52 Stories of the Bible

(New Testament)

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27. The Birth of Jesus

Luke 1

# First part of the Bible makes some amazing promises

## God created Adam and Eve so they could enjoy a personal relationship

### Did what they were not supposed to do — broke God’s rules — “sin”

### Result: they and their descendants lost their relationship with God

### God promised to someday do something about their sin — 3:15

## 1,800 B.C. — Promise to Abraham (Gen 12:3b)

### Through Abraham he will bless all people (families)

## 1,000 B.C. — Promise to King David (2 Sam 7:12-14)

### Physical descendant (“who shall come from your body”)

### Reign over an eternal kingdom

### Father/Son relationship

### Came to be known as the “Messiah/Christ”

## 700 B.C. — Related prophecy from Micah 5:2

### Messiah from Bethlehem

### “Origin is of old, from ancient days”: supernatural king

## 700 B.C. — Promise of a miraculous birth from a virgin (Isaiah 7:14)

### “Immanuel” — “God with us”

### Promise is not only that there would be a miraculous conception

### Something supernatural about the child himself

## About 700 years later, God kept his promises

# Angel (Gabriel) visited a young woman (Mary)

### Luke 1:26-38

### Notice the promises God is starting to keep

## 1. Virgin (v 27)

### Her Son, Jesus, fulfills God’s promise made through Isaiah

### Connection between Jesus’ birth and I’s prophecy explicit in Matt 1:22-23

## 2. Joseph was a physical descendant of King David (v 27)

### Jesus fulfills God’s promise to David

### This Jesus will reign over his eternal kingdom forever

## 3. “Jesus”

### “God is salvation” — Matt 1:21

### Jesus fulfills promise to Adam & Eve, and all their descendants, to save from sins

## 4. Jesus will be a blessing to all …

### And thereby fulfill God’s promise to Abraham

### a. Blessed with forgiveness of sin

### b. “Immanuel”: “God with us”

#### The greatest blessing we can ever receive through Abraham/anyone

#### is to enjoy a personal relationship with our creator — presence of God

# Mary does become pregnant, as God promised

### Goes to see her friend Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-56)

### Luke 1:50

### Distinction: blessing to all, but mercy only on some

#### Fear God

#### Approach God in reverential awe

# Birth (Luke 2:1-7)

## Angels announce Jesus’ birth to the shepherds (2:8-14)

### Appropriate — very low on the social scale

### Blessing of Abraham is available for all, even shepherds

### “Great joy will be for all the people” (2:10)

## Distinction of 2:14

### God’s peace is only on those with whom he is pleased — fear him

### “Peace” means that the conflict has ended and relationship restored — we all desperately need that peace

## God does not treat all people the same

### Fair to all

### Only some receive his mercy and peace

# Who then is this baby Jesus?

## Fully God

### “Son of the Most High/God”

#### His Father is God, not Joseph — Jesus fulfills God’s promise in 2 Sam 7

#### Biblical language for being God (John 1:1; 10:30)

### God could have sent the messiah some other way — born of a virgin

#### but he sent Jesus this way to make it clear that Jesus was God

### Necessary, because in 33 years this baby will die on the cross

#### On that cross this baby will carry all the sins of all people.

##### No human being could endure that pain

##### And no human being can pay the penalty for another person’s sins

#### Only God could endure the pain,

##### and only God could apply his death as the penalty for the sins of others.

## Fully human

### Born of a human mother — John 1:14

#### Mystery that we call the “incarnation” — greatest miracle

### God could have sent the messiah some other way, but he sent Jesus this way to make it clear that he was also fully human

### Necessary, so that Jesus could pay the penalty for human sin

#### Oranges cannot pay the penalty for fig trees

#### Only a human can pay the penalty for human sin

#### Heb 2:17

## Jesus, as the incarnated God, becomes …

### Unique revealer of God the Father (1:18)

### Unique mediator/intercessor/High priest (1 Tim 2:5)

### Unique savior (Heb 7:25)

### No one else, especially no other human, can …

### Mystery/beauty of the incarnation — good news to the shepherds

# Not enough to simply know these facts (demons)

## Takes more than intellectual assent to be at peace with God/mercy

### A. Like Adam and Eve, we are sinners/separated from the relationship

### B. Jesus, God-Man, died for my sin — penalty

### C. Born again, live out our lives as God’s children

### It’s all about Jesus — no wonder God prepared us for his birth with so many promises.

## Offer of salvation from sin and relationship with God is offered freely to all — “good news to all people”

### Invite you to receive God’s blessing — To be saved by his mercy

### Walk in relationship with him, to finally be at peace.

28. John the Baptist

Matthew 3

## Jews of Jesus’ day were the heirs of an OT full of promises

### These promises form the backdrop to the entire New Testament

#### To Abraham (Gen 15) — descendants would be God’s special people

#### Joel 2 and the coming “Day of the Lord” — a day when God establish his kingdom

#### Isaiah’s promise of a future salvation — People need to prepare themselves

#### Ezekiel 36:26-28

#### c. 500 B.C. — last two verses of OT end with a promise — Malachi 4:5-6

### Judaism waited — over 400 years of prophetic silence — God did not speak

# A.D. 27 — John the Baptist breaks onto the scene — 3:1-6

## Specifics

### Grew up in wilderness (Luke 1:80) — conscious fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy

### Clothing/food shows simple lifestyle—conscious fulfillment Malachi (2 Kings 1:8)

### John is the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy

#### Prepare for the coming kingdom of heaven/God — God’s kingly reign — by repenting of sin

### Hard to underestimate the level of excitement

## Hard for You and Me to understand the conflict that John’s message would have produced, especially with religious leaders — not lay

### “Repent and be Baptized” — Repent of what? Children of Abraham!

### God’s kingdom belongs to all Jews, regardless of their (lack of) sin

### We don’t have to prepare — prepared by being born descendants of Abraham.

### Ingrained into them that all Israel will be blessed (except very worse) and all Gentiles punished

## Part of the Conflict had to do with the Meaning of John’s baptism?

### John appears to have based his baptism on “proselyte baptism” — “Convert”

### Gift to the temple; circumcision; baptized

#### Died to their old life as a Gentile — Begin new life as a Jew

#### Previous debts could not be collected — son marry his mother

## John’s baptism was the declaration that

### Jews are in exactly the same position as the Gentiles.

#### Just because are Jews not automatically acceptable to God

#### Ethnic descent does not guarantee salvation

### God has no grandchildren — No family plan — not enter KG because of parents

# 3:7-10 — See Actual Conflict between John and Jewish Leaders

## Questioned the sincerity of their repentance

### I wouldn’t believe you until I see the fruits of your repentance.

#### If you are truly repentant, there will be “good fruit” in your life.

#### I will see movement toward obedience — holiness (Luke 3:10-14)

### Anticipating their objection — “By the way, your ethnic heritage means squat!”

#### God can fulfill his promise to Abraham by turning stones into children.

## If the Jewish Leaders really understood significance of John’s baptism

### Their repentance would be real

### But they think they have something to offer God — ethnic heritage

### Repentance isn’t real because they don’t think they have anything to repent about.

## John Understands that True Repentance

### Begins with an accurate assessment of our sinful condition — empty hands

### Repentance shows itself — bears fruit

## Say another way: No place for biblical repentance that is followed by constant sin

### To the person who claims to have had a conversion experience

#### Life shows no change — think this is okay

### John would cry out — “Bear fruit in keeping with repentance”

#### If there is no fruit, then God’s axe of judgment will cut you off at the feet and you will be thrown into the fires of judgment.

### (Where is the grace? Divine empowerment? Lose salvation?)

#### Encourage you to let this passage speak for itself

#### It is just as true as Rom 8:38-39

#### One reason why we tremble in awe before God

# “I am Only Preparing the Way” (3:11-12)

### Fulfill Malachi

## 2 kinds of people

### 1. Those who understand they have nothing to offer God — regardless of ethnicity

#### Truly repent — bear fruit — God’s wheat gathered into barns

#### Receive God’s promised Holy Spirit — Ezekiel — Pentecost (Acts 2)

#### This Holy Spirit becomes the agent of change, guaranteeing that the process of sanctification — bearing fruit — will begin.

#### Fire that accompanies the Holy Spirit is a purifying, refining fire

### 2. Those who think they have something to offer God — not baptized

#### Not repent — no fruit — tree cut down — chaff that is burned — cast into judgment

#### Not receive God’s Spirit

#### Fire that accompanies the Holy Spirit is a fire that destroys

### No third option

#### No place for someone to supposedly repent, their life not to change, and for us to say that is okay — not preferable — but okay

#### John says, if your repentance is real it will produce fruit

#### If not, you are a tree cut down and destroyed by the fires of judgment — you are chaff burned with unquenchable fire

## Jesus appears on the scene

### Preaches the same message (4:17)

### What is true for John is also true for you and me

# Our Evangelical Heritage

### John the Baptist—must be repeated

### Today, in America

## 1. Not enough to be born American

### White middle class family

#### Parents that go to church

### Every one of us is a sinner, separated from God, unacceptable to him on our own.

#### Every one of us, individually, must repent and turn to Jesus

#### Zero distinction between black/white, rich/poor

### God has no grandchildren — my fate has nothing to do with my parents

## 2. Repentance is more than raising a hand or saying the “sinner’s prayer”

### A truly repentant heart always shows itself in a converted life

#### Statement of Faith: “Necessary and certain”

### If we do not bear fruit that is appropriate for repentance

#### Have not receive Isaiah’s promised salvation

#### Have not receive God’s promised Spirit

#### Have not entered the kingdom of God

### If we truly repent

#### Our godly sorrow will lead to the pursuit of God and his holiness

#### We will, empowered by his Spirit, be God’s wheat gathered into His barn

## Repentance involves both confession and profession

29. Nicodemus and Rebirth

John 3

## End of 2 chapter of John, Jesus at Jerusalem for Passover

### Many people saw his miracles — “signs.”

# One of these was a Man Named Nicodemus (3:1-2)

## Pharisee — Jewish leader — Sanhedrin (7:50-52)

### Jesus steps through Nicodemus’ accurate yet incomplete assessment

### Knows Nicodemus’ deeper question — while Nicodemus never actually asks the question, in v 3 Jesus answers it.

## Necessity of a Rebirth (3:3)

### As a Pharisee

#### Believed that the present age would end when the Messiah comes and sets up the kingdom of God on earth

#### Enter that kingdom by being obedient to the law

### In essence, Jesus repeats the message of John’s baptism

#### Cannot move smoothly into God’s kingdom

### Does so with the new imagery of being “born again.”

#### Builds on the imagery in 1:10-13 — “born of God” is to be born again

### Rather than earning admission to God’s kingdom, Nic. Must start from scratch

#### A start so radical that it is a new birth

#### Born a second time, but this time as God’s child

### Without this radically new beginning

#### Nicodemus will not see (experience, enter) kingdom of God.

## Nicodemus doesn’t understand (3:4)

### Doesn’t understand the metaphor nor the need for a radically new beginning.

### Jesus clarifies the meaning of the metaphor in v 5.

## Rebirth is a matter of spiritual repentance and spiritual renewal (3:5)

### Remember John’s prophecy: I baptize in water; he will baptize in Holy Spirit

#### “Born of water” is a reference to John’s baptism of repentance

#### “Born of (the Holy) Spirit” is ref. to Jesus’ baptism of regeneration/renewal

### In order to be part of God’s kingdom

#### Experience the *cleansing* power of God’s Spirit in repentance

##### Agree with God — sinner; sin has separated

##### Cleanse from your sin

#### Also experience the *renewing* power of that same Spirit

##### Regenerates — gives you a new beginning — a new life

### Nicodemus: you cannot walk smoothly into God’s kingdom

#### God must cleanse you of your sin

#### God must make you into a new person

#### You do not save yourself (≠ earn; deserve)— God saves you

## Jesus continues by emphasizing the diff. between flesh and spirit (3:6)

### Flesh is the worldly existence into which we are all born.

#### Spirit is the realm of salvation and life available to those who are born again

### You can’t grow/evolve from the realm of flesh into the realm of the Spirit

#### Only way to cross the divide is through the work of God’s Spirit

### Why all works religions are wrong — knock on doors, money, go to church

## Drives the point home (3:7-8)

### Based on a pun: wind/Spirit, blows/breathes out (speaks), and sound/voice

### Rebirth is not a natural phenomenon

#### Mysterious work of God’s Spirit

#### Not fully understand it, yet it is as real as the wind

### Essence Statement

# How is all this possible? (3:9)

## John 3:16

### God *made* the world, *loved* the world, *gave* his Son for the world, and His Son will in turn *die* for the sins of the world

### so that those who have placed their trust in Jesus will live with God forever.

## “Gave his only Son”

### God’s love led him to treat us, not as we deserve, but according to his grace—gave

### His only Son — no brothers /peers — Sole means of salvation — John 14:6

## “Whoever believes in him”

### Because God loved the world, he offers salvation to all — whosoever will may come

### Offer of rebirth must not be limited to any one group of people

#### Rich, white, intelligent, beautiful

#### Salvation is for all; therefore cross is sufficient to cover sins of *all* who believe

### Yet it is only to those who believe in Jesus given right become children of God

## (“Believes in”)

### Mystical term — hard to give clear/precise definition

### Includes belief —intellectual assent — believe facts — not saving faith (Jam 2:19)

### Includes the idea of coming to faith

#### That time when we initially submitted ourselves to God’s rule — enter kingdom — raised our hand and said the “sinner’s prayer”

### “Believe in” is better “believe into” — Incorrect Greek grammar

#### Biblical belief is no longer believing in ourselves — but transferring our trust out of ourselves into Jesus

#### “Faith is an activity which takes us right outside ourselves and makes us one with Christ.” (modified Morris)

#### Elsewhere John calls it “receiving” and “abiding” in Jesus — 20:31

#### Paul calls it being “in Christ” — mystical union — Col 3:3; Gal 2:20

#### Moved our trust out of ourselves — thrown ourselves into the merciful arms of God — there lie, fully trusting him for everything.

### This is what is so wrong with “event” Christianity — “easy believism”

#### All that matters is the one-time *event* of saying “I believe”

#### Thinking that is all there is to being a follower of Jesus.

### But true biblical belief moves us out of ourselves and into the person of Jesus

#### Become his child — live as his child — follower; disciple

#### To believe into Jesus is to abide in Him, live in him, be joined to him.

#### No longer trust in ourselves for salvation/life — place all our trust in him.

## “Not perish but have eternal life”

### We think of “eternal” in temporal terms — never ending

### “Life of the age”

#### Bible thinks in terms of two ages — this age and the age to come (Messianic)

#### Not so much that this coming age will go on forever

#### It is a different *kind* of age — emphasis is on quality, not quantity

### Essence of eternal life: life lived in relationship with God — 17:3

### We can possess this quality of life here and now

#### When we enter the kingdom, we have eternal life

#### How Jesus concludes (3:36a)

#### Elsewhere — “abundant” — 6:35

#### Still hurts and pains — joy that is deeper than circumstances

### After our death — same thing, even more so — see Him face to face

# The Doors of the Kingdom of God Stand Open Before You

## God made you, loves you

#### and knowing him is the only answer to the longing in your heart

## Only way to enter this relationship is to allow God’s Spirit to radically change you.

#### Begins with an admission of sin — repentance — cross is sufficient

#### Begins with believing into Jesus

##### Trusting him wholly for forgiveness and life

## Then God will make you into something that you were not before — renewing

#### Live out your life as his child — a reborn child of God

#### Live a quality of life unlike anything the world has to offer.

#### All the while looking forward to living, eternally, in his presence.

30. Beatitudes

Matthew 5:1–10

## Early in his ministry, Jesus went up mountain

### Preached most famous sermon — “Sermon on the Mount”

### Permeated English language — “turn cheek” — Lord’s Prayer

### Stott, 15

## Begins with “8 Beatitudes”

### From the Latin word “blessed” — first word

### Primary meaning of the word is not subjective: “happy”

#### People who are blessed by God may be happy, but not necessarily so

#### Most basic meaning is objective: “find approval” (from God)

### Beatitudes are the message of how you and I can

#### find approval with God

#### that blessedness lives itself out day to day

# 1. Blessed are the poor in spirit … kingdom” (5:3)

## Definition

### “Recognition of our inability to be approved by God on our own”

#### “There is nothing I can do about my sin and separateness”

#### Recognition of spiritual bankruptcy

#### Stott, 39 — opposite of self-sufficiency/Christ-sufficiency

### The *fundamental* characteristic of *every* disciple

#### Listed first: all other beatitudes flow from it — fundamental

#### Every person who becomes a disciple does so by first recognizing they have nothing to offer.

### Promise: Kingdom is God’s rule in and over creation — my life — “blessed”

# Consequences of “Poor in spirit” — “Golden chain”

## 2. “Blessed are those who mourn … comforted” (5:4)

### Not salvation by sorrow.

#### Not salvation by merely acknowledging sin

### Spiritual poverty, bankruptcy — moved, as it were, to tears

#### Confession to contrition/deep sorrow/repentance — mourn (Jas 4:8-9)

### Promise: “They shall be comforted”

#### There is an end to spiritual emptiness — brokenness can move to wholeness

#### Not by therapeutic preaching that wants you to feel good about yourself.

#### It is God who leads us through brokenness (mourn) to wholeness (comfort)

### If not fully comforted, perhaps you have not fully mourned — Rom 7:24

#### Yes, total comfort waits until heaven, but there is true, profound comfort now

## 3. “Blessed are the meek … inherit” (5:5)

### The person who recognizes spiritual bankruptcy, to the point of mourning,

#### will not be a proud, arrogant, self-assertive person — neither a doormat

#### Meek: has an accurate assessment of himself — Stott, 43

#### Sees sinner praying: “there but for the grace of God go I.”

### Promise: “they will inherit the earth” — opposite of expectations

#### *Counter-cultural* (first, last; greatest, least; be served but serve)—Stott/Hughes

## 4. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness” (5:6)

### Meek have no *righteousness* in and of themselves

#### God’s righteous — God alone can declare us righteous

### Promise: “they shall be satisfied” — Ps 107:9; John 6:35

### If your hunger/thirst not satisfied — greatest joy/deepest delight

#### Nibbled and sipped at his righteousness — Ps 42:1

## Especially combination of 1/4 that shows the *essence of the gospel*

### “Poor in Spirit”: nothing in my hand; drives non-disciple to his knees — A

### Seek for God’s righteousness — cross — B

# Relate to others (Poor, Mourn, Meek, Hunger)

## 5. “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy” (5:7)

### “Compassion for people in need” (Stott, 47)

### If you understand that you are spiritually bankrupt—extend mercy—receive

### If you respond to people in arrogance/anger, not mercy, probably haven’t come to grips with your own poverty and with God’s righteousness

## 6. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (5:8)

### “Undivided, unmixed” — opposite of hypocrisy (two-faced)

#### Loyalty to our king is undivided — fully-devoted disciples — 6:24

### There is no promise to see God if you are a part-time disciple

## 7. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God”

### The merciful and pure do not pursue violence

#### Share in the character of their king, and so act like his son (or daughter)

### Not “Peace at all costs”

#### E.g., no peace at the cost of ignoring sin — 12:18

## 8. Persecuted — 5:10, 11-12

### No matter how hard you try — some will not live at peace with you

#### If you live as a son of the King, you will be persecuted — counter-cultural

### John 15:18-20a — Stott, 52.

# Oh, that WE would be known as a persecuted church

### Not primarily that “I like the worship” or “the Bible is preached”

### Recognizes our spiritual bankruptcy — mourn; meek; hunger

#### Moves us to live in a counter-cultural way — fully-devoted disciples

## Too difficult? Yes — Rebirth (3:3)

### A: Poor in spirit; B: Seek his righteousness; C: Live counter-culturally

31. The Lord’s Prayer

Matt 6:9-13

## Prayer is the greatest mystery in life

### It lies at the heart of the ultimately mysterious relationship we enjoy w/ God

### Some things we do not understand about prayer

### Many things we do know — Lord’s Prayer (Matt 6:9-13)

## Never intended to be repeated — meaninglessly

### “Pray like this” — pattern of what prayer looks like

# Prayer Starts with a Proper View of God

## “Our,” not “my”

### Certainly are occasions for individual prayer — inner-room type

#### Pronouns are plural — corporate prayer

### American church largely forgot power/need for corporate prayer

#### We think God wants us to be “rugged individualists” — think wrong

## “Father in heaven”

### “Father” (Abba) is the family term for the father — familiarity (child)

#### Approachable, personal, cares about you

#### Revolutionary to think of God in such personal terms

### Judaism much more comfortable with the “in heaven” side

#### Otherness, majesty, wonder, fear, Lord and judge (Carson, 64)

### Prayer calls us to balance these two

#### Our culture desperately needs to rediscover the latter — majesty/wonder

#### We often treat God with disrespectful familiarity

##### “Wave to Jesus for his birthday.”

# Prayer Focuses First on God & His Glory

## This is the first of two basic truths about prayer

### Prayer is not primarily about me

### Prayer is a time to be focused on God

### Three imperatives — Calling on God to act for his own glory

## 1. “Hallowed be your name”

### “Hallowed” is holy; “Name” stands for the person himself

### God already is holy — calling on God to act in/thru me/us in such a way that the world *sees* he is holy — sinless, perfect.

## 2. “Your kingdom come”

### Not earthly realm but kingly “rule” in lives of his disciples

### Calling on God to rule in me/us — rule expand throughout the world

### Ultimately, God’s rule would come in all its fullness (Phil 2) — Maranatha

## 3. “Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”

### God’s will is always done, perfectly, in heaven

### “Not my will but yours be done.”

## Prayers that put God first, and us a distant last

### When we understand: “Our Father in heaven” (approachable; awe-inspiring)

#### We fade into the background

### Become consumed with God and not ourselves

#### His glory becomes central and not ours

### And we can pray, “May your name be hallowed … kingdom … will”

## Prayers often in conflict with what we really think/do

### Pray: “May you be seen as holy,” but when we live as sinners and not saints

#### Our sin diminishes God in the eyes of the world — makes him small

#### “Oh my God”— vulgar — our curse shames God, makes him seem less holy

### Pray: “May your kingdom come,” but we fight against God’s lordship in our lives

#### God’s kingdom does not grow, in our lives — outreach — missions

### Challenge of prayer — do we mean what we say?

# When Our Deepest Desire is to See God Glorified

## We come to understand our total *dependence* on him — 2nd basic truth

### Prayer shifts to our needs that only God can supply — three imperatives

### NB: the focus is still on God, because it is only He who can act on our behalf.

## 4. Dependence for physical needs: “Give us this day our daily bread”

### God is concerned about my daily, mundane needs

#### Wants to give us our needs, not “greeds”

#### Daily bread, not yearly bread

### Understand that everything comes from God

#### Live in dependence on him — 1 Cor 4:7 — abilities, opportunities

#### Human security is an illusion — 6:33

## 5. Dependence for spiritual needs: “Forgive us our debts as …”

### Think of sin as a debt owed to God — payment for that debt comes only from God

### Relationship between God forgiving us, and us forgiving others (vv 14-15)

#### If I truly understands who God is and what He has done in forgiving my sins

##### I will freely forgives others — sign of my true repentance

#### But if I hold on to resentments and hurts and refuse to forgive others.

##### Wouldn’t forgive until *I* think they are *really* sorry

##### Then I have not truly repented of my own sins

##### God will not forgive me — my relationship with Him damaged

### Difficult — only hurts me (December 7)

#### Nothing more sinful than my heart

### My forgiveness of others must not be predicated on their repentance

#### Rather, God’s forgiveness of me is predicated on my forgiveness of others

## 6. “And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil”

### Difficult

#### God does not tempt anyone (James 1:13)

#### “Testing” of our faith is a good thing (Jam 1:2-4)

#### “Evil” can also be “evil one,” i.e., Satan

### Basic idea is clear: Express our dependence on God for our moral needs

#### We are not capable, in and of ourselves, to resist the power of sin and Satan

#### Only God can protect us from sin — “Wretched man …”

# Most of Us are Obsessed with Ourselves

## Our reputation, authority over ourselves, our will be done

#### Shows itself in self-reliance (physical, spiritual, and moral needs)

#### Enslaved

## Prayer teaches us that we should be obsessed with God — his holiness, reign, will

#### In that obsession we see our utter dependence on him for all things

#### With our hands open and empty, we come to our father in prayer.

#### Free — rest, trust, serve

## Prayer is worship, and lets worship God right now

### Encourage you to follow the pattern tonight

32. Seeking God

Matt 6:25–34

## We can worry about anything and everything

### Our creativity is overwhelming in devising ways in which to worry

### Paying off the new building, even though it isn’t even built

### Getting married, even though we haven’t figured out how to date yet

### Making ends meet, even when there is money in the bank

## Like it: Worry carries illusion it can actually accomplish something

### More dangerously, worry carries the illusion that I am in control

## Sermon on Mount is Counter-Cultural in what it Teaches about Worry

### Nutshell: The kind of person who recognizes his spiritual poverty and trusts in God’s righteousness, is the kind of person who will replace worry with faith as he seeks hard after God.

# Disciples have given their “Unwavering loyalty” — 6:25

### Because we trust in God and not in ourselves

### Therefore, that trust shows itself in a refusal to worry about the necessities of life

## Logic: (Implied) God has already given us life/body

### Sustain the life he has created with food (eat and drink)

### Sustain the body he has created with clothing — No worries

## To drive this point home Jesus draws out two illustrations from nature

### 1. Feeding the birds — 6:26 — You are of more value

#### (V 27 — no good, except to get that ulcer you’ve always wanted)

### 2. Clothing the flowers — 6:28-30 — little faith

### If God cares for his creation, also care for you — more (Luther in Stott, p. 164)

### Both these illustrations from nature are based on one fundamental truth

## God does in fact feed the birds and clothe the flowers

### What do you see …

#### when you see a robin tugging at a worm,

#### or the wild flowers on the face of Mt. Rainer

#### or pictures of distant galaxies,

#### or the infinite variety throughout creation?

### Do you see impersonal forces of nature and evolution just doing what they do?

#### Beautiful / powerful God declaring his glory in the infinitude of all creation?

#### Creator *and* Sustainer of all life?

## As we look at creation we must learn to see God, and God at work

### Sometimes we see God working in “supernatural” ways

#### gives life to a newborn baby that should have died

#### or stretches out his hand to stop the truck sliding into your car.

### Also see God working through “laws of nature”

#### The laws that God established and still superintends — supernatural

#### Gravity not work because mass attracts — gravity God says mass attracts

#### It is God, not mother nature, who oversees the cycle of life that produces worms for the robins and photosynthesis for the plants

### We must learn to see God at work *supernaturally* in both mundane & unusual

## Only when we see that God *does* in fact feed the birds / clothe flowers

### That we will be able to see that God also feeds & clothe us

### Sometimes through “ordinary” means — genes, abilities, education, job

#### With these “ordinary” means we are called to work, as diligently as the birds

#### 2 Thess 5:10 “If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.”

### Other times through wonderful surprises

#### Gene and the Giant Turnip

### Our heavenly Father created us

#### Committed to providing for us

#### Therefore, we must not worry

# Repeats Theme (v 31) — Two reasons (v 32)

## 1. “For the Gentiles seek after all these things”

### Those who do not know God are justifiably preoccupied with survival

### But when we worry about food and clothing, we look/sound just like them

### We must be different — salt and light — Set apart — in but no of the world

## 2. “Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all”

### And, as the paragraph argues, has committed to providing them

### To worry is to call into question the love and promise and provision of God

#### To worry is “practical atheism and an affront to God” (Mounce, 126)

#### V 30 “O you of little faith”

## There is an anxiousness that is good — “concern”

### Concern that calls us to work hard as unto the Lord — not lazy

### Concern for our own sin and the needs of others

## But there is an anxiousness that comes from a lack of faith

### Not convinced that the God who gave us life will sustain life

#### Lack of faith that dethrones God — I climb up and I take charge—worry

### When you and I live this type of self-centered, faithless, anxious life

#### We have become narcissistic atheists

# The negative “do not” is replaced by the positive “do” (v 33)

## Context: we are spiritually impoverished, mourn, hunger for God’s righteousness

### Pray, “May your kingdom come; may your will be done”

### Chosen to trust God rather than ourselves, and therefore .…

## Rather than worrying about necessities of life — God has said he will take care of,

### We seek God’s kingdom — rule/reign in me/world

### We seek God’s righteous standards, and pray that they be “established and obeyed in every area of life” (Blomberg, 100)

## Essence Statement

### “People Pursing God in Spirit and Truth”

### Fill ourselves with a love and trust and pursuit of God — a God who has given us life and has promised to sustain that life — no room for faithless worry.

## Promise: “all these things will be added to you”

### As we seek, he will give us our needs, not “greeds” (mundane and unexpected)

#### All the things we need for life and body will be given

### Do you believe this?

#### As I look at my life, my worrying, do I really believe this?

#### Don’t saints die from starvation and exposure?

### Part of the answer is in v 25

#### Life is more than food, and we have what we need for true life

#### Life is more than clothing, and we have been clothed in His righteousness

### Part of the answer is also that there is enough food and clothing

#### Those who have it wouldn’t share with those who don’t

#### Perhaps the problem is more our lack of missions than God’s provision

# Let’s not be practicing atheists

### Let’s not act like there is no God, or that he doesn’t care, or isn’t powerful enough to sustain his creation

## Rather, lets assert our own impoverishment and God’s riches

### Free ourselves from the illusion of control that comes with worry

### Let’s see God at work everywhere, in every way, and learn from his creation

### Replace worry with trust in God’s provision and care

## Doesn’t happen overnight

### Process begins with a correct understanding of myself — poor, mourn

### As we hunger/thirst, we will fill our hearts and minds with Jesus

### We will find that he satisfies our hunger, refreshes our thirst, clothes our bodies

33. The Deity of Christ

John 10:30

# John 10 centers on the imagery of sheep and their shepherd

### Shepherd — vv 3b-4

#### Changes metaphor — vv 7b-8

#### Changes metaphor again in vv 11 and 14

### Shepherd Jesus) knows the sheep — name, leads

#### Sheep (us) know our shepherd — follow (not follow false)

###  Picture of God as shepherd and us as sheep background to our passage

# 10:22-24

### Probably not an honest inquiry — like Sanhedrin, legal accusation

### Jesus gives them more than they ask for

# 10:25-29

## Jesus answers that he has already told them plainly

### Not listening to what he was saying

### Not seeing the significance of his works

## They were unable to understand his words/actions

### Did not believe

### Were not able to believe because they are not Jesus’ sheep

## Election

### The Father has chosen specific sheep to be his own

#### Given them to Jesus so that Jesus will give them eternal life

### Sheep know Jesus’ voice and follow and will never be taken from the Father.

### Why? None greater than God the Father

# 10:30 — “I and the Father are one”

## What is Jesus not saying?

### 1. He and the Father are identical

#### Greek is explicit — “One thing,” not “one person”

#### Distinct “persons” — 10:29

### “God” and “Father” are different categories — don’t mix them

Jesus is God, and the Father is God, and Jesus is not the Father

###  2. He is less than God — lesser status (Mormons; JW)

#### Stoned for blasphemy — 10:33b

#### “Son of God” is not less than God — 10:36

#### Phil 2:6 “although he existed in the form of God … equality with God …”

#### “Form” does not mean an inferior copy

## What is Jesus saying?

### While the Father and Son are distinct persons, they are both the one God

#### to see one is to see the other (14:9),

#### to hear one is to hear the other,

#### to glorify the Son is to glorify the Father (17:1).

### 10:28-29 “my hand … Father’s hand”

# Mystery of the Trinity

## We believe God is One — Bible says so

### Not three Gods working together (heresy of “tritheism”)

### Isa 45:5-6

## We believe God is Three — Bible says so

### There is not one God in three forms (heresy of Modalism)

### Father is fully God

#### Son is fully God, yet distinct from the Father

#### HS is fully God, yet distinct from both — Statement of Faith

## Ultimately, human language fails — no analogy to God

### “Trinity” is Latin for “threeness”

### Three persons of the God-head

## This is as it should be expected

### No surprise that God is not like us or like anything else in creation

### Ultimately unfathomable

# Helps us understand other passages in John

### 8:58 (Exodus 3) — “Great I AM”

### 1:1 — John is not saying everything God is, Jesus is

#### More to God than Jesus

#### Yet, Jesus is fully God

#### This is why the Prologue ends as it does — 1:18

### 20:28

# More to this than mere theological curiosity

### Because Jesus is the great “I am,” that he can also say …

### 6:35 — he is the only thing that will truly satisfy

### “I am the light of the world” (8:12; 9:5) — source of truth“I am the door” for the sheep — unique source of salvation and life“I am the good shepherd” — God who lays down his life for his sheep“I am the resurrection and the life” (11:25) — source for life, before & after death“I am the vine” (15:5) — our only source of nourishment“I am the way … truth … life” (14:6)

# Doctrine of the Deity of Christ is not just in John

### Explains why Jesus can forgive sins, when only God can forgive

### Why Jesus claims honor/glory/worship that belongs solely to God

### Why verses in the OT that refer to God can be applied to Jesus in NT

### (Phil 2:6; Col 1:15, 20; Rom 9:5; Titus 2:13)

# Question of John 10:30 is not what it means — Do you believe it?

### I wonder if we really do?

### If I really believed Jesus is God, I wouldn’t compartmentalize him?

### Would we disobey him?

#### “Bear one another’s burdens” — live in isolation?

#### Eph 4:29

### Good shepherd is God — God died

#### Would we continue in our hypocrisy — mask our deceitful hearts by saying religious things?

# Think of greatest thing in all creation — Sombrero Galaxy displays glory of J/G

### Then think of the smallest animal/insect — myself as ant

### Even this comparison fails, not because I am less than an ant, but because Jesus, God, is greater than galaxy — anything we can see/experience/conceive of.

### And yet we fight him, marginalize him, ignore him, and argue that he doesn’t know what he is talking about.

### Do I really believe Jesus is God?

# I know it is not that simple

### Debates shows the unbelievable power of sin

### That the ants would shake their defiant fists in the face of the God of galaxies

### “I’ll do it my way. You can’t tell me how to dress/talk/do!”

### Power of sin blended with our deceitful hearts is a force greater than anything we can possibly imagine — certainly greater than we can overcome on our own.

# Life is a journey, and we walk the path together — brothers/good shepherd (JG)

## As we walk, as we make mistakes, we also learn from our mistakes, and grow

### Jesus grows larger — we see him more and more for who he is

### Same time we see the ugliness of our sin for what it truly is

## As we walk, as come to learn again and again that Jesus is God, then when we …

### Pray — Creator of all life — all galaxies

### Hurt — Reach out to the Sustainer of all life

### Lonely — Jesus, the God of Galaxies, sits by our bed

### Sin — it was God who laid down his own life, the galaxy for the ant

### Meaning/Significance — find it solely in him.

## “I and the Father are One”

34. Discipleship

“Peter’s Confession” — Mark 8:27-30

## After probably two years of ministry, Jesus is ready to ask his disciples, “Who am I?”

### “Peter’s Confession” — Mark 8:27–30

## But Peter didn’t understand his own confession

### Expected the Messiah to be victoriousDisciples would live in God’s kingdom as earthly rulers

## Instead, Jesus tells them them he is going to die — 8:31–33

### Not only does this contradict all of Peter’s expectations about the ChristHas significant repercussions in terms of what it means to be a discipleThis is what Jesus talks about in the next paragraph” discipleship in the kingdom

# Thesis statement (v 34)

## “Come after me … follow me”

### Jesus thinks in terms of discipleship (“followers”)

#### Becoming a disciple — “count the cost; hand to the plow …”Being — hunger and thirst for God’s righteousnessDying as a disciple — “He who perseveres to the end will be saved.”

### Paul thinks the same way, but with different terms

#### Justification by faith — Rom 12:1-2

#### Warning passages to persevere (Col 1:21-22a)

### Much of American church has adopted terminology/way of thinking = foreign

#### As a result, our understanding of being a Christian is often skewed

### E.g., we talk about making a “profession of faith”

#### Raised hand — sinner’s prayer — join the church

#### Problem: we think that this is all there is — God doesn’t necessarily require anything else.

### Yes, these are all ways of speaking about “becoming” a disciple

#### But there is more to discipleship than becoming a disciple — being; dying

#### We must speak/think in biblical categories

## “Deny” — What does that mean?

### Not denying ourselves “things” in general

#### Not asceticism (e.g., Lent)

### To “deny” myself means that I say “No” to my very self

#### Say, “I will not live for myself”

#### “I will not pursue my goals/ambitions/desires”

#### “I am not on the throne of my life — it’s not all about me.”

### To “deny” myself means saying “Yes” to God

#### “I will live for God”

#### “I will pursue His goals, ambitions, and desires

#### “May your will be done”

#### Agree with Jesus in Gethsemane: “No my will, but yours”

### To say “No” to myself and to say “Yes” to God

### I had to make this choice several years ago

#### “Are you willing to give up all your goals/ambitions/desires for me?”

#### Good things — programming, books, website

#### After a difficult struggle I said, “Okay, fine, whatever.”

#### Some of the things God gave back to me — and more (pastor)

#### Still a decision I have to make weekly, sometimes daily

### Will you deny yourself? What would that look like?

#### Live a life dependent upon Jesus — pursue his goals, ambitions, desires?

##  “Take up your cross”

### Luke 9:23 — “take up his cross daily”

### Cross was a well-known means of execution and death

#### Jesus had just said he was going to die, and evidently so must his disciples

### Take up cross: daily live out the fact that …

#### You do not live for yourself

#### You are no longer central in our own life

#### You in fact have died to yourself and live for God — Gal 2:20

## This is how we “follow” Jesus — decision followed by action

### Not enough to talk the talk — deny; I am a Christian

### Disciples walk the walk — cross

## Jesus continues

### V 35 spells out the rationale behind v 34

#### If you attempt to save your life — refuse to deny — you will lose it (hell)

#### If you lose your life for gospel — deny — you will save your life (heaven)

###  Vv 36-37 emphasizes that there is nothing more important than your life

# V 38 — Spells out what a self-centered life — non-denial — will cost you

### “Son of Man” — Jesus — Daniel — Judgment

## What does it mean to be ashamed of someone?

### To not want to be connected with them — to distance yourself

### Context: ashamed of Jesus — live in such a way that you distance yourself from him — living for yourself, denying Him and not yourself

## What does it mean for Son of Man to be ashamed of you?

### To distance himself from you at your final judgment. — Hell

## Critical not to water down what “ashamed” means

### When we stand before the throne of judgment, Jesus will not ask us if we raised our hand and said the sinner’s prayer and made profession of faith.

### He is going to ask, “Were you proud of me? Did you live for me?” “Not ashamed”?

## When the Bible talks about judgment, it speaks of judgment based on … works

### Not in the sense that we earn our salvation — by grace through faith

#### In conversion we were made into new creatures/new birth,

#### and we must live out that change by God’s power

### Statement of Faith — Rev 20:12; Rom 2:6-8; Matt 25:31-40 (sobering) — 8:38

# Piper: What drives you? “Our churches are full of people going to hell”

### Harsh at first, but true.

## When the gospel is not taught in its fullness — becoming, being, dying a disciple — when Jesus no longer says, “Come and follow me” …

### People don’t know what God requires of them

### Raise their hand, join the church, and live any way they want to

### They think they are on their way to heaven

## I think every preacher should have to stand and watch the people in his church go through judgment

### He should preach with that knowledge in mind

### Imagine the look on the faces of the condemned — “I did what you told me.”

### Why I always preach the full gospel — guilt of your blood is not on my hands

# Do you want to be Jesus’ disciple? (only disciples go to heaven)

## Become a disciple

### Confession, profession, commitment

### God’s power will change you

## Live as a disciple

### Deny — cross

### God’s same power will continue to transform your life so that you can die a d.

## Urge: Give yourself wholly to Him — “Whatever”

### Come to know the only true freedom and joy

### Ps 16:11 “You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

35. The Greatest Commandment

Mark 12:28-34

## After 3.5 years of public ministry

### We now come to the last week of Jesus’ life

## Tension is increasing between Jesus and the religious leaders

### Jesus has been pronouncing judgment

### They have challenged Jesus’ authority and tried to embroiled him in political and theological turmoil

# This tension provides context for our story: Greatest Command?

### Mark 12:28-34

## Answers by quoting the Shema (Dt 6:4-9)

### Monotheism

### Our primary response to the one God — is to love him

### Love him passionately — heart, soul, mind, strength — everything, w/o reserve

## What does it mean — really — to “Love God”

### 1. Emotional — Puritans talked about our “affections”

### 2. Personal — not love things about God, but love God himself

# 1. Is your love of God emotional?

### Does it move you, like even a good song? — Draw you closer to God?

### Does your relationship with Jesus affect you at the deepest places of your soul?

## We are different people, and we show our emotions differently

### But for love to be love, there must be emotion — must move our affectionsIf your children were perfectly obedient—no emotional tie—love?If your spouse perfect — did everything expected but no emotional attachment?You can’t take the personal, emotional element out of love and still have love.

## What does loving God look like?

### In many ways it looks like the love I have for my wife

### Emotional: want to spend time — understand — what makes her tick (informed)

### Drives me to act: encourage; speak only kind words; provide; ache when away

### My love is highly emotional, and it drives me to act in a certain way, not because I have to, but because I want to, because I love her.

## What does loving God look like?

### In many ways, it looks like the love God has for me

### God delights in me — Ps 18:19; 32:10

### Drives him to act: John 3:16 — Ps 59:16

## What does loving God look like?

### Emotional: I want to know him, enjoy being in his presence

#### When I sin, I ache when we are apart

#### Ps 42:2; 43:4a; 63:1

### Drives me to act: spend time; read His word; talk; tell others of his love for me

## Yes, obey (Jn 14:15)

### But “loving God” is not the same thing as being obeying God

#### “Do you love God?” Yes, I do what I am supposed to do — I go to church

### Love is the basis for the obedience; they are not the same thing.

#### Only shoveled and mowed, would I love my wife or be the gardener?

### If we love God, then yes we do obey him, but there is so much more

#### He is our greatest joy, deepest desire — highly emotional

#### Then out his love for me, and my love for him, then I act in obedience

## By the way, we are not called to “like” God — all your heart, soul ...”

### God demands pre-eminence — more than mother/father

# 2. Is our love of God personal?

### Greatest commandment is to love “God,” not love things about him

## I believe our tendency is not to love the person of God

### but to love the more tangible things that relate to him

### Danger: we often equate loving these good things with loving God

#### These good things become idols

## 1. Loving the Bible is not loving God

### Knowing the Bible is good.

#### How can we be like Jesus if we do not know what he is like?

#### Without biblical knowledge, our love is ignorant emotionalism

### But loving the Bible does not mean you love God

#### Reading the Bible does not necessarily mean you are hearing the author.

#### Pharisees knew and loved the Bible, but Jesus says: John 5:37-38

### Test: do you stop with the words, or do the words carry you into an encounter with the author, and encounter in which your life is changed?

## 2. Loving worship is not loving God

### Some people love to worship worship, but they don’t worship God

#### Love to come to church whenever the door is open.

#### Love the fellowship — physiological effect music has on their bodies

### But if the focus remains on them —not God

#### How they feel — not whether God praised, glorified

#### Come out of church feeling good about themselves but not necessarily feeling good about God.

## Often hear two comments about a good church

### Enjoy the worship and the Bible preaching — good

## Rather hear: “People love God” — first things first

### Encourage me to love God

### Encourage me to express my love in worship

### Encourage me to inform my love with biblical preaching

### When I go to church, I am in the midst of people who love God — Greatest C.

# Scribe asked “which commandment” (singular)

## But Jesus can’t stop at the one greatest commandment

### You can’t love God without at the same time loving your neighbor — 12:31b

## Jesus knows our tendency is to love in the abstract — love moves to action

### If you do not love your neighbor, you do not love God

#### Neighbor is more than people living on your street — sitting next

### Love for God necessarily leads to love for others — 1 John 4:20-21

### Love for God necessarily overflows into action for others — 1 Cor 13:4-7

## Juan Carlos Ortiz (South America): “The text for this morning is, “Love your neighbor.”

### Do you love God? Ask the person sitting next to you.

### Listen to how we speak about one another — love / grace — critical/judgmental

### We cannot, at the same time, love God and speak in critical, demeaning, negative ways about one another

# Greatest Commandment is to love God — most important

### Love must necessarily move your affections

### Love must be directed to the person of God, not good things about him

### Love that must overflow into our lives and neighborhoods

## If we do nothing else as a church, may we love God-

### And may that love be visible in how we treat/talk about one another

36. Eschatology

Matthew 24

## Jesus has been teaching his disciples that he will go away

### Promises that he will return to stand in judgment of the world

## Now near the end of the last week of his life

### Another promise — 24:1-2Horrific — God’s house

## Disciples two questions in v 3

### 1. When will the temple be destroyed (v 3a)

### 2. Sign of Jesus’ return and the end of this age (v 3b)

### Jews thought of time in terms of two “ages," two time periods

#### This age, which would end when the Messiah cameStart a new age — Messianic age — age to come

### Disciples can’t conceive of the temple being destroyed apart from Messiah/Age

#### Two answers are intertwined throughout chapterKey to interpretation — which question is being answered?

# 1. When will the temple be destroyed?

## Many false signs (24:4-8)

### False Christs — wars — famines and earthquakes

## 24:9-14 — The first true sign of the temple’s coming destruction: tribulation

### Vv 12-14 — “apostasy” — perseverance by disciples so gospel can be preached

### Important point — eschatology (“study of last things”) is primarily ethical

#### Not a detailed road map into the future

#### Get worse — we win; they lose — live like you believe this (faithful)

## 24:15-20 — Second and final sign is the “Abomination of Desolation” (vv 15-16)

### Prophecy in Daniel — elsewhere called the Anti-Christ — 2 Thess 2:3b-4

### Jesus has answered the first of the two questions

### Fulfilled in A.D. 70 — every stone pulled down

## At v 21 it starts to get a little sticky to interpret (vv 21-22)

### Increase in the tribulation leading up to the destruction of the temple

#### Josephus says 1 million Jews died — cannibalism, etc.

### Language seems to go beyond just 70 A.D. — “no human being”

#### Most believe the tribulation of 70 A.D. was a precursor — typical of prophecy — to the even greater tribulation before Jesus’ return — and then these words have their fullest meaning.

## Vv 23-28 — Continue to be false prophets during this time of tribulation

### Don’t be tricked — when Jesus returns, everyone will know it — v 27

### Can’t have a secret return of Christ

# 2. Jesus now answers the second question — sign of his return (29-31)

## The period of tribulation will someday end

### Instantly, without warning

### Cosmic signs — perhaps metaphorical (“earth-shaking”) or literal

### Vv 30-31 — Can you imagine?

## What has to happen before Jesus comes back? Tribulation

### World-wide Church has lived in constant tribulation

### Often horrific in many places

#### In America we just don’t feel it, yet

#### Today in Sudan and Indonesia — can’t get worse — no survivors

### I think — controversial — that all that must occur before Jesus returns has already occurred, or is occurring

#### Repeat of the “Great Tribulation” of A.D. 70 may already be under way

#### Perhaps in the midst of the final apostasy — state of the American church

#### Anti-Christ — by time of 1 John there were many

### Jesus’ point here through end of 25 — no more specific signs/warning

#### Jesus to the disciples: not the right question

#### Jesus tells us the right question in a few verses

# Jesus speaks specifically about signs preceding these two events

## First question (temple): Watch for the signs — vv 32-35

### “These things” cannot be Christ’s return …(≠ vv 29-31)

#### 24:3 Disciples: “Tell us when will these things be” — temple

#### 24:33 Return is near

### 24:34 Tribulation/Abomination/Temple will both occur within one generation

# Second question: There will be no signs preceding Jesus’ return

### Basic thrust from here to the end of chapter 25 — other than tribulation

### Emphasis: we must be ready — right question

## V 36 — No one knows when Jesus will return

### “That day” can’t be the destruction of Jerusalem since there are signs

### V 33 leaves Jesus “near, at the very gate”

#### “That day” is that day when he finally comes through the gate

### Some think “day and hour” mean specific times — possible but not necessary

#### Arrive at the same situation — if not watching, it will surprise us

## Series of three passages

### Point: don’t become preoccupied with looking for signs

#### Don’t wait for signs and then get ready — be prepared

### 1. Will catch some people unawares — 24:37-44, esp. 42 & 44

#### Comes without warning, so live in preparedness

### 2. Jesus may come sooner than you think — 24:45-51

#### Reward and punishment

### 3. Jesus may come later than you think — 25:1-13 (Ten Bridesmaids)

#### Jewish custom: wedding ceremony in bride’s house, and then procession to the groom’s house for the wedding meal

#### Bridesmaids wait for the procession and join in

#### Reward for being ready? Join the bride/groom for feast

#### Punishment: “I do not know you” and left out

# So what does it mean to be ready/prepared?

### Heart of eschatology, and what Jesus wanted to teach

## 1. Parable of the Talents (25:14-30)

### Talent is two month’s wages — 5-2-1

#### Reward (v21) and punishment (v 30)

### We prepare for Jesus’ return by being good stewards of what he has given us

#### All that we — financially, materially — is his, and we will answer to him

#### None of us are independently wealthy

## 2. Discourse on the Final Judgment (25:31-46)

### Judgment scene

### Good stewards are the sheep on right — vv 34-40

#### Good stewardship of wealth/time is basis of judgment — not profession

#### Did your life change when I made you into a new creature?

### Bad stewards are the goats on left — vv 41-46

# Are you ready for Jesus to return?

### He is near the gates—everything that must occur has happened—or is happening

## Do you want to hear, “you wicked and slothful servant” … v 30

### Live only for the present, not looking forward to your master’s return — not ready

### Refuse to use God’s wealth for God’s purposes — treasure up treasures on earth

### Refuse to be a steward of God’s time — not visit your disenfranchised brothers

### Your blood is on your head

## Do you want to hear: v 21, 34

### Be ready for Jesus’ return — sooner, later — will come

### Prepare: use all that God has given you for God’s purposes — principle/interest are his

### Love his brothers, especially those in need — feed, welcome, clothe, visit — v 40

## If you hear nothing else this morning

### Jesus is coming again — we win; they lose

### Let’s live like we believe this — prepared good stewards of wealth/time

37. The Holy Spirit

John 14–17

# John 14-17 is called the “Upper Room Discourse”

### Last time Jesus was alone with his disciples before his death — many topics

### Four times Jesus discusses the coming Holy Spirit — look at 3

## Trinity — monotheists — triune God

### God the Father/Son/HS — each person fully God — distinct yet one—mystery

### What do we learn about the God the HS from the Upper Room Discourse?

# 1. John 14:16-17

**Jesus is going to leave them shortly — 14:2-3**

## Context for 14:16-17

### “Helper” — “Advocate,” “Counselor” — “Paraclete” — “Holy Spirit”

### A friend who argues in your defense in the law court

### Paraclete, HS, God, is on our side — fight for you in the challenges of life

## “Another”

### While Jesus was on earth, he was advocate/friend for his disciples

### H.S. will continue doing the same, but he will be with us forever.

### Yet, as real as he is to us who are his disciples …

## The World is incapable of hearing/recognizing the HS (reread)

### I cannot convince a non-believer of the reality of the HS

#### No amount of arguing will help — They wouldn’t get it

### John 3:6 “That which is born of the flesh is flesh …”

#### “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor 2:14).

### Yet without coming to know the HS — never find forgiveness (John 3:5)

## Wonderful promise

### Active since Genesis 1:2

#### Hover over the face of the waters

#### HS is in the midst of the 11 disciples

### Someday, he will be “in” all disciples — Acts 2 — “Indwelling”

# 2. 14:25-26

**Part of the work of the indwelling Spirit is to teach us “all things”** (to love & obey God)

## 1. Sometimes speaks quietly to our minds

### Whispers, “Turn off the movie”Don’t say that — critical; judgmental — I don’t care if you think you’re rightQuestion: when he whispers, are you listening? — Are we quick to obey?

## 2. Sometimes he shouts and hits us over the head with a 2x4

### Keith

## 3. Other times he speaks through Scripture

### As you read the very words of God, you begin to hear/commune with its author

### “Illumination” of Scripture

### “Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything” (2 Tim 2:7)

## Specifically for the 11 Disciples — help them remember what Jesus taught

### Why do you believe the gospel writers got it right?

#### Logical arguments: eyewitnesses

#### But I’m not going to trust my life to logical arguments (≠ faith)

### Reliability of Scripture based on Jesus’ promise

#### Wouldn’t convince a non-Christian, but it is all I need and confirming work of the Holy Spirit

# 3. 16:4b-11 (-15)

## Imagine yourself as a disciple — advantage?

### HS could not come until the work of the cross was accomplished

### Turn a band of frightened men who fled after Jesus’ arrest, to Acts 4:19-20

## “Convict the world”

### Paraclete not just our defense attorney but also God’s prosecuting attorney

## 1. Convict the world of its sin

### Gracious act in showing people that they are not acceptable to God

#### When you/I do not tell people that apart from Christ they will die in their sins and go to hell — no favor — not love but apathy

#### Let them think they can walk straight into kingdom of God — born again

### Necessary act

#### Said earlier, the world on its own cannot respond to the gospel

##### Blinded by their sin of unbelief

#### No matter how hard you or I try, we cannot convict the world of their sin, or reality of the HS

##### “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him” (6:44)

#### It is the HS’s job to convict the world of his presence/sin — supernatural

###  How doe the HS do this?

#### Sometimes HS works directly — prick conscience; challenge beliefs

##### Primarily through Jesus’ disciples as we proclaim/live the gospel of sin/ forgiveness/joy

#### A of the ABCs

##### While you and I must say the words, it is not our job to drive it home

##### Free you up for evangelism

##### 16 year old suicide

## For those of you who are truly “seeking” God — there must be more than this life

### What you are feeling is God’s HS drawing you to himself

### Question is, will you respond?

## 2. Convict the world of righteousness, “because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer”

### Negative sense: show the world that its so-called righteousness is as filthy rags

#### Jesus told them — Now task of HS

### Positive sense: show the world that righteousness is available, only through Jesus’ death on the cross

#### Jesus is going to the Father as a victor—accomplished his work on cross

#### Now role of the Spirit

### How does the HS do this? Primarily Jesus’ disciples bearing witness

#### B of the ABCs — 2 Cor 5:21

## 3. Convict the world of judgment

### Namely, that Satan (and those belonging to him) stands condemned

#### On the cross, Satan’s judgment and destiny were finalized

#### Included are his children — those who do not believe in Jesus (8:43-44)

### How does the HS do this? Primarily though Jesus’ disciples

# Too Hard? Right! On our own we cannot do it

## Fully indwells each believer

### Empowers — so we can walk by the Spirit — Gal 5:16, 22-23

## The HS normally works through Jesus’ Spirit-empowered disciples

### Our helper/advocate — teaches us through whispers/2x4/Scripture

### As we share/live the gospel, the HS convicts neighbors/coworkers/family of their sin and their need for Christ’s righteousness

38. The Lord’s Supper

## Almost 4,000 years ago, God made a promise to Abraham

### Land and descendants

### Generations later, God sent those descendants to Egypt (Joe) — save from famine

## 400 years later they had become slaves

### Moses (to save) — after nine horrible plagues, Pharaoh still not release

# Tenth plague is the most terrible

## Pharaoh has been killing God’s first-born — Israelites

### God will now kill the first-born of every Egyptian family

### God knows that this will break Pharaoh's hard heart —will release the Israelites

## Preparation

### Exodus 12:3b-4, 6b-8, 11-13

#### Family (not isolated individuals)

#### Symbolism: Bitter —(Egypt) — Unleavened/dressed (God will save quickly)

### Yearly ceremony to help the Jews remember what God has done.

#### A teaching tool for their children — 12:26-27 (family festival; ≠ isolated)

## 10th Plague came

### Angel passed over the homes of God’s people

### God saved his people by taking them out of Egypt

### Exodus — greatest act of salvation throughout the OT

## Go to Mount Sinai and enters into a “covenant” — agreement

### God’s part: I will be your God — commits to doing certain things

### People’s part: we will be your people — relationship / community

### Primarily defined by the Ten Commandments — God’s law written on stone

# 8 Centuries passed

### Passover celebration repeated hundreds of times

## Amazing promise

### Jer 31:31-34 — new covenant has same goals as old covenant — law internalized

#### God’s part: forgive sin

#### Our part: know the Lord — forgiveness opens door to relationship

### How? God’s Spirit — Ezekiel 36 — context of forgiveness (vv 26-27)

#### God’s part: give us his spirit — NIV “move you to follow my decrees”

#### Our part: allow HS to move us, to walk in his statutes (guidelines for relationship)

# c. 6 Centuries more have passed — Jesus’ last night before he died

### Having a meal, but not just any meal

## Celebrating the Passover — reinterprets

### We’re celebrating the Exodus, God’s greatest past act of salvation

#### God is about to do something even greater than the Exodus

### As Jesus starts to reinterpret the Passover

#### Not back to Egypt but forward to the cross, we begin to understand how God will do his part in the new covenant

##### Sinners, separated from the holy God — penalty is death

##### Cross, Jesus—the lamb of God—pays the penalty of our sin

##### Death will make possible the new covenant promised through Jeremiah

##### Death make possible the coming of God’s Spirit—Ezekiel

## 1 Cor 11:23-26

### Passover bread now points to Jesus’ body — broken on the cross in death

#### When we celebrate: New Passover: “Unleavened” — loaf/crackers — points to body broken

### Passover cup now points to Jesus’ blood — spilt on the cross

#### “Cup is the new covenant” = his death makes the new covenant possible.

### “Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me”

#### Antecedent of “this” is Passover — *me* (some celebrate once a year)

## Controversy throughout the centuries — divided churches

### “This is my body … (Matthew 26) This is my blood”

### Catholics: Transubstantiation

#### All becomes physical body/blood — wafer/hold cup

#### Sacrifice — Jesus dies every day in Mass (death not sufficient)

### Luther: Consubstantiation

#### Body/Blood is physically present “in, with, and under”

### Calvin and most evangelicals: Spiritual presence/represents

#### Bread/Cup point to his death

#### Jesus is sitting there — Jews never drank blood — symbolic

#### Perhaps limits to this: croutons

## Controversy: what to call this “New Passover”

### Lord’s Supper

### Eucharist “when he had given thanks”

### Communion

### All correctly emphasize one aspect of what Jesus is teaching

## Controversy of how to celebrate communion

### My greatest concern is that it not become a meaningless ritual — variety

### I don’t like the “traditional” method — method not mandated — isolated individuals

#### Fully Biblical: meal sitting around a table — at least gather as groups

#### Family/teaching time

#### Hope that we break free from human tradition — family time (servers)

## No controversy among evangelicals

### Jesus is the lamb of God, who took away the sin of the world

### With this bread/cup we celebrate his victory, and ours, over sin and death

# 1 Cor 11:26 — Three times frames of Communion

## 1. Proclaim (present)

### By both our actions and our words, we are proclaiming for all to hear that Jesus has died for my sins, and yours.

### Evangelism

## 2. Lord’s Death (looking back to the past to the cross)

### Salvation is only through Jesus because only Jesus did something about sin.

### Said earlier: Sin separates us from our holy God — die as penalty

#### God in his mercy allows for a substitute

#### God in his mercy gave himself as that substitute

#### Salvation is in no other name

## 3. Look to the future when he returns

### I am not a citizen of this earth — clod of dirt is not my home

#### My citizenship is in heaven (Paul tells the Philippians)

#### My inheritance is waiting for me (Peter tells us)

### I will live my life on earth with my head up

#### Not falling in love with creation but living in love with my creator

#### Waiting to go home, sending my treasures on ahead

# Practice of Communion is a powerful picture of the Christian life

### God desires to be in a covenant relationship with you/me

### Our God — his people

## God’s part: He saved me by dying on the cross

### I don’t save myself

#### Not celebrating that I work really hard to earn God’s favor

### Celebrating the fact that God paid the penalty

### Celebrating the fact that God, by his mercy and grace, gives us forgiveness

### Nothing in my hand I bring — salvation is all of God

## God the Holy Spirit does his part too

### Ezekiel: new heart — put his spirit in me

### Empower/Strengthen us so to “walk by the Spirit” — desire/ability

### By the Spirit’s power, we strive to live lives of holiness

#### Daily confess that I can’t do it on my own — I need you, God

##  Our part

### Accept that God does his part

### Accept the Spirit’s enabling

### Live within the context of the new covenant — relationship/community

**1 Cor 11:26**

39. Jesus’ Death and Resurrection

# We’ve been looking at the 52 major events in the Bible

### Most of the events so far have been looking forward to today’s event

## First two chapters of the Bible: Creation — created for fellowship with Creator

### Third chapter: Fall into sin

### We are not the kind of people that God asks us to be

#### We do not do what God asks us to do

#### Therefore, we have separated ourselves from our Creator

## Leviticus — sacrificial system

### Holy God cannot live in the presence of sin

### Just God cannot ignore sin

### Consequence of our separation from God is death

### In his mercy, God grants forgiveness through the death of a substitute, e.g., lamb

## Abraham

### God promises to create a nation of his descendants—through it to bless the world

## Prophet Isaiah

### That blessing would be through God’s “Servant” — that substitute — 53:4-6

## Prophets Jeremiah/Ezekiel

### New covenant (relationship)

#### Not a bunch of rules — power to transform—inside out—God’s Spirit

#### Are the kind of People God wants us to be

### That transformation — Nicodemus — born again, by God’s Spirit

## Thursday night — Passover — old ritual with a new meaning

### New covenant would be made possible by Christ’s death

### Jesus is God’s servant / Lamb of God who will die for the sins of the world

# Themes woven together in Jesus — story of death & resurrection

## Thursday — after Passover — he was betrayed by Judas, denied by Peter, rest fled

### Through mockery of a rigged/illegal trial by Jewish leaders

### Roman governor pronounced him innocent

### Pacify the crowd — crucified — Scourged, carry cross to Golgotha, nail, left to die

## But in the moment of sin’s apparent greatest victory

### Jesus — lamb — died for your sins and mine

### On the cross God broke the power of sin

## Temple veil was torn

### Separated “Holy of Holies” — God’s presence used to dwell — High Priest once a year

### Symbolized not only God’s presence

### But also our separation from the presence of our Creator

## Torn — We now have access to the direct presence of God our Creator

### When Jesus died, he …

### Made possible the new *covenant*

### Paid the penalty of our sins by being our *substitute* — lamb of God

### Brought us back to the Garden/*peace*

## Only for those who have faith in Jesus — believe that …

### Rom 5:1 “Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

### Neither peace nor salvation in any other name — Mohamed — because only Jesus dealt with sin

## “The Passion of Jesus Christ” by John Piper

### Sorrowful to think of the pain Jesus suffered for us on the cross

### Good Friday is good, and joyful, because of what Jesus’ death accomplished for us. Jesus’ death … (TOC)

# Story does not end here — on the sadness (and joy) of the cross

### What happens next is much more than a postscript

## Three days after his death, Jesus’ followers discover that he is alive

### Appeared to various groups at different times — once over 500

## Death is a penalty for sin, not for living a long time (Rom 6:23)

### Jesus was sinless — no penalty to pay of his own

#### Therefore death was not able to contain him

### “It is finished” — he had in fact accomplished what he had set out to do — die

#### Resurrection was God’s stamp of approval on that very statement

### Piper, pp. 26f.

## Not just given life again — resurrection is not resuscitation

### Lazarus was resuscitated from dead — would have to die again

### Raised to a new kind of life — resurrection life — heavenly life—never again die

### Calls us to join him in this new type of resurrection life — Rom 6:4

# What does this resurrection life look like?

### “Walk in newness of life”

### Life as joyful as the crucifixion is bad

## 1. Life of Forgiveness

### “And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins” (1 Cor 15:17).

### Full forgiveness is available for you today

#### Purchased by his blood on the cross

#### Celebrated by his resurrection

## 2. Life of Regeneration

### Made into new creatures — once dead in sin; made alive in Christ

### “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pet 1:3).

## 3. Life of Sanctification — growth in spiritual maturity — becoming more like Jesus

### We “belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God” (Rom 7:4).

### Christianity is not primarily a new list of do’s and don’ts

#### When we become disciples, we are ushered into a new kind of life

#### We are made into a new kind of creature — part of new creation

#### Power of sin is broken — we no longer have to live under its domination

### By the resurrecting power of God

#### We want to be the kind of person God wants us to be

#### We want to do what God says is best for me to do

## 4. Guaranteed our final resurrection

### “God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power” (1 Cor 6:14).

#### “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you” (Rom 8:11).

### Through Jesus that death has been defeated and our resurrection guaranteed

#### 1 Cor 15:54-57

#### “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live” (John 11:25).

## 5. Life of peace, living in the presence of our Creator forever

### Jesus is coming again — death or the end of time

#### “Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him” (Heb 9:28).

### “Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your master.”

### Rev 21:1-4

# Question of Easter: Are you ready?

### Sins forgiven?Life to be transformed?Lose your fear of death?Look forward to eternal life?Be at peace with your Creator?

## Admit that by your sin you have separated yourself from your creator

### **B**elieve that Jesus … Is God/Man; died on cross

### **C**ommit your life to him, waiting eagerly for his return

## God’s Spirit will transform you

### Forgive

### Declare you righteous — not guilty

### Empower you to live a life of increasing holiness

# Question of Easter

### We will respond like Jesus’ followers did when they saw the resurrected Jesus?

### Disciples were “glad” when they saw Jesus (John 20:20)

### They worshipped (Thomas in Jn 20:28)

# Jesus has already come once to deal with sin

### Coming again to gather to himself those who are eagerly waiting for him

40. The Great Commission

Matthew 28:16-20

## We come to the end of the gospel story

### Jesus has died to provide forgiveness and access to God

### Raised from the dead to show he had earned victory over death

### Context of glory/wonder/majesty/power that the disciples go north to Galilee

## “Great Commission” (28:16-20)

### Jesus’s command is not only to the eleven

### It stands at the conclusion to the gospel as a commission to all disciples/all times/all places

# “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me”

## Phil 2:9-11

### Jesus is Lord — Sovereign (“boss”) over absolutely everything

#### King of kings — Lord of lords

### Think through what this means

#### Within the context of Jesus’ absolute authority that we understand the GC

## Sovereign over the Natural world

### Largest things in the natural world

#### Wind and rain, sickness and death

#### Volcanoes and earthquakes, hurricanes and tornadoes

### Smallest things in the natural world

#### Our DNA and chromosomes; electrons circling neutrons

#### Germs that infect and the white corpuscles that protect

## Sovereign over all Human authorities

### Close—humanistic forces that seem invincible: city, state, nation

#### Political forces that seek to kill the unborn.

### Far away — North Korea and Al-Qeda

## Sovereign over the Spiritual world

### Demons and Satan, the occult and the skinheads

### Ghosts and mediums, psychics and tarot cards

## Sovereign over the world religions

### Muslims; Hindus; Buddhists, Animists;

### Mormons and JW and New Age and Spiritism and Superstition

### Kneel in judgment

## Sovereign over every part of every person

### Our desires & goals, time & money

### Abilities & dysfunctions, past & future.

### Your children & friends, neighbors & co-workers

## Jesus is Lord of All — Sovereign over all

### It is this Jesus, to whom all authority has been given, who says …

# “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (v 19a)

## God’s will? Make disciples

### Become “learners,” followers of Jesu, disciples — make more

### Cloning business

## Therefore — ought/must do

### I don’t have to wonder if I am supposed to make disciples

#### We have been told to do it

#### By the sovereign God

### I don’t need permission from anyone else to do what Jesus tells me to do

#### Them — parents — school board — political powers

#### Still have to be wise in how I do it.

### Behind our witnessing/preaching stands the Sovereign Lord

#### His ambassadors (in school, work) — doing his bidding

### Somebody doesn’t like it? Tough. I don’t answer to them.

## Great Commission applies to every single one of us

### “Go” is not an imperative — GC is primarily one command — “make disciples”

### For some “go” will carry the force of a imperative — “all nations”

### For others, GC equally applies to those of us who stay home

#### “All nations” includes my nation

#### Bloom where planted

### Culmination of the Gospel message — God’s will for every believer

## How do we make disciples?

# 1. “Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”

## Begin to obey the GC when we are involved in evangelism — people becoming disciples

### As we baptize new disciples in the name of the triune God

### They are proclaiming that they have become his disciples

## But I am not an evangelist!

### Not my gift —someone else’s responsibility

GC is for all disciples regardless of their giftedness

## Evangelism is more than street-corner witnessing and tent revivals

### Evangelism happens …

### our hearts are broken in desperation for our neighbors — knees (I believe in hell)

### as our mouths are full of thanksgiving for what God has done for/in me

### as our changed lives proclaim the change in our heart

### as we explain our hope — share the ABC

## Is this what our life look like?

### Pray for opportunity to establish a relationship with neighbors — ignore

### Mouths full of thanksgiving — consumed with critical spirit

### Lives different — “salt of the earth” look just like every other kid at school

### Are we ready to share? Live like we do not believe in hell?

## People becoming disciples

# 2. “Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you”

## Evangelism and Sanctification — people becoming/living as disciples

### “We’re a GC church” — John 3:16 — “half a church”

### “We’re a teaching church” — unaware about seekers — don’t care

### Both are equally disobedient — new disciples/fully-devoted disciples

## “Teaching them all that I have commanded you” — content, doctrine, theology

### Starts with basic theology

#### 52 Stories sermon

#### Biblically literate — Statement of Faith

### More than just basic theology — KJV “all things whatsoever”

#### Not all seminary professors

#### Every one of us must move beyond theological milk to meat

#### Heb 6:1-3

## “Observe” — not only about doctrine but also about ethics — how we live

### Profession of lips — confession of lives

### Not enough to simply know the right stuff — do the right stuff

#### Technical theological term: Know but don’t do — Fools (Mt 7:26)

#### Common example for Jesus: Pharisee

### Much of the American church is on a starvation diet — not meat (doctrine)

#### Much of it is also spiritually obese

#### Take … eat … but the food never leaves their system

### How do you do this? Teach to observe?

#### Can’t be done from the pulpit — not really (encourage, prompt)

#### By example — friendship, mentoring, discipleship — 1-1, 1-3, 1-10

#### Not by lecture but by example

# Great Commission Starts at Home

## 1. Starts with me

### I cannot impart what I do not possess — doctrine; ethics

### Learn and model — teach others, and watch them put it into practice

## 2. Continues with your (grand)children

### Teach: Read the Bible/pray to talk

#### Make the most of opportunities to explain the character of God

#### Sunset — beauty of God

#### Homeless — go to school, or, We were once homeless and God cleaned us up and brought us into his family.

### Observe: Godly model — maturity is more caught than taught

#### Our children will not desire God above all things if *we* do not desire God above all things

#### We live in such a way that our children want to know our God

### We are committed to helping you raise the next generation of believers

#### But if your child’s spiritual growth depends on what we do for 5-6 hours a week, there is a good chance it will fail and they will go to hell

### Is your home a safe place, a learning place, a place of discipleship?

#### Half-time — MTV; ShowTime; HBO

#### Alcorn

### Discipleship is hard work

#### Difficult choices — lost art

#### Can become joyful as we desire God more than sexual titillation, wealth

## 3. Great Commission expands through friendships

### Christian crockpot

### Small/men’s/women’s groups

### GC will never be fulfilled if we try to do it only Sunday morning

### Teaching/observing community — teach one another; share; accountable; laugh and cry

## 4. Other nations

### Mission’s Committee — request more budget — our people overseas

### Children under the Monroe Street bridge

# Encouragement? — 20:29b

## Gospel ends as it begins

### With the promise that this baby would be “Immanuel,” “God with us” — always

### Whether you are struggling in your own heart

#### difficult time with your child

#### working with the sewer children in Budapest

### “Nothing can separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus”

## May we be come GC disciples

#### Learn doctrine — model ethics — imparting what we do in fact possess

#### GC church

41. Pentecost

Acts 2

## Acts begins where the gospels leave off

### After resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples and followers several times

### Told them not to leave Jerusalem — wait for the HS He had promised

### Ascension (1:8-9)

# Pentecost (Acts 2)

### “50th” day after Passover — end of the Jewish “Feast of Weeks”

### Many Jews from around the world made pilgrimages

## Fulfillment of Jesus’ promise — 2:1-4

### OT — few rare exceptions — temporary possession for specific task

#### Pentecost is the beginning of a new era — permanent

### Signs accompanied the giving — external confirmation

#### Sound of wind (OT theophanies accompanied with wind‚ John 3)

#### Fire divided into tongues and went over each person (12 and 120)

#### Speak in tongues — later — unlearned human languages

##### V 11 — praising God for His mighty works

## Moved outdoors, presumably to the temple — peoples’ amazement

### 2:5-11 — (Galileans)

## Always the secular excuse for the miraculous working of God (1:12-13)

### Despite the obvious miracle — as if being drunk turns you into a linguist — say same

### Francis Crick and James Watson — Nobel Prize for work in DNA

#### Death of the myth of the simple cell

#### Evolution is impossible

#### Looking at a miracle, and instead of praising God — “panspermia”

# Peter’s Explanation (cf. 2:14-21)

## Not drunk

### Not even Galilean sailors get drunk at 9 a.m.

## Fulfillment of prophecy

### Joel’s prophecy about the coming Day of the Lord

### Day when God would pour out His Spirit and all would prophecy

# Peter’s Sermon

## “Kerygma” — the essential nature of NT preaching

### Look at sermons throughout Acts — say the same basic thing — model

### 1. Jesus lived — miracles (2:22)

### 2. Died — fulfillment of prophecy (2:23 — human responsibility for sin; God sovereignly accomplishing His purposes)

### 3. Raised from the dead — exaltation (2:24, 33, 36 — “Lord / Christ”)

### 4. Call for repentance (2:37-39)

### If our evangelistic services would follow the same pattern — avoid much of the mess in the church today — “Sorry for your sins?” = “Salvation by sorrow.”

## World has many answers to the question in v 37

### 1. Be a good person, sincere — deny the reality of sin

#### If there is no sin — no need of repentance — no cross — Father lied to Son

#### Street corner; Liberal churches; Schuller (Hughes, 101) — “Get along!”

### 2. Earn favor with God

#### Jehovah Witnesses (doors + other things)

##### Mormon (married in temple)

##### Muslim (pray)

##### Hindu (reincarnation)

##### Pastor in Spokane (Luther got it wrong)

#### Many “Baptist churches”

##### Implicitly teach salvation through the appearance of religiosity

##### Many agree with the Roman Catholics — baptism is a “means of grace”

##### Baptism is a “Get out of hell free” card

### 3. Peter is an evangelical — Repent and be Baptized

#### You cannot move smoothly from this life to eternal life — Disjunction; born again

#### “Evangelical”

##### the reality of sin and the need for the atonement — Christ’s sacrifice

##### individual repentance

##### the necessity of God doing a work in your life (changing you; born again)

##### the on-going demands of sanctification

## 1. Repent, but repent of what?

### A. Sin — v 38 “for the forgiveness of your sins”

### B. What is the bulk of Peter’s sermon about?—Who is Jesus?—Repent misunderstanding

#### Everyone who hears the gospel must answer this same question: “Who is Jesus?”

#### 1. Liar or 2. Lunatic — Jews

#### 3. Who he says he is — v 36 — Lord and Christ

#### No fourth option: “good man” — I am the vine — I and the Father — I am the way

### Repent of misunderstanding and the ensuing sin — change mind/conduct (v 40)

## 2. Baptized

### Not a magical cure for sin — “means of grace” — Visible indication of inward reality

### Enactment / Public profession of the kerygma

#### Sinner, separated from God

#### Under the water of baptism — died with Christ to my life of sin

#### Come out of the waters — commitment to live a new kind of life

# There is no more important question in life: Who is Jesus?

### Answer determines where you spend eternity

## Don’t hide behind a smokescreen of intellectual questions — Don’t let them

### Good God let bad things happen to good people? — are no good people — What about J?

### How can I believe in a God who sends people to hell because they haven’t heard? — doesn’t — sinners

### What about the Crusades?

### Good questions, and the Bible has good answers — but they are not the most important

## The answers to these questions will not condemn you to hell

### The answers to these questions will not bring you into eternal bliss

### Who is Jesus?

## I invite you this morning to “repent and be baptized ...”

42. The Church

## “I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it”

### What actually is this “church”?

## Summary

### Not a building/denomination/human organization

### “Assembly of true believers”

#### Not individually the church — disciples assemble together

#### “True believers” — not everyone who goes to a “church building” is part of the true church

#### Augustine: “Many sheep are without and many wolves are within”

## Many metaphors — the four most common

### Goal #1: Define the church biblically and not according to human tradition

#### Is this building a “sanctuary”? (Acts 7:48)

### Goal #2: Enjoy God’s vision of what the church is

#### Allow that vision to motivate us to act like a biblical church

# 1. Christ is the “head” of the church

### Col 1:18 “he is the head of the body, the church”

### Eph 1:20b-23a

## Christ is the authority over all things — his church

### This is not some religious organization where we all have a vote

### Not a democracy

### We do not have the option of making the church into what we think it should be

## Jesus is the boss — head

### We are called to implement what He thinks the church should be

### His church

## So easily forgotten

### Powerful pastor: starts well but uses pulpit to gain favors — sexual/monetary

### Secretary/Janitor: wrestles control of the church from the elders or the pastors

### People: who by virtue of their longevity, giving, social status, think they own the church and can make it be whatever they wish — “stinking money sermon”

## Christ is the head of his church

### Every person — elders, staff, layperson — submits to God’s authority as expressed in God’s Word

### Puts church leadership in a difficult position

#### Called to lead — put God’s plan in place — cannot be afraid to lead

#### And yet we must fear greatly the seduction of power and the corruption of the gospel at our hands.

### In our leading, we submit to God’s vision for His church

# 2. We are the “Body of Christ”

### 1 Cor 12

## The human body has a variety of needs — walk, talk, see

### Therefore, it has many different parts to meet those different needs

### Feet, mouth, eyes

## So also the church is Christ’s body

### Christ’s body has a variety of needs

### Therefore it has many different parts (you and me) to meet those different needs.

## 1 Cor 12:7

### Mercy — unusual ability to cry with those who are hurting

### Administration — like working with details

### Service — care for the needs of the people

### Teaching — lead us to the center of the bullseye

## We all together are to work for the “common good” of Christ’s body

### Worse thing that could happen is for part of the human body not to do its part

#### Kidney “Take a break” — dialysis

#### Spleen — insulin

### Same is true for Christ’s body

#### Those who encourage — remain silent

#### Those who serve — refuse to participate

#### 40% not give — puts a tremendous load on the rest of the body

### Best thing that could happen is for all of us, to work together, for common good

#### Church is not about what I get out of it — we do for each other

#### “Ask not what Christ’ body can do for you; ask what you can do for Christ’s body.”

#### Symphony — everyone playing in balance and harmony

# 3. The Church is a “Family”

## For some people that is a frightening thought

### Dysfunctional or abusive background — statistics

### God’s family has the perfect Father — children may be messed up

#### Always loves/ disciplines properly

#### Never too busy, never abuses

### Faith

## God is into relationships

### Didn’t die for things — world, people — our priorities as well

### Vertically: Father — sons/daughters; children — 1 John 3:1

### Horizontally: brothers/sisters

## God is into “Community”

### “Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works” (Heb 10:24).

### There are two sets of forces at work within us (dogs)

#### Power of sin and the flesh — drag us down and destroy us, if possible

#### Power of God’s Spirit working in our regenerate heart

#### Which one is the strongest? The one you feed

### If we are going to be a biblical community, then we must stir up …

#### Feed the good dog — Encourage one another toward holiness

### How? Romans 8:5-6

#### What do you set your minds on?

##### Set before your eyes? Fill your days with?

#### Things of the world — voyeurism; violence; materialism — never satisfy

#### Does the TV, wallet, calendar pass the Phil 4:8 test?

# 4. God’s family has a home — we are the temple of God

## Individually and corporately, we are the temple of God

### 1 Cor 3:16 “you are God’s temple and God’s Spirit dwells in you.”

## 1. Worship in the very presence of God — Look like? Rev 5:6-14

### This is going on right now — eternal worship service in heaven.

### When we worship at 207 E. Lincoln, we are called to enter into that service

#### Question isn’t: did I “like” the worship — not right question

#### “Was I able to enter into the heavenly courts and worship the lamb?”

#### “Was I able to declare who the lamb is and what the lamb has done?”

## 2. In this temple we are called to holiness

### Isaiah 6 — remind us of sin; 2 Cor 6:16b-18 — call to holiness

### Starve the wicked dog — *The Purity Principle,* page 67

### Feed the regenerate dog — Phil 4:8

# We are the church of the living God — assembly of true believers

### Built by Christ and will never be destroyed

### 1. Christ stands at its head — authority

### 2. His body — variously gifted members of the divine Symphony

### 3. Family — relationships — stirring up each other to love and good works

### 4. Temple — worshipping in his presence; walking in his holiness

## What else can the world possibly offer to compete with this vision of who we are in Christ?

Only lies, deceit, and empty promises

43. Justification by Faith

Romans 1–3

## End of Third Missionary Journey

### Plan: Offering — Jerusalem — move base to Rome — 4th journey to west (Spain)

### Writes Romans — wants them to fully understand his theology — support him

### Most systematic presentation of the gospel

# Thesis 1:16-17

**Not ashame**d **of gospel**

### Good news about Jesus — who he is / what he did

### Paul didn’t care what other people thought — knows it is true

## It is the Power of God

### V 4 uses same word “power” to describe the power that raised Christ from dead

### When Paul, you, and I speak, unashamedly, the gospel, we do so sharing in the same power that raises the dead.

## It is this resurrecting power that makes our Salvation possible

### We are separated from God by our sins — unable to do anything about it

### If we are to be saved, we must be saved by the power of God

### If God does not save us, we will pay penalty of our own sins with our own death

## Salvation is for “everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek”

### Gospel is for everyone — no (ethnic) barriers — chronology

### Not universalists — salvation is not for everyone, period

#### Gospel is applied only to those who believe

#### Offered to all — applied only to those who believe

### Repeat 1:16

## Why would Paul, or why would we, be ashamed?

### Why do we so often couch our words so people will not know we are a Xian?

#### Stop short of actually saying the name, “Jesus Christ”?

### The gospel is the message of human inability/arrogance — deal with sin

#### Message of an apparently failed Jewish fanatic who did what I could not

#### Theme song is not, “I did it my way,” but “God did it his way”

### On the surface appears to be an embarrassing, weak, uncool philosophy

#### Values meekness and gentleness

#### Calls us to love our enemy and leave vengeance to God

#### Paul would never have been popular at high school

### Nevertheless, the gospel is true and Paul is not ashamed

# Why is Paul convinced it is the message of salvation? 1:17

## Gospel (who Jesus is—what he did) is the message about the “righteousness of God”

### “Righteousness” is first of 3 metaphors (“Justify”)

#### Legal metaphor: not guilty of sin

### Gospel tells us two things about the “righteousness of God”

#### That God himself is righteous — perfect in his holiness — without sin

#### How God makes us righteous — declares me not guilty of my sins

#### “Becoming a disciple”

## How does He make us righteous?

### Completely and totally a matter of faith — “from faith for faith”

#### Not “works” — not doing things to earn favor with God

#### Faith — believing that Jesus has already done the work for us

### What do “works” look like today?

#### Not do certain bad things

#### Be better than your neighbor (vice versa)

#### Do some token good things — church periodically, give, sincere

### Common thread in all world religions, cults, and even Catholicism (j=f+w)

#### I don’t come to God empty-handed — something to offer him — deserve

#### “Works are as filthy rags” — “What can a person give in exchange ...”

#### Nothing I can do to make myself righteous

### What does “faith” look like today? Habakkuk 2:4; 3:17-18

#### Surrendering our pride—admit our inability to make ourselves righteous

#### Come with hands empty — asking to be filled with the work of Christ

#### If is by our faith that we are declared righteous

## 1:16-17 — thesis

### Everything that follows through chapter 8 flows out of these two verses

# Having stated his thesis, Paul begins to build his case

### 1:18-3:20 — apart from Christ no one is righteousness

## 1:18-32 “General revelation”

### Everyone knows about God because they have seen the world

#### 1:19-20 — without excuse because we did not respond to what we saw

### God’s response to our sin is two-fold:

#### Wrath (v 18)

#### Giving us over to our sin — downward spiral (1:28-32)

## Turns specifically to the Jews (2:1-3:8)

### Clapping: “Go get’em Paul”

### You are doing the same things, thinking that because you are God’s special people somehow your sin will be ignored on judgment day

### You too are unrighteous — not respond to what you know of God

## Conclusion (3:9-20)

### One of the darkest passages in the NT — vv10b-18

#### This is what life looks like apart from Christ, because no one in and of themselves can do the good necessary to be righteous

### If only we could learn to see our neighbors as God sees them

#### Nice guy, love’s spouse, time with kids — true

#### Their heart with God’s eyes — dark, sinister, bent on hell (C.S. Lewis)

#### Hindu student

# Heart of the Gospel (3:21-26)

## Gospel is all about the righteousness of God — vv 21-22a

### Gospel shows that we are made righteous by:

### 1. Faith — fully convinced God is/will do (≠works)

### 2. Faith in Jesus Christ — did on the cross

#### Not sincerity; people can be sincerely wrong

#### Not pluralists — object of faith must be Jesus

### 3. All who believe — no barriers — all in the same boat

## Repeats in reverse order — vv 22b-25a

### Sin has caused us all to fall short of the glory God intended us to have

### Therefore, if we are to be justified, God has to do it because sinners can’t

#### Justification is “by his grace as a gift” — can’t be saved

#### If we are to be justified, God must do it for us

### Gift? “Redemption” made possible by CJ (cross)

#### Second metaphor (after justification) from slave market

#### Price (cross) and freedom (from power of sin)

#### Bunyan

## How did Jesus redeem us? “Propitiation by his blood” (blood on the cross)

### Third metaphor, from sacrificial system (sermon on Leviticus): *hilasterion*

#### “Propitiation” — to God — Christ’ death appeased God’s wrath to sin

#### “Expiation” — to us — removed our feelings of guilt

#### “Mercy seat”: top of ark in the Holy of Holies — public view on cross

### Still must be applied to me, individually — “Received by faith”

#### Forgiveness is hanging on cross, but you must receive/take make it your own

#### ABCs of the gospel

# Conclusion

## Read 1:16-17 out-loud

## Gospel is the message that God’s power is available for our salvation

### Every one of us has sinned — separated ourselves from God

### Christ died on cross as our *hilasterion*—sole source of redemption/forgiveness

### Redemption is offered to all, freely, as a gift, by God’s grace

#### Can’t earn it

#### Receive it by faith, believing Jesus is … has done …

### Gospel calls us to live a life of faith, trusting in the promises of God

## Nothing here to be ashamed of — gospel is the power of God for salvation

### Respond in joy

44. The Grace of Giving

2 Cor 8-9

# “Grace”: “God’s goodness—to those who do not deserve

### Undeserved blessing

### Unmerited favor

## 1. God’s grace that Saves—familiar

### We deserve nothing but judgment and hell

### God, in his goodness, treats us with grace and saves us — Eph 2:8-9

## 2. God’s grace that Sustains—less familiar

### After conversion, you and I continue to deserve nothing from God

#### Don’t somehow become worthy because God has now saved us

### But God, in his goodness, continues to treat/uphold us with sustaining grace.

#### Sustaining grace is the power to live lives of holiness

#### Sustaining grace is God’s willingness to forgives us 70x7 when we fail

### Often combined — 1 Cor 15:10; Titus 2:11-12

## Sustaining grace is a radical way of thinking—counter-cultural

### Our tendency is to approach life as a patchwork quilt

#### One square, we acknowledge our need of God’s saving grace

#### I will go on living in the other squares of my life oblivious to

##### my ongoing need for God’s grace

### Forget if God were to withdraw his sustaining grace from me, I would crumble

#### No matter how strong, smart, and clever—I can’t make it

#### I desperately need the ongoing power of God’s sustaining grace

#### Paul: “Grace be with you”

#### Piper: “Future grace”

### Why all this talk about grace?

# One way God’s grace shows itself is in my financial giving—sermon

## Primary NT passage on giving is 2 Cor 8-9

### End of third missionary journey

### Collecting offering from the Gentiles for the Jewish/Jerusalem church

### Encouraging the church in Corinth to give by reflecting on what the Macedonian church had already given.

## Dominant note is that of “grace” — “Grace of Giving”

### If you hear anything this morning:

### Giving is God’s gift of grace to undeserving sinners that frees us from the materialism of this world by calling us to give generously and cheerfully

##  Alcorn: how we often apologetically approach topic of wealth, possessions, & giving

### “I apologize, but I need to speak this morning about adultery”

### “Adultery week”

### Adultery committee requires me to preach on this once a year

### For those of you committing adultery — bear with me — not until next year

## Snicker, but isn’t this typical of preaching on stewardship?

### 15% of NT is about money and possessions

### In a series on the 52 major events of the Bible — negligent/sinful to omit

### You’ve asked me to preach the full gospel — here it comes, without apology

# Sets the stage with 8:1

###  “I want you to know about the grace of God in Macedonia”

### Gift of God’s grace that saved unworthy sinners

### Gift of God’s grace has enabled the Macedonians to give!

### “Gift” and “grace” are the same basic word — repeat theme Bill

# 8:2-4

## Macedonian Christians were being severely tested — whether truly saved

### “Afflictions” — religious persecution (2 Tim 3:12)

### “Extreme poverty”—far below our definition of poverty

#### Everyone in this room is in top 10% of the wealthy in history of the world

#### Visit 2/3 world countries to see the extent of the Macedonian poverty

## Passed the test — Proved by their actions that their faith was real

### Proved that God’s saving grace was indeed sustaining them

### 1. “Abundance of joy” — in the midst of suffering, persecution, and poverty

### 2. Giving “overflowed in a wealth of generosity”

### Their abundant joy, that flowed into their generous giving, can only be explained by seeing it as the result of God’s s/s grace in their lives.

## Should be no surprise that Paul tells the Corinthians — and us

### That we too must “prove” the genuineness of our faith — 8:7b-8 (also v 24)

### Reaction: “I don’t got to prove nothing to nobody. This is my business.” Private.

#### Reaction of our sinful, individualistic, western culture

### Bible says, “prove God’s grace through your generous and joyful giving”

#### Show that God’s grace is in fact active in your life

#### Our giving is proof of God’s saving/sustaining grace—freeing us from the materialism of this world

### Specific application of the general principle in John 15:8

# How were they able to give so generously? 8:5

## Macedonian Christians, first and foremost, gave themselves to God—God’s saving grace

### God’s sustaining grace transformed them — enabled them to give

## This is why giving is an “act of grace” (v 1)

### Idea that is repeated in v 7 (“excel in this act of grace also”) and again in v 19

### 1. Enables us to want to give

### 2. Enables us to be able to give — even to the point of helping us earn the money (9:8,10)

#### Gives the seed to plant, and in fact multiplies the seed

#### God also gives growth to the seed for the harvest of bread

### Macedonian Christians understood that God is the Giver at both ends

## They also understood that giving is God’s will (v 5)

### 9:13—Crucial to see the flow of theology

#### Corinthians experience God’s saving grace—“confession of the gospel of Christ”

#### Submit to God’s sustaining grace that enables us to give—“submission”

#### Results in God being glorified—primary goal of all believers

## Macedonians understood that everything belongs to God — 1 Cor 6:19-20

### We are stewards of God’s wealth, to be used for his purposes

### One purpose is to care for ourselves/families — set our own salary

### Another purpose is to give away God’s wealth to further God’s purposes

## Alcorn: Not given God’s wealth to raise our standard of living

### Standard of giving

# What is our ultimate motivation and goal?

## Motivation: In response to what Jesus gave us — 8:9

### Incarnation: just as Christ gave graciously to us, so we are to give to others

## Goal: Bring glory (honor; praise) to God

### Whole life (1 Cor 10:31)

### Specifically of our handling of God’s wealth — 2 Cor 8:19; 9:13

### Alcorn, 57

# Struggled with this final point

## You’ve asked me to preach the whole gospel

### Speak bluntly and honestly and gently and biblically about all things: sin

### Pastor’s conference: holding back on money and possessions — off limits

## I don’t care about your money

### God will be faithful — accomplish his purposes here

### Those who give will be blessed — 9:6

## I do care about your heart

### Jesus: the location of your treasure IS the indicator of the location of your heart

#### Paul: a person who has truly experienced God’s grace toward undeserving sinners will give

### Some wonderful indications of God’s grace

#### Giving to the stewardship challenge is more than pledged

### I asked our financial secretary to give me the broad sweep — I don’t know spec.

#### Over half of you are giving less than $1 per day — not a latte

#### Allowing for exceptions—Is God’s grace at work in your life?

### Why are the Muslims building schools?

# All of us: “Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift” (9:15)

### Grace that saves undeserving sinners

#### Grace that sustains redeemed sinners

### Grace that leads and enables us to give

#### to the advancement of God’s kingdom for the sake of God’s glory alone.

### Show God and one another and the world that we have experienced God’s grace

### Giving is God’s gift of grace to undeserving sinners that frees us from the materialism of this world by calling us to give generously and cheerfully

45. The Christian’s Joy

## Chapters 1-4 of Romans deal with becoming a disciple (justification)

### Righteousness is only by faith

### Declared not guilty because we believe Jesus paid the penalty of our sins

## Chapter 5-8 Paul moves to the next topic of being a disciple (sanctification)

### Spell out the benefits of being justified

### Show what the life of a righteous person looks like

## Notice the order and connection — 5:1

### Justification is first, then sanctification comes after and is based on justification

### Justification must necessarily lead to sanctification

## Give broad sweep of four chapters

### Pick out 9 specifics of what this life of righteousness looks like

### Overwhelm you with the goodness and graciousness of God

### Spur you on to love and good works by showing you what it looks like to live as a fully-devoted, righteous, disciple of Jesus Christ

### Read these chapters this afternoon

# 5. Joy of our Reconciliation

## 1. Looks to the past — Peace with God

### V 11 “reconciliation”

#### Hostilities have ceased — replaced by relationship

### Primarily an objective reality

#### Its not so much how you feel about God

#### Peace is how God thinks about us

### This objective confidence gives us stability in the midst of the emotions of our life

#### The ups & downs of the circumstances of our life

### Eventually, this objective reality moves our subjective affections/emotions/joy

#### Even in the midst of life’s struggles we can rejoice

## 2. Looks to the future — “rejoice in hope of the glory of God” — 5:2

### Like peace, Christian “hope” is not “I hope this or that happens”

#### “Confident anticipation of what is to come”

### Look forward with absolute confidence to receiving the glory of God

#### a. Glory that God always intended us to have — 8:30 (future; past tense)

##### Someday the pain will all be gone, the struggle with sin will be erased, the half-heartedness with which we serve God will be destroyed.

##### We will be exactly who our perfect, all-loving, all-powerful, always-gracious, all-glorious God created us to be.

####  b. Also look forward to seeing the glory of God himself — 1 Cor 13:12

##### Heaven is a terminus — 10,000 years — not static

##### When we get to heaven, we will still not fully understand God’s glory

##### Through the trillion millennia we will grow awe/wonder

###  This hope is so firm and so glorious that it carries us through suffering (5:3-5)

#### Because we know what lies on the other side: endurance, character, hope.

## 3. Christ’s sacrifice fully covers all our sin (sufficiency of the cross)

### Describes Adam’s sin, which we all share in because we all sin — 5:12

### Compares it to Christ’s act of righteousness — 5:18

### Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross is sufficient to cover all the sins of the world

### No amount of sin is too great for the cross

### Joy

# 6. Sanctification

### Okay to live in sin?

## 1. We have been set free from sin — why would you want to live in sin?

### Baptismal imagery — 6:3-4

#### We are set free from its tyrannical power! — 6:7

#### What joy to live this way

### Sin still affects us — 6:11, 12

## 2. Slaves of righteousness

### Before our conversion, we were slaves to sin — caught in a web of deceit and lies

#### Slavery to sin leads to impurity, ever-increasing wickedness, and death

### But now we have become slaves of righteousness — 6:22

#### Results in freedom from sin, holiness, and eternal life

#### Joy of servitude to the God of heavens/cross

### So often think of a life of righteousness as burdensome

#### Nothing more burdensome than being enslaved to sin

## Note what he does not say

### ≠ yes

### Christian life doesn’t really matter — sanctification optional

### Justified by faith; live any way you want — profession

### Sanctification is the necessary and certain fruit of justification

# 7. Righteous person is Free from condemnation of the law

**There is so much more to the Christian life than a new list of dos and don’ts**

### So much more than the condemning finger, “You can’t do that anymore.”

### Remarkable how many people shut themselves up to this type of miserable existence

**1. Freedom (8:1-2)**

### Just as a person who loses a spouse to death is free to remarry.

#### So also believers have died to the law — married to Christ — 7:4

### There are still rules — must not act like an adulteress — 7:6

### There will still be struggle — 7:19

#### The absolute, tyrannical power of sin has been destroy

#### In the midst of that struggle, we cry out — 7:24-25a

# 8. Moves in crescendo to Life in Holy Spirit enjoyed by righteous

## Our life is now a life in the Spirit of God (empowered, guided, encouraged)

### So much Paul says

#### “Life and peace”(8:6)

#### Prays for us (8:26)

#### Sovereign God in control (8:28)

#### Holy Spirit is our “first-fruits,” guarantee of what is to (8:23a)

### More warnings — 8:12-13

#### HS holds out a life of joy and peace, but you must take hold of it

#### Must set your mind on the things of the Spirit

#### Must put to death the misdeeds of the body.

## 7. Adopted into the family of God — 8:23b

### The adoption process has started.

#### We know with certainty that we have become God’s children

#### Wait for the final court date when the judge finalizes the adoption.

### Don’t just “wait”; we “groan” in anticipation — look forward with excitement

#### Are you so excited about your future with God that words cannot express your joy?

#### Are your words replaced by groans because the emotions are so deep?

##  8. HS assures us that we are God’s children

### 8:14-17a — No question in my mind that I am a child of God

### Another warning — 8:17b — Salvation by suffering? (≠ martyr — 2 Tim 3:12)

#### Conflict with the world is not a sign that something is wrong — sign that there is probably something right

#### Warning: If there is no conflict — good time to worry

### It is in the midst of suffering that the HS speaks the loudest

## 3 As if all this isn’t enough, Paul concludes that we know God is on our side

### There is no one of any consequence who opposes us — 8:31-32

### No one can charge us with sin — 8:33

### No one will condemn us — 8:34

### No one will separate us — 8:35-39

# This is the Joy of the Righteous Life. Overwhelmed?

### Encourage you to see what our life can/should be like

### Stir you up to love and good works:

#### Confident and joyful in our hope

#### Free from the power and condemnation of sin

#### Enslaved to God

#### Let by God’s Spirit

### If you are not righteous — life you want?

#### Ask your neighbor

46. Humility

Philippians

## Paul has close emotional ties with church he planted in Philippi

### Much joy in his letter to them

### Yet it was a church with its share of problems

#### External persecution

#### Internal rivalry, envy, self-centeredness

#### The motivation of some preachers was to make Paul jealous

### Solution is to call the church to humility, unity, and focus on God/gospel

# 1:27

## Paul wants the Philippians to live “worthy of the gospel”

### Footnote: "behave as citizens worthy of the gospel"

#### Philippi had special status — Roman privilege — proud of R. citizenship

#### 3:20 — church in Philippi is an outpost of heaven

#### Live in a way that is worthy, appropriate, for a citizen of heaven

### What does it look like to live as a citizen of heaven?

## "Standing firm in one spirit"

### In the face of external persecution and internal rifts: stand firm!

#### Don't waver in your commitment to Christ/one another

### How do I do this? “By God's Spirit”

#### You and I can’t live on earth as citizens of heaven by our own strength

#### By the sustaining grace of God, which is the power of Holy Spirit—2:13

### When we are together, united, empowered by the same Spirit,

#### we can “strive side by side for the faith of the gospel” “with one mind.”

# Specifically look like? 2:1-4

### "Same love": my love for you is to be the same as your love for me

### "Full accord": we are in full agreement — really are in this together

## "Same mind" — mindset — disposition, way of thinking, focus — like-minded

### Doesn’t mean we have to agree on everything

### Also doesn’t mean we ignore significant problems and “just get along”

## 1. Agreed on one central focus

### Focus on God, and “strive side by side for the faith of the gospel"

### So easy to lose our focus (esp. as a church) — become distracted

#### When we lose our focus on God and his gospel

##### Secondary things come into focus — become primary

##### Church becomes about numbers, growth, spill coffee on the carpet

#### Focus naturally, sinfully, shifts to me. Instead of, “Glorify God?”

##### Do I like it?

##### Does church make me feel good about myself?

#### Focus becomes, That person hurt me

##### I don't like the way (s)he does things

#### Church — glory of God — becomes the glory of men/women and dies natural death

##### World sits back and smiles

##### Doesn’t have to lift a finger

##### We have become our own worst enemies

### We cannot afford to lose our focus

#### With one mind, we must focus on God, the gospel, and in turn true enemy

#### Tozer (The Pursuit of God): piano tuning fork — Mission Statement

## 2. Our lives must be characterized by humility

### “Once you think you got it, you’ve lost it.”

#### Hard to preach — 3 times in my life I was especially humble

#### “It’s hard to be humble, when you’re perfect in every way.”

### Key virtue in Paul’s thought

#### Without humility, most of the other Christian virtues are impossible

### What is humility? Opposite of …

#### Rivalry, conceit, looking only to your own interests

#### “Self-interest & self-aggrandizement at the expense of others”

#### Servility that claims to be humility but in reality wants to attract attention to itself — you know this kind of person

### Humility is not thinking that everyone else is more important, more valuable, intrinsically superior to you.

#### When Jesus humbled him — why people fail and give up, he was not of less intrinsic worth

### Humility is caring for others

#### More significant in that we put their needs ahead of your own

### Another way: Humility is coming to a right understanding of who you are in Christ

#### We stand before our Creator “utterly dependent and trusting”

#### Focused not on ourselves but on him — center of the universe

### When we begin to think rightly about God

#### Then we will begin to think rightly about ourselves

### Then we will look to the interest of others

#### Lives marked by humility, probably with us not even realizing it

### Precisely the point Paul will make next

# V 5 "Have this mind(set) among yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus" (ESV footnote)

### Mindset is one of humility

### Show Christ’s incarnation/death/resurrection shows us God’s willingness to humble himself in order to meet the needs of others

## Humiliation (2:6-8)

### Jesus existed "in the form of God" before he was born (“Pre-existence”)

#### "Form" means the exact representation — despite English

#### One of the strongest affirmations that Jesus is God

### "Did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped"

#### Being God is not about grasping for yourself — hanging on for my benefit

### Being God, is about “making himself nothing”

#### By taking the "form" — exact representation — of a servant

#### Specifically a human servant ("likeness" points to Jesus' real humanity)

### Extent of God's "making himself nothing"? Humiliation

#### Human — died — cross

#### Christ’s death on the cross shows *that God made himself nothing for the needs of his creation for the sake of his creation*

#### Fee “Here is the very heart of Pauline theology ...: God is love and … his love expresses itself in self-sacrifice … for the sake of those he loves” (217).

## Exaltation (2:9-11) — illustrates the depth of his humiliation

### God the Father "highly exalted" Jesus

#### Not a reward — Not giving Jesus something he did not already possess

### Universal declaration of who Jesus truly is

#### In the resurrection and ascension, God declares Jesus' true name: “Lord,” “Yahweh”

### Ultimately, all of this is to the praise and glory of God the Father

## Point of the illustration

### Christ, in his incarnation and death, revealed part of God the Father’s character

### Willing to make himself nothing for the needs of his creation for the sake of ...

### We too should make ourselves nothing for the needs of others, ultimately for the glory of God

# Comes back to application (2:12-13)

## “Work out our salvation”

### God saved us — changed us — not earn but work out consequences

## Serious stuff — fear and trembling

### What do people see when they look at us?

### Someone casually going through life at their own speed for their own purposes, focused almost entirely on ourselves?

### People who understand that our sin cost Yahweh his human life, and in light of his divine sacrifice we must take our spiritual maturity — specifically humility — very seriously?

## Quickly corrects any possible misunderstanding

### You can work out the consequences of your salvation, only because God has already been at work, giving you the desire/ability to change

#### Word play: work out salvation because God is at work in you so you can work

### Ultimately, a life of humility is possible only because of God’s prior work (1:27), standing firm by one Spirit

**Paul concludes with one way in which we work out our salvation**

### Chooses sins that are especially destructive of unity — 2:14-15

# Can we continue to be that kind of church?

### 1. Keeps the focus off ourselves — wants, desires

#### In humility, put the needs of the others before our own

### 2. Keep the focus on the gospel — strive side by side for the gospel

### If we can/will, our neighborhood wouldn’t know what hit it

47. All Scripture is God-Breathed

2 Timothy 3:14-4:2a

# There’s trouble in Ephesus

## Paul’s prophecy in Acts 21 come true

### Leadership had gone bad — attacking the sheep

### Behavior of these elders was reprehensible and their teaching was heretical

### Sent Timothy to Ephesus —1 and eventually 2 Timothy

## In 2 Tim 3 Paul is describing godlessness that Timothy was experiencing — 3:14-4:2a

### In the midst of the turmoil in Ephesus — midst of the false teaching

### Paul encourages Timothy to hang on to Scripture

### Make it central in his ministry

# V. 16 is the primary verse for the “Doctrine of Inspiration”

## “All” of Scripture (Bible)

## Each and every last little bit — from cover to cover

### Easy parts to believe: God loves you — cares — grace sustains

### Hard parts, such as when

#### Claims of Scripture appear to conflict with science or history

##### Evolutionary fluke — we believe God created heavens & earth, Adam & Eve

#### S. claims God works in the midst of evil to accomplish his good— rejoice

#### Man is the head of the marriage and family — society wants to neuter men and portray them as weak and stupid (ad last night)

## “Scripture”

### V 15 “Sacred writings” — father Greek but mom Jewish — OT

### “Salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” — expanded to include “NT”

## “Breathed out by God”

### “Inspired” — “Given by inspiration”

#### Meaning of the English has changed and doesn’t carry the right meaning

#### Today we talk about many writings as being “inspiring” — Garfield

### Scripture is unique — Paul made up this word: “God breathed”

#### 2 Pet 1:20-21

### Doctrine of the “Inspiration of Scripture”

#### God is the *source* of Scripture — “Breathed” — “from God”

#### No difference between reading, and Jesus appearing and saying them.

# Two points implicit in all this

## 1. Because Scripture comes from mouth of God, it is therefore true

### God is true, and therefore what he says is true

## 2. Because Scripture comes from mouth of God, it is also authoritative

### Carries the authority of the speaker

### Determine theology/behavior

## Say “amen,” but I wonder if we truly, always believe this?

### Hear a preacher preach his own ideas — blasphemy (≠ opinion; ≠ mistake)

### See people believe contrary to clear teaching of Scripture—“not a hint,” Eph 5:3

# Do you/children believe this? Really? Why?

## Story of Matt — common and healthy experience — ask the question again

### If you do not raise this question for yourself and come to your own conclusions

#### You will never fully believe Scripture is true — will never fully trust it.

### Can’t inherit the faith/conviction of your parents or teacher

### Some answers from what Paul is saying

## 1. Learned it from childhood — from people he trusted

### Mother and grandmother, and Paul (1:5)

### Kiersten’s and Tyler’s comments

## 2. “Firmly believed” — became fully convinced in the course of life’s experiences

### Lived out the truths expressed in the Bible — saw that they are true (self-validating)

### In my experience, it has never let me down — esp. hard to believe (e.g., Jam 1:2)

### As opposed to other claims of truth — live out — fail to convince

#### Cross cultural experience: Mall — Victoria’s Secret poster — promise that sexual titillation satisfies

#### In your experience, has looking at pornography ever, fully, deeply satisfied?

## 3. Personally (opinion), it makes better sense to believe the Bible than not to believe

### Origins — Design

#### Exists such a thing a good, beauty — Scripture’s answers make good sense

### Historical accuracy — internal consistency — fulfilled prophecy

### Tied up with this is the fact that Jesus makes better sense than anyone else

#### This is his story — Bible makes sense because Jesus makes sense

## 4. Ultimately Timothy/you/I/children believe what Paul is saying is true

### When I read the Bible, I am hearing God’s voice

### True of any and all belief systems — ultimate reality — based on faith, not fact

#### Materialists — nothing outside the world of sense — faith (≠ prove)

#### Evolution (religion surrounding it) — based solely on faith

#### They will deny it — but where is proof? (bush become tree over 2 million)

### Question: which faith-based system best explains reality?

#### I don’t have enough faith to be an atheist.

#### Only have enough faith to be a Christian

### Don’t have to put my brain on a shelf — there are supporting arguments

# Because Scripture is from God, it is therefore “profitable”:

## Theology — “Teaching” and “reproof”

### Basis for determining what we believe, and rebuke those who believe differently

### World preaches pluralism — Bible says, “I am the way …”

### Must be baptized: “For by grace you have been saved …”

## Behavior — “Correction” and “Training in righteousness”

### Confront unbiblical behavior and encourage us toward righteous behavior

### World says, fit in, do what we do (mall) — Phil 2:15

### World says, touch, taste — Phil 4:8

# What is the ultimate result? 3:17

## “Man of God”

### OT expression for a messenger of God

### Specifically Timothy, and by implication all Christians — men and women

## “Competent,” namely, “equipped for every good work”

### Scripture may not tell us everything we could ever want to know (Deut 29:29)

### Sufficient for salvation and sanctification

# Two applications

## 1. I, like Timothy, have no choice but to preach the gospel — 4:2a

### I don’t have the option of preaching my ideas

#### Not an issue of personality of preference

#### Blasphemy

### To the best of my Spirit-enabled ability, I will preach the Word

#### Not put my ideas on the same level as God’s

#### Opinion — state it as such

#### If I err, I will ask God for forgiveness

### At all time — in season and out of season

#### Whether or not I want to say it — I don’t like talking about pornography

#### Whether or not you want to hear it — goal is not to please you

## 2. Men: I challenge you — preach

### You are called to be the head of your home

#### Must preach the word to your family

#### Dinner — declare the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light?

#### Let your children see your devotions and hear your prayers

### 2 Tim 2:2

#### God is still looking for faithful men to whom He can entrust the proclamation of the gospel

#### Home; children’s Sunday School, Flight school, adult connection class; men’s ministry; one-on-one discipleship

##### Who will accept the challenge

##### Who will make the commitment to mentor our new disciples?

### Many of you men have have been silent for too long

#### Why are most the grade school Sunday School teachers women?

#### I challenge you “Men of God”: preach the word

48. Assurance and Perseverance

Hebrews

# We don’t know who wrote Hebrews (“author”)

### Jewish converts — persecuted for their new faith

### Considering apostatizing and later returning to Christianity

# Solution is two-fold

## 1. Teacher: superiority/pre-eminence of Christ

### See who Christ is in all his glory, not even consider worshiping anyone/thing else?

## 2. Pastor: Interspersed — warning passages — must “persevere”

### God will continue to empower his true children for obedience (desire/strength) - assured

### God’s true children will continue to live in obedience — must move toward maturity

## Hebrews is going to step on almost everyone’s toes, one time or another

### Believe all Scripture is true and that it doesn’t contradict itself

### Doesn’t fit your theology, then your theology is wrong.

### Tendency — hear a passage — “Well, I believe this.” — really saying “I don’t believe that.”

### Challenge to think like Scripture thinks.

# Summarized at the very beginning (1:1-3)

### Why worship anyone/thing else?

# Greater than the angels (1:4-end [14])

### First warning in 2:1 — gentle

### Rarely do people bolt from the Christian faith — “drift away”

### One sin at a time — unresolved conflict — act of self-centered arrogance

# Superior to Moses (3:1ff.)

## Second warning — 3:6b, 12-14

### (Not an evangelistic tract but is addressed to the church)

### Mt 10:22

### Hold fast to the confidence we had in Christ when we were first saved

#### That same confidence that keeps us from drifting away to an unbelieving heart, hardened by sin

## 3:14

### 1. There is “Assurance” of our salvation/destiny — share in Christ — persevere

### 2. Implicit warning: if we fall away from Christ — hardened by sin — not hold original confidence — no assurance

#### No assurance of salvation, if our initial profession of faith is not followed by a life of faith

#### No matter how good you have been

### Author is not talking about the sin that can plague the life of a true believer

#### Not talking about some who sins here and sins there (≠ Jeff)

#### Life is characterized by sin — no longer show the fruits of the Spirit

#### Living in clear violation of the clear teaching of Scripture

# Greater than the High Priest (4:14ff.)

## Third warning passage (5:11ff.)

## You and I can have “full assurance” of our salvation

### 1. 6:11-12 — Our earnestness, intense desire for sanctification is part of our assurance

#### Where else do you think your earnestness comes from? Yourself? Satan?

#### Implicit warning: if there is no earnestness, there can be no assurance

### 2. 7:25 — 4:14-16 — objective assurance in the work of Christ — Jn 3:16

#### Perseverance is first and foremost about God’s perseverance

##### God will not give up on me — enable me not to give up on him

#### Implicit warning: only for “those who draw near to God” — 9:28

# Encouragement — what the Christian life is supposed to look like

### 10:19-25 — Another warning — 10:26-31 — hell, fire, and brimstone

# What’s the point?

## 1. Jesus is pre-eminent over all — greatest joy, deepest delight

## 2. We can have full assurance that we truly are God’s children

### Because of the power of God — John 10:27-29

### Because of the work of God’s Spirit — Spirit is our seal, guarantee (Eph 1:13-14)

### Obedience — 1 John 2:3-6

#### Not continuing in sin — 1 John 3:6 (penalty of not persevering)

### Those who are continuing in their Christian walk have no fear — live in joy

#### Live in forgiveness — 1 John 1:9

## But what about those who are not living out their profession of faith

### Question of whether you can lose your salvation or not ever a Christian

### Academic

#### Wesleyans and Calvinists: agree the person is headed to hell

#### Judgment of a person alone belongs to God

## 2. Opinion: You and I must assume that their faith is not real and on way to hell

### False assurance

#### You made that profession — you’re okay

#### Many people in hell who have been told they are going to heaven

### Many warning passages in Hebrews

### Paul: Jesus has reconciled us “if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard” (Col 1:23).

# If someone not sure about their salvation

## Not at the first sign of sin

### Clear they are drifting away

## Struggling with the things of God — tasted the world and like it

### “I will deal with this later, perhaps much later.”

### Is your life worth the risk? —

## Apart from perseverance there is no assurance — gamble eternity

### Do you have any idea how long hell is going to last?

### Cannot entrust your soul to what may have been a fleeting, emotional, religious experience

### No false assurance

## Recommit — forgiveness (“Here is my heart; cleanse every part”)

### Live in God’s sustaining grace to taste and see that the Lord is good

### Tastier than anything the world has to offer

### Encourage, and be encouraged, to never drift away.

## It’s not how you start but how you finish

49. The Tongue

James

## Book of James is perhaps the first NT book that was written

### Believe author was Jesus’ earthly brother

#### James who became head of the Jerusalem church — Acts 15

### Not the James who was the brother of John

## Theology of James is very much like that of Paul, but with a twist

### Paul taught that justification — right with God — is by faith, not “works”

#### Justified life necessarily shows itself in growth toward holiness

### James emphasizes the second half

#### Justification moves a person toward holiness —“works” — confusing

#### 2:24 “a person is justified by works and not by faith alone”

#### 2:17 “Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead”

### Same thing; different language

#### Both agree you can’t earn your salvation by *works*

#### Justification must show itself in *works* — growth toward holiness

## Most clearly stated in 2:14-26

### 2:14 (mhv), 17

### 19, 22, 24, 26

### “The faith that saves is faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone.”

## All this provides the theological framework for much of what James teaches

### Esp. tongue

### Introduced the topic in 1:26 — worthless, useless, dead

# Tongue (3:1-12)

## Tongue is an amazing member of our body

### “A world of unrighteousness”

### “Set on fire by hell”

### Cannot be tamed

### “Restless evil, full of deadly poison”

## Tongue is a small fire, but can ignite a great blaze — destroys forests as well as lives

### “Stains the *whole* body”

### “Sets on fire the *entire* course of life” — true!

## How can the tongue be so powerful?

### Hint in 3:4b — will of the tongue is the human heart — why so powerful

### Tongue is traitor—snitch—tells everyone what really is going on in your heart

#### James 3:12 — see olives, not a fig tree

#### Jesus: “By your fruits you will know them” — Fruit show the roots

#### Mt 12:34— out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks

#### Tongue broadcasts to all who listen what you really think in your heart

# 1:26 is a frightening verse

### We must work to bridle the tongue

### So many ways that we rationalize not controlling our tongue

### So many ways to g/s — destroys a person’s/church’s reputation

### Several months of reflection

## 1. It is true — “I can say whatever I want as long as it is true.”

### As long as I *think* it is true; assume (truly honest)

#### Truth can start destructive fires just as easily as a lie

#### G/S don’t have to be false to be destructive and sinful

### Do we really want to make “truth” the criterion of whether we say something or not?

#### Still emotionally abusing your husband

#### Still visiting your favorite porn site weekly?

#### Malachi — still robbing God by not paying your tithe?

## 2. S/He hurt me — — right to say whatever I want

### You’re right; we’ve all been hurt

#### Pastor; elders; friend; spouse; parent

#### Give us the right to loosen our tongue & destroy their reputation? s/g

### Eph 4:32 “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

#### Each of us killed Christ — Gibson’s hand

## 3. Feign piety

### “I probably shouldn't tell you this but ...”

#### Speak in generalities: “I have problems with that person.”

#### “I’m just going to tell you, but keep it a secret.” — g/s

### Respond? “I don’t want to hear this.”

#### I suspect that the listener is just as guilty as the speaker

## 4. Pretend to be really religious — cloak g/s in religious language

### Only once in two years of prayer meeting — visitor

### Tell you a little so you will know how to pray

## “I’m doing this in love” — “share”

**Cymbala (p. 160) :** Gossip, slander, a judgmental and critical spirit

### Fires of the heart that ignite the tongue and destroy lives and churches

## Easy to think this applies to someone else

# So what are we going to do about it?

## 1. Start with our heart

### Arrogance: tongue will put the other person down to elevate ourselves

#### Sin: tongue will seek to destroy

### But humility: put the needs/reputation ahead of our own

#### Forgiven: mouth full of tender words seasoned with kindness

#### With extra servings of grace and thanksgiving

### Legalism fails — emphasis on external conformity

## 2. Take every thought/word captive to Christ (2 Cor 10:5)

### Pray for the Spirit to whisper, perhaps yell — bring God glory?

#### Grace and thanksgiving, or destroying someone’s reputation?

#### Edify or criticize

#### “Turn on your brain before engaging your mouth.”

### If you are the person being spoken to, ask for sensitivity/ strength to say,

#### “I don’t need to hear this.”

#### “Go poison someone else’s life.”

#### Harsh? James 3:8 (“full of deadly poison”)

## 3. There is a time and place to talk about issues — confront as well as comfort

### When the person (sg) you are speaking to is part of the solution

### When your heart is to reconcile — forgive and be forgiven

### When your words are an expression of grace and thanksgiving

### When the motivating forces are love, humility, gentleness

### Never a time to gossip or slander

# This is one of the central struggles of the Christian walk

## Must rise to the challenge

### If we do not, it will stain the entire body — individually and corporately

### If not, it will “set on fire the entire course of [the] life” of this church

## Faith without works is dead

### Justified person will most certainly show it in a life lived toward holiness

### Part of holiness is learning to control our tongue

## Never be fully successful this side of heaven

### Move significantly in the right direction

### as we fill our hearts with tenderness, kindness, forgiving as we have been forgiven

### As we … (4:10)

50. Suffering and Heaven

1 Peter

# One of the fundamental questions of life:

### How can an all-powerful, all-good God allow pain and suffering?

## This morning not so interested in non-Christians asking this question

### God never committed himself to step in and protect them from pain/suffering

### Step out so they can live the rest of their time apart from him

## Not interested in the questions of “Christians”

### who use pain as an excuse to marginalize God in their own lives

## Interested in this question being asked by fully-devoted disciples

### Rick and Shelly Peterson — Scott born with heart defect — died when 11.5

## Part of the answer lies in 1 Peter

# 1 Peter 1:1-2

## “Exiles”

### “Strangers in the world” — “Reside as aliens” — “Living as foreigners”

#### Technical: non-Israelites permanently living in Israel — resident aliens

### Peter is saying that they may live in modern-day “Turkey” — Spokane

#### Live as foreigners

##### This piece of dirt on which we stand is not home

##### We live as exiles — resident aliens

#### Phil 3:20 — “citizenship is in heaven”

#### “This world is not my home, I’m just a passing through”

### Kiersten: “What is blue and has four legs?”

# Why are we exiles? — 1:3a

## Entered this world through physical birth, but exiles have been “born again”

### We have become a new person—new creature; dead to alive — “regeneration”

## Expand Peter’s metaphor

### Born into a new family — brothers and sisters — father — home

###  This world is no longer my home — exiles

# Benefits of being born again — 1:3b-5

## 1. Have a “living hope”

### World might “hope” in things (grades; job; 9/11)

#### Tries to be good and hopes it can go to heaven

#### This world has no real hope — Eph 2:12

### But for us who are reborn (exiles): not only have hope, but hope is sure

#### Living — active, sure, we are confident of what lies ahead

### E.g., Before judgment — confident, already pronounced “not guilty” — “well done”

#### When a loved one dies — believer — confident we will see him again

### Why sure? “through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”

#### Power raised Jesus from dead is same power that guarantees my hope.

## 2. V 4. “Inheritance”

### Because I have been born into a new family, my inheritance is …

### Our inheritance is not on earth

#### Not subject to stock market — Parents can’t spend— I can’t waste it

#### Waiting for me in heaven

### Strong emphasis on the future throughout 1 Peter

#### Deal with the needs of the present — ultimately, eager anticipation

## 3. As we live out our lives in anticipation of our future inheritance

### We know that in the meantime we are guarded by God

### “Protected,” “shielded” — look forward “for a salvation ready to be revealed”

### Present: Jesus is close; almost hand-in-hand — watching, guiding, guarding

#### Live, ultimately, looking to the future

## Point: Christians are exiles

### Christian exiles live their lives

#### Dealing with the present

#### But always looking to the future

#### Heaven — true home/inheritance

### Future orientation is throughout 1 Peter

#### 1:13 — 2:12; 4:5 — 5:4

### Mindset that must permeate our lives: living in the present; looking forward to the future

# This is how we handle suffering — vv 6-9

## We will experience trials

### Suffer/pain because we are part of a fallen, sinful worldPersecuted for our faith — 2 Tim 3:12How will you respond?

## 1. Earth is not my home — exiles

### Suffering is at best temporary (v 6), and then we go home

### Porter — “3 seconds” — can you give me 3 seconds of obedience; suffer for me

#### Not minimize pain, but put in perspective

## 2. Faith that recognizes that God is at work in the midst of our pain for our good

### Whether we want it or not

### 3:14 — 4:13b — 4:16 (chance to glorify God)

### It is this type of faith that affirms, in the midst of sorrow, that … v 8

### Rom 8:28-29 — don’t like His definition of “good”

# Testimony of Rick and Shelly Peterson is the message of 1 Peter

### Daughter Darci, now 20

### Story of their son Scott, Darci’s big brother, who died 12 years ago when 11.5

### Painful (11 minutes) — perspective of how they now look at life forward to heaven through eyes of pain

. . . . .

## Brings heaven close to home

### Makes it a very real place

### Something to look forward to

## God is good — we are truly blessed

### Live totally dependent on him

# If only all of us could learn to live life

### knowing that we are separated from eternity by only a thin veil

### one day, very soon, our 3 seconds will be up and we will go home, blowing a kiss back to our loved ones

## To a place

### “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away” (Rev 21:4).

## Then

### We will fully understand how our sorrow and pain was for our good, and for the glory of God — Amen.

51. Christian Love

1 John

# “Love” is one of the most used, and certainly most abused words

## Definitions range from a short-term hormonal reaction

### to a superficial, “I love ya man”

### to a life-long commitment of sacrificial service

## 1 John

### Helping to define “love” — Encouraging us to love

### 4:7-11

# Believers (“Beloved”) are called to love one another — 4:7-8

## Supremacy to the command to love

### Greatest Commandment

### 1 Cor 13 “Faith, hope, love abide, but …”

### What does word mean?

## World would water it's definition down to something resembling “sentimentality”

### Good feelings some of the time — when it is self-satisfying in my self-interest

#### Wedding vows — “til love does depart”

### No concept, e.g., of God discipling the one he loves

## Church often, unfortunately, does the same thing

### “I love you” is watered down to “I like you, for the time being”

### Rarely extend itself to meeting the unlovely, outcast, unusual, different person

## Our definitions of “love” are all messed up

### Even after regeneration, power of sin still clouds our perception/judgment

### World continues to exert it influence — external: media; internally: hormones

### Therefore, we cannot start with our own definition of love

# Why John insists that love is defined, first and foremost, by God

## “God is love”

### Doesn’t say God loves us — he does

### He is the essence, wellspring — definer

## God’s definition of love? — 4:9-10

### John doesn’t explicitly define “love”

#### He does define it implicitly by looking at the effects of God’s love

### 4:9 “Sent his only Son into the world”

#### John 3:16

#### 1 John 3:16a

### 4:10 “Sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins”

#### “Hilasterion” — What happened on the cross

#### Propitiation: averted God’s wrath

#### Expiation: forgiveness for our sin

#### Mercy seat: place of the atonement is the cross

### Partial definition: “Love is the giving of oneself for the benefit of the other”

#### Love is seen most clearly, not in the victory of the resurrection,

#### but in the pain of the cross

## No place for a mystical definition of love

### Love … “gave”

### Concrete, real — 3:16-18

# John calls us once again to love as God loves — 4:11

## Love begins with God

### Definer — reservoir, wellspring, fountain

### Love flows from God to us — born of God; children — 3:1

### 4:19 “We love because he first loved us.”

## Ultimately, God’s love flows through us to others

### Just as we see God’s forgiveness of our sins — forgive others

#### so also we see God’s love in the pain of the cross — love others

## God’s love *must* flow through us to others

### “Let us” (v 7) and “ought” (v 11) are not suggestions

#### Greatest Commandment is not “The Greatest Suggestion”

#### Command — upon which heaven and hell watch and wait

### 4:8 — John 17:3 “This is *eternal life*, that they *know* you the only true God.”

### Friend: “You have to love me or you wouldn't go to heaven.”

## What does it look like for God’s love to flow through us?

### 1. Obedient — 5:2-3

### 2. Loving our brother — 3:14 (assurance; lives changed so that we love God)

### 3. Don’t live in sin — 3:9-10 (cf. 2:29; 5:18)

### 4. Don’t hate our brothers — 4:20-21 (cf. 3:15; 5:1)

### 5. Don’t love the world — 2:15

### Concrete. real.

## (This is why the world's love isn't a saving love” — 4:7b)

### Doesn't move us away from sin and toward God — ultimately, sentimentality

### World's love comes from God through faith in Jesus — 3:23

# John sees the world in black and white

### Either your father is God or Satan

### Walk in darkness … light

### Hate your brother … love

### Love the world … do the will of God

### Practice sinning … righteousness

## Careful: life isn't always b & w — challenge in interpreting John

### Much of life is on a continuum; process; growing

### Love one another — we fail — forgiveness — 1:8-9

## Careful: not to dismiss the clear teaching of 1 John

### God or Satan — no middle ground

#### “If you are not for me you are against me.”

### If you hate, you do not know God

### If you are a child of God, you simply cannot continue in sin

# “Love is the giving of oneself for the benefit of the other”

### God's love *must* flow through God's children to our brothers/sisters

## There are many things I do not understand about love

### How do you “give of oneself for the benefit of the other” when that will conflict with doing the same to another person?

### Function while expending the tremendous emotional energy required to love a group of people?

### A few things I think I do know

## 1. Not easy

### Hard to love some people — esp. if they hurt you

### Shock — some people may likewise find it almost impossible to love you

### Remember: “If you don't love me, you can't go to heaven.”

## 2. Must not water the definition down to “like” —

### Easy — “love” slides down “like”

### Bible says “love” and so we “like” people and think we are obedient

## 3. Must look deep into our heart

### I love my fellow believers — I don’t hate anyone — Really?

### Love: Give ourselves for the needs of others

### Hate: wish the worse

### Perhaps you need to call someone this afternoon — love must move to action

## What is at stake?

### Obedience

### John 17:21b, 23

#### Epistle makes it clear that the bond that unites us is God's love

#### At stake: our role in the mission of the gospel is at stake

52. Revelation

# Bible is one continuous story

### Unfolding drama of God's relationship with his creation

## Begin with Genesis

### Creation of the world and humanity

### Garden — A/E enjoy walking in fellowship with their Creator

### Tree of life — if Adam and Eve would have eaten of it, they would have lived forever

## Instead they sinned

### A/E did what God asked them not to do

## Begin to see the effects of sin

### A/E alienated themselves from their creator — leave the Garden

### Downward spiral of sin and its destruction in their descendants

## Begin to see God's plan of redemption

### Bless the world through Abraham and his descendant

### To those descendants: “I will be your God, and you will be my people.”

### One descendant — king David — eternal throne — Father-son relationship

## Through this one descendant

### God's plan of redemption was implemented — life, death, & resurrection of Jesus

### Gospel — good news of our redemption — spread throughout the world

# Last book in the drama — Revelation

### Promise that someday all this will end — return to the Garden

### Fellowship

### “God will be our God, and we will be his people.”

## Strange book

### “Genre” called “apocalyptic”

#### Bizarre images (swords out of mouth; 666)

#### Images are metaphors that need to be interpreted

### Like any genre — poetry; fairy tales — own rules of interpretation

#### E.g., how tell people who are dying for their faith that Heaven is precious? — Streets of gold

#### “People struggle on earth for a few golden coins; in heaven we pave the streets with the stuff.”

## Controversial book

### Because it is highly interpretive

#### I believe — we tend to ask the wrong questions (charts; Gog and Magog?)

#### As long as we ask the wrong questions — secondary—unhelpful, divisive

### What are the right — primary — questions?

#### Take our cue from the first three chapters

# John is exiled on the island of Patmos — vision

### Told to write letters to seven churches in Asia Minor (chapters 2-3)

## Message to them is basically the same

### God will not keep us from suffering and persecution (except Philadelphia)

### God calls us to be faithful in the midst — endure; persevere — conquer through death

### If we conquer —God will reward us — 2:7, 10b and 11b; 3:5

## This is the message of Revelation

### These are the right questions to ask

#### Were you surprised? How behave? Why?

#### Draw charts, okay, as long as it doesn't detract from the central message

### “Eschatology is ethical” — primary function (bad; win; hang in there)

### One author — easiest book in the NT to understand

# Vision of the future

## 4-5 — throne room and the lamb of God — scroll — 5:6-10

## 6 — Series of opening the Seven seals (sample of apocalyptic literature)

### 1. Rider on a white horse — wages *war*

### 2. Red — remove *peace* from the world — people kill each other

### 3. Black — consequences of war — *financial* devastation of war

### 4. Pale — kill with sword, and with *famine* and pestilence

### 5. Move to looking at these events from heaven — 6:10-11

### 6. Judgment comes with great cosmic signs — 6:16-17 — at the end of time

## Interlude in chapter 7

### 1. Sealing of the 144,000 — 7:2-4

#### 12 tribes of Israel — Church is 12 x 12,000

#### Sealed: kept safe, not from death but through death

### 2. Final judgment — 7:9-17

#### 144,000 sealed, protected — Able to endure persecution

#### Able to conquer, to be faithful to death

#### Reward — living in the presence of God — “before throne ... the Lamb ...”

### Is there anything this world has to offer that is more joyous/satisfying?

#### Favorite book in Ethiopia (1991)

## Interpretation — cycle starts over in chapter 8

### Cycle of 7 trumpets with same basic message

### More information

### Another cycle of 7 bowls with the same basic message

## Final judgment in chapter 19

### Rejoicing in the justice of God — vv 1–2

### Faithful prepared for the marriage supper with the lamb — bride

### Rider on white horse — King; Jesus — destroys beast, false prophet (demonic figures who persecuted the church) — lake Fire

### Eventually Satan is destroyed — 20:10

### Great White Throne judgment — 20:12, 14-15

#### All those who opposed you because you are a Christian

#### All those who would not respond when you shared the gospel

#### All those with whom the gospel was never shared — neighbor; Bangladesh

# 21 – 22: What are we waiting for?

## New heaven and new earth — 21:1-4 — Fulfillment of Genesis 1-2

### Living in the presence of our Creator in a father/son relationship

### All pain will be gone, replaced with the bliss of God's very presence

### Who will be in the new heaven/earth? — 21:7

## New Jerusalem (21:9ff.) — 21:22-23

## Garden of Eden restored — 22:1-5

# We were created for fellowship/relationship with God

### Broken by sin in the Garden

#### Repeated in the life of every sinful human being

### Creation is alienated from its holy Creator — penalty of separation is death

### Jesus died to pay that price — open access to God — God/Man

### So that we who are faithful — conquer through death — names in book of life

#### Hear Jesus say, “Surely I am coming soon” (22:20)

#### We respond: Ma ra na tha, “Come, Lord Jesus”

## Do you long for Christ's return?

### Or are you in love with this world and never want it to end?

### All going to burn, and every treasure on earth will be lost

#### Friends that have led you to compromise your commitment to Jesus — burn

#### Few golden coins you earned at the expense of your children — burn

#### All those things that more joyful to us than living as fully-devoted disciples — burn

## Revelation call you to love *God*

### Live out our time on earth as exiles

### Faithful to the end of your life — to death is necessary

### Knowing that someday we will eat of the tree of Life and live forever in relationship with our Creator

### Ma ra na tha, “Come, Lord Jesus”