

World Christian Fellowship

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Heaven on Earth!

DAILY SCHEDULE

29th March Friday

09.30 am to 11.30 am **Good Friday service**

11:30 pm to 1.00 pm **Prayer Station**

12.30 pm to 2.00 **Lunch**

2.30 pm to 4.00 pm **Break**

4.00 pm to 4.30 pm **Tea**

4.30 pm to 6.00 pm **Activity**

Icebreaker-Groups with Revelation Stone Names

6.00 pm to 8:30 pm **Session I**

Heaven on Earth Introduction

8.30 pm to 9.30 pm **Dinner**

9.30 pm to 11.00 pm **Worship night**

30th March Saturday

6.00 to 7.00 am **Devotion.**

7.00 to 9.00 am **Breakfast.**

10.00 am to 12.00 pm **Session 2:**

Church Election & Identification

12.00 pm to 1.00 **Activity**

1.00 to 2.00 pm **Lunch**

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2.30 pm to 4.00 pm **Break**

4.00 pm to 4.30 pm **Tea**

4.30 pm to 6.00 pm **Photoshoot with T Shirt**

6.00 pm to 8:00 pm **Session 3:**

Church Purification

8.00 pm to 9.00 pm **Dinner**

9.00 pm to 11.00 pm **Movie night**

31st March Sunday

7.00 to 9.00 am **Breakfast.**

10.00 am to 12.00 pm **Easter Service**

12.00 pm to 1.00 **Photoshoot**

1.00 to 2.00 pm **Lunch**

2.30 pm to 4.00 pm **Break**

4.00 pm to 4.30 pm **Tea**

4.30 pm to 6.00 pm **Treasure Hunt**

6.00 pm to 8:00 pm **Session 4:**

Church Revelation

8.00 pm to 9.00 pm **Dinner**

9.00 pm to 11.00 pm **Patti Mandram**

1st April Monday

6.00 to 7.00 am **Stretch with Punith/ Zumba with Adeline**

7.00 to 9.00 am **Breakfast**

10.00 am to 12.00 pm **Session 5:**

Church Restoration

12.00 pm to 1.00 **Q&A**

1.00 to 2.00 pm **Lunch**

2.30 pm to 4.00 pm **Break**

4.00 pm to 4.30 pm **Tea**

4.30 pm to 6.00 pm **Quiz**

6.00 pm to 8:00 pm **Session 6:**

Church future-Your Role & Living in the kingdom

8.00 pm to 9.00 pm **Dinner**

9.00 pm to 11.00 pm **Camp Fire**

2nd April Tuesday

7.00 to 9.00 am **Breakfast**

9.00 am to 11.00 pm **Testimony and Feedback**

11.00 pm to 12.00 **Check-out**

12.00 to 1.00 pm **Lunch**

1.00 pm **Bus leaves**

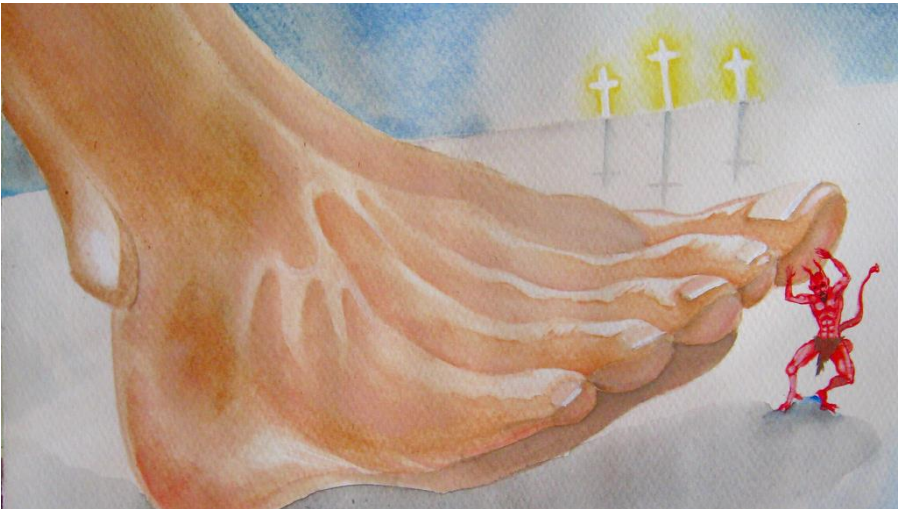
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Good Friday Service:

How Satan defeated?



Genesis 3:14-15, *So the Lord God said to the serpent: “Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. ¹⁵ And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.”*

Let us first see how Satan got the authority.

God created everything with His words.

Genesis 1

Genesis 1:1-2, *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*

Genesis 1:3, *Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.*

Genesis 1:6, *Then God said,*

Genesis 1:9, *Then God said,*

Genesis 1:11, *Then God said,*

Genesis 1:14, *Then God said,*

Genesis 1:20, *Then God said,*

Genesis 1:14, *Then God said,*

Genesis 1:20, *Then God said,*

Genesis 1:24, *Then God said,*

Genesis 1:26, *Then God said,*

God’s word has the power to create everything.

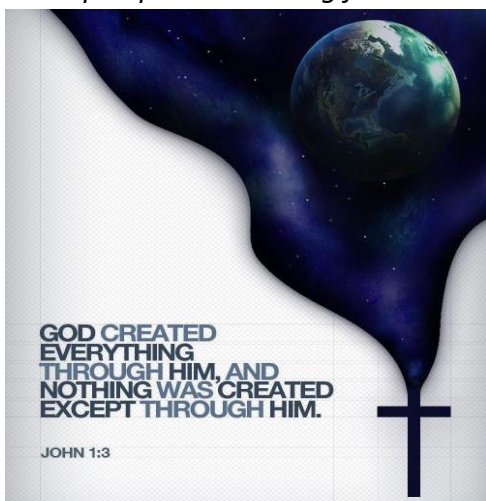


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Psalms 138:2, *I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.*

Matthew 5:18, *For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.*

Isaiah 55:8-11, *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. ⁹“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts. ¹⁰“For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, ¹¹So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*



John 1:1-3, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.*

God who created everything by His word gave that authority to Adam and Eve.

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Genesis 1:26-28, *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*

Adam named all the animals and their character becomes according to their names.

Genesis 2:19-20, *Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. 20 So Adam gave names to all cattle, to*

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the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

The authority was passed on to man to rule the earth.

Psalms 8:4-8, *What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? ⁵For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. ⁶You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, ⁷All sheep and oxen— Even the beasts of the field, ⁸The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas.*

Psalms 116:15-16, *May you be blessed by the Lord, Who made heaven and earth. ¹⁶The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; But the earth He has given to the children of men.*

Satan deceives Adam and Eve and get the authority.

Genesis 3:1-7, *Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" ²And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; ³but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' " ⁴Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*

⁶So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

Luke 4:6, And the devil said to Him, “All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.

Jesus defeated Satan.

Satan power is in the head.

Genesis 3:15-16,

Exodus 4:1-4, Then Moses answered and said, “But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, ‘The Lord has not appeared to you.’”

²So the Lord said to him, “What is that in your hand?”

He said, “A rod.”

³And He said, “Cast it on the ground.” So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. ⁴Then the Lord said to Moses, “Reach out your hand and take it by the tail” (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand),

Exodus 7:8-12, Then Moses answered and said, “But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, ‘The Lord has not appeared to you.’”

²So the Lord said to him, “What is that in your hand?” He said, “A rod.” ³And He said, “Cast it on the ground.” So he cast it on the

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ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. ⁴ Then the Lord said to Moses, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail" (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand),

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Rod of God.



Isaiah 11:4, *But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.*

God's word becomes the serpent and swallows all the snake and then becomes again word.

On the cross Jesus spoke the words of forgiveness.

Luke 23:34, *Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."*



Every power of Satan has been stripped.

Colossians 2:14-15, *having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us.*

And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. ¹⁵ Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Numbers 21:9, *So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.*

How did Satan is able to do something in others life?



James 3:8, *But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.*

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Romans 3:13, *“Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit”; “The poison of asps is under their lips”;*

James 1:20, *for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*

You fast and pray still you are struggling in your life?
Words which comes out of your anger.

Proverbs 18:21, *Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.*

How Jesus was able to manage?

Isaiah 53:7, *He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.*

Matthew 4:3-4, *Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”⁴ But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”*

Close your mouth all your problems will be solved.

Open your mouth to speak about what God said about you.

James 3:5-6, *Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!⁶ And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that*

it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.



Fire can be stopped only by fire.

Jeremiah 5:14, *Therefore thus says the Lord God of hosts: "Because you speak this word, Behold, I will make My words in your mouth fire, And this people wood, And it shall devour them."*

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Session 1:

Introduction- Where is Heaven on Earth?



There seems to be so much chaos and confusion about the church. There are people who promote the church, who love the church, and people who have disdain for the church even though they would call themselves Christian.

Biblical definition.

1 Corinthians 1:2, *To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:*

That is a powerful description of the church.

It is the church of God that belongs to Him; He purchased it.

It is those who have been sanctified, set apart from sin.

Because they are in Christ.

They are then “saints by calling”.

They are saints because God ordained that and called them to that saintly reality.

They are marked “in every place” as those who confess Jesus as Lord. That’s the church.

1 Corinthians 1:8-9, *who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

The church of Jesus Christ, then, are those who.

- belong to God,
- purchased by Him,
- separated from sin and
- judgment by the work of Christ,
- faith in Him,
- called as saints,
- Confess Jesus as Lord,

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- Given the promise that this salvation is permanent,
- They will come to an end that will render them in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ blameless,
- God will faithfully fulfil those promises.

The church is not a building.

The church is not an institution of religion.

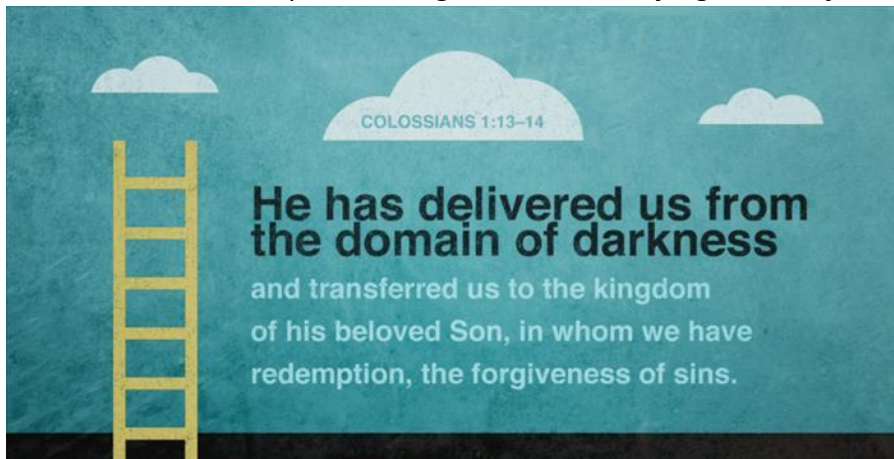
It is not an ethical organization.

It is not a sociopolitical association.

The church is the assembly of those chosen by God, called by God, redeemed by Christ, and brought to final glory.

It is redeemed sinners called out of darkness into light.

Colossians 1:13-14, *He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.*



This is another direct description of the church.

- We have been rescued when we were helpless and hopeless.
- We have been rescued from the domain of darkness run by Satan and marked by sin and death.
- We have been transferred by the power of God into the kingdom of His beloved Son.
- We have been redeemed.
- Our sins have been forgiven.

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1 Thessalonians 2:12-13, *that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.* ¹³ *For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.*

The church is those called by God into His kingdom through faith in Jesus Christ, belief in the gospel. Who are separated from sin and death and judgment, and they live to the glory of God.

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Philippians 3:20-21, *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,²¹ who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*

Our Father is in heaven, our Savior is in heaven, our fellow saints are in heaven, the angels are in heaven, and so are we, as far as our citizenship goes.

We are citizens of heaven already.

One day we will be transformed into glory, a body of glory, and taken into heaven.

Hebrews 12:23, *to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect,*



We are enrolled in heaven.
Our citizenship is in heaven.

We have been taken out of the
kingdom of darkness.

We have been put into the
kingdom of God's beloved Son.
It is the kingdom of heaven.
Christ is our King.

All of this points to the fact that the church is a foretaste of heaven.

Though imperfect, the church represents the only place, the only place where you could honestly say heaven comes to earth, because the activities of heaven are reflected in the life of the church.

In the church, God's people desire to worship Him.

God's people love Him.

God's people submit to His moral will as be expressed in Scripture.

They seek to obey Him out of devotion.

This is a taste of heaven.



In heaven, believers will serve Him perfectly.

Now we serve Him to the best of our ability, even though imperfectly, in the anticipation that someday it will be perfect when we see Him face-to-face.

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In the church, believers continually offer adoration to God.

Hebrews 13:15, *Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.*

“A sacrifice of praise.”

Such expressions of worship are exactly what heaven is doing.

Revelation 4:8-11, *The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!”* ⁹ *Whenever the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever,* ¹⁰ *the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:* ¹¹ *“You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honour and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”*

So, for all eternity, believers, when in heaven, will exalt the Lord for His work of redemption.

The worship of heaven has a faint echo in the church here on earth.
We bring heaven down.

In fulfilment of our Lord's Prayer.



Matthew 6:10, *Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.*

That can only be in one place: the church.

In the church we are not yet perfected, but you begin to glimpse a virtue and righteousness at a level that is manifestly different than the world surrounding us.

Although it is not the holiness and purity that characterizes heaven in its perfection. But it is the holiness and purity that characterizes heaven in its direction.

The absolute holiness of heaven is underscored in **Revelation 21 and 22**.

It explains that the eternal glory of the final estate will be free from immorality, idolatry, and any form of impurity.

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So, the church is called to be free from immorality, idolatry, and any form of impurity.

The church ought to walk in righteousness and reflecting holiness.

In the church we enjoy rich fellowship.

The church, when it's built up and grown, is marked by love and fellowship.

This fellowship that we enjoy on earth, which is the richest of all possible human relations because it's a taste of heaven.

One day it will erupt into an eternal fellowship!
Which we can't even imagine.

So, we are citizens of heaven.

Our Savior is there,

Our Father is there,

Our inheritance is there,

Our fellow saints are there,

The angels are there.

Therefore, this world is not our home.

We belong to the assembly of the firstborn enrolled in heaven. It's a strange thing to think about how many churches are trying to be as much like the world as they possibly can, when that defies the entire purpose of the church's existence.

Submission to God's will,
Christ-centered worship,
Pursuit of holiness,
Flourishing fellowship with believers.
These are the ways in which the church on earth foreshadows the
glories of heaven.

notes

Colossians 3:1-7, *If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ²Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. ⁵Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.*

This is how you used to live>
You don't live that way anymore.
When you think about the church that the church is heaven on earth.

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Whatever is true of heaven, in some measure should be manifestly true of the redeemed church.

I have given many years to the ministry of the church, and what an incredible joy it's been.

I have loved every moment of it because I love the church.
I love you as a congregation.

I can't even fathom a life lived in any other environment than in the church of Jesus Christ and to be able to shepherd that church and to feed that flock of God is the highest of all callings.



I understand that this is a stewardship of something that doesn't belong to me.

It's not my church!

- ✓ It's God's,
- ✓ It's Christ's,
- ✓ It's Holy Spirit.

I am just called to be a steward.

It's required of stewards that we be faithful, and we will give an account for how we cared for the little bit of heaven on earth assigned to us.

We need to understand that ministry has to be built on an accurate doctrine of the church.

My life has been an endeavour to live out my doctrinal convictions as to what the Bible teaches.

I have always been driven by doctrine, by divine truth.

I am driven by, and I am confined by, and hopefully conformed to theology.

It exercises control over my life personally and pastorally.

I have never been compelled by culture, demographics, polls, surveys, human expectations, the desires of the unconverted, the limits of the carnal, or the follies of the immature.

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What defines pastoral work for me and for all faithful pastors is what the King has said about His kingdom and life in His church.

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And one thing that Scripture is clear about,

1 Timothy 3:15, *but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*

Paul writes to Timothy, who was in Ephesus at the time, pulls into its context the Temple of Diana. It was said by many ancients that of the Seven Wonders of the World, this was the most astonishing of all. It has 127 pillars to hold it up; each of them was some gift from some country or some noble person.

They were made of marble, and they were overlaid with gold. This was a temple, and the foundation was false religion. The foundation was paganism.

Paul, looking at that and contemplating that, reminds Timothy that that's a temple to lies, and the church is to be "the pillar and ground," or "buttress," "of the truth."

Everything is about the truth. It's the biblical foundation for all our understanding of the church.

You cannot understand the church in some sociological way or some psychological way or some personal way.


To truly understand the church, you have to understand the revelation of God as to the doctrine that defines the church. And as I thought about that, I thought of five foundations. If we are going to talk about pillars that hold up the truth, the true temple of God, there were five doctrines that I found myself listing.

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Passage _____ Date _____

Notes _____

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Attributes _____

Application _____

Prayer Focus _____

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Session 2:

Church-Election and Identification



The church and election.

Not a political election, a divine election.

If you want to understand the church, you must understand election, identification, purification, revelation, and restoration.

Those are the foundations of the church.

The church and divine sovereignty,
The church and divine substation,
The church and divine sanctification,
The church and divine revelation (Scripture), and
The church and the Second Coming.

Make an effort to look at these and foundationally understand the church from a biblical viewpoint.

One of the pillars that we must recognize, one of the foundational realities or doctrines, is the church and election, or the church and divine sovereignty.

The church is being built by the Lord Himself. It is not an institution of human ingenuity. It is a divine institution being built by the Lord. This is consistent with who God is.

In Isaiah 44 God is identifying Himself, and the way He does it is important and foundational to the point.

Isaiah 44:6-8, *“Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: ‘I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God. ⁷And who can proclaim as I do? Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me, Since I appointed the ancient people. And the things that are coming and shall come, Let them show*

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these to them. ⁸ Do not fear, nor be afraid; Have I not told you from that time, and declared it? You are My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one.' ”

How is it that God can tell the future?

Because He authors it.

Because it unfolds according to His solemn plan.

Isaiah 46:8-10, *“Remember this, and show yourselves men; Recall to mind, O you transgressors. ⁹ Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, ¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,’*

History is His story.

God is the Sovereign over history.

God wrote the ending at the beginning, and everything in between.

With that in mind as a foundation, listen to the words of Jesus.



Matthew 16:18, "I will build My church."



That is a statement of sovereign purpose. "I will build My church and the gates of Hades will not overpower it."

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“The powers of death and hell cannot stop Me.”

In other words, He portrays in a simple way that the most powerful possible wicked, anti-God effort can't stop Me. I will build My church. It's My church, I will build it.

This is critical to understanding the church.

Titus 1:1-2, *Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, ²in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,*

What's my responsibility as a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ?

To bring the gospel.

So that those who are chosen can believe.

They can believe and be saved, so that they can know the truth, which is according to godliness, in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago.

Paul says that ministry for me comes down to this:

- I am a slave of God,
- An apostle of Christ,
- To bring the gospel truth to people chosen by God,
- They can hear it and believe and
- Be moved from sinfulness to godliness.

Again, notice that phrase, “those chosen of God.”

2 Timothy 1:8-9, *Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, ⁹ who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,*

Before there was anything but the Trinity.

The Father determined that He would redeem His chosen people.
The promise that He made involved Jesus Christ.
This purpose of God and this grace was granted to us.

What is that telling us?

- ✓ The Father made a promise to the Son.
- ✓ He made the promise before there was time.
- ✓ That promise was to redeem a humanity to give to the Son as a love gift.

- The Father loves the Son.
- In loving the Son, God extends this magnanimous gift to the Son that demands the creation of the universe.
- The redemption of the chosen, who are then given to the Son as a bride from His Father,
- They can serve Him, love Him, worship Him, adore Him forever and ever.
- It is all the work of God.

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Our Lord understood that.

John 6:44, *No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.*

This again consistent with God's sovereignty.

God does what He will.

The church is a divine operation, completely.

John 6:37, *All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.*

Who comes to Christ?

All that the Father gives Him.

Who does the Father give Him?

Those whom He has chosen before the foundation of the world.

Jesus is not going to reject those who are the love gift from the Father.

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Why?

John 6:38-40, *For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹ This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. ⁴⁰ And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."*

No one falls through the cracks.

Who the Father chooses, He gives to the Son.

The Son receives, and no one is lost.

- ✓ The Father promises to the Son the elect in eternity past.
- ✓ In time He calls them to Himself.
- ✓ They become love gifts to the Son.
- ✓ The Son receives them.
- ✓ The Son holds them.
- ✓ The Son raises them, and
- ✓ None are ever lost.

John 17:6-7, *"I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. ⁷ Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You.*

Our Lord acknowledges that everything comes from the Father!

John 17:8-9, *For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.⁹ "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours.*

Heaven on Earth!

They are not saved yet, but “they are Yours” by divine election from eternity past.

Their names are already written down in heaven.

John 17:10-12, *“And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. ¹¹ Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. ¹² While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.*

The only one who defected was Judas.

But that was predetermined in the Scripture.

The Lord recognizes that all those who follow Him were given to Him by the Father.

John 17:24-26, *“Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵ O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. ²⁶ And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”*

All divine work.

Romans 8:28, *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

God takes the good and the bad, and it all works out for your good and His glory.

All things are working together to produce a good end, a righteous end, to those who love God because God is causing it to happen. It doesn't just happen. God causes it to happen.

Romans 8:29-30, *For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.³⁰ Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*

You go from election to glorification.
This is the promise of God.

Romans 8:31, *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?*

Who is going to stop the eternal God from accomplishing His purpose, laid down before the foundation of the world?

If God has determined that all the predestined will be glorified, and if God is working everything out for our eternal good, who is more powerful than God?

Heaven on Earth!

Who can alter that?

Romans 8:32-33, *He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*
³³ *Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.*

No one can overpower God.
There is no higher court than God.
God has declared us righteous in Christ.
There is no higher judge.

Romans 8:34, *Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.*

notes

Christ won't condemn us because He took our condemnation.
He paid it in full.

God validated that by raising Him and setting Him at His right hand to intercede for us.

This is the security of God's divine, elective purpose.

Romans 8:35, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

Will hardship separate us from the love of Christ?

No.

Romans 8:37-39, *Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*



- ✓ God the Father predestined us.
- ✓ God the Son paid the price for our sin.
- ✓ God the Holy Spirit gave us life.

This will never change.

This is the glory of the church at its most foundational level.

Heaven on Earth!

We are God's people by His choice.

We must view the church that way.

We must understand that the church is the possession of God forever, forever.

2 Peter 1:10, *"Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble"*

We know that Peter is talking to Jews and that their election has nothing to do with salvation.

Therefore, this is not a Calvinistic call for us to somehow make sure that we have been chosen to eternal life! It is rather a reminder to the chosen people to embrace the fact that they were elected, chosen by God to be His special treasure. However, their election is by no means an absolute guarantee that they will inherit eternal life.

Paul validates this fact so clearly when he wrote a letter to his spiritual son Timothy.

2 Timothy 2:10, *"Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."*

Note well that Paul must endure for the elect, the Jews, so that they too might be saved.

As we have seen, election has nothing to do with salvation.

Furthermore, election is generally a term used of the Jews, who are of course, the chosen people.

This is confirmed yet again by Paul, who is speaking about the Jews.

Romans 11:28, *“Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.”*



Consequently, we triumph.

Does that have implications in the church?

Overwhelming implications.

I can't build the church.

I can't come up with a strategy that's going to cause those whom God has not chosen to come to salvation.

The only people who can come to Christ are those whom God has chosen and draws and gives to His Son as a love gift.

I have never been under any illusions about the fact that people's eternal salvation rises or falls on me.

Not even my own salvation rises or falls on me.

It is all a work of God. So, I don't need to try to strategize, somehow, to save the non-elect.

It will never be the cause of someone losing their salvation, because if you have been given by the Father to the Son, the Son will keep you and raise you from the dead.

Heaven on Earth!

I am just a steward of the people of God.
I have a responsibility to feed the flock of God.

Feed the flock of God. “Feed My sheep, feed My sheep, feed My sheep,” Jesus said to Peter.

2 Corinthians 2:14-16, *Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. ¹⁵For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. ¹⁶To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?*

You may be weak. You may be inadequate.
Paul would agree with that. He even says so much.

You may be frail. You may fail consistently, but that does not change the end purpose of God at all.

We are proclaiming the gospel is like an aroma, a fragrance, that rises to the nostrils of God and pleases Him.

We are in our ministry a sweet aroma, a gospel aroma.

- There are people, who are being saved.
- There are people, who are perishing.

- The people who are perishing will hear the gospel, and it will compound their death.
- The people who are being saved will hear the gospel, and it will exhilarate their eternal life.

No person could do that.
You can't make your life that important.

You are not the reason people are redeemed.
You are not the reason people are lost.

You don't tamper with your calling.
You don't reinvent the church.
It's all a matter of faithfulness.

notes

1 Corinthians 4:1-2, *Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ² Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.*

Heaven on Earth!

Paul says, “If you are a steward, be faithful.”

Paul understands that. He knows that he can’t overcome the sinner’s resistance.

So, we just need to be faithful with the truth.

That’s a foundational doctrine for understanding the church. It is the elect of God.

If we are believers, we are so inseparably connected to Christ.

Galatians 2:20, *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

This has massive implications in the church.

When you look out at the congregation, you must realize that you are not dealing with people, but Christ.

Every one of you that knows Christ is the temple of the living Christ. If you have not the Spirit of Christ, you are none of His.

So, if you are a believer, Christ lives in you.

1 Corinthians 6:17, *But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.*

Not only has Christ's righteousness been imputed to you but His righteous life credited to your account.

More than that Christ has taken up residence in you!

So, when I minister to the church, I understand the level of this stewardship.

Practicality this is well presented in **Matthew 18**.

A primitive chapter talking about life in the church.

Matthew 18:1, *At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"*

Now the kingdom of heaven is the church.



The disciples wanted to know who's the greatest.

To humble them from the pride that that question revealed, the Lord picked up a child.

Heaven on Earth!

Matthew 18:2-3, *Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them,³ and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.*

You don't come into the kingdom of heaven because you have earned it or worthy of it.

Matthew 18:4-5, *Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.⁵ Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.*



Jesus is not talking about physical children.

Jesus is using the child that He is holding to illustrate childlike humility.

We are all in the kingdom because we humbled ourselves.

We are all the children of God.

We need to be reminded that when one of us comes into our presence, we are having an encounter with Christ.

“Whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me.” It’s

How you treat other believers is how you treat Christ?
Can’t get away from it.

notes

Does that have implications in pastoral ministry?

It certainly does.

We will give an account.

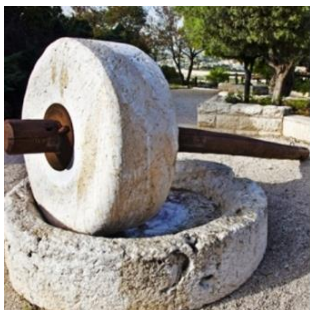
We will give an account to the Lord, those of us who shepherd God’s flock.

It may not be something as simple as good or bad sermons, good or bad leadership.

But we will stand before God to give an account for how we treat fellow believers.

What happens when you mistreat them?

Heaven on Earth!



Matthew 18:6, *“But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.*”

Deadly serious.

How do you treat other believers?

So, when you look at what ministry in the church is,

- First, recognition of the church and election (the kingdom and sovereignty), and
- Secondly, the church and identification (the kingdom and substitution).

Those two foundational doctrines have been the foundation that the Lord allowed in my life many years ago to keep me on course.

Be totally content with God being sovereign.

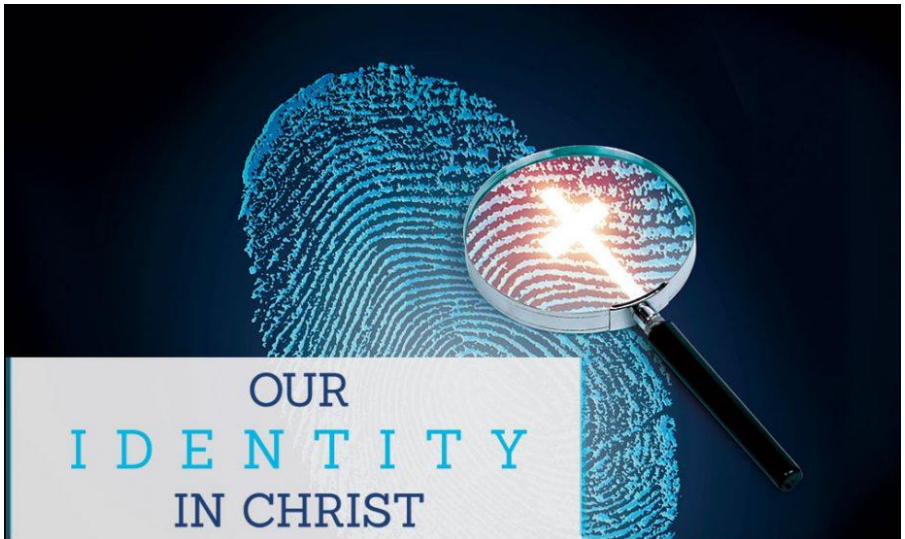
Be totally content with feeding the flock of God and letting the Lord gather His church as He wills.

Heaven on Earth!

The mandate of the church.

The only place where the righteous will of God will be manifest on earth.

Church is the identification and its calling to be the heavenly kingdom on earth.



Scripture identifies believers as children of God. The family, the household of God through salvation in Jesus Christ.

Christians then identified as citizens of heaven, as the assembly enrolled in heaven.

Why?

Because if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have become a part of the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven. Your home is in heaven.



Your family is in heaven.
Your King is in heaven.
Your inheritance is in heaven.

Your family is in heaven.
Your King is in heaven.
Your inheritance is in heaven.

Therefore,
Your heart should be in heaven.
Your treasures as well.

Matthew 6:19-21, *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

Everything that matters to us on an eternal level is part of the heavenly kingdom.

Sometimes it is hard to grasp because we are so captive to the world in which we live, and so earthbound.

Heaven on Earth!

1 Peter 2:11-12, *Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, ¹² having your conduct honourable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

We are a part of the heavenly kingdom are called aliens and strangers in this world.

This is not our country.
Our nation is not our home.

View the church as a colony of heaven.
We all know what a colony is.

You have a nation, a ruler who decides that he wants to plant his power and plant his influence and plant his blessings in a place far away.

There were many such colonies were part of the United Kingdom.

There was a great era in the Western world of colonization.

Our King is in heaven.
He rules from there.
His law is there, but His law has been transferred to a colony on earth.
His power and His presence are there in heaven.

They too have been transferred to a colony on earth where His people embody His presence and His power through the Holy Spirit.

We are to be the culture of heaven on earth.

We are to reflect our King Jesus.

The law of His kingdom as well as the benefits and blessings of His kingdom.

The church should be a colony of heaven.

The church is a ragged Cinderella so often. But we must go back to the foundation.

When churches have lost sight of what they really are to be in these days.

Now the will of our King is not difficult to know.

We are not waiting for voices from heaven.

The will of King Jesus is His revelation in Scripture.

1 Corinthians 2:16, *For “who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ.*

We know what the King desires.

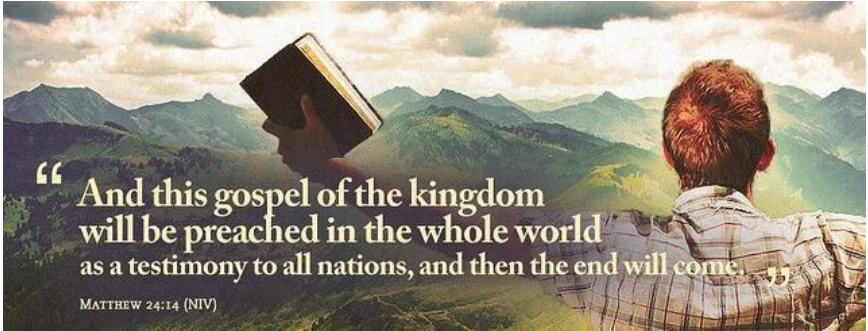
We know what He wills.

We know what He promises.

We know what He punishes.

We know all that is necessary for life and godliness, all that is necessary to proclaim His name and His glory and His Word across the earth.

Heaven on Earth!



Matthew 24:14, *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

This good news concerning our King and His kingdom, and its benefits and blessings is to be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations.

notes

Matthew 28:18-20, *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on*

earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

We are to teach everyone to observe all things that have been commanded by God in Christ in Scripture.

So, the church is heaven’s colony on earth, and what marks the church is truth.

1 Timothy 3:15, *but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*

We speak the truth,
Proclaim the truth, and
Live the truth in a world of lies.

We make such an issue about the Scripture and sound doctrine because everything is built on the truth.

The church cannot be built on lies, falsehoods, half-truths. It must be built on the truth.

Romans 6:3, *Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?*

Immersed into Christ but not talking about water, it’s using it as a way to express being immersed into Christ.

If we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.
Romans 6:11, *Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Chris is in us. We are in Christ.

This is the great doctrine of identification, or substitution, or imputation.

Since this is true, every believer has Christ dwelling in him and in her.



Whenever you meet a Christian, you are meeting someone in whom Christ lives.

How do you treat each other is critical.

Because how you treat each other is how you treat Christ. And we looked at Matthew 18 to see the practical implications.

Heaven on Earth!

You don't ever want to despise one of Christ's.

You don't want to cause one of Christ's to stumble into sin.

You had be better off drowned, Jesus said.

You want to do everything you can to avoid an offense to one in whom Christ lives.

So, the church can only be understood foundationally as the elect of God who are in living union with Christ.

We live, "Yet not I but Christ lives in me."

We are in Christ, and He is in us. This is the true church.

Passage _____ Date _____

Notes _____

_____	<i>Cross References</i>



Attributes _____

Application _____

Dragon Focus _____

Heaven on Earth!

Session 3:

Church -Purification



Church is the present form of the kingdom of heaven.
That is a fundamental definition of the church.

The kingdom has many manifestations. There is the universal kingdom, the kingdom of creation over which God is the universal Sovereign; He rules over all creation.

There is the eternal kingdom to come, the new heaven and the new earth. This will be the kingdom of righteousness and holiness that lasts forever.

There is the millennial kingdom, which is a thousand-year reign of Christ on earth, when He comes and sets up His throne in Jerusalem and rules over the entire world.

Heaven on Earth!

The kingdom has various manifestations through redemptive history, but for now, in this present era, it is the present form of the kingdom of heaven, and that is the church.

Church should be informed by, and conformed to, heavenly realities.

As Paul said to the Colossians, it should be where our affections lie.

As Jesus said, it should be where our treasure is.

Our perspective must be heavenly.

The church is the realm of the redeemed, the kingdom ruled over by God and His appointed head, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul said that if you are a believer then you have been transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

Our Lord speaks of His kingdom and entrance into His kingdom, and those who will not enter into His heavenly kingdom.

1 Corinthians 15:23, *But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.*

Great statement.

The true church, the kingdom of heaven on earth, is made up of those who are Christ's.

When you understand that, it ends all the foolishness of trying to figure out what a church is and should be.

What establishes the entire ministry of the church?

What the King says about His kingdom?

Our King is none other than the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Father made Him as head over the church.

The church of Jesus Christ is not a man-made organization.

- It is not a human institution.
- It is not to be designed by clever people, or any people for that matter.
- It is certainly not to be designed to fit the preferences of a debauched culture or the desires of the unconverted.

The church is heaven on earth.

We are conformed to the will of God in heaven.

1 Timothy 3:15, *but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*

The church is “the pillar and support of the truth.”

Church is built on truth.

Psalm 119, it is built on truth, designated as the word of God, fixed, settled in heaven forever. It doesn't change.

**The church and purification, or
The kingdom and sanctification.**

Heaven on Earth!



The church is being built by the Lord Himself.

The church is united to the Lord Himself.

The church is called to be like Christ.

Pressing toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus is to press toward Christlikeness.

The church pursues holiness.

Matthew chapter 18 is the first instruction in a corporate sense to the church.

Matthew 18:15-17, *“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ ¹⁷ And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the*

church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

Now this must be balanced with the reality.

- You recognize that fellow believers are the elect of God. They are on their way to eternal glory.
- You must recognize that fellow believers are also temples of the Spirit of Christ.
- They are Christ lives in them, and they in Him.
- We must be careful how you treat them.

But at the same time, fulfilling that treatment of fellow believers, and in a way that honours Christ, calls for confronting their sin.

“If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private.”

This is a command, not a suggestion.

Even though they are the elect of God, even though they are one with Christ, we are still in our fallen flesh.

If we are to be the church, then we are to be pursuing Christlikeness, which is pursuing holiness.

So, when you know another believer is in sin, you go to him in private.

If he does not respond, or she does not respond, you get a couple of others to go with you to confirm the sin.

If they still don't respond, you tell the whole church.

That's how important holiness is to the Lord.

Tell the whole church to go pursue that sinning believer because the Lord wants purity in His church.

Heaven on Earth!

notes

People who want to be like Christ want all the help they can find, all the encouragement they can find. Even the confrontation is welcome to those who are Christ's. He wants a pure church.

Just so we don't get overly obsessed with this confrontation.

In response Peter poses a question to the Lord.

Matthew 18:21-22, *Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"* ²² *Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.*

The rabbis said three times.

Peter thought he would double it and add one just to be magnanimous.

Jesus said no, seven times seventy times.

So again, the balance of this confrontation is in this endless willingness to forgive.

So, we understand that we are the elect of God, we are the possession of God. We understand that we are the dwelling place of Christ as individuals.

Yet we understand that our sin must be confronted.

But we also understand that it must be forgiven, mercifully and endlessly. The Lord wants His church pure.

There's an illustration in the fifth chapter of Acts.

Ananias and Sapphira famously lied to the Holy Spirit. We won't go through the whole story.

But Peter says to Ananias.

Acts 5:3, *But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?"*



The public claim of something he did that he really didn't do. He overstated the generosity of his gift, and it was a lie.

Heaven on Earth!

What happened?

Acts 5:5, *Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things.*

It wasn't adultery.

It wasn't homosexuality.

It wasn't robbery.

It was that he lied about his giving.

Early church, God sent a lesson never to be forgotten, and killed Ananias right in the middle of the service.

His wife showed up later.

Acts 5:10-11, *Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband. ¹¹ So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.*

They got a lesson in the fact that the Lord wants His church purified. He wants a pure church.

Revelation chapter 1 is the first vision of John, which is an image of Christ.

Revelation 1:12-18, *Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. ¹⁴ His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; ¹⁵ His feet were like fine brass, as if*

refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; ¹⁶ He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. ¹⁷ And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.

Christ wants a pure church, a holy church.
This shows up in the seven letters to the churches.



To the church at Pergamum.

Revelation 2:16, *Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.*

Heaven on Earth!

To Church at Thyatira.

Revelation 2:21-23, *And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. ²² Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. ²³ I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.*

Deeds of sin will bring down judgment from Christ, the head of the church.

To the church at Sardis.

Revelation 3:3, *Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.*

To the church at Laodicea.

Revelation 3:19, *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.*

Purification is at the very heart of the life of the church.

What is the practical implication?

2 Corinthians 12:20-21, *For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish*

ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults; ²¹ lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced.

What would Paul do if he found that?

2 Corinthians 13:1-2, *This will be the third time I am coming to you. "By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established." ² I have told you before, and foretell as if I were present the second time, and now being absent I write to those who have sinned before, and to all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare—*

A loving pastor. If the church is heaven on earth, the church is elect in union with Christ and marked by purity.

2 Corinthians 11:2, *For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

Ephesians 5, the marriage passage.

Ephesians 5:25-27, *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*

We must understand the kingdom and sovereignty, the kingdom and substitution, and the kingdom and sanctification.

Heaven on Earth!

If the church is holy, it is heaven on earth.

If the church is dealing with sin, it is heaven on earth, it is heaven on earth.

Its purpose moves us from understanding that the church is heaven on earth to the individual.

You are not only part of the church, which is heaven on earth, but that you are experiencing heaven on earth in your own lives.

To be in a state of true grace,

To be miserable no more.

A soul in this state is a soul near and dear to God.

It is a soul much [blessed] and very highly valued by God.

It is a soul housed in God.

It is a soul safe in God's everlasting arms.

It is a soul fully and eminently interested in all the highest and noblest privileges.

notes

What heaven on earth is it if you don't know you are in a state of grace?

The church is heaven on earth, and all who are true believers are the colony of heaven on earth. But those who have assurance are the ones who live in two heavens.

Two heavens: the heaven above and the heaven within.
The heaven of being blessed by your own conscience.

There are many Christians who do not enjoy the internal heaven.

Assurance is the beauty and climax of a Christian's happiness in this life. It is usually attended with the strongest joy, with the sweetest comfort with the greatest peace.

It is a pearl that most want, but a crown that few wear.

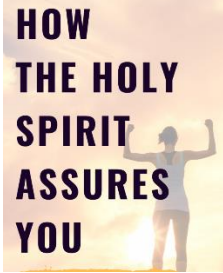
Individually, personally, we want heaven, heaven on earth, heaven in our hearts.

1 Peter 1:3-7, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

⁶In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes,

Heaven on Earth!

though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honour, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,



Your assurance comes from the witness of the Holy Spirit.

Your assurance comes from spiritual graces which dominate your life.

Love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control.

But here is the strongest force in assurance.

Though distressed by various trials, your faith holds.

You are triumphant.

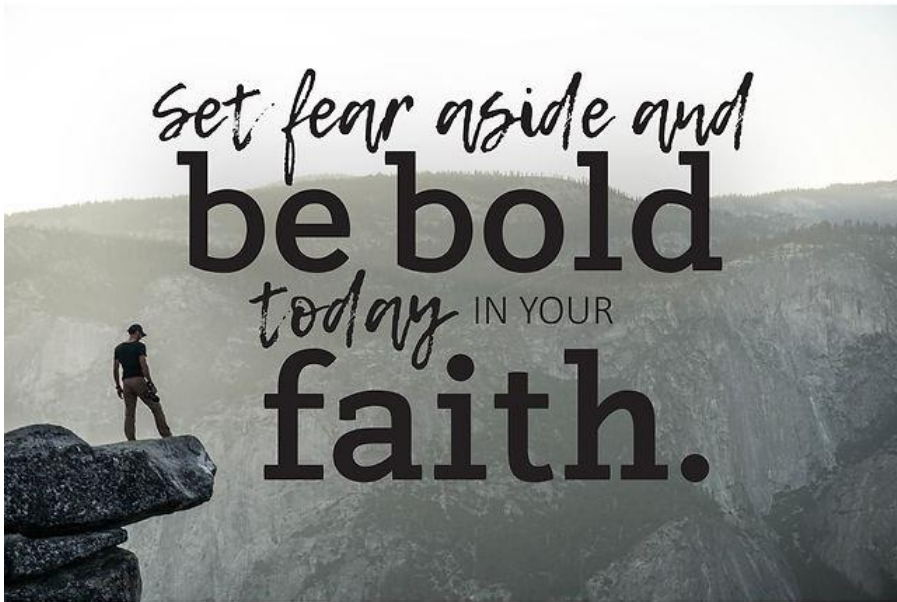
It is easy to sustain your faith when you are being blessed when all is well.

But the real proof of your faith is being tested by fire and having your faith stand strong. That confidence that comes out of a tested faith.

Peter says that is more precious than gold which is perishable.

It is another way of saying it is heaven on earth.

I can't imagine what life would be like for someone who was told that they were in a state of grace but never had any assurance. Because assurance is the sweetest taste of heaven in this life.



It is wonderful to be a part of the church because this is heaven on earth.

It is even more wonderful when you know you're not just a part of it, but when heaven on earth is in your heart because you are Christ's, and you know that.

Again, that confidence comes through the work of the Spirit. Particularly Peter is saying that it comes through various trials.

1 Peter 1:8-9, *whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,⁹ receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.*

You love Him,
You believe in Him, and
You greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.

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Heaven on Earth!

Session 4:

Church-Revelation



The church and revelation.

The church and revelation (meaning the Word of God), or

The kingdom and Scripture.

The reason we understand the doctrine of election and identification and substitution and sanctification is because we understand the Scripture.

This is the cornerstone of what the church is.

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One reality guarantees that the church will be heaven on earth is conformed to the Scripture.

Psalm 119:89-90, *Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven. ⁹⁰Your faithfulness endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides.*

Word of God is not changing.

God doesn't change.

His Word doesn't change.

God's faithfulness to all generations.

For all generations in all human history, the word of God is settled, established, fixed, and set in heaven.

Psalm 119:160, *The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.*

Isaiah 40:8, *The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever."*

1 Peter 1:25, *But the word of the Lord endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.*

Matthew 5:18, *For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.*

Matthew 24:35, *Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.*

The Word of God is eternal, never altered, never changed.

Nothing can be added to it, nothing can be taken from it.

Revelation 22:18-19, *For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; ¹⁹ and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*

This is the Word of God, settled forever in heaven.

So, for us to understand how the church is to behave as heaven on earth simply is to bring the truth of God, settled in heaven, to earth, and live according to it.

We conform our lives to the Scripture, to the Word of God.

That becomes the theme of the instruction in two critical books in the New Testament.

1 and 2 Timothy.

These are called the pastoral epistles because this is the Spirit of God, through the apostle Paul, showing Timothy what is required of pastors who lead the church.

1 Timothy 3:15, *but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*

Heaven on Earth!

What is truth?

The truth settled in heaven and revealed on the pages of Holy Scripture.



1 Timothy 4:1, Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

The implication.

1 Timothy 4:6-7, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. ⁶ If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.

Timothy if you want to be a faithful pastor then you must be constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.

That's the positive.

Then the Apostle Paul gives the negative.

1 Timothy 4:7-8, But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. ⁸ For bodily exercise profits a little, but

godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

1 Timothy 4:11, *These things command and teach.*

Keep on commanding and keep on teaching these things.

These things that come from the forever-settled Word of God. That is what brings heaven down.

The church will be like heaven when it submits to, conforms to, is faithful to, and proclaims the eternal Word of God.

1 Timothy 4:13-16, *Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. ¹⁴Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. ¹⁵Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. ¹⁶Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.*

If you want a church to be everything God wants a church to be, then live a godly life, and consistently and constantly teach the Word of God.

The New Testament commands the church.

1 Timothy 5:17, *Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and doctrine.*

Preaching and teaching is hard.

It is hard work. But those who give themselves to it are “worthy of double honour.”

Heaven on Earth!

1 Timothy 6:20, *O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—*

notes

What had been entrusted to Timothy?

2 Timothy 1:13-14, *Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.*

Acts 20:27, *For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.*

2 Timothy 2:14-18, *Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. ¹⁵ Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. ¹⁶ But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. ¹⁷ And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, ¹⁸ who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.* This is not a time for fancy oratory and speech.

How can you avoid shame?

Accurately handling the word of truth.

Paul just keeps coming back to this same emphasis.

2 Timothy 3:15-17, *and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

All you ever need as a minister, for every good work, is to be equipped with the Scripture because the Scripture has the power to save.

Paul gives his final command.

2 Timothy 4:1, *I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:*

Heaven on Earth!

The King of the kingdom is going to hold you accountable.

2 Timothy 4:2-5, *Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. ³For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. ⁵But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry.*

What does that mean?

All the time.

You are either in it or out of it.

Preach the word, all the time, in season, out of season.

So, the defining and distinguishing mark of Christ's church is the complete submission to the Scripture, which is forever settled in heaven, and when brought to earth becomes heaven on earth.

It is to know the Bible,
To understand the Bible,
To be taught the Bible.

This is the sum and substance, the centre of the church and its life.

Isaiah 55:10-11, *"For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to*

the eater, ¹¹ So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

God says, “My Word will accomplish everything I intended to accomplish. This is how I do My work.”

Deuteronomy 8:3, *So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.*

Every word out of the mouth of God is bread.

Scripture is our bread.

A wonderful gift.

But beyond that, Isaiah 55 says God has a plan, and He will work that plan through the proclamation of His Word.

That plan will not, and it cannot fail.



Heaven on Earth!

Do you want the church to be what God wants it to be?

Then preach the Word.

God will do the work that God intends and that God purposes. It's powerful.

God created the entire universe by His word.

God spoke it and all came into existence.

His word has massive physical creating power. It also has massive spiritually creative power to build the church.

So that is the sum and substance of the church.

We have one book, one revelation: the Bible.

Not the Bible and the Book of Mormon, Science and Health and any other book given equal authority as the cults do.

We have one book, and it does everything.

The Word of God is the tool of salvation.

It is the instrument of salvation.

John 5:24, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life.”*

Do you want to receive eternal life?

Then you must hear the Word of God brought down from heaven.

That's what delivers you from judgment and passes you out of death into life.

John 6:63, *"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."*

All your fancy strategies to do evangelism in the flesh profit nothing. This is the power of Scripture: It gives life.

Scripture gives spiritual life to the spiritually dead.

John 12:49-50, *For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. ⁵⁰And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak."*

Jesus, the Son of God, came down from heaven and never spoke on His own initiative. Jesus spoke only what was forever settled in heaven.

notes

Heaven on Earth!

Do you want a mandate for pastoral ministry and preaching?

You better be preaching what the Father has established forever as the settled Word in heaven.

John 14:24, *He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.*

Christ Himself is faithful to the forever settled word. He doesn't make up anything.

John 20:31, *but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*

God wrote the Bible so that you could have eternal life.

The Bible, the Word of God, that gives life.

Romans 10:17, *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

1 Thessalonians 2:13, *For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.*

It not only saves, but it continues to work powerfully in those who believe and are saved.

James 1:17-18, *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.* ¹⁸ *Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.*

The good things come from heaven.

Philippians 2:16, *holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.*

The Scripture is the word of life. It has the power to give life, just as the Word of God had power to give life at creation.

In **Luke chapter 8**, the parable of the soil.

Luke 8:10-11, *And He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that 'Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.'* ¹¹ *"Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.*



What does that tell you?

The seed is the word of God.

Heaven on Earth!

Luke 8:15, *But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.*

The power is in the Word.

1 Peter 1:24-25, *because "All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, ²⁵ But the word of the Lord endures forever."* Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

He preached the Word, and the Word, the living and enduring Word of God, gave life.

The Word of God is alive. It gives life to all who believe. Consequently, preach the Word.

Why would you do anything else?

Nothing else can give life.

2 Timothy 3:16, *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,*

It establishes doctrine.

It is "profitable for teaching," or for doctrine.

That's not a process, teaching; that's a content, body of truth. Scripture is the body of truth revealed that Paul gave to Timothy.

Timothy was to guard, as we saw in 1 Timothy 6 and 2 Timothy 1. It is the truth.

“Your word is truth.” God’s will is revealed in His Word.

The Word is filled with teaching that generates truths,
propositional truth,
fixed truth,
eternal truth,
everlasting truth, and
unchanging truth.

This is what we as pastors would want.
To dispense to our congregation.

If you want to give them anything, you want to give them the truth.

Why would you give them anything else?

Matthew 22:16, *And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men.*

The Pharisees were trying to trap Jesus.
They made this comment.
Later Jesus said to them.

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notes

Matthew 22:29, *Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.*

You don't understand the Scriptures,
You don't understand the power of God.

The power of God is released through Scripture only when it is rightly divided, and when you believe.

The knowledge of God's Word forms our entire theology.
Our entire view of everything in the natural and the supernatural world comes through the scriptures.

This is the reason why Bible says repeatedly, "*Be renewed in your mind.*"

Romans 12:2, *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Ephesians 1, *“I pray that you will have real knowledge and discernment.”*

The power of the Word unleashed in your life when accurately understood is the power that establishes a set of convictions by which you can live your life to your own blessing and to the glory of God.

Scripture is profitable not only for salvation and for doctrine, but “for reproof.”

Strong word.

- It refutes,
- it confutes,
- it convinces,
- it convicts, and
- it rebukes.



This is the other side of truth teaching: It exposes error.

When you have an expository ministry, and you preach the Word of God, you are bound to make some people uncomfortable.

Does it bother you that you offend people?

I live to offend people because that’s the work of the Word.

It exposes their error.

It undoes everything that is deceptive.

It un.masks all the lies.

It crushes the fortified ideologies that condemn people.

Heaven on Earth!

So, we preach the Word because it saves, it establishes truth structure, which produces convictions, and it reproves us in our error and our sin.

Scripture also corrects us.

First, it makes you feel badly, but only with the purpose of establishing the right thing to do and believe. It reproves error, it reproves unrighteousness, and that's Hebrews 4, which is also an amazing testimony to the power of Scripture.

Hebrews 4:12, *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

Nobody can hide from it. The Scripture will cut right to the bone, right to your soul, your spirit.

Powerful it is. It is effective. It is dynamic. It is accurate. It penetrates the inmost recesses of spiritual heart, into the depths of sin.

It reveals emotions, attitudes, thoughts, and behaviours and God misses nothing with His Word and no one.

Men hate that.

John 3:19, *And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

But it's a necessary exercise.
The Word of God does all that work.
Rebuking error and confronting sin.

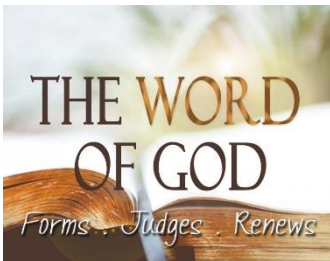
“Correction” to straighten up, to thoroughly restore to an upright position. It will break you down, and then it will put you back together in a far better condition.

John 15:3, *You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.*

The Word of God not only exposes your sin, it cleans you up.
It corrects you.

Regarding the church, the Lord's desire is that He would sanctify the church, cleansing her.

Ephesians 5:26, *that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,*



How are we cleansed?
How are we rebuked?
How are we corrected?

By the work of the Word, washing with the water of the Word.

Heaven on Earth!

Ephesians 5:27, *that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*

The Word does the rebuking, and the Word does the correcting.

“Training in righteousness.”

This is the full work of the Word.

It tears you down, and rebuilds you, and then it trains you in the right direction.

1 Peter 2:2, *as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,*

You may grow in respect to salvation.

The Word begins by assaulting you, offending you, then it sets the correction in place, and then it begins to train you in righteousness.

Why is it that every time you come here, we are teaching you the Bible?

We only have one tool.

2 Timothy 3:17, *that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

The work of the Word, in saving, teaching, reproving, correcting, and training makes the man of God adequate, perfect, complete, and mature for every good work.

What more could you be than equipped for every good work?

What is going to get you to that kind of spiritual maturity where you are to complete, capable, proficient?

It's the Word of God.

Scripture always been the only tool.

Faithful pastors go deep into the Word to mine out its riches.

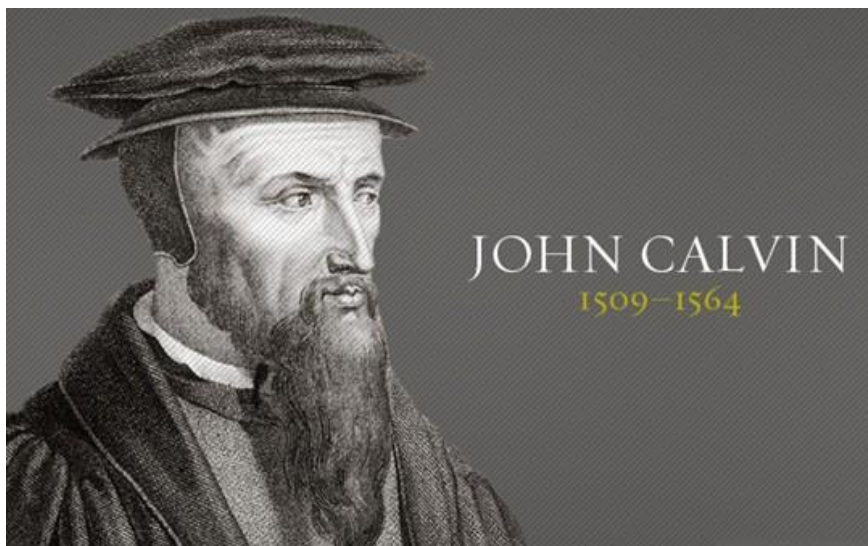
- They disdain the flat, trivial, shallow preaching.
- They reject the formulas, the cleverness, the human wisdom.
- They know the Word is the truth that transforms.

Faithful pastor takes his people consistently down deep into the Word because that's the singular demand from God for his ministry.

When you don't do that, you get a kind of evangelicalism that is man centred. Trying to make people feel good about themselves rather than encountering the realities of heaven.

The greatest revival the church ever knew was the Reformation in the 16th century. The Reformation came about because there was a restoration of biblical expository preaching.

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John Calvin, whose impact was probably without parallel. He was relentless in his exposition of Scripture.

In Geneva he started in **1536-1564**, and he expounded the Scripture, with a three-year break when he was exiled by the city council.

All the leading Reformers, whether in Germany, Switzerland, England, or Scotland, were constant preachers, and their sermons were expository.

We may assume with safety that the instrumentality to which the Spirit unleashed power in that greatest of all revolutions was the restoration of scriptural preaching.

The Bible forms the whole content of our preaching.

God set forth all its truths in such proportions and relations as He knows suit the soul of man under the work of the Holy Spirit, so that you don't need to alter the Scripture.

What is preaching, then?

It is explaining the Scripture in its context.

The church will be heaven on earth, must be radically committed to Scripture.

Part of the problem of the confusion in the church resides with those preachers who refuse to do this.

Maybe out of pride,
Maybe out of unbelief,
Maybe out of laziness,
Maybe out of sin,
They don't do what we must do.

They will be held in account.

James 3:1, *My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.*
Stop being so many teachers; theirs is a greater judgment.

But the Reformers understood it.

Calvin wrote massive theology.

He wrote commentaries on Scripture, except the book of Revelation.

He gave lectures.

He regularly preached ten sermons every two weeks.

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That's a lot of work. All of them Scripture exposition.



Martin Luther, between **1510-1546** for 36 years, he preached three thousand sermons, frequently, many days a week. More than two times a day, studying, preparing, and preaching.

Both **Martin Luther and John Calvin** did with some very serious issues in their home life, with their wives and children, who were ill and died.

Heaven on Earth!

Luther did that all week, week after week. The whole church was just preaching, preaching, hearing the truth of God's Word.

John Calvin did the same thing. He was preaching in the same church in Geneva.

In August of **1549**, he began a series on Acts and ended it in March of **1554**, five years later.

After that, he decided to preach on the **Thessalonian epistles** and preached **46 sermons**.

Then he preached **186 sermons on Corinthians**.

Then he preached **86 sermons** on the pastoral epistles.

Then he preached **43 on Galatians**,

Then **48 sermons** on Ephesians.

Then there was a gap while he was ill in 1558.

But he came back in **1559** and began the harmony of the gospels and didn't finish when he died in May of 1564.

On the weekdays during that same season, he preached **159 sermons on Job**, **200 sermons on Deuteronomy**, **353 on Isaiah**, **123 on Genesis**, and on and on. Just this saturation of Scripture.


It was an Easter day in 1538 he preached in the cathedral, and the city council arrested him and banished him.

He returned three years later and picked up the exposition in the next verse.

Heaven on Earth!

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Heaven on Earth!

Resurrection 2024



Resurrection day known as Easter is far more than eggs, rabbits, and clothes.

For us, it is not the worship of **Astarte**, that's where the word Easter comes from.

Astarte, who was the goddess of spring.

The Old Testament gives her the name Ashtoreth, supposedly the mother of Baal.

We don't worship some pagan goddess, who was called the queen of heaven. It was believed by the Egyptians that it was dropped out of heaven in a giant egg, landed in the Nile River, and was pushed to the shore by some very cooperative fish.

The egg rolled its way up onto the shore and cracked open and out came the queen of heaven,

Ashtoreth, Semiramis, Astarte; celebrating her became the festival of Easter eggs and spring.

But that isn't what it is for us.

It is resurrection, and if it is not that it is nothing at all.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the basic cornerstone of all Christian faith, and it is the hope of all human history.

If there is no resurrection, there is nothing to hope for.

There were lot of propaganda against the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Because this is where Christianity must be destroyed if it is to be destroyed, at the point of the resurrection of Christ.

The apostle Paul chooses this very issue, and then proceeds to show the consequence if Christ didn't rise.

We as Christians must defend so vigorously the resurrection of Christ, for if Christ doesn't rise, as you will see this morning, everything that we count on is lost.

There was a historical problem in the city of Corinth.

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Paul is discussing problems in the Corinthian church, problems which had arisen because they had allowed their thinking to be conditioned by certain pagan beliefs around them.

They were victimized by the human philosophies which made up the most part of their lives before they were saved, and even having become Christians.

They had still been holding on to some of these old beliefs.

Among the many philosophical drifts that had found their way into the Corinthian assembly was this one:

The Greeks taught that there was no such thing as a physical, bodily, fleshly resurrection.

They didn't believe that.

They denied that.

The epitome of attaining good was to abandon the flesh.

To then be reborn in the flesh, resurrected in the flesh, would be to enter a second incarceration. For the Greeks, to escape the body was everything.

Acts 17:18, *Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, "What does this ^[a]babbler want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods," because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.*

Acts 17:32, *And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, "We will hear you again on this matter."*

Some mocked.

notes

This was not a part of Greek philosophical religious belief. They believed in the immortality of the soul, much as reincarnationists believe today, but did not believe in the resurrection of the body.

Plato himself taught that the human body was a prison and man should long to escape that prison.

Celsus in 220 AD said, "To believe in a physical resurrection is to have the hope of worms." Who would ever desire, he said, to wish to return in a body that had rotted? They had no perception.

Heaven on Earth!

Some of the Corinthians were saying, “The dead rise not. Everything is spiritual. The dead don’t really rise.”

Paul approaches this issue in his letter to Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 15:12, *Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?*

Some of them were saying there is no physical resurrection. But if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how can you say that?

This is what precisely preached about Christ.
This is the content of the eleven verses preceding.

Paul begins this chapter with the gospel.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4, *For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,*

1 Corinthians 15:11, *Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.*

Now if that is the heart of the message, that Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how can you say there is no resurrection of corpses?

You cannot certainly say, “I am a Christian, I just don’t believe in the resurrection.”

We will not relinquish the literal, physical, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.

If we give in and say there is no resurrection, a series of sequential things will take place that are utterly devastating.

If Christ didn’t rise, if there’s no resurrection of the dead, if corpses stay in the grave and rot, what are the consequences.

Their philosophical orientation means that they believe there is no resurrection of bodies.

Spirits do, but not bodies. Bodies just rot.

Resurrection of Bodies.

If you believe there is no resurrection of bodies, then Christ isn’t risen.

1 Corinthians 15:13, *But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.*

If you are going to deny a literal physical bodily resurrection of human beings, then Christ didn’t rise.

Paul is affirming here is that Christ is in every sense human.

He is a man.

Though 100 percent God, God of very gods, equal to God in glory and essence, He is nonetheless 100 percent human.

Heaven on Earth!

Human in the fullest capacity of humanness.

If you deny a literal physical bodily resurrection of the dead, then you are stuck with the fact that Christ isn't risen. Because He is a man.

He died as other men died.

If He doesn't rise, then there are terrible things which result.

Bible tells us Christ was a man.

There are many who have taught that He was not, that He was something less than human.

But we believe He was a man.



Acts 2:22, *“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—*

1 Corinthians 15:21-22, *For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.*

He is as much a man as Adam was!

We all know Adam was a man, for he fathered us.

Galatians 4:4, *But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,*

Heaven on Earth!

life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—

John says that which we have seen, heard, and our hands have handled concerning the Word of life, declare we unto you.

- ✓ He was visible,
- ✓ He was audible,
- ✓ He was touchable,
- ✓ He was a man.
- ✓ He was conceived in a woman's womb.
- ✓ He was born in a human manner.
- ✓ He was circumcised.
- ✓ He possessed a human soul.
- ✓ He possessed a human body.
- ✓ He grew in wisdom and stature.
- ✓ He was seen weeping, hungering, thirsting, sleeping, and growing weary.
- ✓ He felt sorrow.
- ✓ He felt grief.
- ✓ He was beaten with fists.
- ✓ He was whipped.
- ✓ He was nailed to a cross.
- ✓ He died.
- ✓ He had his side pierced.
- ✓ He was buried, and
- ✓ He came out of the grave.

- ✓ He was seen by over 500 people.
- ✓ He was a man.

If we say there is no resurrection, then Christ didn't rise, because He will not rise as something other than He is and He's a man.

Luke 24:33-43, *So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, ³⁴saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread. ³⁶Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." ³⁷But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. ³⁸And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."*

⁴⁰When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. ⁴¹But while they still did not believe for joy, and marvelled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?" ⁴²So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. ⁴³And He took it and ate in their presence.

An incredible demonstration of His humanness, that He was alive in a physical body.

if men don't rise, Jesus didn't rise.

Preaching is Useless.

Heaven on Earth!

1 Corinthians 15:14, *And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.*

Useless, void, null, empty, meaningless, folly.

The heart of the gospel and apostolic preaching is the resurrection.

If Christ didn't rise, all our preaching is useless.

The whole gospel is subverted.

You don't have a gospel without a resurrection.

There is no good news but bad.

The One who thought He could pull it off couldn't, and He rotted in a Palestinian tomb. It is over.

The Bible says neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

Our only hope was in Him.

There is no salvation under any other.

There is nobody else. All our preaching is empty.

If there was no resurrection, there was no power, there is no declaration, He is not the Son of God.

Every preacher who ever uttered the gospel if Christ is not risen are folly.

Romans 14, it says that He rose to be the Lord of the living.

If He didn't rise, He's not the Lord of the living.

Then we have no Lord, and we have no Saviour.

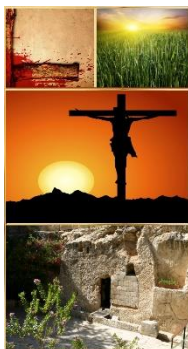
notes

Because if He didn't rise, the Father didn't approve of His work.

If the Father didn't approve of His work and validate that through His resurrection, then He didn't do His work and there is no atonement, no redemption, and no justification.

If you do not believe in resurrection, then Christ doesn't rise and if Christ doesn't rise, all gospel preaching is empty.

Heaven on Earth!



Faith is empty.

1 Corinthians 15:17, *And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!*

If Christ doesn't rise, then all gospel preaching is useless and so is your response to it.

Christianity is the biggest rip-off.

If Christ didn't rise, we have put our faith in nothing.

To be a believer in Christ Paul says you must confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead.

If you have believed that and banked your life and eternity on it and it isn't true, your faith is useless.

If Christ is dead, He can't save us, and we are believing in something that's an absolute illusion.

The gospel is a sham and so is the faith that it produces.

Psalms 73:13, *Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain, And washed my hands in innocence.*

Isaiah 49:4, *Then I said, 'I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain; Yet surely my just reward is with the Lord, And my work with my God.'* "

All of the rigidity of your commitment to Christ, all of the endeavored to live Biblical principles, all of the goodness of your life toward other people, all of the strictures you have applied to be obedient to God is nothing but idiocy if Christ doesn't rise, because there is no Christian faith, there is no Lord of the living, there is no eternal home in heaven, there's nothing.

Able, who believed God, was a fool.

Enoch never walked with God.

Noah, the ultimate fool, 120 years to build a boat in an act of obedience to God, would spend eternity in hell.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Gideon, Sampson, Barak, all the heroes who placed their faith in God in anticipation of a coming redemptive work were fools.

God lied.

Every sacrificial lamb that pictured the death of that ultimate and final Lamb was an empty dream.

It never happened if Christ didn't rise.

Hebrews 11:33-38, *Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. ³⁶ Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— ³⁸ of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.*

Heaven on Earth!

The disciples who went out and at least 11 of 12 of them died for their faith in Christ, sacrificing their life because of boldness to proclaim it.

If Christ didn't rise, the gospel is useless, our faith is empty.



Sin's power is unbroken.

1 Corinthians 15:17, *And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!*

You are still captive to the deadly sphere where your sin will damn you to hell forever.

One thing we need is a savior from sin, isn't it?

We need someone to save us.

If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, He failed.

If He didn't go into combat with death and win, He failed.

If He didn't go into combat with Satan, who according to Hebrews 2 has the power of death, and win, He failed.

If He didn't go into hell, as Colossians tells us, and announce His triumph and come back out, He failed.

The Bible says

- ✓ He conquered sin.
- ✓ He conquered Satan, and
- ✓ He conquered hell.

If Christ didn't rise, He lost, sin won, Satan won; and hell is still holding a carnival over the victory.

If there is no resurrection, sin is still on every man.

The only place we will ever occupy through eternity is hell.

There can be no forgiveness.

When the Father brought Christ out of the grave, that was the Father's way of approving His work.

notes

Romans 4:25, *who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.*

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The Father has brought Him through the grave and out the other side, because He was pleased with what He did.

Romans 6:4, *Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

The Father was approving, accepted His perfect work, and lifted Him out of the grave.

Romans 5:10, *For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.*

Jesus' death reconciles us and His life keeps us.

Paul says in **Philippians 1**, "I wish to depart and be with Christ." That's our hope!

We love His appearance.

Conclusion:

During the war years in London a church had established a great harvest Thanksgiving service for a certain Saturday evening, inviting all the people to come, and they did. And they brought corn as a token of the harvest, and they placed it there in the center of the church. After the service was over, they went, leaving it there. That night the church was bombed and gutted.

Nothing remained but stone and rubble. Devastation had occurred in an air raid. The months passed on and as the spring came, some people noticed that there were some shoots coming up through the floor of what was once the church, and by summer amazingly enough there was a crop of corn, a little patch, flourishing in the middle of the devastation.



At the cross, Satan unloaded the bombs, but it wasn't long before the indestructible seed of life sprang forth from the ground and because He lives, you shall live also.

in Acts chapter 17 it said when they preached the resurrection, some mocked, some delayed and said we will hear again of this, and some believed.

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Those are all the alternatives you have:

To mock, be skeptical.

To delay, postpone it.

To believe.

Thank God I believe by His grace.

So do you.

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Session 5:

Church-Restoration



The church and restoration.

We are going to talk about the Second Coming. For most people, that doesn't seem to be a very important truth. It has been abused and misrepresented through the years.

It's also more likely been ignored and left in some unnecessary confusion by many in ministry.

The Lord expects us to know exactly what He has revealed, and to be accountable for it. So that we don't glorify Him alone but live in hope.

This should be the best news for a believer.

When you look forward into the future this is at the heart of your worldview of Christ is coming.

He has already written the end of the story of humanity.
The end of the story of this planet earth.

Heaven on Earth!

The end of the universe story.

It has already written.

It has been written in the pages in Scripture.

It is revealed to us clearly.

We can follow it detail by detail and know exactly what is going to happen.

How is this world going to end?

How is the earth going to end?

What is going to happen in the final chapter of humanity?

Most bizarre, ridiculous, nonsensical, fictional, things were written about it.

The scientists say about how in a few billion years the sun is going to do this, and the Earth is going to do this in response.

Honestly most of them who had written and who had studied live in fear.

I have no fear about what's going to happen in the future.

I know what's going to happen in the future.

I know the earth is not going to be destroyed by Satan,
it's not going to be destroyed by men,
it's not going to be destroyed by any human power or powers,

But it is going to be destroyed by Christ.

It is going to be judged first and then destroyed by Christ.

I just want to remind you about that, and neither does yours. But if you create all kinds of crazy things about that, you can terrify people enough to have power to control over.

The whole reason for the redemptive history that is laid out in Scripture and our part in it. It's the church and restoration. The kingdom and the Second Coming.

Now the Bible is neither vague nor equivocal regarding Christ's return.

In the Old Testament there are about **1,525 prophecies** that related to His Second Coming. About half that many relate to His first coming. Theme of the Old Testament double the times that His first coming is referred to His Second Coming is prophesied.

In the New Testament there are about **320 references** or prophetic allusions to the Second Coming.

This is biblical revelation and biblical doctrine.

But in spite of the extensive revelation with regard to the return of Christ, there is so much confusion and so much scepticism.

2 Peter 3:3-4, *knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, ⁴ and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."*

So where is Jesus?

Two thousand years have gone by. He hasn't come.

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This is the scorn they heap on those who have such a foolish hope.

Nothing has ever changed. It's always been the same. We have never had this kind of cataclysmic judgment in the past, and we certainly aren't to expect it in the future. This is foolish. They treat it with scorn and mockery.

2 Peter 3:5-6, *For this they wilfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, ⁶by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.*

notes

They forgot one cataclysmic event that destroyed the entire human race, except for eight people, and that is the Flood in Genesis.

So, all things have not continued as they were from the beginning. The world was destroyed by water.

2 Peter 3:7-8, *But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. ⁸ But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

If you think it's been a couple thousand years, and you are doubting whether that's absolutely going to happen.

There's no sense of time in God's domain.

What's He waiting for?

2 Peter 3:9-10, *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.*

2 Peter 3:12, *looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?*

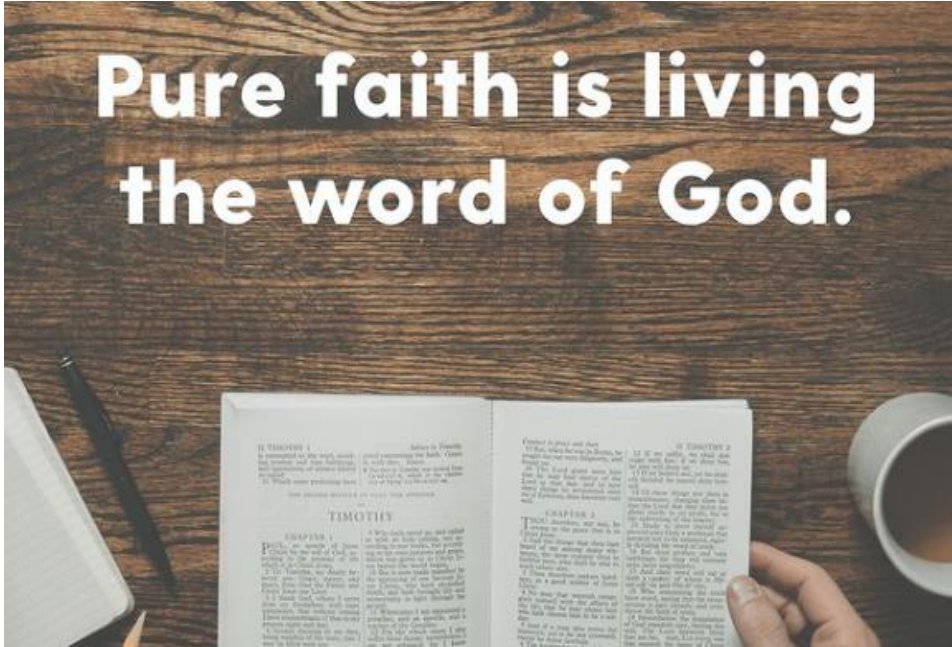
Essentially, an atomic destruction.

The whole planet and the whole universe is made up of atoms, and it will explode in an unimaginable destruction by God's hand.

That's what you should fear.

You shouldn't fear the folly of men.

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If you are a Christian, your faith is in the Word of God.
There is no fear from the words of men.
We shouldn't be subject to that.
Those who listen to men are the ones who should be terrified.

Some are terrified about the future, but they are terrified for the wrong reason.

According to popular understanding, they are terrified by what may happen from global warming.

For others some kind of heavenly body smashing into the planet.

Their fears are basically unfounded because we have the message from the Word of God.

Luke 21:25-27, *“And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; ²⁶ men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷ Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*

Revelation says that they will cry for the rocks and the mountains to fall on them and hide them from the face of the One who is coming.

Luke 21:28, *Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”*

Our redemption is connected to the Second Coming of Christ.

For the world it is the final judgment.
For us it is the final act of redemption.

Church, we must live in the light of that.
We get to live in the light of His second coming.

We are looking for Christ.
Let us build a biblical picture in your mind that will establish in your mind this glorious truth of Christ’s return.

Matthew 24 & 25, massive, epic sermon by our Lord on His Second Coming.

Heaven on Earth!

What triggered the discussion of His Second Coming?

Matthew 24:3, *Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"*

They knew there would be an end to everything, and they knew it was connected to His coming.

The disciples asked this question.

Jesus gives answers starting in the beginning of chapter 24, that goes all the way through chapter 25.

Matthew 24:29-31, *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

This is how it ends.

After the Tribulation, when the creation is completely disrupted, and Christ appears with power and glory to establish His kingdom.

Matthew 24:42-44, *Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched*

and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

People are afraid of the wrong thing.

They are afraid of some kind of natural phenomenon or some kind of man-made phenomenon which will bring about the end.

The one who brings about the end of it all is Jesus Christ Himself. He is the one to be feared.

notes

For Believers it is very different.

John 14:1-3, *“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ²In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*

What is terrifying to the world is joyful to us.

Christ is coming back, having prepared a place for His own in His presence in the glory of heaven.

He will come to take us home.

This is the believer’s hope!

Revelation 1, speak of the Second Coming.

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The book of Revelation, which is essentially the chronology and the character and the circumstances surrounding Christ's return.

Revelation 1:4-6, *John, to the seven churches which are in Asia:*

Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, ⁶ and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. ⁷ Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

The Bible ends on that note, the last of Revelation 22.

Final words of the book of Revelation.

Revelation 22:20-21, *He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! ²¹ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

All of Scripture closes with a definite statement that Jesus is coming and He's coming quickly, and His people respond by saying, "Let it happen."



Christians, we are not looking for any demonic source to destroy the earth or any cosmic source to destroy the earth.

We are not fearful of some green beings, aliens floating around in the air who may come and destroy us.

We are not fearful that man, no matter what he does, could bring about the end of human history. You can't alter human history one split second either individually or collectively.

The whole human race can't change the story of the end. We are fully informed on that.

But others the whole world lives in fear.

They ought to live in fear.

Fear of death paralyzes them. Some kind of existential threat terrifies people, a threat of the unknown.

The only existential threat that people need to be worried about is the return of Christ.

The New Testament writers then, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, call the church to live in anticipation of that.

Again, it just doesn't seem to be important to Christians. They get so caught up in the world, they just don't seem to be living in the light of the Second Coming of Christ. They seem so earthbound, even self-centred.

1 Thessalonians chapter 1 gives a description of the church in Thessalonica. It was a wonderful church.

Heaven on Earth!

1 Thessalonians 1:3, *remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,*

The gospel had come to them with power and the Holy Spirit and conviction.

They became imitators of the apostles and of the Lord.

They received the Word even though there was much tribulation.

They received the Word with joy.

They became examples of the believers.

They sounded forth the Word of the Lord, in every place.

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, *For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*

The church is living in the waiting period, anticipating the return of Christ from heaven. He is the one we are looking for. He is the one who will bring everything to its end.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

What is our comfort?

Our comfort is we know the end of the story.

Our Lord is coming back for us. He's in charge of the culmination of human history.

We are encouraged because we are to be rescued from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 5:2, *For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.*

1 Thessalonians 5:4, *But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.*

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11, *For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. ¹¹ Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.*

So, we are waiting for His Son from heaven like the Thessalonians were.

This is repeated in many places in the epistles, and there are just a few select ones that might be an encouragement to you.

Titus 2:11-15, *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹² teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for*

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Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. ¹⁵ Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

Don't let anybody knock you off the subject of the return of Christ. This is the believer's hope.

We are waiting for the Son of God to come from heaven and deliver us.

We have no reason to fear any human activity or demonic activity, natural activity to bring about the end of this life as we know it. It is all preplanned in the purpose of God.

Hebrews 9:28, *so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.*

We are waiting.

We are looking for Him.

To complete the salvation that He already paid for at the cross, the final aspect of our salvation, even our glorification.

1 Peter 1:13, *Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*

We are waiting for Christ to be revealed. Fix your eyes on Him.

2 Peter 3:10-14, *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. ¹¹ Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? ¹³ Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. ¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;*



We are going to have the opportunity to live a life in anticipation of Christ's return.

If it really grips our heart.

It is going to comfort us.

It is going to motivate us to godliness, holiness, sanctification in conduct and

speech and attitude.

Because if you know He's coming and you don't know when He's coming, you want to make sure when He does come you are the kind of believer that you should be.

This is the trigger for all of it. He returns in the air to snatch away His church.

1 Thessalonians 4. This is called the Rapture, from a Latin term “to catch away.”

Following that event when the church is caught away into heaven and the church goes to heaven and meets with the Lord and has the marriage supper with their Bridegroom, Christ, all hell breaks loose on earth.

The restraint of the church is out of the world.

The earth is overrun by hell’s forces, demons belching out of hell. Sin dominates the world.

Satan’s forces are in charge.

Satan even leads the world through a man called Antichrist, who makes covenants with Israel and breaks them, who takes absolute control over the world, and turns out to be a wicked and murderous individual.

So, the Lord takes His church out, all hell breaks loose in the world. At the same time God begins to judge the world.

The judgments are laid out in **Revelation 6 to 18.**

At the end of that Tribulation, terrible, cataclysmic, catastrophic judgments of **Revelation 6 to 8.**

There will be at the end a massive, world-war battle of Armageddon, as it’s called, in the land of Israel, as the forces of the world will gather to fight against Christ.

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At that point, Christ Jesus will return from heaven with His raptured saints, with His glorified church, with the holy angels, to destroy all the wicked, and to set up His kingdom on earth for a thousand years.

That is precisely how the book of Revelation lays out the future, and that is the overall view that as believers we must have.

We are looking for Christ.

We are not looking for some physical or natural disaster to end history.

There is going to be those kinds of natural disasters. We all die. We are going to die one way or another.

But as far as the end of this planet, we have the record of how it's going to end.

It is going to end at exactly the split second when the Lord determines for it to end.

It will be preceded by the Rapture of the church, the pouring out of divine wrath in the Tribulation.

At the end of that time, Christ returns with His holy angels and His saints, and He establishes His earthly kingdom and reigns for a thousand years.

At the end of that thousand years, Satan is released from having been bound for the thousand years. He's released for a little while to collect

all the unbelievers in a final rebellion, which is stamped out by God's power.

After which God Himself will destroy this earth and this entire universe and replace it with new heavens and a new earth in which there's only righteousness and where the righteous will live forever. That is what the Bible lays out.

The next event on God's calendar is the snatching of the church. That is the beginning of the end. It will not come by what people fear most, it will come by what they seem to fear least. This generation of people don't seem to think they should fear God, or fear Christ, fear divine judgment.

But that's exactly what they should fear.

He is coming.

He is coming to judge the ungodly. For us, we wait with joy and anticipation.

Titus 2:12-13—in godliness, and we shun worldly desires.

We live sensibly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

That is not finished until He returns.

The promise of God demands the return of Christ.

The promise of Christ demands that He return.

Heaven on Earth!

Mark 14:62, *Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."*

Jeremiah 23:5-6, *"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. ⁶In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

God's promise.

The testimony of the Holy Spirit affirms it.

Every scripture that speaks of His Second Coming is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

The plan for the church demands that He return.

He is the Bridegroom coming to collect His bride.

The corruption of the world demands that He comes.

John 5:28-29, *Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice ²⁹and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.*

2 Thessalonians 1:7-10, *and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, ⁸in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus*

Christ. ⁹ These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, ¹⁰ when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

For us, it's a glorious day; for the world, it is flaming, divine retribution. The promises of God demand that Christ return.

The words of Jesus demand that Christ return.

The testimony of the Holy Spirit in Scripture demands that He return.

The plan for the church demands that He return to take His bride to be with Himself.

2 Corinthians 11:2, He's coming to get His bride and take her to glory.

The corruption of the world demands that He comes to judge and destroy the ungodly.

The future of Israel demands it.

There is to be a time in the future when Israel is brought into the promises of God by virtue of the New Covenant.

The vindication of Christ Himself as the triumphant King demand it.

The last chapter of Jesus will not be the one that ended at the cross. This is the final glory of Christ.

The destruction of Satan demands it as well.

Heaven on Earth!

The Son of God appeared to destroy the devil, destroy the works of the devil.

Christ is coming.

All this given to you that one strong conviction.

We must live in the light of Christ's coming.

Hold lightly to the things of this world.



Colossians 3:2, *Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*

Luke 22. It's the time of the Passover with Jesus and His disciples.

Luke 22:16, *for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."*

Our Lord is instituting something.

This is the first time it had ever been celebrated.
He instituted it in the upper room before His crucifixion.

He said that I will never again participate in this with you until the kingdom comes.

Christ is saying one time, “I will have Communion with you, this night and never again, because I am going away; and it won’t be until I come back that I will have Communion with you again.”

Luke 22:18, *for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”*

When Christ returns, He will have Communion, celebrating His own cross with His redeemed people.

He said, “Until I come, you do it.”
He only was there one time.
He instituted it and never had Communion again.

But He will when He comes back.
Until He comes, He calls on us to celebrate Him at the Lord’s Table.

notes

Heaven on Earth!

Session 6:

Church future-Your Role & Living in the kingdom



Saving faith comes by hearing the message.

The word concerning Christ, concerning salvation.

You have had the opportunity to hear the message this week and to do some heart examination.

Many of you know the Lord, and you know you know the Lord, and there's evidence you know the Lord because you see the fruit of it in your life.

You love the Lord, you love the Word, you love the body of Christ – fellow believers.

You desire to honour the Lord.

You hate the sin that you see in your own life and you want to grow in grace.

But at the same time, it's just obvious in a group like this that there are some of you who really don't know where you are spiritually, and you probably need a clear definition of what must happen for your salvation to be real.

I am not talking about believing in Jesus because you know about Him, you're taught about Him, the pastor preaches about.

You know about Christ.

You know that He came into the world.

God in human flesh lived a perfect life, died a substitutionary death, and rose a literal resurrection and paid the penalty for the sins of all who will ever believe in Him through all of human history.

You know the facts.

You know His death, His resurrection, and His ascension.

You know about His second coming.

You know about Christ.

A lot of people know about Christ.

Heaven on Earth!

A lot of people talk about Christ.

A lot of people talk about heaven.

But as the old spiritual said, “Everybody talking about heaven are not going there.”

Everybody talking about Jesus doesn’t know Him savingly.

What it means to agonize, to strive, to enter the narrow gate.

You need to really understand that.

It shouldn’t be fuzzy in your mind.

You shouldn’t be confused about it that’s not helpful.

You shouldn’t be like so many kids and just occasionally, doing kind of a little, “I think I had better pray and ask to be saved again prayer.”

Have you done that?

I am not sure about my salvation.

I will try again. Lord, if I am not saved, save me.”

I think there’s enough truth in a key passage of Scripture that can show you what that striving looks like, what that repentance looks like.

Proverbs 30:12, *There is a generation that is pure in its own eyes, Yet is not washed from its filthiness.*

There is a kind of person who is pure in his own eyes, who is not washed from his own filthiness.

But the world is literally full of people who think they are good. They can't believe for a moment that they are going to go to hell. I am a good person. I am a spiritual person. I believe in God. I believe in Jesus. Those are the kind of people Paul talked about in **Romans 10th chapter**.

Romans 10:2, *For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.*



It's just a zeal for God.

It's superficial.

It's emotional.

They feel sentimental about God, they feel good about God, they like to sing about God. A lot of people feel religious. They have absolutely no hope of entering heaven.

How do you to get there and make sure you arrive?

Believing in Jesus – critical and essential.

John 3:16, *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

You have to believe that the Lord is who He says He is and did what the Bible says He did.

You must believe the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Heaven on Earth!

notes

Matthew 7: 22-23, *Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’*

It is not what you say but what you do in love.

Matthew 7:21, *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.*

It’s not about saying, it’s about doing.

If you don’t believe in Jesus, you will perish.

If you don’t believe in Jesus, you will perish in hell forever.

That's foundational and basic.

Nobody is going to be saved from hell and given eternal life in heaven unless they believe in Jesus Christ.

John 14:6, *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

No gospel, no belief in Christ, no heaven.

Repeated in the gospel of John.

Repeated in the other gospels.

Same thing in some of the epistles of Paul, and John.

To go to heaven, you must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Lord, Lord, we not only believe in You, we have preached in Your name, we have engaged in conflict with demons in Your name, we have even performed miracles in Your name."

Pretty strong claims.

Were they real miracles?

Probably not.

Did they really have power over demons?

Probably not.

But they thought they did, which means they were very active in religion, very active in the right religion, you could say – Christianity.

How is it that somebody can say that really with passion?

"Lord, Lord," twice for emphasis.

Heaven on Earth!

“Depart from Me,” which means you are going to hell, *“I never knew you. You are not in My family”?*

“I don’t have a personal knowledge with you.”

That word “know” very important word when you see it in Scripture. It means “an intimate, personal relationship.” It does many times.

In the Old Testament, it says that “a man knew his wife.”

A man knew his wife and she had a child.

That doesn’t mean he knew her name, it doesn’t mean he knew where she was, it means an intimate relationship.

It’s the most intimate of all relationships in the sense that Jesus said, *“I know My sheep and My sheep know Me.”*

Jesus is talking about that intimate relationship.

In the Old Testament, God says to the prophet Amos.

Amos 3:2, *“You only have I known of all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.”*

That doesn’t mean that God doesn’t know anything about anybody but the Jews. It simply means we have that intimate relationship.

Mary showed up pregnant and she had never known a man. It’s that kind of relationship that that word defines, that intimate relationship.

“You know My name, ‘Lord, Lord,’ you have been involved in religion, but I have no relationship with you.”

You will be sent to hell because you practice lawlessness.

The evidence that you don’t really know God is in your life.

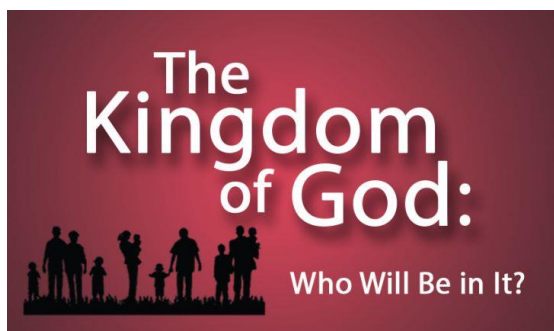
The evidence that you have been transformed.

The evidence that you are saved is not because you can remember, not because you remember when you raised your hand or signed a card or walked an aisle, not even that you can remember your baptism.

The evidence that you are saved is the fruit of your life.

Worship, praise, thanksgiving, obedience, love of God, love if Christ, love of Scripture, love of the church, spiritual fruit – fruit of righteousness.

But there are a lot of people who are looking at activities rather than obedience.



How can we be certain that we enter the kingdom?

We struggle, strive, agonize in the right way?

Matthew 7:13-14, *“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴ Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.*

Heaven on Earth!

Matthew 7:15-20, *“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Therefore by their fruits you will know them. “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing. They inwardly however are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bear bad fruit.”*

That’s how you know you are a good tree.

That’s how you know you have been saved.

The fruit is the evidence.

Matthew 7:21-27, *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’ ²⁴ “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.*

²⁶ *“But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”*

That’s the fruit.

This is how the Lord ends what’s called The Sermon on the Mount, and it’s “make up your mind time” on the mount.

The whole sermon – **chapters 5, 6, 7** – is a series of sharply defined contrasts.

The dominant contrast is between false religion and true religion.

That is the dominant contrast in the entire Sermon on the Mount – chapters 5, 6, and 7.

It lays out that there are,

- two kinds of religion,
- two kinds of righteousness,
- two pathways to follow.

Pathway:

“I am good enough.”

I am good enough to do enough to please God so that I can earn heaven.

The other is: “I am so bad. I can’t do anything to earn heaven. I must ask for mercy.”

Heaven on Earth!

There are only two religions:

The religion of human achievement.

You contribute to your own place in heaven by being a good person or religious person, a moral person.

You can't do anything, and you must cry out for mercy. God must save you out of grace.

Salvation is by grace alone. They don't mix.

What you do doesn't earn you heaven?

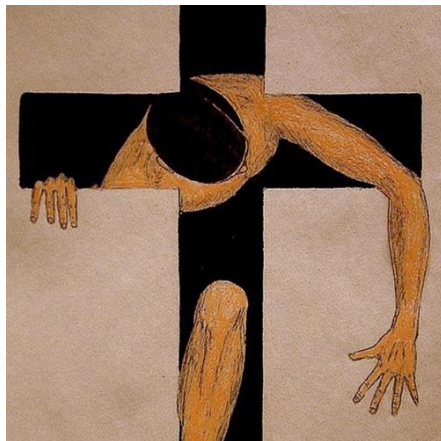
What Christ did earn you heaven.

It's not your works, your righteousness, your religion, your morality. It is all of grace that the Lord would give you the heaven that we talked about this morning.

V 13, *"Enter through the narrow gate."*

That is a command.

"Strive to enter the narrow gate."



What do you mean, “Strive to enter the narrow gate”?

Assuming you believe in Christ.

You believe He is who He is. You believe He died, rose again, provides salvation on the cross, paid in full the penalty for the sins of all who believe. You believe that.

The only thing left then is for you to enter the gate.

How do you know that you have done that?

As we come to the end of the Sermon on the Mount, it’s just a series of contrasts.

Two gates: wide and narrow.

Two ways: broad and narrow.

Two destinies: life and destruction.

Two crowds: many and few.

Two trees: one good, one corrupt.

Two fruits: one good, one bad.

Two behaviours: saying and doing.

Two builders: wise and foolish.

Two foundations: rock and sand.

Two houses: one stands, one falls.

There are only two religions in the world.

There aren’t many, there are only two.

There is a religion that says you can earn your way into heaven by being religious or moral.

Heaven on Earth!

There is the religion that says you absolutely cannot, and you have to cry out for mercy.

We assume that you understand that the religion of human achievement is the Devil's religion, and it's a lie. It has a thousand names. All the religions of the world apart from the true gospel are false.

So here we find the contrast between the only two religions that exist.

notes

Two gates:

V 13 – two gates.

There's a narrow gate and there's a wide gate.

The narrow gate is mentioned in verse 13, and again in verse 14. It's not only narrow. It is small.

The narrow gate and the broad gate say the same thing. They both say, "This is the way to heaven."

Both gates say, "This is the way to heaven."

One is true, and
Other is a lie.

Satan invented false religion. He is disguised as an angel of light. False religion doesn't say, "Join our religion so you can go to hell."

All religion says, "This is the way to paradise. This is the way to utopia. This is the way to nirvana. This is the way." In Islam, they end up with 72 virgins on green pillows if you die as a martyr. "This is our religion. It takes you to heaven."

The mystic river of the Greeks who were buried in ancient times with a silver coin in their mouth so that they could pay their fair across the mystic river into the bliss of eternity. All religions say heaven, but they go to hell.

There is the true way to heaven.

There is the broad way.
That means all kinds of religions everybody can come in.

You can come in without any restrictions.
You can bring anything you want.
You can come in with a group.
You can join the group and you can go on the broad way that says heaven.

Heaven on Earth!

But goes to hell.

Doesn't take anything personal.

You join the group, and you buy into whatever the teaching is. You go through whatever the ceremonies are, and you are a part of the group on the broad road that think they are going to heaven. They are not.

On the other hand, there is this narrow gate and it's a turnstile, and you come one at a time. The kingdom of God advances one soul at a time.

One soul at a time comes through the gate.

The command is, "Enter the narrow gate." That is the way of Christ who is the way, the truth, and the life.

Number 1 "You must enter."

Here's a command, a call to immediate response.

This is a command without an alternative.

It doesn't say, look around and try to make a good judgment about what you ought to do. Look around and consider your options. It doesn't say that. It's a command.

The gospel is always a command: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved and your house if they believe as well" Paul said to the Philippian jailer.

"This is My beloved Son, listen to Him," the Father said.

God, the Father, commands us to believe in Christ. He commands us to enter. Not enough to look, not enough to listen, not enough to study, not enough to admire.

Hell is full of people who admired Jesus.

Hell is full of people who admired the Bible.

Hell is full of people who admired even the Sermon on the Mount.

Hell is full of people who admire Christians.

You must enter. You have got to come in.

Secondly:

“You must enter this gate.”

John 1:12, *“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.”*

He is the gate.

John 10:7, *Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.*

“I am the door.”

John 14:6, *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

Romans 10:17, *“Faith comes by hearing the message concerning Christ and believing that message.”*

The only way is Christ.

Heaven on Earth!

What about all the people all through human history and all over the map who have never heard about Jesus?

What about them?

They will perish in their sins if they do not believe in Jesus.

Jesus said to the leaders of Israel.

John 8:24, *Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."*

That's why our Lord said to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

You must enter.

You must enter this gate.

notes



Third:

"You must enter this gate alone."

It admits one at a time.

It is exclusive.

It is intensely personal.

We are glad you are here at camp at this Heaven on Earth.

We are glad you go to the church you go to.

We are glad you listen to the leaders and make friends out of other believers.

This is not, however, a group experience and a group work of God. It is a singular individual work of God.

You enter alone.

You break all ties that hold you back.

How alone are you?

Luke 14:26, *"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.*

Some cases, they might forbid you to.

They are going to try to hold you back.

They are going to try to have you hold onto the traditional religion that you grew up in.

Or, they think Christians are fanatics.

They don't want to see you go this way.

They feel like they are losing their child.

Or, even worse, they feel that because you now believe in Christ and you want to go through that narrow, narrow gate.

In a sense, showing disrespect and disdain for them.

You are breaking the family up.

Heaven on Earth!

Matthew 10:34-37, *“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’; ³⁶ and ‘a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.’ ³⁷ He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.*

You must enter.

You must enter this gate.

You must enter this gate alone.

Your friends may pull you back, your family may pull you back, the world may try to pull you back but you must enter, and you have to enter alone.

It might mean saying goodbye to everybody who has been a part of your life in the past in an intimate sense.

You are stepping away from all of them, even the people you love the most.

Jesus went so far as to say this: “You have to hate your own life.”

You hate the person you are.

What does that mean?

You are sick of your sin.

You are weary of losing the struggle.

You are frightened about the consequence eternally.

Most of your life, young people, is madly rushing with the crowd. That's what high school kids do.

They just go places in crowds, group-think.

You are stimulated by the common cultural exposure you have to the same trash, the same entertainment, the same sitcoms, the same movies, the same music.

You can just be led to hell like a herd, like the pigs that ran off the cliff. At some point, you step out alone, no matter what the cost.

Number 4:

"You must enter this gate alone with difficulty."

The difficulty is indicated here:

"Enter the narrow gate."

V 14, the gate is small.

Why it's difficult?

It is small.

What does that indicate?

Hard to find.

Imagine that you are a non-Christian, and let's say you turn on the Christian television to try find a way to heaven.

What would you come up with?

Man, it's a ship of fools, isn't it? You'd listen to one guy, after another, after another person. You may never come to understand the gospel.

Heaven on Earth!

Or, you might say, "I want to go to heaven. I had better go to church."

How long would it take you to find a church that would tell you the truth about heaven?

How long would it take you to filter out all the churches that are sending people to hell?

It's chaotic, and few find it.

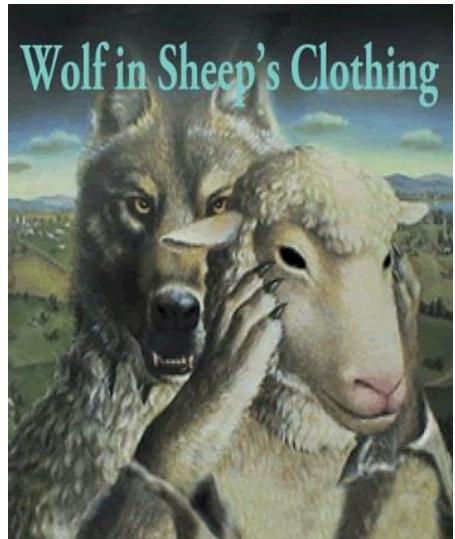
The broad way:

Easy to find, huge opening, and furthermore, there are lots of false prophets selling tickets. That's what false prophets do. They dress with sheep's clothing.

What is sheep's clothing?

What comes off sheep?

Wool.



Why is that stated that way?

Because, traditionally, prophets wore a wool garment, prophets wore a wool garment.

Heaven on Earth!

Jeremiah 29:13, *And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.*

There is an amazing statement.

Matthew 11:12, *And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.*

When you are looking for that gate and that very small gate is hard to find. When you find it, you storm it with violence.

You seize that opportunity.

Luke 16:16, *“The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it.”*

What an amazing picture.

Now you believe in Christ, you believe in the cross, you believe in the resurrection – all absolutely critical components.

But this we are talking about is the real, full definition of what repentance means. Turning from sin, turning from the world, turning from everybody who holds you back, and finding that door.

You seize it with violence, and you crash through.

You are very privileged. We have put before you the small door, the narrow way but it's hard to go through.

Why is it so hard?

It's hard to find because it's small.

It's hard to go through.

You must strive, you have to agonize, you have to be violent about it, you have to press into it.

Isaiah 55:6-7, *Seek the Lord while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. ⁷Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the Lord, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.*

It's hard because you must turn your back on your sin.

Turn your back on your wickedness.

Turn your back on the past.

Part of hating yourself.

Luke 9:23, *Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.*



I am tired of my sin.

I am tired of fear.

I am tired of guilt.

I am tired of doubt.

I am tired of unrighteousness.

I am tired of displeasing God.

I am tired of a guilty conscious.

I am tired of hopelessness.

I am tired of the fear of death.

I am tired of being dominated by the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life.

Heaven on Earth!

In Luke 18, there's this tax collector who's in the temple and Jesus says "he won't even look up to heaven. He won't lift his eye as if to look up to God because he's so unworthy. He bows his head and he pounds his chest and he cries, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner.'"

That's taking a violent approach to the small door.

It's hard.

It's because we are proud and because we love our sin.

The love of sin is what dominates us.

Number 5:

You must enter.

You must enter this gate.

You must enter this gate alone.

You must enter this gate with difficulty, abandoning everything that has been dear to you, all the sin that you have loved, and all the people who go with it.

You must enter naked.

What do I mean by that?

No luggage.

No baggage.

John 12:25, *He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.*

You hate your life.

You bring nothing with you.

Two little parables in Matthew.

Matthew 13:44-46, *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. ⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, ⁴⁶ who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.*

The treasure in the field is salvation.

The pearl is salvation.

The whole point of those two very short parables is that when you find salvation, when you find the door, when you find the way, you seize it, and you go through, and you sell everything.

A vivid illustration.

But that is how you seize the door, that is how you strive.

You hold nothing, no baggage; you bring nothing.

You don't bring your works.

You don't bring your personal morality, your personal achievements.

You don't bring your favourite sins, all self, self-righteousness.

You really come with a beatitude attitude.

Matthew 5.

You come poor in spirit. Meaning spiritually bankrupt.

You come meek and humble and lowly.

Heaven on Earth!

You come hungering and thirsting after righteousness, which you know you don't have.

In the language of **Philippians 3**, you look at everything in your life, all the good things.

Paul said, "All these things were counted gain to me. But when I saw Christ, when I saw the door, when I saw what was waiting, I reevaluated everything and it was all manure. It was manure, rubbish, garbage."

This is the stuff of real repentance.

Isaiah 53:5, But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.

He is talking about our sins, our transgressions, and our iniquities.

notes

Isaiah 53:6, *All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*



What is that?

Recognition that not only are my sins a problem.

I am the problem.

Sheep go astray because it's their nature.

It isn't just that I want to get rid of the deeds I have done.

It isn't that I want to leave all the transgression behind.

I want to leave me behind.

I want to deny myself.

I want to count the cost.

I want to sell everything.

Heaven on Earth!

So you must enter this gate, enter it alone, enter it with difficulty, enter naked, and enter obediently, obediently.

What now marks you as you come through?

Obedience.

Do you remember at the end of Matthew where our Lord tells the disciples and all the rest of us to take the gospel to the ends of the earth?

Matthew 28:18-20, *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* Amen.

Do we do that in evangelism?

There is this narrow gate.

I am going to show you the narrow gate.

I am going to end the search for you.

It's hard to find.

You could go through a lot of religion, you could go to a lot of places, and you wouldn't be able to find it.

I will tell you where it is.

- This is what it looks like,
- This is what it requires.

You need to seize it with violence.

As soon as you come in, you must be totally committed to obey everything that God commands.

Matthew 19, there was a rich young ruler who wanted to know how to get to heaven.

When Jesus told him it would cost him everything, he walked away.

Jesus gave him a command: “Sell everything you have and give to the poor.” That doesn’t save anybody.

Why did Jesus say that?

Why did He tell him to sell everything he had?

He was very rich.

It’s a test.

He gave him a command to see if he would obey.

Salvation wasn’t important enough to him to obey.

Jesus wants us to be willing to obey His command.

You enter confessing Jesus as Lord, and you commit yourself to do the will of the Father, which is the path of blessing, the path of joy, the path of reward, the path of peace.

Heaven on Earth!

Contrast:

There is the wide gate.

Huge crowd.

Bring all your baggage. Come in a group.

Says heaven.

Where does it go?

Hell.

There are two ways:

“Broad is the way,” plenty of room for diverse doctrine, tolerance of sin and no boundaries.

All the desires of the fallen heart are there.

You can live any way you want.

You can be a homosexual, you can be a transgender person, you can be a gay bishop.

You can believe anything you want to believe.

On the other hand, once you come through the gate, narrow way, pressed.

The commands of God.



Luke 14:28-33, *For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it—²⁹ lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him,³⁰ saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish’? ³¹ Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³² Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. ³³ So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.*

Sometimes I think when we talk to people about the gospel, we want to make it as easy as possible.

Jesus never did that.

There are two destinations then:

two gates,
two ways,
two destinations.

V 13, is destruction.

Hell. Says heaven but goes to hell.

V 14, Leads to life.

The eternal life.

There are two crowds.

Heaven on Earth!

There are many who enter the broad gate to the broad way that leads to destruction. There are few who find the narrow gate that leads to life.

Two evidences:

Two behaviours:

V 21, “Not everyone who says, ‘Lord, Lord,’ but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven.”

Lots of people say, but it’s the doers who are in the kingdom.

The doomed are branded as those who speak empty words out of empty hearts. “Lord,” they say.

They are very polite and have a certain reverence. But their eternal destiny is based not on what they say, but on what they do.

“They do the will of My Father who is in heaven.”

How do you know the will of the Father who’s in heaven?

From the scriptures.

Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord’ and do not the thing I say?

You call Me the way and walk Me not.

You call Me the life and live Me not.

You call Me Master and obey Me not.

If I condemn you, blame Me not.

You call Me bread and eat Me not.

You call Me truth and believe Me not.

You call Me Lord and serve Me not.

If I condemn you, blame Me not.

"I NEVER KNEW YOU. DEPART FROM ME"?



Two foundations:

A foundation of true, repentant faith in Christ is a rock, and the life of that person is a life of obedience.

Then there are the empty professors whose lives will collapse under the weight of judgment, who will cry out, "Lord, Lord. But."

He will say, "Depart from Me, I never knew you."




Heaven on Earth!

Seize the opportunity to enter the kingdom.



Passage _____ Date _____

Notes _____

_____	<p>Cross References</p> 

Attributes _____

Application _____

Prayer Focus _____

Heaven on Earth!