

Mind of Christ Class – Week 17

May 22, 2019

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I call the study of the mind of Christ “Challenger Deep”. There is a part in the Pacific Ocean that is 36,000 feet deep. This is the deepest part of any ocean that we know of. Only three men in history have gone to the bottom of this crevice which is three times the height Mount Everest. James Cameron, who wrote “Titanic” was one of the three who reached the bottom.

1 Cor. 2:6-16

⁶ We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. ⁷ No, we declare God’s wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. ⁸ None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹ However, as it is written:

“What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived”—the things God has prepared for those who love him—¹⁰ these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. ¹¹ For who knows a person’s thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. ¹³ This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. ¹⁴ The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. ¹⁵ The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, ¹⁶ for, “Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

Although the benefits are freely given, they must be understood by us. The Holy Spirit speaks God’s language to us in ways that we can understand:

Romans 8:1-6

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵ Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶ The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.

Col 1:15-20

¹⁵ The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or

rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Romans 11:33-36

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and [i] knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! ³⁴ “Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his **counselor***?”

³⁵ “Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?”[k] ³⁶ For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

***Counselors give council by going into one’s mind.**

Col. 2:2-3

² My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, ³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge

Read, Meditate, and Pray each word. I use the NASB Key Word Bible, the Analytical Greek Lexicon and The Harmony of the Gospels by A. T. Robertson.

Matthew 11:28-30

²⁸ “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Yokes mean travel and labor. What is Jesus teaching you?

Romans 8:28-30

²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who^[i] have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

Our image or icon is to be the true God. “Iko” means “to be like”. It is similar to stamping an image on a coin. It must be pliable enough to be imprinted on. Our hearts have to be pliable as well. Hardened hearts cannot receive the influence of Christ.

Hebrews 1:3

The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Romans 5:1-5

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we[b] boast in the hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only so, but we also glory in our *sufferings*, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, **character**; and **character**, hope. ⁵ And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

We put characters on a page to send a message. A blank page means nothing. Characters change the nature of the page. If God writes on our hearts, he establishes character in us. He is transferring His character into us. And "we are a letter written by God to be read by all men.

Hebrews 5:8-10 *suffering* produces perseverance.

Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered ⁹ and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him ¹⁰ and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

2 Cor. 3:2-3

² You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. ³ You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

A false heart expresses hypocrisy. Hypocrisy mimics God; it mimics Christ. And we know how Jesus **hated** hypocrisy. Hypocrisy distorts the image of Christ and God.

1 Cor. 15:49

⁴⁹ And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man.

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

Faith is the substance of things unseen. God and faith are the substance. Jesus was ground zero – the hupostasis – the essence of all. He is the ultimate reality. Faith connects us with this. Set your **faith** on Him.

Romans 8:28-30

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who^[i] have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

Philippians 3:20-1

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Morphos: Meta-morphos

Matthew 17:2

There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.

Romans 12:2

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

2 Cor. 3:18

¹⁸ And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate[a] the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Morphos-Sum

Romans 8:29

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

Romans 12:2

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

We are conformed to His pattern. We are transformed, fashioned, **together with Him**.

1 Peter 1:1-9

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, ² who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood:

Grace and peace be yours in abundance. ³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Eph. 4:17-32

So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ¹⁹ Having lost all

sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

²⁰ That, however, is not the way of life you learned ²¹ when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²² You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

²⁵ Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶ “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸ Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

The Mind of Christ 1/23/19

Lesson 2

Ephesians 4:11-13

And {Now} He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the **knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.** ¹⁴

As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. The phrase “now” is in 4:13.

This knowledge is something we are to attain to. From the knowledge of the Son of God we become a mature man to the measure or the stature that belongs to Christ. This “attainment” we realize is something that we work all of our lives to reach. That is why I call this study “Challenger Deep”. The deepest part of any ocean is 36,000 feet which is why I call this “Challenger Deep”... for that metaphor.

The word “knowledge” in verse 13 is “epignosis” (ἐπιγνωσις) meaning “full discernment” (not just a head knowledge), “acknowledgment”, or “*intimate* knowledge”. 2 Peter 1:3 uses the same word saying, “seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the **true** (intimate) **knowledge** of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.”

If we are going to attain to that divine nature, it is going to take an intimate knowledge of God. It is not about memorizing the Bible. We could memorize the entire Bible and still not have that intimate knowledge of Christ or God. So discerning the mind of Christ is not about memorizing the things that Jesus said or did. If ‘that’ were my goal, I would just memorize Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. It is more about understanding why Jesus did what he did and why he said what he said, and how this helps us to know an invisible God. Jesus is the visible expression of the invisible God.

According to 2 Peter 1:2, grace and peace are multiplied to you ‘in’ the (intimate) knowledge of God and of Jesus, our Lord. So if we want to have the multiplication of grace and peace in our life, (a common greeting of that day), it is going to come from that intimate knowledge of God. I really believe that we have so much chaos and confusion in the world today because people just don’t know God. They don’t have that kind of relationship with Him. They live in chaos. The NASB calls this intimate knowledge “true knowledge” but they don’t have a true knowledge of who He is to receive that grace and peace. We need to capture the true knowledge of who He is. In 2 Peter 1:8 says, “**For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**”

After listing the qualities of character that we talked about last week, it is this character that is imprinted upon us, not with pen or ink but is written on our hearts (Romans 2:15). God, through the Spirit, writes His character on our hearts – it is inscribed into our hearts. It becomes a part of who we are. And that transference that takes place is very intimate. It comes from God’s mind into our mind. God renews our mind almost by wiping the slate clean and rewriting events on our hearts when we turn to Him.

Now, after listing the qualities and characters, Peter tells us that these are increasing so that our knowledge of Jesus will be neither useless nor unfruitful. People in Christ want become very useful and fruitful people, but these are not just products of honing our skills but they come from having a relationship with Him. And through that relationship, God can equip us for the good works we are to do. Now people may be good at what they do, but if it is not from having a relationship with God, it isn’t the quality of God ... it’s human work.

This knowledge of God is essential for completeness. The Greek word for completeness is Teleios {τελειον}. Full growth is complete manhood in the Bible. The measure of this completeness is the stature of the fullness of Christ. So if we want to realize what the goal is for us, it is to measure up to Christ. Now that is a daunting ideal—to measure up to the full stature of Christ. It’s like a young child trying to stretch up to be as tall as his dad. We’re stretching. We are stretching and stretching somehow trying to fill to the stature of fullness of Christ.

If I have to realize, “What is the mind of Christ” ... if I am going to pursue the mind of Christ, I need to know what it is that I am pursuing. I need to know what I want to accomplish having the mind of Christ ... the fullness of Christ.

The Pleroma of Christ is the word fullness and that is what we are trying to accomplish. In Colossians 2:9 says, “For in Him all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form. So we are coming at this from two different angles. One angle is that God is pouring all of His wholeness into the form of Jesus. And then I am trying to come at it from the other side of this equation. I am trying to reach out and take from Him all the fullness of Jesus (meaning, really, that I am trying to take all the

fullness of God.) Of course, God's side of the equation is much more doable than my side of the equation. Nevertheless, we are supposed to meet in the middle. (?The first son of man is Jesus. That is where we meet God) and when we meet God at the point of Jesus, what does that fullness imply? Our life will be full. And I think we can take that in a very practical way. I mentioned last week we want to live our lives in fullness. I want to be filled up with all the fullness of God. That is a decision that we have to make every day. (This is the day that the Lord has made and I will rejoice and be glad in it.) I want to get out of life today every bit that I can squeeze out of it—each day). We cannot do this every day. Some days are fuller than others, but when you do that, you're usually tired at the end of the day. Good tired.

The fullness we seek to attain lies in Christ and his followers before Him as he sojourned the earth. To know and understand His life on Earth is to know and see the fullness that was visible. The context is that we can see the path of the fullness in His life.

In Colossians 1:28, "He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. ²⁹ To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me." This could be Paul's mission statement. (This is likely how Paul went into all the world and preached the gospel.) Remember how he said that he was "resolved to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and Him crucified". 1 Cor. 2:2.

Paul's mission was to proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man, with all wisdom that he might present every man complete in Christ. How would he present them perfectly? He "admonished" – to put into their mind as he instructed his followers. "And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another." (Rom. 15:14)

Admonition and teaching were the methods that Paul used with those he met. "Nautheteo" means to use the Word of God as a counseling tool – To give counsel to, to admonish. It is used in Christian counseling by applying the Word of God to people's circumstances. It has therapeutic value to the individual. It may be a bit harsh sometimes to admonish someone but it comes from love. It means to put into one's mind; to caution or reprove. It is made up of two words: 'mind' and 'to place'. And that brings us right back to wanting to have the mind of Christ. What is it that we are trying to place into 'our' minds? We're trying to place 'His' mind into 'our' mind. That's like trying to put ten pounds of potatoes into a five pound sack. We are going to have to have some type of expansion in order to fill our minds up with the mind of Christ.

The mind of Christ is going to stretch us. It's the idea of wineskins. If you pour new wine into old wineskins, what happens? They burst. You can only pour new wine into new wineskins that haven't already stretched. That is why we are made "new" in our minds. We have newness of mind so that our minds can expand with the knowledge of Jesus Christ. We take in more and more and more of Christ until we reach completeness. But if you take an old mind, the mind of a person who is set in their ways, someone who has never changed one idea in the past fifty years, I can show you somebody who never knew Jesus. One cannot get to know Jesus without being stretched. It will challenge you all the time. People who are set in their ways, have hardened their minds against change.

This doesn't mean to open yourself up to the world; open yourself up to Jesus. That is when and where spiritual growth takes place.

Back to Romans 15:14, “And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.” Paul said that he was confident that those he taught would be able to instruct one another. So to the degree that you have the mind of Christ; to that degree you can instruct one another. You are competent.

If you are in Christ, you probably know considerably more than most people of this world. To get into Christ you have to know enough to obey the gospel which is more than most people know. You are competent to instruct other people about what you know. And in doing this, in sharing this, you are reminding yourself again so you will not likely forget it yourself.

We also teach “didasko” διδάσκει – to instruct. We do this with all wisdom which is available to us in His Word. So we have our goal (the fullness), the resources of wisdom and the method of admonition and teaching which sounds pretty simple. But this is absolutely profound! The Holy Spirit is in this process. This process that we are beginning to learn about is profound because the Holy Spirit enters into this process.

When we decide to sit down and open up God's word together with the Holy Spirit, He goes to work. He on the same page as us, but He's doing the inside job while I'm doing the outside job. And there is a process here that can lead us to have the mind of Christ. We are participating with the Holy Spirit of God. This process leads to maturity. We have taken this so for granted thinking that it is a man-made process. It's NOT a man-made process. It is a divine process that we need to reverence ... to hold in high esteem.

Otherwise we come to think of this as “just another study” or “just another Bible class.” The Holy Spirit is truly at work in this process.

In Philippians 3:5-15 Paul says, “But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, ⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. ¹³ Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you; ¹⁶ however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.”

Paul is talking about this pursuit for perfection or maturity. This perfection or maturity is found in Christ. He talks about an attitude that we must have. This attitude is the word Phroneo (φρονεωεν). It is the exercise of the mind, to entertain in the mind or opinion. It is a concern for obedience or to set our affections on. This is the attitude we must pursue with intensity. It is used in Philippians 2:5-11, “Have this attitude in yourselves (have the same intensity in you) which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Rod likens this to the Progressive Insurance commercial -
(<https://www.ispot.tv/ad/wccR/progressive-cycling-is-my-passion>)

She is not striving, she is kidding. Exercise that doesn't challenge you is not really exercise. This pursuit of maturity is extremely challenging. It is a mind-set, takes focus.

People talk today about getting into shape and say that it can't be just a diet or exercise routine. It has to be a change of their mindset. We have to think differently about how we eat and what eating is about. If you are simply going through routines without understanding how it works, the diet will not work very well. It is when we really buy in to how it works, then that is where we get into the pursuit of it.

My journaling was during a 7-year period. I really truly believed that something was going to happen to me. There was going to be a change. I would be in spiritual shape, being transformed in some way. This mental exercise was a new mind-set that became a very holy addiction. If I had to miss it for a day or two, I had withdrawals. I couldn't handle it. I had to get back into this.

Here, Paul says that the pursuit of maturing in knowing Christ came from having a certain attitude. In verse 8 Paul talked about Jesus humility and obedience. So if you are going to have the mind of Christ, you are going to have to have the same mindset that Christ had when he came to this earth. It is interesting that Paul says in verse 15 that if you have a different attitude, God will reveal it to you. He says that He will. He will give you that mindset. We need God's help to have this mindset. ***We may need to pray often for this attitude and mindset.*** We don't have the same attitude of Christ. We don't have His focus or His intent to carry out the will of God. Pray for God to reveal this to you. Ask Him for it. Pray that He will give you focus in this process.

We need help. ***The Mind of Christ must become the mind in me.*** There has to be this transference. This attitude of Philippians 2:5-7 in Christ explains how He existed in the form of God, but did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped. {He} emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant and being made in the likeness of men! This would result in his death on the cross!

This idea of grasping something or holding on to something for us is so hard. Think of what Jesus had to do to come down here. He had to let go what he had a hold of. This idea of grasping something means to plunder or seize. It goes with the word robbery. A robber grabs hold of something and holds on to it with force. He covets it. He knows its value. (This can be positive or negative: covet the mind of Christ or covet the things of this world.) We must covet a relationship

with God. Look at the words 'jealous' and 'zealous'. I can be jealous for a bad thing, or be zealous, intensely committed to something good.

In Jesus' case, he was holding on to His deity. He held on to His place in heaven, His nature, His goodness. The question is, "What do I hold on to?" What do I seize? What do I covet? What do I desire that I must let go of?

Remember Achan in the O. T. He sees the plunder and what does he do? He holds on to it. And what happens to him? What happens to his family? He was holding onto something that he had no business holding on to.

Imagine a child grabbing a toy away from another child and holding onto it. "It's mine", they say. It may not be, but to them, "It's mine." At that moment, in their mind, that toy belongs to them and they have a death grip on it. They are holding on to it. The reason it's mine is because 'I have it'. Possession is 9/10^{ths} of the law. I got it first so that makes it mine. Just because I hold something very tightly doesn't make it mine. It may be yours ... or somebody else's!

Jesus said that if you hold on to your life, you could lose it! But to lose it for the sake of Jesus is to hold on to it. It's a paradox. The child who learns to share, receives. That's why we teach kids to share. The child who shares will enjoy life a whole lot better than a child who won't let go. So the hoarder eventually loses. What am I holding on to that I need to let go of ... so I can step off the pier and go challenger deep?

Now I have to reveal what has a hold of me. That was the question that I grappled with in my study of the Mind of Christ. If I am eventually to get down to the bottom of Challenger Deep, the 36,000 feet ... I have to step off the pier. I have to let go of something. I will never get down to the bottom of that pit if I don't strip myself of everything that could keep me from getting down to the bottom of the pit. If I'm holding on to a rope or a life preserver, or hanging on to the edge of the pier, I will never have the mind of Christ. Seriously, this is risky business. This is a journey that once you are on it, and you are floating down to the bottom of it, there is no return. This is not a simple question. This is a serious question. This you have to ponder. "What do I need to let go of?" Only then can the emptying begin. Letting go of the raft is the first step. Then you have to loosen yourself.

Personal story:

Now the only time I was seriously in trouble drowning was with Brenda. It was in Solavix State park on the other coast. I won't bore you with all the details. Brenda could tell you. She probably knows it better than I do. But I went down for the third time! And I **do** remember that when I went down for the third time, there was a point in time when I felt that emptying feeling place. I quit struggling. *I resigned myself to the possibility that I was going to die.*

Brenda said, "But I was not resigned to that! I would not let go."

But I really remember thinking that I could really die today. In some ways, it was a peaceful feeling! It was strange. Even thinking back on it, it was strange. I stopped struggling. I was worn out. I was tired. I didn't think I had anything left in me. I just resigned myself to dying that day. And I just felt peaceful. And there was a point in time in this study of the Mind of Christ where I came to some peace about going down to the trench.

This is real deep.

I remember in College when I was first asked this question, (Bobby Chisolm) “What would happen, how would you react, if suddenly tomorrow there were no Church of Christ buildings; no Christian or Church of Christ Colleges, and no publishing companies for the Churches of Christ? What if there was no remnant outwardly of anything I had learned about the Churches of Christ? What would happen to your faith?” I thought of all the great teachers that I had looked up to growing up.

That was such an integral part of my identity growing up that I couldn't even imagine not having that in my life. I can't even imagine what that would be like. (The Question really sent cold shivers down my back.) And I had to seriously consider, was that really more important to my spiritual life and maturity than Jesus Himself! Not to turn my back on those things or say that those things weren't important. They **do** have a place in my life, but they are a **part** of my life. I know I'll never be saved because I went to the Dasher Church of Christ from the time I was a baby. I'm not going to be saved because I went to a Church school from first grade to twelfth grade. I am not going to be saved because of my schooling from Harding University and Harding graduate School. I'm not saved because I preach for the church of Christ on Sunday. For a few minutes there, I felt that I wouldn't know who I am. But his point was '*if we're not getting our assurance from Christ and Christ alone, there is something wrong*'. And that's what Paul was saying in Philippians 3. Only when you strip yourself of everything, can the emptying begin. Paul knew that whatever he held on to was in vain. Paul had credentials and performance.

In Phil. 3:1-11 Paul wrote:

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you.

² Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; ³ for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, ⁴ although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh.

Remember when King Solomon saw the emptiness of everything. All the things he was holding on to were vain and meaningless. *Whatever I hold on to must be made vain.* Consider it empty. That is when you can draw the right conclusions. We have been redeemed from the empty way of life handed down by our forefathers. **Are you willing to let go of the weight of life, and to make it vain in my heart and mind?**

The opposite of full, as in the fullness of Christ, is the emptying. If I'm trying to attain to the fullness of Christ, I won't have room for the fullness inside of me until I empty myself. I have to strip myself of everything else if I'm to have the fullness of Christ inside of me.

To show that something is without true or ground essence (remember the word from last week: hupostasis). Jesus is the Hupostasis; the essence of all ... the ultimate reality. Our faith is in the substance. Jesus is the essence of all things and our faith is the essence of all things.

Hebrews 1:1 Now, faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. And verse ¹¹ By faith, even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised.

What is your faith in? The first time I went overseas, I went to England. It was my first time out of the U. S. A. I wasn't worried. I thought I was on solid ground. My hupostasis was, "I'm an American citizen. Don't mess with me." Nothing can happen to me. That gave me stability. I could stand on that. Being an American gave me a sense of okayness. If anything went wrong, the government would send the Marines out here and I'd be free. But I have learned from many times going overseas, they're not going to send Marines to get me out ... and if they did, it could take a long time. It could take a very long time, if ever, to do.

My security was in my identity as an American. My security was in my identity as a member of the Church of Christ. My security was in my identity as a member of the Myers family and my mom's side of the family. *But what Jesus was telling me to do was to let go of my security ... my "stuff".* It wasn't worth a thing. None of that is going to get you to heaven. None of that will get you to Christ. Just let go of it. It doesn't matter!

So in Philippians 3:7-11, Paul said, *"⁷ But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I count **all** things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, ⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."*

Paul had no struggle with the flesh like what we would call hard core immorality, stealing, lying, or fornication. Paul's fleshly struggle was regarding his credentials. Some people struggle with the immoral sins of life (fornication, adultery, stealing) but Paul's struggle was with his performance. And that was a little bit more of what I was struggling with. What was gain to Paul needed to be turned into a loss.

Verses 4-6 *"If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: ⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.*

I was persuaded that my position as an American gave me a status in the world; therefore put my confidence in that. When I realized that that wasn't where my confidence was, (not my passport or my birth on American soil), but is my name written in the book of life. It is not that I perform a certain way or have a certain IQ or degree, and if I hold on to that, if I grasp that, I am going to miss Christ. What do we rely on for our well-being? Is it close friends who you can trust? How much do we really tell our personal confidante? We lean on them. But we can trust no one that much. We may tell some, but not all. So, no. We don't let go of our own personal security normally. Jesus didn't trust himself to man either. He said he knew what was in man. You need to discern who you can and cannot trust. Jesus is the one.

Remember the word "form" in **Philippians 2:5-6**

5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, **although He existed in the form of God**, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself ... The word is “Morphe” meaning nature or shape. There was a difference in shape or form when Jesus was on the road to Emmaus. The disciples were kept from recognizing Jesus. Luke 24

Mark 16:12-13

¹² After that, He appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking along on their way to the country. ¹³ They went away and reported it to the others, but they did not believe them either.

What we are is not the outward. What we are is the inward.

In Phil. 2 He *had* the **form** of God but he emptied Himself and he took on the **form** of a bondservant. In this context, Jesus goes from being God to being a slave. How reassuring is that? To go from being God to being a man to being a slave is amazing. And then he died on a cross. But how does that affect me? What do I die from?

Romans 12:2 says, “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

I need to get out of that ‘conformed’ and be transformed into something new. So for me to realize the extreme nature of that – this emptying business is tough stuff! Jumping out of the form that I was in {all my life} and turn my life completely over to God to be formed into something else would be like being molded as a piece of clay by a master. We may look at it and say that that is beautiful and wonderful, but if that piece of clay could talk, do you think it would say, “Look at how perfect I am, how beautiful I am?”

Jesus says if you come to me, here’s what I will do for you. I will melt you down and re-form you. I will form you into **My** image. You think you’re beautiful now, you think you’re useful now; you think you have it all together now, wait! Wait till I melt you down!

Whoa. I’m pretty good right now. I’m not too bad. Can’t we just do a little makeover here? Put a little paint on me? Jesus says, “No. It’s not going to work that way. Give yourself to me and I am going to melt you down into a pliable place where I can shape you and mold you to take on the form that **I** want you to have.” That is pretty tough.

So the application seems to be that I must take **His** decisions where I go, and get rid of whatever will prevent me from carrying out God’s will even when I give up my ability to get the job done. That means that when I think I know how to get the job done, and He has another idea, I must give up my idea and let him do His will in me.

When we get to 5:11, the Challenger Deep begins in earnest.

January 30, 2019

Class 3

Today we are going to talk about the pre-existent Christ. This is from May 11, 2010

‘Meta’ – change or beyond ‘Onuma’ meaning name

Let’s read John 1:1-18 to begin.

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. ⁵ The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not [b]comprehend it.

I wrote what I'm teaching tonight on May 11, 2010.

Today the descent into the Challenger Deep begins. We’re about to step of the pier we talked about last week. {To know the mind of Christ, we need to read Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. In following A. T. Robertson’s plan, I begin in John 1-18 to explore the nature of the preexistent Jesus.}

Since Jesus’ is the same yesterday, today and forever, his nature is not dependant on his body. ‘I AM that I AM’ is who He is. The Apostle John, by inspiration, pulls back the curtain for the incarnation of Christ and shows us the person who Jesus really is. So now we jump off the pier with John 1:1. ¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The word “beginning” is from the word begin or ‘archay’ {αρχη}. This is where we get the word ‘arch’. When they were building the Roman arches, the arch was the beginning or most important part. The arches were the main support or how they would keep the building held up. My first inclination is to take this passage as the ‘beginning of the world’ as in Genesis 1:1. But I must be careful not to assume this. In other words, like “in the beginning was the Word”, we have to be careful not to assume that Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”. Now it may be, and I have come to the conclusion that it IS, but I won’t rule out other options.

This word, ‘beginning’ is used in various texts such as the beginning of time, or as in Col. 1:17-18, ¹⁷ He [y] is before all things, and **in Him** all things [z] hold together. ¹⁸ He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. In this text, He is the beginning of all things. That’s not relationship or time. He is the **forefront** of everything. He is not at the tail end of anything. He is the start of everything so the ‘part’ stands for the ‘whole’ of everything. He is all-inclusive. (But note – in answer to a question..., “**He is outside the system. He is not a part of the system. He’s the beginning of the process of time, but He is outside of time and space.** He is the beginning of all things that are in time and space and things that are not. In a room, a corner is a type of beginning. It can also refer to dignity, as Jesus is in first place. He’s on the ground floor. He began it all.)

Regarding time, Arché is normally used with a preposition. In this case, the preposition is “in”. The other senses may and do apply to Jesus, but what is John’s **intent here**? And since he goes on to His making (creating) things, it is reasonable to believe that he is speaking of the beginning of the world. (Without Him nothing was made that has been made – so I would think that in the beginning of the world was the Word, and that pushes him back several thousand years from the time of his birth. He goes back to the beginning of the world.) It does not mean that he **had** a beginning; but he was there

at the beginning. This is not speaking to *His* origin, but Jesus' identity at this point is described as "the Word" – "the Logos".

Logos is a very important term here. The word '**Logos**' is most basically used of something that **is said**. That is the most **usual** way it is used—something that is 'said' or something that is written. It is an expression of something. It can be like an **idea**, and the **word**, or logos, is the expression of it.

This afternoon, Molly was talking to me. I was having a little trouble understanding her. **She** was having no trouble understanding what she was saying, but I have not decoded her language yet. But she was definitely speaking words and I'm sure they were very intelligent ... probably profound words. But I didn't know the code so I couldn't tell you exactly what she said.

Jesus is the most important, concise, meaningful, profound statement ever made by God. The single Word is "God". **Now imagine God being able to put Himself into one word ... to embody Himself into one word. The Word is "Jesus"**. The one Word that can express the totality of God is "In the beginning was the Word" and the word is Jesus. (Verse 14 – 'the word became flesh'). So I am not saying just the five letters J e s u s. I'm saying Jesus, Himself, as the person of Jesus – **He** was the embodiment of God. He is and was the most important, concise, meaningful and profound statement ever made by God. {The Greek word for became is Egeneto (εγενετο)}

Man struggles on his own, to use words to express himself, to communicate who we are, what we think, and we die trying to be understood because we can't find the right words to say what we want to say. Most of us struggle all of our lives to try to be understood. Even those people that we are closest to – husbands, wives, parents, siblings – many times we still feel like that there is still some barrier between us and the other person that we really can't put totally into words exactly what we're trying to say or communicate.

Pat Landes – We talked in our prayer group about not being able to do that with God. The magnitude, the grandeur that we can even begin to communicate with God is amazing.

Rod: With all the words that we have in the universe, and all the languages that we have from the most primitive to the most sophisticated languages among us, are not sufficient to capture all the meaning that needs to be made. But **not so** with God; He said "Jesus" and that said all. The deep things of God are embodied in Jesus and in a language we can understand. Jesus communicates God more clearly than all of nature, all of our God-ordained feelings, and all the Bible. Now, I am not discounting those things. We learn something about God from nature, from our inherent feelings because we are created in His image, and we can learn things about God through His written Word, the Bible. But there is no more concise word than Jesus Himself.

The answer to "who is God", "what does He want" and "what is His message to me" is compacted into one life – and that life is Jesus' life. There is no other life worth studying compared to the life of Jesus. I've read a lot of biographies in my life. I like to read Biographies about people and see how they lived, and so forth. But there is just **no** more profound life than the life of Jesus. Now, I really think we ought to be talking about that more. We ought to be talking to people about that more. I think we've sold Jesus short and we have so much part of our culture that we have lost the awe of who He really is and how profound He really is.

So in 1 John 1:1 Jesus is called "The Word of Life" ... [What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands,](#)

concerning the Word of Life”. Revelation 19:13 says, “¹³ He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.”

For me, in the beginning, in my life, I want my communication ... I want my word and deed, to be more precise and more profound to reflect the Jesus within me. Jesus dwells within me and He is going to be reflected out of me by what I do and what I say. I have to fine-tune my words and my actions in order to more precisely convey who Jesus is while I live my life. So, if God was to take the vast amount of who He is, the deep things of God, and He was able to hone them down into one single, solitary life, it would be / and is, Jesus. And now that that life lies ‘in’ me, and that life within me gets expressed out into the world, it has to be an expression of the *true* Jesus within me. It can’t be a characterization. Jesus can’t be just a caricature of Jesus. It has to be as accurate as possible or I will confuse people and they will not know who Jesus is in my life, unless I am able, in a sense, to channel Him out to the world. So I want the parts of my communication that are confusing and unclear to be brought into submission to the head.

Let’s talk about the word Logos – and why John was spiritually led to use this term. The Greeks were seeking a perfect, ideal man. They were always looking for the “ideal” man or the ideal person – something or someone who embodies the ideal. All their philosophers and religionists of the Greek world saw a focal point – a way to explain the existence or the essence of man. They were looking for the *hupostasis*—the most basic or fundamental truth. The Greeks were philosophers at heart because they were searching for the most fundamental truth that they could find. They said that *when they found it, they would have found the LOGOS*. They would have found the one single, solitary Greek thought (what was the most profound thought) that would encapsulate all of life, all of existence in that one thought. They searched and searched for it. Jesus was born into a Hellenistic world, so when John begins to describe who He is, he uses a word that the Greeks would understand. He uses the word Logos (λογος). In the beginning was the logos. So what John is saying to the Greek mind, not so much to the Jewish mind is, ‘I will tell you who the logos really is’. I will reveal him to you. I am going to show him to you.

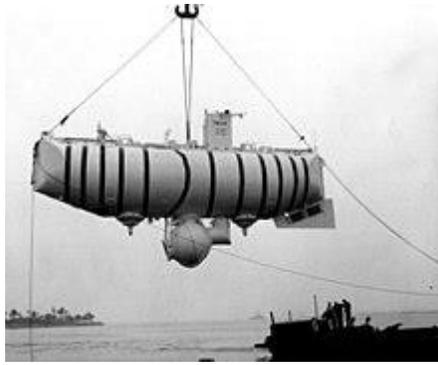
It’s almost like Paul telling the Greek men in Athens that he could explain to them the *unknown God* in their Temple. Acts 17:22-23. “Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. ²³ For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ‘TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.’ Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.” Paul told them that he would reveal the unknown God to them. John is saying to the Greek world that they are looking for this most important logos, this most important, ideal, perfect person, and I am going to tell you about him. He is **the** logos of God. And, of course, that was Jesus.

I read this morning, and Ron will like this, that when Jacque Picard and Don Walsh descended to the floor of Challenger Deep, the first two men to go to the bottom of the 36,000 feet, I’m wondering if they did the series, they named captain Piccard after this man.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacques_Piccard

Jacques Piccard (28 July 1922 – 1 November 2008) [1] was a Swiss oceanographer and engineer, known for having developed underwater submarines for studying ocean currents. In the Challenger Deep, he and Lt. Don Walsh of the United States Navy were the first people to explore the deepest part of the world’s ocean, and the deepest location on the surface of Earth’s crust, the Mariana Trench, located in the western North Pacific Ocean. He had a twin. His brother was Jean Luc

Piccard. They went to the floor of Challenger Deep around 36,000 feet, in what was called Bathyscaphe, named **Trieste**.



Trieste



Flatfish

On January 23, 1960 they descended down. They accomplished what no two people had ever done. And the only form of life that they saw when they reached the bottom was a flatfish. They went all the way down 36,000 feet, and the only life they “saw” was a flatfish. They could only stay there for about 20 minutes because they had to come back up, (so they may have been other life that the men did not see). They only had a very limited range of vision from that depth.

I tell you that to say that if we go down to the ground level of our very existence, the very existence of God’s nature – to the furthest that we, humans, can go into the mind of God, **what** are we going to find? **What** are *we* going to see? **What life** are we going to experience? And I maintain that what you are going to see is the logos. You’re going to see Jesus. **He is going to be the life at ground zero.**

Then John uses the term “was”. **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.** He uses the term *was*. In no sense of the imagination am I a Greek scholar, but I *can* look up the tense of the verb. The tense of the verb “was” is the imperfect tense. The imperfect tense means that Jesus “continues to be” the Word; not just that he was ‘at the beginning’. This tense shows that He continues to be the Word. That truth had a beginning but it continues to be. It didn’t change. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. The word determines its use for God in this text. The word Theos “θεος” is a very popular name for God. We understand that “θεος” is deity. Other references to connect Jesus’ identity with God might include:

John 20:28 When Thomas went to touch the Lord Jesus in His side, what did he say?

Thomas answered and said to Him, **“My Lord and my God!”** He testified that Jesus was God.

Romans 9:5 Paul refers to Christ in the flesh as being God

... From whom is the Christ according to the flesh, **who is over all, God blessed forever.**

Phil. 2:6

... Although He existed **in the form of God**, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped

Heb. 1:8 But of the Son He says, **“Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, Amen.**

1 John 5:20

...and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. **This is the true God and eternal life.**

What they are showing us here is that the Bible is consistent in designating Jesus as being God.

He is deity. In this verse we are told, he has given us understanding so that we might know of Him,

– so *Jesus facilitates our understanding*. We have understanding because He facilitates it. He makes it possible for us to know, not only Him, but the God that He has come to reveal.

Brian - We also have Jesus talking to the Pharisees in particular like, “[Before Abraham was, I AM.](#)” The Pharisees knew that He was equating himself with God which is why they tried to kill him on several occasions. But you also have the miracles. It comes up in Jonah 1:5 and also in Isaiah 43:2. He calms the waters. He is God and the waters become immediately calm. It’s the same as Jesus calming the waves and the storm. Immediately the Apostles worshiped Him. They realized that this was evidence of deity.

Rod – there are many lines of evidence for Jesus’ deity.

Wayne mentioned the Holy Spirit coming down from heaven to testify about Jesus and Jesus had done many miracles while He was here on Earth.

Rod – When we say that Jesus first miracle was changing water into wine, really, that is the first miracle that is recorded for us. Yet, in reading John 1, the first miracle recorded is really the creation of the world. That’s a little bit better than turning water into wine.

Sometimes I really wonder, are miracles just miracles because they are out of the realm of the natural world – what we experience in this world? Miracles may be just the way God operates. Maybe it’s just God’s way of doing things.

Brian – every work of God is a miracle.

Rod – I’ve had debates with people about “does God do miracles today” and I answer, “Well, does God do **anything** today? If he is doing anything today, and it is outside of this universe, isn’t that a miracle? I mean, **it’s supernatural, at least**. Everything God does is supernatural.

But the signs and miracles were not for his benefit, but for us . . . to get **our** attention. A sign is a sign because it “points to something else”. That’s why Jesus was so frustrated with them. They wanted another sign, and what it was pointing to, was standing right in front of them! It’s like going down I-4 and seeing a sign for Disney World and you say, “I want to see another sign so I can be sure.” Then you arrive at the gate and you say, “I just want to see one more sign for Disney World.” And you think, “Why don’t you just walk through the gate? You’re there. Why do you want another sign? Well, I just love signs!”

So getting to know Jesus’ mind is getting to know the mind of God – or at least the parts He wants us to know! Just as the explorers of the depths risked it all to discover, so I wish to see into the deep cavern of the mind of God.

Yet, Romans 11:33-34 speak of the difficulty of the search we are going to have. ³³ [Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How **unsearchable** are His judgments and **unfathomable** His ways!](#) ³⁴ [For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor?"](#) NASB In sea terms, a fathom is six feet (approx. 1.8 mi. in reference to depth of water. Challenger Deep is about 6,000 fathoms – the height of 6000 men.) Knowledge is unfathomable. There is no measurement. And Jesus was seeing what we are not allowed to see. Since John says Jesus was God and He was with God, what difference does the preposition “with” make to my understanding? Again, John says, “[In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was](#)

with God, and the Word was God.” Why would John put the words “with God” in there? How did He get in there to see God? What does the word “with” convey to us?

There are a variety of meanings here, but I think the most obvious should be pursued. Since John is going to make the case later that the Word became flesh, and He’s talking about Jesus. So then in our study, “in the beginning was the word and the word was with God,” it certainly puts Him in elite company. And since Jesus **was** God, it puts him in exclusive company. I have no problem believing that the term God, is an exclusive class which includes three Persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, all of whom are God but are individuals in mysterious ways from one another. Therefore Jesus can be both God and **with** God.

Now again, I don’t want to get too much into the godhead and how do we understand this, but when I began to think in sorts of categories, I saw that there is a category of angels, for instance. Angels are in a different category than man. There are different categories of “God”. There are a certain finite number of angels that God has created. We don’t know what that finite number is, but there are probably millions of them. We get a hint of that. Man is a finite number; men who **have** lived on the face of the earth or **will** live on the face of the earth. Again, I don’t know what that finite number is, but there are billions, at least, of people who **have** lived on the face of the earth or **will** live on the face of the earth. And they are all in the category of ‘man’. And then there may be some other categories, like, I don’t know ... the four living creatures. I don’t know if they were angels or they were in a class by themselves. I’m not exactly sure who the _____ were up there. (The word sounded like “velvers”). {Maybe the creatures of Rev. 4:5-11?} They were in a class by themselves.

But what I am saying here is that there are classes of beings. Obviously there are classes of animals, classes of insects, classes of plants and in all those things, **one** is not the **other**. But there is a class that is called “God”. And in that class, there are only three persons; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, but each one of them is God just like each one of us is man. Okay, I’m not Annie and Annie is not me, but we are in the same class. We share, in **some** ways, a common DNA, because we all came from the first two people. So, we all a common DNA, so there is part of you in me, and me in you. We’re all cousins. We are all cousins—some more distant than others. So there is a connection between all of us, among all of us physically, because we all share the same DNA, but we recognize the distinctiveness between us—between each individual person, even though there is a biological connectiveness through us in our DNA. Now, I don’t understand **that** very well either. And I surely don’t understand the spiritual connectiveness between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and how they can all **‘be’** God, and yet how they can all **‘be’** distinct. ‘How can they be distinct? Well, we accept it in the human realm but we struggle with it in the Spiritual realm.

So when John says that He **was** God and that he was also **with** God, it doesn’t particularly cause any problems for me because I see Jesus as distinct. Is there one God? Yes, there is one classification of God.

Wayne said that some people believe that when Jesus ascended to heaven, He had previously been less than God, but when he ascended, He became God. He may have been an angel, but when he ascended to heaven He became a God.

Rod – There are lots of theories out there. Some see Jesus as a demigod. . . a little god. And some believe that they may become God one day, but I don’t think that’s possible because of their certain classifications. It’s like people talk about when people die they become angels. No they don’t—

they're still people. People don't become angels and angels don't become people. Angels may **look** like people, but they're still angels.

Now Jesus was God. He could **look** like a person, but He was still God. The nature of who He **is** didn't change. Now, the miracle of the incarnation is that He was all God **and** all man. He connected all of that DNA into one Person, but He also connected it to the Godhead as a 'person'. I have no problem believing that the "GOD" was in an exclusive **class** being the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. All of them are God but are distinct in some mysterious way. This "Word" that became flesh is in a very exclusive inner circle or community. {How can we} try to imagine what it was like to be with God? Okay, here is where I am going with this. You may ask why we are going through all this to try to understand the mind and life of Christ. It is because I am trying to understand the experiences that Christ had in the pre-existent form. What did He experience with God? What did he experience being **with** the Father and the Holy Spirit? I ask because that is part of His mind! That is part of who He is! And if I am going to understand the mind of Christ, I have to understand some of the experiences He had pre-existently, . . . at least the parts that are *revealed* to me.

So this "Word" who became flesh was in a very exclusive inner circle or community. I am trying to imagine what it was like to be God the way Jesus **was** with God, which is probably beyond the realm of knowing. But we get a glimpse of it in places like Genesis 1:26. This gives us a glimpse of what it was like to be in a community before there was any community of man. "**Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...'**" There seems to be a conversation going on here among the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit before they actually created man that said, "Let's create them in our likeness."

Now if I try to "knee drop" (wrestle or bring down) from that verse into a conversation that is going on in the pre-existent Jesus' mind, then I get some insight into what that mind was thinking. Why did He think that way? Now, I'm not going to flesh that out too much. But where this exclusive community is discussing **making man**, it is discussing making man **in our image**. They have an idea; they have a plan; they have an agenda which resulted in what . . . in making man. How does Jesus think? He thinks in terms of "we are going to do something (the Father, Son and Holy Spirit) that will result in "this". It will have "this" kind of **quality** to it . . . this kind of **nature** to it. That tells me something about how the Godhead thinks. Now, why did they think that way? There is a lot I don't understand about it, but I got a little "peek, or peephole" into the mind of God, of the pre-existent Jesus.

We also see this interaction with the Godhead in creation with Salvation. In Ephesians 1:4 we read, "... **just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before [d] Him.**" He is saying that before the creation of the world, God had choices. He chose a certain path of salvation for man before man (or men) who had even been created. Where do I get some insight into the mind of God or the mind of Christ before any of us was ever created? It is certainly before He ever came to earth in AD 3 or AD 0 or whatever.

Carole – Well, before, you said the word "companionship". The Godhead is a fellowship. So we are in a family — a people of fellowship."

Rod – Right. And that is the community we find ourselves in. We find ourselves in community because the Ones who ordained that community were in community – the Father Son and Holy Spirit.

We are made in their nature and in their likeness, and therefore it is natural for us to be in community with each other. That is why it's "not good for man to be alone".

Pat – Community is what blows my mind. The way you explained it and how Jesus Christ creates this community by living in us because of His nature; because of His community. Oh my word! (I hope I got it all)

Rod – Yes! And again ... when you get inside, back into, back into their nature and how they created man and how they designed man, you need to understand something about ...

It's like an inventor. You know what is inside an inventor by what he invents! Jesus gives us insight into His mind. In this case we can use the word "invent" because the **Godhead invented man. They designed him; they came up with a plan; all throughout their specifications. When they did it, that made it so, but it all existed in the mind of God before it ever existed in the Garden of Eden. Before Jesus ever went to the cross, it was thought about; it was in the mind of God before the creation of the world.**

So we are getting insight into the mind of God through the preexistence of Jesus!

Being with God involves the Word in some pretty amazing projects, if you will. The project of creating man in the beginning and the project of saving man was already on the drawing board, was being thought about and discussed. This is true in whatever God does. And this is the same Jesus who walked for a while among us! This is the same Jesus. He's not a different Jesus than the One who was planning to create us in His image or planning to save us before He ever created us! And people are walking around here among us . . . Again, this is where I went with this study.

Now, in John 1:2, "**He was in the beginning with God**", John repeats the truth by directly connecting the Word as being 'with God' in the beginning. He repeats himself. This phrase is simply to show His relationship to time (Genesis 11:1) and he places the word, Jesus, at the scene. This was Jesus in space and time being involved in the creation. John's point was to establish Jesus' deity, and His involvement in creation would do it on at least two different counts.

1. Only God can create. If you want to establish the deity of Christ, put Him as the creator of the universe. Only God can create something out of nothing. No man was there.
2. The second reason these words show the deity of Christ is that no man was there at creation by the very nature of things. If there was no man there, and we're talking about it, who was there? Moses wasn't there when he wrote Genesis 1:1. Moses wasn't standing off on the side taking notes on a notepad saying, "I'm an investigative reporter and I'm going to tell you how God created the heavens and the earth." The only reason Moses knew how God created the heaven and the earth is because God revealed it to him. Moses wasn't even thought of. Neither were his mommy or daddy.

Since all of this is so exclusive to God, what does this amazing discovery mean for my knowing the mind of Christ and being changed into His likeness?

First, His mind is vast ... beyond understanding.

Second, his nature is relational. That preposition “with” tells us volumes about Jesus. He was meant to be **with...** What if Jesus wasn’t meant to be **with** me ... or I wasn’t meant to be with **Him**? That little preposition changes the whole ballgame, because now I am **in relationship with** Christ.

Third, his involvement in creating and in planning demonstrates his amazing administrative ability and His diversity. He had the ability to get so many parts into a unified whole. Imagine what Jesus and the Godhead did in bringing about all the different manifold parts and variations . . . I mean, it is amazing how this universe is put together. All of that flowed through the mind of Jesus. If I am going to know the mind of Jesus, I am at least going to have to consider that He has the most amazing, inventive, creative, administrative mind that ... I mean that this is just beyond anything I could even begin to impress (i. e. to make someone feel admiration and respect. This is vast. His mind is vast.)

I have to understand the nature of the mind that I am looking at. I am seeing just a little sliver of what is being expressed in a three-year-period of time – and there is so much more in that mind that I can’t even see or understand. I’m just getting CliffsNotes on the mind of God.

Pat – Does it say in the Greek that “we have the mind of Christ?”

Rod – Yes. It does say in the Greek that we have the mind of Christ at the end of the Philippians passage in Philippians chapter 2:16, “**For who has known the mind of the Lord, that He will instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.**”

I’m going to end with this. I believe, part of knowing the mind of Jesus from Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, is the realization that we can only understand a minuscule amount of the knowledge we want to know of the mind of Christ. Let’s continue this next week.

February 6, 2019 **Week 4**

Okay. We’re just getting to go down the road a little bit. We’re in John, Chapter One and we have been investigating this idea of the pre-existent Jesus, and about what was going on in the mind of Christ before he actually came to Earth, as much as we have insight into that. So, I’ll just give you a little bit of review that is mentioned just a little bit in this slide.

Lessons on this slide show the pre-existent mind of Christ, that His mind was vast beyond understanding, that he is relational and he has the administrative ability to bring all parts into a unified whole. Now where we got this from is the fact that we have insight into going into the mind of God.

We know that through:

1. The Creation Itself

God has created things. That tells us that in order for God to create things, He is thinking about these things. We’ll touch on that some more tonight.

2. And then we also learn from Ephesians 1:4, “just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that *we would be holy and blameless before [d] Him*. In love ⁵ [e]He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the [f] kind intention of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷ In [g] Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace ⁸ which He [h] lavished on [i] us.”

3. He made choices for us in regard to our salvation. He was thinking about our salvation which was tied up in His ability to be relational. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are relational and he calls us in to that relationship. This is a very exclusive club that we are called in to participate in it. We get a seat at the table. That’s what we were talking about in John 1:2.

I am picking up where I wrote on May 13, 2010. “So for me to be like him, I need to expand my understanding, pursue my own relationship with Him (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), and to implement my own abilities to “create”. I won’t create like He created but I can be creative. I can learn to plan and to administer what is harmonious with Him.

What I am getting at there is that if I want to fully understand the mind of Christ, I have to enter into and participate in the things God does. And as I participate in those three things, in harmony with His will, to that extent I can understand better the mind of Christ.

In John Chapter 1, verse 3 it says, “*All things came into being through (or by) Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.*” Come into being in some translations is, “has been made”. “*Come into being*” is more accurate. Going back to verse 2, “*He was in the beginning with God*”. John seems to repeat himself because he already said in verse 1 that “*He was with God*”. This repetition of John is not just being redundant. It is there for a reason. The word “He” is literally “This one”. John is making the point of identity here. He wants us to know, to be sure that we understand **who** he is talking about.

I was reading this passage with someone this week, and they were unfamiliar of the idea of “the word” and that the Word is Jesus. I told him that it was Jesus, but we kept reading for a while. At first they had trouble with the idea of who John is talking about . . . who are the first 2 or three verses talking about? Who is the word; the logos? He thought “**he**” was Jesus but John wants his reader to know that the one he is talking about “**was** in the beginning” and he was “**with**” God.

The Hebrew word for God in Genesis 1 is Elohim and it is a plural word for “God”. It is used over 2600 times in the Hebrew Scriptures. So clearly, God, plural, the Godhead is under consideration here . . . the mystery of the three in one.

In verse 3, creation is introduced. This “created into being” is not necessarily creation from nothing. It can be to create from nothing, or it can be just a rearrangement of something that didn’t exist in that form before.

In Genesis 1 it says *the earth was formless and void* and God began to “rearrange” it. He put order to what was already there. It all came from God. He created everything out of nothing originally, but how he actually “re”-constructed everything together and make it all work out, I don’t know. We know that it all came from God. He created everything out of nothing. But how He actually constructed everything and did it, we don’t know.

{For fun:

Cosmos means (according to google) “the universe seen as a well-ordered whole.” At some point, the world must have been chaotic. See above, Genesis 1:2, “Now the earth was formless and empty”. This was before God began His creativity. We get the word “Cosmetics” from “Cosmos” meaning . . . to create order out of chaos. ☺}

John N. Clayton

<https://www.google.com/search?q=cosmos&oq=cosmos&aqs=chrome..69i57j0l5.4624j1j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

The idea of coming, or bringing into being, is ginomai (γεννημαι) meaning to generate or something to arise or be assembled into a certain state of being. So Jesus is the One who causes things to be. . . . It is the mind of Christ because Jesus is doing these things

If we’re going to get into the mind of Christ . . . If I wanted to know Thomas Edison . . . If I really wanted to know him, I’d read books about him to learn. He was a serious guy with great persistence.

You can look at the things he “dabbled” in or the inventions he tried to perfect and you would learn something about his mind and the processes he went through by seeing what he does.

Now in this situation . . . talking about Someone so far above Edison . . . we can get some sense that Jesus is the master . . . the real deal. So what Jesus was doing in the very beginning, was “causing things to be”. And that is so significant to me because if I am going to understand the mind of Christ, I must understand that Jesus was all about “**seeing things that are not**” and calling them as they are! He calls things into existence that “are not!” He can see the **potential** – what **can be**.

Romans 4 – Look at the way Jesus saw Abraham!

What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? ² For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³ For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham **believed** God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” ⁴ Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. ⁵ But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness, ⁶ just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

⁷ “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered.

⁸ “Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account.”

⁹ Is this blessing then on the circumcised or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, “Faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness.” ¹⁰ Under what circumstances was it credited; while he was circumcised or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised . . .”

This is so fundamental to the thinking of Christ. When he came to earth, and we began to see that work out in the Life of Christ, we realize that when He looked at people, He didn’t just see them as they were. He saw them as they **could be**. “What manner of child shall this be?” Luke 1:66. He saw “what this woman caught in the act of adultery become!” John 8:1-11.

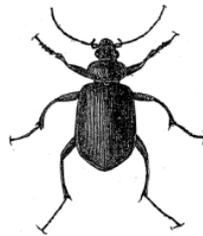
We are trying to discover why Jesus thought the way He did, and there are always things we discover . . . that He sees things that are not as though they were. So here is this idea of bringing things into being . . . I don’t know how you have the mind of Christ and be a pessimist. I do not know how pessimism and the mind of Christ go together . . . or cynicism or fatalism. We have to develop His character.

Being able to see what *can become* is vital. Nothing came into being without Jesus causing it to come into being. He is a “bringing it to be” God and we ought to be “bringing into being people.” We bring things into being. We bring something into the situation. We contribute and make good things happen.

So when Jesus was there in the beginning causing things to be, John could say that “Without Him nothing was made that has been made, John 1:3. All things that “came into being” were because of Jesus. **Whatever** became ... Jesus was involved in **all** of it.

On May 14th, 2010 Rod spend a couple of hours with an entomologist talking about insects. We must have identified 30 species of insects that day. The world is filled with diversity and Jesus was there when it all began. He caused it all to be.

Giving great consideration to the things made in nature brings me closer to the mind of Jesus.



What was Jesus thinking when he made the Damsel Fly or the beetle, or the ant? What do I know of Christ by what he made? The obvious things are that He’s brilliant, He’s powerful, He’s creative and He has organizational skill. But where does that take **me** in understanding the mind of Christ?

His brilliance is used productively, so any mind that has the mind of Christ will have a productive mind ... a beneficial mind. We do things to benefit others. Our minds are not going to be destructive, tearing things apart. With the mind of Christ we will do amazing things.

Christ’s power is under control, so when we have power, we use it to a good end. If we have the mind of Christ and think like He does, we do things in a controlled way and to a good end. That’s what the creation was about. It wasn’t from “order” to “disorder”. Christ always brings “order” out of “disorder”, {or order out of chaos}. So, any power I have will be put to good use, to bring more order out of something. I don’t want to create more confusion than is already there. If I want to bring something to a person’s life ... I want to bring something that will cause more order than confusion. Jesus’ creative ability in nature, life’s variation, beauty, cleverness and orderliness brings unity and oneness, peace and harmony – not chaos and confusion.

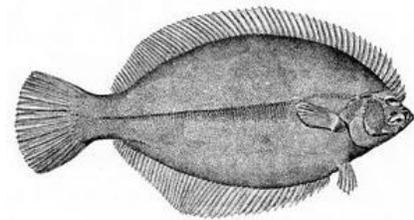
In Romans 1:18-23 says that there is so much to be understood by the things He has made. The world has gotten itself into trouble because it is denying itself even the evidence of creation that God had given them.

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth [I]n unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world **His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood**

through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. ²¹ For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

I guess what I am saying here is that John Chapter One says simply {that Jesus **was** God and He was **with** God but} we spend so much of our time on “what are the doctrinal questions of the church”? We ask things like, “what do you want me to do on Sunday morning”, etc. It seems like we have so limited the mind of Christ to a set of doctrinal rules, while the vastness of the mind of Christ involves even what passes through His mind in creation of the whole universe. Now once I learn about that and His nature, . . . I don’t think that anything I learn about the mind of Christ is going to be incompatible with what is revealed in the “letters” about how “**church**” is supposed to work. The same unity that Jesus brought to the universe and the world of mankind is all together under one head – Christ. It is the same unity that he wants to bring to the church. And when **that** happens, we present to the world the same kind of evidence of the thinking of Christ to the world. And people can see consistency there. I fear we have not shown that too clearly.

In connection with this study, I decided to read the book on deep sea exploration. I read, “Mapping the Deep” by Robert Kunzig. I wondered if any of the explorers, although intelligent and brave, had ever asked the most important questions. “What does this discovery tell me about the mind of Christ?” They went all the way to the bottom of the deep, but did it tell them anything about the mind of God? He created these things. What was God thinking when he made a ‘Sea cucumber’ to live in the greatest depths of the sea?



At the greatest depths of the sea you will find sea cucumbers, flatworms, and flatfish. What was He thinking for them to rule over the depths of the sea?

Now back in John 1, verse 4 - Okay. Now hold on. We’re going down deep.

“In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. ⁵ The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not [b] comprehend it.”

In him **was** life. The verb “**was**” is in the imperfect tense showing **continuous action**. This is continual action: he continues to be the life. He continues to be light. He’s like a steady stream of light. He’s consistently the light. And it is reasonable that he brought all things into being because he continually had **life** within himself. So, in Him was **life** and there was **light**. We know the connection between life and light. Without light there could be no life.

So if Jesus is going to be the creator of all things, he had to have the source of life within Him. I learned in school that God is a necessary being and all of us are contingent upon His life. We are contingent beings. God is self contained. We are not. He has the source of life within Him and He could impart life, as he did, to us.

Rod to Buffy: If there was ever a point where God was not; nothing would be.

Connie, Ruth's friend: She spoke a lot but I couldn't hear her. Her main point was that "God created us in **His** image, and **He** gave us a piece of **His** light. God is called "Light". He **is** light. We get little pieces of **His** light ... (energy)

Rod: Okay, we're going to try to dive into this. I wanted to see the progression of my thinking as I went through this. For Jesus to be bringing things into being, He would have to have life within Himself. He would be a light "source". He, Himself, would be a life "generator" or self-generating, if you will. My life is dependent on a whole series of processes and elements in my environment. I could not live without these external things.

Jesus life was internal and independent of all things outside of Himself. Verse 4 says the life was "in Him". It was not a struggle to him. It was "in Him". Ephesians was written to those who were "in Christ". The term "in Him" is found in verses 1:1, 3, 4, 7, 10, 12, 13, 2:10, 13, 15, 21, etc.

We read a lot about his people being "in Him" and "in Christ" and so forth ...

Life, used here is Zoe. Zoe can pertain to a physical AND/OR a spiritual body. Either way, the life is "in Him", and we are dependent "on Him" for that life. How does one think about something ... something that is so intimate to one's own existence? And that question bothered me a little bit. How can you think about something that is so, so germinal to your own existence? {"Germinal: in the earliest stage of development; providing material for future development. Most germane to this conversation if the mind of Christ"}

When I came upon the fact that there was a point in time that seed, that moment when conception took place, when the sperm entered the egg, impregnated the egg and became attached to the body, it eventually made "me". I don't know how to think about that. How do I think about "me" at that stage of beginning? But I was there. I was alive. It was something that I experienced, so to say. Not with my 5 senses. I didn't have 5 senses at that stage of life. Eventually I did. But there is a reference there that God knew me when I was in my mother's womb (Jer. 1:5, Job 3:16 and Gal. 1:15) ...

Gal. 1¹⁵ But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased ¹⁶ to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with [i] flesh and blood, ¹⁷ nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus.

But for me to try to get my mind around an experience that was so close to my beginning ... I don't know how to do that. And so the same kind of question here, in regard to this life that is in Him, that is so intimate to one's own existence ... How can a rock exist, and still be considered dead? Things can have existence and not be alive. Existence is simply existence. But this existence is my life. Life, for me, is connected to consciousness. So the truth is I had life, but I had no consciousness of it. And consciousness is obviously a product of the human brain. I don't think you can have consciousness without the human brain.

{**Someone** said}, "The parts were all there. They just weren't put together."

Rod: I know, and there is body, soul and spirit, so I guess you can have consciousness without brain. The Rich man and Lazarus did... The brain was up here but they weren't. I don't know. There are a lot of things here. This is not my field.

Now regarding consciousness . . . James says that the connection between the body and the spirit determines human life. Jas. 2:26 says, “**For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.**” James definition of death is when the spirit separates from the body. So when the spirit leaves the body ... the man; the body is dead. But what about the spirit? Well, I haven't had that experience yet.

There seems to be a spark of life, (if we there was some “spark plug” for the engine to start) ... if we can call it that. It's almost like there needs to be a spark that has to ignite, and with oxygen mixed with it, it's running. But what is the nature of this life that I have? It's not merely mechanical. Surely, the life that is in **Him** is not mechanical. There is some self-generating quality that is life, and once it is placed within me, it should be natural. It should be nurtured and optimized so that the intent of the inner quality of **my** life will grow deeper and deeper in the experience.

In other words, if Christ is going to infuse a quality of life within me, (because I'm not just talking here simply about my physical life, but also about spiritual life—eternal life). So if that gets infused within me, I truly have an opportunity to experience . . . of becoming . . . and of participating in this physical and spiritual life in me. I have the ability to participate with my own nature.

2 Peter 1:3-4 says, “**His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. ⁴ For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you [we] may become partakers of the divine nature ...**”

What God is doing throughout the New Testament is trying to stretch our ‘holy imagination’ to its limits, for what He has prepared for those He loves.

Look at 1 Corinthians 2:7-13 This is us tonight

“⁷ but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; ⁸ the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; ⁹ but just as it is written,

“Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, ...all that God has prepared for those who love Him.”

¹⁰ For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. ¹¹ For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, ¹³ which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.”

We know that the mind has not conceived what God has done for us, but he gives us enough so that we can begin to dig really deep into this quality of life that we have been given in Him.

And for us to connect with the mind of Christ, (this is difficult to understand), but ‘**how is this life the light of men**’? John 1:4 says, “**In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.**”

It is like God is putting a bit of His life into us. The Holy Spirit enables us to see God. It shows us the life of Jesus and his life is transferred into our life. His life shines. It is eternal.

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:6, “For God, who said, ‘*Light shall shine out of darkness,*’ is the One who has shined in our hearts to give the Light of the **knowledge** of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” The word for “light” is “phos”, {φωσ} where we get the word phosphorus or photo from. It means to make manifest, to shine. The means of this light is the gospel which enlightens us and those with who we share it.

Paul wants us have in intimate **knowledge** of the glory of God. We are to **know** God. There is a correlation between knowing and light. We “use” it that way when we say, “a light bulb just went on in my head”. Jesus agreed with Paul in John 17:3-4 when he said, “**This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.** ⁴ I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.”

The light inside of Jesus, revealed and manifested in His life, is the means by which we now profit. He shined light into the darkness and now we do also. The Holy Spirit may be transferring the light inside of Jesus to a light inside of us. **There has to be transference of His life into our life.** And ‘light’ is the word that is used to describe that transfer because light can shine. It can shine into something ... into darkness. So the quality of this life is eternal because it’s God’s life. 2 Cor. 4:6 says that *this connects the creation, of which Jesus was a part, with a re-creation of us in Christ.*

Let’s look at 2 Cor. 4 again because there’s something very interesting. ⁶ For God, who said, “*Light shall shine out of darkness,*” (when did God say this? In the beginning ... “Let there be light”.) Again, “⁶ ...the One who has shone in **our** hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”

Back in verses 4-5, Paul said, “... **the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.** ... ⁵ For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus’ sake.”

So God has, for a while, blinded the eyes of unbelievers to prevent the light that Jesus is shining from entering into them. The means of the light is the gospel. It is the same gospel that commanded light to shine into darkness, and it sends itself into our hearts to enlighten us with the knowledge of the glory of Christ.

This enlightenment, illumination, is for us ... to bring **us** something. Illumination is to brighten something up. It is to illuminate us, because without this light, we are not too bright. Our brightness comes from God shining His light into our hearts.

One of the things I fear is that as we lost the knowledge of God in our society, we are going to go into a truly dark age. It will be a very dark age because it will seem so sophisticated ... so knowledgeable about so many things. But the very thing that gives us the light of the knowledge of God has been blocked by the evil one so the minds of unbelievers can’t see that light.

Philippians Chapter 2:14-15 says “so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom *you appear as lights in the world...*” **We are to shine like stars in the universe.** We have to make the distinction *very clear* between the **true** light and the **world’s** darkness.

So, what must our hearts be like without this light? I contemplate what my heart would be like without this light. It would be a dark place indeed. We need constant light to keep us from slithering back into the darkness. It reminds me of Revelation ... the description of the Holy City.

Revelation 21:10-22:9 The New Jerusalem-

¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹ having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper. ¹² It had a great and high wall [j] with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. ¹³ There were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west. ¹⁴ And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

¹⁵ The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall. ¹⁶ The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal. ¹⁷ And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements. ¹⁸ The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. ¹⁹ The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; ²⁰ the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. ²¹ And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

²² **I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.** ²³ **And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.** ²⁴ *The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth [s]will bring their glory into it.* ²⁵ *In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed;* ²⁶ and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; ²⁷ and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

22 Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, ² in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³ There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; ⁴ **they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.** ⁵ **And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.**

⁶ And he said to me, “These words are faithful and true”; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must soon take place.

⁷ “And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who [e]heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.”

⁸ I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. ⁹ But he said to me, “Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God.”

2 Cor. 3:16-18 says “but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. ¹⁸ But **we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.**” We are being changed from one degree of glory to another! We are all to reflect **His** glory. **He** is our source of light. **He** illuminates our hearts.

The steady illumination of our hearts will be constant in the New Jerusalem. In my opinion, it’s not merely talking about “heaven” here; but it’s talking about the Bride of Christ ... the church. **We** are the bride of Christ. We will be the bride of Christ on this side **and** the other side, *but the nature of the bride of Christ is to reflect the glory of the Lord to the world. This is the only way we can show the Lord’s glory and be a light to the nations.* This is a description of the church. *It is the nature of the church to be a constant reflection of the Lord’s light.* We have to be sure that **we, ourselves**, are being constantly illuminated by Jesus, by the Word, through prayer and meditation... **This is what is missing in the modern church today;** the constant illumination.

So **back in John 1:5**, “The Light *shines* in the *darkness*, and the darkness did not *comprehend* it.”

The word “shine” here is “φαινει” meaning “to light or shine”. All these words are related to one another in the Greek. To shine is to “show”. Here, the word “shine” relates to Jesus who became the Word made flesh.

In **John 5:35** the word “**shine**” relates to John the baptizer. John was “**He was the lamp that was burning and was *shining*, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.**” Light shines for a little while, {but it needs a connection}. Very charismatic people can light up a room *for a little while*.

It wasn’t John’s intent to become the light—Jesus was; but for a little while, John ‘shined’. And we know of some people who have walked by Christ’s light ... for a while, and then stopped. In the next verse we read, “**But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me.**” The work that Jesus did would vastly overshadow the work of John the baptist {and it should have been a testimony to His people as ours should be in today’s world}. John’s light was like a measly flashlight compared to God’s Son.

The nature of the bride of Christ is to reflect Jesus' work and His glory. {Our light should shine as great as that of John the baptizer since we also have the Holy Spirit in us. And this light is not separated from the work that testifies how great our faith is. Our works **reveal** the *amount* of faith that we have. They are a witness of our faith.}

The word for “**dark**” is “skotia” or “σκοτία” means denseness or obscurity.

But the word I really want to get to is the word “comprehend”; ... the darkness (skotia) has not “comprehended” it or has not “understood” it. Nestle’s Greek Text interprets it as “overtook” it. The darkness has not overtaken the light . . . yet.

The word used for “**comprehend**” or “**understand**” is “Katalambano” or “κατελαβεν” meaning to take eagerly, to seize, lay hold of, to partake of, to apprehend, to perceive, to attain, to overwhelm, to overtake or grab. It is a lot more than to simply understand with the brain. It is to make the connection.

It is used in John 8 for the woman who was “caught” or “taken” in the act of adultery. See end of this lesson for more.

The following verses use the word “katalamano” in them to give us a clearer definition of it.

{All the words **in red** were taken from Dr. Alfred Marshall’s Greek interlinear}

John 8:3, 4 caught in, has been caught

The scribes and the Pharisees *brought a woman **caught** in adultery, and having set her in the center of the court, ⁴ they said to Him, “Teacher, this woman **has been caught** in adultery, in the very act.

Mark 9:18 seizes

Whenever it (the evil spirit) **seizes** him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.”

John 12:35 overtake

³⁵ So Jesus said to them, “For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not **overtake** you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes.

1 Thess. 5:4 overtake

But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should **surprise** you like a thief.

Rom. 9:30 – It didn’t click (apprehend, did not arrive)

³⁰ What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not **pursue** in a way that apprehends **righteousness**, have **obtained it**, a righteousness that is by faith; ³¹ but the people of Israel, who pursued the law as the way of righteousness, have **not attained** their goal. ³² Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith, but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone. ³³ As it is written: “See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who believes in him will never be put to shame.” [m]

1 Cor. 9:24 - obtains

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one **gets the prize**? Run in such a way as to get (or seize) the prize.

Phil. 3:12-13 I may lay hold, laid hold of

Not that I have already **obtained** it or have already become perfect, but I press on [h]so that I may **lay hold of** that [i]for which also I was **laid hold** by Christ Jesus.

In this case, Jesus grabbed a hold of Paul. We need to grab hold of Jesus!

Acts 4:13 Perceived

Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and **understood** that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them [k]as having been with Jesus.

Acts 10:34 Perceive

Peter said: "I most certainly **realize** now that God is not one to show partiality

Acts 25:25 discovered

But I **found** that he had committed nothing worthy of death; and since he himself appealed to [p]the Emperor, I decided to send him. The investigation caused Festus to **grasp** that Paul had not done anything worthy of death.

Eph. 3:18 discovered

... you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ (that you) may be able to **grasp** with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ

We need to grasp the depth of Christ's love, to understand it, to comprehend it, to grab hold of it, to overtake that love!

John 1:5 "The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." John is saying that the light is still shining in the darkness, but the darkness has not overtaken the light . . . "yet".

At one time, Jesus says the darkness did not understand, take hold of, seize, grasp or obtain the light. Normal light in the natural realm always dispels darkness so long as the light shines there. Is this a generalization? Well, some seized the light. We have to hold onto it, grasp it.

My ability to know the mind of Christ is to allow His light to expose and seize my darkness. I need to allow **it/Him** to do **its/His** work. I must allow Jesus' light to shine on or illuminate my sinfulness. Am I comprehending it; and holding onto it? If His light is constantly shining into my darkness, am I choosing it? Am I grabbing it? I have to allow that light to illuminate me on a consistent basis? Am I going into the light for a little while, and back into the darkness for a little while tossing to and fro? (Ephesians 4:14-15). We have to hold fast to the illumination that Christ gives us.

Week 5
February 13, 2019

We're in John Chapter 1, studying the mind of Christ. You all know that in 2010, I did a 7-year study on the mind of Christ. So the 21 journals I filled are the basis for this study.

We're in John 1, and I'm going back to verses 4-5. "In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome [a] it." We talked last week about the idea of 'comprehending, or seizing or grasping or understanding' the light. We talked about ways that same word as used in other contexts. When we think about the mind of Christ ... to understand His mind being the essence of the light that he shines into our lives, the challenge before us is to grab it and to seize it making sure we have grasped the light and understood it. We don't want to be like the darkness that cannot grasp the light and be like the world spoken of in verses 11-13 NASB. "He came to His [h] own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who were [i] born, not of [j] blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." We want to be able to see Him as He really is, grasping and understanding Him. That is the challenge before us now.

So I'm reading May 18, 2010. The ability to grasp or understand is critical to bearing fruit in Christ. If you don't grasp or understand, you won't be able to bear fruit. There is no change that actually occurs in our lives ... no relationship with Christ, unless we understand Him and know Him. The desire of knowing Christ is found throughout Scripture. There is no spirituality in our lives until we make that connection. It's kind of like this battery. So, we want this vital, essential connection.

1 John 1:5-9 tells us about the continual walking in the light. "This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; ⁷ but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This walking 'in the light' also puts me in fellowship with others who are in the light and puts me in a forgiving, cleansing connection with Jesus.

Back in John 1:6-7 it tells of John the Baptist and his role in the process. When I was studying this and began to think about the first part of John chapter 1, I got up to about verse six, and then it switches and I am reading about John the Baptist and about his role. And I am wondering, 'why are they putting this in the middle?' I mean, the Holy Spirit wrote the Bible and He can put in anything, anywhere he wants. But I had to figure out what this has to do with understanding Christ, or the role of any man in the process. It was a big deal to me to understand that because 'if God wants to use Jesus as the perfect instrument to reveal Himself to man, where does human agency come in to this process?' Jesus spent just a few years down here training about twelve guys and then went back to heaven. He left to give us as the agency. So if we're going to understand the process that leads to understanding the mind of Christ we have to understand the nature of human agencies. So in John 1:6-7 He tells us:

“There came a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that all might believe through him.”

This tells us that John’s role through this process was that **he was sent from God for a purpose**, and that purpose was **to be a witness** who **bears witness of the Light**. So he’s not the Light, but he will bear witness **to** the Light. Why? His purpose is ‘so that all may believe Him’.

This idea of “witness” ... (the Greek being, “marturian” (μαρτυριαν), means *to present evidence* or *to bear witness to the truth*.” It has to do with testimony at the risk of one’s life. We get the word, “Martyr” from the word witness. Martyrs are people who bore witness. In the first century when one was called to testify about a belief, he bore witness risking his very life. Many lost their lives because of the witness that they had.

This process of human agency in understanding or grasping the light is essential. This is not to say that God couldn’t do this a different way, but God saw the need to do it that way. It might relate to this: when God was trying to find the perfect vehicle in order to help man understand who He was, He sent His own Son in the form of man in human flesh. Therefore, what was embodied in Jesus was TRUTH ... grace and truth. So God used the humanness of Christ to be able to communicate God to us.

Jesus, then, took that TRUTH and transferred it into the minds of men so that now ‘they’ could be the human agency to *continue* to communicate that truth of Him. To me, it’s almost like taking out a 55 gallon drum of ‘knowledge of God’ and you are dipping out of that and putting it into smaller containers. (Now, my container is like a thimble. How do we try to get 55 gallons of water into a thimble?) That’s like trying to get the mind of Christ into our little minds ... to be able to understand and grasp what that’s all about.

So he said he came to bear witness to the truth—to give testimony even at the risk of his own life. To tell the truth or point people to the Light threatens many who wish to remain in the darkness. The reason there is a risk when trying to bring people into the light is because their deeds are evil and they don’t want them to be exposed. So, with John the Baptist, who did he confront that got him killed? It was Herod and Herodias, his illegitimate wife ... his brother’s wife who he took. John confronted them about their sin, but they loved their sin and darkness and didn’t want to come into the light. So what did they do? They tried to snuff out John’s life (which was light). The life is in the light. The world thinks that if you can snuff out the life, you can snuff out the light and they can remain in darkness. How do you put out the light? Well, if I see light bulbs on the ceiling, I can turn the switch off and they’ll go dark. Or I can shoot the light. Then I can flip the switch all day long but it’s not going to come on.

The world thinks that if you kill the messenger, there will be no more light and then they can do whatever they please. They tried that with Jesus. He confronted the darkness of the religious leaders of His day, and what did they do? They got Him snuffed out! They snuffed out his life, and in doing so, they snuffed out the Light. But **He** had another plan. They called it resurrection. The resurrection was: He came back to life and He was able to shine brighter when He came back to life, than He was before He died.

Comment ?: They persecuted the early church. And when they persecuted the church trying to snuff them out, they scattered everywhere.

Rod - It's like you have a fire, maybe an oil fire, and you try to fight it with power and try to beat it but all it's going to do is spread! When you beat a fire, it spreads out and pops up somewhere else. And that is what was happening here in the early church. So, here's John who is a witness, and that may be the first indicator that it won't end up well for him.

Now in this work, what is in the mind of God that says witnesses are needed for other humans to grasp the light – that is, “come to believe”? Like Paul in 1 Corinthians 9 says, he will use all ‘possible means’, ‘all legitimate means’, to save some ... he is not going to save them all.

¹⁹ For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more.
²⁰ To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under [i] the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; ²¹ to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law. ²² To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some. ²³ I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it.

If Paul did this, then certainly God does the same thing. Of course, Paul would not do something illegitimate to save a person, like pass out \$100 bills to get a person baptized. That would be illegitimate. I might baptize a whole lot of people, but I'm not sure that that would be salvation.

So God uses every legitimate means to save the people He can.

But then there's another factor here. In John 1:8, he said he was not the light, but came that he might bear *witness* to the Light. John wanted to make it clear that John the Baptist was *not* the Light, but only provided *evidence* to the Light. This is important because man tends to fixate on the object, or the person who reflects the light, instead of on the true source of that light. This becomes idolatry. We must not get the *means to an end* mixed up with the *end* itself or someone, or something, even in nature that points to the real deal. Some examples of that are where God created natural things and what does man tend to do? He tends to {*put his hand to microphone- not sure of wording*} things, made an idol out of it and fall down to worship it. They would even worship the sun, moon and stars. Or in the case of 1 Cor. 3:1-4 when Paul talks about them fixating on the messenger:

“And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. ²I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, ³ for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? ⁴ For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” are you not mere men ...” They were so fixated on the one who brought them to Christ, the preacher, rather than on the **Son of God**. All those men were only reflecting the truth, the real deal. They had no light in and of themselves.

What I am trying to get across is that ‘created things are witnesses to the Light’. This is one way we can learn more about the mind of God: by the things or the persons He has sent, that He named, that He put His glory into, but they only reflect the real glory. They have no light of their own but merely **reflect** the Son's Light.

John 1:9 says, “There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.”

We want to camp out on this one a little bit because we need to get this idea of enlightenment. We talked a little about it before. The central nature of illumination, to understand the mind of Christ, is that **His** Light is the Light that lightens every man.

He comes to enlighten us. What does enlighten really mean? What does it mean for Jesus to enlighten us? We have a whole period of history called “The Enlightenment”. There were the Dark Ages, a period of relative ignorance from what we know today, and then there was “The Enlightenment” because, in a sense, light bulbs were going off in peoples’ heads.

Newton was sitting under a tree and an apple fell on his head, and he said, “Oh, gravity!”

Louis Pasteur was looking through a microscope and all these squiggly things were crawling around and he said, “Germs”!

Then, instead of the earth being the center of the galaxy, Nicolaus Copernicus looked up into the sky and said, “Oh, the Sun is the center of the galaxy, not the earth.” That changed everything! They began to make maps differently because they were beginning to understand that the world was **not** flat. It was a circle that had the ability to rotate on its axis. The whole world began to open up to them. Scientific discoveries were being made right and left changing the way people perceived reality. And it was really a fundamental change in reality. That is a kind of example of how, when we discern the mind of Christ, it changes our reality. Before you have the mind of Christ, it’s like living in the Dark Ages. You live with superstition. You live with not knowing cause and effect, how things work, and then when you begin to put it together, it’s a “wow! That’s how it works?” Yes, this is how it works!

Let’s get this idea about blindness. The word “enlightened” in the Greek is photizo (φωτιζει). It means to shed range, to shine, to brighten up, enlightened, enlightenment or illuminate. So let’s look at some other passages where this word is used to enlighten us about enlightenment:

Ephesians 1:18

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be **enlightened**, so that you will know ‘what is the hope of His calling’ and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

So, when the eyes of your heart are enlightened it opens up the storehouse of things like ‘hope’ and all the things He has given us. We’ll be able to understand things now. Our eyes are enlightened.

Remember when Saul was on the road to Damascus and a bright light came out and it blinded him. Then when Ananias arrived, he was able to open his eyes ... he was able to see. **But that was really a metaphor for what was happening in his heart.** He was now able to see the world from a completely different angle. In 2 Corinthians he said that there was a time when he looked at Christ from a worldly point of view, but after that experience on the road, and he was **enlightened**; he was able to look at Christ differently. And after that, he was able to look at other **people** differently. When people are enlightened, it changes their view of God and it changes their view of other people because we can see more clearly. And it changes our view of ourselves because we see ourselves differently as well. We see ourselves realistically, truthfully, honestly – both the amazing things about us and common sense.

Ephesians 3:8-9

“Although I am less than the least of all the Lord’s people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ,⁹ and **to make plain** to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.”

Here he is talking about the mystery that proved what Jesus did ‘so that all men, Jews and Gentiles would be united in one church under one head, even Christ’. He is bringing this to light. It’s a mystery that was shrouded in darkness. Now it has been brought into the light having been revealed. Now not only do we get a different view of ourselves and of the world in Christ, but we begin to get a different view of His plan—of what He has in store for us.

So these are the kinds of practical things that are happening when you know the mind of Christ. You begin to say, “Oh, this is a plan. This is what God had in mind for the world ... to bring everything under one head, even Christ.” This **had** been hidden.

1 Corinthians 4:5

Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will **bring to light** what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.

There are some things that are difficult for us to see now, but when God comes back again, He will enlighten everything for us. Everything will be coming into the light. It will be disclosed. It will be made clear, even what the motives of men’s hearts are.

So the enlightenment doesn’t just **end** with us becoming Christians. There will be a HUGE enlightenment when Christ comes back. A lot will be revealed then. So, we’re in the **process** of enlightenment that will have its consummation, if you will, when Christ returns and everything becomes clear, and we’re going to see Him and know Him as He is.

2 Timothy 1:10

“This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,¹⁰ but it has now **been revealed** through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

The means by which he brings things to light is the gospel; the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. So He brings to light two things: life and immortality. He brings those into perspective.

Hebrews 6:4-6

“It is impossible for those who have **once been enlightened**, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit,⁵ who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age⁶ and who have fallen [c] away, to be brought back to repentance. To their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.”

We talked about a point in time when a person becomes enlightened. It’s when they know the truth ... they **see** it. But He also says it is possible that once a person comes into the light and given life, they **can** go back into the darkness. It doesn’t mean that just because we experience enlightenment, we will stay in the light. It **is** possible to go back into the darkness. He warns us about that.

To me, that tells me about the mind of Christ. It's not just one of these things where you just grab it and you've got it forever. No. You have to keep grabbing and keep grabbing and keep grabbing. You have to keep pursuing it. It takes constant effort to be able to know the mind of Christ because if you don't continue to do that, you may lose it. You must continue to hold **on** to it.

Hebrews 10:32

“Remember those earlier days after you had **received the light**, when you endured in a great conflict full of suffering.”

Now He's talking about people who are under persecution. He's talking about that time when they first saw the light. He wants them to remember that time ... that point in time where they “got it”. The light wouldn't go off because if you really understood it, that is what would cause you to endure this persecution.

Buffy: Is he talking about the time when you were baptized?

Rod: Well, that certainly is involved at the time of enlightenment. Yes. But there is much more to it than just the point that they were baptized. It's that point *when we recognize* the central nature of God and we recognize who Jesus is. Understanding who He is causes so many things to fall into place in our lives. You know that the person who lives in denial of who Christ is, is going to have all kinds of trouble in this life. But when Christ is put in His proper place in our lives, everything begins to come together. He is the cornerstone. He is the One who causes the rest of the building to fit together. He's the most essential **part** of the building. He's the ground ... He's the foundation ... He's ground zero of everything. So when our lives are built on that kind of foundation, everything begins to fall into place.

The verses said that once Light has come, there is enlightenment. So Eph. 1:18 means that the eyes of the heart must be enlightened. He's telling us to turn our “eyes” back on. Before Christ, your eyes were turned off ... your heart was turned off. Now you have to turn your eyes and your heart on. When Paul was praying for the Ephesians, **this could not be for salvation** for they were already in Christ. They were already “in the light”. This additional life and enlightenment is when the Holy Spirit helps us to **understand** or **comprehend** what we have been freely given.

So in 1 Corinthians 2:10 b-16 it says that the Spirit continually helps us to understand the things that we have been freely given:

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. ¹¹ For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so **that we may understand what God has freely given us**. ¹³ This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. [c] ¹⁴ The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. ¹⁵ The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, ¹⁶ for, **“Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?”** [d] **But we have the mind of Christ.**

This constant enlightenment, the eyes of our heart, is that God is aiding us to grasp that light when it shines into our darkness. In this case, it is to know hope and power. A Christian can have hope and power without even knowing it. In other words, he's praying for the eyes to 'know what to have'.

This is what we have been talking about in our "Victory Over the Darkness" study on Sunday mornings. We've been given everything we need for life and godliness. He has equipped us and supplied everything for us. But sometimes we're not **aware** of it. It's like having all these resources around us and we're blind to them. We don't even know what we have! **That's** what Paul is praying about ... that they will understand.

In this case, there's no hope and power—at least of their comprehending it. I see this frequently in experiences. I see in Ephesians 3:8 that Paul's job is to bring to light, or to enlighten the administration of the mystery. Gentiles can be saved! This mystery is part of the unfathomable riches of Christ. The riches of the ocean are being fathomed, but not the unsearchable riches of Christ. In other words, we are spending so much time trying to uncover all the riches of the ocean, but how much time do we spend diving down into the unfathomable riches of Christ? Enlightenment continues even in the judgment when God will expose the motives of men's hearts. It is God who brings to light what is hidden.

Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." The word of God serves its purpose even now.

Hebrews 6:4 says that the two realities that accompany enlightenment are 'tasting the heavenly gift', and 'being made partakers of the Holy Spirit'. That is why it's so important. At the same point in time, when the light bulbs go off (those are the eyes), the eyes are open and the taste buds come to life. We begin to "taste" the heavenly gift. We begin to become partakers of the Holy Spirit. To partake of Him; His spirit, is similar to a tasting of His Flesh and His blood. It is to participate in it or to partner in what He did. It is from the word Koinonia, meaning "common sharing".

Buffy – Are you talking about the taking of the bread?

Rod - Communion, the Lord's Supper, is the representation, or an outward symbol of the true bread and true blood. When we are partaking of the Holy Spirit or partaking of the heavenly gift, we are interacting with this.

You interact with food. Most of us don't just sit there and look at it saying, "Well, that's really pretty. Just look at that steak. Look at that cupcake." We interact with it so we taste it; we experience it in order to get the "good" out of it.

He's almost saying that this is why you put your five senses into the world. The more you want to experience the world, the more you have to touch things, smell things, see things, taste things and hear things. The world is made more understandable and more exciting when we can put our five senses into it.

And Paul says that the same thing happens when you put your spiritual five senses (or more) into an experience with Christ. When you do that, then you begin to open up a new world. New doors open up.

So, when Helen Keller was locked up in a very dark place in her life, she was very frustrated with her life. We can see that in the way she behaved, but when the enlightenment came (Annie Sullivan) ... Now she was able to see, she was unable to hear, and she was unable to speak. (She did learn to speak later.) BUT, it was when she began, through touch, through that experience, the one thing she had that she **could** use, **that** opened her world up to her. She found that there were some things that she could 'hear' and 'say' through her other senses. It was amazing how her life was transformed because they found a way to teach her ... to get the experiences inside of her. The same thing is true with our relationship with Christ.

I **will** be woken up! We have the **ability** to experience what enlightenment and illumination is all about. That's when everything opens up. The greens are greener and everything seems to become 'loud'. We are seeing things that we could never see before. These are the kinds of things we're talking about. Jesus brought **life**. Now if we want to know about life and immortality, the purpose of being here and the purpose of life, He brings us life. We want to know if we will live after we die ... is there another life. The Light opens up all these visions of possibilities. Left to ourselves, we would do crazy things from our crazy ideas about what life and immortality are about. He opens that up for us.

We think that there was an initial enlightenment that continues throughout our lives. Usually when one is searching for salvation they spend more time in serious study of the word, but later it slows down, the light becomes dim and things go dark. That is why we must **continue** to be seekers, constantly seeking how I might order my life so that Jesus continues to shine into my darkness. Being enlightened means looking into the mind of Christ and going challenger deep... the deepest hole in the ocean. If you go down deep enough into that 36,000 foot-hole, it is going to get very, very, very dark.

But if you look down into the hole that is the mind of God or the mind of Christ, it gets brighter and brighter and brighter the deeper you go into it. It doesn't get darker and darker.

The Mind of Christ- 6 February 20, 2019

We're going to read tonight from John 1:6

The Witness John

⁶ There [c] came a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ [d] He came [e] as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ [f] He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light.

⁹ There was the true Light [g] which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His [h] own, and those who were His own did not **receive Him**. ¹² But as many **as received Him**, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who were [i] born, not of [j] blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

We will concentrate on verse 11

He came to His own (things) in Greek...to His own (people), some say.

The first part of that article is the definitive article. It pertains to self, to those you consider your own, or are more intimate with. I've seen only two interpretations of this phrase:

The Jewish people or nation (They did not accept or receive Him)

or

The world He created. What precedes verse 11 is the "Word" as creator of the world. Jesus created the world, so since He is Creator, it belongs to Him...the creation is His own. More specifically, the people of the creation are His own. But in verse 12 He speaks of those who receive Him become children of God.

The Key Word Study Bible says regarding Luke 15 in the three stories, the coin, the sheep and the Prodigal Son, all of them are lost. The lost sheep, the lost boy and the lost coin were still owned by the father, the woman and the shepherd. There is a parallel here that they were the father's own, the woman's own and the shepherd's own. Even though they were lost, they still belonged to the father, the woman and the shepherd. Even though they were lost, it doesn't mean that they weren't their own. The point I'm making is that when it says that 'Jesus came to His own', it's not necessarily meaning that they were *saved people*. They could be *lost people*, but He still owned them. There is an ownership of those because He created them.

So my opinion is that John is speaking of the cosmos, the world, and not specifically, the Jews. The right of Sonship is not just the Jews; it's extended to all men. It says He gave them the right to become children of God and that was extended to every man. The need to receive Jesus is for all men, not just for the Jews.

But what does this tell us about the mind of Christ? If I am right, again, about this comment, Jesus had an affinity {a spontaneous or natural liking or sympathy for someone or something} to His creation. He is not some cold, detached mad scientist cooking up universes. He is personal and has a personal desire to connect with what He created. He desires to "know" God's creation. He desires to receive God's creation. He desires to be believed by God's creation. He desires to have a Father/child relationship with God's creation. God's creation is His creation as well.

He is not simply making universes like a scientific experiment and, as the deist, Thomas Jefferson thought, God created everything and then just went off on a vacation until he would come back one day and check on it and see how we're doing and how the experiment is going. Jesus isn't just a detached creator. He is, in fact, the Person who wants to connect and interact with his creation.

Now those who received Him ... the word "received" is "paralambano", (παράλαμβανον) and there are notes on this in Philippians 3:12 where Paul talks about laying hold of something, receiving something. "Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on [h] so that I may lay hold of that [i] for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus." The word here has the idea that the creator is offering Himself to man, and the man, much like faith, receives Him. He recognizes Him. Jesus is at the heart, a giver of life and light.

The idea of "right" is "exousia", meaning to give us the privilege, the force, the capacity, the competency, the freedom, the mastery of, or the authority of. It conveys the idea that the One who has these things, all authority, power and right shares it with us! Jesus has all these things, all of it, but he wants to share it with us. He wants us to "receive" it as a gift. He is giving us "rights".

We talk about that in terms of civil rights and The Bill of Rights and things like that. We say that we have "certain unalienable rights". That is not foreign to what he is saying in John 1. Jesus wants to give us rights ... the right to become children of God. He wants to give us the access and the authority to wear that name. He offers this to us. He shares this. It is His gift to us. It is choice. ***He gives us the right to choose. That's a huge, huge deal.*** That leads to becoming. You can't become until you first have the "right" to become. The purpose for giving us a choice is so that we can become. I think of the word "self-actualization". This was a theory of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The highest form of man was self-actualization; he is fully actualized—fully human. He's not simply a function of needs (air, water or food). He wants man to reach a pinnacle of being so he becomes everything he is supposed to be.

We use self-actualization in counseling for people who are stuck in some kind of slavery to some kind of addiction. We try to help them break free of that so they can become entirely free "to live and move and have their entire being" in a sense. We want them to be in control of their life. The philosophical and the psychological use of the word is a kind of mirror of what Jesus was saying. Jesus was giving us a life so that we can truly ***become*** His fullness ... everything we were designed to be to become children of God.

Sandy – Am I right in thinking that nobody was saved until Jesus death, burial and resurrection?

Rod – No. If you go back to Romans and look at chapter 4, he talks about Abraham: What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? ² If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. ³ What does Scripture say? "**Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.**"

⁴ Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. ⁵ However, to the one who does not work but **trusts God** who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. ⁶ David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

⁷ “Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

⁸ Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them.”

⁹ **Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised?** We have been saying that Abraham’s faith was credited to him as righteousness. ¹⁰ Under what circumstances was it credited? **Was it after he was circumcised, or before?** It was not after, but **before!** ¹¹ And he received circumcision as a sign, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. ¹² And he is then also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also follow in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

¹³ It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. ¹⁴ For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless, ¹⁵ because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

¹⁶ Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. ¹⁷ As it is written: “I have made you a father of many nations.” He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.

Romans 1:17 says, “For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.” Paul goes back to the Old Testament to use Abraham as a prototype of

Genesis 15:6. ⁶ Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness. This verse is quoted 3 times in the New Testament. Everyone is saved the same way. The death of Christ had to occur in order for anybody to be saved. But Rom. 3 talks about not counting men’s sins against them. Those, who in faith, come to the messiah ... the death of Christ went back and covered all of those sins. The blood didn’t just reach into the present and the future but went all the way back to cover the sins committed before.

Sandy – Then they really weren’t covered until Jesus’ death.

Rod – They were covered in the mind of God. God knew their faith and knew what Jesus was going to do so it (Abraham’s righteousness) was already credited to Abraham’s account.

The sacrifices of the O. T. were a preview of the sacrifice that was to come. There were indicators all through the Jewish Scriptures. The Gentiles, by nature, had evidence of the Creator. They had a conscience inside. They had the ability to put their faith into something other than an idol.

Buffy - What are Jewish Christians?

Rod – A Jewish Christian is a Jew who is a person who is ethnically Jewish but they believe in Jesus. That’s a Jewish Christian. So if someone who is technically a Jew, their heritage is Jewish, but they believe in Jesus they are a Jewish Christian. **If** their ethnicity is Jewish.

Carole – I believe Judaism is not an ethnicity but rather a religion. My ethnicity is English, Russian and German. My religion was Judaism.

Rod – Well, okay. But do you trace your lineage back to Abraham?

Carole – Yes. But a little further back.

Rod – Yes; to Adam. But did you come through Abraham’s seed?

Carole – Maybe. I don’t know. I can’t trace it back that far.

Rod – Again, I know that there is a difference between someone being religiously a Jew and someone being ethnically a Jew. A religious Jew is someone who believes in Judaism. They may be a gentile who converted to Judaism, but an ethnic Jew is someone who can trace their lineage back to Abraham. If they have a genetic connection to Abraham, they are ethnically Jews. It doesn’t matter where they were born; it’s whether their grandma and grandpa were Jews and all the way back.

Let’s pick up in verse 12:12. **But as many as received Him (ελαβον), to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, he gave them the right to be born of God.** He cannot give us what he does not possess. Satan tried that. He tries to give us what he does not have. He tried that with Jesus in Matthew 4 during the temptation in all kinds of ways. He promises all kinds of things, that he could not deliver.

A further implication of the believer is that he is born of God. So, who is a believer? He is the one who believes in His name, and he adds that they are the ones born not only of blood, (the will of the flesh, or the will of man), but of God. One of the identifications of the believer is that he is born of God. He **must** be born again (John 3:16; 1 John 5:1). John stresses that this is not a birth of blood or of a will of the flesh. This is not a fleshly birth. We are not children of God merely because we physically exist or because of our desire of flesh. We are children of God only because he offers us his power “exousia” (the right) to become sons because God puts his spiritual DNA in us.

All of God’s children are loved, (as He said in John 3:16 that God loved the world), but the “born again” children are empowered. The difference is between being loved and being empowered. God loves everyone; He doesn’t empower everyone. He doesn’t give the authority to ‘become’ to everyone. It is only those who “receive” him and are born of God, who are empowered of God.

Actually, this establishes a lot of theology in verse 13 that is fleshed out by Jesus, Paul and others in many other places of Scripture.

In verse 14 we read, **“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”** So in this verse, the emphasis returns back to “the logos” or “the Word”. This is almost the opposite of verse 13 which says, **“who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”**

Now this is interesting. It is in verse 13 where **flesh** becomes **word** or spiritual children. We let go of flesh to become spiritual. Fleshly children let go of the flesh to become spiritual.

Jesus, let go of the spiritual in order to become flesh. It's just the opposite here. He left the spiritual to become flesh. Philippians 2:6-7 says, "although He existed in the form of God, [He] did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men."

Let's look at the idea of "became". Notice how often this idea of "became, become or becoming" is used in John. In verse 3 we read, "All things **came** into being through Him ..." They **became**. The word *came* or *became* was used two or three times just in v. 3.

In verse 12 it was the "**receiving ones**" who become children of God. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to **become** children of God, even to those who believe in His name,¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." Now in verse 14 it is **Jesus** who *becomes* flesh. And as I was preparing for a class in 2010, I thought about Matthew 19:5 that said, 'For this reason a man shall *leave* his father and mother and *be joined* to his wife, and the two shall *become* one flesh'. Notice that there are three parts to that process. There is a leaving, a cleaving and a turning. It is the same process that we find with Jesus. He lets go ... He doesn't hold on to his identity, His equality with God. Phil. 2:6 says, "... who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped."

He lets go of that. He latched onto flesh and He *becomes*. There is a **letting go**, a **cleaving** and a **becoming** for Jesus.

In fact, we can see that it our own relationship with God. We let go of flesh, we grasp hold of Christ and we become. We let go, we grasp and we become. We cannot *become* until we *let go* and *grab a hold of* that understanding ... that "knowing the mind of Christ."

Paul said that he had not already attained this. Phil. 3:12-14

"Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on [h] so that I may lay hold of that [i] for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.¹³ Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." He was working on it.

I see it as grabbing a hold of something. You grab the tiger by the tail. Now, you have a hold of Jesus, of God, and you're in for the ride of your life. It is like being dragged all over the place (in a good way) and in the process of being carried along (by the wind of the Spirit), you are carried along in this relationship and you are *becoming*. You are *becoming* something. You're *becoming* children of God and *becoming* more and more in character like Christ. **But you have to let go, before you even grab hold, and then you start *becoming*.** That is the picture that is emerging here.

So, the idea of Jesus becoming flesh certainly affects the mind of Christ. This is heavy but we'll get through this!

Imagine: here is Jesus who has only known life in His deified state. He lets go of that and now He is in the flesh. How does this affect his mind? Imagine the battle, or the struggle that must have been occasioned by this new fleshly experience.

As we have trouble experiencing the Spiritual realm, did Jesus have trouble experiencing the fleshly realm? The word is “sarx” (σαρξ) meaning “flesh”. The meaning stands from “being stripped of skin”. It’s almost like Jesus was stripped of skin; but **He** was being stripped of God. The whole idea is of being stripped ... getting to the meat; getting to the flesh. The flesh is not simply the skin on top. It is the meat inside. That experience is ‘sarx’ or ‘flesh’. It’s the meat below the skin, and then to the body as opposed to the soul or the spirit.

We are detaching from our human nature with its passions and desires. This is what the battle is about. It’s like **karma**. { ‘the sum of a person's actions in this and previous states of existence, viewed as deciding their fate in future existences,’ or it ‘refers to the spiritual principle of cause and effect where intent and actions of an individual (cause) influence the future of that individual (effect).’ }

<https://www.google.com/search?q=karma&oq=karma&aqs=chrome..69i57j0l5.1136j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

It affects our minds. We turn from being fleshly minded. Jesus had to become fleshly minded as opposed to the spirit. It’s often thought of as “no good” or “evil”. Those words are implied. Sometimes it’s not so much about good and evil, but that you are going according to the flesh. Romans 1:3 says that Jesus was a descendant of David ‘according to the flesh’. According to the Spirit, He was of God.

Sometimes there is no implication that there is something evil about flesh, although many times it is. Flesh sometimes implies weakness, frailty or imperfection in any context. It is the opposite of “pneuma”; God breathed or Spiritual. I wrote in my journal, “We are sinful only because of the body, but not in our spirits” and I put question mark ... question mark. It is the flesh that is associated with sin. Our spirit is not associated with sin.

Now, we have to be very careful in this territory because there can come in a dualism between flesh and spirit. **They** teach that what you do only affects your body and does not affect your spirit. This was a very popular belief because you could go out and do whatever you wanted to do. This is NOT what I am talking about, obviously. Some move beyond weakness to sinfulness. I’m just saying that weakness is not *necessarily* sinfulness in our natural selves. Just because women are the weaker vessel doesn’t mean she is sinful because she is weaker.

Most understand this to mean the mind. The mere taking of the body or the flesh subjected Jesus to temptations that are possible in the flesh. Hebrews 2:10 says, “**For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the [k] author of their salvation through sufferings.**” It was fitting for His perfection to suffer. The word “fitting” means “proper”. In His becoming flesh, it says it was suitable for Jesus to suffer. The body and the flesh were necessary for Jesus’ suffering to take place. In order for Jesus to suffer, He had to have a body. That’s why John emphasized “that He came in the flesh” in 1 John 4. He, who **wasn’t** in the flesh, *became* flesh. And those who said He didn’t come in the flesh were anti-Christ.

It was necessary for Him to take on flesh so He could suffer. Suffering was important for His perfection (Heb. 2:10 above). I don’t want to go too deeply here, but if you want to do a study of suffering, suffering is not looked at as a bad thing. Suffering must be looked at as a necessary thing to build and develop character to make us more like Christ. And Jesus had to suffer in order to be perfected.

{If Jesus didn't come in the flesh, 1 John 4, He didn't die for our sins, He wasn't raised from the dead, and He didn't suffer or shed blood for us. There was no sacrifice.}

Heb. 2:14

“Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that **through death** He might **render powerless** him who had the power of death, that is, the devil ...”

In 2:17, “Therefore, He had to be made like us in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.”

2:18 says, “Since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.”

Heb. 3:6, 12 - We talk about Jesus in flesh **being faithful**, yet how we often will stray.

Heb. 4:15, “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.”

Jesus is touched with the feeling of our weaknesses, so what should I look for in this truth that Jesus became flesh? This is important to understanding the mind of Christ. He transitioned from deity to flesh. This is **CORE** to our understanding the mind of Christ. Jesus is no longer just simply “God”. He is **in** flesh.

Sandie – When we are reborn, we grow in the spirit, as Jesus had to grow in the flesh.

Rod – Yes, He had to grow naturally just like everybody else does. Luke 2:52 says, “**He grew in wisdom, in stature and in favor with God and man.**” This was a type of snapshot, a view of the growth of the cycle that Jesus was in. He wasn't just growing taller, but also in favor with God and man.

Sandie – What I'm saying is that when He left heaven, it must have been a pretty big shock for Jesus to leave where He was and come down here as a person.

Rod – Yes, I would think so. I think if it were me, I'd have to get used to it. Let me explore that a little bit more here: So what should I be looking for when Jesus became flesh?

Jesus had the same physiological impulses that I have as a man. Then, in His mind, He had to contend with what I contend with. Here is one of those places where we intersect with the flesh. We have a lot of experiences with the flesh. We live it. That's our existence. Jesus had the same physiological impulses that I have as a man. When He was happy – when He was hungry – what did He feel in His body, and how did He respond in His mind to that feeling?

When he prayed, and fasted in the wilderness, the desert, when he felt hunger what did He contend with in his mind? It's not just the physical things...like His stomach growling. But there may have been struggles in His mind with that as well.

Was He a dieter? Was He careful about the quality and the quantity of life? When He saw a beautiful woman what did He think? Was the struggle intense? Was He aroused? How did he manage His desire? He had all the biological things going on that the normal man does. When those “signals” from the flesh hit His brain, what thoughts did He think? What do you think in those moments? There must have been a lot of things going through His mind. There must have been some struggle in His mind. He had some thought patterns going on in His mind? I am sure he had practices of prayer and other things, but...

Mike: He was tempted in all points as we are, but without sin (Heb. 4:15).

Rod – Yes, as we are. So it is interesting to ask these questions about what He was thinking. Sometimes when we’re tempted, it’s not always a *good* thought pattern. Sometimes it is and sometimes it isn’t. But what was going on in Jesus’ mind? Something was going through Jesus’ mind.

How did His apostles handle it . . . and their wives?

What about His anger? He did get angry. There must have been some struggle. What about greed? He didn’t have much. Was he ever jealous of others? What about fatigue? How did He deal with the fact that He was just tired? All thoughts and paths had to be managed so as to **not** sin.

I would love to have a day in the life of Jesus just in the temptation area to see what His thought patterns were. What did He think when He was hit with temptation in that moment? Just like us, sometimes those temptations get out of whack.

The idea of the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us is interesting. I don’t know how far to take that, but the word used here is “tabernacled”. Jesus ‘tabernacled’ among us. That means He pitched a tent or encamped among us. He was just camping out here. He didn’t settle in. He could break camp at any time.

We are called his tent or body in 2 Corinthians 5:4 *For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.* ⁵ *Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a [b] pledge.* It talks about our encampment—our temporary existence. We are sojourners here. The Greek word is “paroikeo (παροικειω). It is translated aliens in 1 Peter 2:11 saying, “Beloved, I urge you as *aliens* and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.” Jesus spoke in terms as “just passing through”. Jesus had the mindset that He was just camping out on Earth. He was here for about 33 years, but He wasn’t tied down. Even in the physical realm, shouldn’t this be “our” mindset?

Now in John 1:14, John paints a picture of what a sinless man is filled with, and what we see when we look at Him. He is full, it says, of grace and truth. Now, I know we studied that recently, but when it says he had a life of abundance, “they beheld His glory, glory as of [1] the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” This one statement is huge. There were two principles that affect things. One is grace and the other is truth.

The word for grace is “charis” (χάρις). Grace is something that causes joy or gratification. It is favor; it is to be full of favor or gratification. It is a feeling of joy that “we are blessed”. That is the essence of grace. {It can be literal, figurative, or spiritual ... especially the **divine** influence upon the heart.} When I know the grace of God, I feel blessed. I feel gratified. Jesus carried the blessing which would bless the world according to Genesis 12:3, “[and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.](#)” In flag and stone He had a fullness of grace.

He had a fullness of blessing inside of Him. He had the fullness of gratification inside of Him. Each gratification ends in contentment, or satisfaction, or of knowing one is okay. Did Jesus carry inside His heart a sense of “okayness, peace, and security”? Of course, He came to impart these to us ... to give these to us. We’re dealing with what robs us. Being okay in Jesus is not desire, but being Jesus, He’s not fixating on the external forces of gratification. He had this gratification inside of Him. When He was tempted, he didn’t try to gratify Himself with something external, but reverted back to the gratification He already had inside Himself.

In other words, the more I am filled with grace and truth, the less I am going to be tempted or give attention to temptations outside of myself, because internally, that is where gratification is really coming from. It is something that lies inside of us.

In Ephesians 2:3 we read, “[Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ \(by grace you have been saved\)...](#)” By himself, man seeks to do the wishes of the flesh (the NIV uses the word “gratifying” the wishes of the flesh). By contrast, Jesus did the will of the Father, and by doing so, He was “okay”. What gratified Him was to do the work of His Father. John 4:34 “[My food,](#)” said Jesus, “[is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.](#)” And John 6:38, “[For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.](#)”

Others may carry out the wishes of **their** father, the devil. John 8:44 “[You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires.](#)” Jesus was so filled with grace that came from His relationship with His Father that His brain was bathed in such thoughts and feelings of being “okay”.

In other words, if we are going to get the key to temptation and to how Jesus managed temptation, it was by knowing that He was okay. Temptation feels more like temptation when we feel like we are not okay. We feel like we’re missing something ... that there is something that is not complete within us. Why did Adam and Eve eat the fruit? It was because they felt like it would give them something they didn’t have. They did not have the grace or the truth inside of themselves, so they looked externally to meet that “okayness”. And in doing so, they really got messed up. {They looked to the father of lies instead of the Father of truth.}

And so He was also filled with truth. Truth is to conform to the nature and reality of things. A thousand times a day we make mental and emotional calculations to determine “what is truth” or “what is true in this situation”?

One of the terms I learned in college, since I paid for it, I have to use it, is *Sitz im Leben*. It refers to, “the setting in life, or the context of life”. {Google}. It is the “situation or the circumstance” you are in. Perhaps, because Jesus lived in the fullness of grace, his vision of truth was not obscured. In other words, He was content within Himself and therefore, His being able to ascertain the truth around Him was not obscured; it was not blinded.

What obscures my ability to know truth is all too often my own internal desire for something that I don't need. Jesus knew the truth about **everything**. Or did He? Perhaps He divested Himself of some of the truth. I don't know. But is there is a *power* in truth? Some truths are more important for me to know than other truths. And I assert that some truths are more important than other truths. Jesus talked in terms of reality. Phil. 4:8 gives us something to think about. “**Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.**” He says ‘His word is true’. That's not something we need to think about. There was nothing false or fake about Jesus. His life was an open book. There are still details about how He lived that I'd like to know, but what I *can* know is so profound and overwhelming, that I am occupied with discovery for the rest of my life.

This fullness of grace and truth gave me something to see ... His glory. So when we have this fullness of grace and truth, what does this tell us about the mind of Christ? Well, there is this feeling of okayness and His sense of reality. It is a knowing of what is right and what is wrong, and of knowing ‘good from evil’.

Jesus had *moral glory*. When I am totally real, I will feel ‘glory’. Then I will be authentic ... not fake. And beauty is the result. *We have to capture the essence of grace and truth in our lives.*

Week 7
March 6, 2019

I want to go back to verse 14, NIV “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the {only begotten} one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” A sinless man is filled with grace and truth as we beheld his Glory.

NASB, “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Where we left off a couple of weeks ago, we have been pouring through the idea of GRACE and TRUTH and why He was filled with Glory. We’ve seen that this idea of the glory of the Lord is associated with the beauty of the Lord in the Bible, and the idea of the attraction that comes {from that}. So we’re usually attracted to things that are beautiful. Our eyes tend to go toward things like a landscape or something.

I read a huge Treatise that I think was written by Jonathan Edwards, one of the reformers, where he tried to understand the nature of beauty in creatures. It was a fascinating thing – I couldn’t follow most of it, but I tried to understand why there are things on the earth that have beauty put into them and reflect the beauty of God. What is the correlation between **that** beauty and the beauty of God?

{<http://www.onepassionministries.org/blog/2015/7/8/how-then-should-we-preach-about-gods-beauty-wisdom-from-jonathan-edward>}?

Psalm 27:4, the verse that Alison quoted is, “One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.” He talks about gazing on the beauty of the Lord. We even sing the song, “He is Beautiful Beyond Description” which shows us how beautiful God is.

The summation of this is not simply the outward manifestation of that glory; that which is being manifested is summed up in two words: GRACE and TRUTH, and HOW beautiful Grace and Truth really are. It is an amazing concept to me that if we could somehow wrap our heads around this, we could *begin* to know the mind of Christ because He was full of both. I have talked a lot about that, although I don’t know if I understand it very well.

So **John 1:14** gives us a place where we have, so far, found the term “only begotten”. Jesus is the only begotten from the Father. So let’s investigate that for a little. (It was on this on May 27, 2010)

Did Jesus know that He was the “only begotten” of the Father? He was flesh. He said that He knew in Chapter 3 verse 16, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His **only begotten Son**, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” So Jesus understood he was the **only begotten** son of the Father.

So what does that mean: “only begotten”, and how am I affected by this thinking? How do we flesh this out? And how did this affect Jesus’ thinking? The word used, Monogenes, is in fact, two words. It is derived from the words “Monos” {μονο} meaning only, and “Genos” {γενος} meaning kind’. The complete word in Greek is “μονογενη” meaning **only** of a kind or class. It is related to another word, Genomai – we see that word “**becoming**” again.

We talked about how we leave, cleave and become. The concept of becoming starts in Verse 12, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.” Jesus gives us this power and the right to be “becoming” children of God or ‘to become’ children of God. So there is something in the nature of God and the thinking of Christ that is this “becoming;” that is wrapped up in this word “only begotten”.

In Luke 7:12 we read about Jesus raising the widow’s son. “As He approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the **only** son of his mother, and she was a widow.” This is the same context—he’s the only **son** of the widow.

It is used in Luke 8:42, where they’re talking about Jairus’ daughter who was dying. We read, “Then a man named Jairus, a synagogue leader, came and fell at Jesus’ feet, pleading with him to come to his house ⁴² because his **only daughter**, a girl of about twelve, was dying.”

The words mean more than they were just an only child. The concept is broader than they’re simply being an only child. It cannot be an indication of origin because Jesus didn’t have an origin. He always existed so it can’t be about origin. He is the only begotten in that His relationship was unique with the Father ... He was dimensionally with the Son of God. We don’t know exactly what that means, but I have a theory of what it means. We have to look more clearly at the idea of **becoming**. Becoming things helps inform us about Jesus. Jesus is the **only becoming** Son ... the only One who let go of His equality with God. He was the only One who has grasped humanity to become like man and like God. He is the only One who could. In other words, He is becoming like man. Just like we are called to become like Him, He became like us. He is the only “becoming” One of God. He is in a unique position because He is the only person who is fully God and fully human. He is the only One who could let go of His divinity in some way or form, and grab a hold of humanity and be truly both human and divine at the same time. If this if so, then how does this affect His thinking? He must have known that He was unique from all beings, in a class by Himself. In His original form as God, He was in a class with His Father and the Holy Spirit, but it has now changed to being fully human **and** fully divine. There is no one else who can say that.

Carole: He is also the only one who has died, been raised, to never die again. Hebrews 11:17 says, “By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his **only begotten** (or one and only) son”. And we **know** that Abraham had Ishmael, Isaac’s older brother. But Isaac was a special son with a special relationship ... the son of the promise. So it doesn’t mean the **only** child. It can’t or Ishmael was never born. But Isaac was a special “kind” of son.

Rod: I know. Yes. It is important to see the lines in Hebrews but all of those things are in some way “particular of” something else. Jesus is **in substance** the only begotten. Isaac is a type of begotten but not of substance. They were both sacrifices, and can be called sacrifices, but Jesus was uniquely **the** sacrifice whereas Isaac was a shadow.

So who else was fully God and fully man in perfection? Jesus was the **one of a kind** – the **only** one to become completely united with the father and with men by virtue of death and resurrection. So Jesus is the only one who has that unique position of being fully united with man and fully united with God. He shared Deity and humanity because no one else could ever be in His position. The integrity of God and the salvation of man were at stake. It’s like, if you will, to have one foot in the

divinity world – with a tension there to **not** fail ... to **not** sin; and one foot in the humanity section here to secure the salvation of the world. So Jesus had to maintain [or balance] both of these relationships - with God **and** with man. He was the only one in a very unique position to do that.

I may be making more of the word “only begotten”, but here again, the other explanations I've seen haven't convinced me. When people see the “begotten” thing, many try to talk about Jesus coming from the Father. He was obviously **sent** from the Father, but it can get into some really dangerous territory when some associate the only begotten Son with {**having to do with**} his origin.

Jesus must have thought about how pivotal, unique and important {**His being was**} – how much was riding on His one, single, unique life. You know, in life, we sometimes occupy a position where we think we're the only person who can do something. There are many other people who can do what I do. The whole world is not riding on me being successful in doing any one particular thing. But Jesus was unique in that **everything** was riding on His single, voluntary, unique life. I speculate that this must have provided Him with the incentive to stay absolutely focused on His mission and His relationship with the Father which was the **only** way to succeed. He had to stay focused in and on that relationship.

That is why my attention must be on **His** uniqueness; not on mine. Once you begin to put yourself in the light of being unique to the world; that becomes visions of grandeur. In other words, Jesus occupied the place that has no peer—there is no one who begins to compare. It's another indication that there is no other way to God. But for Jesus to be there, He had to let go; first, of that divinity. In some way, He had to let go of that equality with God. He had to grasp humanity and take on that form of man and then **become** this unique Person that he was. So, that's my interpretation of “only begotten.”

Now we're back to John 1:15-18. John (the baptist) keeps being interjected in John's Gospel. He tells us different statements about Jesus. So in verse 15, John reads: “**John testified about Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me [m] has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’”**” The NASB is a bit more literal than other translations.

The NIV says, “(John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, “This is the one I spoke about when I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because **he was before me.**’”)”

Here again, we see the high rank that Jesus had. He has “higher rank” or “has surpassed” me. Some translations say “he comes after me because he was before me”. It goes on in vs. 16-18, “**From his fullness we have all received grace upon grace, ¹⁷ for the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth ^[p] were realized through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*” - (or **exegeted** Him).**

So we return to the theme of John's witness of Jesus. He says that Jesus “comes” physically after John as he was 6 months younger than His cousin. John says he **became**... here's that word again. {See Jan. 30 - Egeneto (εγενετο).} The NIV says, “He **came before** me”, the NASB says “he **existed before** me”. This is the “**becoming**” word. John also said that he became first “protos” (πρωτος) meaning “of higher ground”. Literally, in the Greek, it means “He became first of who He was”. The word of God (Scripture) speaks of **higher rank**, not just **prior existence** which was already addressed in the previous phrase.

The protos is from the word “Pro” which fits the theme here. He is the **pro**. This is a Greek preposition meaning **advanced**, or **in advance of** something. It is a higher rank. I know we get the word “Pro” from professional, but this is literally the pro (protos). He is “chief”, He is “principal” and most importantly, Jesus is “prior”. In John 1:30 we will read, “**This is He on behalf of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who [t] has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’**” We know from Scripture that He has the highest Name, He is the King of Kings, the First and Last, the Alpha and the Omega **all** indicating the superiority of Jesus. Jesus was the consummate pro. He is at the top of every contender. No one outruns Jesus. He has more stars on His shoulder and won more super-bowls, more world series, more accomplishments than anyone ever could. And yes, I know Jesus didn’t compete in sports. But He does **all** things well. He is **the PRO**. We are rank amateurs in comparison to Jesus. And sports are superfluous. In life, in all the ways that “**count**” Jesus is the consummate professional.

The world paints Jesus in a lot of different ways . . . even the art world. Sometimes the world paints Him as being somewhat effeminate or not very masculine and pale white. They seem to show weakness. This isn’t really about His physical appearance; this is about this “Person” or “Being” of this highest rank. There is no one above Him. There is no one who compares to Him. He is uniquely the Son of God. Perfect Man and perfect God.

Brenda: I think people think of meekness as a lack of strength. But when I think of meekness, I don’t think of someone being weak. I think of controlled strength.

Rod: Right. And Jesus was that way in the spiritual realm. He knew what to do, how much, and how to choreograph, and if we are to understand the mind of Christ, we have to say, “How do I think the same way He does so I can, at least, **try** to imitate the kind of way He goes about doing things.”

It is like studying someone who is at the high end of their profession, so we can imitate them (Jesus).

So how does Jesus’ higher rank affect His way of thinking? We ask that question because this is a description of Who He is, and how does **that** affect the way He thinks? If someone has a high rank in business or the military or whatever, it can ‘go to their head’. They can think that they are more important than you are. It can affect people that way. Obviously, it didn’t affect Jesus this way, but for humans, it can become a way of feeding themselves as they move through the battle. For people, comparisons to this approach in any area of life, often give way to arrogance, pride, or feelings that ‘rules don’t apply to them’. Sometimes they have privilege and expectations of always having the best of everything, expecting to be served, to be shown respect, given the best seats or put ahead of others, but none of this was how Jesus thought. The high Ranking of Jesus didn’t go to His head and cause Him to think that He should be catered to. It was just the opposite. He turned that around and He became the servant of all. So even though He was the real Pro, He did not act or think like normal or worldly brothers.

John 13:13-17 says, “You call me ‘Lord’ and ‘Master,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.” {called Teacher and Lord in the NIV}.

So the Lord and Master still washed feet. He taught against the things listed above that I just mentioned. The first shall be last and the last shall be first. The least will be the greatest and the greatest will be the servant. That is what Jesus taught.

Carole – When people know who they are, they don't have to **prove** anything to anyone. You don't have to show off to prove who you are. And that's how I think of Jesus. He **knew** who He was. He didn't have to bring out all the false "garbage" that we do.

Rod – Right.

John now speaks of Christ's fullness in this. He says in verse 16, "From his fullness we have all received **grace upon grace**."

The word for "fullness" Pleroma (πληρωμα), when used in this way, means "to cram as much into a net as you can get". Remember, on occasions, Jesus would tell some of the men to put their nets down, and they would be so loaded with fish that the nets would be breaking so they had to pull them onto the shore. Jesus' *life* was crammed with as much as possible. That is the *fullness* of His life. Sometimes we talk about ... there have been a lot of comments that we've seen of people's life and how 'full' his life was—spiritually full. We see the relationships and the various things he has done in his life. It was a life much like many people we've known that have passed away. We can definitely look at them and say, "They crammed a lot into their life." It may amaze us regarding all the things that they did, or studied or understood or whatever. If you put that to the **max**, you get the fullness of Christ.

When Jesus says, don't grieve for anything, He is replete {abundantly supplied, or overflowing}. Our abundance comes from **His** infinite storehouse.

We read in **Colossians 1:19** "For [aa] it was the Father's good pleasure for **all the [ab] fullness to dwell in Him**." NASB And "For God was pleased to have all **his fullness dwell in him**" – NIV

In Colossians 2:3 "in {Christ} are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" NASB And "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" – Colossians 2:3 NIV

The completeness of Christ is utter—nothing is lacking. This is why this study it is destined to fail because who can know the mind of Christ in its vastness and fullness? But if you don't appreciate the vastness of it, well ... it must be like when the pioneers were making their way west and they came into these great broad plains and big skies. It was probably overwhelming. They saw the Rocky Mountains and the scope of mountain and there was nothing like it in the East. I am sure that they were overwhelmed by the fullness of the scene. How would we ever explore all this? How could we understand all of this? (Someone mentioned the Grand Canyon). How do you wrap your head around the Grand Canyon—its vastness and fullness of the scene?

Our ability to receive is based on His ability to give. He is amply supplied to meet our needs. We see "grace upon grace" as used here in verse 16, or "grace instead of grace" is difficult—and I've preached on that recently. The word for **upon** or **instead of** is the Greek word "anti" (αντι). The term "**grace instead of grace**" in the Greek is "χαριν αντι χαριτος". The word for "instead of" is "anti" (αντι). It indicates contrast. It denotes a substitution or a correspondence. It can mean 'over against', or 'in the presence of', or 'in lieu of'.

The Key Study Bible says it denotes “an overabundance of grace”, or “one favor after another”. It is almost like the contrast is—the more favors He gives out to us, {He out-gives} the other one. It’s better and better and better. As it progresses, it gets sweeter and sweeter and sweeter. It’s an overabundance of grace. It is like the more we are blessed - it seems that the blessings we received yesterday cannot compare with the ones we receive today! It is blessings, upon blessings, upon blessings, upon blessings, upon blessings. When we “have” this, we begin to understand the fullness of Christ!

Is this the sustaining nature of Christ? Just like the creation of the world there are two aspects to this. There is the “creation of the world” and the “sustaining” of the world. It was no small task to create the universe. It is also no small task to sustain it once He created it. We know how difficult it is to sustain certain things. I can become very hard. Today we had our air conditioner serviced. Well, it’s one thing to buy an air conditioner—it’s another thing to sustain *and* maintain it. Of course, they found a little part that needed to be replaced in order to get more ‘life’ out of the unit. We are constantly battling with sustaining the things that we are stewards over. And relationships; I just sustained a relationship. How do you sustain a work environment? How do you sustain your own health ... or anything?

Here is Jesus, who not only creates us in Christ Jesus, but He sustains us in Christ Jesus with one grace upon another ... with one aspect upon another. *What would happen if his grace stopped being extended to us?* I mean, I shudder to think what would happen if God’s grace was intermittent ... that if it was just every now and then? But that’s not how it’s described here. It is grace upon grace. There is an overabundance of grace. So, once created, we must be sustained by grace; one favor from God after another.

We can go to a friend to ask for a favor. Sometimes we shutter because we don’t want to “over” ask. But we are in a position with God where we have to receive multiple favors from Him daily just to stay alive! And not only does He have the ability to do that, but He is willing to do that. So not only is God **wise** enough to create, but He is **ingenious** enough to sustain everything that has been created. If the flow of the favor of Jesus ceased, we would cease.

In verse 17 there is a reference to the Law coming by Moses. Moses was not the *source* of the Law ... God was, but Moses was the **agent** who represented God by giving the law to the people. “[For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ](#)”. He was the filter, or a “middle-man”, if you will.

Jesus also “brokered” grace and truth to us. That is why He is in that position as “the only begotten Son of God” where He is **both** God **and** man. He is in the unique position to broker grace and truth to us. He talks about *truth* in this verse, and begins to exegete God to us.

So Jesus brokered grace and truth. It “became” through Him. Here’s that word “became” again (from page 68 and January 30 ... Egeneto - Higher rank.) Grace and truth “became” through Him.

We see the third leg of the work of Christ; and by extension, our path. We leave, we cleave (grab hold of) and then we become. That becomes the theme of this. Jesus is a practical being giving us attributes of Himself. His **DNA** is His **grace** and **truth**.

A parent's DNA dwells unseen **inside** and **becomes manifest** or seen in the child. When conceived, that child takes on that DNA from mom and dad, but it doesn't always show itself at first. But as that child grows, you begin to see mom and dad in the child ... you begin to see the reflection of the parents in the child. Then you begin to see mannerisms. You might see yourself walking like your dad, etc. Now a lot of that isn't DNA but because of imitation. Even medically you begin to realize what diseases your mom and dad had or your grandparents went through so that you can be aware of what may be inside of you. But it may not manifest itself for some time. It may take years.

God creates us new in Christ Jesus, but we may not look a lot like Christ at that point. As time goes on and we become more developed, we become more like Him and it becomes more manifest to the world that we are a child of God and Christ; that we have His DNA in us. Grace and truth begins to come out of us and people begin to see that grace and truth by the way we live. Grace and Truth dwelt in Jesus always, but was revealed in His children. He gives *us* the power to become children of God (John 1:12).

So the transfer of qualities from Jesus to us isn't instantaneous. We have to **live out** grace and truth for it to become evident in our lives. We are given red hair by our parents and we live it out naturally. We don't have to tell our hair to be red. I understand—that is until we're older (giggles). We really don't tell our hair ... to will our hair to be a certain color—it naturally forms that way. Often the grace and truth that we receive from Jesus Himself is not always evident or seen. Our will or our spirit is connected to the living out of the grace and truth {attributes} we receive from God. We **have to** get our spirit and our will to **allow** that grace and truth to come out. We need to have the mind of Christ.

The gap between the true God and our **knowledge** of God has to be done by **Him** to be breached. We read in verse 18 that, "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." The word for **seen** in the Greek is "horao" or οραω and means to stare at, to discern clearly {physically or mentally} or to attend to. What John is saying is that no one has seen God, no one has stared at God, and *no one has been able to get a 'good look' at God*. Moses got a glancing view of God but he was not allowed to see His face ... square in the face. The implication of this is Psalm 27:4, "One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple." It is being able to stare on the Lord all the days of our lives—to gaze, to stare at the beauty of the Lord. But one day we will be able to **stare** at Him—and not take our eyes off Him.

When this was written it says, "No one has seen God..." No one has been able to see clearly or to discern God or *know Him* clearly; and by extension, to attend to or experience Him or have the right perception of God.

John uses this word elsewhere:

John 6:46 NASB

Not that anyone has **seen** the Father, except the One who is from God; He has **seen** the Father.

John 6:46 NIV

No one has **seen** the Father except the one who is from God; only he has **seen** the Father.

14:7 NIV

If you really know me, you will know[b] my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have **seen** him.” (If they had seen Jesus they would have seen the Father.)

15:24 NIV

If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have **seen**, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. (If you hate Him, you hate the Father as well).

1 John 3:6 NIV

No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either **seen** him or **known** him.

4:20

Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have **seen**, cannot love God, whom they have not **seen**. How can you not love your brother who you DO see and love your Father who you do NOT see? There is a correlation there between the two.

3 John 11

Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not **seen** God. The idea of seeing God is found in many places.

These scriptures, {John 1:1-18}, indicate several things to us:

First of all, we discover Jesus’ preexistence. Jesus has uniquely *seen* and *known* the Father. He has been in that position because of His preexistence to have known the Father.

Second, Jesus **revealed** the Father God who he has seen to us.

Third, to **know Jesus** is to **know God**.

Fourth, it is **possible** to see God and hate Him (because they had seen Jesus and hated Him.)

Fifth, **sin** in our lives indicates **blindness** to God. Sin obstructs our view of God.

Sixth, **loving** the unseen God is **predicated** on **loving** the **seen** brother. In order to love the God you **cannot** see, you must first love the brother that you **can** see.

The position of Jesus at the time He saw the Father was “in the bosom of God”.

The Greek word for bosom is kolpos (κολπος). It is used in verse **John 16:22** where the “poor man” Lazarus was in the bosom of Abraham. In **John 13:23** it says, “There was reclining on Jesus’ bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.”

Luke 6:38 says, “Give, and it will be given to you. They will [w] pour into your “**lap**” a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over.” The Greek word here is bosom (kolpos). Lap is another word for bosom. Goods or things that we receive are being poured into our laps or bosom.

Acts 27:39 says, “When daylight came, they did not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a sandy beach.” The word for “bay” is also kolpon (κολπον). A bay forms something like a human chest. It is a **seat of emotion** or a seat of being hugged. It is a **place of comfort**. When a child hurt you wrap them up and bring them to your bosom or set them on your lap to give them comfort.

So **that** is where Jesus resided with the Father. He was intimate with the Father. Jesus and God *spoke*. They *hugged*. Jesus sat in His Father’s **lap**. **They were close**. It’s hard sometimes to “get that” when we’re thinking about that in the spiritual realm, but they were close. This was a place of intimacy and comfort between Jesus and His Father and demonstrates how **well** Jesus knew His Father. We use the term mostly to describe or refer to a relationship between a husband and a wife. We use it for the relationship of a mother and child and very close friends, but *this* was the relationship between Jesus and His Father.

The outcome of all of this is that Jesus is letting go of this place of intimacy. He is letting go of the bosom of the Father. He is leaving the bosom of the Father behind in order to come **here**. I wonder if God gave him a hug before He sent Him to earth. How did Jesus let go of that? It’s like somebody is going off on a trip {or going into the military}. You have to release them from your hug, from your bosom in order to send them out. Jesus relinquished His place of intimacy and security and knowledge in order to come here to do what? Jesus gave up his security **to explain God to us!** And the word used here is the word we use to get exegete meaning to rehearse, to unfold or to declare or tell. The word is (εξηγησομαι).

Jesus came here to exegete God to us. (εξηγησομαι). **He is** the exegeses of God. I was meeting with Jeanie the other day and I said the word “exegete” and she didn’t understand what the word meant. I explained it to her, and I told her that there is a difference between exegeting a passage and applying a passage to your life. First you have to do the business of exegeting it. You have to understand it. You have to know **who** said it, **when** it was written, **to whom** it was written and **what all the words mean** in the passage ... you exegete the passage. It is only **then** that you can apply it to your life. It’s hard to apply it without first exegeting it. Some people are trying to apply God to their life before they let Jesus exegete God to them. They don’t understand Him and they come away with the wrong view of God.

I meet with people and they say things like, “I’m afraid of God” or “I think God is always mad at me”. The problem is that they are trying to apply ‘that’ god to their life before they let Jesus explain God to them. That is one of the problems in the world. People are searching into an unknown realm, running ahead, correlating conclusions and ways of life without first understanding Who God really is. He is truly an unknown God to most of the world. It’s like Paul said to the people at Mar’s Hill, **Acts 17:22-23** “So Paul stood in the midst of the [s]Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. 23 For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ‘TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.’ Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.” We have to tell people who God really is. **Then** they can worship Him acceptably in the right way.

In **Matthew 11:27** Jesus said, “All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and **no one knows the Son** except the Father; **nor does anyone know the Father except the Son**, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.” No one knows the Father except the Son. The Father hands over all things to the Son and the Son reveals the Father. (The word “know” isn’t the word for **exegete**, but the word for ‘**reveal**’ - apokalupto {αποκαλυπτω}). This is the word from which we get the word apocalypse or revelation.

So in searching out the mind of Christ is to spend time to learn the mind of God that Jesus shared in His intimate relationship with the Father.

Okay: That’s where I was going through A. T. Robertson’s book on the Harmony of the Gospels and deciding on what direction I was going to go. I decided to do some of this preliminary work – the things that preceded the actual life of Christ and the words of Christ. Just from this background information, John 1:1-18 was part of that. When I got to the end of that section, I had to decide where to continue my study. He, {Robertson}, went to Matthew 1 through the genealogies and I really wondered if I wanted to do that. I didn’t want to spend a lot of time with that so I decided where I would pick the story up. I decided to bypass some of the first stories of Jesus like his birth and presentation at the Temple.

So where we will pick up next will be from the time Jesus was about two years old. Herod was trying to kill all the babies and Joseph was warned to flee into Egypt. Then He made Nazareth his home. One of the reasons I chose that is things can happen early in our lives, in for very formative years of our lives, and will affect the way we think. Even though Jesus is like most of us who don’t have a lot of conscious memories from two-years-old, Jesus certainly heard the stories. It was part of the culture of His family He was brought up in. It must have been a part of what went through His mind and affected His thinking. So that will be a backdrop of the thinking of Christ as He got older.

The Mind of Christ Latest Class

Week 8

March 13, 2019

Let's get into telling some stories. We will get into some straight theology.

We'll start in **Matthew 2:13-15** with the little boys in Bethlehem being killed.

¹³ When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

¹⁴ So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, ¹⁵ where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son." [HOSEA 11:1]

The reason I want to include this story is that such a tragic event would have made a great impact on Jesus later when He learned of this surrounding His birth. If you want to share, is there anything, even historically going on around the time that you were very little that you may not even have been aware of at the time, but later, as you grew up, the story was told about these things? I think of people who grew up in Europe during the war, or in the war zones, and they hear the bombs and see the lack of food and those kinds of things.

I know of people who lived during the depression in our country. Even as little children, they would save bread and put it under pillows trying to store something up.

Brenda: During the war, my dad was in charge of many children overseas. He couldn't get the kids to fall asleep at night and he wondered why. He knew they were tired and stressed. He asked one little boy what was wrong, and the child said that he couldn't sleep until he had some bread. My dad went into a kitchen and brought him some bread. The child put it under his pillow and quickly fell asleep. He went back and got a loaf of bread and gave some to each child. They needed the comfort of having food for "tomorrow" in order to be able to sleep at night.

Rod: They needed to make sure that when they woke up they would have something to eat.

Things like that that happen early in Children's lives, although they don't personally remember them, often affect them when they are older. They hear the stories being told about it and it affects the way people think.

I got to thinking about that with what happened to all the little children killed by Herod. There was the appearance of the angel of the Lord, the departure of Joseph into Egypt, the prophecies related to this and the essential impact on Jesus because of the lasting "hurt" of those who lost their children. In the life that Jesus came into, a lot of mothers when He was growing up or even through His ministry had lost children during this time.

What do you think the effect of the 'slaughter of the little children' had on Jesus as He grew up? How did He come to understand it? The slaughter of little boys must have had an impact on Him as he heard the stories when he was growing up. Did He know any of the mothers and fathers who had lost their babies when Herod was king? Did it affect Him that there were very so few little boys His age?

Let's talk about the angel of the Lord. It isn't the first time we read this. When Joseph considered putting Mary "away", the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, [f] because he will save his people from their sins."

Mt. 1:17. I was actually thinking that this was **the** angel of the Lord who is talked a lot about in the Old Testament. But it is really more "**an**" angel of the Lord. **The** angel of the Lord, it is conjectured, is really *Jesus on Earth* in the Old Testament. That is a very popular contention of many—that Jesus had appeared on Earth before His physical birth.

Usually in the O. T. seeing miracles and seeing angels was rare. They went through long concentrations of time with no mention of either. We sometimes read it as though angels were appearing all the time and miracles were happening all the time. This is not so.

The "dream" appearances make this even more subjective as opposed to the appearances, as in the case of Abraham. Here is an angel that appears in a vision to Joseph as opposed to an angel who is in the appearance of a man making this even more subjective because it is happening in someone's head.

Abraham: Genesis 18:1-2

Now the Lord appeared to him by the [a] oaks of Mamre, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day. ² When he lifted up his eyes and looked, behold, three men were standing opposite him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth..." But the dramatic impact on *Joseph* that caused him to uproot his entire family to Egypt is amazing.

I have a note here on the effects this may have had on the Coptics and the establishment of the church because of Jesus spending time in Egypt. {'The Egyptian Orthodox Church') is an Oriental Orthodox Christian church based in Egypt, Africa and the Middle East.} There are still Coptic Christians in the church in Egypt that are being persecuted by Muslims today. (Halai Selassie was a Coptic Christian, an Ethiopian regent from 1916 to 1930 and emperor from 1930 to 1974. He is a defining figure in contemporary Ethiopian history. His original name was Tafari Makonnen, (born July 23, 1892, near Harer, Ethiopia, who died August 27, 1975, Addis Ababa). Some of his influence got into Jamaica.

I have always believed that Jesus was about two years old, but I cannot find a reference to that. We only know that Herod was killing the children of two-years-old and younger when He was actually taken to Egypt so we're not sure of His exact age.

I suppose I got the length of the Egyptian stay from the idea of slaying of two-year-olds so I had it in my head that He had been there maybe two years, so he was older than two by the time He came back. But Matthew marks the time from Herod's death (in other words, He came back after Herod died; not so much as when He turned two years old). So what difference does this make?

Well, the longer Jesus was in Egypt, the greater the Egyptian experience influenced His family.

How long did they stay in Egypt? That experience was in His family's history. Brenda's family was in Costa Rica and had more of an influence on Tim than on Brenda because Tim was there long enough to learn the language and that affected his whole life—what he's doing today. He is fluent in Spanish. Where you live and how long you stay in another country has a huge impact on you, and how long Jesus was in Egypt, we don't know, but He was influenced somewhat by the culture of Egypt, the language, and all the things that He was exposed to.

Jesus must have followed the same route as the early Israelites did AND *His* father's name was Joseph.

So the “out of Egypt” quote is from Hosea 11:1 and a reference to the Israelites' exodus from Egypt was obviously an historical reference and a Messianic prophecy. Jesus later made others aware that He was the fulfillment of prophecy about Him. Later, when Jesus began His ministry, He connected the Old Testament prophecy to Himself as the fulfillment of the prophecy. So, Hosea 11:1 was one of His prophecies of His ‘coming out of Egypt’.

The last consideration of Jesus' later understanding of the babies' who lost their lives because of Him may have been the hurt of the parents—the emotional impacts on them in Bethlehem. This was a small area. This is right outside Jerusalem. In a community this small, it would have had a significant impact on the people of that community. It would have been spectacular and it is reasonable to think that this event, even if it had happened thirty years prior, (think about Carlie Brucia), —that kind of story doesn't die easily. But here is a whole village of two-year-olds slaughtered by a bunch of soldiers. This was remembered. This massacre was brutal and had been prophesied by Jeremiah in 31:15.

What did these women think on that mournful day? What did they think was happening? Why was this occurring? “They were not to be comforted” it said. Did Jesus later ever meet any of these mothers? By the time He was 30, these mothers would have been 40, 50 or 60 years old. If you were twenty years old when you had a two-year-old, you might now be 50 years old. So it is reasonable that these women were still alive, and if they had tied the murders to the coming of the Messiah because of prophecy etc., and Jesus comes along claiming to be the Messiah...again, just connect the dots. Here are women who have to deal with this Messiah being the reason and the cause of my child being ripped out of my arms by the Romans and being killed. We see the greater picture, but when you are grieving the loss of your child...even if you knew there was some purpose in this...it doesn't matter much

Why did my baby have to die in order for Jesus to be the Savior of the world? This was just another emphasis of evil in the world that Jesus came to save us from. Did Jesus grow up with stories about that? He certainly came to know it later on and ran into these women. I don't know. All of this is conjecture but this must be **partly** what went on in the mind of Jesus.

What would He have said if a woman came up to Him and said, “You're the reason my child died.”? I mean, He would have known what to say. But we can only imagine how His childhood events surrounding His birth later affected His thinking.

One more thought to be dealt with. Now remember, when Mary was told about Jesus' coming, He would be the rise and fall of many (Luke 2:34). Jesus was going to cause pain as well as bring salvation. (Now, Jesus didn't cause the pain. It was peoples' reaction that caused the pain).

Let's go to Matthew 2:19-23.

Matthew 2:19-23

But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord *appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and said, ²⁰ "Get up, take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child's life are dead." ²¹ So [h] Joseph got up, took the Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Then after being warned by God in a dream, he left for the regions of Galilee, ²³ and came and lived in a city called Nazareth. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: "He shall be called a Nazarene."

Luke 2:39

When Joseph and Mary had performed everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own city of Nazareth.

This follows on the heels of Jesus being presented in the Temple but this isn't directly chronological here. They didn't return to Nazareth until after they had gotten back from Egypt.

So this is the story of the family's return from Egypt to Judah. Because Herod's son, Archelaus, was reigning over Judea, Joseph was warned by God to return to Galilee to live in Nazareth. This is the city where Mary became pregnant (Luke 1:26). They hadn't been back to Nazareth, it seems, since she had the baby. Now, did they know she was pregnant before she left for Bethlehem? Joseph had contemplated putting her away privately already but it's a little fuzzy about whether the people of Nazareth knew she was pregnant. We get the picture that when she came to Bethlehem she was about nine months pregnant and ready to deliver, but do we know that she was that close to delivering? It is depicted that she gets into town and in the morning she had a baby.

Well, it may not be exactly that way. It could be that they had to stay there a little bit longer because they had to go through the process of the census and everything. We do not know how long that took. What I want to know was how far along was she before she left Nazareth. The travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem wouldn't have taken more than a week to walk it. The distance isn't that far. I would say probably, that she was far enough along that everyone knew she was pregnant because Joseph had already talked about putting her away. They were already concerned about that. So let's assume that they knew she was pregnant, they were not married and now they have been gone for a couple of years at least, and now they are back and they have a baby.

In this section, there are some issues that may have impacted the thinking of Jesus.

1. Here is the effect of *another* move.
2. Then there is the *fear of the King*. Ever since Jesus was born, they have been living in fear. They have been in hiding for two years for fear for their lives and the life of this baby. Imagine, if there has been a threat to your child by the King, Herod the Great, this is huge. It's not like someone is a little upset with you. We are talking about the most powerful man in the whole region is trying to kill you. And don't you think he had influence in Egypt too? They've been living in fear, looking over their shoulder for years.

3. Now, *Archelaus, Herod's son is in power* and they're still afraid of him. So even going back to Nazareth keeps them in fear. Fear has got to be the norm of their lives. (Is Joseph wondering why they are in Egypt putting their whole lives at risk...and this child isn't even mine?) He must have has a lot of faith in Mary too. (Tell me what that angel said to you one more time). ***Fear is a stressor.***

4. Was this dream really a revelation from God? And remember, here is a family that is moving around doing things because someone had a dream. I have to try to put myself in their shoes. I mean, if Brenda said, "You know, I had a dream last night and we have to get out of town" I'd be like, "Okay, Brenda. You had a dream last night." But she would have a lot of convincing to do. But suppose I believed her. ***Doubt is a stressor.***

So here they are getting re-established in Nazareth where the scandal occurred a few years earlier. Now they have to get resituated in that area. Again, I can only raise questions and speculate on the effects of Jesus' thinking, but we can assume that these issues did have some effect on Him.

There is also another underlying question of 'did He know He was the Messiah?' At what point did Jesus understand that He was the Messiah? I have to believe that He didn't know it the day He was born. Was he 6 months old, or a year old? This gets into what kind of normal challenges Jesus had. He shared in our humanity. He had to go through the same processes humans go through and we'll get there. We know He had to learn to walk, to eat solid food, to learn everything that we did. It's true that He grew in wisdom and stature with God and man (Lk. 2:52). But I am going to assume that there was some point in time where He knew that He was the Messiah of God...He totally related to that identity of who He was. How that exactly came and at what point we're not sure. Children can recall things very early in Childhood.

Rod: They've done studies to try to trace back earliest memories and sounds bring on certain emotions. Babies can listen to sounds that comfort them. They are sounds that they would have heard in the womb (under water).

Moving is traumatic on a family even if there isn't much to move. The wealth from the wise men's gifts perhaps supported the family while they were in Egypt and maybe they worked down there as carpenters. ***Moving and support for his family are stressors*** so we have to add that into Jesus' childhood.

Being ostracized because of ***Mary's pregnancy could have been a stressor.*** Was she thought of as an adulterous woman?

The word used to describe Joseph's fear is phobia φοβία which is a common word for fear. Back in Matthew 1:20, "Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, ***do not be afraid*** to take Mary as your wife". The word for ***afraid*** is "φοβηθησ".

At least two major fears dominated Joseph's thinking:

1. The fear of disgrace or of being ostracized for marrying an adulterous woman

That was a fear in Joseph's head. I am going to be separated from Society. They think I married a woman of adultery. In their minds, it's the Hosea thing. I wonder if He thought of Hosea although Mary was not Gomer. She was pure.

Numbers 5:11-28

The Test to figure out if someone has committed adultery

¹¹ Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ¹² “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘If any man’s wife goes astray and is unfaithful to him, ¹³ and a man has intercourse with her and it is hidden from the eyes of her husband and she is undetected, although she has defiled herself, and there is no witness against her and she has not been caught in the act, ¹⁴ if a spirit of jealousy comes over him and he is jealous of his wife when she has defiled herself, or if a spirit of jealousy comes over him and he is jealous of his wife when she has not defiled herself, ¹⁵ the man shall then bring his wife to the priest, and shall bring as an offering for her one-tenth of an ephah of barley meal; he shall not pour oil on it nor put frankincense on it, for it is a grain offering of jealousy, a grain offering of memorial, a reminder of iniquity.

¹⁶ ‘Then the priest shall bring her near and have her stand before the Lord, ¹⁷ and the priest shall take holy water in an earthenware vessel; and he shall take some of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle and put it into the water. ¹⁸ The priest shall then have the woman stand before the Lord and let the hair of the woman’s head go loose, and place the grain offering of memorial in her hands, which is the grain offering of jealousy, and in the hand of the priest is to be the water of bitterness that brings a curse. ¹⁹ The priest shall have her take an oath and shall say to the woman, “If no man has lain with you and if you have not gone astray into uncleanness, being under the authority of your husband, be immune to this water of bitterness that brings a curse; ²⁰ if you, however, have gone astray, being under the authority of your husband, and if you have defiled yourself and a man other than your husband has had intercourse with you” ²¹ (then the priest shall have the woman swear with the oath of the curse, and the priest shall say to the woman), “the Lord make you a curse and an oath among your people by the Lord’s making your thigh waste away and your abdomen swell; ²² and this water that brings a curse shall go into your stomach, and make your abdomen swell and your thigh [o]waste away.” And the woman shall say, “Amen. Amen.”

²³ ‘The priest shall then write these curses on a scroll, and he shall wash them off into the water of bitterness. ²⁴ Then he shall make the woman drink the water of bitterness that brings a curse, so that the water which brings a curse will go into her and cause bitterness. ²⁵ The priest shall take the grain offering of jealousy from the woman’s hand, and he shall wave the grain offering before the Lord and bring it to the altar; ²⁶ and the priest shall take a handful of the grain offering as its memorial offering and offer it up in smoke on the altar, and afterward he shall make the woman drink the water. ²⁷ When he has made her drink the water, then it shall come about, if she has defiled herself and has been unfaithful to her husband, that the water which brings a curse will go into her and cause bitterness, and her abdomen will swell and her thigh will waste away, and the woman will become a curse among her people. ²⁸ But if the woman has not defiled herself and is clean, she will then be free and conceive children.

Perhaps it was not necessary in this case because Mary **was** pregnant and had clearly been with another man so she did not need the test.

Deuteronomy 22:13-25

“If any man takes a wife and goes in to her and then turns against her, ¹⁴ and charges her with shameful deeds and publicly defames her, and says, ‘I took this woman, but when I came near her, I did not find her a virgin,’ ¹⁵ then the girl’s father and her mother shall take and bring out the evidence of the girl’s virginity to the elders of the city at the gate. ¹⁶ The girl’s father shall say to the

elders, 'I gave my daughter to this man for a wife, but he turned against her; ¹⁷ and behold, he has charged her with shameful deeds, saying, "I did not find your daughter a virgin." But this is the evidence of my daughter's virginity.' And they shall spread the garment before the elders of the city. ¹⁸ So the elders of that city shall take the man and chastise him, ¹⁹ and they shall fine him a hundred shekels of silver and give it to the girl's father, because he publicly defamed a virgin of Israel. And she shall remain his wife; he cannot divorce her all his days.

²⁰ **"But if this charge is true, that the girl was not found a virgin, ²¹ then they shall bring out the girl to the doorway of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death because she has committed an act of folly in Israel by playing the harlot in her father's house; thus you shall purge the evil from among you. ²² If a man is found lying with a married woman, then both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman; thus you shall purge the evil from Israel. ²³ "If there is a girl who is a virgin engaged to a man, and another man finds her in the city and lies with her, ²⁴ then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city and you shall stone them to death; the girl, because she did not cry out in the city, and the man, because he has violated his neighbor's wife. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you.**

²⁵ "But if in the field the man finds the girl who is engaged, and the man forces her and lies with her, then only the man who lies with her shall die.

Here, if Joseph had followed *this* ruling, Mary would have been stoned to death at her father's door. The exception would be if she had been raped in a place where no one heard her cries for help.

So Joseph has options: Do I follow the dream that I had to stay with this woman and that everything is going to be okay, or do I do what the Law says and **stone** her at her father's door? That was the Law of Moses regarding a woman who was betrothed to another man.

Clearly breaking the Law and being looked down on by society would have been heavy for Joseph. And when told that he was to keep her as his wife with the explanation that was given, that this is by the Holy Spirit, would have required great, great inner strength on his part.

2. His second fear was for the safety of his family.

The first fear was his disgrace. The second fear was ***how do I keep my family safe?*** I need to keep my family safe ... especially Jesus because He was a special child. The circumstances about His birth – how do I raise the son of God? Imagine a hit that is put out by a ruthless king (Herod) who has already had his **own** wife and children murdered. It wouldn't bother him to kill Jesus. Remember that Joseph has been hiding out in Egypt for awhile. How does this fear shame a family if they are trying to re-establish themselves in Nazareth? Perhaps the lives of those who fear religious persecution in Islamic lands might be some clue to us today as to how people might deal with that.

Jesus was raised in a family with such fear that they had to adjust their lives **to** this fear and **live**. How does this affect Jesus' family? He grew up in a home that **had** to have a lot of stress in those days. You can talk about looking at your brother as you walk down the street, looking at this little boy and wondering if this is a *bastard* child. If the people had any inclination that this is the child that takes away the sin of the world ... which has already been revealed to Mary (in part, by the angel); that's a **lot** of pressure to keep Him alive.

Another possible affect on the family was **the dream revelation**. God, through His angels was really connecting with this family. God was intimately involved with this family. He was leading, guiding and protecting them. Mary and Joseph were listening and being obedient. This was **huge** in their family. It wasn't just some kind of reading the Bible and trying to do what God said. God is personally shepherding them through this experience; and telling them what to do every step of the way. That's big. They are building a very intimate relationship with God here because so far, in everything God has told them to do, they have been obedient and God has protected them and is working everything out and so their faith is probably growing during this time. But this is the kind of experience they're having. Jesus is developing an intimate relationship with His Father, in part because of His parent's relationship with God. When Jesus began to grow up, He saw how **they** reacted to God's leading and guidance. That was His primer. And Jesus used this "hearing" and "obeying" often in His ministry.

It reminds me of Paul's words to King Agrippa, "[So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision](#)" Acts 26:19.

One of the four possible affects on Jesus' family that helped shape Jesus' thinking was their return to Nazareth. This was where the scandal began. This was where Mary and Joseph were living when she became pregnant. The {optic} there was "stigma". How could this family fit into a society which was a very small, close-knit rural society? We know that Joseph was a carpenter and Jesus, a carpenter's son. We know Jesus had half-brothers who grew up not believing in him. And did they not believe in Him because the community didn't believe in him or because (as he said) a prophet has no honor in His own town? They may have been influenced by the negative reactions of the people... they just didn't know what to **do** with Him. I wonder if they were willing to do business with Him. Some of this is speculations but these are reasonable things to extract from the circumstances that we know Jesus went through.

Was this because of the way the community treated him, or the way he grew up. All these speculations are reasonable to suggest that.

The incident in Luke 4:14-2 indicates that when he did reveal His identity through prophetic fulfillment, He did it in the synagogue at Nazareth.

["He stood up to read,¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:](#)

[¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free,¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." \[f\]](#)

[²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. ²¹ He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."](#)

I wonder if that was His crowning moment when "I've grown up in this community. And you have all been looking sideways for 30 years. And now I am going to stand up and tell you who I really am. I am going to reveal to you for the first time who I **really** am. And after that event, they tried to throw Him over a cliff. They thought that this was the straw that breaks the camel's back. They're ready to throw him over a cliff but He slips out through the middle of the crowd and escapes from them.

This tells me that there is this “30 years of stigma, of stereotype” attached to Him. These people know his beginnings. Was this revelation of Himself to them is just too much to take? This must have affected his thinking. He grew up with a cloud of scandal hanging over Him. And remember, later, when He talks about the cross, which was another scandal, (scandalon or stumbling block). There are stumbling blocks all through the life of Jesus. People will stumble over the stumbling stone. The stone that the builders rejected has become the capstone. And they were stumbling over Him from the time he was a baby all the way to the cross . . . and after the cross.

Matthew 2:23 says, ‘and came and lived in a city called Nazareth. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: ‘He shall be called a Nazarene.’” To reside means to make a permanent dwelling – to settle down. It is the same word used for God dwelling with men. Acts 7:48 “However, the Most High does not live in houses made by human hands. As the prophet says⁴⁹ “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me?” says the Lord.

In **Acts 17:24-25**, Paul says, “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands.²⁵ And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.

Was it in {Jerusalem} that Jesus was taught not to trust Himself to any man? (John 2:24).

Jesus had learned what was in man. Maybe He learned early on—growing up. ‘I can’t trust them. I just cannot trust them. They are not trustworthy. They don’t accept me. They’ll hurt me’. So Jesus wouldn’t trust Himself to any man.

Let’s go to **Luke 2:40**. “And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.” The word for ‘He grew’ means caused to grow, or went through all the normal developmental stages of growth including mental, emotional, physical stages. He learned to walk. He was potty trained. He learned to feed Himself. He learned social skills. He went through puberty. He lost teeth. All the things that kids go through, Jesus went through.

Jesus had friends. He discovered things like (how did He look at a butterfly). Were there certain emerging talents that they began to recognize in Jesus? Could He sing? Did he have rhythm? Was he athletic? We don’t know that He was naturally good at everything. Could He do the broad jump? It doesn’t say that he was physically good looking.

Isaiah 53:3 says,

“He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
and like a root out of dry ground.

He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

3 He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.

Like one from whom people hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.”

Did he ever have to go through trial and error to figure things out? Did He ever have to correct something like, “Oh, I cut that board too short”? Did He have chores? Did He ever have to take out the trash? Did He have to ever look after His younger siblings? Did He have to discipline them? Did His parents have to discipline Him? Heb. 5:8 says

“Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.” Did He ever grieve over a lost pet? Did He ever wet His bed? You know that all of these experiences shape us into who we become. I remember when I lost my prized pet. I can close my eyes and see that I was riding in the front yard. I was five, maybe. I remember the first time I shot a sparrow with a bb gun ... and I felt bad. I remember that.

Jesus had to navigate these same waters that we do in our upbringing. That’s how He became strong – strengthened. Becoming strong physically raises the issues of childhood Diseases. Did He ever have a childhood disease? Did He have colds or ear infections, mumps or measles, pinworms or diarrhea? Did work make Him strong? How long did He work for Joseph before Joseph died? Did He take over the carpenter shop as a teenager, maybe? Did He play sports? Did He watch His diet? Was he over weight? Did He jog or swim? Did He have emotional struggles? Did He have struggles like fear or anger? Did He like to look at girls? Did He stutter? Did He have acne? Did He ever have a wart? My point is, these are common things everybody goes through. We go through “stuff”. Jesus went through “stuff” to grow and become strong. These are the normal ways of becoming strong.

Jesus increased in wisdom. John 1:14 says, “And the Word became flesh, and [k] dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of [l] the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. The word “wisdom” in Greek is ‘Sophia’ or ‘σοφία’. Jesus did not merely gain knowledge and information, but he got the application of this information – wisdom. It seems strange that the Creator of the Universe would have to increase in wisdom. He had to learn how to *apply* the knowledge that He had. Proverbs 9:10 says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”

I believe that this was the type of wisdom that Jesus increased in. He grew greater insight in all areas that he possessed before He emptied Himself to become frail flesh. Before he came here, He had to let go of His “God-wisdom” and take on “human wisdom”.

The Mind of Christ
Week 9
March 20, 2019

Let's start in **Luke 2:41-50** NASB

This was a trip made to Jerusalem and Jesus got left behind accidentally. This brings up all kinds of questions in my mind, as we'll see.

⁴¹ Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. ⁴² And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast; ⁴³ and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But His parents were unaware of it, ⁴⁴ but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances. ⁴⁵ When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him. ⁴⁶ Then, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. ⁴⁸ When they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "Son, (and I wish I knew the inflection of her voice when she said this - Son) why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You." ⁴⁹ And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them.

There is a lot in this story that raises some questions about Jesus. We're trying to get into the mind of Jesus and here he is; a twelve-year-old. Let's see. Do I have any grandkids that are 12 right now? Sarah is 11. (Alison shared that she has a 12-year-old). Twelve is usually right before they hit that rough spot in the road when they start into middle school and lots of things start changing.

This event to Jerusalem was not His first trip to Jerusalem. His parents had taken Him every year for the Passover feast. The mind of Christ growing up in Jewish society was shaped by events like the Passover. Jesus sat at the center of that Passover meal yearly, and I assume being a Jewish boy, He asked the questions of the meaning of the event. During the Passover, the children were supposed to ask the parents, "What is the meaning of this? Why do we celebrate the Passover?" They would then explain the Passover story to them. They did this every year. It would probably be a good custom for kids today (Christmas or Easter), if we had that conversation with the kids asking questions like, "What is the meaning of this event?"

When He was told of Israel's departure from Egypt by Moses, perhaps he was reminded that He also had an exodus from Egypt as well. I don't know if Jesus was reminded of that but there would be a parallel there with the exodus that Jesus made from Egypt. Special sacrifices were a part of Jesus' life and had to have an effect on His thinking. But the question is "how"? He grew up with a sense of history and a sense of His place in the story. The difference between Jesus celebrating the Passover with His family and us celebrating Christmas is that He is **in** the story . . . He is **in** the Passover story. He is the Passover lamb.

When they would celebrate Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, He was in that story as well as most all of the other events . . . the sacrifices they made and circumcision. All of these things have some relationship with Him in the processes, either as a type or antitype.

How does that affect somebody if they know, if they're sitting there at the Passover and they **know** the elements of the feast? Does Jesus understand that 'that' was the precursor to Him? Did he realize that this was His story that was going to be 'lived out'?

When He was thirty, John introduced Him as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. I'm raising the issue here, 'how do you, as a child, celebrate year after year rituals that are really all about you'? You're not just thinking about history but about your own place **in** history. I don't know the answers to His recognition of all of that or when it began to be clear to Him, but certainly at twelve it would be reasonable to think that He knew by then what was going on.

This is missing today in the lives of so many children. They don't know the story so they don't know their **place** in the story today. Did Jesus, at age 12, know that He was pre-figured by the **lamb**; was he aware that He would one day save the Israelites by posting His blood, (in a sense, figuratively) on the doorposts of the houses, and deliver **them** from the bondage of death, the Law and sin? Did He understand that when they were reenacting the blood on the doorposts of the houses, that that blood represented the blood that He was going to shed one day to save people from their sins just as they had been delivered from the angel of death?

It just seems to me that if I had known as a 12-year-old boy, that feast would have taken on a very, very serious meaning. It would have been scary to know that something like that was going to happen to me.

Jean: Do you think that he realized that God was his Father and that He was God's Son?

Rod: I think by age twelve He was fully aware of who He was, and why He was on Earth was becoming clearer to Him. That's my opinion. That **may** be one of the reasons why the story of His age was put here. When we think of the 'age of accountability', that rite of passage where things begin to become clear, we might not be in that concrete stage of life where you begin to put things together. When I was 12-years-old, I was putting a whole lot together.

Jean: How old were you when you were baptized?

Rod: I was 10.

Jesus knew at thirty, obviously, because He was proclaimed by John to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. But when did He know for sure, and what effect did it have on Him? Are we told the story from age 12 because by then He knew what His Father's business was? When He tasted lamb, did He think of His future death on the cross? I wonder if lamb (or goat) was His favorite food. Remember the goat that was killed for the sins of the people, and the scapegoat that was set free (Leviticus 16:6-10).

Most of us know that we will die one day, but we're not told how or when. Jesus had rich stories of the past that told His future. The Passover feast of Unleavened Bread lasted a total of 8 days (Exodus 12). The Jews considered a boy to be a man at age 13. That was the 'golden' age when he had his Bar Mitzvah. Girls had a Bat (or Bas) Mitzvah. This story raises the issue of custom, or what is customary for the family. Jesus' family had customs that He was exposed to and that shaped Him.

“Going to church” shapes children just by the fact that parents go to church. Regardless of what church it is or what the customs of that church are (high liturgy or free flowing), whatever they have been exposed to at church has a great affect on them. I don’t know how many people I’ve studied with over the years who ‘went to church’ a lot when they were kids. They cannot tell you a whole lot about what they learned, but they can tell you about the effects the church had on them (sometimes positive and sometimes not).

Both of Jesus parents participated in the Passover. We don’t know the length of Joseph’s life, but we know that he was alive at this Passover. Joseph does not seem to be around when Jesus was 30. It is noteworthy that they spent the full number of days in Jerusalem. In thinking about that, with the 8 days of the feast, and all the travel involved in that, it could have been 10 or 11 days. They may have taken a couple of weeks off work for just this one feast every year in Jerusalem. I believe this is significant. You had to take time off from work and save money for travel expenses, money for Jerusalem – food and a place to stay so this was a real commitment. I think for me, it would be like when I grew up you went to church for Sunday morning bible class, Sunday morning worship, Sunday night, Wednesday night, gospel meetings, fellowship means and all other times that the church met—that was the commitment I grew up with. How many hours and hours and hours ... That is what shows the seriousness of your family.

Luke refers to Jesus as ‘the boy’ (pais - παις). This is a child—not yet an adult. He is under the authority of His parents. Jesus was no ordinary child, mature beyond His years, and I would probably say that He was ‘gifted’. It’s a technical term we use today in schools, but I would say Jesus was a gifted child as we use the term today. Did He excel, and how? Did He excel in all areas of life? Was he athletic? Was He well rounded? Did he study a lot? Did He have access to books (since books were not readily available to people in those days) or did He have to go to the synagogue for the reading of the law or the books of the prophets? It was not likely that He was staying up at night going over books unless He was writing some things down and going back over them. So we don’t know if He had access to books or not. Did He spend time with local teachers of the Law?

I wonder if He hung out at the synagogue and had conversations with the Rabbis and teachers of the Law in Nazareth. We don’t know, but trying to get into that 12-year-old mind and what He’d been doing, just go back to my own childhood. At 12, I’d had much exposure to the teachings of the Bible, the church, Christian School, and I found it fascinating to talk to people—older people, who had studied the Bible a lot more than I had. I can remember the times in my life when I was exposed to more teaching, particularly missionaries. We had several missionaries, two or three who had come from Africa. I loved it when they were in town with their stories—it was just fascinating. We wonder what Jesus was exposed to growing up; how He was able to sit in the Temple Courts where the teachers of the Law (and some of the upper echelons were. They may have come from different areas and were there for the Passover. Jesus was there for about 3 days.

Maybe one of them said something like, “You’re parents will be back quickly.” There must have been some adults that would not let Him go hungry.

But when his parents were returning home, Jesus stayed behind. But how do we take this? I mean, I would be in big trouble if I was a kid and I didn’t stay with **my** family and my mom had to find me after three days. I’d be in a heap of trouble.

Jean: I don't know why the parents wouldn't know that He wasn't with them. I lost one of my kids once. I left them in another town ...

Alison: I left one when Ron was in ministry. My Mom and dad and my granddad were all here. We left the church building and all headed to lunch at a restaurant and when we got there, there was no "Doug" so we had to go back to the church and get him.

Rod: We did that a couple of times with our kids. One was sleeping under the bench.

Alison: It's like a second home for them so he wasn't scared or anything like that.

Rod: Timothy was still asleep when we got to him.

Carole: What gets me is what did Joseph and Mary think? How do you tell God that you **lost His** son?

Rod: Oops

Carole: Of all kids ...

Ruth: Jesus said, "Didn't you know that I had to be in my **Father's house**." I know it was Jesus Christ, but He said, "**My Father**". He didn't call it "The Temple". He called it, "**My Father's House**".

Rod: Later He's going to say the same thing when He drives out the money changers saying, "My Father's House is to be a house of prayer..." (Matthew 21:13).

Well, He was so engaged in conversation with Jewish teachers that He did not realize that His parents had left. Maybe, and I'm asking a question. This seems more reasonable to me than Jesus simply ignoring or disobeying His parents ("I'm not going with you). I think He was so absorbed in conversation that He didn't realize they left and later He realized that He wasn't with them.

Carole: It was explained to me when I first learned about this, that when they traveled, the women would go ahead of the men since they walked slower. The men stayed behind visited and talked, and they would leave later on and meet up at night. So Dad was sure Jesus must be with mom, and mom knew that He must be back with Dad and I'll see them tonight. Then they meet. "You don't have him?" "He's not with you"?

Rod: That's reasonable. It was a big caravan.

Brian: It's very interesting because it shows His nature both as a man developing and as God. As the Son of God, He is consumed by the thinking of the process of Passover, righteousness and the history of Israel. As a 12-year-old boy, He is single-minded, focused on the dinosaurs, the space-crafts the things of 12-year old boys. It's just a very human thing to do – and all of a sudden, His parents are gone. Then He goes to the teachers to try to get answers to His questions. This is exciting. And when you put God and this boy together with the developing sense of who he is...

I think it's fascinating. There must be more of His childhood and stories we don't know about, but we get this little window into this piece of His childhood. He may have been pre-occupied. His parents didn't realize He was not with them. Did He realize at some point that He was left? At some point He must have thought, "Wait. Where is everybody?" When it dawned on Him that had been left, did He then decide to stay with the teachers of the Law as a safe place for Him to be as a 12-year-old boy, rather than go "on the road" to try to find His parents?

Brian: It just says it was obvious to Him that He had to be about His Father's business. What else could there be in this world but to be about the Father's business?

Rod: Well, I could tell you this. If I left my boys behind, I would not have automatically thought that they would have been about their father's business. (Laughter) I remember one time Brenda and I left to go somewhere and she forgot something so we went back to the house to get it. Our boys were teenagers and we had told them, "Do not drive the other car." We had been in the car. So when we pulled back in the driveway, the other car was gone. They had been joy-riding around the neighborhood and they pulled back in and "Ooh".

Another question is, "Did Jesus remain in a public place for His parents to find Him? If He had gone home with someone, His parents would have had a hard time finding him. There is so much that we don't know. Was He scared to be left behind? How big was the caravan they were in? He had brothers and sisters at this point. Maybe Joseph and Mary were so busy keeping up with the younger ones, they didn't worry about the 12-year old. So they looked for Him among the relatives first. What was the moment like when they realized that He was not there? Was this three literal days—three 24-hour periods, or could it have been part of three days (like when He was in the resurrection)? So it was anywhere from 26 hours to three 24-hour periods. It was a long time to be separated requiring at least one night's sleep. He must have slept somewhere ...

Twenty years later, did this night play some role in Jesus' death? They found Jesus in the sacred place – the Temple precinct. He probably wasn't in the Temple proper but in one of the courtyards. He was likely in the 'court of the men' where the men were allowed. If this is so, then Mary would not have been with those who found Him. She wouldn't be allowed in that part of the temple courts. Joseph may have found Him and brought Him out to His mother. That would have been an interesting conversation between Joseph and Jesus.

We find Him reuniting with His mother. I can only imagine what Joseph's conversation with Jesus would have been like from the time he found Him to the time he reunited Him with His mother. I can only imagine what that conversation was like. (Son, we need to have a little talk here. I'm okay and I understand. You're 12 years old. I'm glad you're safe. I'm cool with this. Things happen. Mom may not be quite as understanding as me so just prepare yourself. You are going to get an earful.) I don't know.

Jesus was in the midst of these teachers (*didaskolos* - διδασκάλων) of the law. The Jewish doctrines of these Rabbis could have been the very ones that tried to trick Him throughout His ministry. I wonder if some of the rabbis were young enough, and knew Him as a 12-year-old boy that when He was thirty, they may have been some of the very ones who engaged Him and tried to trick Him into some contradiction about the Law.

It is reasonable to talk about the women who had lost their children, that perhaps they knew Him when He was an adult at the start of His ministry. Did they make the connection that He was partially the reason for their losing their children (when the babies were being killed in Bethlehem)? Were these some of the same teachers who tried to trip Him up eighteen years later? Could they already have had a taste of how smart He was? *In Jesus' sermon in Matthew 23, there was a strong denunciation of the people. Could His experience with these people have dated to the age of 12?*

In the temple, how did He come to be among “them”? Did He seek them out? Did He listen for a while before He asked these questions? Did He raise His hand to be acknowledged? It says, **He listened to them, He heard them and He asked questions** (Lk. 1:16).

I wonder what questions Jesus asked these teachers of the Law? I would love to know the questions that He asked. It doesn't tell us. Was He seeking to expose them? Was He already on the attack and trying to expose them, or was He just seeking information? Was the reception calm or was it a **heated** discussion? Now He's only 12 years old. *(Now, at that age, I could be in some pretty heated discussions about matters of the Law according to the churches of Christ. I could get into really heated discussions on those matters. I mean, I could argue a lot.)* Were the topics discussed on this occasion the same as those that would be in some of His later teachings? Did He learn some things from them that He later incorporated into His teaching?

Their reaction to Jesus was **astonishment**. The word means, “To put out of his place”. It seemed so out of place for a 12-year-old boy to be able to ask these kinds of questions . . . to engage in this kind of conversation. It was **astonishing** to them.

Jesus' answers seemed out of place to them. I don't know if they were out of place because they were contradictory to them, or they were out of place because He seemed to be so smart. In Luke 24:22 the Emmaus disciples said that “the women were **amazed** when they went out to Jesus' tomb.” Certainly, something was “**out of place**” when they reached the tomb.

Simon, the magician, “**amazed**” people with his tricks in Acts 8:11. In Matthew 12:23, the crowds were **amazed (astonished)** at Jesus' healings. In Mark 3:21 they thought Jesus had lost His senses (**He was out of His mind**)...this same word. He was “beside himself” (exesta - ἐξέστη). What He was doing seemed “out of place” to them. So when someone was “astonished” at something, it does not always mean something positive. It may just seem odd. It could be odd in a good way, like “Wow!” or it could be odd in a bad way like, “that doesn't seem right”. The word depends on the context. Maybe His just “being there” seemed out of place. 12-year-old boys don't end up being in the Temple talking to the Teachers of the Law. What's He doing there? Another place where this word is used in 2 Corinthians 5:13, “**For if we [e] are beside ourselves (mad), it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you.**” Something is unusual...out of place.

Jesus' *intelligence* and questions were “out of place” (unexpected, not easily explained). Intelligence means that things have “come together”. It could be a strange coming together of different trains of thought, and blend them into some teaching or some argument. That was the idea of *intelligence*. So when you see kids, you look for signs of their putting things together—{making sense of them} in their minds.

It can be very simple things. I was with little Molly today. We have a little ritual that we do where I lean toward her and she'll lean her head towards me and we'll touch heads. And then, she'll back up, she'll come around and grab my face, and sometimes she'll kiss me. It's an endearment to her. And then the third thing she'll do is try to put my glasses on her face. But I watched her today while Brenda was in the ER. As a one-year-old, I know she'll be into everything. If it's on her level, she will try to touch. But if I say, "Uh uh", she'll stop. She may try a little bit, but she doesn't keep pushing it. She may forget and come back to it later, but for about 10 minutes, she'll remember the "uh uh", she'll stop, back off, and go do something else. She's a very unusual child for a 1-year-old. And to me, that's pretty intelligent. She doesn't cry. She'll look at you to see if you are really serious, if you really mean this, and then she'll go on to something else. This is extreme intelligence here.

Intelligence is when everything comes together ... everything begins to come together. (Sunesei - συνεσει). It is sagaciousness (**discernment, insight, perceptiveness, prudence, - sage, sapient, wise**). It's discernment. This word is used a lot in the New Testament.

There was astonishment to Jesus' intelligence. They were astonished that at 12, He could put things together so well. He understood what they were talking about, He made sense of it, and He asked intelligent questions about it. That is one way that you know someone is "getting something"; it is by the questions they ask you. That is what they were recognizing in Jesus. That is a **KEY** insight into the mind of Jesus. They were astonished at His intelligence. At twelve! How astonished will people be at His intelligence at Thirty? They must have wondered where He got all of this learning. Amazing teaching.

We're getting a preview at 12 as to what kind of a teacher Jesus will become at 30. Let's look at the meaning of Jesus question in Matthew 22:42, "**Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question:** ⁴² **“What do you think about [p] the Christ, whose son is He?”** That question was a question put there by God.

1 Cor. 1:20, 25 ²⁰ Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²⁵ **Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. *What seems out of place to man is exactly in the right place to God.*** Things that seem strange to men, God may look at and think, "Why don't they get this?" Jesus would say it ... "Don't you understand? Don't you understand what I am saying to you?"

So much seems so "out of place" to the people of His day... of the teaching that He was giving them. They were astonished at Jesus' answers as a response to certain questions or circumstances like in Matthew 3:15 when Jesus was going to be baptized by John. Jesus said, "**Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.**" The answers display no doubt to the wisdom of God, but they may not have appeared so to these teachers. The answers were not always well received by the teachers as we see.

Now, here's Mary. Jesus is being reunited with His mother. Mary took Jesus' actions personally. She said, "**Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I [t] have been anxiously looking for You.**" She could just as easily have said, "Why have you done this to *me, Jesus?*" "**Why have You treated me this way?**"

I believe that **this** is the intent of this because I don't think that Jesus was trying to do *anything* to His mother. (It's human nature, sometimes, to blame things on someone else *even when* you did it yourself. Mary asks, "Why have you done this to **me**?") Human nature wants to blame it on someone else. Why did **you** make **me** do this?

We had a professor at Harding, James D. Bales was always talking way up here – a couple of Doctor's degrees and philosophy degrees and he (his wife, really) was telling the story of their little boy. Their 4-year-old son one day came up to the professor and tried to kick him and James stepped aside. Their son lost his balance and fell down. The little boy looked up at his dad and said, "Look what you made me do!" His dad looked down at him and said, "Don't rationalize, son." (Laughter) He's telling his 4-year old that he needs to understand that he himself caused his own fall. So it's human nature when we feel ashamed of something that we have to try to turn it around and at least find someone to share the blame with us.

Carole: She's really saying, "How could you scare me this way? If you had been with me I wouldn't have been so scared."

Rod: Well, I think it's this "Jewish Mother" kind of thing. (giggles)

Now, Mary called Jesus a "Teknon" (meaning 'son' referring to a little child - τεκνον). We know he was a boy already, but to her He was a child. He's now 12. He's now almost a teenager. He's a child. That's what Mary calls Him. So in this situation she is establishing her authority over Him and the justification for her anxiety that she has experienced over the past several hours (days). She's expressing her sorrow, **agony**, grief, and torment. The word for **agony** is (adunemenoi - αδυνωμενοι). So this was like Hell to Mary. It is the same word as used in Luke 16:24 about "**the rich man and Lazarus**". The rich man wanted Lazarus to dip into the water and cool his tongue for he was also in **agony** in Hell.

So for Mary, this was like Hell. I mean she...they...were suffering greatly at the loss of Jesus. This was not like leaving your son at the local church and you go back to find him a few minutes later. This was a part of *three days* and Mary is out of her mind with worry.

So those are the words that were quoted—not Joseph's words, but Mary's. We don't know anything Joseph said. I wonder if he was as stressed as Mary was. I don't know. But notice how Jesus reacted to this intense distress of His parents. He seems to have stayed very calm. He gives a measured response. His first statement was a question. "[Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?](#)"

Why have you sought me? Why were you looking for me? That seems like a strange question. I don't think he was saying, "Why did you **come looking for** me?" It was more, "**Why didn't you know where I would be?**" Why were you seeking me when you should have known where I was all along. The word "**sought**" is the word seek, search for, (exateite - εξητειτε). It means also, 'to question' – why are you questioning me? That's a more accurate translation of this. Not why are you seeking me, but why are you **questioning** me? Should it not have been obvious to them where He would be? He seems to think that they should have known. What would most 12-year-old runaways have been doing? Probably **not** what Jesus was doing.

Alison: What would most worldly parents be thinking about what was going on with their child when they don't have a grasp of life or being gifted? It would be extremely distracting. We can't think in those terms. – {I couldn't hear the rest.}

Rod: That is exactly it. The way Jesus is responding indicates that He had thought what they should be thinking about this ... that they should have been thinking about this differently.

Okay, I have too much more to do and I don't have the time. We'll pick this up again next Wednesday night.

March 27, 2019

Week 10

Last week I didn't quite finish "Jesus at 12 years of age" so let's go back to **Luke 2:41-50** and say a few more things about that. This was a trip made to Jerusalem and Jesus was left behind accidentally. This brings up all kinds of questions in my mind, as we'll see.

⁴¹ Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. ⁴² And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast; ⁴³ and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But His parents were unaware of it, ⁴⁴ but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances. ⁴⁵ When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him. ⁴⁶ Then, **after three days** they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. ⁴⁸ When they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, your father and I have been anxiously looking for You." ⁴⁹ And He said to them, "**Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?**" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them.

It seems to me from what Jesus says, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?" ... and by the way, to my knowledge, these are the first recorded words of Jesus – at least in the New Testament. Some people believe that when it says, "the angel of the Lord said" in the Old Testament it is Jesus speaking. That's another discussion, but at least in the New Testament, these are the first red letter words of Jesus – Jesus' first words spoken.

He says, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?" It seems from what He says, and I don't want to make too much of it, that He expected His parents to know where He would be. Now I don't mean that he meant to be there for three days while they were on the road looking for Him, but perhaps He was saying, "You know, when we are in Jerusalem, I hang out at the Temple. You should know where I would be." That's like saying, "When I'm in Nashville, Tennessee, I hang out at Music Row..." There are certain places where you would know where to find somebody – where they're going to be. By now, they **could** have known, since He was a good son and not into mischief, that He would not have gone to sinful places and be with sinful people (unless, of course, He was trying to convert someone. I don't know if He was evangelizing at twelve years of age).

The word “know” is *eido*, *εἶδω*, and it means “to see, to be aware”. His parents were not aware of where He **had** to be. Jesus said that this was where He **must** be – it *behooves* Him to be. It means to bind, tie, or confirm. In other words, it was inevitable – He **had** to be there. It was a “must”. It wasn’t just that He **wanted** to be there; it was an obligation. So, did the Spirit lead Him there or did God tell Him to go there for some special role that might take place in His future ministry?

All these are questions. Had Jesus talked to His parents about this? Maybe He had mentioned that ‘when we go to Jerusalem, I’d really like to hang out with some of the teachers of the Law’ and they thought, ‘yeah, right’, but He was serious. Maybe He **had** really told them about that but they had forgotten. They didn’t make sure that He was with them when they left, so He stayed where He told them He was going to be. Maybe they just didn’t “get” it, or “understand” it. So, that’s what I get from the text here.

The idea of His being about His Father’s house... The New American Standard says “I had to be about my Father’s **house**”. The word “house” is in *italics* meaning that the word is not in the original Greek. In the King James Version it says, “I must be about my Father’s business”, but the word ‘business’ is not in the text. Neither the word ‘house’ nor ‘business’ is in the text. It’s really a phrase “ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς μου” – translated word for word as “did ye not know that in the [affairs] of my father, it behooves...” The Greek is not very specific. The word ‘tois’ is the dative article meaning “to be” and it’s in the masculine form. *Patros* (πατρὸς) is in the genitive singular and is possessive form so it is “the Father’s ‘something’”. Neither the words **house** nor **business** are in the text so it was the Father’s *whatever*... Whatever the Father’s ... was, He was ‘about it’. It’s quite open-ended, the way His life was open-ended. If the Father was involved in it, He was involved in it. Everything I see the Father do, I do. , “**Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because what- ever the Father does, the Son also does**” - John 5:19. I don’t speak anything on my own. I only speak what the father gives me to speak. “**For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken.**” John 12:49. Jesus was totally involved in whatever the Father was involved in.

So, Jesus was absolutely under obligation to do the work His Father sent Him to do, and even though He was 12-years-old, He must have recognized that He had come down here to do **His Father’s** work. Whether it was to be in His Father’s house or be about His Father’s business we can’t say. I guess those who translated the Bible had to put something in there. They couldn’t just leave it, “The Father’s ...” leaving it open-ended.

So even at 12, Jesus was totally focused on being ‘possessed’ by His Father. He was **His** Father’s possession. So what did his parents find Him doing? He was talking about what His Father ‘said and did’ fulfilling the Scriptures. He was talking about His Father’s business...His words...who **He** is and what **He** is doing.

Mary and Joseph didn’t understand what Jesus was saying. The word is “*rhema* - *ῥῆμα*” is the **word ‘uttered by another person’** as opposed to the ‘written word’. It seems that even after this, they did not understand Jesus’ special relationship that He had with His Father. That was a sticking point all through Jesus’ ministry. (Don’t you understand the special relationship that I have with My Father?) That’s what people didn’t get. And when He called God **His own Father** in John 5:18, **that’s** what caused the outrage to the Jewish people.

¹⁸ For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself **equal** with God. So, even at 12 years of age, Jesus was talking about His Father – and it’s a big deal because it’s not typically Jewish. The Jews didn’t refer to God as ‘Father’ in the Old Testament.

Throughout Jesus’ ministry, they didn’t understand the special relationship, but this is one major key to understanding the mind of Christ. If we want to understand the mind of Christ, we have to understand the relationship that Christ had to His Father. This is a major point and we see it emerge even at 12 years of age in that one brief statement that He made in His first recorded words of Him speaking.

Then it goes on to say that Jesus subjected Himself to His parents—He was in submission to them. So Jesus could be in submission to them and **STILL** be in submission and in total unity with His Father. He saw no contradiction in following His parents and being totally obedient to His Father.

Now I concede that there could be...and there were... times when Mary and His brothers came to get him because they thought He was mad (**Mark 3:20-21 and 31-35**).

²⁰ Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. ²¹ When his family [b] heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, “He is out of his mind.”

³¹ Then Jesus’ mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. ³² A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, “Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you.”

Jesus didn’t play into that. He didn’t go along with that.

³³ “Who are my mother and my brothers?” he asked. ³⁴ Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵ **Whoever** does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.”

Even with Mary and the turning of water into wine, He basically gave in to her, but there is no contradiction between the relationships that we have on earth and the relationship we have with the Father. When there are, (and Jesus spoke about this in Matt. 10:34-39), when there are those conflicts, you must obey God rather than man. (Peter also said this in Acts 5:29). But at this point, (in **Luke 2:51**) Jesus is willing to be under the authority of His parents. To submit, here, is voluntary as **all** submission is voluntary in Scriptures. Jesus is laying down His own will to His parents’ will. Jesus’ alignment to His Father is absolutely essential to His thinking or his mind.

Mary’s response to all of this is typical of a mother for something that is not completely understood. Remember that last week we looked at the idea that they were astonished. We saw the element of ‘astonishment’ by Mary and Joseph. That astonishment was because it didn’t quite make sense to them – it didn’t “fit together” for them. The teachers of the Law were astonished, but so were His parents. It says that she treasured these things in her heart (Luke 2:51). The word is diatereo (διατηρεω) meaning to watch thoroughly, to observe strictly, to keep, to guard with care, or to retain. Mary kept these things sealed up, retained in her heart, and she thought about them. From this word, it seems the effect was profound. This was the effect that Jesus had on **many** people.

They would see what He did and hear what He said and they would take it to heart and think about it. But was the experience a pleasing one?

Was the experience of treasuring these things in her heart a pleasing experience or was it a disturbing experience? We can store things up in our heart, but it may not necessarily be pleasing. It may be just ‘shut up’ in there. Maybe it was one that was fraught with anxiety. She had already been told by Simeon when Jesus was a baby, her soul was going to be pierced by Him. (Luke 2:34-35, ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, ³⁵ so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. **And a sword will pierce your own soul too.**”)

Compare this with **Luke 1:29**. When Gabriel came to Mary, she was pondering, “**Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.**” The word means “to reckon thoroughly” or “to deliberate”. Things are going on in Mary’s head, too. She has been collecting over the years, bits and pieces of a very large puzzle that she is trying to put together in her mind about “who is this child?” “What matter of child is this?” “What is happening here?” Piece by piece this is being put together for Mary. Did Jesus ever sit down with her, at any point in His life (and I’m just asking questions—we have no evidence) and say, “Mom, I am going to spell the whole thing out for you. I’m going to let you know what this is all about because you are the closest person to me on this earth. You are my mother. You brought me into this world and I know that you have been storing all these things up in your heart. I’d like to lay it out for you. I want to tell you what this is really all about so that you don’t have any more doubt or questions about that.” Again, we don’t have any sense that Jesus did that.

Do you have any questions about Jesus at twelve and what we have been talking about?

Brian Henegar – Since this is something that Jesus’ family did every year, could this have been a sort of divine providence for Him? He didn’t really do things on his own, but at this age, nearing 13, he was approaching adulthood. In the years to come, could this have become more of a regular thing? It seems like it was almost by *accident* that this happened, and I know that Joseph and Mary were scared, but it kind of makes sense that this type of thing may have happened more and more over the years. (Not word for word but according to my best hearing).

Rod: Exactly. That is possible.

Jean: At his age, we don’t really know what Jesus knew. Do you think He knew who He was at this age? Was He born knowing all these things?

Rod: The indicators to me, and we’ll look at it in the next verse, is that He grew in these things. He didn’t come out of the womb being a typical scholar ... it accumulated over the years. How, both the supernatural and the natural played into that, we don’t know.

Buffy – trouble hearing but something about Jesus being God eternal ...

Rod: Yes, but the idea of Him emptying Himself in Phil. 2:6-7 and taking on the nature of a man, indicates from the next verse that Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men. There was an **increasing** measure of wisdom in Him.

It is hard for us to understand how He matured. We're just speculating. It is probably a mixture of natural maturing that we all go through, learning by experience and teaching, and then, perhaps, a supernatural infusion of information or knowledge into Him as well.

We see that in the life of Paul. Paul had his normal upbringing as a Jewish boy. He learned the Law and went to Gamaliel's school, but then he also had those direct revelations when He was in the Arabian desert for three years (Gal. 1:11-12, 15-18).

“For I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me – that it is not a human affair; for I neither received it from a human nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ”? ¹⁵ But when **God**, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, was pleased ¹⁶ to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, my immediate response was not to consult any human being. ¹⁷ I didn't go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before me, but **I went into Arabia**. Later I returned to Damascus. ¹⁸ **Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem** to get acquainted with Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days.

No man revealed the gospel to Jesus...it came directly by God.

Mike: I think this was mentioned last week, but what sticks out to me is that as a parent, missing of a child for three days, I can't imagine what must have been going through Mary and Joseph's minds. I mean, if we lost one of our kids for five minutes, we'd be going crazy. And this is **God's** Son who they lost.

Rod: Yes, and I mentioned last week that this three days could be similar to the three days and three nights that Jesus was in the tomb. It didn't have to be 3 twenty-four hour days. It could have been part of three days. If this is so, it could have been part of one day, a full day, and part of a third day. It could have been 24 hours and two minutes. But, yes, that would be a long time to be missing a child.

Jean – Jesus must have had a great interest in what they were hearing by His being there.

Rod: Yes. It says that they were astonished at His intelligence. Intelligence means “the ability to put things together. It is being able to put concepts together.” They were amazed at that. And he had been referred to as just a “child” in verses 40 and 43.

Verse 52, “**And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man**” this is similar to the verse back in verse 40, “**And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.**” I don't know if Brenda remembers this, but verse 52 was the motto of the Christian school that we went to. I remember it because I grew up there. . . it was pounded into our heads. That was the model for the way that we were supposed to grow. So here it adds that Jesus is getting taller (stature). This “stature” **could** be spiritual stature because that same word is used in Ephesians 4:13. It says “**Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.**” It can't mean that we are trying to get as tall as He is but we are becoming like Him. But here, I believe it indicates physical stature. He's getting taller – bigger and everyone is noticing that. “Look how big you are getting.” Boys seem to go through that growth spurt around this age. Girls a little bit earlier than that, but boys certainly around this age. He is also increasing in favor or in grace with God and man.

So how did Jesus at age twelve, help us to see how He thinks? It reminds us of Psalm 27:4, “One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek (or inquire) of him in his temple.” Did the teachers of the Law understand what a unique opportunity they had to learn from the One who created them? This was the unique Son of God, the Lamb of God, who would remove their sins and give them eternal life? How often have *we* longed to sit with Jesus and ask Him so many questions? Did they even understand what an opportunity this was, or years later did some of these same teachers try to trick Him to discredit Him? If they were astonished by Him at twelve, just imagine what kind of match He was at thirty. And it may have been some of these same teachers, eighteen years later, who were confronting Him. Maybe they had remembered back to discussions they had had when He was twelve years of age? Man, this guy is sharp!

Is that why, when he would say something to them, they’d just be quiet? They just wouldn’t know what to say. They couldn’t answer Him.

Brian Smith: When they didn’t know what to say, they would come back with an insult. They’d accuse Him ... **You have a demon!** They’d call Him names.

Rod: They came back with ‘ad hominem’ arguments (fallacious argumentative strategy whereby genuine discussion of the topic at hand is avoided by instead, attacking the character, motive, or other attribute of the person making the argument). https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ad_hominem

Instead of substance of the argument, they would attack the man. So, in this way of thinking, it is His mind or thought process that I want to imitate.

When Jesus left God’s house that day, did Joseph ask Him what they had been talking about for so long? Did they talk about this on the way home? I have so many questions that I want to know about my Lord, Jesus. But this is what the Holy Spirit chose to reveal, so I say, “Thank You.”

That’s the section of Jesus at twelve years of age and I wanted to spend a long time on that because it is the only thing we know about His middle years.

Alright, I'm following A. T. Robertson’s “Harmony of the Gospels” so now we’ll go to Luke 3:1-2. Robertson combines this with Mark Chapter 1 and verse 1. So we read:

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene—² during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. **And Mark 1:1** The beginning of the [gospel] good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. Robertson puts these scriptures together.

The question is “who runs things politically and what was the stage like when John the Baptist and Jesus began their public ministry”? All of these figures will play a role at the right time. Remember that Gal. 4:4-5 says, “**But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,** ⁵ to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.” It says that at just the right time, Christ was born into the world. So what made it the “right time”? This discussion has been debated for centuries. What made it the right time “**politically**” speaking may have played into this.

Putting **Luke 3:1-2** and **Mark 1:1** gives us a frame. We won't spend a lot of time here, but all of these figures will play a role at the right time in waiting for the Messiah to be revealed. Just as Herod the Great was used to try to destroy Jesus, each of these men and their successors would be used on one way or another in this drama ... some more than others.

Tiberius was the third Caesar after Julius and Augustus, his adopted father, and the Caesar who ordered the Census at the time Jesus was born. Tiberius reigned from 14 A. D. to 37 A. D. He spent much of his time in seclusion, and later on when Jesus was shown his image on a coin, He said in Matthew 22:21 **“Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God.”** Jesus was also accused in his trial for being *in competition* with Caesar - John 19:12 **“If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar.”** Since Jesus said He was a king, he was in competition with Tiberius Caesar.

Pontius Pilate of Judea was a person who figured prominently in Jesus' life and death. He ruled from 26 A. D. to 36 A. D. He was the fifth Roman Governor of the region and his origins and history are unknown except in legend. He provided the major political influences in Judea during Jesus' ministry.

Pilate's counter-part in Galilee, where Jesus spent considerable time was **Herod the Tetrarch** (or **Herod Antipas**), son of Herod the Great. Herod the Great ordered the massacre of the children. Herod Antipas was one of the sons who survived his father's wrath. Herod Antipas is the Herod who divorced his wife Phasaelis and married his brother, Philip's wife, Herodias. So Antipas figured into the life of Christ in that John the Baptist condemned this marriage and was executed for that. Jesus also stood before Herod the Tetrarch in **Luke 23:6-7**. Pilate asked if Jesus was a Galilean and when he learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

Luke 23:8-12

When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform a sign of some sort. ⁹ He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰ The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. ¹¹ Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate. ¹² That day Herod and Pilate became friends—before this they had been enemies.

So this man figures into the life of Christ through his relationship with John the Baptist, and later during Jesus' own trial where He was mocked by Herod Antipas.

Philip “of Iturea and Traconitis” was another son of Herod the Great who had two territories. He was the half uncle to his own wife. They had a lot of freedom in marriage.

Lysanias, the Tetrarch of Abilene was in the north area near Damascus. Jesus didn't spend a lot of time there. We don't know why he's mentioned unless it's to fix dates.

Then there are **Annas** and **Caiaphas**, the High Priests. They figured prominently in Jesus' life. They were father and son. Annas seemed to have considerable influence and stayed right in the picture while Caiaphas was “in charge”. Politically Annas had a lot of power with regard to the death of Jesus. So the political scene had particular importance and influence on Jesus' thinking.

First, the evil one (Satan) worked through the powers of the world to go up against Jesus. This is a theme we see throughout the Old Testament. The powers of the world were often in opposition to the people of God. These dramas have played out in history through the Old Testament.

Remember when the devil tempted Jesus, one of the things he said he would do for Jesus was to give Him all the kingdoms of the world. So he seems to have some sway or control over the political powers that be. (Ron, you had better think about that before you run for office. Satan has particular influence over political leaders. But it can work out the other way too. Cyrus the Great was influenced by God to send the Israelites back to Jerusalem.) This happened under every major empire: Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greek, Rome, and in every case God intervened to control the powers and to advance His plan of redemption.

Second, the story of expectation was that the Messiah would be a worldly political leader. Think about this: Here, the people of the day were thinking of the messiah in a political sense. Much of the research that has been done of the intertestamental period regarding the mindset of the people about the coming messiah verifies this. So they would be thinking about his opposition to the current powers that be. If we were looking for a savior in America to ride up and become the greatest leader in America, we would think about it in the backdrop of our current political landscape. To this is sort of how Jesus had to somewhat separate Himself from those stereotypes of what those politicians were like. He was definitely the outsider. He wasn't in the beltway. He came to *confront* the leaders.

John the Baptist, right out of the gate, was at odds with Antipas and his illegitimate wife, and *that* got him killed. Jesus is constantly in battle with, at least, the Jewish religious leaders, and less so with the Romans. But that was against the backdrop because the Jewish leaders were often doing things because they didn't want to get into trouble with the Romans. They would attack Jesus, or at least try to neutralize Him, so the Romans wouldn't come in and make them even less powerful than they already were.

Politics is always there, and every now and then it erupts. It was major in the crucifixion. The Jews wanted another David who would usher in the age of peace, prosperity and religious influence throughout the world. Many had their hopes set on Jesus doing this.

Third, the politicians and religious leaders shaped the thinking of the people. This influence or leaven permeated all levels of society. Jesus had to cast out the leaven and purify the house. Jesus had to redirect people's hearts back to God as their King and leader, and avoid getting high-jacked by the political agenda (as they tried to do in John 6 where they wanted to take Jesus by force and make Him a king).

John the Baptist also entered this world and as the prophetic forerunner of Jesus, God came to John and "rhema" spoke to him. John was a prophet, preacher and proclaimer to confront the common people, the political and religious leaders of his time. Surely the setting of this first wave response of John the Baptist took some space in Jesus' thoughts.

We have to think about the political landscape of the time, and how this played into the mind of Christ. I know that I can't go more than a couple of hours without the political landscape of our world in my mind. (Giggles) I'd like to get it out of my head sometimes and take a breath. Any thoughts on that?

How did Jesus see the politics of His day? Did he isolate from it? I mean, if they had had TV in the days of Jesus, what station would He be watching? Would He have joined a political party? Would He have been independent? Would He have given any attention what so ever to politics? Did he act a-politically? Did he avoid positions? Were there a lot of things going on out there in the political world that Jesus ignored (I don't really care; it's not my agenda.) Example - I don't care if you legalize marijuana or not. Did he take the position du jour (of the day). I don't care if you ... whatever...you pick the condition.

Brain Smith: I think He would have gone to the heart of the matter. Remember the man who hollered out in the crowd "make my brother share the family fortune with me." Jesus answer was "it's not about money. Be content with your wages." It's not the answer they wanted, but ...

Rod: Jesus would get to the heart of the issue. How did He view the work of John the Baptist in preparing hearts to receive Him? Did Jesus find ways to confront the leaven of the world that affected the hearts of men? Did Jesus do spiritual battle with Rome, Judea or Galilee? Did His messages have political implications? Did He seek to replace the world's system of government, and if so, with what? How would His kingdom co-exist with the worldly kingdom? What was Jesus' strategy in regards to those mentioned? What was the mind of Christ regarding political and religious leaders?

That opens up all kinds of questions. People in some religions have opted for absolutely no political involvement whatsoever. You must not even vote. We are the kingdom of God, not the kingdom of the world. "We separate ourselves totally from that, other than our having a moral obligation to be salt and light; leaven within the kingdom of the world to bring about change. We influence people that way."

Jesus was in this political mess, soup if you will. I imagine somebody has done a study on this. I haven't read one ... Maybe they pointed out who Jesus would rub shoulders with in bumping up against the political winds and waves of the time and how that affected His thinking. I just raise those points for your consideration.

I would think if He were here today, He might just say, "**Enough! Just grow up!**" (Giggles). He might just exclaim, "How long must I contend with you?" (Mt. 17:17)

Jean: if there were a right and a wrong for whatever they had back then, He would be thinking along the godly part if there was one. He even taught us to pray for our leaders.

Rod: He did.

Carole: I would say that He got involved heavily with morality, but not politics.

Well, again, it's just something to think about. He **had** to be effected by it when John the Baptist was executed. Jesus proclaimed that John was the greatest person ever born of woman (Matthew 11:11). John was His cousin and to see him get caught up in this political drama ... although for John it wasn't so much political as moral. But the political power that was wielded against John was tremendous. That was the precursor of all the political power that was going to come up against the kingdom ... the persecutions.

So Jesus knew that even if you are not that involved in it, people often see the Kingdom of God as a threat to their power and control, and there will be a backlash, sometimes violently.

Ron: “I got a question from my brother a few weeks ago. What do you think about a flag in front of the church or in the church? Their congregation is going through a real debate about what that looks like. I told him that we have a flag **on** the grounds and **in** the building. Obviously, we don’t have an issue with it, but it seems to me that our motto is “in God we trust” for the state of Florida, and the scripture is really clear about “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord” - Psalm 33:12. It’s right to honor God if we’re going to involve politics with being the citizens of a nation. We need to pray for and try to put people in positions who can help **promote** God’s truth and values. What is destroying this nation is that we have abandoned them. We can see where that leads. I think this nation was built on this truth.”

Rod: Certainly Jesus must have looked at Judaism even in the hands of the Jewish kings at the time, the puppet Kings of Rome, and even ‘high priests’ and thought, “Man, you didn’t learn anything from the Old Testament. You didn’t learn anything from the way God arranged this to be. You could be such a huge dynamic influence of right and good; of morality and the Law, if you just would.” But you have drunk the ‘Kool Aid’. It has gone to your head and you operate from your own power and greed.

Jesus did influence that. He did attack that.

Ron: For example, the decisions that attract the way we fall away from God ... I mean it’s politicians. They’re the ones who said that even a five-year-old can decide whether he’s male or female, and you cannot talk to their parents about it. Political decisions are being made about marriage and things that go flatly against the truth that God has given us. So I think it’s right to be involved politically, to pray for, and to have people in positions of authority.

Rod: Tomorrow morning I will be hearing David Barton. He is speaking for the Sarasota prayer breakfast. David Barton has done significant research into the documents of the founding fathers and I am sure he will be speaking about what you are saying.

Jean: You can access the videos he has. Every state in the country, in their constitutions, have the words, “Under God”.

Brain Henegar: Brian made a comment before about Jesus focusing on the deeper issue about the compassion and humanity that we show to one another. No matter how we think from a political spectrum, from certain liberals or to think about how it effects people on an individual basis, that they realize that there is a societal issue, but there is also, it sounds to me, an individual and compassion issue as well. On one side, I can see it from the protection of the nation – like “that” side of it, but the compassionate side that we want to take care of the people who are here as well. That is an obligation that God really speaks to – having compassion for the poor and compassion for people that wins doubt over anything else when it comes to individuals and numbers with Jesus and the people. [I missed a lot of this but tried my best to hear Brian].

Rod: Exactly.

We're out of time. I will pick up next week with the statement in Mark 1 verse 1, "The beginning of the gospel [good news] about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God." Even though it is one brief statement, we are going to learn how the word "gospel" is used. It indicates a word that is going to dominate the Kingdom of God. It is not a minor, but a major word that is used. We will have to take a good look at that before we go into another story.

The Mind of Christ

Week 11

April 3, 2019

We're going to start out tonight in the next section which is Mark 1 verse 1, and just ask some questions about it. We're not going to go in depth about this ... it will unfold as the time goes on in "The Mind of Christ".

Mark 1:1 says, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Mark is the second gospel that begins with the word "beginning" in the first line as John does in John 1:1. All of them deal in origins in some way or another; the lineage of Jesus in Matthew and Luke and in John, "In the beginning WAS the Word" and here in Mark.

So the question comes to my mind:

As I think about the fact that we have been given the commission to go preach the gospel to the entire world, and therefore, people don't know it unless we tell them... I listened to a man who is with me on the board of the Ministerial Association, Jim Pierson. Jim has many hats. He is chaplain for the Bradenton Police Department and he has a ministry to nursing homes where he will go in and do services in multiple nursing homes in Sarasota/Manatee County. But he talked about the ministry to the nursing homes dealing with the elderly who are near 'end of life' situations.

He made a point that you might assume that most of them would know what the Gospel is, but that is not a good assumption. Many of them in their 70s, 80s maybe 90 years of age, really, if you ask them what the gospel is, they have no clue. They don't have any idea. They don't know what the gospel is. The word doesn't mean much to them.

You would think, being raised in America, at least the word 'gospel' would be a fairly common word that most people would know kind of what it means.

Brian Smith: Especially for the time period they were born in.

Rod: Yes, but he finds that you don't make that assumption. You have to explain it to them. You have to tell them what it is. He said that many of them have very little concept of personal sin, or the consequences of their sin. They just don't think in those terms. It's just not something that's important to them ... and I am sure you find people in all kinds of states of mind. But that was an interesting comment, particularly with regard to the questions I am going to raise here.

Mark begins, "**The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.**"

John began with "In the beginning". He gave us a picture of the preexistent Jesus. Mark is focusing on the beginning of the **gospel**. The identity of Jesus, of which certainly he was aware by the beginning of the gospel ministry, was established. In the very beginning there were terms that were used about Jesus that were used like *Christ, Messiah, King or Son of God*. All of these were terms that became firmly established in the ministry of Jesus.

But from this identity, he turned to the message he came to preach - the Gospel. This word was very important with regards to our vocabulary and our thinking. Euangelion (ευαγγελιου) is the word in the Greek; the 'good message' or the 'good news'; and something as simple as 'good news' must be understood properly.

For instance, we can define this in such a way that anything one might be considered to be “bad news” would be excluded. In other words, “Good news” is the correspondent to the “Bad news”. So what anybody to be considered ‘bad news’; — if you go to the opposite of that, it would be ‘good news’—or it could be interpreted that way.

Telling people of their sin and their need to repent, the exclusive commitment to their faith in Jesus, all in our current PC world do not seem to be positive to people today. It doesn’t seem like good news today. You start talking about sin, and repentance, and the exclusive nature of Jesus being the only way to God; people in our world tend to think of that as ‘not’ good news. That’s bad news. That is not ‘positive’—it’s negative.

Good must be defined by the only One who **is** good ... the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. So when you think of words that are relative like ‘good’ or ‘bad’ there has to be someone who defines that definitively, because to be left to just what **we** consider to be good or bad in terms of the message, people are all over the page with that. So not knowing the gospel and what it is, we might be all excited about it and saying, “I want to tell you some good news” and then we include in that “you’re a sinner and you’re on your way to Hell if you don’t repent, and if you don’t turn to Jesus, and he is the only way to God” and people may be thinking, “When is the good news going to come because I’m not hearing ... this is not computing with me as being good news.”

True, there was *no* ambiguity in the mind of Christ regarding the nature and the content of the gospel. If *anybody* understood the gospel, it was Jesus. But that raises some questions. The only person who truly and absolutely understood the gospel was the One who embodied the gospel. Jesus **was** good news. Everyone else, including me, simply proclaims it and incorporates the truth of the gospel into our lives as best we can. But Jesus **WAS** the good news, and since He was good, through and through, He was the only “really” good news.

As we will see, this gospel did not merely include Jesus’ ministry, but also that of the forerunner, John the Baptist because he proclaimed the gospel as well.

So my question is:

How did Jesus, by the time He was thirty, how did He come to know and understand the gospel? Now I’m assuming, again, a maturation process that Jesus went through. Again, I’m asking about the maturation process that Jesus went through. I am not assuming that when He was born and He was two days old, He understood the gospel. I’m not even assuming He understood how to ... He wasn’t potty trained, He didn’t know how to feed Himself. There were so many things that no one would understand at two days old or ten days old or two years old... there was a maturation process He went through, but at what point did He fully understand the gospel, because by the time He started preaching it, He fully understood it. How did that come about?

How did He formulate it in His mind? And so I have more questions. Questions raise questions. What was the learning process? Was it aided by men? Did He get any part of the gospel from His parents, from teachers of the Law, from maybe neighbors, from the Synagogue because aren’t truths of the gospel imbedded in the Old Testament? So was He aided in His understanding the gospel by all of these human influences in His life? Did that contribute anything to His understanding of the gospel?

People's understanding of God's plan was corrupted because every one of them, including His parents, understood the gospel as well as Jesus, so anything He got from them was going to be something of a corrupted gospel. It wasn't going to be the fullness of the gospel that **He** understood by the time He started preaching it.

How did Jesus avoid the distortion of man and gain a clear, precise understanding of the gospel? Did He learn it like Paul? Paul made a big point in Galatians 1:13-2:2.

¹³ For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴ I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. ¹⁵ But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, was pleased ¹⁶ to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, my immediate response was **not to consult any human being**. ¹⁷ I did not go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went into Arabia. Later I returned to Damascus.

¹⁸ Then **after three years, I went up to Jerusalem** to get acquainted with Cephas[b] and stayed with him fifteen days. ¹⁹ I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord's brother. ²⁰ I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie.

²¹ Then I went to Syria and Cilicia. ²² I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. ²³ They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." ²⁴ And they praised God because of me.

2:2-3 Then after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. ² I went in response to a revelation and, meeting privately with **those esteemed as leaders**, I presented to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. I wanted to be sure I was not running and had not been running my race in vain.

Paul says, "I didn't learn it from anybody. It was revealed to me by Jesus. It was a revelation of Jesus Christ. He made a big point: I didn't go up to Jerusalem. I didn't talk to Peter. I didn't talk to the other apostles; that I gained it by revelation of Jesus Christ.

So did God, Himself, pour the gospel into Jesus' head through a special revelation?

Jean: I think that might have been it because He learned to do what God told Him to do. He was very obedient to His Father so maybe God told Him to do this and He obeyed.

Rod: Okay, And certainly God was inspiring men to write the New Testament, which is the essence of the gospel, and Jesus was a living, breathing, inspired person of God, but at what point did that happen?

Sandie: I'm thinking of the beginning of John, "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God". Jesus was "in the beginning with God". So are we agreeing that when He became a human, that His human mind could recall that pre-humanity?

Rod: I guess what I'm assuming is that, as a small child, at least, He didn't have the fullness of the understanding. He had to mature in the wisdom and knowledge and understanding. We've looked at passages that said as much. So, I'm questioning at what point did this fullness of this knowledge of the gospel—when did He become fully aware of that. Because He divested Himself of His deity according to **Phil. 2:6-7** “Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.” So again, raising our questions here,

Carole: To use your expression, “Holy imagination” (I think I'm keyed in there right now): From the time He was born to the time he came out to the public and preached in the synagogue, He had been in the synagogue, or the temple, several times a year for 5, 10, 12, 15, 18, 20, 22 or 30 years. And hearing things, and the Holy Spirit helping Him to interpret—it may have been bits and pieces at a time ... but I can imagine Him thinking, “...it's Me. It's about me. The way it all fits together ...” So, He's got thirty years to...

Rod: Yes. I mean, I know for me if you had asked me at ten years old if I'd understood the gospel, I'd have said, “Yes.” I **did** understand it enough to obey it. But if you had asked me after Jimmy Allen's Roman's Class, if I understood the gospel, I would have said, “Well, I understand a whole lot more than I did before I took this class. But I got a whole lot of questions that were raised in this class. Paul definitely wrote some things that were hard to understand.” And so, it not only enlightened me at 18 or 19 years old, but it also raised a whole bunch of other questions that I still struggle with today about some of the aspects of the gospel and how it's put together.

Jean: It sounds like He knew that God was His Father.

Rod: Yes... at twelve, at least. For He said He had to be about His Father's “business” or “whatever”... the word “house” that's not there. {See last week's lesson}

There's no evidence of this, and you have to piece together some things from Galatians 1 and 2, with Paul's laying out things, he spent three years in Arabia. Paul said he spent three years in the Arabian Desert which is interesting because that's where Moses received the Law. Was that where Paul spent a profitable time with Jesus in the desert as the other apostles did with Jesus in Judea, Galilee? I think that's possible; even likely that He had some kind of three-year course directly from God Himself. And Paul also had the experience of going into the third heaven and seeing Spirits and things that he couldn't tell us about.

2 Cor. 12:1-4

I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. ² I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. ³ And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows—⁴ was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell.

So there are many ways which Jesus, supernaturally, could have gained His knowledge of the gospel itself other than just simply the human ways we gain that knowledge. It's a mystery that we might not know on this side but somehow from newborn to thirty, He came to the gospel and His words will be the clearest understanding of it in the mind of Christ. So, that's really what I want to introduce you to here is that the clearest understanding of the gospel was in the mind of Jesus Christ. If anybody knew what the gospel was, He knew what the gospel was.

Some have said, “Can we learn the gospel if we only read Matthew, Mark, Luke and John?” And since it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes it, if that was all we had (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), or any **one** of them, would there be enough information for us to not only obey the gospel and become a Christian, but have enough of a message to be able to go out and preach to the entire world? Now, of course, that is a moot question because we do have a few other books to pull from.

Alright, we’re going to turn to something that’s in some ways a little more complicated but in some ways it is interesting here. We are going to go to Mark 1:2-6 but there are other passages that go along with this: Matthew 3:1-6 and Luke 3:3-6, from the Isaiah prophecy of Isaiah 40:3-5.

The first part of this is Isaiah’s prophecy: **Isaiah 40:3-5**

A voice of one calling:

“In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

Mark 1:2-6

...as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: “I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way”—³ “a voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’” ⁴ And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. ⁶ John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.

Matthew 3:1-6

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea ² and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” ³ This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: “A voice of one calling in the wilderness, prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.” ⁴ John’s clothes were made of camel’s hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. ⁶ Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

Luke 3:3-6

He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁴ As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: “A voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. ⁵ Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. ⁶ And all people will see God’s salvation.’”

(Now I didn’t plan it this way, but it just so happens that *that* will be the text that I will be preaching on Sunday...s mounted on the wings of Eagles.) I am going to go back and give a context to that which will include this section.

You may not realize unless you get the transcript of this, but Mark has verse 3 of Isaiah 40, Matthew has verse 3, Luke has verses 3 through 5a. So they are quoting Isaiah, but all of them do not quote all of it. Mark also throws in a bit of a curve ball in the exegesis of the passage. Mark also begins with a line from **Malachi 3:1**.

Mark begins his message with **Malachi 3:1** although he says he's quoting from Isaiah. Malachi's statement is, "Behold. I will send my messenger [a], who will prepare the way before me." But **Mark** doesn't quote it the same way Malachi does. **He says**, "Behold I send my messenger *before your face* who will prepare your way." [a] - before your face

Mark adds, "**Before your face**" into the mix. They are essentially the same except for "before your face". This raises the question that 'if you are going to quote someone, it's always good practice to, you know, with references, to quote it accurately. You quote someone "as is". Even if there is a misspelling in there, you can put that little notice in there. That (sic). I don't even know what (sic) actually means. That (sic) reference means, I didn't misquote it ... the original guy did. Don't be (sic'd) on me because I didn't do it. It's what **he** said, okay? (giggles)

<https://www.dailywritingtips.com/what-does-sic-mean/>

Sic is a Latin word *meaning* "thus", "so", "as such", or "in such a manner"

<https://www.google.com/search?q=%3A%22sic%22&oq=%3A%22sic%22&aqs=chrome..69i57j0l5.4104j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

(sic) used in brackets after a copied or quoted word that appears odd or erroneous to show that the word is quoted exactly as it stands in the original, as in *a story must hold a child's interest and "enrich his [sic] life."*

There are only two possible explanations for this addition. Although I cannot find this phrase in any context associated with John the Baptist. So, adding the phrase, "before your face" – anything having to do with John the Baptist – I can't find anything that relates to that.

So in Isaiah 40:5 he speaks of the glory of the Lord who will be revealed, and all flesh seeing Him. In Malachi he mentions, "**The Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple**".

It reminded me of Psalm 27:4 where His face is mentioned. It says, "One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to meditate in His temple."

But this idea of the glory of the Lord being mentioned ... Remember, as far back as Moses who wanted to see the glory of the Lord. Moses was not able to see "what?" He was not able to see the face of God because 'no man can see God and live'. God passed by so Moses could see his back side, because "no man can see God's face and live"

Exodus 33:18-20

¹⁹ And the Lord said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. ²⁰ But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."

But somehow, in this passage, Mark inserted, “before your face”. Again, if you go back, “And behold I will send my messenger before your face who will prepare your way.”

Now I don’t think I have this even in my notes, but in **2 Corinthians 4:6** it says, “For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,”[a] made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed **in the face** of Christ.” And in 2 Corinthians 3:7-8 Paul says, “Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, transitory though it was,⁸ will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious?”

When we turn to the Lord we begin to be transformed from one degree of glory to another. There is something about us seeing the face of Christ that is associated with the glory of God. The “glory of God” is in the passage ... just not in terms of that phrase “in the face” being there. So perhaps John (or Mark) who wrote this, took some liberties with the passage and inserted a truth, but did not accurately quote the Old Testament passage as it was written. That may raise issues for some people about the validity or reliability of the Bible.

I don’t know... this isn’t the day to talk about “alleged discrepancies of the Bible” but I do **raise** that because we can’t be honest with the text and then point out that there are some things that are hard to understand about this, why it got said the that way it did. So not mentioning Malachi or only quoting from Isaiah, and inserting this phrase about “before your face” is questionable. Why did that happen?

The word “messenger” in the text here is the same word from which we get the word “angel”. {The word is angelos, (αγγελιον)}. One sent to announce or to proclaim God has often, in the Old Testament and the birth of Christ, it has often been “angels” coming to announce God’s plan. But now we have another messenger who is announcing God’s plan... and that is John the Baptist. So here we have a man sent for the unique role of introducing Jesus to the world.

Introductions were in order, I mean, we are talking about the most important person who ever lived. Normally, if we have important people, those people get introduced, and sometimes very lavishly. Introductions can go quite extensively, particularly if you are the one being introduced and you advised them what to say about you. “The Bridegroom Cometh” must be announced. There is an announcement about the Bridegroom. This is one more thing that God did to make sure Jesus was pointed out as the long-awaited Messiah. In the mind of God, at least, God, in His wisdom and in His plan, said I am going to put someone to go before Jesus and prepare people for the way. Because God put that into prophecy, when John came, it certainly got people’s attention because they immediately associated this with a Messianic introduction and with a Messianic gauge, even thinking that John himself might be the Messiah.

The word “prepare” here means to put in readiness, to construct, to form or to build. John the Baptist was a ‘construction worker’ preparing hearts for the Lord. Here, Isaiah talks about the idea of preparing the way or the road...a place where they could make progress . . . a mode; means, journey or way. This is a road taken by a king so it would need some construction work. Jesus was surely aware of John the Baptist’s work was for Him. I wonder, had they talked about this ahead of time? Did they meet prior to John the Baptist starting to preach? These are things that we don’t know. Did they discuss where John would position himself? Did they talk strategy or timing?

Brian Smith: It doesn't sound like it because they barely knew each other when they finally met. It seems that John had some spiritual revelation. It sounds like he knew who He was when he baptized Him, and he had to tell his disciples to go to Jesus later on and ask Him if He was the One.

Rod: Yes but I have a theory about that too. I don't really think that John was curious about that. I think in that particular case, it was his disciples because they were trying to protect John wanting to be very, very sure that "it was worth it". So John said, "Go ask Him. Go ask Him. Go satisfy your curiosity." I don't think it was for John at all.

Brian: That makes sense.

Rod: I think when that dove came out of heaven and the voice came out of heaven, I think John was absolutely convinced.

But again, did Jesus have a problem with John's clothing? This may sound like a crazy question, but John, do you think you could have dressed up a little bit? I mean, I'm the Son of God here – okay? Clean up a little bit. Did they eat locusts and wild honey together? We don't know.

But John's work was part of the thinking of Jesus because He knew that there would be "one coming before Him" and He had to know what the nature of that was all about. They may have called John the Baptist 'the voice'. . . the **real** voice . . . of one crying in the wilderness. I guess I thought of this as one crying where a few people could or would hear. If you are crying out in the middle of the wilderness, there is nobody to hear you.

There is a guy who stands on the side of Fruitville Road sometimes, around Honore, and he holds up a sign that says "The end the world – Repent of your sins and he waves his sign. He seems like a nice guy, but it seems like one crying a little bit in the wilderness. I don't know how effective that is.

Wilderness sounds like a desolate unpopulated area although the two places they took me to . . . us to . . . when we went to the Holy Lands was not exactly a desert. And it couldn't have been a total desert . . . it was right by the river. The Jordan River at that point is not really impressive. It's not the Mississippi, for sure. It's just a muddy, narrow little river. I mean, at the point where they think it may have happened, I could have thrown a stone across the river easily.

Carole: But you might get shot!

Rod: Yes. I might get shot because Jordan was on the other side. Jordan and Israel have armed guards on both sides.

"The voice" is also used in Matthew 2:18 about weeping in Bethlehem. "A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more." It was used again in 3:17, "And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." So there are three voices that are used here in a very short period of time – the voice of John the Baptist, the voices of the women who were weeping over their dead children, and the voice of God from heaven saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." So Rachel, John the Baptist and God all give voices to the event of Jesus' introduction. The word is "phone" (φωνε) meaning sound or tone.

They are out in the “desert” or “wilderness”. It means a waste, an uninhabited or desolate place. Why choose an area to interview Jesus far from where people lived? There was water there. Did the remoteness add to the mystery of John the Baptist’s ministry? Did the distance of travel attract those who would be truly interested? Isaiah said it would be a voice **in** the wilderness so when it happened, people recognized it as a fulfillment of the prophecy.

But I think that there is a little bit more. I think that in the prophecies God gave, He gave people “markers” – He gave them some very distinct markers. And one of those markers is “the voice isn’t going to be in Jerusalem.” It is not going to be in a metropolitan area. So if you are tracking when the Messiah is coming, don’t listen for the few preachers in Jerusalem because that’s not where it’s going to originate. That is where most people would go if they want to gain a following. They would go where the population centers are. But God says I have to do something that will set this apart from all the shahs in South Judea. We need to have a place where this will be somewhat unique and it’s going to be in the wilderness; it’s going to be in a remote area. It would have to be by water because he would also perform baptisms.

This is a side-note: In John chapter 1 God had already told John the pre-arranged signal - John would know exactly who the Messiah would be. He knew what to look for. When John was out there baptizing, and he may not have known exactly who the messiah was at that time. I think every time he baptized someone – a Jewish man, he looked up to heaven and thought, “Is this the one?” But he just kept baptizing. “Is this the one?” Because, I think, God told him that when you get the right one, something will happen and you are going to see the Holy Spirit come down in the form of a dove, and He is going to light on His head, and that is going to be my signal. You cannot miss it, John... You will know exactly who the Messiah is. It couldn’t be more clear if a finger had come out of heaven and pointed at Jesus and said, “This is Him!”

John 1:32-34

Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. ³³ And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴ I have seen and I testify that this is God’s Chosen One.”

John knew exactly what to look for and knew that that was the pre-arranged signal that God had given him. I believe that the wilderness contributed to that in prophecy, so that people, when they heard ‘there’s some really crazy guy out there’ and they had already associated him with Elijah because Elijah was a little eccentric too, it was all the images in their minds coming together. So John cried out in the wilderness, exclaiming it, proclaiming it, provoking it. There is some urgency in John’s cry. “You need to hear this!” The urgency was that the Lord was near and the way had to be prepared for Him. He’s coming. We’ve got to get ready. We’ve got to make the preparation. There is an urgency here.

The way is prepared by making His path straight. The word there means to make it right, to make it upright, to make a true path for Him. Jesus travels on true and right paths. The only place Jesus can travel is on true and right paths. If He is going to travel in our lives, He has to travel into a life that is true in the sense of being sincere, honest and willing to accept Him for who He is. That is why when they went into the villages they looked for people who were worthy. Matthew 10:11, “Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house

until you leave.” You knock on doors until you find a worthy person. You will find a true and right path, and you go into that house and stay there and share the gospel there. If people don’t receive you, shake the dust off your feet, you know you haven’t found a true and right path, you look for that and share the gospel with people.

Jean: How did John make the path straight?

Rod: We’re going to see that. He did that through his preaching. We will get to all that. He does not follow crooked paths. Jesus doesn’t follow crooked paths. Now he may go into lives of people who are on crooked paths, but He is not going to follow those crooked paths. We have phrases about abhorrent behavior. We say they should be straightened out, or they need to be scared straight. We tell kids to “straighten up”.

They had to know how to do that. So the metaphor “the road is prepared for a king” is where this comes from. It means filling in the ravines and the valleys and bringing the mountains and the hills low. He improves the way. He grades the roads. The image is bold. It makes Jesus’ way easier, faster, and more productive. The crooked places must be straightened. **The word for straightened here is the word ‘ευθειασ’ meaning to straighten – to smooth out. {The opposite is ‘skolia’ meaning bent or crooked where we get the term scoliosis from.}** - (Luke 3:5). The rough and the uneven have to become smooth. The idea of “smoothing it out” comes from the word Leios (λειος) meaning to lay, to arrange or to put together in some kind of order.

Isaiah’s quote continues in Luke to encourage: and all flesh will see the salvation of God. The word for flesh is ‘sark’ (σαρξ). It is the same word that describes Jesus as becoming flesh in John Chapter 1:14. This reminds me of the pouring out of the Spirit on all flesh or all mankind in Acts 2:17 - ‘**In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.**’ This is interesting for two reasons. God made His salvation or His Spirit **visible** – able to be seen. They are going to be able to “see” the salvation of God. They are not going to just “hear” the salvation of God, but they are going to “see” it. God makes salvation visible. One way He did that was to make it visible in Jesus Himself, because Jesus is the embodiment of salvation...able to be seen or revealed.

If man is to participate in salvation, he must understand it – he must “see” it, which again, goes back to the theological argument: how can a little baby “see” the salvation of the Lord? How can they understand it? How can they grasp it? It must be “seen”.

This salvation is available to all flesh – Jew and Gentile. This is interesting here because it is one of the first New Testament references regarding the mystery of salvation to all mankind and the breaking down of the walls of hostility in Ephesians chapter 2 and 3. He says that the “mystery” of the gospel is that Jews and Gentiles will all be under one head - Christ.

That is that the manifold wisdom of God is to pull all this together so that everyone together will come under the headship of Christ. There will be oneness on the earth. Here is where that is introduced because salvation will be seen by **all** flesh. This is now the first indicator that this isn’t just for the Jews, but this was Isaiah’s prophecy way back when. This wasn’t really new, but the Jews had made salvation exclusive in nature. They thought it was exclusive just for themselves. But it was always supposed to be for all flesh...for everyone.

Of course this teaching was in the Old Testament in prophecy all along. It's now being made clear. There will be incidents in the life of Jesus where He reaches out to the Jews, the Samaritans and the Gentiles. The Mind of Christ was firmly set on the salvation being for all men. If you want to get a major impact on the mind of Christ very early on, from the beginning, even as the way was being prepared for Him, He understood the gospel is for all. The Gospel is for all.

Now that might not sound like a really major idea to us because we've lived with that for over two thousand years, many of us all of our lives, but that was a major deal for the Jewish people. Jesus, in His mission, was inclusive in that He wanted all men to know His Father.

What **is** this salvation? The word is "soterion" (σωτηριον) meaning a "soter", a savior, or a deliverer. It is spoken of as God and as Christ, as the One who saves from the danger of destruction. It brings someone into a state of prosperity and happiness. The deliverer is the benefactor of the estate. It's also delivers from slavery or imprisonment. For Christians it is the deliverance from sin and the consequences of sin.

So why was John called "the Baptist"? I always was a little bit jealous that the Baptists had John. I thought, "Good night. The later on I learned that the Baptist church could have John because we have Jesus. We'll get to John a little later on. But we're good – we're good.

John was called "the Baptist" because he was the one who made people fully wet. He was the one who immersed. He is simply a baptizer. Was this designation from God? Did God call him "John the Baptist" to keep him straight from John the apostle? Or did the people call him that. Come on out and see the baptizer ... it was likely from the people who were going out and being baptized by him. Did Jesus pick up the designation, or didn't He? Did Jesus ever call John "the baptist"? That would be a good argument for the Baptists. Jesus never called him the baptist...the people did. Anyway...It's like "the Nazarene." The Nazarene church claims that.

Before John Baptized people he preached. The word is "kerusso" or (κηρυσσων) - a 'herald'. He was a public "crier" – especially of divine truth. Now remember, he was the voice of one crying in the wilderness. John had to get the attention of the people so the way could be "smooth" for Jesus. There was no Madison Avenue Ad campaign – just preaching. The word was rich and has found much in the way of application. John does not appear to have had any formal training. He simply had a job to do, and his heart was inflamed with a passion to be obedient. He too, in a short time, would begin preaching publically. So He is seeing the introduction and sees the preaching of John the Baptist. He knows that in just a few short days or weeks, He too will follow John onto the stage of public preaching.

The Mind of Christ Class

April 10, 2019

Week 12

We're going to continue tonight in the section we left off last week. It is found in parts of Matthew 3:1-6, Mark 1:2-6 and Luke 3:3-6. I think you'll recognize that the passages here are basically the message that John the Baptist preached. We are trying to understand what was his basic message?

I begin with the question, (from 6/16/2010) "What did John preach?" In a nutshell, it says He preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. That was the core of His message ... baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Having been engaged in this past week (in 2010) in the reading of "The Original Intent" by David Barton, which is interesting...I just heard David Barton speak a couple of weeks ago. In his book, he deals with the constitution – the framers of the constitution, and what was their original intent when they wrote it.

So I ask the same question about John's intent in his message: 'what was his original intent' which is a question we should be asking about everything we read. That's what we're doing now on Sunday mornings in the short series I am doing. We're looking at very familiar passages of Scripture and talking about the context of the passage for understanding better.

How are baptism, repentance and forgiveness related to one another? Often when I am studying I look for the key words and I try to find the relationship among those key words they use. Surely, this question is important to the mind of Christ. Since what John preached was intended to prepare the way to Christ, what was it in his message that actually did the preparation work? What was he doing to prepare the way for Christ?

The heart of that message, again, is a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. First, one does not have to be a Greek scholar to preach baptism. That is pretty simple. We know he preached *baptism*. The other two phrases tell us something of the nature of that baptism or that immersion. That baptism was "of" repentance. That's one of them. The word "repentance" clearly, for us to understand, means compunction for guilt including reformation, or the reversal or the change of mind. Jesus would later share His message with that same word: repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Mt. 3:2; 4:17). So 'repentance' is definitely at the heart of the message of John, the message of Jesus, and it had something to do with preparing the way for Jesus.

Baptism had something to do with the change of one's heart. So obviously, and of necessity, repentance had to occur before baptism to make baptism meaningful. So, that is the meaning of a baptism of repentance. We had another fund-raiser today to follow-up on our benefit for the Pregnancy Center. The Fund-raiser included a video clip of the Benham brothers (Charlotte, N. C.) that came to our benefit for a recap of their speech. The retold the story of Norma Leah McCorvey (The Roe of Roe v Wade).

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1995/september1/5ta070.html>

The Benham brothers dad, by his own admission, was a drunk. He owned a bar...a saloon in Florida.

One day a coffee salesman came in and taught him the gospel. He became a Christian and then started preaching to everybody in the bar. The bar was moved to Texas and he became a Free Methodist preacher. He decided to put his church right by the abortion clinic somewhere in the Dallas area. Norma McCorvey worked in that abortion clinic. She was a chain smoker and she'd come out to the parking lot during her break. They had some benches out there where she would sit and smoke her cigarettes, and Flip Benham would come out and talk with her. He struck up a friendship with her and eventually taught her the gospel and baptized her.

McCorvey was a lesbian and she had a lesbian partner who, later on, she invited to come and hear this preacher. Sitting around their kitchen table, Benham said that he lead her lesbian partner to Christ. He said, "As I was telling her the gospel, her chin started quivering and she started crying. She repented of her sins and I told my boys, 'go to Wal-Mart quick. Get a blow-up pool. We're going to baptize her right now.'" And they did. They baptized her partner.

But it was just a good illustration of someone who made a complete turn-around but she was used. She never even had an abortion herself. She was used by certain people to be the plaintiff in Roe v Wade, but she became a committed Christian and remained a committed Christian until she died recently. There are stories and stories and stories like that, of people who made radical changes in their lives simply because of a baptism of repentance; and that's what she received.

Later, we will find that John demanded to see some "fruit of repentance" before he would baptize someone. This is also why Jesus' baptism was such an abhorrence to John when Jesus was baptized. It was an abhorrence because he had no need for repentance and there was no need for forgiveness for Jesus. The state of the heart of the baptized was a repudiation of sin ... his sin, with a view toward the reception of the One whose way was being prepared.

So, when we put all this together, we see the preparation being made; for if Jesus was going to have a smooth path to walk into a person's life, the way you smooth that path was through repentance. It is a person changing their heart and orienting themselves to Jesus and receptive to what Jesus would teach them.

The next word we find here is 'baptism **of** repentance **for** forgiveness of sin. The reason this little "for" or "[of]" is important is because it is disputed by people who don't find baptism being essential to salvation because the word 'for' or 'eis' depends on how we translate that word, that preposition. This word either looks 'forward to something' or it is a 'because of something'.

The intent of the word "eis" (where I could do any research on it in a Greek Lexicon) – the intent of the word "eis" is always pointing forward –so it's looking toward something that it yet in the future. It means "into" or "indicating a point reached or entered" of a place or a time or a purpose.

In other words, it is either a place you are going to enter, or a time you are going to arrive at, or a purpose that is going to be accomplished; probably, more-so, a purpose in this case. So the purpose of the baptism is "for", again, forgiveness. It's a forward motion resulting in a state unto which one comes. So the result of preaching a baptism of repentance, and one's compliance to the preaching is forgiveness. *Forgiveness* is an interesting word, as well. It means freedom, pardon, deliverance, liberty, or remission. Literally it means "to send away, to dismiss" as the dismissal of a multitude. When, in Matthew 13:36 "[Then He left the crowds and went into the house](#)" NASB.

Jesus *dismissed* the multitude ... it's forgiving them in a sense. He was sending them away. It's the same word as the word used for **divorce** in 1 Cor. 7:11-13 because when you divorce, what do you do? You put someone away. It's the idea of 'putting away of sin' was the idea of forgiveness.

Jean: John baptized before Jesus died, so was his death necessary for the forgiveness?

Rod: Absolutely. His death goes both ways. Otherwise, how could anybody in the Old Testament be saved? Paul addresses that in Romans 3:26 [“He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished.”](#) In other words, God did not hold certain sins against people. Like Abraham: “Abraham *believed* God and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

Gen. 15:6 and **Rom. 4:3**. It was “in view of” the death of Christ that he covered these sins.

Forgiveness is the idea of ‘sending away the sin’. In Judaism, there is a rich heritage of “sending away sin” by way of the scapegoat. We see the scapegoat in Leviticus 16, when the priest would come out and lay his hands on the head of the scapegoat, representing all the sins of the people. They would tie a small ribbon around the goat’s neck and take him off into the wilderness and send him away. This was a symbolic gesture of putting away sin. This was “in view of” the reality by Jesus. Jesus, in John’s mind, was centered in one main purpose, and that was Jesus’ coming, and that was for forgiveness.

Jesus was the great liberator or freedom fighter, if you will. He was the One who came to set people free. I have another note that I added last year on 8/26/18 when I was thinking through this again. The question was, “Why was John the Baptist in the wilderness?” Now this is totally my speculation, but the scapegoat of Leviticus 16:21-22 was taken out into the desert, so he could be released in the desert. Is there a connection to why John baptized for the forgiveness of sin “in the desert”? The people were going out into the remote regions, which would have been the regions where they let the scapegoat loose and they were going out there seeking forgiveness. I just thought this was an interesting parallel. But I cannot put that into a theological point of the Old Testament.

Ruth: Was there a baptism in the Old Testament?

Rod: There may have been a kind of baptism in the Old Testament. I thought of it more as a healing, but ... I had this conversation with Sue and Marlene this week.

The conversation was about what Peter preached in Acts 2, of what the Jews may have been thinking of when they were told to be baptized. Did they have any reference to that? The reference they would have had would have been two-fold: there was the ceremonial process that the Priests went through for purification before they went into the Most Holy Place. They had a process of washing – a big basin in the outer court to wash and purify themselves before they’d go in behind the curtain. That may have triggered their mind as something comparable to Baptism.

And then, there were a number of rituals that grew up that became traditions for the Jews, particularly when it came to a Gentile becoming a Jew. The Gentiles would have to go through ritual washings in order to purify themselves. If this was a Gentile man, he would also have to be circumcised in order to become a Jew. So there were also those Jewish practices that could be comparable to baptism.

Carole: The only thing I know is that my Cousin Janie's girl friend who was not Jewish, was marrying her friend who was Jewish, and she had to go through the Mikveh bath to become part of the covenant.

Rod: Was it like a baptism of complete immersion?

Carole: I'm not sure – {I have found: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikveh> “A mikveh must, according to the classical regulations, contain enough water to cover the **entire** body of an average-sized person; it goes on to give ‘**The reasons for immersion**’ in the Mikveh ...} this was not part of the discussion but I have looked it up since.

Rod: There are details and writings about that... but I would think those would be the two things in their minds comparable to Baptism.

Sandie: Was John the Baptist the first to baptize for the forgiveness of sin?

Rod: As far as I know.

Jean: I think you were talking about the word means “forward” so John was baptizing thinking of the time Christ would die – that's a forward-looking thing.

Rod – Well, yes. It could be taken that way. I was just thinking of the purpose of baptism and what is “it” for? “It” is for remission of sin or the forgiveness of sin. The word “for” (eis) is relating to baptism—not relating to the death of Christ. Obviously, we learn in ‘other’ places that there is no remission of sin without the shedding of blood” and it's the blood of Christ that forgives us of our sin. (Heb. 9:22) But I'm not sure that I could make the point that “eis” – “for the forgiveness” is looking forward to Jesus' death. It is looking forward to giving a purpose for the baptism itself.

In that Jesus and John were focused on the outcome of forgiveness and the coming kingdom, with baptism and repentance being the preparation, this must have dominated Jesus' thinking – how could He *not* be focused on the main purpose of restoring our relationship with His Father.

The reason this was important to me was because sometimes *we* make things that are important to God ... we make them peripheral. We switch things that are central to His thinking, we may put over here on the side a little bit; not that we push them off the plate but they become back-burner things. We don't make as much of them. What I am saying here is, in this preparation process that John is involved in, and Jesus Himself in his early ministry, if we just simply focus on what we know about what they preached, why would they be preaching on peripheral things? Would they be preaching on “back-burner issues”?

It seems to me that whatever they preached was pretty central to the thinking of God...to the mind of God because this was a crucial time. It's one thing when you're paving the road and you're getting it all ready; you don't want to be going off to the side and planting flowers, too. I mean, the flowers might be nice, but they don't do much to smooth the road out for the king. And that is your purpose—to smooth the road out. The purpose of preaching a baptism of repentance is *to smooth the road out* for the coming of the Messiah and therefore, it *has* to be central to the mind of God and the mind of Christ. It's not a peripheral matter. And I would project from that, that neither is it a

peripheral matter in our teaching it as well. We should have the same focus and emphasis on it – a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. It is just as central now if Jesus is coming into a person's life as it was in the days of John the Baptist. I don't know why we would just push it aside as just a side-note.

Jean – That's like the preachers who preach so many good sermons and then they get to the end and tell you to accept Jesus into your heart. Say a prayer. They don't preach baptism.

Rod: That's why I was so encouraged when the Benham Brothers talked about their dad. I know Methodists that do baptize people; it's important. Now, depending on the type of Methodist, they may baptize a baby and they may sprinkle water on their heads. I don't know the difference between them and "Free Methodists". I'd have to do my research on that. But what encouraged me is that as soon as they encouraged Norma McCorvey and her partner, they baptized them. That was an encouraging message. And I know where the Benham brothers cut their teeth; it was at Liberty University.

In Matthew's account, he emphasizes John's message of repentance as it relates to the kingdom of heaven which was 'at hand'. Now we have another element put into this. We have repentance. We have baptism. We have forgiveness. Now we have the kingdom of heaven put in the mix. This becomes another feature of the message. So if you are looking for the big points of the message, the kingdom must be put in there ... it fits ... because it's the kingdom of heaven which is 'at hand' in Matthew 3:2.

Luke sticks with Mark's summary of the message while Matthew puts in the kingdom idea. The kingdom message is also Jesus' focus when He begins to preach in Mt. 4:17, from that time on Jesus began to preach, "[Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.](#)"

The necessity of repentance is still there, yet tied to a kingdom yet at hand or near.

The word for kingdom is Basileia (βασιλεία) {where we get the word Basilica from}. Basileia means "to rule, dominion, reign, exercise of kingly power." It is referred to as "the Kingdom of God" in Matthew 6:33, "His kingdom" referring to Christ in Mt. 13:41, it's called "the kingdom of our father, David" in Mark 11:10 (there is a relationship between David as king and as Jesus as king – because David was promised that he would always have someone on his throne (Acts 2:29-32 Peter connects the two – the idea of David's throne and Jesus descending from the throne of David to the right hand of God). There is also the kingdom of Christ and of God in Eph. 5:5; The Kingdom of Jesus Christ in Rev. 1:9; the heavenly kingdom in 2 Tim. 4:18 and simply "the kingdom" in Mt. 8:12.

The Old Testament is filled with prophecies of this kingdom, most notably Ps. 2, 110, Isaiah 2:1-4 and Daniel 2:44 referring to the coming kingdom.

The mind of Christ regarding the kingdom is or was different than the expectations most of the people had of his day. We might ask, "What is the proper teaching or mindset of the kingdom for us?" How should we view the kingdom?

I had a conversation today with a gentleman who goes to the Dominican Republic and I told him that I had just been there and what I was doing, and he told me a little bit about what he is doing. He goes in and does equipping work for churches and church leaders to equip them to do better work. I found out later that he's connected to the church where my son Joshua goes so I kind of know what he's doing. He is heavily into discipling programs and he writes literature. But in the course of the conversation, we realized we did similar things and I did some of that in Africa. I told him that we work with people from a lot of different groups and he said, "Yes. We do too." And he immediately he said, "That's kingdom work" ... as opposed to "church work" (which is different denominations). But there is a level above where you work with all faiths in Christ. He referred to that as kingdom work. Now I understand what he means and that's a very popular way of using the word Kingdom today. It's a way of saying that I'm not stuck in "my little church" and saying, "You have to come to my church" to go to heaven. No. You have to be a part of the *kingdom* to go to heaven.

Carole: When I think of "kingdom" I think of "he's the boss". A king, like King David, could have anybody killed. Any king can have you beheaded. So if I'm in God's kingdom, I have to submit myself to Him. It's all about me submitting myself to Him because He is the authority.

Rod: And remember this metaphor that is being used here about preparing the way, is the metaphor of preparing the way for a king who is coming into town and we're making His way smooth. So, his chariot, or whatever he's riding on the road is not bouncing all over the place. They're getting the rocks out of the way ...

The simple answer here when we talk about a kingdom mindset what you're saying ... we put ourselves under the rule and authority of Jesus. We are *His* subjects, but there are various aspects of this. I just noted an article that I read looking at various aspects of 'kingdom' in the way it is used in Scriptures is a good study. It's the ruling authority of God and how it's used in various contexts. But John the Baptist, in preparing Jesus' way had to talk of the kingdom being at hand. That phrase, 'at hand' or 'near' is the word eggizo (εγγιζω) meaning approaching. It is the kingdom that is approaching ... you might even say that we're approaching it. It is the 'coming near' kingdom, getting closer and closer to us.

Clearly, John the Baptist and Jesus knew they were ushering in the kingdom '*prepared since the foundation of the world*'. They knew that God's timing was being fulfilled, as God had a certain timing for this. The prophecies of the Old Testament indicated some of that. A new rule or authority was being initiated where the Father entrusted all authority to His Son. Every person now has a new choice to make regarding the authority of God. Now God's authority rests in His Son. Jesus understood the authority and He administered righteousness accordingly.

Here, where this goes to the mind of Christ, is the idea of (like we talked about before) "when did these things come together in the mind of Christ, where He understood that He had all authority ... it was being given to him" (Matthew 28:18)? [And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.](#)

At what point did it occur to Him? At what point did He receive that authority... the whole idea of being the Anointed One?

Was it when He got up in Nazareth and read from Isaiah 61:1 “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound” and He said that this scripture has been fulfilled today. Does that mean that ‘**that**’ particular day is when God anointed Him, because he had received the anointing of the Spirit at His baptism ... not the synagogue in Nazareth?

I think He was just simply saying that “when you read that Scripture, you know that it is fulfilled in Me.” And they ‘**got**’ that, because the next thing they tried to do was throw Him over a cliff because they thought ‘that’ was blasphemy.

So the idea of being at hand or part of the phrase, is the word eggizo. We noted this also indicates God’s timing regarding this new rule or authority under his Son. The Daniel 2:14 passage, “In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever”, indicates that this new rule would rise in the days of ‘these kings’ (intending the Roman Kings – though they’re not named). The David-like rule did set up the reign of Christ against the earthly kingdoms of Rome and Rome’s opposition to Jesus was part of her demise. (If you don’t believe that, read Revelation with the kingdom of Rome coming up against the Kingdom of Christ.) Rome falls and Christ wins.

But Jesus’ reign is so patently different than reigns of political power that it seems to have no power at all. It doesn’t **appear** to have any power at all. It’s a kingdom, but it’s so unlike the political kingdoms of the world that most people don’t think it **has** any power.

I know that much of understanding the Mind of Christ is the way He perceived absolute authority over against the many lesser authorities in this realm including demons. This authority also includes our finding our place within His rule, both our submission and our exercise of authority. In other words, if we are goin to be kingdom people, we have two aspects of kingdom authority.

The first aspect is being **under** His authority... submitting to Him under His rule. But it is also a **taking** of that authority and using it; of exercising that kingdom authority over other things. This is an authority that we are both under submission to, and He is also able to give that authority to us to do certain things.

When I get questions – particularly when out of the country, questions about this or that, sometimes I have to say, “I don’t have the authority to answer that ... to tell you one way or the other about that.” I can’t answer their question because I don’t have the authority to answer that question. But if you are asking me about ‘this over here’, to tell you what the Bible says about that ... I can answer you. It’s Biblical authority, but it’s also authority ‘over’ certain things.

Jean: I don’t understand what you mean.

Rod: Well, for instance, when Jesus gave the apostles authority over the demons, it wasn’t **just** Biblical authority. They had Biblical authority to go out and preach, but they also had the authority to cast out demons. They had the authority to command in Jesus’ name, and tell the demons to leave. So they had the authority to act and to channel His authority through them, to meet the needs of people.

We have the authority to do what God tells us to do. If I go in the name of somebody else to do something, I have been given that authority. And you see this in the ministry of Paul where in Acts 19:13-16 “Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, “In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.”¹⁴ Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.¹⁵ One day the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?”¹⁶ Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.”

These men said the right words, but they didn't have the authority to cast out those demons. Then the demons turned on them.

Jean: So how can we use that authority today?

Brian: Let me see if you agree with me. Our spiritual warfare is not against people. It has nothing to do with authority but it has to do with servitude. So I think that what the Scripture talks about is authority over the powers and principalities of the world. We have the authority to overcome sin in our lives. WE have power because “sin does not have a hold on us”.

Romans 6:11-14 says, “**In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.** ¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. ¹³ Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. ¹⁴ **For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.**”

So long as we are asking for the Spirit of God to work in us, we overcome. So those powers of this world do not have a hold on us. Is that close?

Rod: And I think, even in prayer; prayer is an example of the authority we have been given. We can appeal to God for the things that we need. We can pray for others for their healing or whatever it may be. We have been given that authority – not cart blanch that because I say it, and it comes out of my mouth it is going to happen, but God says He wants us to pray for other people – I want you to do these things in My name.

Anytime you see the words “in my name” God has given us authority to act on His behalf – in the name of Christ for whatever it is. So if you give a cup of cold water in His name, you won't lose your reward. Now, you can give that cup of water in your own name,

Jean: Why do we do it in His name?

Rod: You do it in His name for *His* glory, for *His* honor, for the name of the kingdom of *God* ... for purposes that were intended by *God*. If you are doing things so others think how good **you** are then you're just doing it in your own authority. Some things have to do, not with the act itself, but with the motivation of why we do it.

So, to get back to the Word of God, if I go to someone and say, “The Bible says this, this and this” and they say, “Where do you get the authority to come tell me that?” I can say that God gave me the authority. He told me to go preach. When He told me to go preach, He gave me the authority to go tell you this.

Jean: I think in our society, they are so anti-God – do we have the authority to fight these things?

Rod: Yes we do. I think that to pray over things ... One of the things I talked about at the fundraiser today at the pregnancy center ... I know thousands of people have prayed and prayed and prayed and asked God to do something about this thing with abortion. Right now we're in the middle of "Forty Days of Prayer" and a lot of people are focused on prayer. Today, I mentioned to people that **my perception** is that the momentum is changing –that we are seeing all kinds of things happen across this land with the abortion issues being put on the **front burner**. Now I know that there is some exceptions to this – notable exceptions like in New York where they just passed the law there, but there are other places aren't getting nearly the attention, like Kentucky and Georgia where they're passing partial birth laws to roll back abortion. A couple of weeks ago, there was some funding that was to be given to Planned Parenthood, about 8 million dollars, that was taken away and is being redistributed to pregnancy centers by the Federal Government!

Jean: Is this an example of using the power of God...

Rod: I think it's an example of using the power and authority of God. The evil that is in this world, the abortions that were being paid out of our federal dollars, to countries overseas—all that money has been withdrawn. We are no longer paying for abortions overseas anymore, but there are **a lot** of signs. There are abortion centers that are closing down all over the country. Planned Parenthood Centers are closing down all over the country. Even in that very Planned Parenthood center where Abby Johnson was the director, that center of the movie "Unplanned" has closed down. It doesn't exist in Brian, Texas any more.

There are far more pregnancy centers, that are Christian based Pregnancy Centers, in this land than there are Planned Parenthood Centers because we are pushing for more of these centers to open up, and Planned Parenthood is finding it increasingly difficult to make money on abortions so because of legislation that is being enacted.

Jean: Are we actually fighting against abortion?

Rod: We are fighting against the spiritual forces of evil that is manifested by the killing of babies.

Jean: {Something about evil forces in ?}

Rod: Exactly. So what I am saying here is that we as Christians can cower in some corner thinking about {not} having authority or any say in what is going on in the world, or we can preach the truth. We can **stand** for the truth as if we have authority. so I think there is a boldness that comes. In Acts chapter 4 when Peter and John were let out of prison and the people there had been praying for them. Look at that prayer. God, you need to consider their threats. And you need to embolden us. Give us the power and authority to preach Your word boldly. It says, He did that, and ³¹ "After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly." They went back out into the streets where they had been arrested. I believe they had taken the authority that God gave them through the Great Commission and exercising that authority.

That's why Peter said, Look, You tell us not to preach, but we must obey God rather than men. ¹⁹ But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! ²⁰ As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

Carole: But when we go out, we go with love and respect thinking of the other person.

Rod: Right.

I saw an interview with Phil Robertson from Duck Dynasty and it was a powerful interview:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IL0I4ZT3DGs>

He talked about how one day somebody came to him and said, "Do you know that in Duck Dynasty, when you're around the table praying in Jesus' name, they're cutting out the word 'Jesus' from the prayer?" And Phil said he didn't care that much about the show, but he said, "I didn't know they were cutting that out." So he called them up and at the next meeting he had with them, he said, "What are you doing cutting out Jesus from my prayer?" He said, "I want you to put that back in there."

So the next time they filmed, he bowed his head and started praying, saying (and I can't quote it verbatim but), "Lord, you know these people that are making this television program and they've have decided to take the name of your Son out of my prayer. Now, God, I don't want you to call down fire from heaven right now on them, because I just pray that you won't burn them up right now, but I pray that they'll have the sense to put Your Son's name back in the prayer and if they don't, You can just do whatever You like – just burn them up God. In the name of Jesus, Amen."

He said, 'and I stopped that prayer, and they were filming it...recording it. He looked up and their eyes were big and he turned around and looked at them and said, "You had better leave Jesus' name in this prayer." And they put it back in'.

Here is a case where I think Phil Robertson used the authority he had in Christ telling his TV people "Don't mess with the name of Jesus." Don't mess with that name. And they did what he said. He didn't care about their money. He didn't care about the show. He told them that when he accepted that show, he expected to go on the show and do this project to give him a platform to preach on. That was the only reason he took the show – for a bigger platform to reach people. And he didn't have to be ugly about it but they got the point.

The Mind of Christ Class

Week 13

April 17, 2019

We are in Matthew 3:7-10 and Luke 3:7-14 looking at John's Messages

{We are talking about John the Baptist in the wilderness (uninhabited places), wearing clothes of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. Was this a strange sight? – I just turned the recorder on}

John wore this "rough" clothing. I don't know how unusual it was for someone in his day to wear these kinds of things. But he certainly wasn't wearing "soft" clothing. Jesus was talking about this in Luke 7:25-28 when He said, "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? ²⁵ If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear expensive clothes and indulge in luxury are in palaces. ²⁶ But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ²⁷ This is the one about whom it is written: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you."

What does clothing have to do with anything? We see that He noticed John, but I think He was getting at something a little deeper than fine-clothed people when they went out to see John . . . what had they anticipated seeing. John may have looked totally different from what they expected to see.

Brian: That may have been the typical clothing of a prophet, maybe like Elijah. So they were going out to see a prophet.

Rod: Yes. It could be even *more* than that. They may have been going out to see what they thought might be the Messiah. And Messiah's are kings. So they may have had this anticipation of going out to see a king and they get out there and see a guy in camel's hair, a leather belt, with a locust hanging out of his mouth and honey dripping off his chin, or something. (giggles) Are they thinking, "What kind of king is this?"

I'm struggling with Jesus' words later on in Luke 7:25-28, "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? What did you expect? Did you expect someone in fine raiment – someone who lives in a king's house? And they obviously didn't get that. He said, 'Did you go to see a reed shaken by the wind? What were you anticipating seeing?' What did John's attire communicate to Jesus?"

Well . . . the unexpected – the most unlikely one to usher in a kingdom and prepare the way for a king. There was nothing on the outside to impress people.

Now, remember, when David was selected as a king, they put before Samuel all of the brothers before David. Samuel thought that surely one of these brothers would be the one. He looked at all of them, and David wasn't even there . . . they hadn't brought him in.

He was out in the wilderness with the sheep. And Samuel said, "Do you have any more sons?" Yes, I've got one more. He's the youngest and he's out there with the sheep. "Bring him in." Now I wonder how **he** was dressed . . . but he was working. He had his working clothes on. David shows up, and do you remember what . . . when God says, "This is the one." He was not selected because

of his outward appearance, but because of his heart.” 1 Samuel 16:7 says, “But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’”

So when Jesus saw John the Baptist, what did He see? He wasn't looking at his outward appearance. That had nothing to do with Him – being impressed by what he was wearing. He saw John's heart. He said in Luke 7:28, “²⁸ I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is *least* in the kingdom of God is greater than he.” You may think he's some hillbilly or you may think he's some local yokel here who can't afford a decent set of clothes, but that's not what God sees; it's not what God sees.

John was dressed roughly. He ate plainly. Locusts were allowed under the law. You could eat locusts under the law. It's all protein. Locusts are 60% protein, so if you are on a good protein diet, go out and buy a bag of locusts. You can toast them up a bit to make them crunchy. Rock honey is a good supplement. The diet was not considered unusual back then. John wasn't fancy, but God did not need *fancy*. He needed **faithful**. That is what He was looking for.

I want you to think about 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 when Paul was talking about the wisdom of God and the wisdom of man. In the wisdom of man, man would not have “done” salvation the way God did salvation. God does the unexpected. He doesn't go after the wise, the scholars or all of that. He looks for people who are faithful, and people who understand **His** wisdom and message.

I thought about that today. We often wonder if “the Baptist” were a preacher today would any church hire him? I mean, if he came in dressed in a camel's hair coat ...”

Ruth: He kept confronting people. He was too confrontational.

Rod: Yes

Brian: He called people snakes.

Rod: Right, “You brood of vipers.” And Jesus said the same thing in Matthew 23:33 “**You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?**”

So when we think about what impresses God versus what impresses men... This whole movement today about “How to go about doing church is so often about, “How do you ‘market’ something ... how do we ‘package’ it in a way to get people's attention or impress them or keep them... Again, I don't know. I guess there is room for some of that but we can sure lose our way. We can go to seed on that and not look for **faithful**.

Mike: I remember, when I was young, I had the impression in my head, that John was a crazy looking guy. Rightly or wrongly, that was the impression I had. But it doesn't seem like people were offended by dress. He was a very effective speaker. I don't know why, but with me, as a youngster, I had the impression that he was almost like the guy standing on the corner waving banners...

Rod: Yes. I don't want to make too much of this, but simply, when you look at key people and when God notices and says, 'I want you to do this work' it didn't seem to have much to do with their outward appearance, or their degrees, or a lot of things **we** think are important. God saw something else in people.

Matthew notes that Jerusalem and all of Judea and the district around the Jordan were going out to John the Baptist. (3:5 **People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan.**) John was causing such a sensation. People from all over flocked to hear John and to be baptized by him. (3:4 **Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.**) What was it that drew people to this person? Was it the anticipation of the coming Messiah? Were they caught up in some religious frenzy? What was the conversation between the husband and wife the day before they went out to see him? Was it, "We're going to see John the Baptist? Pack a lunch. Come on, kids. We're going out to the Jordan tomorrow."

We don't know what happened once they got there and actually heard John preach, but they submitted to baptism in the muddy Jordan River, just like Namaan did all those centuries earlier, **and** they confessed their sins.

The word "confess" here means to acknowledge, to profess, to agree with, to concede or to seek out the same things as another. When I confess something, it means I'm agreeing with someone else. You say, "You did it" and I say, "Okay. I did."

Ruth: We went to a baptism in Africa once and walking down to the river, they yelled at the man, "Have you been guilty of sin?"
"Yes, I have".
"Did you repent?"
"Yes. I repent of—" and he went on to list fornication.
"Did you treat your children badly?"
"I did it. I repent of it." The whole walk was a confession of sin. And it was like, "Oh, my goodness. I didn't want to know all that about him." I thought, "We don't do that here."

Rod: We downplay it, at least.

Ruth: It sounded like John, who called these people, and called them really bad names. He even talked about the King, or he wouldn't have gotten himself imprisoned.

Rod: He only called the 'leaders' bad names. He wasn't calling the rank and file bad names. He centered his really harsh comments on the leaders.

Ruth: It would be like talking about preachers. We're not supposed to talk about preachers that way. And he was talking bad about Herod...

Rod: Yes. I've gotten in trouble doing that a couple of times. I didn't get thrown in jail but I can think of a really tense time where I called somebody out. It wasn't at a church service, but at a meeting of church leaders and I called him out. But that's another story.

So this is added to other key words in John the Baptist's ministry. There are certain key words in John's ministry that help us understand. **Repentance** is one of the words, and **Baptism, Kingdom, forgiveness,** and now **confession**. Those are five key words in the ministry of John the Baptist. If you pick out those words, you can get a pretty good idea of what his preaching was like.

All of this is directed, one way or another, to their sin. The Greek word is "hamartía" (αμαρτια). It means "to miss the mark of God's law". So this is the problem. This is the thing that must be dealt with. This is Jesus' target. He must destroy sin to reunite us with God. Our argument with Him on this matter begins with our admitting that we are sinners and that we need forgiveness. I am reading a book right now that addresses this point. It is about why many churches are moving away from the teaching of the atonement of Christ. The death of Christ was for the forgiveness of our sins, and they just teach moral universalism; that man is basically good and doesn't really need a savior or someone to die for them. They just need an example. They just need someone to live a good life before them to show them how to live a good life.

One of the reasons they are not teaching the atonement is because they do not want to call out anybody's sin, because in a day and age where there's **your** truth, **my** truth and **everybody's** truth...then there can't be any real sin involved. And if there is no real sin, you don't need any real atonement for sin. There is quite a movement away from that. But those churches are dying probably about as fast as some people on the other end of the scale who are so hyper-legalistic that nobody wants to be around them. You've got the two ends of the scale where one is so liberal that anything goes, and the other is so conservative that nobody but the preacher can go to heaven. (I'm saying 'the preacher' because **somebody** has to go).

Jean: I was told that you had to repent and be baptized so if you're baptized too young, you don't have a lot to repent of. They were even against baptism at 12 years old. I was baptized at twelve and I don't know what I was 'thinking of'. But I wanted to obey God.

Rod: Well, we talked about that with Sunny today. That was one of the topics of conversation – about the nature of sin and repentance.

Let's go to the next section, **Matthew 3:7-10** [But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ¹⁰The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.](#)

We learn in a little more detail about the nature of repentance. Luke has the most complete account of a specific incidence of John the Baptist's preaching. Matthew indicates that the target audience was the Sadducees and Pharisees, but Luke has him addressing everyone, so there is a difference between the two accounts.

These were coming for baptism, but it appears that they were merely doing it for show without the seriousness that it deserves. Baptism must mean something very serious for John the Baptist to refuse them. Most preachers are anxious to baptize people. They're not in the business of turning people away from being baptized. So, for a preacher to say, 'No, I'm not going to baptize you', there must have been an indication that they weren't taking it very seriously. He understood that they didn't really 'get it'...the repentance part of baptism.

John the Baptist addressed, at least the leaders, as ‘a brood of vipers’. Jesus uses the phrase in Matthew 23:33 for His condemnation three years later and it is possible that some of the same ones who heard John say, ‘brood of vipers’ may have been the same ones who were in the crowd when Jesus said it three years later.

‘Brood of vipers’ literally means ‘offspring of vipers’. A viper was a serpent, and offspring is the natural fruit that it produces. A poisonous snake can only reproduce a poisonous snake, so a rattlesnake doesn’t *give birth* to a black snake (*or lay eggs*).

The brood of snakes were under some warning here but did they really sense the alarm? Did they have a sense that there was really a danger that they were in? If I told you to get out of the building right now, that there is a fire, I could probably tell pretty quickly if you were taking me seriously or not. Those who got up to make their way out of the building – I would think they believed me. They are taking the warning seriously. If you just sit there and say, “I’m tired. I don’t want to go anywhere”, I would know that you probably are not taking the warning very seriously.

Carole: I never thought about it before, but now that you have explained ‘brood of vipers’ it’s almost like He’s telling them that your father is Satan ... You’re the children of Satan.

Rod: Yes. You’re the offspring. You’re the natural prodigy, in fact.

So did they really sense this alarm? Is this their purpose for coming out to John? When he uses the word “warn” it means to indicate, intimate or suggest. Who suggested that they flee from the coming wrath? This is the idea of taking flight, or escaping – that they are under the penalty of a coming wrath. We need to let this sink in a little bit because this is pretty serious business. This is more than simply saying to somebody, “you’re lost and need to be saved.” This is saying that there is a **coming wrath ... there’s a coming tornado – there’s a coming hurricane ... there is something major coming** and **YOU** need to take shelter now! You **need** to hunker down right now or you will be blown away here. It’s more than just a warning that Jesus is issuing to them. So John the Baptist has a reality in his message. He is telling others to prepare others for this coming wrath. So, the mind of Christ had in it the reality of the wrath of God coming upon sin and sinners, and an urgency to win as many as possible to faith and avoidance of this wrath.

If you want to see urgency in the preaching of anybody – this is it! Do we really believe that the wrath of God is coming upon the world? Do we really believe that God is going to pour out His wrath on the Day of Judgment? Now, it doesn’t matter what we **think** about that ... about a loving God would never do that, He would never hurt anybody. This is not what this is talking about.

Remember, we **are** by nature objects of wrath. **Ephesians 2:1-3**, “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath” **By nature!**

We are by **nature**, objects of wrath. There has to be something to remove us and make us the object of his love and mercy or we are going to remain objects of God’s wrath?

And the wrath of God, as it says in Romans 1:18-20, “is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness,¹⁹ since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.²⁰ For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.” This wrath is coming upon **all** wickedness ... all un-repentant sin ... all unforgiven sin. The wrath of God is going to be poured out on that.

When I talked to Sunni today, I talked about this. She was very sharp today. She made the statement, “What is God going to do? When I am baptized, what is God going to do?” I said, “That’s a very, very good question because it’s not so much what *I’m* going to do and what *you’re* going to do. It’s about what **God** is going to do.” I said that He is going to take your sins away and remove those sins. And that removes us from being objects of God’s wrath. Now you’ll be an object of mercy ... an object of grace. And that’s the point. And if we really believe that the wrath of God is coming upon this world, then what would change about the urgency and the way we reach out to other people? God’s wrath was real to them – to Jesus and to John the Baptist. Everything was not *okay* for the unredeemed. It was not okay.

So John the Baptist’s response to this ‘brood of vipers’ was to bring some evidence of their change of heart. He wanted to see something visible that demonstrated that they had a change of heart. So John the Baptist said, “The fruit should be **worthy**, or of equal value of repentance. It must be comparable, estimable or corresponding or suitable to repentance. In other words, the action must correspond to idea of repentance.

It’s kind of like our currency. The dollar is a paper currency. It used to be backed up by **gold**. Now, our currency is **not** backed up by gold. Okay, there has to be something that backs it up. If you go out and borrow money against our house, the lender will send someone out to do an appraisal so he can tell what the *real* value of your house is. It is so the money the bank gives you to refinance your loan or whatever, they want to **know** that there is something of **substance** that will back up the money that they are going to give you. Then they know that if you do not pay back that money, they could take your house to have something ‘of substance’ to bargain with to get their money back.

John is basically saying, “You can say all you want: ‘I repent’, I repent, I repent, I repent, but John is saying, show me some collateral here. Show me something to back that up.” There has to be evidence of it. There has to be proof or otherwise, you’re just *talking*. You are just talking a good game.

Jean: I remember a book, “I’m Okay, You’re Okay” and that’s the philosophy of this world today. They think everything is okay with God. And we don’t want to tell people that they’re not okay.

Rod: Yes. That’s true.

Paul used the same term in Acts 26:20 when he was talking about the Gentiles. He said “**that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds.**” Their deeds should be **appropriate to repentance**. There are certain deeds that are *appropriate to repentance* and some deeds that don’t prove repentance at all. John is going to get into some detail about this in a minute.

In another context, the thief on the cross recognized that he and his companion were receiving punishment corresponding to their deeds. In other words, he said, “We deserve what we’re getting. The punishment that we are getting is compensation for our deeds. It is tied to what we actually did. But he recognized that the punishment Jesus was receiving was not deserved ... it didn’t correspond to how He lived His life.

Since man’s heart is deceitful, we must prove our sincerity by our deeds. Later, James will teach that faith must also be evidenced by deeds. John will make the same case about love. Jesus did the same. “Not everyone that says to me Lord, Lord will enter the Kingdom of heaven but he who **does** the will of the Father...” In other words, it is not what we say; it is not what we indicate with our mouths that makes the difference with God. He wants to see the evidence in our lives. There has to be a corresponding action that proves that it’s real. Now, **the action itself doesn’t save us**, but it’s an indication that the *heart* is right.

This is what John is getting at here, so it’s a really powerful lesson on Repentance. And this is what is in the mind of Christ. When He calls people, He’s not simply looking for ‘lip service’, “I will, I will, I will”. Remember the two sons. The father says to the two sons, go and work in my field. One son says, “I will” and doesn’t. The other son says, “I won’t” but then he changes his mind and does. Jesus asks, ‘which son was justified?’ It’s the son who actually **did** it ... the one who actually followed through and did what he was told. So John will go into more detail on this about the concept of what fruit is appropriate *to prove* genuine repentance? That’s next week.

Back to the word repentance, “metanoia” (μετάνοια), it has two components to it. There are two components to repentance. First, there’s the idea of compunction or guilt that leads us to a willingness to reform. There has to be a measure of guilt. The word “guilt” is not liked by the world today. We don’t want to make anybody feel guilty about anything, but you will *never* repent unless you feel guilty. That’s why the people on the Day of Pentecost were “cut to the heart”. They felt guilty because they helped to crucify Jesus. And **that** is the compunction part of repentance. So there is a reformation – and it’s the reversal of a decision. That is what repentance is. It’s to *think* differently or ‘to reconsider’. There is a change of mind, a relenting, a feeling of regret or sorrow that goes along with repentance. 2 Cor. 7:10-11 is an excellent explanation of repentance.

(In 2 Cor. 7:10-11 Paul says, “Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.”¹¹ See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.”) Paul uses about nine things to describe the nature of true repentance.

I belabor this point because it is *central* to the thinking of Jesus. Man must be convicted and persuaded to turn from sin, to come to Him for rescue, salvation, forgiveness and freedom; otherwise he faces the coming wrath. This act of repentance, or should we say, “this state of repentance” is essential to salvation to a relationship with God and to spiritual growth. One cannot remain the same after meeting Jesus and hearing His gospel. Accepting our condition and need to change is often hard. Our will must be broken and brought under Kingdom authority and the rule of Jesus as Lord. That is what is at stake in the preaching of John the Baptist!

Man's thinking or mindset up against the mind of Christ is distorted. So when we look at the thinking of man versus the thinking of Jesus, man's thinking is **always** the distorted thinking. We've talked about cognitive distortion for years. They are things like jumping to conclusions, or taking things out of proportion –those are just things we typically do.

But Jesus' mind was not distorted. It was totally clear and totally focused. He was totally **right** in His thinking all the time. John the Baptist anticipates **their** thinking, and literally says, "Don't say to yourselves ...". In other words, when I tell you to repent, and I tell you that there is a coming wrath, don't delay. You're going to be talking to yourself when you hear that. But don't delay. When you are confronted with the necessity of repentance, man thinks to say something ... to defend himself ... to minimize it. Don't say, 'Oh, it's not that bad' or 'you're overstating your case'. Don't tell yourself that He's a loving God and could never be a wrathful God. John says – don't think to say things that should not be said. That includes thinking with others among yourselves, and that's often what happens if we have when 'group think'. Don't think to say among yourselves, where you hear something and look at someone else and ask, "Did he really say the wrath of God is coming?" Then you try to talk each other out of what was just said. He says, "Don't think to say to yourselves..." You reinforce it by the numbers who agree with you.

If I can get a lot of people to agree with me, I can feel a whole lot better about it not being as bad as John says it is. So, in order for our minds to conform to the mind of Christ, we **have to be challenged** in our thinking. Our self-talk can be destructive. **Jesus' commands are not to be argued with but obeyed and obeyed from the heart** with no resistance. In other words, Jesus doesn't throw out something and say, "Okay, you all talk about it amongst yourselves and think about it and have a little group discussion about this." Jesus does not have small group discussions with the Apostles and say, "Tell me what you think about this God thing...Hey, Nicodemus, how do you like this..." He **tells** Nicodemus that unless you are born again you will not enter the Kingdom of heaven. This is non-negotiable. This is not up for discussion. There was no argument about it. It's just the way it **is!**

It was a common play of the Jews to point to their ancestry, especially their relationship to father Abraham from 2,000 years earlier, and they seemed to think that by mere genetic connection they enjoyed a right relationship with God. It was a sort of 'shared righteousness' relieving them of personal repentance. In other words, they were exempt from personal repentance because "Abraham is our father. Don't you know who I am?"
And I kind of grew up with that—

I remember very distinctly when I was in School at Georgia Christian, my granddaddy helped start that school in 1914. I felt that **that** gave me a little bit of a 'pass' because my granddaddy helped start it. So when a teacher would call me down, I would be thinking to myself, 'Don't you know who I am? My granddaddy started this school. And don't call me down and tell me I can't do this because you wouldn't even have a job if my granddaddy hadn't started this school.' But he didn't care **who** my granddaddy was! Jesus didn't care, really, who **their** granddaddy was either. And I remember thinking that I don't have to personally repent because of who my ancestors were. And they tried this with Jesus in John 8:54-56. You think John is tough. Read John 8 when they brought it up with Jesus!

Jesus replied, “If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. ⁵⁵ Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and obey his word. ⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.”

⁵⁷ “You are not yet fifty years old,” they said to him, “and you have seen Abraham!”

“I’m going to tell you who your father is. If Abraham **were** your father, you wouldn’t treat me like this. That’s not how Jesus treated God. Your father is the devil. That’s who **your** father is. Jesus was rougher than John was about that.

John the baptist shows that one’s relationship with God is not corporate and it’s not inherited. Remember the Ezekiel 18:4, 20 passage, “**The one who sins is the one who will die.**” The father does not pay for the sins of the son and the son does not pay for the sins of the father. “**The child will not share the guilt of the parent, nor will the parent share the guilt of the child.**” It’s the old thing, “every pot sits on its own bottom.” That’s not what Scripture says, but it’s an old saying for everybody taking responsibility for their own life, and their own choices.

Brian: It’s in 1st Opinions, or Valdosta 2:3 {**Rod was raised in Valdosta, Georgia**}

Rod: That’s the Valdosta explanation of Ezekiel 18.

So one’s relationship with God is individual, and it’s personal. Jesus would die for **all** and for **each**. If God were merely interested in descendants, he could produce them in any number of ways including turning stones into children. Compare this to Satan’s first temptation of Jesus turning stones into bread. That was mere child’s play compared to what God is able to do. The ability, God is able, ‘dunamis’, denotes what is possible for God. It is God’s power and strength. But just because God **can** do something, it does not mean that it is His will to do it. That’s not where he gets descendants of Abraham, by turning stones into children.

Carole: We can say Abraham is my father ... Wow, we’re related to Abraham, but it wasn’t **Abraham** that God loved. It was the **faith** of Abraham **that’s** what saves us.

Rod: Exactly. Now that I’m older and I can look back on my attitude when I was in school, it should have been, ‘I have been called to a higher standard because my granddaddy helped start this school.’ It was his idea, and the idea of other men and women in that community to have a school where people would be taught to obey and respect God and respect authority. And I wasn’t honoring my grandfather by calling him into play. I was dishonoring my grandfather by calling him into play. I was using him as a “get out of jail free” card where I should have been looking at him as a model of somebody who thought it was important to obey God and obey those who were over you. But I didn’t look at it that way.

Comment: You were a little bit younger...

I was a little younger, and turned it around. It made a good debate at the time, but I didn’t win. Unfortunately I didn’t win. Regarding the idea of ‘repent’, the end of a board on my rear end ...

So God does seek **true** descendants of Abraham, but not those ‘outwardly’ Jews, but those who are of the **faith** of Abraham. See Romans 4. ¹⁶ **Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law**

but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. See Romans 11:19-20 “You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.” ²⁰ Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble. ²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.” See the book of Galatians. All of that is found there.

Turning stones into Jews was also child’s play compared to how Jesus had to fulfill God’s plan of redemption in order to bear **true children, sons and daughters of God**. You know, if God could make us His children by just simply turning us into it ... Wow! Then Jesus wouldn’t have to go to the cross. But God did it the hard way. The only way was for Jesus to go to the cross and that’s how we get to be sons. This power is the power of the gospel of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

In **Matthew 3:10** and **Luke 3:9**, John the Baptist speaks of an ax that is laid at the root of the tree. I know a little bit about that because I’ve been digging stumps lately. I’ve been getting my ax out and my hatchet out and laid them out at the root of the tree. The context demands that this is about repentance and the coming kingdom. What is the person with the ax looking for?

I know when I’ve gone out and dug around that tree that Brenda wanted out of the front yard this last weekend, I dug around the tree and I found the roots of the tree. Fortunately these weren’t very big roots. I didn’t use the ax...I had a hatchet. What was I looking for? Any idea? What was I searching for as I was looking around in there? I was looking for what was holding this thing to the ground. I knew that I could not just push it over. Even if I hooked a chain to it, I wasn’t sure I could not just pull it up. I knew I had to sever the roots in order to get the stump out to fell the tree. So when you think about what God is trying to do, He’s trying to take the tree down. And you take the tree down from the bottom. You don’t take the tree down from the bottom. Well, you can but if you are going to get the stump and everything, you can start at the top and work your way down. That’s how tree trimmers take trees down. But they eventually got to get that stump. they’re either going to grind it into the ground, or they’re going to get under there and they’re going to cut the roots and somehow pull it out.

But actually, ‘what is John looking for? Why is he even considering taking the roots out or cutting this tree down in the first place? What is he looking for in that tree?

Brian: Fruit

Rod: He’s looking for fruit. Actually, they’re looking for ‘**good**’ fruit on this tree, and if they don’t find it, they’ll get rid of the tree. So this is an ominous image. Compare it to Romans 11:19-21, “You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.” ²⁰ Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble. ²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

And compare it to Jesus encounter with the fig tree that was all leaves and no fruit. This is not some distant future threat. The ax is **at** the root ... not the trunk of the tree. In fact, John the Baptist has found the root of the problem in Israel! He is not attacking the symptoms. He’s not pulling leaves off the tree. He’s not cutting branches off the tree. He’s looking for the **root** of the problem. And he wants to attack it at the root. The **lifeline of the tree is about to be severed!**

The ax is “laid” Keimai (κειμαι) meaning to lay down, to place, to set it at the root of the tree. John 2:6 talks about pots that are “set” there. The ax has been carefully placed at the root to sever the very life of the tree ... to cut off the life line of the tree. There must be change, or they will be cut down and burned.

So, the picture here is that you take the tree down so it has no more life in it. And that was the problem they had with that other stump. You could take so much of the tree down, but there was still life in the stump and it kept sprouting. And we just kept hacking away at the stump trying to get the thing down there so there would be no more life in it. Bless its heart. It just kept coming back.

So John is really trying to find the root of this thing to get this thing out of here so it won't come back. It's like Brazilian pepper. If you don't pull them up from the roots or they come back twice as full. You have to pull them up by the roots.

So John continues with the response of the people. They wanted to know what they needed to do and we'll take that on next time here because he's going to get into some very specific things about the nature of repentance. When they start asking the question, ‘what do we really need to do’, that's the same question that they asked on the day of Pentecost. “What do we need to do?” When they were convinced that they had a part in crucifying the Son of God, they asked, “What must we do?” “What do we do?”

John is going to go into some great detail about the nature of the repentance with some very specific people here, and I think we can learn a lot about the nature of our repentance. It goes far beyond just simply being ‘sorry’ for something.

Jean: Isn't that the first thing John first said, “Bring forth fruits of repentance? Didn't John tell them ‘don't steal any more, don't take more money than you should. It's very simple everyday things. We should be doing these things every day of our lives.

Rod: Exactly. We'll get into detail on that and look at what he told them to do. And what we'll see here is there is both the positive and the negative to repentance in the words of John the Baptist. It's not just about “stop doing something” but also what you start doing .

Jean: Like giving water to someone or giving someone something to drink. That's repentance too.

Rod: Yes. Matthew 25

April 24, 2019
Week 14

Let's pick up in Luke **Chapter 3:7-14**

We're toward the end of where John the Baptist is teaching about repentance and baptism and he gets into some detail here in Luke.

John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ⁹The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

¹⁰ "What should we do then?" the crowd asked.

¹¹ John answered, "Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same."

¹² Even *tax collectors came to be baptized*. "Teacher," they asked, "what should we do?"

¹³ "Don't collect any more than you are required to," he told them.

¹⁴ Then some *soldiers* asked him, "And what should **we** do?"

He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely—be content with your pay."

Let's talk a little bit more about the idea of repentance from John the Baptist. He called them to things that were very appropriate to the life of the person. There are negative acts that we *shouldn't* do and positive aspects that we *should* do.

Luke continues with the response of the people. They wanted to know what they needed to do. We compare that with the question that was asked in Acts 2:37 when those people were convicted after Peter told the crowd that they had crucified the Messiah. They also asked what they needed to do.

³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter didn't go into detail about repentance, he just told them to repent and be baptized.

These are the exact questions the preaching of Jesus and John the Baptist were designed to take people to. They needed to bring people to that place of repentance. Peter's answer was, "Repent and be baptized." John the Baptist had the same answer, but he goes on to explain the nature of repentance in practical ways.

We have three groups: the crowds, the tax collectors and the soldiers. So to all, he tells them to share their clothes, and share their food. "What do you have", he wants to know. Begin with what is in your hand. That's where it starts. It doesn't begin with what you don't have. It begins with what you "do" have.

Everybody comes to Christ with a certain something in their hand ... and that's not *just* material goods. They have something that they bring to the relationship with Christ, or any relationship. In marriage, the husband brings something to the relationship; the wife brings something as well. It is the same with friends, co-workers, bosses etc.

The rule, here, is if you have more than enough, you let go of it and you give. Now, define, 'what is more than enough.' That may be difficult. How do we know when we have more than enough?

Jean: I think if you see someone with less than you have, you can give because you have more.

Rod: Okay

Jean: You'll have less, they'll have more and you'll be equal.

Rod: We'll find that principle in Acts 4:33 b-34 where Luke says, "[And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all ³⁴ that there were no needy persons among them.](#)"

This demonstrates that repentance is a letting go of possessions. That is fruit. Fruit may be what you let go of.

The Tax Collectors were there and they came to be baptized, (v. 4) and they wanted to know what specifically *they* needed to do. John's answer was, "Collect no more than you are ordered to or appointed to. The word means they had a certain quota by Rome and that was what they had to collect. They had a tax code that they were supposed to follow. It was probably a pretty onerous tax code. These tax collectors were obligated to their employer to collect what they were told to collect. But they're told to collect no more than they were ordered to.

Jesus has Matthew and Zacchaeus, people who collected taxes. Repentance is not only letting go of what one has, but it is *not taking* from others more than one has a right to. That also is involved in repentance. Do not demand from somebody something that you don't have a right to. Now that could cover a whole bunch of things. You have to understand what you have a 'right to'. That's why even in the 10 Commandments, He says, "Do not covet your neighbors ox" or "your neighbor's wife" because you do not have a right to their ox. You don't have a right to their wife. Do not take, or try to gain, what you do not have a right to. That would cover stealing, obviously. You don't take something from somebody that you don't own. But if you think of that principle, if everybody would abide by that principle of repentance, we would stop ourselves before we cross the line into an area where we don't have the right to be.

Sin is called **Trespassing**. When you enter into an area where you have no right to be, then you trespass. So repentance is "Stay in your lane." "Stay in your yard." "Mind your business." "Earn your own bread." You can then *share* with people who have. That is the good part of it. But don't take from people who you don't have a right to.

Jean: I have an example of this. I had a friend who wanted to **give** a car to another friend and he wouldn't do it. She was moving and wasn't taking the car with her, but he wouldn't accept the car. He looked up the blue book price and paid for it. But she wanted to give it.

Rod: Well, in 2 Samuel 24:22-3, an example we used a couple of Sunday's ago, was when David, at the threshing floor of Araunah, wanted to buy the threshing floor to build an altar to the Lord to stop the plague that was killing his people. In verse 22, Araunah said, "[Let my lord the king take whatever he wishes and offer it up. Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and here are threshing sledges and ox yokes for the wood. ²³ Your Majesty, Araunah gives all this to the king.](#)" Araunah also said to him, "May the Lord your God accept you."

²⁴ But the king replied to Araunah, “No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing.” David said that he would not offer something to the Lord that cost him nothing. I will pay for it. Don’t give it to me.

Rod: You can look at that and think that there is an element of pride in that, or whatever. There’s one thing to be able to accept a gift graciously from somebody, but there’s a time when you say, “I don’t want you to do that. I want to be able to pay my way.”

This happens very rarely, but I remember when my kids got a little bit older and they were earning some money and we would go out. And I thought it was really great when they would just insist on paying for their **own** hamburger. But occasionally they would say, “I got this dad. I’ll pay for yours”. I would think, ‘man. Okay. I really like this.’

This actually happened last Sunday Tim called and said, “We want to take you and mom out to lunch.” Well, it didn’t take me long to accept that. I said, “Yes sir” and I didn’t fight over the check at all. I wanted to teach him ‘how to give.” (giggles)

So it’s a little tricky sometimes, trying to figure out what you have a right to and what you don’t have a right to. Some things are easy, but others are a bit more difficult. In the area of “what is your business, ... what business is it of yours to do x, y, z.? Of course, if somebody looked at you and said, “Mind your own business, maybe you’d get out of there pretty quickly”.

Now to the soldiers, John tells them two things. I don’t know if it identifies them as Roman soldiers or of the Temple Guard, but it probably wouldn’t matter either way. The Roman Soldiers would have more authority over the population.

The Soldiers are told three things:

1. Do not take money by force.
2. Make no false accusations. Don’t accuse people of things they didn’t do.
3. Be content with your wages.

So, here are people who have the power of the sword. They are law-enforcement, if you will. Then can hurt you. They can hurt you in many different ways. They can hurt you physically, by physical force, or they can make you do things that you don’t want to do. They can put you in jail for things you didn’t do. They have power over you.

He is telling them that they have a higher burden here to bear. They need to learn how to control this power that they have. Jesus was a good example of that as He had more power than anybody. He had the ability to do all kinds of things...anything He wanted to do. But He had power under Control. He used His power for good and not for harm.

So the abuse of power is being addressed in this. I would say that this one Scripture alone would kill a lot of the abuses in this whole world. This abuse of power is world-wide. People get into a place where they have control over lives of other people, and they are not very benevolent rulers.

So the common denominator of these instructions is that *it hits at the heart of the person*. It asks, “Where is your treasure? What are your values? What is important to you? Is clothes, or food, or money, or power over other people ... is that more important to you than the person themselves? And when those things become more important to you than the person, you are probably going to sin. You are probably going to do something wrong.

Jean: Did he talk about being content with your wages?

Rod: Well, obviously, it is the same for the tax collector. When the tax collector exacts more tax than he has a right to, he gets paid twice. He gets paid the salary that came out of the taxes, but then he also gets a cut off the top. He takes something to ‘pocket’.

Jean: Was the soldier taking something more than he was supposed to?

Rod: He could. He was told ‘don’t take money by force.’ And if you accuse somebody of something, what is the person going to do? He could say, “Okay. I’ll let you off.”

Brian: We discovered that with the customs officials in Nigeria. That was very common.

Jean: Is that the same as if you have a job and ask for a raise? Must you always be content with what you have?

Rod: No, I don’t think that has anything to do with that. A man is worthy of his hire. You must treat your laborers appropriately. It’s a just thing to do. If you’re in a job, and you contract for that job at a certain wage, then don’t go out there through evil means to try to increase your paycheck. Now, if you could go back by legitimate means to negotiate a raise, that you have been there a certain amount of time ... that’s fine.

Jean: But it also says that we are to be content.

Rod: Yes. Godliness with contentment is great gain. (1 Timothy 6:6)

Brian H.: Isn’t there an application where he’s telling these soldiers to be content with their pay **because** it was a fairly common practice for soldiers to get more money from people if they could. I personally don’t see any correlation there. There the soldiers were robbing people.

Rod: Exactly. And it can work in any kind of business. People can get really creative about how they sell something and end up with a whole lot more than you had any idea you would be paying just because of the way the deal was structured. We need the “Full Disclosure Laws” written in ways that we can understand them. Sometimes they are too complicated with ‘legalese’ that no one can understand them ... with the fine print.

The heart of this is greed or covetousness. There are so many things that are being addressed in these words.

I think the ‘take-away’ from all of this is “The life that Jesus is calling us to live is a life of letting go of things, and grabbing hold of what is true in life... what is real and what is important.” And we can get so caught up holding on to stuff, holding on to power, or to control, that it becomes the antithesis of what He was calling us to do. We’re supposed to be giving up our lives. We let go of our lives to follow Christ. And that means the things *pertaining to* our lives. It’s not *just* about material goods.

So let’s look a little deeper into the actions expected by John the Baptist. The man who has two tunics or food should give to the one who has none. The verb means “to give a part”, to “share” or μεταδοτω. In Romans 1:11-12 Paul says, “I long to see you so that I may *impart* to you some spiritual gift to make you strong— that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith.” Paul wants to go to Rome to share a spiritual gift. He is not “holding on” to his spiritual gifts but wants to share them with others. Romans 12:8 “If [your gift] is giving, then give generously”. Give with liberality.

The ‘*haves*’ and the ‘*have-nots*’ are addressed here. This does not mean that the ‘*have-nots*’ have no obligation of repentance. In other words, you might read this and say, “Well, if I have nothing, I’m not obligated to repent.” He’s addressing those who *do* have something. The soldiers *did* have something. That does not mean that the *have-nots* do not have an obligation to repent as well. John just doesn’t get into that here. So the guy who doesn’t have a tunic, what is he supposed to do? Well, he might quit being lazy and could get up and get a job. That might be his repentance. John just doesn’t get into all the circumstances as to why the man doesn’t have a tunic. But we know that if a man doesn’t work, the Bible says he shouldn’t eat. 2 Thess. 3:10 says, *For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: “The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat.”* So there are other considerations here than just what is said.

Jean: We might have abilities that we could share with people.

Rod: Well, what you might need to give somebody without a tunic; you might just need to help them to be more industrious. They may not want that, but... In the long run, it might help them the most. It gets complicated. If everybody who has comes across those who have less than you do, eventually everybody will have less and nobody will have more. There has to be more to it than ‘if I see one in need I give him some of what have’. There has to be more to the story than that. I’m not saying that that’s not a good rule of thumb. I’m just simply saying there is more to it than what is written here—and the Bible has a lot more to say about that.

This does not mean that the ‘*have-nots*’ have more obligation to repentance. If they are in this place because of laziness, then they must work. To share with one who refuses to work is forbidden. But there are many social settings where ‘analysis’ is not necessary before we share. Let’s not get legalistic here. We don’t need every person here to fill out twenty pages of forms in triplicate before I give them something to eat or a shirt to wear. But I do need to use some wisdom in how I help people.

Notice that it says in verse 12, **even tax collectors came to be baptized**. “Teacher,” they asked, “**what should we do?**” That often gets lost when we read this. We don’t know about the soldiers, but the tax collectors had the *intention* of being baptized. They showed up *wanting* baptism and it was John who said, “Wait a minute ... Before you are baptized, I want to see a sign of repentance. And that’s why John suggests all these *evidences of repentance*.”

So John the Baptist’s instructions to them were actually two-fold. First, they were sent by their employers to collect a certain amount of money. Second, they are sent to their clients.

Many of the people felt as though the taxes they are collecting are too much. They believe Rome wanted too much in Taxes. Well, what do the tax collectors do? How do they deal with the “clients” of Rome? It’s not the tax collector’s business. So John tells them that it’s not up to them to determine how much tax to collect. Now, our IRS agent may look at our tax code and say, “the government is taking too much.” But that’s not his job. Congress sets tax codes. It becomes the law of the land. The person working at IRS who doesn’t like collecting so much in taxes should get another job.

The Tax Collector *works for the government* who sets the tax rate. It is not his job to decide if the rate is fair. He must do what he is told. He is only an agent. He cannot legally change an order. He *can* choose not to be a tax collector. His *obligation is also to his client*. He may not add additional fees on top of the tax. This would be corruption. This corruption goes on in governments all around the world. Especially in third world countries, there may be all kinds of extra fees to pay. Give me a dollar and I’ll take this paper to the office or whatever ... and I understand it. They’re probably not getting paid much anyway for their regular job so this may be how he is subsidizing his income. He may consider these “tips”. The paper may never get to that other office unless you pay the \$1 to get it there. The word “διασεισητε” in verse 14 is the idea of extorting or intimidating. The word really means to shake thoroughly or violently. It’s really a shakedown. That’s what a shakedown is – to shake somebody down until their money falls from their pockets. If you shake someone long enough, the money will fall out of their pocket if they have any in there. John the Baptist said to the soldiers *stop doing that*. It means *to take advantage*, and rape is just a *much more personal form* of this. It is exacting power over another person to get what you want. So, be content with what you have. Don’t want more. Do the service you are supposed to do.

The second long word here, συκοφαντησητε', means to accuse falsely. The injustice of false accusations cannot be overestimated. How is a person treated if they *didn't* do something? If I accuse you of something, how do you prove you didn't do it? If you didn't do it, how do you prove that? If I say that you committed such and such crime on this day, at this hour at this place, can you prove you didn't do it? If you have a good enough alibi, you *might* be able to prove you didn't do it. But if there are a lot of accusations, how can I prove I didn't do them? Once accusations are made, it's almost impossible to {I couldn't hear - erase them?}.

I thought it was interesting that one of the aspects of the Mueller report that was supposed to be redacted was – people who were perhaps investigated, but who were never charged with a crime, how do they redact {remove-obscure} those people’s names so that no one would get the idea that they somehow were guilty just because they were under investigation? Well, that doesn’t seem fair. They investigate them, but they don’t indict. They didn’t do anything to them. Why reveal that they were even under investigation? So that should have been redacted out.

The burden of proof should be on the accuser, not the person being accused.

Justice is turned into injustice. This distorts truth and reality. John the Baptist warns them against this. That's repentance. It's really very simple. If something is wrong, **Stop it!** And if you are not doing something that is right, **start doing it.** That's the basis of repentance. This is a great primer on repentance.

Okay, let's open up another section here and we'll do a little reading. Does anyone have:

Mark 1:7-8 “And this was his message: “After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

Matthew 3:11-12

“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Luke 3:15-18

The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them.

Beginning in Luke that was just read, it says that the people were in a state of expectation. They were looking for something. They were expecting something. In John 11:3 John calls him the expectant one. NIV 11:22-32 “When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples ³ to ask him, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?’”

One of the reasons the people were coming out to the Judean Countryside and coming out to John, was their expectations had been off a bit - distorted. But when John started preaching, it was about the Kingdom life. And now their expectations were really, really mounting. They probably did that a lot in the course of time. The Messiah was the expectation of the ages. For 2,000 years the people had been *wondering* in their hearts. The word means to *deliberate* by reflecting in their hearts, and in their minds. They not only had expectation; but were *pondering* over this, seeking and discussing it.

They were probably searching the Old Testament Scriptures that pointed to the Christ's coming, but also maybe reflecting on other people who has claimed to be Christ and turned out not to be...where they got their expectations up but it didn't work out so well. So I imagine them were debating with themselves a lot, trying to figure out what really was the truth. They wanted to believe it, but if they let themselves, they just might get hurt again.

This is the same word that was used for Mary when she *pondered* these things in her heart (Luke 2:19). You can tell a lot about a person if you know what they ponder on and who they ponder on. But they wondered if John might be the Christ, or Messiah. That's what they were wondering. "Maybe John is it". They were eager to latch on to the charismatic figure.

This is brought out in **Acts 5:33-39**

³³ When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death. ³⁴ But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while. ³⁵ Then he addressed the Sanhedrin: "Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. ³⁶ Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. ³⁷ After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered. ³⁸ Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. ³⁹ But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God."

This is when Gamaliel was asked by the Pharisees what they should do about this Christian movement that was going on. Gamaliel reminds them that if it is not of God, it will come to nothing. It will fizzle out. But if it IS of God, you won't be able to stop it. So, there were expectations here, but they had seen people come and go before.

In thinking about Jesus, what does it do to a person when they know that there are many people thinking about you and putting hope in you, building a case of what you are going to do? I had recently experienced this in a small way (back in June 24, 2010) regarding the chaplaincy of the Fire Department. I had just become the Chaplain of the Fire Dept.

There was an expectation, and I thought a lot and hard about what everybody expected of me as a Chaplain. I had never been a chaplain. I had never had this kind of position or role before and I questioned myself, "Could I do this job"? (Do I even know what I am supposed to do in this job?)

One of the first things that happened within a couple of weeks of taking this job was a first death. It was a suicide in the department. I got thrust into the middle of a lot of grief from this suicide in this unit. There was a funeral. No more than two weeks later another of our fireman died of cancer. We had another funeral for that. So, in the first six weeks, I had two funerals. One was a suicide and one from cancer.

I remember thinking back then, what is expected of me? I had roles in each of those deaths. So being in that position, all these people were coming out, and they were expecting something.

I just can help but think that John the Baptist is sitting there and watching all the crowds of people coming out and thinking, "I didn't know there would be such a surge of people. I didn't know all these people were going to come out here." He's in the spotlight. Some of them are thinking he is the messiah. So, this is the climate in which all this is happening.

First, John wanted to correct their thinking quickly. He did not want to *feed* their expectation. Maybe a lesser man would have, and said, “Yeah, I’m great. I’m great. Come out and hear me. I have a good sermon today.” But John didn’t feed into that. He wanted to correct their expectation as quickly as possible. He did not seek a following for himself. So how does he redirect their thinking? He states his own mission as baptism. He says that this is what I came to do. I have come to baptize.

The **second** thing he did was compare Jesus mission of Baptism with his. I will baptize you, but He, the One who comes after me, He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. In other words, my baptism may be a big deal in a certain context here, but I don’t do Holy Spirit and Fire baptism. I do water baptism. That’s left to the one coming after me. And that begins to put it into perspective.

Third, John put things into perspective regarding his greatness by saying, ‘I am not worthy of even reaching down and unlatching his sandals. The One who is coming after me is so far above me, that I don’t even deserve to do that.’ That kind of puts it in perspective.

Then the **fourth** thing he does is he paints an awesome picture of the Messiah’s work with a winnowing fork. A winnowing fork is in his hand.

Those are the four things that John does to confront the expectations that people have toward him.

John’s baptism was merely a baptism with water. Matthew adds that it is for repentance. He was not minimizing his work of preparation; he merely wants to show that it is not complete until the Messiah Baptizes.

Secondly, John the Baptist says that Jesus, the Messiah, will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with Fire. And this is referenced by Jesus in Acts 1 to show that baptism by the Spirit is coming, and it did come in Acts chapter 2. Jesus spoke of this in John 14-16 saying that it is necessary that Jesus return to the Father in order to pour out the spirit to His own as prophesied in Joel 2:28-32.

We won’t get into a lot of detail here about baptizing in the Holy Spirit and fire but that baptism requires the death of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus, the ascension of Jesus in order to be able to pour out the Holy Spirit on all mankind.

Sandra: John said that someone was coming who would baptize in the Holy Spirit. Was the concept of the Holy Spirit known to the Jews before this time – prior to Jesus?

Rod: Well, the Holy Spirit is not a stranger in the Old Testament. The teaching about him is there although it may not be as prevalent as in the New Testament. Acts says that **Joel prophesied** that the Holy Spirit would be poured out on all flesh. Also, **Isaiah 61** says, *The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,...*

The concept of the Holy Spirit was in the Old Testament but it got fleshed out a lot more in the New Testament.

{A question was asked but I couldn't hear it}

There was a discussion on the baptism of the Apollos in Acts 18 (who knew only the baptism of John) and rebaptism of some disciples in Acts 19 (who also received John's baptism). Paul made the men get rebaptized so it must have been very important to him even though both baptisms were for the forgiveness of sin. {trouble hearing the recorder}

Jean: There's no forgiveness without the shedding of Blood, right? Jesus hadn't shed his blood if John baptised them...

Rod: That's true but the forgiveness of sins on the cross reaches forward and backwards. There is no "time" with God, so even Abraham, according to Genesis 15:6, 2,000 years before Christ, received the righteousness of God. {See also Romans 4:9, 4:22, Gal. 3:6, and James 2:23}

Jean: I was baptized when I was 12 years old. I had always heard that the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost but now I believe that everyone is baptized by the Holy Spirit when they are baptized because Jesus ... {died}?

Rod: This is a big subject. The way I think about it is that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is "the wholesale" and "not the retail". The wholesale is that Jesus poured out the spirit as he said He would when He ascended back into heaven. It fulfilled that prophecy. He did it in a wholesale way pouring it out on all. The Holy Spirit was now available. It was now able to be given individually – "retail". I believe when we're baptized into Christ we receive the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit was already available to us because He has already been secured by Christ. So if you think about it, you get these pictures. But it's more than 'Jesus secured the blessing of being able to give the indwelling Spirit to every person'. He did that to everyone on the day on Pentecost, but then he reaffirmed it to every Gentile in Acts 10:44-48. To me, it demonstrated perfectly that all the Jews have the right to the gospel and all of the gentiles have a right to the gospel.

But the **retail** receiving of the Holy Spirit comes in baptism. 1 Cor. 12:13 says, "For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. We are baptized into that one body by one Spirit.

There is also the idea that the Spirit is active in baptism; not simply to be received as a gift for that. **He** is doing the spiritual part of the baptism. The man has his part, 'my' part in it doesn't mean very much, but the Spiritual part is being done by God. So that's how I see it.

The wholesale is the pouring out on all, (and I can't even say on two occasions...it's all in the mind of God and I just make it clear to myself that 'this covers everybody'. This is for the Jews; this is for the Gentiles). So I am baptizing in the Holy Spirit. I am pouring Him out. And now, each one of you, receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. That's just the way it makes sense to me.

We try to use accommodative language when it comes to God. The Holy Spirit is God. How do you pour God out?

There has to be some kind of accommodating language to give us a vision of something, but to take it so literally and put it in time frames, I think we get ourselves into all kinds of theological problems by doing that.

One of those questions that are brought up is, 'if the Holy Spirit is just hanging out in Heaven until Jesus went back and poured Him out...' Well, He was very active throughout the whole Old Testament, and maybe even from the indwelling standpoint.

Remember when David sinned, in Psalm 51:10-11 he begged God not to take His Holy Spirit from him. He said, "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. ¹¹ Do not cast me from your presence or *take your Holy Spirit from me*. Why would David say this? That's a big deal to David if you lose His Holy Spirit.

This idea that only Jesus has the authority and power to baptize in the Spirit...we may ask a lot about what is that. But the point John the Baptist is making is not a detailed explanation for it. He's just simply saying that you need to know that there's a certain thing that I'm called to do, but this baptism 'in the Spirit' is a big deal, and only Jesus can do this ... only the Messiah can do this. And even the baptism in fire that we'll get to next week

These concepts that we know a whole lot more about are being introduced at the very, very early days of John the Baptist and Jesus. Jesus will talk about how God loves to give good gifts to His children, and that He will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him. So Jesus even talks about the giving of the Holy Spirit and what a good thing that is!

Sometimes in different Christian circles, there are some people who try to pit Paul against Jesus. They say that here are Jesus' words, and we ought to read only the red letters of Jesus.

They feel that that's all they need, and that Paul, Peter and the others are simply giving their own opinion about what Jesus said and taught. That is just their opinion.

We need to see that concepts that are introduced by Jesus and John and others in the four gospels are the same concepts fleshed out in the writings of Peter and Paul. And they are not contradictory. The Apostles never contradict the words of Jesus. They are completely compatible.

May 1, 2019

Week 15

We talked last week about the different aspects of the message of John the Baptist. His baptism was merely with water, and when Jesus would come, He would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

1. So the first thing we learned was that John's baptism was with water.
2. The second thing was that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit.

3. The third thing John had to say about Jesus is found in **Matt. 3:11-12; Mark 1:7-8** and **Luke 3:15-18**, and is that John the Baptist knows his place. The One coming, he says, is mightier than I. Throughout the gospels, there seems to be a large concern for **greatness** ... of the pecking order. That's kind of natural in life but in some ways, for me, it's a little unexpected that the followers of Jesus would have to deal with a subject like "who is the greatest". I mean, that's a very worldly concept, but I guess it just shows how normal they were as people. So it came up in the preaching of John the Baptist. He was proactive, while the Apostles had to be instructed. John was **proactive** in the matter and he made sure that no one thought he was greater than he was.

But if you put this in the context of them looking for the Messiah, and perhaps being confused that John might **be** the Messiah, when he came preaching and everybody was coming out to him not knowing any better, maybe they thought that "he" was the Messiah, he needs to make it very clear that that is not who he is. So he says that Someone greater is coming. It is interesting that John pronounces Jesus is great, and Jesus pronounces that John the Baptist is the greatest man that has ever been born! Matthew 11:11, "Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist..."

So, just as John is saying how great Jesus is, Jesus is saying how great John is. This is kind of interesting because of the whole idea that if you humble yourself you will be exalted ... the last shall be first and the first shall be last (Matthew 23:12), but Jesus adds "yet even those in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John. (Matthew 11:11)."

So, in one way, He's not simply saying that John is great – He's saying that everyone in the Kingdom is great. Just because we recognize that we're not greater than Jesus doesn't mean that we are not great! It just means that we are great, but putting it in perspective.

So Jesus also got in the mix with the Apostles when their talk turned to who was greatest in Luke 9:46. (An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest.) Jesus was concerned about the reality of authority and identity. So, throughout the ministry of Jesus, we see Him at various times addressing this idea of authority: who has the power, who has the authority and what is the identity of the person. You'll see this come up in subtle ways in all through the ministry of Jesus, like when the coin was presented to Him and they said, "Shall we pay taxes to Caesar or not?" Matt. 22:17. Jesus answer is that you give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God" (v. 21). Jesus recognized the authority of Caesar. He didn't say that Caesar has no authority. He just basically said that when Caesar stays in his lane, he has authority. So, the Apostles were **given** authority. Even when Jesus sent them out, they were given authority to do what Jesus commanded them to do – but it was a delegated authority. So, I guess the "take-away" is that in relationship to Christ, *we have to understand the delegated authority we have*, and *we have to understand our identity as it relates to the identity of Christ*. Now, if we can keep those two things straight, we'll probably be pretty good. It's when we begin to think that we have more authority than we really do, **OR** when we think we're somebody we're not, that we get ourselves into trouble. So, *who a person is and the task that they have been given is important to know*.

We see that again on the Mount of Transfiguration – because who shows up on the mountain with Jesus? Moses and Elijah are there. But when the voice comes out of heaven, even though Moses had his place as the Law Giver, and Elijah had his place as Prophet, when the voice came out of heaven, it said, "This is my Son. Listen to Him."

He wasn't saying that Moses didn't have a place or he didn't have authority. In fact, if you go back and read the story of Moses, one of the biggest things that is going on is the authority of Moses. The people were bucking that authority and trying to challenge the authority of Moses.

Elijah was also looked at, particularly by Ahab and Jezebel, as a prophet who was trying to demean *their* authority, and so they struck back at him and try to make it look like he had no authority ... he wasn't a real prophet. So we have this idea of identity: who are you? But Jesus, of course, has the greater authority. But this is not determined by men. It is God who tells us who we are and what authority we have. Jesus knew who He was, and that He had all authority. So, that is one of the issues that John brings up.

In Luke 3:17, he explains the work of Jesus in a figure ... He wields a winnowing fork. The purpose of a winnowing fork is to separate the wheat from the chaff. It is a large fork used to grab the wheat and throw it up into the air. As it goes up in the air, (and in Matthew, he uses the term "fan" – 3:12 KJV). Usually the terms are used in conjunction with each other. Someone would throw the wheat up in the air and someone else would have a fan to be blowing on it. After throwing it up long enough and blowing on it long enough, the chaff which was lighter would be blown away, and the heavier wheat would fall back to the threshing floor. The chaff would separate from the wheat and what would be left would be the wheat on the floor. Sometimes they would take that wheat and put it under the stones and the animals would come and tread it out to make it into flour. **** see end**

So, the winnowing fork used to divide the wheat from the chaff ... **But I want you to get this picture really in your head. These things don't happen by accident. This is a deliberate tossing up of the chaff and doing it over and over again into the air. In other words, you have to disturb the wheat to get the chaff out of it. That's the picture of it. In fact, it has to be disturbed or agitated, moved or separated. That is what winnowing is! It is the agitation of something. When you throw it up in the air you are agitating it, you're disturbing it. You are getting it out of its comfort zone, if you will... Through that process, the chaff is separated and the wheat remains.** Then it says, two things are going to happen:

1. The wheat is going to be gathered into barns
2. The chaff is going to be burned up in fire.

This is the ministry of Jesus! Now again, when was the last time you heard someone go out and say, "Let me tell you what the ministry of Jesus is about?" Do they mention the winnowing fork in his hand? Do they say He is going to go into your life and He is going to agitate you? He is going to disturb you. He is going to throw you up in the air and blow on you, and hopefully the chaff is going to fall off you and blow away and be burned up and what is left, will be a "refined" you. This is also to bring people to repentance. He is blowing up whatever needs to be gotten out of our lives.

OR you can look at it as a division between the sheep and the goats. The chaff would be those who are worthless and the wheat being those who are worthy. The stuff you keep, the stuff that you eat, versus what is useless. It is only good to be burned up.

There is that separation there. It's like the salt that loses its saltiness. What is it good for? It's not good for going on the food. It's worthless, so you just throw it out and it's trodden under the foot of men. This same thing is being understood here in the ministry of Jesus.

Imagine if YOU had the responsibility of deciding what is chaff and what is wheat in the lives of every person that you come in contact with! What if it was YOUR responsibility to hold the winnowing fork in your hand ... and to agitate people ... and to make a decision about whether or not they are chaff or wheat? Will they go into the barn or will they be burned up? Because Jesus is the One who is baptizing with the Holy Spirit, (those are the ones in the barn) or baptizing with fire (the chaff). So, everybody gets a baptism. It just **depends** on which baptism you want ... the baptism with the Holy Spirit or the baptism with fire! Jesus is the One doing it with the winnowing fork and the fan.

Buffy: I thought Jesus goes after everyone and tires to save them.

Rod: Yes. The good news is – even if you are chaff, you can turn into wheat. But if you want to be chaff, you can just be chaff. You get blown away and get burned up. So, you’re right. This is why Jesus said, I didn’t come to bring peace on earth, but to bring a sword. (Matthew 10:33-34 “[Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.](#)” I came to divide. I came to separate . . . one from the other ... the sheep from the goats. Sometimes people in your own household:

{[Matthew 10:35](#) ‘For I have come to turn ““a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’ }

There is a division, a separation of this person from this person that is occurring in the ministry of Jesus. He is always separating people out. Which way are you going to go? Now He gives them a choice. So everybody has to make a choice of which way they want to go. But Jesus is not leaving you alone. He’s not leaving anybody alone. He is saying that **you** have to decide. So I would imagine that this responsibility weighs heavy on His heart – knowing that He has the ultimate authority in heaven and on earth deciding who goes to Heaven and who goes to Hell.

Sharon: We know that later in Scripture it talks about hardness of heart. Could you speak to that for a moment?

Rod: Well, the idea of the hardening of heart ... in fact, one of the passages that deals directly with that is Hebrews 6, and it’s a very difficult passage to understand in *some* ways. It begins in Hebrews 5:11-14, where he says, “[We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand.](#)”¹² In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!¹³ Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

Then in Chapter 6:1 He says, “[Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God,](#)”² instruction about cleansing rites, (washings or baptisms) the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.³ And God permitting, we will do so.”

In other words, if we stay in that place of spiritual immaturity, *which some people will do that because they can*...if God permits us to do that. But he continues in v. 4-8 “It is impossible* for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift and who have shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵ who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age ⁶ and who have fallen away, (it is impossible*) to be brought back to repentance. To their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace. ⁷ Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. ⁸ But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned”. { * impossible **αδυνατον** – see note at end. cc }

Now again, in these passages, He is talking about people who are exposed. They are exposed to the good things of God. In their exposure to it, they build up a tolerance for it. They build up an immunity to it. It's like the immune system where if you are exposed to something long enough, you build up an immunity to it so it doesn't effect you anymore.

It can be the same way with the word of God. You can hear the Word of God, and if you are not responsive to it – if you're not obedient to it, if you're not listening and obeying it, then it can be just like rain that falls on the ground. You know, just because it rains, (go look at my yard), it doesn't mean that everything that grows there is good. There is grass. But that rain will grow weeds just like it will grow grass. In fact, sometimes the weeds grow a lot better than the grass.

What he is saying here is it's a dangerous thing to hear the Word of God and not respond to it. That's how 'hardness' begins. That is how a person becomes hardened. It is when they hear something, and it just rolls off their back. They just don't listen to it. They just put it aside. With time, it gets easier and easier and easier for them to think, “Well, I've heard that before. I've heard that before.” That is when the heart gets hardened.

Sometimes there are things that happen that really break through that hardness. It gets them down and really shakes the person up. Then they think, “Wow.” And you can see it happen.

But then you see somebody like Paul, for instance. Paul was **convinced** that he was doing the right things. He was convinced that he was **obeying** God. He was an **obedient** person. So when the truth was presented to him that Jesus was real, he **responded** to it. He immediately changed, repented and showed that he didn't have a hard heart. He had a **deceived** heart, but it wasn't a hard heart.

Mike: I think that's one of the reasons God chose Paul. He knew his heart and knew that he was zealous for Him. He wanted to get him on the right team.

Rod: Yes. Yes. Absolutely, and I think that's one of the reasons we've been so successful in places like Haiti. We have a lot of people over there who love Jesus and they love the Lord but they've never really been taught. So they have a very superficial knowledge of it. They have a big **zeal**, and are **willing** to be obedient, but they just need someone to show them **how** to be obedient. We teach them, and when they begin to see that, it's just amazing to me. We had four more denominational preachers who were baptized recently in the Dominican Republic.

Sharon: I don't want to take us too far off course, so just stop me, shut me down, but it seems to me from what we just read, it threw all kinds of holes through the "once saved always saved" theory.

Rod: I think it does. And when you go to chapter 10:26-30, it continues the theme there because he uses some of the same language there about one who has been enlightened.

²⁶ If we deliberately keep on sinning **after we have received the knowledge of the truth**, no sacrifice for sins is left, ²⁷ but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. ²⁸ Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ **How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?** He's comparing sin "under the law" and sin "after the sacrifice of Christ".

The point here is that deliberate, willful disobedience to God will cause you not only to be hardened in heart, but also to face the judgment for that. Yes, I believe that Scripture teaches that it is difficult to be lost once we're saved, but it's not impossible. But the Hebrews 6 passage says that there **can** be an impossibility of restoring someone who was once saved and got lost again. There is an impossibility of restoring that person. Okay.

Now, when they reach that point of impossibility, only God knows. It's not our job to determine that. We continue to work with anybody for their good. So **we** don't decide. Even in cases where someone is under church discipline, and they are being withdrawn from, if you will, (we're not participating with them in the same way), but that's not for the purpose of determining whether or not they have a hard heart and they're going to be lost forever. That's in order to get their attention and to try to bring them back to the truth.

Carole: It's an act of love

Rod: It's an act of love, yes. So Jesus knows the barn and he knows the unquenchable fire. And it's interesting the way he says the fire is unquenchable. The barn (Matthew 3:12 – αποθηκη - apothekay) is the word where we get apothecary from. We don't use that word much anymore but back in the pioneer days it talked about the apothecary. It simply means a place to store things. It was a storehouse – used to store something.

The **fire** is a πυρι ασβεστω - (puri asbestos – a **fire** unquenchable). This fire is inextinguishable. The material Asbestos "resists heat". {It is defined as a "heat-resistant toxic and natural mineral that can be woven into fabrics, and is used in fire-resistant and insulating materials such as brake linings."} Asbestos can be exposed to high heat and will not easily be burned up. He uses that to describe the kind of fire that can reach high heat and not be extinguished ... to not burn all the fuel up. Again, I'll leave it to you to try to figure out what all the implications are of that. It's a fire that cannot be put out.

Mark 9:43 describes this **fire** as Hell or Gehenna. This is based on the idea of the Valley of Hinnom {a small valley in Jerusalem. It was cursed in Jeremiah 7:31 and 19:2-6}

Mark says, **"If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out."**

Gehenna was a dump, much like those seen in the gullies of Haiti. If you ride through the streets of Port Au Prince during the **dry** times when water isn't running through there, they just throw trash into the gullies and it's constantly burning. Smoke comes up out of it day and night because they are constantly throwing of trash into the fires and the gullies. If you go up into the mountains over Port Au Prince and you look down over the mountains, it's constantly smoky. The environment in Port Au Prince is probably very toxic and if you had emphysema, you would not want to live there.

The fires never go out according to the Bible. The picture is more than an illustration to Jesus. He spoke of it more often than any other. He would be the One to judge whether a person would **go** there or not. "He" would throw people into this.

This raises for me, the question of whether this is a fire meant to torture a person eternally, or whether it is a means by which people are burned up or annihilated. I am not going to go into that tonight, but that is a question that we need to consider more seriously. 'What is the purpose of Hell'? Is the purpose of Hell to torture a person for an eternity, and that means forever and ever without end, or is it a means by which a person; body, soul, and spirit is annihilated—ceases to exist? If you want to talk about that another time, I'll tell you what I think about that. But I do think there is enough evidence to consider both sides of that question.

For Jesus, neither the barn nor the fire is a baptism that no one should desire. In Luke 3:18 Luke tells us, "**And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them.**" John used many other exhortations. To exhort is to call upon, to admonish, or to persuade people. When he's talking about these kinds of things, he is using the term for preaching as an exhortation.

You will see that same word used in regard to the book of Hebrews. It is an exhortation. It will say at the very end, "thank you for putting up with my short exhortation – Hebrews 13:22. (It's a 13 chapter exhortation). The word exhortation is "παρακλινσεως" in Greek. Much of it is warning people not to allow themselves to become hardened in sin (3:12-13) "**See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.** ¹³ **But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.**" He is telling them not to be deceived by sin. He tells them to encourage one another or exhort one another **daily**. Do not allow a deceitful heart to grow up within you.

The word "preached" means to evangelize. John was an **evangelist** and his method was **exhortation**. He tried to persuade people to repent to the rule of Christ in their lives even in the way they conduct themselves in their personal affairs.

Back to Matthew 3:12, some additional words are used and I've alluded to this. Instead of "winnowing fork" he uses the word "fan". It means "to spit out" and has two possible meanings in English: to fan something or to spit something out. It is also the idea of thoroughly cleansing the threshing floor. The threshing floor is being winnowed or being fanned until it is thoroughly cleansed. This is no half-way job. No one will escape the process. No grain of wheat will be left. It is a thorough process. There is nobody who is going to escape the winnowing fork or the fan. At the end of it all, the threshing floor will be cleaned.

Regarding the fate of the chaff, Matthew says it will be consumed with inextinguishable fire. Luke said it will burn up. Jesus' thinking, regarding the outcome of his work, certainly puts some great urgency to it, and made him constantly know how important His mission was.

So, in our trying to get into the thinking of Jesus, we have to try to capture the urgency Jesus lived with every day of His life. Knowing how important His ministry was, and literally, how the souls of every person who ever lived and ever would live, was at stake, everybody would be going through this process of separation, one from the other. It even talks about in Matthew 24:40-41, "Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left." There is this constant idea of separation: of light and darkness; you are either in the sheep pen or you're not in the sheep pen. You are either a branch on the vine that is bearing fruit, or you are being cut off and thrown into the fire. There is a constant separation.

But there is also, like in Romans 11, the idea of being grafted back in. There is a way to be put back into it. You may be separated **from** it but you can be put back **into** it.

This is the thinking that Jesus lived with, I believe, every day of His life. How urgent it was every person he saw every day of His life. That is why, when the apostles were sent out later on the limited commission to go into every Jewish village, He told them to go to a house and they should inquire there and determine whether or not someone was worthy or not worthy. Were they worthy or not worthy? Another separation was occurring.

We have about 15 minutes left so let's turn to Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, and Luke 1:21-23. This is a new section. This is about Jesus' baptism.

Matthew 3:13-17

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. ¹⁴ But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

¹⁵ Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.

¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Mark 1:9-11

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan, ¹⁰ Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

Luke 3:21-23

When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened ²² and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

²³ Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry.

So in this section about Jesus' baptism, the preliminary thoughts are that Jesus' desire or need to be baptized was fundamentally different from everyone else's desire or need. Everybody else who was coming to John was told to repent, and we had quite a bit of explanation about repentance. Jesus' action was fundamentally different. It's the same action but it is for different reasons.

However, there is one common denominator other than the actual baptism itself. In all cases, baptism was an opportunity for God to do something, and I believe, fundamentally, that we need to look at baptism in that way. Baptism is not just an opportunity for **us** to do something. It is not even **primarily** an opportunity for **us** to do something. It is **primarily** an opportunity for **God** to do something.

Baptism is something that we **submit** to. It's passive. It is not active. God is the active person in the baptism. Our **faith** may be active, our **repentance** may be active, but the **baptism** itself is **passive**. We are *baptized*. Now we can be active in baptizing other people, and that's something we do. But that's a minor role ... that's a supporting role. But what is God doing in the actual baptism?

So the common denominator for everyone, including Jesus, is an opportunity for **God** to **do** something. For most, or for all, this action of God includes forgiveness. For Jesus, it provided God the opportunity to reveal to Israel the **source** of that forgiveness or righteousness! Obviously, Jesus didn't need forgiveness—personal forgiveness. But it was an opportunity for God to reveal to Israel, and to all who were there, and all of **us** through the Scriptures, to reveal the One *through whom He would* save the world. *Baptism* was the opportunity for God to do that.

Matthew has the most complete account. Both Mark and Matthew mention that Jesus came to the Jordan from Galilee and Mark says that He came from **Nazareth** of Galilee. I was thinking about the significance of that. For me, the significance of that is the fact that He was **home** before he started His public ministry. So there is no indication that Jesus left home at age 20 and gone somewhere else for 13 years and then he showed up with John. When Jesus came to John, He came from Nazareth where He was raised. He came from His home town. So, again, we don't know **everything** He was doing during that adult time, but we know that He was in Nazareth and that is where He left to start His ministry from there. Jesus had been with His earthly family among people who knew Him as a boy. He wasn't off at some University or some exotic mission. One reason I say that is because some people believe that Jesus came over here for a while ... to America, and worked among the American Indians. They believe that the American Indians were the ten lost tribes of Israel. This is a Mormon belief.

Surely the ties to His people had to be undone in some sense. For Jesus to walk out the door to publically accept his life's mission we have to go back to another scene that we looked at early on. He had to **let go** ... He had to **grab hold** ... and He had to **become**. So that is a kind of theme for a lot of what Jesus did.

So then they said that Jesus arrived ... to be by the side of, to approach, He arrived, he's here. He reported to duty. He left home and showed up for duty. The Marine has landed, if you will. He takes center stage. All of heaven must have been watching that day. It was an important day. This was the first day of the ministry of Christ. Jesus steps from the shadows and into the light and baptism is the way of introduction. He comes specifically to be baptized by John. Later, John will tell us more about this in John Chapter 1.

John forbade Jesus. The word means that he tried to hinder Him, to restrain Him or prohibit Him. It is interesting, I think, that one of Jesus' first public acts commanded by His Father was opposed, even for noble purposes, by one of the most faithful servants of God ever born.

This becomes a theme of His life. He pursues the will of God. Jesus is always pursuing the will of God and others get in His way trying to prevent Him ... even people who are on His side. They are constantly trying to prevent Him from doing what He came to do.

Peter did this in Matthew, Chapter 16:21-23. Jesus announced that He was going to the cross and Peter said 'no you're not. I'm not going to let you'.

²¹“ From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

And Jesus answer was “Get behind me, Satan:

²³ Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; **you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.**”

Jesus' mind was to obey the will of the Father. John was showing respect, but he still was in the roll of a restrainer.

This brings to **my** mind, “what is it that **I** want to be in this relationship to Jesus?” I think, sometimes, the apostles, and John, thought that they were in a protective or they kind of had to manage Him. They were in a managing roll for Jesus. They felt that He was like some movie star that they had to manage. And Jesus was basically saying, “Get out of My way. You're supposed to be **following Me**. Get **behind me** and **follow!** Don't get out in front of me so I have to stumble over you or have to step over you to get to where I'm going. Fall in behind. **I** know where I am going. **You** don't know where I'm going.” Even that conversation in John Chapter 14:3-7--

³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴ ***You know the way to the place where I am going.***”

⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don't know where you are going, so ***how can we know the way?***”

⁶ Jesus answered, “***I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*** ⁷ If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

Jesus told Thomas that they knew where He was going, but Thomas said 'how can we know?' And Jesus said, ***I am the way and the truth and the life. You can't get to the Father except through Me.*** He's saying, “You're **right**. You **don't** know where you're going! Fall in behind me and don't get in My way. It'll be better that way.” But this is a theme in Jesus' life.

So where am **I** in this picture? Do I sometimes want to manage Jesus, and manage my relationship with Him? Or do I just fall in behind Him wherever He leads **that's** where I'm going to go!

John has in mind that the baptizer is greater than the one being baptized. But John already said he knows that he's not greater. He already said that. But now he's acting as if he **is** greater, as if he knows better than Jesus does.

Carole: It's understandable though. You are greater than I am. You are Holy. I'm not. I **can't** baptize you. So we can understand where he's coming from.

Rod: Right ... exactly. He is speaking from a noble **purpose**. I'm not saying John had some evil intent in his heart. It's just that, unwittingly, he was getting in the way of this. He had no problem baptizing all the others because of his commission from God. But Jesus was different for him. Jesus should have baptized John, he thought. That's what John thought.

And that raises the question, "who **did** baptize John?" Who baptized the baptizer? Have you ever thought about that? Hmm ... I don't know. John says he **needed** to be baptized by Jesus. I wonder if Jesus baptized him before the day was over. I don't know.

So Jesus words to John regarding the purpose of His baptism are curious to me. Again, what was Jesus thinking? He says three things:

1. Permit now – those are the literal words.

He was telling John to let go of the objection, to remove the obstacles, and to act on Jesus' will rather than on John's will. This was a mild struggle between Jesus' will and John's will. Hebrews 6:1 says, "**Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ ...** The word for leave, is the same word as "permit" in Matthew 3:15...**permit** it for now.

Leaving is something that you **let go of**. You **leave**. Matthew 5:40 says "give up your shirt or tunic". Let go of it. This is about "**letting go**" at the present moment. There are two ways to take this phrase. You either 'permit it for now' or "permit it now." In other words, "John, stop hindering Me. Permit it...**now.**" Get me in the water...we're going to do this baptism. I'm not sure, but Jesus definitely knew what was right, and persuaded John to cooperate.

2. Jesus speaks of "**what is fitting**" – We are going to do what is **fitting**.

To us, and not JUST for Jesus ... it is **right** or **proper**. It is becoming. It is suitable. It's decorous {in keeping with good taste}. It's same word used in Ephesians 5:3 speaking about things that are improper for God's holy people to do ... or the attire that suits women professing godliness. Or the thing that makes some practice "fitting" as a value associated with righteousness, Holiness and goodness. There are certain things that are fitting or appropriate for righteousness, Holiness and goodness.

So does this act express this value? In other words, what is the value? We do what is fitting and what is of value. If so, it is fitting. Otherwise, it is out of place. In other words, John was thinking that this was out of place. "It's out of place for Jesus to be baptized by me". Jesus is saying, "No it's not. This is the most fitting thing you're going to do today. This is the most apropos thing that you are going to do today. You may not understand it. But this is suitable." So the baptism was fitting or proper. And again, it's not just proper for Jesus but it was also for John since he was a participant, and he needed to agree ... not to be coerced to do something he could not do in his spirit. John yielded or submitted to the will of Jesus.

So many conflicts center in what people **think** is proper and not proper. So what is the value to which Jesus appeals? And we'll take that up when we talk about righteousness.

Sharon: I wonder, the word "us". Is it referring to John and Jesus, or to John, Jesus and all the rest of us?

Rod: I believe it is referring to John and Jesus. When Jesus says it is proper for *us* to be doing this today.

Go to **John Chapter 1**. There is no mystery as to why this baptism is taking place. This is a pre-arranged sign by God. John has already been told about this, and that's another reason why John should not have been opposing Jesus. He already knew ... God had already told him that this was the means by which to reveal the Messiah to the world.

Read John 1:32-34

John had already said,

"I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. ³³ And I myself did not know him, but the **one who sent me to baptize** with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴ I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One."

So this was fitting. It was appropriate because God had said it was appropriate. We'll look at it more next week. And we'll look at the righteousness part. It was fitting for all "righteousness". What makes it fitting for righteousness within this context? We'll find out what makes it fitting for righteousness.

* **Added Note** with Rod's permission: 5/4/19

{My comment on Hebrews 6:4-6 – (* impossible αδυνατον – also in Luke 11:7-cc) is to show that the word impossible means "impossible without great difficulty". It is used in Luke 11:7 "Suppose you have a friend and you go to him at midnight and say, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; ⁶ a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.' ⁷ And suppose the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. **I can't** get up and give you anything.' ⁸ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need. The word for can't is ου δυναμαι meaning I **cannot**. It is from the word αδυνατον and means "impossible without great difficulty".}

** **DELETED WHEN MAILED OUT AFTER TRAMPLING ON WHEAT:**

Comment: How unsanitary.

Rod: Well, we used to have what were called safes. It wasn't one of those big metal things but it was a cabinet with a type of wire mesh thing. The bottom would be a big flour bin. You would pull the flour bin out and there was a sifter in it. The sifter would remove any bugs that got into the flour. We didn't throw the flour out because it had bugs, we just sifted the bugs out and used the flour anyway.

Comment: They build up your immunities.

Rod: Well, the bugs had protein... there's nothing wrong with bugs. ... anyway...

May 8, 2019

Week 16

We're continuing to talk about Jesus' baptism. We've been in:

Matthew 3:13-17

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. ¹⁴ But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

¹⁵ Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for **us** to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.

¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Mark 1:9-11

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan, ¹⁰ Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

Luke 3:21-23

When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened ²² and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

²³ Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry.

We're in a talk of why Jesus was baptized, and the statement that is made by Jesus explained to John about why he should baptize Him is 'to fulfill all righteousness'. So we're going to talk about that a little bit and hopefully finish this section and begin to get into the temptations of Jesus which is a long section. We will not finish **that** tonight.

The word "fulfill" here is the word "pleroo" or "πληροω" in Greek. It is a very rich word. It means to make replete, or literally 'to cram' (as filling a net), to satisfy, to execute, or to finish or to verify, (coincide with prediction); it has a lot of various meanings. So, this act of baptism corresponds, in **some** way, to righteousness which will be incomplete, or less than full, unless this act is done. In other words, there is something about the act of Jesus being baptized that "fills up" righteousness ... to make it complete. So we know it is not to make **Jesus** righteous. We know what it's not. It's like what doctors do when they don't know what something is...they rule out what it's not. So even if we don't know what "fulfill all righteousness" means, we know what it doesn't mean. It doesn't mean that the baptism of Jesus was to make Him righteous. The lack of it might make him, perhaps, **un**righteous. Now, get what I am saying here. If this was something necessary to fulfill all righteousness, then it was something Jesus had to do. It was something that He was required to do; not for the same reasons we're required to do it, but he was required to do it because it was God's will that He did it.

If Jesus had not done it, to fulfill all righteousness, then He would have been less than righteous. In fact, He would have been in disobedience to God.

If Jesus came to do the will of the Father, and this **was** the Father's will, then to **not** be baptized would mean that Jesus **and** John would leave righteousness lacking. It would be less than full, because neither one of them would have complied with the will of God if they had not done it, okay. But I think there's a whole lot more to it than that.

I really believe that was the case. It wasn't that it was a take it or leave it command ... do it or not do it. It was something that was "in the will of God" to do.

Righteousness – what is it? It means to be just, or right, or equitable. It can mean fairness or personal righteousness. It could also be objective righteousness – in other words, the righteousness from God rather than our own personal righteousness. It is equivalent to something that is "proper" or "fit". Remember when Jesus said, "It is fitting that we do this". {In May 1 Class} So righteousness can also be something that is fitting or proper to do, and we've already talked about that so Jesus is already framing it with the idea that 'this is fitting'. "It is correct for us to do this, John." John, you may think that this is inappropriate for us to do, but it **is** appropriate...it is fitting for us to do it because it will 'fulfill all righteousness'.

So what does Jesus mean when He says his being baptized by John will fulfill all righteousness? What are the possibilities? One mentioned frequently, is that by being baptized He is providing us with an example of our need to be baptized. So some will say, "Well, if Jesus did it, then I need to do it." That is the argument that some people make ... if it's good enough for Jesus, it's good enough for me. If He needed to do it, I need to do it." Well, that kind of implies the wrong thing. He doesn't need to do it for the same reason I need to do it. So, what is the example that He is giving? That kind of pushes the question down the road. Is it simply that God wills we all be baptized, so He's setting an example for us to do that? I think that pushes the question down the road. It doesn't really answer it. But Jesus didn't say that. He didn't said, "Let's do this so I can set an example for everybody." He said, "Let's do this to fulfill all righteousness."

Jesus did it for reasons different than us. Should I be willing to do what Jesus did, even die on a cross? I mean, Jesus set an example of dying on the cross, as well. But if I died on the cross, it wouldn't be for the same reasons Jesus died on the cross. It wouldn't fulfill the same purpose for which He did it. There's a lot of the things that Jesus did, by walking in His steps ... It might be a good idea to be willing to walk in His steps, but it may not accomplish the same things He accomplished by doing it.

But of course, if I did it, it would not accomplish or fulfill what Jesus death did. It seems to me to be more plausible, and it fits the language of the text to say, 'the type of righteousness being referred to by Jesus here is "what is appropriate" to do? It is "proper" for at least two reasons. It is proper for Jesus and John to engage in this act of Baptism, first, because his baptism prefigures His death, burial and resurrection. It prefigures His death, burial and resurrection. So, in being baptized, Jesus is prefiguring His death, burial and resurrection.

It's almost like a type/anti-type; an indication of what is to come. And in that way, we **do** imitate Jesus in baptism because His baptism figures (or has the figure of) the death, burial and resurrection to it and then when **we're** baptized, we also participate in the death, burial and resurrection.

Jesus is beginning His ministry. He's letting go of His private life, and fulfilling righteousness. He is fulfilling the purpose for which He came. His baptism is, in a sense, a **coming out** ceremony. Secondly, and we see this in John 1:31-34

John says that the baptism was a pre-arranged signal of the Messiah. I really think we need to read that. John writes 'after the fact'. He's talking about the event later.

³⁴ I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One." So one of the major purposes for 'his' ministry was to be a testimony to Jesus. We will see this later on in John Chapter 5 where he talks about the different people who bore witness to Jesus. One was Moses. Moses bore witness to Jesus. But John was also one that bore witness.

So how could John be absolutely convinced, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that Jesus was the Messiah – was the Son of God, so that he could actually testify, as if in a court of law, (swearing to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth) ... how could he affirm that Jesus was in fact, the Son of God? And John goes on to say the next day, that he was standing with two of his disciples and he looked upon Jesus as He walked and he said, "Behold the Lamb of God. He's making the testimony that Jesus is the Lamb of God. The two disciples heard him speak and they followed Jesus.

Let's back up. Verse 34 is the conclusion of **why** he could testify that Jesus was the Son of God. But if you go back in John 1:31-33, he said of John the baptist, "**I myself did not know him.**" Now, the word '**recognize**' does not necessarily mean that he did not know who Jesus was, in the sense that He was his cousin. He may have suspected who he was, but John needed absolute confirmation to say "**I recognize Him** ... that I am going to be able to affirm Him. So John said, "**I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water...**

So why did John go out and start baptizing people? Well, we know that he was baptizing them for repentance for the forgiveness of sins, and so it benefitted those people. But that wasn't the only reason he was out there baptizing people.

John the apostle writes in 1:31-32 NASB

³¹ I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water."

³² John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him.

John repeats, "³³ I did not recognize Him, but He [God] who sent me [John the Baptist] to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, **this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.**' ³⁴ I myself have seen, and have **testified** that this is the Son of God."

So, it seems to me that what John is saying is that God told me to go out here and start baptizing people ... for repentance ... for forgiveness of sins... for the benefit of the people, and because it makes the way straight for the Son of God to come.

But the other reason for me to be baptizing is so that I could have an affirmation from heaven that this person is truly the Son of God. And so when Jesus was baptized, we know what happened. The Holy Spirit came down from Heaven in the form of a dove, it, descended upon Jesus and a voice came from heaven saying, "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

All of that is happening as a pre-arranged signal. John is to be baptizing, he is going to baptize Jesus. *That's why it was fitting* – it was appropriate for him to baptize Jesus – **so that** God could affirm Jesus as the Son of God. **That fulfilled** righteousness. That fulfilled the purpose for which he was being baptized. It wasn't being baptized to be saved, or to be forgiven. He was being baptized to be **manifested** to Israel. And how could God manifest Him? The Spirit descended upon Him and a voice came out of heaven saying, "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." It was almost like, maybe not as strong as the resurrection of Jesus, where they were eye-witnesses of the resurrection and they could testify that Jesus was risen from the dead; but this was pretty conclusive evidence for John the Baptist. He was **fully** convinced that this [Jesus] was **the One**.

That is why, later on when John sent the disciples back to Jesus to ask if He were really "the one", (because John was likely to be killed pretty soon), some people say that John was trying to be really ultra sure that Jesus was the One because He didn't want to die for nothing. *I don't think it was about John at all*. I think John's disciples were bringing up the question about, "are you **sure** this is the right one? We don't want to see you die, John, for somebody who is not really the Son of God – the Messiah." John probably just told his disciples, "Then go to him and ask Him. You go confirm it for yourself. I don't need it confirmed because I already heard God speak from heaven and tell me that He is the right one." So I think all of this is tied up in this "pre-arranged signal" if you will, from God.

Jesus needs to be manifested to Israel, to be rendered apparent, to be declared. John was apparently told that the Messiah would be manifested while you are baptizing, and the One on who the spirit comes to rest and remain on Him, this is the Lamb of God, the Son of God, the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit and fire, and of course, the voice from heaven confirmed this as well. So, what was at stake at Jesus' baptism was fulfilled by plan to present Jesus as Messiah to Israel.

This was "proper" because God had arranged this. And remember, the word righteousness can mean "proper" ... "what is fitting". It fulfills all of what is proper in this matter. God arranged a sign that included John in it, and He made this the occasion of Jesus' anointing with the Spirit. We'll see more on that when we get to Luke 4.

Does that make sense of what was going on here?

Now, Jesus knew all of this. Jesus knew what the signal was. John knew what the signal was. But John was getting hung up on the idea that, "You're Jesus. You need to baptize me. I don't need to baptize You. And Jesus is like...John, you **know** what we're doing here. You know what the plan is. You were already told what to expect. So, let's just do it."

So, how did this reflect the mind of Christ? **First**, He was obedient. **Second**, if His obedience depended on others, He was also persuasive (which he had to be was with John the Baptist). **Third**, he understood why he was obeying and he explains this to other people. I think it's important that

when we obey God, we need to be able to explain to people why we're being obedient. What is the purpose of our obedience? It's not just doing it because God is God and He told me to do it, but this is the purpose of what I am trying to accomplish. God has told me about the purpose to my obedience.

Obedience to God is not just some blind thing that is meaningless. It has some purpose to it. God doesn't tell people to do meaningless things even if He is testing them in some way, like when he told Abraham to go offer his son on the mountain. God is not into meaningless obedience ... it always has some purpose. So this is why Jesus could say, 'this is why we need to do this, John'. And we need to be able to tell people, too.

Fourth, Jesus was also insistent about getting John's willing compliance, but not only by force. We will see this in another way. Jesus was clear when others were fuzzy. Jesus was **not** fuzzy about why they were doing this. This is the mind of Christ. Jesus is never fuzzy about what he's doing.

Brian: Even in the crucifixion... even before Pilate...He was always in charge.

Rod: Exactly. Jesus is always clear-minded. He always knows what it's about, and it comes out in a small way in this, and in the crucifixion.

So the actions that follow Jesus' baptism include His coming out of the water, the descent of the dove and God speaking.

1 His "coming out of the water" means He walked out onto the bank – unlike the many pictures that show Him in the water. I don't know – it's not important.

2. Why was the dove chosen as the symbol of the Holy Spirit? Have you ever thought about that? I do recall it was used by Noah – Noah had a dove. But just because Noah used a dove may have no significance to why Jesus is using a dove. Noah sent out the dove to see if the waters receded. A dove is certainly more docile than most birds. But if a dove lighted on you, would you be afraid or less likely to panic? I mean, if a dove landed on your head, probably in that moment, you wouldn't care if it was a crow or a dove. You would probably be startled by it. Doves are peaceful. They are comforting at times. I like to hear the cooing of a dove. I'm glad it wasn't a mocking bird because mocking birds will dive-bomb you. So God didn't use a mocking bird to land on his head. But the word for Dove here, in the Greek, could also mean a pigeon, which can be trained to carry messages and then return. The word Carrier pigeons bring a message and return to where they started. Pigeons were used in sacrifices.

So this is a fitting figure for the Spirit. We might have to change some of our logos when we have the dove coming down. We may need to replace some with a pigeon coming down out of heaven. It would be just as fitting. And it does say, "Like a dove" (in Matthew 3:16; John 1:32; and Luke 3:22) so we may need to change the Christian symbols to the spirit to pigeons. In Matthew 10:16 Jesus tells us to be wise as serpents and as harmless as doves. So I'm not exactly sure why God chose a dove/pigeon to land on Jesus' head, but the real descent was the Spirit. So this anointing was a seal; an indication of Divine Sanction. It was a setting apart – a sanctification. The presence of the Spirit in one's life is the definitive indicator of a relationship with God.

Jesus, as Messiah or King, received this anointing as a King, not with oil, but divine Spirit. This, accompanied by the voice of the father indicating pleasure and identifying Jesus as the beloved Son, was the perfect introduction of Jesus into this new ministry.

What a way to begin a ministry. Being baptized, coming up out of the water, the Spirit comes down upon your head and God says, “This is my Son – listen to Him. That is a great way to begin a ministry. That’s an introduction.

All of this being “out of heaven” made it clear that Jesus had authority, and this is how it all began. So, this is definitely a transition period, out of private life and into public life. Nothing is ever going to be the same for Jesus after this point. So the “well pleased” statement must have been a powerful and satisfying statement for Jesus, particularly as he probably had some foreknowledge of what was happening in His life from here on out. It is appropriate. It is approval and delight for the special and positive relationship that Jesus had with His Father. This is merely one indicator that this truth and reality surely must have been a dominant theme in the thinking of Jesus. Jesus mind was filled with this mutual state of loving and being loved; an absolutely essential state for health, spiritually, emotionally and physically.

In my notes here, and I do this several times in my notes - I “star it” ★ and I write that “I believe this is a **dominant** aspect of Jesus’ thinking” ★. This one is a **key** ★ to His thinking

Now, what is that key? The key is ‘*Jesus always had in His mind the fact that He was loved and that He had the capacity to love.*’ ★ That made Him a person who was well rounded, a person who had well-being, and a person who knew who He was. I have seen more people in my ministry who have one or the other missing in their lives. Some people were very good at receiving love but horrible at giving it. And other people were very good at giving love, but were horrible at receiving it. And neither one of those is a balanced individual.

Jesus was able to receive the love of His Father but He was also able to be pleasing *to* His Father. God was well-pleased with Him and Jesus did everything He could to be pleasing to his Father. Jesus was pleased with His relationship with His Father. That caused him, I believe, *a dominant pattern of thinking that served Him all through His life.* And if we had to capture the mind of Christ, I would have to say that one of the places we need to begin having the mind of Christ is *having that balance* in our lives.

In this section, Luke added two facts not found in Matthew and Mark. It’s interesting to see what one person puts in and the other leave out. I had to slow down and read very carefully so I don’t miss these little gems, but it says that Jesus, in Baptism, was praying!

(Luke 3:21) *When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened* ²² *and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove.*

Luke mentions that Jesus was praying and the Spirit descends in bodily form. Luke makes note of that. By the Spirit descending in “bodily form”, it makes me assume that he is saying here that it was a real dove or a real pigeon. The text is, “As Jesus was being baptized and while He was praying...It’s a common word for prayer (προσευχομενου). It is “*being in prayer*”.

So being in prayer during baptism is not something emphasized, commanded or practiced elsewhere that I am aware of, but this it is interesting to me. In 1 Peter 3:21 it indicates that when we are baptized, it says that baptism saves us. It is not putting away the guilt of the flesh. But that next phrase is a little bit difficult phrase to translate, but it basically indicates that **an appeal is being made to God** for a clear conscience. In Baptism, we are making an appeal to God for a clear conscience.

So a person recognizing that in baptism there is a need for a clear conscience, and it is like an appeal that we make. So, the debate among us is: praying Jesus into our heart, or being baptized into Christ? That is usually a debate we have. At least here, we have them joined together. Though the purpose of both may be different than our pursuit of salvation, because Jesus was not being baptized to be saved, but what was Jesus saying to His father in this instance? He was praying to His Father while He was being baptized. I wish I knew what he was saying.

Now we know, on the cross something to that effect was going on. He was calling out to God, “My God, My God, Why have you forsaken me?” His example of frequent prayer, especially at critical points in His ministry is instructive ... it further indicates His earthly dependence on His Father - His Father’s delight in Him.

But it is interesting to me that Jesus combined prayer and baptism together, at least in His experience, and then, that question then is, “could we really be saved by a sinner’s prayer if it is connected with Baptism? Could that prayer (the sinner’s prayer) actually be that appeal that we’re making to God?”

Remember when Paul was baptized? In Acts 22:16 Ananias told Paul to, “Arise and be baptized washing away your sins, **calling on the name of the Lord**”? Here is **another** connection here between someone calling out to God and the act of Baptism. Maybe we need to be teaching people that when they are baptized, they are calling out (could we say ‘praying’) to God? Okay? I just thought that connection was interesting.

It is clear it was the **Holy Spirit** who descended in a bodily form as a dove. Belonging to a body, or a material, it speaks to corporeal (<https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/corporeal> - {relating to a person's body, physical, fleshly, mortal}). I won't get into much of it, but certainly when it came to the resurrection of Jesus it was a big deal that he was raised in “bodily” form and that he was not just raised in some spiritual sense. His actual body came out of the grave. It just seems to me that God makes important things **real** by putting them in the corporeal realm and not just in a Spiritual realm.

Well, let’s jump to the next section. ***Jesus Is Tested in the Wilderness***

I'm not going to take time to read the Scriptures now because of the 10 minutes we have left. But I want to introduce it a little bit because there is a concept at the very beginning of this whole section that is curious to me and I spent a little time on it here.

Mark 1:12-13

[At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness,¹³ and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.](#)

Mark offers a summary of the temptation of Jesus. He does not give us any detail so we are depending pretty much on Matthew and Luke for the temptations of Jesus. But the activity of the Spirit, and remember when He was baptized, the Spirit was descending on Him so we begin to see the activity of the Spirit in the life of Christ.

The translation here is a little amusing. I am using a literal translation here. It is described as the Spirit was “*thrusting Him forth into the desert.*” The Christ is being **thrust** into the desert according to **Mark 1:12**. The word, “εκβαλλει” or “ekballei” is the Greek word 1544 in Strong’s Concordance. It seems to be a strong word. Matthew 15:17 uses the same word in “Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and *then [cast] out* of the body? It is “**eliminated**” like a bowel movement.

It is the same word used in **Acts 27:38** where they cast out the **wheat throwing it** out into the sea. (They were in the storm and the ship was sinking, so they threw the wheat out to save their lives.) So they didn’t just lightly drop it over the side of the boat. They “threw” it out of the boat.

It is also used in **Luke 4:29** where they say **Jesus is “cast out”** of the city. I believe that was in Nazareth when he said, “The Spirit of the Lord is Upon Me”, He was in the Synagogue and said, “Today these Scriptures have been fulfilled in your hearing”. They **cast Him out** of the City. Imagine being “**pushed along**”.

With **Stephen** in **Acts 7:58** – they didn’t just take him gently outside the city. They *pushed* him. They *thrust* him outside the city. In **John 6:37**, Jesus promises *not* to **cast out those who came to Him**. If you come to Him, He is not going to thrust you out.

Matthew 7:4 is about **extracting or taking a speck out of someone else’s eye**. In other words, this is a delicate surgery, and most of the time while we’re trying to get specks out of people’s eyes, we’re somewhat violent about it, or critical, aggressiveness when getting specks out of other people’s eyes. We always want people to be delicate with us, but we’re a little harsh sometimes with others.

In **Luke 6:22** the word is for **spurning, rejecting or casting out your name as evil**.

Matthew 9:38 Jesus said we should *beseech the Lord of the harvest* to **send out workers into the harvest**. So like the whole idea as thrusting Jesus into the desert, we are praying to God and asking Him to thrust workers into the field to harvest. Not just simply urge them in, but **we want God to push people into the harvest field**.

In **Matthew 9:25** He talks about the *crowd being “put out”* of their house. Here, in **this** passage, the New American Standard Bible uses the word “**impelled**” – to **urge**, or **drive forward, to move by exerting strong moral pressure** on him.

The point is, ‘how does Jesus get from the Baptism into the Desert?’ He was **pushed** by the Spirit. He was **thrust** into the desert. He was **thrown** into the desert by the Spirit.

Matthew 4:1-22

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

⁴ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶ “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:

“‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’”

⁷ Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹ “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Luke 4:1-13

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness ² for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry. ³ And the devil said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.” ⁴ And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone.’”

⁵ And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶ And the devil said to Him, “I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. ⁷ Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours.” ⁸

Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.’”

⁹ And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; ¹⁰ for it is written,

‘He will command His angels concerning You to guard You,’

¹¹ and, ‘On their hands they will bear You up, So that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.’”

¹² And Jesus answered and said to him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

¹³ When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.

Matthew and Luke use a different word. Mark uses the word we just studied, but Matthew and Luke use a different word which is interesting. They use the word “led up”. “ανηχθη” or “anecthe”.

In **Luke 4:5** this word is also used of **Satan taking him up to a high place**. So when He was **led up** to a high place to see the world by Satan. But before Satan **led him up**, the **Spirit led him up** into the desert. The contrast is interesting – **being led** by the Spirit and **being led** by Satan in the same context here.

Then in **Acts 12:4** the word has a sense of “**going up**”... going up to Jerusalem.

So both words have a sense of a force or acting on Jesus pushing Him into the desert – the temptation, and as soon as Jesus was baptized, he began to be led, or was he before, by the spirit? In other words, up until that time Jesus was being led by the Spirit? Now I don't want to spend too much time on that, but we know that after he came up out of the water, He was being led by the Spirit.

The compelling influence of God came to bear on His life through the work of the Holy Spirit. However, Satan countered with his **own “push”**. Satan saw the Spirit pushing him into the desert, and Satan comes along and says “I've got some pushing to do too. I want to push you up to the mountain. I want to show you some things.” Whether this was new or not, how did Jesus think about this? This is about what this class is about—the mind of Christ.

What was Jesus thinking about? What would I think about? Somebody is trying to push you. Say you can't swim and someone's trying to push you into the pool. You might be fighting and clawing, saying ‘leave me alone’. Or someone is trying to push you out of the door of an airplane and you didn't want to go (with or without a parachute on). Think about anybody trying to push you into something. How would you react to that? This is kind of what is happening here. Did Jesus realize that it was the Spirit pushing Him or leading Him into the desert? We don't always realize that it's the Spirit leading us.

How much of His conscious will was involved? Was the 40 Day's fast planned? Or, when did He plan it? Why did He plan it? Who was it planned by? The baptism was planned by God, the Father. Did Jesus know that a confrontation from Satan was coming when he went into the desert? Was Jesus anxious about this period of His life, or was he pumped up for the challenge like, “Yes. Let's do it! Jesus was thinking something. What was He thinking? Why did he need this push into the desert?

Luke says Jesus was full of the Spirit. So it's the idea is that he was being “pushed” by the spirit, but He was also full of the Spirit. It says regarding this verse that “He was full, bounding and holy occupied, completely under the influence, or affected by the Spirit.” So what must it be like to be completely under the influence of the Spirit, at all times, and all situations? Man comes under the influence of the flesh – desires that draw him away – pull and tug at him. So we understand the idea of the flesh pulling, pushing, tugging and almost forcing people, like it says in Romans 7, “**The things I don't want to do, I end up doing**” as if I'm being pushed into it somehow. “Sin is “pushy”.

Jesus faced the head to head confrontation with Satan. The threefold temptation wholly occupied the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit was totally involved in this process. He was full of the Spirit and he was being pushed by the Spirit.

For me to have the mind of Christ, this is what must be true of me. To identify the areas where the Holy Spirit has not completely and wholly occupied my being is necessary work. I want to be occupied territory...ground taken...held...saturated with the influence of the Spirit.

As we have seen, this degree of fullness involves being thrust forth by the Spirit. Imagine Him pushing **me** out of the way of danger and sin. Imagine him leading me into a situation where temptation is possible, even though you remember in the prayer of Jesus, He said, “**Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.**” What was the Holy Spirit doing leading Him into a place of temptation? He didn’t **tempt** Him, because God can’t tempt anybody. But He was certainly putting Him in a position of testing.

Imagine the Spirit leading me into a situation where temptation is possible and probably, but giving me the strength to stand. **Full** of the Spirit and **Led** by the Spirit is the goal.

Ephesians 5 tells me that this is for me. ¹⁹ ... speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is through this context that we understand what it means to be filled with the spirit. Look carefully into that passage. There was speaking to one another with Psalms, hymns and Spiritual songs, we make music from our heart to the Lord.

When other’s influence threatens this, this is a three-fold strategy for keeping the filling of the spirit.

And so, what I am saying here is that Jesus maintained His filling of the Spirit and a saturation with the Spirit even in the midst of a test, or trial or temptation by Satan. We’re told later on by Paul in Ephesians 5 that if we’re filled with the Spirit it is going to manifest itself in certain ways. And the three and the most immediate context is,

1. “sing - music” (like Paul and Silas did in jail). What did they do in the midst of their trials? They sang. What do we do in the midst of trial? We sing. Music - It helps us through those difficult times.
2. What else do we do? We give thanks.
3. What else do we do? We don’t fight it. We submit – out of reverence for Christ. We don’t fight it. We submit ourselves to God.

He has given us a formula. And what I wonder is “how did Jesus survive forty days and forty nights, in the wilderness, with the wild beasts and with the depravation of having no food, (I assume he drank water), and being tempted by Satan. ***How did He survive that?*** I believe there is a ★ key here to help us understand what was going on in His mind when He was under that severe test that we could gain from that and figure out what we do when we are under our test so we can survive.

The Mind of Christ Class – Not Last Class

Week 17

May 15, 2019

We are going to be in the “Temptations of Jesus” in **Matthew 4:1-11**

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted[a] by the devil. ² After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

⁴ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶ “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:

“He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.””

⁷ Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹ “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Mark 1:12-13

At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, ¹³ and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

Luke 4:1-13

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, ² where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

³ The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.”

⁴ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone.’”

⁵ The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. ⁷ If you worship me, it will all be yours.”

⁸ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’”

⁹ The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here. ¹⁰ For it is written:

“He will command his angels concerning you
to guard you carefully;

¹¹ they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.””

¹² Jesus answered, “It is said: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

¹³ When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

Last week we talked about Jesus being led (or driven) into the wilderness. Mark, alone, mentions Jesus as being with the wild beasts. What do we make of this? When you go out into the wilderness or go out into the woods, or go out wherever, there are critters. I did a little bit of research on what kind of wild beasts are in the wilderness in Israel. Here is what I came up with.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wildlife_of_Israel

There are venomous snakes, other dangerous snakes, lions (back then), Arabian Oryx (like an antelope), Onager (the Asiatic wild ass or donkey), Ostrich, Wolves, Fox, Sand Cats, Leopards, striped Hyenas (most active at night), Hedgehogs, Rodents, and Fruit Bats. These may be some of the wild beasts he was out in the wilderness with.

Onager



Sand cat



Leopards



Hyena



Hedgehogs



I don't know if that makes you squeamish about camping out, but ...

Brian: The sand cats are so cute thought.

Rod: Look at those cute cats. But they have big feet. Don't try to baptize one.

But Jesus was East, out into the wilderness Just as Adam was cast out of the Garden. The wilderness was kind of a 'cursed' garden. Adam was given authority over all the animals. Jesus is with the wild beasts (those not subject to man – not domesticated. That's why they were called wild). Do any of these beasts dare attack Jesus? Now this is just speculation, but, just as Daniel was protected by angels who closed the mouths of the lions, did Jesus' ministering angels protect Him from the wild beasts?

Brenda: At the cross, Jesus said that he could call a legion of angels to help him in Matthew 26:53.

Rod: Yes. I think in **Psalm 22:12-21**, Jesus on the cross is being spoken of as surrounded by wild beasts.

¹² Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.

¹³ Roaring lions that tear their prey open their mouths wide against me.

¹⁴ I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint.

My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within me.

¹⁵ My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death.

¹⁶ Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet.

¹⁷ All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me.

¹⁸ They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.

¹⁹ But you, Lord, do not be far from me. You are my strength; come quickly to help me.

²⁰ Deliver me from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dogs.

²¹ Rescue me from the mouth of the lions; save me from the horns of the wild oxen.

Isaiah 43:19-21 suggests that the church is where the wild beasts will honor Jesus.

See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?

I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

²⁰ The wild animals honor me, the jackals and the owls,

because I provide water in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland,

to give drink to my people, my chosen,

²¹ the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.

Isaiah 35:8-9 speaks of “the highway of holiness in which no ravenous beast can go”

Since there are no beasts on the highway of holiness, there is only singing and everlasting joy.

Isaiah 11:6-11

The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them.

⁷ The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

⁸ The infant will play near the cobra’s den, and the young child will put its hand into the viper’s nest.

⁹ They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

¹⁰ In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious. ¹¹ In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the surviving remnant of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the Mediterranean.

Amos 5:19 “It will be as though a man fled from a lion, only to meet a bear, as though he entered his house and rested his hand on the wall only to have a snake bite him.”

We remember David, when he was out protecting the sheep in the wilderness he slew a bear and a lion. David is a type of Christ. These are just connections with all of the symbolism, but what is the practical aspect of Jesus being in the wilderness with the wild beasts? It must be mentioned for some reason. So He’s sleeping out in the open at night in the wilderness. He is exposed to the weather and to the critters... the snakes, the mammals, and the bugs for forty days and nights.

I remember when I was on that Sabbatical ... I had a six week Sabbatical. I spent one night camped out in Amicola State Park in northern Georgia by myself. I was in a tent. There was this guy who came along as I was getting ready to go to bed. He came up where the Appalachian Trail comes up in the park. He stumbled up. He looked like he was in some distress; that he was diabetic and needed something to eat. So I pulled out some things to give him and he seemed to feel better after he ate a little bit.

He said, “I hadn’t had anything to eat except the rattlesnake I killed on the trail. I cooked him and ate him.” That made me feel a lot better about sleeping up there that night. {nervous giggles}.

Jean: At least one was gone. That’s one less snake you had to worry about.

Rod: Yes, there was one less wild beast out there. Although I was a little afraid of the guy himself because he looked like ... if anybody just kills a rattlesnake and eats it on the trail; he might be rougher than the snake. So I had one of those nights where I was a little bit nervous because there was hardly anybody else in the park. There was one guy who was a caretaker in the park who looked down from a house trailer or something like that but – you know. There’s nothing *out* there. There were some bathrooms you could go to and they set the trash cans up in a way that kept the bears out of them. So...I'm like, “Okay. Here we are, Jesus ... me and the wild beasts here in Amicola State Park.”

So, just the mere physical discomfort of being there ... how did Jesus handle this for forty days and forty nights? Was He fearful? Did a snake slither across His feet while He slept? Did a scorpion bite Him? How about sand fleas? Could he hear sounds in the night? Was He able to identify the animals ... He made them. He knew what they sounded like. Did Jesus have any fear at all while He was out there sleeping in the wilderness?

As He became hungrier and weaker, did His mood change? Does your mood change when you get hungry? I wonder if Jesus’ mood changed if He got hungry. Did He hallucinate? I guess that’s possible. If you get hungry enough you might start seeing things like Big Macs. Did He have to struggle harder to hang on during those forty days and forty nights? Did Satan work in the shadows watching for a vulnerable point of attack, because when you are weak, you can also be more vulnerable spiritually? When you’re feeling pretty good and everything is going fairly well you’re alert and stay on your toes. When you’re not feeling well, you may be under spiritual attack as well.

Did Jesus spend long hours praying? Did He sing? Did He study nature while He was out there? Did he check on some of the critters He had made? He was there 57,600 minutes! (I don’t know why I thought of doing that.) Can you imagine 57,600 minutes alone? No T. V. No radio. No telephone.

Did He talk to Himself? Was it anything like “Castaways”?

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castaways_\(TV_series\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castaways_(TV_series))

It chronicles the lives of 12 individuals as they try to survive on a number of islands in Indonesia. Unlike other reality shows, participants on Castaways may not be initially aware that there are other "Castaways" nearby. Moreover, the participants can leave only by waiting for a rescue team at the end of the show or by quitting. Each castaway has one piece of luggage. They all arrive alone and with their or someone else's luggage washed up on shore with them. Everyone is required to have a journal in their luggage where they write about themselves, thus allowing those who find it to learn about them.

3.45,000,000 seconds alone. Did He lay awake counting the stars, calling them one-by- one by name, remembering what it was like at creation? How would I do? I don’t think I would do very well ... forty days and forty nights in the wilderness with no food - me and the critters.

Mark indicates during this forty day period, Jesus was being tempted by Satan, the accuser. So from Hebrew, to Greek, to English, and other languages transliterated, it’s an ancient name for an ancient enemy. There are many unknowns regarding this person, this angel that we know as Satan, but regarding the mind of Christ, I wonder if this was Jesus’ first personal encounter with him. I don’t think it’s ‘likely’ to be His first personal encounter, but this was a very personal encounter.

Brian: All the demons knew who he was, right?

Rod: Yes, they knew who he was.

Did Jesus do battle with him in His pre-incarnate state? Maybe before Jesus became a man He had a personal battle with Satan. Had they ever talked? Remember in the book of **Job 1:6** **One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them.** We know nothing in Scripture to answer all of these questions, but we know that Jesus had knowledge of him. But did He have **experience** with him? Jesus had known temptation in the flesh before this experience, yet without sin, of course. Was Satan any match for Jesus? Did Jesus fast forty days in the wilderness to make it a fair fight? The salvation of the world, the will of God and the integrity of God was at stake in the contest.

It says He was tempted. Peirazo “πειραζω”. This word has a range of meanings. It means to be tested in regard to an endeavor; to be scrutinized, to be enticed, to be disciplined, to assay (like you do assay of metal to determine what the metal is), to examine, to prove, to tempt, to try. It can be related to the words trial, experience, and is often used in a good sense to ascertain character, views or feelings of someone. Matthew 22:35-6 in the questioning of the lawyers says, **“One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”**

But in many cases, the intent is called, ‘assayer’. One of the attempts of temptation is to cause someone to fail. The temptation in the hands of Satan is to failure. Trials and testing in the hands of God are for the purpose of proving what we are made of in order for us to succeed. Galatians 6:1 says, **“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.”** James 1:13-14, **“When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.”** Rev. 2:10 says, **“Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor’s crown.”**

1 Cor. 7:5 indicates that situations may create greater opportunities to sin:

“Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.” What is tested here is self-control. In 1 Thess. 3:5 Paul fears that the tempter might have tempted them in some way that their labor was in vain. A person who falls for temptation can nullify their previous labor. Wipe it out.

Whatever gains that they had made can be wiped out if you succumb to a temptation. If that happens, basically you have to start over. And Of course, we can start over because God is gracious and He will forgive us. It’s like the prodigal son who **can** come home.

1 Cor. 10:13 says, **“But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”**

All of these are teachings from Scripture about temptation. We can only imagine how all this applied specifically to Christ and His temptation.

So if we could identify the struggle in Jesus' mind regarding the temptation, we would know what it is like, and how Jesus thought during this period of intense temptation, and how practically wonderful it would be to know the mind of the Lord.

When I think about Jesus going through these forty days and forty nights, I need to understand, 'what is His thought process in this.' If someone could lay that out in great, great detail, that would be wonderful, but we only have so much information.

The last thing that Mark mentions is that the angels were ministering to Him. So angels figure prominently in the Jesus Story thus far. The word *angel* means, "one sent" or "a messenger". Of course, the Father sent them. How many were there? We do not know if only two or three angels came, or there were hundreds or thousands who were with Him in the wilderness. Did the Father hand-pick the best, or send Michael the archangel, or Gabriel? Did Satan bring his demons (fallen angels) with him for back-up? Was there fighting going on? Were there fights going on in the background of these temptations?

This would have been an interesting scene in which to pull back the curtain and being able to see what was going on during this time with the angels of God and the fallen angels, of Satan if there were any . . . and maybe the battles that were ensuing during this time.

They were ministering to Him. What does that mean? They were rendering service. They were tending to Him. They were serving, they were waiting on Him, and they were assisting Him supplying the necessities of life. Was 'being there' enough to help Him through this? What did they do practically? What did they actually '*do*' to minister to Him?

It says He was fasting so they weren't serving Him food. Did they talk to Him? Did He have conversations at night with the angels? This reference does raise this issue: Jesus needed to be ministered to. He was a dependant person. You only minister to those who *need* to be ministered to. He could not ... did not ... go it alone. I assume He could see and could communicate with His angels. Did they protect Him from the wild beasts as they did for Daniel in the Lion's den?

The mind of Christ is relational. It is not sealed in a box. It is dynamic. It communicates. It corresponds. It allows for giving and receiving. Jesus had true vulnerabilities ... could we say, "weaknesses" because of being in a body? He had needs and He needed others both other-worldly and this worldly ... people of the other world and this world.

He had His Father, the Holy Spirit, angels, his disciples, women who followed along with Him. He had John the Baptist to minister *to* Him and *with* Him. He did not deem this a 'weakness' or 'out of place' to admit His need, to accept the help. He accepted it.

★ Remember how I taught that one of the *key understandings* of Jesus' mind, I believe, is His ability to love and to be loved. That made that perfect balance – that blend of being able to love other people and to receive love Himself made Him a balanced person.

Could He have said to the angels, "What are you all doing here? I got this! I don't need you. Why don't you go back to Heaven? Go help some of those people out there. They need you." He was not so macho that He had to try to do this work on His own. He was surrounded and gained from others. This is a piece of the mind of Christ. Lord, help me to have this mind.

Brian: In Matthew it says that it was after the devil left; that was when the angels came. Mark doesn't tell us when – at what point.

Rod: Right. We don't know exactly when they interjected.

Jean: There are so many times that we're told not to be afraid. We're told that over and over again. I don't think Jesus was afraid.

Rod: Right. Many times when angels came and encountered human beings, one of the first things they told them was 'don't be afraid'. But if I saw an angel, with a sword ...

Matthew uses the term devil instead of Satan (diabolos - διαβολος). It also means 'accuser' or 'slanderer'. It is actually two words. It means 'through' and 'throw'. It means 'to throw something through', slander.

Luke also says Devil. Both **Luke** and **Matthew** mention He ate nothing, or fasted for forty days and forty nights. He became hungry. Fasted is the Greek word 'nesteusos' (νηστευσας) – to abstain from food religiously, so it's not just a diet. Strictly, fasting is a religious practice.

It is interesting that both Matthew and Luke indicate that it was not until the end of the forty days and forty nights that He became hungry. **Matthew** says afterward, he hungered (first aorist, past tense, simple action seems to make it clear that he became hungry *after* the forty days of fasting!) Does this mean He felt no hunger on day twenty-five? I believe it means that He reached His **greatest** state of hunger after forty days of fasting. **Luke** says, after these days had ended, (or complete entirely, to fulfill, to accomplish), Jesus fasted the entire forty days and forty nights, and **then** the temptations directly by Satan began. I believe that the temptations didn't happen until He was at His most vulnerable spot – not during those forty days but at the end of those forty days.

Does this mean that there were not natural or fleshly temptations before that time – the kind that originate in the mind or desire? It was the more direct, satanic temptations came at the end of the forty days and forty nights.

What endurance, and perseverance and determination and discipline to devote himself to this spiritual retreat for this long without food. It *doesn't* say He went without water. There was loss of weight. I don't know how much weight you lose in forty days. I imagine you'd lose quite a bit of body weight, muscle mass and all. The toll on His body would have been remarkable.

For instance, Gandhi fasted for six days in September of 1932 for equal rights for the untouchables. In 1933 he did a twenty-one day fast for this cause. There is much available about the physical effects of fasting, especially for forty days.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_fasts_undertaken_by_Mahatma_Gandhi

I've read where, particularly in places like India, in places like Korea and other certain kinds of churches, there are people who **regularly** fast for forty days. I say regularly meaning that they plan a forty day fast in order to be like Jesus. I've never personally known somebody who has done that for forty days.

Ron: I did a forty day fast once, but it was under the supervision of a doctor and he had me drink juices up to 600 calories a day for forty days. I think I remember how delicious that first meal was. It was eggs and a little bit of toast and it was so, so good.

Rod: I would imagine that you kind of had to eat little by little to get yourself back on food.

Ron: Yes, I did.

So now we DO know somebody who fasted forty days and nights. The discipline of fasting is expected in the New Testament actually.

Matthew 6 says **when** you fast... It has a real spiritual purpose. I would recommend a book by John Piper called "*A Hunger for God*" if you want to understand some of the spiritual dimensions behind fasting. He goes a little bit into the how to do it and how not to do it, but it's mostly about the spiritual aspects of what fasting is ... the purpose of fasting.

So, if Jesus "**needed**" to fast, what was in his mind on this? I put "needed" in parenthesis because, "why did He do it if he didn't **need** to"? And why did he **need** to? I understand that this was the beginning of His ministry; He's going to start after the fast is over, but why did he "**need**" to? *

* I just typed this and I began to wonder if Jesus needed to fast because if he didn't, Satan would attribute His **success** {of saving the world} to His coming from God and being helped by God the Father, just as he accused God of putting a hedge around Job. I am thinking of Job 1:9-11, "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. ¹⁰ "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. ¹¹ But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face." **In my copies only.** He **needed** time with God - strength.

Mathew also calls Him "the tempter", talking about Satan now. So we have three names now in this context here: He's called Satan, the devil and the tempter. And as he enters, I've noticed a couple of differences between *Matthew* and *Luke*.

First, Matthew says, "And approaching" in the Greek. Tell, or order, or command {the stones} to become bread. I would have to go back to the context here to understand why I wrote this in my journal. But there are some subtle differences between Matthew and Luke and the language that they used. Matthew does use the plural of stones and loaves, and Luke uses the singular stone or loaf. I don't see the significances in that, but there are differences in the text. Not contradictions ... just differences.

But it says "approaching", "to come and go", "to draw near". This is Satan approaching near to Him. Did Satan watch the ordeal of Jesus from a distance? Did he lurk in the shadows? Did he tail Jesus waiting for His weakest moment looking for just the right time to strike like a snake or a lion? Was Jesus aware of Satan's presence before he passed? Was the watcher being watched?

Second, Matthew uses a stronger phrase for Satan's temptation. He uses "to tell in order", a force or command. In other words, when Satan tempted Him to turn the stones into bread, he "commanded" Him to turn those stones into bread. It's a very strong word.

So Satan knew Jesus could turn a stone into a loaf of bread. He knew that. It wasn't a question of whether He could do it. He knew that it must have some power, force or intention, so notice carefully - "in order that" is a statement of purpose.

Third, the significance of Matthew using the plural while Luke uses the singular is not clear. Practically, what difference does it make? But for accuracy's sake, was it just a quote, and was it intended to be an exact quote? In other words, I just struggle sometimes with the consistency of the reports as to what actually happened. Again, it doesn't mean they're contradictory, but why would one writer say one thing and another say something else?

The opportunity for the first temptation is physical need ... hunger. One of our most basic desires is eating. We **must** eat. What is the real issue here? Is it just "not doing anything Satan said to do because Satan **said** it?" In other words, what is the essence of the temptation here? Was the essence of the temptation that 'Satan told me to do it so I can't do anything that Satan tells me to do so I just won't do it?' Was it because the 'command' of Satan was attached to it? "If you are God's son" may be the phrase that got Jesus. "If you are God's son ..." Was it because Jesus was not ready to break the fast and His commitment was not complete so He didn't turn the stone to bread? Was it because Jesus did not want to use His power on earth for 'personal' comfort? Was it simply I'm not going to work a miracle because I'm uncomfortable? I know that I think I would have been tempted if I were out there sleeping to turn one of those stones into my pillow. I think I would have slept a little better.

Brian: It seems like the issue with Jesus was He refused to do it just to prove a point or because somebody just said so. He only seemed to do them for the glory of God and somehow in the timing of God. So, to do a miracle for one's own need would be to deny God's power to take care of Him or to circumvent that. So that's why I always thought He didn't ... or it wasn't to the glory of God, and it would be 'not trusting God' which is really at the heart of many of our sins.

Carole: I think when somebody says, "If you believe this" or "if you think" they're almost **daring** you ... they're tempting you: go head, do something on your own. And the whole purpose, from my studies over the years, of the temptations, was to get Jesus to act independently of God – and He would not do it without God's permission.

Rod: Okay. Those are some of the things that we have to struggle with here about what the essence of the temptation was.

Brenda: Jesus wasn't being oppositionally defiant. And people who try to, like with little kids, "if you do that one more time you step right over the line. They are being oppositionally defiant. But they can be easily manipulated by other people when they get in that mode. Usually they don't realize that they can be easily manipulated by **you** doing the opposite of what they are **expecting** you to do. When you do that, you do the opposite. You don't buy into that...you don't answer baited questions. If you refuse to answer a baited question, you take away their power.

Rod: Well, in regard to Jesus 'not doing something for his own comfort', He **did** allow the angels to minister to Him. That may have been something of a comfort to him, although I don't know if that required Him to do a miracle with God sending the angels there **for** Him.

What was in Jesus' mind when He thought why He must resist this temptation? What was going on in his mind when he said, 'I have to resist this temptation – I must not turn these stones into bread'? What **made** it a temptation for Jesus?

The phrase, "If you are the Son of God" – How offensive this phrase must have been to Jesus. He must have been tempted just to prove this to Satan and later to people. Was there any relationship more 'dear' to Jesus than the one with His Father? So, to say, "*If you are the Son of God*" is *certainly a "baited" question*. It is poking Him in a very sore spot.

Carole: If somebody said to me, "If you're a Christian, you would do so 'such and such'" I would be so tempted to do it right on the spot ... but now I'll think about it more.

Rod: That's good

Later at the cross, in Matthew 27:42-43 we read, "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants {if He takes pleasure in Him-NASB}, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

Luke reports in 23:35, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One." ³⁶ The soldiers also mocked Him, coming up to Him, offering Him sour wine, ³⁷ and saying, ..." So Jesus is getting the same kinds of things on the cross.

Jean: In my mind, I always think about why He had the temptation. I think it was to show the Devil that He wasn't going to give in He quoted Scriptures every time he tempted Him. He was going to stay faithful to God even though He was suffering. I think Jesus was there so that the devil could have a shot at him and lose, and God will know that He's still being obedient to Me no matter how bad off He is.

Sandy: It seems to me that Jesus, knowing God, would have total trust, and He still knows who **He** is, and I would guess He had total confidence. He didn't **need** to go to the wilderness. **He** knew who He was.

Carole: But we know from last week that He didn't go into the wilderness. He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. It wasn't His idea. He was brought, or thrown into the wilderness.

Rod: Yes.

Jean: Another Scripture says that He learned obedience from the things He suffered.

So, in Luke 23:37 it says, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" It's that, "If you are". And here's what I want you to do "to prove that's who you are." ...If you are... Surely Satan knew who Jesus was. He wasn't literally asking Him if he really was the Son of God and if you do this I'll know for **sure** that you are. He **knew** He was. But He was setting up tests or signs by which Jesus could prove it. Jesus, in the course of His ministry *did* prove it. (**John 20:30-31**). Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

The insincerity of Satan and those at the cross was evident. These people were not looking for evidence to believe. They simply wished to mock, and that is one of the things that Jesus never played in to. People who were insincere and really weren't looking for truth, they were just mockers, He gave them no place.

Jesus was physically weak in the desert, and at the cross. The most natural human instinct would be to think, "I'll show you", and reach over into the God-side of his nature and do something truly Divine with power to prove His identity. The issue has always been 'who is Jesus'. The voice of the Father at Jesus' baptism confirmed Jesus' identity as the Son of God and loved by Him. Was Satan there to hear these words and now using them as an occasion to tempt Jesus?

Would it be like us, saying, "We're a child of God" and someone responding, "If you are **really** a child of God, then call on Him to feed us. Surely 'your Father' would not want to see you go hungry. It's like setting up a false test ... watching someone to fail it only to say, "See. God really is not your Father and you're not His son.

But Jesus was not falling for these tricks. He knew who He was and He knew who His Father was. He was secure in His relationship with His Father. No doubts, perfect peace, contentment, He was sure throughout His life and in His death and in His resurrection of His Father's love. This was His protection from the assault of the devil, and His knowing His Father's word which we get into as well. The point is everything that Jesus knew was secure in the relationship with His Father and protected Him from the temptations.

There is a key here for us:

★ **The more secure we are in our relationship with God, the more we know 'who we are', the more we protect ourselves from temptation. I don't have anything to prove.**

Brian: That is exactly like what Jesus said when He was washing the disciple's feet. He showed that true humility because He knew who He was and where He was going. He could do that.

Rod: Absolutely. And Jesus had this confidence – this God confidence. I don't even want to say self confidence; it was God confidence throughout His life. Again, he didn't have to play the games. He didn't **need** something external to Himself in order to make Himself something. **HE WAS WHO HE WAS.** And when you find people who know who they are, they're above reproach. You can't bribe them. You can't sway them by saying, "I'll do this for you if you do this for me." They're not into deals, and games.

So, Matthew, in questioning Jesus' identity as the Son of God, there are only three in the Deity – and only one Son of God. So could there be a mistaken identity? I mean, there is nobody else who is THE Son of God. We are called sons of God through faith, but there is no one else who is THE Son of God and Satan knew this. The devils believe and tremble – James 2:19. Stones to bread – It's an easy move for Jesus. His first public miracle was similar to that when he turned water into wine. But Jesus was no exhibitionist or some self-centered miracle worker.

Other than Jesus being extremely hungry, what was the temptation? Was it the command of Satan? Satan commanded the Son of God to command the stones – would this make Jesus a lower rank to Satan? What if it had been merely a request; not a command? Now Jesus' own mother asked Him

to turn water into wine ‘before His time’. And later Satan took Him to the Holy City and had Him stand on the Pinnacle of the Temple. He also took Him to a high mountain, and it says that Jesus complied with that. He didn’t fail to go with him. Did Satan command Him, “Come with me”? How did Satan get Him up there? I don’t know. But He went to the Pinnacle of the Temple and to the high mountain with Satan. Satan persuaded Him somehow, at least, to go that far.

So **I think the answer is found in the reply. Jesus’ reply is to conclude for oneself how far to comply.** He is going to draw a conclusion **for Himself.** ***He*** is going to respond.

The nature of the temptation is found in His response. These temptations and the three responses all begin with the words, “It is written”. So **Jesus appeals to the authority of Scripture.** It’s a crucial question in understanding the mind of Christ is how did Jesus come to connect certain Scriptures to certain circumstances? If we are going to understand the Mind of Christ, how did He come to apply the three Scriptures that He quoted from the book of Deuteronomy? How did he come to apply **those** scriptures to **this** circumstance? **Jesus would not let Himself “take the bait”**

You may say, ‘well, it’s Jesus, okay.’ **But what I'm getting at here is that if I am going to have the Mind of Christ, I am going to have to apply Scriptures to MY circumstances.** And I am going to have to apply the **right** Scriptures to the **right** circumstances if I am going to have the mind of Christ.

Ruth: Since Jesus **is** the **Word**, He would know all the words given to Moses on the mountain: the 10 commandments, the structure of the tabernacle, the sacrifice laws, the vestments of the priests, and the whole of the Law of Moses. He would know how to properly use them in every situation. ***So maybe His forty days and forty nights that He spent fasting was the time for the ‘earthly Jesus’ to think about the words that Moses collected in ‘his’ fast.***

This was the beginning of His ministry. The Holy Spirit led him into the wilderness to be tempted of Satan. He fasted for 40 days like Moses did when he received the law. God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit had designed a plan to redeem man from his own sinful self-centered willfulness. They all knew that Jesus, as a man, could be tempted away from that plan. He might want to take an easier route than the one planned, he might want to eat just a little to help his earthly body be helped from the pain of hunger.

But I think this was his chance to work through these plans in his **prayerful time of fasting** and remember his words and renew his commitment to the word he had given and the plans they had made so he could stand against the wiles of the devil as a man.

It brought both covenants together in the beginning, and his experience of having given the words to Moses, and seeing that they had an effect on people, would then make it possible for Jesus to say to Satan, “you can’t use this trick on me. I know what these words are supposed to do.”

Rod: That’s good reasoning to put all those things together. Yes, very good...very good.

So Jesus came to connect certain scriptures to certain circumstances. But quoting the Bible can be a dangerous thing, **making** whatever quotes **prove** your point. That’s what ‘we do’ sometimes. We pull Scripture out to prove **our** point instead of trying to **understand** the point of the Scripture to **prove us**, or to test **us**. But Jesus did not do this.

The Mind of Christ Class – Not Last Class

Week 18

May 22, 2019

We are going to continue with the temptations of Jesus. After Jesus was first tempted by Satan, Satan commanded Him to turn these stones into bread. So, where did Jesus' mind go? Well, it went to Scripture. Deuteronomy 8:1-3 is where He went in His head.

What is interesting to me is when we're tempted, is the first place we go; is it to the Scriptures? Do we think of specific Scriptures we go to counter the temptation? Jesus did, from this example. But what does it say in Deuteronomy 8:1-3? Moses is explaining to the Israelites the purpose of eating the manna in the wilderness for 40 years.

Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land the LORD promised on oath to your ancestors. ² Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. ³ He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

The purpose was not simply to sustain them. That was one purpose – so they wouldn't starve to death. But what was the purpose of giving them manna in the wilderness for 40 years? It cuts down your choices of what you are going shopping for if you can just walk out and say, "Okay. I guess we're having manna tonight." But most of us don't do well with that. I can eat leftovers for a long time...till they're gone, and it doesn't bother me. If it was edible and it was good the first time I can usually get it down the second time, the third time or the fourth time. But some people like a little more variety every day.

God *led* them, He *humbled* them, and He *tested* them. Those are the three things it says He was doing in Deuteronomy 8:1-3. He was leading them, He was humbling them and He was testing them. But, why?

He wanted to know what was in their hearts and would they keep His commandments or not. So, testing, many times, is for the purpose of knowing what is in someone's heart. How do you know what you are made out of until you are put to the test? God is not doing that so that we will fail. He is doing that to prove us, test us as you would, again, a 'precious metal'. If you want to know what the precious metal is, you have to assay it ... you have to put it through a process (different processes for different metals) to determine what the metal is. They can maybe tell by the color of the flame, or other ways of testing it.

Brian: That method was 40 years old – from when we were in school. Now, I'm not saying that you're old ...

Rod: They must have new methods now.

The manna was so unlike anything previously known, so other-worldly, that the Israelites would know that the source was from God. It wasn't anything naturally grown. It wasn't anything they had produced. They *had to know* that the source of the manna was from God. He did this to help them understand this most important principle. God was doing these things in the desert as well. So, He wasn't just doing this back then with the Israelites; He was doing it with Jesus in the desert as well.

First, God was leading Him. Remember it said that the Holy Spirit 'pushed' Him into the wilderness, but other translations or other accounts say that He was 'led'. That's He was doing with the Israelites in the wilderness.

Second, Jesus was being humbled in the wilderness. He was being stripped away of all His external props. He was deliberately being put into a state of need and want, to know his faith and trust – to be able to see that.

Philippians 2:5-8 seems appropriate here. ⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Jesus was humbling Himself. He was experiencing in the desert His total earthly dependence on His Father.

God was always testing. The word in the O. T. was 'nasa' (pronounced na' sha). By implication, to attempt something, an adventure, to assay, to prove, to tempt, to try – it is used 40 times in the Old Testament. It is used of God testing the faith and faithfulness of humans. That's what God does – He tests our faith to see what it is made out of.

So, if our connection to God is faith (without faith it is impossible to please Him), then we want to know that our faith is a real faith – that it's a solid faith. He tests it to prove it. **He** already knows what our faith is, but **we** need to know what our faith is. **We** need to know the limits of our endurance and our faithfulness.

And so he allows us to be in situations that prove that. In Genesis 22:1-18 we read, Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied.

² Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."

³ Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. ⁴ On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. ⁵ He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."

⁶ Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, ⁷ Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, “Father?”

“Yes, my son?” Abraham replied.

“The fire and wood are here,” Isaac said, “but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?”

⁸ Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them went on together.

⁹ When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!”

“Here I am,” he replied.

¹² **“Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.”**

¹³ Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.”

¹⁵ The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time ¹⁶ and said, “I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, ¹⁸ and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

This was one of those tests. God told Abraham to kill his son. The outcome came in verse 12 which says, “Now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your *only* son from me.” So, the outcome of the test was to know Abraham feared God, and the way he showed that was his willingness to do whatever God said to do ... even the unthinkable. Abraham called this place ‘The Lord Will Provide’, Jehovah Jireh.

And that is what was going on in the wilderness. The wilderness looked like a place of depravation. It looked like a place that was not conducive to life, ‘but the Lord will provide’. No matter where we are, no matter the circumstances we’re in, no matter how it looks, the Lord will provide.

Jesus’ wilderness experience was just as much a test by God, if not more so, than a test of temptation by Satan. It may look like it was Satan who was tempting Jesus, but maybe it was more *God* testing Jesus in the wilderness. It is the same word, but different purposes. Satan was doing it to make Him fall; God was doing it to show Him how strong He really was.

God had a specific purpose for Jesus being there. God had to know that Jesus would obey Him in *everything* because the tests are going to get harder. He needs to know that He can count on Jesus to go the full distance.

In any situation we are in, *Satan may have one purpose for you in that situation – to cause you to fall. God has another purpose for you in that situation – to help you succeed.* But it's the same circumstances, but one has one motive as an outcome, and the other has another motive for the outcome. It's what God said in Romans 8:28:

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

So, even when Satan shows up, when he's trying to trip us up and he's trying to cause us to fall, know that God is there too. God is there to help us succeed. But both of them are kind of watching to see what you're going to do. God is hoping that you succeed ... that you do the right thing. Satan is hoping that you fail ... do the wrong thing. Whenever Satan is there, God is also there with you as well. It depends on where our mind goes. And for Jesus, His mind went to Scripture – He was recalling the wilderness wanderings and the testing in the desert there and He knew that He needed to respond to God's test, and not to Satan's temptation in this matter.

Brian: If we were looking at this with our spiritual glasses on, if you think about the war that is going on in the Spiritual realm, when Michael and Satan did '**something**', we could see there was some struggle, but to imagine what they would look like in the Spiritual realm. I could imagine even more, if Jesus Himself was here. Our view of Jesus is with the white robe and a really mild-looking fellow, but if you look at it in a spiritual sense, it would be like Arnold Schwarzenegger in armour (or something like that) with the flaming sword and who knows what else. But the sword is the Word of God. You have Satan on one hand trying to misuse the Word and Jesus using the sword of the word. On the spiritual level, this is a very intense battle.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_in_Heaven

... As I see it, God was using this like any Army Commander. You have to develop your soldiers. The greatest Soldier of all has to be the strongest of all so He's taking on this to show the soldier that he has the strength to take on anything. This is what I see looking at it in the spiritual realm. {See Daniel 10:4-11 – Carole}

Rod: Oh, absolutely. This was Jesus' boot camp – His testing ground. When Jesus felt like He could not go on, when He was going to die, He resisted self-preservation and relied on God until God said the test was over.

The forty days is corresponding to the 40 years of testing in the desert. Jesus understood this. Satan must have understood it as well. Now, if you look at the people in the wilderness, you will see that they did not succeed very well. They did not do very well under the test. Satan got the upper hand on many of them, and certainly the older ones died in the desert. It was the younger ones who got out. So there is definitely a contrast here.

Could Satan get Jesus to break, to give in under extreme pressure, under the weakness of the flesh? This is why Jesus was surprised that the disciples could not last one hour without sleep (Matt. 26:40). Physical endurance often proves spiritual dependence.

So God had to know what was truly in Jesus' heart. Testing was the method. Take things away. See what Jesus would do. Obeying the Word of God was Jesus' food, he said in John 4:34. "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work." What an insight into Jesus' wonderful mind ... to know that He considered the word of God to be His food. That was what he absolutely *needed* more than he needed physical food to eat.

But Jesus' focus is in one part of Deuteronomy 8, He says, "Man shall not live on bread alone but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." He prefaced this with, "It is written, in this case, 1500 years earlier by Moses (Matthew 4:4). I'm reading a book by G. K Chesterton called "Orthodoxy".

Chesterton is a very challenging writer. He speaks in ways that challenge my mind. I have to really concentrate. I have to think. I have the book, "Orthodoxy". In this regard, he was talking about the difference between people who say that something is old, and therefore it's not relevant anymore. He broke that down. He said 'if that's the case, what is the difference between something being written **fifteen hundred** years ago or **two thousand** years ago, and it not being relevant; from something being written half an hour ago and **it** not being relevant? How far back do you have to go before "time" just makes it irrelevant?' He says that by **that standard**, nothing will ever be relevant for us except for what we are saying right in the moment! And that is where we have gotten today in regard to orthodoxy. Orthodoxy is not orthodoxy anymore. Orthodoxy is a moving target. It only happens to be true in whatever the person is saying in the moment. And they may say something different in the next moment, and that's their new Orthodoxy. That's their new truth. There doesn't have to be any consistency in it. And that's his point.

But Jesus is saying that He could reach back 1500 years, get a quote from the Bible, and it's just as true **now** as it was when it was originally written. It gives us a little insight in the way how He would respond to Post Modernism that says, 'there is no truth anymore'.

We used to have truth, but we don't have it anymore.

So let's look a little closer at the content of Deuteronomy 8. The purpose for the wilderness wanderings for the young people included was 'to prepare them for the blessings of entering the land'. So the young people already had a promise to enter the land. God knew that a disciplined person needed to be *prepared* to enjoy the blessings, lest they forget the Lord who blessed them, leading them to not keep the commands.

Part of this deal is that, going back to the context of Deuteronomy 8 – the context is that there were those who were going to die in the wilderness, but there were also a whole lot of folks who were going to be going into the Promised Land. So why did God test *them* if He was going to lead them into the Promised Land?

Part of that was that He wanted to make sure that they were prepared for the blessings that were to come. In my experience, people who have been through trial and tribulation and troubles, and they have endured it faithfully, are usually those who are most grateful for what they have, because they know times when they *didn't* have them. I think He is preparing the 20-year-olds for the receiving of blessings. The undisciplined become proud and forget the slavery out of which God led them. But the disciplined person remembers what God has led them *through*, are grateful for that, and they can enjoy the blessings of God when they receive them.

Now, I have heard of people who, when they receive the blessing of God after going through a lot of trouble, particularly when others went through like troubles and didn't make it, feel guilty for receiving the blessings. That is what is called *survivor's guilt*. "Why should I have survived; why should I be receiving the blessing?" But God prepares those who get the blessing to be grateful that they received it by helping them to be faithful during the trials.

Moses mentions this discipline as a man disciplines his son. Let's go back to Deut. 8 and see what is happening there.

I was talking to Jeanie the other day and she told me she was reading through Deuteronomy. I asked her if she knew what the name 'Deuteronomy' meant and she said, "No. I don't know what it means." I told her that 'Deutero' means second and 'nomy' part means law ... second law. She thought that was pretty neat. She has been going around asking everybody if they knew what 'Deuteronomy' means.

Let's pick up in verse 3. *He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.* ⁴ *Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.* ⁵ *Thus you are to know **in your heart** that the Lord your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son.* NASB

Notice the discipline of the Lord is in the temptation or in the testing by God. In the temptation that Jesus was going through, He was being disciplined by God.

⁶ *Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him.* ⁷ *For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs ...* These are the blessings that they are going to receive. He is preparing them to receive those blessings by disciplining them, first, so that they will appreciate the blessings when they get them.

It is like an athlete. An athlete who goes through extreme discipline to prepare himself, and then goes out and competes and wins, can enjoy the blessing as opposed to the athlete who might *happen* to win on a fluke because somebody else was disqualified or whatever may have happened. He knows that he didn't really earn it. He didn't go through the discipline to win. It was just handed to him. People who don't work for what they get don't appreciate what they have as much as the person who has to undergo great discipline in order to get it. And *then* when they get it, it's like "Yes!" They can enjoy it.

This is what God is doing with Jesus. He is preparing **Him** for the tremendous blessings that He is going to receive; the exaltation that He is going to receive at the right hand of God. But what did He have to go through to get there? What kind of discipline did he have to endure to *get* to the right hand of God?

Jean: It says that Jesus learned obedience through what He suffered.

Rod: Exactly. Exactly. That is what is going on, and so we have to go back and look at the context. Not just simply the statement that Jesus pulled out, but notice all that is going on around that statement. You can see the corollary between what Jesus is going through and what **God** is attempting to do with Jesus.

I think we've made a little bit of a mistake in studying the temptations of Jesus, because we have studied too much about what **Satan** is doing and we're not studying as much about what **God** is doing in this picture. Maybe if we would look at it in a more balanced way; yes, we need to see what Satan is doing and not be unaware of his schemes, but we also what to know what **God** is doing in this too. That is what I am trying to drill down into a little bit ... it is 'what is God doing?' When we look a little closer to Deuteronomy 8, the purpose, again, was to prepare them for the blessing.

Moses mentions this discipline in verse 5 ([the Lord your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son](#)) and it brings us to Hebrews 12. The author of Hebrews says, "[My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you,](#) ⁶ [because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.](#)" Jesus' desert experience was God disciplining His Son for what was coming. The outcome of discipline is the fear of God. That is what discipline results in: the fear of God - respect follows discipline. This fear is mentioned in verse 6 in Deuteronomy 8.

[Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear \(to reverence\) Him.](#)

Proverbs 1:7 says, "[The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.](#)"

Back in Genesis 22:12, in the test that Abraham went through, Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son **proved** his fear of the Lord. [The angel said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."](#) God was teaching **His** Son to fear Him above all others.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom - Proverbs 9:10. It all begins with that respect. What did Solomon say - what is the whole duty of man? Eccl. 12:13 says, "[Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments.](#)" Absolute total respect for God is the basis of our relationship with Him; and it was the basis of the relationship that Jesus had with **His** Father. He **respected** His Father.

Another observation from Deuteronomy 8 is that wild beasts are mentioned in verse 15. “He led you through the great and terrible wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water...” And, of course, Jesus was in the wilderness with wild beasts. It talks about fiery serpents and scorpions and so forth. Mark 1 mentions the wild beasts in Jesus’ experience in verse 13.

The serpent in the wilderness is in Numbers 21:6-9. “The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. ⁷ So the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned, because we have spoken against the Lord and you; intercede with the Lord, that He may remove the serpents from us.” And Moses interceded for the people. ⁸ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live.” ⁹ And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived.” The fiery serpents were there to punish Israel’s rebellion. The snakes came up against the Israelites and the solution was that Moses went and put a bronze snake on a pole, lifted up ... a focal point of faith.

1 Cor. 10:9 mentions this. “Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents.”

In John 3:14 says that Jesus is our serpent on a pole. (As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; ¹⁵ so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.) He was lifted up, to be looked upon, to prevent us from perishing.

And, of course, Satan is in the form of a serpent in Genesis 3.

Did Jesus in the wilderness remember the story of Numbers 21:6-9?

The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. ⁷ So the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned, because we have spoken against the Lord and you; intercede with the Lord, that He may remove the serpents from us.” And Moses interceded for the people. ⁸ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live.” ⁹ And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived. And when threatened by real snakes, Jesus kept putting His faith in His Father.

Was He bitten like Paul – and nothing happened? (No ... There is no argument here to become snake handlers).

The word “man” in Deuteronomy 8 is the word ‘adam’ which can mean **male**, but also the **human race**. The Greek word is ‘anthropos’ meaning countenance, man’s face, or “man-faced”. The way the Greeks thought of humanity was “a human was someone with a face”... a man-face. A human being was a person with a face. Part of that word that figures into the idea of “man” is the word ‘gaze’. You have a face. You are gazing into the face. It is interesting that this word carries in it a sense of gazing into a face. So man is designed to be the one with a face

and the one who gazes into faces. How do we establish contact with one another? Part of that is that we look into each other's faces. We recognize each other; we identify each other. Often times, when you are trying to get someone to testify, when they ask you "what does the person look like?" they **may** tell you about his build and his color, but they **want** to know about the face. Usually when they are sketching out things, they are sketching a person's face for the "facial recognition".

The word "live" in Matthew 4 and Luke 4 is the word "ζαω" or zao. We're talking about "man shall not **live** by bread alone" so the man here is the one who gazes into the face. The word "live" means "to exist or to sustain life." This can be either human life or existence in an absolute sense. So when he says, "Man shall not **live** by bread alone, he's talking about something that is beyond just human 'existence in our physical lives'.

In Matthew 22:32 God says 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the *dead* but of the *living*. So Jesus says in John 11:25, "Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies,²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die."
He shall **live**.

The key to life is the Word. Just as, in the beginning, God *spoke* the world into existence, Jesus sustains or upholds" all things by His powerful word in Heb. 1:3.
And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. The word **upholds** is Phero, "φέρω" meaning to carry, to have in charge, to direct or to govern.

So this idea that *man shall not live by bread alone* is in *Luke* 4:4. Life is created by the word and sustained by the word. There is **power** in that word of God. So, mere bread will not sustain this kind of life. *Matthew* gives us a longer quote. "*We live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.*" Matthew does not just say **the word**, but **every word** that comes out of the mouth of God is what we are sustained by. This is a good encouragement for us to study EVERY word in the Bible, not just SOME words in the Bible. And does that include the genealogies? Perhaps ...

The entire phrase is Rhema "ῥημα", meaning a word spoken word from a living voice. Rhema means voice or a voice that is personal. There must be a speaker actively speaking. This may sound self evident, but nothing is today. God speaks! Words proceed from His mouth. He communicates. He has something to say, and he says it to us. He says it to me.

Again, that should be so evident, but to stop for a moment and say, "God is speaking to **me**." It's not just that God spoke sometime in the distant past, but God speaks *to me*. The context determines the type of utterance: the charge, the prophecy, the promise, or the command. So it may come in many different forms, but when God speaks, it has some **form** to it – some **purpose** to it. And we remember that Isaiah, the prophet said, "*your word will not return to me void*" in Isaiah 55:11. It will always accomplish whatever **God** has intended it to accomplish.

When we note the idea of (panti) “παντι” **every**, or **all**, words coming from God’s mouth are necessary for life. It is not for man to decide **which** words are important and which are not. If God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit **says** it, it’s important. Too much debate has been heard to decide which words of the Bible are God’s words. Man seeks to eliminate the parts that he believes are unnecessary. We must be careful. We need these words to live.

Perhaps we do not believe that. To me, it’s kind of like ... “well, doc, if you give me some medicine” ... and I decide that somehow I'm going to separate out the parts of that medicine I need from the parts I don’t need, I'm messing around with something I don’t understand. I need to leave it alone. I need every bit of it, I assume, to get well. The word recedes and it proceeds from the mouth of God. It also goes out ... it departs from the mouth of God. It is spoken. It bursts forth. It is spread abroad. You can’t speak out without breathing. Where there is no breath, there is no speech. It is breath that passes through those chords that enable you to speak. It’s the **breath** of **God**, it’s the **inspiration** of God. It is the breathing out of God. It proceeds from the mouth of God. All speaks to source or origin ... words have an origin, a source.

This is why exploring the words of Jesus is so important. **The source is His mind!** That’s where His words began ... in His mind. And then they **do** come out of His mouth. But they first dwelt in His mind. In this case, the mind of God is searched by the Spirit and put into spiritual words that we can understand.

The word **inspiration**, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, means to breathe out. The word goes forth, and it is to go forth into the very ends of the earth, and into every heart. That is where the word of God is supposed to go. How far are we to project our voices? And I don’t mean just our individual voice in speaking, but how far does He want the breath to go out? He wants them to go out “To the ends of the earth”. He wants to be heard throughout the whole world. So much proceeds out of the mouth today that is meaningless, vain, profane and useless. This is why we need to be careful not to waste our words. We talk about “wasting our breath”. What do we use our breath for? I suppose we only have so many breaths in us for our lifetime. There will be a time when we will have no more breath in us; that we will have expended every breath that we have. It will be gone and we will too. So we only have a certain amount of breaths in us, just as we have a certain amounts of seconds and minutes in our lives. What do I expend my breath on? What words do I form in my mouth that I push out, that proceed out of my mouth, and I would contend that too many things coming out of people’s mouths are just absolutely useless. They are pointless; they have no purpose in them what-so-ever. They accomplish nothing.

Jesus is saying, I understand that every word that comes out of the mouth of God; that proceeds out of the mouth of God is useful and profitable. That’s what Paul said. It’s useful and profitable, but do we believe it? Everything that came out of the mouth of God is useful to us. There is only one test. Do we **believe** it and do we **live** by it? That is the test for whether we believe the word of God is useful. Do we **believe** it and do we **live** by it?

Jesus said that the wise man is the one who hears his word and puts it into practice. Matthew 7:24. The only way to incorporate the word into our lives and hearts is to **do what it says** (James 1:22-25). That’s how you know. That is how you incorporate.

“But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. ²⁵ But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.”

So the quicker you can put your word into practice, the more that word now owns you. It has done something in your life. It has animated you.

Then there is the word “mouth” stoma (στομα). What is not said next leaves me wondering about the exchange between Satan and Jesus. What effect did Jesus’ answer have on Satan? We aren’t told what effect that His answer had on Satan. The text leaves the impression that Satan dropped that temptation and moved on to another one. Peter learned the hard way that the only response is to resist him – firm in your faith (1 Peter 5:9). James says that if we resist him, he will flee from us (James 4:7).

It is interesting that in the **first** temptation, the devil did not quote any scripture, but in the **second** one, He did. At least it is the second temptation in Matthew and the third in Luke (4:9). You have to compare the different accounts of the temptations. But in the first temptation, Satan did not quote the Word of God. Jesus did but Satan didn’t. But in the next one Satan did (Mt. 4:6).

Ruth: I always thought that was like, the devil is learning that he couldn’t get Him without using the Word of God so he tried the Word of God on Him.

Rod: That could be. Satan adapts.

Ruth: He adapts to what we know and what – maybe, we still need to get clarified.

Rod: Yes. And that’s an insight right there ... that Satan **adapts** to us. He adapted to Jesus.

Ruth: He even used scripture on Him. He did that with Eve, too.

Rod: Satan’s not stupid. Like **that** one didn’t work. **Jesus** is firing back Scripture. Maybe I’ll give **Him** one. He did that one with Eve, too. He quotes God, he misquotes God actually. He added a word to it.

Matthew says that the devil **takes** Jesus somewhere. But Luke says he **led** Him. It’s like the Holy Spirit **pushing** Him into the wilderness and the Holy Spirit **leading** Him into the wilderness. It’s to lead, to bring, drive on, or to accompany, to conduct with force, to drag or to guide. It is obviously varying degrees of influence depending on context. Matthew’s words mean “to take one’s side – to take with oneself – to be carried off.” It depends on context. So, did this transport happen naturally or supernaturally? How did he take Him to the next place? Was it a trek or did they fly? Did it take a day or did it take an instant. How quickly did it take to get from the wilderness to the Temple? We talk about the temptations in the wilderness.

They didn't stay in the wilderness. They went to Jerusalem. They went to downtown Jerusalem. Matthew calls it the Holy City; Luke calls it Jerusalem. You have the unholy Satan, and the Holy Jesus, together in the Holy City ... at the Temple. Wow!

So Paul got into trouble when they merely thought he brought a gentile into the Temple courts. Now, here is Jesus, actually on the pinnacle of the Temple – the devil himself. If they had spotted them, they may have crucified Him faster than they did. Satan got Jesus to stand on the pinnacle of the Temple. How did they get up there? The **string** point of the thing – that's what the word Pinnacle means; or the apex of a building. It was the southwest corner of one of the porches of Herod's temple overlooking the Kidron valley. They think the distance from that porch to the valley is about 700 feet. Let that sink in. 700 feet is a large leap into the air. Now add the depth of the valley. It's argued that this would be a very visible sight. Did bystanders see this and think someone was trying to commit suicide? If I saw someone standing on a pinnacle 700 feet tall, I might think, "Oh no. Are they going to jump?"

Ruth: You would wonder how they got up there if they didn't fly.

Rod: Yes, I'd think they had to fly.

We don't know this, but if Jesus went into a spiritual "out of His body" then, was he hungry?

Ruth: It says he was hungry.

Rod: Did He ever leave His body?

Brian: Angels speared in some type of body and they ate. So ...

Rod: The Midrash says that the Messiah will manifest Himself from this lofty place. So Satan uses this theme phrase, "If you are the Son of God..." again to taunt Jesus. Psalm 1 says "blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners". NASB Galatians 6 says that "God will not be mocked."

So Satan's instruction varies by one word from Matthew and Luke. Both say, "Cast yourself down." Luke adds the word 'hence' "εντευθεν" meaning "cast yourself down – now." Get er done. The word for "cast" is Ballo "βαλλω". It means to throw. It is a deliberate action. It means jump, take charge of yourself. Throw yourself off this height. The direction is Kato "κατω" meaning downwards...to the bottom of the Kidron Valley. Luke adds another word "from this place" – from here.

Satan's intention was clear. To justify his request, he quoted Scripture. Psalm 91:11-12. **For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways.**

¹² **They will bear you up in their hands, that you do not strike your foot against a stone.** But Satan left out one phrase, "to guard you in all your ways". What he left out in the psalm is "to guard you in all your ways". It's interesting that he should choose this Psalm. Go back and read it. It is a reassurance for the One who trusts the Most High.

Verse 3 says, “For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper and from the deadly pestilence.” Why would Satan pick a psalm that says God will deliver you from the snare of the trapper?

Many threatening situations are mentioned including the wild animals in this Psalm as well. Verse 14 says, “Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him securely on high.”

Satan interprets this psalm to say that Jesus can act like a reckless Son of God. God won't let anything happen to him. His Father will always bail Him out. He's almost saying, “Jesus, you're just a spoiled child of God. You're like the prodigal son.” Satan is thinking “God is always going to bail him out. He's Your **favorite**.” I think this temptation goes back to the whole reason that Satan fell in the first place. He wanted to be God's favorite, and he wasn't.

Carole: He did that with Job. He said, ‘you just put a hedge around him and he'll do anything you say. If you would let me have **my** way, he would curse you.’

Does Satan take Jesus for some spoiled brat who lives merely under the protection and influence of His Father's power? Spoiled rich kids often take risks and expect nothing to happen to them. They're above the law, and in this case, the law of gravity.

Jesus **could** say, “God's not going to let anything happen to me. I have to go to the cross. I'm not dying here today.”

In Jesus' case, the question was not, “**could** the angels save Him as he saved Peter sinking in the Lake of Galilee?” The **entire** scene was wrong. The entire **scene** was wrong. Jesus didn't need to prove **anything** to Satan about His Father's love. This love did not need to be a foolish test to demonstrate its realness. Jesus was the One being tested and His willingness to be an **obedient** Son ... not the Father. The test is not whether or not God will be a loving Father and save Him?” The test is whether or not Jesus will be an obedient **Son**.

Satan is like the older brother in Luke 15 story. He's **mad** because he's not in the spotlight. Let's just see just how far You can go before God has had enough of your reckless ways. God loves you, but if you do this, you might just see His love has limits. Satan was not just tempting Jesus; He was tempting God! The brazenness of Satan ... Let's see if God will come through and save you.

Of course, this is a precursor of a bigger trial where Jesus could have called 12 legions of angels to deliver Him. God had already saved Jesus when he was a baby and may do so as in the storms on the Sea of Galilee, but staging a foolish act to **goad** God into action was absolutely wrong. It was wrong.

We'll continue next week.

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‘Meta’ – change or beyond ‘Onuma’ meaning name

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★ ★ ★ ★ Key points!

★ ★ ★ ★ Key points! Important (May 8th)

DEUTERONOMY 8

8 Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land the LORD promised on oath to your ancestors. ² Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. ³ He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your

ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. ⁴ Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. ⁵ Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you.

⁶ Observe the commands of the LORD your God, walking in obedience to him and revering him. ⁷ For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land—a land with brooks, streams, and deep springs gushing out into the valleys and hills; ⁸ a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; ⁹ a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills.

¹⁰ When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. ¹¹ Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. ¹² Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, ¹³ and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, ¹⁴ then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ¹⁵ He led you through the vast and dreadful **wilderness**, that thirsty and waterless land, with its **venomous snakes and scorpions**. He brought you water out of hard rock. ¹⁶ He gave you manna to eat in the wilderness, something your ancestors had never known, to humble and test you so that in the end it might go well with you. ¹⁷ You may say to yourself, “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.” ¹⁸ But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.

¹⁹ If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed. ²⁰ Like the nations the LORD destroyed before you, so you will be destroyed for not obeying the LORD your God.