (forerunner of baptism) Sin of covenant.

Circumcision—sign in flesh of change in heart.

- 1) Do away with excess)
- 2) Separate self)
- 3) Become as God calls you to be)

I Peter 3—Days of Noah—water used as a sign of death and resurrection.

Old Testament (Soul)

Exodus 28:41—anooint Aaron

Acts 2:38)

Ezekiel 36:26) New Heart

Seek/confess/forgive/accept—Baptism!

Repentance/remain/eternal life

Book of Discipline 1980—Distinguishing mark, sign of regeneration—new birth.

Baptism—Coming to life in the family of God.

Partakers in righteousness.

Matthew 19:14—children

Baptism with the Holy Spirit

Text: Acts 1:5

Baptism with the Holy Spirit is a term that is not understood by many Christians, and for those who say they understand each seem to have a different perspective.

Classical Pentecostals will tell you that unless you are baptized with the Holy Spirit, you don't have the Holy Ghost, and you are not even saved, and the primary

evidence is speaking in tongues. Others will tell you to be baptized with the Spirit is to be filled with the Spirit, and they were filled when they were saved. Others will tell you that it is a second work of grace; similar to sanctification, but that you don't need to speak in tongues. And, finally, there is the position that says it is a necessary experience to be the most effective, because it is a source of power and service.

Biblically, we are told that there is more than one baptism (Hebrews 6:1-4). Specifically, there are three:

Baptism with water as a sign of regeneration and relationship to the Lord (this is the time that the Holy Spirit comes to live in the heart or spirit of the believer; i.e., "I have Jesus in my heart.")

Baptism with the Holy Spirit is when a believer recognizes the need for spiritual power and ministry and asks for it (the Holy Spirit has YOU).

Baptism with fire is the refining and maturity process through which Christians must pass as they develop in service and ministry (practical experience—college of hard knocks spiritually).

This pattern is seen in the baptism of Jesus and the time immediately following it. In Matthew 3 and Luke 4 we have the record of the baptism of our Lord and in both instances the sequence is the same:

1. Jesus was baptized in water by John the Baptist, and this was an outward sign to the world of the commitment and relationship to God the Father. The sign of this is water—physical.
2. After Jesus was baptized and came up out of the water, then He was baptized with the Spirit and received power. The sign of this was the dove—spiritual—and was confirmed by the voice of God.
3. Baptism with fire is where Jesus went into the wilderness and encountered temptation and overcame Satan with the Word in the power of the Spirit. The sign of this is trust and obedience—made manifest in daily life.

This pattern of sequence was true in the early church and needs to be today. The reason more is not written or recorded about being baptized with the Holy Spirit is that it was a common experience as part of the faith. Jesus was the example of it, and then He commanded that believers receive before becoming witnesses (Acts 1:8). This not an option...it is a command as part of the Christian life.

In the Old Testament the Spirit of God came upon the Prophets and by the power of the Spirit the Prophets spoke the message of God. The Holy Spirit did not live in man, but was external. In the New Testament, after the resurrection of our Lord (John 20:22), the Holy Spirit lived inside believers as a source of direction and spiritual life. On Pentecost the Holy Spirit came upon believers as He did in the Old Testament, but it was for the purpose of empowering spiritually as Jesus promised. The power is dormant and not available to use until it is requested.

In the Book of Luke, the author uses “baptized with the Spirit” and “filled with the Spirit” interchangeably. In Acts, Jesus says “baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:5). To be accurate, infilling is where the Holy Spirit comes inside the person to live. ***This occurs once*** when you accept Christ as your Savior.

To be baptized with the Holy Spirit is to request that the power of God be activated for ministering and offer yourself as the vessel through whom it will flow. ***This happens one time.***

To be filled with the Spirit is to come to the Lord daily for renewal and strength in direction in our relationship. ***This happens daily*** and is a matter of keeping current in hearing and obedience to the Lord.

The process of being baptized with the Holy Spirit is identical to salvation except that the individual asks for spiritual power and gifts for use in ministry not a personal relationship because it already exists.

Step 1: Recognize the need for power other than your own.

Step 2: Recognize Jesus as the source.

Step 3: Ask Him for his promise.

Step 4: Thank Him for receiving it (this is done by faith just the same as salvation is accepted by faith).

Following this experience, there will be a physical manifestation at some time. You receive by faith and not by feeling. Some people have said, “I don’t feel baptized with the Spirit”; others say, “When is it going to happen?” Another says, “I haven’t spoken in tongues.” For another, they expected to be slain in the Spirit. None of these are proof. It makes no difference whether you stand still, are slain in the Spirit, pray in tongues, cry, or whatever other experience is possible, these are after effects ***not*** evidence of. ***You receive by faith when you act upon the Word.*** After this, God will manifest Himself through you, supernaturally, as identified in what we call spiritual gifts...when you act in obedience.

The primary evidence of an individual being Christian is ***Peace***. The primary evidence of a believer being baptized with the Spirit is ***Power***. The primary evidence of a believer in relation to others is ***Love***.

Baptism with the Holy Spirit is a normal part of the Christian life. This is very noticeable when you visit another country and believers do not know enough not to ask for or receive it. In the United States there seems to be a block concerning this experience which is a necessity for ministry. The empowering is spiritual and ***not*** intellectual. It comes through total dependence upon the Lord and obedience to His Word.

Baptism with the Holy Spirit means that the Spirit comes upon you that you might receive the release of power (not that He comes in to live) for use in:

- 1) Worship (and praise).
- 2) Witness (evangelistic outreach).

- 3) Warfare (spiritual against demonic forces).
- 4) Work (acts of service in ministry).

If a person is not baptized with the Spirit for whatever the reason, he will function at less than optimum efficiency in the service of our Lord.

The Beatitudes

The Beatitudes are grouped sayings of Jesus as found in Matthew 5:3-12 and Luke 6:20-22. The name ‘beatitude’ comes from Latin... Beatitudo’—meaning ‘made happy’. In the Beatitudes, Jesus gives clear-cut statements with regard to certain blessedness of those possessing certain virtues or experiences. It is generally held that these are the qualities of character which he expected of His followers. But, more correctly, it might be said that these are the blessings promised to those who would follow Him and His teachings!’

In Matthew there are eight or nine Beatitudes (blessings) of a spiritual nature, applicable to all; whereas in Luke there are four blessings, spoken to the disciples, which relate to external conditions. In Luke they are accompanied by four ‘Woes’. The Beatitudes listed in Matthew are in the third person except the last one and Luke’s are in the second person. Note also, that Matthew’s scripture has explanatory phrases, and Luke’s do not (in spirit or for righteousness). The Beatitudes describe the qualities of Christian perfection and have analogies in the Old Testament, as in Isaiah 32:30 and Psalm 1:1; and elsewhere in the New Testament as in Luke 12:37, Matthew 13:16, or even as quoted by Paul in Acts 20:35!

The Beatitudes include: 1) Blessed are the poor; 2) Blessed are they that mourn; 3) Blessed are the meek; 4) Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; 5) Blessed are the merciful; 6) Blessed are the pure in heart; 7) Blessed are the peacemakers; 8) Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake; 9) Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Every one of the Beatitudes has exactly the same form and if you will look closely you will note that in the English version the word ‘are’ is printed in italic or sloping type. This means that there is no equivalent word in the Greek or Hebrew and that the word has to be added to bring out the meaning the sentence. The reason is the language in which the Beatitudes were spoken, Aramaic and the structure of the sentences went something like this, “*O the blessedness of ...*” (being poor in spirit, etc.). Look in Psalm 1:1, the form is seen there.

As the Beatitudes are read, it should be noted that in the form they are used, “*O the blessedness of the poor in spirit*”, means that this is not just a hope of the future or some blissful event in time to come... they are congratulations on what is at the present time! It is not a state in which the

Christian will enter at some future time but one that he has entered now upon following Jesus Christ is truly committed! “O the blessedness of being a Christian!

It is said that the Beatitudes are easy to misunderstand, but is it deliberate or accidental? Be open to the Beatitudes as the Lord speaks to you about them in your studies. You may be surprised, annoyed, aggravated, or inspired...but take them seriously because as you study them you will find the heart of the gospel that our Lord taught...and it being a life! Praise The Lord!!!

Material taken from: Bible; Harper’s Bible Dictionary; “The Sermon on the Mount” by Roger Shinn; and “The Sermon on the Mount” by Edward Blair

Introducing the Sermon on the Mount

Text: Matthew 5:1-2

Approach Sermon on the Mount like Mark Twain says...bothered by what we don’t understand or bothered by what we do understand? Often we wish to know exactly what Jesus meant...but more often to know what is required but fail to do! There is a clear calling for a definite change... *listening? Hearing?*

One of the most appalling judgments against Christianity today is an idle ignorance and indifference of the demands of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount... a pastor read from Matthew 5-7, and people wanted copies of the sermon! Praise the Lord!!!

Plan to study a series of lessons on the Sermon on the Mount...results should be: information, obedience, and concrete action for Christ! Sermon deals more with fruit of Christian faith than roots . . . approach as if you heard it for the first time! To what extent are the unchristian acts and attitudes of church members a direct result of/or caused by conditions in the world? What does it mean to be salt? What does it mean to be Light?

As we begin, we need to understand that the teachings of Jesus concern the character and conduct of the true disciple. All of us like to think of ourselves as disciples . . . but how true is that? Or how effective are we? Found in Matthew 5:3-7:27 and in Luke 6:20-49. One is on the Mount; the other on a Plain. The main concern *IS* the ideal life of a true disciple . . . the New Law of Kingdom . . . LOVE. Test of a person is not what you are or have done, but . . . *your* character! Shown in the fruit of life transformed by the Grace of God!

Luke 4:18 tells what Jesus came to do . . . Christians are accused of causing revolts (Acts 17:6) and turning the world upside down, which is really right side up! “Thy Kingdom Come” . . . repent and believe the gospel . . . sovereignty over a world . . . God is still active!!!!!!

“Blessed . . .” Attainment of ideal or goal . . . not worldly indulgence. “How happy . . . what joy . . . Luke 6:21, “Blessed are you that weep now, for you shall laugh” We ask His blessings!

“Kingdom . . .” poor in spirit shall inherit the Kingdom. Jesus setting values . . . usually the wealthy in past compromises, but the poor kept the faith. *Do you believe the first part?*

Jesus wants to turn our values upside down . . .

I. Critics of the Sermon

A. The Sermon has attracted critics . . . both inside and outside of Christendom.

- 1) Sermon is praised by many
- 2) Sermon criticized . . . German philosopher, “Nietzche”, talked of super race . . . results devastating!

B. Still judged out of date by many

- 1) Many believe it applied only to those in times of Jesus or see it as an “ethic” . . .
- 2) Dispensational view (giving of law) sees it as something as being in effect during the millennium or 1000 year reign of peace!

But how about NOW?

II. Ignorance of the Sermon

A. Greatest opposition continues to be in the neglect of sharing it . . . teaching it in the lives of Christians.

ILLUSTRATION: Use it as a flag but not a rudder to steer course! If a visitor from Mars landed in the typical Christian community after reading the Sermon on the Mount, he would figure he was in wrong place!

B. Facts about knowledge of the Sermon on the Mount.

1. Students between 17-24 . . . only 37% knew in Matthew 5; 35% In Matthew; 28% had wrong chapters; knew of Luke.
2. 91% knew Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount . . . 48% couldn’t quote a Beatitude; misquotes. 21% didn’t know the Golden Rule!

III. Importance of Sermon.

A. Spoken into ear of church . . . heard by world . . . how you should live after becoming a Christian.

B. Rabbi . . . walk/talk . . . sit/important Spiritual revival follows when Christians practice! Will you practice being a good Christian?

Sermon on the Mount

The Sermon on the Mount was meant to be lived, not to be written about! Of course we do not understand all that we see in the Bible, but we need to follow what we do understand. This means not only being informed, but Christian obedience and concrete Christian action! You must be willing to work with what is revealed to you

as you study the Sermon on the Mount as it is far more than merely beautiful words or idealism . . . it is life as revealed by Jesus to those who follow Him.

The Sermon on the Mount embodies the teachings of Jesus concerning the character and conduct of a true disciple. This is found in Matthew 5:3-7:27, and a shorter version, called Sermon on the Plain, is found in Luke 6:20-49. It is addressed to those who are already disciples, yet it is delivered in the hearing of “the multitudes” which indicates that it followed the appointment or calling of the twelve disciples. The Beatitudes, the Golden Rule”, and the Lord’s Prayer are well-known parts of the Sermon. Both Matthew and Luke open with the Beatitudes, of which Matthew gives eight and Luke gives four, with the four woes not found in Matthew. The Golden Rule found in Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:31 summarize the teaching of the Law and the prophets concerning human relationships. The Lord’s Prayer, in Matthew 6:9-13, is not included in Luke’s account, but is in Luke 11:2-4.

The Sermon on the Mount presents the ideal life of the real disciple, and is concerned with true righteousness, and with the New Law of the Kingdom of Heaven . . . which is basically the law of love. Jesus taught that the final test of a man is not what he has done or omitted today, but what his character is and his deepest aspirations are. The higher righteousness is not attained by larger total of good deeds, but it is the fruit of a life transformed by the grace of God.

Jesus did not present this New Law as a new set of specific commandments similar to the old Law of Moses which was being replaced. Instead, He pronounced upon the true disciple . . . a series of blessings which carried the idea of love rather than exaction or legalism! The Sermon on the Mount may be outlined as follows:

I. The True Disciple . . . Matthew 5:3-16

- A. His portrait in the Beatitudes
- B. His task: to be “salt” and “light”

II. How the higher righteousness of the New Law fulfills the old Law in respect to: Matthew 5:17-48

- A. Murder
- B. Adultery
- C. Divorce
- D. Truthfulness
- E. Revenge
- F. Love of neighbor

III. How the new righteousness affects acts of piety. Matthew 6:1-8

- A. Almsgiving
- B. Prayer
- C. Fasting

IV. Trust in God and devotion to the Kingdom. Matthew 6:19-34

V. The right attitude toward others. Matthew 7:1-12

VI. The test of true righteousness: Doing God's will Matthew 7:13-27

- A. Two ways
- B. Two kinds of teachers
- C. Two kinds of disciples
- D. Two kinds of houses

(Material taken from the Bible, Harper's Bible Dictionary, and Sermon on the Mount by Edward P. Blair.)

Happiness Is

Text: Matthew 5:12a

This text comes at the end of the "Beatitudes" and talks of "rejoicing" . . . in suffering for Christ! Suffering the slings and arrows of the world who does not want Jesus to be Lord! Just what did the early Christians have to suffer?

- a) Faith disrupted their work . . . contractor, tailor . . . loyalty to Christ or life?
- b) Faith disrupted social life . . . sacrifices to gods/cup of wine poured out in honor to gods . . . like a grace before a meal. Presence meant approval . . . prepare to be lonely as a Christian/even today!
- c) Faith disrupted home life . . . split families up . . . penalties were great . . . Nero . . . living torches; sewed in animal skins and dogs turned loose on them; tortured on rack; scraped with pinchers; molten lead poured on them; brass plates hooked to the most tender parts of their bodies; eyes torn out; part of the body cut off and roasted before their eyes; hands and feet burned with cold water poured on them to prolong the agony . . . prepare for this if you choose Christ!'

Why the persecution by the Romans?

- a) Slander by Jews . . .
 - 1) Accused of cannibalism body/blood
 - 2) Accused of meeting being orgies of lust . . . love feast
 - 3) Political threat . . . greatest . . . yearly man was required to burn pinch of incense and say, "Caesar is Lord!" . . . Christians refused . . . Christians automatically an outlaw, Polycarp, martyr . . . bishop of Smyrna. 86 . . . honored!
 - 4) Stand made it easier for those who follow! US!

5) Church . . . when really the church is the conscience of the nation and society . . . praise and condemn . . . insult, persecution, mockery, rejection for Christians!

Among all of this is the call to REJOICE . . . be happy! “Blessed are ye
“Blessed”*makarios*”—Greek. Joy which has the secret within itself. Self-contained and no chances taken! “Happiness . . . HAP-chance! Happiness as described by Jesus occurs within you not to you! Can never be taken from you . . . John 16:22! Praise the Lord! Never touched from outside!
ILLUSTRATION: Island of Cyprus, fertile, natural, self-contained!

I. An Unhappy world.

A. Physicians estimate that of one-half of the hospital beds in America are occupied by patients with mental/spiritual disorders . . . manifested in the body!

- 1) 20,000 institutionalized
- 2) 100,000 convalescent as outpatients!

B. Some of the most unhappy people in the world are Christians. We have enough religion to make them miserable but not happy!
Peter Marshall said:

- 1) Too Christian to enjoy sinning/too sinful to enjoy Christ,
- 2) Enough religion to keep out of taverns/not off golf courses.
- 3) . . . recognize need for prayer/but not enough to go to church!
- 4) . . . keep from reading trash/not enough to read Bible!
- 5) Off lake on Sunday morning/not television in evening!

II. Why so many unhappy people?

A. Don't know meaning of happiness. (Not in things!)

- 1) “Hap” . . . chance (Salvation not change!)
- 2) Often think of luck, fortune, pleasure . . . chance!

B. God intends for you to be happy . . . promises!

C. 56-car/20-2 cars/62-home/90-TV/85-refrigerators/72-washing machines/22-clothes dryer/15-air conditioner/72-dishwasher/?-hair dryer

III. God's Formula for happiness (congratulations Christ)

- A. Recognize spiritual helplessness (poor in spirit)
- B. Sorry for sins (mourn)
- C. Closer/more sinful—farther/dissatisfied . . . (hunger and thirst)
- D. Re-birth (pure in heart)
- E. Love in action (merciful)
- F. Sharing peace (peacemakers)

Five Beatitudes—vertical relationship . . . poor, mourn, meet, thirst, pure. Three deal with horizontal relationship . . . merciful, peacemakers, persecuted for

righteousness sake. Ten command happiness . . . right with God and man . . . are you happy?

They That Mourn

“Laugh and the world laughs with you . . . cry and you cry alone!” . . . The last thing we want is to be sad and to mourn! In second beatitude our Lord tells us there is blessedness in sorrow, comfort in crying, gladness in grief, and bliss in being broken hearted! Isaiah 61:2-3

Mourning is defined as: a) Webster: 1) to feel express sorrow, 2) lament, 3) grieve, b) Word used for mourning is the strongest word in Greek, and means mourning for the dead! 1) Word used in Genesis 17:34 . . . 2.) Word used for Jacob’s feeling for Joseph being lost and feared dead! 3) Kind of grief that takes hold of a man and can’t be hidden . . . ache to heart, tears to eyes!

Keep in mind that Jesus was talking to His disciples up on the Mount and giving special instruction . . . to those who followed those who would hear . . . today that’s **YOU!**

I. Reasons for mourning . . . SIN!

A. Sin . . . equals rebellion . . . mourn because we are like the world, because we have offended our Lord!

- 1) Want to do own thing . . .
- 2) Know better than to do it . . .

B. Rebellion is equal to witchcraft! Powerful! I Samuel 15:23.
How about this today . . . ?

C. James 4:1-10 tells the condition of man and verse 9 tells about mourning.

D. To mourn means that we need to know something better so we know what we are losing . . . know the grace and love of God the Father!

ILLUSTRATION: Don’t know what we have missed because we have never experienced it! i.e. ice cream, or warmth, etc!

II. Kinds of mourning. (sad-sacks/lemon faces/cry-babies)

A. Wrong kinds

- 1) Depression over world situation.
- 2) Disappointment over material failure. (II Corinthians 7:10)
- 3) Bitterness because of injured pride. Spiritual chip on your shoulder?
- 4) Grief because of discovered sin . . . Judas!
- 5) Self-pity . . . repeat story until left by self!
- 6) Second beatitude speaks of something more meaningful

B. Right kinds

- 1) Blessed is man who is sorry for his sins
 - a) Psalms 34:18 . . . precedes repentance.
 - b) Peter on Pentecost . . . Holy Spirit and power . . .
“People pricked in hearts” . . . reply is found in Acts
2:37-38
 - c) Continual sorrow . . ./no enjoyable sin! Romans
7:18-20

2) Sorry for sins of others . . .

ILLUSTRATION: Lincoln . . . Sorry man can't feel lash on others.

- a) Isaiah 53:3 . . . Jesus was a man of sorrows . . . Jesus we
- b) Need recovery of this trait . . . sorrow truly.
- c) John Know/John Wesley Martin Luther . . . change!

III. Ways the beatitude can be taken!

A. Literally—

- 1) Blessed is the man who has endured the bitterest so
- 2) Arab proverb: All sun makes a desert . . .
- 3) Only rain helps some things grow . . .
 - a) Help of God
 - b) Kindness of fellowman

B. For others—

- 1) Blessed is the man who is desperately sorry for the
sorrow and suffering of this world.
- 2) Right to detach selves from things but not people!
- 3) Blessed is the man who cares! Often the sympathetic
spirit suffers!

C. For Self—

- 1) Blessed is the man who is desperately sorry for his own
sin and unworthiness. Repent!
- 2) Christianity begins with a sense of sin!

Comfort: Psalm 51:17 . . . broken heart! Comforted same base word as that for Holy Spirit! Blessed is the man whose heart is broken for the suffering of the world and his own sin . . . will see joy of God! Comfort in salvation/healing/eternal life!

Poor in Spirit

Texts: Matthew 5:3, and Jeremiah 9:23-24

We are looking at the first of the Beatitudes. What is a Beatitude? A Beatitude is a promise of blessings to be received and are listed in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:3-11, and Sermon on the Plain in Luke 6:20-22. In Matthew there are eight or nine blessings of a spiritual nature, applicable to all, whereas in Luke there are four blessing spoken to disciples relating to external conditions. In Luke they

are accompanied by four ‘woes’. The Beatitudes describe the qualities of Christian perfection and have analogies in the Old Testament as in Isaiah 32:20 and Psalm 1:1, and elsewhere in the New Testament in Luke 12:37 and Matthew 13:16. The others in the New Testament are called Beatitudes, but are isolated from the Sermon on the Mount. Usually, the Beatitudes are ‘grouped sayings’ that relate to what we call happiness and given by Jesus! Beatitude . . . highest happiness!

The first sentence in the Sermon on the Mount, the first Beatitude, strikes a revolutionary note that is characteristic of Jesus and should be remembered! We often miss the facts because the words of Jesus of Nazareth are so familiar, they soothe us! Jesus is definitely revolutionary as you look at Luke 4:18! The power He sought was not of this world, and is available to you today if you will listen to His Word and act on it. The revolution by Christians is that they try to turn the world right side up, as in Acts 17:6.

Look at the three phrases: Blessed, Poor in Spirit, and Kingdom of Heaven. To understand these give us a clue to Jesus and His teachings and message!

Illustration: Three blind men were asked to describe an elephant. One said as he felt an elephant’s tail, “It feels very much like a rope.” Another felt a leg and proclaimed it a tree. The third felt it’s side and found a wall. People are this blind to the real meaning of happiness. We learn that we are not really happy! First, is the key to the rest of the Beatitudes, and we need to understand it clearly!

Jesus began His public ministry with the proclamation, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matthew 4:17) The sermon starts with the same promise about the kingdom of heaven . . . Mark and Luke call it the Kingdom of God. God’s sovereignty over a world that acknowledges Him as Lord! It is God’s answer to a world that denies His Lordship.

I. Blessed is the person who realizes his spiritual helplessness.

A. Greek word for ‘poor’ is derived from a word meaning to ‘crouch’. Carries idea of a beggar, reaching, asking.

1) Jesus taught that possessing wealth is close to depending on it and thereby rejecting the Kingdom. (rich compromise)

2) Those who have a spiritual need and realize it . . . yearn!

B. Prodigal Son . . . left so his Father could no longer tell him what to do . . . “came to himself . . . “ Have you?

II. Blessed is the person who sees himself as God sees him.

A. “Inner-happiness” . . . blessedness, comes from knowing Jesus!

B. Sees self as sinner . . . Romans 3:23, Isaiah 53:6 . . . stray!

C. Sees self as object of God’s love/image/fellowship—Genesis 2:26

D. Sees false pride . . .

1) RELIGIOUS . . . “*By grace through faith*” Ephesians 2:8-9

- 2) Intellectual pride . . . “*Knowledge puffeth us . . .* (I Corinthians 8:1)
- 3) Material pride . . . life consists not in abundance of the things he possesses. (Luke 12:15)
- 4) Racial pride . . . “*No respecter of persons . . .* (Acts 10:34)

III. Blessed is the person who accepts the perfect will of God as the goal of his life.

A. Kingdom of God comes when you do the will of God.

- 1) When you ask . . .
- 2) When you obey. trust
- 3) Kingdom is society where God’s will is perfectly done and those who do it belong in the Kingdom. (citizen) (Matthew 6:10 . . . 6:33)

B. Must see self . . . God . . . before action can be taken!

“. . . truly happy (blessed) is the man who has realized his own utter helplessness, and who has put his whole trust in God.”

Only then can perfect obedience bring citizenship!

The Meek

Text: Matthew 5:5

We will look at the third beatitude, blessing . . . remember it is in the present tense! First was –Poor in Spirit. Second was—They that mourn, Now to look at meekness.

ILLUSTRATION: Meek inherit the earth; worldly way of looking at the situation. Benito Mussolini obsessed with leaving mark on his era like a lion with claws and he scratched a chair back! Not meekness nor strength . . . foolhardiness!

Greek word . . . *Praus* . . . 1) right timing, angry at right time, selfish anger is a sin, 2) self-control and submissiveness, God-controlled, and 3) teach ability, true humility banished all pride. It is the beginning of all love and relationship to God.

Difference in use of words in centuries . . . 1710 at St. Paul’s Cathedral architect waited for Queen Ann’s reaction . . . awful, amusing, and artificial. Awful—awe inspiring, amusing—amazing, artificial—artistic!

Words such as meek as a mouse carries a derogatory meaning because we don’t like mice! Meek usually thought of as weak, flabby; Casper Milquetoast—spineless and unable to stand up for himself. Often, the meek are the lazy and easygoing; people thought to be meek are really indolent! Many peace-at-all-costs people would rather compromise convictions than take a stand for the Lord Jesus! Not really meek as Jesus meant it!

It is the men with self-control, impulses under discipline of God that are willing to act for Him that are meek!

Illustration: Lincoln . . . “Illinois Ape” by Edwin Starton. Appointed to cabinet by President Lincoln. General McClellan . . . holds horse for victory.

I. Blessed is the person who is God-controlled!

- A. Greek word, “*Praus*” is the standard word used to describe a domesticated animal. It is also used to picture a war-horse that is under control and waiting!
 - a. Animal is under control of master.
 - b. Christian is under control and waiting . . . impulses, passion, thoughts and Actions given to God. There is to be a disciplined life of service!
- B. God controls everything in the committed Christian life; his temper, motives, will, affections, conduct, and speech. Jesus holds the reins of life itself!
- C. The person is “God-conscious.”
 - 1) Animal is in presence of master and obeys.
 - 2) Christian lets God take the reins of his life. It shows in his attitude toward mankind.
 - 3) Opposite of the world which is arrogant, haughty, and ungrateful.
 - 4) Reflections of Jesus are in you. You take on His nature!
 - a. “Come unto me . . .” Matthew 11:28
 - b. Meekness of Christ is in II Corinthians 10:1.

II. Blessed is the teachable person.

- A. Meek person can be told something . . . doesn’t always take offense.
 - 1) Moses in Numbers 12:3 is very meek, peace on earth, Illustration: Man in thread factory is told. “If tangled call the foreman.” He tried untangle it himself and replied, “Tried best to help myself.” Foreman replied, “Help best by calling foreman.”
 - c. Jesus was meek as in Matthew 11:29.
- B. A teachable person is humble.
 - 1) Illustration: Little watch/ Big Ben . . . looked up too. Suspended next to Big Ben it goes unnoticed! Luke 14:11
 - 2) A teachable person is trusting.
 - a) Question . . . Acts 9:6 (Most important)
 - b) Job 1:21, 13:15 . . . trust!

III. Blessed is the person who has fellowship with God! The promise of this beatitude is . . . inherit the earth. Three approached: 1) defiant (Alexander), 2) Passive, and 3) Meek. Inherit now! No use in heaven!

A. Inherits relationship

1) Jesus echoes Psalm 37:11 . . . inherit means in Hebrew to receive a divine gift! For us it's Jesus! Praise the Lord!

2) Romans 8:17, "Fellow heirs with Christ" . . . kingdom!

B. Salvation brings meekness (Philippians 2:5-8)

1) Galatians 5:23—meekness . . . Ephesians 4:2

2) Prophets, seers . . . see God in all things! Response is eight Jesus or the world . . . II Peter 3:4!

They that Hunger and Thirst

We'll look at the fourth beatitude, blessing . . . remember that it is in present tense! First—poor in spirit, second—mourn, third—meekness, and now hunger and thirst.

Usually we think of hunger & thirst in physical way and even then it is hard to imagine for most! Not all hunger and desire can be satisfied . . . wealth? Not many end up wealthy, but long for the elusion of wealth, So many of life's goals are either never attained or turn out empty!

We need to look at the words in their proper context . . . so to understand the beatitude we must know what it is to be hungering, to thirsting, to be righteous and to be filled! Remember the teaching is to **disciples** and meant in the **present** and tells the character of Jesus!

This is really a command and a promise . . . as are many of our Lord's teachings . . . if you are truly hungering and thirsting after righteousness, then you will be filled! Praise the Lord! Life-changing, earth-moving experience that lasts!

The setting was a hot, sultry day and wind was blowing, dust in the air! The sun beat down on the heads of those waiting to hear . . . eyes were hollow with hunger . . . throats parch with thirst. They knew and understood the first three beatitudes . . . the Roman government was in control . . . people gained interest again because of the Promise! Praise the Lord!

I. **Hunger** . . . working man's wages eight pence a day . . . ate meat once a week. Border-line on starvation! This was a very real and painful hunger! Have you ever been that way? Fast for about three days, and that's a beginning!

A. Hunger of starving person . . .

1) No casual-mid-morning snack.

2) Needed food for survival! (Price?)

B, Response of God. Always good!

1) Isaiah 55:1 . . . no money. no price!

2) Same for Holy Spirit and Salvation . . . ask and receive!

II. **Thirst** . . . Not that many wells in Palestine . . . no modern plumbing! Wrap your head in scarf and wait out a sandstorm!

Illustration: No Nestea plunge could satisfy!

- A. Psalm 42:1 David . . . calling on God. (hart/heart)
- B. Psalm 63:1 David in the wilderness! Thirst! No water!
- C. John 7:37 . . . living water/power
- D. Revelations 21:6 gives freely! No price!

How much do you hunger and thirst? What will you pay? Psalm 37:4 . . . desires of heart . . . will you do what it says?

III. Righteousness . . . means getting right with God through Jesus Christ! It is the right standing with God . . . perfect relationship! Uprightness/no hiding! Not just moral goodness . . . but spiritual rightness!

- A. In Old Testament, righteousness and salvation considered same. (Isaiah 46:13, 51:8, 61:10)
- B. In the New Testament you must come through Jesus Christ.
 - 1) *Righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ comes upon all them that believe* (Roman 3:22)
 - 2) *For He hath made Christ to be sin who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* (II Corinthians 5:21)
 - 3) *“Christ is the end of the law for righteousness (Romans 4:10)*
- C. Christ is never a reality to anyone with whom He is not first a necessity (John 6:35 . . . John 4:14)!
- D. Must get-right with God . . . get closer . . . the desire is that of a person who wants the *entire loaf, entire cup*, and reaches for it! (Failure: Deserving/apathy!)
 - 1) Psalm 106:15 . . . leanness . . . loss of hunger!
 - 2) Psalm 34:8 . . . not work/SS/etc . . . “hunger and thirst”
We must have a balanced diet.

IV. Filled . . . (satisfied) Many are often satisfied with “partial-filling” . . . moral goodness!

- A. The word “Chortadzo” is used, meaning to fatten cattle, gradually grow in Christ . . . Illustration: Spiritual Sponge
- B. True “surrender” is ALL! Psalm 23:2 “green pastures”. This “hunger and thirst” should continue and be filled daily! “Blessed is the man who longs for total righteousness as a starving man longs for food, thirsts for water; he will be truly satisfied!

The Merciful

Text: Matthew 5:7

We will look at the 5th beatitude (blessing) . . . poor in spirit, mourn, meek, hunger & thirst . . . now Merciful!

The Christian is the only genuinely happy person on earth. He is happy because he realizes his spiritual helplessness, because he cannot sin and enjoy it, because God controls his life, because he is never satisfied with self . . . up to now Jesus dealt only with man's relationship to God. Now we deal with the first beatitude concerning man's relationship to man!

Greek word, "Eleemon" . . . merciful is to feel empathy with the misery of another; especially, empathy manifested in action . . . A fine example is God sending Jesus! God felt empathy with man, so He sent His only son to take on the sins of the whole world.

I. What is mercy?

- A. Mercy, compassion, is the act of God to those in distress.
 - 1) That tells us about the nature of God.
 - 2) That tells us God is active!
- B. Principle of mercy is throughout the New Testament.
 - 1) To be forgiven you must forgive and show mercy!
 - 2) James 2:13 . . . no mercy at judgment!
 - 3) Parable of unforgiving debtor . . . Matthew 18:25
- C. Mercy requires forgiveness.
 - 1) Grace . . . attitude of God toward law-breakers.
 - a) It is the nature of man.
 - b) What we receive because of mercy.
 - 2) Usually, we don't forgive because we put ourselves over God.
 - a) Ephesians 4:32 . . . unwillingness to forgive, selfishness.
 - b) Forgiveness must be applied . . . can go to hell and never receive gifts of God! They have been prepaid! Praise the Lord!
 - 3) Lord's Prayer . . . "*If you forgive . . . forgives you*"!

II. What does mercy mean?

- A. Usually . . . used to describe God and relationship to man.
 - 1) Earth full of God's mercy . . . Psalm 119:64.
 - 2) Mercy reaches to heavens . . . Psalm 36:5.
 - 3) Mercy endures forever . . . Psalm 100:5.
 - 4) Salvation in Christ is available to all men because of God's mercy . . . Titus 3:5.
 - 5) Man has hope because of God's mercy . . . I Peter 1:3.
- B. To be merciful is to have same attitude toward men that God has! Think and feel for others as God does! Actions are also included here!
- C. Mercy is demanded of us.

- 1) Hosea 6:6 shows mercy is superior to religious activities.
- 2) Micah 6:8 tells us to “do justly, love mercifully, and walk humbly . . .”
- 3) Mercy is love in action!

Illustration: A friend just had horse killed . . . One said, “I’m sorry, I’m sorry.” Another says, “Sorry \$14.00 worth . . . how about you?” Another passed the hat. That’s love in action!

- 4) Have compassion on these at our mercy. To the adulterous woman, He said, “Go and sin no more”.

III. A world without mercy.

A. In Jesus’ day it was a world that lacked respect for human life.

- 1) Root of Bitterness is unforgiveness. Hebrews 12:15
- 2) Luke 6:27-33 . . . love your enemies!
- 3) Joy over sinner’s repentance!

Illustration: Roman slaves were beaten. In Athens deformed children were thrown out. Beggars were used to begging for alms!

B, In our day lack of respect for human rights. (privileges)

- 1) Child labor laws had to be set in place.
- 2) Right to become a Christian . . . 5% evangelical witness!
- 3) Bitter, despondent people . . . no respect for others!

C. In you . . . Jesus should be living in you . . . MERCY!!

- 1) Matthew 18:12 . . . forgiveness in heart!
- 2) John 13:26 . . . involves giving (Jesus with Judas, sign of Prophecy)
 - a) Holy Spirit, power, and victory!

IV. **The Promise for mercy.** “They shall obtain mercy.” Mercy is triumphant . . . see James 2:13!

A. Mercy in day of judgment . . . II Timothy 1:16-18.

B. Salvation . . . Ephesians 2:8-9 . . .not based on mercy!

C. Truly saved . . . show mercy . . . God sees Himself in you!

Cross/forgiveness/mercy . . . circle includes us if we act! Merciful . . . forgiving/cultivate love! Blessed is . . . receive!

The Pure In Heart

Text: Matthew 5:8

The unsaved are not interested in beatitudes, or blessings, because they convict Him of sin! First, convicts you of helplessness. Second, you must be sorry for your sins. Third, you must give God control of your life. Fourth, your life’s goal must be changed. Fifth, you must be merciful; and these things are of no interest to the unsaved, or those not wanting to be a Christian disciple. The sixth beatitude is no more popular than the rest because it demands a trait that is thought to be ‘old

fashioned’—purity! Playboy and new morality have tried to put purity out of style . . . not so! It is purity of the heart and mind in relationship to Christ! All are called to stop and examine self in regard to this beatitude . . . sometimes it is painful!

The Greek word for pure is “*Katharos*”, and it has a variety of usages . . . all of which contribute to the Christian life.

- a) Originally meaning CLEAN . . . i.e. clothes
- b) Used for corn cleaned of chaff . . . army cleaned of disorderly and cowards and troublemakers! Only first class fighting men! (Christians also)
- c) “*Akeratos*” . . . means unadulterated, unmixed, unalloyed!

Very seldom do we even do the finest action with unmixed motives . . . self-gratification is almost always present. (i.e. pastor preaching . . . John Bunyon was told that he preached well, and he replies, “The devil already told me that as I was coming down the pulpit steps.” Praise the Lord for that insight!

Beatitude is for future tense . . . Jesus promises that those who are pure in heart will see God . . . physical sense and spiritual . . . how many pure spiritually? **ONE PURPOSE?** Best commentary is not education, intelligence, or leadership, but *re-birth* as in John 3 in the heart!

James 1:5 tells us that a double-minded man is unstable . . . and Matthew 22:37-40 tells what the One thought should be . . . God first! Called to purity . . . I John 3:1-3 . . . to be different in this world! Physically and spiritually!

I Timothy 5:22 . . . keep self pure! Psalms 18:25-26 purity. Acts 20:26, Paul was made pure by the preaching of Christ. He was now innocent of the blood of others. Qualification for seeing God is pure in heart!

I. God is known through heart cleaning of Holy Spirit.

A. Beatitude reminded listeners of Oriental custom of preparing way for a king’s visit . . . those cleaning can stay and view king. God calls for internal cleansing! Spiritual cleansing! Luke 11:37-44!

B. Salvation is not second-handed!

- 1) Girl in Billy Graham crusade . . . inherited religion.
- 2) God demands individual cleansing! Rebirth!

C. Experience inward cleansing at rebirth! (Titus 3:5)

- 1) Washing of regeneration and renewing of Holy Spirit!
- 2) New Creation . . . II Corinthians 5:17 . . . genuine conversion!

D. Purity of heart prerequisite for entrance to heaven!

- 1) Hebrew 12:14 . . . without holiness no man shall see God.
- 2) Psalm 24:3 . . . Clean hands, pure heart, and stand in God’s

presence.

II. Jesus Christ demands cleansing of heart . . . sin is a disease of heart!

A. Scribes and Pharisees of Jesus Day acted religious . . .

- 1) 1200 regulations from one of Ten Commandments.

- a) No eggs laid on Sunday.
- b) No dragging cane or accused of plowing!
- 2) Your heart must be cleansed before your life can be! Psalm 51:2
- B. Actions changed when the heart changed . . . fruit produced!
 - 1) Doing good doesn't mean being good.
 - 2) Need inner cleansing as Jesus said in Matthew 15:18-20!

III. How does one become pure in heart?

- A. *Holy Spirit enlightens eyes of the heart* . . . Ephesians 1:18
And the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts. II Corinthians 4:6.
- B. *Sin darkens eyes of heart* . . . II Corinthians 4:4 and *Holy Spirit comes in to cleanse* I John 1:8-9!
- C. Please God . . . **one purpose** . . .
 - 1) Be perfect . . . II Corinthians 6:16, II Corinthians 13:11
 - 2) Perfect will, permissive will . . . love God not the world!

“Blessed are the clean in heart for they God shall see” (Gk). Possible in Christ . . . Tennyson, “Crossing the Bar” see Pilot face to face . . . Pure in heart will see God? How is your heart? Is it reflected in your actions and service?

The Peacemakers

Text: Matthew 5:9

Close to the end of the line in study of the Beatitudes or blessings. Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount . . . “Blessed peacemakers . . .”

Keep in mind that this is “progressive” . . . beginning with a new birth in Christ! Disciples follow beatitudes and live in them! 1) Poor in Spirit—helplessness, 2) Mourn—Sin, 3) Meek—God-control, 4) Hunger & Thirst—goals changed, 5) Merciful—forgiveness, 6) Pure in heart—clean, 7) and now **Peacemakers!** Keep in mind that this is the opposite of the world! Actions not in keeping with traditions of the world! In the world, but not of it!

Define words:

A. Peace

- 1) Greek . . . *eirene* . . . harmonious relationship between men
- 2) Hebrew . . . *shalom* . . .
 - a. Never avoidance of trouble . . . not freedom from!
 - b. Everything for total good of man! Enjoyment! Victory!

B. Sons

- 1) Greek . . . *Huios* . . . not children! **Sons!**
- 2) Matthew 5:43-44 . . . Love enemies . . .

- a. Believers as children . . . Spirit bears witness/children; this stress spiritual birth (Romans 8:16-17)
- b. Believers as sons . . . led by Spirit and actions give evidence of relationship! Like our Father! Praise the Lord!
- c. Hebrew lacks many adjectives . . . “son of . . .” used instead

The beatitude is in the present tense, once again, and applies to our lives daily . . . Barclay suggests three different approaches:

- 1) Blessed are those who make the world a better place . . .
- 2) Spiritual . . . peace in own soul . . . whole heart to God!
- 3) Peacemakers in right relationships to others!

Either you are a peacemaker or a trouble maker! No fence-riding! No neutrality . . . either for or against! Every church has troublemakers . . . working for devil! And kingdom of self!

I. Peace is often misunderstood.

A. We seek peace in a world of strife! Conflict! In the past 4000 years there have been less than 300 years of peace! Between 1480 and 1941 the world situation looked like this: Great Britain-78, France-71, Spain-64, Russia-61, Austria-52, Germany-23, China-11, Japan-9, and USA-13!

B. Misunderstood:

- 1) Not a vague dream or pleasant hope . . . “Keep in perfect peace . . .” Isaiah 26:3! Do you keep mind on Jesus?
- 2) Not removal from problems.
- 3) Overcomes problems even in strife—Philippians 4:7
- 4) Paul . . . Philippians 4:7 . . . from within! “Keep us to guard!”

C. Peacemakers do will of Father . . . work! Romans 15:33, II Corinthians 13:11, I Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrew 13:20!

II. Peace is in Christ! Only lasting peace is in Jesus!

A. Prophesied Jesus would bring peace—Isaiah 9:6, Psalm 72:7

B. Birth/peace on earth—Luke 2:13-14.

C. In His ministry to others:

- 1) Preaching as mission of peace—Luke 4:18
- 2) Taught disciples to know peace in tribulation—John 16:3
- 3) Instructed disciples to spread peace—Luke 10:5
- 4) Brought peace in time of despair—John 14:1-2
- 5) Promised peace after He left—John 14:1-2

D. Only those who are justified by faith in Christ possess everlasting peace—Romans 5:1, Isaiah 48:22! Do you?

- E. Takes courage to be a peacemaker . . . begin in Christ! I Corinthians 1:20—wisdom, II Corinthians 6:17-18—separate from unclean things, to be called His children.

III. Role of Peacemaker. (Follow works of Jesus!)

A. Is not . . . (Isolation/indifference/avoiding trouble)

- 1) Merely a peaceable person
- 2) Merely peace lover
- 3) Merely a peace keeper.
- 4) Merely a peace-at-any cost

B. Is:

- 1) Positive force in world . . . peace in self Galatians 2:20!
- 2) Beyond Reproach . . . I Timothy 3”7 (reproached for Jesus)

C. Does: Romans 14:13-18

- 1) No judge/prove right/exert self!
- 2) Follows Jesus and is positive and powerful in God!

“Oh, the blessedness . . . right relationships . . . doing God’s work!”

Persecuted for Righteousness

Text: Matthew 5:10-12

This is the last of the beatitudes, blessings, Matthew 5:1-2, 1. We have seen that most of the beatitudes are in the present tense and are progressive—following the pattern of salvation and service and victorious living!

The eighth beatitude seems to e out of place until we see the logical order of the beatitudes: 1) Recognition of need: a. Poor in spirit, b. Mourn, c. Seek, 2) Satisfaction of need: a. Hunger & thirst, after righteousness, 3) Indication of satisfaction: a. merciful, b. pure in heart, c. peacemaker, 4) Outcome: living the Christian life without compromise thereby being persecuted!

A) Persecuted: Acts of persistent and cruel hostility!

- 1) Old Testament says God will strengthen upright, Psalm 119:86. Jeremiah versus contemporary monarchs, Jeremiah 21:11-23:8.
- 2) Jesus refers to persecution of prophets, Matthew 5:10. Jesus persecuted . . . John 5:16. Disciples expect no better . . . John 15:20! End-time persecution . . . Matthew 24:3-25:46!

The first seven beatitudes describe the Christian directly, while the eighth indicates what is surely to happen to the Christ in whose life the other seven are evident! The same promise is made for the first and last beatitude . . . “for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”. Does this describe you?

B) Righteousness: Character of being right of just! “Right-wise-ness expresses it clearly! Romans 3:5 tells of examples of truthfulness, and faithfulness. Whatever conforms to the revealed will of God as in Matthew 5:6, 10, & 20. **Not moral goodness!**

- 1) Greek . . . *Dikaioisune* . . .
- 2) Hebrews 5:13 . . . Word of Righteousness . . . Gospels!
- 3) Righteousness is our Lord Jesus . . . II Corinthians 5:21!

I. Only persecution for Righteousness is blessed!

Illustration: The straight-jacket of religiosity . . . thinking we are good. Goodness is God's own worse enemy! Satan often tempts the Christian to be "good". Moral goodness is of man . . . not of God! Moral actions result, but are not the objective!

A. Different kinds of persecution: not blessed

- 1) Difficult . . . obstinate!
- 2) Foolish . . . poor judgment, management!
- 3) Self-righteousness . . . blatant!
- 4) Wrong-doing . . . I Peter 4:15. . . often Christians suffer persecution because they are 'busy-bodies' . . . always nosing around and criticizing with a poison tongue!

B. Persecuted for righteousness; you are blessed.

1) When you are persecuted for being like Jesus Christ! Look at John 15:20, and II Timothy 3:12.

a. Jesus reviled . . . Mad? John 8:48, Mocked . . . I Peter 2:23!

b. Jesus persecuted . . . Herod, Pharisees, Saducees, Soldiers.

c. Spoken evil of falsely . . . three Jewish, e Roman trials! False!

2) Persecuted for living by faith . . . I Corinthians 4:9-13. Illustration: Nero, lions, pitch fires, eyes, hands, feet, etc.

3) When willing to die for faith . . . Greek word for martyr is witness . . . Illustration: Snakes/sacks, river/rocks, horses, catapults, nets/bulls!

II. Why persecution for righteousness is blessed!

A. It tells the Christian who he is . . .

Illustration: Polycarp . . . "sacrifice to Caesar or die . . . 86 years!

B. World tries to live in own power . . . with heroes and doing good things (according to their standards)!

C. Tells a Christian where he is going . . . heaven . . . in this there can be joy in persecution. I Peter 3:14-17/.

a. World can't handle Jesus in life of a believer . . . reflection of Jesus.

b. Can't duplicate peace brought by Jesus . . . upsetting!

D. It tells the Christian what is waiting for him in heaven!

III. Rejoice because the world sees Jesus in you!

Illustration. Defeated man walking streets and saw workmen working on a church. They were chiseling a triangular stone with no place to put it . . . asking . . . man pointed up top! Shaping here to fit there!

“Oh, the true inner-joy of . . .”

Rejoice . . . like a man leaping up and down after completing a mountain climb! Victory in Jesus . . . persecuted for Him!

The Basis for Belief

Text: Isaiah 6:1-8, Romans 8:12-17

In today’s world, it is difficult to share the Christian faith. Most of the world doesn’t think that it is applicable to life in the 21st century. Christianity is outmoded!

The Scripture is questioned, and its authority is supposedly determined by each individual as he sees fit. Questions include: 1) Divine Dictation; 2) Irrelevantly; 3) Verbal inspiration; etc. On and on the list goes . . . where does it stop? It needs to stop with the individual who hears the Word of God.

The Holy Spirit will open your heart to truth and guide you in it. Religion is useless, but faith in Christ is life itself.

The basis for belief rests upon these things: 1) The resurrection of Jesus, and 2) The Holy Spirit. Jesus is the historical reality of God in the flesh. The Holy Spirit is the contemporary proof of God’s presence with us and in us. 3) Our need completes the basis for belief. Inside of each person is a need.

It is a concern of mine that our youth and most of our adults need to know what they believe, and why they believe it. Then they need to know what difference it makes in their lives each day!

The basis for belief is a personal encounter with the living God, regardless of form. The result is that we will be a changed, peculiar people!

I. A Changed View—Isaiah 6:1-8

A. Saw Lord, saw self also in relation . . . a new approach

B. Priest at time. Do religious leaders need shattering experience?

C. Social standing, politics, economics are all for naught. Relation to the Lord is all that is important.

D. Know with-renewed mind and believe by surrendered heart.

II. A Changed Self—Ephesians 4:22-24.

A. Put off old self . . .

B. New in attitude of mind.

C. Created in righteousness . . .

D, Isaiah was well educated but was ruined before God . . .

E. Nicodemus

F. Born of water and Spirit

- 1) Theology any good?
- 2) Power of man insufficient!

G. Die to self . . . live to Christ

- 1) Transformed in His likeness
- 2) Reflect the Lord's Glory—II Corinthians 3:18

H. Changed talking—II Timothy 3:2-5

- 1) Ungodly as boastful!
- 2) Form of godliness but deny power thereof!
- 3) Boast only in Christ—Galatians 6:14
- 4) Share experiences for conversion, help of others

I. Changed loyalty—Luke 14:25-33

- 1) Loyalty to Jesus absolute
- 2) Greater and lesser loyalties
- 3) Deny self and take up cross
- 4) The cross—the vertical is the world; the horizontal is Christ; the world is against

III. A changed center—Romans 8:12-17

- A. Born again and live according to Spirit.
- B. Have more than 'want to' . . . now have "power to"
- C. Live by Spirit—children/Father—ABBA—Mark 14:36
- D. Co-heirs with Christ—responsibility
 - 1) Sufferings
 - 2) Glory
- E. Choose for Jesus and not the world. It is a daily choice!

IV. A changed mission—II Corinthians 5:14-21

- A. Prophet spoke harsh messages for people . . .
- B. People forgot God—forsaken justice
- C. Saul on road to Damascus—change; and new mission
- D. Holy Spirit—gifts, call, enables for unique ministry
 - 1) Messengers of reconciliation
 - 2) Labor with all His energy which works so powerfully in me—
Colossians 1:29

Our basis of and for belief is Jesus and Holy Spirit and results in a changed lifestyle and ministry. Each needs to know the how and why of faith—own your own faith!

Always offer the invitation to faith and ministry!

Bible—Statement in Preparation for Receiving the Word

This is my Bible

I am what it says I am.

I can do what it says I can do.

I boldly confess that my mind is alert and that my heart is receptive to God's Word, which is Spirit and Life.

I am about to receive the God-breathed, inerrant, infallible, non-corruptible, indestructible, ever-living Seed of the Word of God.

And I will allow it to transform me more into the likeness of Jesus.

I will never be the same, nor will the people with whom I come into contact.

I will never be the same, never, never, never.

I will never be the same.

In Jesus' Name.

The New Birth

Text: Matthew 19:16

Rich young ruler—two part question,

A. Awareness of need?

B. Desire to do something?

1) Why did he ask the question?

2) He was looking for Jesus to solve his problem.

We are all like the young man. There is a need to fulfill the deep inner hunger that is unsatisfied—the young man knew the hunger had to do with 'life'—do you understand the area of need? Each person has: 1) Spiritual deadness until he accepts Christ; 2) the void in each person is the reminder of the need; 3) people try to fill it with things of the world.

(Example: Money, fame, power, pleasure, religion, sex, self-indulgence.) Man's need to have a spiritual birth is demonstrated in Jesus' discussion with Nicodemus in John 3:3, which says, "*Except man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God.*" The question is, how is a man born again?—I Peter 1:23—in spirit.

I. Another effect of God's word—the new birth—the Word produces not only faith but life . . . John 6:63.

Nature of man—I Thessalonians 5:23

Spirit is God conscious.

Soul is self-conscious.

Body is sense conscious.

Hebrews 4:12 tells of contract between soul and body.

A. God's image

1) Genesis 1:26

2) Purpose is to rule

3) To present the image of God to the rest of creation.

a. –"Image" (Tselem) . . . shadow . . . photograph.

b. External form as well as internal projects

c. Likeness in image of God.

4) Jesus made flesh

5) You are fearfully and wonderfully made inside and out in the likeness of God.

B. First creation

1) Genesis 2:7

2) “*Elohim*”—Trinity—*Jehovah*—“Yahweh”

3) Reason for creation is fellowship

4) John 1:1-3

II. The Word created all things

1. John 1:3

2. Jesus made all things

3. God the Father initiated creation

4. Creation proceeded through Jesus—formed—“Yatsar”—to mould and to form—special care—dust—clay—breath

A. The explosion is creative power of God

1) He made us the first time, he can heal and restore us the second time . . . Trinity . . . man’s soul is the contact or window to Heaven . . . seat of man’s will: Spirit—Godward, Body—flesh, Soul—decision.

2) “*Ruach*”—breath . . . breathe in—receive

3) “*Nephesh*”—being . . . breathe out—give

B. The second birth

1) John 3:7

2) John 20

3) John 20:22, Genesis 2:7

4) Born by power of the Word

5) Spiritual death . . . Garden of Eden . . .

a. Non-functioning or dormant

b. Hungering

6) John 1:4—life and light

a. Receives

b. Registers

III. The Life of God

“*Zoe*”—Life of God . . . John 5:26 . . .

John 1:24

I Corinthians 6:19

A. God’s life inside of you

1) Word creates new birth

2) Word contains power for fulfillment

3) “*Rhema*”

4) Mary—Jesus

B. It is the same today

1) Believer is a vessel

2) Belief—results

3) Word—Jesus

4) Word breathed on—life

5) Scripture plus anointing—miraculous

6) New birth—result of the Word

7) New birth is essential

8) New birth is the relationship necessary for victorious life in ministry.

Blood—The Blood Covenant

Text: Psalm 25:14, Hebrew 9:14-15

Most have made agreements . . . bank, lawyer, car dealer, mortgage for home, etc. Considered binding by law . . . never cheat on it . . . but how about an agreement with God? A covenant!

State or condition of world very poor: people are lost and wandering in search of some help . . . which only Jesus can provide through His covenant. It is time to take a most serious look at a binding agreement between God and man.

Illustration: Old man-summer-cold hands-feet-heat faint! A covenant, *Diatheke*, literally meant a coming together. This is a mutual understand between two parties, each binding himself to fulfill obligations . . . not always a joint obligation.

It is into this type of relationship that you enter when you become a Christian . . . and each Christian needs to show the conditions and the responsibilities.

Illustration: Key-hole perspective . . . always looking into a larger world as we seek and grow . . . continue in God’s Word. Next week . . . “Covenant Meal” . . . now begin with the Covenant itself.

I. Covenant . . . external relationship your last will and testament.

A. Jewish understanding

1) Unqualified commitment

2) Intimate relationship

3) Life in the blood as in Genesis 9:4

Illustration: Blood brothers . . . blood literally mixed-in! You become a part of the person as his blood enters you. Blood is thicker than water!

4) “Friend” . . . means result of covenant . . . Jesus calls us friends . . . Abraham is a friend of God!

B. Covenant Process . . . ritual

- 1) Exchange:
 - a. Coat
 - b. Belt
 - c. Sword
- 2) Protection was exchanged
- 3) An animal was split “asunder”—down the backbone—and the halves laid on ground about four feet apart, and the people walked in a figure eight, meeting in the center . . . and doing so, saying, “If I break this covenant . . . so be it done unto me as this animal.”
- 4) Cut hand, and then shake hands, and mingling the blood.
- 5) Raise hands to God—swear and give oath.
 - a. Tell conditions to people
 - b. Tell conditions to God
 - c. Read curses in Deuteronomy 28 after the blessings!
- 6) Mark of Covenant
 - a. Keep wound open leaving a mark—a scar created from lead in cut?
 - b. Mark identifies . . . tribes agreeing for protection under the covenant.

Illustration: Man with a mark bothered by others? The whole tribe back the covenant.

C. Covenant meal

- 1) Eat—“take in”—the object becomes a part of you!
- 2) Exchange names . . . Christians—common name

II. Types of covenants . . .

A. Biblical covenants—participants are unequal in power!

- 1) With individuals . . . Abraham, Noah, David, and Moses
- 2) With nations . . . Israel
- 3) With mankind . . . Adam (animal skins, land, etc.)
- 4) With God—man responds
- 5) With other men . . . David . . . Saul hates him!
 - a. In II Samuel 4:4 the story of Jonathan’s son-Mephibosheth, meaning “despised one”. David showed kindness for Jonathan’s son because of Covenant (II Samuel 9:1)
 - b. Lived in Lodebar (desert retreat) as a pauper, dwelt in Jerusalem, and ate at David’s table and the Covenant was honored.

B. Theological Covenants

III. Our Covenant . . . Hebrew 9:14-15 and Jeremiah 31:31-34. Just as Mephibosheth was crippled so we are spiritually crippled and in need of help so God sent Jesus!

A. Covenant promised in Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Hebrew 8:6-13.

- 1) New heart
- 2) New spirit

B. New Covenant

- 1) Provides unconditional, grace relationship.
- 2) Provides regeneration as in Ezekiel 36:26.
- 3) Provides for restoration to favor and blessings of God as in Hosea 2:19-20.
- 4) Includes forgiveness of sin as in Jeremiah 31:34b.
- 5) Indwell and teaching ministry of Holy Spirit as in Jeremiah 31:33 and Ezekiel 36:26.
- 6) Provides for exultation of Israel as head of the nations as in Jeremiah 31:38-40 and Deuteronomy 28:13.

C. Foundation of new Covenant.

- 1) Blood of Christ makes the covenant not because of personal merit as in Matthew 26:28!
- 2) Your willingness to participate, if you want to receive!

D. People of the new Covenant—dispensation.

- 1) Israel as in Jeremiah 31:31, Ezekiel 37:21-28.
- 2) Believers in Christ as in Hebrew 8:6, have a better covenant.
- 3) Believers are new ministers of Covenant as in II Corinthians 3:6.

New Covenant is fulfilled to Israel in second coming as in Romans 11:26-27 . . . no blessing for Christian in reference to the restoration of promised land . . . but all spiritual blessings are made available to Christians through the blood of Christ!

New Covenant . . . Hebrew 9:15

New Covenant . . . Second . . . Hebrew 8:6

New Covenant . . . better . . . Hebrew 7:22

Psalm 25:14 . . . *“The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His Covenant.”*

That Covenant you make with God through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit is your last will and testament, and it is everlasting . . . Purchased with the blood of Christ for you! It is into this relationship you have entered when you say, “I want Jesus as my Lord.”

Will you enter that relationship today?

Covenants: Biblical

- 1) Noah . . . Genesis 6:18 and recorded in Genesis 8:20-9:17.

- 2) Abraham . . . Genesis 17:1, 22:16ff (simple)
- 3) Mosaic/Sinai . . . Exodus 19:8-31 (more complex)
- 4) Palestinian . . . Deuteronomy 29-30 (return to God)
- 5) Davidic . . . II Samuel 7:4-16, Psalm 89:3-4 (Successor)
- 6) New Covenant . . . Acts 7:38, Galatians 3:19 (Believers)

Covenants: Theological

- 1) Of works . . . Adam
- 2) Of grace . . . Ephesians 1:3-6 (God chose Us in Christ before foundation of the world)
- 3) Of redemption . . . Hebrew 10:15-17

Christ fulfilled all Covenants . . . Romans 10:4

Covenant for health, life, protection, deliverance, salvation through eternity!

The Blood of Jesus

Text: Hebrew 9:22, Revelations 12:11

On entering the season of Lent, the forty day preparation for Easter, with the end result is Victory. During the forty days there will be the shedding of blood. We need to understand the importance and how to apply it for a victorious living!

Blood . . . *Haima* . . . Ephesians 6:12, Hebrew 2:14; life . . . Leviticus 17:11;
Haima—blood, *Tekchusia*—poured out or given . . . Hebrew 9:22!

Body—parts—live only when there is Blood!

Three purposes of blood: 1) carries food—power, 2) provides energy—can do all things! 3) Carries off waste—cleansed as in I John 1:9.

Death without blood—spiritually dead without blood of Jesus! Revelation 13:8 tells of the Lamb slain before foundation of the world.

Illustration: Adam . . . blood poisoning/rebellion/spiritual death! Innocent blood required (skins?) Genesis 3:21. Law and Tabernacle . . . specific offerings . . . bulls/goats, lambs, etc . . . until Jesus!

Blood of Jesus same as blood in body . . . protects, heals, restores and brings life! Revelations 12:10-11; blood must be applied to spirits, souls and bodies—blood of Sinless One—Jesus! We are joint heirs.

Illustration: Infection—rebellion . . . immunity—obedience in blood!

I. The Bible teaches about blood.

The composition of it is not discussed, but the effects of it is –LIFE! It is throughout the Bible from Genesis to Revelation—essential to redemption and power!

A. In the Old Testament

- 1) Abel offered lamb—blood. Hebrew 11:4 by faith pleased God. No approach to God except by blood—Jesus!

2) Noah's first act after the Ark landed, and he could get to dry land, was to build an altar and sacrifice. Reminder: water for cleansing and blood for redemption and power!

3) Abraham offers Isaac showing his full surrender on Mt Moriah. As we all know God provided a ram instead sparing Abraham's son. Only through death can a life be consecrated!

4) For the Passover sprinkle blood on lentil and doorpost. In Hebrew 9:7 covenant with blood—Angel of death?

Illustration: Sprinkle on altar, book of covenant and people themselves (at Sinai, Exodus 24).

5) Applied differently . . . a) Mt. Moriah—given; b) Egypt—sprinkled ; c) Sinai—people sprinkled; d) Today—accepted/pleaded! Declare total dependence on Christ as Lord!

B. Jesus teaches about blood.

1) Lamb of God (John the Baptist . . .) Blood shed . . .

2) Baptize with Spirit (power) . . . after sacrifice . . .

3) Holy Communion . . . Matthew 26:28—the body and blood

4) Blood shed for us and given to us—both!

C. Apostle taught about blood

1) Hebrew 9:12 . . . “By His own blood . . . entered holy place”

2) Hebrew 13:12 . . . “Jesus sanctified people . . . own blood”

3) Romans 3:25 . . . “Faith in blood”

4) I Corinthians 10:16 . . . “Communion is about the blood of Christ.”

5) Galatians . . . Cross used to tell about blood

6) John 6:53 . . . no life outside of Christ—eat or drink

D. Heaven teaches about blood—Revelations

1) Revelations 1:5 . . . blood of Jesus speaks!

2) Blood overcomes Satan . . . Revelations 12:11 and also Word

3) Blood . . . a. means of dealing with sin/sinners

b. Learn power of blood . . . sacrifice/surrender

c. Washed in blood of lamb . . . saved!

d. Rely on Jesus . . . apply to life!

II. Life is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11). John 6:53-56 tells us that unless we eat and drink we will have no life . . . communion . . . take Him into you.

Illustration: Water serves two purposes. Cleansing the outside and refreshing the inside. Blood is the same. It cleans and brings life anew!

A. Called to be partakers

1) Spiritual renewal . . . born again—Jesus in you. Union!

- 2) “Drink in Spirit”—accept—give—take in hungrily!
- 3) Abide . . . stay powerfully for use!
- 4) Jesus said, “I am the Bread of Life.”

B. The Blood Speaks

- 1) Satan hates it! (Beelzebub means “Lord of flies”—Death)
- 2) Sing, talk, plead blood, and Satan is disturbed, but you are under protection of blood of Jesus. Luke 10:19
- 3) Faith without blood is useless . . . man made religion!
- 4) Cain killed Abel . . . blood cried out for revenge
- 5) Jesus dies . . . blood is message of mercy to God!

Illustration: Blood on Altar . . . sprinkled . . . *Shekinah* Glory, Hebrews 10:20-22 . . . Heart sprinkled! No good unless used! Use it!

C. Value of Blood . . .

- 1) I Peter 1:18-19 . . . redeemed with precious blood!

Illustration: Temple dedicated Mt. Moriah (I Kings 8:5 and II Chronicles 5:6) 120,000 sheep and 22,000 oxen sacrificed for Israel.

- 2) Need fresh supply daily just like manna!
- 3) Passover . . . 160,000 but Christ is our Passover (I Chronicles 5:7) no need for lambs any longer!
- 4) Deliverance out of bondage and slavery
- 5) John 20:17 . . . “touch not . . . “High Priest was not touched. Before entering Holy place there was an offering of blood.

III. Atonement by Blood—atonement to be one with—together.

A. Power source—life in blood

- 1) External power of God Head carried in blood—Acts 20:28.
- 2) Power in giving as an offering unto God—redemption.

B. Accomplishments

- 1) Opened graves . . . Hebrews 13:20, “Raised again . . . Lord . . .
- 2) Opened heaven . . . Hebrews 9:22, “Obtained eternal redemption”
- 3) Opened hearts . . . redeemed—delivered from slavery
 - a. Works through FAITH
 - b. Made new with life and joy in Jesus!

C. Jesus . . .

- 1) Blood—robe of Righteousness—right Relationship.
 - a. Thorns, spikes, spear . . . blood shed
 - b. Bones out of joint—Psalm 22
 - c. Face dreadful to look upon . . . Isaiah 53:2
- 2) In I John 5:8 we read, “And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the Water, and the Blood; and these three agree in one.”

- a. Water—repentance—Word
- b. Blood—Redemption—Life
- c. Spirit—Jesus!

Blood is essential to your salvation and victorious living . . . as attested to throughout scripture . . . Will you accept it and make a covenant with God through Christ? **Plead the blood** by confessing to God that you depend wholly on Him and His Mercy . . . **cling to the cross!**

The Blood pleads mercy, forgiveness, pardon, healing, protection, deliverance . . . all multiplied with joy and peace! Blood is only a word until used just life ammunition is only a word until used . . . Army of the Lord powerless until it used the weapons . . . beginning with the blood of Jesus then the Sword of the Lord . . . the Word . . . all in the power of the Spirit!

I invite you to Jesus, and the power of the Blood.

Body—Whose Body is it?

The question is not morality nor abortion. The true question is our stewardship and responsibility for the body God has given us temporary custody over! What will we want to answer when He comes to claim it and sees how it was used—cared for?

- Creation . . . Jeremiah 1:5 . . . knew in womb—living
- Womb . . . Mary/Elizabeth . . . the child jumped—recognition—Luke 1:49
- Price . . . Romans 1:26; Jude 7

I. What is Sex?

- Sex is not love . . . love is choice and sex in physical form is action.
- Male/female . . . Genesis 1 . . . Good!
- Attitude/approach to life –complements each other
- Animals vs. People—choice/use . . .
- Purpose . . . procreation—fulfillment
- *-Relationship not always leads to sex . . .
- can appreciate appearance, etc., without mentally sizing the person up for a bed partner
- Christian attitude toward sex . . . love!!!

II. How do I use it?

- Responsibility . . . not rights is the question!
- Complete abandon—humanism—proverbs . . . sell soul
- Control-power—by person
- Sale
- Responsible to self . . . and to God!
- Guides in Leviticus
- Herpes—aides . . . abuses of sex . . . God’s law!
- *God sets the norm . . . in Ephesians—husband—wife

*Morality and Changing times do not make a difference
. . . Biblical Teaching is the same!

III. Abuses and results

*will see one such tragedy in a few moments. Sad part is the mixed-up idea that abortion is a means of birth control or a solution to problem.

-Women not always used . . . sometime user!

-Men guilty in causing problem about abortion

*Humanism—law . . . versus Christianity

-Self-esteem

IV. In relation to God

-in marriage

-No adultery

-No fornication—unfaithfulness

*God's body . . . temple . . . we use it temporarily . . .

*Forgiveness for abortion, sin, etc. . . . usually talk of fornication, chastity, lasciviousness

What to do if already into the situation . . . God makes us clean and whole . . .

Chapter 3 'C'

Our Christian Calling

Texts: Luke 4:17-21

Intro: During Lent and preparing for Easter is a time we should get closer to Jesus and grow in our relationship with Him. Yet, many are self identified Christians, which means they believe intellectually, but have never had a life transforming encounter with Jesus. They have never asked to be forgiven and granted Jesus control of their life which results in a personal covenant whereby they belong to the Body of Christ and live for Him.

Christians are not merely committed to the mission of Jesus, although, we are called to continue it. We are not called to a religious system, but rather, to a personal relationship with Jesus to whom you gave control of your life.

As believers, we have life-eternal and life abundant yet many have bondages, hindrances that ought to never be. These bondages hinder us from fulfilling our potential and living in the power of the Holy Spirit. Some types of bondages include: spiritual, emotional, relational, financial, and physical.

These bondages ought never be because Jesus is our protector, our healer, our deliverer, our guide and our source of provision.

Remember that Christianity is not just what we do—but who we are, and how we live for Him, and minister in supernatural power. There is no failure in Jesus. Neither is there any lack. So, be like Jesus and be obedient to do what God tells you. As in John 5:19, 30.

Christians are called to turn the world upside down as in Acts 17:6.

Christians are called to set captives free as in Luke 4:17-21.

- 1) Know that people can be aggravating or pleasant, but they are of most importance to Jesus, and they should be to us. Each person is unique, but has common needs such as love, acceptance, and hope.
- 2) Know that our approach is often ‘canned and unloving.’ Often, Christians use the ‘caveman approach’ and should ‘try wooing them’ instead. No person is worse off for following Jesus, even if they never accept Him.
- 3) Know that the calling of Christians is to bring the Kingdom by meeting needs through love, and allowing God to work through you in supernatural power.
- 4) Know that the Christian faith is an active relationship that supernaturally transform. Simply declare it, and God honors it.
- 5) Know that a Christian is not ‘threatened’ by a difference of opinion. Theology or personal preference. There is no need to ‘convert’ nor ‘condemn’ because the Holy Spirit will do that.
- 6) Know the God wants to use you in ministry as a minister as in

I Peter 2:8-9.

7) Know that you are called to use spiritual gifts and natural abilities. Use the five natural senses of sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing as well as the five spiritual senses of prayer, faith, praise, revelation, and the Word of God!

I want you to desire Him to be fire in our bones and trust Him implicitly in all things. Remember that people are not something to just be counted as a statistic nor are they to be manipulated. They are to be free in the power of the resurrection. They will receive and follow Jesus when they see and experience Him in you.

The Holy Spirit convicts of truth of Scripture, Jesus saves and delivers, and Christians disciple, equip, and bring the Kingdom.

With this in mind, make a decision to commit totally, and bring the Kingdom this season of Lent!

Calling—A Personal Calling

Text: John 20:19-21

Intro: What is the purpose of the resurrection? Proof of God's power, sovereignty and presence. It is also to empower—not something you do for yourself—and send believers to the rest of the world . . . to accept atonement and to be reconciled—brought together—with God, and the relationship re-established as in the Garden of Eden.

Believers are called to know the King of Kings and the King of Glory, personally and serve Him. The key is to **Know**—who you are, whose you are, what you are, and why you are.

- Bring Kingdom—not religion and not faith
- Transform—spiritual
- Set-free—emotional
- Make disciples—physical

Pre-requisites—to respond to calling

A. Know identity—relationship

- With Father—Son
- With Jesus—servant
- With Holy Spirit—minister

B. Know authority—empowered . . . for what?

- From Father—family inheritance
- From Jesus—called-sent
- From Holy Spirit—enabled supernaturally

C. Know your Calling

- To spread Gospel—Good News—Matthews 28:18-20
- To offer salvation—through Jesus—Mark 16:15-20

-To set Captives Free—Luke 4:18

D. Know the Process

-Word—speech . . . describe . . . effect

-Attitude—expectation

-Action—doing . . . obedience

I. **A Personal Call of the Disciples**—John 20:21-23

-Came at a time of need and fear

-Came in person or resurrected Lord Jesus—bodily

-Came for purpose of beginning next part of God's plan . . . believers spreading Gospel and bringing His Kingdom.

A. Jesus brought peace first mark of Christian

1) Absence of internal strife

2) Presence of every good and perfect gift

3) Complete ease . . . no fear of world

4) Result of relationship . . . trust, response, focus

B. Jesus brought calling

1) To disciples to go

2) To disciples to bring Kingdom in power

3) To offer salvation

-Forgiveness

-Restoration

4) To go in power of Holy Spirit

-Spiritual birth—empowering released and used

-*Ruach*—Old Testament—Adam, spiritual and physical

-*Pneuma*—New Testament—disciples, spiritual

-Holy Spirit . . . guidance and power—not our own

II. **Personal call of Peter**—John 21:1-25

A. Peter went fishing—the old way of life

-Broken

-Hopeless

-Disappointed

-Worthless

B. Other disciples went with Peter—they followed

-Fished all night—logical, natural way

-No catch of fish—no gain

-Only same sense of loss

-Direction

-Purpose

-Value

-Worth

III. Jesus on shore—close by us also

- Asked if they found any fish? Successful? World's way?
- None . . . cast net on right side—directions for success
- John recognized Jesus—Luke 5:1-11
- Dragged net because couldn't lift it—more than enough
- Jesus third appearance to disciples
 - Upper room
 - Upper room again with Thomas—note Jesus concern for people like Thomas and Peter . . . and us!
 - On shore of Galilee
 - fed disciples bread, fish—physical and spiritual
 - opened their eyes when they received from the Lord—similar on Road to Emmaus

IV. Peter restored

- Three times denied
- Three times accepted
- No shallow—quick answers
- True feelings, emotions, motives
 - . . . *Agape*'—self sacrifice—more than these—other disciples—feed lambs
 - . . . *Agape*'—self sacrifice—of Peter—feed sheep
 - . . . *Phileo*—brotherly love—are you even my friend? Feed the sheep.
 - *do you truly love me? Sacrifice?
- Peter still focused on self
 - . . . Asked about John
 - . . . Jesus said not to concern self about others
 - . . . Be obedient
 - Not compare to others
 - Not rationalize level of devotion
 - Not question justice
 - . . . What's that to you?
- Mind your own business . . . respond to your own call.
 - . . . What faith, relationship is all about
 - . . . Truly walking in faith, relationship
 - . . . Result is reflected in your life—just like your body
 - Either victory or defeat
 - Joy or fear

Institutional church has a generalized call for organization—not ministries. It can be specialized for pastors . . . but what about believers?

Invitation: respond to your own personal call.

Ministry: confirmation of Word

Cataracts—Spiritual Cataracts

Text: Deuteronomy 34:7 reads, *“Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim not his natural vigor diminished.”*

Well, I’m no Moses. My eyes were dim, but as many of you know I had cataracts removed from both eyes.

A cataract is a clouding of the lens inside the eye which leads to a decrease in vision. In my case, I had trouble reading. I, also, had trouble driving at night because oncoming headlights caused more glare than before. Also, colors did not appear as bright as they once did. The bottom line is that my vision was obscured . . . I could not see things clearly.

Today, I would like to talk about spiritual cataracts. Has something caused you to lose sight of the Lord? Are you able to focus on Him? Do you have a clear vision of what you are to achieve or accomplish for Him? Are you able to perceive or discern what is going on around you and can you anticipate what is coming?

The goal is overcoming the things that obscure spiritual vision: such as bad teaching, theology, bad experiences, or worldly distractions. Not that the cataracts usually start out small and at first have little effect on your vision. You might not really notice them. Things such as worldly distractions or some bad teachings will cloud your spiritual vision. Some cataracts are caused by injury or other conditions. Bad experiences for one will temporarily blind you.

By making Christ the focal point, so that things in the Christian walk are clear and sharply defined, you can have spiritual cataract surgery!

Church Characteristics—Essential Characteristics of the Church

Text: Acts 1:4-8

Characteristics of the church are found in Acts that are still applicable today.

- 1) Unity—Acts 1:14—given spiritually—bonding
- 2) Apostolic Authority—Acts 5; accountability—Hebrews 13:17—James
- 3) Community—Acts 2:12; participation in ministry of Jesus
- 4) Worship and Prayer—Acts 4:31
- 5) Sign gifts—Acts 3:6, 5:12
- 6) Confrontational witness—Acts 7:44-51
- 7) Catholicity—universality—Acts 9:15

One Accord

- 1) Acts 1:14
- 2) Acts 2:1, 46
- 3) Acts 4:24,32

Many strands—one chord

Prayer brings promise to pass.
Division is refusal of receiving God's gift of unity.

Choices, Choices, Choices

(Personal responsibility)

In a Newsweek magazine there was an article about stressed out professionals dropping their careers for lighthearted summer jobs, and said that people were looking for what gives them peace. Then a television show addressed the issue of women having fulfilling lives that included both career and family—in that order. When some of the women found out that they couldn't have both because they waited too late for family, they expressed anger and said they were cheated because no one—physicians or others—told them. They were just plain angry because they made a choice and had to live with the results like everyone does.

Everyone wants to fulfill their 'dream', but few do because they follow feelings rather than spiritual vision from God. Or sometimes, these people have almost a complete lack of knowledge of God's Word which is both Source and direction for a fulfilled life. Remember: People always do what they believe, not necessarily what they say—and no one is responsible for your choices except you!

Stress—mental, emotional, physical tension, strain, or distress—is often caused by poor choices and/or unrealistic expectations based on perceived society demands. If an individual is willing to slow down, live with less extras, do what you like and are gifted to do, and make your life priorities those of the Lord—you will fulfill your purpose in life, enjoy, and help others.

Professionals begin with attempting to evaluate newborns, determine how parental stress is transmitted to children, offering sessions on emotional competence of babies, and develop alleged strategies for early intervention to help children cope with stressful events. This reveals the degree that society has bought into dependence, support groups, and unrealistic expectations that will not bring fulfillment.

Parents are responsible to be parents and care for their children. Whether society likes it or not, there are Biblical roles for mothers, fathers, and children. When this pattern is followed things run smoothly. Our calling is not to try to develop techniques, sessions, programs, or solutions to stressors so everyone's 'dream' can be realized—it is to live by and present the Biblical plan regardless of what society says—because it has been proven effective. Everyone is responsible for their choices and to live with them. **That's something to think about!**

What is the Church?

Text: Matthew 16:13-20

Today, Christians are under attack and many are persecuted to the point of martyrdom, and so is the church. Unfortunately, many do not know what the church

is, or how it is to function, much less, the mission and resources. There is the secular view of the church, and then there is the Biblical view of the church.

To begin with the English word ‘church’ is derived from the Greek word *Kyriakos*—belonging to the Lord; more specifically, *Kyriake oika*—belonging to the house of the Lord. In Matthew, Jesus talks about building His church—*Ekklesia*.

In the Old Testament the word *gahal* describes the assembly of people. As in II Chronicles 30:23—congregation, or Jeremiah 26:17—secular gathering.

In the New Testament *ekklesia* means ‘meeting called together’ similar to the Old Testament *gahal*. Usually, when the New Testament term *ekklesia* is used, it distinguishes God’s people as being called out from the world for service and blessing.

Let’s look at the New Testament when Jesus was speaking, and then apply it to today.

In Matthew 16 is one of the single most important questions you will ever have to answer—how you answer determines the rest of your life and after life! First, Jesus asked His disciples, “*Who do men—others—say that I, the Son of man am?*” Second, Jesus asked, “*But who do you say that I am?*” And thirdly, Jesus blessed Peter, commissioned Peter, and gave authority to do the task (this was not released until Pentecost.) The rock spoken of is Jesus. His answer revealed Peter’s identity and role. The keys give the authority—inside the church organization and out as leaders and ministries. The keys of authority are not merely the opportunity to share God’s Word or to forgive sins. Sin can be declared forgiven based on the Word, but man cannot forgive sin.

The church is God’s vehicle for blessing and ministry. The church is composed of professed believers. The church was born on Resurrection Day.

The church’s purpose is to bring God’s Kingdom through the power of the Holy Spirit. The church has been equipped—at Pentecost. The church is ‘called out’ from the world and will be taken out in the rapture. Only transformed, committed people, not merely those who used Jesus name, will be called, as in Matthew 7:21 and Matthew 25.

Following the resurrection, there were twelve disciples to become Apostles, and some Jewish converts. They stayed in Jerusalem in obedience, prayer and expectation. The government was bishops—overseers or pastors, elders—supposedly a mature Christian who is dedicated to the Word and helps the pastor in teaching, discipline, ministry and helps equip deacons. Deacons are those who are actively involved in ministry as described in Acts 6.

Their worship was patterned after the synagogue. Read the Old Testament then later letters of Apostles—Colossians 4:6 and I Thessalonians 5:27. They prayed publicly, listened to a sermon, celebrated communion and observed baptism. They also sang hymns as in Ephesians 5:19 and sometimes initiated collections for the poor as in I Corinthians 16:1-4. A temporary phenomenon was house—churches usually

the family, servants and a few friends. Most, but not all, ministry was done outside the church gathering. That is how we are to have church today.

Supposedly, according to early Christians, there are four distinct features of the church. The first is Unity (by virtue of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit who guides in all truth.) This is a spiritual bond that surpasses denominations—for instance parts of the pie, all make a whole. The second is Holiness—the exhortation is to be holy as in I Peter 1:15; also, to cleanse themselves of every defilement as in II Corinthians 7:1 and I Thessalonians 4:3.

The third is Catholicity meaning an all inclusive—universal without regard to race, social status, or gender—church. And the last is Apostolicity. Christ’s message based on the Apostles as recorded in the New Testament and preserved by the Holy Spirit.

The church are those individuals who have been transformed by the blood of Jesus, know Him and the power of His resurrection, live in His power, seeking His fullness, and continue to bring His Kingdom by being a miniature version of Him!

Just as the early church turned the world of its’ day upside down, so should we be bringing the message and supernatural power of the Holy Spirit to bear on every aspect of life expecting deliverance, healing, and transformation!

When Jesus commissioned the church as in Matthew 10:7-8, Matthew 28:15-20, and Mark 16:15-20, He commissioned the individuals who make up the church, and who would in the future, not an organization!

The Lord showed me five things He wants from the Church it is to be the true church flowing in His anointing and bringing His Kingdom.

They are:

I. Be in Covenant

A. God wants you to be in covenant with Him.

B. In brief it means to be in an agreement that cannot be changed; where you are expected to live up to the conditions.

C. It amounts to an unchangeable spiritual agreement without an expiration date.

D. Covenant (to cut) is a last will and testament with four factors present:

1) Parties are identified. Individuals, groups, nations—Abraham—Genesis 21:27, nations—Joshua 9:6-16; Genesis 12:1-7, SCIS—II Samuel 7:4-16.

2) Conditions where many are unilateral (God announces and some are conditional such as circumcision or baptism. Eleven covenants between men are bi-lateral and conditional also with signs.

3) Results from Deuteronomy 28—with blessing and warnings.

4) Security because you can't change covenant—God does His part and you are expected to do your—no excuses or reasons.

E. Kinds of covenants—Biblical—Noah, Moses, Earth—Genesis 8:22, Judgment—Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:4-9, Abrahamic—whole world blessed, Mosaic with the people—Exodus 19:8, Palestinian with Ishmael, David—I Samuel 18:3-4.

And the most important of all, our covenant with God through the shed blood of Jesus—Genesis 15:9, Hebrews 9:15-17. It began with Adam; continued through generations. It is completed in Jesus for us.

II. Be Holy

A. Pure

B. Cut off, separate, devoted to God

C. Leviticus 19:2, I Peter 1:15

D. God imputes holiness—transfers-imparts

E. God is Holy—Matthew 6:9

F. Jesus is Holy one of God—Luke 4:34

G. We are called to be holy—Ephesians 1:4

1) Attitude

2) Heart

3) Motive

4) Actions

5) Speech

6) Relationships

III. Be Powerful

A. BHS

B. Anointing

C. Ministry

D. Witness

E. Teaching

F. Speaking—authority

G. Bringing His Kingdom

IV. Be Committed

A. To Him—Jesus

B. In Holy Spirit

C. To bringing His Kingdom

D. Personally and collectively

E. Totally

F. Worship

G. Service

V. Be Obedient

- A. Faithfulness
- B. Enduring—overcoming
 - 1) Worship
 - 2) Missions
 - 3) Outreach

C. Make His priorities yours.

God wants us to reach the world beginning in Langley, Ok.—so think big, believe big, live big in Him by speaking and acting on His Word in all situations.

VI. The Church at Fellowship of Believers is called to:

Vision	Equipping	Actions
Matthew 6:33	desire His Manifest Presence in everything!	
Increase in #s	pray—be bold	Offer Christ/Offer Fellowship of Believers
Double in size yearly	have a heart risk	reach out—be passionate
Make disciples	classes/studies	mentoring-practical application
Plant churches	materials/\$\$	Africa
Help Israel	WOE/prayer	public support
Youth ministry	SST/VBS/Crusades	Langley
Develop needed ministries	Use Gifts	Langley

We are in a blessed place, and God is calling us to come up higher—spiritually, relationally, financially, to be a people of the Holy Ghost—be more intimate, free, fulfilling our potential, have guest speakers, and activities.

Identify, minister, measure! Press-in! Press In!

I invite you to truly be the church in power and supernaturally transform our area because we have been transformed—serve Him with everything you have—make His priorities yours, and bring His Kingdom in a hurting, dark World!
Have our ministry confirmed with Signs and Wonders!

Complacency

Text: Revelations 3:14

It is possible for a person to be physically present and participate in faith, worship, or ministry, and be complacent. Complacent is defined: to be at ease, to be overly contented, to be satisfied, not to grow spiritually, to be self satisfied, to be indifferent or dissatisfied.

In many instances today the church has become content, satisfied, or comfortable; focused on survival not the Word, or supernatural ministry that brings the Kingdom and sets captives free. This can be seen in comfort and complacency that is described Biblically as being lukewarm which leads to latent sin and separation from God. This

means that until we are straight ourselves we cannot help others nor expect to receive from God what He has for us.

The prophets had to deal with complacency as seen in Isaiah 32:9-13. People turned their back on God. They were thoughtlessly complacent. They enjoyed worldly possessions and living. They rejected, by action, God's purpose for their lives.

In Joel 1:5 people were oblivious to sin. They were called to awaken from complacency before it was too late. Often in times of peace and prosperity, believers are lulled into complacency. In Joel 3:21 the people were awaked from complacency. That need is seen in the church today. We have become hard hearted. The steps to change from a complacent church are repentance and return regardless of the cost or persecution. Then accept forgiveness and make a commitment. The Holy Spirit will renew and give you a fresh anointing.

In Malachi 2:11-12 the temple was rebuilt and the walls were up. The promise of victory over enemies seemed very slow in coming as did the coming of the messiah. The result was complacency. Today when things seem slow, it is the same today if we are honest about it. Yet our faith should affect every area of life.

Complacency is active in the church today, in the people and the pastor.

Here are some facts about complacency. Complacency is rebellion. It separates us from God. Complacency hinders ministry effectiveness and our relationship to God. We become lukewarm. Complacency leads to destruction because we are not ready for His return. Time is running out; shown by the persecution around the world. Complacency dulls our spiritual senses. It means there is no presence of the Holy Spirit. Don't ignore God's call when He knocks on the door of your heart!

Jesus wants more than belief—follow Him. He wants a radical commitment. Following daily makes you useful. You must give up old—guilt, shame, betrayal, loss, failure, rejection, resentment, and unforgiveness. See Luke 9:62 and Revelations 14:4.

Confession of Faith

According to Philemon 1:6, the communication of my faith becomes effectual by my acknowledging every good thing which is in me from Christ Jesus.

I am now releasing my faith by confessing this to be the greatest day of my life. *"This is the day that the Lord hath made; I will rejoice and be glad in it."* I am a recreated being, *"old things have passed away and all things have become new."* I am created in His glorious image and likeness. I am His workmanship and am complete in Christ. I am full of His Spirit and divine power. I have the fruit of His Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, meekness, temperance, and faith. I am humbly submitting myself to the authority of His Holy Word, for He and His Word are one. I am obedient to His commandments

and He enlarges my capacity to receive “revelation” knowledge, wisdom, understanding and ability in all things that pertain to life and godliness. I am God’s property. I have “been bought with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.” Therefore, I am free from the curse of the law. Sin, sickness, poverty, fear, doubt, worry, confusion, and all that Satan represents shall not have dominion over me. I am prospering in my spirit, soul, body, and finances, for I am a liberated person. Jesus said, “I will know the truth and truth will make me free.” I am a disciplined person. I study God’s Word daily. I meditate upon its precepts; I confess who Christ is, what He has done, and what He is doing in and through me now. I am acting upon truths, I am expecting God to meet all my needs, and to do super-abundantly above all I dare ask, hope, dream, or desire in every area of my life. I am a beautiful person, full of God’s forgiveness and love. I forgive as God has forgiven me. I love as God has loved me—therefore, His faith is working in me by love. I speak directly to every mountain of satanic adversity in my life and command them to go in the name of Jesus. They cannot stay. They must go in Jesus’ name.

Through the abundance of God’s grace, I have received the gift of righteousness and am now reigning in this life by Christ Jesus. In Genesis 1:24-31 and Genesis 2:8-15, God has told me what it is that a righteous man is to reign over. Praise God, I am a righteous person, and I am reigning over God’s creation now. “Christ has been made worthy to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing.” I

am now a joint heir with Christ, and as He is, so am I in this world. He has made me worthy to receive all that Jesus represents. Praise God, I am everything that the Word declares that I am. I have communicated my faith by acknowledging every good thing which is in me in Christ Jesus. I believe my faith is now working effectually, and that all of my needs and desires have already been supplied by His riches in glory through Christ Jesus. I worship with all my heart, soul, and strength. I lift up my voice and hands in praise and adoration to His glorious name, for He is worthy of praise, and he has made me worthy to praise His name!

Our Confession

Text: Matthew 16:13-20 & Joshua 1:5

Confession: To speak inward conviction and ascent . . . Jesus is Lord!

Confession goes deeper than opinion in that opinion is what we think but confession is what we will act upon and live or die for . . . Jesus!

Confession influences others . . . Illustration: The political leaders former president

Ronald Reagan was a fine example where politics and morality should be inseparable. Former vice-president Walter Mondale was a humanist who thought religion was private. Belief and action or source of power and authority?

Many things to confess:

- 1) Failed Jesus in many ways . . .
 - a. Reject of Oral Roberts ministry—United Methodist
 - b. Acceptance of deists/agnostics in seminaries/school
 - c. Undue emphasis on structure/survival/money

Illustration: Upper Room “bag lady” . . . wanted her to leave . . .

What if God gave a party and didn’t invite you?

- 2) Our emphasis not His . . .
 - a. Letter on stewardship . . . giving . . . national level
 - b. Equal rights with women and minorities in positions in church
 - c. Lack of Biblical emphasis . . . music with youth
- 3) These things speak of our confession . . . about
 - a. Christ Jesus
 - b. The World in which we live and follow!
 - c. Another Peter . . . denial not confession!

Let’s look at the Word a little bit . . . Three things . . .

- 1) Others
- 2) Jesus
- 3) Us

All related to confession . . .

Worldwide communion Sunday. . . Basic confession . . . Are we **One in Christ**?

Do we . . . speak it? Reflect it? Act it?

- I. **Others . . . tell about worldly ways . . .** opinions . . . including witnessing . . .
- II. **Tell about witnessing to a man who talked of being an atheist/agnostic . . .** He couldn’t answer who Jesus was—there is an extreme urgency in sharing the news of Jesus!
- III. **Jesus . . . tell of promises . . .**
 - A. Build church on Jesus. Hell can’t prevail
 - B. Key to Kingdom—binding & loosing
 - C. There’s victory through our Father!

What do we confess? Is Jesus really our Lord? If so, how will people see Him and hear the Truth this week through us that they might follow Him. Do we live like we are His?

- 1) If you confess Me before man, I will confess you before the Father—advocate

- 2) Often we speak as though we have a relationship, but really we don't—Unity/ love/commitment
- 3) Confession reflects relationship and also ministry
- 4) Confession is to be spoken—John 5:19

Confession is key to faith . . . sacrifice of praise is essentially an act of confession of the Word, Name and Blood . . .

IV. High Priesthood of Jesus.

A. Intercessor before God

- 1) Prayers
- 2) Personal representative
- 3) Praise
- 4) Guarantee of fulfillment of promises
- 5) Confession directly linked to Jesus as intercessor . . . He only goes as far as our confession permits.

B. Confession

- 1) Hebrews 3:1 . . . Jesus is High Priest of our confession,
- 2) Brings confession to Heavenly Father.

a. does not bring:

- begging
- crying
- pleading

b. Does bring:

- Confession based upon Word.
- Confession accepted by us.

Right confession opens His high priestly ministry—wrong confession shuts it off!—Hebrew 4:14

3) Hebrews 10:21 and 23.

- a. 10:21—relationship
- b. 10:23—right confession
- c. Do not give in to pressures—keep faith and right confession.

C. Tested

- 1) of man in board meeting—money for printing press--\$15,000.
- 2) Stay with confession when God gives it to you.

V. Hold Fast

- A. Offer sacrifice of praise continually
- B. Hold fast to confession
- C. Praise releases Jesus to operate on your behalf
- D. Stopping praise—stopping confession ends in defeat!

“Father honor the faith expressed by our praise”—Miracles—Kingdom comes!

Conflict—God’s People in Conflict

Text: Jeremiah 20:7-10; Luke 12:49-53

Conflict is not something you usually think about in relation to the church or the Kingdom of God—yet—it exists and non are immune!

Stress is a part of life but it seems to have gotten out of balance and is now almost in control—

- New business of massages at offices (15 minutes)
- Counseling
- Therapy
- Groups
- How about church?

Two extremes in life—ecstasy and despair!

- 1) All our way—goals/objectives/ministry/people
- 2) All against us—people resist message/money/etc.

Jeremiah experienced same thing in his day—people rejected the message; they mocked.

Jeremiah discouraged; he was depressed!

One in three teens—15-19 years old—attempt suicide. Out of 500 surveyed

73% thought of it. 33% tried it. The problems the teens found unbearable were parental communication, personal appearance, and loneliness.

Like Jeremiah we are often lonely, rejected, sad for Him and friends. Jeremiah tried to WITHHOLD THE MESSAGE—but couldn’t tell why. “Like a fire” God accomplishes divine purposes in face of opposition—in our lives as well as church.

I. Know the reality of conflict—coming up against opposition and differing ideas and goals.

- A. God on our side—spiritual bearings—directions.
- B. Bad things happen to good people—moral or Christian, for instance cancer, drunk drivers, etc.
- C. Evil not always upper side—
- D. Hope in discovering God is at work daily, obedience.

II. Need for endurance—Hebrews 12:1-2

- A. Discipleship is like a long race, not short.
- B. Discipleship requires commitment, dedication.

As in the Bible with Elijah and loneliness; the cloud of witnesses;

“Jesus . . . who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross.”

- C. Lay aside every weight that so easily besets us—
- D. Rededicate ourselves to our Christian walk—

III. Dealing with struggles—Hebrews 12:12-17

- A. Danger—react in inappropriate ways
 - 1) Anger
 - 2) Bitterness
 - 3) Giving up
 - 4) Weary—blessed is he who helps!—Moses hands.

- B. Christians under pressure go through a critical time
 - 1) Question, ‘why?’
 - 2) Value?

C. Stress real and Christians not insulated from it!

Illustration: Roger Helle—Vietnam—orphanage/step-father very strict; not measure up/loneliness/Marines experiences—injury—stomach, groin, legs, burns, arms, face. Pinkerton’s Agency—now in Teen Challenge—opened life to Lord.

- D. Jesus Kingdom cannot be shaken—Hebrew 12:28!
 - 1) Obey
 - 2) Let Jesus do the fighting.

IV. No Neutrality—Luke 12:49-53

- A. Must choose sides—concerning Jesus
- B. Total devotion or it is defective devotion—

Illustration: Description of Jesus? How about FIRE? We have peace in Christ in conflict—

- C. Jesus/Jeremiah—both of judgment/Sovereignty

V. Utilize Spiritual Discernment—Luke 12:54-56

- A. Signs of times—spiritual?
- B. Signs—opposition, indifference, squeezed, threatened, tempted—
- C. God is very much at work with us—we are to be soldiers of the cross—not spectators!

God’s people have conflict but they also have victory Old Testament people went to battle—obeyed and the Lord fought Help through, not escape from.

Content not Satisfied

Text: Matthew 5:6, John 5:19, Philippians 4:11

In your faith walk are you content or satisfies? Contemporary Culture has weakened the Word by compromise. It is time for the church to rise up in the anointing and be bold as we apply the Word to life. When we do God will show Himself strong on our behalf as He did for the Israelites.

To fulfill your potential and calling in life you need to be content to work –serve and minister where God has you at the moment, but not be satisfied that’s all there is. There is more as you hunger, mature and have a heart’s desire to grow in relationship and serve in ministry.

To be **content** is to have enough—Luke 3:14, I Timothy 6:8; to be self-sufficient, to have adequate, and to be resigned to circumstances and natural limitations.

It can be stated as recognizing what you have and being thankful—Philippians 4:11—because you trust God knowing He will meet your every need.

You can be content like Paul because of God, or you can be falsely content because you trust your abilities and desires.

Often people are content to have enough, to have knowledge not a relationship, to take the initial step—salvation—but stop short of discipleship, to be comfortable with dependence on self and have a limited vision, and be resigned to human limitations.

True contentment is to be confident and pleased—resting in total trust and serving with peace not doubt, frustration, or distraction for God is in control.

Satisfied is to be full, have no room for more—Luke 1:53, John 6:11-12, Matthew 5:6, and Acts 14:17, to put in what is lacking, and to comply with requirements. True satisfaction is to be assured that you have done your best and that you have been called to do with His Presence and confirmation in power—Mark 16:15-20. God is waiting for the church to not merely be content but to come up higher one step at a time. Last week we saw Jesus put people first, and then He taught and calls us to do the same. Now we are going to look at not being content, but coming up higher based on what is seen and measured about churches (Barna surveys).

I. What is the Church called to do?

- A. Transform or change society—one person at a time.
- B. Give a vision of what God wants, and what is available.
- C. Provide a mission—your part in bringing the Kingdom.
- D. Impart a purpose—a calling that fills the God vacuum.
- E. Matthew 10:7-8, Matthew 28:15-20, Mark 16:15-20, Acts 1:8.
- F. Be a church that gives God a chance to show you what He offers—be a church that is different, confirmed y God.
- G. Bring the Kingdom by bringing Jesus in power to others.

II. Is the Church functioning Biblically and fulfilling its' calling?

- A. If not, why not?
- B. What is needed?
 - 1) Word
 - 2) Relationship
 - 3) Vision of self biblically'
 - 4) Boldness
 - 5) Action

III. What are the main keys to Biblically Functioning?

- A. Prayer

- 1) God kind
- 2) Intimacy
- 3) Daily
- 4) Passionately
- 5) Expectantly

B. Compassion

- 1) A feeling of distress through ills of others—feeding the 5000—Romans 9:15
- 2) To be touched with
- 3) Sympathetic concern
- 4) To show mercy
- 5) Is love in action that meets needs and alleviates suffering.

IV. Some hindrances that cause worldly contentment rather than spiritual satisfaction.

- A. Attitude of people toward others.
- B. Incorrect attitude about God.
- C. Listening to the wrong things.

I invite you to reach for satisfaction not just contentment!

The Covenant Meal

A covenant is an everlasting agreement using blood—the source of life—as in God’s Covenant with man! The Blood covenant is the last will and testament with Christ—when you take Jesus as your Lord! Part of the covenant was the covenant meal. We use the word Holy Communion or Eucharist. Many of us have experienced this type of covenant as a child.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 is the promise of a new covenant, and the covenant meal is the remembrance of the new covenant fulfilled—the shedding of blood, renewal, a new heart! The covenant between God and man –unending!

I. Remembrance of the Covenant involved deliverance, protection, and salvation—Exodus 12:3-4, 14.

A. Passover Meal

- 1) Purpose—exodus 12:14—memorial to God.
- 2) Who can take it? Exodus 12:48—committed, circumcised Jews, circumcised in the heart!
- 3) Explanation to children—our heritage—blood on the door.
 - a. Deliverance—new birth—Nicodemus?
 - b. Psalm 105:37—brought forth also with silver and gold and there was not one feeble person among them! 3,000,000!
- 4) Sacrifice—Blood—saved.

- a. Pay attention to paschal lamb—covenant setting—
I Corinthians 5:7. Christ is our Passover!
- b. April—*Abib*—10th—Passover lambs selected—inspected
Jesus—Palm Sunday—no blemish.
- c. April—Nisan—14th—sacrifice—hand on lambs’
head—sins blood sprinkled on altar mercy seat.

B. Passover Table

- 1) Empty seat for Messiah—Jesus took this one.
- 2) Bread in three compartments—no bread taken from center
compartment—Jesus did?
- 3) Eat all of the food—Exodus 12:10 no remain
 - a. After eating—fellowshipped.
 - b. Sang psalms—113, 118, 119? 136!
- 4) Pious Jews looked for deliverance again—Isaiah 51:9-16

C. Description of meal in I Corinthians 10:21—read!

- 1) Lamb sacrifice.
- 2) Bitter herbs—slavery
- 3) Unleavened bread—haste
- 4) Bowl of salt water—tears as slaves
- 5) Paste—apples, dates, pomegranates, and nuts—clay for
bricks with no straw. Cinnamon was straw.
- 6) Wine—four cups—four promises.
 - a. Deliverance
 - b. Rid of bondage
 - c. Redeem you.
 - d. I will be your God!

II. Remembrance of Salvation by Blood! Only the blood of Jesus saves, cleanses, and sanctifies!

A. Examine self—I Corinthians 11:28, Psalm 103.

- 1) Examine your heart—confession
- 2) Bless the Lord—forgiveness, healing—Psalm 103.

B. Accept elements.

- 1) Wine—blood—True Lamb—John 1:9—not ours.
- 2) Bread—body—so ours wouldn’t be broken.
 - a. I Peter 2:24—bore sins stripes—so we are healed!
 - b. Isaiah 53:5—wounded for our transgressions.
 - c. I Corinthians 11:30—eat unworthily—damnation.
 - d. Psalm 118:3—mercy endures forever!

C. Communion is a blessing to us—body and spirit!

- 1) To reject promise of salvation is blasphemy!

- 2) Faith in Christ is a circumcised heart!
 - a. Rebellion—heart changed.
 - b. New Spirit—Ezekiel 36:26—Excited!

3) Not sufficient in and of ourselves! Time to realize or act!

III. Remembrance—Observance—Luke 22:14-21. The Lord's Supper is the reenactment in sign of the reality of Christ's self-suffering—God remembered His people—fulfilled and no need of repetition. The stress is on significance of what was done already! *“Paul asks, ‘The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?’* I Corinthians 10:16

A. Participation—by faith—John 6:35!

- 1) Physical eating no guarantee of spiritual nourishment by Christ or fellowship with Him.
- 2) Basically a source of healing—all areas!

B. Host—Presence of Christ.

- 1) Present in Holy Spirit—often physical manifestations.
- 2) Christ is Host at table—gives self to be abiding sustenance of His people. Take Him in—He becomes a part of you.
- 3) Have fellowship with Him and with one another in Him—
Isaiah 25:6

C. Fulfillment—anticipates final Messianic Banquet.

- 1) Divine fellowship in Second coming—Matthew 26:29.
- 2) Says task is complete all we have to do is accept!
- 3) Our participation indicates:
 - a. Thanksgiving and self-dedication.
 - b. Glorifying God for deeds done and commitment!
 - c. Feast of love for God and one another
 - d. Sample of Marriage feast of Lam! Praise God!

D. Parts today—that we utilize in service.

- 1) Remembrance—John 1:1-5
- 2) Proclamation—I Corinthians 11:26—“Proclaim death until He comes . . .”
- 3) Offering—one full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice
- 4) Participation—Romans 5:6-11—Reconciled to God and one another—are we?
- 5) Thanksgiving—I John 3:1—blessing, called sons of God!

Covenant Meal is a promise fulfilled for those who will accept and a promise for future joy when Christ comes again . . . Have you made a covenant? Shared in the covenant meal?

A Covenant Meal

I Corinthians 11:23-26 tells of where Paul discusses disorders in the practice of the Lord's Supper and then shares about the new covenant in Christ Jesus. What Paul describes is a covenant meal that calls us to a daily response to Christ.

There is a cartoon about the medical profession and the situation of selling **malpractice insurance** to faith healers. Man cannot protect himself in all situations any more than he can control all things. Man's needs for God and Communion is not only a reminder of this, but it is a time for renewal of our covenant.

Once a little boy had communion explained to him and he said that he understood, but he did not always remember! It is much the same with us. We may understand, but we somehow forget when it comes to the daily practice of our faith.

Communion is a sacrament. It is a sacred act. It is an act that was important enough for Jesus to practice, and He calls us to do the same. Let's take a closer look at the practice of communion, and what actually occurs in the life of a Christian who shares in it.

I. Communion is a reminder of God's action in History—I Corinthians 11:24.

- A. God acted in delivering the Hebrew people-Passover.
- B. It is an assurance that God has not forgotten His promise.
- C. It involves a personal encounter with Jesus—self offering.

It was on an encounter with Youth, during a Mission in Colorado while we had youth with us this trip. The key was that Jesus is the center around which all else is built. He is not a topping added to the already mixed-up world!

II. Communion is a reminder of the Covenant—verse 25.

A. Covenant parts.

- 1) Parts
- 2) Conditions
- 3) Results
- 4) Security

B. Old covenant and the New

Covenant between David and Jonathan—I Samuel 18:1-4.

C. Demand for response.

III. Communion reminds us of Ministry—verse 26.

A. Parts to Communion

- 1) Invitation
- 2) Pardon
- 3) Consecration—renewal
- 4) Elements

5) Commitment—renewal

B. Proclaim death

1) Tell of victory in Christ

2) Share presence of Jesus as reality

A man and children came to parsonage looking for help. They met Christ Jesus. The man had several hindrances that he let go.

The bread represents the body of Jesus which was given for us. It represents death. The blood of Christ or wine which is received is a certainty of life—Exodus 12:23. Communion is not merely a remembrance of a historical event. It is a current commitment to a living God. When we accept the cup we are saying that we are willing to share in the life-style and ministry of Jesus our Lord. It is indeed a covenant meal because in it we realize our need and place ourselves in Jesus' control, depending upon His promise and power. In doing this we receive peace and healing. Are you prepared to share in a covenant meal—and to live it to bring the Kingdom?

Cops

We are Cops

Submitted by Eric Nester

That means that the pains and joys of my personal life are often muted by my work. I resent the intrusion, but I confuse myself with my job almost as often as you do. The label 'police officer' creates a false image of who I really am. Sometimes, I feel like I'm floating between two worlds. My work is not just protecting and serving. It's preserving that buffer that exists in the space between what you think the world is, and what the world really is.

My job isn't like television. The action is less frequent, and more graphic. It is not exhilarating to point a gun at someone. Pooled blood has a disgusting metallic smell and steams a little when the temperature drops, CPR isn't an instant miracle, and it's no fun listening to an elderly grandmother's ribs break while I keep her heart beating. I'm not flattered by your curiosity about my work. I don't keep a record of which incident was the most frightening, or the strangest, or the bloodiest, or even the funniest. I don't tell you about my day because I don't want to share the images that haunt me.

But I do have some confessions to make:

Sometimes my stereo is too loud. Andrea Bocelli's voice makes it easier to forget the wasted body of the young man who died alone in a rented room because his family feared the stigma of AIDS. Beethoven's 9th Symphony erases the sight of the nurses who sobbed as they scrubbed layers of dirt and slime from a neglected 2-year-old's skin. The Rolling Stones' angry beat assures me that it was

ignorance that drove a young mother to draw blood when she bit her toddler on the cheek in an attempt to teach him not to bite.

Sometimes, I set a bad example. I exceeded the speed limit on my way home from work because I had trouble shedding the adrenalin that kicked in when I discovered that the man I handcuffed during a drug raid was sitting on a loaded 9mm pistol.

Sometimes, I seem rude. I was distracted and forgot to smile when you greeted me in the store because I was remembering the anguished, whispered confession of a teenager who pushed away his drowning brother to save his own life.

Sometimes, I'm not as sympathetic as you'd like. I'm not concerned that your 15-year-old daughter is dating an 18-year-old because I just comforted the parents of young man who slashed his own throat while they slept in the next bedroom. I was terse on the phone because I resented the burden of having to weigh the value of two lives when I was pointing my gun at an armed man who kept begging me to kill him. I laugh when you cringe away from the mess in our teen's room because I know the revulsion of feeling a heroin addict's blood trickling toward an open cut on my arm. If I was silent when you whined about your overbearing mother, it's because I really wanted to tell you that I spoke to one of our high school friends today. I found her mother slumped behind the wheel of her car in a tightly closed garage. She had dressed in her best outfit before rolling down the windows and starting the engine.

On the other hand, if I seem totally oblivious to the blood on my uniform, or the names people call me, or the hateful editorials, it's because I am remembering the lessons my job has taught me.

I learned not to sweat the small stuff. Grape juice on the beige sofa and puppy pee on the oriental carpet don't faze me because I know what arterial bleeding and decaying bodies can do to one's décor.

I learned when to shut out the world and take a mental health day. I skipped your daughter's 4th birthday party because I was thinking about the six children under the age of 10 whose mother left them unattended to go out with a friend. When the 3-year-old offered the dog the milk from her cereal bowl, the dog attacked her, tearing open her head and staining the sandbox with blood. The little girl's siblings had to pry her head out of the dog's jaws—twice.

I learned that everyone has a lesson to teach me. Two mothers who were engaged in custody battles taught me not to judge a book by its cover. The teenage mother on welfare, mustered the strength to refrain from crying in front of her worried child while the well-dressed, upper-class mother literally played tug of war with her toddler before running into traffic with the shrieking child in her arms.

I learned that nothing given from the heart is truly gone. A hug, a smile, a reassuring word, or an attentive ear can bring an injured or distraught person back to the surface, and help me refocus.

And I learned not to give up **EVER!** That split second of terror when I think I have finally engaged the one who is young enough and strong enough to take me down taught me that I have only one restriction: my own mortality.

One week in May has been set aside as Police Memorial Week, a time to remember those officers who didn't make it home after their shift. But why wait? Take a moment to tell an officer that you appreciate their work. Smile and say "Hi" when he's getting coffee. Bite your tongue when you start to tell a 'bad cop' story. Better yet find the time to tell a 'good cop' story. The family at the next table may be a cop's family.

Nothing given from the heart is truly gone. It is kept in the hearts of the recipients. Give from the heart. Give something back to the officers who risk everything they have.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

I did not forward this for self serving reasons or my own pat on the back. When you have police contact, I would ask that you take a moment to consider what else has gone on in that officer's day/week/career and realize that their intentions are good, and they want to serve the public in the best way they know how. The best of officers can have a bad day or a bad week occasionally.

Approximately 3 police officers per week are killed in the line of duty in the United States each year. This number does not reflect the thousands of officers each year that die of various illnesses off duty, due to side affects of the job (alcoholism, heart disease, suicide, etc.).

An officer with the Kirkwood Police Department was gunned down for no other reason than he was wearing a police uniform. Most officers don't want to talk about that outside of their law enforcement circles because it makes it too real. Your service from Law Enforcement will never be perfect; the world has too many personalities and too many expectations to ever be perfect. If you are treated in a negative way, it may need to be pointed out to the officer, but please extend the same courtesy that you would like extended to you at your job if someone had a complaint. Knowing that someone may want to kill you just because of the clothes you are wearing and what you represent is not something most people ever have to think about.

We don't need a ticker tape parade, or constant praise; most officers would just appreciate your patience, May 15th is National Law Enforcement Day, and the week leading up to that is called Police Week. This is a time of reflection, appreciation, and ceremony for slain officers, and as important, their families. Thank you for your support and patience.

Covering—The Right Type of Covering

Texts: Genesis 3:1-24 & Revelation 12:10-11

We are going to talk about not only protection but about weapons—of warfare—specifically, the Blood of Jesus.

The account in Genesis 3 tells much about us today—we are covered with religion—leaves—and need to be covered with the Blood of Jesus—skins. An innocent animal died for man's sins—rebellion against God.

Current situation: God is moving among people and bringing to maturity—refining—inner-hunger for Word, and then participation in ministry of Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit.

During a conversation we can discover what we believe. We ought to know—we are forever studying but never come to a fullness of knowledge—we need to experience, to take risks. We need skins—forgiveness and not leaves—just religion.

Just as Adam and Eve tried to cover themselves and failed, so we do also today, unless we come to Christ as Lord and Savior and learn to walk in the power of His resurrection—intellectually and experientially.

- 1) Responses . . .
- 2) No good—low self-esteem
- 3) Anger—won't participate
- 4) Guilt—not really that bad—pass the buck
- 5) Forgiveness—in form of remorse
- 6) Repentance—God sorrow—II Corinthians 7:9-10

It is good to have the armor—Ephesians 6:10ff—but you need to have the weapons also—start with a right relationship. Are you certain of it?

- 1) Satan is accuser
- 2) Brings guilt
- 3) Brings fear
- 4) Brings feelings of inferiority
- 5) God convicts—not misery—shows sins and admonishes us.
- 6) Spiritual inferiority complex—robs of victory
- 7) Sin conscious—condemnation
- 8) Need to present truth—righteousness in Christ—by blood!

Terry Law—zookeeper-bird-name-keep eyes on sin?

- 9) Sin treadmill—conviction—repentance—repetition.
- 10) Try and fail—lose power.

Survey of 500—What do you expect when you feel guilt?

Parents

-fear of punishment
-depression

- 1) punish—shame
- 2) withdraw

- isolation—rejection
- recognizer righteousness
- Romans 1:16—do you?
- II Corinthians 5:21—Jesus became sin –all based on relationship
- Romans 10:10—believe unto righteousness—with heart!

Spiritual Warfare

I. Believers Righteousness

- A. Romans 5:9—justified by blood
- B. Daily battle
- C. Revelations 12:10-11—overcome!
- D. Testify regularly to power of blood!

II. Blood of God—conception—Holy Spirit—not contaminated!

- A. Hebrew 9:12—presented to God! Wow! Ascended when?
- B. Exodus 12—Moses and Passover

III. Believers testimony:

- A. Blood on doorpost of heaven applied to life by testimony.
- B. Spiritual weapon stops oppression—victory instead.
- C. Ephesians 1:7—redemption—forgiveness.

IV. Declarations:

- A. Ephesians 1:7—redeemed—bought back—continually cleansed.
- B. Romans 5:9—justified as if never sinned.
- C. Hebrew 13:12—made whole—set apart.
- D. II Corinthians 6:19-20—free in name of Jesus and Blood.

Praise and worship begin here because of recognized relation need—blood leads to praise and worship.

Blood is the weapon—praise is launching pad!

I. Creeds of the Patriotic Church

The early church had three main concerns in its creed making. The first was **liturgical**—the need for brief, definitive statements of the common Christian faith in the acts of corporate worship, especially baptism. The second was **didactic**—because both teachers and their catechumens required a stable norm for their guidance in Christian instruction. The third was **polemic**—for the church had to be able to ward off ‘false teachings’ by statements of authentic Christian belief which no conscientious heretic could repeat. Early in the second century, a distinction arose between the baptismal **symbolon**—credo—short stable, suited to the rite of baptism—and the **regula fidei**—**canon tes alethes**—longer, variable, suited to the business of catechetical instruction.

The Apostles’ Creed

The earliest known baptismal **symbolon** was developed at Rome in the first half of the second century and is usually known as The Old Roman Symbol or **R**. Its text is hypothetical, especially in the matter of the ‘third article.’ The following is J. N. D. Kelly’s reconstruction of it (cf. *Early Christian Creeds*, p 102).

Kelly’s Reconstruction of R

I believe in God the Father almighty:
And in Christ Jesus His only Son, our Lord,
Who was born from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
Who under Pontius Pilate was crucified and buried, on
The third day rose again from the dead, ascended to
Heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father, whence He
Will come to judge the living and the dead.
And (I believe) in the Holy Spirit, the holy Church,
The remission of sins, the resurrection of the flesh.

This is, obviously, the prototype of the so-called Apostles’ Creed. The following is the developed text of this creed, as preserved for us by Marcellus of Ancyra (d. ca. 374) and Rufinus of Aquileia (ca. 345-410):

Marcellus’ Text

I believe in one God the almighty Father
(pantokratora);
and in Christ Jesus His only begotten Son our Lord,
who was crucified and buried under Pontius
Pilate, who rose from the dead on the third day,
Ascending to Heaven and taking His seat at the
Father’s right hand, whence He shall come to judge
Both living and dead;
And (I believe) in the Holy Spirit, the holy Church,
The remission of sins, the resurrection of the flesh
And life everlasting.

Rufinus’ Text

I believe in God the almighty Father, invisible
And impassable;
And in Christ Jesus His only Son our Lord who was
Born by the Holy Spirit from Mary the Virgin,
Crucified under Pontius Pilate and buried. He
descended to hell. On the third day He rose again from

the dead, He ascended to Heaven, where He sits at the
 Father's right hand and from whence He will come to
 Judge both living and dead;
 And-I believe-in the Holy Spirit, the holy Church,
 the remission of sins, the resurrection of this flesh.

Compare these developments of **R** with what came finally, in the sixth century,
 to be the Textus Receptus of the Apostles' Creed (cf. Kelly, p. 369):

Textus Receptus

I believe in God the almighty, Creator of heave and earth;
 And-I believe-in Jesus Christ His only Son our
 Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of
 The Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was
 crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell,
 on the third day He arose again from the dead, He
 ascended to heaven, where He sits at the right hand of
 The Father Almighty, from whence He shall come to
 judge both living and dead.
 (I believe) in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic
 Church, the communion of saints, the remission of
 sins, the resurrection of the body and life
 everlasting.

Apostle's Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, of heaven and earth:	Gen. 1:1, Ne 9:6, Acts 14:15 Maker Heb 11:3
And in Jesus Christ his only Son, Our Lord:	Matt. 1:21, Matt. 3:17, Matt 17:5, Luke 1:35, John 1:q14, John 3:18, John 9:35, Heb 10:29, I Jn 4:15
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,	Isa 3:64, Matt 1:18, Luke 1:28-35
born of the Virgin Mary,	Matt 1:23
suffered under Pontius Pilot,	Isa 50:6, Matt 27:2, 13, 24; Mk 15:2, 14, 15; Luke 13:1, Luke 23:4, John 18:35, John 19:1

was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell;	Matt 27:35, Mk 15:24, Luke 23:33, Jn 19:23 Acts 2:32, I Peter 3:18
the third day he rose again from dead;	Matt 16:21, 16:32, Mark 9:9, John the 21:19, Acts 4:33, 10 1:39-41; Rom 10:9
He ascended into heaven,	Luke 24:51, Jn 6:62, 20:17, Acts 1:9, Heb 9:24
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.	Mk 16:19, Jn 17:5, I Peter 3:22 Matt 16:27, 19:28, 25:32; Jn 5:22 Acts 10:42, 17:31; Rom 2:16; I Thes 4:16-16, Rev 20:11-13
I believe in the Holy Ghost;	Ezk 36:27, Joel 2:28, Lk 11:13, 24:49; Jn 16:13, 20:21; Acts 2:38- 39; Rom 8:9, 8:11; I Jn 2:27
the holy Catholic Church;	Rom 12:5, I Cor 12:27, Eph 1:23, 4:12; Col 1:24, 2:19
the communion of saints;	Acts 2:42; Phil 1:3 & 5; Heb 12:1; I Jn 1:7
the forgiveness of sins;	Ps 103:3 & 4; Matt 6:14; Acts 5:31, 13:38; Eph 1:7; I Jn 1:9
the resurrection of the body;	Dan 12:2; Ps 49:15; Jn 5:25, 28 29, 6:40, 8:51, 10:10-11, 11:25; Acts 24:15; II Cor 4:14; I Thes 4:16, 17; Rev 20:13
and the life everlasting.	Dan 12:12; Matt 25:46; Jn 6:27,10:28; Rom 2:27, 6:22; I Tim 6:19; Tit 1:2; I Jn 2:25; Jude 21

Amen

Acts 2:22-36—Biblical Basis—Peter’s Sermon on Pentecost

Vs 22 Men of Israel, listen

Vs 22 & 30 Jesus, Son of God

Vs 23 Crucifixion

Vs 24 Resurrection

Vs 26-28 Believer’s hope

Vs 31 Descended into Hell

Vs 32 Witnesses—Communion of saints

Vs 33-34 Right hand of God

Vs 36 Forgiveness and eternal life

Christmas—The Message of Christmas in Song by Jack Nester, Jr.

As the days grow crisp and shoppers hurry from store to store, you can hear Christmas music, and it helps set the mood for the special day—Christmas. As Christmas draws closer you see groups of Christmas Carolers go from house to house; there are special music programs such as Handel’s Messiah. All are a part of the Christmas tradition, touch hearts, and prepare people for celebrating the birth of Jesus.

In a local Wal-Mart store the music during the morning hours is uniquely Christian with hymns and old time favorites—and then later in the day there are the popular secular Christmas songs. Whether it was planned that way or not, a wide variety of people enjoy Christmas music that appeals to them—and this is as it should be. Unfortunately, in some instances in our society there is a reluctance to speak or sing anything that is Christian. It is almost as if there is a concerted effort by the ACLU and some others—and there is—to transform Christmas into an entirely secular event—eliminating Jesus entirely!

People in centuries past, also, had their troubles with expressing their faith publicly without repercussions. Today, we hear a Christmas song that is a favorite of many and yet most who hear it do not know the origin or importance. In fact many think it is a secular song but it isn’t. It is “The 12 Days of Christmas.”

The 12 days of Christmas mentioned in the carol by this name refer to the 12 days of feasting and celebration originally designated in the sixth century as a time to commiserate the incarnation of Christ. The 12 day period began on December 25 and ended January 5.

The carol dates to the 16th century when Roman Catholics were experiencing religious persecution in England. From 1558 until 1829, it was illegal for them to practice or express their faith in any form in public. In fact, to be caught in public with any material about the Christian faith brought imprisonment and death. Out of this intense persecution, “The 12 Days of Christmas” emerged as a kind of coded message affirming belief in Christ and in the Bible. Each of the 12 days represents

some important aspect of the Christian faith that the disciple was to learn and adhere to.

First Day: “The Partridge in a pear tree” represents the birth of Christ on Christmas Day. Christ is portrayed as a partridge because of the instinctual habit of mother partridges to pretend to be injured in order to decoy predators away from their helpless young.

Second Day: “Two turtle Doves” refer to the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Third Day: “Three French hens” stands for the three virtues written about in I Corinthians 13: 13—faith, hope, and love.

Fourth Day: “Four calling birds” symbolizes the four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Fifth Day: “Five golden rings” points to the first five books of the old Testament—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Sixth Day: “Six geese a laying” stands for the six days of creation and the affirmation that Almighty God is the creator and sustainer of all things.

Seventh Day: “Seven swans a swimming” represents the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned in Romans 11—prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, giving and generosity, leadership, and compassion and mercy.

Eighth Day: “Eight maids a milking” stands for the eight beatitudes Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5—each beginning with “Blessed are”— 1) the poor in spirit, 2) those who mourn, 3) the meek, 4) those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, 5) the merciful, 6) the pure in heart, 7) the peacemakers, and 8) those who are persecuted for righteousness sake.

Ninth Day: “Nine ladies dancing” represents the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control.

Tenth Day: “Ten lords a leaping” symbolizes the Ten Commandments—Exodus 20:11-17.

Eleventh Day: “Eleven pipers a piping” refers to the 11 faithful disciples. Because Judas Iscariot, the 12th disciple, betrayed Jesus, he is not included among the faithful.

Twelfth Day: “Twelve drummers drumming” emphasizes the 12 doctrinal points of the Apostles’ Creed, which outlines the core beliefs of the Christian faith.

Chapter 4 “D”

Dealing With Tools and Manifestations

Test: I Corinthians 12:11-13

Growth of the church is based on reaching people:

- People are reached by people
- All people not able to share easily by skills
- All people can operate under leading of the Spirit

God’s Spirit

- Fills
- Baptizes
- Empowers
- Is manifest in use

Gifts—Supernatural abilities granted by God for use in ministry to bring His Kingdom and free captives

Manifestations—How the abilities are seen and used

Identify gifts which are essential to fullest use to bring the Kingdom.

I. Confession—John 16:12-15

A. Jesus is Lord

- 1) Over gifts
- 2) Over people
- 3) Over use
- 4) Over results

B. Jesus is beginning point

- 1) All must glorify Jesus
- 2) Holy Spirit is below Jesus

C. Person must be subject to Christ Lordship

- 1) Discipleship
- 2) Ministry

II. Composition—Ephesians 4:1-7

A. Gifts are a sign of new Spiritual life

B. Each needs what the other has to give—dependent

C. Spiritual church is a gifted church—not talented

First—Different gifts for work and witness

- each has own function
- each has own ministry

Second—all gifts are fro the same Spirit

- gifts not deserved
- gifts not produced within self

Third—Gifts for use in Kingdom

- not discord

-enhance fellowship

III. Consideration—Romans 12:4-8

- A. God gives gifts for good of all—not for power, popularity, or position, but for strengthening the church.
 - B. No one receives all the gifts.
 - C. Not all Christians receive the same gift.
 - D. Holy Spirit is source of Gift.
 - E. Holy Spirit determines gift—permanent or temporary?
- You must respond by working with the rest of the Body . . .

IV. Comparison—Colossians 1:18, 2:19

- A. Body—the church—has multiple parts.
- B. Key—Unity within Variety—for organic whole
 - 1) No member constitutes body or unity—Saint-whole
 - 2) Brought together in Christ—Divine life flows
 - 3) All made one in Christ—place and function

V. Cooperation—I Corinthians 12:14-20

- A. All parts needed to work properly.
 - 1) Test—how differences are accepted?
 - 2) Test—how do we help people identify gifts
- B. Withdrawal of use is destructive to all.
- C. Not comparison but cooperation the parts of the body enriches its usefulness.

VI. Complimentary—Romans 12:6-8

- A. No competing but complimenting
- B. No jealousy, fear, or conflict
- C. Importance not determined by function—seen or unseen.
- D. Smallest gift needed to make largest effective.

VII. Conclusion—Ephesians 4:11-13

- A. Christ's Body jointly
- B. God does appointing—so there is order
- C. All members do not have the same gift.
- D. Greater gift benefits the largest number.

Motive for use of your gift must be love—it is lasting.

Do you recognize your tools? How are they manifest? Do you desire Kingdom growth?

Death—Christian Concept of Death

Text: Hebrew 9:27

Not considered a pleasant topic—but one that must be dealt with. There are several types of death—Physical, Spiritual, and in Sin!

Distinguish between death and dying—death is result and dying is a process! All are dying—Genesis 21:16.

I. Defined—*Thanatos*

A. Separation of soul from body—physical—John 11:13; Hebrews 2:15, 5:7, 7:23; Revelation 13:3, 12—death stroke!

B. Separation from God—Spiritual—Genesis 2:7-Adam dies (sin); Romans 5:12-All born into sin (original sin)

C. Dead unto sin—salvation—John 5:24; I John 3:14
Death—non-existence!

Spiritual life—conscious existence in communion with God

Spiritual death—conscious existence in separation from God (Sheep/goats)

Anairesis—taking of life as in Acts 8:1 with Stephen

Epiphanatios—doomed as the apostles in I Corinthians 4:9

Thanatoo—death of Jesus in Matthew 26:59; Mark 14:55; death of believers deeds—Romans 8:36; and II Corinthians 6:4

II. References—death

A. Certain—Job 14:1-2

B. Consequence of sin—Romans 5:12

C. Satan causes murder—John 9:44; and fear of death—Hebrews 2:4

D. Second death—Revelations 20:14

E. Loss of spiritual life—Jude 12

F. Removal of breath—Psalm 104:29

G. Return to dust—Genesis 3:19

H. Shadow of coming event that is inescapable—Luke 1:79

III. Coping with death

A. Talking to people

B. Funerals—concept

C. Wakes?

D. Grief—the stages of

Decision—Your Decision

Text: James 1:22

Our mid week services have been about how praise releases faith. We have discussed some areas such as thought attacks; weapons of war; the key to great faith; how God works; abundance and blessing; and victory over Satan; and how the Word of God heals. You have even learned about the light of God's Word, and now it's time for your decision. What you are going to do about the Word of God? Whether you will be hearers of the Word or doers? What you have studied and learned about, or even heard, demands a response from you. If you do not decide now, to be a doer of the Word, and you postpone it, and say 'tomorrow', that in itself is a decision.

You must decide—face the fact that a decision is demanded concerning God’s Word, and it is demanded now. This decision will change will change your life. You need to understand your decision-making powers.

-Many believers become slaves of circumstances and emotions because of indecision.

-They follow one preacher after another, but without any concrete change in lifestyle. This is wrong and needs to be changed.

Just as you are tri-part: Spirit, Soul, Body; so your soul is composed of three parts: Intellect, Emotion, and Will.

The primary function of the human soul is your Will—that ability to make decisions. Everything else revolves around this. The soul is the window between Heaven and earth where decisions are made. Your strength is not intellect or emotions but in Will.

-**Jesus Did the Father’s Will**—John 5:30—don’t seek your own Will—if you do you will not have spiritual discernment.

-Matthew 16:39—submission to the Will of God.

-John 4:32-34—doing God’s Will gives strength.

a) Spiritual, b) Emotional, c) Physical

-Set your Will to do God’s Will—intellectual, deliberate, willful, purposeful. God is asking you to make a decision now. Our wills lead us in the ways of God. God looks for you to desire His Will. Dealing with God begins in the area of your Will (Choice)—in emotion and not feeling.

I. We have Dominion:

A. Daily question

1) Am I delighting to do God’s Will?

2) Genesis 1:26—You must make decisions to exercise dominion.

B. God never intended man to be a slave of circumstances or external forces.

1) The way out is to make a decision based upon scripture.

2) The importance of making a right decision is primary in your life as a believer.

3) Your character is the sum total of your habits—habits are made by repeating certain decisions.

II. Involvements of Decisions: All decisions are important because they are a basis for habit which reflects our character. Every decision has a positive or negative quality.

A. To make a decision you have to choose for yourself—you are the decision maker.

1) You may be persuaded

2) You may be inspired

3) You may be prayed for

B. Choice involves sacrifices:

1) The sacrifice is to go one way and not another. No one can serve two masters.

a. Intellectual decision to follow Jesus

b. Heart decision to continue in the world

2) You must decide to make the Word of God work in your life.

C. Delay makes the right decision harder. Now is the accepted time—is the Holy Spirit speaking to you?

D. Indecision is a choice—it weakens your Will.

E. The time for decision is limited

1) What is your decision concerning the Will of God in your life?

2) Will you be a hearer or a doer?

3) This decision is guiding you the rest of your days.

4) Based upon your decision, you will either be blessed or defeated.

III. Components essential to becoming a doer of the Word:

A. Repentance

1) The first decision is to repent

2) Greek-*metanoein*-to change one's mind—this is a decision not an emotion. Judas cried but did not repent. Judas reflected remorse and anguish not a change of heart.

3) When you repent you make a decision—you decide to change your mind and your lifestyle—Luke 15:18—Prodigal Son.

4) True repentance goes before true faith.

a. Mark 1:15

b. Luke 2:47

c. Acts 2:38

5) Have you truly repented? You cannot remain in your former state.

B. The second decision you must make is forgiveness.

1) Forgiveness is a decision.

a. Forgiveness is not an emotion.

b. Forgiveness is not a feeling.

c. This is an area where Satan has robbed the Church of its power—**unforgiveness!**

2) The Lord's Prayer.

a. Forgiveness required

b. Forgiveness granted

3) Matthew 18:21-22—forgiveness granted from God—
Forgiveness required from us.

- 4) Forgive those closest to you. When you forgive you know. Unforgiveness equals bondage.
- 5) When you forgive you also make the decision to forget.
- 6) If you repent and if you forgive, you are prepared to apply the Word of God.

C. The most important question. How can I become a doer of the Word?

- 1) Make a decision now.
- 2) Follow Proverbs 4:20-22.
 - a. Attend to My Words.
 - 1) Exclude everything else.
 - 2) Give undivided attention to God.
 - 3) Do not let the business of this world get between you and Jesus.
 - b. Incline your ear.
 - 1) Meekness of Spirit
 - 2) Submission in your Will.
 - 3) Be teachable—Matthew 15:6-9—hear what the Spirit of God is saying, not doctrinal prejudice.
 - c. Let them not depart.
 - 1) Divided attention
 - 2) Double mindedness
 - 3) Direct your eyes toward the Word.
 - 4) Don't waiver

D. Meditation

- 1) Keep them in the middle of your heart.
- 2) Joshua 1:8
- 3) Psalm 19:14—words, meditation, be acceptable
- 4) Don't listen to the counsel of the ungodly
- 5) Don't give your time to the things that conflict with the Word of God.

IV. Application.

A. Secret things:

- 1) Deuteronomy 29:29
- 2) Revealed things belong to us—promises belong to us, they are inheritance.
- 3) Matthew 6:22 –spiritual eyesight needs to be properly focused.

B. Spiritual explosion of faith

- 1) Romans 10:17
- 2) Allow God to bless you by obedience

- 3) Make the scripture the standard by which all things are judged.
- 4) Make the scripture the source for victory.

Conclusion:

- 1) It is not enough to like the sermon.
- 2) It is not enough to agree with the doctrine.
- 3) It is not enough to approve of the Pastor.
- 4) It is not enough to say you agree with the Word.

It is only when you make the choice to be a doer that you will live in victory and bring the Kingdom. If you decide to be a doer of the Word, don't stop until the Word works!

Deliverance

Texts: Mark 6:12-13, Mark 16:17, Luke 4:18

Deliver—*Eleutheroo*—to set free—Romans 8:31-32

Deliver—*Thuomai*—to rescue from, to preserve from and so, to deliver—
synonymous with SOZO to save—Romans 11:26; II Corinthians 1:10; II
Timothy 4:17-18

Oppression—*Katadunaateuo*—to exercise power over. *Kataponeo*—to tire
down with toil, exhaust with labor, to afflict, oppress!

Possession—ownership not external pressure!

Satan—origin—all spirits created by God. Colossians 1:15. Satan fell—Isaiah
14:12, Ezekiel 28:15; Revelation 12:4-9

Demons—*Daimon*—inferior diety, Matthew 8:31, devils? Means evil spirit—
fallen angels—meaning shadows.

Their Task: Spiritual agents of idolatry—Disseminate error among believers,
familiar spirits among mediums, spiritualism, tremble before God, helpers
that act under Satan—Revelation 16:13-14—tempt with unclean thoughts—
mind is attached first—differ in degrees of wickedness— Matthew 12:45.

Ranking—Romans 8:38—Angels, Principalities, powers

Principalities and powers—higher ranks—rulers such as those in Daniel 10:13,
and 10:20.

Demons—not spirits of evil dead—not disembodied spirits of pre-Adamic race.

They—Seek to inhabit human bodies in order to indulge and express sinful and
lustful natures—have all attributes of personality, possessing minds, emotions, and
wills. They are personal enemies—to be dealt with by blood.

Christians should always consider demons as trespassers and undesirables—I Peter
1:18, I Corinthians 6:19-20.

A trespasser is anyone who unlawfully and stealthily encroaches on the territory of
another—you belong to Jesus!

Entry is gained as a direct result of disobedience to God—I Samuel 15:1-9.

Continual indulgence of carnal appetites—Romans 6:12 or Ephesians 4:27—Sin—Galatians 5—list of flesh.

Unexpected sorrow or shock—

Before birth—Exodus 34:6-7

Psychic or occult experimentation—Deuteronomy 31:16

Doctrinal error—I Timothy 4:1

NOT by inheritance—Psalm 47:4

Not all problems are caused by demons—don't hunt in doorknobs! Old man—old nature must die before dealing with demons; power works against evil spirits not against people! Deliverance is not a substitute for self-discipline.

I. Determining Need:

A. If conditions compel, shame, defile, or torment

B. If constantly defy other spiritual disciplines; such as prayer, fasting—

You can live a competent Christian life and not be delivered—although you are more effective if you are delivered! Check-up! Daily—for self—prayer.

C. Discernment—I Corinthians 12:10

D. Detection—observation—Mark 7:24-30

1) Emotional problems

2) Mental problems

3) Speech problems

4) Sex problems

5) Addictions

6) Physical infirmities

7) Religious error

II. Steps to Deliverance

A. Humble self—James 4:6b-7. Choose between self

B. Honesty—Psalm 32:5, 139:23-24—call same name in self as you call it in others—no fancy psychological names!

C. Confession—God hasn't changed—requires it of you!

D. Repentance—Renouncing—Proverbs 28:13—turn with heart and will—turn for spiritual growth—Matthew 3:7-8. A clean break with Satan—all items in life and home—Deuteronomy 23:7—household cursed—for symbols.

E. Forgiveness—I John 1:9; Matthew 6:14-15, 18:21-35

F. Prayer—Joel 2:32—call and be delivered!

III. Biblical Authority

A. Matthew 10:1; Luke 4:18

B. Matthew 10:8; Mark 3:14

C. Luke 10:17-20; Matthew 28:20

D. Mark 16:17; Acts 2:38-39—delegated authority!

IV. Retention

- A. Put on whole armor of God—Ephesians 6:10-18
- B. Confess positively
- C. Stay in Scripture—James 1:22-25; Psalm 1:1-3
- D. Crucify flesh—Luke 9:23; Galatians 5:19-21, 24
- E. Develop life of praise and prayer—I Thessalonians 5:17; I Corinthians 14:15-16
- F. Maintain a life of fellowship and spiritual ministry—I Corinthians 12:7-14
- G. Commit self totally to Christ—Ephesians 6:16

V. Occult in forms

- A. Divination—revelation, prediction, especially fortunetelling
- B. Witchcraft—spells, charms, chants, hypnosis, or dominion
- C. Sorcery—charms, music, dancing, drugs

VI. Attacks mind first—Curses

- A. Deuteronomy 23:2-10—generational curses
- B. Household—Deuteronomy 23:7

Prayer—Bondage of Mind

Father, I come in the name of Jesus, to break the curse of bondage on myself and demonic hold in psychic power, physical, mental illness, or curses as a result of my previous choices. I ask for an open mind that is receptive to the Holy Spirit that I might be controlled by Christ—have the mind of Christ—I repent and rebuke all occult bondage and open myself to Christ.

Pattern—Evil spirits are *PHEUMA*—usually exhaled—manifestation pray prayer of confession then remain silent and I will complete prayer—then ask for refilling of Spirit of God!

Prayer—Lord Jesus, I believe you're the Son of God, died on the Cross for my sins and was raised again (name the sins-silently). I confess all my sins (name them). I renounce my sins and contact with Satan (name how if you know it) and renounce all occult powers and, in particular (name them). Now I have renounced all occult oppression. I also willingly forgive all who have hurt or wronged me as I would have God forgive me. I believe You have forgiven me, cleansed me, and I am acceptable—to You. I forgive myself and accept myself for what I am in Christ—and renounce every evil spirit that has affected me—leave now in the name of Jesus! In Jesus name—Amen!

Prayer by Pastor: In the name of Jesus—Satan you are commanded to cease your activities here—you are bound and cannot and will not harm nor torment those present nor their families—I am serving notice on you in the name of Jesus, and you will release the people when spoken to—Thank you Father for your victory in Jesus and His blood—as (and I name the oppression), I thank you that it will leave. In Jesus name—Amen!

Emotional—fear, envy, pride, jealousy, resentment, hatred, rebellion, violence, murder, rejection, self-pity, despair, despondency . . .
Thought—doubt, unbelief, confusion, insanity.

Deliverance

Deliverance goes after prayer and before Biblical Authority

I. General Guidelines

- A. Pray before meeting to minister
- B. Remember that you have authority and use it.
- C. Always have at least one other person with you in ministry
- D. The individual can help by:
 - 1) Reading deliverance scripture accounts out loud.
 - 2) Discerning spirits especially the strongman
 - 3) Identifying spirits either by activity or name.
- E. Always have the person come to church for ministry unless on the mission field.

II. Plead the blood of Jesus over everyone for protection and direction.

- A. Bind the demons so they can't cause distraction, harm, or injury to the person being delivered or the ministry team.
- B. Use authority if demons speak or act out other than doing what they are commanded to do in Jesus name.
- C. Always pray with your eyes open so you can see what is happening such as resistance or rebellion by the demon acting through the person—choking or talking back.
- D. Command the spirit—demon—to come out peacefully and immediately in the name of Jesus and go to Him to be dealt with as He sees fit—it cannot stay in the person, team members, the church, or the location where ministry is taking place.

III. Instructions for the person being delivered.

- A. Do not pray—just listen and respond when directed—you cannot transmit and receive at the same time.
- B. Repeat when asked to renounce or claim your status in Jesus.
- C. Remember that the minister is talking—commanding—the demons, not you unless specifically addressed.
- D. Know that you are safe in Jesus and will be free.
- E. Watch for body changes—where Satan is resisting through the person.
 - 1) Eyes appear recessed with dark circles under them.
 - 2) Voice changes to gravely and deep.
 - 3) Skin can appear gray and chalky.
 - 4) Throwing up a bile or liquid that does not come from the stomach.

F. Replace with anointing of the Holy Spirit—Matthew 12:34.

IV. Remember—summary

A. Deliverance is part of healing—beginning with the inside.

B. It is the removal of demonic spirits that have trespassed on God’s property.

C. The Holy Spirit is called to replace the evil that was in control but is no longer.

D. Pay more attention to God and His Word than to demon.

E. Christians cannot be possessed—owned—but they can be oppressed and influenced because the demons have trespassed.

F. Remember the tools of Name, Blood, and Word.

G. Remember to praise when finished.

Depression—Dealing with Depression

Test: Romans 12:19-22; John 14:16-20, 16:19-24

When you confess to God your feelings about depression you are not telling Him anything He doesn’t already know. Jesus experienced these same feelings while on earth. By admitting and examining depression, the first positive step is taken toward healing!

I. Living Beyond Your Means

A. You have limitations—physical, emotional, & spiritual

1) Recognize the needs

a. Wants versus needs

2) Stay within the limits

B. Be consistent—habitual abuse beyond limits results in chronic—neglect/stress—depression—possibly even clinical (chemical/medical) or pathological (behavior pattern)

Illustration: A man with an identity crisis, also had an energy crisis. He didn’t know who he was and was just too tired to find out!

C. God does not suspend His laws—even if you are in the Lord’s service.

D. He does not make cosmic pets out of preachers, missionaries, high achievers and over-committed church workers.

E. They still come under the laws He has built into our bodies and emotions.

F. You cannot regularly violate these laws and expect to get away with it! Whether you pay now or pay later, you will pay for the violation.

G. What kind of load are you carrying? Who do you think you are? This is one of the perfectionist problems!

Illustration: In the emergency room after a suicide attempt, the body needs food— proteins—first, then you need rest! Different perspective, same needs! Depression is a built in indicator that something is wrong—out of balance—trying to live above realistic possibilities. When slave-drive of perfectionism

causes you with a sense of ‘ought’ to overstrain your emotional motor—the price paid is chronic depression.

H. Always someone else’s responsibility

I. Entitlement mentality

II. What about your Reactions?

A. Events are not as important as your response!

- 1) Some responses produce chain reactions
- 2) These can lead to emotional/spiritual depression
- 3) A blow to ego?
- 4) Disappointed badly?
- 5) Deep hurt or loss?
- 6) Response of friends: You shouldn’t feel this way if you are a real Christian.
- 7) Win war and get killed by sniper—Elijah in I Kings 19:2
- 8) God used emergency room techniques—
 - a. Ravens fed Elijah—protein
 - b. Followed by sleep
 - c. Re-oriented perception; not the only one—7,500 others with you!

B. Three primary reactions that lead to depression (cause depression from problems).

1) Indecision

- a. Cope by putting off decisions.
- b. If so, you have built-in depressor—cause you to lose peace of mind and feel trapped.
- c. Use energy for constructive purposes not worry, fear, or indecision.
- d. Postpone decisions because you don’t want to say ‘no’?
 - aa. Postpone because you don’t want to hurt someone—end up causing twice as much damage?
 - bb. Afraid to say ‘yes’ because of the fear of responsibility or risk?
 - cc. The result is being double minded.
 - dd. James 1:8—unstable in all ways!

2) Anger

- a. Depression is ‘frozen rage’.
- b. Result of not resolving some area of anger in your life.
- c. Depression follows unresolved, repressed or improperly expressed anger—like night follows day.

3) Injustice

- a. Perfectionists have a very disproportionate sense of justice and injustice.
- b. Feel a deep need to right the wrongs.
 - aa. Wants to pull up weeds in the wheat!
 - bb. Feeling is valuable but must be controlled.
- c. Sense of injustice must:
 - aa. Be surrendered
 - bb. Be cleansed
 - cc. Be controlled by Holy Spirit.
- 4) Unresolved sense of injustice results in:
 - a. Destructive behavior
 - b. Depression
 - c. Disruption of personal relationships
- 5) Most depressed perfectionists have a terrific sense of injustice and unfairness.
 - a. The answer is forgiveness.
 - b. Parents or family is the major source of problems.
 - c. Deal honestly with angry roots.
 - d. Face resentments.
 - e. Forgive by choice.

III. A Story of Forgiveness

- A. Mary and Martha, even though sisters, were opposites.
 - 1) Mary was a blond, outgoing, and vivacious.
 - 2) Martha was a brunette, quiet, and talented.
- B. Martha had problem with man she dated.
 - 1) Depression, anger, and faultfinding with him.
 - 2) Loved him but also wanted to hurt him.
 - 3) It scared her, so she needed to replace anger with love.
- C. Problem was sister; she had anger and unforgiveness.
 - 1) Comparison to sister by parents
 - 2) Comparison to sister by others.
 - 3) Felt injustices of comparisons.
 - 4) Memories healed by God—
 - 5) Depressions now merely normal mood changes.
 - 6) Discovered self to be different person—real her!
 - 7) Was set free to be happy and fulfilled!
- D. Is there frozen anger somewhere in your life?
 - 1) To your parents?
 - 2) To your family?
 - 3) Angry at God?

- 4) Hold God responsible for a grief?
 - a. Forgive spouse or family member and receive grace also.
 - aa. Do not have right to ‘feel’ and act on it.
 - bb. Forgive others also for being unable to meet some needs.
 - cc. Often refuse to forgive people who have authority over you.
 1. Romans 12:19-22—don’t allow self to be overpowered—don’t take offense!
 2. Ephesians 4:32—be kind, and forgive one another.

When you surrender your anger and over-sensitivity to injustice and unfairness, you won’t have trouble with self-pity, and depressions will lessen immediately.

IV. Luther and Suggestions: Martin Luther wrote much about depression; He had an unhappy childhood, strict religious upbringing, and he fought low self-esteem and depression. He suggested:

- A. Avoid being alone—isolation is equal to alienation.
- B. Seek help from others—during depression perceptions change—real friends can help you see; seek joy.
- C. Sing! Make Music—King Saul and David—I Samuel 16:14-23.
- D. Praise and give thanks as in II Timothy 1 and I Thessalonians 5:18.
- E. Lean heavily on power of God’s Word. Out of 150 Psalms 48 speak to the condition. The list is as follows: 6, 13, 18, 23, 25, 27, 31, 32, 34, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 46, 51, 55, 57, 62, 63, 69, 71, 73, 77, 84, 86, 90, 91, 94, 95, 103, 104, 107, 110, 116, 118, 121, 123, 124, 130, 138, 139, 141, 142, 143, 146, and 147. Read them aloud! Listen!
- F. Rest confidently in the presence of God’s Spirit. The secret of deliverance is hope—certainty—in Christ Jesus that He will indeed meet all needs and never leave you. Psalm 42:5. With the help of His Countenance—Face today the presence of the Holy Spirit!
- G. Jesus asked this help for His disciples as in John 14:16-20.
- H. Jesus promises us the Holy Spirit (Paraclete—the One called alongside) Regardless of how you feel, Jesus is with you!
- I. Jesus assured disciples of both His presence and victory in which they have a part as in John 16:19-24.

Are you living beyond your means or limits? Are you responding biblically? Are you forgiving? Are you depending on Jesus?

Depression—A Form of Depression

There are many different kinds of depression. The one we're looking at now is caused by damaged emotions—spiritual distortion—called Perfectionism!

There is a great difference in Christian perfection—in Christ—and perfectionism—of man. Christian perfection is holiness, sanctification, or the Spirit-filled life. Perfectionism is a counterfeit; it produces spiritual Pharisees and emotional neurotics.

Early pastors, such as John Fletcher—a contemporary of John Wesley, were tormented with imagined guilt, heavy burdens of own making. John Wesley was one who condemned self, and had a tenderness of conscience carried to extreme—prayed and recovered a sound mind. A pastor in an early century wrote the book, “The Spiritual Treatment of Sufferers from Nerves and Scruples.”

Text: Isaiah 53:4-6, 12; Matthew 11:28-30

Perfectionism is the most disturbing emotional problem among evangelical Christians—most prevalent—least addressed.

I. Symptoms

A. Tyranny of Oughts

- 1) Never doing well enough or good enough.
- 2) Permeates all of life, affects spiritual lives.
 - a. Ought to do better
 - b. Ought to have done better
 - c. Ought to be able to do better
- 3) Three favorite phrases used—
 - a. could have
 - b. should have
 - c. would have

B. Self-Depreciation

- 1) Don't feel good enough
- 2) Not satisfied with achievements
- 3) Results in feeling God doesn't think we are good enough
 - a. You and God can't both be in first place. Who is in charge?
 - b. You require first place in activities, but God doesn't always require it of you.
 - c. Increase efforts and demands on self to 'measure up' which will never happen, but you keep trying.

C. Anxiety

- 1) Oughts and self-depreciation produce over-sensitive conscience with a lot of guilt, anxiety, and condemnation.
- 2) You try revivals, prayer, and 'deeper commitment' to no avail.

3) You sense Divine disapproval and comprehensive condemnation.

D. Legalism

1) Being over scrupulous and legalistic with over emphasis on externals do's and don'ts usually accompanies oughts, self-depreciation, and over sensitivity because—

- a. Sensitive to what others think
- b. Doesn't think God approves, so seeks approval of others.
- c. Apostle Paul—Galatians 1:5—halo turn to yoke of bondage.
- d. Can't win God's approval; His love is a gift!
- e. Listen to worldly local legalists, regulations, diluters, and revisionists.
- f. Immature but sensitive believers can become guilt-ridden, too tight haloes, unhappy and uncomfortable as well as ineffective. Frigid in outlook, critical, fearful, loveless, and conforming to approval and disapproval of others—they transmit their spiritual condition to others!

E. Anger

1) All of the above result in a developing of:

- a. Resentment against oughts
- b. Resentment against the Christian faith
- c. Resentment against Christians
- d. Resentment against Self
- e. Resentment against God—at least against their false image of God.

2) Turn loose of anger and accept grace.

F. Denial

1) Anger is denied.

2) Mixture of bad theology, legalism, and salvation by performance become immobilizing.

3) Result is emotional problems, mood changes—seems like two different people.

4) Stress of incorrect perception that:

- a. Living with self that is not liked.
- b. Living with a God you can't love.
- c. Living with people whom you can't get along with.

The results are a break away—turning away from faith. Believes with head but cannot believe with his heart. Can't live up to faith so he leaves it behind and

breaks away—then being miserable—leaves all behind. Or a breakdown being unable to function or cope with life.

One professor, missionary, ended this way and said he was a burden to his wife and useless to God and others. He couldn't preach, teach, or even read his bible; because he invented, in his mind, an impossible God; an ungracious, unloving, and unpleasable God; his perception of God's demands being too high to reach. His personal opinion of himself was too low. His ability to meet the standards was not possible. He felt condemnation toward himself. He thought God used love against the believer because of lack of performance.

II. Cure—the only cure is Grace—unmerited favor of God which is freely given, unearned, undeserved, and not repayable.

A. Often need inner-healing of emotions, and this requires re-programming of bad conditioning left from teachers, parents, and church.

B. Perfectionists programmed

- 1) Unrealistic expectations
- 2) Impossible performance
- 3) Conditional love
- 4) Theology of works

C. Need mind renewed

- 1) Not done overnight
- 2) Includes Spirit-filled Christians By:
 - keeping journal of honest feelings
 - reading good books
 - memorizing scripture
 - spend time in prayer
 - positive
 - specific
 - biblical
 - expectant Results in:
 - true freedom
 - peace
 - love
 - joy
 - power
 - discipleship

III. Healing Process—Perfectionism is the constant and all-pervading feeling of never quite measuring up, being good enough or pleasing to self, others, or God.

A. Which produces a distorted picture of God, and feelings of doubt, anger, and rebellion.

B. Begin by:

- 1) Abandoning all ideas of a quick cure
- 2) Part of the disease is looking for a cure just around the corner.
- 3) Give up the “if only’s”
 - a. Each desperate grasp is a search for magic not a miracle.
 - b. Healing is a process:
 - aa. Mind—concepts
 - bb. Feelings—emotions
 - cc. Relationships
 - dd. Perceptions
 - ee. Downgrading evaluations
 - ff. Memories

D. God will be pleased with you

- 1) God will be with you
- 2) God’s grace will be with you
- 3) Grace is not a commodity given by God—even though it is unmerited favor.
- 4) Grace is God coming to you—II Corinthians 12:9; I Corinthians 6:23; Galatians 6:18; Philippians 4:23
Prayer, “Thank You, Lord, that You are healing me according to Your perfect schedule.”

E. Root Causes—Emotional problems result from the kind of life we saw as we looked through the relational windows of childhood. Developed concept of Heavenly Father from earthly parents and often feelings become intertwined and confused. Guilt and contradictory feelings not the voice of God! Most of our basic patterns of relating come from relationship of family.

- 1) Unpleasable parents
 - a. Little affirmation
 - b. Much criticismUnpleasable parents and conditional love produce unreachable goals and unattainable standards.
- 2) Unpredictable home situations
 - a. Greatest hurt for children is injustice
 - b. Never know whether you get a ‘hug’ or ‘slug’, and couldn’t figure reason for action.
 - c. Often see God as unpredictable, irrational or unrealistic.
 - d. Unclear signals produce emotional cripples and perfectionists.

Need: time, counsel, support, and prayer. In prayer you must receive reprogramming, renewing, sharing, as in James 5:16.

F. Cower—Power

- 1) Causing people to be hurt by injustice, hurt, accusation, condemnation, or humiliation.

-D—ependent

-O—rder

-O—f

-R—eally

-M—eek

-A—and

-T—imid

-S—ouls

Motto: The meek shall inherit the earth, if that's O.K. with everybody!

Abuse—inner-conflict, violent emotional conflict.

G. Rage—

- 1) Healing requires the courage to unmask anger and bring it before God and put it at the Cross where it belongs.
- 2) Most perfectionists are angry.
- 3) When you experience a response on your part that is way out of proportion to stimulus. Then look out because you tapped into deep emotional hurt.
- 4) Not scripture nor prayer can remove rage—repent and allow God to restore—by asking for forgiveness and granting it.
- 5) In-depth change results.

H. Justification of God.

- 1) Basic inner resentment is really anger against injustice and says that the person with difficulty didn't choose to be involved in the problem or even be born. Hurts, scars, illnesses and humiliations are unjust!
- 2) The correction for the problem is Not perfection but is the Cross. The Cross removes undeserved suffering and punishment!
- 3) God is Truth
 - a. For all people
 - b. About us and our needs
 - c. On Cross Jesus bore—absorbed—all injustices, pain, and rejection.
 - d. Puts into the sea of forgiveness and forgetfulness.
 - e. Jesus understands, receives, and heals—Matthew 26:26-28

“Jesus—our Wounded Healer, I give You all the Broken pieces of my life and ask that You put them together again and make me whole. Thank You. Amen!”

Depression—Myths and Truths about Depression

Depression is a common experience among Christians! A ‘depressed Christian’? The words are contradictory and incompatible. One might think that ‘true’ Christians or ‘spirit-filled’ Christians would not suffer from depression. Not So! Again one might think that these ‘depressed people’ need to get straight with the Lord . . . that there is sin in their lives. They often think, ‘I’ll get help next week.’ This does not square with scripture or the bibliographies of the saints!

Depression is defined as let down, helplessness, hopelessness, fear, loss of control, listlessness, expecting the worst results, or vain imaginations.

Texts: Psalm 42:5-6, I Kings 19:4, Matthew 26:38

I. Christians can be depressed

A. Symptoms

- 1) Miserable countenance
- 2) Tears
- 3) Loss of appetite
- 4) Feed on despair

B. Scripture more kind than some Christians

- 1) Saints had problems
- 2) Wesley spoke from depression, doubt, dejection

C. Must acknowledge depression to deal with it.

- 1) Is depression an acquaintance? A Friend? That shouldn’t be!
- 2) Denial compounds the issue by adding guilt and feelings of failure.

D. Depression is not a sign of spiritual failure.

- 1) Can be letdown after spiritual success.
- 2) Elijah on Mt. Carmel is an example.
- 3) Abraham also is an example.

E. Often Christian friends can be worst enemy.

- 1) Some have little understanding.
- 2) Others have strong temperament, or constitution.

II. Depression and Guilt

A. Depression can come from guilt of sin.

- 1) Known sin.
- 2) Known disobedience.

Concrete, specific feeling of guilt related to a given incident or attitude is usually reliable.

- 4) Vague, generalized feelings of condemnation, anxiety—usually depression from emotional sources not a given incident.

Sin can lead to depression but not all depression comes from sin!

B. Roots of Depression can run deep.

- 1) From Childhood
- 2) From incidents when not able to cope, control

III. Depression and Personality

A. Depression is related to:

- 1) Personality structure
- 2) Physical make-up
- 3) Body chemistry
- 4) Glandular functions
- 5) Emotional patterns
- 6) Learned concepts and feelings.

B. Nursery rhyme sense—Jack Sprat/wife—not the same!

C. *New birth as a Christian does not take away old temperament!*

- 1) II Corinthians 4:7, 7:5; and I Corinthians 2:3

D. Failure to deal realistically with ourselves regarding depression is root cause of much of our depression.

E. There **Is** a relationship between our natural temperament and our supernatural spiritual lives.

Both faith and feeling operate through the same personality equipment.

F. Often depression comes from sources outside of spiritual because something has gone wrong with equipment—balance in personality or emotions—transmitter/receiver?

IV. Acceptance of Your Personality

- A. Accept personality
- B. Acknowledge temperament
- C. Accept self as you are—
- D. Give **Real You** to Christ—
- E. Let Christ use you—

V. Know Jesus is the Answer

- A. Spiritual
- B. Physical
- C. Emotional
- D. Natural response
- E. Greater is He that is in me—

Doubt, Thief of God's Greater Blessings

Texts: Matthew 14:22-31, 17:14-20; Mark 4:35-40

Central truth is Doubt will rob the believer of God's best for his life.

In studying the memory verse in Mark 11:23. "***I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.***", from a positive point of view, looking at the various ingredients to a perfect faith in God. Let us concentrate on the phrase, "and shall not doubt in his heart," looking at some examples of doubt which we find in familiar Bible stories.

Faith to walk on water—Matthew 14:22-31

Verse 22: ***And straightway Jesus constrained His disciples to get into a ship, and to go before Him unto the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.***

Verse 23: ***And when he had sent the multitudes away, He went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, He was there alone.***

Verse 24: ***But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.***

Verse 25: ***And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.***

Verse 26: ***And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.***

Verse 27: ***But straightway Jesus spake unto them saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.***

Verse 28: ***And Peter answered Him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.***

Verse 29: ***And He said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.***

Verse 30: ***But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.***

Verse 31: ***And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?***

In this story Jesus sent His disciples across the sea while He went alone to a mountain to pray. In the fourth watch of the night (between four and six o'clock the next morning) the disciples saw Jesus walking toward them on the water. Thinking they were seeing a ghost, they cried out with fear. Then Jesus spoke reassuringly, "***It is I, be not afraid.***"

Impetuous Peter shouted, "***Lord, if it is really you, then bid me come to you on the water.***"

Jesus answered with one word, "***Come.***"

Peter started out in faith and as long as he kept his eyes on Jesus he did just fine. But when he took his eyes off Jesus and looked at the circumstances surrounding

him, when he saw the wind whipping the sea about him, he became afraid and began to sink. “*Lord, save me!*” he called to Jesus.

Jesus took Peter’s hand in His and led him safely back into the ship, after rebuking him with the words, “*O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*”

Faith is acting upon the Word of God. Jesus had said, “*Come,*” and as long as Peter acted upon that word, he was all right. But when he began to doubt, when he quit acting on the words of Jesus, he began to sink. Doubt robbed him of the best that God had for him. Jesus didn’t intend that Peter should sink. He meant for Peter to walk back to the ship with Him. But doubt robbed Peter of this blessing.

Peter became afraid and doubted. Doubt and fear go hand in hand, but faith and love go hand in hand. “*Perfect love casteth out fear.*”—I John 4:18.

Faith to cast out devils—Matthew 17:14-20

Verse 14: *And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying,*

Verse 15: *Lord, have mercy on my son: For he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for often times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.*

Verse 16: *And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.*

Verse 17: *Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me.*

Verse 18: *And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hours.*

Verse 19: *Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?*

Verse 20: *And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.*

In the above passage of scripture, what was Jesus’ explanation for the disciples’ failure to heal the demon-possessed boy? It was because of their doubt, or unbelief—verse 20.

But did the disciples actually have the power to cast the demon out? The answer to this question is found in Matthew 10:1, “**And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.**”

How often do we hear Christians say that they need more power in order to do more for God? However, that is not the trouble at all. If they have the Holy Spirit, they have the power. They think that if they had more power, it would work automatically; but it works by faith. The problem is a lack of faith, not a lack of

power. It is doubt that is robbing them of God's best. Jesus didn't tell these disciples that they couldn't cast out the devil because they didn't have the power. He said, ***"Because of your unbelief."***

How much faith does it take to cast out demons? Jesus said in the above passage that faith no bigger than a grain of mustard seed could move an entire mountain. Every Spirit-filled believer has within him enough power to claim God's very best for his life. If he is living beneath his privileges, it is not because of a lack of power but because of a failure to release that power through faith.

Faith to still a storm—Mark 4:35-40

Verse 35: ***And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side.***

Verse 36: ***And when they had sent away the multitude. They took Him even as He was in the ship. And there were also with Him other little ships.***

Verse 37: ***And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.***

Verse 38: ***And He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake Him, and say unto Him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?***

Verse 39: ***And He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.***

Verse 40: ***And He said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?***

In the evening after a full day of preaching to the multitudes that thronged Him, Jesus told His disciples gathered about Him in a boat, "Let us pass over unto the other side." As He was very weary, He went to the back of the ship where He promptly fell asleep. In a sound sleep, He was oblivious to the storm that arose. As the howling winds grew more vicious and their boat filled with water, threatening to capsize, the disciples ran to Jesus. Awakened Him and said, "Don't you even care that our boat's about to sink and we'll all die?" They had forgotten Christ's words as they started out on their journey, "Let us pass over unto the other side."

Jesus stood, rebuked the wind and stilled the storm until the sea was once again calm and peaceful. Then He turned to His disciples and rebuked them. "Why did you doubt Me? Why are you so full of fear? Where is your faith? Didn't I tell you at the outset of this journey that we would cross to the other side? Why didn't you believe me?" The disciples had allowed doubt and fear to come into their hearts, driving out faith in Christ's promise that they would make it safely to the other side. Once again the thief called "Doubt" had triumphed.

Let us look at these three Biblical s and notice the similarities in each. Point out the scriptures in each one in which Christ rebuked the disciples for their unbelief—Matthew 14:31, 17: 20; Mark 4:40.

In each instance Jesus solved the problem which the disciples, through their lack of faith, had failed to solve. Point out the scripture in each story in which Jesus brought the deliverance that was necessary—Matthew 14:31, 17:18; Mark 4:39.

In every instance the disciples possessed the power to handle each circumstance. Peter had the power to walk on water, as evidenced in the fact that he started out walking on the water and began to sink only when he became fearful and began to doubt. The disciples had the power to deliver the demon-possessed boy, but failed only because of their lack of faith. The disciples had the power to still the storm which threatened their lives, for Jesus had promised that they would “pass over unto the other side.”

In every instance that thief of doubt kept the disciples from receiving God’s best for them. His highest and best for their lives was for them to receive by their faith. If we will but utilize the power that is within us and act on God’s Word, we will achieve God’s greatest blessings that He has planned for our lives.

Memory Text: “For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.”—Mark 11:23.

The lesson in action: “But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only . . .”—James 1:22.

Chapter 5 'E'

Elections—Where is God in All of This

Text: I Samuel 1-21

Well, the election is over. Many will have withdrawal from lack of campaigning, but the true impact and effect is just beginning.

I always give a Word from the Lord about electing Godly leaders on Election Day. This is a Word from the Lord about the result of the American people rejecting Him and doing what they want. It is a prophetic Word that you will see unfold as time goes on and more of Scripture is fulfilled daily.

We are indeed living in Matthew 24 (Read it and be prepared!). The world—as well as America—is in a mess and no one person can get it straightened out, but it is easy to support people who tickle your ears and tell you what you want to hear. People respond to needs and feelings, including wants, far more than they do the Word of God. Many have bought into the false concept that the government is here to give to you and support you—not so! What is the result when people realize that the elected one cannot fix the situation and will not make it better? What will it take to turn people to God? Persecution? It's coming knocking at the door! How about tragedy? Attacks? Shariah Law? Too late then!

The Bible is coming true before your eyes one world government and a completely secular society that wants nothing to do with God. His Word will be preached around the world then the end shall come—His Word will come to pass regardless of man's perverted efforts of war, politics, religion, or people.

Where is God in all of this? He is allowing based on His Word and the choices of people. He is there just like He was with the three Hebrew children thrown into the fiery furnace, or Daniel into the lion's den, or the Israel in Babylon who hung harps on trees—no joy—no song!

In I Samuel 8:1-21 it tells of the people wanting a king not to follow God—and how God gave them what they wanted. It's the same today! So is the result of rejecting God.

I asked God about a Godly leader. Why He allowed a leader that was against His Word to be elected into office. Why He would have a man who is set on socialism, and support of the world instead of God. God answered me. **He said that it is because America has rejected God and because of it America is already under judgment.** That the elected leader Barak Hussein Muhammad Obama was an instrument in the judgment just like Nebuchadnezzar was in Babylon. Further, He said that America is in the same place Israel was in when they went into bondage.

Christians are called to obey the law in as much as it does not go against the Word of God. They are to support what God loves and reject, expose and speak against what is not of God.

I and II Chronicles reveal that based on the godlessness of the people God gave them leaders of like mind! But note this—Exodus 20:3-6 tells us to trust God and only Him. It truly isn't a matter of who is elected because God is ultimately in control and will use, even evil men, to bring about His plans—and we are heading toward the end. The president is merely a reflection of the majority of the people—their heart and thinking! The president will have distress to cope with as will all nations in this time in history.

I. Know that good things came from the Christian faith.

- A. In national history
- B. In individual lives
- C. In missions
- D. In our country
- E. In helping the world

II. USA is under Judgment—Proverbs 24:21-22—Change

- A. Israel—bondage
- B. USA is the same
- C. In bondage to world
- D. Ignorant—selfish

III. God selects leaders—Daniel 5:21—Obamanomics \$

- A. Saul as king
- B. Distress in nations—Luke 21:25
- C. Obama—history in Kenya and support of overthrow

IV. Christian Response

- A. Pray faith
- B. Pray the Word—Romans 10:17
- C. Support God
- D. Oppose evil
- E. Pray for leaders—I Timothy 2:1-2
 - 1) Attitude
 - 2) Wisdom
 - 3) Do God's will even if they are against it—I Thessalonians 5:17-18
 - 4) Pray without ceasing
 - 5) Give thanks in all things not for them

God's Word is certain and will come to pass. Believe it and live by it!

I invite you to follow and trust God in spite of circumstances.

It's time for God's people to win souls.

Emotions—Damaged Emotions

Text: Matthew 8:17, Romans 8:26-27

Christians with problems:

- Sincere
- Spirit filled
- Searching—not advice, Scripture, nor prayer helped.

Two Groups:

- 1) Futile—loss of confidence
 - a. Pray
 - b. Pay
 - c. Profess
- 2) Phoniness;
 - a. Repress inner feelings
 - b. Covered problems with veneer of Scripture, theological terms, unrealistic platitudes.
 - c. Denial—reappearance of illnesses, eccentricities, unhappy marriages, and often emotional destruction of children.

Special area of Need:

- 1) Between sins—Spiritual need—and sickness—physical—lies the area of infirmities.

Illustration: Rings in a tree tell story of its injury, fire, storm, etc. It is the same with our lives. Beneath surface is the story of hurts that need healing.

- 2) In rings of thought, emotions, memories are recorded and are alive.
- 3) Memories affect concepts, feelings, relationships—to include how we look at God, others, and ourselves.
- 4) New birth is not the answer—inner-healing of damaged emotions is the answer!
- 5) By fruit you know them—Matthew 7:16—but also by roots you shall understand and not judge them.
- 6) Hurts, scars, wrong programming
- 7) Not fakes, phonies or hypocrites
- 8) Spiritual compared to what? Your past? Their past?

Certain areas of lives need healing from Holy Spirit and these areas are not subject to ordinary prayer, discipline and willpower. They need a special kind of understanding and unlearning of past wrong programming, and a relearning and reprogramming transformation by renewal of our minds. This is by choice and is not done overnight!

Evidence of Damaged Emotions

- 1) Deep sense of unworthiness
 - a. Anxiety
 - b. Inadequacy
 - c. Inferiority—Needs Balm of Gilead—Gospel to penetrate Soul as well as Spirit—heal damaged inner-self.

2) Perfectionist complex

- a. Groping
- b. Striving
- c. Feeling guilty
- d. Driven—trying but never pleasing; i.e. placing knives, forks, plates on table, report cards, parishioners, etc.

Sick people produce sick theologies—keeps people from Kingdom!

3) Supersensitive people

- a. Reached for love and got the opposite
- b. Sees and feels what others often do not
- c. Need a lot of approval—never quite enough
- d. Try to get even by often knowingly:
 - aa. Pushing
 - bb. Using money, authority, position, sex, even sermons

4) Fearful people

- a. Greatest fear is failure
- b. Try to compensate by not participating in life, constant excuse and criticism, i.e. referee unfair, don't like rules, etc.
- c. Fearful of choosing—make excuses
- d. Decisions are difficult
- e. Faith is hard
- f. Discipline is difficult
- g. Usually live on 'if only'—
- h. Defeated
- i. Indecisive

5) Damaged sexually

- a. Abuse—molestation
- b. Homosexuality
- c. Religious condemnation
- d. I Corinthians 2:2

Divine Repairs

- 1) Face problem squarely—James 5:16
- 2) Accept your responsibility in the matter: your response to being a victim? Responsible for actions!
- 3) Ask yourself if you want to be healed—John 5:6
 - a. Want sympathy?
 - b. Want a crutch?
 - c. Face responsibility in matter?
- 4) Forgive everyone involved in your problem.
- 5) Forgive yourself!!

6) Ask Holy Spirit to show what the real problem is and how you need to pray—James 4:3

Enemy—Know Your Enemy—No Peaceful Co-existence

Text: Ephesians 6:10-17

When becoming a Christian—God begins a work in us calculated to conform us to the image of His Son, Jesus. The peaceful co-existence with evil forces terminated and we entered spiritual conflict when we came to Christ Jesus—Wage spiritual warfare for duration of time on earth. Principles of combat similar to modern-day combat . . .

Information:

- 1) Combat—strength, location, plans, desires, etc.
- 2) Terrain—location, weakness, etc.

Satan's Existence: The Battle is real even if you can't see Satan. A Myth?—Definitely not.

Ephesians 6:10-17 tells us clearly from Paul: Promotes disbelief/displays evidence to prove non-existence.

I. Who is He?

A. Old Testament wisest, most attractive and powerful angel—sinned against God and was removed (Israel 14:12-14 and Ezekiel 28:14-19; Revelations 12:11-12), Apostle Paul—I Peter 5:8—Lion

- 1) Destruction—governments, groups, individuals hostile to Christian faith.

B. Satan and evil angels—demons—are the absolute opposite of God—unimaginably evil, cruel, vile, malicious, filthy, disciplinable, corrupt

- 1) II Corinthians 11:14—angel of light—promising good but never delivering—Appearance of Good.

II. Objectives

A. Solicit worship of Satan himself

- 1) Thrown out of heaven
- 2) Tempted Jesus—Matthew 4:9
- 3) II Thessalonians 2:3, 9-10—last days of temptation
- 4) For loyalty—supernatural satanic powers.

B. Oppose process of salvation—II Corinthians 4:3-4

- 1) Saying Gospel is foolish
- 2) Removing Word before fruitful—Matthew 13:19
- 3) Acts 26:18—Paul turn to light

C. Attacks God's people

- 1) Attacking us is avenue of getting to God.
- 2) Attempt to deface the image of God—bring dishonor

- 3) Job 1-2
- 4) In lives of believers—Ananias in Acts 5:3
- 5) Known sin quenches Holy Spirit and inhibits usefulness
- D. Satan hinders the work of God.
 - 1) Thessalonians 2:18—Satan hindered Paul from getting to visit and minister to the people of Thessalonica
 - 2) Old Testament-Joshua—Zechariah 3:1—before the angel of the Lord and Satan at right side to resist him.

III. Methods of Attack

- A. Poses questions that will loosen the roots of faith
 - 1) Eve—Genesis 3:1—Is it true that . . . ?
 - 2) Cast doubt—you won't die
- B. Stimulates unlawful desire
 - 1) Eve—open your eyes like God's—pride.
 - 2) Promise of benefit or pleasure/scared by guilt, shame, emptiness
- C. Repeated attacks
 - 1) Luke 4—Jesus in temptation
 - 2) Self-help
 - 3) Shortcut God's plan
 - 4) On doorstep of first attack—after pride in resistance
- D. Approaches gradually
 - 1) Flee sin
 - 2) How is thought life?
 - 3) II Corinthians 10:5 is the solution—read it—casting down imagination captive to obedience of Christ.

IV. Overcoming your enemy—duck, dodge, ignore, pray, plead, or pretend?

- A. Maintain conviction that every trial and temptation will be beneficial
 - 1) James 1:2-3—make the truth yours
- B. Remember that Satan's power is absolutely limited; Hebrews 2:14-15—God's power is our protection—Satan on a chain
- C. Maintain resistance against Satan
 - 1) James 4:7—draw nigh to God—resist Satan
 - 2) Don't dilly dally with Satan
- D. Wear the armor of God
 - 1) Convinced of victory—shield of faith
 - 2) Use scripture properly as Jesus did—Sword of Lord—Spirit which is the Word of God.
 - 3) Knowledge of Bible—belt of truth
 - 4) Committed to responsibility—feet shod with Gospel of Peace
 - 5) Holy living—breastplate of righteousness—not dabble/sin

- 6) Christian hope—not worldly ambitions—helmet of salvation
- 7) Romans 13:12—armor of light—Jesus.

Evaluation—Spiritual Evaluation—It’s Time for a Spiritual Evaluation

Whenever someone receives a diagnosis that they have a life-threatening disease of illness, it is a signal that your whole life must change. I believe this point in the healing process is often overlooked by the medical professionals and ministerial leadership.

When a critical need for healing is faced, people will give you Scriptures; they will tell you how to release your faith and confess the Word. All of these things are good, but if your life is going the wrong direction, without a life change you will be sick again. An evaluation beyond the physical arena is needed.

A physical checkup in the natural includes an examination of the chemistry of the blood, the vital signs, the heart, and every part of the body. A spiritual checkup begins with some basic questions and honest responses, such as:

- Where am I in my relationship with God?
- Where am I in my life?
- Why am I living?
- What am I living for?
- What drives or motivates me?
- What are my goals and dreams?
- What’s wrong with the way I am living?
- Is everything okay with my focus, purpose, and direction?
- What can I change—Pride?
- What are my priorities—are they the same as God’s?
- Why should I live? What good am I doing for God, His Kingdom, and society? Is there a significant reason for me to live another day?

When people cannot answer these questions satisfactorily, whether they have a life-threatening disease or not, some take their lives in suicide. That’s *not* God’s plan for anyone, for He left a message of hope and purpose for you and me in Jeremiah 29:11—*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*

Making Excuses

Text: Luke 14:1-38

As we begin a new year, it is one of the few times that we have the opportunity to start fresh and new without the hindrances of the past. Whether it is attitudes, negative expectations, activities, habits, or bondages, we must choose to lay down every weight and sin that so easily besets us and run with patience the race set

before us—Hebrews 12:1. One of the hindrances that keep us from fulfilling our potential and bringing the Kingdom is –excuses!

Excuses are usually presented as logical reasons why something is not done or accomplished. It amounts to seeking pardon or forgiveness by attempting to transfer the blame from self to either others or circumstances supposedly beyond your control.

Examples:

Event	Excuse	Fact
Being late	Traffic	Didn't allow time
Missed event	Forgot	Didn't plan ahead
Unprepared	Busy	Procrastination
Missed seeing it	Lack of focus	Not a priority
Unaware	Didn't know	Didn't listen

Most excuses are due to the fact we are selfish and consider ourselves first. This can be true with how we relate and share the Gospel also. What is true physically is usually true spiritually.

Being lazy or inconsiderate are just two examples. The early church was not perfect but for the most part it did not deal in excuses but rather in service ministry!

Let's look at some root causes. When a person is 'saved' or 'converted' it means that there was true repentance, granting control, obedience, and service all because of a change in heart resulting in different actions. God asks us to 'make new' every morning, our minds by reading the Word and communing with the Lord. When God changes our spirit by forgiveness because of repentance, and we renew our mind by deliverance, the Holy Spirit is free and invited to move, transform, and empower. The result is a life of reaching out like Jesus did, not one of just taking.

It is difficult getting 'Believers' to be about the business of bringing the Kingdom. Like Mary and Martha—prayer or complaints are taken rather than action. Are you being led, or just lazy? It could be fear of rejection, or a feeling that you have done your part. Then there are other unstated excuses in response such as being beneath us or feeling overlooked and not appreciated.

How about the uncommitted 'definite maybe' response? It hurts the Kingdom and results in unwarranted difficulty for others in receiving as well as sharing. Reasons can cause adjusted activities, but excuses hurt the Kingdom! In Luke 14 Jesus gives a powerful account of invitations and rejections in the parable of the wedding feast—similar to Revelations 19:6-9. The first invitation was a reminder when the time was close at hand. The invitation was an honor and declining was an insult.

Three men were invited, but they were busy with the wrong things. They accepted the invitation, but then declined at the last minute. This is disrespectful and insulting. One man had a field—possessions. Another man had oxen—a career. Still another had a wife—relationships. Jesus said to the Pharisees that they had a personal invitation and blew it! Don't let 'good' blind you to the best. All with one consent began to make excuses—verse 18. Affections figure in, so set affections on things above—Colossians 3:2. There is great difference in facts and excuses. Let's take a look at excuses and fulfilling our calling in ministry and life as a Believer.

I. Do I exploit people and make excuses?—verses 1-14

A. Eating together is a time of loving fellowship and gratitude to God.

B. The Pharisees used it as a time to exploit and to try to trap Jesus.

C. The Pharisees also used it for honor and prestige and returning favors.

Illustration: Fellowship Dinner. What is the emphasis? Fellowshiping!!
Sharing!!

D. How do we act toward those who can't return hospitality? Hospitality is ministry only if our motives help others and glorify God.

II. Do I invite people to make excuses?—Verses 15-24.

A. Salvation is a feast not a funeral—excuses for not sharing.

B. God wants His house filled. Motivation—desire—part the Holy Spirit plays in achieving this. Illustration: hedges and highways.

C. As servants we have the privilege of telling the world. Do we? Why not? Verse 19 says to come because all is ready, even if some reject. Keep inviting with a passion! Those who are considered unworthy God wants at the feast—Matthew 22:1-14—It is very strong, clear and very compelling.

III. Do I follow people and make excuses? Verses 25-35

A. It is easy to be part of a crowd.

B. Following the crowd is not true discipleship.

C. The Holy Spirit wins souls. We are the mouthpiece and mentors.

D. Are we more concerned with comfort and opinion than in Jesus and the Kingdom? Our priorities show what is really important to us.

IV. Do we lead people or make excuses?

A. Apply the Word to our lifestyle.

B. Bring the Kingdom

C. Do we transform our part of the world in supernatural power?

D. It is time for Believers to examine ourselves and repent for selfishness, fear, laziness, unbelief, comfort, over commitment and lack of consideration, dependence on the world systems rather than on Jesus, and then make excuses. It is time to seek first the Kingdom, put on the robe of righteousness, believe the Word and trust it in our own lives. Do our best to

walk in holiness, minister in the supernatural anointing, and turn the world upside down—Acts 17:5-6!

Jesus thins our ranks—same as with Gideon—and wants only those who will die to self and live for Him. Does He hear excuses or passion? Many are called but few are chosen. **Where are you?**

Expect—Advent—What do you Expect?

Text: Luke 4:43

It's that time of year and Christmas is only four weeks away, the beginning of Advent and spiritual preparation as well as secular. What do you expect from Christmas? For most, it is a season of hectic schedules, shopping, traveling, meals, church activities, and Christmas programs which in times past, the entire family was expected to attend. It all concluded with candlelight communion service on Christmas Eve. Then it was home to get in one of the secular parts of Christmas. These activities can and should be fun, enjoyable, and a time of spiritual maturity. We need to expect out of Christmas what God wants us to expect and receive. A Divine spiritual encounter that fills the vacuum and gives hope manifested in supernatural power!

Simply put there should be an 'aha' moment when the simplicity, truth, love, and power of the Gospel is all but overwhelming and puts things in perspective so we can truly know God loves us, and live in victory as He intends. All too often, people are caught up in the commercial aspect of Christmas and neglect the spiritual side. This can be seen in the fact that Black Friday (Friday after Thanksgiving) with all of the bargains begins in the middle of the month and continues through the rest of the season.

While traditions can be good, many times people observe things for which they have no understanding—including Church activities. We are not dealing with religion here, but rather relationship as you will see clearly when we address the matter of Advent shortly. Christmas should be a time of peace, rest, and joy as well as fellowship. Not stress—much of which we bring on ourselves by incorrect, worldly choices.

The celebration of Christmas is about the fulfillment of a promise God made clear back beginning in Genesis 3:15—the coming of the Messiah who preches the Kingdom and sets people free and offers them life and wholeness through a relationship to God. There are many scriptures that tell Jesus is the Messiah but John 4:25—Jesus says He is the Messiah, and 18:37—Jesus declares before Pontius Pilate that He is the Messiah—tells it clearly! Read: Luke 4:43—preach the Kingdom, Luke 12:49—bring fire to earth—persecution/suffering/and whining, and John 10:10—life eternal and abundant—belief, obedience, and action.

Advent is: 1) a time of preparation, anticipation, and expectation, 2) the arrival of something momentous—the birth of Christ—history and Christ in us—born again today.

Simply put—like the sermon on Pentecost or Stephens. The God and Creator of the Universe came into ‘time’ to show us what He is like and offer us the opportunity to decide for Him and live in Him. The message is Jesus came, He ministered, He was crucified, He died, he was raised from the dead, He ascended into heaven, He sits at the right hand of the Father, and He is coming again! Let’s take a closer look at Christmas which was the beginning of the Revelation of Himself and His love for us.

I. Do you expect HOPE?

- A. Hope is a confident expectation.
- B. Hope is a certainty in Christ.
- C. Hope is the happy anticipation.
- D. Christ in you is the hope of glory.

There is Hope and a lack of Hope in the world today!

II. Do you expect PEACE?

- A. Peace is the absence of strife or conflict.
- B. Peace is the presence of every good and perfect gift from our Heavenly Father.
- C. Scripture—stilling storms-sea-Mark 4:39, and also in life-John 14:27.

Peace or rest is yours even in what you cannot control.

III. Do you Expect JOY?

- A. Joy—internal gladness.
- B. Internal delight in serving God. Joy set before you—endure/conquer.
- C. Rejoice and receive—take forcefully—keep-don’t let it be taken from you.
- D. Paul and Silas in jail were singing despite their surroundings.
- E. Joy of the Lord is our strength.

IV. Do you expect LOVE?

- A. Unconditional
- B. Unending
- C. Forgiving
- D. Restoring

3 types of Love: eros, phileo, agape

- E. Undeserved

V. Do you expect VICTORY?

- A. Power
- B. Conquer
- C. Kingdom

Jeremiah 1:12—God is ready to perform His Word.

We as Christians have to have proper perspective, priorities, and purpose. You act and are governed by what you believe. What do you expect—believe—to happen in your life because of Christmas this year? The same old thing—or the supernatural manifestation of a loving God working through you to bring His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven? This is the Church’s finest moment! Don’t be afraid to expect God to move in your life just like He did in the New Testament. He hasn’t lost His power nor willingness and desire to bring His Kingdom in your life and those around you. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. What do you expect from Christmas and your relationship?

“I’m Full”

Q: Thanksgiving is a time of expectancy. After the big meal, what do you usually say when you are offered a second or third piece of pie?

A: You probably say some variation of “I’m full.”

This year, what if you said “I’m full” before you even eat?

Are you full of joy, grace, hope, peace, and love?

Are you full of goodness?

Are you full of compassion, forgiveness, and mercy?

Are you full of the Word?

Are you full of His Spirit?

Chapter 6 “F”

Faith that Prevails

Text: Hebrews 11:5

Faith that prevails, overcomes, is to have a personal relationship to Jesus, believe His promises and take action on them completing the race of life victoriously.

This means that you believe Scripture, 2 Timothy 3:16, and that your faith is a choice to trust God by living in obedience to His Word and promises.

Recently, I was reading material from the Voice of Martyrs magazine where a church in China grew from a house church of twenty to a church of seven hundred and met in a seven thousand foot office building. The government declared their church illegal and when taking pictures of members and their names did not hinder them the government took control of the building and all of their financial assets. Even though, some members were put in prison, homes invaded and persecution increased—people are keeping the faith that prevails.

It is time that Believers in America examine their faith to see if they have a faith that prevails, overcomes. Then it is a matter of sharing that faith with as many as possible both adults and children—I Peter 2:8-9.

I. What is faith? Hebrews 11:1

A. Faith is the substance of things hoped for. This means to stand under a title deed—promises—of God knowing with certainty they will come to pass.

B. Faith is the evidence of things not seen that will occur in the future.

Joseph’s life is an example of faith that prevails. He had a dream from God—Genesis 37:5-11. He was sold into slavery—Genesis 37:27-28. He was imprisoned—Genesis 39:2. He suffered—Genesis 39-20. His life was one of service—Genesis 40:1-23 and 41:1-46. Through all these years Joseph was patient and had a faith that prevails. Compare Genesis 50:20 to Romans 8:28. Joseph even had faith that God’s people would leave Egypt and be free to the point he made them promise to take his bones with them many years in the future.

II. Faith that prevails is a faith that is applied and does not quit—Hebrews 11:5.

A. Faith is the established conviction concerning unseen things and settled expectations.

B. Faith always acts or else it is useless.

C. Faith does not doubt in the heart.

III. Faith that prevails is the faith that completes the race of life—Hebrews 12:1.

A. We are surrounded by the record of witnesses who have completed their race set before them. This is encouragement for us that it is possible and expected.

B. the witnesses that surround us are not the people themselves but the record of their lives.

C. Some examples are Abraham, Sarah—who judged God faithful to fulfill His promises, Moses, Noah, Daniel, and David.

IV. Faith that prevails is a faith that lays aside hindrances—Hebrews 11:7.

A. Weight can be outside, worldly conditions.

B. Sin is personal rebellion.

C. Must run the race set before us—each is different.

D. This is a choice that is on-going.

Faith that prevails—overcomes—is based on a personal relationship to Jesus and a total trust that He will bring His promise to pass. There are degrees of faith. Do you have a faith that prevails?

Faith in End Times

Text: Luke 12:35-40

Why do Believers pray and stand on the Word and nothing seems to happen? God answers prayer in three ways—yes, no, or wrong timing. Speak His word and He will answer. State the need/remind Him of solution in the Word. There is a real tension between what God’s Word says and what most Believers experience. For example: The Word says, “I am healed” and based on solid Scriptural promises the Believer confesses, “I am healed”. Yet the Believer dies of the same disease after confessing he was healed. However, Jesus healed everyone who came to Him. How can this be?

Jesus healed not only because of compassion but also to reveal the Kingdom with God’s love. Those who came and asked received what they needed and glorified God in His Sovereign timing. He healed the infirmed, the injured, the diseased, lepers, and demon possessed.

When Satan seems to win the day keep believing the Word as evidenced by applies trust and obedience. Reverend Jeff Mart had seven suicides, mostly kids—church needs ministry.

In our text today Jesus was calling Believers to be prepared. Also look at Matthew 24. Believers are called to bring hope not just fill a pew or chair.

1) Faith in the end-times requires belief in the Word as a foundation for a personal relationship with Jesus.

What is the “Word of God?” The Bible is the Word of God and all Scripture is “God breathed”—II Timothy 3:16. The Bible doesn’t contain the Word. It is the Word and faith comes by hearing—Romans 10:17. You can read the Bible like reading a newspaper, but when God’s anointing is on it. Then it becomes the Living Word with transforming power—just like the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

2) Faith in the end-times requires study to know the Word, so it can be applied. Only then are we prepared for His return. Be rooted in the Word as the foundation for life and His return.

Hebrews 13:8 tells us that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Before the Bible was spoken or recorded, John tells us that the Word was already here—in the form of the person Jesus. He was part of creation—the eternal Word—John 1:1-2. He is the One we serve and obey. His return is closer than ever before, and we need to be prepared and vigilant. **Look up—the time is near!**

Our faith in Christ sustains us in times of trouble and guides us in ministry. We need to be rooted in faith not merely study about it. Come out of earthly security and begin to walk in His anointing! **Look up the—time is near!**

3) Faith in the end-times requires intense prayer for understanding, revelation knowledge, and anointing—Psalm 37:24.

The world desperately needs Jesus but most have rejected Him. We are called to be witnesses to others of what God is doing in our lives—witnesses that God is alive and well and is still here for us.

Pray the answer scripturally not the problem. Identify the root not merely address symptoms. Pray for God to be glorified and see how prayers are answered. This does not mean that you cannot pray for yourself, but it does mean that our request should line up with God's.

4) Faith in end-times requires that Believers need to apply the Living Word to all of life.

This begins in prayer for mountain moving, fig tree withering, and resurrection faith—by abiding in Him. It also means to intentionally and with anointing declare and share the Living Word.

It is only the Resurrected Lord, the Living Word, who spoke in the beginning, and His anointing that saves, heals, delivers, and empowers. So, as a child of the King don't waver, dilute, question, or compromise the Word—apply it in faith in these end-times, remain in His presence and power so you can accomplish your purpose in life—**be prepared for His return by living in faith and power.**

Faith—Activating Your Faith

An old couple went to the doctor and both had beginning of Alzheimer's and were told to write things down. At home the wife asked her husband to get her some ice cream—add chocolate, nuts, whipped cream with a cherry on top. Need to write it down? No! Thirty minutes later he came back with bacon and eggs, and she told him he should have written it down because he forgot the toast! It is interesting how we think we have it together, but missed it—especially spiritually.

Life is like sitting by a fire feeling warmth—getting closer as it dies out but never adding more wood or stirring it up!

In these last days, it is crucial every believer activate the fire of the Holy Spirit by intentionally releasing Him to act and stirring up the gifts. Don't let your fire go out by neglect—activate your faith and the fire will spread—bringing the Kingdom and setting captives free! A fire never maintains—it either increases and consumes, or dies. In Acts 3 Peter and John activate their faith when they spoke to the lame man. In II Timothy 1:6 Paul encourages Timothy to stir up the gifts!

In the final days before Christ returns there will be spiritual drop-outs, people with itching ears, heretics, false teachers and people who are self-deceived because of following public opinion, politics, religion, personal rights. What is needed is a solid foundation in Jesus to flow in the anointing as you activate—manifest—your faith.

I. The first thing you have to do is to decide whether you are going to function in the natural or in the supernatural.

- A. God wants us to act in the supernatural.
- B. His words are life and transform people and the world when activated.

II. Release the Holy Spirit and His gifts that are in you, so God can work on your behalf.

- A. John 14:10-14 is the key—God dwells (lives) in you—do greater things.
- B. In Acts 3 with Peter and John, what did he know that he had? Presence and authority of God to bring the Kingdom. Greater is He who is in you . . .

III. Don't Limit God.

- A. God is a gentleman, and He will not go against what you are willing to receive.
- B. Jesus in His own hometown in Mark 6:4 was limited by the town people. It is the same today—familiarity brings disbelief and fear, quenching the Spirit, limited by public opinion.

IV. Believers must have an active, on-going connection to activate faith.

- A. The woman with the issue of blood knew she just had to touch Him—Matthew 9:20-22.
- B. With Jairus and his daughter, he wanted Jesus to touch her—Matthew 9:23-26.
- C. Then with the Centurion and his servant, he just wanted Jesus to speak healing—Matthew 8:8.

D. Peter and John with the man at the gate, faith was present and they spoke with authority—Acts 3:1-9.

E. Paul did many miracles, including through handkerchiefs—Luke 19:11-12.

F. Peter's shadow even healed in Acts 5:15.

G. Most churches are not connected spiritually.

V. Power is available.

A. Inactive until released by faith.

B. Must participate to get results.

C. Where the Word is taught or preached power is present to perform it.

D. Power is waiting for a connection.

E. Power is wasted and ineffective if not applied, or released.

VI. If you truly want His Kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven, then it is imperative that Believers function in the Spirit by activating their faith.

A. Choose to believe.

B. Choose to meet or connect.

C. Choose to know what you have.

D. Choose to act in obedience according to the Word.

Are you willing to meet and connect with God to activate your faith? Where? He will meet you where you say and do what you ask—for what you are willing to receive. Where is your faith level!

There are four ways to contact God:

1) Pray Him down.

2) Preach Him down.

3) Sing Him down.

4) Call Him down.

Acts 3:1-(6)-10:

1) What do you have to give/impart?

2) Spoke

3) Acted (right hand) giving

4) Activated—result was a miracle.

Acts 2:42-47—continuing—contagious—attract—equip.

Acts 4:13-(18)-31—speak—request—boldness—audacity.

Faith—Will Jesus find Faith . . . ?

Will Jesus find faith, complete trust, when He returns as evidenced by relationship, obedience, priorities, and action? F-A-I-T-H—acrostics stand for Faith is more than intellectual agreement—it is applied trust put into action and without it we cannot please God.

Jesus is coming for a church 1) without spot—worldly foundations, 2) without wrinkle—marks of worldly control-compromise, and 3) without blemish—tainting or mixture by contact with the world. This will be a church of extreme, radical faith in action!

At this point, the church is not ready to reach out and receive multitudes into the faith because of the internal need for healing of personal wounds.

1) Faith should prepare us to sacrifice for our Lord Jesus just as a husband should for his wife.

2) Faith should make the primary well-being of the church evident as a husband does for his wife.

3) Faith should cause every believer to care for others and the body of Christ as a husband does for his own body.

Faith is not passive; it is active but is only a word unless it is experienced—most often forged in the furnace of affliction, difficulty, and persecution. Examples of true faith are found throughout the Bible but especially in Hebrews 11-12. Take time to read this to see how these people, who are like you and me, applied their faith and God honored it!

Faith conquers because of promise, power, and hope, and results in excitement, expectation, and effort. Faith is a personal reliance on God and His Word so let's look at it in our own lives.

I. What takes first place in your life?—relationship?

A. Self, family, or God?

For example: Missionaries who send their children home to USA and remain on a mission field only to die. Is that neglect or priorities?

B. To Dihn Trungs's family in Vietnam was arrested, imprisoned yet continued to preach Jesus. What is first place?

C. See Luke 8 and Luke 9

1) Tung would not accept early release because of ministry in prison? Wow!

D. Matthew 22:1-14 tells of an invitation to a wedding twice. People made light, refused to go, then attacked those bringing invitations. The King avenged them and held the wedding feast with invitations to both good and bad. Mad without wedding coat—righteousness—was put out. Many are called but few are chosen—what's first? Priorities?

II. What are your priorities?

A. Pleasure, comfort, or service?

Matthew 25:1-13 is a parable of ten virgins, or bridesmaids; All appear to be prepared—such as in the Army or a sports inspection. Five were ready—maintain an active relationship and

full of Holy Spirit. Five are not ready—neglected relationship and not full of Holy Spirit.

This shows us that by faith we are:

- 1) Responsible for our own light or oil. Is this a priority?
- 2) Responsible for use—stewardship.
- 3) Responsible for service to others and God.

III. What is your goal? Obedience?

A. What is your heart's desire? Think—obedience to Jesus above all or self?

Matthew 25:31-46 talks about service to others such as the hungry, naked, and those in prison. If you have faith it will be put into action—into service.

B. In final judgment God separates pretenders—goats, tares—from believers—sheep, wheat—and rewards accordingly. See Luke 6:46 and Matthew 7:24-27.

C. Obedience because of love and faith—rewards are byproduct not the focus!

IV. What are you doing?—Action!

A. Simple acts of sharing show that we believe and care.

Ester, a girl in China says she didn't have true faith until her parents were arrested and imprisoned. Early years in church—including weekly attendance and quiz by pastor-father—was a warm foundation for persecuted faith that came.

B. Matthew 25:14-30 is the parable of talents—use your own abilities! Spiritual and natural to bring the Kingdom of God!

- 1) Moses had the staff
- 2) Elisha had the mantle
- 3) Jesus had the anointing
- 4) What do you have? An active faith?

Your faith needs to reflect your passion, power, and purpose. It means applying trust of Jesus to daily life for you and others. When going gets tough, the tough get going—now is the time! See II Samuel 23:10 where Eleazar, mighty man of valor under King David fought till his hand stuck to the sword—no privilege nor option to quit—same for us! Mark 12:1-13—“... *he who endures* (keeps an active faith) *until the end will be saved.*”

Will He find faith in YOU?

Faith—The God Kind of Faith

Text: Mark 11:12-14, 20-24; Romans 10:13-14, 17

Central Truth: The kind of faith that spoke the universe into existence is dealt to our hearts.

There are two things to notice about the God kind of faith. First, a man believes with his heart. Second, he believes with his words. It isn't enough just to believe in your heart. In order to get God to work for you, you must believe with your words also. Jesus said, "Whosoever shall say . . . and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith" Mark 11:23. This is the unalterable law of faith.

Mark 11:12-14, 20-24

Verse 12 And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry:

Verse 13 And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came if haply he might find anything thereon; and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet.

Verse 14 And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever. And his disciples heard it.

Verse 20 And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

Verse 21 And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursest is withered away.

Verse 22 And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.

Verse 23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

Verse 24 Therefore, I say unto you, what things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

Let us focus our attention on the statement, "Have faith in God," or as the margin reads, "Have the faith of God." Greek scholars tell us this should be translated, "Have the God kind of faith." Jesus demonstrated that He had the God kind of faith. While He was afar off He saw the fig tree had leaves. But as He approached it, looking for fruit, He saw that it was barren. Some have questioned why Jesus looked for figs on this tree when it was not time for them to be ripe, it was not their season. However, in that country, trees that retained their leaves usually had figs also.

Finding no fruit on the tree, Jesus said, "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever."

The next day when Jesus and His disciples passed by again they found the tree dried up from the roots, amazed, Peter said, "Master, behold the fig tree thou cursedst is withered away." It was then that Jesus made the statement, "Have faith in God (have the faith of God, or the God kind of faith). For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast

into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.”

After telling His disciples in verse 22 to have the God kind of faith, Jesus went on to explain in verse 23 what this meant: The God kind of faith is the kind of faith in which a man believes with his heart and says with his mouth that which he believes in his heart, and it comes to pass.

Jesus showed that He has that kind of faith, for He believed that what He said would come to pass. He said to the tree, “No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever.”

This is the kind of faith that spoke the world into existence. “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” Hebrew 11:3. How did He do it? God believed that what He said would come to pass. He spoke the word and there was an earth. He spoke into existence the vegetable kingdom. He spoke into existence the animal kingdom. He spoke into existence the heavens as well as the earth, the moon, the sun, the stars and the universe. He said it and it was so. That is the God kind of faith. He believed what He said would come to pass and it did.

Faith—The Measure of Faith

Jesus demonstrated the God kind of faith to His disciples, and then He told them that they too had that kind of faith—the faith that a man believes with his heart, says with his mouth what he believes, and it comes to pass.

Someone might say, “I want that kind of faith. I am going to pray that God will give it to me.” However, you don’t need to pray for it—you already have it. “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” Romans 12:3. Notice that Paul wrote this to believers, for he says, “to every man that is among you.” The epistle of Romans was not written to the sinners in the world, it was a letter to Christians. He addresses this letter “to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints . . .” Romans 1:7. And in it he tells them that God has given to “every man the measure of faith.”

Paul also said, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” Ephesians 2:8. Paul is saying here that this faith is not of yourself. He was not referring to grace, for everyone knows that grace is of God. He is saying that the faith by which we are saved is not of ourselves. It is not a natural human faith. It was given to sinners by God. And now did God give the sinner faith to be saved? Romans 10:17 says, “So when faith cometh by

hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” In these verses Paul has said that faith 1) is given, 2) is dealt, and 3) cometh.

Romans 10:8 says, ***“But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach.”*** Why is it called the Word of faith? Because it causes faith to come even into the heart of the unsaved. It causes the kind of faith that spoke the universe into existence to be dealt to our hearts. Faith is given to us through the Word.

Faith—The Key to Great Faith—Believing and Saying

Notice again the words of Romans 10:8, ***“But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach.”*** How does this compare with the words of Jesus in Mark 11:23? Paul’s writing to the Romans agrees exactly with what Jesus told His disciples when He said, ***“Whosoever shall say . . . and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe . . . shall have whatsoever he saith.”*** We see here the basic principle inherent in the God kind of faith: Believing with the heart and saying it with the mouth. Jesus believed it and He said it. God believed it and He said it, speaking the earth into existence.

Verses 9 and 10 of this same 10th chapter of Romans say ***“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confessions is made unto salvation.”*** A measure of faith is dealt to the sinner through hearing the Word. The he uses it to create the reality of salvation in his own life.

When Christians are asked, “When were you saved?” They often answer by saying something like, “About nine on the night of July tenth.” They are mistaken, however, for God saved them nearly two thousand years ago. It only became a reality to them when they believed it and confessed it. Salvation belongs to everyone. Every man and woman in this world has a legal right to salvation. Jesus dies for the whole world, not just for you and me. When the truth is preached to the sinner it causes faith to come. When he believes and confesses, he creates the reality of it in his own life by his faith.

Romans 10:13-14, 17

Verse 13 ***For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.***

Verse 14 ***How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?***

Verse 17 ***So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.***

Just as faith comes from hearing the Word of God, so does anything that we receive from God. The God kind of faith comes by hearing God's Word. In other words, God causes the God kind of faith to come into the hearts of those who hear.

No wonder Jesus said, "***Take heed therefore how you hear***" Luke 8:18. You cannot let it go in one ear and out the other because that won't do any good. Faith won't come. If you act as if the Word of God were some fairy tale, faith will not come. But when you accept it reverently and sincerely, when you act upon it, faith comes.

Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, "***We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak***" II Corinthians 4:13. Paul said that we have the same spirit of faith. And what belonged to the church at Corinth belongs to the church today. On no occasion did Paul or any of the apostles ever write to encourage the people to believe; never did they tell them to have faith. Our having to encourage believers to believe or have faith is a result of the Word of God's having lost its reality to us. **We are believers!** When our children are away, we don't have to write to them and say, "Be sure to keep breathing." They will continue to breathe as long as they are alive. Neither do we have to encourage believers to believe because that is what they are—**believers!**

How many of us realize that our words dominate us? "***Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth . . .***" Proverbs 6:2. Another version says, "***Thou are taken captive with the words of thy mouth.***" A young man once said that he was never whipped until he confessed that he was whipped. One writer put it this way, "You said you could not, and the moment you said it you were whipped." You said you did not have faith and doubt rose up like a giant and bound you. You are imprisoned with your own words. You talk failure and failure holds you in bondage.

Defeat and failure do not belong to the child of God. God never made a failure. God made us new creatures. We are not born of the will of the flesh or the will of man, but of the will of God. We are created in Christ Jesus. Failures are manmade. They are made by wrong believing and wrong thinking. I John 4:4 says, ". . . ***Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.***" Learn to trust the Greater One that is in you. He is mightier than anything in the world.

God created the universe with Words. Words filled with faith are the most powerful things in all the world.

The key to the God kind of faith is believing with the heart and confessing with the mouth. Our lips can make us millionaires or keep us paupers. Our lips can make us victors or keep us captives. We can fill our words with faith, or we can fill our word with doubt. We can fill our words with love that will melt the

coldest heart, or we can fill our words with hate and poison. We can fill our words with love that will help the discouraged and broken hearted, with faith that will stir heaven. We can make our words breathe the very atmosphere of heaven.

Our faith will never rise above the words of our lips. Jesus told the woman with the issue of blood that her faith had made her whole. Thoughts may come, and they may persist in staying. But if we refuse to put those thoughts into words, they die unborn. Cultivate the habit of thinking big things. Learn to use words that will react upon your own spirit. Faith's confessions create realities. Realization follows the confession. Confession precedes possession.

Memory text: ***“But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach”*** Romans 10:8.

Lesson in Action: ***“But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only . . .”*** James 1:22.

Faith—Owning your own Faith

When people are asked to provide their opinion on a matter, they usually seem quite willing to do so. Yet, what they say is not necessarily what they believe but rather someone's opinion not their own. They simply parrot what they have heard. In short, they do not own—have a personal opinion based on study or experience—their comments. It is the same with a personal faith in Jesus Christ. Many have heard the Bible facts and also opinions of others, but have no personal foundation for beliefs. Little wonder, that it does not provide a solid foundation for life decisions, relationships, and activities.

For most people, belief is what they have learned as a child and may have put into practice. Usually, the child accepts what is taught without question, simply because of trust. It is essential that we know what we believe, and why, whether in the secular world or in our personal religious faith walk. A large number of people have depended on mind, emotions, will, and intellect to fill a void that only God through Jesus Christ can fill spiritually, but to achieve this you must own your faith not simply reflect others.

A point of beginning is the Bible which is more than a religious book—II Timothy 3:16. It is God's Word that has the power to produce the promises and does so for those who own their faith! The following is a statement in preparation for receiving God's Word:

This is the Bible,
I am what it says I am.
I can do what it says I can do.
I boldly confess that my mind is alert,
And that my heart is receptive to God's Word,

Which is Spirit and Life.
I am about to receive the God-breathed,
Inerrant, infallible, non-corruptible,
Indestructible, ever-living seed of the Word of God

And I will allow it to transform me,
More into the likeness of Jesus.
I will never be the same,
Nor will the people with whom I come in contact.

I will never be the same,
Never, never, never,
I will never be the same,
In Jesus' Name.

Do you own your Faith? That's something to think about!

Family Series—The Christian Home

Text: Genesis 2:22-25; Matthew 19:3-6

Criticism of the United States of America—crime, teenage problems, possible war, etc., lack of respect. Much is heard about what the problem is—or what we feel the problem to be—and then who we feel is to blame!

ILLUSTRATION: Often seen in the cartoons or the political cartoons.

Hear accusations leveled at school, church, government, and people—all in an effort to no account as if it would do any good! Need to look at who is to blame for our 'organized chaos'—and who can help correct the situation.

The Christian family is the key! The inner-control and desire to do differently will change our society—no outward pressure can do it! In the Christian family, on a small scale, we should see the wisdom and gentleness of command and direction as well as obedience, unity, and mutual confidence and respect that characterize the perfect Kingdom of God—where He is in total control.

ILLUSTRATION: You say this is the Church—not so unless the family is built in Christ! Families increase the Church—what do you want? Do just for this year? Only what He wants?

The family—Christian—does not exist for its own benefit, but is created to bring glory and honor to God. Man's blessing is a by-product—just as morality is a by-product of Christianity—the product is life!

I. The Christian Home must have an authority.—This authority is Jesus Christ!

A. Jesus is foundation

ILLUSTRATION: Carpenter—one last home/shortcuts/his home built on man's values not quality!

B. Divine Order—I Corinthians 11:3

1) Ephesians 5:25 is order for the home—Christ, husband, wife, and children

2) Must be followed if to succeed as God wants!

II. Christian Home involves Relationships. Home is not just where you are comfortable, where born, or where you reside—but a place where you know you are needed, wanted and loved! Even with this they come in various colors, sizes, etc—but there is a common foundation. Jesus Christ and relationships based on our relationship, to Him.

ILLUSTRATION: Jesus is the measurement of understanding of what God is like, and what He expects of those for whom He cares, and who follow Him. This is true regardless of the activity/sports, business, etc.

A. Relationship to God.

1) Individually—through personal experience and sharing with others who are Christian. All members of the family—

ILLUSTRATION: Don't leave it to the pastor to explain everything; accept responsibility in the home and begin there. Begin on or before wedding/continued daily. Begin for child by first trip being to church—no more germs there than anyplace else—in fact, probably less.

2) Daily relationship—prayer/devotion/reading/growth.

B. relationship to each other. Called to love our fellowman if we say we love God—call to have a definite relation on a regular basis and not isolate ourselves.

1) In Worship—usually on Sunday.

2) In daily life—work-a-day—as we live.

III. Christian home is an experience. It is an experience of complete and total trust in God through Jesus Christ as experience in the power of the Holy Spirit in individual lives—Love, care, responsibility.

A. Live by teachings of Jesus—Disciples keep commandments.

1) Trust—joyous relaxed living that is victorious.

2) Obedience—seek to follow and know you will receive.

ILLUSTRATION: Teach family not just that God is—but that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him!

B. Teachings reflected in relationships—not just cram for final, so to speak!

ILLUSTRATION: Thomas Jefferson—some of happiest moments are those spent with family. Often this is not the case—members drop in home for a shower,

quick meal; rush of again to something else—homes are efficiently run hotels!

1) Set priorities—God first, family second, job third.

2) Give quality time—make it not just find it!

The Christian home is an effort by all to truly love, obey, and follow Jesus Christ wherever He leads, that we live in victory, joy, and peace that we truly taste part of the Kingdom now!

Family Series—God’s Order for Husbands

Text: Ephesians 5:25

It is extremely important that we know and realize God’s order for the family before we take a look at the duties of its’ members. The “Divine Order” is an order of authority and responsibility spelled out in I Corinthians 11:3. God has ordered that the family operate according to this structure and any change or disobedience results in a home and family life that is not what God intended. The Christian family exists for the purpose of bringing glory and honor to God, not for its own benefit—the family belongs to God and unless we live according to Him—we fail and live in a state of chaos in all ways.

ILLUSTRATION: Ask if husbands love wives: Sure! Feeling or doing—but how about giving self as Christ gave for Church? Joke about wives being submissive—but what are duties and responsibilities of husbands?

Love is measured not by feeling, or even actions, but by sacrifice of self for the others! Lay down life—etc. Ephesians 5:25.

I. Husband—love your wife—Sacrifice Yourself for Her. Greek: ‘love’— 1)

Eros—not in New Testament; 2) *Phileo*, Human affection/concern; 3)

Agape—sacrifice. Last is type used by Jesus and Paul in text tonight!

A. Spiritual taproot for God’s order of family

1) Divine authority vested in father and husband—modeled on Christ—Matthew 28:18. Authority not fleshly but spiritually rooted in sacrifice of self.

2) Obvious expression is husband’s support of family.

Breakdown today is shown in ease in which husband’s give responsibility to wives—‘working’.

B. Burden for support of family is on the man.

1) Care and management is role of woman—home.

2) Enslavement to materialistic society—wife working!

Don’t break the Divine Order for the world—husband give up ego, status, pride—serve family—Matthew 16:24—deny/take/follow—Christ.

II. Husband—love your wife—care for her spiritual welfare. A husband who loves his wife according to the Word of Scripture gives first priority to her

spiritual need! True happiness is based on relationship to Jesus—not just a pious or legalistic nod toward religion. But a practical, vital, active relationship to Jesus is needed!

A. Highest duty of husband is to care for sanctification of wife.

1) His model is Christ—in church, at home—prayer, word, and study—to sustain her in spirit and strengthen her feeling for high and heavenly things and cause her to go forward in Christian knowledge and victorious living.

ILLUSTRATION: Pastor can teach but cannot and should not take place of husband as a spiritual guide. The head of the house is responsible for those in it—burden and responsibility—Pastor gives account for congregation—husband for families! Husband should have most influence and does either in a positive or negative way!

2) Husband is to care for sanctification of wife—if he believes her to be holy and she is as a Christian. She is entrusted to him—and she is to be preserved, confirmed and perfected in holiness. I Corinthians 14:35 tells clearly that the husband is the channel of spiritual welfare for the wife.

ILLUSTRATION: Satan causes differences, but the common bond Christ and the heart should be like that of Christ to love and teach and share and give of self.

B. Husband should not take for granted his wife's relationship to Jesus—

1) He is not to evade responsibility by saying, “That’s between her and God.”

2) Husband is called to be spiritual head of family—shown clearly in Ephesians 5:25-33.

III. Husband—love your wife—go the way of the Cross before Her. Not by giving orders, lectures or spiritual principles like a teacher—

A. He gives himself up for her—shows by example what it is to die to self. Does not drive, or lead but ‘draws’ her as he allows Christ and the Cross to work in his own life daily!

1) How does this work in practice? Love wife as Christ loved the Church—Jesus humbled self and loved us while we were yet sinners—Romans 5:8. Goes way of Cross—denying self, giving up own rights, and this repentance is blessing.

ILLUSTRATION: Not ladies first—husbands first!

2) Not to lecture—when this begins and dominance begins then ground for authority has been given up by husband. He is called to fulfill role in family not harass others about theirs!

- a. Moses—Numbers 12:10 and 16:33 sought God for people.
- b. Left out of Promised Land due to own actions—Numbers 20:2-12. Authority is Lord’s and we are to use it wisely!

B. Rebellious families—wife and children—first action is to go to God and mood is one of repentance asking, “Why are you not able to establish your authority in my family? What is it in me that makes me an unfit instrument for your purposes—uncomfortable but factual?”

1) I Corinthians 11:3—head of husband is Christ, husband –head of wife. Husband is called to find his own relationship with the authority of Christ. Only when we are right can we exercise authority. From this comes authority that the family yields to due to the Spirit not pressure!

2) Whether, when, and how, the ‘death’ of the husband to spiritual pride, ego, and arrogance, will draw his family after him is the prerogative of the Holy Spirit. John 12:24—seed or grain of wheat falls to earth and dies—bears fruit. Called to die to self for wife and set example with Christ!

IV. Husband—love your wife—exercise authority in Humility. The authority should remain with the husband—not be switched!

A. Husband should feel it to be his duty not just right. Always remember the responsibility as well as power entrusted to him—whatever’s done in home should be according to husband’s will as revealed by Christ.

1) Sometimes takes easy way out—but still accountable!

2) Called to refrain from annoying displays of authority and gently and wisely maintain standing as head of house with firmness, love, and decision.

B. Respect wife’s sphere of duty. Have broad oversight but leave immediate responsibility and authority in her hands. (President and cabinet, etc.)

1) Desire to meddle in areas not ours—tells how to do a job but never do it—kitchen hers! Her task not trifling—or simple.

Illustration: Vitamins—not just money, or time—but appreciation?

Proverbs 31:10, “A good wife is described as ‘far more precious than jewels’”.

- a. Colossians 3:19, “Husbands love your wives and do not be harsh with them.” Sunday best for others but left over for family?

b. To chastise, especially in front of others, lowers self-esteem and his own dignity!

C. Marriage founded on mutual esteem. Courtesy is a support for this esteem and it must come from deep within.

1) Scripture demands wives be treated tenderly. I Peter 3:7—***That your prayers be not hindered.*** To be hard-hearted is to close off access to heaven.

2) Spiritual authority is a paradox—last shall be first—John 13:3, 4—***“girded himself with a towel.”*** Not pride, or power, or self-assuredness, but humility. To exercise authority you must be under it—Husbands love your wives, give up pride and ego, follow the Lord Jesus as an example of transforming love, and your home shall prosper.

Family Series—God’s order For Wives

Text: Ephesians 5:22-24

The song “Take My Life . . .” has changed into “Take My Wife, and let her be consecrated Lord to Thee.”

This is not the order that God means for you to follow as a husband nor a wife . . . “ladies first” is not the sequence that God prescribes! Wsife is the link between the husband and the children . . . husband is link between Christ and wife. (Read Ephesians 5:22-24).

To be submissive is not to be inactive, insignificant, nor a door mat that cannot think for herself! To be submissive as God intends is: To yield humble and intelligent obedience to an ordained power of Authority. The example he gives is that of the church being submissive to the rule of Christ. Do we do this? In worship? In living? This is the church’s glory. This rule is established for the protection of women and the harmony of the home. The relationship is 100-100 husband and wife cooperatively!

Wives are called to choose freely to be submissive to husbands as Christ chose freely to be submissive to the Father. Read Philippians 2:5-9. God honors not those who cling to their ‘rights’ but those who choose freely to obey Him!

Proverbs 31:10-31 presents the Bible’s most complete and beautiful picture of what a good wife should be. She is capable, ambitious, a willing worker. She is kind, wise, trustworthy, cheerful, providing for her household and reaching beyond. She knows her worth, uses her intelligence and strength and God-fearing character. She makes life abundant for her husband and her children.

What triggers all this enthusiasm and work? Husbands fulfilling their role—love wife/not be harsh—Colossians 3:19. Mutual love and devotion—spiritual not just fleshly authority.

I. Submission is a means of Protection

A. Physical—basic fact of all ages that women are the protected ones as well as children.

Illustration: Men to war, women at home!

B. Psychologically, neighbor complains about your children and you refer the person to your husband—free of the burden of representing the family in the community.

C. Emotional—from attacks by own children. Should not have to fight for respect and dignity of children. Father/husband is to protect wife from abuse—should call her authority into focus and support it with youth. Stand behind the wife in her role and duties!

D. Spiritual attack—the husband stands as a shield and protector to his wife against assault from the unseen world of ‘principalities and powers’ Ephesians 6:10.

1) Wife called to be submissive in Lord—I Corinthians 11:10—head covering is symbol of submissiveness to authority—we do not use it today.

a. Angels—loyal Spirits of God—II Thessalonians 1:7.

b. Rebellious cohorts of Satan—I Corinthians 6:3, Romans 8:38.

The covering is not the point, but the fact, it symbolizes the fact the wife needs protection according to God’s Order.

c. No authority for women/deception—I Timothy 2:12-14.

d. Teach/prophecy/pray—Joel 2:38, 29; I Corinthians 11:5.

No formulation of doctrine—wife is to live in authority and protection of husband, and then she will move with power and be effective in prayer and exercise spiritual gifts. **God’s intention is that a husband should stand between his wife and the world—the husband is responsible for what happens in the home, community, and church.** When husband deserts his role or the wife takes it, then there is a problem!

2) With a single woman—the Church is the protector—Acts 6:1; James 1:27, and I Timothy 5:3-16; specifically the deacons—Acts 6:3. Same difference if the husband is in military and will be gone for a long period of time.

II. Submission is the means of Social Balance. Galatians 3:27-28—neither male nor female—not social equality—but spiritual equality in Christ for salvation!

A. Firm, unalterable decree of God in positions of men and women.

Began in creation and confirmed in New Testament.

Illustration: Eastern nations—wife is slave. Romantic period wife was mistress—Christian idea is different!

1) Subordination of wife by Bible. Genesis 3:16-19 burden on both Adam and Eve for all. Resist words but not change situation!

2) Burden of both man and woman—worldly ways. Follow God's order and prepare for Kingdom of God!

Illustration: Force marriage—can/cliff/can't fly!

a. Husband's decision threatening to family! Colossians 3:18, wives be subject to husbands as is fitting in the Lord! Must not lead to sin—disobedience of Lord!

Illustration: Church grows when men take roles, calls for

b. Acts 5:29, Obey God not men—obey husband's authority.

B. Submissiveness not servility—tell husband if his counsel seems unwise—he is called to listen.

Illustration: Wife who lets trouble come and not say is servant!

1) Submissiveness not matter of outward form but inward attitude. Must respect husband even if outspoken.

Illustration: Wise husbands listen and welcome counsel of wives.

Note: Physical—man begins life/wife produces/in the spiritual the wife begins life and husband produces! Share needs with husband—then ask him what God tells him to do. Insight of wife/authority of husband.

2) Submission is not to be piously silent. Must give feeling and understanding to be totally submissive!

3) Subordinate role does not stifle personality. Should provide environment for creativity and individuality.

C. Responsibility of both husband and wife to maintain clear roles.

1) Church suffered—men given up roles and authority.

2) Men turned role over to women and teach by example to boys that when they grow up they can put away such childish things as church!

Illustration: Church rises in power in proportion to men in leadership spiritually! Sunday School/visitation/prayer/etc.

3) Wife's primary role is to give of self to family—but also minister in God's plan—now her own!

III. Submission—is a means of Spiritual Power. If sole source of happiness is husband and children then doomed to disappointment. I Peter 3:6 tells of the joy in Jesus first! Trust God and not nag husband!

A. Submission is more than outer form—it is an inner attitude.

1) Often a wife's spiritual awareness and concern goes ahead of her husband's. Heart deceitful above all things—Jeremiah 17:9.

Husband driven away—with God, wives, you have a guaranteed result—success if you do as it says in I Peter 3:1-2.

Illustration: Relationship of husband and wife not dependent on being Christian—I Corinthians 7:13—but on God’s orders! Be subject to husband in all things—Ephesians 5:24. Accept it and act on it! Joyfully!

2) Need to change and submit to husband—coffee/tell why Lord commanded obedience.

3) Human wisdom urges rebellion—follow ‘head’.

B. Possible that wife is ahead of husband spiritually—

1) Command of obedience is certain—love, honor, obey.

a. Love God and believe in Him? Then trust for husband. Stand in power! Obey!

b. Don’t try to teach husband—he will not listen but do bring him by encouragement to hear the gospel and learn.

2) Way to the heart of the husband is by patience, love, and obedience to God’s order.

Illustration: Men’s group and prayers for wife—man prayed for a loving, obedient, caring wife. He asked angels to protect her.

Wives—called to rejoice in husband’s authority—live in protection by submissiveness and husband take proper role—make the home and church a blessing!

Family Series—God’s order for Children

Text: Colossians 3:20

God’s order for children is in a single command, “Children obey your parents in everything for this pleases the Lord.” A child’s relationship to Jesus thrives in direct relation to the obedience which he gives to his parents. Jesus lives in an obedient child, and the child is happy—the child is relieved of the burden of having to decide what is right and wrong. The stress of deciding is removed.

I. A child will test parental authority—push the envelope. Youth feel at odds and unhappy when they are in a situation where they do not agree with parents. But deep down the child wants the parent to stand firm.

Illustration: On grades, drivers license, respect.

A. Rebel move at lack of authority.

1) Romans 7:15—old nature—discontentment in Spirit when at odds with parents—relationship with Jesus is clouded!

2) Pattern is found in parents—do you obey the Lord?

B. Every parent has had experience of children “asking for spanking.”

1) Discontent—disobedience in living!

Children obey parents—parents require obedience! Jesus will bless your life!

Fear—Living in Fear

Fear is alarm or agitation caused by expectation or realization of danger. This includes fright, terror and being scared or living in dread.

What I have described is what millions of Americans live in each day based on the worldly circumstances. When you realize that what David said in Psalm 24:1-2 is true, world conditions will not bother you. *“The earth is the Lord’s and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein. For He has founded it upon the seas and established it on the waters.”*

It is amazing that people who profess to be Christian have as many or more fears than the worldly people who profess nothing and depend on science and themselves.

Everything is indeed going God’s way even if we can’t see it. II Timothy 1:7 says, “For God has not given me a spirit of fear but of power, love, and a sound mind.” Inner fear comes from hopelessness which is a lack of trust in and commitment to the Lord Jesus.

The world will not get any better unless we, Christians, do something about it—by changing it! There’s that word again—CHANGE. It can only be done in the supernatural power of God not merely by carnal, earthly natural abilities.

Whether you believe it or not, the battleground is the mind. Many people cannot think for themselves and others do not think for themselves . . . they depend on friends, neighbors, and the government—which was never intended to take care of people and make them dependent which it does today . . . always with strings of control attached.

Communications and news media of all kinds are feeding people fear by the word and paragraph, spoon feeding it into lives. The result is hopelessness, fear, and disbelief in God’s Word and ability to perform His promises. Further, most give slanted, perverted perspectives hunting for sensationalism, not truth.

Today is no different in that the media continued to be negative, seeking, and suggesting gloom and doom as the voice of fear. Don’t listen to them unless they are reporting on Biblical prophecy—i.e. what the world wants Israel to do as compared to what the Bible says, or upheavals of nature or acts of ungodliness. Live in the Lord. That’s something to think about!!!

Fellowship with God

Text: Exodus 33:18, and Acts 4:23-31

God’s desire is for genuine, intimate communication with you and every believer. This comes from Bible Study, prayer, listening, and obedience.

The other day God reminded me that He wants to fellowship—and that morning and evening prayers and devotions are not fellowship! They are good but shallow—and He is calling for more depth! The problem is that He is not a priority and we get side-tracked by the world! For those who pay attention to Scripture and world situations—you know that time is short—and we do not have time to waste either personally or as a congregation of believers!

I. Fellowship defined:

A. Dictionary—being together and sharing an interest, companionship, friendship, and communication.

B. Bible—sharing in a common bond—which is Jesus; communication is the result of fellowship; communication is the heart of fellowship because of desire, vulnerability, and interaction.

II. Levels of Communication

A. Shallow

- 1) Not in depth of attitude desire or priority
- 2) Cliché's a way of life
- 3) Facts and data—not true self
- 4) General greeting, “Hi, how are you?” “Fine.”

B. Deeper

- 1) Acknowledge desire put there by Holy Spirit.
- 2) Be willing to be vulnerable.
- 3) Be willing to risk and make Him a priority.
- 4) Trust and share everything because of total dependence.

C. People who desired fellowship with God—do you?

Adam, Enoch, Moses, David, Jesus, Peter, and John.

D. Desire fellowship with Manifest Presence—Moses did—Exodus 33:18.

E. Fellowship includes: Repentance, restoration, renewal, rededication, and revival because of heart's desire. As in Acts 2 (unity), Acts 3 (Binging the Kingdom), Acts 4 (Sanhedrin, arrest, rejection)

III. Bible Study—read slowly, frequently and prayerfully

A. Read it through in one year—are you?

B. Deuteronomy 8:3 and Matthew 4:4

C. It gives mind and heart of God.

D. It gives light and direction.

E. It is wealth, health, and joy as well as responsibility.

IV. Prayer—two way communication with God.

A. Pray it (fellowship) in

B. Fill your memories (experiences)

C. Let it rule your heart.

D. Let it guide your feet (direction).

V. Listening—with heart not just ears.

A. Pass it (fellowship) on.

B. Hear voice of Holy Spirit.

C. Listen for guidance in every area of life.

D. Give God equal time when praying and seeking Him.

E. Write (record what He says)

VI. Obedience—act on commitment to His Lordship

A. Live it (fellowship) out.

B. True you is deep inside.

C. Need honest feeling and emotion (not just head).

D. God wants you to have a powerful, life-changing relationship.

What type of church do you want? Are you willing to pay the cost? Has your fellowship suffered because of weather, work, or just the world? We need to be like the Acts 4 prayer.

God is waiting and time is short—the fulfillment of our purpose and bringing His Kingdom begins and is sustained by fellowship.

To fellowship with God and make Him a #1 priority which will result in vision, power, ministry and His Kingdom. It is time to put our focus on Him and expect the supernatural in every area of our lives. Will you do it?

Fishing—I am going Fishing!

Text: John 21

To go fishing is to return to the old worldly ways of comfort, priorities and habits which are familiar rather than step out on Jesus promises in obedience. Jesus is calling all believers to a supernatural daily walk.

-He will meet you where you live and work.

-He will meet you at your faith level.

-He calls believers—you—to leave the past and commit to the future.

Main Thought: Jesus is calling believers to walk supernaturally into the future not retreat to the past. To live in the past is to give God left-overs and you can't bring His kingdom with left-overs—He must be the priority in every area of life!

I. People pressed in to hear the Word—Luke 5:1

A. There is a spiritual hunger and people try everything in the world except Jesus.

B. Food is available—but you must eat.

C. Jesus fed people—Luke 5:3; John 21:9-12.

D. Will you feed them also?

II. Jesus calls you to launch out—Luke 5:4.

A. Peter returned to what he knew because he lost sight of Jesus

- B. This means taking action physically and spiritually
- C. It means going deeper in your relationship with Him by trusting and granting Him more control in your life as evidenced by priorities and choices.

III. Jesus wants you to take Him, at His Word—Luke 5:5; John 21:6.

- A. Jesus cares and meets you at your point of need.
- B. Luke 5:5 toiled all night—tried the worldly or natural way.
- C. John 21:6 put net on right side of boat—the correct location.
- D. To take Him at His word is to take spiritual over natural.
- E. Obey even when you are not certain in the natural—obedience better than sacrifice—if you love Him you will obey Him.
- F. Church has not taught authority of Word—II Timothy 3:16—nor followed it.

IV. A Divine encounter with Jesus brings life-transformation and changes .

- A. Peter after recognizing Jesus, saw himself as sinful—Luke 5:8, and ate with Him but didn't ask who He was because they knew—John 21:12, and could not handle the holiness—anointing.

B. The result was:

- 1) Peter repented.
- 2) Peter returned.
- 3) Peter was restored.
- 4) Peter was renewed.

C. Peter had

- 1) A new occupation.
- 2) A new identity.
- 3) A new relationship.
- 4) A new desire.

D. What does it or will it take for you to recognize Jesus and commit to live for Him?

V. Jesus is calling for total commitment—John 21:15.

- A. Jesus asked Peter 3 times because Peter denied Him 3 times!
- B. Jesus asked if Peter had life-giving—*AGAPE*—love.
- C. Peter answered with brotherly concern—*Phileo*.
- D. Each time Jesus asked, “If you love me then feed my lambs—sheep.”
- E. Jesus said, “follow me”—which means completely and actively.
- F. Peter, like many today, asked about someone else—John—and Jesus told him as much as mind your own business—you are responsible for yourself.

The Invitation—Jesus is the Son of God and calls us, as believers, to continue His ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit—not to revert to the world and try to bring His Kingdom by logic, organization, administration, and tradition. ***Don't go fishing—go deeper!***

Review this outline to see if you are growing in Jesus and applying His Word to daily life—then intentionally share it with three other people this week.

Faith—The Bible Contains Faith

The Bible is an essential tool in the Christian faith. It is here that we read about what God has done, is doing, and will do. It is here that we find the greatest love story, the greatest sacrifice, and the greatest call to action.

The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its stories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map; the pilgrim's staff; the pilot's compass; the soldier's sword; and the Christian's charter. Here paradise is restored, heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good the design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, health to the soul, and river of pleasure. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents. **Pray it in. Read it through, Live it out, Pass it on.**

The Gideon are an interdenominational association of Christians who are dedicated to saving the lost through personal witnessing and the distribution of God's Word.

Deuteronomy 8:3 and Matthew 4:4 tell us, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." Many people make resolutions at the beginning of the year; for some that includes spending more time reading the Bible. Nearing the end of February, many of us find ourselves already off course for our goal of spending more time in the pages of the Word, especially with our altered schedules because of the record-setting weather. We allow even the weather to throw us off our determination to increase our time with the Lord.

I encourage each of you to spend time in the Word daily.

And in the spirit of "Passing It On," keep a box of outreach Bibles. We want to make sure we have Bibles for our members, their families, their friends, and visitors to our church. Take whatever you need; there's no cost. If you run

out, get more. If you have special needs—like a Bible in a different language, keep those on hand too.

Forgiveness

APHIEME—send away—completely cancel—release.

Involves—debts—Matthew 6:12; Sins—Matthew 9:2; thoughts as well and intents of heart

Conditions: Repentance and confession—Matthew 18:15-Luke 17:3

Through: Blood of Jesus

Results: Complete cancellation and remission of punishment.

Human forgiveness akin to Divine—direct ratio—No limitation—Matthew 18:21-22

Basis for all healing in all areas.

Forgiveness—Growing Through Forgiveness

Text: Psalms 103:3; Acts 26:17-18

It is a fact that even when we have the correct information we cannot always use it to get the desired results. We know that there is a need to have a right relationship with Christ—and maybe we even know how it comes about. Whether we act upon it determines whether we are victorious or not! It is time to grow through forgiveness—by asking for it, receiving it, and granting it.

Jesus preached repentance and forgiveness of sins. So did Peter in Acts 2:38, Paul in Acts 12:38, and Luke 24:47. Paul stands before Agrippa and explains about his personal commissioning—Acts 26:17-18. God revealed to Paul that God's way was better than man's way—to do otherwise is to SIN. Deal with it by #1 God, or #2 man.

Hindrances to growth include:

- 1) Iniquity—attitudes of heart.
- 2) Sin—iniquity in action—against God.

I. SIN—separation, indifference, neglect

A. Nature of in—Adam and Eve

B. Rebelling against sovereignty

C. Assuming government for self

D. Doing things their way!

E. Isaiah 53:6—everyone to his own way.

F. Forms

1) Intellectually—philosophies against God.

2) Physically—doing as you want—over-eating, etc.

3) Sin is rebellion against God and man!

G. Result of Sin

- 1) Guilt and pollution (moral degradation, etc.)
- 2) Guilt unavoidable when transgressing of God's laws.
- 3) Judgment follows transgression without forgiveness
- 4) Call sins what they are—
 - a. Habakkuk 1:13—Can't tolerate wrong
 - b. Psalms 86:5—Ready to forgive, be merciful
 - c. Psalms 45:7—Love righteousness, hate wickedness
 - d. Psalms 9:17—Judgment
 - e. Isaiah 55:7—Way to forgiveness

II. Forgiveness:

- A. Remission
- B. Hid—put out of sight
- C. Lift up—taken away
- D. Sent away—to set free
- E. Process
 - 1) Blood—Hebrew 9:22 without shedding of blood
 - 2) Christ's blood—John 1:29; I Corinthians 15:3; Galatians 1:4
 - 3) Romans 6:23—wages of sin; Romans 5:6, 8; Isaiah 53:4-6
 - 4) Mercy—not requiring what is due
 - 5) Grace—unmerited favor
 - 6) Repentance
 - 7) Baptism
 - 8) Confession
 - 9) Love—basis of it all!

III. Repentance:

- A. Luke 24:47—repentance and forgiveness to be preached
- B. Repentance first requirement—be truly sorry—Mark 1:4
- C. Mark 1:15—basis for forgiveness
- D. Change mind—followed by ACTIONS—life style
- E. Isaiah 55:7-8—thoughts, ways, etc.
- F. Baptism—obedience—I John 1:9
- G. Confession—attitude of forgiveness—Matthew 6:12

IV. Acting on Forgiveness—growing

- A. Realize you sin
- B. Realize forgiveness is available
- C. Realize God will forgive just as He heals
- D. Forgiven and covered—Psalm 32:1-3
- E. Swept away—Isaiah 44:22
- F. Not remembered—Isaiah 43:25
- G. Cast into depths of sea—Micah 7:19

H. Cannot be found—Jeremiah 50

I. Cast behind God's back—Isaiah 38:17

J. Removed as far as East from West—Psalm 103:12

of Satan persisting in saying we won't be forgiven.

Need to grow by removing hindrances and have right relationship—forgive self, others, and receive from God and others—**GROW!**

V. Forgive

A. To send away

B. Cancel debts—obsolete

C. Remission of punishment. Due to sinful conduct.

D. Removal of cause of offenses—I John 1:9

E. To excuse

F. To pardon

G. To renounce anger or resentment

VI. Psalm 32:1-7

A. God wants to forgive sinners

1) Disobedience

2) Clean the record

3) David confessed sin with Bathsheba

B. Confess is to agree with God

1) Don't let stubbornness keep you from obeying God.

2) Repent of wrong desires—iniquity.

Forgiveness—Settling Accounts

Text: Matthew 18:23-35; 6:12; Luke 11:4

This parable teaches about forgiveness and healing—spiritual and emotional. King desired to settle accounts. One servant owed a sum of ten million dollars! Taxes from five provinces—Judea, Idumea, Samaria, Galilee, and Perea—only amount to \$800,000!

A person's debt to God and others is so great that it can never be paid back—any more than a servant who makes only a few cents a day can pay back a debt of ten million dollars!

The servant asks for a special kind of mercy—a delay in time—for the purpose of getting money. The king granted **ANOTHER KIND OF MERCY**—forgiveness of total debt and release of obligation!

The forgiven servant has another servant put in prison for a debt owed—twenty dollars! The king was upset and had the servant, whom he forgave, put in prison because he had not forgiven the other servant for the small debt owed.

To the unforgiving and unforgiven—God will be like a stern debt collector. This is not just in the future but in the present, the unforgiven and unforgiving are

plagued with guilt and resentment—which result in emotional conflict that needs to be resolved.

Jesus is teaching about human relationships that include forgiveness, mercy and grace. As God's creation each person has been created with a need for interpersonal relationships that include grace, love, and acceptance.

Forgiveness—Oughts and debts.

Sin is a “violation of God's laws.” When we break these laws we are in debt. The words **ought** and **debt** come from the same root. To say **ought** is the same as saying **owe**. What is true about God's laws is also true about interpersonal relationships. Listen to people speak—hear the feelings of **ought** and **owe** expressed in relation to others. Prisoner OWES society—when released the DEBT has been paid. We seek to atone for wrongs—anger at self or others, the personality is turned over to inner tormentors.

The unforgiving and unforgiven are turned over to fearsome foursome of guilt, resentment, striving, and anxiety. These four produce stress, conflict, and all sorts of emotional conflict. Seventy-five percent of all hospitalized with physical illnesses are rooted in emotional causes—punishing self and physical symptoms are involuntary confessions of guilt.

I. Causes of Emotional Problems

(The following are true of Christians and need to be addressed the same as any other difficulty.)

A. Failure to receive forgiveness

- 1) Misunderstand offer of the Lord—servant
- 2) Not really hear what the Lord says (can't pay back ten million).
- 3) Didn't believe wonderful news. (Couldn't believe it—and tried to collect from another servant to pay what was no longer owed).

Illustration: No self-atonement—minister—past life –torment—forgiveness. God's grace is undeserved mercy and favor—it is also unlearned and can't be repaid!

No forgiveness from God unless you forgive your Brother (which includes yourself). Forgive enemies—yourself as own worst enemy? Anger and resentment against self? Realized? Unrealized? Still destructive!

B. Failure to give forgiveness.

- 1) Failure to accept and receive from God results in—
- 2) Failure to give unconditional love and forgiveness to others which results in—
- 3) Unforgiveness, conflicts and a vicious cycle.

The unaccepted are the unaccepting—the ungraced are the ungracious—the unforgiven are the unforgiving—BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS are the result.

Illustration: Significant others in your life—parents, brothers, sisters, relatives, friends, children, or spouse. They owe you affection, love, security, and affirmation, but since you feel indebted you won't collect from them—and turn into a grievance collector!

II. Marriage in Debt

Often married people want the spouse to do what only God can do! Marriage vows, or promises, are only possible to keep when a person is secure in God's love. What some mean is that they have needs and intend to let the other one have the opportunity to fill these needs and take care of them.

Often we try to get the person to live up to our expectations. Each wait for the other to change—and wants to collect what is perceived as owed.

Illustration: Courtship—image of persons

Marriage—person as they are

Partners—in Christ

III. Three tests—to see if there is someone you need to forgive.

A. First, there's the resentment test.

- 1) Past
- 2) Present
- 3) Friend
- 4) Relative
- 5) Other

B. Second, there's the responsibility test.

- 1) Parents—owe?
- 2) Pass the buck?
- 3) Extend forgiveness and then accept responsibility—healing.

C. Third, there's the reminder and reaction test.

- 1) Inappropriate response because a person reminds you of someone else.
- 2) Causes a clash—anger/resentment
- 3) Need to grant forgiveness to the unforgiven person in the past.

IV. How to Deal with Your Debts. There is a scripture way of dealing with debts.

A. God goes beyond forgiving and surrendering resentments.

B. God takes sins, failures, and hurts that happened earlier in your life and wraps His loving purposes around them to change them.

C. Cross—injustice?

D. Joseph—wronged by his brothers

Are you part of a debt-free Christian community?

Church, marriage, fellowship, family, homes, marriage

Tear up the charge card—Romans 13:8, *“Owe no man anything, but to love one another.”*

“Freely you have received, freely give.” Matthew 10:8

Fourth Man—Trust the Fourth Man

Text: Daniel 3:25

The last week of Jesus life is called Holy Week. This is not merely about passion but about fulfilling our purpose—like Shadrack, Meshack, and Abednego did by trusting God as recorded in Daniel 3:8-30.

The scripture for the day shows how God uses people who trust Him, obey Him, and serve Him. The fourth man was not responsible for Nebuchadnezer’s act of throwing the three Hebrew children into the furnace. He became responsible for bringing them out. He did not stoke the fiery furnace, but He did rob the fire of its violence. He did not bind them, but he did liberate them from their bonds. He did not send them into the furnace, but He did bring them out. The three Hebrew Children were free and had more liberty inside the furnace than out. The Fourth man joined them in the fire, and no weapon formed against them would prosper.

They were thrown down, but God raised them up. Man bound them, but Jesus set them free. They were not burned and did not even smell of smoke. Their obedience resulted in favor with the king and God’s kingdom being advanced. Before the incidence with the furnace the king required them to bow down and worship the king’s idol when they heard the music. They refused resulting in the time in the furnace.

-Trust because there is no compromise.

-Trust because you need to be where Jesus wants you to be.

-Trust because it leads to obedience.

-Trust because you have decided to refuse to bow down to the things of the world.

I. They were commanded to bow down.

A. the three Hebrew Children were commanded to bow down.

1) Verses 4-6 and verse 12.

2) They would not bow down regardless of what the king said.

3) The result was Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury because he lost control and face. His pride was hurt and so was his authority.

B. There is a rage and fury against Christians today.

1) Jesus said the world would hate us but it hated Him first.

2) Jesus said Believers would be persecuted. Matthew 24:9

3) Many will be offended. No surprise!

II. There were threats of reprisal. Daniel 3:15

A. Pressure to deny Jesus

- 1) You will be put into the furnace.
- 2) Who can deliver you?

B. Eight excuses for the Hebrew Children to give in.

- 1) We will fall down but not actually worship the idol.
- 2) We won't be idol worshippers but will worship this one time, and then ask God for forgiveness.
- 3) The king has absolute power, and we must obey him. God will understand.
- 4) The King appointed us—we owe this to him.
- 5) This is a foreign land, so God will excuse us for following the customs of the land.
- 6) Our ancestors set up idols in God's temple. This isn't half as bad.
- 7) We're not hurting anybody.
- 8) If we get ourselves killed, and some pagans take our high positions, they will not help our people in exile.

What excuses do you use for not standing up for Him?

III. The Fourth Man—Daniel 3:25

A. He is with you in all of your trials.

- 1) Physically
- 2) Spiritually
- 3) Emotionally

B. He is listed and described in all sixty six books of the Bible.

- 1) Read the list—all 66
- 2) He will never leave nor forsake you.

IV. Your destiny is in God's hands

A. His power is available to us today to be faithful and overcome.

- 1) Use the power to apply His Word.
- 2) Not everything will be like you want or expect.

B. There are eternal reasons for temporary trials.

- 1) Be glad your destiny is in God's hands and not man's.
- 2) It is costly to be a disciple.

Are you ready to trust the fourth Man with your life and serve Him?

Fruit—Growing by the Spiritual Fruit—Life by the Spirit

Text: Galatians 5:13-26

Possible say “life in the Spirit” actually by leading and power. Talk about fruit versus gifts. Both are needed but fruit=character, and gifts=tools, to put it briefly.

If committed to Christ then lives portray fruit first and then gifts. All gifts must be used with fruit lover. Paul talks to people of Galatia about being in grace and not under law—Romans 7-8.

I. FRUIT:

A. Figuratively

- 1) Children—Psalm 21:10
- 2) Fruit of womb—Psalm 127:3
- 3) Fruit of lips—praise—Isaiah 57:19
- 4) Fruit of mouth—words—Proverbs 12:14

B. Consequence of Actions

- 1) Eat fruit of wrongdoings—proverbs 1:31
- 2) Fruit of wickedness is judgment incurred—Jeremiah 6:19
- 3) Fruit of righteousness is good works from heart—Philippians 1:11
- 4) Fruit of Spirit—habits and principles produced in Christian by Holy Spirit—Galatians 5:22-26
- 5) Fruit-result of action and attitude
- 6) Fruit can be bad—Matthew 3:10; Romans 7:5
- 7) Fruit can be good—Psalm 104:13; James 3:17

II. BEAR FRUIT:

A. Disciples urged Mark 4:20; John 15:4-8

B. Criticized for being unfruitful—Mark 4:19; Titus 3:14; II Peter 1:8; I Corinthians 14:14

Fruit produced should match what Jesus says it should be and that is in keeping with His character in whom we say we have new life!

Galatians 5:13—freedom in service—life of loving service is the intent of the law. If led by Spirit then you are not under law but grace—Galatians 5:18. Delivered from conflict of law—Romans 7.

III. Lower Nature—Galatians 5:19

A. Sex sins

- 1) Immorality—not accepted standards-obscene
- 2) Impurity—unclean-mixed
- 3) Licentiousness-no rules—liberal in all things

B. Pagan sins

- 1) Idolatry
- 2) Sorcery

C. Sins of faction

- 1) Enmity—hostility/antagonism
 - 2) Strife—competition/quarrel
 - 3) Jealousy—resentful, suspicious, demanding of rights
 - 4) Anger
 - 5) Selfishness
 - 6) Dissension—disagreement/discord
 - 7) Party spirit
 - 8) Envy, discontent, desire, covet
- D. Sins of appetite
- 1) Drunkenness
 - 2) Carousing

Forfeit chance of salvation even if professed—must live!

IV. Higher Nature—Galatians 5:22

- A. Love—concern for well being over all else—agape
- B. Joy—inner rejoicing
- C. Peace—presence of every good and perfect gift/conqueror
- D. Patience—to wait and endure
- E. Kindness—affection and good will
- F. Goodness—generosity and benevolence
- G. Faith—total trust and expectation
- H. Gentleness—appropriate and considerate actions/obedient
- I. Self-control—inner discipline

If the Holy Spirit is really the inner principle of your life, then you will shape your outward actions accordingly.

Growing in Spiritual Fruit—character that produces harvest essential to grow spiritually—first in character then in ministry.

Fasting—What about Prayer and Fasting?

Text: Luke 4:2

Today, within the church, people are more receptive than ever to the Word and are searching for means of growing, yet we have overlooked much that will help us grow.

Whenever you have a physical thirst you get a drink—you know what to do—likewise when you have a spiritual thirst you get a drink also of the spiritual water that never runs dry!

Recently, I have preached on the Holy Spirit, and the power that is available and meant for every Christian, and the fact that behind every promise there is a command which we must obey if we are to receive. Too often, we have our halos too tight. We are filled with legal goodness, or we have a pity party when things to

wrong. If none of these things work for us to salve our consciences for failures we then try scape-goating whether it be fellow=Christians or even blaming God!

But, is the problem with God or with us? Why not take a close look at ourselves for a few moments. Just as we have made light of God's promises and often neglect to expect a response when we ask, so we have overlooked such helps as anointing with oil, prayers for healing, and fasting!

But fasting is for times past isn't it? Isn't it harmful to the body? Isn't it outdated? It is rather radical, isn't it? I mean for today's world. For just a moment consider what Jesus did before He was actively involved in His ministry. He was tempted, He fasted, He prayed, He stood on the Word, and He acted on guidance by the Spirit as told in Luke 4:3.

Likewise, He told His disciples about fasting in the parable of the Healing of the demonic son. The father had the disciples pray for his son yet there was no healing—Matthew 17:19, and Mark 9:29—so Jesus prayed and then answered the disciples questions of why they could not do the same thing as they had been empowered. The response was that this spiritual power came only with prayer and fasting!

Many today have asked for and received the Holy Spirit and yet do not exercise the power thereof in their lives because they have not become disciplined to do as is required to grow.

In Matthew 9:14 we see the Scribes and Pharisees ask Jesus why His disciples did not fast, and Jesus tells about the bridegroom and not mourning—but fasting after the bridegroom is gone. Also, Jesus told about the new wine in old wine skins—and He clearly tells the disciples they should fast after He is gone.

I. What is Fasting?

A. Fasting is the act of denial of food for the purpose of gaining spiritual insight and power to minister and glorify God. Fasting is indispensable to those who have received spiritual power from God, and those who are using it in His service (Which should be all Christians).

B. Examples of fasting:

- 1) Moses, Elijah, Jesus (40 days-supernatural fast)
- 2) Ezra, Esther, Saul, Elijah (I Kings 19:8, 3 days)
- 3) Daniel—10:3 7 days partial fast—no sweet bread.

II. Why Fast? It would seem that only those in positions of authority in the church or are officers should fast—not so! All Christians are called to do so. When fasting takes place it is not to please God as a ritual—it is for a purpose.

A. Fasting brings prayer power to bear on situations.

B. Fasting removes evil spirits—I Thessalonians 2:18. Paul was hindered from visiting the Thessalonians by the devil. Take your eyes off the world and onto Jesus!

C. Fasting purifies.

D. Fasting is to God for a purpose—crisis, thanks, direction, intervention, etc.

(Do not spiritualize—fasting is the actual denial of food—and the replacing of food with prayer.

III. How to Fast. This is a problem in that most people have never been taught how to fast much less its purpose or for what results. Fasting must be done for a purpose and for a period of time if that is what is selected.

A. Fasting can be as a group.

1) Declared in the church today—state the purpose.

2) As in Ninevah in time of Jonah. Esther.

B. Fasting can be as an individual—possible with a friend to encourage.

1) Elijah

2) Jesus

C. Types of fasting—

1) Supernatural fast—Moses, Jesus, Elijah

2) Total—normal/absolute—fast-does not exceed 3 days-no food or water.

3) Partial fast—Daniel—no sweet bread—for 7 days.

4) Non-total fast—orange juice, tomato juice, water, etc for 3-5 days.

D. Beginning and ending is important—take care!

E. Fasting for one meal only—very valid!

IV. When to Fast? This is a valid question. Only during lent when there is a period of denial? Not so! At any time when you need a more clear vision of what the Lord calls you to do—in time of crisis—in time of dedication and empowering—as an act of obedience for a given purpose. The results will be the same for you today. But, fasting is just as vital a part of the Christian life as is anointing, prayers for healing, and Holy Communion, and baptism!

Never undertake fasting for ritual—but for purpose—and expect God to reply. Why deny a valid resource we have for empowering and service? We don't in other areas, so why in our spiritual life?

Friends—the Story of Four Boyfriends

Once upon a time there was a girl who had four boyfriends.

She loved the fourth boyfriend the most and adorned him with rich robes and treated him to the finest of delicacies. She gave him nothing but the best.

She also loved the third boyfriend very much and was always showing him off to neighboring kingdoms. However, she feared that one day he would leave her for another.

She also loved her second boyfriend. He was her confidant and was always kind, considerate and patient with her. Whenever this girl faced a problem, she could confide in him, and he would help her get through the difficult times.

The girl's first boyfriend was a very loyal partner and had made great contributions in maintaining her wealth and kingdom. However, she did not love the first boyfriend. Although he loved her deeply, she hardly took notice of him!

One day, the girl fell ill and she knew her time was short. She thought of her luxurious life and wondered, 'I now have four boyfriends with me, but when I die, I'll be all alone.'

Thus, she asked the fourth boyfriend, 'I loved you the most, endowed you with the finest clothing and showered great care over you. Now that I'm dying, will you follow me and keep me company?'

'No way!' replied the fourth boyfriend, and he walked away without another word.

His answer cut like a sharp knife right into her heart.

The sad girl then asked the third boyfriend, 'I loved you all my life. Now that I'm dying, will you follow me and keep me company?'

'No!' replied the third boyfriend. 'Life is too good! When you die, I'm going to marry someone else!'

Her heart sank and turned cold.

She then asked the second boyfriend, 'I have always turned to you for help and you've always been there for me. When I die, will you follow me and keep me company?'

'I'm sorry, I can't help you out this time!' replied the second boyfriend. 'At the very most, I can only walk with you to your grave.'

His answer struck her like a bolt of lightning, and the girl was devastated.

Then a voice called out: 'I'll go with you. I'll follow you no matter where you go.'

The girl looked up, and there was her first boyfriend. He was very skinny as he suffered from malnutrition and neglect.

Greatly grieved, the girl said, 'I should have taken much better care of you when I had the chance!'

In truth, you have four boyfriends in your life: Your fourth boyfriend is your body. No matter how much time and effort you lavish in making it look good, it will leave you when you die.

Your third boyfriend is your possessions, status and wealth. When you die, it will all go to others.

Your second boyfriend is your family and friends. No matter how much they have been there for you, the furthest they can stay by you is up to the grave.

And your first boyfriend is your spirit: often neglected in pursuit of wealth, power, and pleasures of the world.

However, your spirit is the only thing that will follow you where ever you go. Cultivate, strengthen, and cherish it now, for it is the only part of you that will follow you to the throne of God and continue with you throughout Eternity.

By Mangesh

Chapter 7 “G”

GOD

Text: John 4:24; Matthew 6:9

THEO—Greek-Deity

DEUOS—Latin-Deity

NAME: Exodus 3:14, “*I AM who I AM.*”

Part of Trinity—Matthew 28:19

One whom we worship—adoration, praise

Names:

A. Generic—

1) *Elohim*—Creator

2) *Adonai*, Master, Sovereign—*Kuros*—Lord

B. Proper—

1) *EL Shaddi*—God Almighty—Deliverer—Exodus 6:2

2) *Yahweh*—6,823 times in Old Testament—Exodus 3:14—I Am . . .

C. Personal—

1) Father

2) Son

3) Holy Ghost

Omniscience—everywhere

Omnipresence—ever present

Omnipotent—ever powerful

Qualities:

Unique God—Exodus 20:3, 5—no rival

Lord of Earth—Exodus 9:29

Omnipotent and Holy—Exodus 15:3-5

Merciful and Faithful—Exodus 34:6

Demanding Obedience—Exodus 20:1-7

I Peter 1:15—Absolute Holiness

Almighty-Power—Matthew 19:26

Righteousness—John 17:25

Love—John 4:7-8

Judgment—Romans 9:15-18

God is not the Father of all—only the Saved!

He is not a celestial sugar-daddy.

God is not dead—He is a member of our family—God stood on nothing . . . etc.

He is Lord! Same forever! Today how He acts is the same as yesterday and tomorrow!

I. Who is God?

II. How He acts.

III. Our relationship to Him.

Find God in others, in basics of faith in Scripture.

Illustration: Bible—chocolate bar—eat, use!

Religious Roulette—don't play

Expect too much fruit with no root.

Walking Jello—double-minded—don't be wishy washy.

Fire not lit—is your wood wet . . .

Bell not rung—is your clapper broken

One-half saved—you are totally lost . . .

Well—a sign for drinking, but still you must prime pump . . .

God—cares, knows, acts . . .

You may have religion and be lost and go to hell . . .

1) Way to God . . . through the Son.

2) Perish for lack of knowledge

God is my Father—do you have a relationship with Him? What expectations do you have?

How God Works

Text: John 1:1-2, 14

We are going to take a look at the Word of God: a) what it means; b) what it does; c) what it produces.

I. The Living Word: Greek—Logos—John 1:1-2—Word; John 1:14—Word made flesh—Word—person of Jesus Christ.

A. Jesus and the Word are one:

1) Hebrews 4:12—scripture, Bible

2) Jesus is the Living Word

3) Bible is the recorded Word.

4) John 6:63—Words—Spirit—Life

5) John 4:24—God is the Spirit—worship in Spirit and truth

6) God and Word—Spirit

7) Accept meaning or lose power

B. Receiving the Word of God:

1) I Thessalonians 2:13

2) Thankful beyond measure

3) Heard the Word—received in truth not natural

4) Received/worked—proportionately

5) When received God comes to life in you

6) Word hindered/ineffective/not believed or received

II. Faith—Faith is more than trust, it is total reliance—Romans 10:17—faith

comes from hearing the Word of God—faith directly related to the Word of God—faith translates into believing God’s Word and promises.

David—I Chronicles 17:23

Mary—Luke 1:38

Hebrews 11:6—Faith is basic to any transaction between God and man—faith is the foundation/substance of things hoped for.

A. Faith relates to unseen world:

- 1) Hebrews 11:3—through faith we understand
- 2) Faith lets us see invisible
- 3) Foundation for the invisible is the Word of God.
- 4) II Corinthians 5:7—tension
- 5) Psalm 27:13—believing/seeing—sequence

B. Believe then see:

- 1) John 11:39-40—Lazarus—believes and see/faith and sight
- 2) II Corinthians 4:17-18—faith is the way to reality
- 3) Matthew 19:26; Mark 9:23—all things are possible to him that believes

KEY—if you have faith you are obedient and can do what God does.

C. Hope (worldly definition) versus faith:

- 1) Hope is the counterfeit of faith
- 2) Hope does not bring miracles
- 3) Faith brings them now
- 4) Hope normally corresponds to wishing
- 5) Faith takes hold of our spiritual reality

KEY—faith is in the heart—hope is in the head—Romans 10:10

- 6) Hope is believing the best is yet to be—I Thessalonians 5:8
- 7) Hope has no negative—protects man from subtle attacks
- 8) Hope is based upon what the Bible teaches about God.
- 9) Faith is in the present and hope is in the future
- 10) Faith is feeling.

D. How to receive faith:

- 1) The measure of faith /not gift of faith/ maturity
- 2) We are responsible to get faith
- 3) Romans 10:17—faith comes by hearing the Word of God.

III. How Can I Hear?

A. Hearing—Proverbs 4:20-22

- 1) In God’s Word there is life and health
- 2) Attend/undivided attention—tag
- 3) Incline—instruction—teachable

- 4) Depart means focus on answers not problems—Word not world.
- 5) Keep them—obedience and meditation
- 6) Romans 10:17—faith—**RHEMA**—heart.

B. Logos and **Rhema**:

- 1) **Logos** is heart
- 2) **Logos** is unchanging—self-existent Word of God—Psalm 119:89
- 3) The Bible contains Logos which is the total Word of God.
- 4) **Rhema** is heart knowledge—it is received from a spoken word—the Word is spoken by the Holy Spirit.
- 5) **Rhema** is Logos personalized in action—a\personal revelation from the Holy Spirit—Matthew 4:4—Rhema; Isaiah 55:8-11—Logos

C. **Rhema** releases faith:

- 1) **Rhema** applies to particular situation
- 2) We are responsible for what we do with the Word when it comes—first is to speak and second is to act.
- 3) Faith not spoken is still born
- 4) Faith not spoken brings **Rhema**
- 5) Our words must line up with God's

KEY—**Rhema** and heart—testimony by mouth—praise and victory.

Are You Limiting God?

Text: Judges 21:25

To limit is to have a boundary surrounding a specific area. It is to confine or to restrict. If you have a boundary that restricts and hinders potential, it is not good. Likewise, it is equally destructive not to fulfill or utilize the entire area within your boundary because it also limits your potential.

If God does not set a limit in a given area, then don't you you set a limit either. Judges 21:25 reads, "***In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.***" During this time Israel experienced trouble because everyone was his own authority and acted on his own opinions of right and wrong. Does this sound familiar?

This produced terrible results and it is no different today. You see individuals, groups, clubs, and organizations making themselves the final authority without reference to God. Many even refute or reject God's directions and rely on human logic and reason. Whenever people selfishly satisfy their personal desires, including remaining in their spiritual comfort zone at all costs, everyone pays the price.

The ultimate act of love is to submit all of our plans, desires, and dreams and to act in obedience to God. God has created you with individual tastes and preferences. He does not want you to stifle these, but He does want you to put Him first and then these will be realized and fulfilled. Ultimately, limiting God means not believing and acting on His Word, but instead doing what you think or feel.

Just as the Israelites were given the opportunity to enter the Promised Land—Numbers 13-14, so we are given the opportunity to enter into the best He has for us beginning with relationship to Him and continuing to live in the power of His resurrection. Yet, many limit God by not believing and acting of His Word. Sometimes it happens that we believe in one area and not another.

Just because God made provision for you and has given you a promise, it is not guaranteed unless you do your part. An example of this is the Israelites not doing their part to enter the Promised Land.

- When God puts a dream or vision in your heart do you boldly act in faith?
- When God brings opportunities across your path do you expect the best and act in confidence?
- When God gives you guidance do you know, without a doubt that you are able to do what He wants you to do?
- When you see the need do you do the deed, or do you hesitate in fear and make excuses? The job will always be beyond your abilities.

If you want God to do bigger supernatural things in ministry then you must start believing Him. You must believe that He has not changed and that He is willing and waiting. The key here is that what you receive is directly related to how you believe the Word, to what you expect, and to whether or not you speak the Kingdom into existence in the situation.

I. Are you limiting God? Then do a spiritual checkup. Just as a physical checkup includes an examination of blood, vital signs, and every part of the body, so a spiritual checkup begins with some basic questions and honest responses.

- A. Where am I in my relationship with God?
- B. Where am I in my life?
- C. What am I living for?
- D. What drives or motivates me?
- E. What are my goals and dreams?
- F. How are my focus, purpose, and direction?
- G. How can I change and improve?
- H. What are my priorities? Are they the same as God has for me?
(Jeremiah 29:11)

II. Are You Limiting God? Then quit letting people's unbelief restrict you—
Mark 6:4-6. God knows best and will use everything for good if you allow

it. He will intervene in your life, change circumstances, give you favor, work on your behalf, and give you more than enough.

III. Are You Limiting God? Then enlarge your vision—goal. Psalm 37:4-

5 is the key here because it tells us to delight ourselves in Him, to commit ourselves, and to trust in Him, and He will bring it to pass. Believe that God has more in store for you. What is your life mission? Has our goal—vision been hindered by weariness, disappointment, people, circumstances, or finances? Or possibly, by a lack of knowledge, planning, or action?

IV. Are You Limiting God? Then accept the fact that God's dream—goal for your life is much bigger and greater than you can imagine. It would boggle your mind to see it in fullness. There is the American dream and there is the Kingdom dream. Know this that you cannot receive what you cannot envision.

Illustration: A frog in a well thinking that he had the best until he climbed out of the well and into the pond. Sometimes we are in our own well of comfort and miss experiencing living, sharing, and bringing the Kingdom. Come out of the well and into the pond!

V. Are You Limiting God? Then don't settle for too little. We are told that we can do all things through Christ and His authority given to us—Philippians 4:13. Don't settle for too little because you think God is limited. He will do it through you—through your education, finances, relationships, and other resources. Ask God to show His heart not just His ways.

VI. Are You Limiting God? Then dare to dream. Run the race set before you—Hebrews 12:1-2. Your dream is from God's heart to yours. Operate by faith—Hebrews 11:1. The time is now to take action! **Stop Limiting God!**

Gospel—Is Our Gospel too Small?

Text: Mark 6:32-44

God meets us at our faith level—whatever we are willing to receive and use. In most instances believers live far below what God has for us. I am not talking about building faith—but using what faith you have. If you have enough faith (the measure which you do) to believe that Jesus is Lord—then you have enough faith to receive anything else scripture talks about. It's just that most believers don't expect the word to work—so they do not act on it!

Our society is in such a time crunch—there is not time allotted—priority—for Jesus who is our Source. You don't need more time—you need the right priorities—those of Jesus.

In these end times, God is working with those who are willing and those who will respond in obedience—but for the most part people deal in religion not relationship. The result is a powerless society in a fearful world.

When our government leaders don't want Jesus mentioned—"t" shirts rejected in Supreme Court and Senate that mention Jesus—or as former President Obama had the cross covered on one occasion and the IHS on the cross at Notre Dame covered before speaking—something is seriously wrong. It is an insult to Christians and to Christians in years past as well as our forefathers who died to make this country free and operate on Christian principles—not to mention insulting God.

Christians have been lulled to sleep rather than using the Word, Prayer, voting, and personal involvement that makes public and lifts up Jesus as the standard. Is it that our Gospel is too small? Or that believers don't really expect insensitivity?

The Christian faith—not religion—has survived because of God still offering Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit! Hebrews 13:8 tells us that Jesus is the same today, yesterday and forever—but apparently most do not believe nor expect. The Christian faith produces life, freedom, joy, love, and healing—none of which can the world nor any government produce. Christianity is a threat to any Communist, Socialist, Atheist, or Liberal group because the Christian's allegiance is to Jesus first!

The Gospel is not too small—but for many the believers' expectation for the Gospel is! It is time to let God be God and lift up Jesus to His rightful place then watch what God does. Put Him in the center of your marriage, home, schools, government, and churches—yes, churches.

It is time for the church to get an attitude adjustment about faith and ministry—the Kingdom of God is the focal point, not the world nor its' limitations!

Let's look at the account of Jesus feeding the 5000 as recorded in Mark 6:30-44.

-Note verses 30-33 set precedence for time alone with God for rest, fellowship, and renewal.

-Busy enough, no time to eat, think, or hear.

-Verses 32-33 tell of the hunger of the people as they ran to catch up with Him.

-Verse 34 tells that Jesus had compassion so the first thing He did was teach—He fed them the Word.

-Verse 35 tells that the day was far spent and the disciples asked Jesus to send the people away so they could get food.

-Much to their surprise Jesus told them to feed the people!

-The next idea was natural which was to buy food—impossible for such a large crowd and the location of the meet.

-Jesus took five loaves and two fish—looked to heaven and prayed.

-Then He had the disciples feed the people who were told to sit in groups of 100's and 50's in preparation to receive.

-Everybody ate and they had 12 baskets full of fragment of loaves and fish left over—5000 men plus women and children!

Even though in the USA Christians are the only group who is open game to attack, slander, and attempt to discredit and destroy—it is also the only faith that has the power to produce the promise. So, let's take a look at some Biblical truths about this account and how they apply to us today!

-Jesus doesn't ignore needs—physical, spiritual, emotional, financial, etc.

-You can have a taste of the Kingdom now!

I. Jesus invested in people

- A. He made them a part of His life.
- B. He gave of Himself to them.
- C. He forgave sins.
- D. He saw potential.
- E. He offered a solution.

II. Jesus calls us to invest in people too.

- A. Give of your abilities.
- B. Give of your resources.
- C. Give of your time.
- D. Give of yourself as Jesus did because people desperately need to know they are valued.

III. Spiritual insight puts things in perspective.

- A. Jesus—when run out of town was fine.
- B. Jesus—when rejected He was fine.
- C. Jesus—when misunderstood was fine.
- D. Jesus—when doubted was fine.
- E. Jesus—told the truth and when people didn't like it—was fine.
- F. Jesus—wasn't politically correct but He was fine.
- G. Jesus—profiled when He told about sinning and the Kingdom of God—but He was fine,

IV. Jesus was fine because—

- A. He listened to His Father—John 5:19, 30.
- B. He believed people were worth His life and ministry.
- C. He knew who He was and what He was called to do.
- D. He knew the reality of the spiritual world over the natural or physical world—John 11—raising Lazarus—Hebrews 11.
- E. He used abilities and spiritual gifts to help people.
- F. He did not use people knowing that if He did, He would loose both.
- G. He could not be deterred but was about His Father's business.

Don't look at size or lack of resources.

- Use what you have—like David defeating Goliath; feeding the 5000.
- Know that the impossible is an opportunity for God if you do your part.

Use the faith you have—

- Trust the Word not the world.
- Step out and act on your faith so it can be made manifest.
- Truly expect God to respond.
- The world is waiting for the manifest Sons of God.
- The non-believers are waiting for the manifest **sons of God**.
- God is waiting—for us to invest in people. God has a remnant and**

you are it!!

I invite you to make your Gospel larger and to supernaturally bring the Kingdom like Jesus did. He calls us to do the same!

Growing by Spiritual Fruit—Life by the Spirit

Text: Galatians 5:13-26

Possibly say 'life in the Spirit' actually by leading and power. Talk about fruit versus gifts. Both are needed but fruit=character and gifts=tools briefly!

If committed to Christ then lives portray fruit first and then gifts. All gifts must be used with fruit lover. Paul talks to people of Galatia about being in grace and not under law—Romans 7-8.

I. Fruit

A. Figuratively

- 1) Children—Psalm 21:10
- 2) Fruit of womb—Psalm 127:3
- 3) Fruit of lips—praise—Isaiah 57:19
- 4) Fruit of mouth—words—Proverbs 12:14

B. Consequence of Actions

- 1) Eat fruit of wrongdoings—Proverbs 12:14
- 2) Fruit of wickedness is judgment incurred—Jeremiah 6:19
- 3) Fruit of righteousness is good works from heart—Philemon 1:11
- 4) Fruit of Spirit—habits and principles produced in Christian by Holy Spirit—Galatians 5:22-26
FRUIT=result of action and attitude
- 5) Fruit can be bad—Matthew 3:10, Romans 7:5
- 6) Fruit can be good—Psalm 104:13, James 3:17

II. Bear Fruit

- A. Disciples urged Mark 4:20, John 15:4-8

B. Criticized for being unfruitful—Mark 4:19, Titus 3:14, II Peter 1:8, I Corinthians 14:14

Fruit produced should match what Jesus says it should be and that is in keeping with His character in whom we say we have new life!

Galatians 5:13=freedom in service—life of loving service is the intent of the law.

If led by Spirit then you are not under law but grace—Galatians 5:18.
Delivered from conflict of law—Romans 7.

III. Lower Nature—Galatians 5:19

A. Sex sins

- 1) Immorality—not accepted standards/obscene
- 2) Impurity—unclean/mixed
- 3) Licentiousness-no rules—liberal in all things

B. Pagan sins

- 1) Idolatry
- 2) Sorcery

C. Sin of faction

- 1) Enmity—hostility/antagonism
- 2) Strife—competition/quarrel
- 3) Jealousy—resentful, suspicious, demanding of rights
- 4) Anger
- 5) Selfishness
- 6) Dissension—disagreement/discord
- 7) Party Spirit
- 8) Envy, discontent, desire, covet

D. Sins of appetite

- 1) Drunkenness
- 2) Carousing

*Forfeit chance of salvation even if professed—must live!

IV. Higher Nature—Galatians 5:22

A. Love—concern for well being over All else—agape

B. Joy—inner rejoicing

C. Peace—presence of every good and perfect gift/conqueror

D. Patience—to wait and endure

E. Kindness—affection and good will

F. Goodness—generosity and benevolence

G. Faith—total trust and expectation

H. Gentleness—appropriate and considerate actions/obedient

I. Self-control—inner discipline

*If the Holy Spirit is really the inner principle of your life then you will shape your outward actions accordingly.

Growing in Spiritual Fruit—character that produces harvest essential to grow spiritually—first in character then in ministry.

Growth

GROW

Auzano—to increase naturally and/or spiritually

-of the Body—Luke 1:80

-of people—Acts 7:17

-of Faith—II Corinthians 2:19

Ginomai—become great—grownup

-Apostolic work—Acts 5:24

-of Moses—Hebrews 11:24

“grown-up”

Huperauxano—increase beyond measure

-Faith and love in life and practices

-II Thessalonians 1:3

I. Salvation

A. Roman Road—3:23, 6:23, 19:9, 10:13

B. Beginning no end—milk—then meat!

II. Christian Growth—Philippians 3:14

A. Spiritual growth—Hebrews 11:1-29

Faith—Pistis—primarily a firm persuasion; a conviction based upon hearing (peitho—to persuade) is used in New Testament always of faith in God or Christ, or things spiritual.

1) Trust—Romans 3:25

2) Trustworthiness—Romans 3:3

3) Metonymy (what is believed) Acts 6:7; Romans 3:23

4) Assurance—Acts 17:31

5) Pledge of faith—I Timothy 5:12

B. Spiritual Maturity—Hebrew 5:14

III. Results—Acts 2:36-47

Guidance—Divine Guidance

Text: James 3:15-18

Guidance is needed because it gets to the practical side of the Christian faith.

Guidance gets to the difference between living under law—abstract principle—and gospel or grace—relationship with a living Lord.

To respond under law is to be bound by specifics, but to be under grace is to be able to be flexible!

God speaks beyond the Scripture but never goes against it. Scripture is for the most part—general—it is the Holy Spirit that makes it specific!

To use law is to use old solutions to current problems. An example of how God works is to get CONFIRMATION from brethren—they are less involved than we—confirmation is needed—

ABSOLUTES versus paradox—Proverbs 26:4-5—speak, don't speak to a fool. SPIRIT leads when! The EMPHASIS is led by the Holy Spirit—discipline, mercy, accountability, etc.

HEARING—

-scripture is norm

-Christian counsel

-Circumstances

-UNITY of people

-Prayer

-Hear faintly—

-Agnes Sanford—cancelled flight and it crashed. God spoke to many but few listened!

-Dreams—sort out and match the Scripture—

-Word/Brethren/Prayer/ Circumstances/Spirit

Talked about need for guidance and some basic principles of guidance, but let's look at where to find guidance?

I. Desire for Guidance—

A. Who am I?

B. Where am I going?

C. World—past/present

D. Testing? Computers—

E. Correct way to check is through God

II. Sources of Guidance—

A. God—James 1:5; accept God

1) Gives direction—John 8:14

2) Christ in believer by faith—Colossians 1:27

a. the Holy Spirit—John 16:13

b. the Bible—Word—John 8:31-32

c. Counsel of mature Christians—Proverbs 11:14

III. Counterfeit Guidance

A. Exposed to counterfeit wisdom

B. Read James 1:5

1) Deuteronomy 18:11—familiar spirits

- 2) Deuteronomy 18:10-13—what NOT to get involved in
 - a. astrologer
 - b. enchanter
 - c. witch sorcerer
 - d. charmer-hypnotist
 - e. consulter-medium
 - f. wizard-clairvoyant or psychic
 - g. necromancer-consulting dead
- 3) Satan attacks from supernatural and strengthened impulses—feelings!
- 4) Emotions/desires/impulses
- 5) Turn back on God for fear of Commitment
 - a. new dispensation
 - b. natural not safe—
 - c. careful failures!

IV. True Guidance—

- A. Break with past
 - B. Turn to God’s Word
 - C. Pray
 - D. Check results—James 3:15—negative
 - E. Check results—James 3:16-18—positive
- Submit selves—God’s Word final!
- Certainty of guidance as we MATURE in Word.
- Romans 8:14—led by Spirit—sons
- Results—kingdom living!

Guidance—Receiving God’s Guidance—for best results

Text: Psalm 23:3; Colossians 1:9

Many people believe God can guide and does provide information to them but in a rather vague sort of way—and not always too regularly—yet God tells us we need to hear, listen, and obey for best results.

I. Why God Guides

- A. Didn’t just spin the world and let it go like a top—
 - B. Problems with society, economics, families, religion, etc.
For His name’s sake—Psalms 23:3
 - C. His reputation on the earth—Moses pleading for people
 - D. God leads, keeps on course, protects—for His purpose
- Illustration: Who’s in charge? Whose body is it?—etc.
- God’s image is not enhanced by His creation, wandering aimlessly and failing to honor the Creator

- E. Israelites led out of Egypt
- F. Israelites led into captivity—Ezekiel 36:21
- G. Israelites brought back—Ezekiel 36:23-24
- H. We must be willing to follow willingly God’s guidance—brings glory to Jesus.

Leads out of:

- sin and death
- out of testing
- trouble
- despondency

Leads into:

- freedom
- testing
- opportunity
- green pastures

--all of His name’s sake—

God has a plan for everyone—Psalm 32:8—Read it

Conditions—Desire it—John 7:17—not just know it

-Seek will of Father—John 5:30

-Our desires are secondary to God’s—rejected if they differ from God’s

-God’s will not always painful—Psalm 37:4

Be moving—in faith

-Move in what you know

-Revealed a piece at a time—Isaiah 48:17

-Walk in the light you have—supply more light

II. How God Speaks—Through the Word—Psalm 119:105

A. Tells what to do and what not to do

B. Never seek guidance for what God forbids—Colossians 3:9—lying—II Corinthians 6:14 marring unbelievers.

C. Not take promises out of context

D. Sometimes try to find His will not specified while not following what is clear!

Through the Holy Spirit—John 16:13; Romans 8:14

E. Leading is available through Holy Spirit if you are a believer and have relationship to Jesus

F. Must have intimate/unbroken relationship

G. If Spirit is grieved/quench then, leading is cloudy—Ephesians 4:30; I Thessalonians 5:19

H. Guidance to disciples

1) Acts 8:29; 10:19-20; 13:2; 16:9

a. Speaks to men of: willing obedience, Prayerful character, devotion to Gospel

b. Uses more than one method

aa. Paul—vision/Macedonia

bb. Philip/Peter heard a voice

cc. Voice furthers Gospel
dd. Holy Spirit leads within limits set by God
(Do not expect to marry unbeliever; I
Corinthians 7:39; II Corinthians 6:14-15 and 7th
Commandment in the Bible.

*Through Circumstances

- Certain courses of action forced on us—Joseph in Egypt—
Genesis 45:8 part of God's plan
- Often confirm decision or speaking
- Sometimes God's Will must be done in spite of circumstances
- Seek Sword and Confirmation of Christians—circumstances are
last source of dependency

*Through Authorities

- parents—Ephesians 6:1
- teachers/employers—Ephesians 6:5
- Government—I Peter 2:13-14
- Church—Hebrews 13:17/Romans 13:1—legal authorities

*Not give blind obedience/obey God first not against Him.

*Through common sense

- support
- pay back money
- use reason—based upon principles not specifics—some
decisions are left to us—ice cream, etc.

Illustration: Inward guidance not only one—learn it.

*Through Christians

- Advice from other Christians
- Don't listen to just anyone/counseling addict
- Counselor/mature/spiritual/skill to be helpful

*Through God—the final judge

- Isaiah 26:3—perfect peace—read it
- Bring problems with prayer and thanksgiving—Philippians
4:6-7
- Peace of God is final judge—inner witness

Be willing to not only know but to do/act upon God's Will—guide us
according to eternal purposes.

III. How to Apply Guidance

A. Law—abstract principle

B. Grace—living Lord

Difference is ability to be flexible and respond according to situation and
need as led by the Holy Spirit

- C. Scripture gives principle
 - D. Holy Spirit gives application—hear the Holy Spirit?
 - E. Certainty of hearing—charismatic
 - 1) Confirm Word through Body
 - 2) Common witness
 - 3) God not respecter of persons—speaks to all who will listen
 - F. Absolutes
 - 1) Sovereignty of God/sin/salvation/atonement of Christ, morality—etc.
 - 2) Discernment by Spirit as to application of scripture that seems hazy—or not specific enough
 - a. Sometimes stress by Spirit is works/grace/disciple/punishment/gentleness/mercy/love, etc.
 - *Truth in both directions but not always wanting to hear it.
 - 3) Hearing from God
 - a. Scripture is the standard/Christian counsel if scripture leaves alternatives
 - b. Unity indicates hearing
 - c. Prayer life—God’s voice versus your thoughts—I Corinthians 13:12—see darkly
 - 4) In Old Testament/New Testament often unrealistic means of ‘hearing’ not the norm for most people. Dreams, visions, etc.
- Step by step—short reign to keep us in the Light.

Chapter 8—“H”

Halloween—Trick or Treat?

Text: Luke 22:31-34

In October there is a holiday that most people see as harmless—childlike—even, in fact, much money is made on it—Halloween. Satan’s Holiday—a time when we see little children jokingly say, ‘trick or treat’—but as we look at our lives we need to see that the statement is real in reference to our condition, and what is happening in this world. The statement which I am putting into question form, ‘trick or treat?’ applies to us in our daily lives. Martin Luther King spoke of changes and reformation. It is time for a modern day reformation and we need to nail the thesis on the door and give notice to Satan that there will be no more tricks in the name of Jesus! Only treats from the Father as we learn to live in Him—Praise God!

I. Situation—the Scripture tells of a struggle within the soul (mind, emotions, will, and intellect). It is a battle between Jesus and Satan.

Illustration: In Kentucky a man saw the Devil—going home to Happy Hollow—feet of horse, body of calf, long neck and gash down its side and it wouldn’t get out of the way. He was sampling “Kentucky moonshine”—he was “frightened enough to attend church for three whole weeks!”

The point is not merely church attendance or fear—but protection, power, and productivity for Jesus!

A. Need to see that Satan claimed—falsely—the disciples and he intended to ‘crush or sift’ them as wheat—to buffet them—Job 1:6-12 and 2:1-6.

B. Need to see that Jesus is on our side, and that He has already won! He gave himself to a beating, torture, the cross, and even death for you and me—Romans 8:26-39.

C. Need to understand the intent of Satan is:

1) Paralyze your life—including preachers.

2) Preach only what sounds good.

3) Disrupt convictions.

4) To make you miserable—He gets angry when you are faithful to Christ. Tries to convince you—all are against you—that you are unworthy.

5) Cause you to make light of God—Eve, Judas, etc.

6) To stir up trouble—in church, at home, and in your personal life.

7) To make you feel self-sufficient—Peter verse 33.

8) To cause to not pray through—I Samuel 12:33.

II. Participants

A. Simon

- 1) Loyal—Poor musician but loves music, loves Christ.
- 2) Warned
 - a. Would be on own soon.
 - b. Danger in existence—lives in danger
 - c. Seriousness, danger, liability.
 - d. Over-confident—the risk is high—courtyard—John 18:1; would fight—Luke 22:49-50.

B. Satan—the name is “Diabolos”—slanderer, false accuser, Superhuman person—spirit, fallen angel without body, highest archangel before the fall.

- 1) Origin—Job 1:6
- 2) Position—Ezekiel 28:14
- 3) Prince of the world—John 14:30—on leash
- 4) Intent is to destroy—roaring lion—helpless; Helpless in power of Jesus blood!
- 5) Attributes—deception—Revelation 12:9; I Peter 5:7
- 6) Works—war Revelation 12:17; sickness II Corinthians 12:7; Luke 13:16
- 7) Names—Revelation 20:2

NOT: ALL KNOWING, EVER PRESENT, ALL POWERFUL

C. Jesus—the name is Savior—personal, all powerful, Spirit, truth, life, way—love and wholeness!

- 1) Spoke in sorrow—love; Peter looked on His face.
 - 2) Prayed for all—John 17:6-19
 - 3) “Simon” instead of “Peter”—character traits—John 12—shifting sand! Not rock!
 - 4) Jesus can help—Hebrews 2:18-19
- JESUS IS—ALL KNOWING, ALL PRESENT, ALL

POWERFUL!

III. Outcome—there will be trials BUT ALSO VICTORY—Jesus prayed not for exemption but for victory over Satan through His Heavenly Father—by believing in Him as He prepared to go to the cross. *“Be of good cheer for I have already overcome the world.”*

A. Warned

- 1) No provisions—Luke 9:1-5 and 10:1-9
- 2) Hatred replaces “glad reception”
- 3) Suffering Servant—Isaiah 53:12; Luke 23:32—is a sign for battle between Jesus and Satan.
- 4) Take provisions—Sword of Lord—Ephesians 6:17

B. Secret of Defeat is: Revelations 12:11

- 1) Blood of lamb—accept, use
- 2) Word of Testimony—Scripture/power
- 3) Loving not your own life—witness!

C. Return to Lord Jesus

- 1) Are you like Simeon? Powerful in return?
- 2) Lay down your life? (on cross upside down?)
- 3) Obey God rather than men
- 4) Rebuke Satan—James 4:7

Trick or Treat? Hell on earth or Salvation and power?

Will tell you to postpone believing—don't delay—“look on face and say ‘well . . . ‘

Accept Christ—Power of resurrection!

Healing

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1) The Holy Communion | I Corinthians 11:24 |
| 2) The Laying on of Hands | Mark 16:18 |
| 3) The Anointing Oil | Mark 6:12-13; James 5:14-15 |
| 4) Confession for Healing | James 5:16; Mark 11:25 |
| 5) Pray—that you may be healed | |
| 6) Healing in the Word of God;
Speaking in tongues | Matthew 4:4; Psalm 107:18-20 |
| 7) The Joy of the Lord | Nehemiah 8:9-10 |

Healing

Text: John 5:6, 9; Acts 10:38

This topic is sensitive and many close their ears when it is mentioned because of personal bias or fears! But this is as much a part of the faith as prayer—but deals with whole person in Spirit, Soul, and Body. Must take God as His Word—He wants to bring healing—Exodus 15:26 and Deuteronomy 7:15. Many will not receive healing because they will not ask—many limit God—John 5:6, 9.

Jesus is the reconciling link with God. God operates based on yourf need and willingness. The basis of all healing is LOVE—God's love and yours for each other. Regardless of illness—love is basis not will power!~

Greek: Healing

Therapeuto—attendant, treat, care, cure

Iaomi—used for physical treatment/made whole—Matthew 5:23; James 5:16.

SOZO—is word of major interest—Mark 5:23; Luke 8:36—to make whole—SAVE FROM DISEASE and IT’S EFFECTS! **SIN**

Jesus—brings healing and saves from all sins, and this is reflected in the body as well. We are called to live in Divine Health—remember about illness and causes—some things we allow and never pray about! Words—Jesus—was made flesh and dwelt among us—the purpose was healing.

- Areas of healing are—
- 1) Spirit—Salvation
 - 2) Emotions—anger, envy, hatred, resentment
 - 3) Memories—painful experiences
 - 4) Bodies—physically
 - a. Divine intervention—GOD
 - b. Mankind—agent, doctors, you.

Healing can be immediate—gradual—continuing.

Illustration: Not proper to refuse medical treatment based on scripture or faith—use resources put here. Pray first and then go—God prepares body to receive treatment and often heals before arrival at doctor/s office!

Doctors will have to verify what God has done.

Healing—Inner Healing

Text: Romans 12:1-2; Hebrews 13:8; John 14:27; Isaiah 53; & Luke 4:18

Everyone, including Christians, needs healing of emotions and memories—this is inner-healing!

- Christians need inner-peace/not just external peace.
- Christians need to know God loves them; experience it.
- Christians should not withdraw—be healed/made whole.

There is a difference between salvation, healing, and deliverance.

Bondages: Spiritual hindrances!

The key—Jesus heals wounds of past—not erases them. Jesus then fills us with His love. Inner-Healing is a continuous process.

Process: repentance example: Haunted by—

Identify basis of hurt Worthiness, anger, fear, depression, Anxiety, compulsion.

Some hurts are before child’s birth—John the Baptist leapt for joy while in his mother’s womb when she came into contact with Mary while carrying Jesus.

Child picks up on mother’s emotions while still in the womb.

Helping others:

- Small number of people
- Confidential
- Setting—peace/gentleness

-Time—60 minutes—45 to talk; 15 to pray.

Questions:

- Where did it begin?
 - Childhood
 - School
 - Sex
 - Broken marriage
 - Religious convictions

Idea of Cause:

- Why
- What
- Ask God for Revelation or Vision.
- Receive the love of the Father—John 17:26; John 4—the Samaritan woman
- Inner-Healing—Emotion
- Basic need of all people is to know the Lord.
 - Not for actions
 - Not for power
 - Not for position
- Matthew 12:20-21—the Gentleness of Jesus!
- Repentance—SPIRIT—Sin
- Inner-Healing—SOUL—Memories
- Physical—BODY—Sickness
- Deliverance—DEMONS—Attack

Helping Self:

Confess: To God
To self
To others

Sequence:

- Choose place/regularly
- Relax
- Pray—confess need
- Write
- Recognize/confess
- Receive forgiveness
- Infilling
- Prayer—Thanksgiving
- Walk in forgiveness—power

Healing Low Self-Esteem

Text: Proverbs 23:7; I Corinthians 13:9-12; Matthew 5:43-48

A famous plastic surgeon thought that a person's personality would change when their face changed—after several years he found that this was not so because the inside had not changed! **People needed to change the picture they had of themselves.**

The emotional face—not physical face—is the key to change! First, Emotional scars are removed; then there is healing and a true change in the person. The change affects **ACTIONS** and **ATTITUDES** and **RELATIONSHIPS**.

A person received gifts and compliments, and the more the person resisted the compliments and sharing—the self-image was not there!

Self-concept involves both **mental pictures** and the **emotional feelings** you have about yourself. This is at the core of your personality. The biblical base is true and is found in Proverbs 23:7—the way you feel about yourself down deep is the way you will become, and what you see and feel will determine your relationships with people and with God!

I. Components of Self-Image—A healthy self-image is essential for Christian growth and nurture in the Lord. There are three essential components of a healthy self-image according to Dr. Wagner, a Christian counselor who wrote “The Sensation of Being Somebody”.

A. A sense of belongingness

- 1) Knowing you are loved
- 2) Awareness of being wanted
- 3) Accepted, cared for, enjoyed and loved.
- 4) Often this can be traced back to parental attitude before birth and it is transmitted to the child.

B. A sense of worth and value

- 1) Inner belief and feeling
- 2) I count
- 3) I am valued
- 4) I have something to offer

C. A sense of being competent

- 1) Feeling or concept from within
- 2) I can do the task
- 3) I can cope with the situation
- 4) I am able to meet life Put all of these together and you have a triad of self-concept-feelings:
 - a. Belonging-ness,
 - b. Worthwhile-ness,
 - c. Competence.

II. Sources of Self Image

A. Four sources of self-image

- 1) Outer world—experience of life/opinion of important people in your life. “Looking-glass self” I Corinthians 13:9-12. Language of relationships when growing up.
- 2) Inner world—physical, emotional, and spiritual equipment within us. Senses, nerves, and capacity to learn—also, includes handicaps, deformities, and defects. Forgive and receive forgiveness.
- 3) Satan and forces of evil—liar—John 8:44, accuser—Revelations 12:10; blind minds—I Corinthians 4:4.
- 4) God and His Word—power for new image—from disease to cure!

III. Correcting Faulty Theology

A. Can't think wrong and live right!

B. Can't believe error and practice truth

C. Self-belittling is not humility—

Matthew 22:36-40

-Love God

-Love Self—value esteem

-Love Neighbor

-Can't love others when trying to prove self-worth

-Low self-esteem person always worrying about self.

IV. Take Your Self-Estimate from God

A. What right do you have to ridicule or despise someone whom God loves so deeply?—Genesis 1:26; John 3:16.

B. What right do you have to ridicule or despise someone whom God has honored so highly?—I John 3:1-2.

C. What right do you have to belittle or despise someone whom God values so highly?—Romans 5:7-8, ll.

D. What right do you have to belittle or despise someone whom God has provided for so fully?—Matthew 7:11; Philippians 4:9.

E. What right do you have to belittle or despise someone whom God has planned for so carefully?—Ephesians 3:1-5.

F. What right do you have to belittle or despise someone in whom God delights?—Ephesians 1:6; Matthews 3:17.

V. Cooperate with the Holy Spirit

A. Be a partner

B. Transformed by renewing of mind.

C. Ask God to check you when you belittle yourself—
spiritualize/criticize.

D. Let God love you.

E. Let God teach you to love.

What in life keeps you from being your best for Jesus Christ?

A. Mirror image?

B. Negative comparisons?

C. Some spiritual struggles not spiritual in origin!

Are you ready to begin the healing process?

Healing of Memories

Deliverance

I. General Guidelines

A. Pray before meeting to minister.

B. Remember that you have authority and use it.

C. Always have at least one other person with you in ministry.

D. The individual can help by:

1) Reading deliverance scripture accounts out loud.

2) Discerning spirits especially the strongman.

3) Identifying spirits either by activity or name.

E. Always have the person come to church for ministry unless on the mission field.

II. Plead the blood of Jesus over everyone for protection and direction.

A. Bind the demons so they can't cause distraction, harm, or injury to the person being delivered or the ministry team.

B. Use authority if demons speak or act out other than doing what they are commanded to do in Jesus name.

C. Always pray with your eyes open so you can see what is happening such as resistance or rebellion by the demon acting through the person (i.e. choking or talking back).

D. Command the spirit (demon) to come out peacefully and immediately in the name of Jesus and go to Him to be dealt with as He sees fit . . . it cannot stay in the person, team members, the church, or the location where ministry is taking place.

III. Instructions for the person being delivered.

A. Do not pray—just listen and respond when directed (you cannot transmit and receive at the same time).

B. Repeat when asked to renounce or claim your status in Jesus.

C. Remember that the minister is talking—commanding—the demons, not you—unless he specifically addresses you.

- D. Know that you are safe in Jesus and will be free.
- E. Watch for body changes (where Satan is resisting through the person.
 - 1) Eyes appear recessed with dark circles under them.
 - 2) Voice changes to gravely and deep.
 - 3) Skin can appear gray and chalky.
 - 4) Throwing up a bile or liquid that does not come from the stomach.
- F. Replace with anointing of the Holy Spirit—Matthew 12:34.

IV. Remember—summary.

- A. Deliverance is part of healing—beginning with the inside.
- B. It is the removal of demonic spirits that have trespassed on God’s property.
- C. The Holy Spirit is called to replace the evil that was in control but is no longer.
- D. Pay more attention to God and His Word than to the demon.
- E. Christians cannot be possessed—owned—but they can be oppressed and influenced because the demons have trespassed.
- F. Remember the tools of Name, Blood, and Word.
- G. Remember to praise when finished.

Healed Helpers

Text: Romans 8:18-28

God takes the hurt and uses it to His Glory—changes human hearts and heals/restores. Recycling Grace? Takes garbage and uses for good—

Problems—Suffer because it is this World—this side of Eden—hoping for new birth and redemption.

-the lost

-the hurting

-the defective—all of creation—due to the Fall!

God doesn’t need infirmities and sins but uses them as they make up most of the material presented to Him.

With Compassion, acceptance, and love wee people as Christ sees them.

I. The One Alongside

A. Romans 8:26—read it

B. Jesus has experienced all we go through

1) Loneliness

2) Abandonment

3) Depression

4) Rejection

5) Anxiety

- 6) Stress
- C. Bore it all—
 - 1) Wounded for transgressions—rebellious acts.
 - 2) Bruised for iniquities—rebellious thoughts.
 - 3) Bore infirmities—sicknesses, diseases, and weaknesses.
- D. John 14:16-18—read
- E. Always there!
 - 1) When you call.
 - 2) Who will take hold?
 - 3) Provide help.
 - 4) Present tense—continuous action by Holy Spirit.
- F. Doesn't leave because we have problems or hang-ups.
- G. can't carry load—Mary/Martha—Luke 10:40.
 - 1) God loves us because—His acceptance.
 - 2) Jesus bore our sins/infirmities—identification.
 - 3) Holy Spirit offers continual presence and power—help.

This is complete provision of Grace for every believer!

- H. 8:26—Holy Spirit helps with c rippling infirmities
 - 1) Define infirmities
 - 2) Tell how Holy Spirit helps.
 - a. Understanding
 - b. Prayer life—three types of tongues.
 - aa. Pentecostal—message for group of believers
 - bb. Praying in—to God.

I. God is Master of all events NOT author of all events.

- 1) 8:27—hearts—inner self.
- 2) God changes meaning of bad—uses for good.
- 3) The Wounded Healer—Jesus—now us.

II. Process of Inner-Healing.

- A. Identification of problem
- B. Place of Jesus in the event/now? John 8:58
 - 1) Good events—conception—birth?
 - 2) Bad events—loss/death?
- C. Sequence of Healing
 - 1) Return
 - 2) Release
 - 3) Repent
 - 4) Receive
 - 5) Renewed

III. The Other Alongside

A. We can minister out of weakness not just strength—

B. Glory in—only two things!

1) Cross—Galatians 6:14

2) Infirmities—II Corinthians 12:9-10

C. Do you argue with the Holy Spirit and not respond in obedience or sharing?

D. His—Jesus'—strength brought out in our infirmities—

E. Does Jesus have the opportunity to exercise His power in your life?

F. Will you let God use you to help others be healed? Set free?

G. The healing of damaged emotions is for you—God will minister if you will allow and participate according to His Word.

Will you risk it? The result is not only healing and true freedom but increased effectiveness in ministry to help set others free.

Healing

Text: John 5:6, 9, Acts 10:38

Topic is sensitive and many close ears when mentioned because of personal bias or fears! But this is as much a part of the faith as prayer—but deals with whole person in Spirit, Soul, and Body. Must take God at His Word—He wants to bring healing—Exodus 15:26 and Deuteronomy 7:15. Many will not receive because they will not ask—many limit God—John 5:6, 9.

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Areas of healing—Spirit—salvation

Emotions—anger, envy, hatred, or resentment.

Memories—painful experiences

Bodies—physically

- 1) Divine intervention—GOD
- 2) Mankind—agent—doctors, you.

Healing can be immediate—gradual—continuing.

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Doctors will have to verify what God has done

Hearing and Obedience

Text: John 10:27; Jeremiah 13:1-15; Revelation 2:7

It is NOT ENOUGH to hear—we must obey! Hearing brings responsibility and accountability.

It is important to hear God’s voice and obey for the following reasons.

- 1) God judges those who refuse to hear. Read Jeremiah—one phrase that is repeated—“This evil people who refuse to hear My words.” God wanted Judah and Israel to be a “people, a name, a praise, and a glory” but they would not listen. They became unprofitable to themselves and to God.
- 2) God is faithful to the repentant. No one listened and judgment came through captivity. God is faithful in judgment—hope, mercy, and love—Jeremiah 33. Repent and turn to God—hear and obey.
- 3) Hear what the Spirit SAYS—Did God Speak? Is it real? Did I obey?
- 4) Success is dependent upon Hearing and Obeying. Matthew 7:24-27—built on the Rock—Jesus. Rock is also His revelation. Success is certain if revelation is obeyed. Needs are supplied for the future. Be doers of the Word as in James 1:22. Deceive others? Deceive self? Get rid of all uncleanness and wickedness. Obey the Word. Don’t twist the truth; refuse to pervert it.
- 5) Obedience births blessing, as in Luke 1; 6:10-11. Faithful, true riches, no revelation until heart is right—Jesus not money. Jesus commits self due to heart—John 2:24-25. Heart and treasure as in Matthew 6:21; help or hoard? Ethical in business practices? Other guy have short end of stick? Cheat God in tithes and offerings? If you prove faithful in money, then trust you with true riches.

The following is the procedure, or steps, to follow when God speaks.

- 1) Submit to Christ’s Lordship. Put your own desires in neutral. You must want perfect will. Rebellion as stated in Psalm 18:12 and 106:13-15.
- 2) Have faith that God will speak to you. There is always a PEACE with God’s Word.

- 3) Listen as God sends His Spirit into you—His Word—John 16:34 transmits directly to your spirit.
 - 4) Test the Spirits: as in I John 4:1 wisdom and discernment nor deafness or paranoia.
 - 5) Rebuke all spiritual experience not of Jesus.
 - 6) Disregard messages not in line with the Word—Psalm 119:4-5, 24.
 - 7) God's Word must glorify God.
 - 8) Disregard the word if it brings condemnation/discouragement, or confusion—I Corinthians 14:33; James 3:15.
 - 9) Read Colossians 3:5.
 - 10) Counsel as told in Proverbs 24:6. Pygmies or giants/biblical truth—go for it!
 - 11) Wait for God's timing.
 - 12) Take action—walk on water; do not stay in the boat!
It is a choice—Stay and stagnate or go and grow—hear and obey!
- What is most difficult? Submitting? Believing? Receiving? Trying? Seeking? Waiting? Obeying?
- The prayer is that we not stagnate, but **grow in power, love, and kingdom!**

Holiness

Text: I Peter 2:9

Part tells us that we are a holy nation. The text refers to God's chosen people. We are God's chosen people by virtue of accepting Christ, and we need to look at the qualities of Holiness.

Definition: *Hagiasmos* = Holiness; Sanctification

--Signifies separation from God—I Peter 1:2

--The resultant state—the conduct befitting those who walk in Christ.

Therefore, Christians are called Saints—sanctified or Holy ones.

Hagiosune = the physical quality of Holiness—personal conduct.

--Holiness of Christ—Romans 1:4

--Holiness of believers—II Corinthians 7:1; Thessalonians 3:13.

Note: Holiness has to do with our relationship to God, and our growing toward perfection in character.

Hagiotes = this has to do with quality of Holiness in relationship to God—Hebrews 12:10; Luke 1:49; and John 17:11.

Note: *Hagioi* = Sanctified believers or Saints. Sainthood is not an attainment. It is a state into which God in grace calls men. Believers are called to sanctify themselves; cleansing themselves from all defilement forsaking sin and living the holy manner of life—II Peter 3:11.

The Saints are spoken of as the church; the Holy priesthood and the Holy nation.

Hagnos—relationship=Pure or free from defilement.

Hagios—action=God likeness.

You can have action set apart unto God, or Holy actions without holiness which is a relationship to God through Christ.

I. God is Holy—pure, undefiled:

A. Psalms 99:9

B. Isaiah 6:3

C. Revelation 15:4

1) God is transcendent and independent of His created universe—I King 8:27.

2) He is separated from its inhabitants and feared by them—Exodus 19:10-25.

3) Holiness is the equivalent of true deity separate from the world and false gods—Exodus 15:11.

4) Holiness characterizes God and includes all other attributes—Isaiah 40:28.

II. Us. God shares His holiness with those in covenant with Him—Exodus 19:4-6, and 33:16; Leviticus 11:44, 45; and I King 8:53.

God draws us to His state or quality of holiness through our dependence and obedience on Him. Israel was holy; New Testament believers were holy and we are called to be holy because of our relationship. Ceremonial objects can be holy. For example: the tabernacle where God's **Shekinah** glory was made manifest—Exodus 29:43, 45. Priests had holy garments—Exodus 28:2; the spot where God appeared to Moses in the burning bush—Exodus 3:5; ceremonial holiness could result in death when God was confronted—**Uzzah**/Ark—II Samuel 6:6, 7.

God gave rules through Moses for purification rights in separation for Holy ceremonies—Exodus 19:14. Some of these ceremonies include dedication of first born; offering of first fruits; distinction between clean and unclean food; holiness of Priests and holy convocations or festivals.

Often, holiness is called moral purity based upon covenant with God who is righteous and sinless. The punishment of man's moral infractions, or deviations, comes from the fact that God is Holy and cannot be in the presence of evil. The closest punishment is separation from a relationship to God and His favor.

III. New Testament. The New Testament teaches that the believer is not a sanctified/holy person before God without holiness of Christ imputed to Him at the time of conversion—I Corinthians 1:2 and 30.

He is being sanctified experientially as keeping his position in Christ by refusing to yield to sin and presenting himself to God—Romans 6:11-13. He must deliberately follow peace to all men and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord—Hebrew 12:14. He will be ultimately sanctified in sense of full conformity to Christ in glorification—Romans 8:30, 31.

Holiness, therefore, is the characteristic mark of a believer in the Old Testament, the New Testament, and today. The believer must stand in a holy place to worship God and must have clean hands and a pure heart—Psalm 24:3, 4; to dwell in God’s holy mountain; that is, in His presence; must walk with integrity—Psalm 15. God chose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before Him—Ephesians 1:4.

All sanctification/holiness is God’s direct and perfect will for us—I Thessalonians 4:3. Therefore, every activity of life becomes sacred when man’s aim in conformity to the Will of God who directs normal righteous life, cannot be divided between secular and sacred, our actions, our response of gratitude to the grace of God—Matthew 22:36-40; Luke 10:27 and 28.

Honesty: Be who you say you are

One day, there was a pastor who was talking to God and complaining about the congregation. He said, “God you know that they complain a lot, are not always dependable in commitment, reluctant in giving, and hesitant in ministry. Recently, some even did some things that did not represent the church well in the community. Please, help us be what we say we are and be effective.” The Lord replied, “I am aware of the things you say but now that you mention it—I am not totally satisfied on how YOU, as pastor, represent Me.”

What a shock! It’s tough to be honest—but God is trying to grow us up. The Church universal –Body of Christ—is not what God is calling it to be. Often, it acts like a spoiled brat rather than a King’s Kid. Isn’t it interesting that the spiritual life reflects the world rather than vice-versa, as it should be. Acts 11:26 tells that the disciples were called “Christian”. The name reflects not only relationship and responsibility but also representation and role.

When this is fulfilled by individuals professing Christ, then the third role of America can be fulfilled. The third role is that of preaching the Gospel to all the world—Mark 16:15. Seventy-eight percent of America claims to be God fearing, but not all have a fear—respect—of God. This is reflected in the fact that it is difficult to distinguish the church from the world. The church is

infected with liberalism—not merely tolerance but extreme to the point of accepting what is clearly not of God. An example is when people re-write history to match what they want, or when the church re-interprets scripture in light of contemporary ideas.

Immorality is just as much as disease in the church as it is in the world, but the use of pornography—even by leaders—abuse, perversion, adultery, and homosexuality not addressed. Instead, it is usually defended as freedom of speech and personal rights! Greed is often taught as prosperity and business and personal life accounts for many leaving the church and even the faith.

Poor representation is an insult to Jesus without a doubt, but then there is also a lack of unity. Many churches, groups, or denominations will not even share communion together. There are churches that even threaten to fire the pastor if he brings someone in to speak that disagrees with their personal preferences, even if the individual is Biblical!

The idea of many churches is to “guard their turf” and promote what makes them comfortable. Denominations reflect personal preferences in worship and emphasize what they deem most important from scripture. For the Baptist it is salvation; for the Methodist it is social action; for the Pentecostal it is spiritual gifts; for the Presbyterians it is predestination—you must complete your part to receive what is predestined. And on the list goes. If you were to put all of the elements, that are emphasized, together you would have the Church as God intended. We would truly be one in the Lord—John 17:21—“*—that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*”

America pays 90% of missionary costs to evangelize the world. You are your vision and your life reflects it. Step up, come up higher. If the Word offends you then change your attitude and heart. God is concerned with your relationship and obedience not what offends you. You can't afford to be offended. Grow up and get a thicker skin while still having a soft heart. There is no place for apathy, selfishness, or whining in life, if we represent our Lord as we should.

America has a good start and can fulfill her calling of bringing the Gospel to the world if we are truly Christians as we say we are. Be honest and begin at home by being what you say you are—a disciple as defined by Scripture—and not a cheap imitation—as defined by the world. We have the choice of uniting as one and living in commitment and obedience or living in personal preference and idolatry. Until next time—**that is something to think about.**

Chapter 9 “I”

Bible Interpretation

Text: Acts 8:30; Luke 24:27

Bible—Collection of books of Old Testament—39

Collection of books of New Testament—27

The Bible is recognized as divinely inspired record of God’s revelation of Himself and of His will for mankind.

“ta biblia”—the books—150 A.D.

Hermeneuo—messenger of Greek gods—“**hermeneutics**”—explaining meaning of words in a different language—John 1:38, 9:7; Hebrew 7:2; Matthew 1:23; Mark 15:22—Luke 24:27 Jesus on road to Emmaus.

Understand—**Ginosko**—to know, to come to know, is translated to understand—Acts 8:30—perceive with mind in addition to feeling –perceive with spirit.

Perceive—**Ginosko**—to know by experience and observation

“To know by experience and observation the true meaning of what is contained in the collection of books that were divinely inspired by God as a revelation of Himself and His will for us His creation and children—after acceptance of Jesus.”

Interpretation based on “Scripture” not an opinion or commentary of others. Scripture is own best commentary—cross reference—basic truths never change, fade or shade for any generation –will come to pass when believed and applied to daily lives.

Illness

Text: Hebrews 13:8

Illness is one of our major concerns at least we spend more money in that one given area than most others in our lives—we are concerned with good health care. If we had our way there would be no sickness at all—but there is sickness in life whether we like it or not.

“Divine Healing”—many afraid—but need to know about the place of the Lord in relation to illness. Just as surely as God redeemed man’s soul, so He cares for the body—is it outlandish to think He cares about the whole person? Spirit, Soul, and Body—Hebrews 13:8—the same response is relevant today. 2000 years do not make any difference in the compassion or power of our Lord!

Early church had a powerful healing ministry—Mark 16:18—laying on of hands, Mark 16:17—signs that follow them that believe. Promise was to all! Don’t live below your privilege as a Christian—you are an heir and a joint heir with Christ and are equal to Peter, James, John and etc!

Illness defined—**Kakos**—bad as in Romans 13:10. Bad—defined—**Kakos**—lack of a person or thing—character/thinking/acting/feeling.

Poneros—active form of evil—thoughts/speech—used concerning Satan and demons—literally translated means “malignant one”—influence.

Kakos—evil in character/morally/ethically/spiritually.

Satan is source of illness regardless of the type of condition: mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually—Romans 5:12.

I. How did it start? God’s creation perfect and no evil—in came SIN and Satan.

A. When Adam obeyed Satan in stead of God; he fell spiritually and became susceptible to suggestions of Satan.

B. The act affected Adam physically also—

1) Genesis 2:17 brought death.

2) Illness came with it—aging/illness and the reminder that we will all die—Genesis 3:19.

3) I Corinthians 15:55—O, death, there is thy sting? Until the curse for sin is finally removed, men will get sick and die.

4) God made provisions for both sickness and death—Jesus.

II. Why does it Happen? Permissive will! We need to look at some reasons why we get sick—

A. Inherent weakness—susceptible to illness.

B. God uses illness but does not cause it!

C. Is sickness punishment? No! Not for specific sins—but original sin yes! Miriam in Numbers 12:10 with leprosy; In John 9:1-3 the man was not blind due to parents or self!

D. Satan can affect a person physically—Job 2:7; II Timothy 4:20—not a lack of faith—Paul/Trophimus!

III. Spiritual Healing First. Read I Peter 2:21-25

A. God is interested in spiritual and physical—spirit lives.

Atonement for entire being—expect physical healing also. Put priorities right!

1) Sin. Spiritual sickness—Psalm 41:4.

2) One remedy—precious blood of Jesus—then ask about body!

B. Matthew 8:16-17—bore sins and infirmities—Came to destroy the work of the devil—I John 3:8.

1) Exodus 15:26 healing and deliverance from slavery!

2) James 5:14-15—vehicle—pastors—elders!

IV. Spirit Affects Body—New Testaments letter III John written to Gaius—2nd verse is actually a prayer—pray that your body would be like your spirit—healthy!

- A. Spirit affects body, not just your mind!
- B. Interrelationship—saved and unsaved also!
- C. Body is a temple—I Corinthians 6:19—healing—Isaiah 53:5!
- D. Pray—trust—act on promises!
- E. Prevention—Word—Name—Blood—armor.

Infilling

- 1) **What it is not;** Baptism with the Holy Spirit, which is to request that the power of God be activated for ministry and offering yourself as the vessel through whom it will flow. This happens only one time,
- 2) **What it is;** infilling is coming to the Lord daily in prayer, Bible study, and listening to His Spirit to receive a fresh supply of His presence. This is essential if the anointing is to flow in your ministry, and God is to work as He wants to work. This happens daily.
- 3) **How it is received;** essentially, what it amounts to is to live—Matthew 6:33—in such a way that you have a continual hunger and heart’s desire for the Lord to be above all else in every area of your life. It is to make Him the priority of your life, to come like a child and sit on His lap to listen and fellowship with Him. In doing so, you receive a fresh supply of His presence to strengthen and guide you, and to share with the world.
- 4) **Repentance** is the beginning of receiving God’s presence and direction because we can truly see ourselves in need and God as our Source.
- 5) **Prayer;** open your heart and share with God your desire for Him.
- 6) **Request His Manifest Presence—GLORY!**
- 7) **Scripture;** remind Him of His promise in Jeremiah 29:11.
- 8) **Thanksgiving;** give thanks for His answering your request and granting you His Manifest Presence.
- 9) **Fellowship;** spend time daily with Him, LISTENING to what He has to say. Then OBEY!

Purpose of Infilling

The infilling is essential if the anointing is to flow in ministry as God will touch and transform lives. This will happen in the Church through such means as word of knowledge, word of wisdom, prophecy, deliverance and healing.

On one occasion, I prayed for a person’s knee to be healed. After prayer, the person was standing with a cane, although the knee felt a little better. The Lord spoke and told me to speak to the knee, rather than to pray about it, because His anointing was present to heal. I spoke, and the glory of the Lord was made manifest as the knee was instantly healed and no surgery was required.

God touches lives through your witness as a believer as people see how you respond to life's situations. In addition, they will see the anointing that comes from the glory of God, because you are in-filled each day anew with His living Manifest Presence.

In a single day, God granted me the opportunity to minister in His anointing in three stores where I was shopping. In two of the three instances, I did not know the people. In every instance, God provided boldness based on revealed needs, and people received healing. One person who was healed that day claimed a relationship with Jesus, yet maintained, "I am healed because I do not have any pain or soreness and can move like normal, but it sure is scary."

Yet, another person who was touched by God said, "I'm a believer, but I didn't believe God healed. I thought it was just a gimmick on TV."

On still another occasion, after eating in a restaurant and walking across the parking lot, a man shouted to me and ran up and said, "I heard you and the group talking about Jesus. I want what you talked about. I want Jesus in my life; will you pray with me?" As we used the car hood for an altar for prayer, God came in and transformed his life! If you are filled daily and obedient, God will use you to supernaturally touch lives for Him.

Chapter 10, “K”

Kingdom—Bringing His Kingdom

People are hunting in this mixed-up world for something that makes sense and gives hope. Many have given up on the church as irrelevant—they lack power. Still others try to bring the Kingdom with natural skills and abilities rather than spiritual and supernatural.

Jesus was not about the church—but the Kingdom. The church is the vehicle that God wants to use to bring the Kingdom. We would do well to: 1) Share His vision, 2) Continue His Ministry, and 3) Bring His Kingdom! Jesus is calling us to work while it is day, be about our Father’s business and to set captives free.

I. The first thing we need to do is to have Jesus’ vision—revelation—in our hearts so we can continue His ministry of bringing the Kingdom.

A. Biblical plan—supernatural drawing

B. Our part—using spiritual abilities to bring power/help people where they are at—their point of need.

C. Give hope in a depressed world

1) Lawlessness

2) Same sex marriages

3) Abortion—child abuse

4) War—manipulation by leaders instead of winning.

5) Corruption

6) Attacks against Christian faith

7) Hope—Certainty comes from

a. Believing Word

b. Trusting God

c. Living by faith

d. Christians being bold in faith

e. Make Jesus focal point of your life—daily.

II. The second thing we need to do is repent.

A. This means being truly sorry that we have hurt God.

B. It also means deciding to change directions and act on it.

C. It means repenting of things done and left undone.

D. It means repenting of substituting the world for Jesus.

E. It means believing God by being obedient in all areas.

F. It means preparing the way for fulfilling our purpose.

III. The third thing we need to do is to die to self.

A. Deny Self, take up cross—Matthew 16:24.

B. Purpose in living

C. Daily.

- D. Attitude.
- E. Desires.
- F. Goals.
- G. Have the heart of Jesus.

IV. Give up Bad soul-ties.

- A. Soul ties are those relationships that we make a part of our lives that end up controlling us—either for good or bad.
- B. These relationships reside in the mind—soul.
- C. Bad soul ties put us in bondage to things of the world.
 - 1) People
 - 2) Anger
 - 3) Hate
 - 4) Traditions
 - 5) Beliefs
 - 6) Organizations
 - 7) Wrong teachings
 - 8) Adultery
 - 9) Idolatry
 - 10) Crime
 - 11) Heritage
 - 12) Guilt
 - 13) Possessiveness
 - 14) Unforgiveness

V. Establish Godly Soul-ties by establishing a relationship:

- A. With God
- B. With believers
- C. Biblical traditions
- D. With families
- E. With Spiritual leaders
- F. With the Church

VI. By Walking closely with Him

- A. Ensuring He is a priority in all things.
- B. By entering His presence—taking time, setting a place, right attitude, confession, praise, worship, surrendering, and receiving,
- C. By seeking passionately His Manifest Presence; the revealed presence of the Father. This is the key to everything else—Exodus 33:18.
- D. The result is intimacy with God, obedience and His Kingdom.
LISTEN, SPEAK, and OBEY

Our calling is to bring His Kingdom by being faithful to the vision He has given us and being in unity with other believers. Remember:

- 1) The Kingdom is not word but power—I Corinthians 4:20.
- 2) Be persistent in commitment and do not look back—Luke 9:63.
- 3) Endure and overcome all trials—Acts 14:22.
- 4) Be faithful to the vision He has given you like the Apostle Paul—Acts 26:19, and Jesus in John 5:19, and 17:4.
- 5) There will be non-believers in churches but you are responsible only for yourself—Matthew 13:24-30.
- 6) Now is the time—the Kingdom is at hand—Mark 1:15.

Some measurable steps and goals are available within our church—The Fellowship of Believers:

- World wide ministry.
 - Missions trips.
 - Increase membership and discipleship—double each year!
 - Use of facilities in bad weather and for community needs—feed the people physically as well as spiritually.
 - Healing teams.
 - Intercessory prayer groups.
 - More passionate worship.
 - Community coordinators for church events.
 - Minister to pastors.
 - Cooperative community youth ministry.
 - Increase facility size.
 - Prepare for ministering to needy.
 - Make disciples.
 - Boldly Evangelize.
- 1) We see His vision.
 - 2) We see our vision which is our part of it.
 - 3) We have clarified our vision.
 - 4) We are activating our vision.
 - 5) We are now to Bring His Kingdom and occupy until He comes.
 - 6) Now is the time to decide to Bring His Kingdom in His power.

I invite you to a new supernatural walk in the anointing and His manifest presence by choosing daily to bring His Kingdom through Listening, Speaking, and Obeying.

Knowing in Your Knower

Test: Proverbs 4:20-22

John 6:63—Life in the Word

-Cleanse

-Forgive

-Invite Him into control.

Everyone is seeking life and health.

Can be in need and never appropriate.

Written Word reveals living Word.

God's desire for you is to have abundant life.

No Ho-hum life—you can't recover time!

John 17:17—Word and Truth.

John 8:32—Word and Truth—pay attention.

Technology is a curse because man puts trust in technology not God.

Take the Word for what it says.

Know that you are healed because Word says you are.

Often judge physically based on feeling not spirit.

Deal with same feelings as last year.

Body is not meant to rule you—the Spirit is.

When Spirit knows—the body responds.

Quit seeking evidence—God gives confirmation.

Proverbs 20:27—you are related to the King—you are adopted—a Child of God.

Psalm 107:20—sent Word—Healed.

Healer/Holy Ghost lives within you.

Activate Spirit in you by Bible food.

Philippians 2:13—God is working in you to do His good pleasure.

Chapter 11, “L”

Leadership—Spiritual Leadership (motivation)

Text: I Peter 5:1-7

Maybe you don't see yourself as a spiritual leader—but you are a Christian—a person who can influence others to follow Jesus. It is important to each of us to be able to be the most effective possible—so let's look at our personal maturity in the spiritual sphere.

Peter was a natural leader. He went fishing and took others along. What he did seemed good to others. He wrote to a persecuted church and gave some guidelines for spiritual leadership—which is the task of all who profess Christ.

Peter wrote to the elders as an elder to encourage them to feed the flock—beginning with a heart for it.

--own failures—want to help others.

--forgiveness and growth in Christ—experienced—born again,

I. What is your motivation?

- A. not mere duties
- B. Not compulsion
- C. Willingly serve!
- D. Constraint of Divine love
- E. According to God—5:2
- F. Not self
- G. Not confused because of:
 - 1) Unworthiness
 - 2) Inadequacy—Moses in Exodus 4:14

II. What do you desire to gain?

- A. Not for shameful gain
- B. Money
- C. Popularity
- D. Fame
- E. Power
- F. Not dictatorial—5:3a

III. What example do you set?—5:3b

- A. Speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity
- B. feed—total task—fill with the Lord!
- C. Intercession
- D. Spirit of the Shepherd—Holy Spirit—Ephesians 5:22

IV. How Do You React—verse 6

- A. Clothed with humility—garment of servant
- B. You are a leader by attitude, actions, and relationships
- C. Are accountable

- D. Peter—towel—wash feet
- E. React humble to disciplines of God.
- F. Will give account—5:4
- V. What do you cast on Him?—5:7**
 - A. Give cares—you are His charge!
 - B. Anxiety—distraction of mind/conflict of emotions.

Taught by precepts—instructions—and example—life situations.
 Retreats for instruction—also along highway
 Internship—Luke 10:17-24
 Failures and successes—Mark 9:14-29
 Exercise faith for daily needs
 Delegated responsibility
 Delegated authority
 John 13-16 graduation address!

God has a plan, a calling, a claim on your life, and you are to grow and mature into it as you grow spiritually.

- disciplines
- vision
- wisdom
- decision
- courage
- integrity

You are, as a Christian, a spiritual leader. Are you maturing? Are you leading others to Christ?

- Be disciplined & Christ-like
- No one is exempt
- No immorality
- No excuses—for sin, selfishness, rebellion
- No Immaturity
- No excuse for bad behavior—even if others do it!

Lent—Ash Wednesday

Lent comes from a word meaning spring or literally the lengthening of daylight hours.

It is an annual season of fasting and repentance in preparation for Easter.
 It begins on Ash Wednesday.
 It lasts 40 days—excluding Sundays.

It symbolizes the 40-day period Jesus fasted and was tempted in the wilderness. During that time focus on doing right—present and future—not on negative—or past.

Just like you do spring cleaning in your home; Lent is a time and to do spring cleaning in your spiritual life. Have you accumulated things that hinder your personal relationship with Christ? Now is the time to clean them out, and we start with repentance—that's Ash Wednesday.

Ashes serve a dual purpose:

1) They remind us of our mortality and humanity. We know we will not live forever and that “what we do in life echoes in eternity.” We also know we can only be victorious in life through trust in and obedience to Christ.

2) They symbolize repentance throughout the Bible. When we repent, we have a change of mind, convictions, and commitment. We are sorry for offenses committed against God. We turn away from sin and turn to God and His service. Mark 1:15 says “the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

You receive the ashes on your forehead, but what happens after that? What happens for the rest of Lent? Typically, there are things we focus on to transform ourselves spiritually and prepare for Easter:

-Fasting/self-denial. You may have heard this referred to as “give something up.” The point is to simplify your life by identifying and eliminating material excesses that hinder your relationship with Christ. This also helps you develop greater discipline and control that lasts beyond Lent.

-Prayer. With a stripped-down, simplified life, you should have more time to spend in prayer.

-Scripture Reading. You should, also, have more time to spend reading your Bible. As you read your Bible, spend some time in Matthew 4:11-13 and Luke 4:1-13. These are the accounts of the temptation of Jesus while He was fasting in the wilderness. Using the Word of God, He was victorious over temptations. We need to follow that example.

-Ministry /Service. If you aren't already involved in a ministry, Lent is a good time to find ways to get involved.

You should now be able to see the goal. Spiritual growth comes from repenting, eliminating the garbage and excesses, and replacing them with prayer, scripture, and ministry. As we prepare to receive the ashes, I want to remind you that the ashes are traditionally gathered from the burnt palm leaves of the previous year's Palm Sunday,

This is a powerful reminder of how quickly praise can turn to dust...How we can go from exclaiming “Hosanna!” AT Easter last year to becoming mired

in sin and ignoring what God wants—which is why we need to repent and turn back to God and His service.

Now, read Psalm 51:1-13.

Invite them to come forward to receive the ashes. Kneel at the altar in prayer. When you are ready to receive the ashes, turn your hands up.

Imposition of Ashes: paraphrase Mark 1:15 as you place ashes on their foreheads, “Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel.”

The Light of God’s Word

Text: Psalm 119:130 *“The entrance and unfolding of Your words give light: their unfolding gives understanding (discernment and comprehension) to the simple.”*

The study of the effects of God’s Word gives a new surge of power in your ministry. It is exciting. The Word produces Faith, New Birth, Healing, Abundance, Victory over Satan, and Spiritual Food. The Word also produces Light, Cleansing, a Mirror, and Judgment.

I. Light

A. The next effect of the Word of God is **Light**

B. Psalm 119:130—light and understanding directly related.

C. Word gives light; Word gives understanding—this is a direct result of relation to the Word.

D. God’s Word brings light—missionary activities—worldwide.

1) Hearts alive

2) Standards raised

3) Finances improved

4) Society upgraded

E. Underground church—Russia

1) Darkness—Bible mocked and scorned.

2) Education not the same as spiritual understanding.

3) Secular education can be misused—souls can be in darkness.

F. Light comes not from information but from the Word of God!

1) John 1:4-5—Zoe life—flows in Jesus of Nazareth.

2) There is no light nor life until there is spiritual life in Christ! God’s Word brings you into light.

3) Darkness can’t comprehend it!—the carnal mind.

4) Life that is in you is light.

5) Spend time with Word—meditate—remember.

II. Cleansing and Sanctification

A. The next effect of God’s Word is Cleansing and Sanctification.

- B. Ephesians 5:25-27
- C. Word permeates believers
- D. John 15:3
- E. The Blood and the Word.
 - 1) I John 1:7—Blood cleanses of sins
 - 2) Ephesians—Church cleanses by washing of the water by the Word.
 - 3) I John 5:6—water and blood
 - 4) Teacher—Word—Cleanses
 - 5) Savior—Blood—Cleansed
 - 6) Blood is for relationship
 - 7) Water is for Christian Walk
- F. Cleansed by:
 - 1) Psalm 119:9 paying attention to Word
 - 2) Need dust of life removed from feet.
 - 3) John 15:1 clean through Word.
 - 4) Isaiah 40:31 rest, relax, refresh, shout, memorize, meditate, recite, read, bask—Praise the Lord!

III. The Mirror of Spiritual Revelation

- A. James 1:21-25
 - 1) Hindrances—filthiness and naughtiness
 - 2) Helps—meekness—doer of Word.
 - 3) Mirror
 - 4) Verse 23—mirror—see God—conviction/conversion
 - 5) See yourself in mirror—see God in Bible
 - 6) Reaction to seeing in mirror?
 - a. Approve
 - b. Change
 - 7) Responsibility to Change/obey!—renewed mind.
- B. Hearers and not doers
 - 1) Sit in church and look in mirror then forget.
 - 2) Spiritual suicide
 - 3) If you refuse to respond to sin in life after being in the house of the Lord you are in grave spiritual danger.
 - 4) Veil and hardness—callous.
- C. Positive Mirror
 - 1) Romans 5:1 sinned/forgiven
 - 2) II Corinthians 5:21 declare victory
 - 3) Continue to look in mirror
 - a. James 1:25

- b. II Corinthians 3:18
- c. II Corinthians 4:17-18

IV. The Word of God is our Judge

- A. Hebrew 4:12
 - 1) Thoughts
 - 2) Hearts
- B. God is the Judge
 - 1) Judges 11:27—judge
 - 2) II Peter 3:9—mercy and judgment
 - 3) John 5:22-23—reluctance to judge
- C. Jesus is the Judge—judgment transferred to Him—John 12:47-48
- D. Word is the Judge—Psalm 119:160; John 5:24

Limiting God

Are you limiting God?

Test: Judges 21:25

To limit is to have a boundary surrounding a specific area. It is to confine or to restrict. If you have a boundary that restricts and hinders potential, it is not good. Likewise, it is equally destructive not to fulfill or utilize the entire area within your boundary because it also limits your potential.

If God does not set a limit in a given area, then don't you set a limit either. Judges 21:25 reads, "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes." During this time Israel experienced trouble because everyone was his own authority and acted on his own opinions of right and wrong. Does this sound familiar?

This produced terrible results, and it is no different today. You see individuals, groups, clubs, and organizations making themselves the final authority without reference to God. Many even refute or reject God's directions and rely on human logic and reason. Whenever, people selfishly satisfy their personal desires, including remaining in their spiritual comfort zone at all costs, everyone pays the price.

The ultimate act of love is to submit all of our plans, desires, and dreams and to act in obedience to God. God has created you with individual tastes and preferences. He does not want you to stifle these, but He does want you to put Him first, and then these will be realized and fulfilled. Ultimately, limiting God means not believing and acting on His Word, but instead doing what you think or feel.

Just as the Israelites were given the opportunity to enter the Promised Land (Numbers 13-14), so we are given the opportunity to enter into the best

He has for us beginning with our relationship to Him and continuing to live in the power of His resurrection. Yet, many limit God by not believing and acting on His Word. Sometimes, it happens that we believe in one area and not another.

Just because God made provision for you and has given you a promise, it is not guaranteed, unless you do your part. An example of this is the Israelites not doing their part to enter the Promised Land.

-When God puts a dream or vision in your heart do you act boldly in faith?

-When God brings opportunities across your path do you expect the best and act in confidence?

-When God gives you guidance do you know, without a doubt, that you are able to do what He wants you to do?

-When you see the need do you do the deed or do you hesitate in fear and make excuses? The job will always be beyond your abilities.

If you want God to do bigger supernatural things in ministry, then you must start believing Him. You must believe that He has not changed, and that He is willing and waiting. The key here is that what you receive is directly related to how you believe the Word, to what you expect, and to whether or not you speak the Kingdom into existence in the situation.

I. Are you limiting God? Then do a spiritual checkup. Just as a physical checkup includes an examination of blood, vital signs, and every part of the body, so a spiritual checkup begins with some basic questions and honest responses.

A. Where am I in my relationship with God?

B. Where am I in my life?

C. What am I living for?

D. What drives or motivates me?

E. What are my goals and dreams?

F. How are my focus, purpose, and direction?

G. How can I change and improve?

H. What are my Priorities? Are they the same as God has for me?

(Jeremiah 29:11)

II. Are you limiting God? Then quit letting people's unbelief restrict you (Mark 6:4-6). God knows best and will use everything for good if you allow it. He will intervene in your life, change circumstances, give you favor, work on your behalf, and give you more than enough.

III. Are you Limiting God? Then enlarge your vision/goal. Psalm 37:4-5 is the key here because it tells us to delight ourselves in Him, to commit ourselves, and to trust in Him, and He will bring it to pass. Believe that God has more in store for you. What is your life mission? Has your goal/vision been hindered

by weariness, disappointment, people circumstances, or finances? Or, possibly by a lack of knowledge, planning, or action?

IV. Are you limiting God? Then accept the fact that God's dream, or goal for your life is much bigger and greater than you can imagine. It would boggle your mind to see it in its fullness. There is the American dream, and there is the Kingdom dream. Know this that you cannot receive what you cannot envision. Illustration: A frog in a well thinking he had the best until he climbed out of the well and into the pond. Sometimes, we are in our own well of comfort and miss experiencing living, sharing, and bringing the Kingdom. Come out of the well and into the pond!

V. Are you limiting God? Then don't settle for too little. We are told that we can do all things through Christ and His authority given to us (Philippians 4:13). Don't settle for too little because you think God is limited. He will do it through you—through your education, finances, relationships, and other resources. Ask God to show you His heart, not just His ways.

VI. Are you limiting God? Then dare to dream. Run the race set before you (Hebrews 12:1-2). Your dream is from God's heart to yours. Operate by faith (Hebrews 11:1). The time is now to trust, risk, and live in His presence, anointing, and power—without limits!

Live It—God's Way

What is really important?

Have you noticed that people put time, energy and money into what is truly important to them? People commit to causes supposedly because it gives purpose to their lives. Do you really think that God is impressed with the fact the Bible Literacy Program is endorsed by interfaith groups, 1st Amendment Watchdog associations, and educators? God will use it to reveal Himself and bring His Kingdom in spite of the efforts of man to shut Him out. It has not worked for two thousand years, and it won't work now. People also commit to church organizations as well as principles and ideas of Jesus thinking they are committed to Him—not so!

What is really important? Getting your way? Asserting your rights? Fighting a cause? Fighting aging rather than staying healthy and trusting God. Focusing on getting financial security to the exclusion of missing what is truly important—loving and serving God first then loving and helping man. Get a handle on what is lasting—only what's done for Christ! It is also practical and fulfilling in this life. Believe God for now. Believe Jesus for the future and trust them for both.

Recognize your Source—God—who provides all of your needs, many through man, jobs, etc. and others directly and supernaturally. Recognize that

God will heal brokenness and hopelessness—both of which operate in lives of Christians. Recognize where your treasure is—relationship to God and to family, to church and to dreams God is fulfilling in your life. Recognize who you are serving with your time, energy and money—God, Satan—the world, or self? Recognize what you will present to God as a life’s work—hobbies, bank accounts, possessions or a life fulfilled in Him?

Many today are controlled by idolatry—worshipping other things than God by putting them ahead of Him—can you think of any in your life? Most probably can even though it is not intended—and this includes perceived religious causes.

What is really important, has value, and worthy of your time, energy, and money? Will it be something to present to God that clearly reflected your appreciation, stewardship, recognition of purpose and faithfulness in achieving His purpose in creating you and giving you the privilege of life?

Life is too short to not live what is important. **That’s something to think about!**

Chapter 12 “M”

Maturity

Maturity is to grow up, develop—fulfill potential. Pass it on to others, not just for yourself—JOY—*Jesus-others-you*.

I. Maturity is not automatic.

- A. In any form
- B. Natural
- C. Emotional
- D. Spiritual
- E. Receptive

II. Maturity is result of choices.

(Chart on page 2735 of Life Application Bible.)

III. Maturity should develop with character.

(Character—Galatians 5:22-23—the fruit of the Spirit—determine choices)

IV. Maturity determines actions:

- A. In relationship
- B. In Ministry

V. Actions reflect goals.

- A. Daily
- B. Yearly
- C. Personal
 - 1) Exercise
 - 2) Read
 - 3) Volunteer

Spiritual Growth is not instant—Deuteronomy 7:21-24. Hebrew 13:4-5 is a call to spiritual maturity. The problem in faith is result to opportunity—I Timothy 4:7-10.

Making progress—Numbers 33:2. TAG—Time Alone with God—Matthew 14:23.

Understanding the process of Growth—Mark 4:26-29. Parallel between Physical & Spiritual Growth—John 4:13-15. Strengthen weak faith—Romans 14:1. Spiritual check up needed—II Corinthians 13:5.

Can't separate Physical from the Spiritual—rest of life—I Thessalonians 5:23.

Spiritual Maturity

Taught in parables—Hebrews 5:14—call to spiritual maturity—produce much for Lord Jesus! Discipleship! Compare to a man working for you. Vineyard keeper—Matthew 20:1-16.

- 1) Vineyard
- 2) Call to work
- 3) Reward
- 4) Tendency to murmur

Pattern for teaching—growth.

- 1) Put off old—Romans 6:6; Hebrews 8:13
- 2) Put on new—II Corinthians 5:17; Revelations 21:5; Ephesians 4:34; Colossians 3:10.
- 3) Watch and pray—Matthew 26:41; Mark 13:13, 14:38; Colossians 4:2.
- 4) Withstand Satan—Ephesians 6:13.

Meditation

Text: Joshua 1:8 *“This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.”*

Meditation is earnest contemplation on a few verses from the Word of God with personal application by the Holy Spirit. Marvelous things happen when believers learn to sit quietly and meditate on the Word. The Bible is God’s love letter to you. Relax and let Him speak to you through it. As the Psalmist cried, *“Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Thy law.” Psalm 119:18.*

The following pointers may be helpful to you as you seek to gain the very most from your times of meditating upon God’s Word:

- 1) Prepare your heart as you would for intercessory prayer—confess sin, take authority over the enemy, and acknowledge dependence on the Holy Spirit for insights.
- 2) Ask the Lord where in the Bible He wants you to begin meditation. Focus your attention on one or two verses or take in an entire chapter.
- 3) Read each verse slowly word by word.
- 4) Ponder each word carefully—this could be compared to the very natural process of a cow chewing its cud over and over. Seek to fully digest each word and phrase.
- 5) Remain sensitive to the Holy Spirit to reveal fresh insights.
- 6) Apply the verses to your own life and respond as the Lord directs.

The following may be the result of your meditation: a greater desire to seek God, conviction of sin, praise and thanksgiving, intercession for others, further study, or specific application of what you have learned.

Meditation is never true meditation unless it creates a response toward God. Your attitude must be that of a child, totally dependent on the Holy Spirit

and not on your own intelligence for fresh insights. Your response should be a new continuing obedience and submission to new truths and insights which you have gained. God is always faithful to provide more grace as we come to know Him better and better. He delights in our waiting before Him.

Ask for and expect to receive these new understanding from God's Word as you meditate. Too often we don't expect, and therefore are not available to readily receive.

Meditation is a key to spiritual prosperity and fruitfulness as expressed in Joshua 1:8, our keynote verse: *“. . .; but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.”* This isn't a promise of fulfillment and spiritual success as we come to know God in greater measures.

Consider another promise: *“But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither; and whatever he does, he prospers.” Psalm 1:2-3*

Many who see the importance and blessing of meditation begin enthusiastically, but quit before it really becomes a spiritual habit. It is something that requires discipline. You can challenge yourself on with this: “The more I press on to meditate in the Word, the more I will see God Himself.”

Meditation—“The Lost Christian Discipline”

Text: Revelations 1:10; Psalm 1:2-3

Found in Psalms and New Testament; Joshua 1:8—*Do not let this book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”*

“*Haga*” means to speak with oneself.

“*Siah*” means to meditate on divine things.

New Testament: Luke 21:14 *“take care beforehand”*. I Timothy 4:15 *“to attend to carefully or to be diligent in”*

Philippians 4:8; Colossians 3:2

Philippians tells us to *“think”*, to reckon inwardly, to weigh reasons of, to deliberate.

Colossians tells us *“to direct the mind to and to strive for.”*

Scripture encourages us to meditate on God. His law, works, and things that bless the soul.

Mark 13:11; Acts 4:24 (imagine).

Meditation can be Christian—withdraw to communicate with our Father—silence—prayer Meditation is part of Christian Devotion—Isaac went out into field—Genesis 24:63. Psalm 63:6. “I think of thee upon my bed—**People were willing to listen to God** (key).

Psalm 119:48, 119:148, 1:2; Revelations 1:10—trained to listen?

Eastern meditation empties—

Christian meditation fills—

Eastern meditation detaches—

Christian meditation attaches to Christ—

Eastern meditation, identity lost—

Christian meditation, identity found—

Imagination is the way to most easily enter meditation—smell, see, hear, feel, etc.

Dreams—means of revelation—ask God to inform through dreams/record dreams and check pattern/ask God to interpret—James 4:2.

Methods of Meditation—

I. Palm down/drop/release anger, etc.

Palm up/desire to receive

Silence—listen do not ask—impressions, directions possible.

II. Breathing

Check tension level—

Exhale—head forward/release

Silence—listen not ask.

Give thanks after meditation /expression of gratitude.

Meditation:

1) Think part of creation/tree, leaf, etc.

2) Scripture—center reference point for meditation—Internalize and personalize scripture.

3) Event of Scripture such as resurrection /Word

4) Single word meditation

5) Events of time—Bible/newspaper Ponder in your heart as Mary did.

Ask for guidance/prophetic insight.

Ministry and Mission of the Church

Text: Ephesians 4:13-16

Much has been said about “gifts”, “fruit”, and “ministry”—and from questions it seems that we need to bring it on home as to practical applicability.

Read Text Ephesians 4:1-6.

Pentecost—Spirit-filled—Body of Christ—cooperative effort—

I. Body of Christ

- A. Living organism—grow to maturity
- B. Gifts to aid in development
- C. Every member baptized in Spirit—gifts—I Peter 4:10; I Corinthians 12:4-13; Romans 12:3-8.
 - 1) Baptized for power, service, love
 - 2) Not better—“Spirit filled often offensive”
 - 3) Should result in better relationships, etc.
 - (Not a toy or status symbol)

II. Grow in Expansion

- A. Every member expected to witness—Acts 1:8.
 - 1) Taking gospel
 - 2) Making disciples
 - 3) All equal position
 - 4) Church organized to insure orderly, practical
- B. No succession of Apostles—Acts 1:21-22
 - 1) Disciples
 - 2) Apostles
- C. Preside over church and give direction
 - 1) Deacon—Acts 6:1-6
 - 2) Elder—Acts 14:23, 20:17-38; Philippians 1:1; James 5:14.

III. Growth Individually

- A. Chosen, guided, energized by Holy Spirit!
 - 1) Acts 13:1-3—Paul and Barnabas
 - 2) Acts 20:28—Elders and leaders
 - 3) I Timothy 4:14—Prophetic utterance at Ordination

- Called to:
- 1) Minister unto the Lord—Acts 13:2a
 - 2) Worship—Philippians 3:3
 - 3) Work by Power of Holy Spirit—John 14:12-13

Ministry—Continuing the Ministry of Jesus

Part I—Preaching—Divine Nature in US

Text: Mark 6:6-13; Hebrews 2:1-4

Became a Christian to –follow Jesus—continue His ministry.

Became a pastor to—follow Jesus—continue His ministry.

Most people want to leave a definite mark on the world before they leave it as they pass through—in these teachings, I am going to tell you just how it can be done—and the fulfillment it brings—to you and others.

Relationship

Rhema

Revival

If I could preach just three sermons on achieving fulfillment in life—it would be in three parts:

- 1) Continuing ministry of Jesus—preaching—announce
- 2) Continuing ministry of Jesus—teaching—confirm
- 3) Continuing ministry of Jesus—healing—testify

God calls us to live to our fullest potential IN HIM, to achieve fulfillment and bring His Kingdom. To see potential unused is not only frustrating it is painful—Jesus over Jerusalem—asked God worldly struggle and entangled in activities that kept it from being as He intended and as recorded in scripture.

Reply was: teach about the three areas and these things will happen:

Personal fulfillment

Church growth

Kingdom growth

As we look at Hebrews 2:1-4, we see three distinct areas: Speaking; Explaining (confirming); and Performing (testifying in power).

I submit to you that God has much for us in our lives that we need to grasp and utilize—that the time is now—“Do you want to continue the ministry of Jesus?”

-Not church membership

-Not baptism

-Not activities and involvement—but—continuing ministry of Jesus in His sequence!

Authorship of Bible? Value? Purpose?

Need for sequence in Church today is paramount—Acts 20:25-28—CARE—cost Jesus His life—how about you? **Are the people worth it? Are you willing to Risk continuing the Ministry of Jesus?**

We are told by the scripture that we can drift—that the message is binding—and that Judgment is certain.

Today, look at first part of continuing the ministry of Jesus—preaching—proclaiming—declaring. Jesus said REPENT—can’t share message of love/hope without: 1) repentance, 2) re-birth; 3) renewal.

I. Repenting—Divine revelation—Mark 1:15

A. Divine revelation—God opening our hearts to truth of need for Him—peace.

B. In touch with feelings—honesty—level of society!

C. Spiritual problem—priorities—pride!

D. Change of heart—reversal of lifestyle

- 1) Hurt, realize wrong ways—wants to be left alone.
- 2) Not desire disturbance/resist serious activity.

3) Always later—not sentiment but revolution!

E. Change of habits, attitude, and character—for Jesus!

II. Rebirth—Divine encounter—John 20:21-23.

A. Opposite of faith—fear!

B. Become what He intends—fulfilled disciples/kingdom.

C. Liberated from:

1) Moral wreckage

2) Physical suffering

3) Spiritual decay

D. Having life of Father in us.

E. Time when you look Jesus in eye and ask forgiveness and grant control over your life—not necessarily at baptism or even membership—NOW?

III. Renewal—Divine nature—II Peter 3:1-11.

A. In harmony/symphony with Father—do what He does.

B. More movement of Holy Spirit—directing/guiding.

C. Growing in Fruit of Spirit—leads—Baptism in Holy Spirit=Power.

1) Act in accord with Divine nature—fruit—

2) Act like self—in obedience—childlike.

3) Act in risking—to continue ministry—

Results of manifestations/fruit/Father!

Can't proclaim Jesus until we take on and participate in Divine Nature—by choosing to continue ministry of Jesus—do what He did—**reach people for the Father!**

Continuing the Ministry of Jesus

Part II Divine Power in Us

Text: Psalm 100; Ephesians 4:11-16

The Sunday before Thanksgiving it is important to hear about being thankful—God calls each of us to an individual time of thanksgiving—

-Attitude of gratitude—being truly grateful

-Attitude of heart—relationship

-Attitude of Obedience—love and service

Be Thankful—in the Tulsa World there was a declaration of a **psychic festival** supposedly an attempt to get in touch with God. It is needed by ALL—a **relation with God**. I am thankful that God gives us the Holy Spirit and allows us to minister—to serve Him.

The Christian life is one of service not comfort—the progression found in Hebrews 2:3-4 shows us that God—announced the Kingdom—preached, confirmed the Word—taught, testified with signs—healed.

Ministry is the Test of Faith—what is practiced daily? To continue the ministry of Jesus we must serve. It means that we will be like Jesus—“He who will be great among you must serve . . .”

Ministry: Includes signs, wonders, and miracles . . .

It is using our talents/skills, and gifts . . .

It means doing daily the leading of Jesus . . .

Minister: **Diakobos**

Luke 12:37; I Corinthians 6:4—wait tables

Acts 13:5; I Corinthians 4:1—under-rower in galley—

subordinate

Presence not separated from power . . .

Presence not measured by miracles—power—love and obedience most important—service

Illustration: Lady buying a bouquet of flowers by leading of Holy Spirit.

Thanksgiving is expressed in life service for Jesus!

-Thankful people are obedient people—serve Christ!

Purpose of ministry is to bring Kingdom—continue—nonstop

Ministry—free people—set them free with the truth—the Word.

Divine Nature and Divine Power lead to Divine Ministry. This means lead, anointed by the Holy Spirit—the condition of your heart in action.

Result of Divine Nature and Divine Power is a Divine Ministry—
healing—wholeness—Kingdom.

I. Healing

A. Signs of Kingdom to come—taste of heaven

B. Gift to Church because of God’s love

C. Divine healing –not faith healing—reconciliation!

1) Task is restoration not renovation.

D. Healing is now and later—

II. Signs

A. Gifts—supernatural manifestations

1) Sign to world

2) Gift to Church—faith that must be honored is not a gift.

B. I Corinthians 12:1—spirituals

C. I Corinthians 12:4—gifts

D. I Corinthians 12:5—ministries

E. I Corinthians 12:6—works

F. Signs—confirmation—follows Word—Mark 16

III. Miracles

- A. Divine intervention in natural order
- B. Not self-authenticating
- C. Glorify Jesus
- D. Sovereignty of God
- E. Miracles in Spirit/Soul/ Body—

Thanksgiving is reflected in obedience—service to the Lord Jesus as we allow the Divine Nature and Divine Power to be made manifest in Divine Ministry—signs, wonders, miracles, and healing—

Result of Kingdom presence is healing—signs and results of power and love of Father—**reflected in You!**

Continuing the Ministry of Jesus

Part III—Unity is Essential

Text: John 17:9-21

In the Tulsa World I saw an article about a new restaurant and what makes it successful—the upshot was that no special formula made it successful—the people did. So it is with the Church—there is no secret formula but some essential ingredients are *Christ and unity of believers!*

If you will remember that Part I was about Divine Nature in us, Part II was about Divine Power in us; Part III was about Divine Ministry—sign. It is all held together in Unity based upon Love in Christ Jesus!

It is that time of year when we celebrate Advent—the coming of our Lord Jesus. Not just as a child but as a risen Lord returning to claim what is His! We need to be ready—this means UNITY in the body which goes past harmony or cooperation.

Unless Christians have complete unity as Jesus prayed in John 17:23—the world will not know Christ, nor His ministry be continued. It is only through unity based upon love that the world can SEE the gospel in us and desire Christ.

Unity is the main purpose of the Holy Spirit! Maturity—well-rounded fruit—developed character. Fruit trees are an example.

In the garden during the trying times, Jesus desired Unity among believers for the purpose of the world knowing the Father. Advent is a reminder of God's desire for unity—between Himself and man and between people in the world.

Unity=Oneness—husband and wife—children—Ephesians 4:13.

Unity=comes from 1) love; 2) intelligent use of gifts.

Unity=fulfillment of Jesus Priestly Prayer in garden—that they all be one!—Philippians 2:3-5 tells how.

Priestly prayer—parts:

- 1) For self
- 2) Protect disciples
- 3) Future believers
- 4) Final consummation. Jesus prayed for us—unity—continue ministry of Jesus only through unity!

I. Who are the disciples?

- A. Those that love and obey Christ in daily life.
- B. Disciples given to Jesus by God—conviction.
- C. Through disciples offering lives to Jesus—converts.
- D. By disciples being committed to task—commitment.
 - 1) Task of healing
 - 2) Task of reconciliation
- E. Can't, or shouldn't, recreate apostolic church—go back—renewal crucial—Divine Nature
- F. Baptism in to church—Body of Christ
- G. Join fellowship—local group
- I. Unity with Jesus—main purpose of Holy Spirit—all His!

II. Prayer for Disciples

- A. Prayed for victory not escape
- B. Not withdrawn—hermit/selfish activities
- D. Live faith daily—in midst of hostility and need
- E. Unity not units—equip
- F. Live faith daily
- G. Gifts in Ephesians 4 same as Acts 2:38
- H. I Corinthians 12—Manifested Unity—elaborate on power/use.

III. Unity of Disciples

- A. Prayed for self and disciples with a certainty of Christ
- B. Faith in God the Father.
- C. Confidence in men—creation.
- D. Become one—by unity of personal relationship.

Not: 1) Admin./Organization/Ecclesiastical

Unity between heart and heart—men loved own structure cause of Christian unity injured/hindered because men love self more than God and will not unite in Christ.

- E. John 17—desire for unity
 - 1) Verse 11—Be one
 - 2) Verse 20—Church to come to unity
 - 3) Verse 22—Believers be one
 - 4) Verse 23—Complete unity—purpose.

Pentecost result of priestly prayer for unity—time to follow scripture not logic. Advent reminder of need for unity—prayer fulfilled upon our response. The question becomes:

Continue Ministry of Jesus? Pentecost? Unity?

Moderation in Ministry

Text: Malachi 3:31; Luke 3:15-17

Holy Spirit and Fire—separate for service; faithfulness

Situation in church today—lack of power and direction.

I. Rejection—liberalism

A. Type a theology

- 1) Name some theologians
- 2) Share some of the reasoning
 - a. Philosophy
 - b. Logic
 - c. Tradition
 - d. Psychology

B. Type B. theology—Spirit

- 1) State that begins with God
 - 2) State approach
 - 3) State how it works
 - 4) Give examples fro Scripture
- #### C. Churches today in where they stand

- 1) Conservative
- 2) Needs

II. Record—promises

A. Refine—Luke 3:15-17—Baptize

B. Surrender—Luke 3:21-22

- 1) Anoint
- 2) Approve

C. Acts 8:14-17

- 1) Intense faith
- 2) Great awakening
- 3) Wesley

D. Romans 12:9-11

- 1) Zeal
- 2) Fervor
- 3) Intensity

III. Renewal—power

A. Sickness unto death

- 1) Renewal—Psalm 85:6
- 2) Times of refreshing

B. Time to:

- 1) Confess
- 2) Repent
- 3) Hunger

-Repent for unfaithfulness.

-Confess forsake society norm—secularism

-Abandon belief in politics.

Chapter 13, “O”

Obedience—Obeying the Inner Voice

Text: Hebrews 5:4-11; I Samuels 15:22

It is much easier to travel a well established road than it is to make one through the wilderness. Scripture is clear that the way is broad and the gate wide that leads to destruction—Matthew 7:14, but the way to life is narrow and few there be that find it! Even if you have made the right choice, have you continued to extend the boundaries of the Kingdom of God?

Possession of knowledge produces little except storage unless applied. Pioneers are risk-takers, people who launch-out—into the deep—to extend the boundaries of the Kingdom because they are obeying the Inner-Voice.

-Is the church producing pioneers?

-Or is it merely producing sight-seers who are “map reading” along the way?

Illustration: Credit belongs to people who try—not those who criticize or recline!

I. Getting Started—

A. There is that ‘inner-voice’ that compels us to act.

B. Pioneering is risky business—pioneer in no danger until he attempts to apply the truth.

C. Faith is measured by actions and risk not by head knowledge!

Illustration: -God displeased with Adam and Eve—opted for knowledge compared to risk of living.

-God favored Abraham because of willingness to venture into unknown—character flaws and weaknesses overcome/shadowed by the willingness to obey.

-Pioneer spirit for America—how about for Jesus?

--Pioneers not perfect—motivated to find better ways.

--Pioneers not always tactful, or civil—individuals often rough due to environment—strong.

--Pioneers are practical, preferring action to talk—confident of success and stand.

--Pioneers believe in something that does not exist yet—dream and faith.

II. Going to School

A. Atmosphere needs to create pioneers—risk-takers!

B. Church must care for and provide for people, but must also must prepare them to extend the borders of the Kingdom.

1) Be committed to Bible as God’s Word in a way that moves us beyond analytical and intellectual posture.

- 2) Recover realities of Prayer—Biblically. This means honesty, purpose, passion, and commitment.
- 3) Recover the supernatural. Road paved by principle, but pioneered by power.
- 4) Renew covenant of love—bind us together Lord!
- 5) Provide practical opportunities for people to demonstrate knowledge and gifts.
- 6) Instill sense of corporate-ness and accountability.
- 7) Encourage boldness to act upon message of Holy Spirit.

C. No career students—purpose is to put into action.

D. “Find self in Christ—“

- 1) Elisha did as he picked up the mantle.
- 2) Timothy did as Paul wrote, “preach the Word—“
- 3) Disciples did as Jesus said, “All power is given—“

E. Enter into purpose for which we are prepared.

Illustration: Eagles nest—stickers—not nest construction, but flying instruction.

III. Spread your Wings

A. Peer over the edge? Or take off!

B. Often face tough questions about how to continue—

**Hebrews 10:38-39 is “key” –the Lord takes no pleasure in those who turn back or shrink back. We who trust Him are not among these—majority.

C. You will never know purpose of your preparation until you act/pobey the Inner-Voice and launch out in faith.

D. Reminders—

- 1) Lord’s own nature and Spirit in you if you trust. John 3:1-8: Born of faith—not just flesh!
- 2) The Lord Himself is with you. Will not leave you alone—John 14:16-18; 16:7.
- 3) Someone needs what you have been given your—obedience

helps build Body of Christ—Ephesians 4:15-16.

Read Hebrews 11—FAITH

- 1) Extend Kingdom
- 2) Release ministries
- 3) Launched out—

Are you obeying the Inner-Voice of the Holy Spirit?

Chapter 15, “P”

Parables

The word ‘parable’ is derived from the Greek *“parabole”* meaning, “a placing of things side by side” . . . or the Hebrew word *“mashal”* meaning to “set side by side”. This is usually for the purpose of comparison. The definition varies depending on the source you check ranging from, “a short, fictitious narrative based on a familiar experience and having an application to the spiritual life”, to “an earthly saying—story—with a heavenly meaning.” The parable is always true to nature and life—something that can be observed in the world of our experience. Often Jesus used parabolic s such as the birds of the air or the lilies of the field.

A parable is distinguished from fables, allegories, myths, metaphors, and similes. A fable is a short story, not based on facts, in which animals and plants talk as if they were people. An allegory is a symbolic narrative in which every detail has a figurative meaning—when you look at a parable and try to assign a meaning to every detail, the one great truth that remains to be revealed is often lost and the effectiveness gone. A myth, an invented legend or story concerning imaginary or superhuman beings. A metaphor is a figure of speech in which one thing is compared to another that is not like it—all the world is a stage. A simile is similar to a metaphor except it is more explicit such as, “a heart as big as a whale.”

In the Old Testament there are strictly speaking, only two parables: Nathan’s story of the poor man’s one ewe lamb—II Samuel 12:1-14—and Isaiah’s parable of the unproductive vineyard—Isaiah 5:1-7.

There are numerous allegories, metaphors and similes that are called “parables.” Judges 9:8ff and II Kings 14:9 are both fables. Look in the book of Ezekiel chapter 17, verse 2 and 24:1-24 and these are allegories. Habakkuk contains a “riddle” parable. In the period after the Old Testament the rabbis and religious leaders used the parable to teach. A collection of these are found in the Talmud—collection of writings constituting the Jewish civil and religious law—and the Midrash—the text of the Talmud. The difference in the use of the parable is that the rabbis used the parable to illuminate an already known truth while Jesus used the parable to proclaim the Kingdom of God which came in His own person and ministry!

The New Testament parables of Jesus represent the highest development of this narrative form and there is no parallel in either the Old Testament or rabbinical writings. Parables appear in the Synoptic Gospels but not in the Epistles, “The Bread of Life—John 10:7ff—and “Vine and Branches”—John 15:1ff—are allegory and not parables. Matthew’s account of parables show Jesus as the expected Messiah and Luke shows Jesus as the Savior! The purpose

of parables was to reveal more and more of the Kingdom of God—Matthew 13:10 and Mark 4:10-13. John 1:9 tells the purpose of Christ’s coming, and it is to bring light and life. Jesus used parables to make a spiritual truth clear and compelling!

Approximately one-third of the teaching of Jesus is in parables, and they vary between 30 and 80 depending on how you define a parable. All have to do with relationships and the Kingdom of God whether you use the four major breakdowns as suggested by A.M. Hunter or someone else. Hunter uses the following suggested breakdown: A) Coming of the Kingdom, B) Grace of the Kingdom, C) Men of the Kingdom, and D) Crisis of the Kingdom—but regardless of what ‘breakdown’ you see, all of the parables are related to the person and work of Jesus Christ! Parables were often told in groups such as the Mustard Seed & Levin. Themes are often similar to Wisdom literature in Proverbs, Job, and etc.

A Peculiar People

Text: Matthew 21:28-32

People have the tendency to start the New Year with Resolutions—a verbal statement with intent? It is no good without following up with action and obedience! Cartoon friend, Calvin, never made resolutions because he wants things familiar. He doesn’t want disruptions—he takes everything for granted. He can’t change himself—only the outside! God wants to change you into the best YOU, as YOU begin a New Year.

Text says: God wants obedience,

Text calls for: Willing obedience.

Situation: two sons—one said no to obedience then changed.

The second said yes but didn’t obey.

Question—Which pleased the Father most?

How does it apply to us today?

I. Peculiar People are chosen by God (Love)

A. God knows you by name—power

B. You are elected for new life

C. You have an intimate relationship

D. God calls for Repentance for:

1) Those in need

2) Those who will acknowledge need.

E. Proud—self-righteous—religious people

1) Not see need

2) Reject message

F. Religious respectability nothing without true repentance!

II. The Vocation of peculiar people is worship—service of God— Loyalty

- A. Know God personally.
- B. Experience God's presence,
- C. Have mind of Christ in you.

III. Peculiar People live daily as if nothing else is important—

Obedience.

A. God is first place—Matthew 22:36-40—love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, strength!

B. Lesser loyalties equal idolatry!

- 1) Money
- 2) Power
- 3) World problems
- 4) Personal difficulties

Conclusion: a man who was religious was told another prayed better so he went to see why and how. The man couldn't read nor pray and when asked what he did to please God he said, "I can't even read and know only part of the alphabet to the letter "J" so what I did was say, ABCDEFGHIJ. Lord, put these letters together to say something pleasing and acceptable to you. ABC—"

When beginning the New Year, be PECULIAR. Are you? Holy? How about bringing the Kingdom? COMMITMENT—OBEDIENCE?! The choice is now as we begin anew. Including spiritually!

Pentecost—What does it mean?

Text: Acts 2:1-21

Pentecost is NOT the birthday of the Church. Easter is! John 20:21-22

Many don't understand Pentecost—the result is a powerless ineffective church that doesn't win souls, change lives, or bring the Kingdom.

There is much to do today about Pentecost and having the Holy Spirit in us—Pentecost means that the Holy Spirit has you!

Setting Day of Pentecost—harvest festival and the power of the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples because of obedience and the result was dynamic ministry for the Kingdom of God.

Facts: First 13 chapters of Acts have 40 references to the Holy Spirit—power of the church.

Fact: All leaders were men of the Spirit—Acts 6; Elders—Acts 20; Stephen and Barnabus—Acts 7.

Fact: Work of the Holy Spirit:

- Convict of Sin—cleanse
- Reprove of righteousness—renew
- Reprove of Judgment—image of God

I. It means that we need to be open to the ‘power’ of the Holy Spirit.

- A. Presence is salvation
- B. Power is ministry
- C. Have you received the Holy Spirit?
- D. Have you received power?
- E. Have you diligently sought the Holy Spirit?
- F. Do you have regular fellowship with the Holy Spirit?
 - 1) Early church grasped what a Spirit-filled fellowship was
 - 2) Interest of Pentecost absorbed disciples
 - 3) Holy Spirit should dominate us
 - a. Tongues—control

II. It means that we need to be ‘empowered’

- A. Not intellectually
- B. But Spiritually
- C. Acts 5:32—Measure or Spirit—obedience
- D. Follow instructions
- E. Tarry
- F. Pray
- G. One accord
- H. One place
- I. One unity

III. It means that we need to be witnesses

- A. Purpose is to bring Kingdom
- B. Direction at K.U.M.C.
 - 1) Fellowship
 - 2) Trust
 - 3) Empowering
 - 4) Forgiveness
 - 5) Value

Power—Channels of Power

Text: Luke 4:14-31

Christians meant to be channels of power—like a straw through which liquid flows—wire through which electricity flows—a conductor for God!

Proverbs 71:15-17 tells that from youth the Psalmist trusted God and would proclaim his wondrous deeds—deeds?

Leaders in the Body of Christ need to see the total picture:

- ahead
- behind
- left

-right

Illustration: wagon trip—caravan.

Surety—co-signer, guarantor—person contracted to be responsible for another in the event of default. (Note: this is a legal matter but each individual must account spiritually.)

Disciples are meant to be channels of power and are Guarantors of faith:

-to insure message is secure against

--loss

--theft

--damage

--default

-If youth are to learn and become Guarantors of faith, it will be because of the guarantors of today—you and I.

I. Meant to be channels of power—but we limit God and ourselves:

A. Often tell God

B. Willing

C. Able

D. Trained to do

E. Not ask—obey

1) Jeremiah 1:4-10

2) Excuses: youth/inability/frightened

3) Lord doesn't always allow single track lives

Illustration: Man on violin—knows note—but it takes more than one to make a song.

II. Meant to be Channels of Power—but we must speak to the correct issues.

A. Heard about love

1) Healing

2) Restoration

B. Need to hear about change

1) Pluck up

2) Break down

3) Destroy

4) Overthrow

Illustration: Some institutions, organizations, etc, need a change—not anarchy but renovation in Christ—problem of whether it is for us or for God. Must be scour and scrub Christians—otherwise ashamed and of little effect.

III. Meant to be Channels of Power—must loose love.

A. God's people are called to be POWER-FULL people.

B. Bestowed power—granted

- 1) Abilities
 - 2) Skills
 - 3) Knowledge
 - 4) Position
 - 5) Competence—all have a limited supply of this.
- C. Summoned Power
- 1) Assumed
 - 2) Accepted
 - 3) Asserted
- D. Not always in line with cultural standard
- 1) Servant leadership—held against opposition-power
 - 2) Some threatened at others freedom/growth
 - 3) Must lay down power to grow
 - 4) Empower people for Christ—no shoddiness!

IV. Meant to be Channels of Power—but often cross with society.

- A. Jesus accepted until He went against cultural norm
- B. God speaks through people/events not just experts
- C. God speaks through ordinary channels—like you and me.

Channels of power—daily ministry of those who have accepted Jesus Christ and want to follow Him. Must be yielded/willing—channels of power.

Praising the Lord

Text: Hebrew 13:15; Psalm 100

Praise is the key to POWER, HEALING, and DELIVERANCE!

Praise is part of the relationship—without it the relationship is not there!

Praise has a scriptural design—Psalm 100—

-Joyful noise

-Singing

Psalms 120-134 sing in preparation for feast

-Psalm 120:1 Distress—heard me

-Psalm 134:2 Lift hands—bless

-Begin with man and end with God!

I. Focus on God—verse 1 tells how to enter presence of King of Kings

A. Sing on way to tabernacle—prepare

B. Give heart to leadership of the Holy Spirit

C. Singing gives flow of unity—gather scattered thought—

D. Psalm 121 lift eyes to hill—help

E. Results of singing is Worship

Thanksgiving focuses on deeds—Body

Praise focuses on character—Soul

Worship focuses on holiness—Spirit
Come into His presence—not just come to church!

II. Enter presence—Hebrew 9:1-9

A. Outer Court—Body

- 1) Worship in spirit and truth
- 2) Thanksgiving
- 3) For deeds
- 4) **Towdah—Yadah**—Hebrew words of praise—lifted hands, humility, surrender
- 5) Bring body into submission
 - a. Clap hands
 - b. Dance
 - c. Body in act of sacrifice

Sacrifice—act of will for God not us! Romans 12:1

B. Put lives on Altar

- 1) Sacrifice of animal
- 2) Sacrifice of lives

C. Cleansing our bodies

- 1) Water in bowl
- 2) Cleansing
- 3) Word of God
- 4) Ephesians 5:26—washing of water by Word
- 5) Hebrew 1-11
- 6) Sing word of what God has done—power comes!

D. The Holy Place

- 1) Enter courts with praise
- 2) **Tehillah—Halas**—Hebrew words—boast, rave, celebrate, extravagant, song
- 3) Stay with praise and not return to thanksgiving—I will sing the mercies of the Lord forever—
- 4) Focus is on who God is now!

E. Sacrifice will—bread table

- 1) Table—two rows of six loaves
 - a. Praise comes from soul
 - b. Submit—do will of Him who sent me--?
- 2) Lampstand—mind
 - a. Human mind
 - b. Renew
 - c. II Corinthians 10:4 Pulling down strongholds—imagination/etc.

- d. Prayer language
- e. Spiritual warfare—inside
- 3) Emotions Golden altar of incense
 - a. Emotions give expression
 - b. Will makes choice
 - c. Worship is result of both
- F. Most Holy Place
 - 1) Body, mind, spirit subjected—submitted—
 - 2) Await invitation to enter presence
 - 3) Respond
- G. In Presence
 - 1) Response—individual—power, silence, etc.
 - 2) Return chorus
 - 3) Commitment, healing, etc.
 - 4) Pour self before Lord in praise and worship—miracles follow
 - 5) Be in presence of God!
 - 6) Thanksgiving for God’s presence
 - 7) Praise—tell how great God is—
 - 8) Worship telling God you love Him!
 - 9) Manifest presence

Predestined—Predestined to be Conformed

Text: Romans 8:28-29

God created man in His own image and pre-destined—determined ahead of time—him to be conformed—shaped and grow in His likeness and image. Since God does not want anyone to perish, being predestined is not fatalistic. It shows a Divine Will, based on love, concerning the matter but not necessarily a control of events to cause it to happen, because there is free will in our response.

Romans 8:28-29 is clear that it is God’s determined intent of heart and desire for every person to be conformed to His image and in doing so, experience the best possible life both now and hereafter. This is what is intended but not achieved by most for reasons that we will examine a little later.

This ‘conforming’ or ‘shaping’ is for the maturity of the Spirit, soul, and body. It matches Genesis 1:26 where we were created in His image. We are tri-part just as God is the trinity.

It is time in history—current events and prophecy—that Christians need to know who they are in Christ and be conformed to His image so we can do the work He calls us to do which results in Bringing the Kingdom. The invitation

is general to all, the calling is personal and the equipping is personal preparation.

Every person must make the choice to be conformed to His image by dying more to self and living to Him in the supernatural. God is not interested in our comfort but our Christ-likeness that makes us more like Him where we are empowered to do miracles and minister in the supernatural. It means not wavering in pain or persecution but keeping the faith. It means having a new mind-set and loyalty to Jesus above all.

In one of the daily devotion books it says clearly, “God’s number one goal is not comfort. It is our Christ-likeness! And to reach it you have to undergo some of the same experiences that Jesus went through like being misunderstood by His family, ridiculed by church folks, rejected by the world, and disappointed by people who say they love you.” When you are conformed to His image you will share in His suffering as well as His power and glory. This is done in three ways, “1) Stay focused on God’s plan not your pain—run the race with endurance. 2) Don’t give into short term thinking. Keep your eyes on Jesus and stay the course. 3) Stay praying the right way. When you realize God’s desire is to mature you to be more like Him you pray fewer “comfort me” prayers and more “conform me” prayers. “Don’t take us out Lord, help up through to overcome. Predestination is to grieve to become a miniature version of Christ, the manifest sons of God. The world is waiting and so is God for us to make our choice to grow, mature, and serve.

1) You are predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ.

a. In spirit which is purpose

b. In should which is attitude

c. In body which is desires

d. Be like Jesus and do what you hear His say or see Him do—
John 5:19, 30.

e. When you seek this relationship you will discover the true self
God intended you to be.

f. Doing your part by reading and Bible study, prayer, obedience,
Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and ministry.

g. Know you are not predestined for hell, provision has been made
for heaven—Jeremiah 29:11.

2) You are predestined to fulfill His purpose for your life.

a. God works in all things

b. God works in all circumstances

c. God is no working to make you happy but to fulfill your purpose
in life in preparation for eternity; happiness and joy are by
products.

- d. Blessings and promises are for those who are called according to His purpose.
- e. Line up with what God wants from you.
- 3) You are predestined to fulfill purpose and mission of the church.
 - a. Bring Kingdom in supernatural power.
 - b. Share love of the Father.
 - c. Set captives free—Luke 4:18.
 - d. Fulfill Matthew 19:7-8.
- 4) Predestination is prevented by the following.
 - a. Fears
 - b. Traditions
 - c. Vision
 - d. Attitude
 - e. Desires
 - f. Expectations or lack of them.

Illustration: Holy Spirit release and manifest—receive, release and use.

- 5) You are predestined because of His love.
 - a. Opportunities all through life.
 - b. He offers best in spite of our selfishness even through the tribulation, message, and offer by church, 144,000, two witnesses, angels.
 - c. Your name is recorded
 - aa. At birth by being put in Book of Life—Daniel 12:1, 7:10.
 - bb. At choice name is put in Lamb's Book of life—Revelation 21:27.
 - cc. At judgment—Bema—Seat—Revelation 20:12-13. His Spirit does not strive always. Time does run out.
 - dd. Judges at: rapture, Great white throne, judgment

Invitation: Be conformed and serve!

Presence—Entering the Presence of the Lord

I. Present Yourself

- A. Time
 - 1) Set aside a specific time.
- B. Place
 - 1) Away from interruptions
 - 2) Quiet place
- C. Attitude of
 - 1) Expectation
 - 2) No preconceived ideas

- 3) Seeking
- 4) Allowing
- 5) Yielding and submission

II. Cleansing—of self

- A. Confession of sins, transgressions & iniquities
- B. Ask to be forgiven
- C. Accept forgiveness
- D. Forgive yourself

III. Minister to the Lord

- A. Praise
- B. Songs in English or “in the Spirit”
- C. Prayer
 - 1) English
 - 2) Tongues

IV. Surrender

- A. Turn loose, let go
 - 1) Problems, worries, concerns, cares, and burdens.
- B. Yield—hand over to Jesus
 - 1) Spirit, Soul—mind, emotions—and body
 - 2) Control over your own self—your being, your essence, the necessary and intrinsic value of self.

V. Allow and experience

- A. Be quiet and listen—with your heart and spirit
- B. Be expectant and ready to experience
 - 1) By thoughts
 - 2) By Impression
 - 3) By Perception
 - 4) By Physical ‘feelings’
 - a. Increased warmth
 - b. ‘Goose bumps’
 - c. Light headedness
 - d. Blurred or unclear physical vision
 - e. Tingling or numbness
 - f. Trembling of inner and outer physical body
 - g. Resting in the Spirit—coming under the Power of God.
 - 5) Emotions
 - a. Increased sense of love
 - b. Weeping
 - c. Laughter

d. Increased feeling of joy

VI. Body Ministry—results of entering into the Presence.

- A. Word of Knowledge and Wisdom
- B. Visions
- C. Perception
- D. Prayer
- E. Tongues and Interpretation
- F. Laying on of Hands
- G. Anointing with Oil
- H. New Ministries brought forth
- I. Deliverance from bondages & strongholds pulled down
- J. Soul ties cut
- K. Healing, spirit, soul, body, relationships, and finances.

VII. Inviting His Presence

- A. Call down
- B. Preach down
- C. Pray down
- D. Sing down

The Price They Paid

Have you ever wondered what happened to those men who signed the Declaration of Independence?

Five signors were captured by the British as traitors and tortured before they died; twelve had their homes ransacked and burned; two lost their sons in the Revolutionary army, another has two sons captured. Nine of the 56 fought and died from wounds or the hardships of the Revolutionary War. What kind of men were they? Twenty four were lawyers and jurists, eleven were merchants, and nine were farmers and large plantation owners. Men of means and well educated, but they signed the Declaration of Independence knowing full well that the penalty would be death if they were captured. They signed and pledged their lives and their sacred honor.

Carter Braxton of Virginia, a wealthy planter and trader saw his ships swept from the seas by the British Navy. He sold his home and properties to pay his debts and died in rags.

Thomas McKean was so hounded by the British that he was forced to move his family almost constantly. He served in the Congress without pay and his family was kept in hiding. His possessions were taken from him, and poverty was his reward.

Soldiers looted the property of Clymer, Ellery, Hall, Walton, Gwinnett, Heyward, Rutledge, and Middleton.

The British General Cornwallis seized the Nelson home for his headquarters—sadly, though it was his home, Nelson quietly urged General Washington to open fire upon it, and he tearfully watched it destroyed—Nelson died bankrupt.

Francis Lewis had his home and properties destroyed—the enemy jailed his wife, and she soon died.

John Hart was driven from his wife's bedside as she was dying—their thirteen children fled for their lives. His fields and gristmill was put to the torch. For more than a year he lived in caves and forests returning home only to find his wife dead, his children vanished. He died a few weeks later from exhaustion.

Norris and Livingston died of similar fates.

Such were the sacrifices of the American Revolution. These men were educated men of means. They had security, but they valued liberty more. In their spirits, they imagined a land where the people were the government instead of socialism and totalitarianism. They stood tall, squared their shoulders, and pledged “their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor.”

Chapter 15, “Q”

Quenching the Spirit

Text: I Thessalonians 5:19

Look at sin against the Holy Spirit—grieving as in Ephesians 4:30—which is to go the way of flesh and please the body. There is also quenching the Spirit—I Thessalonians 5:19—which is to refuse to give God control of your life and actions; and, lastly, the sin unto death—I John 5:10; Hebrews 6:4-6, 10:26. These are all sins against the Holy Spirit that a Christian can commit! Blasphemy is what a non-believer commits!

Begin today by understanding what relationship you have with God—your body is His temple! Praise the Lord! In Exodus 24:8 God began to deal with the people of Israel in terms of a house—a covenant. When it was time for the people of Israel to take control of the Promised Land they would not act—from deliverance to wilderness—and because of their unbelief—giants in the land—the twelve spies—they wandered for forty years!

I. Body!

A. God gave a house to Israel—a Tabernacle—Exodus 25:8. This was temporary and used in the wilderness. It was composed of three parts.

- 1) Outer court—altar of sacrifice and cleansing.
- 2) Holy place—table of showbread, candles, and incense.
- 3) Holy of Holies—veil—ark of covenant—stone tablets—Hebrew 9:4, pot of manna and Aaron’s rod that budded, and mercy seat on top.

Yearly, a day of atonement—sprinkle blood on altar—mercy seat—**Shekinah Glory**, “Presence of God”! Illustration: Robe with bells, rope on ankles—no sin dwells in tabernacle.

B. God gave a house to Israel—a Dwelling Place—Temple. In Ezekial 10, people sinned against God and allowed sin in His house and **Shekinah Glory** returned to heaven—10:18! David not temple, Solomon –temple—**Shekinah Glory** filled it!

C. God gave us another tabernacle—JESUS! John 1. Dwelt—tabernacled—resided! Three Parts.

- 1) Body—outer court
- 2) Soul—Holy place
- 3) Spirit—Holy of Holies.

The Holy Spirit dwells in the body—the temple. The Trumpet sounds and bodies rise to meet Christ in the air! Praise the Lord! The House of the Lord rises to meet Him—a time of Jesus revealing Himself again to call His

people to Him. **Then comes the tribulation!** Jesus returns to reign for one thousand years—to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.

New Heaven and New Earth will not have a temple, but God will dwell on New Earth!

II. Keep Body from Sin! In II Chronicles 29:15-16, Hezekiah commanded that the temple be cleansed—took all uncleanness to the brook in Kidron valley. Jesus cleansed temple also, John 2:15; Matthew 21:12. All need to be cleansed—the temple, which is our body, needs to be cleansed and **Is** by the blood of Jesus!

A. Sin of Attitudes—permit sin into life—grieve. Sin of actions—not confess is to grieve.

B. Sin of refusing—leads to sin unto death. Body is dwelling place—grieve Spirit—But by not letting Holy Spirit have your life and use you is to quench Spirit! Illustration: Holy Spirit—fire—water!

C. Sin unto death.

III. Quenching the Spirit—is saying ‘no’ to God’s control!

A. Quench in your life—IO Thessalonians 5:16—live in praise—rejoice. This includes prayer!

B. Quench Spirit in others—Illustration: Young Christian—witness—despair at what God is doing in another’s heart!

C. Quench Spirit in Church—criticism/diversion. Illustration: Pastor—leadership—etc.—lack of active commitment—sin!

1) “State of Church”—weak, worldly, withering!

Mission?—Matthew 10:7-8

a. Money—okay

b. Attendance—moderate—visitation sporadic!

c. Sunday School—study—poor.

d. Youth—money support okay—otherwise poor.

e. Planning—almost non-existent.

2) State of lives—not tired, but want help in Lord!

a. Need repentance—

b. Need committed action.

c. Test Spirits/I John 4:1; submitted/honest/Christ?

If a believer—I John 1:8-9 Yes to flesh-grieve/no to God—quench.

Invitation to come to cleansing—rededication—acceptance!

Grieving—it is to choose to go the way of the flesh. It is pain of the body or mind—heaviness/sorrow—to distress, to cause hurt. To hurt the Holy Spirit that is in you.

Quenching—Refusing to submit to the Holy Spirit by ignorance/selfishness. Just as a candle is “put out”—so man is “put out” of the Kingdom by refusing and hindering the Holy Spirit from working—because of free choice.

Blasphemy—To insure by speech—defamatory of the Divine Majesty. It has two parts—1) denying God acted & give credit to Satan. (Illustration. Jesus healing by power of Satan. Tongues are of the Devil?)

The Sin unto Death—Refers to Hebrew Christians returning to Judaism; or to superficial believers returning to old ways by choice and thus rejecting Christ by choice. Those who reject Christ will not be saved; only one way to God and that is through Christ.

Chapter 16, “R”

Receiving

Texts: Matthew 7:8; Mark 11:24

- A. Receive: 1) “Lambano”-to take or receive literally in contrast to asking—Matthew 7:8; Mark 11:24
2) “Lambano”-synonym with “dechomai” but differs in that it is a self-prompted action without asking—Galatians 2:6
- B. Receive: 1) “Dechomai”-to receive deliberately and readily—accept—what is offered.
2) “Dechomai”-has to do with the heart as in James 1:21.
3) “Dechomai”-Luke 2:28 Taking hold—hand.
Acts 3:21 Christ into Heaven
John 4:25 Visitors
Matthew 10:14 Hospitality
Hebrew 11:31 Rahab and spies
Acts &:59 Lord—Spirit of Believer
- C. Receive: “Paramanlsano”-Mark 7:4—ear.
Accept: 1) “Dechomai”- I Thessalonians 2:13; II Corinthians 8:17, 11:4.
2) Old Testament-To accept-“Basa” to receive with pleasure and kindness—Deuteronomy 33:11; Psalm 119:108.
3) Acceptability of offering to God—Leviticus 22:20; Isaiah 60:7.
- Sacrifice and prayer acceptable only when man’s person acceptable to Him—Hosea 8:13.
- D. Receive: Accept as reflected by:
1) Verbal acceptance
2) Accept as reflected in response.
3) Accept as reflected in action of obedience and ministry.

Receiving—Some Principles for Receiving

Text: John 20:22

Did you hear that the rapture was to be May 21, 2011 6:00pm? A billboard in Tulsa, Oklahoma showed an attitude toward professed Christians. It ridiculed and showed disbelief. This makes it extremely difficult to talk seriously with anyone—yet it is possible!

One of the main reasons that people fall for such things is that they do not have—have not received—a good solid foundation. Believers need to

receive but they need to receive the correct material if they are to bring the Kingdom and set captives free!

To receive is to: 1) take what is offered and 2) to accept it.

-This is true whether it is spiritual and/or physical. This means you can receive with either your ears—worldly knowledge—or your heart— spiritual revelation.

-It is time that Christians accept what Jesus offers which are tools not just blessings.

-We are told that we must believe that God is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

-All believers must learn to receive before they can give.

Let's look at some principles of receiving—

I. Know what you want specifically—Psalm 37:4

A. Delight—desire of heart—from Holy Spirit

B. Reverend Cho—needed a bicycle and a desk to expand his ministry. So he could take the gospel out to the mountains.

C. Are you a believer or non-believer?

D. What is your need?

E. What is your heart's desire?

F. What is in your heart? Pray with compassion for, and God provides.

II. Know what God has to say about the matter—Hebrew 13:8.

A. He cares.

B. He hears.

C. He answers.

D. He heals.

E. He wants His Kingdom to come, so we should expect it!

Illustration: Stilling storms—changing impossible medical issues.

III. Know what you truly expect—Jeremiah 33:3

A. God kind of faith

1) See in your mind.

2) Know with certainty God is going to answer.

3) Know that often God will answer based on time and circumstances

4) Know God will confirm His Word with signs that follow.

B. Do you expect God to work on your behalf?

C. Do you expect to do greater things?

IV. Know what you will speak

A. Have not—ask not.

B. When two or more agree.

- C. Mark 11:23; Mark 16.
- D. World?
- E. WORD.
- F. God's love.
- G. God's promise.
- H. That God is willing to act?
- I. Will you agree with what person ministering says.
- J. Will you speak so God can and will act?

V. What will you thank Him for now?

- A. His Presence.
- B. His Love.
- C. His transforming power.
- D. His answering

- Invitation:** 1) Decide that his Word is true and available.
 2) Decide you want everything He has for you.
 3) Decide to receive—accept and apply.

Resting in the Spirit

Text: II Chronicles 5:14; II Corinthians 12:2-4

Read II Chronicles 5:14—Living Bible—Introduction. Similar to Exodus 40:35—Moses

New Testament—Matthew 28:4, John 18:6,, Acts 9:4, Acts 22:7, Revelations 1:17.

Termed:

- 1) Coming Under the Power
- 2) Special Anointing
- 3) Slain in Spirit—God is not violent—compare Him to counterfeit.
- 4) Resting in the Spirit.

What happens:

- 1) Release of God's power and individual can't stand the intensity—and succumbs to it—can't stand.
- 2) Physical collapse—

Examples of Ministry—Katherine Kuhlman, Kenneth Hagen, Oral Roberts, Charles Hunter, and John Wesley!

Not a new phenomenon—remember the Giver more than the gift!

Resting in the Spirit is Spiritual Surgery!

Give your personal account—sense of floating, hearing but not seeing—result!

NOT: Twisting, jerking, and thrashing, etc— peaceful touch of the Lord!
 Reasons for it—

- 1) Need
- 2) Acceptance of Power of God.
- 3) Willingness to surrender all—

TRADITION—Protestant—II Corinthians 12:2-4

Books: Power to Heal—Francis MacNutt

Slain in Spirit, Fact or Fiction?

Enthusiasm—Ron Knox

Molthar and Hutton tried to convince Wesley that conversion was best in perfect silence—people in Bristol cried in agonies of death—struggle, swoon—and were called into question.

Relationship

Text: Acts 9:1-7

Lord, what do you want me to do?

What you do today lasts for eternity. So, if you want life to have meaning, be fulfilled and complete your purpose you need to ask the Lord a question. “Lord, what do you want me to do?” Ask like Saul did on the road to Damascus if you really want the best it has to offer from a spiritual perspective. Ask regardless of age or circumstances.

When people deal in religion not relationship, it is easy to be shallow. But God is calling us up higher. In these difficult times Christians have the opportunity to live and demonstrate God’s presence, power and love in the world. The result will be that captives will be set free, and His Kingdom will come. For instance, meet them at their point of need. To do this we need to be united in prayer and have Scripture as the ultimate authority in our lives. It is no time to withdraw from the battle that is attempting to destroy us—Psalm 78:9. It is time to ask the Lord what He wants to do individually and collectively.

Have you heard people talk about ‘the good old days’? Some reminisce about times, relationships but they do not long to return to that time. But looking back briefly may help us return to God, who many have abandoned, then ask what He wants us to do in our time and culture.

We, Americans, have departed from God much like the Israelites did. Know that the Word of God is the same for all generations. It is also available to every generation and the Word is: repent, believe, receive fellowship, and serve.

Not everyone is happy with what God says or with what He wants, so they do not ask Him anything. When the foundation for the second Temple was laid in Ezra 2:68, 3:10-13, the people shouted until the ground shook. Older people compared the 1st temple to the 2nd temple and cried. They wanted God’s manifest as it was with the 1ST Temple found in II Chronicles 5:13-14.

There is a parallel. Today's culture is satisfied with crowds, luxurious buildings, and music that is more worldly than holy. Most have never experienced the true Manifest Presence of God.

When you see Biblical praise, singing in the spirit, and a Sovereign move of God's Spirit in the five-fold ministry—it is the real thing! Things happen when God is invited to be the Guest of Honor and allowed to do what He wants; and we are obedient to what He says. Illustration: Oral Roberts' tent meeting where a mother brought her child with club feet and a pair of shoes to wear when the child was healed. She expected and received! Most of the time these things are not wanted in church services. The church can and should be prepared for anything.

In Acts 9:1-7 we see the account of God speaking to Saul—then Saul asking the Lord what He wanted. The result was the spiritual birth of a mighty man of God.

Illustration: Sabrina Wurmbrand told how wives took over for husbands while they were in prison. They were Holy Ghost taught, empowered and led! This is an example for all Believers, especially when the need arises—I Peter 2:9. God tells Saul he cannot kick against the goads. Some here today are kicking against God. They need to ask God what He wants you to do!

I. God wants you to die to self

- A. Like Saul had to do
- B. Like every Believer is called to do.
- C. Matthew 16:24—deny, take, and follow.
- D. Die daily to self.

Know that what you decide and do today matters for eternity!

You must bear your own cross—responsibility—and follow or else you are not a disciple.

II. Bearing the cross means:

- A. Putting God first in all things.
- B. Getting yourself in line with the Word.
- C. Getting your home in line with the Word.
- D. Getting your family in line with the Word.
- E. Applying faith to life—bringing Jesus to people.

III. God wants you to have a solid foundation.

- A. A personal life-transforming encounter—Acts 9:17.
- B. Acknowledge Jesus as King and Lord.
- C. Confess sins.
- D. Resolve to commit and obey Him.
- E. Make His desires yours.
- F. Fellowship daily.

G. Live and serve in power of resurrection.

IV. God wants you to be wise and prioritize.

A. Deuteronomy 32:29 Read & stress. Have discipline.

B. Choose who will fill your calendar?

C. If anything goes—nothing goes.

D. It is a challenge to make good, Biblical decisions—that affect all of life, and it is also a responsibility.

E. Ask the Lord what He wants you to do that is unique to you.

God doesn't reward wasted effort—He rewards wisdom, good choices and obedience.

V. God wants you to be obedient.

A. A part time Christian is a full time atheist! This is because they live as if the word doesn't matter—they have only head knowledge.

B. Obedience is better than sacrifice—Samuel 15:23.

C. If you love me you will keep my commandments—John 14:15.

D. The compromising Church will miss the rapture—Revelations 2:3.

E. Must be faithful to the end—Mark 13:13.

F. Revelations 20:12—Book of life.

G. Revelations 21:27—Lamb's Book of Life.

VI. God wants you to have fresh fire,

A. Dry bones need refreshing.

B. Know that fresh anointing is available—Joel 2:28-29.

C. Know who you are in Christ.

D. Prophecy the Word.

It is time to focus on Jesus I John 5:19.

It is time to put down religious barriers and share basic scriptural truth.

It is time for other individuals and the church to ask the Lord what He wants and then do it!

Expect the Supernatural!

Relationships—Dealing with Relationships

Text: Matthew 22:36-40

All have relationships—contact with others—result is good or bad—but not neutral!

Must learn how to relate—not just communicate—Relate—respond to and be united within some endeavor. Communicate—to make known/give and receive.

Love—basis of relationships—

Look at the cross—upright is love of God; crosspiece is love of man.

To relate to man you must relate to God—can't break fellowship—

I. Love God

A. Love is Commanded—Deuteronomy 6:5, 10:12

B. Earnestness

1) Obedience—Psalm 119:2

2) Trust—Proverbs 3:5

3) Prayer—Jeremiah 29:13

4) Repentance—Joel 2:12

C. Spiritual Love

1) I Corinthians 3:13

2) Galatians 5:22ff

3) Ephesians 3:17-18

4) Colossians 3:14

5) I John 4:16

II. Love Man

A. Brotherly Love

B. Love of Neighbor

1) Romans 13:10, 15:1—no harm, help not, please self.

2) Matthew 7:14—Golden Rule; Mark 12:33—best

C. Keep the Law—Joshua 23:6

III. Application

A. John 13:34-35

B. I John 5:1-5

C. Galatians 5:13-18—life in Spirit—daily relationship.

The Roman Road

The Roman Road is a scriptural explanation to make a commitment to Christ Jesus.

Romans 3:23 All of us have chosen to please ourselves instead of God, as a result, we have not lived up to what God intends for us in this life on earth. An initial decision must be made to grant control of our lives to Christ, and live to serve Him. Only through our Lord and Savior will we have inner peace and be able to live our life to the fullest.

Romans 6:23—The result of living to please ourselves instead of Christ Jesus is a lack of inner peace and separation from our heavenly Father. God grants us eternal life through a personal relationship with his son Jesus Christ.

Romans 10:9—The way to have a relationship to Christ Jesus is simple—Just speak it with your mouth “Jesus is Lord”, we are yielding control of our lives to Him by asking Him to Forgive us of our sins.

Romans 10:13—The result of “Confessing Christ”, is a relationship with Jesus and a place in our Heavenly Father’s Kingdom, both now and forever. To call on the name of the Lord, is to place a personal trust in the Power and Qualities the name “Lord” represents.

We ‘receive’ Faith by way of obedience to God’s Word. You are most precious to Jesus—by God’s grace through faith by shedding of blood of Jesus—we receive salvation.

The Lord showed me that after presenting the Roman Road that I should ask two questions before asking the person to pray.

Question#1—Do you understand the Roman Road that I have just shared with you?

(A personal relationship to Jesus) is there some reason you do not want it?

Then lead the person in the –prayer for salvation-as listed below:

Heavenly Father, I come in the Name of Your Son Jesus and ask you to forgive me for choosing to please myself first instead of You. I believe that Jesus is Your only Begotten Son who dies for me and was resurrected. Forgive me for the things I have done against You and also the things I have left undone.

I accept Jesus as my Lord and Savior. Please come in with Your Holy Spirit, take control of my life and guide me in living for You in the power of the resurrection and use me to bring Your Kingdom. Thank You for being my Lord and Savior and making me Your child.

In Jesus Name. AMEN!

Chapter 17, “S”

Saved—What it means to be Saved

Text: II Corinthians 5:17, 19

In the Christian faith we hear about being “saved”—but few really understand it, know how to get it, or realize what to expect as a result. Normally, we think of SECURITY when we think of being saved.

Illustration: Just as surely as you cannot throw the ring-buoy to yourself in the water—neither can you “save;” yourself spiritually by works—but accept it on faith.

To be “saved” is to be rescued—to be preserved from harm and danger. All have sensed this at some time in your lives—saved FROM—saved FOR!

Illustration: Just as surely as you cannot throw the ring-buoy to yourself in the water—neither can you “save” yourself spiritually by works—but accept it on faith.

Many people think that one religion is as good as another—that there are similar ethics in all of them—but if the religion is not based on the God of the Old Testament and New Testament—on Jesus Christ as Savior there is no common denominator.

To experience salvation is to rest assured in your personal relationship to Jesus Christ because you have taken Him at His Word and acted on His promise—

Paul in his second letter to the people of Corinth tells us about what it means to be “saved”—Chapter 5, verses 17 and 19: ***“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new—”***

I. To be saved is to repent—Mark 1:15. *“The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”*

A. Unveil your need—

- 1) For assurance—of belonging!
- 2) For help—we are weak!

B. Break your pride—

- 1) Of your own strength—
- 2) Of putting yourself first.

C. Seek forgiveness—

- 1) Considered weak in our society
- 2) Know that it will be granted—woman at well/adultery.

D. Surrender willingly—

- 1) Often grudgingly
- 2) Often partially

Illustration: Ivan the Terrible-Russian/Sophia of Greece in marriage. Requirements/baptism/no fighting—Ivan and men held up fighting arm with sword at baptism!

II. *To be saved is to be remade—II Corinthians 5:17. “. . . therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature—“*

A. For Paul a Christian was a person—“in Christ”—Galatians 2:20-Christ lives in you--.

B. Changed radically—to the roots.

1) Old—desires and self-centered purposes gone!

2) New—inner thoughts of Christ and outlook is the same as His about family, friends, world, job, God, etc.

C. Promise is sure and clear—

1) Any man—

2) All things become new—

Illustration: God is not a liar—you will be remade just as a potter makes a pot and shapes it gently and lovingly!

Are you remade? Is the old put away? The new brought on? Do you really let Christ in? Or are you skeptical or afraid? Some fear it won't happen as scripture says—Satan lies!

III. *To be Saved is to be reconciled—II Corinthians 5:19. “To wit, God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself—“*

Illustration: Wesley/ship/Moravian/know Jesus?

A. Man's basic need is reconciliation—brought back to God.

1) God seeks us—Shepherd.

2) We don't seek God—lost sheep.

B. Four forms of separation—

1) Indifference—Psalm 10:4

2) Resentment

3) Selfishness

4) Guilt

C. Not holding trespasses against you—forgiveness!

To be “saved” is to truly be “set free” from the bonds of sin—self-will and guilt, to know that God loves you, that He is good to His promise for abundant and eternal life, and that you are meant to act on it! Have you experienced this in Christ Jesus? The road to the Cross and salvation begins in Lent—won't you travel it and accept what Christ has done for you?

Soul Winning

Text: Proverbs 11:30; John 3:1-10

Evangelism—to announce the message of God to people so they truly understand and have as opportunity to respond.

I. Mission

A. Soul—“Nephesh” or “Life” in Old Testament—756 times.

“The Man Himself”—mind, emotions, will, intellect—Intangible but not

Spirit—Matthew 10:28—Kill body but not soul—

I Peter 2:11—lust war against soul—

Revelations 6:9—Souls of Martyrs

B. Soul Winning—leading a person to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and making a commitment.

C. Spirit—“Ruach” or “Pneuma”

Ruah—377 Old Testament

Genesis 6:17/Ecclesiastics 8:8—no power over Spirit

D. Visitation—contact with persons because of love and concern.

E. Witnessing—sharing what God has done personally in our lives.

F. Born again—regenerate—John 3:5

From children of devil to children of God

Water—repentance? Or Physical birth?

Spirit—faith? Or Spiritual birth?

Tests of new birth—

1) Does not practice sin—I John 3:9, 5:18

2) Has true Christian love toward others—I John 4:7, 20

3) Loves God and keeps Commandments—I John 5:2-3

4) Overcomes world—lives victoriously—I John 5:4-5

If these are missing—either not converted or living in defeat which is often the case—then deal with Baptism of Holy Spirit—and power. Lead people to personal relationship with Christ. Life and lip are equal—two wings of plane. S.W.A.T.

Love is the basis.

Witness=reporter/stones—Genesis 31:44-52

Tabernacle—Numbers 17:7-8

People—I Timothy 5:19

People—Acts 1:8

Gifts—Acts 4:31

Child of God—Romans 8:16

1. What is a Soul winner?

2. Purpose of Soul Winner—born again?

3. How is it done?—How to Witness

II. Messenger

A. Prerequisites

- 1) Personal relationship to Jesus Christ. Willing to risk.
- 2) Obedience
- 3) Prayer
- 4) Study
- 5) Listen to Holy Spirit
- 6) Love for people

B. Habits

- 1) Helps
- 2) Hindrances

C. Attitudes

- 1) Mind of Christ
 - a. Importance of soul
 - b. Tenacity of bulldog
- 2) Expectation
 - a. Victory
 - b. Commitment
 - c. Clear delivery and definitions

III. Message

A. God—love/creation

- 1) Us—selfish/rebellion/ sin
- 2) Jesus
- 3) Holy Spirit
- 4) Being Christian—steps to Christ
- 5) Obligations

IV. Means

A. Talking to people

- 1) Question/share
- 2) Progressive not prying
- 3) Listen/learn
- 4) Christ centered—not religion

B. Location

- 1) Homes
- 2) Streets
- 3) Work

C. Time

- 1) Scheduled
- 2) Unscheduled

D. Attitude

- 1) Never take for granted
- 2) Expect victory

E. Goal

- 1) Witness
- 2) Soul-winning
- 3) Seed-planting
- 4) Visitation
- 5) Power of the Holy Spirit

V. Methods—Structure—sequence not steps

- A. Get attention—go to person
- B. Get curiosity—no gimmicks
- C. Show world solution
- D. Offer Christ
- E. Ask for commitment—tell how

Jesus not toying on the world—but Savior of it!

Send—Prepare to be Sent!

Text: Luke 10:2

To: To be sent is to: Cause to be strongly directed to a destination—to go on a mission. You are volunteering you have a choice. If you are in the military you are ordered to go because you agreed to serve. As a Christian you voluntarily signed up for God's army—which you are a part—and He is telling you that time is short, and you are to prepare to be sent on a mission—a difficult spiritual endeavor—see Luke 9:57-62. This is usually locally or close to where you live—but it can be in another area. Christians do more with less than anyone I know—because of the anointing and supernatural intervention of God.

I. The discipleship requires instant action—no excuses. In the text today it says: 1) that the harvest is great, 2) the laborers are few, 3) pray for the Lord of the harvest to send laborers, 4) know that it is dangerous, and 5) it is rewarding. What motivates you to volunteer? Jesus was not limited to the twelve nor the seventy—many are called but few are chosen—why? The need is so great for total commitment and obedience with a passion to bring the kingdom. The harvest is still plentiful—great—and the laborers few—are you prepared to be sent, so He can confirm His word through you and have people listen to the Good News?

II. God is waiting—the world is waiting for laborers—Holy Spirit filled disciples to bring the Kingdom of God and set captives free—let's see if we are prepared:

- A. What type of seed are you?—Matthew 13:24-30
 - 1) Wheat—authentic

- 2) Tares—imitation that is undesirable because it hinders and destroys that which is good—selfish, indifferent to Word—destructive to those around.
- 3) If you are truly Christian you must have integrity—firm adherence to a code of values—sound, complete, trustworthy because of foundation in Christ.
 - a. Are you the same no matter who you are with?
 - b. Am I willing to make decisions to help others ahead of myself?
 - c. Can you be trusted to keep commitments made?

Illustration: Great wall of China—bribed

gatekeepers!!!

The purpose of the wall was defeated by the lack of integrity of the gatekeepers.

- 4) Integrity means that there is no discrepancy between what you look like and what you are. It means making right decisions based on the Word.

Illustration: Decisions are important—both large and small. Many professed Christians have little or more and this hinders the Kingdom.

integrity

- 5) You must have true hunger to serve.
 - a. The will of God should be the food that nourishes you—not earthly motives.
 - b. The Holy Spirit motivates you because of your heart's desire to please God.
- 6) Do you have an excuse for not witnessing?
 - a. Describe witnessing
 - b. Describe excuses
 - c. Harvest all around.
- 7) Hunger results in priorities being changed.
- 8) Hunger to point of desperation—be radical!

III. The Harvest is waiting?

- A. The harvest are those who are willing to hear, receive, and act on the Word.
- B. Read II Timothy 4:1-5—preach it—God will confirm it!
- C. In these last days the harvest seems like a remnant—prepare to be sent!
- D. Purpose of harvest is to bring in what is good and use it—compare to Christians.
- E. Luke 10:2-9 explains the need for laborers—workmen
- F. Laborers

- 1) Accept hospitality graciously.
- 2) Ministers deserve to be supported.
 - a. First by adequate salary.
 - b. Second support emotionally and in prayer.
 - c. Third support through use of spiritual gifts.
 - d. Fourth support by active involvement

Illustration: Moses telling people to stop giving—pastors telling people we have enough help?

IV. Follow Jesus pattern.

A. People worth your effort—Jesus thought so—He died for us and was raised again.

- 1) Pray
- 2) Offer Christ
- 3) Disciple—mentor
- 4) Act—serve

B. Expect miracles and the Word of Works!

The Invitation: To take seriously your commitment to Christ—prayers, presence, gifts, and service. To operate in the supernatural anointing—bring the Kingdom. The alert has been sounded, and the call to action is at hand! You are being directed in to a difficult Spiritual endeavor in the times in which we live—what is your response?

Are you ready to be sent?

Soul Winning—How to Win Souls

Let's look for a moment now on 'how to win' those whom we want to meet our Lord!

The story in John 4:7-30 of the Samaritan woman is very vivid in the steps that our Lord used as He encountered those in need and what He did to bring them into the Kingdom.

I. Be Sure and Get Their Attention. Jesus did by even coming to the woman at the well—maybe this will be the case with us also in that we are not expected.

- A. Listen to the person you are visiting—match Gospel to that need.
- B. Share of yourself as well as the Gospel—but not to the point of being pushy.
- C. Examples of how to deal with the physical setting might be:

- 1) Television distraction—lower voice until they turn it down.

II. Be sure and get their curiosity. Jesus did with the matter about 'living water'—what will you share that brings the same response? What do you have to share?

A. Let them know you care about them as people—not as numbers, figure, money bags, or landscape!

III. We must show the inadequacy of what is present—in a loving Christian way.

A. If a person is truthful with themselves—even if they are not with you—they will have to admit to some dissatisfaction.

B. Areas might be: Physical, Spiritual:

1) Woman at the well

2) You and me!

IV. We must replace it with something better. Jesus did as He offered eternal life and a life of abundance now.

A. Be specific about what will replace it.

B. Be sure that it applies to their individual needs.

V. We must get a commitment. Jesus did from all whom He contacted. Some committed themselves to the world and others to our Lord!

A. To the Lord.

B. To the fellowship.

C. To an activity.

Don't just try to ADD JESUS on top of everything else—nor use Him as a bandaid when you need stitches!

Attention-getting and sharing:

Use game of 'sharing/rejection'—have two people talk to one another. One talk and the other listen. Try to share something important, and the other try to ignore or reject. Reverse roles. One is the person who is visiting, and the other is the person being visited. Describe your feelings and needs—does this accomplish what our Lord wants us to do? What can we do better?

Spirit, Body, and Soul

Text: I Thessalonians 5:23

Often wonder why it is hard to worship God? or to talk to Him? You need to know which part of you is trying to relate to God—body, soul, or spirit? How did you make your commitment to Christ? body, soul, and spirit?

It is high time to see ourselves as we are—primarily as spirit with a soul that lives in a body! We have things reversed—we need to have it straightened out, that is, it we live in victory! We talk about advent—the coming of Jesus Christ into our lives and what difference has it really made? If you can't tell then take a look at the part of you that is trying to relate to Him! Know self!

Recognize the difference in the words—body, soul and spirit—I Thessalonians 5:23. 1) Spirit—knows God and relates to God. 2) Soul—mental,

emotional, attitudes, personality, intellect, and self. 3) Body—physical, and the world.

Hebrews 4:12—Word of God—sharper—divide soul and spirit. I Thessalonians 5:23—pray, spirit, soul, and body be preserved—John 4:24—worship in spirit and truth (don't worship just in a place or condition—soul or body—but in spirit) I Corinthians 14: 14-18—Pray!

I. Spirit—John 4:24—about the woman at the well—how to worship.

Existence of the Spirit world—Greek: Pneuma-spirit. Spirit highest element—life in individual. Elisha and servant in II Kings 6:16-17—opened eyes to Spirit! Praise The Lord! II Corinthians 4:18—look to world eternal. God spoke the world into being by Spirit.

Illustration: Created for fellowship with God—born again—God consciousness—Adam/death—life in Christ! No fellowship with animals—only God! Genesis 2—fellowship.

A. In the spirit world you have God, angels—good and bad—and Satan—who is not the opposite of God but of Michael the Archangel. In the physical world there are five senses: sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing. All born again—all Christians have five senses as well but not worldly senses—spiritual! Use them—they are: 1) Prayer; 2) Faith; 3) Praise; 4) Revelation; and 5) Word of God!

Can't prove spiritual with worldly evidence!

Spiritual truths can't be verified by carnal means!

1) Come to God in Spirit

a. John 1:1-4 word became flesh.

b. Reach God in Spirit—not soul or body.

c. Still recognizable without body—Luke 16:19-31—about the rich man and Lazarus.

2) Threefold nature—I Thessalonians 5:23.

a. New Spirit now—II Corinthians 5:17—old man—new birth.

b. New body at Second Advent.

B. New Covenant promised in Ezekiel 36:26

1) New birth prophesied—new heart/new spirit.

2) New creature—II Corinthians 5:17.

Heart and spirit used for the same things—center of all!

C. Hidden man of heart—

1) I Peter 3:4—real man on inside—inward not outward.

2) Paul—II Corinthians 4:16—outward perish/inward renewed.

Illustration: Defeated because we look at wrong things—we are moved by— physical—feeling—mind—but how about believing?

D. Building of God—II Corinthians 5:1.

- 1) Physical body—earthly house.
- 2) Spirit endures—house not made with hands—spirit.
- 3) II Corinthians 5:6-8 confident—home in body absent from Lord—walk by faith not sight—be willing to be absent from body (not literally spaced out!) in Christ. Live in the Spirit/walk in Spirit—etc! Spirit world more real than physical! I Corinthians 14:14-15! Remember—no time in God's world—

II. Soul—Greek-Psuche. Life of individual! Romans 12:2 tells us about the soul—transformed by renewing of the mind—literally the UPDATING of the mind. Has yours been updated with Scripture?

Illustration: As you think, so you are!—Paul was writing to born-again people—Christians. Spirit-filled—experienced people—John 3:5!
Not all are renewed—updated in mind—soul.

- a) Natural man—has to see everything.
- b) Carnal man—lives on line/tries hard in self/has Spirit and uses when in trouble!
- c) Hypocrite—pretends to have Spirit/looks religious/follows people—Romans 8:16 Spirit will bear witness.
- d) Spiritual man—shall not be moved—lives in Spirit!

A. God is not going to do anything with body or mind. He contacted our spirit!

- 1) Do something with bodies—present them—Romans 12:1.
- 2) Do something with minds—be transformed—Romans 12:2.

Illustration: One of greatest need of Church is to have renewed minds with Word of God.

B. Growth comes from renewing of mind—teachers/anointing.

- 1) Feed upon Word of God—revelation of knowledge.
- 2) Minds renewed by two methods:
 - a. Private study and meditations.
 - b. Spirit-anointed—not carnal—teachers.

C. Difference in real faith and mental agreement?

- 1) Mental agreement agrees with Bible—ought to have!
- 2) Real faith acts on Word—pray/receive, even if not seen in natural!

Illustration: Peter walking on water.

Hebrews 11:1—faith substance of things hoped for—faith, not mind—soul—says I have received!

III. Body—Greek: Soma—Outward man –worldly. This is the third area that we need to look at, and usually we give most weight here, and it is wrong!

Romans 12:1 says to present bodies as a living sacrifice—Paul talking to Saints (believers)—not sinners (unbelievers)—stressing presentation is body not spirit because the spirit already belongs to the Lord with willful choice of believer!

Illustration: Man/handkerchief—has already, can't take and returns.

II Corinthians 4:4 world of Satan—restricted power—limited by God. We are used to living in body—the world—reaching to it! In Ezekiel 28:5 Satan started the economic/commerce system—Revelations 13—wants to end it also—no mark/no buying! The World System (land/people/material goods) in the end is under Satan's control—material goods.

Satan wants you to either: 1) run from the world; or 2) get messed up in it! You are in the world but not of it—like an astronaut on a life support system—our lifeline is Christ! We operate in another environment! We are called to be one in Christ, but we are sojourners in world! Our true home or kingdom is in heaven. Praise the Lord!

A. We are caretakers of this house.

1) Some say it makes no difference—IT DOES! Present.

2) Born again and live right/only by Christ/not self!

B. Living good does not make you Christian anymore than sitting in your garage will make you a car!

1) Striving to do good is religion.

2) Born again is Christianity.

3) Die to old self—willful action for Christ!

C. Control over body—dominate it with Spirit of God! I Corinthians

9:27, "I keep body—bring under subjection—"

1) "I" is Spirit of God in you! II Corinthians 4:16.

2) Subject to what? Inward man—Spirit—if body rules then you are a baby Christian!

3) Baby Christians are body-ruled Christians.

Live, act, be victorious in Spirit because you learn to respond to God, and that is largest part of you! How are you living? How are you responding to advent of Christ in your life—in body, soul, or spirit?

Spirit, Soul, & Body

Man is three part—Spirit, Soul, and Body—as is the Godhead—Father, Son Jesus, and Holy Spirit. The following is a 'scriptural outline' of the 1) make-up, 2) laws, 3) struggle, and 4) plans involving you as a threefold being in relation to God. You can't prove spiritual truths with worldly evidence, and you can't relate to God in body or soul without spirit. To grow and be effective in witness and service we need to learn to listen, live, respond and act in and to the Spirit of God. Sitting in your garage doesn't make you a car any more than

being ‘saved’ makes you effective in service—we need to learn to respond in spirit, then soul, and body.

- 1) Threefold Being—I Thessalonians 5:23
 - 2) Laws and desires of each—Romans 7:21 and 8:1-4
 - 3) Internal Struggle of Flesh and Spirit
 - a. Galatians 5:16-17
 - b. I Corinthians 3:1-3
 - 4) God’s plan for body and mind
 - a. I Corinthians 9:27, 15:31
 - b. Romans 12:1-2
 - c. Colossians 3:5
 - d. Hebrew 5:12-14
 - e. I John 2:15-17
 - 5) God’s plan for your spirit
 - a. Romans 8:16
 - b. Galatians 5:25
 - c. I Corinthians 14:14-15
- A. Natural man—doesn’t have the Spirit of God.
- B. Carnal man—Christian—has Spirit but is controlled mostly by mind or reason
- C. Hypocrite—looks religious but has not the Spirit—follows people—Romans 8:16.
- D. Baby Christians has Spirit but is body-ruled.
- E. Maturing man—Christian—has Spirit and is ruled or controlled by it.

Enclose diagram of Spirit, Body, & Soul

Spirit—Being Spirit-Conscious—Wells and Rivers

Text: Acts 8:5, 12, 14-17

- 1) Inward Witness—
- 2) Inward Voice—
- 3) Voice of the Holy Spirit—
Spirit/Soul/Body

I. Two experiences—

- A. Well of water—John 4:10, 11, 13-14—Spirit in you Spirit
- B. Rivers of water—John 7:37-39—overflowing
- C. Well is for self—rivers for others—

II. God is inside—II Corinthians 6:16

- A. In your Spirit—I Corinthians 3:16
- B. Develop spirit/listen—John 14:23

III. Depend on your spirit—Mark 11:23-24

- A. Take a t word
- B. Act on word

IV. Help from within—John 16:13

- A. Perceiving—Acts 27:9-10, Paul on voyage
- B. Spectacular guidance—Acts 10:9-11, 19-20, 11:11-12
- C. Biding of the Spirit—Acts 13:1-2
 - 1) Ministered
 - 2) Fasted

Spiritual Principles—Operating on Spiritual Principles

Text: Revelations 12:7-12

Weapons of Warfare:

- 1) Word
- 2) Name
- 3) Blood

Pull down strongholds—strongholds are thoughts of mind. Strongholds established by principalities and powers—Ephesians 6:12—defeat thought system—humanism.

Tools for activating weapons:

- 1) Prayer
- 2) Testimony
- 3) Preaching
- 4) Praise

Church has weapons and means of using—God waits for the Church to begin the process—operate on principles of Spiritual Warfare.

Read Revelations 2:7-11.

I. Praise and Worship

- A. Michael and Angels victorious against Satan
- B. Believers overcame Satan by blood—power.
Believers overcame Satan by testimony—action.
- C. Heaven responds—God allows Angels to cooperate with Church in accord with spiritual principles.
- D. Daniel : Jeremiah 25:1-11; Daniel 9:2
 - 1) Situation bad—
 - 2) Prophecy in 9:2
 - 3) Action by Daniel to pray/fast.
 - 4) Gabriel on way—21 days
 - 5) Reply—10:2—persistence—10:13

II. Man's actions activate—

- A. II Chronicles 20:22—Israel to be invaded by Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir.
- B. Jehoshaphat feared—20:3; declared fast/prayed—entered into praise.
- C. Declared fast/prayed—entered into praise.
- D. Spirit came—verse 14—game plan—verses 15-17.
- E. Praise—Verse 22—victory.

III. Church meant to participate

- A. Commitment/diligent prayer
- B. Angels waiting
- C. Church on call—

Operate in power of Holy Spirit—not just institutionalism
Accounts of deliverance, etc., mighty works—
Humanism—mind—thought—strongholds—

Chapter 18, “T”

Thankful—Four Reasons to be Thankful

Text: I Peter 2:9

Thanksgiving is a national holiday whose origin was in 1621. It was a celebration and thanksgiving to God by the Pilgrims for their survival through the winter after landing on our shores. In 1676 in what is now the state of Massachusetts there was an official celebration of thanksgiving. In 1789 President Washington declared a national day of thanksgiving. In 1864 President Lincoln also declared a national day of Thanksgiving. Then in 1941 Congress declared the fourth Thursday in November to be an annual national day of Thanksgiving. All of these observances were conducted with thanksgiving directed toward God for His favor and care to us as a nation as reflected in the covenant recorded in the Mayflower Compact.

Our nation was founded on our relationship to God and is the reason America has been blessed.

When America decides to go against God and follow the world, then that is the day of our decline and ultimately our destruction. In every instance of thanksgiving it was directed toward God and has a Biblical basis.

Thankfulness is an attitude of gratitude reflected in action. Being thankful is a choice, a habit, and also a lifestyle. Our attitude of gratitude is a state of mind that expresses our appreciation. This is reflected by choice in our actions, speech, our relationships, care of possessions, what we give away, and even what we consider to be our priorities.

Thanksgiving is like love—it’s a choice, not a feeling.

Thanksgiving is a habit—we do what is important to us.

Thanksgiving is a lifestyle—a part of everyday life.

Many people, including children, are not thankful because in many instances the parents aren’t thankful. Many other people have never been taught to be thankful nor know the reason they should be. Still others compare thankfulness to happiness which is usually based on physical conditions and possessions not internal and spiritual understanding.

We know that we should be thankful, but it often slips by us because we are not focused on blessings, but rather on what we do not have. Psalm 34:1 and 19 read, “I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. Many evils confront—consistently—the righteous, but the Lord delivers Him out of them all.”

Thanksgiving applies to all areas of our lives, not just when we pray about it on special occasions. When it comes to our minds, we should voice our appreciation. In an article in Charisma magazine, Joyce Myers lists four ways that will help any person practice being thankful:

-When a person does something nice for you, let them know. Don't take people for granted. Express gratitude for and to them, whether at a restaurant, in stores, etc.

-Appreciate your family members, especially your spouse. Tell them what you appreciate and thank them for being considerate, thoughtful, and helpful.

-Meditate daily on things for which you can be thankful. Focus before you get out of bed and identify five things. At night identify five things that went well during the day.

-Be thankful for people who tell you the truth about yourself—especially something of which you are not aware, either good or bad.

Now—four Biblical reasons to be thankful:

- 1) You are chosen—by God!
- 2) You are a royal priesthood!
- 3) You are a holy nation!
- 4) You are a peculiar people!

I Peter 2:9—purpose and calling—connect the dots!

I invite you to a lifestyle of thanksgiving and ministry!

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Now—four Biblical reasons to be thankful:

- 1) You are chosen—by God.
- 2) You are a royal priesthood.
- 3) You are a holy nation.
- 4) You are a peculiar people.

I Peter 2:9 "***But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.***" Your purpose and calling comes from this—connect the dots!

The invitation: to a lifestyle of thanksgiving and ministry.

Thankful—Five Reasons to be Thankful

Text: I Peter 2:9

Thanksgiving—Thursday—a national holiday—why—place of thanksgiving in our lives. Definition: An attitude of gratitude. Thankfulness is gratitude.

Love is thankfulness/gratitude in action. Because of Jesus—how we live. Thankfulness is directed toward someone else—joy toward God—fruit of Spirit

-To people

- Ruth 2:10—found favor
- I Samuel 14:45—Jonathan saved by people
- II Samuel 10:2—David for people saving Jonathan
- Luke 17:11-19—ten lepers
- Matthew 9:22—issue of blood
- Hebrews 11:6—rewards those who earnestly seek Him
 - needs
 - expecting
 - seeking
 - receiving
 - sharing

-To God

- Psalm 9:11—singing praises
- Psalm 33:2—musical instruments
- Psalm 67:3/Isaiah 42:12—Universal
- Hebrews 13:15—Perpetual
- Psalm 51:15—with mouth
- II Chronicle 5:13, 20:22—for setting ambush

-Heavenly

- Revelation 7:11-12
- Revelation 19-5

-Worship

- Psalm 100:4
- I Thessalonians 5:18—in everything
- Acts 2:47
- Acts 16:25

Being thankful is a choice, a habit and also a lifestyle. Being thankful can be defined as an attitude of gratitude. It is simply a state of mind that expresses appreciation. This is reflected by choice in our actions, speech, relationships, and care of possessions, what we give away and even what we consider to be priorities.

Thanksgiving is live love—it's a choice not a feeling.

Thanksgiving is a habit—we do what is important to us.

Thanksgiving is a lifestyle—a part of everyday life—

Many people, including children are not thankful—feeling of entitlement—because in many instances their parents aren't thankful. Many people have never been taught to be thankful or the reason they should be. Still others compare thankfulness to happiness—which is usually based on physical conditions and possessions not internal and spiritual understanding.

We know that we should be thankful but it often slips by us because we are not focused on blessings but rather on what we do not have. Psalm 34:1, 19 in the amplified reads, "I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth—Many evils confront the (consistently) righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all."

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- 1) When a person does something nice for you let them know. Don't take people for granted—express gratitude for and to them—whether at the restaurant, in stores, etc.
- 2) Appreciate your family members, especially your spouse. Tell them what you appreciate and thank them for being considerate, thoughtful, and helpful.
- 3) Meditate daily on things for which you can be thankful. Focus before you get out of bed and identify five things. At night identify five things that went well during the day.
- 4) Be thankful for people who tell you the truth about yourself—especially something of which you are not aware.—good or bad!

Now for Biblical reasons to be thankful—

- 1) You are Chosen—by God.
- 2) You are a royal priesthood.
- 3) You are a holy nation—with privileges and responsibilities.
- 4) You are a Peculiar People. You have the opportunity to focus on who blessed you—not what you got.

Invitation—thanksgiving lifestyle/ministry.

Thanksgiving Ideas

Is Thanksgiving about our blessing or is it more about THE ONE who has blessed us? Instead of asking, "What are we thankful for? maybe we should be asking, "To WHOM are we thankful?"

*I Chronicles 29:13 “Now therefore, our God, We thank You
And praise Your glorious name.”*

*Psalm 69:30 “I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify
Him with thanksgiving.”*

*Psalm 100:4 “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts
with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name”.*

*Psalm 107:1 “Thanksgiving to the Lord for His Great Works of Deliverance
Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures
forever.*

*I Thessalonians 5:18 “In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in
Christ Jesus for you.”*

Eighty-two

When I mention “eighty two” what comes to mind? Most people think of a highway or road marker.

82% of people who are invited to church by someone they already know will say **yes!**

Especially at a holiday season people will respond positively about attending church with you. At that time of year, particularly Christmas, is when people are more likely to alter their Sunday pattern and attend a church service. But don't wait until Christmas. Ask them now. More than likely, they will accept your invitation to attend church here with you if you simply invite them. After they say yes, make plans to meet them on Sunday and drive together. Even offer to have lunch together afterwards. Just invite them—82% will say yes.

Time—Steps for Use of Time

Text: Psalm 90:12, 39:4; James 1:5

In the middle of hectic schedules and we realize that life is short, it helps us to use the time we have more wisely and for eternal good. Using time wisely begins when we ask God what He wants for us, then we can ask if what we want matches what God says.

Thanksgiving is in November and Christmas in December shortly after. Before you get swallowed up in the secular frenzy, let's look at how we can be more effective and fulfill our calling in serving the Lord. It seems as if there are more things to do than there is time to do them. Yet each of us has an equal amount of time. It is a matter of how we use it that determines our effectiveness for God and fulfillment for ourselves.

Psalm 90:12 tells us, “So teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” When we realize just how short life really is, it helps us use

our time more wisely for eternal good as well as bringing His Kingdom on earth. Neither does it mean all work and no relaxation. There needs to be a balance.

When you begin to “number your days you look at living in the now”. Then ask yourself what desire has God places in your heart that you want to see accomplished before you step into eternity! Activate this desire by determining what small steps are needed to begin to reach this desire.

When we exercise God’s wisdom in use of our time—really it is His time on loan to us—we make more time for Him. Understand that we need to be more like Jesus and begin each day—John 5:19—in prayer and hear from God. Here are some practical steps that will help us.

- 1) You must decide what is important that deserves your time and attention.
 - a. What is important to you is not always important to God because His ways are not our ways.
 - b. God’s ways reflect His heart’s desire for what is best for us.
 - c. What is important to God should be important to us.
 - d. The decision of what is important is up to you and you have to live with it. Good choices-bad choices-free choice.

2) Prioritize your time.

- a. Do first things first which is what is necessary to function. : First Aid.
- b. Second, comes the natural talents.
- c. Last, but not least, is spiritual fellowship, gifts, and ministry.
- d. Don’t get distracted by “rabbit trails” or lesser things.
- e. Ask if you need help and God will answer with understanding.

Proverbs 2:9 He may also answer with wisdom—James 1:5 Wisdom consists of three parts: a. Practical, b. Divine, and c. Christ-like. These are reflected in Love, Care, and Sovereignty.

3) Learn to motivate yourself.

- a. Most people are not self-starters.
- b. Scripture gives direction from Jude 20.
- c. Encourage yourself through prayer/promises.
- d. Encourage yourself by seeing how God has and continues to answer when we call on Him.
- e. Qualities needed include vision, desire, expectation, obedience, and commitment.

4) Be a Doer and take action—James 1:19-25.

- a. Does your time listening equal your time talking? Vs 19
- b. Have no anger or offense. Vs 20
- c. Get rid of hindrances that keep you from taking action. Vs 21
- d. Important matters: 1. Listening, 2. Obeying Vs. 22-25

- e. Measure the effectiveness of your study and time alone with God by:
1. the effect on your behavior, 2. the effect on your attitude, 3. the action you take.

You are free to live as God created you but not free to just do anything you want. You are not to be selfish in the use of wisdom.—I Peter 2:16

These steps are meant to help each of us live more productive lives and fulfilling what God is calling us to do by more effective use of time. This is an on-going effort. This will enable you to achieve what God has intended for our individual lives.

I trust that these steps will be helpful not only in the busy season but in the days to come. The key is our relationship to Jesus and His place in our lives! Does He have control of your time as well as your heart?

Treasure—Take time to seek the Right Treasure

A little girl's parents went to an open house at the elementary school. The teacher met them and her eyebrows seemed to elevate slightly. Although, she spoke kindly about the little girl, she had some concerns. To demonstrate what she meant, she invited the parents to look at the artwork. The artwork was dozens of brown paper treasure chests tacked to the bulletin board. Each had a barrel top attached with a brad. On the front was printed, "A Real Treasure Would Be . . ." The parents looked into each "treasure chest," and saw TVs, Nintendo's, coins, and all different types of toys.

When the parents got to their daughter's "treasure chest" in the very bottom right corner, they had to stoop to open it. They were anxious to see what concerned the teacher so much. As they looked inside they saw a picture of Jesus hanging on a cross with red drops of blood shaped like hearts dripping from His hands. She had completed the sentence, "A Real Treasure Would Be . . . Jesus."

"Do you see my concern?" the teacher asked, her arms folded across her chest.

"Yes," the parents agreed, "we see what you mean. The J is backwards, isn't it?"

Matthew 6:21 tells us clearly that where our treasure is, there our heart is also.

For the little girl, here "Real Treasure—is knowing Jesus." This is very simple statement coming from a child, but it is very profound and the center of life. It is more than knowing He died for us . . . it is knowing that He's alive and working supernaturally in the lives of those who are willing to allow it today. It is knowing that there is something after the resurrection that affects all of life and gives direction and meaning to your purpose here on earth.

After the resurrection and ascension, the disciples acted like many people do today—they were just standing around, gazing steadfastly toward heaven. Today we would say that people were “day dreaming” but for the Apostles, it was much more. They were trying to make sense of what had just happened and what to do next.

They returned to Jerusalem and continued in one accord in prayer and supplication with Jesus’ mother and brothers as He had told them to do. This was the beginning of the fulfillment of receiving power in the Holy Spirit so they could become witnesses throughout the world (Acts 1:8) to bring His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

Two things happened when the apostles grasped what it meant to know Him and the power of His resurrection (Philippians 3:10). First, they would witness to the power of the resurrection because they had personally experienced it. Second, they would minister in supernatural power with miracles confirming Jesus’ Word.

The power involved spiritual transformation first. This is a life changing encounter, not merely intellectual agreement. Then, there is boldness, courage, urgency, confidence, insight, wisdom, ability, and authority, all needed to bring the Kingdom of God and set captives free, destroying the works of the evil one which is confirmed by miracles, signs, and wonders.

The “Real Treasure” is to “be about our Heavenly Father’s business” and the result will be not only life eternal but life abundant, where you live in victory daily, regardless of what happens. You care more than a conqueror in Him, and it is experienced as the spiritual power of the Holy Spirit works in and through you to change and overcome the world.

It is not what we can do for God, but what God is doing through us. He did not say to bring people to Jesus, but rather, to take Jesus to people. This is not a play on words; it is the understanding of what Jesus wants and the key to “Bringing the Kingdom.” It is to personally be transformed by the resurrection and to live daily in the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit with the evidence that as we speak His Words, He confirms them with signs, wonders, and miracles to meet needs in lives and set people free.

In these last days it is crucial that Christians know the exceeding greatness of His power (Ephesians 1:19) as Peter and John did with the lame man at the gate (Acts 3:6). To do this your mind needs to be renewed if you are to minister in the power Jesus did with the results He got. This means 1) having the right attitude (believing the Word not the world), 2) speaking the Word not speaking what the world says, and 3) acting with confidence and certainty on God’s Word that it is true and will come to pass as He said. It means, as I heard someone say, “movin’ from stinkin’ thinkin’ to thinking according to the

Word.” It means being transformed by the supernatural power of Jesus not conformed to the world.

Are you witnessing to the resurrection power which is in you with it being confirmed by God? Where is your real treasure? That’s something to think about!

Token

A token is representation, authority, portion, or sample of something. For Elijah the small cloud was a sample of something great that was about to occur.

In the church today Christians are seeing a token—sample-small taste—of what God has in store. Healing, victory, peace, and glory!

Zechariah 4:10 says, “For who has despised the day of small things (beginnings)? Regardless of what it is in, many people become discouraged or despise small beginnings. Use what God has given you, and it will increase. Do you recognize that you have received a token from God and that you need to prepare for the wave of God that is to come soon?

In the text today we see that Elijah has caused Ahab much trouble and killed 450 prophets of Baal. The drought is about to end. Let’s look at the text . . .

41-Go up, eat, drink, sound of abundance of rain (take action, prepare, something supernatural is about to happen)

42-Ahab obeyed (so should we) . . . Elijah bowed down . . . head between knees. Prayed.

43-said to servant . . . go up and look toward sea, (Expect now and look to Source)

44-six times nothing/7th a small cloud size of a man’s hand coming from the sea.

45-Black clouds came and so did the heavy rain.

46-Ahaz left/Spirit of Lord came on Elijah and the old prophet out ran the horse!

God gives resources, wisdom and courage to accomplish His purpose. Do not yield, press-in! For Elijah it was a token of the supernatural that was about to occur in his own life not just the rain that came on a parched land.

God has His time to answer your prayers . . . (time for most of mine is 1-30 days) Elijah asks, “Lord, where are you?” Just like we do . . . don’t lose hope but neither should you run ahead of God.

In times of attack we receive a “token” of things to come and we need to stand-in there! It might be compared to a loaf bread.

Answer—full loaf

Help—one slice

Miracle—multiplication of what you have.

Remember—in modern language the servant's response to Elijah about the cloud is: Ain't nothin' (no cloud)

Ain't much (only a little cloud)

The cloud is a sign that the answer is on the way. What sign is God giving you? God is speaking to the church today and giving us a token of what is at hand! God revives the church when it tries to die. Matthew 21:19 cursed fig tree . . . curse dead religion that has form of godliness but no power. Bring forth fruit of God will tear up the church by refining, reshaping, renewing. Receive His Word/Resist evil/reject alternative when tempted to do things man's way. Whenever there is frustration and disobedience . . . God is against what is happening . . . Christians, wake up! He is giving a token and telling you that something tremendous is about to occur.

I. Take a Stand (19:21)

- A. How long to halt between two opinions?
- B. Unsure of who God is hinders our stand
- C. Enjoy sin and temporary benefits
- D. Worship false god of self

II. Fire came down (18:38)

- A. God supplied needs to complete task
- B. God commands
- C. God calls for obedience

Illustration: a pastor was worried. God said that if He said to receive the offering between midnight and 1:00 am in the roof top where people could only reach by ladder that all needs would be met! Wow—O us of little faith.

III. Prepare (18:41)

- A. Go up—act on instructions
- B. Eat—take in what God provides
- C. Drink—receive refreshing of His Spirit
- D. Sound of abundant rain—recognize a torrent of God's presence is about to occur for all to see and experience.

IV. Look (18:43)

- A. Expect—the answer
- B. Focus—on the Word
- C. Don't lose attention
- D. Don't pay attention to worldly circumstances

Illustration: Big harvest, big offering, healing, debt free

V. The Token (18:44)

- A. Small cloud

- B. We often overlook signs from God
- C. When something small happens—it's as good as a done deal.
- D. God give us a token to hold until the answer comes.

Joshua 1:8 read it—meditate/observe

2:8 Read is—Rahab, sign

VI. The Answer (18:45)

- A. Black clouds
- B. Heavy rain

Just like Elijah, God is preparing us for a race and for some very special events that are at hand. Focus on the Word. Apply the Word, Share the Word. Now is the time to realize that God's Word is going to burst forth—if not through us—then through those who are obedient and passionate.

Illustration: Current events/attitudes/Christian beliefs not applied to life situations

The church can transform the world, but first it must allow itself to be transformed by God. God is calling us to bring His Kingdom by making His priorities ours.

Are you ready?

Chapter 19, "U"

Unity Instead of Units

Texts: John 17:9-23

All is not hopeless even if he drinks Hope . . . wanted only medical not spiritual or emotional . . . even had a reference to demons . . . /

Many try to live as UNITS not in UNITY . . .

For example, U.S.A./ U.M.C. units tied together by a common bond but not a part of each other.

Setting: Garden of Gethsemane

- Cross is gateway to glory—road to heaven

- Completed work

- Told about God—the Father

- Brought love

- Obey God

- Prayed for glorification—resurrection

- Prayed for self

- Prayed for disciples

- Prayed for you and me Text Say: Jesus consecrated himself to the

Father Text Calls for: Consecration of self and unity in Jesus

Key: All based on a personal relationship to Father . . .

- All I have is yours

- All you have is mine

- Love and obey

Dream—

- No membership numbers

- No finance numbers

- Basis of ministry is people . . .

Measurement is:

- Converts

- Conflicts reconciled

- Outreach

- results

I. Need

- A. Help not escape or withdrawal

- B. Protection from evil one

- C. Consecrated by truth

- D. Set apart

- E. Equipped

Watch tower . . . fortify city against God in refusal to spread out and repopulate the earth after the flood . . . / Genesis 11:4

Ziggurat=pinnacle, mountain top

Buildings were rectangular, built in stages and accessible from courtyard below by stairs.

Normally, three stages . . . some reached seven stages . . . chapel on top held image of their deity. 3,008' square in Babylon or 10 miles South . . . certainty is a symbol of human ambition and pride and disobedience that led to dis-unity and dis-harmony . . . and different languages.

Church unified . . .

- Powerful church . . . emphasis on agreement
- Change social, political, spiritual and personal
- Difficulty=divisive spirit or selfishness/suspicion
- Truly follow Spirit then we will be in unity!!!
- Hindered by Christians
- Jesus prayed for protection
- Jesus prayed Disciples consecrated by truth
(set apart for special tasks)
(equip with qualities of mind, heart, and character).
- God chose us . . . called us for obedience!

His Kingdom can't come without **unity** and to get **unity** there must be a personal relationship with Jesus being the senior partner . . . **how about it?**

Chapter 20, “V”
Vote Your Values

Well, every four years in November is the day . . . seemingly endless presidential campaign is finally drawing to a close and it is time to VOTE . . . your Biblical values since **II Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness**. This is the basis and final authority by which all things are judged.

I am amazed at the amount of money put into campaigning as well as the amount of time. It would be much simpler to have an equal amount of free time provided to each candidate six months ahead . . . and require that the candidates give a direct, simple, straight answer to questions, or they would be disqualified. Even if you are weary and possibly bored by the rhetoric and hollow phrases that have to be examined to see what is really being said . . . it’s almost over . . . the end is in sight . . . go vote on Election Day in November . . . and vote your values.

With the understanding that no president can produce the promises without support of congress and staff, it would seem appropriate to identify who the person wants to work with. Then there is the matter of integrity . . . which many seem to be lacking. Of course, if you are of the mentality that the government owes you something and is responsible to take care of you then the vote is usually a compromise of values.

Unfortunately, many self-proclaimed Christians will vote in favor of promised self-serving programs rather than Christian values. Close examination reveals that people usually do vote their values which means you will get leaders of like mind which means it is good if the leader has Christian values as our forefathers intended and has prospered our nation . . .but it is bad if the like minded leaders have a selfish, change-for-the-sake-of-change-attitude that is not based on Christian values.

Christian values as reflected in conservative Supreme Court Justices, opposition to the slaughter of innocent babies, opposition to perverted sexual values that destroy families and our nation and support of first amendment rights . . . will result in Biblical, practical decisions in all other areas of what people identify as “issues” such as economy, energy war, health care, education, etc.

Just as Joshua and Caleb paid the price for the other spies fear (Numbers 13:30-31, 14:11, 22-23) so there will be many who pay the price for believing a false/evil report, out of fear, and voting for it. Be sure to make it a priority to vote Christian values on Election Day in November. We as Christians get to Turn the world upside down! That’s something to think about!

Victory Over Satan

The Word of God works.

This is a fundamental truth if you are to grow in God. The Word of God is: a) quick, which means alive; b) powerful; c) sharper than any two-edged sword.

Psalm 119:93 tells us ***“I will never forget your precepts for with them you have quickened me.”*** We are made alive by the power of God’s Word. Every Word from God contains in it the power of its own fulfillment.

We have looked at the effects of God’s Word; how His Word works; how healing comes from the Word and also abundance. Now let’s look at two aspects of God’s Word—victory over Satan and spiritual nourishment.

I. Victory Over Satan

David/*119 vs. 11*, ***“Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee.”***

-Spiritual power in God’s Word.

-Life and energy that works against sin. II Peter 1:4

--promise/participation.

A. Special power of the Word

- 1) Exceeding great and precious promises provide escape.
- 2) Provides power to overcome sin.
- 3) Psalm 17:4—treasured/used
- 4) Right and wrong decisions/I Corinthians 10:31 and Colossians 3:17.
- 5) Due to the glory of God give thanks to God.
- 6) Acceptable if these two items are present.

B. The sword of the Spirit

- 1) Word provides victory over sin.
- 2) Provides victory over Satan himself.
- 3) Ephesians 6:17—sword/Word
- 4) Anointing of the Spirit comes through obedience.
- 5) Begin by meditation in God’s Word.
- 6) Luke 4:1, 2—temptations of Jesus—Word defeated Satan—it is written.

C. Power of the Spirit

- 1) Luke 4:14—Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit—
- 2) Passage began with the phrase “Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost—was led by the Spirit.”
- 3) Difference between fullness and power is use of sword.
- 4) Without power of the Spirit Christian’s play spiritual games.

--The difference between being full of the Spirit and moving in the power of the Spirit is the effective use of God's Word.

a. Strong your men.

aa .I John 2:14

bb. Strong-strength is from God inside.

cc. Word must abide in your heart.

b. Believers authority:

aa. The biggest problem with most believers in the use of the Word of God is the authority issue.

1a. Uncertain as to authority from Christ.

2a. Uncertain if Satan will respect that authority.

1aa. Luke 10:19

1aaa. Power=Exousia=Authority.

2aaa. Dunamis=power; Acts 19:13

3aaa. Authority is delegated power.

Use the authority God has given you.

D. Do something about the Devil.

1) Believer is never told to pray to God about the Devil.

2) God has done everything about Satan He is ever going to do.

3) Instructions to you—James 4:7. (Flee from you).

4) I Peter 5:;8, 9—resist.

a. Stand firm.

1a. It is written.

2a. Satan will attack you.

3a. Meditate on God's Word.

4a. Recognize authority you have been given (inside).

b. Satan is unarmed foe.

1a. Matthew 12:28, 29.

2a. Luke 11:20, 22.

3a. Jesus stronger than the Devil—took his armor.

4a. Colossians 2:15—unarmed—no power.

5a. Believers are responsible to enforce authority of the Word.

6a. Matthew 12:29—bind the strong man.,

c. Identifying the strong man.

1a. Ephesians 6:12

aa. Princes

bb. Powers

cc. Rulers

dd. Wicked spirituals

2a. II Corinthians 10:4=strongholds.

3a. Daniel 10-Prince of Kingdom of Persia; Grecia.

4a. Manifestations=standing in authority.

5a. Power=obedience to authority.

II. Spiritual nourishment:

A. Word provides spiritual food for every stage of Christian growth.

B. Milk to meat.

C. Spiritual nourishment is essential to growth.

1) Word is milk.

a. I Peter 2:1,2

b. Remove negatives.

c. Take in God's Word.

d. Stay away from questionable teachings and doctrines.

e. Begin maturity—give up bottles—do not remain spiritual babies.

2) Word is bread.

a. Matthew 4:4=spiritual bread...

b. Bread is staple item and source of strength.

Bread=Strength

c. Ephesians 5:4—what to shun/not take in.

d. Don't be a junk food addict in the Kingdom of God; such as prosperity, authority, tongues, power, etc.

e. Take in the entire Word of God.

3) The Word is strong meat.

a. Hebrew 5:12-14.

b. Be sure to receive the Word and apply it properly to our lives for spiritual maturity.

c. Strong meat is for those who are of full age and maturity—know the difference between right and wrong.

Lead a person to Christ/Instructions to new converts/teaching scriptures/educating children in the power of the Word/Hungering after the Word.

Vision

Nehemiah 7:1-7 After the wall had been built and I had set the doors in place, the gatekeepers and the singers and the Levites were appointed. 2 I put in charge of Jerusalem my brother Hanani, along with Hananiah the commander of the citadel, because he was a man of integrity and feared God

more than most men do. 3 I said to them, "The gates of Jerusalem are not to be opened until the sun is hot. While the gatekeepers are still on duty, Have them shut the doors and bar them. Also appoint residents of Jerusalem as guards, some at their posts and some near their own houses."

4Now the city was large and spacious, but there were few people in it, and the houses had not yet been rebuilt. 5So my God put it into my heart to assemble the nobles, the officials and the common people for registration by families. I found the genealogical record of those who had been the first to return. This is what I found written there:

6These are the people of the province who came up from the captivity of the exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had taken captive (they returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his own town, 7 in company with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum and Baanah.)

The wall was build in 52 days . . . a miracle and testimony to God! (We run into similar problems duty can get same results.

I. God has a vision for us. For you.

- A. Calling us to build relationships—in the church and community.
- B. Calling us to bring the Kingdom in supernatural power—healing & delivery by working with Him and each other.
- C. Nehemiah saw vision and wept—1:4
- d. Nehemiah remembered promise 1:6-7
- E. Renewed covenant—8:1-6

II. Are there walls we need to build today? –Ministries?

- A. Clear vision with world situation
- B. See where Christians fit—minister
- C. Nehemiah 2:17-18

III. Difficulty with world

- A. Plan
- B. Confidence in God and selves as His people
- C. Discouragement
- D. Not triumph without trials

IV. Revival must result

- A. Face problems—family, friends, fears
- B. Face needs
- C. Reform/change into what God wants His way!
- D. Do something about it (describe—specifically for us)

Invitation: Wholehearted participation—Bring the Kingdom God does not want half-hearted people—make sure you truly know God.

Vision—Living out your Vision

Text: Acts 26:12-29

People don't talk much about their dreams and visions for their lives. Possibly, it could be because they are so busy trying to survive daily life that they don't remember their dream or vision. Some have given up on the dream or vision. Still others have never risked dreaming or following the vision. It is tragic that people do not fulfill their potential and calling in life by living out the vision God has placed in their heart.

In the text today Paul is standing before King Agrippa. He has been before Governor Felix who was called back to Rome and replaced by Governor Festus who deferred to Agrippa. Paul was giving an account of his conversion and how he met the risen Christ on the road to Damascus. Paul was declaring that he was faithful to his heavenly vision and living his life accordingly which is the key for us all.

1) How many people are living the life they set out to live?

Illustration: Susan Butcher, four time winner of the Iditarod (1150 mile sled dog race), lived the life she set out to live. She also placed in the top five—twelve times! She was reared in Boston and wrote in a school paper that she hated the city and wanted to live in the wilderness. She lived a very simple life training dogs and racing them. She lived in a 15' x 20' log cabin with no running water or electricity. In the 1990's she retired, married, had children, and then died in 2006 at the age of 51; but her vision to live in the wilderness had been fulfilled! There are others who risked and fulfilled their vision. When this happens God can bless and use people to bring the Kingdom.

--Are you living the life you set out to live? If not, why not?

--What did you set out to live?

--Did your vision change? If so, how? Why?

Even in the world situation which is not good, you can live the life God has placed in your heart. Now is the time to start. Victorious Christian living is a success because of obedience.

2) What are your priorities? Susan's priorities were family, dogs, and land, living with the wildlife. She made sure that what she was doing was consistent with what she was saying.

--As a Christian are your words and actions consistent?

--Do you speak faith and live fear?

--What truth of your life is being projected, transmitted, or imparted?

(faith, peace, confidence, joy, etc.)

The manner of Paul's life and purpose is discussed in II Timothy 3:10-12. What is yours? Have you suffered for the faith?

3) The way we live is a reflection of our faith and relationship to Jesus. Our relationship to Jesus is more than legalism, values, and careers. It is a lifestyle that comes from the heart and is the foundation for life abundant and life eternal.

--How do you relate to the world and to the resources God has given you?

--How do you relate to people? With interactions? In fellowship? In ministry?

--How do you relate to possessions? In quality? In quantity? In use and care?

4) What is your life saying to others? Do they see the Holy Spirit helping you live out your vision? See Joel 2:28-29 and Jeremiah 29:11.

--Do others see how your desires are fulfilled because they are the same as those placed in your heart by God?

--Do you talk about the same things Jesus did which was fulfilling His calling/vision? Are you consumed by it? Is it like fire in your bones? Jesus didn't talk much about lifestyle. He did talk about contentment, simplicity, service, love, hospitality, and obedience to His Father and completing His calling or purpose.

--How is your life testifying to your true priorities and vision?

5) Life is a journey of choices in our spirit, soul, and body.

--We reflect our choices so we need to evaluate our habits, our desires, our motives, our speech, and our obedience.

--When we evaluate our choices they are "touch points" to help keep us on the right path in our faith walk.

6) Pray for increased sensitivity to the Holy Spirit in matters of your lifestyle and vision. They should match and they will if you are fulfilling God's vision for you.

--How is God dealing with you concerning your lifestyle?

--Are you faithful to the vision God has given you when you began your walk with Him?

--Sharing is voluntary. Acts 4:32-37 is an example. Giving is part of every vision, and it helps bring the Kingdom.

Paul was faithful to the vision God gave him.—are you?

What would your life, the world around you, and His Kingdom be like if you were faithful to the heavenly vision He has given you?

Don't sell yourself short in living out your vision. You can do it—starting now. If you have started already then come up higher—begin now!

Vision—Write Your Vision Down (See it and receive it.)

Most people go through life with a deep awareness that there is more than they are experiencing. So, we are going to examine our vision for Fellowship of Believers and ourselves. The result will prayerfully be a more fruitful life with fulfilled potential . . . and experience the best God has to offer. It is not merely success by obedience, but fulfillment of potential.

Grasp the vision of what already exists (as the kingdom) and is about to be manifest. Do this mentally & spiritually.

Don't take this exercise lightly, This is vital to life and ministry. Begin by using the following: (read Ephesians 1:17 and following). Be guided by His Spirit (John 5:19-20). Then write—

I. Write down the vision (Habakkuk 2:2)

- A. General idea first.
- B. This is what stirs your heart.
- C. This is what motivates you (can see it done).
- D. Note the vision is always greater than we can do alone—requires God or some partner.
- E. Writing vision increases likelihood of fulfillment by 1000%.

Write your vision as a general concept.

II. Make it plain—necessary for success.

- A. Write detailed description of your vision.
- B. Let your imagination go wild.
- C. Write as many pieces as you can (every piece is a part of the whole vision),
- D. Don't stop until you have more than you think you can use—or need.

Write your vision and make it plain.

III. Make it measurable.

- A. The message can run with it.
- B. Identify/measure steps.
- C. Don't worry about how you will get there.
- D. Be bold.
- E. Dream big.
- F. Expect literally—have God-kind of faith.

Write your measurable steps necessary to fulfill vision.

IV. Summary—State your own dream or vision succinctly.

- A. Don't try to do it all in one sitting.
- B. Get quiet and listen to God.
- C. Remember that you want/need the vision to be as clear and specific as possible.

Write your vision as clear as possible. and make it plain.

V. An appointed Time.

- A. Don't be impatient.
- B. Wait for God's timing.
- C. Don't get discouraged by circumstances.
- D. Psalm 27:13
- E. Keep vision in front of you to see it every day.
- F. God's dream/vision for you is larger than you can do by yourself.

Write what you are doing to prepare for the appointed time.

VI. Certainty—no delay.

- A. Trust God and you will see the vision fulfilled.
- B. Believe God.
- C. Obey the Word.
- D. God will manifest/make tangible.
- E. God will give you the desire of your heart.

Write vision for yourself and for our church the Fellowship of Believers of which you are a part.

Where do you fit/minister?

Vote Christ—Do your Part

Text: Daniel 5:1

What seems to have been an endless presidential campaign is over. Now, at election time in November is the time to do your part—VOTE. Christians should be faithful and fulfill their responsibility to vote. To neglect to vote is to open the door for hindrances to what God wants which is a nation who believes in Him and lives in obedience to Him.

1. Christians have a standard who to vote for and it is called "Scripture" or as some say, "The Bible". The Scripture is abundantly clear about how to vote on specific issues. Daniel 5:21 is clear that God establishes leaders and nations as well as bringing them down when they are in disobedience.

Since the foundation of our nation pastors have been involved in presenting issues and comparing them to Scripture which is freedom of speech. In many instances pastors even recommended candidates—then people vote their choice.

2. People get caught up in personalities, appearances, issues and negative aspects. While we are electing a president not a pastor, the president should have a solid Biblical foundation for making decisions since our nation was founded in covenant with God and, has been blessed because of our obedience—both public and private.

3. According to statistics it is estimated that approximately 40% of Evangelical Christians do not vote. This is mostly because they do not like the candidate. Still others do not research material for themselves—they repeat the

last thing they heard. If you do not like a candidate then take a look at the candidate's platform and see if it is in the best interest of the people and the nation.

Some Christians believe that rather than vote for what they see as "the lesser of the evils" they just will not vote. This is not the thing to do because through out the centuries God's people have had to choose between things (issues or programs) and people that are not perfect and trust God to do the rest.

4, King Cyrus (see Isaiah 45:1-2) is an example of God choosing leaders and anointing them. King Cyrus was prophesied to deliver Israel 100 years before his birth. Donald Trump has been compared to King Cyrus who had the qualities God wanted to help release Israel. Donald Trump has the secular qualities (anointing) to help release America from bondage, even people do not believe it. We need to look at our faith and guidance to support God's anointed. They may not qualify according to our understanding, but they do according to God.

With all of the evil in the world and leadership it is time to do our part which begins with voting. It seems to me that we are living in Matthew 24 and Scripture is being fulfilled every day with America being judged for leaders encouraging sin. We need to have a leader who can destroy the old power structure and help restore like King Cyrus did.

There needs to be a Christian World View led by pastors in the power of the Holy Spirit. This can begin with election of people with God's vision whether or not they seem spiritual. What is needed is the practical application of God's Word. God's leaders were not always polished but they were effective.

5. Realizing that no one is perfect, let's look at the presidential candidates for 2017 for a minute compared to Scripture.

RELIGION—Donald Trump was for freedom of religion and to repeal the Johnson amendment—1st amendment freedom restored.

Hilary Clinton was to destroy long held, deep-seated religious beliefs—and for Christian persecution.

ABORTION—Donald Trump was pro-life.

Hilary Clinton was pro-choice.

LGBT—Donald Trump—had no special concessions-traditional

Hilary Clinton—pro-LGBT/homosexual/SSM

MEDICAL—Donald Trump-no socialized medicine

Hilary Clinton-pro-socialized medicine

BORDERS—Donald Trump was for closed borders except legally

Hilary Clinton was for open borders and benefits.

ISLAM—Donald Trump—no favors or political concessions

Hilary Clinton—very accepting
GUNS—Donald Trump—pro-2nd amendment
Hilary Clinton—anti-2nd amendment
MILITARY—Donald Trump-Pro police
Hilary Clinton—Anti police

We live in a fallen world, but we are supposed to be faithful in living according to Scripture—and influencing as many as possible.

America may never be as she once was, but she is still the best country in the world. All those who served in the military paid a price—don't disgrace their efforts or jeopardize future generations' freedom—VOTE.

Chapter 21, “W”

Weapons of War

Text: II Corinthians 10:3-5

I. The kingdom of darkness operates

A. Strongholds—source of attacks—anything evil used to bind in any area of life—disease, satanic oppression in mind, family relationships, temptations, or financial.

B. Pull down –weapons mighty to pulling down strongholds (must know location to pull down—prince of power of air—wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers in high places (several heavens).

C. “Epouranos”=high placers—4 additional places: Ephesians 1:3, 1:20, 2:6, 3:10 (New Testament)

D. Both “epouranos” and “shameh” are plural

E. Several heavens—II Corinthians 12:2, 4—presence of God—heaven.

1. 1st—Psalm 19:1—universe

2. 2nd—Revelation 14:6—midst-middle

3. 3rd—Revelation 12:7—God dwells there

F. Satan’s command post—and heaven—consists of—strongholds.

1. Principalities

2. Powers

3. Rulers of darkness

4. Wicked spirits

G. Warfare in heavenlies—Matthew 16:19—all power, heaven and earth—go ye therefore!

H. Warfare at different spiritual levels—individuals, nations—influenced by corporate thought systems—political, physical, false religions, media enhanced control.

I. Thought bombs

1. Spiritually backed—generated by Satan

2. New Age materials—Kant, Hegel, Marx, Lenin, Freud, Darwin

3. geographical areas—

a. Daniel 10-13—Persia

b. Gabriel—deal with Grecia (Greece)

c. San Francisco—homosexuality

d. Chicago—violence

e. New Orleans—occults

4. Bind strong man—key to evangelism.

II. Weapons of warfare—II Corinthians 10:4

A. Defensive—Ephesians 6:10-18

1. Helmet of salvation

2. Breastplate of righteousness
 3. Shield of faith
 - a. Shoes of gospel of peace
 - b. Girdle of truth
- B. Offensive
1. Word
 2. Name
 3. Blood
- C. Word—contains thought of God (action vs. why's)
1. Isaiah 55:9—thoughts higher than man's
 2. Hebrew 4:12—judges thoughts, intent of heart (discerner of thoughts)—bring your thought under control of Christ
 3. Open to attack if you don't
 4. Satan operates in thought control
- D. Key—superimpose God's thoughts vs. Satan's!
1. Satan's thoughts—sickness, divorce, financial burdens, mental oppression
 2. God's thought—healing, harmony, prosperity, deliverance
 3. Wrestle—use God's thoughts against Satan, put into practice—**VICTORY!**
- E. Blood—Blood of Jesus contains the singularly most powerful group of thoughts in Word of God
1. Represents doctrine of atonement
 - a. essence of gospel
 - b. Represents everything on cross (“sozo” = save)
 2. Same work—healing of woman with issue of blood
 - a. Deliverance of demons (Gadarenes)
 - b. Raising of Jairus' daughter
 - c. James 5—prayer of faith
 3. Meets our needs.
 - a. Spiritual
 - b. Physical
 - c. Material
 4. Overcome
 - a. Revelation 12:11—blood of lam/Word of testimony
 - b. Revelation 12:10—Satan as accuser of brother
 - c. God wants us to take authority!
 5. Essence—bring thoughts into captivity of Christ
 - a. Psalm 101:3—David—no wicked thing before eyes

- b. Psalm 19:14—words/meditation—be acceptable in Your sight, Lord, strength, redeemer
 - aa. Mediator—thought life
- 6. Use of the Word—Matthew 4—“It is written”—thought life
- 7. Key to victory (Matthew 4:9-10)
 - a. Replace with word of God. “It is written.”
 - b. Really believe—then must obey
(personalize Psalm 91)
- 8. Mouth—center of spiritual warfare (speak!) Praise/warfare
 - a. Baptism in Holy Spirit
 - b. Praying in Spirit
- 9. Delivery Systems
 - a. Prayer
 - aa. Always power
 - bb. Word
 - cc. Name
 - dd. Blood
 - b. Preaching—II Timothy 4:2—focus on Word, Name, and Blood
 - c. Testing
 - aa. Witness—Acts 1:8
 - bb. Baptism in Holy Spirit—power to witness!
Anointed, no prompting needed
 - d. Praise and worship—Acts 16:25, 26

Will—The Will of God

Text: Acts 22:14; Romans 12:1-2

In our text we find Paul being called to account for his actions as he ministered in Jerusalem. (Read text from the Amplified version). Note: Will of God, verse 14.

What is true of Paul is also true of you and me. If we have a living relationship to Jesus then we are called to know what He wants us to do. This is heart—Rhema—knowledge not head—logos—knowledge. We are called to be led by the Spirit, to know the Spirit bears witness with us and that we are heirs—relationship, friends; therefore we are called to have regular fellowship and understanding.

I. “Will”—*Defined: Thelma*—Matthew 18:14 and Mark 3:35—fulfilling is a sign of spiritual relationship to the Lord Jesus. John 5:30 tells how Jesus sees His Father’s will—submissive to it!

This is the “desires” of God—Acts 13:22. To define the will of God is, “Doing the Word of God.” When your desires are the same as that of your Heavenly Father you are within His perfect will! If your wish is not that of His, then you are desiring the flesh and out of His perfect will. Briefly then, God’s will is for you to be obedient to his Word and to live in victory! Have your desires submissive to those of Jesus if you want to be in His will.

A. Types of WILL

- 1) Perfect Will—Matthew 6:10—Lord’s Prayer.
 - a. Tends to Spiritual knowledge—John 7:17
 - b. Whole heart required—Ephesians 6:6
 - c. Psalm 40:8 Law in heart
 - d. Rule for every day life—James 4:15
- 2) Permissive Will—Romans 1:28
 - a. God never goes against your free choice.
 - b. God ‘allows’ wrong choices—Genesis 3:6

B. Purpose—Colossians 1:9

- 1) Daily—step by step
- 2) Victory—Philippians 3:10
- 3) Life
- 4) Service—Romans 2:1

II. Preparation—as with anything else you must prepare if you are to be successful and accomplish what you set out to do. It is the same with knowing and following the will of God. First, we must prepare ourselves—In Spirit, in Soul, and in Body—I Thessalonians 5:23—begin by renewing of minds—updating—Romans 12:2.

A. Inner-Man—Romans 8:14—led

- 1) Proverbs 20:27—“The Spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.”
- 2) Inward man renewed day by day—II Corinthians 4:16
- 3) Romans 6:13—body desires old ways—Spirit says no!~
 - a. Conscience—John 14:23
 - b. Intuition
 - c. Inner guidance—II Corinthians 6:16
 - d. Inner witness—I Corinthians 3:16
- 4) No “Fleeces”—not same day as Gideon—new covenant (can ask for confirmation but not use fleece.
- 5) No ducking responsibility and putting on Jesus—listen—choose—act! Acts 27:9-10—Perceive
- 6) Matches the “Word”

B. Knowing God’s Ways

- 1) Exodus 33:12-16—Relationship
 - a. Verse 13—request—signs—Moses
 - b. Verse 14—response—rest/presence—God
- 2) Psalm 103:7—Recognizing
 - a. Moses—ways—teacher
 - b. Israel—acts—witness/testifier

THEREFORE—

- 3) Hebrew 3:10—Heart not right
 - a. No rest—verse 11
 - b. No belief—verse 19
 - c. No victory

Ways may be compared to true love while the actions can be compared to infatuation—as long as the person does what you like in actions then you respond—

Knowledge leads to trust which means life! (Example of being saved--)

Knowing—heart originated—need fellowship

Acts—system of religion (Sodom and Gomorrah and Abraham praying—knew ways!

When you know God's ways he reveals Himself—

Accomplished by:

- 1) Presence Psalm 77:13
- 2) Sea—personal experience—Psalm 77:19

C. Conditions—Seeking mind, willing heart and obedient spirit!

- 1) Open-minded (not trash barrel for world)
- 2) Willing to follow (Heart) John 7:17
- 3) Obedient Spirit—(Paul to Macedonia--)
- 4) Abide—to live in!

III. Applying Life's Actions to God's Will

A personal relationship is a must! A saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as Lord! Then continued growth daily—

A. Some Principles:

- 1) Desire to know God's will; Proverbs 3:5-6; John 7:17
- 2) Will not go against WORD—harmony; Joshua 1:8
- 3) Known in answer to prayer—I John 5:14
- 4) Circumstances may indicate God's leading—but Satan can imitate so test spirits!
- 5) Be led by Spirit—Romans 8:14
- 6) Perfect will brings peace—John 4:6-7; Colossians 3:15

B. Some means used—

- 1) People—pastors, friends, teachers

- 2) Prayer—
- 3) Fasting—
- 4) Visions—Philip—Acts 8:26
- 5) Prophecy—I Corinthians 14:3 “to edification, exhortation and comfort”—Matches Scripture!
I Corinthians 14:32—God doesn’t make you but you respond!

Result of knowing will: Submission/victory/power in service

Last Will—Last Will & Testament

Text: Psalm 37:5

In studying the Founding Fathers of our nation (America), I found that they sacrificed lives and fortunes based on two things:

- 1) A cause greater than themselves.
- 2) A personal faith in Jesus Christ.

In their writings, these men left two things. First, they left a will that gave directions for disposition of their material goods. Second, they left a personal testimony of faith in Jesus Christ, and how He influenced, directed and sustained their lives.

This testament or testimony was intended to encourage others to put their trust in Jesus and to depend on Him to control their lives so it would be the most fulfilling and effective possible—thus, fulfilling their purpose and helping others. Men were judged, and still are judged, for just on how they lived but also how they faced death and died in faith.

The foundation was Jesus Christ crucified and risen in the power of the Holy Spirit. Future generations need guidance and where better than from those who have run the race of life. If there is not a solid foundation then lives, dreams and nations will fail and fall. The greatest thing a person can do is to leave a personal testimony of a relationship to Jesus, how it affected their lives and encourage others to follow Him also. (I would encourage you to do this in writing and leave it to be read at your funeral. The other option is to record it on a cassette or CD to be played.)

I have already prepared a will (which everyone should do) and what follows is my personal testament concerning my walk with Jesus Christ. My prayer is that each of you who either read this or hear this will experience, as a minimum, what I have plus your own intimate walk, just like Elijah and Elisha.

Just like Elijah’s mantle, anointing, falling on Elisha—so I am asking God to have my Mantle fall on you. This means that, like Elijah and Elisha, you will do what I did plus more that God calls you to do. Prayerfully, you will bring His Kingdom in supernatural power with a loyalty to Him above all! Be

faithful and bold and He will confirm His Word through you—setting captives free and bringing His Kingdom.

There is no greater person nor cause to which you can commit your life than Jesus Christ. Jesus gives meaning, purpose, and fulfillment to life. Only by following Him will your life be what He wants it to be, and your purpose accomplished so that it touches others and brings His Kingdom.

As a child I sensed a “peace” in the old church where my family attended—but I was not very “spiritual”—just full of life and zest doing whatever came to mind without regard as to cost or result. God protected me, mostly from myself, and my guardian angel (Matthew 18) was kept busy! In my teen years as I lived in a rough and violent area on the Mexican border (as many others have done), I continued to “run” and do whatever I wanted even though I went to Sunday School and church. What freedom—getting a drivers license at 14, cutting class and going to the beach at Padre Island. So long ago there were no buildings on it—staying all night with a friend in Mexico and running the streets without getting into trouble—and on—the list goes with what I thought was fun. Remember, that God is watching over you and calling you to Him—because He has a plan for your life. Some people come quicker than others to the Lord. Those who are stubborn and linger, He continues to protect—at least for a while as He speaks to them.

Then, there were the years of moving with the Air Force as a dependent—no roots, just looking for excitement and fun—never depending on groups or public opinion. After breaking my leg and setting it myself, I tried all sorts of things for fun; fulfillment and peace eluded me. I did come close, as a Ranger at Philemon, being a guide for scout groups over the mountains experiencing what life must have been like for the mountain man.

Then, a Baptist pastor, Monte Peterson, took an interest in me although I never did attend his church. He took time to take me to college and get me enrolled with a promise from me not to quit for one year. It was at this time that God spoke to me in a chapel service, and I agreed to come into ministry. The decision was short lived—15 minutes—until someone ridiculed my faith. My response was proof to me that I did not “fit the image” of a pastor—so I ran for 14 years before I finally responded to the call to fulltime ministry.

During the years of college I continued to run and when I was in the Army, it was no different—I was always trying to find “peace” through activity, risk, and challenge—all to no avail. Once, in Vietnam when there was an attack on our base camp I thought about ministry, and concluded that I would not compromise just because of the situation. I heard God speak to me out loud and assure me about not being wounded or killed—and I still refused ministry.

Then five years later, I had an out of body experience with the Lord, and He told me that it was the last time He was going to ask me. I was hard headed but not stupid—so I agreed, and what a ride after that! I had a mentor in Howard MacAllister who reminded me that I should only choose ministry because I could do nothing else and be satisfied and at peace. I entered the ministry and would never trade it for anything else. As with other areas in life there are ups and downs, but know this—ministry is a calling not a job! It will break your heart and sometimes seem to consume you—but absolutely nothing is as fulfilling as ministry in the supernatural power of Jesus, wherever He leads you.

Psalm 37:5 tells us to commit our way to the Lord and trust in Him also . . . that He will bring it to pass. This is a promise I have experienced all my life and it is worth following! God uses your past, your abilities, your spiritual gifts, and your dreams to bring His Kingdom—allow Him to use you the way He wants because it is not “chance”. There is no failure in Christ because He equips you for the calling.

I have been blessed with a wonderful wife, Joyce, who supports and is involved in ministry, and a family who knows and serves the Lord in their chosen vocations—and grandchildren who are following that path also. All have a personal relationship to Jesus and are a blessing! You are not an island—you have family, a church family and friends, health, and the opportunity to serve Him. He has sustained me through the rigors of life, cancer, and the death of a grandson. Just as scripture says, “Once I was young and now am old—and never have I seen God’s people begging bread”. He is worthy of your full trust.

Some things to remember:

I. Commit yourself to calling greater than yourself.

Commitment is essential—this comes from a personal relationship with Jesus as a foundation for all of life. Find out what is important and make it a priority. Commit to the person of Jesus not just an idea or Christianity as a cause.

II. Accept the mantle and use it.

Just as the mantle (anointing) of Elijah fell on Elisha, so accept and use the anointing God has given you to serve Him supernaturally. Bring Jesus and His Glory and power to bear on every life to help set them free.

III. Make disciples.

This means being a mentor and teaching those who are willing. This is done by instruction and example not just in church but in daily life and activities—**be bold!**

IV. Be obedient.

Obedience is the result of love and commitment as we act in faith. Be obedient and faithful to the end.

V. Know that God loves you.

He created you and you have value. Accept Him as your Lord and Savior. Serve Him with all of your being!

I am thankful that God has been faithful and has not quit on me. Also, that He has blessed me with a wonderful family, and trusted me to preach His Word. To live is Christ and to die is gain—because we will be with Him. Life is short when viewed from the end—that is why it needs to be lived to the fullest—worshipping, witnessing, doing spiritual warfare, and working while it is day. No effort for Christ is ever a loss or waste—only what is done for Him will last. When the race is run and life (as we know it on earth) is done thank Him for being on the point of the spear—to bring His Kingdom and make the world a better place to live. A place to love people and help set them free for now and eternity. I have lived the best possible life and wouldn't trade it—family, friends, Body of Christ, and serving Jesus for anything.

It seems that more could have been done for the Lord Jesus—but I am satisfied that I did what He called me to do—feed the hungry people and set captives free—now it is up to you. Will you decide to follow Jesus without reservation!

Thank you for sharing your life with me. I look forward to seeing Gabe, my grandson, and waiting for you to join us—I commit you to His care—see you there! Love & Blessings!

Witness—Be My Witnesses

Before He ascended, Jesus made a promise that would enable the Apostles to be His witnesses operating in supernatural power. This promise is for us today also. So, let's look at the necessary steps that enable Believers to witness as God intends.

First, you must be born again, spiritually. For this to happen, you need to have a life-transforming encounter with Jesus. This is done by repenting of your sins—acts of rebellion and selfishness—confessing Him as Lord, and giving Him control of your life.

Biblically, this started in the upper room, John 20:19-23, on the evening of the first day—Resurrection day, where Jesus did several things to enable them to begin their walk as Christians:

- 1) Jesus appeared to them which was a personal proof of His Resurrection. For most of us today, it is a result of hearing the Word and accepting in faith.

2) Pentecost: Jesus breathed on them and told them to receive the Holy Spirit. This is when the Holy Spirit came into them, and they became Christian Believers. Just as God breathed the Holy Spirit—ruach—into Adam, and he became a living being; so Jesus breathed—pneuma—in the Disciples, and they became spiritually alive.

From this point on, the Disciples and Believers had the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit to minister, guide, empower, and direct. When this happens, you have all of the Holy Spirit within you that you will ever have. To have the power operate is a choice to be obedient, and God honors His Word.

3) Jesus commissioned them. He called them to a task and began preparing them for a supernatural, world-wide ministry that continues today. These steps are essential just as they were when Jesus commissioned the Disciples. John 21:15

4) Jesus authorized them to use His name by being the One who sent them. It is in His name that the Apostles preached and healed (see Peter's sermon in Acts 2 and healing in Acts 3). He preached both the way of salvation and damnation as well as life abundant. This also includes forgiveness and judgment for all who will listen.

5) Another thing that happened is that the Disciples became Apostles. That is, they were set apart for a special mission to fulfill which was to equip Believers and dispatch them as witnesses. This included starting churches, teaching, and demonstrating the Word in supernatural power which should continue today.

Second, Believers need to be supernaturally empowered. This was the beginning of a new era or walk in the faith. What happened is that through their obedience to remain until they were empowered, the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit was released as cloven tongues of fire sat on them. Then, they began to preach the message of salvation in the native tongues of those listening.

1) Remain—wait—on the Lord meant:

- a. Being of one mind.
- b. Being of one purpose.
- c. Being of one body in unity.

2) It also means:

- a. Intellectual unanimity—unanimous.
- b. Emotional rapport—trust.
- c. Volitional agreement—act of will.

When we have the same, we will see signs, wonders, and miracles as the Kingdom is spread!

Third, Believers need to be obedient. This includes receiving as well as sharing or giving in ministry. The Disciples were obedient by being in Jerusalem for Pentecost. The other two times a year, they were expected to come to Jerusalem was at Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles. How fitting that the first fruits of their obedience was 3000 converts at Pentecost or harvest festival!

The miracle of the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit in empowering was seen in three areas: wind, fire, and voice.

- 1) The sound was of a mighty rushing wind—power.
- 2) Cloven tongues as of fire—purity.
- 3) Native languages—salvation.

Notice that all of these are external—not internal.

Remember, the primary evidence of being born again is peace. The primary evidence of being baptized in the Holy Spirit is not tongues. Rather, it is power and signs, wonders, and miracles that follow.

These three steps: being born again, empowering and obedience are essential to being witnesses. Are you ready to be a witness? God is waiting for you and so is the world.

Witnessing for Jesus

Everybody ought to know (a song by Bill & Gloria Gaither)

--dead world . . . dying world . . . all ought to know!

--Luke 24; Matthew 29; Mark 16; Acts 1:5-8.

--Christians as a whole are not faithful to anointing!

Did you see someone today? You had an opportunity to witness (no good to grab by lapels and shout).

--Need to be more serious and sensitive to opportunities to witness.

--Pray . . . for the people; for yourself; for the opportunity and for reception!

--: Lady . . . Lent . . . eyes shining . . . asked by another, “What happened?” Told of rising early, coffee . . . not all have the same experience . . . but must be disciplined.

--What divides Christians?

- 1) Form—liturgy.

For example in the United Methodist Book of Discipline . . . Paragraph 68, Article 22, 260.9, 720.4, 1314.

- 2) Doctrine is negotiable . . .

- a. Homosexuality—sin

- b. Form to be kept: at all costs—even souls!

- c. Promote own way—pride.

--Called to share as Christians not merely as a Methodist, or other church . . .

--Exodus 33:7-11 tells about each of us . . . read!

- 1) Not optional
- 2) Not in own interpretation
- 3) But in own style as God
 - a. Street/airplane, etc.

: Security check . . . beeper, cross, luck, talk—

Pray for self, for a person; you have a vested interest as their blood is on your hands.

You need to witness—Evangelism explosion . . .

Word—“The Word”—Spiritual Weapons

Text: John 6:63

II Corinthians 10:4—weapons are offensive—

- Word
- Name
- Blood

The Bible tells how to break strongholds with the Word.

I. Power of the Word

- A. John 1:1 Christ is the Living Word.
- B. John 14:23 If you love—will keep words (commandments)
God means as much to you as His Word does—
- C. I Thessalonians Paul says —(2:13) received word in truth/works
Life and power is in the Word.

II. The Word Gives

A. Faith—Romans 10:17—faith/hearing/word

1. Proclaim
2. Hear
3. Develop

Hearing is Spiritual Hunger—Listening is not!

B. Health

1. Psalm 107:20 heal and deliver
2. Isaiah 55:11 prosper
3. Proverbs 4:20-22 health (medicine)
4. Syrophenician woman/daughter—bread is healing!

C. Birth

1. I Peter 1:23—Word is seed planted.
2. John 3—Water and the Spirit.
3. Life of victory over sin.

D. Light

1. Psalm 119:130 Word gives light.
2. James 1:22-23 Word brings spiritual revelation
 - a. Mirror reflects image.
 - b. How God sees.
 - c. How God desires us to be.

E. Food

1. I Peter 2:1-2 Milk of the Word
2. Matthew 4:4 Not bread alone
3. Hebrew 5:12 Meat!

F. Cleansing

1. John 15:3 Clean through the Word.
2. Ephesians 5:25-26 Cleanse by water and the Word.

G. Victory

1. Ephesians 6:17 Sword of the Spirit
2. Psalm 119:11 Word his in heart—not sin against God.
3. Luke 4:1 Full of Holy Spirit
4. Luke 4:14 Returned in power of the Holy Spirit
(Difference between knowledge and authority/potential and reality in practice)

III. Word Comparison

A. Logos—general, intellectual, unchanging, self-existence—Word of God, Psalm 119:89 Revelation of God in Science.

B. Rhema—specific, heart—Proverbs 4:20-22.

1. Attend.
2. Incline your heart.
3. Not depart from it.
4. Meditate.

Proceedeth—means NOW! (Matthew 4:4)

Speak into existence—talk the Word of God.

IV. Resist Satan

A. Use Word against Satan—come against Satan—actively/intentionally in power!

b. Galatians 5:19-21 List of weaknesses

C. Praise with the Word

1. An act of will, not emotion
2. Sing the Word.
3. Sacrifice of praise.

The Word of God is powerful and needs to be USED/APPLIED not merely learned or quoted or remembered.

Grow in the use of the Word—devotion, meditation, prayer, healing.

Word—Statement in Preparation for Receiving the Word

This is a bold, accurate, anointed revelation.

This is my Bible,

I am what it says I am,

I can do what it says I can do.

I boldly confess that my mind is alert,
And that my heart is receptive to God's
Word which is Spirit and life.

I am about to receive the God-breathed,
Inerrant, infallible, non-corruptible,
Indestructible, ever-living seed of the
Word of God.

And I will allow it to transform me,
More into the likeness of Jesus,
I will never be the same,
Nor will the people,
With whom I come in contact.

I will never be the same,
Never, never, never,
I will never be the same,
In Jesus' Name!

Word—The Powerful Word

Text: John 1:1 (creation); John 1:14 (spoken); II Timothy 3:16

Much is said about the “Word of God” but many Christians live far below God’s calling because they do not understand the “Word” nor do they apply it in daily life. The “Word” is the basis of our relationship to God our Heavenly Father, and it is also the primary source of power for the Christian. We are going to look at the power of the Word of God and how it works in our lives—or at least should work in our lives!

I. The Word of God

A. The Word is our weapon.

- 1) Entrance into the Army means—using weapons (Word, Name of Jesus, and Blood)
 - a. Rifle
 - aa. Know it/blindfolded.
 - bb. Assembly/cleaning.
 - cc. Use/accuracy.
- 2) God’s Army.
 - a. Skills needed also.
 - aa. Familiar with weapons.
 - bb. Begin with Word of God.
 - cc. Prepare for victory—not defeat!
- 3) Word of God
 - a. Bible
 - b. Jesus Christ—John 1:1, 1:14.
 - c. Both contain divine revelation—unity between them.
 - aa. Bible contains written Word.
 - bb. Jesus is the living Word.
 - cc. Hebrews 11:3—the worlds were formed by the Spoken Word of God.
 - dd. He created, and He maintained by His Word.
 - d. Your relationship to Christ is the same as to Scripture.
 - aa. Believe as much in Scripture as in Jesus.
 - bb. The two—Bible and Jesus—are one.
 - cc. You don’t love God more than His Word.
- 4) Seeing Jesus
 - a. John 14 Jesus’ discussion with His disciples.
 - b. John 14:9 “in a little while—“
 - c. John 14:22 continue to see Him.
 - d. John 14:23 “love—keep words”
 - aa. Keep-doing in Old English
 - bb. Key—Love=doing Word!
- 5) Doing the Word.
 - a. Doing God’s Word makes us different as believers.
 - b. Doing God’s Word shows that we love Him, and God loves us in return.
 - c. Doing the Word of God opens the door for Jesus to manifest Himself—which He will do!
 - d. Doing the Word means that the Father and the Son come to establish an everlasting residence within our hearts. (The key is always found in doing the Word.)

- 6) Putting the Word into Practice.
 - a. Doing the Word lets the world know you are a believer.
 - b. As you do the Word Christ manifests Himself to you.
 - c. Your attitude toward the Word is your attitude toward God.
 - aa. How much time do you spend daily in the Word?
 - bb. Commit to doing not just hearing!
 - cc. Matthew 7:24-27. . . house build on rock or sand . . . foundation is to be solid.
 - 1a) Doctrinally sound—Can be healed.
 - 2a) Doctrinally sound—God Wants to bless.
 - 3a) Doctrinally sound—can be set free.

II. Learning the Principle.

- A. Praise in the midst of adverse circumstances.
 - 1) In native language—English or whatever country you are from.
 - 2) In prayer language—I Corinthians 14:14.
 - 3) Become a doer of God's Word.
 - a. for example Terry Law continued through the loss of his wife. Psalm 34:1
 - b. You in your walk with the Lord; where you are right now!
 - aa. Do Word—overcome Satan.
 - bb. Do Word—superimpose God's thoughts over Satan's.
 - cc. Do Word—build on solid foundation and have victory.
 - 4) Hearing and Doing.
 - a. Difference in the two
 - b. Reflected in churches today
 - c. Major dividing point—James 1:22-24.
 - d. Lack of commitment is like looking in a mirror—a lot of reflection but no works!
 - e. Problem is not in the Word—but in our response to it.
 - 5) Building on the Rock.
 - a. Jesus showed us how
 - aa. Hear sayings.
 - bb. Do them.
 - 6) Commitment
 - a. Understand something about the Word.

- b. Make a basic decision about the Word—truth about Word must penetrate our Spirits!
 - aa. Word is ALIVE—Hebrews 4:12—energetic, quick.
 - bb. Word is ALIVE—John 6:63—Spirit and life.
 - cc. God’s thoughts carry His life—divine nature.
 - dd. God’s thoughts carry His Spirit! I Thessalonians 2:13.

III. Word of God Works.

- A. God’s Word works in you.
 - 1) In all circumstances.
 - 2) In all conditions, situations.
 - 3) Key: to the degree you respond.
- B. Lay aside two things—James 1:21.
 - 1) Filthiness
 - a. Excitement over anything impure or wicked.
 - aa. This attitude closes off person from the truth of God.
 - 2) Naughtiness.
 - a. Attitude of selfishness.
 - b. Root of rebellion.
 - 3) Un-regenerated mind.
 - a. Not submissive to God.
 - b. Hostile to Word of God.
 - 4) Salvation.
 - a. Spirit regenerated.
 - b. Mind needs to be renewed—it remains un-regenerated, in rebellion, must submit to God’s Word
 - c. Must make our thoughts agree with—line up with—God’s thoughts.
 - d. Key: our reaction to the Word determines its working! Be doers of the Word not merely hearers—act upon it.
 - 5) Word is a sword.
 - a. Roman sword claimed an empire.
 - b. God’s sword claims a Kingdom!
 - aa. Two categories—Hebrews.
 - 1a) Those who receive the Word—saved, healed, prosper.
 - 2a) Those who don’t are lost.

IV. The Power of Our Words—Jesus Words—Mark 11:12-14.

For example: the fig tree—negative power—curse; creative power; life—issue is faith or doubt spoken into existence.

A. Hath God said . . .

- 1) Genesis 3—doubt.
- 2) Reinterpretation—twisting of scripture.
- 3) Subtle approach.
- 4) Word requires obedience—not situational response (healing—feeling).
- 5) Failing to hear is not failing the Lord.
- 6) Lack of faith in praying is not believing.

B. God's Will for you is praising,

- 1) God is a good God,
- 2) Satan comes to destroy.
- 3) Jesus is the source—John 10:10.
- 4) Jesus came to destroy the works of the evil one—we are called to continue His work—spiritual warfare—bondage—freedom.

C. Tongues—example the Tower of Babel.

V. Delegated Authority—Jesus gave—Matthew 28:18-19—Heaven and earth—signs; Mark 16:17-18.

A. Key: God has delegated—imparted—to us the power and authority to establish His Kingdom in heaven and on earth.

- 1) Jesus finished the work on the Cross.
- 2) Satan's power is destroyed.
- 3) God's Power is available.

B. Principles of Authority:

- 1) Authority is given.
- 2) Responsibility is demanded.
- 3) Believers are responsible for their words—our words must match God's Words and promises. We bind or loose God by the words or our mouth.
- 4) Matthew 12:37—justified—condemned.
- 5) Proverbs 18:21—death—in life.
- 6) Matthew 12:35—heart brings forth good things.
- 7) Words have creative power.

C. Faith, trust, and confidence is God's Way.

- 1) Hebrews 11:6—without faith it's impossible to praise Him—He is a rewarder.
- 2) II Peter 1:3-4 . . . already provided.
- 3) Line up with God's Word—spirit, soul, and body.

D. Praising God with promises.

1) Supply all of our needs—the Word of God versus cultural tradition.

Key: It takes time to re-educate in God's Word.

VI. What does the Word say?

A. Keep the Word of God in your mouth—Joshua 1:8—law not depart, meditate, prosperous/ success.

B. Stay with it.

1) Attend to His Word.

2) Incline your ear.

3) Hold on.

4) Use.

C. Key: Continue in God's Word by speaking with your mouth what He promises.

1) Faith is released.

2) Awareness recognized in your inner-man.

3) Faith is applied.

Faith is released through the spoken Word. The result is praise and power. His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

Works—How God Works

Text: John 1:1-2, 14

We are going to take a look at the Word of God: (a) what it means; (b) what it does; (c) what it produces.

I. The Living Word.

Greek=Logos—John 1:1-2—Word; John 1:14—Word made flesh—
Word =Person of Jesus Christ.

A. Jesus and the Word are one:

1) Hebrews 4:12=scripture/Bible.

2) Jesus is the living Word.

3) Bible is the recorded Word.

4) John 6:63—Words—Spirit—Life.

5) John 4:24—God is the Spirit—Worship in Spirit and truth.

6) God and Word=Spirit.

7) Accept meaning or lose power.

B. Receiving the Word of God:

1) I Thessalonians 2:13.

2) Thankful beyond measure.

3) Heard the Word—received in truth not nature.

4) Received/worked=proportionately.

- 5) When received God comes to life in you.
- 6) Word hindered/ineffective not believe or receive.

II. Faith—Faith is more than trust, it is total reliance—Romans 10:17—faith comes from hearing the Word of God—faith directly related to the Word of God—faith translates into believing God’s Word and promises. David—I Chronicles 17:23; Mary –Luke 1:38. Hebrews 11:6—faith is basic to any transaction between God and man—faith is the foundation/substance of things hoped for.

A. Faith relates to unseen world:

- 1) Hebrews 11:3—through faith we understand.
- 2) Faith lets us see invisible.
- 3) Foundation for the invisible is the Word of God.
- 4) II Corinthians 5:7—tension.
- 5) Psalm 27:13—believing/seeing—sequence.

B. Believe then see:

- 1) John 11:39-40—Lazarus—believes and see/faith and sight.
- 2) II Corinthians 4:17-18—faith is the way to reality.
- 3) Matthew 19:26; Mark 9:23—all things are possible to him that believes.

Key: if you have faith you are obedient and can do what God does.

C. Hope versus faith:

- 1) Hope is the counterfeit of faith.
 - 2) Hope does not bring miracles.
 - 3) Faith brings them now.
 - 4) Hope normally corresponds to wishing.
 - 5) Faith takes hold of our spiritual reality.
- KEY: faith is in the heart—hope is in the head—Romans 10:10.
- 6) Hope is believing the best is yet to be—I Thessalonians 5:8.
 - 7) Hope has no negative—protects man from subtle attacks.
 - 8) Hope is based upon what the Bible teaches about God.
 - 9) Faith is in the present and hop is in the future.
 - 10) Faith is feeling.

D. How to receive faith:

- 1) The measure of faith/not gift of faith/maturity.
- 2) We are responsible to get faith.
- 3) Romans 10:17—faith comes by hearing the Word of God.

III. How can I Hear?

A. Hearing—Proverbs 4:20-22.

- 1) In God’s Word there is life and health.
- 2) Attend/undivided attention—tag.

- 3) Incline—instruction—teachable.
- 4) Depart means focus on answers not problems—Word not world.
- 5) Keep them—obedience and meditation.
- 6) Romans 10:17—faith=Rhema—heart.

B. Logos and Rhema:

- 1) Logos is heart.
 - 2) Logos is unchanging –self-existent Word of God—Psalm 119:89.
 - 3) The Bible contains Logos which is the total Word of God.
 - 4) Faith spoken brings Rhema
 - 5) Our words must line up with God’s
- Key: Rhema and heart-testimony by mouth-praise and victory.

Worry—How to Overcome Worry.

Text: Matthew 6:24-34

Worry—anxiety—care

Merimna=to draw in different directions, to distract

Merimno=distracting care such as Matthew 62:5-28.

Text does not tell us to loaf—be a free-loader. Look at II Thessalonians 3:8-12. The words here are addressed to those disciples—those devoted to God! To those who give completely of self—God gives His Kingdom—

Jesus didn’t preach carelessness—but commitment, including our anxious cares over tomorrow. There is anxiety over fear, death, taxes, illness, and etc.

Receive Life from God day by day—anxiety denies love, faithfulness and power of God and chains us to things of earth.

It is a temptation that God can deliver us from (Philippians 4:6-7). Anxiety is the result of desire for external security and refusal to commit totally to God.

Worry is like a rocking chair—something to do but never gets you anywhere—visitor from Asia asked to describe USA—three words: Hurry, worry, bury. ***Matthew 6:34 “Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”***

I. Realize how much worry hurts.

A. Hurts spiritually.

- 1) We call God a liar when we worry.
- 2) I John 5:10.

B. Often God’s promises denied by worry.

- 1) ***“Will never leave nor forsake—“Hebrew 13:5.***
- 2) ***“He careth for you. . . .” I Peter 5:7.***

3) *“He hath done all things well . . .” Mark 7:27.*

4) *“My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus . . .” Philippians 4:19.*

5) *“I and do all things through Christ which strengthened me . . .” Philippians 4:13.*

If we deny these promises we call God a liar . . . it hurts our relationship and, in final analysis, our spiritual life.

C. Worry hurts physically.

1) Our body is the temple of God—Holy Spirit. I Corinthians 3:16, 6:19; and Galatians 4:6.

2) Mayo Clinic has found that fear, hate, worry, selfishness, and inability to adjust are the main causes of: stomach ulcers! Worry affects the heartbeat and makes a person a candidate for 219 other diseases.

: A lady decided she would die of surgery—did even though it was successful.

II. Realize worry is useless.

A. Forget individual worth.

1) God cares for birds.

2) We are worth more—Matthew 6:26.

B. No one can grow by worry—not one cubit . . .

C. Worry blinds us to blessings—Matthew 6:28-30.

Same God who made lilies can make lives!

D. Worry is sinful—Matthew 6:32.

1) Gentiles=unbelievers.

2) Mark of unbeliever is worry.

3) Re-name “nerves”, “emotional troubles”, etc.

Still—worry.

III. Make will of God supreme in your life.

A. Kingdom of God and Will of God are synonymous—Matthew 6:5.

B. How to find Will of God:

1) Earnest prayer—Romans 8:26-27.

2) Following leadership of Holy Spirit—Romans 8:13.

3) Having faith in God—Romans 8:28—Stress!

Practice presence of God—we live in it—eliminates worry!

IV. Live a day at a time—in the will of God—Live all of today . . .

A. Don't live in tomorrow.

1) “Free gasoline tomorrow” . . . meant nothing.

2) Religion must offer more than “tomorrow”.

3) New Testament emphasizes NOW . . . John 16:31; II Corinthians 6:2; and I John 3:2.

: Widow replied . . . Lord I will work and you worry since then no problems or worries.

4) Today is the watchword for those who will do the Will of God . . . Hebrews 4:7.

B. Don't live in yesterday.

: Parents denied daughters after the death of their soon . . . focused on their sorrows.

1) Can't live with yesterday's sins.

a. I John 1:9—confess.

b. Psalms 103:2 East from West.

2) Can't live with yesterday's success.

Today is when it's going to happen When we fill our hours with regrets over the failures of yesterday and with worries over problems or tomorrow we have no today in which to be thankful . . .

Worry is a distraction . . . of this world. Concentrate on promises of God and live them in success and power!

By a conscious, deliberate, act of will you determine to believe, trust, and act on God's Word. Knowing you can say "thank you" before you ever receive.

Come to Jesus—who will take all worries, fears, etc.