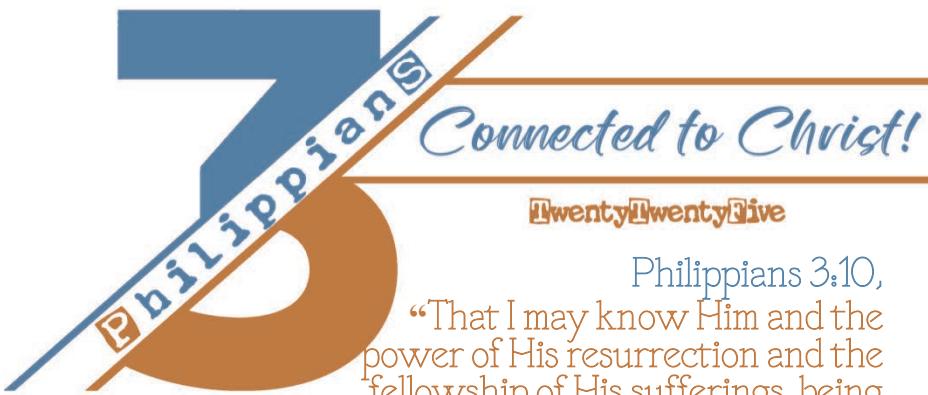




Year Theme: 2025



Philippians 3:10,

“That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.”

### Monthly Theme and Direction

January: Turning Gain into Loss.  
➤ Philippians 3:7

January 5<sup>th</sup> Series Launch/Having a Rubbish Mindset.

January 12<sup>th</sup> Being Found in Him.

January 19<sup>th</sup> Predicaments' Purpose, Part 1.

January 26<sup>th</sup> Predicaments Purpose, Part 2.

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February: That I may Know Him.  
➤ Philippians 3:10a

February 2<sup>nd</sup> The Test of Love.

February 9<sup>th</sup> People who Know.

February 16<sup>th</sup> Determined to Know.

February 23<sup>rd</sup> Friendship with God.

March: The Power of His Resurrection.

➤ Philippians 3:10b

March 2<sup>nd</sup> Only Twelve!

March 9<sup>th</sup> Why the Wait, Part 1.

March 16<sup>th</sup> Why the Wait, Part 2.

March 23<sup>rd</sup> Seamstress and Company.

March 30<sup>th</sup> No Name Power.

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April: Fellowship of His Suffering.

➤ Philippians 3:10c

April 6<sup>th</sup> Six Hours Left, Part 1.

April 13<sup>th</sup> Six Hours Left, Part 2.

April 20<sup>th</sup> Six Hours Left, Part 3.

April 27<sup>th</sup> Six Hours Left, Part 4.

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May: Pressing On!

➤ Philippians 3:12

May 4<sup>th</sup> Body Slam, Part 1.

May 11<sup>th</sup> Mother's Day!

May 18<sup>th</sup> Body Slam, Part 2.

May 25<sup>th</sup> Body Slam, Part 3.

June: Change my Attitude!  
➤ Philippians 3:15

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June 1 <sup>st</sup>	Entitled, Part 1.
June 8 <sup>th</sup>	Entitled, Part 2.
June 15 <sup>th</sup>	Entitled, Part 3. (Father's Day)
June 22 <sup>nd</sup>	The Silent Attitude.
June 29 <sup>th</sup>	Progress on our Attitude.

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July: Following the Right Examples.  
➤ Philippians 3:17

July 6 <sup>th</sup>	“Sir, Yes Sir”, Part 1.
July 13 <sup>th</sup>	“Sir, Yes Sir”, Part 2.
July 20 <sup>th</sup>	The Sacrifice of Cravings and Consequences, Part 1.
July 27 <sup>th</sup>	The Sacrifice of Cravings and Consequences, Part 2.

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August: Rejecting the Wrong Examples.  
➤ Philippians 3:18

August 3 <sup>rd</sup>	The Danger of Conformity.
August 10 <sup>th</sup>	The Danger of Misaligned Priority.

August 17<sup>th</sup>

The Danger of Misplaced Support, Part 1.

August 24<sup>th</sup>

The Danger of Misplaced Support, Part 2.

August 31<sup>st</sup>

The Danger of Misplaced Support, Part 3.

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September: The Rights of Citizenship.

➤ Philippians 3:20a

September 7<sup>th</sup>

Heavenly Citizenship,  
Part 1.

September 14<sup>th</sup>

Heavenly Citizenship.  
Part 2.

September 21<sup>st</sup>

Passport on Display,  
Part 1.

September 28<sup>th</sup>

Passport on Display,  
Part 2.

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October: Anticipating a Coming Kingdom!

➤ Philippians 3:20b

October 5<sup>th</sup>

The King Appears!

October 12<sup>th</sup>

Missing from Heaven.

October 19<sup>th</sup>

Having Heaven's Mind,  
Part 1.

October 26<sup>th</sup>

Having Heaven's Mind,  
Part 2.

November: Our Powerful Transformation.

➤ Philippians 3:21a

November 2<sup>nd</sup>

Heaven's Look!

November 9<sup>th</sup>

True Politics.

November 16<sup>th</sup>

Transformed for now,  
Part 1.

November 23<sup>rd</sup>

Transformed for now,  
Part 2.

November 30<sup>th</sup>

Transformed for now,  
Part 3.

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December: Subjecting All Things to Him.

➤ Philippians 3:21b

December 7<sup>th</sup>

Letting Go!

December 14<sup>th</sup>

Word of Power.

December 21<sup>st</sup>

All Hail Emmanuel.

December 28<sup>th</sup>

Reflecting for  
Tomorrow.

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There is no greater  
experience than being

Connected to Christ!



With our heart and action...



Step #1  
begin

# Turning Gain into Loss.

Philippians 3:7



## Monthly Message Direction:

January 5<sup>th</sup>

Series Launch / Having a Rubbish Mindset.

January 12<sup>th</sup>

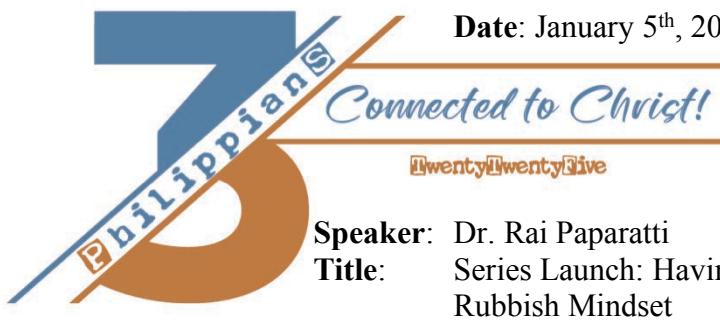
Being Found in Him.

January 19<sup>th</sup>

Predicament's Purpose, Part 1.

January 26<sup>th</sup>

Predicament's Purpose, Part 2.



**Text:** Philippians 3:8

*“His deafness became his greatest asset!” L.V.B.*

**1 - Counting *all* things as loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Jesus. Verse 8a**

How does knowing Jesus surpass what we lose?

A. We gain everything we need in life.

2 Peter 1:3a

B. We gain everything we need for godliness in Him.

2 Peter 1:3b

Four times in 2 verses (7 & 8), Paul makes explicit that everything of purpose or gain in his life, he regards as either loss or rubbish compared to the value of knowing Christ.

**2 - The things in which we suffer as loss because of Christ, desire to use their absence as a hold over our lives. Verse 8b**

When it comes to Christ, the things which we have chosen to lose, does not mean that we have lost.

- Every purposed thing that we sacrifice to the Lord, is not lost, but merely given to Christ.
- That which we give to Him, is empowered, healed, restored, and made to fit in our life

in a way that is sanctified and touched by the hand of God.

What we sacrifice in our life, only loses position to Christ. Christ must take first place.

### **3 - Loss continually desires to keep taking from our lives.**

- Loss of spouse, loss of parents, relationships, finances...etc.
- Loss is ever consuming unless we count them as rubbish.

This is incredibly hard to do. This means that everything of value in our lives, must become less than the value of Jesus. We can say this with our words...but can we show it with our actions?

But loss, when compared to Christ, becomes our biggest gain.

Paul lost all from verses 5-6.

- Anything that brought advancement outside of Jesus, Paul considered as a loss.
- If we don't have Christ, our gain only hurts, condemns, and embitters us.

We make the connection to Jesus by these action steps:

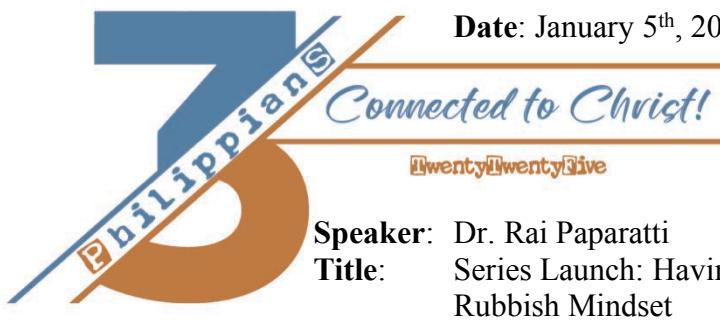
1. Our Choice - (No emotion...just a choice.)
2. Our Time - Priority of our day.



What things have you valued more than Christ?  
Write them top 3 down reassess your priority.

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**Speaker:** Dr. Rai Paparatti  
**Title:** Series Launch: Having a  
Rubbish Mindset

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## Opening Illustration:

The great composer Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) lived much of his life in fear of deafness. He was concerned because he felt the sense of hearing was essential to creating music of lasting value.

When Beethoven discovered that the thing he feared most was coming rapidly upon him, he was almost frantic with anxiety. He consulted doctors and tried every possible remedy. But the deafness increased until at last all hearing was gone.

Beethoven finally found the strength he needed to go on despite his great loss. To everyone's amazement, he wrote some of his grandest music after he became totally deaf. With all distractions shut out, melodies flooded in on him as fast as his pen could write them down. His deafness became a great asset.



**Text:** Philippians 3:9a; Romans 5:12-21

*"If we lived fully through Christ, we would live in power! Power and purpose is what man strives for in themselves...but it is only found through the life of Christ. To live...IS Christ!"*

Paul is reconstituting his entire personhood.

**1 - To be found in Christ, is to come to the end of self, the end of Adam, the end of the old age.**

- Have we ever thought of our lives as being over in Christ?

We often try to merge the two and salvage that which was once full of sin instead of running in the newness of the New Life.

**2 - To be found in Him, is to live life through Him.** **Romans 5:17**

- Our struggle is that we want Christ to live through us!
- Which would you choose? (Illustration). The choices *are* really this drastic.

We must release to Him our:

- A. Reliance** - He must be the source and effect of our decisions. He must be the sole hope of comfort.

**B. Expectation.** This is where we fail. Do we want our answer or do we want fellowship with Christ. This is not to say that we can't or will not have both. But if we needed to choose, what would we take hold of.

*“When our expectation of a fulfilled need becomes greater than our desire for Christ, we will always struggle with our faith and with trust in Him.”*

**C. Outcome** and all the actions that our feelings come up with.

*“To live through Christ, we must release the rebellion of our emotions.”*

### **3 - To be found in Him is to unashamedly represent Him.**

- This is the premise of what Paul is writing.  
Jesus becomes first - Jesus becomes everything.

Each time we represent Christ, we give up an aspect of our own lives...visibly...outspokenly!

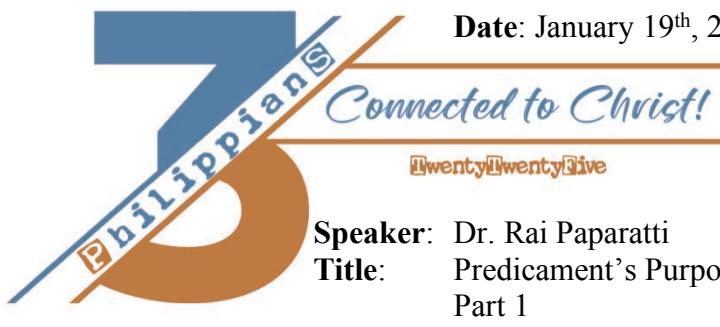
We never really lose. Our loss becomes our gain, when the gain is Jesus. What we lose only turns into an opportunity for a new direction.

Stop thinking *New Direction* in an *Old Life*. This is *New Direction* in a *New Life*. One led by Jesus, and lived through Jesus.

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## GrowthPoint

Take ONE day, go through each of the day's events and write them down. Purpose to meet each event, **Living through Christ**, as your Target. Watch the power, connection, and purpose that comes!



**Text:** Revelation 1:9-20

*“When we are ‘found in Christ’, every predicament has significant purpose.”*

John’s Predicament:

**1 - He was exiled to the island of Patmos.**

**Verse 9**

- The Patmos experience was the follow up of a difficult and trying experience.

John’s Patmos experience follows the initial attempt to silence John by having him boiled in oil.

- Tertullian tells us in, *The Prescription Against Heretics* (Ch. 36) 197 a.d.

*Since, moreover, you are close upon Italy, you have Rome, from which there comes even into our own hands the very authority (of apostles themselves). How happy is its church, on which apostles poured forth all their doctrine along with their blood; where Peter endures a passion like his Lord’s; where Paul wins his crown in a death like John [the Baptist]’s; where the Apostle John was first plunged, unhurt, into boiling oil, and thence remitted to his island-exile.”*

**2 - John elevates Jesus over his predicament by considering that in Jesus, for a purpose, we will have tribulation, Kingdom, and Perseverance.**

**Verse 9a**

- He lists all “3” as belonging ‘in’ Jesus.

In Jesus and for a purpose, we are participatory agents in both the kingdom, the suffering of that testimony, and the grace to endure.

Paul says it in this way, *“That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.”* Philippians 3:10

This knowledge allowed John to:

### **3 - Worship God and keep the discipline of his walk.**

**Verse 10**

Our embracing of fellowship with Jesus and the suffering that comes into our life because of our stance with Him, prepares us for the outpouring of God’s presence and power.

John was:

- A. **In the Spirit.** To be in the Spirit is to not walk according to the desires of the flesh. It is to accept God’s providence of predicament and realize that purpose must come! And so it did.
- B. **On the Lord’s Day.** He kept the practice of seeking, worshipping, and setting part the discipline of structured devotion.

Predicament when seen through faith, must give way to the revelation of Jesus.



Read Revelation 1:17-18. Make a clear record of who Jesus is to you from these verses and why He means so much. Write down His descriptions:

- 1: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4: \_\_\_\_\_

What do these descriptions say to your predicament. \_\_\_\_\_.



**Date:** January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025

## Connected to Christ!

## Twenty Twenty Five

**Speaker:** Dr. Rai Paparatti  
**Title:** Predicament's Purpose,  
Part 2

## Text: Acts 8:1-4

*“The continual discipline to worship Jesus and make Him known, in the midst of a severe predicament, fills our lives with the active power of God.”*

## 1 - Phillip!

## Verse 5

➤ The people heard and saw his signs. (Verse 6)

## What were the signs of his preaching?

There is always the opportunity for joy while we go through predicaments.

The only hesitations are that we feel:

- Uncomfortable; therefore,
- Uncertain, (which fills our emptiness with fear and anxiety) and then,
- Unable to do anything!

But if our attention is firstly on Jesus and our relationship with Him; that is where we find comfort, certainty, and the ability to function.

*“Our ability to function properly is intertwined with our relationship with Christ. The deeper our soul thrives in Christ, the more it translates to the everyday function (relationships, job, emotions, sustenance, etc.) of our life.”*

## **2 - Predicament connects us to new people in which God has destined to cross our path.**

**Verses 26, 40**

- “*This is a desert...*”
- It may seem like following God in the midst of predicament, brings us to desert roads; but, hold fast!
- Connections are not far.

We must stop living solitary and secluded lives.

We must broaden our scope and people perspective.

- Could it be that in the midst of predicament that God is actually bringing us to connections with new people?

## **3 - We must not miss the opportunities of our predicament.**

**Verses 27a, 30a, 35, 40**

- Phillip’s story is filled with action statements.
- He kept moving forward and did not stop to contemplate the predicament.

If we do not take the opportunities of our predicament, we stay in a perpetual cycle of sadness and frustration. The purpose of predicament is so far greater in reach than what we initially can see.

- Saul comes to Christ. (Acts 9:17-19)

- Tabitha is raised from the dead. (Acts 9:36-42)
- Cornelius and his home come to Christ. (Acts 10:44-48)

Phillip actually stops in the same city (Caesarea) which Cornelius lives in.

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## GrowthPoint

*What is my predicament making me feel?*  
(Circle all that apply)

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Fear Anxiety Anger Disappointment Bitterness

Unforgiveness Hatred Sadness Uncertainty

Isolated Alone Depressed Sluggish Defeated

Unproductive Stressed Rebellious Powerless

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*Now release every circled word in prayer before God. One by one, speak freedom from it and its hold.*

*Ask Jesus for insight into this predicament. How can I grow? How can I benefit from it? How can I connect with someone through it? Who can I connect with? Write down some thoughts that come to your mind while asking God these questions.* \_\_\_\_\_

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# That I May Know Him

Philippians 3:10a



## Monthly Message Direction:

February 2<sup>nd</sup>

The Test of Love!

February 9<sup>th</sup>

People Who Know.

February 16<sup>th</sup>

Determined to Know.

February 23<sup>rd</sup>

Friendship with God.



Date: February 2, 2025

**Text:** Philippians 3:10a; 1 John 2:3-4, 3:6, 4:7-8

*“Life’s greatest tragedy is losing the presence of God and not even knowing you’ve lost it.”*

What is our motivation for coming to Jesus?

- We can come to Jesus for salvation and yet the live the rest of our lives without ever “knowing” Him.

### 3 Marks of Knowing God:

**1 - We willingly keep His commandments.**

**1 John 2:3-4**

- Where are we on the “liar” spectrum?

Keeping the commandments of God is the entry level requirement of knowing Him.

- Knowing Him is not separated from keeping His commandments.

*“God’s commands are invitations wrapped in obligations. The invitation is the inner core of the command, and the obligation is the outer layer.” Jason Meyer*

- Some people never get to the core of God’s commandments because they never get past the outer layer of obligation.

We must reject the thought of the command being primarily the obligation. We are invited by God.

- Romans 8:7-8

*“The redeemed have an entirely different experience with respect to the commands of God. They feel the initial weight of the authoritative demand, but they look more closely and see the core of invitation. They are stirred by the invitation to intimacy with their Savior and King.” J.M.*

God’s commands are not an invitation to earn salvation, but an invitation to enjoy communion.

## **2 - We stop the habitual practice of sin.**

### **1 John 3:6-8**

- This is not talking about “messing up” and then going to God for forgiveness. This is the regular and welcoming heart to sin.

The issue of sin comes down to what we practice!  
In practice we see this type of effort:

- Time given, (1 Chronicles 16:11)
- Resources spent, (2 Corinthians 9:6-8; Psalm 112:5)
- Mental occupation! (Isaiah 26:3)

## **3 - We love in an extraordinary way.**

### **1 John 4:7-8**

- We love and forgive those who have hurt us. This is how Jesus forgave us.

Loving like Jesus is putting the needs of other before our feeling of hurt.

- Thinking of the person(s) that have hurt us; have we met their of forgiveness or are we holding on to our feelings of vengeance?
- This moves us from, “*How could they?*” to “*Lord, thank you for them and what you are doing in me because of them.*”

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*GrowthPoint*

Knowing God is all about His Word and His commands. How will you obey His command? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Opening Illustration:

Derek Prince:

There's a dear brother in New Zealand whom Ruth and I came to know. I hope you'll forgive my digressions, I trust I'm being led by the Holy Spirit. He's a committed Christian, and his wife. His eldest son was born with Down's Syndrome, what they used to call a mongoloid. He's a beautiful Christian but he's different, he's still a mongoloid and he does some very unusual things, often prompted by the Holy Spirit. So their next son was a fine young man and then they had a daughter. This second son was all that they wanted a son to be. He and his parents and his sister went to a meeting and the son and the sister drove back from the meeting ahead of the parents. And when the parents came along at a certain point there were all these ambulances and these police cars and they saw there had been a major accident. The Lord spoke to the mother and said, "It's your family." So they turned aside and discovered that there had been an accident and the son had been

killed at the age of sixteen, and the body was covered. The police, when they discovered who was the father, said, “Do you want to see the body?” He said, “Of course I want to see the body.” So they uncovered the body and the father knelt down and prayed and thanked God for sixteen wonderful years. And the people around the accident started to get saved.

The daughter was seriously injured too, but the mother said to God and to the devil, “That’s enough. One is gone, you’re not taking the other.” And the daughter recovered.

Well, sometime later the father and his wife were in a motel and they had been preaching. They went to bed about 11:00 o’clock and the father was really missing his son. The Lord began to speak to him and said, “What is it that’s wrong? You have a relationship, if it’s still there. What’s missing?” And he said, “I have a relationship but I don’t have fellowship.” And the Lord said, “That’s my problem, too. I have a relationship with my people but I don’t have fellowship with any of them.” Then the Lord said to him, “But I’m going to take you to heaven tonight.”

Now, I got this story from him firsthand and he’s a very honest, godly man.

So he lay there awake. Hour after hour passed and nothing happened and he thought, “I must have got it wrong.” But about 5:00 am he suddenly found himself in heaven. He said the colors were unbelievable. It’s not that things had a certain color but the color came out of the thing. Then he found himself beside a little play theater, you know, one of those miniature theaters. So he stooped down, went in and inside everybody was full size and everybody there was about 25 years of age. Everybody was at their prime. And after awhile somewhere across he saw his son. The son was a very playful boy and he kind of said to his father, “See if you can catch me.” He took off and the father took off after him and he said he ran a long, long way as fast as he could and never got tired and never began to sweat. Eventually he caught up with his son and said, “Oh, I’ve been longing to see you.” They had a certain amount of fellowship and then the father began to cry and the son said, “Why are you crying?” He said, “Because I’m so happy to see you.” He said, “Dad, in this place no one cries.” The father found himself back in his bed on earth.

But that stuck with me so vividly that God said, “I have a relationship but what I want is fellowship.” And I believe that’s true of many of you here today. God has a relationship but He’s longing for fellowship. And that’s the only way you’ll get to

know Him. It's not by learning doctrine or even going to a Bible college, it's by walking with Him daily.



**Date:** February 9, 2025

## Connected to Christ!

## Twenty Twenty Five

**Speaker:** Dr. Rai Paparatti  
**Title:** People Who Know!

Text: Daniel 11:32

*“A deep feeling that we are soon to stand in the presence of a holy God, our final Judge, cannot but have a happy influence in making us pure.” Albert Barnes*

**1 - If we are not striving to deepen our walk with Christ, we are in danger of the infiltration and acceptance of godlessness.      Verse 32a**

- If we are not actively striving to get closer to God, we run the risk of mismanagement - and that is the entryway to godlessness.

## Ephesians 5:10-20

- A. **Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.** This is purposefully engaging in godly deeds. Verse 10
- B. **Don't participate in deeds of darkness, but expose them.** Verse 11
- C. **Be careful how you walk.** Focus on the wisdom of God. Verse 15
- D. **Make the most of your time.** Reject idleness and complacency. Verse 16
- E. **Understand the will of God.** (1 Thessalonians 5:12-22) Verse 17
- F. **Do not get drunk with wine.** Stay away from addictive bad habits. Verse 18
- G. **Value the body of Believers** and the impact they have. Verse 19

## 2 - The people who know their God, will display strength. Verse 32b

*“That’s the key: Knowing God. Not knowing about Him, not merely understanding His truths, not simply practicing His principles, but knowing Him. The closer we draw in intimate communion, the more He imparts His solutions, strategies, character, and purposes to us. We may not even be conscious of it, but it happens. When opposing circumstances arise, we rise up, and our great exploits are celebrated in heaven.”* - Chris Tigren

The word for *display strength* is the Hebrew word *chazaq* and conveys the idea of *physical strength, emotional fortitude, and spiritual resilience*.

- It is strength in every aspect of our lives.

If we know Him, we display strength physically, emotionally and spiritually.

- If we are lacking on one of these areas and fear is replaced instead of strength, the misalignment is in that we have not pressed in to know God and be used by Him for His purpose.
- It could be that our own purpose is choking out the strength that comes from being used for God’s purposes.

It is not that Believers will show how strong *they* are! They will display the strength of the Lord.

## 3 - The people who know their God will take action. Verse 32c

- We are called to live a life of strength and action. James 1:21-22

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*GrowthPoint*

Seriously! How will you be a “doer” of the Word of God? **Involve your faith, involve another person, involve prayer.** Your life will change!!



**Text:** 1 Corinthians 2:1-16

*“God alone is the Initiator of our knowledge of Him. Only God can reveal Himself.”*

### **1 – Only God can reveal Himself. Verses 9-11**

This is so important for us in that, each time we experience an aspect of God, we are experiencing an invitation from God.

- Learning is invitation.
- Preaching is invitation.
- Time spent in His Word is invitation.

With invitation comes: Verse 4

1. Demonstration of the Spirit.
2. Demonstration of power.

The reason behind the power of this invitation is so that our faith would be rooted not on man's wisdom but on the power of God.

A. We believe because we have **experienced** His power.

- Experience of Salvation.
- Experience of Baptism.
- Experience of Him breaking strongholds.

- B. We believe because we are **living** through His power.
  - Life with purpose.
  - Life without fear.
  - Life on a greater mission.
- C. We believe because we are **showing** His power.
  - We have highly underestimated the power of praying for someone. This is why we don't.
  - If we understood the power and the invitation, we would jump at the opportunity to pray for another.

Because we have received the Spirit of God, we possess in us the ability to *know* the things freely given to us by God.

**We must act and speak.** Verse 13

We have been given the mind of Christ.

## ➤ Verse 16

We must learn to respond to the aspect of revelation we have received.

- If we receive revelation that God is a provider; we must respond to God about His provision. If God reveals He is a healer, we must step out and respond to His healing.

1 – Dedicate prayer time with a journal. What did you learn about God this week? How will you respond to His invitation?



**Text:** Deuteronomy 1:1-8

Book of Deuteronomy is a repeat of the Law.

➤ **Speaker** is Moses. The **Audience** is the Children of Israel. The **Situation** is Wilderness living at the end of 40 years.

**1 - Message from Jehovah : You have stayed here too long.** **Verse 6**

➤ The Children of Israel overstayed on Mt. Horeb. They made no progress because of:

**1 - Unbelief; 2 - Disobedience to God; 3 - Rebellion**

**We should never repeat the same mistakes.**

- A. **Stagnation:** Very little or no progress.
- B. **Disobedience:** Disobedience may lead to stagnation.
- C. **Confusion:** Without a focused life, it may lead to little progress.
- D. **Demonic Attack.** This may also lead to stagnation.
- E. **Generational curses.** May affect our progress until it is uprooted

There was no progress. In their finances - no progress. In their spiritual life - no progress. In their education - no progress. In their sicknesses - no progress.

## *“Stagnation equals death!”*

### **2 - The first command is to break camp and advance.**

Verse 7

- This is a command with direction!  
Rise up and turn.

We must change our mindset and our direction.

- Come out from our comfort zone.
- Go to another level.

### **3 - Second command is to possess the land God has set before you.**

Verse 8

- This is a promise with responsibility.

Confront the enemy to get your portion!

#### **Why People Don’t Advance:**

##### **1. Voices from the devil (enemy).**

- “*You failed last year; you will fail again.*”
- “*Your situation will never change.*”

1 John 4:4

##### **2. Description from people. (Identity)**

- “*Nobody ever made it.*”
- Never let people discredit or describe your life.
- You are SPECIAL!

##### **3. Having the Grasshopper Syndrome.**

- Numbers 13:30
- “*I am nobody.*” “*I am a failure.*”

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Text:** Colossians 3:2; Romans 8:5-18

Opening illustration by: T. De Witt Talmage

*“A man was passing along the street, and saw a blind boy seated on his father’s knee, holding in his hand a kite-string, the kite flying away in the air. The man said, “Is it any satisfaction to you, my lad, to fly that kite, when you cannot see it?” “O yes, sir,” he replied, “I cannot see it, but I can feel it pull.” And so out of this dark world, and amid this blindness of sin, we feel something drawing us heavenwards; and though we cannot see the thrones, and the joy, and the coronation, blessed be God, we can feel them pull.”*

**1 - Friendship with God is about setting our mind on the Spirit. Romans 8:5**

- Setting our mind on the Spirit is all about prioritizing heavenly things (Colossians 3:2; Philippians 4:8-9).
- Dwell on these things and Practice these things!

**2 - The mind set on the Spirit is about true life and peace. Romans 8:6**

- Life and Peace stem from a mind set on the Spirit.

- Life is the Gk. word *Zoe* and refers to *life in its fullest sense encompassing both physical and spiritual dimensions.*
- Peace is the Gk. word *Eirene* and means *to be complete or sound. It is used to describe both the absence of conflict and the presence of positive blessings such as safety, prosperity, and spiritual peace.*

**3 - The mind that is set on the Spirit is friendship with God. Romans 8:7**

- Friendship with God begins when we develop subjection to the law of God.
- This means that we willingly surrender to be governed by His ways and accept His conviction.

**4 - If our mind is set on the Spirit, His Spirit becomes manifest life and power through our bodies.** Romans 8:11

- We can live in the resurrection power of God!

## **5 - If our mind is set on the Spirit, we walk in and through the Spirit of Adoption.**

## **Romans 8:15**

- Abba/Pater; Father/Father; It is the ultimate reconciliation of Jew and Gentile to God.

## The Benefit of Adoption: Romans 8:15

1. Stability,
2. Access to more opportunity,
3. Actual love manifested through action.



## Monthly Message Direction:

March 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Only Twelve!
March 9 <sup>th</sup>	Why the Wait, Part 1.
March 16 <sup>th</sup>	Why the Wait, Part 2.
March 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Seamstress and Company.
March 30 <sup>th</sup>	No Name Power!



**Text:** Mark 5:21-43

*“While we are bound by the laws of the earth, Jesus is not! Who the Son sets free, is free indeed.”*

There are lessons from each character all around.

**1 - For Jairus, as a father, his greatest strength was falling down at the feet of Jesus.**

**Verse 22**

- We must never become too proud to fall down and weep at Jesus' feet.

If Jairus stayed with his daughter, she would have died and remained dead.

- The need for Jesus' help, led him away from the problem and seemingly into the chaos around where he found Jesus.

**2 - For Jairus, he needed to know that there can only be *one* voice!**

**Verse 36**

**Jairus had to tune out:**

1. The crowd,
2. Other people receiving before him,
3. The voice that carries news. [It may have been “earthly” true, but it was still a hindrance.]
4. Sympathizers. They will cry one moment and laugh the next.

## ➤ Too many voices!

The devil will raise so many voices so that our problem becomes compounded with confusion.

*\*Before we receive a word from a counselor, friend, or even a spouse, we need a word from Jesus!*

## 4 - The crowd needed to know humility and faith. Verse 40a

- This was the home of a synagogue official.
- Jesus, in the eyes of the crowd was a well-respected Rabbi (teacher).      Verse 35

They started as well-wishers and in the same breath openly laughed and mocked Jesus.

➤ Was this a very situation funny?

*“Have one person mock your faith? Put them out in regards to your solution! They will be detrimental to your faith.”*

- Jesus alone has the power and insight of what we need.

He raises this girl from the dead, yet, gives her parents the responsibility to feed her.

- Jesus partners with us to use and rely on His power and to give out of our own ability.



## Opening Illustration

### The Day God Raised Me From The Dead

The work of a rural doctor is never easy. It was Friday 24th October 2008 and I had just run a medical clinic in Esperance, on the southern coast of Western Australia. I had only been back in Australia five days, after running free clinics in Vanuatu for local villagers. As I drove the 400 kilometers back to Kalgoorlie with my intern, I started to feel a minor discomfort in my chest and a bit hot.



About 50 kilometers from Kalgoorlie I passed through a small town called Kambalda. I was still feeling quite uncomfortable so I called my wife Sherry also a doctor and described my symptoms to her. She suggested since I'd come so far already, that I continue straight back to Kalgoorlie as I had intended. But after I hung up I was overwhelmed with the sense that I needed to get to the small medical clinic in Kambalda urgently.

Since my friend Dr. Rao who worked as the GP in Kambalda Health Center was at lunch I asked the nurses to perform an electro-cardiogram (ECG) on me. At the end of this Dr. Rao still hadn't returned to the clinic so it was up to me to interpret the readings. I was shocked to see that I was having a heart attack! Dr. Rao, Dr. Kanwal (my intern) and the nurses commenced treating me with the small selection of drugs and pain killers on hand.

Just 11 minutes after the ECG, with the pain in my chest becoming unbearable and no analgesics providing relief, my heart completely stopped. Over the following 70 minutes the team in Kambalda worked with paramedics and emergency physicians from Kalgoorlie who fought bravely to save my life. I was in refractory Ventricular Fibrillation for 48 minutes during which I received 13 electrical shocks and CPR. I then progressed to flat line (asystole) for the next 37 minutes and I only had CPR during that time. In 1 hour and 10 minutes having had 13 electrical shocks from a defibrillator, and over 4 000 cardiac compressions, they all agreed to stop CPR and all life support measures except oxygen to the lungs. My wife had travelled to Kambalda with two of my colleagues arriving about ten minutes later.

The senior physician gave Sherry the terrible news; I was gone and she could go in and say goodbye.

When the blood supply is interrupted to the brain for 3 minutes the brain cells begin to die, after 20 minutes the organ is completely dead, this is why CPR is rarely performed for more than 20-30 minutes. Studies show even with high quality CPR the neurological outcome is very poor after prolonged CPR over 30 minutes. Had I been performing CPR on another person in the same circumstances I would have stopped life support as well.

Sherry entered the medical center and saw where my body lay, but in faith she did not give up hope. My wife and I share a faith in Jesus Christ as the Almighty God and taking my hand in hers, she offered a simple, silent prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, Sean is only 39, I am only 38, we have a 10-year-old boy, I need a miracle. Immediately, my heart beat came back even though I had been dead for 1 hour and 25 minutes.

I was still unconscious and my pulse was extremely weak, so I was transferred to Kalgoorlie Hospital and then onto Royal Perth Hospital. Cardiologists operated to clear an extremely blocked right coronary artery, using a stent and balloon pump to support my heart. The attending physicians were extremely doubtful I would survive at all, let alone wake from my coma with any brain function. The heart attack had also damaged my liver and kidneys.

In the following days my recovery astounded all the staff treating me. Late on Sunday night, just

over 2 days since the heart attack, I opened my eyes momentarily. My wife saw me but the Physician treating me refused to believe her when she told him. But all doubt was removed on Monday when I started moving my hands and feet, and by Wednesday I was completely conscious. Not only could I talk, see and move, I read my charts and monitored my own recovery. Two weeks later I was discharged from hospital and within three months I had returned to full-time operational duties at Kalgoorlie Hospital.

On reflection now, I think God saved my life from complete and certain death to teach me some important truths. Jesus Christ really is the Creator God, the giver of life, the accomplisher of impossible things, and He responds to the humble prayers of His servants. Also, eternity is only a breath away for us all, and what really matters is our relationship with God. We are only pilgrims on this earth, life is temporary, what matters is eternal.

I believe I am only alive because God has done an amazing miracle. This happened for the glory of God and I can take no credit for any good thing that has happened to me.

There aren't many well documented cases of patients being clinically dead for so long, returning to life with their memory perfectly intact and without any neurological problems at all. Medically this is impossible; it could only be done by God. This is just a brief synopsis of a much larger story.

## Progress After Prayer:

- Patient opened his eyes spontaneously on the 3rd day on 26/10/2008
- Patient started to move both hands and legs on the 4th day 27/10/2008
- Doctors were able to wean the patient off the ventilator and was able to remove the tube in the trachea and patient was able to breath on his own by the 6th day
- Patient was weaned off all the blood pressure support medication and the intra-aortic balloon pump was removed and his blood pressure was stable
- Patient was able to speak with an absolutely perfect memory of all events until the cardiac arrest on the 6th day
- There was NO neurological deficits, no loss of any function in spite of the prolonged cardiac arrest of 1 hour and 25 minutes
- Patient had to undergo dialysis 6 times before his kidney function returned to normal
- Shifted out of ICU on the 8th day
- Discharged from the hospital on the 13th day



**Text:** John 11:1-45

The delay of Jesus is always:

- On purpose, (John 11:6)
- For a purpose, (John 11:15)
- Giving us purpose. (John 12:3)

**1 - Jesus allowed the sickness in Lazarus to remain for its season so that He (Jesus) would receive greater glory.** **Verses 3-4**

- We must never confuse what Jesus allows, in being the narrative through which we base our opinions by.
- What He as Supreme lets happen, does not mean that our situation is hopeless, changeless, or even concrete.

What we come to find is that if even death is not able to resist the command of Jesus, neither will the sting of our trial.

**Genesis 50:19-21**

*“Don’t be afraid.”*

**(Command in the midst of overwhelming fear)**

*“You meant evil...”*  
(Purpose of Devil)

*“God meant good...”*  
(Purpose of God)

*“In order to preserve many people alive.”*

(The outcome of God in light of circumstance)

*“Don’t be afraid.”*

(Repetitive command after knowing the spiritual truth)

- Once we remove and fully believe this factor, we can experience the purpose of God in our life in a powerful way.
- This verse is stuck in the midst of delay and resurrection.

We need to understand *before* we ever have a resurrection experience with Jesus, that He loves us and is for us!

- Romans 8:31-32
- If Jesus loves us, it means He is for us. If He is for us, who can be against us?

The extremity of Romans 8:32 is so magnificent.

- God did not spare Jesus on the cross to pay the penalty for us.
- Therefore, how will He not also freely give us all things?

## Romans 8:33-37

\*Who will bring a charge against us?      Verse 33

\*Who will separate us from God's love? Verse 35

In all these things? What things?

\*Tribulation,      \*Distress,      \*Persecution

\*Famine, \*Nakedness, \*Peril/Sword

- In all these things we *overwhelmingly conquer* through Him who loved us!

“*Overwhelmingly Conquer* is the Greek word *Hupernikomen* (*huper - hyper* & *nikao - to conquer*) which emphasizes the *complete and total nature of the victory, suggesting a surpassing or extraordinary conquering*. It suggests a level that goes beyond the norm.

The normal of our situation can only go so far. When Jesus walks in with resurrection power, the normal becomes electrified with power, progression, and potential.

- Every trial produces the capacity for deeper faith, deeper love, deeper commitment.
- When we struggle to believe in our situation, we compromise and feel defeat in our faith, in our love, and in our commitment.

Sometimes, if we get exactly what we want, we actually believe Christ less than if we struggle through the trial.

#### **4 - Our faith must grow from, “*if only you were here,*” to “*You can do anything!*”**

## Verses 21, 25

- That is a tremendous shift for our emotions to act upon.

To shift our emotions from “if you,” to “You can,” Jesus turns the question around.

➤ “I Am... (verse 25), do you believe this?”

The shift comes for us when we can believe and acknowledge that Jesus can do all things.

- This is not just belief.
- When we truly believe, our action follows it.

When we become invested in our belief, we find that our:

- Choices,
- Time,
- Resources, and
- Affections

All surround our faith in Christ.

**5 - Our faith must deepen from, “*who we have believed Jesus to be,*” to “*Whom He is in our present turmoil.*”** **Verses 26-27**

- Martha said, “*Yes Lord, I have believed.*”
- It is a Greek tense that implies something which happens in the past and continues.

So often we struggle from what we “know” about Jesus, to who He is personally and presently.

**How to bring Jesus from knowledge to personal encounter?**

- In trial, we must choose to consume ourselves with the life of Jesus and His accomplished work.
- Increase time with Christ. We have to prioritize it to take root in our life.
- Be systematic and invested.



In your devotion time, write out the issue in which you need the resurrection power of Jesus in. Ask Jesus to deepen your faith. Invest yourself in the process He shares (through the Word) with you.



**Text:** John 11:1-45

*“If you are the true living God that can raise him from the dead, I believe You can bring him to life.”*

Pablito, JFA Bible Worker in Mindoro, Philippines.

## **6 - Do we run to Jesus out of frustration or out of desperation? Verses 21, 32**

➤ Both verses are identical except in motive.

Martha came to Jesus with frustration and received from Him a lesson.

Mary came to Jesus with desperation and received the tears of Jesus. (Verses 33,35)

### **Frustration:**

1. Puts the blame of our situation on God.  
(Verse 21)
2. Limits our understanding of Scripture.  
(Verse 24)
3. Shifts the spotlight of the uncomfortable feelings of conviction to other people.  
(Verse 28)
4. Has objections to God's methods that are not the way we want things done. (Verse 39)

5. Brings repetitive lessons of trust in God.  
(Verse 40)

## Desperation:

1. Leads with a posture of humility. (Verse 32)
2. Breaks frustration through yielding expression (weeping). (Verse 33)
3. Moves the compassion of God. (Verse 35)

Why did Jesus weep (Verse 35) even though He knew He would raise Lazarus from the dead (Verse 44)?

- Just because Jesus knows the outcome of our life does not mean that He is not moved by our feelings as we travers through the situations.
- What a personal and loving God!

- Our situation is always on display for someone else.

God wants to use what we go through so He can transform someone else's life and meet them as they are going through something as well.

## 8 - We must be careful of the attachments to which we have to our problems.    Verse 39

- Jesus gave a command; Martha had a reason why it should not be done.

We must not be afraid of the stench in our life if Jesus is in our midst.

## 9 - The purpose for our problems is always greater than just a lesson for us.

### Verses 42, 45

- Could it be that our problem and difficulty is an incredible set up for us to trust Him more and for someone near to us to put their trust in Him?

## 10 - Regardless of our frustration or desperation, or even inhibition, Jesus still raises the dead!

### Verses 42-43

What an incredible audible teaching that Jesus gives His hearers.

- God always hears our prayers.

If we don't get what we want, there is greater purpose behind it.

The resurrection that Jesus produces in our life will be so loud, so intense, that our lives will echo with His power.

- Do we want this?

*Kai tauta eipōn phōnē megalē*  
“And these things having said in a voice loud  
*Ekraugasen Lazare dura exō*  
He cried out, Lazarus come forth.”

*Phōnē megalē* is where we get our English word *megaphone*.

*Ekaugasen* is a term often associated with *expressions of strong emotion. It is often used to describe an urgent or emotional, vocal expression.*

- Think of the scream of someone in danger.

*Dura* literally means “here” as in demanding a child to obey.

*Exō* means out.

When Jesus resurrects:

1. What was once in bondage is now released.  
(Verse 44)
2. What was once in chaos is put back in order.  
(John 12:1-2)
3. What once mattered is now put into its rightful place. Our order in life is rearranged and prioritized. (John 12:3)

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## GrowthPoint

What needs to be resurrected in your life? Write it here: \_\_\_\_\_

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Write your frustration here: \_\_\_\_\_

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Pray that God will turn your frustration into desperation for Him.

Thank Jesus that His resurrection power is not dependent upon my response but upon His grace.



**Speaker:** Dr. Rai Paparatti  
**Title:** Why the Wait, Part 2

## Opening Illustration:

### MEET MAR: HE WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD

Aug 13

Written By Jonalyn Martino



Mar is a Mangyan, an indigenous man from Mindoro, Philippines, who got tuberculosis. He had been taking medicine from a nearby clinic. Then his wife gave birth prematurely. A couple weeks later the baby got sick. Mar and his wife went to his father's house, but sadly, the baby died. As they walked back to their house, it began to pour and Mar had to carry his wife back in the rain. From that time, his illness grew worse and

worse. His lungs were filled with phlegm that made it difficult for him to breathe.

Tuberculosis is a common sickness among the Mangyans, and it is a prevalent cause of death in their community. The government offers free medicine for them, but they are afraid of hospitals and do not usually ask for help until it is almost too late because they believe that when you go to the hospital you die.

Pablito is a JFA Bible Worker in Mindoro, Philippines. When he found out about Mar's situation, he wanted to go and pray for him, but his wife stopped him. She said they should wait until Mar's family asked for help because they might blame him if something went wrong. The next day, Mar's uncle came to Pablito and asked if he could pray for his nephew.



When Pablito came to Mar's house, he saw that Mar's situation was hopeless. The auntie of Mar's wife, who is a witch doctor, was trying to heal him. The auntie told Pablito she had done everything she could, but it had no effect. Pablito told her he has no power to heal Mar either; he can

only depend on God. He asked her if he could pray and let God perform healing for Mar, and she said yes.

Then Pablito started to pray silently.

After he prayed, Mar coughed hard until he lost consciousness, and then he stopped breathing.

"He is already dead," His uncle said.

Mar's extremities started to stiffen and his body grew cold.

Pablito was filled with hope that God would raise this man to life. He told the family that God will raise Mar again if they wholeheartedly believe in Him. Josephine, another JFA Bible Worker, came and started to sing songs.

Mar's uncle had lost hope in him. He stripped him of his clothes to prepare his body for burial. His family started to cry. But Pablito still hoped that God would raise him up.

**"If You are the true living God that can raise him from the dead, I believe You can bring him to life."**

"Don't cry," Pablito said to Mar's daughter, "do you want your father to come to life or not?"

Pablito asked Mar's wife if she wanted him back.

"If you want him to come back to life, you need to believe with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength in God. Then God will surely raise him up," Pablito said. But Mar's wife didn't answer.

“If you don’t answer, then we can’t do anything,” Josephine said.

Pablito and Josephine asked her repeatedly. Eventually she said yes, and she promised: “If my husband will come back to life, then all my family will follow your God. We believe that your God is a living God.”

Pablito prayed for Mar once again.

“If You are the true living God that can raise him from the dead, I believe You can bring him to life. You are the Only One who has power. I don’t have the power to do it. Only You can do it. I have faith; if it’s Your will You can raise him from the dead since You own our lives. I don’t have power, but You can raise him in order for them to see that You are God who we can turn to.” The Holy Spirit gave him confidence that God would answer his prayer.

Mar suddenly stood up and said, “I am well; I am well; I’m not sick anymore!” He saw Pablito standing in front of him.

Pablito asked what happened to him. Mar said he saw a light from above and suddenly he woke up. He felt like he just woke up from a deep sleep. He started to look for his clothes and put them back on. Then Pablito told the family to give him food and he started to eat. Pablito also reminded Mar’s wife of her promise.

Mar died at 3 p.m. and he came back to life at 5 p.m. He was dead (not breathing) for two full hours!



Mar and his family in their mountain home.

Afterward, Mar's wife kept her promise and the family started coming to church.

*Pablito has prayed for others who were dead, sick, or dying.*

*As he prays, he always acknowledges God's power, and his own lack of power, to heal or to raise the person, and he asks for God to be glorified in the eyes of those watching.*

*If Pablito senses the Holy Spirit calling him to persistently pray, he prays and asks the family to believe in God. If the family refuses to believe in God, then the Holy Spirit indicates for him to stop praying, and the person remains sick or dead. If, as in Mar's case, the family agrees to believe in God, then the Holy Spirit gives him the confidence to pray earnestly and boldly, and the Lord does the miracle of healing the person or raising them from the dead.*

*We believe this is scriptural and in fulfillment of Jesus' own words: "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." John 14:1*



**Text:** Acts 9:36-42; 20:7-12

These accounts highlight 2 people that were so ordinary that their resurrection highlights the goodness of God and not the worthiness of man.

### **What we know about Tabitha (Dorcas)**

1. Her name means Gazelle in both Aramaic (Tabitha) and Greek (Dorcas).
2. She was a seamstress. Verse 39b
3. She was abounding in life with deeds of kindness. Verse 36b
4. She was abounding with deeds of charity for those in need. Verse 26c
5. She served in kindness and charity continually. Verse 36d
6. She fell sick and died. She was prepared for burial. Verse 37

What makes Tabitha so special that she was raised from the dead?

**1 - Absolutely nothing! None of us deserve grace. Yet, God lavishes it on us.**

- God gives His grace because there is a great point to Tabitha's life. And so it is with ours as well.

**2 - Tabitha used her gift / talent / work,  
primarily for the Lord by helping the lowly and  
the broken.** **Matthew 25:34-46**

- She understood very early in life that, “I am created by God, for God!”
- This is the meaning of our life!
- Revelation 4:11

### **What we know about Eutychus’ situation**

1. His name means *fortunate or lucky* in the Greek.
2. Paul spoke for such a long time. Verse 7
3. The congregation was up past midnight by candlelight. Verses 7-8
4. Eutychus fell into a deep sleep while sitting on the open window sill. Verse 9a
5. Overcome by sleep, he fell out from the third floor window and died. Verse 9b

This resurrection does not look so much like the other ones.

Paul rushed down to the boy, picked him up in his arms, and life returned.

- Paul returned upstairs and continued to preach from midnight to daybreak. Verse 11
- The boy was taken away alive and everyone was greatly comforted. Verse 12

### **What do we learn from this account?**

**1 - There will always be something that will happen in our pursuit of Christ that can shape our feelings in becoming angry, resentful, bitter, and frustrated.**

Instead of looking at “long-winded” Paul, which is actually a misnomer, look at what was happening spiritually.

- The church was blessed to have Paul there.
- A meal was being prepared, so everyone was hungry. Verses 7, 11
- Spiritual hunger was high.
- Physical attacks begin.

## **2 - God's resurrection of Eutychus is almost a side note.**

- It was not as important as the spiritual truths that were revealed that night.

What does this mean for us?

1 - Our lives are the perfect candidate for the resurrection power of God.

2 - The priority in our life should be using our abilities for God and not hoarding them for ourselves.

3 - Resurrection power flows from spiritual hunger.

- Matthew 5:6

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*GrowthPoint*

Cultivate the church atmosphere and experience in your home. Think about hosting a gathering, preparing a meal, and spending time talking about faith, praying together, and moving forward in Christ.



Date: March 23, 2025

## Opening Illustration:

By David Kirkwood

On Thursday, November 29th, 2001, pastor Daniel Ekechukwu and his wife, Nneka, had a misunderstanding that degenerated into an argument that ended in her slapping him. He was very offended by this incident, to the point of not even acknowledging her attempt to reconcile the next morning. Pastor Daniel admitted that throughout the day of November 30th, he angrily thought about how he would put his wife in her place when he returned home. He would not, however, make it home that Friday.

As he was driving home that evening, the brakes on his 20-year old Mercedes 230E failed as he was heading down a steep hill, and his car crashed into a concrete pillar that was built to prevent cars from going over a steep embankment. He was not wearing a seat belt (few Nigerians did in 2001, but that changed in 2003, when wearing a seat-belt became a national law), and his chest hit very forcibly against the steering wheel and its knob, apparently doing damage to his internal organs, as he was soon vomiting up blood and having difficulty breathing (not to mention that he soon

lost all signs of life). Daniel was not able to remove himself from his car, but frantic on-lookers pulled him out. One bystander volunteered her car while another offered to drive him to St. Charles Borromeo Hospital, not far away on the outskirts of Onitsha.

Within minutes of their arrival at the hospital, a doctor began administering emergency treatment, but Daniel knew his body was not responding to it. He began praying the prayer of a man who knows he is going to die, asking God to forgive him of all his sins so that he would be ready to stand before the Lord. He also sent for his wife, Nneka, with whom he had refused to speak when he left his home earlier that day. She fainted upon hearing the news of her husband's accident and condition, but when revived was taken by a Christian neighbor to the hospital. Daniel's friend, Ede Samuel (whom I interviewed at length) was with her and essentially witnessed everything that transpired over the next three days.

When she arrived at St. Charles hospital, Daniel's wife burst into tears, begging her husband not to die and leave her. The doctor admitted that there was nothing he could do to save Daniel's life (keep in mind this was a Third World hospital), and so Daniel requested that he be transferred by ambulance to Umezuruike Hospital, 80 km away. It was on the way to Umezuruike that Daniel died.

Daniel was lying in the back of the ambulance while his wife was in the front passenger seat. He began to feel that he was not going to survive, so he called for his wife to come to him. He began to

say goodbye, give her instructions about certain church and personal documents, and admonished her to take care of their sons and his church. She began sobbing greatly and amidst her tears strongly rebuked him for such negative statements. He was a man of God and should have faith, and not be speaking of dying!

As she was speaking, Daniel saw two large angels (they were so large that he later wondered how they fit inside the ambulance - one was as big as the ambulance) who were completely white (even the pupils of their eyes). Daniel tried to speak to the angels, but one held his finger to his lips, motioning for his silence. The angels lifted him on either side, and Daniel realized that there were now two of himself. The angels were holding him under each arm of his spirit man (which was perfectly whole), while his broken body was lying below. Once they left the ambulance, Daniel became oblivious to the natural world.

When the ambulance arrived at Umezuruike Hospital with Daniel's body, it was now late at night (Friday, November 30th), and Daniel's doctor was not there. A member of the medical staff, however, examined his body and sadly told Nneka that her husband was dead and there was nothing that could be done. Nneka refused to believe the bad report.

So they drove to the Federal Medical Center in Owerri, but found no doctor there either. Finally they drove to the Eunice Clinic, and there Daniel was confirmed to be dead by Doctor Jossy Anuebunwa. There was no breathing, no heartbeat

or pulse, and Daniel's pupils were dilated and fixed. The doctor said that there was nothing he could do. A death certificate was issued at 11:30 P.M., Nov 30, 2001.

They then drove Daniel's corpse to his father's house in a nearby village, and naturally Daniel's father and other family members were heartbroken at the sight of Daniel's dead body, weeping profusely. Daniel's father instructed them to take his body to Ikeduru General Hospital Mortuary not far away. They arrived there around 1:00 am on Saturday morning. The resident mortician, Mr. Darlington Manu, received the corpse and the family members departed.

The primitive Nigerian mortuary where Daniel's body was taken had no cold storage facilities, and so the mortician injected embalming chemicals into Daniel's fingers and into his feet. He then prepared to fully embalm Daniel's body by cutting Daniel's inner thigh in order to insert a tube by which he could inject more embalming fluid. As he did this, he experienced a shock that pushed him away from the corpse. This did not surprise him, as he had experienced similar forces before and attributed them to occult powers. (Such things are widely practiced in Africa and highly respected by all African pastors whom I know. Africans never understand the skepticism of Americans regarding the reality of occult power.) After a second attempt and a second shock that somewhat paralyzed his right arm, he concluded that Daniel must have been a member of a powerful secret society. He assumed, however, that after some occult sacrifices and incantations the powers in the

corpse would subside, and he could then complete his work. (This mortician, of course, was not a Christian, but converted after Daniel's resurrection.)

So he instructed an assistant to lay Daniel's body in the rear of the mortuary where many other corpses were already laid. (Incidentally, Daniel said that people could smell the embalming chemicals coming out of his body for two weeks after his resurrection. They would hug him and hold their noses.)

Around 2:00 A.M. Saturday morning, the mortician, who lived very close to the mortuary, was disturbed by songs of worship coming from inside his mortuary, which stopped as soon as approached the mortuary doorway. This occurred twice. Upon searching for the music's source, he noticed some kind of light emanating from the face of Daniel's corpse. This completely unnerved him.

The mortician was so disturbed over what was happening that he located Daniel's father on Saturday morning to inform him of what had been happening and to request that he remove Daniel's corpse from his mortuary. Then, on Saturday night, while she was sleeping, Daniel's wife experienced a dream in which she saw the face of her husband, and he was asking her why they had left him in the mortuary. He stated that he was not dead and that she should take him to Onitsha where German evangelist Reinhard Bonnke was preaching. She determined to do so, even though her family thought she was out of her mind. Daniel had been dead for more than 28 hours. The family finally

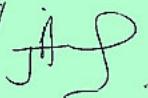
yielded, but purchased a casket and brought funeral clothing for the mortician to dress Daniel. Rigor mortis had fully set in by this time. An ambulance was hired on Sunday morning, December 2nd, and the casket that contained Daniel's body was taken to Grace of God Mission (a large church) in Onitsha, about one and half hours away, where evangelist Reinhard Bonnke was preaching at an afternoon service. They arrived at the church around 1:00pm.

The church grounds were being protected by swarms of federal, state and local security guards for the sake of Reinhard Bonnke, who has received many death threats, and who is hated by Muslims all over Africa. (Not to mention the fact that the World Trade Center had been destroyed by Muslim hijackers just weeks before.) For this reason, the security guards would not allow the casket to be brought onto church grounds, thinking it might actually contain explosives. Daniel's wife loudly pleaded with them, and opened the casket to show them her dead husband, which resulted in their mocking and even flogging her because of her persistence to gain entrance. She caused such a disturbance that the senior pastor was notified, and his son instructed that Daniel's wife be permitted to bring his body to the church without the casket, and that it be placed in the basement. Daniel's body was laid there on two tables pushed together in a Sunday School room.

Some believers gathered around Daniel's body and prayed while Reinhard Bonnke, who knew nothing of the dead body in the basement, preached and prayed. Eventually, it was noticed that Daniel's

corpse twitched, and then irregular breathing started. (By this time, Reinhard Bonnke had left the premises entirely.) The attendant believers began praying fervently, and because his body was stiff and cold, they began massaging his neck, arms and legs. When those in the sanctuary got word that a dead man below was coming back to life, the basement room was soon jammed with people. Suddenly Daniel sneezed and arose with a jump. It was somewhere between 3:50 and 5:15 PM on Sunday afternoon. Daniel had died Friday night around 10:00 PM. He slowly became fully coherent over the next few hours.

ST. EUNICE'S CLINIC			
168 Orlu Road, Akwakuma Owerri.			
Name	Rev. Dan Eke	Age	AD
Address	Amagbo - Iledeuru.	Sex	M
Date	30/11/01	Time	No 9086/01
DATE	Patient brought in dead at about 11:30 p.m. O/E : Chest : No chest movements No breath sounds. CVS : Pulse N.I. Heart sounds N.I. CNS : Eye dilated & fixed. <b>DEMISE</b> . Plan : for removal to mortuary		






**Text:** Luke 7:11-17

We know nothing about the dead, unnamed son.

## What we do know is:

1. There is a widow (no husband). Verse 12b
2. Her *only* son has died. Verse 12a
3. She is weeping while her son is being carried outside the gates of Nain by a sizeable crowd. Verse 12c
4. Her son died tragically (young) Verse 14

Why did Jesus raise him from the dead?

## 1 - Simply, Jesus' compassion was towards this widow!

- This should give us hope.
- Jesus cares about what we are going through.
- **Illustration: The Compassion of Jesus is literally Love in Action!**

## **2 - The compassion of Jesus will always begin with His Word before His touch.**

## Verse 13

➤ “*Do not weep.*”

We must listen to the Word of Jesus for our lives. His Word always prepares us for His action.

**3 - Two crowds in life will always intersect. Those that follow Jesus and those that are burying their dead. The power in the first crowd is compelled to manifest in the second crowd.**

**Verses 11-12**

\*Matthew 10:7-8; \*Mark 16:15-18, \*John 14:12,  
\*Acts 3:6

*“If the first crowd (followers of Jesus) does not manifest power in the second crowd (the world), the first crowd is in danger of succumbing to grief and loss transferred from the second crowd.”*

We often deal with anxiety, bitterness, and dissatisfaction because we lack the true power of the Gospel.

- We receive the Gospel but struggle in manifesting in its power due to unbelief.

**How do we receive this manifested resurrection power of Jesus?**

1. Realize Jesus chose us before we could even have chosen Him.
2. Realize Jesus has already invaded our funeral procession and is there in our midst.
3. Receive the love of Jesus to transform our situation.
4. Rest in the fact that He already knows our life and the direction of it.

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**GrowthPoint**

Daily thank Jesus for the manifestation of His resurrection power in your life. Speak it out! Confess it every moment in opposition to the devil.



## Illustration.

Jesus having *compassion* is the Greek word *splagchnizomai* and conveys a *deep, visceral feeling of compassion or pity*. It describes an emotional response that moves one to action, often in the context of mercy or aid. In the New Testament, it is frequently used to describe Jesus' response to the suffering and needs of others, highlighting His empathy and readiness to help.

In ancient Greek culture, the "*splagchna*" (inward parts) were considered the seat of emotions, similar to how the heart is viewed in modern Western culture. This term reflects a deep, gut-level emotional response. In the Jewish context of the New Testament, compassion was a significant virtue, reflecting God's own merciful nature. The use of "*splagchnizomai*" in the Gospels underscores the compassionate character of Jesus, aligning with the Jewish understanding of God as merciful and compassionate.

It is used in the New Testament 12 times. 8 in reference to Jesus, 2 in reference to God, 1 in reference to someone asking for mercy, and 1 in reference to the Good Samaritan.

## When it comes to Jesus:

1. **Matthew 9:36**, “*Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.*”
  - He cares about our journey (Spiritual and Physical).
2. **Matthew 14:14**, “*When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick.*”
  - He cares about our frailty and the total human condition.
3. **Matthew 15:32**, “*And Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said, 'I feel compassion for the people, because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way.'*”
  - He cares about sustaining us on the way.
4. **Matthew 18:27**, “*And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt.*”
  - God cares about the burden we have carried.
5. **Matthew 20:34**, “*Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him.*”
  - Jesus cares about what hindrance is in our life.

6. **Mark 1:41**, “*Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, ‘I am willing; be cleansed.’*”
  - Jesus cares about the things which isolate us.
7. **Mark 6:34**, “*When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things.*”
  - Jesus cares about renewing our mind through His teaching.
8. **Mark 8:2-3**, “*I feel compassion for the people because they have remained with Me now for three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way; and some of them have come from a great distance.*”
  - Jesus cares about our future. He sees it, the pitfalls ahead of us, and makes provision for us to get through.
9. **Luke 7:13-14**, “*When the Lord saw her, He felt compassion for her, and said to her, ‘Do not weep.’ And He came up and touched the coffin; and the bearers came to a halt. And He said, ‘Young man, I say to you arise!’*”
  - Jesus cares about our cares!
10. **Luke 15:20**, “*So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.*”
  - God cares more about restoration than ostracization.



## Monthly Message Direction:

April 6 <sup>th</sup>	Six Hours Left, Part 1
April 13 <sup>th</sup>	Six Hours Left, Part 2
April 20 <sup>th</sup>	Easter Sunday (Rev. John Bradley)
April 21 <sup>st</sup>	Six Hours Left, Part 3 (Podcast from Malawi)
April 27 <sup>th</sup>	Six Hours Left, Part 4



**Text:** Luke 23:34, 43

*“By the cross we know the gravity of sin and the greatness of God’s love toward us.”*

John Chrysostom

**Phrase #1 - “*Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.*” Luke 23:34**

- The first word spoken on the cross is **forgiveness**.

Jesus fully understood the shortsightedness of the human condition, and pleaded on behalf of their intrinsic value.

The insight of Jesus saw past the sin and saw our need for healing and forgiveness.

*“The English translations miss an important detail. The verb for “saying (elegen)” is in the imperfect tense which means that Jesus was saying these wonderful words not just once, but over and over!” This suggests that:*

- *When they nailed Him to the tree, He said, “Father, forgive them.”*
- *When they mocked Him and scoffed at His claims, He said, “Father, forgive them.”*

- *When they shouted at Him to come down from the cross, He said, “Father, forgive them.”*

The forgiveness of Jesus on the cross and now was and is extreme in its pursuit.

1. It is extreme in that it forgives ignorant, emotional, and radicalized peer-pressured actions.
2. It is extreme in that it forgives purposed hatred from bitterness and animosity.
3. It is extreme in that it forgives rejection and spite.
4. It is extreme in that it forgives ridicule and the pretense of righteousness even when there is really hidden shame.

**Phrase #2 - “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.” Luke 23:43**

- The second word spoken on the cross is **salvation**.
- Both criminals on the cross asked Jesus to save them. Only one was saved.
- Luke 23:39, 42

*“The first thief was angry, bitter, and railing against Jesus. He did not face up to his own sin. Jesus didn’t speak to him. He let him die in his hardness of heart. The second thief was repentant, subdued, and trusting. Jesus graciously granted his request and assured him of Paradise.” Steven Cole*

“Truly,” Jesus emphasizes the certainty and truthfulness of His words.

- Truly is the Greek word *Amēn*! So be it!
- John 5:24

It is powerful to note that Jesus was still choosing in the midst of ridicule and suffering.

- Verses 35, 36, 39
- Our situation does not determine His choosing. His situation determined His choosing.
- This criminal was saved without the *sinner's prayer*.

*“This assurance (Today you shall be with Me...) was so important to Jesus that it cost Him something. It hurt Jesus to even say these words. Since speech occurs during exhalation, these short, terse utterances must have been particularly difficult and painful.”* Dr. William Edwards

“Death by crucifixion was, in every sense of the word, excruciating (Latin, *excruciatus*, or ‘out of the cross’).”

The agony of Jesus becomes our comfort if we only admit our guilt and accept His sacrifice.

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## GrowthPoint

Come to the table of the Lord with a repentant, broken, yielded heart and ask Jesus to lift your burden.

### **Ezekiel 36:25-27:**

**25** Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. **26** Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. **27** I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.



Date: April 13, 2025

## Connected to Christ!

## Twenty Twenty Five

**Speaker:** Jen Paparatti  
**Title:** Six Hours Left, Part 2  
(Palm Sunday)

**Text:** Mark 15:34; Matthew 27:46; John 19:26-27

*"All heaven is interested in the cross of Christ, all hell is terribly afraid of it, while men are the only beings who more or less ignore its meaning."*    Oswald Chambers

**Phrase #3 - “*My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?*”**      **Mark 15:34**

- The third word spoken from the cross is **abandonment**.

While heartbreaking to hear, the disciples and Jews would have immediately recognized these words as being quoted from Psalm 22.

The abandonment of Jesus on the cross, was the greatest welcoming reception for us into the presence of God.

- The power of Psalm 22:1 is the last verse in Psalm 22:31

*“This moment is thought to be when Jesus completes a strange miracle on our behalf. He is crying out because He is experiencing separation from His Father for the first time. This is the only time we have a record of Jesus not addressing God as His Father. Jesus had taken the sin upon Himself, and at the moment, the Father could not be with Him. This moment is filled with mystery as it is hard to fully understand how God’s perfect Son, Jesus, was separated from God for some*

*time on the cross so He could accept God's wrath for humanity's sin."*

➤ Habakkuk 1:13

\*Greg Laurie gives great insight into this.

**Phrase #4 - “Woman, behold your son...(John)  
behold your mother.” John 19:26-27**

➤ The fourth word spoken from the cross is **care**.

By demonstrating concern for the well-being of His mother (Mary), Jesus fulfills His duty as a devoted, first-born son.

➤ Ensuring that Mary be looked after in His absence.

By entrusting Mary to the care of the beloved disciple, Jesus symbolically establishes a familial bond between His followers, emphasizing the importance of community and care for one another within the body of Believers.

➤ Jesus had other brother's and sisters, yet entrusting Mary into John's care blurred the lines between families.  
➤ The family of Jesus - is our family!  
➤ The church is the greatest expression of familial love. John 13:34-35

Jesus being abandoned at that moment on the cross provided our greatest connection to God, and in the Church.

Our love should be incredible!

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*GrowthPoint*

Gather together with someone from the Church and pray together, thanking God that His abandonment on the cross brought you to God and to each other. Share a cup of coffee or a meal together!



## Illustration for Point 3

Greg Laurie provides a deeper look at this dark moment:

I would like for us to consider what I believe was God's most painful moment, the most painful moment for our Lord when He was on this earth. Immediately our minds race to the crucifixion. We think of the Roman whip, that cat of nine tails that ripped into His skin and skeletal tissues, exposing vital organs. Was that it? That was a painful moment to say the least - extremely painful. It is one of the most horrific things that a person could go through. But as bad as that was, I don't think it was God's most painful moment. Was the crucifixion itself, where spikes were pounded into His hands and His feet, where He had to press His shredded back against the cross for a gulp of air? That was horrific as well. But as bad as that was, I don't think that was His most painful moment.

I believe it is found in [Matthew 27](#): “Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, lama

*sabachthani?* that is, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?'" (verses 45-46).

These words surprise us. They disarm us and cause us to wonder what He meant. It is hard for us as human beings to even fathom what was taking place here. To begin with, it was a fulfillment of the prophetic words of [Psalm 22:1](#), which says, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" But these were not the delusions of a man in pain. His faith was not failing Him. I believe that as Christ hung there at this moment, He was bearing the sins of the world. He was dying as a substitute for us. To Him was imputed the guilt of all of our sins and He was suffering the necessary punishment for those sins on our behalf. And the essence of that punishment was the outpouring of God's wrath against sinners.

In some mysterious way that we can never fully understand, during these awful hours on the cross, the Father was pouring out the full measure of His wrath against sin and the recipient of that wrath was His own beloved Son. God was punishing Jesus as though He had personally committed every wicked deed committed by every wicked sinner. And in doing so, He could treat and forgive those redeemed ones as if they had lived Christ's perfect life of righteousness.

*Taken from "[God's Most Painful Moment](#)" by Harvest Ministries*



## Psalm 22

**22** My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?  
Far from my deliverance are the words of  
my groaning.

**2** O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer;  
And by night, but I have no rest.

**3** Yet You are holy,  
O You who are enthroned upon the praises of  
Israel.

**4** In You our fathers trusted;  
They trusted and You delivered them.

**5** To You they cried out and were delivered;  
In You they trusted and were not disappointed.

**6** But I am a worm and not a man,  
A reproach of men and despised by the people.

**7** All who see me <sup>gl</sup>sneer at me;  
They separate with the lip, they wag the  
head, *saying*,

<sup>8</sup>“Commit *yourself* to the Lord; let Him deliver him;  
Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him.”

<sup>9</sup> Yet You are He who brought me forth from the womb;  
You made me trust *when* upon my mother’s breasts.

<sup>10</sup> Upon You I was cast from birth;  
You have been my God from my mother’s womb.

<sup>11</sup> Be not far from me, for trouble is near;  
For there is none to help.

<sup>12</sup> Many bulls have surrounded me;  
Strong *bulls* of Bashan have encircled me.

<sup>13</sup> They open wide their mouth at me,  
As a ravening and a roaring lion.

<sup>14</sup> I am poured out like water,  
And all my bones are out of joint;  
My heart is like wax;  
It is melted within me.

<sup>15</sup> My strength is dried up like a potsherd,  
And my tongue cleaves to my jaws;  
And You lay me in the dust of death.

<sup>16</sup> For dogs have surrounded me;  
A band of evildoers has encompassed me;  
They pierced my hands and my feet.

<sup>17</sup> I can count all my bones.  
They look, they stare at me;

**18** They divide my garments among them,  
And for my clothing they cast lots.

**19** But You, O Lord, be not far off;  
O You my help, hasten to my assistance.

**20** Deliver my soul from the sword,  
My only *life* from the power of the dog.

**21** Save me from the lion's mouth;  
From the horns of the wild oxen You answer me.

**22** I will tell of Your name to my brethren;  
In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.

**23** You who fear the Lord, praise Him;  
All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him,  
And stand in awe of Him, all you descendants of  
Israel.

**24** For He has not despised nor abhorred the  
affliction of the afflicted;  
Nor has He hidden His face from him;  
But when he cried to Him for help, He heard.

**25** From You *comes* my praise in the great  
assembly;  
I shall pay my vows before those who fear Him.

**26** The afflicted will eat and be satisfied;  
Those who seek Him will praise the Lord.  
Let your heart live forever!

**27** All the ends of the earth will remember and turn  
to the Lord,  
And all the families of the nations will worship

before You.

**28** For the kingdom is the Lord's  
And He rules over the nations.

**29** All the prosperous of the earth will eat and worship,  
All those who go down to the dust will bow before Him,  
Even he who cannot keep his soul alive.

**30** Posterity will serve Him;  
It will be told of the Lord  
to the *coming* generation.

**31** They will come and will declare His  
righteousness  
To a people who will be born, that He has  
performed *it*.



Date: April 20, 2025

## Connected to Christ!

Twenty Twenty Five

**Speaker:** Rev. John W. Bradley, Jr.  
**Title:** Easter Sunday

**Text:**

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_







**Text:** John 19:28, 30

**Phrase #5 - “I Am Thirsty.”** **John 19:28**

- The fifth word spoken from the cross is **humanity**.

By Jesus saying that He was thirsty, He was answering the Messianic prophecy from Psalm 69:21

Jesus' Deity did not negate His humanity.

- What is so beautiful is that in Matthew 6:25-34, Jesus reminds us to not worry. But not because our needs do not matter. It is because God already knows we need them.
- Jesus can fully empathize with us.

**Phrase #6 - It is Finished!** **John 19:30**

- The sixth word from the cross is **Accomplishment**.

Jesus uses the word, *tetelestai* in Greek (*shalam* in Aramaic) which means (*be at peace in Aramaic*) *it is finished or completed*. *It was a term used on business receipts indicating that the bill was paid in full.*

- Hebrews 9:12, 16

*It is Finished* - The debt owed by man to His Creator on account of Adams sin is finally and forever dealt with.

When Jesus said, “*It is Finished*” He brought about the completion of all the Old Testament prophecies, symbols, and foreshadowing about Himself.

This sixth phrase from the cross should be our favorite phrase. It is Finished!

**THE DEBT HAS BEEN PAID!**



Date: April 27, 2025

Connected to Christ!

Twenty Twenty Five

Speaker: Dr. Rai Paparatti  
Title: Six Hours Left, Part 4

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**Text:** Luke 23:46

*“Be of good comfort, brother Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle, by God’s grace, in England, as I trust never shall be put out.”* Hugh Latimer

**Phrase # 7 - “Father, into Your hands I commit my Spirit.”** **Verse 46**

- The seventh word spoken from the cross is **Surrender**.
- Loud voice - Greek *megalē* and *phōnē*

*“Because He was fully God and fully man, Jesus could have taken Himself off of the cross, remained alive, and exerted His Divine Authority. He chose not to do so. His divine nature means He intentionally had to choose to no longer hold on to life.”*

This statement, “*Into Your Hands I Commit...*” is a direct quote from Psalm 31:3-5

**Death did not have a hold on Jesus.**

Matthew 27:50 - *Yielded* is Gk. word *aphekēn* which means He dismissed it. It is in the *active voice* which speaks of volitional choice, the choice of His will.

**How far are we willing to suffer for Jesus?**

- Our suffering in comparison with His.

The cross of Jesus produces a new culture for us to follow and participate in:

## **1 - We are empowered to forgive because we now live through Jesus.**

- Mark 11:25-26; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

## **2 - We have the hope of heaven always overshadowing us.**

- 1 Peter 1:3-6
- He gives us perspective and power through faith.

## **3 - We will never be abandoned by God.**

- Deuteronomy 31:8
  1. He goes ahead of you.
  2. He will be with you.
  3. He will not fail or forsake you.
  4. Do not fear or be dismayed.

## **4 - We have a Necessary Biblical Community.**

- Hebrews 10:24-25; Galatians 6:1-2
- *“Biblical [community] is not a luxury. It is a necessity.” Paul David Tripp*

## **5 - God will meet all of our needs.**

- Philippians 4:19; Matthew 6:33;  
2 Corinthians 9:8

## **6 - We now have power to do His work.**

- Philippians 2:13; 4:13; Ephesians 3:20

The hands of God are the best place to commit ourselves. It is the safest place to be. Psalm 91:1

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*GrowthPoint*

Commit yourself into the hands of God by releasing the hold of control. Realize, “I don’t have to control everything in my life.” Jesus, let me live through your control.



## Opening Illustration

**Dying Well** - Dying words, especially when spoken in the throes of persecution or great suffering, are significant. They often reveal a man's true values. Some of my favorite last words came from the English martyr Hugh Latimer. He was tied back to back with Nicolas Ridley as the two were burned at the stake. He called out as the flames were lit, "Be of good comfort, brother Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust never shall be put out." As the fire was kindled, Ridley cried out, "Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit: Lord, receive my spirit!" He repeated the latter phrase often. Latimer cried out, "Father of heaven, receive my soul!" (J. C. Ryle, *Light from Old Times* [Evangelical Press], p. 163.)

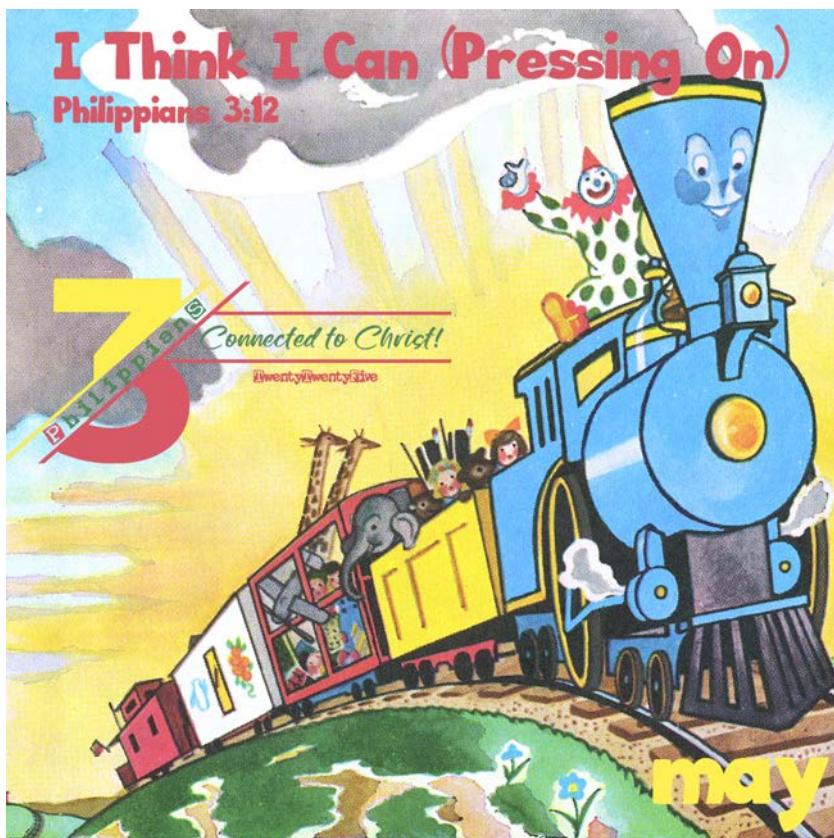
# I Think I Can (Pressing On)

Philippians 3:12

3  
Philippians

Connected to Christ!

Twenty Twenty Five



## Monthly Message Direction:

May 4<sup>th</sup>

Body Slam, Part 1

May 11<sup>th</sup>

Mother's Day

May 18<sup>th</sup>

Body Slam, Part 2

May 25<sup>th</sup>

Body Slam, Part 3



Date: May 4, 2025

**Text:** Philippians 3:12; Acts 9:1-19

*“A recent survey noted that the “greatest questions” ever asked consistently appear in discussions of existential and philosophical nature.”*

**The 2 greatest questions we could ever ask are:  
“Who are You lord?” and “What do You want  
me to do?”**

How did Jesus “*lay hold of*” Paul? (Phil. 3:12)

- *Lay hold of* is the Greek word *katalamano* and means *to capture, seize, or apprehend*.

**1 - There was an open display of Jesus confronting Saul.** Ver.

## Verse 4

- “*Why are you fighting Me?*”
- The content and substance of our relationship with Jesus must be evident to those around us.

Saul was confronted by Jesus in the presence of his companions. Verse 7

## Verse 7

- We oftentimes want our spiritual experience to be so personal and private. Yet, the test of the experience comes publicly.
- How publicly is the expression of our faith?

The lack of public experience with our Christianity could be a reason why we are always so defeated privately.

## 2 - There was a realization of Who and What life was all about. Verse 5

- This was a powerful introduction.

*Saul in this epic encounter is pressed by Jesus and challenged that all his own righteous attempts and zealous behavior was in fact nothing more than persecution against the God he claimed to love.*

If Jesus is not the primary motivation of our life, then it is safe to say that all of our own attempts at living righteous or “good” lives are nothing more than rebellion towards God.

## 3 - There was the initial introduction of purpose. Verse 6

- Jesus makes His purpose very clear.
- Acts 9:15-16; 22:14-16; 26:16-18
- There will always be a starting point of purpose in our lives that is the beginning of cultivation with Jesus.

As we “*press on*,” we also must wrestle with these 3 “*arrows*” being “*laid hold of*” by Jesus:

1 - We must openly confront any opposing rebellion in our life in which we are fighting against Jesus.

2 - Is Jesus *the* Central Figure in our life?

3 - What purpose do we already know about that we must do?

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**GrowthPoint**

Step out in the purpose which you have through your Christianity. If you don’t fully know your purpose yet, start with the written one in Matthew 28:19-20.



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## Opening Illustration:

*“A recent survey noted that the “greatest questions” ever asked consistently appear in discussions of existential and philosophical nature.”*

1. Who am I?
2. Where do I come from?
3. What is my purpose?
4. Where am I going?
5. Why am I here?
6. Is there a God?
7. What is the meaning of life?



**Text:** Isaiah 49:14-16

God highlights mothers and uses their example of love.

### **1 - Can a woman forget her nursing child?**

**Verse 15**

The image and point that God is making is that He cannot not will not forget us because:

- We are always nursing;
- He is always providing.

These verses show a beautiful image from infancy (nursing child), to adulthood (making our own, often bad decisions). **Verse 16**

### **2 - I have you inscribed on the palms of My hands.**

**Verse 16a**

- These palm painting representations were called “ensigns of Jerusalem.”

*Palm* (Heb. *Kaph*) meaning the hollow hand, and *inscribed* (Heb. *Chaqaq*) meaning to hack or engrave.

- God constantly cares for and remembers His people.
- Even in the midst of the most terrible trials.

*“The wounds in Christ’s hands (palms) when He was crucified is a clear message hinting back to this ancient custom and bringing forth the message that the Lord will always cherish and protect those for whom He suffered and died, and His remembrance of us is a close to God and He is to Himself.”*

### **3 - Your walls are continually before Me.**

#### **Verse 16b**

- During this writing the walls of Jerusalem were broken down.
- We can see the heart of God through the words of Jesus in Matthew 23:37-38

The city walls were rebuilt but not their hearts.

Our heart is continually before Him. And His desire is to: Protect, heal, and redeem.

### **4 - I will not forget you.**

#### **Verse 15b**

- In Israel, every time hands were lifted to God, mothers would remember their children or their city.

*“He cannot forget, because of His nature, on which forgetfulness cannot properly fall; He will not, because of His promise, which never fails; ... He forgets their sins, but not their persons; He cannot forget His love, nor His covenant with them, nor His promises made to them; ... All this suggests that the Lord stands in the relation of a parent to His people, and they stand in the relation of children to Him; they are born of Him, and are as it were pieces of Himself, and little images of Him, and dear to Him as the apple of His eye...they are led by Him, and taught to go; He delights in them when they begin to speak in prayer or praise, though in a lisping and stammering manner; all their little actions are engaging, their works done by them, though imperfect, and a great deal of childishness in them; when anything ails them, He sympathizes with them, He takes care of them, and provides for them; and it is a concern to Him whenever He is obliged to chastise them, and can He therefore forget them?” Gill’s Exposition*



## Opening Illustration:

**Woman holds brains in for over an hour after being shot in the head 05-31-2003, 11:56 PM**

**KILLER BISCUITS WANTED FOR ATTEMPTED MURDER**

Lisa Burnett, 23, a resident of San Diego, was visiting her in-laws, and while there went to a supermarket to pick up some groceries. Several people noticed her sitting in her car with the windows rolled up and with her eyes closed, with both hands behind the back of her head. One customer who had been in the store for a while became concerned and walked over to the car. He noticed that Lisa's eyes were now open and she looked very strange. He asked if she was okay and Lisa said she had been shot in the back of her head and had been holding her brains in for over an hour. The man called the paramedics, who broke into the car because the doors were locked and Lisa refused to remove her hands from her head. When they finally got in, they found that Lisa had a wad of bread dough on the back of her head...A Pillsbury biscuit canister had exploded from the heat, making a loud noise that sounded like a gunshot, and the wad of dough hit her on the back of

her head. When she reached back to find out what it was, she felt the dough and thought it was her brains. She initially passed out, but quickly recovered and tried to hold her brains in for over an hour until someone noticed and came to her aid.



## Point 2 Illustration:

It is most probable that this expression is referring to an actual custom among the Jews who actually tattooed their hands or arms with paintings of Jerusalem or the Temple, thus they would always have a remembrance ever before them. This view is accepted by most scholars and these palm painting representations were called "ensigns of Jerusalem" and were performed in this sort of manner:

1. They would have an impression on a block of wood of something relation to the city such as the Temple, and they print it onto the palm or arm with powder or charcoal.
2. Then they would take two needles tied close together, and dipping many times in certain inks they would make small punctures quickly and accurately all along the lines of the figure they have printed, being careful not to draw blood.
3. Then they would wash it in wine once the figure was finished.



Date: May 18, 2025

Connected to Christ!

Twenty Twenty Five

Speaker: Dr. Rai Paparatti  
Title: Body Slam! Part 2

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**Text:** Philippians 3:12-14; Acts 9:15-16; 22:14-16; 26:16-18

*“A nice winter walk turns sour as Scottish man grips for dear life.”*

- Hiker clung to steep cliff edge in the bitter cold with just his finger tips for two hours until rescued by the Coastguard.

**1 - Jesus appointed Paul to know His will, experience Jesus, and to Hear His voice.**

**Acts 22:14**

- We are appointed to know what the will of God is for our lives. It is not an aimless journey.

This journey entails being able to experience Jesus and to hear His voice. An experience with Jesus is the life transforming change that happens when we yield our lives.

- When is the last time we felt the life transformation of Jesus happen?

Anytime we feel convicted about something, we should be happy. Because conviction is from the Holy Spirit, when we are convicted, it means that we have good standing with Christ.

- Conviction is an opportunity for growth.

We often shy away from the uncomfortable feeling of conviction because it makes us feel like something is wrong. But, yielding to this conviction brings power and growth in our life.

- When is the last time that we were convicted of something (attitude or action) in our life?

Isaiah's experience (Isaiah 6:1-8) led him to conviction. His response to conviction, led him to hear the voice of God.

*"Conviction should actually grow throughout our Christian lives. In fact, one sign of spiritual growth is an increased awareness of our sinfulness."*

Jerry Bridges

How do we respond to conviction or even cultivate it?

*"This is the way we develop conviction - by bringing God's Word to bear on specific situations that arise in our lives and determining God's will in that situation from the Word."*

Jerry Bridges

## **2 - Jesus called him to be a witness. Acts 22:15**

- A witness has a different purpose in life.

When our life is so self-centered, we cannot bear the focus being on anything else except our current state of feelings.

But as a witness, our focus becomes how accurately we can describe and represent the status of Truth in our life.

### **3 - Jesus appointed him as a minister and witness. He promised him continual revelation.**

**Acts 26:16**

- The power of our walk with Jesus is that it often begins experientially and then it deepens revelationally throughout our walk with Him.

The more that we know Him, the more that we experience the depth of His nature in the myriad of challenges in our life.

- Our life becomes mundane and full of emotional dread when we cease to develop relationally and maintain relationship.

### **4 - Jesus called Paul to bear His name before Gentiles, kings, and the sons of Israel.**

**Acts 9:15**

God desires our experience to be people-ward (towards people). It must have effect and affect outwardly from our life.

We must ask this question: Is my experience with God noticeable outwardly in the situation I am in?

- How we answer this question reveals the level of happiness and purpose we feel.

### **How does the first half of Paul's calling apply to our "pressing on?"**

#### **1 - We must press on to know His will, to see and hear Christ.**

- Now this is something to press on for!
- If we can see and hear Him, nothing else will matter.

## 2 - We must press on in our witness of Him.

- Witness here does not infer some quality we add to our life. It infers that the witnessing becomes our life.
- We cannot witness that which we have not experienced.

## 3 - We must press on to anticipate continued revelation of Jesus throughout our journey.

- Jesus becomes vivid and active in all the details of our life. Not only in the milestones.

## 4 - We must press on to bear His name!

- To bear it is to possess it and the power of that name.

*“Too often now, His name in us is reduced to a whispered swear and not the creative, omnipotent, awe-inspiring, knee bending force that it truly is.”*

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## GrowthPoint

Spend time and actually read the Bible. Start by reading 1 John. It is very short. But let God's conviction move over your life. Respond to that conviction. Grow and let it change you. Become aware how responding to conviction, increases its growth and nudging.

Write it down. God is convicting me of: \_\_\_\_\_

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I will respond to this conviction by doing: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Text:** Philippians 3:12-14; Acts 9:15-16; 22:14-16; 26:16-18

*“Thankfully, joy is an all-season response to life. Even in the dark times, sorrow enlarges the capacity of the heart for joy. Like a diamond against black velvet, true spiritual joy shines brightest against the darkness of trials, tragedies, and testing.”*

Richard Mayhue

**1 - Jesus rescued Paul in difficult situations as Paul fulfilled his mission of being sent.**

**Acts 26:17**

- Obedience to God's invokes His protection.
- How often we want the benefit from God without the obedience and participation in His plan.

Obedience and participation qualify us for the benefits inherent to the task.

- In the natural, how quickly we lose the benefits from our workplace when we do not work there any longer...

We must press on knowing that nothing can defeat the work which God has initiated in us.

- We are defeated when the work is not God-initiated.

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

**2 - Jesus mission for Paul was that he open unbelievers' eyes, turning them from darkness to light.**

**Acts 26:18**

The mission that Paul was to accomplish was three fold:

1. Open their eyes so they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God. (Morality comes to life)
2. That they may receive the forgiveness of sins. (Guilt is removed)
3. That they may receive an inheritance among those who have been sanctified. (Connection and blessing)

These are the same aspects of calling that we are to fulfill with His power.

**3 - Jesus picked Paul as a chosen instrument!**

**Acts 9:15a**

- What excitement to be an instrument in the hands of God.

We press on by being the sharpest instruments and staying in tune!

- The disciplines of the faith should get deeper.

**4 - Jesus allows Paul to join in suffering for His sake.**

**Acts 9:16**

- There is always power in having the associations of Jesus.
- This is why Paul wrote Philippians 3:10.

*"To choose to suffer means that there is something wrong; to choose God's will even if it means suffering is a very different thing. No healthy saint ever chooses suffering; he chooses God's will, as Jesus did, whether it means suffering or not."*

Oswald Chambers

## Celebration of Discipline

by Richard Foster

This book explores the ‘classic disciplines’ of Christian Faith in three categories:

1. Inward disciplines,
2. Outward disciplines and
3. Corporate disciplines.

Rate yourself on how engaged you are in each of these disciplines.

### The Inward Disciplines:

**1 - Meditation:** Focusing on the Word of God to cultivate a deeper understanding of God’s character and will.

Fully engaged     Sometimes engaged     Not at all engaged

**2 - Prayer:** Engaging in a personal and ongoing conversation with God, seeking His guidance and expressing gratitude.

Fully engaged     Sometimes engaged     Not at all engaged

**3 - Fasting:** Deliberately abstaining from food or other things to focus on spiritual matters and cultivate discipline.

Fully engaged     Sometimes engaged     Not at all engaged

**4 - Study:** Engaging with Scripture, theological texts, and other resources to deepen knowledge of God and His Word.

Fully engaged     Sometimes engaged     Not at all engaged

## **The Outward Disciplines:**

**1 - Simplicity:** Choosing to live in a way that prioritizes God's kingdom and minimizes the allure of material possessions or worldly desires.

Fully engaged     Sometimes engaged     Not at all engaged

**2 - Solitude:** Setting aside time to be alone with God, reflecting on His Word and experiencing His presence.

Fully engaged     Sometimes engaged     Not at all engaged

**3 - Submission:** Yielding one's will to God and seeking His guidance in all aspects of life.

Fully engaged     Sometimes engaged     Not at all engaged

**4 - Service:** Using one's gifts and abilities to serve others and make the world a better place.

Fully engaged     Sometimes engaged     Not at all engaged

## **The Corporate Disciplines:**

**1 - Confession:** Acknowledging one's sin and seeking forgiveness from God and others.

Fully engaged     Sometimes engaged     Not at all engaged

**2 - Worship:** Giving praise and honor to God in various forms, including prayer, music, and other expressions of devotion.

Fully engaged     Sometimes engaged     Not at all engaged

**3 - Guidance:** Seeking God's direction in daily life, asking for wisdom and discernment in decision-making.

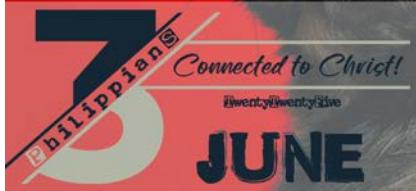
Fully engaged     Sometimes engaged     Not at all engaged

**4 - Celebration:** Expressing gratitude and joy in God's blessings and accomplishments.

Fully engaged     Sometimes engaged     Not at all engaged

# CHANGE MY ATTITUDE

PHILIPPIANS 3:15



## Monthly Message Direction:

June 1 <sup>st</sup>	Entitled, Part 1.
June 8 <sup>th</sup>	Entitled, Part 2.
June 15 <sup>th</sup>	Entitled, Part 3. (Father's Day)
June 22 <sup>nd</sup>	The Silent Attitude!
June 29 <sup>th</sup>	Progress on our Attitude!



**Text:** Philippians 3:15; Numbers 12

*“Complaining is like yawning - it is contagious.”*

The problem began in a family rift. Moses' brother and sister took offense at Moses because of his wife.

Complaint was already the atmosphere of the people. Numbers 11

- Entitlement is the belief that one is inherently deserving of privileges.

*“Often times, complaint begins from a legitimate frustration. But it quickly morphs into a debilitating cancer, becoming the driving force for everything we do.”*

## 1 - Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses.

### Verse 1a

- The wrong attitude will always be quick to speak.

*“God takes our words seriously, and we cannot forget that!” Randall Smith*

Their attack on Moses came while they were under attack (Numbers 11:1).

So often we complain because we are actually in sin, punished by God, and looking to justify our stance.

Israel was deep in the attitude of complaint!

1. The complaint of adversity (11:1).
2. The speaking of greedy desires (11:4).
3. The fondness of bondage (11:5).
4. The animosity towards the provision of God (11:6)

**2 - Aaron and Miriam used a prejudice to hide their sinful stance.**

**Verse 1b**

- The Cushite!
- The first complaint was a diversion.

The wrong attitude usually blames the wrong source. The Cushite was not the issue. The issue was frustration with God's methods.

**3 - Aaron and Miriam were really jealous of Moses' recognition and felt that their vital contribution was passed over.**

**Verse 2a**

- The issue was not the history of God's prophetic voice - but the recognition of it.

**4 - God is always listening.**

**Verse 2b**

- This passage was not about Moses seeking retribution on grumblers, but it was God's ear tuned into Israel's camp.

God's hearing is not to be firstly associated with judgment. His ear towards us has primarily to do with blessings and favor. Psalm 116:2 (Psalm 18:6; 34:15; 40:1; 66:19; 145:18; Isaiah 65:24)

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**GrowthPoint**

Our complaining could be the biggest buffer of God's blessing in our life. Repent of a bitter and complaining heart. Ask God to give you an attitude of thanksgiving and love towards others.



**Date:** June 8, 2025

## Connected to Christ!

## Twenty Twenty Five

**Speaker:** Dr. Rai Paparatti  
**Title:** Entitled, Part 2

## Text: Numbers 12

## **1 - Entitlement receives the discipline of God.**

## Verses 4, 9

- When we display the attitude of entitlement through bitterness, sharp vocabulary and a complaining attitude, we place ourselves under the discipline of God.

We do not lose the love and care of God, but we do receive the consequence of our actions.

## Entitlement has consequences!

## Consequences of Bitterness:

1. Distorts our reality. Ruth 1:20-21; 4:13-17
2. Impairs our judgment. Proverbs 17:14-15
3. Breaks up relationships. Hebrews 12:14-15

*"Bitterness is an irritable state of mind that keeps a man in perpetual animosity - that inclines him to harsh and uncharitable opinions of men and things*

*- that makes him sour, crabbed, and repulsive in his general demeanor - that brings a scowl over his face, and infuses venom into the words of his tongue.”*

### **Consequences of Sharp Vocabulary:**

1. Curses the situation of our life. James 3:10 - Our words cause us to live in a continual state of (James 3:14-16) earthly, natural and demonic presence.
2. Disorder. James 3:16b
3. Every evil thing. James 3:16c

### **Consequences of a Complaining Attitude:**

1. Blinds us to God’s will. 1 Thess. 5:18
2. Increases feelings of guilt and shame. Philippians 2:14-15

## **2 - Entitlement blocks our eyes from seeing the burdens which are being carried by others.**

### **Verses 6-8**

Moses carried the burden of:

1. Complaining Israelites, (Numbers 11:1)
2. Greedy desire in the camp, (Numbers 11:4)
3. Disdain for God’s supernatural provision and providence, (Numbers 11:6)
4. Weeping families directing their blame towards him, (Numbers 11:10)
5. The people wanted meat to eat. Moses must care *even* for their diet, (Numbers 11:13)
6. The totality and brunt of criticism came to Moses, (Numbers 11:11)
7. There was no other leader willing to step up and carry the burden. (Numbers 11:14)

*“Entitlement creates a self-centered lens that obscures the view of others’ struggles and experiences.”*

### **3 - The attitude of entitlement opens our life to receive the judgment of God.      Verse 10**

Some private sins, produce physical infirmities on us and our offspring.

➤ John 9:1-3; John 5:12-14; Matthew 27:24-25

The mental and overpowering strain we may feel (depressions and anxieties) can flourish on in our lives simply because we have an open door of sin.

➤ Close the doors!

# GrowthPoint

## Conquering a spirit of entitlement:

## **1 - Begin relational communication with those we have disregarded!      Numbers 12:11a**

## **2 - Confess our sins before God and each other.**

## **Numbers 12:11b; James 5:16**

- This one could be the release of our infirmities.

### **3 - Re-build bridges and community.**

## Numbers 12:15



## Text: Numbers 12

The heart of a Father with a right attitude!

**1 - Moses' attitude was good because he thrived for the success of others.      Numbers 11:24-29**

➤ Key verse 29

Moses uproots any damaging seed of:

- Jealousy,
- Position, and
- Spiritual authority.

What a lesson for Joshua, considering that later on, he leads the people.

**2 - Moses' attitude was good because he chose compassion over retribution.**

## Numbers 12:13

- Moses was moved (*cried out*) that his sister had leprosy.
- He was more concerned about her condition than her offense

There is a method to rewire our brain to see condition and not offense: Science calls this Neuroplasticity.

According to a journal review on Neuroplasticity, these following steps are what it takes to rewire a brain (interestingly *stolen* from the Bible).

1. **Distract your Brain:** When you find yourself caught in a mental loop of self-sabotage, start singing your favorite songs out loud or immerse in a meditative practice. ([Philippians 4:8](#); [Psalm 1:2](#))
2. **Decrease Stress Levels:** Set boundaries at your job, at home, and even with the people you love if they are constantly adding to your stress levels. ([1 Corinthians 15:33](#); [Romans 8:5-6](#))
3. **Practice Gratitude:** Practicing gratitude throughout the day is a great way to create new neurological pathways and lead your brain into a more peaceful and contented state. ([Philippians 4:6-7](#); [Colossians 3:15-17](#))
4. **Rearrange your House:** Changing the environment around you is an easy way to send new messages to your brain. ([Proverbs 24:3-4](#); [Proverbs 2:6-8](#))
5. **Press Pause on Crime Documentaries:** An adrenalin high brought on by crime documentaries or emotional intense TV shows can put your body into fight or flight. Since your body doesn't know how to

differentiate types of stress, these forms of entertainment can be harmful. (Proverbs 4:23-27 - These are the 4 gates to our Heart: Tongue-Gate, Ear-Gate, Eye-Gate, and Feet-Gate)

Just as a side note: Moses was not always patient - he, more often than not, reacted rashly before God than in the presence of the other Israelites.

The most severe punishment to Moses came as a result of his bad behavior in front of others, and not his private arguments with God. (Numbers 20)

**3 - Moses' attitude was good because after the situation ended, he let go of relational hurt.**

- Between Numbers 12 and 20:1, about 38 years have passed.
- The proof of this is when we can truly plead before God for the restoration of those that have hurt us.

Moses showed:

1. Humility, (Numbers 12:3)
2. Forgiveness, and
3. Intercession. (Numbers 12:13)

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GrowthPoint

A good father is to be emulated. Take these principles from Moses' life and ask God to rewire your brain.

Make it a point to put into practice the points of this message. Make them part of your weekly devotional!



**Text:** 2 Samuel 13:38-39; 14:14, 23-28; 15:7a, 37

*“Jesus won’t allow the unreconciled condition to continue among believers. In Matthew 5, if another considers you to have wronged him, Jesus says that you must go. In Matthew 18, He says that if the other person has done something wrong to you, you must go. There is never a time when you can sit and wait for your brother to come to you. Jesus doesn’t allow for that. He gives no opportunity for that. It is always your obligation to go.”* Jay Adams

\*One thing is strikingly clear: There needed to be reconciliation! It was available; it was possible - but it laid dormant. Why? David held love for his son, but his silent attitude of inner turmoil restricted him.

**1 - David brought Absalom close, but not close enough.** **2 Samuel 14:24**

➤ Why do we keep people at arm’s length when our association with Christ is the very opposite?

When people are hurting, they often respond in one of these three ways:

1. Avoidance,
2. Control, or
3. Revenge.

All three, destroy goodness, reconciliation, and fight against the purpose that Good is intending through His allowance of it.

**2 - When God “forced” the meeting, David let stoicism take over because of his emotional vulnerability.**      **2 Samuel 14:33**

Oxford Dictionary describes *stoicism* as *the endurance of pain or hardship without the display of feelings and without complaint.*

After no emotional response from David, Absalom began to sow discord against his father.

Absalom vents his hurt to by-standers through his advice:

1. No man listens to you on the part of the king. (2 Samuel 15:3)
2. I would be available! (2 Samuel 15:4)
3. If someone bowed down, I would raise them up and kiss them. (2 Samuel 15:5)
  - Absalom had this very experience with his dad (2 Samuel 14:33)

Because David was *slow* to receive his son, Absalom had two years to break down and grow animosity and resentment!

- Especially with our children, the more time we wait to reconcile, the greater the gap becomes!

David never reconnected with Absalom! He did not bridge the gap.

### 3 - David was too late, once tragedy hit!

#### 2 Samuel 18:33

- David's love for his son, as a father, would have traded place with a wicked son such as Absalom, who was looking to take David's life.
- All this was only out of regret!

\*The non-reconciliatory silent attitude kept David relationally (in his family) complacent!

- This will always bring regret (ALWAYS).

David's "*O, Absalom*" account was because he was facing remorse and parental guilt. David avoided Absalom for two years (2 Samuel 14:28) whilst they lived in the same city.

How often we cry when it is too late!

1. Now is the day of restoration.
2. Now is the day to release grudges.
3. Now is the day to make amends.
4. Now is the day to say aloud, "*son/daughter, I love you!*"
5. Now is the day to forgive and restore a wayward child.
6. Now is the day to bring that broken relationship from the neighborhood back into the house.
7. Now is the day for tears and conversations!

**How to bridge the gap in reconciliation:**

1. If you are hurting because of an offense and you desire connection, the responsibility lies with you. The desire to reconnect is the voice of the Holy Spirit prompting you to make the connection.

2. Reject warm emotional expectations.  
Obedience to forgive and release the offense  
is greater than the feelings of hearing an,  
*“I’m sorry too.”*
3. Pray and jump. Prayer gets your faith ready.  
Action is our faith in movement. Without  
action, we actually weaken our faith.
4. Take the high road! This actually means,  
take the humility road. Even if you are  
right, move to a place of humility.

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## GrowthPoint

Read Matthew 5:1-12, and pray through each of the Beatitudes. Release every type of hurt with each Beatitude you put into practice.

Which one speaks most to me? \_\_\_\_\_

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What hurt do I need to release? \_\_\_\_\_

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What action will I put in to place this week? \_\_\_\_\_

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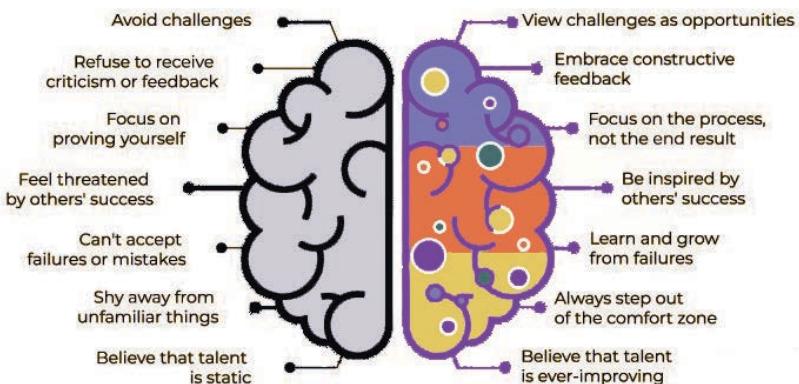


**Text:** Proverbs 3:5-6

Research identifies two types of mindsets:

1. Growth mindsets, and
2. Fixed mindsets.

## Fixed Mindset vs Growth Mindset



## 5 Scriptures that Reveal the Progression and Attitude of Growth:

### 1 - We must have God connected plans.

Proverbs 16:1-3, 9

➤ We do this by committing our works to the Lord.

Verse 3

*Commit* is the Hebrew word *galal* and paints the picture of *something set in motion, transferred, or*

*displaced by rolling. Whether a stone, disgrace, or the burdens of the human heart, the action consistently involves a change of place or state brought about by decisive motion.*

- Life's direction or burden is rolled from human shoulders onto the covenant-keeping God.

## **2 - Growth is tied to spiritual transformation by renewal.**

**Romans 12:2**

- The options of conformity or transformation coincide with a fixed mind (conformity) or a Growth mind (transformation).

The renewing of the mind brings in the good, acceptable, and perfect into our life.

The renewal of the mind comes from the Holy Spirit.                      Titus 3:5, 2 Corinthians 3:18

- The Holy Spirit has a Double Work in us.

He works from the *Outside in*, and he works from the *Inside out*.

**Outside in** - by exposing the mind to Christ-exalting truth. He leads us to hear the gospel, to read the Bible, to study Christ-exalting writings of great, spiritual men, and to meditate on the perfections of Christ.

- The enemy of our soul tries to buffet this: 2 Corinthians 4:4

**Inside out** - by breaking the hard heart that blinds and corrupts the mind. He produces truth-embracing humility.

### **3 - The steps of faith must have action.**

**2 Corinthians 5:7**

*“True faith moves beyond belief to action. Faith is not simply a feeling, but rather a choice to obey God and trust that He will come through.”*

Terrie Chappell

### **How do we develop this action?**

**2 Corinthians 5:8-9**

- Maintain good courage - To be with Christ is better than any experience in this world.
- Develop a godly ambition to please Him.

### **4 - We are purposed instruments of God’s will.**

**Ephesians 2:10**

- If we walk according to the purpose of God, we have power in us because we are being used for our intended purpose.
- Illustration: Wood, Bolt, Pliers, Socket.

### **5 - We are self-sufficient in Christ’s sufficiency.**

**Philippians 4:13**

- Challenges are viewed through the all-sufficiency of Jesus!

If we cannot do all things, it is probably evident that it is being done by our own efforts.

- This is primal to our attitude. If our attitude is defeated and sees situations in a defeated light, it is not the strength of Jesus we are living through.

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*GrowthPoint*

Work through these points each day of this workweek and commit your attitude to Jesus. Renewal is yours!!! Transformations is yours!!

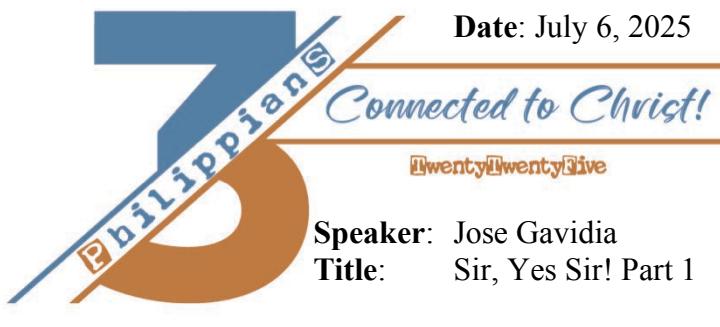
# Following the Right Examples

Philippians 3:17



## Monthly Message Direction:

July 6 <sup>th</sup>	Sir, Yes Sir!, Part 1.
July 13	Sir, Yes Sir!, Part 2.
July 20 <sup>th</sup>	The Sacrifice of Cravings and Consequence, Part 1
July 27 <sup>th</sup>	The Sacrifice of Cravings and Consequence, Part 2



**Text:** Philippians 3:17; John 4:46-54

Verse 54, was Jesus' second miracle. The first miracle, *water into wine*, was completely Jesus' doing. The second one, was based on the **obedience and faith to trust**, on the Royal Official's part.

**1 - There was action-filled desperation to find Jesus.** **Verse 47**

This Royal Official left his son, literally on his death bed, to seek out and find Jesus.

Capernaum to Cana is 25 miles (verses 46, 52)

- He acted in his desperation and took the risk to get to Jesus.

**2 - Although the Royal Official had his own way of how Jesus was to heal his son (physically and in person), he trusted the word of Jesus over the logical method he concocted himself.**

**Verses 49-50**

- In Verse 49, he implores Jesus to "come."
- In verse 50, Jesus tells him to "go."

*“When we are so emotionally frail and feel like we need the “Physical Presence” of Jesus or others with us, we must come to a Biblical Rational and realize that many times, we only really need the “Word” of Jesus and not some mystical feeling of His Presence.”*

Why is this? Jesus is ALWAYS with us! It is His Word we have a hard time trusting.

- The man (believed).
- He (started off).

The Official did not continue to implore Jesus to come. He believed and started off back to his home, 25 miles away.

This is a powerful picture of what the progression of our faith should look like:

1. Jesus speaks,
2. We believe,
3. We act on what Jesus said.

# GrowthPoint

1 - What is your most pressing need and write it down.

2 - What Word are you hearing from Jesus through reading the Bible?

### 3 - How will you act on your trust in Him?



Date: July 13, 2025

**Text:** Philippians 3:17; John 4:46-54

**4 - When we believe and act upon what Jesus says, we can expect there to be testimony on the journey back, of the faithfulness of Jesus.**

## Verse 51

- His slaves met him on the way home confirming the word of Jesus.

Jesus spoke - the boy was living!

**5 - The very moment Jesus speaks a word to us, is the very moment our situation changes! Even if we do not see evidence of it until our journey ends!** Verses 52-53

## Verses 52-53

- This father did not know that his son was healed until a day later.
- When he backtracked with his servants, he found that healing occurred at the time of the Word of Jesus.

We must not be led astray by the passing of time! When we receive a Word from Jesus, the miracle has already occurred. It is creation that is now catching up with the word of the Creator.

Time passed does not mean that Jesus is not doing anything. It means that our faith is in the process of maturity.

Daniel 10:2, 4-5, 12-13

1. Daniel prayed for 21 days,
2. God sent an angel to give him a word,
3. The angel said he was dispatched from the first day of Daniel's prayer,
4. The angel was warring in heaven to get the answer to Daniel.
5. The issue is not about the warring in heaven, but about the faithfulness and trust on Daniel's part.

**6 - The Official's entire household was transformed.**

**Verse 53b**

➤ Jesus' one word for a dying child was really a word of life for an entire household.

The situations of our life are rarely about one solitary issue. The prayers we are waiting an answer for, are so powerful that they will bring effect to everyone's life around ours.

This father needed an answer for only his son. God gave him an answer that resulted in the salvation of an entire household.

We must think bigger than our own need and realize that we can trust Jesus and expect a change in all the lives around us!

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**GrowthPoint**

What action can you take to respond in faith to the Word that Jesus is speaking to you? Start moving about your life in expectancy of the testimonies to follow!



**Text:** 2 Samuel 23:13-17

*“To be a follower of the Crucified Christ means, sooner or later, a personal encounter with the cross. And the cross always entails loss.”* Elisabeth Elliot.

*“If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.”* C.T. Studd

The three closest of David's Mighty Men, brought David water and especially nostalgia which he craved.

- Why would it have been wrong of David to drink it?

**1 - The main objective was freedom for the people under attack, and not the satisfaction of a momentary desire.** Verse 15a

It is so easy to forget the main objective in our life.

- This is why our life is always surrounded by great sacrificial material.
- The more we learn to sacrifice in light of our objective, the more we see the hand of God displayed in and through our life.

Luke 9:23-25

*“Sacrifice is the gateway to finding the life God intends for us. It's the pathway that leads to the perfect will of our heavenly Father.”*

What is the main objective of our life?

- Is it us or is it God?
- Is it our dreams, or God's purposes?

*"We are not sacrificing our own wills, plans, and dreams to a God who has less satisfying plans for our lives. We are not surrendering a happier, better life for something less, boring, or meaningless (John 10:10). God has plans greater than we could ever ask or imagine instore for us if we will lay down our dreams to make space for His. He has inexpressible joy for us if we will exchange what has made us temporarily happy, for His dreams and visions that are full of purpose, meaning, and adventure."*

## **2 - David was not the only man with the urge to drink.**

- Our desires must blend into the fact that all people around us have the same desire.
- How can we use the fulfillment of our desire to be a sacrifice to fulfill the desire in others?

## **3 - The sacrifice of the three Mighty Men was mighty, so mighty, that God deserved the sacrifice and not David.**

What is our biggest “blessings” lately?

- Just maybe, it is an opportunity to sacrifice to God.

## **4 - The work *ahead* of the battle was more important than the cravings or desires *within* the battle.**

- The people with David needed victory from the Philistines.

Discipline and restraint are mighty aspects of growth.

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**GrowthPoint**

What do we have that we can sacrifice to God?       

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Date: July 28, 2025

## Connected to Christ!

## Twenty Twenty Five

**Speaker:** Dr. Rai Paparatti

## **Title:** The Sacrifice of Cravings And Consequence. Part 2

**Text:** 2 Samuel 24:1-4, 10-25

*“If we are to cultivate habits of private prayer and devotion that will weather the storms and remain constant in crisis, our objective must be something larger and greater than our personal preoccupations and longing for self-fulfillment.”*

Alistair Begg

*“Nothing less than a living sacrifice is demanded. Not a loan, but a gift; not a compromise, but a sacrifice; not our poorest, but our best. Not a dead, but a living offering. Each drop of our blood, each ounce of our energy, each throb of our heart, we must offer to God.”* Joseph Pearce

Joseph Pearce

## **The cost of effective prayer.**

**1 - David was humbled and took responsibility for the consequence he was in.      Verse 17b**

- Victory over any sin and its result, is contingent upon a person's willingness to take responsibility for their sin.

We often cry to God but and look for ways out without ownership of the wrong that is being manifested in our life.

## **2 - When presented with an easy way out, David refused. Verses 22-23**

- So often, we offer to God other people's sacrifices and then wonder why we still have no breakthrough.

- Other people's prayers, advice, discipline, and relationship with God are not a substitute for our own.

### **3 - David spent time, money/cost, and effort to be personally involved and invested in the sacrifice he was offering to God.**

#### **Verses 24-25a**

- David spent 50 shekels of silver (\$1,067 today) for the threshing floor.
- David spends 600 shekels of gold (\$594,198 today) for the entire area in which later is built Solomon's Temple.

1 Chronicles 21:24; 22:1

**Time:** David's sacrifice of time consisted of the moment he was in and projection for the future.

**Money/Cost:** David spent great money to make sure that through his sacrifice people would have and altar to sacrifice at and the house of the Lord would be in their midst. (what sacrifice do we make in this?)

**Effort:** David did it all himself.

#### **David,**

#### **Verse 25a**

1. Built the altar,
2. Sacrificed to the Lord, and
3. He prayed.

He was involved in all three aspects.

### **4 - Thus the Lord was moved by prayer for the land, and the plague was held back from Israel.**

#### **Verse 25b**

- Prayer was partnered with personal sacrifice, effort and cost. It became effective prayer!

*GrowthPoint*

*“Lord, show us where our sacrifice must be more personal. Convict our hearts.”*



## Monthly Message Direction:

August 3 <sup>rd</sup>	The Danger of Conformity .
August 10 <sup>th</sup>	The Danger of Misaligned Priority.
August 17 <sup>th</sup>	The Danger of Misplaced Support, Part 1.
August 24 <sup>th</sup>	The Danger of Misplaced Support, Part 2.
August 31 <sup>st</sup>	The Danger of Misplaced Support, Part 3.



**Text:** Philippians 3:18; 1 Samuel 10:19, 24b

*“Some people had rather be president than be right.”*

Ruth W. Berenda

By following the wrong examples, we find three dangers that can creep in and derail our life:

1. The danger of Conformity,
2. The danger of Misaligned Priority, and
3. The danger of Misplaced Support.

### **The Danger of Conformity!**

**1 - Israel rejected God as King outwardly because of immorality in Samuel’s house.**

#### **1 Samuel 8:1-5**

- But God saw the real reason! (1 Samuel 8:7-8)
- They had rejected God because something else became more exciting.

**2 - Israel wanted commonality with the nations around them, rather than individuality.**

#### **1 Samuel 8:19-20**

- The people struggled with individuality, singularity, and devotion because it took more faith to trust in the unseen than the seen.
- Even though they could see the results of an active God.
- Individuality is about trust; Commonality is about ease.

- Individuality is about separation; Commonality is about association.
- Individuality is about Creative ideas; Commonality is about sensual ideas.

**3 - God allowed the people to choose a king and even orchestrated the events so that, He led them even while they rejected Him as their leader.**

**1 Samuel 8:7-9**

- We can never remove God from the equation of our life! Never! Even in sin, He orchestrates our ways so that we can be reconciled to Him.

How God uses the words rejected and forsaken:

- Hebrews 13:5
- Deuteronomy 31:6
- 2 Timothy 2:13

**4 - God allowed them (free will) to reject Him so that, through their wanting a king, God sent Jesus!**

- All of our decisions will always lead us to Jesus. Even in sin, God allows the events of our life to move towards Him.

Because the people valued conformity, they went through years of destruction and captivity.

*“Their conformity caused them to live a life swinging in the pendulum of hardship and grace; instead of being obedient and walking in God’s power-filled, faith-evoking, and trust-building plan from the beginning.”*

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**GrowthPoint**

What in your life is struggling with conformity? Name it: \_\_\_\_\_

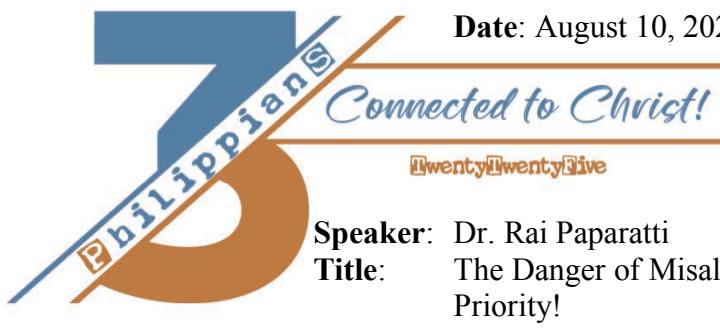
Confess it: \_\_\_\_\_

Take your stand as God’s Individual!



## Opening Illustration:

A few years ago psychologist Ruth W. Berenda and her associates carried out an interesting experiment with teenagers designed to show how a person handled group pressure. The plan was simple. They brought groups of ten adolescents into a room for a test. Subsequently, each group of ten was instructed to raise their hands when the teacher pointed to the longest line on three separate charts. What one person in the group did not know was that nine of the others in the room had been instructed ahead of time to vote for the second-longest line. Regardless of the instructions they heard, once they were all together in the group, the nine were not to vote for the longest line, but rather vote for the next to the longest line. The experiment began with nine teen-agers voting for the wrong line. The lone-student would typically glance around, frown in confusion, and slip his hand up with the group. The instructions were repeated and the next card was raised. Time after time, the self-conscious lone-student would sit there saying a short line is longer than a long line, simply because he lacked the courage to challenge the group. This remarkable conformity occurred in about 75% of the cases, and was true of small children and high-school students as well. Berenda concluded that, *"Some people had rather be president than right,"* which is certainly an accurate assessment.



**Text:** 1 Samuel 13:1-14

*“Christ is first, family second and football third.”*  
Thomas Landry

King Saul lost his kingship that day because his heart was not after the heart of God (Verse 14).

Saul allowed 3 things that day to dictate his heart into a wayward place:

**1 - “Because I saw the people scattering from me.”** Verse 11b

➤ Saul’s trust in God had waned.

**He started to realize that his own efforts might not be enough to save them. Saul relied on his numbers, not on God.**

➤ He could not have won anyway! It always had to be reliance on God.  
➤ Israel had at most 3,000 foot soldiers (verse 2), whilst the Philistines had 30,000 chariots and 6,000 horsemen (verse 5).

The victory was always and only going to belong to God. The only issue for man, was and is, timing!

**2 - “You (Samuel), did not come within the appointed days.”** Verse 11c

- Saul was waiting on Samuel for the start of the victory...not waiting on God!

He should have torn his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and sought the Lord.

- What a contrast between Saul and David.
- David, when he had sinned with Bathsheba, had a child, and the child was going to die because of sins consequence, David WAITED NOT, for Nathan the prophet to come - 2 Samuel 12:16

### 3 - *“The Philistines were assembling at Michmash.”* Verse 11d

- Notice the words, “*assembling*” and not “*marching*.” There was still time.
- There is always time to pause and *do* the right thing!

Saul says this as if there was no longer time. But, he did have time to do the *wrong* thing.

- If there is time to do the wrong thing, then there is always time to do the right thing.

Doing the wrong thing in a situation often feels like the right thing because we seemingly move forward on our own initiative. The right thing often includes self-sacrifice and waiting on God.

*“When we pursue first things first [God’s priorities - Mt.6:33], the second things are thrown in; when we pursue second things first, we not only miss out on the first things, but we also miss the fulness of the second things.”* Kenneth Boa

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## GrowthPoint

How much of your day is filled with your own plan versus God’s plan? \_\_\_\_\_% Make a timed priority. I will meet God \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm



## Opening Illustration:

In recent years a head coach divorced his wife of 26 years when he left coaching a college team to become head coach in the National Football League. He said he needed a wife while coaching on the college level for social functions and to show families that he would be looking out for their sons. In pro football, however, she was an unnecessary accouterment and a distraction to winning. He said winning football was his number one priority and his two sons second. How tragic!

In contrast to this, Tom Landry, former coach of the Dallas cowboys said, "The thrill of knowing Jesus is the greatest thing that ever happened to me ... I think God has put me in a very special place, and He expects me to use it to His glory in everything I do ... whether coaching football or talking to the press, I'm always a Christian ... Christ is first, family second and football third."



**Text:** 1 Samuel 27:1-12

*“Misguided loyalty allows the delusions of the leader to grow and destroys the faith of the loyal.”*  
Stephen Arterburn

David in this moment of weakness, filled with fear, crosses over and lives among his enemies.

So far was David willing to go because of fear, that he also formed himself into battle position to fight the very Israelites he was to be king over (1 Samuel 28:1-2, 29:1-34).

Fear, mixed with haste, brings compromise!

➤ F+H=C

**1 - This equation (F+H=C), brings us closer to our enemy.** **1 Samuel 27:3**

➤ “Proximity is either power or bondage!”

*“Proximity means nearness in place, time, order, occurrence, or relation.”* - Rebecca Greenwood

The closer we are to God and His influences, the more power is manifested in our life.

The closer we are to this world/enemy, the more bondage is tethered to our life.

Are we living in power or in bondage?

Achish, the Philistine king's name literally means: Serpent-charmer or angry.

Just as his name references, any attachments to the enemy bring about anger and idolatry in our life.

**2 - This equation (F+H=C), brings us the false assurance that there is safety in what the enemy has to offer.** **1 Samuel 27:5**

- There is no place in the enemy's camp where we can live safely.
- There is no place in compromise where we will not suffer loss! It is inevitable and only a matter of time.

David brings out three major words in reference to his new enemy friend:

1. **Favor**, (from this world diminishes the longing for God's favor.)
2. **Dwelling**, (causes unbreakable generational ties. Once children are born in bondage, it is hard to remove their desire for bondage.)
3. **Respect**. (removes boldness for right decision making.)

**3 - This equation (F+H=C), ties the bonds of friendship (access) with the enemy.**

**1 Samuel 27:6**

- Ziklag became David's new city.
- Gifts from the enemy in our life are the precursor to heartache and loss.
- James 4:4; 1 Corinthians 15:33

A gift from the enemy does not come free. The gift comes with malicious intent, designed to deceive, manipulate, or entrap (John 10:10)

- Their gift was a ploy for destruction. (1 Samuel 30:1-3)

**4 - This equation (F+H=C), produces loyalty (long-range + long-time scheming) with the enemy.**

**1 Samuel 27:12**

- David turned angry!
- Anger sets us up for a hard fall and a great humbling.

*“Uncontrolled temper is soon dissipated on others. Resentment, bitterness, and self-pity build up inside our hearts and eat away at our spiritual lives like a slowly spreading cancer.”*

Jerry Bridges

James 1:19-20; Ephesians 4:26-27; Proverbs 29:22

*“When we develop anger towards God and those around us, we are no longer fighting our enemy, but are fighting against God...and that action can never win!”*

### **How do we break this equation?**

**1 -We must listen to God for His will *in our situation and not attempt to run and hide from our situation.***

- God has a word for us in the midst of where we are.
- If we cannot hear it, we have not spent adequate time listening.

**2 - We must run to godly people who build discipline and not to ungodly ones who only self-medicate through their sin.**

**3 - We must act on as many trust opportunities we can towards God through our faith.**

- Every trial produces opportunity to increase in faith.
- We must simply choose to practice them as we go through!

Look for little opportunities to be obedient in trust!

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## GrowthPoint

**1 - If you are stuck in the cycle of fear, haste, and compromise, begin by asking Jesus for forgiveness and invite Him into the chaos of your life.**

**2 - Find a place alone, take your Bible, and spend time just reading and asking Jesus for insight and peace.**

**3 - Find a godly Christian and ask for prayer.**  
**NOT ADVICE! Just prayer. Receive more prayer than advice in your life.**



**Text:** 1 Samuel 27:1-12

*“Compromise is but the sacrifice of one right or good in the hope of retaining another - too often ending in the loss of both.” Tryon Edwards*

Fear + Haste = Compromise (F+H=C)

**5 - When we run to the wrong place for support, it brings situational opportunities of compromise.** **1 Samuel 28:1**

- Because David had tied cords of loyalty to the Philistine king, it was expected from him that at the right time, David would have to rebel and fight against his own people.

This is the danger of past hurt in our lives. David was Saul's bodyguard and Saul hurt David.

The enemy now expects David to become his bodyguard.

A few truths to ponder. **1 Samuel 28:2**

1. Our gifts don't leave or change because we have been hurt.
2. There is a danger to hate God's family because of hurt.

3. Hurt naturally leads us towards patterns of sinfulness.

**6 - When we run to the wrong place for support it brings us to fight against the very people that God has placed in our life to lead.**

**1 Samuel 28:2; 29:1-2**

- In verse 2, David desperately wants validation for his skill set. He looks to the wrong place.
- Our validation does not come from people! Our validation comes from God!

How do we fight against the people of God?

- We don't make time;
- We don't make effort;
- We don't value other's lives and situations because we are too busy thinking about ourselves!

**7 - When we run to the wrong place for support it brings about random situations of attack and loss - Great Loss!**

**1 Samuel 30:1-5**

- Why random attacks? The door for the enemy is open.

**8 - When we run to the wrong place for support it brings animosity amongst the relationships we take with us in this “land of compromise.”**

**1 Samuel 20:6**

The Lord is always waiting for us to finally yield to Him.

**1 Samuel 30:6b-8**

- This is what David should have done before he entered into compromise with the Philistines.

- He lived in compromise and uncertainty for 1 year and 4 months (1 Samuel 27:7).

If David had gone to fight with the Philistines, he would have participated in the death of king Saul and Jonathan.

- David would have been involved in killing Saul, of which he stood against.
- David would have been involved in killing his best friend Jonathan with whom he made oaths.

Imagine, Jonathan helps David escape and live away from Saul, only to have David rise up in battle against him.

God's grace in all of this came through the commanders of the Philistines rejecting David.  
1 Samuel 29:3-7

When our enemy rejects us, it is always God's grace protecting us!

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## GrowthPoint

We must run to Jesus in the hurt of our life.  
Running to Jesus involves:

1. Breaking our pride.
2. Breaking our pattern.
3. Developing a new action contrary to the ones that cause us to run.

The uncomfortable feelings of breaking habitual fight or flight patterns, must be confronted.

- Any change towards godliness is a step towards the power of God!



Date: August 31, 2025

Speaker: Dr. Rai Paparatti  
Title: The Danger of Misplaced Support, Part 3!

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**Text:** 1 Samuel 29:8

David called the Israelites his enemies!

When we do not separate from the world:

**1 - The people of God look like our enemies.**

- David was calling his own people, enemies because of a skewed perception based on personal hurt.
- We must not allow our hurt to dictate a move of separation from the people we must be with.

**2 - Instead of desiring to lead/befriend them, we want to destroy them.**

- Why would David have such hatred for all of Israel when it was really just Saul who had hurt him?
- The more time we spend hearing the views of the enemy, the more they enter into our life and change our value system.

The lies of the enemy have a way of entering in.

This is so true in the algorithm of our life. If our shorts feed were to be made public, people could

easily see what is feeding our attention...our perception...our devotion...our truth.

### **3 - Our enemies become our loyalty while God's people become casualties.**

- David asks, “What have I done wrong?” to the king of the Philistines.
- He is desperately looking for validation from the wrong source.

David needed to man up to the responsibility of being set apart for God and for His people.

- So often we will not push into responsibility because we are prone to desire chaos instead.
- This is why it is easier to live in mess than in order.
- It is easier to live in sadness than in happiness because sadness takes no effort and is given to chaos. Happiness takes responsibility and given to discipline.

### **4 - We deny our calling!**

- David was called to be Israel’s king, leader, and protector. Not their destroyer.
- We are called to more than what our fear tells us!

### **5 - We actually fight against God.**

- Disdain for His people (His Church) is disdain for Him.

No matter what we face or the hurt we go through because of *one* individual who turns an army against us, the people of God are still His! God will deal with the rebellious person.

# RIGHTS OF CITIZENSHIP

PHILIPPIANS 3:20A



## Monthly Message Direction:

September 7<sup>th</sup>      Heavenly Citizen, Part 1

September 14<sup>th</sup>      Heavenly Citizen, Part 2

September 21<sup>st</sup>      Passport on Display, Part 1

September 28<sup>th</sup>      Passport on Display, Part 2



**Date:** September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025

## Connected to Christ!

## Twenty Twenty Five

**Speaker:** Dr. Rai Paparatti

## Title: Heavenly Citizen, Part 1

Text: 1 Peter 1:17-25

*“This text was written to a people who were struggling to have a citizenship. The words were not just “a nice idea,” but the striving of life.”*

***“Keep your eyes on the rope!”***

Since our home is not this world, we must develop perspective and discipline for our eternal life to come.

## We must develop:

## 1 - Reverent fear.

## Verse 17

- If this world is not our home, we do not want to mar or mark negatively the representation of our homeland.
- Our fear of God must develop and mature. As it matures, the benefits we receive change!

Gerald Vann

## 2 - Humble dependence.

## Verses 18-19, 23

➤ Proverbs 3:5-6; Psalms 62:5-8; Proverbs 16:3

## Humble dependence produces:

\*Clear direction, \*A place of refuge, \*Success

*“God pursued us in Christ, redeemed us from our old way of life by His blood and brought us into a new life by His Spirit. The resident alien understood this and says, ‘Hallelujah!’”*

Alistair Begg

### 3 - Active trust.

### Verse 21

- This is more than belief that God exists!  
Even demons believe that - James 2:19.
- Our faith and hope are in God!

**Hebrews 11:6** - Pleasing God through faith. Faith is believing first that He is, and then seeking Him continually.

- In the seeking portion of our life, we receive the rewards of this life.

**1 Peter 1:3** - Because of what Jesus did, we have a *living hope!* This is a hope that reproduces continually for the details and directions of each and every turn in this life.

**Romans 5:5** - This living hope “does not disappoint!”

- Because the Love of God pours out over our heart through the Holy Spirit.
- What is the Love of God doing?
- He is preparing us for our Home!

If our mind is stuck on this world, we lose anticipation, hope, purpose, and especially perspective!

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**GrowthPoint**

Prepare for eternity. Put it in perspective in your devotions tomorrow. Spend time thinking about eternity and asking God to mold you to live for it.



**Text:** 1 Peter 1:17-25

***We must develop:***

- 1 - Reverent fear, 2 - Humble dependence,
- 3 - Active trust,

**4 - Decided obedience.**

**Verse 22a**

- Having feared God, having understood the redemption that He alone offers, and having believed that He keeps His promises,  
Believers have done something about it!

Obedience means we have truly accepted the message.

- *“This is a decisive act in the past that has abiding consequences.”* Alistair Begg

When people are married, they make a decision in a moment that affects the rest of their lives.

- That moment may be months or years in the making, but nonetheless, decisive!

Like the man who sold all he had to buy a pearl of great price (Matthew 13:45-46); like the disciples who left their nets, boats, and their father to follow Jesus (Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11).

- The resident alien has experienced God’s calling and entered decisively and willfully

- into a relationship with Jesus Christ - No Turning Back! No Turning Back!

What actions are we taking for a decisive and active faith?

### 5 - Fervent love.

### Verse 22b

- Christian love is not a result of emotional surges. Instead, it is rooted in the truth of the Gospel, grounded in the Word, and results from our Obedience to that Word's truth!

*“The world wears a mask. The love which it shows on the face is only external. That is feigned love. Ours should be unfeigned. If a saint does not have a love which is unfeigned, the trouble is with his adjustment to the Holy Spirit who is the One to provide that saint with that love. The Spirit-filled saint does not have to play the hypocrite in the matter of love, for love shines right out of his eyes. It is on his face, in his actions.”*

Wuest

*Fervent* is from the Greek *ektenos* (*ek*=out + *teino*=to stretch) literally pictures one “stretching out” to love other.

### 6 - Eyes for eternity!

### Verses 24-25

- The only way to really make a mark, is to make one for God! - 1 John 2:17

2 Corinthians 5:15, “Jesus was real, lived a perfect life, was crucified, died, and resurrected on the third day.”

C.K.

- *If we don't make a mark for God, the world will make a mark on us. And we know that we cannot be presented to God with any spot or blemish (Ephesians 5:27).*



Settle eternity in your heart. Live eternity through your actions. Do or say something this week that will reflect the Word of God and your eternal home.



**Text:** Philippians 3:20; 1 Corinthians 15:19;  
Jeremiah 29:4-7

*“Our life on this earth matters, to us and to God. Why else would God’s Son have joined us here? But our life here isn’t everything. To us or to God. Because our true citizenship is in heaven.”*

James Lawrence

How do we live this short life in preparation for eternity? This is the message to exiles. The message to us.

### 1 - Build!

### Jeremiah 29:5

- “Build houses and live.”
- As we build in exile, we are building for Christ.

As we build our life here, we are using the skills and gifts given to us from our native land.

- Just how immigrants built NY.
- Our building influence should be evident in our culture.

### Illustration - Cityscapes

Can people recognize heaven structures we are building and leaving in this world?

What we do must here on earth must reflect what Matthew 6:9-13 declares:

1. The Kingdom of Heaven,	Verse 10a
2. The Will of Heaven,	Verse 10b
3. The Laws of Heaven,	Verse 12
4. The Power of Heaven,	Verse 13a
5. The Person of Heaven.	Verse 13b

**2 - Take and Become!                    Jeremiah 29:6a**

- We must cultivate relationships!

We must become the Fathers/Mothers of sons and daughters.

The purpose of our short time in this land is to cultivate relationships and bring others with us. Bringing them into the family of God.

- 1 Peter 4:8-10

Fervent in love - hospitable without complaint - employing our gifts in service - stewards of the grace of God.

**3 - Multiply and do not decrease!**

**Jeremiah 29:6b**

- We must grow! The Church must grow!

We must not be immigrants in hiding! Hidden immigrants are ones hiding sin. Visible immigrants are ones that are ready to use their gifting from their homeland.

[Letter to Diognetus!](#)

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GrowthPoint

Build - Become - and Multiply. Make a strategy to use your life and gifts for your Kingdom. Pray for insight and perspective...Now TAKE ACTION!

## The Pieter Claesen Wyckoff House in Brooklyn: Built 1652 in Classic Dutch Farmhouse Style



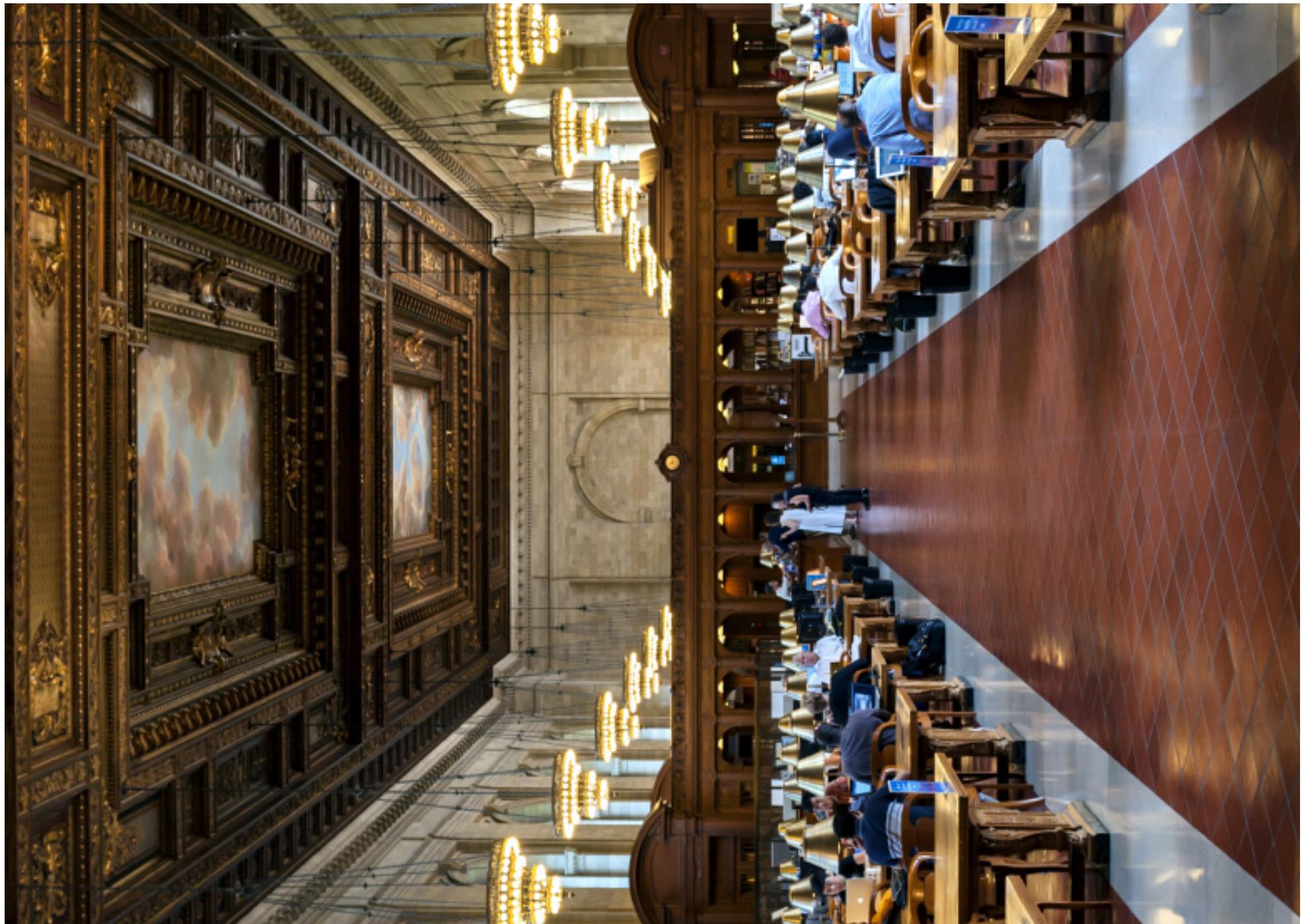
# Trinity Church designed by immigrant Richard Upjohn in 18<sup>th</sup> Century British Gothic Revival Style



**St. Patrick's Cathedral: Built between 1858 to 1878, designed by James Renwick Jr.  
British Gothic Revival Style**



## NY Public Library - 18<sup>th</sup> Century Beaux-arts French Style



## Renaissance Italy - Italianate Brownstones in Brooklyn



## Met-Life Tower: Inspired by the Campanile of St. Mark's in Venice



## Upper-West Side Apartments: By Italian Architect Rosario Candela, copied Italian Renaissance Style



# The Met Breuer - German Style, Designed by Marcel Breuer

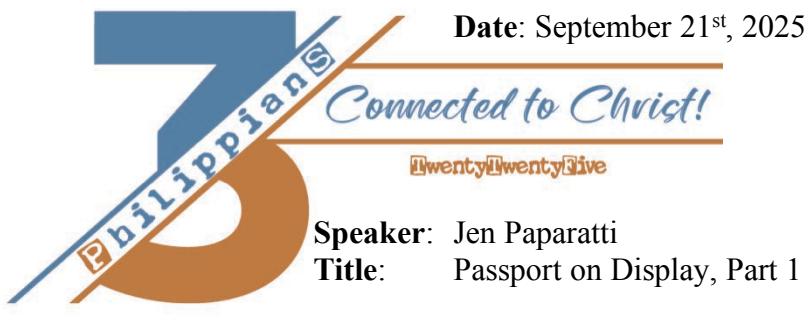


## The Tong Lau in Chinatown: Hong Kong Style



# Permanent Mission of India to the UN





## Illustration: Letter to Diognetus

In the late 2<sup>nd</sup> Century, a letter was found titled: The Letter to Diognetus and it was an apologetic letter defending the claims of Christianity. It was found among the writings of Justin Martyr, and early Christian apologist and philosopher.

Diognetus must have been a man of some rank because the salutation of the letter addresses him as “His Excellency.” The author is not entirely known, although the letter purports the writer to be a student of the Apostles. He calls himself, “Mathetes”, which in Greek simply means “disciple.”

In the letter, Diognetus is admonished in a strong way to live for eternity. The following are some statements from this early letter.

### True Christians:

*“They exist in the flesh, but they do not live by the flesh. They pass their days on earth, **but they are citizens of heaven.** They obey the prescribed laws, all the while surpassing the laws by their lives.”*

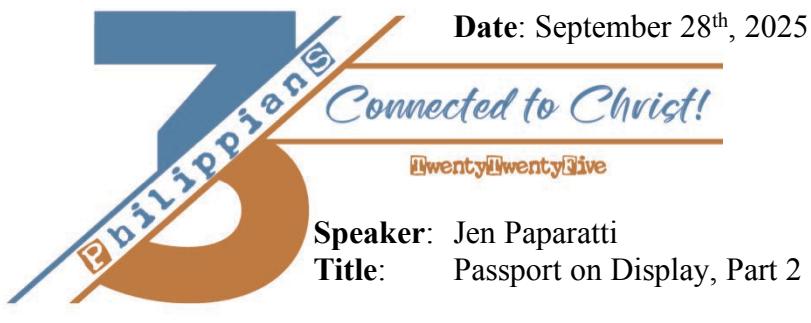
*“They love all men and are persecuted by all. They are unknown and condemned. They are put to death and restored to life.”*

*“They are poor, yet make many rich. They lack everything, yet they overflow in everything.”*

*“They are dishonored, and yet in their very dishonor they are glorified; they are spoken ill of and yet are justified; they are reviled but bless; they are insulted and repay the insult with honor; they do good, yet are punished as evildoers; when punished, they rejoice as if raised from the dead. They are assailed by the Jews as barbarians; they are persecuted by the Greeks; yet those who hate them are unable to give any reason for their hatred.”*

One truth magnified in the Letter to Diognetus is that the lifestyle Jesus called all Christians to live has not changed. Unwarranted persecution has existed since Jesus walked the earth and will continue until He comes again. This letter is a clear and succinct explanation of what it means to follow Jesus and there is no other life worth living.

This life is only the preparatory stage of the eternal life to come!



**Text:** Philippians 3:20; Jeremiah 29:4-7

*“We strive too hard to receive the perks from some of the greatest countries in the world. Yet, heaven remains farthest from our minds, when it contains the greatest and more authoritative perks in existence.”*

- Perks from around the globe.

#### **4 - Seek the welfare of the city.**

**Jeremiah 29:7a**

- How is it that we can help our country of exile?
- God is calling us to action.

The Hebrew word for *welfare* is the word *shalom* and covers *physical, emotional, spiritual and financial peace and prosperity*.

- This does not mean seek prosperity for the world, but that the welfare for our lives will be evident where we are planted.

*“The primary message of Jeremiah 29 to us is to live in the light of our future hope - to live now in this world as citizens of the next world, neither ceasing to do good to all those around us now (Galatians 6:10), nor becoming so friendly with*

*our world that we find ourselves enemies of God (James 4:4). ”*

Phil Colgan

## 5 - Pray for the city.

**Jeremiah 29:7b**

- If we were in Israel’s place, what would we pray for the city that captured us?

We ought to pray for:

1. Peace,	1 Timothy 2:1-2
2. Presence,	Exodus 33:15
3. Safety,	Psalm 122:6-9
4. Revival,	Acts 3:19-20
5. Prosperity,	Deuteronomy 28:12
6. Favor,	Psalm 90:17
7. Heaven’s immigrants to get into earthly government positions. ( <i>We see this in the lives of Daniel and his friends.</i> )	

## 6 - In its welfare, we will have welfare!

**Jeremiah 29:7c**

- Welfare for heaven’s citizens only comes when heaven invades our exiled citizens mind and land.

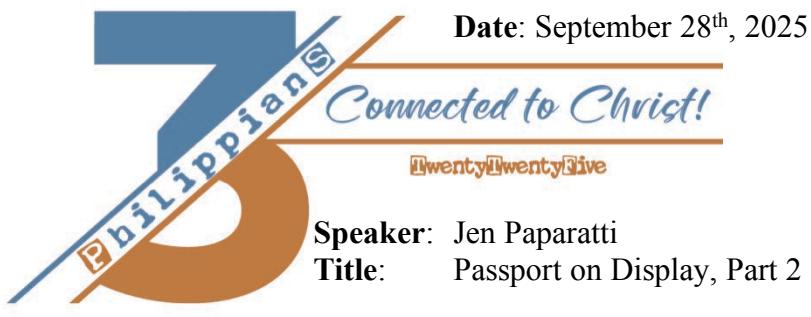
If our mind is on heaven and our true citizenship, the principles of heaven will invade our life.

**Being a city-sent!**

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GrowthPoint

Live for heaven! Be consumed with heaven. Be consumed with eternity! Live truly like a city-sent in all that we do. Live for eternity first. Spend one full day making all decisions based on eternity. The results will be transformative!



## **Opening Illustration: Perks from around the globe.**

### **For New Parents (Or People Planning to Start A Family)**

#### **Sweden**

As one of the countries that offer the longest paid parental leave (a whopping 480 days), this leave is not gender-exclusive so yes, it is not just mothers-to-be but also for aspiring fathers as well. If the parents are employed, their employers ensure that they are provided up to 80% of their expected salary.

And that's not all there is; the Swedish government also provide parents a monthly allowance for each child they have and these can have used towards various expenses such as daycare or simple things like spending time with the family. Don't have the money to entertain baby dearest? That's fine, you can always take free public bus rides and take a leisurely stroll in baby-friendly public areas to keep them entertained.

## Finland

In Finland, maternity leave begins 7 weeks before your baby's expected date of delivery. Plus, you can get up to 16 additional weeks of paid leave in which the government will cover up to 70 percent of the costs of your paid leave through a maternity grant.

Aside from that, paternity leave is also common in Finland in which fathers will get up to 8 weeks of paternity leave to take care of their baby.

But of course, the most famous part of having a baby in Finland would be the much-talked-about baby boxes. Mothers are offered the choice of a baby box or cash grant but most mothers preferred the former, believing that the baby box has a higher value attached to it.

A long-standing tradition of the Finns, the baby box is actually a starter kit for new mothers and it usually consists of a package of clothing and handy items curated especially for both mother and the baby.



## **For Students (Or People Who Want To Do Postgraduate Studies)**

### **Netherlands**

Renowned for their free primary and secondary state education, offered to their citizens, the Netherlands also ranks high when it comes to awarding scholarships to international students.

The Dutch government introduced The Holland Scholarship in 2015 for students who want to do their Bachelor's Degree or Masters in the Netherlands. The best part of it all? The programs are mostly conducted in English.

### **Germany**

The reputation of their education's quality precedes the country itself. Home to many esteemed universities, Germany makes for an affordable study destination among both local and foreign students, particularly for those who are keen to base their career in Mechanical Engineering. Tuition fees in Germany are said to be low as it is financed by the state. To pursue their studies at their selected universities, students in Germany will only need to pay a small, nominal amount.

Prospective students will need to pay the Semesterbeitrag or 'Semester Contribution' administrative charge, in which the cost ranges from 200 – 300 Euros and comes with free public transportation and that's all!!

**The World Citizenship Report**, Publishes an article every year evaluating every nation and ranks each nation on their quality of citizenship.

The report bases its findings on 5 criteria:

- 1 - Quality of life,
- 2 - Safety and security,
- 3 - Economic opportunity,
- 4 - Global mobility,
- 5 - Financial Freedom.

Based on these, the 2024 report listed the following as the strongest nations with best qualities for citizens:

1. Topping the list in the 2024 WCR is Ireland, renowned for its welcoming environment and robust passport strength, offering citizens a wealth of opportunities and privileges.
2. Switzerland follows closely, known for its stability, economic prosperity, and high quality of life, making it an attractive destination for many.
3. Denmark, Australia, and Iceland secure notable positions on the ranking, showcasing their commitment to providing exceptional citizenship experiences. These countries offer a blend of social welfare, security, and inclusivity that sets them apart on the global stage.
4. Germany, Norway, and the Netherlands also feature prominently, recognized for their progressive policies, strong institutions, and overall quality of life for their citizens.
5. The United Kingdom, Sweden, and Finland round out the top rankings, highlighting their dedication to fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment among residents.

## **Closing Illustration: City-send**

When a family member was on a Christian dating site many years ago, one of their suitors, was an immigrant to this country and started their romantic boast by declaring that they were indeed a city-send. Written just like that!

They obviously meant to say that they were a citizen, but to the best of their ability, it came out as city-send. That is powerful.

We ought to become city-sent! Citizens sent from heaven to invade this world for the time frame we are here. The breath of this life will soon be over, and what we have done in this minute moment in time will be the thrust of our eternity!

anticipating a coming kingdom  
philippians 3:20



## Monthly Message Direction:

October 5<sup>th</sup>

The King Appears!

October 12

Missing from Heaven.

October 19<sup>th</sup>

Having Heaven's Mindset,  
Part 1

October 26<sup>th</sup>

Having Heaven's Mindset,  
Part 2



**Text:** Revelation 1:3; 22:7, 12

Unihemispheric slow-wave sleep (USWS)!  
Dolphins know how. Christians should as well.

**1 - There is a blessing to receive in this waiting period if we will read, hear, and heed His Words.**

**Revelation 1:3**

- This is the progression of how the Holy Spirit words in our life.

If we read, we are then convicted to hear.

- Reading, places us in the position to hear what we need for the situations of our life.

If we listen/hear, we are convicted to heed.

- Hearing the Word on the inside (specific for our situation) causes the blessings of the Word becoming alive and doing what it set forth to do.

If we obey, we live blessed.

- This is a pre-event blessing.
- Luke 11:28

Living a life that manifests the Word of God, is a life that lives in the fullness of the power of God.

## 2 - Obedience brings the hope of His return and an unrealized supply of friends.

### Revelation 22:7-9

- The premise is that if we are in obedience, Christ's return is a delight, not a dread.

Because Jesus is coming again, we realize that we have: Revelation 22:9

1. Angelic support, Verse 9a
  - We have a partnership with angels.
2. The prophets that have gone before us become a heavenly support. Verse 9b
  - Hebrews 12:1

*"The "Cloud of Witnesses" represents generations of faithful believers who have lived, struggled, and trusted in the promises of the Creator. Their collective testimony is not a passive crowd but an active, encouraging witness."*

3. A Global Christian Alliance. Verse 9c

*"The connections to God's family globally, is not only for encouragement, but the more connectivity we have, the more we are made whole by the fulfillment from another believer in which we lack in ourselves."*

- Ephesians 4:16

## 3 - His reward is coming with Him.

### Revelation 22:12

The reward is always greater than the work.

1. He will wipe every tear,
2. No more death,
3. No more mourning,
4. No more crying,
5. No more pain.

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Take 1 hour, read the Word, listen to the Word, and obey the Word. Anticipate the blessing in your life because Jesus is Coming Soon!



## Opening Illustration:

Did you know that dolphins sleep with one eye open? It's true.

Dolphins sleep with only half their brain at a time, a phenomenon called unihemispheric slow-wave sleep (USWS). One hemisphere of the brain remains awake to control basic functions like breathing, maintaining body temperature, and remaining alert to surroundings and potential threats, while the other hemisphere rests. The dolphin then switches which side is resting, ensuring both halves of the brain get adequate rest while maintaining constant awareness of the environment.

When the left side of the brain sleeps, the right eye will close, and vice versa.

If a dolphin were ever to go into deep, full-brain, total unconscious sleep, they would simply suffocate or drown.

We must live waiting and anticipating the return of Jesus. If not, we would simply drown in the sea of the world.



**Text:** Revelation 21:4; Galatians 5:19-21

*"If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world."* C.S. Lewis

**1 - When we realize what is missing from heaven, its draw should increase.**

**Revelation 21:4**

- The first things have passed away!
- If we find it hard to think about heaven, something else has shifted into top priority.

We should continually be thinking about going home!

*"What we have experienced, for probably only a few minutes at a time in this life, become eternal realities."*

**2 - There will be no more questions and the struggle of "why?"**

**1 John 3:2-3; 1 Corinthians 13:12**

- *To see Him as He is* will be to **know** Him, His **will**, and His **ways**.

We will instantly look at our life and realize that He has always been good!

The things that are missing from heaven should give us **hope** and **purpose**.

Things missing from heaven list:

**3 - The very things which are missing from heaven, are the things which try to lay **hold** of us today.** **Galatians 5:19-21**

➤ Paul calls these the *deeds of the flesh!*

The hold of **lust**:

\*Immorality, \*Impurity, \*Sensuality

➤ This binds our **bodies**

The hold of **impatience** towards God's timing:

\*Idolatry, \*Sorcery

➤ This binds our **spirit**

The hold of **hatred** towards man:

\*Enmities, \*Strife, \*Jealousy, \*Outbursts of anger,

\*Disputes, \*Dissensions, \*Factions, \*Envy

➤ This binds our **emotions**

The hold of **disconnecting** from God as support:

\*Drunkenness, \*Carousing

➤ This binds our **discipline**

We all fall prey to some of these. Yet, they are specifically mentioned as missing from heaven!

➤ Oh that we would strive to live Godly and rest on the righteousness of Jesus!

*"If you read history you will find that the Christians who did the most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this."* C.S. Lewis

**4 - The greatest thing that should not be missing from heaven is **YOU!**** **2 Peter 3:7-9**

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*GrowthPoint*

As you think about the things missing from heaven, settle your heart in repentance before God and solidify your Passport to Heaven!



## Illustration:

What will not be in heaven by Dr. Monty Wright

In Revelation 21-22 the apostle John is trying to describe the day that heaven and earth combine...when God once again becomes a permanent resident with humanity; A renewal of the Edenic reality, but even better. How do you describe that which you have never seen or known? When language exhausts her best expressions and you still haven't even begun to reveal your experience, a new tactic is needed. This is what John does as he tries to describe the new heavenly reality. Instead of telling us what is there, he focuses more on what is not there. "*No more tears, no more death, no more pain, etc.*" Here is an A-Z list of what won't be in heaven to help us grasp the beauty of what will be there. Obviously this list is finite, incomplete, borrowed and missing items.

What Won't Be In Heaven

**In Heaven there will be no more:**

Acne, aches, addiction, anxiety, anxiety meds, amber alerts, amputations...

Bad breath, body odor, broken hearts, broken homes, break ups, bills, bill collectors, bi-polar, bullying, battles...

Cancer, coughs, catastrophes, conflict, crash diets, CPS, concussions, court rooms, corruption, crutches, casts, child abuse, chemo therapy, crosses along the side of the road, cutting...

Deception, depression, divorce, drama, doctors, disease, double chins...

Evil, erosion, embarrassing moments, enemies, elections, evictions, earth quakes...

Fighting, foreclosures, flu-shots, fear, funeral homes, funerals...

Gossip, guilt, greed, graves...

Hospitals, hurricanes, hate, homelessness, hormones, human trafficking...

Injustice, infertility, infidelity, insecurity, inoperable tumors...

Junk mail, jealousy...

Kooks, killing, killjoys...

Legalism, life-support, lawyers, loneliness, labor camps, lines for the lady's room, love handles...

Motionless ultra sounds, metal detectors, MRI's, Multiple Sclerosis, Middle of the night phone calls, miscarriages, misunderstandings...

Neurosis, night sweats, nursing homes, negativity, needles...

Operations, orphanages, oppression...

Pretending, plastic surgery, politicians, pacemakers, persecution, pain, prejudice, poverty, pink slips...

Quitting, queasiness, qualifying...

Racism, rejection, road rage, rape, revenge, radiation...

Special weight-loss plans, saddle bags, sox without a match, security systems, sleepless nights, slums, suicides, suicide bombers, school shootings, sadness, slander...

Treatment centers, tear stained divorce papers, tissue boxes, tornado, tsunamis, typhoons, trafficking, tiny caskets, taxes...

Unibombers, unwanted, unloved...

Victims, violence, vindictiveness, vaccinations, vice...

Waiting rooms, wheezing, wheel chairs, wounds...

X-rays...

Yelling...

Zoos, Zeroes (because everything will have value)...

Jesus says, *“Look!, I am making everything new!”*



**Text:** Colossians 3:1-4; Philippians 4:8-9;  
Matthew 11:12

*“The people who forcefully grabbed hold of the Kingdom of Heaven are the ones advancing it.”*

Spiritual stability is a result of how a person thinks.

➤ This is why Satan is always attacking the Believer's mind!

Philippians 4:8 brings the mindset of the Kingdom into view.

➤ The daily thinking and acting on the Word of God actually renews new nerve cells and rewires neuronal connections.

(Philippians 4:8)

**1 - We must cling to the truth!      Verse 8a**

➤ We must cling to both the Person of Truth (John 14:6) and to His revelation of truth.

Truth is first because it is the headwaters from which the springs of life flow (John 17:17).

**2 - We must be led by honor.      Verse 8b**

➤ This means we must live in light of eternity.

*Honor* is the Greek word *semnos* which holds the idea of *a character that invites respect because it reflects the holiness, gravity, and worthiness of*

*God Himself. It is to live in a way that commands honor without demanding it.*

## ➤ Can we live in this way?

We need:

1. Holiness - purity through Jesus,
2. Gravity - seriousness in devotion,
3. Worthiness - living for God alone! Period!

This honor or honesty is not honesty in the terms of business transactions. The word was originally used in relation to gods. Being worthy of them. In the way we live, are we acting worthy of the call of Jesus?

### **3 - We must dwell on rightness.      Verse 8c**

- This is to think on what God said is right!
- How can we know what is right apart from the intake and expression of reading the Word and prayer?

## 4 - We must be given to purity.      Verse 8d

- To think about purity is to act on separation from the world.
- Psalm 119:1-8

To be given to purity is to:      Psalm 119:1-8

1. Walk in the law of God - not our own. (v1)
2. To walk in the ways of God. (v3)
3. To realign my ways to His (v5)

# GrowthPoint

Every day this week, focus on Philippians 4:8. Read it every day. Pray it every day. Soon, your mind will begin to develop characteristics of the mind of Jesus. Grow, grow, grow!!



## Illustration on New Nerve Cells

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2)

For the longest time, we have interpreted this verse as meaning that reading the Bible transforms the way we think. While this is true, new research shows that there is more to it than that.

Studies have proven that doing something frequently like reading the Bible not only changes the way we think but literally changes our brain. Our mind is transformed and made new!

Pastor Mark Batterson explains it this way:

Doctors Avi Karni and Leslie Ungerleider of the National Institute of Mental Health did a fascinating study asking subjects to perform a simple motor task—a finger-tapping exercise. As subjects tapped, the doctors conducted an MRI to identify what part of the brain was being activated.

The subjects then practiced the finger-tapping exercise daily for four weeks.

At the end of the four-week period, the brain scan was repeated. In each instance, it revealed that the area of the brain involved in the task had expanded.

That simple task—finger-tapping exercise—literally recruited new nerve cells and rewired neuronal connections.

When we read Scripture, we are recruiting new nerve cells and rewiring neuronal connections. In a sense, we are downloading a new operating system that reconfigures the mind...

When we read Scripture, we engage in spiritual tapping. Our brains are rewired in alignment with the Word, and we develop the mind of Christ. We think His thoughts.



**Text:** Philippians 3:1-4; 4:4-8

*“I was both its guardian and its hostage...I had lost something precious. I had also lost 15 years.”*

*Patrick Vialaneix*

1. Cling to the Truth,	Philippians 4:8a
2. Be led by honor.	Philippians 4:8b
3. Dwell on rightness,	Philippians 4:8c
4. Think about purity,	Philippians 4:8d

### **5 - We must consider loveliness.      Verse 8e**

- *Lovely* is the Greek word *prophile* and is a relationship word derived from *pros* (towards) and *philes* (love of/for a friend). It refers to *the conduct which pushes you towards love*.

If we are to consider loveliness, we are to consider the worth in someone else's life and place a focus or emphasis on it in the same manner as Christ would.

Jesus cares for that which we care for! *That* is loveliness!

- Philippians 4:6; Luke 12:6-7;

## 6 - Bye-bye to destructive attachments!

### Verse 8f

- *Good repute* is that which is well spoken of.
- It draws the mind towards that which is well spoken of with respect - matters that, when named, elicit gratitude rather than censure.
- Gratitude rather than censure!!!! Things that we can vocalize and be thankful for instead of things that we feel we must hide!

We must desire to cling to things which are well-spoken of or godly.

It seems although that the very attractants in our lives are the things which are *not* well spoken of.

1. Immorality is attractive.
2. Gossip removes introspection.
3. Sin momentarily pauses anxious dealings.
4. Swearing brings a fleshly release.

(All these things further wrap cords of bondage in our life.) The taste of these things bring the desire for them and unravel the maturity of Jesus in and through us.

## 7 - Excellence is action!

### Verse 8g

- *Excellence* (GK. *arete*) never means cloistered virtue or virtue of attitude, but virtue which is demonstrated in life.

When anything in nature properly fulfils its purpose, that fulfillment is referred to as *moral excellence*.

*“A thing’s arete is its excellence, or the fulfillment of its purpose. A knife that cuts well has the arete of a knife; a land that produces crops is ‘excellent’ because it is fulfilling its purpose.”*

- Our moral excellence comes when we live by the Spirit. And our spirit is activated and empowered by the Spirit of Jesus.
- 1 Corinthians 2:4

Acts 1:8; Romans 15:18-19; 1 Thessalonians 1:5;  
2 Corinthians 4:7; 2 Corinthians 10:4;  
1 Corinthians 1:17; 1 Corinthians 4:20;  
2 Timothy 1:7

- The antidote for a critical spirit is a mindset that looks for that which is worthy of praise.

Praise must be on the tip of our tongue.

Praise for God - Praise for His Church - Praise for one another.

# GrowthPoint

Begin with breaking the critical way of speaking. Start right now. Find someone in this church and begin by encouraging them and speaking life over them.



**Speaker:** Dr. Rai Paparatti  
**Title:** Having Heaven's Mindset, Part 2

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## Opening Illustration:

**Patrick Vialaneix became so obsessed with Rembrandt painting that he stole it and kept it hidden for 15 years**

*In 2014, Patrick Vialaneix faced up to 10 years in jail, for the 1999 theft of the work from a museum,*

Neither his wife nor his children knew of the terrible secret eating away at the Frenchman who stole a Rembrandt and kept it hidden in his bedroom for 15 years.

The unemployed technician first saw the painting at the age of 13, when his mother took him to the museum where it was exhibited.

The visit led to an obsession with the haunting oil painting of a teenage boy with long brown locks, wearing a gold necklace and holding a soap bubble in his left hand.

“Something happened between me and the child. It was like a mirror,” he told *Le Monde* newspaper in an interview.

Over the following years, he would travel from his home in nearby St-Raphael to stand and stare at the melancholy painting.

He read up on the life of the 17th-century Dutch master and fostered a passion for his works.

“I was both its guardian and its hostage,” he said.

Mr/ Vialaneix confesses to developing a burning desire to possess *Child with a Soap Bubble* in 1999. He was then aged 28 and working as an alarm systems technician.

His visits to the Draguignan museum now had a second purpose — to study the building’s security system.

The alarm went off the second he unhooked it from the wall. He ran out, put the Rembrandt in a garbage bag on the back seat of his car, and drove home.

“I had a smile on my face like I never had before. When I got home, there was a moment of euphoria. I let out a big shout. I took photos. I felt like a superman,” he told *Le Monde*.

The theft made the newspapers and Mr Vialaneix knew his life was never going to be the same again. He wrapped up the 50 x 60 cm painting and hid it under his bed.

A few months later he met Christine, whom he later married.

A psychiatrist Mr. Vialaneix consulted to help him deal with his mental turmoil was also only to find out about its true cause after the confession.

The man moved to various towns across southern France, each time because he thought each house too damp or too dry or at risk from fire, and thus a danger to the boy he had secretly adopted.

When he was alone in the house, Mr. Vialaneix would take out the picture and place it on an easel, and spend hours contemplating its dark earth tones and golden highlights.

“I may sound like a fool, but I would speak to it,” he said.

Mr. Vialaneix told *Le Monde* when he finally handed over the painting, he felt empty inside.

“I had lost something precious. I had also lost 15 years.”

The painting gradually consumes its possessor, until January 2015. Sometime after his interview for the documentary, Patrick Vialaneix died during his sleep of cardiac arrest.

november



## Our Powerful Transformation

*Philippians 3:21a*

### Monthly Message Direction:

November 2<sup>nd</sup> Heaven's Look!

November 9<sup>th</sup> True Politics.

November 16<sup>th</sup> Transformed for now, Part 1

November 23<sup>rd</sup> Transformed for now, Part 2

November 30<sup>th</sup> Transformed for now, Part 3



Date: November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025

Speaker: Dr. Rai Paparatti  
Title: Heaven's Look

**Text:** 1 John 3:2; Philippians 3:21a

*"If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world."*

C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

What will we look like in heaven?

- While the Bible does not show us an actual descriptive of our transformed body, it does give some insight into what we will become.

John tells us that when *He appears, we will be like Him* (1 John 3:2)

**1 - We will have personal connection towards all those who have accepted Christ.**

**Matthew 17:1-8; Luke 9:29-31**

- We will recognize one another.
- Moses and Elijah were recognized by the disciples.

1500 years had passed from Moses' death and Jesus' transfiguration.

800 Years had passed from Elijah's ascension and Jesus' transfiguration.

- *That is like recognizing someone from the year 525 AD and 1225 AD respectively.*

In the transformed state of heaven, we will know and recognize each heart of humanity.

➤ How personal!

Moses and Elijah had an incredible part to play in history. Yet, in their glorified state, they had a greater purpose.

- They were to confer and stand in the mission of Jesus about a month before His death.
- Moses represented the Law and Elijah represented the Prophets.
- They both appeared with Jesus, confirming from the Law and Prophets that Jesus fulfilled them as Messiah.

Moses and Elijah were speaking to Jesus about His departure. They knew intimately the details of this life, even though they were now a part of the next.

➤ Hebrews 12:1

This event had so touched the few disciples that were with Jesus that it impressed them with a mark that was never forgotten.

➤ John 1:14; 2 Peter 1:16-18

**What does this mean for us?**

1. We are connected to the greatest network of people from the beginning of time. We will know them all.
2. Our purpose becomes greater in heaven!  
Greater purpose with perfection.

**2 - Our bodies will undergo transformation and still keep recognition.**      **John 21:4, 7, 12;**

**John 20:14-16; Luke 24:13-16, 32**

- Will we still look like we do now in this life? Possibly not. But we will still be recognized.

We no longer lead by sight! We lead by the transformed Spirit and Heart.

**What does this mean for us?**

1. Our personality was created without lack. We do not have to feel less than who we were created to be. It is this essence that carries on to the next eternal life...in perfection.

**3 - Our faces will become reflective of our Redeemer's Image.**

**2 Corinthians 3:18; Psalm 17:15**

In Earth, we seem to reflect our earthly desires. In Heaven, we will reflect our King - Jesus Christ.

**What does this mean for us?**

1. If in heaven we will reflect the glory of the Only Creator of eternity and all that is in it, here in this life, we can be confident, that our inner man (our spirit) is transforming for that day, reflecting the glory of Almighty God in the mundane of this life.
2. Be saturated with the presence of God. It will only spill over in power.

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*GrowthPoint*

Long for heaven! Let it consume your thoughts so much so, that you day-to-day life begins to change because of heaven's draw.



**Text:** Philippians 3:20-21

### **Our citizenship is in heaven!**

- *Citizenship* is the Greek word *politeuma* (n) and means *commonwealth*.
- The only other place *politeuma* is used in the Scripture is in its *verb* form in Philippians 1:27 - “*conduct yourselves*” (*politeuomai*) and means *living the life of a citizen*.

This made perfect sense to the Philippian reader.

- Citizenship was important and you must live in accordance to your ruling authority.

Paul helps the church realize that, they all through Jesus, received citizen status!

- Now they must live according to the standard of their commonwealth.

We have a continual attack against us from *enemies* (Philippians 3:18-19) of our citizenship.

1. **Their end is destruction.** They are only intent on giving themselves to destructive self-motive.
2. **Their god is their appetite.** Their own inner and debased desires rule every decision they make.

3. **Their glory is in their shame.** They become so surrounded with wickedness that shame is no longer shame but liberation. (Time spent exploring shame, multiplies shame, i.e. *sexual revolution*).
4. **Their minds are set on earthly things.** Spiritual truths are no longer in the picture. When we lose a mind on the Spirit, we lose the desire, discipline, and control of the Spirit.

In context, the “*for*” of verse 20a, is because of the “*for*” in verse 18a. Paul’s thrust is verse 17, “*join in following my example.*” What is his example?

### **1 - Count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus.**

**Verse 8**

With this we gain:

- Righteousness from God (verse 9b)
- Power of His resurrection (verse 10a)
- Fellowship of His sufferings (verse 10b)
- Resurrection from the dead (verse 11)

### **2 - Forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead.**

**Verse 13b**

### **3 - Have this attitude!**

**Verse 15**

- Philippians 2:5, 12

We are almost home!

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*GrowthPoint*

Find a way to emphasize your true citizenship this week. Put it on display, especially when others are looking at you.



## Illustration on *Their glory is in their shame*

### Evolution of the sex movement

The evolution of the sex movement is a complex history driven by factors like the invention of birth control, shifts in societal attitudes, and the rise of social movements like second-wave feminism and gay liberation. Initially rooted in the separation of sex and procreation due to the birth control pill, it expanded to challenge traditional sexual norms and advocate for sexual autonomy, leading to greater public discussion of sex and the politicization of sexuality in the late 20th century.

#### Early 20th Century to 1950s: Seeds of change

- **Sexual activity outside of marriage:** A rise in premarital sexual intercourse began in the early 20th century, and research from figures like Alfred Kinsey in the 1940s and 50s revealed a significant gap between public attitudes and actual sexual behavior.
- **Focus on marital satisfaction:** The focus of sexual liberation in this era was largely on sexual satisfaction within the confines of marriage.

#### 1960s: The Sexual Revolution

- \*\* Technological factors:\*\* The introduction of the birth control pill was a major catalyst, allowing for the separation of sex from procreation and giving individuals, especially women, greater control over their reproductive lives.

- **Cultural and social shifts:** A broader shift occurred towards liberalized attitudes about sex, driven by a youth-oriented counterculture and a questioning of traditional morality and values.
- **Rise of "free love":** This era saw the rise of "free love" as a concept, promoting sexual relationships outside of traditional structures like marriage.
- **Growing public discourse:** Sex began to be discussed more openly in public, fueled by more prevalent erotic media like magazines and films.

**Influence of other movements:** The sexual revolution became intertwined with other social movements, notably the early stages of the gay rights movement and second-wave feminism, which sought to challenge social and moral confines on women's sexuality.

### 1970s onwards: Diversification and new challenges

- **Politicization of sex:** Sexual liberation became a more explicit part of political and social battles for emancipation.
- **Feminist movements:** Second-wave feminism fought for sexual autonomy, with movements pushing for the decriminalization of abortion and other reproductive rights.
- **Gay liberation:** The gay rights movement gained significant momentum, challenging discrimination against sexual orientation.
- **Internal debates:** The sex movement saw internal debates, particularly within feminism, such as the "Feminist sex wars" between anti-pornography and sex-positive feminists.
- **Continued evolution:** Today, the movement continues to evolve, focusing on issues like sexual health, comprehensive sex education, and the exploration of diverse sexual identities and expressions.



**Text:** 2 Corinthians 3:18

*“It’s a radical transformation. It’s not an improved inner man, but a total replacement of the old with the new. A new heart that now has the capabilities and desires to function on an entirely different spiritual plane. So when this new soul seeks its ultimate pleasures in the passing and trivial things that the old soul chased after, it only sets itself up for failure. It’s like trying to drive a \$300,000 yacht down the parkway. You’ll be disappointed.”*

Randy Smith

**1 - We must let the glory of God transform our countenance.** **Verse 18a**

- We can either be changed by circumstance or change the circumstance by prayer.

*“Had I been a stranger to Jesus and to prayer, my reason would verily have given way...”*

John G. Paton, Missionary to Vanuatu (1858)

1 Samuel 1:12-18

- Hannah battled in prayer.
- Her face was no longer sad.

Luke 9:28-29

- Prayer transforms our countenance to that of our citizenship.

## 2 - Our victories build upon themselves.

Verse 18b

- God takes us from glory to glory.

This is not by our own doing or effort. This is entirely empowered and accomplished by Him.

We need victories in our life! We often live too defeated.

- The words of Billy Graham...
- “*Confess, yield, receive, accept...*”

## 3 - Just as we receive from the Lord, His Spirit.

Verse 18c

- He gives us His Spirit so we can rely on Him to work victory through us.

He is the Spirit of Truth: John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13

He will glorify Christ in us: John 16:13-14

How does this happen?

1. Prayer.
2. Submissions to His Spirit (Obedience)
3. Desiring to reflect Him.

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GrowthPoint

Give yourself this week over to true transformation. Dwell on your true identity in Jesus. Your true citizenship. Live for Heaven!



## Illustration - Billy Graham quote from 1959

Traveling across the country and talking to Christians in every walk of life, I am made keenly aware that the Christian life, as it is generally being lived, is not always a happy life.

The Bible teaches that Christianity ought to be and is meant to be something to make people joyful, not something to make them miserable. The Bible teaches that a life of inward rest and outward victory is the believer's birthright.

Thousands of you have received Christ as Savior; you have been born into His kingdom; you have begun the Christian life. Becoming a Christian is one thing, and living the Christian life is another. You took a simple step—you invited Christ to come in as your Savior and Lord.

But this is not all there is of the Christian life. It is true that Christ through the Holy Spirit now lives within you; but in spite of this, you may find yourself unhappy, confused, frustrated and miserable.

You may have become discouraged and are living a sub-normal, defeated life. The joy and thrill of the original Christian experience is gone. There is only the dying ember of what used to be a mighty flame for Christ in your soul. In the very depths of your heart, you know that your experience is not the New Testament experience. It seems that all you can expect from your Christianity is a life of ultimate failure and defeat—one hour failing and the next hour repenting—beginning again, only to fail again.

We American Christians are not living up to the standards set by the early church.

The reason other ideologies are making such inroads in the world today is because Christians have failed to accept the ideology set by Christ. Christians have failed to pay the price of discipleship, causing the great masses of the unbelieving world to become confused as they gaze upon the strife within religious bodies.

**The great need of America today is for Christians to discover the secret of daily victory over sin instead of struggling within themselves.** The difficulties experienced by defeated Christians come because they have taken their eyes off Christ. Their eyes are on the world about them—on circumstances. Some become too introspective, looking only at themselves and their failures. Once you fasten your eyes upon Christ, you will have victory. As long as Peter kept his eyes on Christ, he could walk upon the water, but when he looked upon the waves instead of Christ, he began to sink.

Thousands of Christians may be whispering within: *Why do I as a Christian do some of the things I do? Why do I as a Christian leave undone the things I ought to have done?* Many of you name the Name of Christ, but you are living in constant defeat. You have unclean hands, unclean lips, an unclean tongue, unclean feet, unclean thoughts, an unclean heart—and yet you claim to be a Christian.

You claim Christ, you attend church, you try to pray, and yet you know there are things in your life that are not right. You do not have the victory that is promised in the Scriptures; consequently, you have practically no testimony for Christ in your community. You rarely if ever win another person to Christ. The joy and thrill of Christian experience is not yours. You know that something is missing.

The great need of America today is for Christians to discover the secret of daily victory over sin instead of struggling within themselves.

There are Christians who have **never learned to live a separated life.** They are not separated from unclean habits and unclean thoughts. They have never learned the secret of separation unto God in daily life.

Some have **no daily quiet time** in which to get alone for prayer and Bible reading.

To you defeated Christians who haven't known the power, the thrill and the joy that Christ can bring, I beg of you to make this a moment of new surrender to Christ. Begin by taking all of the sins

you are guilty of—list them, and then **confess** them and check them off, remembering that Christ forgives just as the Bible says: “*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*” (1 John 1:9).

When you have confessed every known sin in your life, then **yield** to Him every area of your life: your girlfriend, boyfriend, your family, your business, your career, your ambitions, your soul, the innermost thoughts and depths of your heart. Yield them all to Christ.

Then **believe** that God has accepted your surrender.

**Accept** by faith the fact that you have been crucified with Christ, but Christ is living in you (see Galatians 2:20). Stand before the cross, recognizing that Christ not only died to save you from the guilt of sin but also the power of sin; and that by dying daily with Christ, you can find the secret of victory.

It is a thrilling, joyous experience to wake up every morning and know His presence in the room. It is a thrilling, delightful experience to know, in the evening when the sun is setting, the peace of God. Then as you go to bed, you can sleep the sleep that only those who know Christ are able. What a joy it is to walk in that eternal and unbroken experience of Christ.



**Text:** Colossians 2:18-22; Jude 1:20-21;  
Galatians 2:20

*“The adventure of a new life in Christ begins when the comfortable patterns of the old life are left behind.”*

David Roher

**1 - As we build our faith, we receive heaven's supply.** **Jude 1:20-21**

➤ Prayer is the only catalyst of change which merges the Kingdom of Heaven into the kingdom of this world.

Building up our faith has to do with:

**A) Praying in the Holy Spirit.**

➤ We need the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.  
**Jude 1:20**

Praying in the Spirit includes praying with our mind and with our spirit. (1 Corinthians 14:15)

**This means that:**

1 - We invest a quality amount of time in prayer,  
2 - We yield yourself to the Holy Spirit, and  
3 - We allow Him to guide, instruct, empower and inspire our prayers.

*“How much you pray in the Spirit determines what type of building you will grow in to. This is because it takes spiritual strength to retain the words of life that Jesus speaks to you.”*

## B) Staying in the love of God. Jude 1:21a

- *Keep yourselves* denotes the idea that it takes *purposeful actions*.
- Faith does not grow itself. It is our actions based on the Word of God that causes growth and causes us to *remain* in the love of God. John 15:5, 7

## C) Waiting anxiously for His return.

### Jude 1:21b

- *Waiting anxiously* is the Greek word *prodechomai* and it expresses *expectant waiting where a person is ready and willing to receive all that is hoped for. This is active looking-for-and-waiting!*

This waiting produces boldness in fearful and challenging situations.

Mark 15:43

This waiting produces the serving hand of God towards us.

Luke 12:35-38

## 2 - Remember the marks of Crucifixion.

### Galatians 2:20a

- What does crucifixion even mean?

## 3 - Actually live through Christ.

### Galatians 2:20b

*"If we have been crucified by substitution, we must live by devotion through the power of His impartation."*

- If He imparted to me salvation by His doing. He will also impart to me His power to then live a salvation based life.



Spend some time this week in prayer simply anticipating the return of Christ. Everything will change!



Date: November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025

Speaker: Dr. Rai Paparatti  
Title: Transformed for Now!  
Part 2

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## Opening Illustration:

The motor home has allowed us to put all the conveniences of home on wheels. A camper no longer needs to contend with sleeping in a sleeping bag, cooking over a fire, or hauling water from a stream. Now he can park a fully equipped home on a cement slab in the midst of a few pine trees and hook up to a water line, a sewer line and electricity. One motor home I saw recently had a satellite dish attached on top. No more bother with dirt, no more smoke from the fire, no more drudgery of walking to the stream. Now it is possible to go camping and never have to go outside. We buy a motor home with the hope of seeing new places, of getting out into the world. Yet we deck it out with the same furnishings as in our living room. Thus nothing really changes. We may drive to a new place, set ourselves in new surrounding, but the newness goes unnoticed, for we've only carried along our old setting.

The adventure of new life in Christ begins when the comfortable patterns of the old life are left behind.

David Roher.



**Text:** Ephesians 4:23-32

*“The greatest display of eternal transformation is when our mouths begin speaking our language of heaven.”*

**1 - Speaking truth to one another. Verse 25**

- Our words either receive the blessings of God and shape our situation for good *or* they receive the curses of the enemy and shape our situation for bad. 1 Peter 3:7-10

Our words bring *life* (*zóé* - *Physical and spiritual life that only comes from and is sustained by God*).

Our words bring *good* (*agathos* - *good which originates from God and is empowered by Him*)

Our words must be protected from evil speech and lying. 1 Peter 3:10b

**2 - Block curses from an angry demeanor.**

**Verse 26a**

- Sleeping angry imprints deeply on our life. (Verse 26b)
- We are most vulnerable when we are sleep. An angry heart is an absolute open door!

1. The devil preys on angry hearts. Angry hearts are open doors for the devil's seeds to enter in.
2. Time does *not* heal all wounds. Jesus does.
3. We cannot do anything while we sleep, but God can! (Psalm 121:3-4)

### **3 - The devil thrives on verbal anger. Verse 27**

- It is his cue.
- Anger opens the door to receive falsities.
- John 8:44

### **4 - Let encouragement, not gossip flow.**

#### **Verse 29**

- The Holy Spirit in us performs power through encouragement - not depression through gossip!

**Verse 30**

### **5 - Bitterness and its verbal minions (wrath, anger, clamor, slander, malice) must be put away.**

#### **Verse 31**

- These characteristics set us up for grieving the Holy Spirit.
- Grieving is not sadness. It is discipline.
- He will never leave us, but will through love discipline us.

### **6 - We must step out and act on forgiveness!**

#### **Verse 32**

- The very action of Jesus towards us should be our main motivation in the relationships of this life.

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**GrowthPoint**

Pray and refocus your words. Be specific on what you say. Be specifically biblical in what you say!



## Monthly Message Direction:

December 7<sup>th</sup>      Letting Go.

December 14<sup>th</sup>      Word of Power.

December 21<sup>st</sup>      All Hail Emmanuel.

December 28<sup>th</sup>      Reflecting for Tomorrow.



## Illustration for Point 4:

There's an interesting law of science called *Coulomb's Law of Electrostatic Force* which very simply says **like charges repel**. If you have a magnet in your right hand and a magnet in your left hand, and you push the positive ends towards each other, they push away. Opposite charges attract; like charges repel. But here's a great mystery: in the nucleus of the atom, protons are packed together which are all positive-charged particles. What keeps these positive-charged protons from repelling like the magnets? What holds them together? Science doesn't know. You can study quantum physics and learn lots of hypotheses and theories, yet to this day, it's a mystery to scientists. The closest some scientists come is describing it as "*Strong Nuclear Force*." But not to believers - for Scripture tells us the real answer. It is Jesus Christ who holds all things together. And the day is coming when, suddenly, He will let go... "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (2 Peter 3:10)



**Date:** December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025

## Connected to Christ!

## Twenty Twenty Five

**Speaker:** Dr. Rai Paparattin  
**Title:** Letting Go!

Text: Colossians 1:13-17

Because Jesus rules all, His power and authority are ours in each depiction of our life.

## 1 - By Him all things were created. Verse 16

➤ Everything comes back to Jesus!

“*All things created*,” has the idea that the permanence of the universe rests on Christ far more than on gravity. It is a Christ-centric universe.

Everything in this world serves a purpose to God!

- What then do we do with the bad? Is it from God?
- Evil has never originated from God. But, God will always use the bad in our life and redeem it for His purpose and our good.

He redeems:

1. Evil made towards us, Genesis 50:20
2. Evil made by us, Acts 2:23-24
3. Evil systemic to this fallen world.

Isaiah 46:10; Philippians 1:12

- *Through* signifies that the Creator's intentions come through His creation.

We were created with intention!

- Intention relates to significance.
- Ephesians 2:10

Only by living *through* His intentions, do we ever realize our full significance.

*"It becomes too easy to lose our divine purpose in day-to-day responsibilities. Without knowing when or how, we trade significance for lesser things like human approval, false identities, or impressive earthly titles. Oh, how sad!"*      Maryann Ward

Psalm 138:8; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Jeremiah 1:5;  
2 Timothy 1:9

Our life ends when our purpose has been fulfilled!

- Acts 13:36; 20:24

### **3 - For Him all things have been created.**

#### **Verse 16b**

- Our specific purpose brings us to His relational purpose!
- God's desire is connection with Him more than our detailed provisional list.

We want *from* God - He wants *us*.

### **4 - In Him all things hold together. Verse 17**

- He alone is our *Strong Nuclear Force!*

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## **GrowthPoint**

Trust your situation into the hands of the One who holds all things together. Write it down. I will place my trust in God for \_\_\_\_\_ today. Speak this out: **If He holds the world together, He holds me!**



## Illustration on Fire.

What can a fire destroy in our life?

What can a fire help us do in our life?

We use the word “burning” to mean different things. Classic Burn Idioms:

1. My stomach is on fire.
2. That burns me up.
3. I’m burning to tell my story.
4. I have burnt the candle at both ends.
5. This money is burning a hole in my pocket.
6. I got burned to a crisp!
7. I’ve burned those bridges.
8. I am all burnt out.
9. Their ears must be burning.
10. If you play with fire, you’re gonna get burned!
11. He is burning the clock.
12. I have been burned by that person.
13. My heart is burning for you!

Our heart burning for someone really causes us to take extreme measures in life.

It is no different spiritually. Our burning heart must become the motivation of a changed life.



Date: December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Connected to Christ!

Twenty Twenty Five

Speaker: Dr. Rai Paparatti  
Title: Word of Power!

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**Text:** Hebrews 1:1-5; Luke 24:32-36

*A fire is either a devastation or a transformation.*

Jesus upholds all things by the Word of His power.

John 12:48

➤ Jesus holds the final word.

Isaiah 55:11

- Every word that Jesus spoke/speaks holds the creative power to change men, heal men, or judge men.
- The purpose of Jesus will always be accomplished.

The super-text for the message is Luke 24:32

➤ *“Were not our hearts burning within us as He was speaking.”*

We must develop a heart that burns within for His Word.

*“When we are much affected with the things of God, especially with the love of Christ dying for us, and have our hearts thereby drawn up in holy desires and devotions, then our hearts burn within us...”* Matthew Henry

*“Jesus appears to us and our hearts are kindled...then we have to learn to keep the secret of the burning heart that will go through anything. It is the dull, bald, dreary, commonplace day with commonplace duties and people, that kills the burning heart unless we have learned the secret of abiding in Jesus.”* Oswald Chambers

How do we break commonplace and develop power-filled uncommon lives?

**1 - Break the commonplace spirit, by doing something for Christ.      Luke 24:33-35**

- It is about activity in our Christian walk.
- Be a witness. Share what you know!

Jerusalem to Emmaus was about a 7 mile journey. 14 miles in that day to see results having to do with their faith.

- The issue is not how many miles we do for Christ, but how far we are willing to go out of our way for our walk of faith!

**2 - Command the wrong emotion!    Luke 24:32**

- Only through the inward burning of the word of God can our emotions ever be commanded.

*“Much of our distress as Christians comes not because of sin, but because we are ignorant of the laws of our own nature. For instance, the only test as to whether we ought to allow an emotion to have its way is to see what the outcome of the emotion will be. Push it to logical conclusion and if the outcome us something God would condemn, allow it no more way.”*

Oswald Chambers

- We can never reject a wrong emotion if we are not filled with His Word, His Church, and His Presence.

**3 - Long for His Presence!    Luke 24:35-53**

- His Presence not only makes the journey - His Presence *is* the journey.

*“Give me the love that leads the way - the faith that nothing can dismay. The hope that no disappointments tire - the passion that'll burn like fire. Let me not sink to be a clod - make me thy fuel, flame of God.”*      Amy Carmichael

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**GrowthPoint**

Practice reading His Word, and then immediately doing something that engages your faith.



Text: Luke 2:10-14

## 1 - The Savior has come! Verse 11

- There is a way out for the struggle of mankind.
- His name is Jesus! He is Savior, Messiah, and Lord.

**Savior** (*sótér*), The *deliverer*.

**Messiah** (*Christos*) Literally: *Anointed*; Transliterated: *Christ*; Properly: *Messiah of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*; By Function: *Kinsman Redeemer*; By Identity: *Jesus (Yeshua)*.

**Lord** (*kurios*), *A person exercising absolute ownership rights.* It means owner using full rights.

- Jesus was born so we don't die.
- A *Pax Romana* doesn't bring peace!

The Heavenly Host praising God declared:

- Jesus is God's highest glory.      Verse 14a
- Peace among men.                  Verse 14b

What did the Shepherds do with this incredible revelation?

**1 - They did not waste any time in contemplation.** Verse 16

- They acted immediately towards the revelation of Jesus and sought Him out.

## 2 - They trusted the Word of God even though their experience was at the initial stage.

### Verse 16a

- Jesus had not saved them yet!
- God is always working out His plan even when our timeline does not seem to fit.

## 3 - They confessed to others the statements which God had said about what they would experience.

### Verse 17

- God had already told Mary and Joseph about Jesus. Why did it matter if some shepherds said anything?
- We would have loved if it was a Roman leader or a High Priest tell us that God was about to do something.

*Don't underestimate the little experiences with ordinary people.*

## 4 - The Shepherds went back glorifying and praising God for what was to happen.

### Verse 19

- Our praise to God solidifies His plan in us, because the greatest critic of any personal experiential reformation is our own heart and mind.

The shepherds being this close to the city meant that the sheep they were tending were usually the ones that would be slaughtered for sacrificial purposes.

- 33 years later, as some of these flocks were being prepared for the Passover sacrifice, Jesus joined their ranks.



**Date:** December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025

## Connected to Christ!

## Twenty Twenty Five

**Speaker:** Dr. Rai Paparatti

## Title: Reflecting for Tomorrow!

*“What [others] most need is to see in you a reflection of what God is like and of the transforming power of the Gospel. Your life can create hunger and thirst for God in others’ lives and can be a powerful instrument in the hand of the Holy Spirit to draw their hearts to Christ.”*

Nancy Leigh DeMoss

## January - Turning Gain into Loss

## February - That I May Know Him

2 - Message from Jehovah: "You have stayed here too long!" Deuteronomy 1:6

➤ Stagnation equals death!

## **March - The Power of His Resurrection**

3 - The delay of Jesus is always: On Purpose (John 11:6), For a Purpose (John 11:15), and Giving us Purpose (John 12:3).

## April - Fellowship of His Suffering

4 - The Church is the greatest expression of familial love. John 13:34-35

## **May - I Think I Can - Pressing On**

5 - Jesus rescued Paul in difficult situation *as* he fulfilled his mission of being sent. Acts 26:17

## **June - Change my Attitude**

6 - God is always listening.      Numbers 12:2b

- This should be our greatest joy even in discipline.

## **July - Following the Right Examples**

7 - David spent time, money/cost, and effort to be personally involved and invested in the sacrifice he was offering to God.      2 Samuel 24:24-25a

## **August - Rejecting the Wrong Examples**

8 - Fear mixed with haste will always bring compromise.      1 Samuels 27:3

## **September - Rights of Citizenship**

9 - We must seek the welfare of our city.

Jeremiah 29:7a

- God is calling us to action.

## **October - Anticipating a Coming Kingdom**

10 - There is a blessing to receive in this waiting period if we will read, hear, and heed His Words.

Revelation 1:3

## **November - Our Powerful Transformation**

11 - As we build on our faith, we receive heaven's supply.      Jude 1:20-21

## **December - Subjecting All Things to Him**

12 - Break the commonplace spirit by *doing* something for Christ!      Luke 24:33-35

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# GrowthPoint

The greatest display of putting this reflection into practice, is releasing your year to the Lord and anticipating a SHIFT for 2026. Anoint your year to come with your family to the Lord.