

VOLUME TWO

KINGDOM EMBASSY MINISTRIES

DISCIPLESHIP DEVOTIONAL

“Think in Bible!”

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**KINGDOM
EMBASSY
MINISTRIES**
DISCIPLESHIP DEVOTIONAL

“Think in Bible!”



KINGDOM EMBASSY MINISTRIES

Remembering our Roots. Restoring Authority. Maturing Disciples. Advancing the Kingdom.

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OPENING SALUTATION

“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.” Isaiah 55:11

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Kingdom Embassy Ministries Discipleship Devotional Series. This body of work was designed to fulfill multiple purposes simultaneously.

First, it is a **Daily Devotion**. Each entry will require deep thought and introspection.

Second, it is a **Comprehensive Bible Study**, for those who will follow the links to the Sermon Resources.

Lastly, it is a **Discipleship Journey**. You will learn the Bible like never before, as you weave your way through thousands of bible verses.

Learn to “Think in Bible”. Dip your feet in the river; wade in waist deep; move in chest high; and then go in up to your nose. Finally, dive under and then rise again to the surface—completely transformed.

HOW TO USE THIS DEVOTIONAL

This Kingdom Embassy Ministries Devotional is meant for daily discipleship. It is intended to require deep introspection and prayer to process the content of each entry.

The digital format has active links to comprehensive Sermon Videos, Notes, and Scriptures for each devotion.

THE IMAGE OF GOD

SERMON RESOURCE: [The Image of God](#)

Set-apart from all other creation, God uniquely created mankind to truly know Him. For that to

2021-10-01 | Genesis 1-6 | The Image of God

[Sermon Notes](#) | [Sermon Video](#)

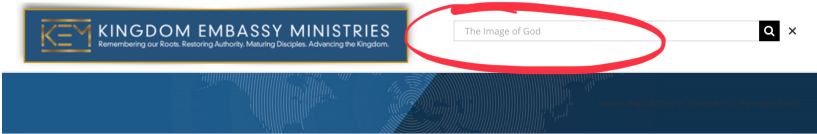
The Image of God

KEY KINGDOM EMBASSY MINISTRIES
Remembering our Roots, Restoring Authority, Maturing Disciples, Advancing the Kingdom.

Yahv
Adar
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look
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God
by al

I encourage you to watch each sermon and to study the detailed notes! If you wish to go even deeper, there are complex questions to explore at the end of each set of bible study notes.

The digital format also includes an active table of contents. Clicking on any title will bring you there instantly. If you are reading the printed version, visit KingdomEmbassyMinistries.org and enter the sermon title in the powerful search engine to locate the content you wish to study.



2021-10-01 | Genesis 1-6 | The Image of God

[Sermon Notes](#) | [Sermon Video](#)

This process will inspire your exponential growth as a disciple. Your understanding of God’s Word will explode and you will be changed.

“May this Kingdom Embassy Ministries Discipleship Devotional enrich your life as a devout follower of our precious Savior Y’shua Messiah (Jesus Christ).” DJH

YOUR DISCIPLESHIP JOURNEY

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Closing Salutation

Kingdom Embassy Ministries

Remembering our Roots. Restoring Authority.
Maturing Disciples. Advancing the Kingdom



ABOUT KEM

Identity (Who?)

Kingdom Embassy Ministries is a body of Christians who believe that before Christ's return there will be a final revealing of the sons of God, a literal transformation of God's people into the full stature and image of Christ, and we believe wholeheartedly that at the end-of-the-age, to be identified as faithful and wise servants requires human participation and a responsibility to bring the Kingdom of Heaven to earth.

VISION (WHAT?)

Kingdom Embassy Ministries is a prophetically informed Church, restored to a mutually submitted authority structure of apostles (pastors) and prophets, with Christ as its Chief cornerstone (king). We teach both the Gospel of Salvation and the Gospel of the Kingdom, while raising up mature, totally committed, and biblically-literate disciples of Christ of all ages.

MISSION (How?)

We present God's redeeming love with the simple message of the Gospel of Salvation; Y'shua (Jesus) shed His blood to reconcile you to God. This begins the journey from spiritual childhood to spiritual adulthood. This maturing is achieved through discipleship with one end in mind, becoming like Christ. The Gospel of the Kingdom is defined, elaborated, and disseminated by and to mature followers of Christ. This is done by a dedicated body of believers who apprehend their true identity as children of God, and who operate under a mutually submitted church governance of apostles (pastors) and prophets, with Y'shua as the chief cornerstone (king).

PURPOSE (WHY?)

Kingdom Embassy Ministries is driven to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; recognizes that the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence and that violent men must take it by force; and that every teacher and expert in the Word of God must be instructed and trained as prophetically informed disciples in the kingdom of heaven. As disciples, we are compelled to seek all truth and to uncover the mysteries of the Kingdom.



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FOUR PILLARS

REMEMBERING OUR ROOTS

Christianity was born from its Hebraic Roots. We explore and honor the roots of our faith by participating in the practices that our savior and early church fathers enjoyed. It's not about religion or legalism, but about radical faith-based obedience to the God who saved us. (*Ephesians 2:12-13*)

RESTORING AUTHORITY

Kingdom Embassy Ministries recognizes that the church was originally established with an Apostolic (Pastoral) and Prophetic authority structure, mutually submitted under the Kingship of Y'shua our Messiah. Our desire is to honor this separation of powers, as we witnessed the early church doing, and that was so effective in making disciples. (*Ephesians 2:20*)

MATURING DISCIPLES

We are commissioned to first turn people toward Christ with the Gospel of Salvation, and to then mature Christians into disciples with the Gospel of the Kingdom.

We have been given everything we need for Godly living. Thus, we are committed to the integrity of that standard without compromise in our faith, relationships, work, ministry, finances, health and leisure. *(Luke 9:24)*

ADVANCING THE KINGDOM

Y'shua was relentless in His teachings on the Kingdom of Heaven and as His disciples we are committed to walking in that legacy. We too must be relentless in both preaching and advancing the Kingdom of God. Y'shua was clear in His mandate for us to seek first the Kingdom before anything else and that only by preaching such will the end come. *(Matthew 6:33)*



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STATEMENT OF FAITH

Kingdom Embassy Ministries believes that the church was originally established with an Apostolic (Pastoral) and Prophetic authority structure, mutually submitted under the Kingship of Y'shua our Messiah, and that we are commissioned to first turn non-Christians toward Christ, and then mature Christians into disciples.

We introduce the world to God's redeeming love with a simple message. Any version of the Gospel of Salvation will do: Christ Crucified; God loves you and gave His only Son to die for your sin; Y'shua died in your place; confess with you mouth and believe in your heart that Y'shua is Lord; believe and be baptized; unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God; Let your light so shine before men, that they would see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven...

If this simple message is presented like an eloquent speech by a brilliant professional, it will be very difficult to tell if those responding are doing so because of the polished convincing words of an inspirational speaker, or if it is truly the power of God at work. To

those who don't know God, the only message to convey is this; *"Jesus Christ, because of His love for you, went to the cross and paid the debt for your sins with His life. And when He resurrected from the grave, it paved the way for your new life as a child of God. Outside of that reality, you are destined for a life of uncertainty, fear and eventual death. Access to this gift is free for all those who God gives the faith to believe."* There are no human words that can persuade anyone of this truth. As ministers, we can only be confident that a conversion is real if we minimize our input and let the power of God do all the work. In other words, our importance must decrease so that Christ's preeminence would increase. Preach faith in Christ crucified; nothing complicated. Then step aside and watch the power of God in action.

Now the journey from spiritual childhood to spiritual adulthood can begin. There is a known discipleship path to becoming spiritual adults. Actively add very specific things to the faith you were given. Add virtue, then knowledge, then self-control, then perseverance, then godliness, then brotherly love, and finally the greatest thing of all—love. God is love. Follow this path and the promise is that you will never stumble. On your journey, NEVER forget that all your past sins are forgiven. LEAVE THEM in the past and press on to the high calling of becoming like Christ.

God's divine power is entrusted to those who become spiritual adults, those who actively seek to increase their knowledge of the Lord Y'shua the Messiah. Spiritual adults can become partakers of His exceeding power, all of His precious promises, and His divine nature. God might say it is like this; *"If you become a mature spiritual adult, you can be trusted to manage My power and wisdom; I can now reveal the hidden mysteries of My Kingdom. You must be equipped, as My human initiative partners, to usher My Kingdom to earth. Only My wise and faithful managers can bear the responsibility of participating in all that this requires, and then partaking in My glory, without becoming prideful, self-absorbed, and or enamored with taking center stage."*

Those operating solely in human wisdom cannot even begin to conceive the wonders of what God has prepared for those who love Him with an adult-like love. Again, God is love, so the highest expression of His divine nature as a spiritual adult is perfect love. Think of it this way; the thoughts of mankind are easily known by the spirit that is in mankind. And the thoughts of God are easily known by the Spirit of God. However, when that great exchange takes place, when you accept God's love and Y'shua the Messiah's substitutionary death on the cross for you, His life for your life, the most supernatural thing occurs. God makes His Spirit

available to you and you are no longer bound by a singular reality. You now have the option to live life animated by His Spirit instead of your human spirit.

Once you submit to the total Lordship of God the Father, you are no longer subject to merely human judgments. Why? Because humans filled with only a human spirit cannot possibly understand what is on God's heart (mind) or how He operates. However, when we become mature Christians, we have access to the most extraordinary promise; we can operate with the mind of Christ. In other words, we can share in His divine nature; we can think like God. This is what we believe because this is what the Word of God clearly says.



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“THINK IN BIBLE”

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “THINK IN BIBLE?”

Something miraculous happened the instant you were born-again. In that moment you gained access to the Holy Spirit and you were no longer bound to operate solely by inspiration of the spirit of man with which you were born in the flesh. From then on you had the option to walk according to the Spirit of God. I say “option” because God did not remove the spirit of the world that came with your birth. He just offered a much better choice in which to now operate. And it is your choice to make. I admonish, however, that you will have a much richer life, as a Christian, if you lose the idea that you still have a choice. In other words, “Freedom is having no options; when God’s way is the only way, you are totally free!”

Nevertheless, it will take the lifestyle of a disciple to arrive at that place of total freedom. You must embark on a journey to replace every thought of man with the mind of Christ. You must learn to “Think in Bible.” Become so familiar with God’s Word that it literally

reprograms your brain. It will feel like God is rewiring your DNA to become Christlike. And don't be mistaken; this is a voluntary process. Yes, it cost you nothing to be redeemed for all eternity, while it cost Christ everything. But, becoming a disciple is not free. It will cost you everything, and for that you must volunteer, even if the price-tag is your very life!

This devotional journey can be as shallow or as deep as you desire. If you go all in, it will take you places you might have never imagined. It is organized into eight sections:

GETTING YOUR FEET WET

"And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, **shall rest in the waters of the Jordan**, that the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off, the waters that come down from upstream, and they shall stand as a heap." Joshua 3:13 NKJV

"Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like **precious faith** with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:" II Peter 1:1 NKJV

WAIST DEEP

"For **by grace** you have been saved **through faith**, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not

of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for **good works**, which God prepared beforehand that **we should walk in them.**“ Ephesians 2:8-10 NKJV

””But also for this very reason, **giving all diligence, add to your faith** virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.“ II Peter 1:5-7 NKJV

CHEST HIGH

”I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you **present your bodies a living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.“ Romans 12:1 NKJV

”For **if these things are yours and abound**, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For **he who lacks these things** is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.“ II Peter 1:8-9 NKJV

”Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, **I press toward the goal** for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.“ Philippians 3:13-14 NKJV

UP TO YOUR NOSE

”When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through **the rivers, they shall not overflow you**. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you.“ Isaiah 43:2 NKJV

”Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and **you are not your own? For you were bought at a price**; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.“ I Corinthians 6:19-20 NKJV

”He must increase, but **I must decrease**.“ John 3:30 NKJV

GOING UNDER

”Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless **not My will, but Yours, be done**.“ Luke 22:42 NKJV

”So likewise, whoever of you does not **forsake all** that he has cannot be My disciple.“ Luke 14:33 NKJV

”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.“ Galatians 2:20 NKJV

”For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are **again entangled in them** and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.“ II Peter 2:20 NKJV

UNDERWATER SWIMMING

”Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; All **Your waves and billows have gone over me.**“ Psalms 42:7 NKJV

Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, **what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,**“ II Peter 3:11 NKJV

”Now **godliness with contentment** is great gain.“ I Timothy 6:6 NKJV

”Therefore, **having been justified by faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have **access by faith into this grace** in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.“ Romans 5:1-2 NKJV

”Now then, **we are ambassadors** for Christ, as though God were **pleading through us**: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.“ II Corinthians 5:20 NKJV

RISING TO THE SURFACE

”Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, And whose hope is the Lord. For **he shall be like a tree planted by the waters**, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, **Nor will cease from yielding fruit.**“ Jeremiah 17:7-8 NKJV

”His **divine power** has given to us all things that pertain to **life and godliness**, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us **exceedingly great and precious promises**, that through these you may be **partakers of the divine nature**, having **escaped the corruption** that is in the world through lust.“ II Peter 1:3-4 NKJV

”Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, **that it may impart grace to the hearers.**“ Ephesians 4:29 NKJV

”Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord **stood firm on dry ground** in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel **crossed over on dry ground**, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.“ Joshua 3:17 NKJV

FOR YOUR FEASTING

”“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘The feasts of the Lord, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, **these are My feasts.**’“ Leviticus 23:2 NKJV

”So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which **are a shadow of things to come**, but the substance *is* of Christ.“ Colossians 2:16-17 NKJV

”Therefore **purge out the old leaven**, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed **Christ, our Passover**, was sacrificed for us. **Therefore let us keep the feast**, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.“ I Corinthians 5:7-8 NKJV



GETTING YOUR FEET WET

JUICY ROCKS & FIERY SERPENTS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Juicy Rocks & Fiery Serpents](#)

You're up against the impossible. What do you do? How do you react? "You are always with me Yahweh, so I got this. With You, anything is possible." Or, "Why did you bring me all the way here Father, only to abandon me and let me crash?" "All that past provision is worthless!" Which road do you take when times get tough? "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."

ZEALOUS WITH YAHWEH'S RIGHTEOUSNESS!

SERMON RESOURCE: [Zealous with Yahweh's Righteousness!](#)

There is nothing wrong with being zealous. As a matter of fact, it seems that Yahweh prefers passion over neutral. "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth." The problems start when what fuels your zeal is your own righteousness

rather than the righteousness of God. And sometimes the line between the two can get pretty blurry. Those who can draw a clear line become very powerful tools for the Kingdom.

FLEXIBLE PROPHETS FOR HIRE

SERMON RESOURCE: [Flexible Prophets for Hire](#)

I am really not happy with what God is saying, so I have a great idea. If I present my case from a different point of view, I am sure Yahweh will adapt. If needed I will invest tremendous time and resources into getting Yahweh to agree with me. I can even convince a few godly people to back me up. With a new perspective and all that commitment and support, I'm certain Yahweh will change His mind. And let's face it, we need to be flexible with the way we interpret God's intentions! When He says, "For I am Yahweh, I do not change..." And, "Y'shua the Messiah is the same yesterday, today, and forever," He doesn't actually mean what appears so obvious. A better way to interpret these Scriptures is that, "As long as I have a good enough reason, Yahweh will comport with my desires." It is His flexibility that never changes! Put it to the test if you must, but the outcome is certain.

LIFE, LIES AND CONFUSED SPIES!

SERMON RESOURCE: [Life, Lies and Confused Spies!](#)

Whose report do you believe? It would seem that the majority of reports can't be trusted. If we use Biblical standards to evaluate what percentage of information presented to "the people" is deceiving, we would come up with a staggering figure: 83.33%. Look around you today; can you trust the reports, can you believe what you are seeing and hearing? Do you fall for the same level of deception when feeding on the public narrative? When you look at your brother, do you see the color of his skin or the color of his blood; or more importantly the color of the blood that covers his sin? Break away from the lies of bad reports and prejudice.

A HOUSE DIVIDED

SERMON RESOURCE: [A House Divided](#)

Iwant what I want, I want it now, and I want it easy. And more importantly, I want what's yours, and I especially don't want you to have it! That my friends is covetousness in its purest form. Now let's mix in a little witchcraft and make a public spectacle of the whole thing and let's see whose side Yahweh is on. I'm

confident He's on my side, as it is clear you have just come with your own agenda, and what is more clear is that there is no reason God chose you when he could have chosen me and my rebellion. Plus, I'm terribly dissatisfied with what I've been given, even though Yahweh says it too is special, He's clearly mistaken; I'm confident I know better than He as well! Does any part of this resonate in your spirit, even a tiny bit? If so, tune in and let's see where the Fire of Yahweh lands!

DON'T LET YOUR COMPLAINING DEFINE YOU!

SERMON RESOURCE: [Don't Let Your Complaining Define You!](#)

Let your light shine into the world like the six branches on the left and right of the Messiah on the lampstand of God. The work of the Holy Spirit is to bring about these six attributes of Christ in your life: the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, and the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of Yahweh.

But, is “resistance” your automatic response to the molding of your character by the Holy Spirit? Is your reflex reaction to complain when you don't immediately

get your own way? Do you quickly forget all that God has done for you and revert back to discontent and impatience the moment you face challenges? I invite you to explore what it means to let Yahweh mold you into the light of a city set on a hill that cannot be hidden!

MIRACLE ARMY

SERMON RESOURCE: [Miracle Army](#)

Try to wrap your mind around this. Yahweh tells you to go take over a group of hostile nations. There are a gang of Kings who have it out for you and they have been preparing to take you on for quite some time. They've summoned the favor of their gods to come against you and have amassed a great army. Then Yahweh casually instructs you to take with you only 12,000 men. Don't worry, your decisive victory has been prophesied. Oh, and when you get back from the war, pay attention to the greatest miracle of the entire campaign—NOT ONE man from God's army was lost in battle! Next time you have to battle with the enemies of God, meditate on that!

COUNTED IN FOR KINGDOM BUSINESS...

SERMON RESOURCE: [Counted in For Kingdom Business...
Take a Vow](#)

Y'shua's words in Matthew 5:33-37 are often cited as evidence that making promises to Yahweh, or in more "Biblical Terms" swearing a vow or an oath, is erroneously thought to be something we ought not do. But, taking a deeper look into His words reveals quite the opposite conclusion; yes, do make vows, but under no circumstances swear falsely. Let your "yes be yes, and our no be no." Have you ever seriously considered the vow you made to Yahweh? Are you truly "set apart" and less concerned for who society says you are, and more focused on your "promise" to be who Yahweh says you are in Him? I invite you to explore what "your" Nazirite Vow should look like. It's hard to imagine, but true. The vow you took as a born-again believer closely resembles the instructions Yahweh gave Moses.

THE FIRSTBORN SWAP

SERMON RESOURCE: [The Firstborn Swap](#)

Did Y’shua come to start a new religion or was He walking in the fulfillment of everything His Father had instituted into the earth? Look to His words for the answer; I did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill, and I did not come with My own doctrine, but the doctrine of My Father who sent Me. As we navigate Yahweh’s Word, if you have eyes to see, you will notice throughout the Holy Scripture, where the legal precedents were set for Y’shua to be who He was and do what He did. If you explore closely, you will find the exact precedent that permits a priest of the most high to stand in as the Firstborn Sacrifice for the children of God—a truly amazing and refreshing revelation!

ISSUES OF BLOOD

SERMON RESOURCE: [Issues of Blood](#)

Y’shua healed a woman who had an ‘issue of blood’ for 12 years, as she boldly grabbed His outer garment. But, just before that He is begged to come save a 12 year old girl. He appears unconcerned as He walks on. Soon after, the girl’s father is told to no longer

bother the Master as she has already died. At the news, again, Y'shua appears unalarmed and calmly says, "Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well." As He comes into her home full of weeping loved ones, He is ridiculed for words that reflect His apparent ignorance, "Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping." The miracle follows; "Little girl, arise." What has often intrigued me is the intersection of these two miracles, especially the common thread of 12 years. Explore the deep insights into these two coinciding miracles.

THE TALE OF TWO PREPOSITIONS!

SERMON RESOURCE: [The Tale of Two Prepositions!](#)

Sometimes it is in the smallest nuances that we learn the most important lessons. These lessons don't come easily and they always have an explosive backstory. The spiritual territory we apprehend comes at a great price, as the ground we take often involves great personal loss. Consider King David and the Apostle Paul as two stellar examples. Both had to encounter God through some spiritually and often physically violent circumstances. They had to wrestle for what they were ultimately used for, which then changed the course of history, YOUR HISTORY! Please dig deeper and unfold

one of those minute details that you just might consider the most important aspect of your life as a Christian.

OUR FATHER'S BUSINESS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Our Father's Business](#)

We are at a point in human history that demands God's people recognize the PROPHETIC REFORMATION at hand! Ignorance is no longer bliss and silence is no longer an option. It's time to strip away all that will ultimately be burned to ashes anyway, and to be about 'Our Father's Business.' And when we remove the filters of man-made traditions and religion, we are left with pure prophetic insight. Venture behind the veil to gain a deep appreciation of the prophetic nature of the feasts of Yahweh with a heavy dose of Passover!

AWAKE!

SERMON RESOURCE: [Awake!](#)

Every day history is being made as the world slumbers, asleep at the watch, as the evil all around manipulates and deceives us. It is one thing for the children of the world to be so easily fooled; it's something completely different when the Church

remains fast asleep. As 440,000 churches in our great nation tell the body of Christ to “stay home” for reasons they should so easily recognize as lies, evil is hard at work eroding our every freedom. Can anyone tell me what time it is? It is time to WAKE UP! Rise up all you children of Yahweh. Wake from your sleep and let the glory of Yahweh shine among you, as the mature children of God manifest in the earth. We call on all of God’s people to “AWAKE!”

WHY DOES THE BLOOD OF Y'SHUA SAVE US?

SERMON RESOURCE: [Why Does the Blood of Y’shua Save Us?](#)

You are not under the law; but under grace. How many times have you heard that declaration? It is for freedom that Christ has set you free. Your freedom was purchased by the precious Blood of the Lamb; the most beautiful thing in our faith. So, stand boldly against being brought again under the yoke of bondage, as the law will just trap us in the chains of slavery. Faith in Christ has freed us from the burden of laws. Yet, the New Testament actually teaches something very different; “According to the law almost all things are

purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” And Paul asked this provocative question; “Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.” Take on a journey of discovery and explore the intricate relationship between faith and law.

HOLY ABOMINATION?

SERMON RESOURCE: [Holy Abomination?](#)

Be holy as Yahweh is holy! Is this some quippy euphemism for the much harsher words of Y’shua Himself, “Be perfect as My Father in Heaven is perfect?” “Hey, just do your best and don’t worry so much about radical obedience. There’s plenty of wiggle room to do things your own way and He will still bless you anyway.” I don’t think Nadab and Abihu would agree. They paid the ultimate price for insulting Yahweh’s holiness. What price are you paying?

TRUTH AND SPIRIT!

SERMON RESOURCE: [Truth and Spirit!](#)

Have you ever considered what role the prophet plays in the church today? I am not referring to the gift of prophecy that many people use for the edification of their brothers and sisters in the faith. I'm asking you to consider what the scriptures say about how the church was established on the apostles and prophets with Y'shua as the chief cornerstone. I'm wondering, "Where have all the prophets gone?"

SINS AND SALT

SERMON RESOURCE: [Sins and Salt](#)

When you are alone, do you ever try to convince yourself that your sin is okay? Do you simply count on Yahweh's unconditional forgiveness as a "get out of jail free card" no matter how you choose to live your life? Not every offering you make to Yahweh is acceptable and it takes a true and committed disciple of Christ to know the difference. Are you ready for the high calling?

IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE!

SERMON RESOURCE: [If You Hear His Voice!](#)

Today, if you hear the voice of Yahweh, DO NOT harden your hearts as they did during times of trials in the wilderness. The Holy Spirit has circumcised your heart and that not only empowers you to obey His voice, but also should give you the desire to do so. It is time to discover what it means to truly enter His Sabbath rest.

FORTY DAYS TOO MANY?

SERMON RESOURCE: [Forty Days Too Many?](#)

Is waiting forty days too many? What is your spiritual MO (mode of operation) if Yahweh does not jump to attention when you need something? Do you throw a tantrum like a five year old? Do you turn to self-reliance? Do you jump out ahead of the Almighty? Might you even turn to ‘other gods’? As a serious disciple, you must become equipped to wait on Yahweh’s perfect timing.

PLAYWRIGHT AND PLAYERS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Playwright and Players](#)

What do you do when you are called to speak for Yahweh. It can get pretty intimidating, but He promises you need not worry! He’s the Playwright and we are the Players. All you need to do is follow the script! It’s a simple concept, but not so easy to apply. It’s free of charge, but might cost you everything. Y’shua made His sacrifice; and you must be willing to make yours. And in the end, it will be an impossible task if you don’t know the script. Where might you locate your lines?

Y'SHUA, OUR ETERNAL HIGH PRIEST!

SERMON RESOURCE: [Y'Shua, Our Eternal High Priest!](#)

As the Church we are called a Holy Priesthood and mandated to put on our “Breastplate of Righteousness”, but what does that even mean? Certainly we are made righteous in God’s sight because of the work of Christ on the cross, but is there something left for us to do? I implore you to dig deeper into the patterns of the tabernacle and priesthood. You won’t be disappointed.

SEEING Y'SHUA IN THE TABERNACLE

SERMON RESOURCE: [Seeing Y'shua In the Tabernacle](#)

See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain. That is what Yahweh said to Moses so many times as he received instructions to build the tabernacle. Why was it so crucial that he be exact? Discover how each pattern was a precise reflection of what we find in our beloved Savior, Y'shua.

HARD-PRESSED ON EVERY SIDE!

SERMON RESOURCE: [Hard-pressed on Every Side!](#)

After all the miracles and all the undeniable supernatural signs: deliverance from Egypt with 10 devastating plagues; being led by smoke and fire out of Egypt so they could travel day and night and in a direction they would have never chosen on their own, so Yahweh could demonstrate His power; a pillar of smoke and fire to hold off the Egyptian army; the opening of a massive body of water with the tap of a rod, so they could pass over on dry ground; the destruction of the entire military force of the most powerful nation in the world, as they are swallowed up in the waters; and they

still DON'T BELIEVE. They complain every step of the way, and each time the hand of Yahweh provides! What about you? Do you still complain every time you face a challenge, no matter how many times you see the “deliverance of Yahweh?”

THE PURPOSE OF POWER!

SERMON RESOURCE: [The Purpose of Power!](#)

This week we witness the powerful hand of Yahweh as He moves in the life of Moses, a taste of “His divine power that gives to us all things that pertain to a godly life,” and a picture of His ultimate prophetic promise to the Church, “the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe.”

There is a a universal theme throughout the Holy Scriptures. Yahweh separates one thing from the other. But, notice each time that God segregates things into three distinct groups, not two!

...so that at the name of Y'shua, every knee will bow in heaven (holy/set-apart), on earth (good/common), and under the earth (evil/disposable).

Hold in your mind these ideas, and then go explore!

1– Holy, Good, Evil

2– Set-apart, Common, Disposable

3– Heaven, Earth, Under the earth

TWO SWORDS ARE ENOUGH...

SERMON RESOURCE: [Two Swords are Enough, Because You Won't Even Need One!](#)

Take two swords with you! And by the way, the moment you think you need them, you won't. The battle you are in and the enemy you will face is not one you will need a sharp steel blade to defeat. First and foremost it is a battle in the Spirit. But don't be fooled, the spiritual battle you wage "against the rulers of the darkness of this age, and against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" will also manifest as weapons of warfare in the earth. What might that look like?

WAIST DEEP

THE CRUX OF THE MATTER

SERMON RESOURCE: [The Master's Piece & The Crux of the Matter](#)

While doing life in general in today's society, it is eminently obvious that the Human race, by and large, does not view itself quite the same as it once did. We are now living in a casual, convenient, and global society, in which absolutes regarding intimacy between people, either of opposite or same gender, do not matter. Instead of deep, meaningful and committed relationships, casual and convenient partnerships are encouraged. If a relationship results in a pregnancy, society regularly encourages the option of killing the unborn child, framed around "a woman's choice" and addressed as "getting rid of it." The notion abounds that there is no objective morality. That is challenged only when we articulate the thought that moral absolutes do exist and from where they come!

The wickedness of society is on full display for all to see. And, it centers on attacking the truth that we have a Creator and what is the image and most important mandate of that Creator. "The two shall become one flesh," and "Be fruitful and multiply."

How did we get here? A wise man once said, "Begin at the beginning." Let's remind ourselves of the

intrinsic value of humanity by doing just that! Let's go back to the beginning!

TENDER BRANCHES

SERMON RESOURCE: [Tender branches: The Fate of Two Messengers](#)

Sometimes Yahweh's instructions seem quite ridiculous. Why build a boat to save you from floodwaters when it has never before rained? We're all familiar with Abraham's extreme act of faith that was accounted to him for righteousness, but Noah's obedience to build the ark might be considered the most significant act of faith prior to Abraham. By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear and prepared an ark for the saving of his household... Tragically, kept outside the ark were all those who had corrupted their way on the earth. What would have happened had Noah ignored the warning? Would he and his family have perished along with the rest?

And, of course, divine instruction did not end with Noah. Many times since, God has reached down and prophetically called a leader to step up with extreme faith to direct or shepherd His people. Maybe even you! What happens when man refuses? What is happening

right now? What will happen in the future should God's chosen vessels neglect to "prepare an ark"

ARE YOU THE ONE?

SERMON RESOURCE: [Are You the One?](#)

Are you the one or should I look for another? It's hard to imagine that you can experience so many encounters with God, and still have doubts. At times, even after you have tasted the promises of God, you still might end up in a difficult situation. In those moments do you look for another?

At other times you have to wait on the Lord for what seems like a lifetime. During those long dry seasons, do you look for another? Do you find another? And what happens while you are enjoying the other, and Yahweh encounters you with what you have been waiting for? Only, you're no longer waiting, as you already took matters into your own hands. All of a sudden you're in a sticky wicket; on one hand you have been enjoying "another," and now God is ready to fulfill His promises.

If your reaction is, "God, can't I just keep what I already have, and You can bless that?" you're in good company! Abram soon to become Abraham did just that. "Why not let Ishmael inherit what you have promised

me?” Let’s explore this all too common occurrence in our walk of faith, “Are you the one, or should I look for another?”

A PROPHETIC BAILIWICK

SERMON RESOURCE: [A Prophetic Bailiwick](#)

I’m not certain you’ll find a portion of Scripture that has more prophetic big ticket items than Genesis 18 to 22. We could certainly grab any one of them and teach an entire sermon on it. Let’s see: nothing is impossible with God; all things happen in their appointed times; God does not hide what He will do from His prophets; who are you to judge me; don’t look back, forget the past; God always shows us what He will do in the future; God provides where He guides; faith is a combination of hearing and doing; what happens when you don’t withhold your only begotten son; what it means to be a living sacrifice; a third day return to life; the worship and faith connection; the ram of God and lamb of God; the significance of descendants as numerous as stars and sands; the singular “seed” of promise; fear not, He already has your spouse picked out!

But, instead of just one, I decided—let’s do them all! Hence “A Prophetic Bailiwick.” In other words, let’s operate in a certain sweet spot, in this case, the

prophetic! Besides, you can't build THE CHURCH without it. Remember, "You are members of the household of God, which is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Y'shua Himself being the chief corner stone."

FLEECES & TESTIMONIES

SERMON RESOURCE: [Fleeces and Testimonies](#)

Have you ever been pressed to the limit and you know that beyond any doubt the only way you will find peace, the only way you will be certain, is if God Almighty answers your petition in every detail? I'm not talking about a vague feeling or gentle leading; I'm talking exact and detailed answers. I've been there! We all have.

In my three decades as a devout Christian I can recall those testimonies as if they were yesterday. They seem so fresh in my mind, I'm sure because I have told the stories over and over and over again. I believe it glorifies God as it testifies to His majesty. But, it also encourages me and others to keep the faith when times are tough and when "there I am again" needing another specific and detailed answer from the Lord. He has never let me down. And that's the thing; His track record in my life is so long and so predictable that every time

I'm up against it, I know just what to do. It's who He is and it's how I've learned to live, and I wouldn't trade it for anything. For those of you who have been there, you know what I mean. For some of you who have yet to test the deep waters of radical faith, jump in; "the water is fine!"

Finally, let me leave you with this; I love to tell stories, mostly because I love to speak about my testimonies, which has led me to this simple yet profound conclusion: "If you tell your testimony, God will give you more testimonies to tell!"

THE IMPETUOUS SEED

SERMON RESOURCE: [The Impetuous Seed](#)

Impetuous: impulsive, rash, hasty, reckless, heedless, foolhardy, imprudent, injudicious, ill-conceived, ill-considered, unplanned, unreasoned, unthought-out, unthinking, precipitate, precipitous, headlong, hurried, rushed. Anything but a cautious and sober-minded decision. For years I have taught my children, "Stop...think before you do anything." At one point I had rubber bracelets made with these words on them: "What would dad think?" I'm not joking; I forced my children to wear them.

How many times have you wished you could stuff your words back into your mouth? As they leave your lips you're thinking, "please no!" I am sure Esau felt that way the moment after his belly was full. "Sure, take my entire inheritance for a bowl of soup." No more impetuous words were ever spoken. Let's take a trip through the Bible and find the many instances when man spoke too soon, without thinking, sometimes extensively. It never works out well. We will land in the modern day and see how this is playing out in our world, even now.

A NATION DIVIDED

SERMON RESOURCE: [A Nation Divided](#)

Each week as I explore the portion of scripture we will be studying, I wait on the Lord to highlight something to me. Sometimes it's something big right there in the text; and sometimes it's an idea that just jumps off the pages. You know, the Word of God is living, and powerful, and sharper than a two edged sword, and it pierces us right down to the core. This week I saw the great controversy that emerged when Jacob fell in love with Rachel, but was forced to marry Leah first. "That's how we do things around here," Laban insisted.

This launched Jacob into the midst of a baby war. What jumped off the pages was that Leah birthed the line that became the priesthood and the Messiah, and Rachel birthed the line of Joseph who saved Israel from extinction and seems to be the representation of the Church. History has recorded the great schism as Israel became a divided nation after King Solomon's death, and later both kingdoms were exiled for disobedience! Benjamin, Rachel's second son and Jacob's twelfth, became the only tribe to land in both kingdoms during the exiles! And Paul, the Jewish Apostle to the Gentiles, was from the line of Benjamin. Wow! Jews and Gentiles uniting as "One New Man!" Y'shua taught us that a kingdom divided cannot stand, so today, as we live in a divided nation, never before has unity of the faith been more crucial.

SPIRITUAL TENACITY

SERMON RESOURCE: [Spiritual Tenacity—For Those with Ears to Hear](#)

Jacob wrestled with God all night long and when God insisted he let go, we notice a different side of the son "who dwelled in tents." Jacob's response was a resounding, "I WILL NOT let You go!" Yet, the Hebrew

words behind the scene give us even greater insight into how violent this encounter truly was, and how tenaciously Jacob resisted. The adverb, “I will not” has a permanent and resolute quality as it modifies a verb, in this case, “let You go!” “I will not” demands absolute prohibition of “let you go.” Yes, Jacob is violent in his encounter: forceful, ferocious, intense, potent, and furious; and Jacob is tenacious in his engagement: locked-on, relentless, fixated, resolute, and steadfast!

What does this mean for us? Spiritual tenacity and violence require a well-developed sense of who God is, plus an unadulterated understanding of who you are to God. Yahweh is steadfast, never lies, and is, of course, infinitely capable of doing what He promises. We are the wild cards in the relationship. If we fail to recognize who we are to Him, we suffer from spiritual amnesia, and it is easy to get swept away in a flood of anxieties and doubts. Yahweh will certainly do His part; will you do yours? Y’shua taught us, “The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.”

If you want on the team, it’s going to take some violent and tenacious wrestling with God. To do so, you must invest as much time as it takes to know God intimately, and spend equal time learning who you are to Him! I promise, be spiritually violent and tenacious about your call and election, and if you do these things you will never stumble.

BETWEEN TWO VERSES

SERMON RESOURCE: [Between Two Verses: Prepped for Power](#)

We live in one of the most important prophetic times in history. I am sure many men over the centuries have made that claim, but if I had to make my argument for the case, I would say we are at a crossroads for two massive reasons. In the United States, and by extension globally, because of the position the U.S. holds in the world, we have come to this great divide. On one side we have those who will boldly proclaim that there is One God, and that He has revealed His image to us. First He did so in Genesis when He made man and woman in His image, told them to marry and to be fruitful as a family, and then again He revealed Himself through His One and only Son. On the other side we have bold declarations that gender is fluid, and therefore there is no definitive distinction between a man or a woman. Marriage is irrelevant and certainly, even if considered, is not reserved for the union between a man and a woman and, as such, has redefined the family. And then there is the assault on being fruitful, with the mass annihilation of unborn children. These violations add up to the very denial of the image of the One and only God. The conclusion of

the matter is this; one side says, “There is only One God,” and the other, by their beliefs and policies says, “There is no God.”

Now, take that definitive conclusion and add this. Historically, God’s people, starting with Israel, have a reputation of killing the prophets. When the conviction of their words reached the people, especially the leaders, many times instead of repenting, they simply killed the messenger. Today, in the church we have done much the same. The church was originally established on the Apostles and Prophets with Christ as the Chief Cornerstone, and yet today, the church, and by extension denominations, are run primarily by Pastors, with almost zero Prophetic oversight. This has left the church divided, drastically reducing its power and influence in the world. As proof, just contemplate how little impact the church has had worldwide on exposing all lies that have gripped the entire planet in 2020 and 2021. Not only has the church been impotent in the matter, it has actually been complicit. And if you are not acutely aware of how this is true, that itself is further proof of what I am saying. The Prophetic authority must be restored in the church; this Separation of Powers must be reestablished for the Body of Christ to take its rightful place of authority in the world and finish what we are here to do.

To understand the critical importance of a Separation of Powers, let's look at the three branches of government in the United States, which operate federally and in each state. You may not have realized, but this form of government was modeled after the Holy Bible, in which Israel was governed by the King, the Priest, and the Prophet, all working together. When operating as intended, they were mutually submitted to one another, and all three submitted to the Torah. In the United States, the King is the Executive Branch, the Priest is the Legislative Branch, and the Prophetic is the Judicial Branch, all three, when operating properly, are mutually submitted to one another and to the Constitution.

Today in the church that would translate to the King of Kings, the Pastoral, and the Prophetic. It is never good when any branch abdicates or overextends its power, or violates its constitution. In Washington, DC, that breeds corruption. In the church it births new religions, waters down the truth, and ruins its power and influence. In both cases it creates fertile soil for dictators. That is why we must restore Prophetic authority in the church! It's the only way we will be prepared to finish the work Y'shua left us to do. Consider this lesson your preparation course!

NEW WINESKINS

SERMON RESOURCE: [New Wineskins](#)

It would seem that in creation mankind was clothed only in the skin on his body and in that form he reflected the glory of God. Something happened when sin came into the world. He looked upon the glory of his own body, and instead of seeing the glory of God, he became afraid and attempted to cover what he now saw as “nakedness.” What took place next has great prophetic significance. God saw man’s new sense of embarrassment over his original glory and accommodated him by causing him to be covered with a “new skin”, an animal skin, a certain downgrade.

This downgrade would now plague mankind into the future and does not seem to have a complete resolution until the revealing of the sons of God, at which time “creation is restored.” Our ultimate hope is to be clothed with a restored heavenly image so we shall not be found naked, like Adam.

The theme of being clothed in either sin and shame or glory and righteousness is something that is well-defined in the life of Joseph. And we will see the exact pattern in the life of every believer as he is sanctified from glory to glory. And putting on a new skin that reflects this glory is something that our Savior

taught about in a short parable: “No one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved.” It’s time to put on your new wineskin!

EMOTIONAL TUG-OF-WAR

SERMON RESOURCE: [Emotional Tug-of-War](#)

As we move about in our daily lives, nothing is more evident than the constant emotional tug-of-war in which we live! Life is filled with constant emotional battles, which we can choose to either fight in the flesh or in the Spirit. Truthfully, none of us enjoys dealing with the issues that cause stress, inconvenience, and controversies. No one likes to be forced into such battles.

However, it is also abundantly evident that Christians today have, in many ways, been wrongfully led to believe that the moment they receive Christ as Savior, such battles will become a thing of the past, money will flow in abundance, sickness will vanish, life will suddenly become much easier, and everyone will get along. And this long list of G-rated happy promises can grow unabated! You’ve heard this type of

“prosperity only” preaching; I have too! Should such thoughts have a place in the minds of Christians living solely for the Kingdom? If this is what the Christian life is meant to be, then why did Peter write, “For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God’s will, than for doing evil?” Let’s find out!

And to be clear, I have nothing against a positive attitude nor an optimistic outlook on life. You should have both! This is more of a wake-up call to make you aware that life, as a follower of Christ, will not always feel like “sunshine and rainbows.” There will invariably be suffering on your journey to maturing as a disciple, and I want to prepare you.

What we learn in today’s Scriptures is that instead of the zero-issue life, the battles we face don’t come about by mere coincidence. They are actually, on many occasions, orchestrated by God, and I implore you to recognize and seize the moments when they present themselves. Don’t waste these opportunities. It is from that perspective I write. So, let’s develop a better theological approach to such opportunities and use them to mature as disciples of Christ. This will then allow you to take part in advancing God’s Kingdom on earth. Deal?

AMBASSADORS WITH SWORDS IN CHAINS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Ambassadors with Swords in Chains](#)

Here we are, facing our greatest enemy. We could be standing in the garden with Y'shua on the night of His betrayal, or standing with Moses and Israel at the edge of the sea on the night of their deliverance from Egypt. "Draw the sword and fight or stand still and see the deliverance of Yahweh?" that is the question. Look around you this very day. Do you feel the danger; do you feel your enemies pressing in against you? Do you feel the need to prepare, to ready for the fight, the need to defend yourself and your family against the tyranny? We are poised at the precipice of a **PROPHETIC MOMENT** in history. What is the Lord asking us to do? Should we "cut off the ear of our foe" or "be still"?

This week we explore the final chapters in the life of Joseph, a man who had many opportunities to raise the sword against his enemies. What can we learn from his life? What can we learn from the heart of the man who said to his adversaries, and may I paraphrase? "I'm Joseph, do not be afraid; it's all good. I'm not God and He had a plan all along to use my chains as a means to become an ambassador to the most powerful nation on

earth. And He did it all so He could save you! So no, I have no sword to lift against you; but now, stand still and see the deliverance of the Lord!”

FEAR GOD OR FEAR MAN?

SERMON RESOURCE: [Fear God or Fear Man?](#)

We are living in a time in which governments are behaving more and more as if they are God, or more accurately, gods. If we pay close attention, we can see that they continually devise ways to force allegiance and involuntary obedience, like it was in the days of old, when kings and magistrates insisted on, even commanded, they be worshiped as gods. By force, either by written or oral decree, kings required their subjects to pay them homage with unwavering fidelity. Of course, this was to replace worship to the god in whom they believed, the god in whom they preferred to serve and worship. And those who worshiped the one and only God, Yahweh, were not immune to their decrees!

While in the present day, we are yet to see such ultimatums in the United States, “Worship the king or die!” the time may not be too far off. Many indicators point to a day quickly approaching when believers will be forced to privatize their worship in order to exercise

any worship at all. May it always be said of us, those who identify as the children of the one and only Most High God, that we would fear God instead of man!

We have already witnessed business owners being persecuted and sued, and some businesses caused to shut down, for not providing services they deem to violate their closely held religious convictions. Legal battles have ensued over religious liberties between establishments and the government. Secular authorities attempt to impose cooperation with same sex unions and late term abortions. And recently, under the guise of pandemic restrictions, they even forced the closure of Churches throughout the nation. The list of issues against believers in Yahweh and His Son Y'shua is long and growing every day.

It's time to take the gloves off! Who do you fear; do you fear God or do you fear man? Ultimately, government bureaucrats are pushing to create a godless society at the behest of a sin-riddled world. We are living in a postmodern, pluralistic society in which people are being indoctrinated to believe there is no ultimate source of truth. As such, there is no ultimate source of morality, and at the very core, they'd like you to believe that we owe allegiance for who we are and to what we can aspire, to their very rulership. I don't know about you, but I can't vote for that!

FIRE, WORMS & WARRING ANGELS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Fire, Worms & Warring Angels](#)

The ancient battle rages on. There have been many playwrights and players along the way, but the storyline is always the same. Men would rather be worshiped as gods than worship God. Whether it was Pharaoh, king of Egypt, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go,” or, Herod [Agrippa I], king of Judea, “And the people kept shouting, “The voice of a god and not of a man!” man has long fought to steal the honor due only to Yahweh.

The outcome is never good. Men who arrogantly receive the accolades reserved for God alone always meet with a dreadful fate. Fire, worms and warring angels, among other horrible outcomes await all who challenge Yahweh’s ultimate authority. And it’s sad to say, but right now we are witnessing the same obstinance by world leaders. Strap in, “Look among the nations and watch—be utterly astounded! For Yahweh will work a work in our days which you would not believe, though it were told you.”

DARKNESS YOU CAN FEEL

SERMON RESOURCE: [Darkness You Can Feel](#)

Each week the Scriptures challenge us with something new. No other book can affect us like that; literally, you can read the same words over again and be impacted in a brand new way. The Word is living and active and sharper than a two edged sword! This week as I read through the final three plagues before the exodus, these words gripped me; “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may even be felt.” It was a blackness so black that the people could feel its weight on their skin and they could see absolutely nothing. It was a complete absence of light.

It stirred something as I contemplated the appropriate title for such a teaching. “Unimaginable Darkness”, “Total Blackness”, and “Darkness Within” were all candidates. Finally, I simply settled on these terrifying words: “Darkness You Can Feel”. There was no light in Egypt. Can you imagine such total darkness that you could literally feel it? That was Egypt’s final step before complete devastation. However, there was light over the children of Israel in Goshen and their deliverance was near. Today, I sense that a total darkness is near in all the “Egypts” in the world. And

once again God's people will see the deliverance of the Lord.

THE SIN THAT LEADS TO DEATH

SERMON RESOURCE: [The Sin that Leads to Death](#)

We are called to love and pray for our enemies—a high calling indeed. But, are we called to do the same for Yahweh's enemies? I think the answer is certain; we are not to pray FOR them but ABOUT them! But, what about them?

There is no doubt that the line a man crosses to the place of no return is difficult to understand, but let there be NO DOUBT that such a line exists. In the Old Testament the line was demarcated with a public voluntary commitment to worship Yahweh and crossed when returning to worship other gods, yet insisting that it was okay to do so, and having total peace about it. Joshua called it a "witness against yourself." I don't believe this included ignorance or accidents or self-deception. It seems to be a moment of knowing and yet still purposely doing so. In the New Testament it is simply referred to as blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, or grieving the Holy Spirit, or the sin that leads to death for which no amount of prayer can remedy.

God calls these line-crossers wicked; they hate Him and have become His enemies. As such, let us agree that all sorts of curses and destruction are coming upon these enemies of His. And we need not identify those who today hold this dreadful title because they are perfectly capable of identifying themselves. They arrogantly raise their hands and openly declare, “Pick me, pick me, pick me!” They place their hand upon God’s Holy Writ and make promises while they aspire to evil and boldly stand for beliefs and practices which Yahweh calls abominations. They openly declare by their proclamations and actions that “There is no God!” Yes, they arrogantly live lives filled with sin that leads to death.

Yes, we must pray, not for THEM, but instead ABOUT them. It’s a simple prayer. Father, please show the world Your vengeance against those who hate You!

ROCK PAPER SCISSORS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Rock Paper Scissors](#)

The U.S. government is made up of three distinct branches modeled after the biblical order of governance that mandated a separation of powers. In the Old Testament we see the King, the Priest, and the Prophet. Today we call these branches, the Executive,

the Legislative, and the Judicial. These three branches are intended to share equal power and are endowed with the authority to keep each other in check. It should be easy to connect the dots here. One branch enforces the laws (the King or Executive), one branch brings forth the laws (the Priest or Legislative), and one branch rules if the laws are being interpreted and obeyed as per their intent (the Prophet or Judicial). Think Rock—Paper—Scissors! What a beautiful balance of powers. And such a beautiful form of governance was created by none other than the Creator of all things.

What happens when any one of these branches attempts to override the other two? The Executive Branch can overstep its power by abuse of executive orders or by mobilizing its justice department against its political rivals. A King without a Priest and a Prophet is a tyrant! In today's vernacular we might say a President not submitted to a legislature or judiciary is a dictator! When the Legislative Branch oversteps its authority, it's equivalent to "mob rule." A Priest without a King and a Prophet becomes an idol! Today we might say this happens when legislative representatives (lawmakers) appease the lowest common denominator, when all that matters is to satisfy the selfish majority, so they can maintain their own power! And when the Judicial Branch has gone off the rails it begins to "legislate from the bench." Why follow the law when you can simply invent

laws as you go, to satisfy your own agenda? In other words, who needs to interpret if the laws that are already in place are being properly applied, when you can easily invent your own laws at any moment? A Prophet without a King and a Priest is an anarchist! Dictators, idols and anarchists are the antithesis of godly governance.

Moses was called to be a Prophet of the Most High, but he finds himself also filling “priestly duties”, even though the Levitical Priesthood has not yet been formally initiated. Moses is about to get a lesson from Jethro, his pagan priest father-in-law. “Son, this is how you run an organization without burning out.” No doubt Moses has been hearing from Yahweh, the King, and making judicial decisions, but he is also trying to take on all the ministry to the people. Suddenly a priesthood, the people ministry, makes a whole lot of sense. Shortly after Moses takes Jethro’s advice, God confirms that this is the direction He is taking His people. “If you obey Me,” He says, “You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” Yahweh is the King, Moses is the Prophet, and now we need a formal ministry of, to, and for the people! Sound familiar?

FAKE NEWS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Fake News](#)

It's amazing how the Bible remains so relevant every day of our lives. Even though the following ideas were written almost 3500 years ago, just meditate on how relevant they are at this very moment. "Do not spread fake news. Do not help a guilty person by being a lying witness. Do not follow the mob mentality into doing what is wrong. When you give testimony in any legal matter, do not pervert justice by taking sides in favor of the mob mentality."

Yes, we stand at a crossroads in history. Will you bend to the expedient pressures of the day? Will you conform to the ways of the world or, in other words, the mob mentality? Or, will you hold fast to the truth? Many key moments in history were defined by what the leaders of the day had done. Did they do what was right or did they follow the crowd? Today's crowd shows up as a new breed of "democracy." The mob rules in the way of Mainstream Media; Social Media; Hidden Agenda Groups; Virtue Signaling; Institutional Brow Beating; Faith-Based Complacency; and Cognitive Dissonance.

But, all is not lost for those in Christ. You have in you the call to practice righteousness and the anointing to know the truth. And for those who hate Christ, well,

there is a different fate; Yahweh will arraign them and set His accusations against them. That is what is in store for those who pervert justice in favor of the mob!

THE VOLUME OF THE SCROLL

SERMON RESOURCE: [The Volume of the Scroll](#)

Have you ever heard the idiom, “the Devil is in the details?” As usual, the enemy wishes to hijack what is rightfully Yahweh’s. The truth is that it is God who is in the details and there is no better place to witness this than the directions given to Moses to build the Tabernacle, the Ark, and the Altar. And you must trust me; this is not mundane work designed to keep Moses busy; it’s not an exercise in futility. There is a divine reason behind each refined instruction. We discover the reason for the details when we explore the letter to the Hebrews. This Tabernacle made by hands was an exact copy of the heavenly Tabernacle. And we learn that Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, and also that the law has a shadow of the good things to come.

I think my greatest joy in rereading the Scriptures over the years is the never-ending discoveries it has in store for us. A little gem sits in the tenth chapter of Hebrews, a reference to Psalm 40. It reads like this: “In

the volume of the scroll it is written of Me—To do Your will, O God.” Those seventeen words just explode off the page. Yes, it should be so simple, so obvious, yet it remains so profound, so convicting. Instantly, it made sense to me why Y’shua was so frustrated with the religious leaders of the day, who cared more about receiving honor from men than from God. Y’shua rebuked them; “If you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me...” There it is, right there—“Moses wrote about Me.” Where? In the volume of the scroll. “...But, if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”

The entire volume of the scroll, the Torah of Moses, was about Y’shua. Moreover, I might ask you the same question. “If you don’t believe the writings of Moses, how can you possibly believe the words of Christ?” In other words, are you in, “the Law has been done away with” club? And if so, can you recognize how much you’ve been missing? And now, if you spend a few moments meditating on that, you might further appreciate why this Discipleship Devotional is organized around the weekly readings of the Torah of Moses and why John wrote: “Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.”

IMPLANTED SAGACITY

SERMON RESOURCE: [Implanted Sagacity](#)

Have you heard this one before? “God helps those who help themselves.” There are so many quippy little phrases that float around in our culture that have no foundation in God’s truth. The Bible says that God’s strength is made perfect in my weakness, so that snappy little saying seems closer to the opposite of the truth. Paul’s perspective on those who could not help themselves was— “When I am weak then I am strong.”

But every once in a while, one of those little idioms is true! This one for instance: “Where God guides God provides.” Yes, it is true that you should consider yourself on assignment for God, and whatever assignment you are on, God has provided everything you need to fulfill your destiny in Him. From your implanted skills and gifts, to your personality bents, to the very circumstances you will find yourself in throughout your lifetime, Yahweh is directing your steps and making provision along the way. If you go where God guides it won’t always be easy, but I promise it will be the greatest adventure imaginable.

FACE COVERINGS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Face Coverings](#)

Have you ever found it difficult to track with the Apostle Paul? You're not alone. Even Peter recognized that many people had a hard time understanding his writings, often twisting his words so badly that it caused trouble. Are you doing the same? And, no other topic has birthed such confusion than Paul's words about the Law. Let's highlight some of his doozies:

- The doers of the law will be justified...
- By the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified...
- You have become dead to the law through the body of Christ...
- We have been delivered from the law...
- Do we make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law...
- The commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death...
- The ministry of death, written and engraved on stones...
- The ministry of condemnation had glory...
- The law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good...
- The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life...

- We know that the law is spiritual...
- What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions...
- What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not!
- I agree with the law that it is good...

All the confusion exists because we are reading his words through a filter, a face covering. Paul referred to this as a “veiled face.” The face covering is supposed to be removed in Christ. When this was written, the whole world was still walking around with their faces covered with useless “protective masks,” a physical manifestation of their minds being blinded with deception, a spiritual blindness for sure. Are you still reading Paul’s words with your face covered?

ETHICAL CHRISTIANITY

SERMON RESOURCE: [Ethical Christianity](#)

Brennan Manning, a Franciscan Priest and author of the Ragamuffin Gospel wrote—“The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians who acknowledge Jesus with their lips and walk out the door and deny Him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable.”

I too can echo those words. We should agree, whether it’s the common everyday believer who sadly

lives their lives as described by Manning, or the recognizable faces of all those who were once held in high esteem for their achievements in the faith, and have now fallen in disgrace, and gone the way of fame to infamy, it is an utter atrocity. The reputation of Christianity is poisoned by professing believers who live this way!

Of course, every Christian is responsible for their own sin. But, as a whole, why has modern Christianity failed to effectively push back against the tirade of temptation it faces from societal pressures? Could it be that Christendom, as a body, has forgotten its ethical foundations?

Consider what God spoke through Jeremiah the prophet; “The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt: who can know it?” This should no longer be true for the Christian heart, having become circumcised unto the Lord. And it should be abundantly evident that if you separate from the lifestyle moorings that God provided in the Scriptures for your instruction, it will always yield the same outcome. In other words, once you claim the spiritual transformation Christianity promises, the outward reflection of that transformation should show up in your everyday life. And when it does not, the spectating world will highlight and point fingers at all those who crash and burn, and as a result, will

indict Christianity for the hypocrisy they witness. All this would be averted if we returned to “Ethical Christianity.”

WITHOUT BLEMISH OR APOSTATE RELIGION

SERMON RESOURCE: [Without Blemish or Apostate Religion](#)

Time and again we read in the Old Testament how Yahweh insists that the offerings brought before Him be spotless, “without blemish.” In the New Testament the sacrifice is to be holy, acceptable, and the perfect will of God. Yes, Paul calls us to give our lives as spotless living sacrifices in the same way those animals were offered without blemish.

As a point of fact, all throughout the New Testament we are called to live blameless lives, without spot or wrinkle. Ah yes, the ever-repeating patterns in the Scriptures. God’s insistence on the perfect sacrifice was always pointing ahead to His spotless bride.

And yes, another pattern shows us what it looks like when rebellion is afoot. Instead of a lamb without blemish, let’s go ahead and offer blind and lame animals, or worse yet, stolen animals. Can you imagine how far from God you must be to think you can offer

Him a sacrifice that you heisted? It's preposterous! In the New Testament, these apostates are called "spots in our love feasts." Today they don't look like Christians dragging lame or stolen animals before the Lord; instead, it's a whole movement of people who call themselves Christians, while they remain fully entrenched in the world.

The prophet Amos called them out like this: "Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! ...Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light? Is it not very dark, with no brightness in it? I hate, I despise your feast days, and I do not savor your sacred assemblies." Which side best represents you; the spotless bride or the stolen blind animal?

CONVERTS & DISCIPLES

SERMON RESOURCE: [Converts and Disciples](#)

There is no doubt God has called many people to represent Him. However, the Scriptures also reveal that only some of them will answer to the higher call of the "chosen". It seems that the free "ticket to eternity" comes with some fine print. The good news about the Good News is that if you don't meet the requirements laid out in the fine print, your ticket does not get voided. Praise Yahweh for that!

That is good news; however, you also don't get to participate in the assignments of the chosen! Yes, those are quite exciting. When the first priests (Aaron and his sons) were consecrated, there were anointing rituals performed that pointed to corresponding assignments that we, the many of the Royal Priesthood, would one day be commissioned to do. It is in these assignments we find our opportunity to step up from "called" to "chosen."

I think I can characterize those assignments with three little words; hear, do, and go! Paul said it like this; "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? If you take on these assignments, you will transform from the many who are called to the few who are chosen. By the way, that is also how you go from a convert to a disciple!

THE FACE OF Y'SHUA

SERMON RESOURCE: [The Face of Y'shua](#)

Glory? The high renown or honor won by notable achievements. A small sample of many possible synonyms would be fame, prestige, distinction, preeminence, and acclaim. Even magnificence or great beauty, praise, worship, and thanksgiving are excellent

descriptors. Yet, when pondering the glory of Yahweh, not even all of these words aggregated come close.

Nevertheless, here is the promise when you choose to obey Him; “The glory of Yahweh will appear to you.” What is not worth trading for that? In other words, obey God by any and all means, and the payoff will be immeasurably above your cost.

But there’s more. The guarantee extends beyond His glory being revealed “to you” and deepens to His glory being revealed “in you.” Let’s take pause and consider the magnitude of this promise. God’s glory will be revealed in you! What’s that worth to you? I hope your answer is this: “I have spent enough of my past lifetime doing the will of the pagans. I will no longer run with them in the same flood of dissipation, nor live the rest of my life in the flesh for the lusts of men. From now on I live for the will of God.”

GO TO THE PRIEST—HE IS WILLING

SERMON RESOURCE: [Go to the Priest—He is Willing](#)

It is not uncommon for man to walk around with secret sins, hidden deep within his heart. In stark contrast, leprosy was a horrific wasting disease which essentially rotted the body from the outside. There can hardly be a

better depiction of sinful decaying flesh. And there is simply no way to hide it.

In the days shortly after the Levitical Priesthood was consecrated, we see provisions made to evaluate and manage this horrible affliction. At the first sign of a lesion, the person shall be brought before the priest. Through a series of assessments and isolation periods outside the camp, and various sacrifices, the priest would declare the afflicted person clean or unclean.

So, is it any wonder why, when Y'shua first encounters a leper begging for mercy, desperate to be made clean, He simply and profoundly declares him clean? He partakes in no elaborate evaluation process, requires no quarantine or reassessment. Why? Because He is the Royal High Priest and the ultimate sacrifice for all lepers, even those of us you are instead decaying on the inside.

After He cleanses the leper, with unmistakable intention He says, "Go and show yourself to the priest." And let's not miss His assertion. He is not directing the "once leper" to go for an evaluation, but instead as a witness. "Offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them," He instructs. And tell no one along the way, this particular testimony is for the "whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness."

BLOOD, LAW & LOVE

SERMON RESOURCE: [Blood, Law & Love](#)

Get yourself in a quiet place in which you can think without any distractions. I want to ask you three critical questions that you should enjoy contemplating. Are you there?

Here's the first one: Why does the blood of Jesus "save" you? Now, don't give a snap answer; really think about it. Ready for the next one?

Here's number two: What is the relationship between the righteousness of faith and the righteousness of the law? Again, take your time! It's pretty complicated. Are you ready for the last question?

Here's your final question: When God first commands us to love our neighbor, what specifically does He say we should do to demonstrate that love? Take as much time as you need.

These three questions can be challenging for many Christians. And they are not intended to put you on the spot, but rather to demonstrate the critical importance of knowing God's Word, and more specifically, the Hebrew Roots of your faith.

If you enjoyed the challenge of answering any of these questions, you will thoroughly enjoy this week's devotional: Blood, Law, & Love.

ARE YOU STILL WALKING WITH A LIMP?

SERMON RESOURCE: [Are You Still Walking with a Limp?](#)

It's not the limp of Jacob I'm referring to here—not the limp of a man who has just wrestled with God and prevailed, a man fighting for a new name, a new identity, a new calling, even a new destiny. No, that would be a welcomed limp, as it bears the scars of a testimony of overcoming with God. He fought to the very end; “I will not let You go until you bless me!” I pray we would all live with the tenacity of Jacob, the fortitude necessary to emerge as an overcomer, the very meaning of Israel, even if we are left with a noticeable limp!

Is this not the exact opposite circumstance I am referring to here, scars that remind us that we have indeed already been blessed, but cannot see the blessing, will not see the blessings, two inches in front of us? You have been given all things needed to live a godly life, blessed with every spiritual blessing, imbued with resurrection power, and yet you still walk around like you have a defect, as if you were lame in the feet, a spiritual cripple. In other words, you are walking around with a limp when—indeed, you should be sprinting freely

into your destiny, a useful tool for bringing the Kingdom and doing greater works!

It's time for a spiritual hip replacement. Yes, it's a major surgery and you will need lots of recovery time and rehab. But fear not, the surgeon is a world-renowned expert and His scalpel—well, it's sharper than a two-edged sword!

RAVENS & LILIES

SERMON RESOURCE: [Ravens & Lilies](#)

Have you ever come to the end of your faith? You know, that moment when you think, maybe even say out loud, “How can I possibly get through this? My circumstance is impossible! Where on earth will I find provision?” When the people of Israel were instructed to let the land rest for a full year, every seven years, they worried about the inevitable lack of provision; “Where will we get our food?”

On one occasion, thousands followed Jesus to a deserted place to hear His words and be healed, and by evening they were hungry. Jesus simply asked His disciples, “Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” They responded in the same spirit as their ancestors; “Where will we get food to feed them? Send them away to get their own food.” Jesus went on to

challenge them; “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.” We learn in John’s Gospel that He did this to test them! What was the test?

Later in His ministry, Jesus taught a parable explaining this very test. If a homeowner knew in advance the schemes of a thief, what would he do? It’s simple; he’d prepare for the break-in. The lesson is that if you have advanced notice of an impending event, let’s say, like the Master asking you to “give the people something to eat in a deserted place,” you too must be prepared. It turns out Jesus has, indeed, given us such advanced notice! “Who is the faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give the people food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.” In other words, be prepared to feed My people when the famine comes!

Oh, and if you are worried about from where such provision will come, Jesus has something to say about that as well. “Do not worry about what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. The pagans worry about these things. Your Father knows what you need; all you have to do is seek the Kingdom of God.” Do that and you will have all the provision you will ever need! And blessed will that servant be!

MY REDEEMER LIVES

SERMON RESOURCE: [My Redeemer Lives](#)

There are times when arguing about minute details is a waste of effort, even contrary to your intended outcome. You must be wise to recognize when the little things matter and when to let them go. It is often said, “Don’t sweat the small stuff; and it is all small stuff.” I agree with the first half of this epitaph, but strongly oppose the latter.

At times, the smallest of what seem to be ancillary ideas, have the most poignant relevance. In one place we read the serious instruction of a spiritual father to his son, “Don’t give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.” And yet we also see in the first census of Israel, how Moses and Aaron “took a man from every tribe, each one the head of his father’s house, and recited their ancestry by families.” It seems in this case genealogy mattered!

And then we have Matthew, the writer of the most comprehensive Gospel, who opens his greatest life’s work with microscopic details; “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham...” His ensuing words seem like “endless genealogies,” a meticulous list that fills space, but seems

to lend no deeper meaning to the narrative. Be honest, how many times have you read Matthew? And how much attention have you given to those first seventeen verses? By the way, if you had, you'd have noticed the serious math error!

But then, if you get out your prophetic magnifying glass, you'll notice he mentions five very significant women, all named in what is usually reserved for a lineup of men. And they all have one thing in common; can you guess? One woman in particular alludes to something so significant that it could be the entire reason Matthew included the genealogy. Yet, it is a microscopic detail, strikingly easy to overlook, and it is almost certain you never noticed it! Hint: It's NOT Mary.

VOWS AND VANITY

SERMON RESOURCE: [Vows and Vanity](#)

It's always something. Week after week, as we dive deeper into the Word of God, we get a glimpse of how far we've strayed from the truth. It's not difficult to completely change the meaning of Y'shua's teachings by strategically leaving out a few words here and there. You think I'm exaggerating? I challenge you; look up Matthew 5:33-34 in any English translation of the Bible

and tell me if you don't conclude that you are no longer to swear an oath to God!

Take a look: "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, '*You shall not swear falsely*, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' But I say to you, *do not swear at all...*" Now, notice a completely different message when we add back the original language: "Again you have heard what was said to those of long ago: You shall not swear *by my name* falsely, but you shall return to the Lord your oath. But I say to you not to swear *in vain* in any matter..."

Do you see it? Y'shua never instructed us to NO LONGER take oaths to God, but rather to end your futile thinking that you can leave Yahweh's name out of your promises. Or, even worse, that you can purposely leave His name out as to lessen your obligation or your seriousness to fulfill your commitment. That is what Y'shua called "swearing in vain!" Leave out the phrases "by my name" and "in vain" and you have an utterly different passage with an utterly different meaning.

"You have heard that it was said..." and then Y'shua refers to Leviticus 19:12; "And you shall not swear *by My name falsely*, nor shall you *profane the name* of your God: I am Yahweh." And the vanity reference is to point you to the third commandment in Exodus 20:7; "You shall not take the name of Yahweh your God *in vain*, for Yahweh will not hold him guiltless who takes

His name *in vain*.” I’ll let you in on a little secret. Vanity is not a reference to curse words, but rather the devastating practice of forgetting His name or making it void. In other words, don’t leave His name, and your commitment to Him, out of your decisions and promises! That is why you are warned to never exclude His name from an oath!

It makes more sense now, doesn’t it? You see, what they were doing back then was swearing on anything but His name, while they crossed their fingers behind their backs. No big deal, as long as you leave out God’s name. That’s how far they had fallen. And we, as the Church, just shot all the way to the other end of the deception spectrum. We simply stopped making oaths altogether!

So, let’s make it simple. Just do what you say you will do, as if your entire life is dedicated to Yahweh. I like to say it like this... “Freedom is when you have no other options; when God’s way is the only way, you are totally free!” Think about that the next time you make a promise!

“FOLLOW ME”

SERMON RESOURCE: [“Follow Me”](#)

Have you heard these words? “Follow Me!” Have they echoed in your heart so loudly that they drown out all other sounds? I pray they have. I remember the day like it was yesterday, almost 30 years ago. As if someone suddenly flipped on the lights and instantly the world around me became bright. No, you rarely know how dark it is until the lights go on. For me, it was the day I heard those words, “Follow Me!” I have been running hard after God ever since and I don’t regret a minute of it. I remember the words of my future wife years later, as I sat next to her on a plane in Panama, on the mission in Central America on which we met. “When I die, I want my gravestone to say, “All used up for God!” I recall thinking in that moment, “I’m going to marry this girl!”

It’s the pattern for sure; Y’shua says, “Follow Me!” And if you do, you will have joined the greatest adventure imaginable. Peter wondered what would come of those who would join Him; “Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?” If you’ve walked with Him for any length of time, you know the answer. It will be the hardest most challenging life imaginable, one filled with daily

opportunities to take up your cross and die to everything you once held dear. And it will be the most glorious and satisfying decision you will ever make! “Follow Me?” Yes, I will follow you anywhere and do anything You ask. I couldn’t imagine life any other way; how about you?

CHEST HIGH

SELF-PRESERVATION

SERMON RESOURCE: [Self-Preservation](#)

Will you go forward into your destiny or do you want to go back to Egypt? We all know what “going back to Egypt” means. It remains as powerful imagery for believers today. Back in the wilderness days of Israel, the people had the tendency to complain as soon as things ahead seemed challenging or bleak. “We should return to Egypt; this was a mistake; let’s regroup and go back.”

And this was their tendency, even after all they had witnessed: the ten plagues; the annihilation of their captors; an ocean that parted; water from a rock; bread from heaven; the voice of their God on the mountain; a betrothal to the Almighty; and a cloud by day and fire by night to lead them.

Then, when they had finally arrived at their destiny, they were given a simple task. Here are your marching orders; go in and survey the Land of Promise and come back with a report. God was looking for them to discover a few facts about their upcoming inheritance. “What is the land like? What are the people like? What are the cities like? What is the fruit like?” And here are some report guidelines: “Do not rebel against Yahweh! Do not fear the people of the land! And always

remember, Yahweh is with you and against them!” Then, with all that information, make a simple choice—determine if you are able or not to take the land and receive the promises of God.

In the end we discover that there are two spirits in operation here, and one potential snag that could derail the whole thing, the strong desire to preserve ones own life. One spirit says, “we are able!” and the other, “we are not!” One is willing to lose his own life for the sake of God’s promises, the other is all about self-preservation. Which spirit is controlling you?

THE BEST OF THE BEST

SERMON RESOURCE: [The Best of the Best](#)

When I was a new believer, almost 30 years ago, I was fascinated while listening to sermons, and wondered how those pastors knew so much about the Bible and how they were able to extract such amazing messages from the Scriptures. Through those early years, I listened to sermon after sermon with keen interest. But, as the years passed I noticed something. Call it discernment or maybe it was being judgmental. I know each gift that God gives us has its equal, but opposite counterpart. So, I have to be careful here to not cross into judgmental.

I noticed over the years that more and more of these sermons began to sound canned. They seemed almost mechanical in nature, as if they were part of some obligatory statement a lawyer must give, commenting on his client's position. I think in politics you'd call it the "party line." There seemed to be no life in them, no freshness in the messages, no abundance. It was as if these sermons were downloaded by robots and repeated, flavored only by various charismatic personalities. I realized that for a message to have real power, it could not just follow some formulaic model of "best sermon techniques," but instead needed to be inspired by an overflow of what was happening in "that man's life!" For the truth to pour out, there needed to be an overflow of the Spirit within.

This discovery has resurfaced in my mind in recent weeks, as I look back at the last few devotions. You do realize that these devotions are modeled after weekly sermons preached over a year, don't you? Sure I believe they are true. A few weeks ago it was "Follow Me." You have to give it all up, no matter what, lay it all down, and run after Y'shua with all you've got, from that moment He called you, and every day since. And then in "Self-Preservation" last week—you better be ready to give your very life for your faith. If you think you can preserve your way of life, or life itself, you will lose it. Again, all-in is the only way. And now this week, "The

Best of the Best.” Do you think you can offer God anything other than your absolute best? Do you think anything less than making your faith walk your top priority is acceptable? You’d be wrong.

So, why these messages, why now? I believe we have reached a turning point in history. Never before has the following option been more critical. “Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve with your entire being, the gods of this world, or Yahweh and His Son.” I know the choice I’ve made, what about you?

BONUS READING FOR ADDED CLARITY

Paraphrase of Numbers 18:25-32: As you know, you will receive tithes from the children of Israel as your inheritance. You are to take a tenth of the tithe and make a heave offering of it to Yahweh. In other words, from the totality of tithes to the Levites, the tenth of all of Israel’s increase, the Levites must take a tithe (a tenth) of that and give it to Aaron, the high priest. On behalf of Yahweh, Aaron will receive *the best of the best of the whole tithe*, what Yahweh considers the consecrated part. Once the tenth of the tenth, the best of the best, is offered, the rest shall be accounted to the Levites for their own use as their inheritance. Remember, the Levites will not take part in a land inheritance. Once they have given the best of the best to Yahweh, they will no longer be at risk of the sin of holding back the

consecrated part, and freed to enjoy the ninety percent that remains. But, be warned, if you try to keep back the tithe of the tithe due to Yahweh, what He would consider as “profaning the holy gifts,” you will suffer!

WATCH YOUR ANGER!

SERMON RESOURCE: [Watch Your Anger!](#)

Anger is a huge problem in modern culture. And it seems to be on the rise. One need not look any further than the local news to see how uncontrolled anger affects everyone. But, in the midst of the Church, the assembly of Yahweh’s people, what should we say to one another when anger rises from the hearts of believers in the same way we witness in the world? Is there a place for such? Without hesitation, the answer is a resounding NO, and I pray you all would agree.

Yahweh has much to say regarding the subject of anger. And sometimes it takes looking intently into historical biblical narratives, for us to notice the patterns in our own lives. Without recognizing how those narratives speak to our own issues, it’s easy to miss how the stories often point directly at us. We might even enjoy the lesson, then simply walk away without considering its personal application. So, our theme this week poses this very difficult question; would you prefer

to simply feel validated in your own anger, rage, and bitterness, the same muck and mire that slimes the world, or would you rather change?

THE INSIDIOUS PROPHET

SERMON RESOURCE: [The Insidious Prophet](#)

This is a true story, but it can be anyone's story. I walked down the aisle toward my redemption that day. I can remember that moment my salvation was secure as if it was yesterday. Maybe you were alone when God called you; maybe you were in an intimate setting with others; or maybe, like with me, there were many people together in a Church building or other public venue. Where, and how, and why, and with whom it happened are the minor details. That it happened—is what matters most! And the story told by all these questions, and their answers, becomes your testimony.

For me, the evening prior to my born-again experience, I had an encounter with an older gentleman who challenged me with questions regarding my eternity. I had weak answers, if any at all, mostly in the form of more questions. I recall waking the next morning as if I had been boxing with the heavy-weight champ, and getting my head pummeled. I was spinning! But, one thing was evident that morning; I knew something

about my life was off and I could not shake it. I had to get to know the character of the God to whom this gentleman was referring. Can you see yourself in this story? In many ways, this is all of us!

My particular background was that I grew up as a Catholic. My view of God was of one who would become easily angered and who would readily use intimidation in an attempt to bend me to His own will. And this God would inspire fear, as a tactic. I also believed that God was confined either within the walls of the Church or in Heaven. I was supposed to be afraid that if I stepped out of line, He could, at any moment, strike me with lightning and I'd be burnt toast. This was a God I had no interest in following. I came to learn that my view of God was very inaccurate. Again, this is many peoples' story, but I retell mine, not to draw attention to my life, but to introduce this week's main character, the insidious prophet, Balaam.

Balaam had a similar problem; he too had a very wrong view of Yahweh! In his case, he thought that Yahweh was malleable, a god who could be bribed or tempted. Balaam believed that he could convince God to change His mind, even break His covenant with Abraham and, instead, fulfill Balaam's own greedy desires.

Like me, boy was he wrong!

MY PEACE I GIVE YOU

SERMON RESOURCE: [My Peace I Give You](#)

Do not let your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Fear can be a paralyzing emotion, the birth place of every type of anxiety. But, it should have no place in the Christian's life. Be anxious for nothing...let the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Fear and anxiety are literally the opposite of peace, and thus are the antithesis of the Christian life. So, how can you access this peace at all times, especially in the midst of difficult circumstances?

Phinehas found himself in a tough spot that threatened the peace of God's people, and he made a radical choice to stand on the side of righteousness, "because he was zealous for his God." And for that Yahweh made to him this amazing promise. "I give to him My covenant of peace; and it shall be to him and his descendants after him." Why such a blessing for such a man? The psalmist might just give us the best explanation.

"Mark the blameless man, and observe the upright; for the future of that man is peace." Psalms 37:37

“Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble.” Psalms 119:165

If we amalgamate these thoughts it becomes clear. The blameless and upright man is he who is zealous for Yahweh, loves to obey Him, and experiences His peace. Y’shua promised it this way; “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you...let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear.” Y’shua implanted in us the desire to be blameless and upright. Walking out a blameless and upright life is exactly how you guard your heart and mind, cast out fear, and experience a peace that surpasses all understanding!

DISSIPATION OR THE SPIRIT

SERMON RESOURCE: [Dissipation or the Spirit](#)

When you were saved into your new life, it was required (not recommended) that you leave your old life behind. Many times along their wilderness journey, Israel was given specific warnings about entering their new life, the Promised Land. Destroy every remnant of pagan worship, idolatry and sexual temptation, or IT WILL come back to haunt you. They were ordered to remember Egypt, from where they came, and to consider Canaan, to where they were

going. The mandate: “DO NOT do what those nations do in any way!”

For Christians, the mandate is the same! You should no longer run with the pagans in the same flood of dissipation, as in your past life. You must “no longer live the rest of your new life in the lusts of the flesh, but for the will of Yahweh. In other words, you have spent enough of your old life in doing the will of the Pagans—so, since you have now escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Y’shua, if you are again entangled in them and overcome by them, the final outcome will be worse for you than had you never known the truth in the first place.

To seal this into your brain, think of it like this; you would have been better off not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then turned away from it! And the “it” according to Peter are God’s holy commandments, of which you have now become intimately aware. Now, pick a life—go back to the same flood of dissipation or live by the Spirit!

ENOUGH ALREADY!

SERMON RESOURCE: [Enough Already!](#)

Enough already? Or, enough already! Have you learned your lesson yet, or do you need to be

reminded of Yahweh's faithfulness—again? Do you still get fearful when your faith is tested, or do you quickly remember His faithfulness? As we enter the book of Deuteronomy, Moses takes a trip down memory lane. Listen people, Yahweh has made good on His word EVERY TIME, so, when He tells you to have no fear as you enter the Promised Land, you can trust Him. "He will go before you and fight for you." Remember, "Yahweh carried you, as a man carries his son, everywhere you went, until you came to this place." "He has blessed everything you've touched for the last forty years in the wilderness, and you have lacked nothing." "Your eyes have seen all that Yahweh has done." Do you think He will fail you now? And by the way, here's a sneak peak; the whole thing was a test! "God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness to test what was in your heart, whether you would obey Him or not."

In Y'shua, the Father makes the same promises to you. The prophetic patterns are striking! "Let not your heart be troubled; I go to prepare a place for you; where I am, there you may be also." Yes, through various trials, as in your own personal wilderness, your faith is tested, and in the end, you will have lacked nothing. Y'shua also uses the same heart test; whereas Moses revealed, "God tested you to see if you would obey Him," Y'shua so elegantly affirms, "If you love Me, you'd obey Me!"

So, enough already? Or, enough already! It should be obvious; it's enough already!

THE NEXT GENERATION

SERMON RESOURCE: [The Next Generation](#)

On the world stage, during the Olympics, athletes compete for medals that bring recognition to their sport, their nations, and to themselves. In Track and Field, one type of event is the “relay race.” Runners must pass the baton to their teammate who continues the race. A clean exchange helps the next runner keep the momentum. Making all clean exchanges gives the team the best chance of winning. From time to time, a poor exchange will result in the baton being dropped. It's severe, but that team is instantly disqualified.

It is evident in Deuteronomy that Moses is passing the baton to Joshua, although it does not always appear to be a “clean exchange. Nevertheless, he charges, encourages and strengthens Joshua as the one who would bring the Nation of Israel into the promised land. Each generation thereafter has had to pass the baton to the next generation in a sort of spiritual relay race. Some exchanges have not been so clean and, can we say that there have even been a few

“dropped batons” resulting in disqualifications? I think you can imagine what I mean.

We have a task at hand. We must run the race well and make a clean exchange as we pass the the baton to the Next Generation. May I paraphrase what Paul said on the matter...? “All the runners run, but only one receives the prize. So run that you may obtain it. I discipline myself and stay under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.”

Don’t drop the handoff! Don’t be disqualified!

WHO WHAT WHEN WHERE HOW & WHY?

SERMON RESOURCE: [Who, What, When, Where, How, and Why?](#)

I was reminded this week about an important concept. I’d like you to meditate on this idea. “The quality of your life is only as good as the quality of your questions!” I know that is a loaded statement that we can literally take in a thousand directions, but play along with me here. And let me add, “If you don’t like your life, ask better questions!” Moreover, to both of these provocative statements, might we affirm that having the correct answers to life’s all-important questions is as

essential as asking the questions in the first place. In other words, asking the right questions, but getting the wrong answers, is as detrimental as asking the wrong questions or asking no questions at all.

Let me give you a simple example. Can't we all agree that asking where we will spend eternity is a critical question? Additional essential questions would be, "What determines where, and how do we know?" Getting these answers wrong is as damning as not asking them in the first place!

In our Scripture readings this week there are many answers. And I think we can safely infer that they are the answers to these questions: who, what, when, where, how, and why?

EASY ENTANGLEMENTS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Easy Entanglements](#)

How tempted are you to become enmeshed with the things of the world? Do you feel yourself drawn to your old life? Are you still enticed by the pleasures of your past? We are warned throughout the Holy Scriptures that we should not even entertain the thoughts of our past idolatries because we can become so easily ensnared by them! Enticed and ensnared speak of desire; enmeshed and entangled paint the

picture of a sticky spider web that easily ensnares its prey and leaves them defenseless.

Now, there are two possible ways you can guard yourself from becoming trapped in your past temptations. One is the self-discipline approach. This involves your body and soul. Become strong and practice self-control and fight against those desires. That's not a terrible idea, but there is an even better way, the spirit-discipline approach! "Fix your eyes on Y'shua, the author and finisher of your faith!" This approach gives your spirit top billing. I'd like to encourage you to make your spiritual disciplines your first priority, without neglecting your self-discipline.

THE JUSTICE LEAGUE

SERMON RESOURCE: [The Justice League](#)

Throughout human history, has there ever been a time when those in power DID NOT intend to manipulate and deceive the unsuspecting masses? First instigate division among the people and help them develop a goodly amount of contempt for one another. Then control them like puppets. Divide and conquer! There's nothing new under the sun and, no surprise, it's happening even now. Could there be more deception, more division?

The question I want you to ponder today is this; has this insidious problem ever been remedied by revealing the truth behind the curtain? Does exposing the corruption ever bring justice? Or, instead does it further the twisted deception? Simply observe what is happening. The louder the truth-tellers scream, the harder the deceivers dig in and the more bizarre their stories become. And if the truth is just too difficult to twist, censor it, or delete it, or just re-write history altogether and publish a new narrative.

I don't write this to depress you or make you afraid, quite the contrary. And I'm not saying there is no value in screaming the truth from the rooftops. People do need to hear the truth. What I am saying is this...there is a better way. The solution is spiritual! The Church must act like the Church. God's righteous elect are the remedy, if we would just take our proper seat of authority!

Let me paraphrase the prophetic Psalmist. God will not tolerate corrupt rulers who kill the innocent and make injustice legal forever. True justice will indeed return to courts governed by righteous men.

It's time for the *Justice League* to arise. No, not a lineup of fictional superheroes. "Justice" is righteous judgment. And a "League" is a collection of people who collaborate, cooperate, align, and conspire for a particular purpose. Sure, keep shouting the truth for the

few who will listen, but more importantly, become a people through whom Yahweh can administer *His Justice!*

PROPHETIC IMPLICATIONS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Prophetic Implications](#)

What does it mean to be “duty bound?” And what does Yahweh do when one is not willing or aware of the need to fulfill that duty? I pray you realize there are no idle words in the Bible and every historical event has implications, well beyond the narrative itself. In other words, the history of what actually took place is important, but what it means prophetically is far more significant.

The best way to investigate what is the deeper message hidden in biblical narratives is to consider the Scriptures as a type of divine web of interconnections and revelations. For instance, in one area of Scripture Yahweh gives a command; in another we read a seemingly unrelated historical account. Then, in yet a third area, He reveals the prophetic nature in which that command was fulfilled in that story. To appreciate it, you must become a student of the Scriptures.

And what is most fascinating is that when man is not willing to fulfill his commanded duty, or not even

aware of it, Yahweh steps in and makes it happen. He simply will not be denied. Good thing for us, as you will certainly see shortly!

And could we agree on one final point? If we can weave together a few fibers of this divine tapestry, might we then become more useful in bringing the Kingdom to earth? We can do so by recognizing the prophetic significance of God's Laws. Let me defer to the words of Y'shua to describe what I'm saying; "Every scribe instructed concerning the Kingdom of Heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old." Now, if a scribe, who by definition is a legal expert in the Scriptures, or in other words, a biblical Lawyer, needs to be "instructed concerning the Kingdom", what about you?

SELF-INFLECTED WOUNDS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Self-Inflicted Wounds](#)

Do you honestly think you will get away with that? You could ask this of anyone who is openly, or even unknowingly, mocking Yahweh's truth and justice. If you further inquired about their beliefs and practices, I bet you would sense one or more of these sentiments in a majority of them:

- They don't consider God because they don't even believe He exists.
- They openly deny Yahweh in favor of some false god.
- They don't consider God because what is perceived as beneficial today far outweighs the unknown consequences of tomorrow.
- They do consider a god, but they are completely deceived; they worship a false god, while believing they serve Yahweh.
- They do consider a god, but for expedience, they have changed who He is to fit their own beliefs.

What we are seeing today, in many instances, are those who proclaim to follow Jesus, while they simultaneously violate so many of His teachings. And worse yet, they actually believe they will escape His judgment.

As the psalmist warns, "Yahweh laughs at the wicked, for He sees that his day is coming; their own sword shall enter their heart." Oftentimes, that "sword" consists of the very people and institutions who once supported the mocker. In other words, the deceived person carries on unhindered, and then one day the very people who partnered with them and shared in their blasphemy, turn on them!

I like to say it like this; "Satan has no allegiance to those who worship him. He will chew them up and spit

them out once they are no longer effective for him.” Well, look no further than the current events of today and you will witness the destruction coming upon those who mock God, by their own swords. Their usefulness for Satan has run its course and Yahweh is laughing.

CRITICAL ROOTS THEORY

SERMON RESOURCE: [Critical Roots Theory](#)

There are a few perspectives that can explain ignorance of almost any matter. The first, and most obvious, is that you know what you don't know. The other, which is more insidious, is that you don't know what you don't know. So, as we launch into this devotion, pay attention, not only to what you are certain you don't know, but be on the lookout for things you didn't even know that you didn't know.

I called this devotion “Critical Roots Theory”, obviously to play off the controversial Critical Race Theory. I would venture to say that regarding the latter, there might be some things you don't know that you don't know about it. It's much like the inflammatory movement called Black Lives Matter. That organization cares about many things, but about for which it is named, it has no authentic concern. Nevertheless, most

people don't even know that, nor do they know that they don't know that.

And that leads us to our current topic at hand. You may not actually know the Hebrew roots of your faith, and you may not have even realized you don't know them. Moses looked forward and said it like this. "This covenant that was made between you and Yahweh, it's not just for you. It is also for everyone who will come after you." That's you! That's a powerful idea. And Y'shua made a similar promise at His last meal before He was betrayed and crucified. "My prayers today are for all these men sitting before Me, as well as everyone else who will ever come to faith in the future because of what they are about to bring into the world." That's you!

There is an unbroken link between Christians today, and those who came before us, all the way back to Abraham. Paul even told the Corinthians that all of their forefathers passed through the sea, even though they were clearly of Greek origin and not Hebrews. What connected them? And why is it appropriate to say we are all from the same root? Did you even know we were; or better yet, did you even know that you didn't know how critical it was that you should know? And more so, what controversies have arisen over the centuries because of this ignorance? Hence, "Critical Roots Theory."

INEXCUSABLE!

SERMON RESOURCE: [Inexcusable!](#)

A good friend once taught me that once you become good at making excuses, you will never become good at anything else—ever again! The Holy Scriptures are replete with warnings against straying from Yahweh’s ways. But, He is a gracious God who provides every resource for us to be successful. He doesn’t just mention His expectations and then leave us to figure it out. And He could never be accused of being vague. I mean, He literally repeats Himself over and over again, reiterating His requirements and expectations in so many different ways, as to speak to the hearts of every type of personality. I believe He does this so we are left with no viable excuse for why we disobey Him. “I didn’t know!” is not an option. “Ignorance of the law is no excuse,” was as true then as it is today. And to be certain, ignorance is NOT by any means bliss!

For sure, the people of Israel could have no excuse; Moses wrote down the law and it was read to every person every seven years. He also composed a song for the people to sing—so they would remember. Even the kings of Israel were required, each individually, to write a copy of the law for himself, in its entirety, and to read it all the days of his life. This was to insure he

would neither become prideful nor stray from God's commands. Neither the people nor the king have any excuse to disobey! What excuses are you making?

Bonus: Relate Paul's words in Philippians 1:19-26 with Shakespeare's in Hamlet's famous soliloquy.

*To be, or not to be, that is the question:
 Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
 The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
 Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
 And by opposing end them.
 To die—to sleep,
 No more; and by a sleep to say we end
 The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
 That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation
 Devoutly to be wish'd.
 To die, to sleep;
 To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there's the rub:
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
 Must give us pause—there's the respect
 That makes calamity of so long life.*

HULA-HOOPS & YO-YOS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Hula-Hoops & Yo-Yos](#)

Everybody's into it! Have you read...Did you know... You should see...We should go...You gotta hear...My entire church is doing it! If there is anything more cringeworthy than Christians getting carried away with the newest arrival to the Christian scene, I don't know what it is.

Have you noticed it? Walk into any popular, seeker-friendly church these days and you will see the same set-up: a dark theatre, flashing lights, smoke machines, popular sounds, and a lot of motivational talk in lieu of teaching the Bible. Leaving inspired by persuasive words takes precedent over God's wisdom. I call this "G-rated Entertainment." And no doubt, the louder the preacher and the more emotional his shouting, the more hypnotized his audience!

Outside the sanctuary there's an entire marketplace catering to the evangelical nature of "Christians". Why wouldn't you go after that segment of consumer? They love to spread information. In the Church it's called evangelism, but in the marketplace they call it word-of-mouth advertising. You see it all the time. It's the latest Christian book, devotional, program, diet, prayer technique, Bible study, seminar, or itinerant

preacher, maybe better called a traveling salesman. The newest arrival spreads like wildfire and predictably fades—those benefiting the most being the progenitors of the latest fad. Don't buy in!

Now, we can't move on until we address the obvious "elephant in the room!" You have in your hands (or device) a Christian book: a devotion, Bible study and discipleship journal. Is this one of those "new cringeworthy arrivals"? You tell me; you had to spend almost an entire year to get to this place in the book. Was it a passing fad that benefited the author, instead of you? Do you even know who the author is? I think we can safely say that your radical growth as a disciple makes the answer self-evident.

These fads are always short lived and produce nothing of any lasting value, neither here on earth nor in eternity. If everyone is "doing it," that in itself should be a red flag. Think of the amount of work this devotional required of you? Can you see "everyone" doing it? Of course there are valuable materials for Christians in the marketplace, only let your truth-meter be dialed in to spot the gimmicks. Unfortunately, conforming to the ways of the world, cloaked behind a thin veneer of Christianity, is the sad direction the modern seeker-friendly Church has chosen. Don't conform; there's a more excellent way!

SECOND CHANCES

SERMON RESOURCE: [Second Chances](#)

Everyone wants a second chance. The question is, what will you do with yours? The first time Israel arrived at the shore of the Jordan, one year after they left Egypt, they made horrible choices. The second time, 39 years later, they were given a second chance. As they prepared to enter, Moses reminded them that they have the words and laws of their Heavenly Father as a heritage.

Many years later we see King Hezekiah, who also gets a second chance in life. He knows the reason is so he can make the truth of His Heavenly Father known to the children. You are the child of God with the heritage of Yahweh's words, His laws, and His truths, and you were given a second chance. What will you do with it?

SPIRITUAL AMNESIA

SERMON RESOURCE: [Spiritual Amnesia](#)

Let's set the scene: A coin toss
[Heads] I thought God was good; but I just can't see any proof. All I know is that I am in the weeds right now and I just can't see my way out. If Yahweh is so

loving, then why is my life so hard? I don't deserve this; it's not fair. I love God and I live a good Christian life. What's the use in following Y'shua if all it gets me is pain and suffering? I'd be better off doing my own thing; look at all the happy people who could care less about Him.

[Tails] Life is good. I have everything I need and every part of my life is dialed in. My relationships are excellent; my provisions are beyond my wildest expectations; and I seem to come out on top every time. I must be doing something right! It's pretty easy to see the difference in my life from the others around me who always seem to be in a crisis. I try to tell them, but they are just too stubborn to listen. Yet, it is completely obvious I'm doing things right and they are not.

Which side of this coin is suffering Spiritual Amnesia? What is the cure and how can it be prevented in the first place?

WRITTEN ON OUR HEARTS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Written On Our Hearts](#)

There is a constant tension inside all of us who identify ourselves as “Christians.” Maybe you call yourself a “Believer” or “a follower of The Way.” Let's just say I am addressing anyone who has had a true born-again encounter with Y'shua (Jesus). Here is the tension:

“NOW WHAT?” So much pressure exists from countless directions, really all depending on “whose church” you got born-again into. I know that sounds really bad, but it happens. Your denomination will strongly influence, even dictate, your “what’s next!” Many just ask you to tow the party line. Sign up for our theology and get to work doing the work of “our church.” You’ve joined a club and clubs have membership dues and those dues come in the form of money and service. All these religious requirements that insert themselves into your new born-again life, as “doctrine”, pose a serious threat to your development as a disciple. There is, however, something I am certain Yahweh wants of you. “My son, keep my words, and treasure my commands within you. Keep my commands and live, and my law as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart.” Let’s set religion aside and circumcise our hearts unto Yahweh!

LOOKING GOOD

SERMON RESOURCE: [Looking Good](#)

Do you think Yahweh is joking? Do you take His grace for granted? Maybe there is no better way to put how serious this is into words than to simply state it the way the Scriptures do in Hebrews 10:26-29. “For if

we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?" Maybe, however, there is one thing even worse than willful sin. Faking it! Y'shua described these counterfeits as whitewashed tombs, all bright and Christian-like on the outside, but on the inside filled with rotting and decaying bones. Pretty harsh words for gentle Jesus! What I am sure about is this; by obeying God you surround yourself with His blessings, and living in disobedience is worse than a horror story!

RELEASE IN ORDER TO REACH

SERMON RESOURCE: [Release In Order To Reach](#)

Have you ever pondered why there's seemingly no progress in your walk with Christ? Of course you have! You hear of all the promises the Bible makes to those who place their faith in Y'shua. But, you've yet to

experience the drastic, visible and enjoyable transformation you've been promised. Have you considered what the problem is? It is your unwillingness to Release in order to Reach what is delaying the growth available to every fully redeemed believer.

YOUR FINAL TESTIMONY!

SERMON RESOURCE: [Your Final Testimony!](#)

Can you imagine this auspicious moment? You are standing in the presence of the Almighty Creator, your heart pounding out of your chest, and He asks you this daunting question. “How would you characterize your final testimony?” You pause for a moment as you consider your many years as a born-again Christian. And you think, “I got this; this is an easy one!” Suddenly your confidence swells; you stand a bit taller and your heart stops thumping. “I got this.” You look into His loving eyes and softly offer this answer. “I have faith in Y’shua, His blood has washed me clean. That is my testimony.” Yahweh lovingly asks you one more question, one you did not expect for some reason. “What about obedience?” Your advocate is standing by your side and reminds you of His final revelation to John. “Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”

(Revelation 14:12) “Faith and obedience,” the Father affirms. “Please enter as by faith, but you missed a powerful opportunity in your testimony because of your ignorance about obedience.” Join us and learn how to avoid this missed opportunity in your final testimony!

THE SPIRITUAL DETECTIVE

SERMON RESOURCE: [The Spiritual Detective](#)

You are royalty, so start acting like it. Maybe it’s just me, but I think it’s horribly presumptuous to think you can keep doing your own thing and God will just bless you anyway. Besides, if you really grasped how awesome the promises are to His royal family, you’d not be so quick to follow the dictates of your own heart. I promise, if you tune into the depth of what is being offered you in God’s word, it is not likely you would so easily exchange those promises for some cheap substitutes. “But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.” (I Corinthians 2:9-10) Do a little spiritual detective work; trust me, the payoff is worth a thousand times your investment.

NARCISSISTIC CHRISTIANITY

SERMON RESOURCE: [Narcissistic Christianity](#)

When you came into the faith as a Christian, something extraordinary happened. The veil that once separated you from God was torn and you gained access to the throne of grace. I'm not sure I've yet learned to appreciate the sheer magnitude of that privilege, but I press into it daily; how about you? Yet, this question remains...why? Why do we have open access to heaven? To quote a friend who recently relayed the vision of his local church: "We exist to take you from corporate encounters to daily personal encounters."

And that struck at the core of my being. I mused instantly, "Isn't that the exact opposite of the call of the church?" Aren't, rather, your deep personal encounters meant to uplift and unify the entire body of Christ? Isn't that the bigger reason we have open access to God's throne? This hyper-emphasis on our personal lives in the faith, rather than what Yahweh is doing in the Body of Christ, has bred a narcissistic brand of Christianity. We have moved our focus from 'Others' Lives Matter' to 'My Life Matters.' "For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus."

The course correction is this; “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

UP TO YOUR NOSE

THE IMAGE OF GOD

SERMON RESOURCE: [The Image of God](#)

Set-apart from all other creation, God uniquely created mankind to truly know Him. For that to happen, He created us “in His Image.” First He created Adam, who had within him, both male and female DNA. All men do! And even before Adam had a companion in the garden, God called Adam “them” and said, “This is My image,” and told him/them to multiply and fill the earth. For that to be possible, hidden within Adam, this visible male, was both a woman and child. Even while he was standing alone in the garden, they were inside him already, just not visible. But, they could not remain invisible if mankind was meant to know God, to understand what it means to be created in God’s image. “It was not good that man should be alone!” Thus, His invisible attributes had to become clear for everyone to see He is the only real God. After that, no one could offer ignorance as an excuse.

So, God took some female DNA from Adam and fashioned a woman. In a very real sense He “extracted” the woman from the man to make her visible. Now we could see the man and the woman separately with all their distinct characteristics. “This is His image.” And He commanded that they marry and be fruitful and multiply,

thus completing the family—the perfect image of the Creator Himself. God is a Divine Family, the Father, Spirit and Son, thus His expressed image needed to be represented by all the same separate and distinct family members. As such, the human family was created in God's image, the man—a husband and father; the woman—a wife and mother; and the children as the fruit of their marriage. Do you see it: Father, Spirit and Son?

When you contemplate the existential crisis of our day, you can simplify it into two opposing beliefs. One position believes men and women are distinct and definitive, marriage is a holy union between them, and children are the blessed fruit of that union. The other position believes any or all of the following: gender is not determined by genetics; it is a social construct and there has never been a distinction between a man and a woman, nor is gender limited to male or female, or even the idea that you must pick only one. Marriage is unnecessary, or if desired, may take place between any genders or no genders at all. And of course, the unborn child is the fruit of nothing. It is not even human or alive, and has no rights to live, other than what the person carrying that clump of tissue permits. By the way, the person incubating that amorphous cluster of cells can be a woman or a man or neither, just to clarify.

One side believes in the family, as God presents it to us, as His visible image. The other has rejected any

or all aspects of the family, and by inference has rejected the image of God Himself. In other words, there is no God! Could opposing beliefs be any more contrary? The destruction of the family is the enemy's chief strategy and thus the restoration of the family to the image of our Creator is the most important work on earth today. When we do that, only then will the Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. The wrath of God is coming against all who oppose this reality.

SUITABLE HELPER

SERMON RESOURCE: [Suitable Helper](#)

Most Christians are familiar with the creation account in Genesis. And one of the most notable recitals in that account is God's view on companionship. The idea is so critical that it inspires this revelatory imperative; "It is not good for man to be alone." As such, God causes a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and then extracts from within him, a helper comparable to him. Then God commands they reunite in marriage and to be fruitful and multiply. To the unbeliever this likely sounds very absurd, a bit like bad science fiction, and even a little insane, breaking from all reality.

To God's Children, this should represent the pinnacle of His intent for humanity. And God did not

suggest, but commanded them to become one flesh in marriage and to multiply with children. Ah, there it is: the institution of marriage and the traditional family. In today's culture, even the word "marriage" can trigger feelings once relegated to those intended by four letter words. The myriad of couples, who have endured the horrendous experience of divorce, might be the most trigger-worthy.

A [Barna study](#) suggests that for all adults surveyed, the overall percentage of people who had been divorced was 33%. For "born again Christians" it was 32%, and for the atheist/agnostic group it was only 30%. I don't know about you, but I find these comparisons appalling! Evangelicals fair a bit better at 26%. But, if you want the best chance of staying married, it's not Christ who makes the biggest difference, but money and ethnicity! Simply being rich lowers your risk of divorce to 22%. Yet, you are best off just being Asian, as they come in at only 20%.

For the unbeliever, it is almost a given that marriage should have a disastrous end. Two humans bound together and living under the same roof with no guiding parameters other than a humanistic perspective, self-help books, and advice from peers living in the same black hole—everything but God. On the other hand, the child of God should be poised for success. We have access to the Holy Spirit along with our

Manufacturer’s User’s Manual for life, at our fingertips! So, why are we not experiencing greater results? What seems to be the problem? In today’s study of God’s inspired Word, we will hone in on both the problem and the solution, and on how to become a Suitable Helper!

CATAclysmic INTERVENTION

SERMON RESOURCE: [Cataclysmic Intervention](#)

Are you contemplating the significance of the days in which we live? Given the events of the last 18 months and counting, you could be questioning things more now than at any other time in your life.

As history rushes headlong into what Christendom calls the last days, do you understand what Y’shua meant when He said, “just as in the days of Noah”? Speaking to His disciples, Y’shua pointed to how Noah was warned of Yahweh’s impending **Cataclysmic Intervention** in His creation, aimed at cleansing evil from the face the earth.

Anyone who has ever been to Church service, even a handful of times, has heard of Noah and his famous Ark. Why did Yahweh command him to build it? What exactly was going on at the time of Noah, and what was Y’shua warning about our future?

Make no mistake my dear brothers and sisters, while Yahweh promised to never bring destruction through water again, He did promise another **Cataclysmic Intervention**. “Just as in the days of Noah” and the “Days of Lot”... “so will it be when the Son of Man is revealed.”

YOU HAVE IT IN YOU...

SERMON RESOURCE: [You Have it in You...](#)

Have you ever heard the phrase that begins with the words, “You have it in you...?” Then, you fill in the blank to make your point. In a portion of scripture spanning six chapters, containing so many important moments in Biblical history, all focused on the life of Abraham, all relevant to you as a Christian, what jumped off the pages to me this week was this one responsibility. “You have it in you to bless all the families of the earth.”

In an era that features an outright assault on the family, what better time in history could there be to take on this duty? It’s a mandate that should not be overlooked.

And may I add one further job description for serious disciples, again considering the times in which we live. “You have it in you to execute God’s judgment

on anyone who wishes to destroy the family.” You have it in you!

PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Preconceived Notions](#)

Preconceived Notions: having the foreknowledge or awareness of something before having any evidence of that something being real. It’s why Y’shua spoke in parables, and it’s what you are privy to when it comes to what Yahweh is doing in the earth. And let me add, it’s not simply a privilege; it’s an obligation. “Surely God does nothing without first revealing it to His servants the prophets.”

Of course, He can do anything He wishes, He just chooses to include us in His plans as His human initiative partners. He wants us involved and we ought to take that responsibility seriously. The Holy Scriptures are rife with proof that Yahweh has chosen to operate this way, right from the beginning; “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing?”

Y’shua continued His Father’s ways; “It has been given to you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.” I think there is no better time in history, than right now, to learn what this means and how to discern what God is doing in the earth. The ongoing problem is

that God's people have a history of killing the prophets. Back then it was with swords and stones. Today, it is the church that keeps them in stone-cold silence!

BICYCLES DON'T HAVE REVERSE

SERMON RESOURCE: [Bicycles Don't Have Reverse](#)

Have you ever been tempted to go backwards? You know, when you've chosen to do what was right and it still ain't working out. It stinks when good decisions seem to yield bad results. What then? "Must you go back to, from where you came?" It's certainly tempting to reverse your decisions when you're sure you did things God's way and it turned out to be a big mess. "No good deed goes unpunished" is the comical euphemism often inserted in these situations.

Nevertheless, it's also abundantly clear that going in reverse is NOT the answer. I'd like you to consider your faith-walk like riding a bicycle. It can be wobbly at times, and truly, steering takes a million micro-corrections to get you where you want to go. But, bicycles don't have reverse. Sometimes you just have to keep going forward until you find the right spot to make bigger turns. But don't be mistaken, you are always going forward. I really like how Abraham said it, as he instructed his servant on finding a wife for Isaac. I'll

paraphrase it for you. “Go find a wife for my son, but under no circumstances are you to take him back to, from where I came. That life is over and all of God’s promises are right in front of us.”

THE TREASURE OF THE HEART

SERMON RESOURCE: [The Treasure of the Heart](#)

Think about how often we make cavalier statements. We sloppily allow words to stumble from our lips. We say things flippantly, without ever considering the power of words and the wrong thinking behind them. How many times have you said things like: “My neck is killing me,” or, “I’m starving to death.”? These are exaggerated statements that declare serious things we don’t really intend. Isn’t the truth more like: “My neck hurts,” and, “I’m hungry.”?

How about the way we diminish what words mean, at times, when we say things like: “I love my new truck; I love my job; I love my football team.” Love is not reserved for things, but for people. God is love and as much as you might enjoy your new “4 X 4”, you can’t love it!

Do you think I am making more of this than I should? Well, I bet Esau wished he could take back his words. He was simply tired and hungry, but said this

instead. “Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?” He didn’t know it at the time, but his entire future was wrapped up in those thirteen words. Stinking thinking and rash remarks changed the trajectory of his life and the course of history. His entire legacy was at stake and he didn’t even know it.

No one describes it better than the prophet Obadiah many years later. ““And no survivor shall remain of the house of Esau,” for the Lord has spoken.” Esau had surrendered his birthright and spoken death over his own life. The true proverb says it like this; “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.” “I am about to die...” Yep, Esau spoke death over his own life and that is the fruit he ate.

BEHAVIORAL PATTERNS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Behavioral Patterns](#)

What’s your problem? You know, everyone has at least one. We’ve all witnessed or endured something significant. I would not have to press too hard for you to remember at least one serious event or circumstance that was so impactful that it is now lodged in your brain. It’s stuck in your mind as if it is actually engraved in your memory.

As you search your memories, and consider both sides of those meaningful events, whether you were the perpetrator or the victim, I am confident you will find several. And what you will notice, as much as you'd like to ignore it, and as painful as it might be to contemplate, the cycle of those traumas have repeated over and over again. I am sure this has made you wonder; "How can this keep happening?"

Well, the answer is rather simple...it boils down to our **Behavioral Patterns**. Whether you like it or not, we have all inherited corrupted DNA, just like Jacob. Let me be clear, this is not an excuse, especially for the Believer! Let's just call it a reason, not an excuse. The Bible encourages us; "I can do **all things** through Christ who strengthens me." Wouldn't getting rid of those **Behavioral Patterns** be included in "all things"? The answer is a resounding YES!!

The Biblical account of Jacob's journey, after he was asked to depart in search of a wife, points us to several **Behavioral Patterns**. We must, must recognize them; and even more critical, we must forbid ourselves from repeating them!

ZEAL OR ZEAL

SERMON RESOURCE: [Zeal or Zeal](#)

It can get really confusing at times. A righteous anger rises up inside of you, or is it? It feels right; it must be right. Surely Yahweh will punish this heinous act. Surely He hates unrighteousness. I can read it in the Bible.

Just look at what He told Saul to do! “I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel...go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them.” And just read how He blessed Phinehas for ramming a spear through a Moabite harlot and her Israelite boyfriend; “Phinehas has turned back My wrath from Israel...because he was zealous with My zeal; ... Behold, I give to him My covenant of peace; and it shall be to him and his descendants...because he was zealous for his God.”

And yet, when Simeon and Levi jumped into action and killed Shechem, his father Hamor, and all the males of the city because Shechem violated their sister Dinah, their father Jacob was infuriated. He later calls them “self-willed instruments of cruelty” and removes a blessing from them.

So, how do you know if you are being a Phinehas or a Simeon? Paul had the answer; “...being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is

fulfilled.” Phinehas must have been acting in obedience, Simeon and Levi, not so much.

What motivated their behaviors? Phinehas was zealous for God, and made atonement for the children of Israel. In other words, his actions ended unrighteousness and saved lives. Jacob’s sons, on the other hand, killed many, plundered the city, took all the wealth, and enslaved wives and children. Their motivation was carnal and atoned for nothing. What is motivating your zeal these days and how do you know?

HOW DO YOU EAT AN ELEPHANT?

SERMON RESOURCE: [How Do You Eat an Elephant?](#)

Do you ever feel discouraged? Of course you do. How often is it because you are certain that God has made certain promises to you, and yet there is one disappointment after another? The twists and turns of the unexpected can get pretty exhausting, don’t you agree?

I’ll let you in on a little secret, one hiding in plain sight. Yahweh’s delay is not Yahweh’s denial. The Scriptures are filled with God’s promises and we could fill a book with how many times the journey towards those promises goes sideways. Wait a minute, we already have the book that is filled with those stories.

But seriously, you could probably fill a book with your own stories. And what I want to share with you today is how to be encouraged, even in the midst of what seems like a complete denial of God's promises. Just think about Joseph; he had a few really incredible prophetic dreams in which he was promised a powerful role in leadership, however, on his journey he was stripped naked, sold into slavery, accused of rape, thrown into prison, and seemingly forgotten. And consider Tamar, Judah's daughter-in-law, as she was promised three successive husbands from the sons of Judah, yet she remained childless.

Well, Joseph ultimately landed in command of the most powerful nation in the world, and Tamar gave birth to a son from whose line came the Messiah. No, God's delays are definitely not His denial. They are just part of a much bigger plan. Think of it this way: How do you eat an elephant? Answer: One bite at a time!

NEW WINESKINS II

SERMON RESOURCE: [New Wineskins II](#)

It would seem that in creation mankind was clothed only in the skin on his body and in that form he reflected the glory of God. Something happened when sin came into the world. Man looked upon the glory of

his own body, and instead of seeing the glory of God, he became afraid and attempted to cover what he now saw as “nakedness.” What took place next has great prophetic significance. God saw man’s new sense of embarrassment over his original glory and accommodated him by causing him to be covered with a “new skin”, an animal skin, a certain downgrade.

This downgrade would now plague mankind into the future and does not seem to have a complete resolution until the revealing of the sons of God, at which time “creation is restored.” Our ultimate hope is to be clothed with a restored heavenly image, so we shall not be found naked, like Adam.

The theme of being clothed in either sin and shame or glory and righteousness, is something that is well-defined in the life of Joseph. And this too is the exact choice you must make. “Do I remain clothed in sin and shame, or do I allow myself to be sanctified from glory to glory?” This, as I often say, depends on one thing only; will you take on your new identity in Christ, in other words, become a new creation, or do you insist on returning to the old you? It’s the choice every Christian must make.

And, taking on your new identity, or putting on a new skin that reflects God’s glory, is something that our Savior taught us in a short parable: He said it like this; “No one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the

new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved.” It’s time to put on your new wineskin!

“I AM JOSEPH”

SERMON RESOURCE: [“I am Joseph”](#)

It’s all beginning to make sense. That’s what happens when you finally see the big picture, what Yahweh had planned all along. At times it was just a complete mess; you could see nothing good in the series of disasters that had become your life. But, all of a sudden it all comes into focus. God brought you through this place, to this place, for just such a time as this. Now what?

This is when extreme humility must prevail; and more than humility—absolute meekness. You get to face all the naysayers, everyone who inspired you to give up, those who were bent on helping you curse God for your struggles. You might even come face-to-face with the culprits who were complicit in the whole debacle. They were instrumental in your demise. Now what?

This is the moment in time in which Christ-likeness must abound. “Forgive them Father, they didn’t know... Hey, don’t worry, it wasn’t your fault... This was God’s plan all along... And it all happened just so I could

help you!” Can you imagine such graciousness, such meekness? You have all the power at your fingertips to make them pay; you have every opportunity to shout from the rooftops, “It’s all your fault; I hate you; I told you so!” But instead, you weep and you take hold of those who harmed you in your arms and say, “I love you; I’m here to help you; I’m here to provide for you; don’t worry about the past for even a moment; it’s all God and I wouldn’t change a thing.” “I am Joseph.”

CARD-CARRYING MEMBER SINCE 1745 BC

SERMON RESOURCE: [Card-carrying Member Since 1745 BC](#)

Sometimes it’s hard to appreciate what really took place when all it is to you is words on a page. Think about history for a moment. Pick any historical narrative, and then consider how you view that memory. You likely see it in your mind as a still picture. Maybe you see it as a short video clip; that would be minimally closer to reality. But, have you ever tried to place yourself inside those scenes? Have you ever tried to live out “a day in the life” of the real person who actually endured what you experience as a photograph or a movie?

I've actually done that. I've tried to imagine myself as a soldier during the American Civil War. I've pictured myself frozen in my tent at night, with soaking wet boots, no way to keep warm, hardly a fragment of food, and desperately missing my loved ones. I've contemplated the real possibility of dying the next day, or worse yet, becoming mutilated and having to die in slow motion, while laying twisted and broken on a mucky and icy battlefield, as my life slowly slipped away, afraid, in agony, and maybe with some regrets. And what I just described is a single day in what could have lasted four years for many real soldiers. Just one dark night, of 1,488 dark nights, is all I've imagined. Has this gruesome painting become visceral enough for you, real enough?

Now, try reading the Bible the same way, imagining being there in real time. For a moment, stop painting pictures of characters on a page and, instead, see yourself as the one who had to endure Joseph's 13 years of pain and sorrows, or his father's agony of loss for 22 years. Have you ever tried to imagine yourself being there and what it would really take to persevere for so many years? Or, do you rather stay hyper-focused on your own little world of immediate needs?

Let's practice. The Bible describes these years in just one sentence. You can dismiss it as quickly as it takes to read, or you can contemplate all the years this

sentence represents. “Joseph saw Ephraim’s children to the third generation.” One verse...three generations. You can assume it was all sunshine and rainbows and move on, or you can further investigate Ephraim’s life and witness what it took for Joseph to see those three generations. Reality check! Ephraim’s first three sons, Shuthelah, Ezer and Elead were all murdered. Yes, “Joseph saw Ephraim’s children to the third generation,” but he also may have witnessed the horror of his grandsons being murdered. It’s so much more than one verse.

My admonition to you today is to stop focusing on yourself for a day, and try imagining what that was like for Joseph and Ephraim. And then go one step further and feel all their pain while still proclaiming “all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

INQUIRING MINDS WANT TO KNOW

SERMON RESOURCE: [Inquiring Minds Want to Know](#)

Ignorance is bliss, isn’t it? I guess it’s all a matter of perspective. If you want to live your life with your head buried in the sand, then I guess you might be able to pull it off. You just might get by as clueless and happy. However, there are always two sides of every story, and

life itself exists on both sides of a coin. If true, then what are you missing if you choose to stay ignorant? Even if you could manage to stay safe, and comfortable, and blissfully unaware, what are you sacrificing by doing so?

Back in the early 1980's, The National Enquirer, a supermarket tabloid, coined the phrase "Enquiring minds want to know." Now, of course, their actual content offered nothing substantive that could even remotely remedy ignorance, but their slogan was spot on! To enquire means to ask and asking is a good thing. But again, the answers you'd get by reading that rag could never truly cure ignorance. Nevertheless, promoting the desire to ask was an excellent concept. And better than an enquiring mind is an inquiring mind. To inquire goes a step further than asking; it means to investigate. "Inquiring minds want to know!"

Investigation is very satisfying because revelation leads to truth, and truth naturally solves the ignorance dilemma. In the end, you will undoubtedly determine that inquiring is bliss, not ignorance! And, if you apply this tactic to your spiritual life, you will find that it is precisely those who are inquiring that God uses to do great things. Now, if that is not bliss, then I don't know what is!

DOOMED TO REPEAT IT!

SERMON RESOURCE: [Doomed to Repeat it!](#)

How is it even remotely possible that the covenant God made with Abraham, and thereafter promised to Isaac and Jacob, was done so without “revealing” His name? In a strange but certain revelation, shortly after Moses’ burning bush encounter, at which Yahweh revealed His name, He informs Moses that He appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as “God Almighty.” Curiously, He tells Moses that “by His name Yahweh He was NOT known to them!”

How can this be? Throughout the Genesis narrative, from the birth of E’nosh in Genesis 4, “When men began to call on the name of Yahweh,” to God’s interaction with Noah before and after the flood, and even after the incident at Babel 100 years later, when He confused the languages of the earth, we see His name Yahweh appear.

It’s understandable why Moses, at the burning bush, would ask His name. Moses lived in pagan Egypt for the first forty years of his life, and pagan Midian for the next forty years. He only had exposure to paganism. So, his concern about what he should say, if the children of Israel ask the name of who sent him, makes sense.

And the reality that Moses did not know God's name already, makes sense.

What does not make sense is that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob only knew Him as God Almighty, not as Yahweh. And quite frankly, if that is the case, how then would the children of Israel who just spent the past 215 years in Egypt, 430 years removed from Abraham's calling, even know if Moses was right?

What also does not make sense is that the name Yahweh appears 6828 times in the Old Testament, and that even when indicated in critical verses in the New Testament, such as, "Whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved," many Christians remain ignorant that the word "LORD" has replaced Yahweh thousands of times in their Bibles. As such, the famous quote is verified; "Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it." In other words, "by His name Yahweh He is NOT known to them!" In the end, what does make sense is that when God Almighty tells you that His Name is Yahweh forever, and that it is His memorial to all generations, you'd better pay attention!

TEA BAGS OR TRASH BAGS?

SERMON RESOURCE: [Tea Bags or Trash Bags?](#)

In everyday life we have items we use for both pleasure and out of necessity. One such item I find pleasure in is tea. I wasn't always a tea drinker and neither do I consider myself a tea connoisseur, if there is such a thing. Various teas have differing and interesting spices; they taste and smell great and can be consumed hot or cold for many reasons beyond taste and aroma, many of which are holistic and medicinal. A common way to prepare tea is to use Tea Bags submerged in hot water. Have you heard it said that Christians are like tea bags?

Something we all use out of necessity are Trash bags. We need not explain much regarding trash bags. Their purpose is pretty obvious and cannot be overlooked. Try running your household without using them and let me know how that works for you.

I'd like to say that Christians can either be like "Tea Bags" or "Trash bags". I'm almost sure saying this in an introduction will not be popular, but it has its purpose. It should help spark something inside of you to pay close attention. Which do you think Yahweh would rather use? Which would you choose to be if you had a choice? Oh, and by the way—you have a choice!

A HEART OF & FOR WORSHIP

SERMON RESOURCE: [A Heart of & for Worship](#)

Wonderful, Merciful, Savior, Precious Redeemer and Friend, who would have thought that Lamb could rescue the souls of Man? I remember those lyrics as if yesterday was the first time I heard them. I recall having a conversation with an older gentleman the day before I went to Church for the first time, the day those words would inject life into my dry bones.

I did not know what to expect, but one thing was clear in my mind; I was not leaving Church without having an encounter with God. When the worship began, I was confused. Having come from a Catholic background, this was completely different. I had no experience with a style of worship that invited this level of participation. Singing along with the music did something to me that day. I was awestruck by the lyrics; they pierced my heart!

The words brought tears to my eyes. “Wonderful, Merciful, Savior, Precious Redeemer and Friend, who would have thought that Lamb could rescue the souls of Man?” Teardrops ran down my face as the weight lifted, as if a ton of bricks were removed from my chest.

My journey as a Believer began that day, and that song still resonates with me. Worship is not what you might think, and many people reduce it to singing in a Church Sanctuary. To limit worship to an event performed once or twice a week at Church, is to short change yourself of a much more vibrant walk with Yahweh.

Having a proper understanding of what constitutes true Worship is paramount to every Believer. The best description of Worship I've ever found is from William Temple. "Worship is the submission of all of our nature to God. It is the quickening of the conscience by his holiness; the nourishment of mind with his truth; the purifying of imagination by his beauty; the opening of the heart to his love; the surrender of will to his purpose—all this gathered up in adoration, the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable."

"Wonderful, Merciful, Savior, Precious Redeemer and Friend, who would have thought that Lamb could rescue the souls of Man?" That is what happened to me that day and that is what has continued ever since!

CANCELLATION POLICY

SERMON RESOURCE: [Cancellation Policy](#)

If more people could recognize how many things in our everyday lives were copied from the Holy Scriptures, less people would resist the truth about the one and only God. For instance, think about the seven day week. The whole world agrees to it, organizes everything around it, and is willing to run their personal lives and businesses by it, and yet they fail to recognize it comes directly from the Bible. Even the most staunch evolutionists, who abhor the idea of creation, blindly and comically submit to a seven day week. It's really hysterical when you think about it.

This is true in other areas as well. Take the legal world, for instance. It copies concepts straight from the Bible. For example, in contract law you must have a valid offer and acceptance. All parties involved must have the capacity, legal standing, and soundness of mind to enter the agreement. And what will be exchanged between parties must be deemed fair and equitable in advance. In addition, many types of contracts include a three-day cooling-off period, so those entering the agreement have a way to back out of their commitment without recourse, after they've had adequate time to consider all the obligations and ramifications that would be included

in their commitment. Can you believe it? You have three days to make sure you have entered an agreement you are willing to keep? Why three days? Where have we seen that before? Oh, right here at Mount Sinai.

First, God reminds the people what He has done for them to bring them to this place and that they are His chosen, so it's well established that they have the mental capacity and legal standing to enter an agreement with Him. They had a legal offer on the table; had already agreed it was beneficial, and had already accepted. That should have been enough to seal the deal! But instead, God says, "Go tell the people to get ready, because on the third day I am coming down to ratify our agreement!" And, after you've had three days to consider all the ramifications, if you still say yes, then there is no backing out!

To simplify, there are two sides to every agreement. God's side is locked-in and guaranteed from the start, but you have three days to really think about what you are committing to, and if you want to opt out during that period—fine. But, if you don't, then the contract is set in stone, and you will be held accountable for your side of the bargain.

WATCHING PAINT DRY

SERMON RESOURCE: [Watching Paint Dry](#)

What's taking so long? Are we there yet? When are we going? How much longer? Is it almost done? I can't wait until we get there. I wish this day would end already! I just can't wait any longer. Sound familiar?

You are certain what God has promised you; it's clear He has spoken to you and directed you. You even have a gazillion confirmations from friends and strangers and songs and scriptures and billboards and unexplained coincidences, and twelve random overheard conversations. There is simply no doubt about what God's saying, what He's promised. And then... tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock. It's like time has stood still! What happened?

Ah, the predictable, immeasurable, unknowable, inevitable delay between God's promise and it's fruition... tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock... We don't like it. No, it's more visceral than that. We hate it; we abhor it; we despise it! But, the alternative is certainly worse. Step in where you don't belong, at the wrong time, and you are bound to get eaten by wild beasts.

The pattern is clear, so, hop on board the moving sidewalk that at times seems to trail slightly behind a

snail. Is it any wonder why patience grows on both the love tree and the fruit of the Spirit tree? It's slow moving for sure, little by little, and you might say from glory to glory. Oh, and one more thing. It may seem slow, but strap-in anyway and enjoy the ride, because with God, even slow moving vehicles are outrageously thrilling and require you to fasten your seat belts!

TORN CURTAINS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Torn Curtains](#)

There is nothing new under the sun. It happened before and it will happen again. But that is not a fatalistic position, rather one of optimism and expectancy. You see, there was once a restriction to enter the Holiest of Holy Places, but there was also a way in! What was in that Most Holy Place? In the natural it was called the “ark of the Testimony.” And what acted as the great barrier? A massive veil, a fifteen-foot high, fifteen-foot wide, four-inch thick curtain. And at the time of Christ the curtain was twice as large. What was sealed behind that veil? Man’s deepest connection with God.

Yes, what was hidden behind the curtain, just waiting to be revealed, was His testimony, which was ultimately symbolic of your testimony. Consider this a portrayal of your heart toward God, or your potential

intimacy with Yahweh. There was a thick veil between you and a deep authentic connection with your Creator. In heart terms we might even call it a hard heart or scar tissue.

For entry behind the veil, to access the full testimony and every blessing and promise from Yahweh, that veil must be torn. Much like scar tissue needs to be broken to reveal the soft, renewed tissue below, your heart must be rent in an act of circumcision to uncover the soft and pliable home in which God can dwell.

Once your heart beats with the life of God, your testimony will be available for all to see. Moses erected a veil to separate the testimony from the people. Y'shua dismantled that veil to expose the light of life hidden within. Your privilege is to enter beyond the veil with Christ, and to let the light of your heart shine before men as a testimony that glorifies God. What not to do: don't stitch the torn veil; don't seal off the testimony; don't cover up what God has done; don't return to your old ways; don't hide your light under a basket!

RIVER ROCKS

SERMON RESOURCE: [River Rocks](#)

What is it about river rocks? You've all held one in your hand. They are shiny and smooth, no

ragged edges, nothing sharp or offensive to soft skin. But, not every rock in a river is a river rock. They all can be, but there is one thing that separates river rocks from rocks in a river. That's time! You see, for a rough and jagged stone to be transformed into a smooth and shiny rock, it needs to sit in the river continuously, for a very long time.

It's like the life of a faithful disciple. You can't just dip your toe in the water and pray the rushing river will transform your whole life, or even your small appendage. All you get when you test the water is a wet toe. But jump in, submerge your whole body, and most importantly, stay there, and your whole being will transform! You'll go from rough and ragged, and not so nice to touch, to smooth and shiny and gentle on the skin.

That is why God emphasizes the idea of a continuous fire. Light the lamp, and keep supplying it with pure oil. Ignite the incense and keep feeding the flames—forever! Don't ever let the light go out; don't ever stop the fragrance of incense from going up. It's a perpetual burn, not a toe in the water.

SACRED COWS & ALTERNATIVE ALTARS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Sacred Cows & Alternative Altars](#)

We are all familiar with the outrageous act of service performed by our Savior after dinner, on the night He was betrayed. It's a moment in history about which books could be written. We can approach what He did from many angles: a mysterious lesson, a convicting exposé, an act of selflessness, a demonstration of serving leadership, an example of how to live, an exhibition of pure humility, a tutorial on priorities, or the substance of deep inspiration and reflection.

However, there is one exchange with Peter that really cuts to the marrow and which reveals the gravity of the situation. It's truly unexpected and might even seem out of character or inappropriate, considering the finality of the moment. Peter is adamant that His Teacher and Lord "shall never wash his feet!" It's a highly charged and emotional scene, and it's completely understandable why Peter would feel as such. He'd much rather switch positions and hold his Master's feet in his hands. He'd certainly prefer to cleanse the dust and dirt from between his Rabbi's toes, than let his

teacher soil His holy hands. Y'shua knows it, and meets Peter's resistance with an explosive retort, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."

And that is what we must explore today. What does He mean? What had inspired such a serious ultimatum? Why was the washing of His disciples feet so critical? What was the deeper prophetic warning? We find clues buried in the words of the Jews who marveled at His insight; "How does this Man know letters, having never studied?" And the secret to His wisdom becomes apparent by His elegant, yet simple response; "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me."

Yes, many books could be written about Y'shua's actions after dinner that night; but His admonishment of Peter might be the most revealing of all. And you cannot fully appreciate to what He was referring, until you comprehend His masterful insights into the Laws of Moses. When you do, you will recognize that His resounding retort remains relevant even today! Paul also mastered this same understanding of the law; "Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law."

PLUNDERED WITH A PURPOSE

SERMON RESOURCE: [Plundered with a Purpose](#)

I don't know about you, but it blows my mind how much wealth is obtained by those who produce absolutely nothing of any value. In particular, I'm thinking of the guy who garners millions of followers because he records himself playing video games. Let's take a breath and consider what I am saying here. His job is to play a video game, which is basically the pinnacle of living in a fake world. But then it gets even more bizarre when he screen captures himself playing that game, while simultaneously offering real-time commentary. Can you picture this insanity?

Apparently, millions of people will then desire to watch the guy play that fake game, not actually playing the fake game themselves at the moment, but instead, they mindlessly watch him play the fake game. And this absurdly meaningless activity can potentially net the fake-game-playing-video-recording-guy MILLIONS OF DOLLARS PER YEAR.

And this is just one example of countless meaningless things people get paid handsomely to do. In comparison, the President of the United States earns \$400,000 per year; a General in the United States Army earns \$225,000 per year; and an Air Traffic Controller

(that's an important job!) earns around \$120,000 per year. And the fake-game-playing-video-recording-guy... millions of dollars per year.

But one thing they all have in common is that God controls the wealth. And God will not allow you to gain wealth just to please your own selfish desires. If you have accumulated great wealth, God has plans for it! I'm reminded how God promised Moses, at the burning bush, that Israel would leave Egypt with great wealth, and then at the Exodus when that promise was fulfilled. Curiously, it's not until the construction of the Tabernacle, the House of God, that we see why they accumulated those riches. Revelation! We are the "House of God" in whom He dwells, and that promise extends to us. Yahweh will transfer the riches of Egypt to build His house!

So, watch the pagans build bigger barns, and store as much as their hearts desire, because God has stored up the wealth of the nations for His people. In other words, if you're wealthy, then use it to do God's work. You can do so willingly, or be dragged kicking and screaming; either way—it is all His!

INSANE CHRISTIANITY

SERMON RESOURCE: [Insane Christianity](#)

The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. Most people attribute those words to Albert Einstein, which may or may not be true. But, what is certainly true, are the words themselves, no matter who gets the credit for coining them. Now, if we take those words and use them to analyze the actions of God’s people at times, I believe we just might discover they suffer from a type of spiritual insanity.

We don’t have time to recall every occasion for which this diagnosis is appropriate, but we should identify the inaugural decision that started us down this path. And as we come to an end of our journey through Exodus, we should make honorable mention, from it, of a significant example. Then, we can have some fun connecting the dots between that first occasion and what we see here at the very end of Exodus: the Tabernacle is complete; and Moses, by way of the people’s obedience, had delivered exactly what Yahweh ordered. Next, put the whole thing into operation to test its function. Then what? Move to the next assignment—“Then God said...”

It really is uncanny. It's the exact pattern every time: assignment—obedience—next assignment. Or, assignment—disobedience—consequences. You'd think God's people would recognize the pattern. If you don't follow directions, it goes very badly. In other words, to think it would go well for you, despite your decision to disobey God is insane, at least according to Einstein, or whoever!

It's like a merry-go-round, but they are not in an amusement park, and they are not sitting on wooden horses, and the ride won't end in three minutes. Instead, they are in the wilderness and the ride will be like going around the mountain over and over again, and not for three minutes, but for forty years. Yes, insanity has a price.

And if I might indulge you with one more perspective, let's call our ride, the glory-go-round. We have the glory of God available to us, and then in some act of, let's call it insanity, we go our own way. And, in the midst of our disobedience, we still expect to maintain God's glory. Are you tracking with me? As a consequence for our actions we get knocked onto our inglorious butts, just like we see in the Bible every time! Assignment—disobedience—consequences.

The real question remains; if you see that this is what happens without fail, why would you think you can disobey God and get away with it? It seems so obvious

now. “Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.” For our purposes, let’s just call this “Insane Christianity.”

MARY HAS CHOSEN WHAT IS BETTER!

SERMON RESOURCE: [Mary Has Chosen What is Better!](#)

When your life is enmeshed with God, it is common to have encounters that make you think, “You can’t make this stuff up!” He cares about everything, even the subtle things. In fact, you should make a habit of accentuating all those subtle experiences, as it is oftentimes in the “still small voice” from which the greatest revelations come.

When His Word is hidden in your heart, and animates your mind “without ceasing”, unrelated ideas become wired together, seemingly out of nowhere. But we know better, or at least we should know that these impressions are not unrelated. Yahweh is not in the business of idle thoughts. Every inspiration from the Lord means something, if you are willing to receive it; His Word will never return void. I promise; if you would make the commitment to pay attention, to block out the distractions, this testimony will be part of your everyday life in the faith. “You can’t make this stuff up!”

For example, shortly before this introduction was written (and this very encounter is what inspired it), I was studying Leviticus, and making sermon notes in the early morning hours. I paused my studies to go wake my bride, as I do every morning. Then, in the silence between those two activities, and what seemed so random, I heard the still small voice. “Mary has chosen what is better.” My initial thought was, “How could this possibly relate to Leviticus and this current collection of notes on various sacrifices?” My quiet laugh broke the silence, as I sat alone. I’d been here before countless times. Moments later I was sharing this encounter with my wife, adding this one assurance. “I don’t know what it means, but I’m certain I will.”

It only took a few hours of pressing into God before the “wires touched” and the connection was made that became this message, even the title; “Mary Has Chosen What is Better!” Isn’t it worth it, the time you spend at the Lord’s feet? When you choose to do so, He always has something to say; “You have chosen what is better!” It’s the testimony every time you sit at His feet and listen to the still small voice, and it always ends the same way. In utter amazement I think, “You can’t make this stuff up!”

FOLDED HANDKERCHIEFS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Folded Handkerchiefs](#)

Everything was so precise, so deliberate. Many of the details are easy to overlook, especially when they are meant to be mysterious. Don't let that scare you; you were designed to be a spiritual detective. It may not come easy, and it may not seem natural, but I assure you, the longer you stare at them, the more they come into focus.

They often look like those squiggly, blurry, and obscure pictures that initially appear to be something born from an accident of spilled paint cans. But, if you stare long enough, and you adjust your vision against what seems natural, all of a sudden the once meaningless painting comes into focus. And what's even more exciting is that it's not even limited to two dimensions, but has images with multiple dimensions that change when viewed from multiple angles.

And that is exactly how it feels when you stare intently at God's Word, and maybe in a way that seems a bit against what feels natural. It's like trying to piece together the details of an incident by compiling the testimony of many witnesses, all standing in different locations. Imagine a circle of bystanders watching the same complex event. Then, interview everyone and

compose a separate narrative using each individual testimony. As you study each viewpoint, you will realize that the further apart the angle of observation, the more varying the account. The secret to a full, multidimensional account of reality would be to piece them all together, in an overlapping series of statements. It may seem very squiggly, blurry, and obscure at first, but take your time, adjust your vision, and when it all comes into focus, you will see a glorious reality you never thought possible.

This is the deliberate style in which we are presented God's Word. Of course, it is not meant to make you doubt or leave you confused—quite the contrary. It should inspire you to search deeper, to strain your vision until the glorious multidimensional multi-angle picture becomes clear. Yes, it's precise and deliberate, and it's exactly why, when Y'shua resurrected, He left His face covering in the tomb, "folded together in a place all by itself."

THE FOOD CHANNEL MEETS THE HISTORY CHANNEL

SERMON RESOURCE: [The Food Channel Meets the History Channel](#)

There is so much diversity in Christianity across the globe and other than agreement on the cross, there seems to be no particular doctrine that is universally held as true in all denominations. Of course, the cross of Christ unites us; it's simple, if you don't believe in the cross, then you are not even a Christian. Beyond that, everything appears to go haywire.

There is one other commonly held belief that has gained almost universal traction in Christianity, however. It's not one that threatens your eternity of course, but adherence to it seems to be as dogmatic as the cross itself. No, it will not threaten your eternity, but getting it wrong might make you arrive there a whole lot sooner.

Interview your Christian family, friends, and neighbors. Find a diversity of denominations to survey, so you can obtain a good cross section of tightly held Christian beliefs. And do you know what you will discover? "Don't mess with my food!"

It's true; Christians will choose common culture over biblical truth almost 100% of the time when it

comes to their food choices. In other words, they will choose their taste buds and addictions over biblically kosher every time. Now, we can spend an eternity (pun intended) talking about the myriads of unnatural man-made junk foods you should not eat (what I call common sense kosher), but we won't go there for now. Instead, I want to make it simple. I just want to explore what the Bible says you are permitted to eat (what I call biblically kosher) and how Christians worldwide, and across nearly all denominations, believe that the cross of Christ annulled God's laws on food, and how that is simply not true.

Yes, Christians universally agree on two things; the cross has set them free for eternity, and has also freed them to eat whatever they wish. The first will save your life; the latter will kill you!

THE REASON

SERMON RESOURCE: [The Reason](#)

Everything happens for a reason. You may not see it right away and you may be up against a decision that seems contrary to the crowds all around you. But, that is when knowing the heart of God is most important. What do you do when all hope is lost and all that is left is to surrender your understanding to one last desperate

attempt? You cannot stay hidden any longer and every effort to find relief from man has been rebuffed. Reason and reasonableness have failed.

But isn't that just like God? When the reason is because there seems to be no reason. Yes, that's it! In my brain, and with every logical option I've exercised, there should have been a solution. But there simply wasn't. That is when your reason must give way to THE REASON.

There it is; there He is! But He seems so far away and there are so many things between us, so many people. What should I do? I have nothing to lose. I'll knock everyone out of the way, remove everything standing between Him and me. I'll push through the crowd and I'll reach out, stretch toward Him, ligament, muscle, and sinew straining to the point of avulsion. I must touch Him, my last hope, my only hope. And then...

"Who touched Me?" "I did Lord, and this is why. I had nowhere else to turn; I should have come sooner; I should have ignored the crowd; I should have known all along that You would look beyond my filth, my issues, my past, my unworthiness, and my failed attempts to seek solutions from men! I should have known you would look beyond the letter that commands my isolation and demands I keep my hands to myself. I should have known You would have said, 'Reach out,

touch Me.’ And so I finally left my reason behind, and in exchange I now offer You Your reason.”

“And how I was healed immediately.” How about you?

ALTER EGO

SERMON RESOURCE: [Alter Ego](#)

Two identical goats are selected on Yom Kippur to be considered for the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the people. Soon after, one goat becomes that sin offering. It’s easy to see the shed blood of Christ in the imagery of this sacrificial goat. “And He Himself is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” And the other, the scapegoat, is set loose, freed into the wilderness, kept alive for another purpose. Who does the imagery of this scapegoat represent?

Y’shua prophesied of a type of “identical goat” in His last sermon before He was arrested; “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.” There He was; about to cover the sins of the world with His blood. But also, right in front of Him was another image. It looked exactly like Him. Yet, this one sheds no blood and is instead sent off into the wilderness. Why?

The prophetic revelation is crowning with imminent birth. One sheds His blood as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world—that's Christ. The other, created in the same image, is sent off into the wilderness carrying an assignment. Who is being transformed into the image and stature of Christ, and what is his assignment in the wilderness? It's impossible to ignore Isaiah's words in search of an answer. "In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

Isaiah identified the assignment, and Y'shua identified the image of His identical goat. "The glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one." We are to be perfect in one with Christ, His identical image, His alter ego. An alter ego is another version of oneself, a person who behaves so similarly to another that the difference is unrecognizable. Are you one with Christ, indistinguishable from Him, His alter ego, His scapegoat? He promised we'd do greater things, be His ambassadors through whom He is pleading? He is finished for now; it's time to complete your assignment. Are you ready? "Go therefore!"

GRAY IS THE ORIGINAL GOOGLE

SERMON RESOURCE: [Gray is the Original Google](#)

Oh my how things have changed. Many cultures have shifted away from venerating their aged population, and moved toward esteem for their young. We have become child-centric with the vast majority of our attention invested in the activities, opinions, interests and desires of youth.

Yet, the Scriptures paint a very different priority. God's word demands that considerably more emphasis be placed on the gray-headed generation. And it becomes strikingly obvious that this attention is not simply because they need to be provided for in their old age. Rather, it is a directive to revere the older generation with such honor, as if their silver locks were a crown of glory.

That's right, the gray hair that adorns the heads of our elders is likened to wisdom and understanding, a crown of glory if it is found atop those practicing righteousness. But instead, the superficiality of today's common culture has inspired our sages to cover up the "splendor of old age" with dyes and treatments.

Somehow we have descended into the "me generation." This is a whole crop of entitled young people who can't resist "selfie everything." Every

Instagram post, every complaining Tweet, every silly TikTok, and practically every photo opportunity is about self. As such, it should be no surprise that they've left behind the connection to and reverence for the silver generation. It has rapidly declined into the practice of, "ask Google everything and let the wisdom of a dying age die with them."

It used to be we would sit at the feet of our elders, gleaning their wisdom and advice; they are the original Google. If you needed to know something, anything, they are where you searched. Remember those who came before you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith you should emulate, as you consider the years of experience resulting in what you see in them. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in them, these things learn from them and do. Let us never forget how the Scriptures equate the gray hair of the aged to the wisdom of the ages! Your life just might depend on it; Solomon thought so! "The way of life winds upward for the wise, that he may turn away from hell below."

MAKE YOUR LIGHT OR LET YOUR SO LIGHT SHINE?

SERMON RESOURCE: [Make Your Light or Let Your Light So Shine?](#)

What is it about light that everyone loves, especially light that emanates from fire? In today's reading, we witness how Yahweh instructed Moses to fashion a lampstand, and a light that is meant to burn continually.

When we leap forward to the days of Y'Shua, and His words in the Sermon on the Mount, He reveals that we are that "light of the world" meant to burn continually. This, undoubtedly, is our call to ministry. It's a call for His disciples birthed directly from an intimate, deep and powerful relationship with Him, not a choice made from the intellect. Unfortunately, this authentic call is not always what we see today, as those "in ministry" are oftentimes self-assigned and self-empowered!

We are called to "let our lights SO shine" not "make our lights SO shine." We are not called to be the source of light, but instead the conduit of His light. Over the centuries, the more diverse and specialized Christian denominations have become, the more reflective they've become of their own light, and

subsequently less representative of His light and thus less impactful.

A lighthouse exists on a coastline for a specific purpose, to guide those who are seeking entrance inland, and in some instances in times of an emergency. Look around; presently the world is in a “State of Emergency!” People are frantic and in need of a beacon of light to guide them, as they near an ever-increasing tumultuous coastline. They are desperate to find their way inland. And now I leave you with this critical decision; will you “Make” or “Let” your light SO shine? One will save them; the other will end in shipwreck.

THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR

SERMON RESOURCE: [The Acceptable Year](#)

Here’s the challenge. And this will only work if you are willing to become a consistent student of Yahweh’s Word. First, commit to daily reading. Then, get yourself into the correct posture as you approach the Holy Scriptures. Remember, it is the Living Word of God. It’s unlike any other book in existence. It is literally the voice of the infinite Creator. Now, if that does not give you pause and cause you to approach with deference and reverence, then I suggest you not take this challenge.

Once in position, humbly, and with the curiosity of a child, ask God to speak through His Living Word, this double-edged sword. Ask Him to reveal something new. Seek for deeper revelation, to discover what you've never known before. Search for magnificent intersections and allusions that will fascinate and excite you. He will show you, you know. If you are genuine and authentic in your quest, He will expose marvelous things, wondrous things. Knock on the door of prophetic inspiration and you will not be disappointed when He answers.

And that's the thing. His Word will come alive and jump off the pages. It was there all along and yet you will see it for the first time. You wonder if anyone else ever noticed. You're sure someone has and yet no one told you. You wonder why. Then, you follow it where it leads you. You chase it down every tortuous trail and leave no stone unturned. Many unseated rocks reveal nothing. But some, some of them have hidden diamonds just below the pressed earth.

You pick one up, wipe it off and examine it closely. You may even shed a tear or two. It's so beautiful, so valuable. You feel privileged just to have engaged in the process. And the reward you now hold in your hand is priceless. You smile—only the Spirit of the Lord could have brought you here. Now, only one thing remains; you must steward what you've

discovered. Deploy it to release the captives; use it to set the prisoners free.

VALUATIONS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Valuations](#)

From where do you derive your value? Pay close attention here; I'm not asking you from where you derive your values, as in principles and standards of behavior. I'm asking about your self-worth. It's easy to fall into the trap that defines you as your profession or vocation; your possessions, position and accomplishments; your situation and circumstances; relationships and associations; your true outer appearance or how you appear to others, including their opinions, judgments, gossip, posts and compliments. Even your divine calling and purpose is not who you are, is not how your real worth is measured.

Many people today are victims of selfie-worth, an inner belief that you are what you can convince others to believe about you. I am not sure that's any better than those who feel they have no worth at all. Any combination of these valuation formulas is a lie, and we know who fathers lies! Yet, if you are not any of these, what are you? Who are you? How much are you worth

and who decides? These are all excellent questions, and if you are not asking them, maybe you should be!

I'd like to introduce you to a concept. Those who are not born-again, justified by faith in the precious work of the cross of Christ, have at their disposal a sole self-valuation formula that demands they load their balance-sheet with self-worth assets derived from the above. Christians, however, have a different form of accounting at their disposal, should they choose. Yes, it's available, but not guaranteed. You must exercise the option.

Sure, at your born-again encounter, you confessed who God is and what Y'shua had done for you. In other words you openly acknowledged with your mouth that God is who He says He is. But, there is another side to the faith coin, and that is the belief in your heart that you are who God says you are. And that is the optional side. You can believe who God is and yet your opinion of yourself can still be wrapped up in all of the above lies. The cross-over happens when you abandon those lies and begin to see your self-worth through God's eyes. Yes! He is from where your real valuation comes. The High Priest of our confession sets the true value of people, places and things, and I highly suggest you adopt His accounting method!

RE-FUND THE POLICE

SERMON RESOURCE: [Re-Fund the Police](#)

The imagery is striking. Your job is to uphold the law; you establish yourself in a well-defined precinct and you serve and protect those around you, as they all maintain their own property. You are like the glue that holds the community together and you are provided every resource to perform your duties.

Service is your name and protection is your game. Things are constantly in motion and you are right in the midst to ensure all goes according to plan. You look up and serve the leaders of your community and you look out to serve every member.

You are completely dedicated to preserving property rights and the rights of the people. In some regards you are members of the most practical side to governance. The more compliant each member of your community, the easier your job. It gets substantially more difficult when the people would rather violate the laws than uphold them. They are not your laws, but those created by your leader and universally adopted by your society. You serve the people and maintain order, so that life for everyone who obeys the laws is not disrupted by those who would rather break them.

And that leads to your final role—protection. You protect the people and their property from those who violate the laws. And equally as vital, because you serve everyone, you even desire to protect violators from themselves. You do so by setting an example and by emphasizing the benefits of living within your supreme leader’s legal parameters and accepted standards. You consistently point to the one from whom the law originates. Your mission is to serve and protect. Who are you?

I am sure you recognize this imagery. You see it within modern-day law enforcement—the police! Biblical law enforcement officers are called priests. Today’s spiritual police force or priests are often called pastors! Calling all pastors...are you serving and protecting your flock? The Chief of Police is coming soon to check on His police force. Are you pointing your flock toward your own laws, or toward the One from whom the supreme law originates?

RACIAL PROFILING

SERMON RESOURCE: [Racial Profiling](#)

It’s about to get controversial. But, that should not come as a surprise, because God is not bound by what feckless political hacks call inclusion. If you demand that

the Creator of the universe operate in equity, then I have some disturbing news for you; we all deserve to burn! Let me be clear about what is meant by equity: the quality of being fair and impartial. I'm not sorry if this makes you uncomfortable. Yahweh's version of fair and impartial must include justice. You see, a just God who operates in equity must exact punishment on everyone equally. This, of course, is true unless He allows a third party to be inserted into the equation to cover the cost for some!

Some! How is that equitable? This is where the examination of inclusivity enters and is likely what will disturb you most. If Yahweh was all-inclusive, He'd not favor any particular person or group. Yet, it is clear that He does: some get His name... some are special... some get double... some are chosen... some are above... some get blessed... He identifies, isolates, and then closely examines some. He treats them differently by offering them a unique opportunity. Should they accept, they are given special privileges. Some and not others? Yikes! God is guilty of racial profiling. His version of equity has an exclusivity clause—some and not others. Report that in today's "woke media" and you will witness the colossal character assassination of Yahweh. Let the indictment of the Judeo-Christian God begin!

Can you imagine the arrogance, the gaul, the utter absurdity? Mankind with his modern institutions

and mores decides, using his own set of standards and beliefs, if the Creator of the universe is right or wrong. Let that sink in! I pray you are not fooled by the relative morality of the day. A culture of virtue is not defined by people. Virtue is simply, and in its purest form, defined by God. Yahweh decides what is good and right! That is reality.

If you don't like it; if you disagree with God, that He chooses some and not others, His use of racial profiling, take it up with Him. Be warned however; every example of every pious, self-righteous boob, who ever challenged God's right to make His own rules and standards, regretted his decision. What makes you think it will be different with you?

PREDICTABLE TIDES

SERMON RESOURCE: [Predictable Tides](#)

The sun rises and the sun sets; the tide comes in and the tide goes out. You don't even think about it. It's like your heartbeat: steady, predictable, dependable, and without any forethought. Well, that is if you are healthy of course. But there would be no questions, no doubts or concerns, if we are measuring the beating of God's heart.

David was a man after God's own heart. What does that even mean? It means David was synchronized with God's desires; he was in-tune with what Yahweh wanted and specifically what Yahweh wanted of him. It means to trust in God's provision and protection no matter what threats surround you. It's comforting to connect with the heartbeat of God, but how comforting could it be if the beat of His heart was erratic, unstable, unpredictable, or undependable?

The sun rises and sets and you don't give it a second thought; you literally can "set your watch by it." The tides also come in and go out like clockwork, unless there is a storm approaching and the heavy rain and potential storm-surge cause rivers and oceans to spill over onto what is otherwise dry ground.

Many heavy rains act as enemies against the riverbanks of our lives. All sorts of storms threaten to overflow our personal coastlines. But God's heartbeat is steady and predictable; His tides never get so low that you bottom out or so high that you drown in the flood.

David writes, "Surely in a flood of great waters they shall not come near me. You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance." Isaiah reveals the heartbeat of God with His words of comfort; "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you."

There is one final piece I must confirm. You are not meant to go it alone. God has placed others around His people and His institution to remind them that His heart never stops beating for them. God’s heart never skips a beat, never flutters, has no leaks or clogs, and is immune to arrhythmias and infarction. Stay connected to God’s beating heart; it is your hiding place. In other words, there is no storm so powerful that He can’t “tide you over.”

ADDING INSULT TO INJURY

SERMON RESOURCE: [Adding Insult to Injury](#)

Picture this in your mind. You’ve already made a bad choice that is sure to have dire consequences. It may even be such that everything about your bad decision is out in the open already, and you are certain of the negative ramifications. What now?

As a parent, I’ve always taught my children that it will go much better for them every time, if they quickly acknowledge their poor choice, admit what they did was wrong, and graciously accept the appropriate punishment. They were well-educated about how much more unpleasant it would be if they did or said anything to make a bad situation even worse. “Don’t add insult to injury” is one way to describe my advice.

There is no doubt in my mind that this aspect of human nature, the sin nature, is one of the main themes that circles back over and over again in God's Word. Paul said it like this; "I am carnal, sold under sin." But he also said, "How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" It's bad enough that we see this pattern so often: sin—warning—intercession—penalty—repentance—forgiveness. But it makes matters so much worse, exponentially worse, if we insert another step between penalty and repentance! I am confident you would like to know what that is, hopefully to avoid making that critical error yourself.

It starts with not liking the penalty. "News alert! Not liking it is what makes it a penalty." So, the human brain gets scheming. "I'll take matters into my own hands!" That's it! As bad as the ramifications for your sin might be, inserting that step, taking matters into your own hands, will make things exponentially worse!

We might say, "adding insult to injury" is a modern euphemism. A euphemism is a mild alternative, an understatement, or indirect word or expression substituted for one considered to be too harsh or blunt, when referring to something unpleasant or embarrassing. Another euphemism I am sure you are familiar with is, "Two wrongs don't make a right!" When you take matters into your own hands that is exactly what you are doing; you are stacking a new wrong on

top of an existing wrong! Now, let's dive a little deeper into what that looks like biblically.

God's words equates disobedience to unbelief, or a lack of faith. If I were to use the opposite of a euphemism, what is instead a dysphemism, and call a spade a spade, I'd rephrase "Don't add insult to injury," bluntly and with harsher terms like this; "Don't add rebellion to unbelief!" Taking matters into your own hands to avoid the consequences for your sin is really the quintessential example of "adding insult to injury or adding rebellion to unbelief." I have a secret for you that will change your life... "Don't do that!"

DISGRUNTLED EMPLOYEES

SERMON RESOURCE: [Disgruntled Employees](#)

The Bible comes alive when we insert ourselves into the various narratives and stories, when we contemplate how we might have acted if we were there. It's fascinating to me and disappointing how often God's children resisted Him and resorted to complaining about, well, everything. Would you have done that? It's easy to know; if you act that way now, you would have then! This is most often how the people related to God. Be honest; is this you?

"We don't like Your leaders; put us in charge."

“We don’t like your instructions; we’ll do it our own way.”

“We don’t like where You’re sending us; we’ll stay right here.”

“We don’t like your directions; we’ll choose our own path.”

“We don’t like Your consequences; we’ll skirt the punishment.”

“We don’t like your assignments; we’ll do what we please.”

“We don’t like this work; we’ll choose what we like.”

“We don’t like Your warnings; we’ll hear what we want.”

“We don’t like what you call us; we’ll pick our own identity.”

And even in the midst of God’s lovingkindness, His tender mercies, and His long-suffering, His chosen usually act like negative nellies: pessimistic about everything, constantly complaining, glass-half-empty-type people, who when given a choice, opt for the negative outlook on life.

Can you imagine? God gives you yet another chance to be content, to avoid the most serious of consequences for your bad decisions. He lays out His plan and to what you must stipulate. And then, your negative glass-half-empty-attitude takes over again. You

assume you are just going to blow it anyway, so why bother? “Surely we die, we perish, we all perish!” It’s utterly depressing.

How miserable, how wretchedly unhappy you must be to always assume the worst outcome, to believe you just can’t obey God, won’t obey God. You exist in a forgone conclusion; we are going to fail, so why even try? We’re going down, so we might as well have a good time doing what pleases ourselves along the way.

In contrast to a negative outlook and a never-ending dissatisfaction with what we’ve been given, we have this wisdom: godliness with contentment is great gain. Think about it; discontentment leads to envy and strife, and contentment opens the doors to an abundant life of blessings and favor. No one likes to be around constant pessimism and complaining: not Moses, not God, and not even you! And no one is striving for chastening and poverty, but that is what you’ll get if you don’t stop whining. So, snap out of it, “Surely we will live, we will thrive, we will all thrive!”

DO YOU DARE GRUMBLE?

SERMON RESOURCE: [Do You Dare Grumble?](#)

As a society in the western hemisphere, we have become spoiled, by having everything in a “have-

it-your-own-way, right-away!” fashion. We have become accustomed to pressing a button on a microwave and in minutes extracting an entire meal—completely cooked and scorching hot. We pick up our cell phones, better described as hand-held supercomputers, for instant information about anything we can fathom: recipes, phone contacts, directions, opinion pieces, news, weather, or the population of Bismarck, North Dakota—you name it and you can find it in milliseconds. You can also run to a grocery store and buy anything your heart desires, with practically zero limitations.

Our level of patience is tested whenever those little trivial things in life do not function as they ought. You know, that little buffering circle on your device takes longer than, well, instantly, and you wonder if you should change providers. The waiter takes too long to come take your order and you are popping up your neck like a giraffe to get his attention. If this is your level of patience, how would you handle a truly challenging circumstance? Let’s say one that might cause a permanent shift in your life. Would you throw a temper tantrum?

In the likeness of the Children of Israel, would you dare grumble at or against God? Or, like Elijah, would you want to give up and throw in the towel after coming to realize that the people you’ve put your life in danger for are not really worth it? They have no interest in

following the Lord and you are left as the only one keeping Yahweh's covenant.

As believers in Christ, we are called to a totally different standard! We are charged with patience and perseverance; we are certainly not permitted to grumble. Question: Do you dare grumble?

WHAT DID THE DONKEY SAY TO THE JACKASS?

SERMON RESOURCE: [What Did The Donkey Say to The Jackass?](#)

It's actually hilarious when you think about it. Let me set the scene. You are so obstinate, so out of touch with reality, so absolutely wrong—and yet you are totally clueless! You have not even reached the starting line of “getting a clue!” I can think of so many idioms that describe this mental condition...

“You couldn't be more wrong.”

“It's like the blind leading the blind.”

“We're not even on the same page.”

“It's like you're dead from the neck up.”

“You're as dumb as a post.”

“You're not playing with a full deck.”

“You're one sandwich short of a picnic.”

And after you have demonstrated the befuddling capacity to be consistently wrong and clueless at the same time, it can only get worse if you verbally insist that it's not you, but others who drown in delusion. "Well, isn't that the pot calling the kettle black?" to frame yet another idiom. In the end, there is a way to know who is right and we can use one final idiom as evidence. "The proof is in the pudding." Yes, the truth of a thing is obvious from the results of the thing! Now, let's witness this cluelessness in action in the Scriptures. Get ready to laugh—or cry, if unfortunately this describes you.

Did you ever read the story in the Bible where the prophet of God becomes the wannabe-relevant-prophet-to-the-stars? This defector becomes so out of touch with God that the donkey he is riding has to: first turn off the path; then resort to crushing his foot against a retaining wall to get his attention; only to follow by simply laying down, as to not move forward one more inch. You'd think this pseudo-man-of-god would get the message. Nope! He just beats the messenger to carry on.

Finally, he discovers that his dumb ass is not so dumb after all, as she blurts out a few choice words. Okay, let's really consider what's going on here. How would you react? First, you would be in utter shock and amazement that the mute beast suddenly spoke, no? I think we can universally agree on this. Certainly you

wouldn't just start conversing with the animal, as if this is totally normal. Would you engage in a conversation? Would you carry on as if this was typical? More so, would you try to reason, or better yet, argue with the four legged creature?

It's stunning as you read the narrative. But maybe if we take another perspective it will seem a bit less distressing. Maybe the talking female donkey is not speaking human at all. Maybe the man upon her back has instead descended into thinking like a jackass (a male donkey) and it's the female donkey who should be shocked that her once human passenger has become nothing more than a stupid beast.

Here is the takeaway and Moses said it best; "Don't bless yourself and say, 'I shall have peace, even though I follow the dictates of my heart—as though the drunkard could be included with the sober.'" Don't descend into such a place of blindness and depravity that you begin to think like an animal! In other words, don't become a jackass who is forced to converse with donkeys.

HOW NOT TO BECOME THE WARNING...

SERMON RESOURCE: [How Not to Become the Warning...](#)

WARNINGS, WARNINGS, WARNINGS—they are all around us. From an early age, we are accustomed to being warned about many different things from parents, relatives, teachers, and friends. If you are grown now, yet still immature, you might still be receiving warnings. During your toddler years, you were undoubtedly told, “Don’t put your finger in that outlet; don’t put objects in your mouth; and don’t put that bag over your head.” As you got a little older, they warned you to, “Look both ways before you cross the street; and to brush your teeth at least twice a day.” In reality, the list of warnings could probably fill a book. In some ways they did!

Imagine if you didn’t obey and decided to stick that metal doohickey in that electrical socket. If you tried that as a youngling, you’d probably become a very strong advocate for prevention of that “shocking” mistake. When you experience the consequences of ignoring a warning, you then “become the warning.” Instead of just a herald you become an object lesson. These are very different. One is a voice; the other is an

experience. The experiential displays more meaning and carries more weight than a talking head, better for the student, not so much for the teacher! This should not be shocking (excuse the pun)!

The human heart and emotions are the same today as in ancient days. We are fooling ourselves if we believe those Bible stories of old are outdated and have no relevant meaning for today. From one perspective, the Bible is one massive word of warning that we might receive like this; “Do not yourself become the warning.” In other words, if you choose to ignore God’s Word, you will indeed become that warning. Peter best describes what God does with these sorts of people; He “makes them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly.” Our minimal aim as Christians should be to live by the Spirit and follow after the precepts of Yahweh, so our very testimony preaches the warning, rather than a disobedient life that then causes us to BE the warning. DO NOT BECOME the warning!

OH WHAT A WORLD IT WOULD BE, IF...

SERMON RESOURCE: [Oh What a World it Would Be, if...](#)

Oh what a world it would be if men kept their word, but they don’t. Wars are fought over such things and people die. Vows are broken; marriages fracture

and families are scattered. Fathering is optional and children are abandoned. Promises are forgotten and trust is lost. Help is withdrawn and dreams are shattered. Doing the right thing is discounted and someone always gets hurt. Greediness prevails and needs go unmet. Faith is discarded and every wrong option becomes available. Forget you are created in the image of God and the enemy gains free reign in your life.

Why must it be said, “If you make a promise you should keep it?” But, unfortunately, it must. Man has the propensity to violate his vows, to renege on his promises. And this condition is not novel. The disease is universal and timeless. God made it clear; “If a man makes a vow to the Lord, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.”

Oh what a world it would be if man exemplified fidelity with his “I do...”; responsibility with his “I have...”; integrity with his “I will...”; confidence with his “I can...”; character with his “I know...”; generosity with his “I possess...”; freedom with his “I believe...”; and certainty with his “I am...!” Oh what a world it would be.

ANTI-DISCOMBOBULATED

SERMON RESOURCE: [Anti-discombobulated](#)

It's the elephant in the room, so let's first stop pretending and settle the issue. "I didn't know" is not the reason. It's not a viable excuse. Okay, now that we have that out of the way, we can get down to business. His voice is loud and clear, no interpretation necessary. And His instructions are straightforward and unambiguous; nothing to clarify. Now, the only question remaining is, "Will you go?"

There is probably no more challenging directive in the Bible than the one that instructs the hearer to "Go!" That type of command can be very destabilizing. Comfort zones are comfortable for a reason. It's like a mother's warm and confined womb. A child floats in utter bliss with every provision on automatic. But, birth changes things; birth disrupts things. It's time to leave the comfort zone through the canal of transition. Your mission is to enter a whole new world, an exciting world, but an uncomfortable one. It's time to go!

Abraham was told to go. Isaac was told to go. Jacob was told to go. Jacob's ten sons were told to go. Moses was told to go. Israel was told to go. David was told to go. Elijah was told to go. The disciples were told to go. Paul was told to go. You also were told to go. Go

therefore! What simply remains is your response. Israel went, but opted for the forty year plan. Even after all the proof that Yahweh would provide every step of the way, they chose the round about route. The disciples went at first and saw miraculous things; after witnessing the crucifixion they scattered like cockroaches in the light.

After the resurrection, the disciples were again told to go; then they went back to fishing. You also were told to go. It's the elephant in the room, so let's first stop pretending and settle the issue. "You didn't know" is not the reason. You have no viable excuse. And now that we have that out of the way, all you have to do is make a choice. His voice is loud and clear, no interpretation necessary. His instructions are straightforward and unambiguous; nothing to clarify. Go or don't go. But, let's not fool ourselves, "You didn't know" is not the reason.

TEN COMMANDMENTS: WHO ARE THEY FOR?

SERMON RESOURCE: [Ten Commandments: Who are they for?](#)

In our Bibles, "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not" can be found hundreds of times. Undoubtedly, Yahweh's

intention was to provide fresh revelation to Moses in the form of His finger-scripted stone tablets. And God was not just revealing His commands to be a cosmic kill-joy. They were meant to be a blessing!

It is well established and agreed that the Ten Commandments are the underpinning of western civilization. They are the bedrock for our cultural morality. However, as time passes since the revelation to Moses, and the further we get from its message, the greater the erosion of societal behaviors. Have we lost our ethical moorings?

The Church, unfortunately, has not been the guide rod and moral compass it was meant to be. A very prominent pastor recently published a book in which he writes, “The Ten Commandments have no authority over you. None. To be clear, “Thou Shalt not obey the Ten Commandments.”” If this is the message well-known pastoral figures are preaching from their platforms, why should the unbelieving world have any desire to surrender their humanistic agendas? Why not just live life according to how things make you feel? If it feels good, do it; if it doesn’t, don’t. What a simple and self-satisfying way to live. And isn’t this precisely what we are witnessing all around us today?

Because of its wish-washy doctrine, the western church is largely to blame for this phenomenon. As an institution, it has bowed to what people want to hear.

The squeaky wheel gets the grease and the church has been all too accommodating to supply greasy grace to the loudest complaints! One of only two things can occur. Either the culture is shaped around God's Word, or God's Word is shaped around the culture. Trust me, no one complains when they get to do whatever they wish. It only gets noisy when people are taught to fit their lives into the narrow parameters of God's instructions.

As such, it is no accident that the world is behaving the way it is. It should be no surprise that morality is at an all-time low. Why? Because when humans are left to determine what is right, the outcome is always the same! If it feels good, do it; if it doesn't, don't. What a simple and self-satisfying way to live.

As Christians, we should be asking everyone this question. "Ten commandments, who are they for?" You might not win the "most popular" title, or the "most likely to succeed" award, but you will leave a lasting imprint. No, it is not your job to convince or change anyone's mind, but it is your duty to challenge their way of thinking.

We are now experiencing the ramifications of living in a pluralistic society, one in which Christians are encouraged, even forced, to keep their opinions to themselves. Moses was handed down stone tablets and told to openly proclaim the truth written upon them. But,

it is the enemy's desire that their powerful meaning stay sealed behind closed doors. Ultimately, who are the ten commandments for? They are for all of humanity, because in the end, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. And until that day comes, be sure that "teaching others to obey!" is part of your disciple-making agenda.

THE GREAT PARADOX

SERMON RESOURCE: [The Great Paradox](#)

The most expensive thing in the universe is free. Make sense? Let me say it in another way to clear up any contradiction; it will take every resource you have to buy something infinitely valuable that cost nothing. Is that better? No? Okay, try this; the faith that you were given for free, which guaranteed your eternity with God for free, will cost you everything. Still confused?

These are what are known as paradoxical statements. A paradox is a seemingly absurd or self-contradictory statement or proposition that when further investigated and explained proves to be well founded or true. I assure you, the above statements are true. Yes, they are absurd on the surface and seemingly

contradictory, but they are nevertheless accurate; they are indeed fact.

It's the great paradox. You come to the Lord naked and ashamed, and deserving of nothing. You are a helpless child and have nothing to offer Him. Yet, the Lord says, come buy bread with money you don't have; use what is in your empty pockets to purchase living water from the fountain of life—an absurd paradox!

Do you see it now? It is the most valuable thing in the universe and you do not have a single asset to offer in exchange. Yet, you partake freely. And suddenly something extraordinary happens. Your eyes are opened and you see everything before you that must be left behind you. Everything you were, all you held as sacred, each dear thing from which you crafted your persona, formed your identity, and derived your self-worth, you must now let die. Everything? Yes everything! You have become a new creature; it had cost you nothing and now it will cost you everything.

“What must I do to become a disciple?” That becomes the burning question; that becomes the only relevant question. And the answer becomes the only thing that matters. Y'shua said, “He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit.” In other words, the fruit one produces is the evidence that one has become a true disciple. But, unless a seed falls into the ground and dies, it cannot produce fruit. Those who received that

free faith, who freely ate the bread and drank from the fountain must now forsake all, even their very lives. If that is you, it will cost you everything for this thing that cost you nothing. It's obviously absurd and seemingly contradictory. But, now that we've further investigated, it has proven to be well founded and true. It's the greatest of all paradoxes!

INDOMITABLE GRACE

SERMON RESOURCE: [Indomitable Grace](#)

In some circles in the Christian faith it is believed that God's grace is irresistible. What does that even mean? I think it best we consider the idea of grace first, before we decide if it is so overwhelming, overpowering, and compelling, as to be involuntarily unavoidable. I like to think of grace as the brilliance that might reflect off the perfect diamond, if you were to shine the brightest light imaginable in its direction. Yes, that's a great word picture, especially if you are the diamond. In spiritual vernacular, grace is God's supernatural power. God directs His power towards us in all its indomitable magnificence, and it has no choice but to reflect.

And that inspires a second question. Do we have a choice to encounter grace? I'm not thinking about the reflecting back part; that's should be self-evident. If the

brightest of lights is blasted toward an object, it will illuminate that object as the light reflects from it. I'm thinking, instead, of the diamond. How perfect is the diamond, how polished? Sure light will reflect off a lump of coal if it's in the path of that light, but it won't be brilliant. And the question remains; can the diamond (or coal) run and hide, or is the brilliance unavoidable... inescapable? I'll leave that for you to ponder, as my true concern for now is you, the diamond itself, the object doing the reflecting, assuming it has encountered God's grace. And let's make a clear distinction, as there are some who believe God's grace excuses abhorrent behavior. That is like hijacking God's power in some slimy back alley transaction. Note to self: it won't work!

So, let's presume you have encountered God's grace; His supernatural power. What then? To me, it's as if you've been handed the codes to a nuclear weapon. But, in this case, it's not a weapon; it's a blessing. Or, maybe it's a weapon and a blessing. The point is—what are you going to do with it? You've been cut and polished to reflect God's grace, or have you? And if so; what will you do with it? That is the real question; what are you going to do with God's indomitable grace?

IMPERSONATING A CHRISTIAN

SERMON RESOURCE: [Impersonating a Christian](#)

It can be very funny to watch a talented comedian do impersonations. They are skilled at capturing the essence of someone who most people would recognize. They accentuate their mannerisms, facial expressions, voice, body language and talk about subjects this famous person is known for. They truly capture the outer expression of a person's character. It might be said that imitation is a great compliment. Of course, this is true if it is all done in clean fun, as the Bible warns us against course jesting.

Yet, it is far from funny and rather offensive, even dangerous, when we find someone impersonating a Christian. What does that even look like? Too often, you cannot easily identify such "comedians" simply by their mannerisms, facial expressions, voice, body language or the subjects they talk about. Those all appear authentic. But it's their inner character that ultimately exposes them. Out in the open they appear as Christians, but in the secret place of the heart they are just frauds.

I'd invite you to use a few key parameters and see if you can spot them. They are much more popular than you might think; they are actually everywhere, lurking just below the surface. They love their idols.

You'll notice what's most important to them on the inside by what gains most of their time, attention, and resources. Another key giveaway is effort. It takes a lot of effort to be accomplished at anything; and you will recognize counterfeits by their cheep imitations; they simply never put God first, never give Him their best of anything. Something else is always more important than God. And we all know that actions speak louder than words, so if you keenly observe what people are doing, you will know.

In this high tech world in which we live, virtual reality and social media have become major brands of entertainment. Strap on the headset and dive into a wondrous and expansive fake world. Fabricate any persona you desire and propagate it on your channels, feeds and posts. People have become experts at fake! Practice your fake Christianity in that world and no one will care; no one gets hurt. But, when you take off the blinders and step back into reality, you will get exposed. The divinely inspired words of the Bible insure you will have no plausible deniability if you say one thing and do another. It's there in plain sight, so you do not turn aside from God's ways to the right or to the left.

"Catch Me If You Can" was a movie released in 2002 in which the main character successfully performs all sorts of cons. He convinces everyone that he is someone else, someone he's not. He is a great

impersonator, an imposter. It seems like an exciting ride all along, but deep inside he is actually tormented by his true identity. In the end, all his pretense is exposed anyway. You can't hide the truth forever! Is that you? Others may not have noticed yet, but deep down inside, you know! Are you impersonating a Christian?

SEEKER FRIENDLY

SERMON RESOURCE: [Seeker Friendly](#)

Look what the cat dragged in! Now, I don't have a cat and maybe you don't either, but we are all familiar with what that implies. Cats don't drag into the house anything desirable. Maybe it's a dead mangled mouse, or a decapitated lacerated lizard, or a limp bleeding bird. Either way it's a disgusting scene and somebody's got to clean up the bloody trail.

I guess the picture I wish to paint is that sometimes things are dragged into the house that simply shouldn't be there. In this case, although it's nasty, it's nothing that can't be remedied without a baby wipe and a little spray disinfectant. And if the bad habit prevails, a trip to the vet for some declawing action and your problem is likely resolved.

But, it gets much more complicated if the feline is instead a Christian, and the house is instead the house

of the Lord, and the refuse dragged in is not an unfortunate rodent, reptile, or feathered creature. Christians drag all sorts of nasty refuse into the house of God, His holy sanctuary. They do so and plop it down right under their seats, and it sits there—marinating, fulminating. Many times it goes unnoticed; the feline human has crafted all sorts of diversions from their bloodied dead animals. It's like someone spraying air freshener in a bathroom just after the most foul deposit. You can't quite smell the worst of it, but you know something went wrong in there, horribly wrong. Nevertheless, exactly what took place remains hidden, for now. Yes, there are diversions, but if you care to sniff around, you'll figure it out soon enough.

Other times it's not so well hidden; sometimes there's not even an attempt to hide the offending guest below the seat. Maybe this is the worst type of all. It's the obvious sexual immorality, the idolatry, the slander, the gossip, the greed, the physical and chemical abuse, the unchecked desires, the consumerism, and the preoccupation with selfish gain. Need I continue?

Neither the bearer of such carcasses, nor those sitting nearby, nor the orator in the pulpit cares enough to do anything about it, to even say a word. "They are here aren't they? And isn't that good enough; isn't that the goal; isn't that what's most important?" The seat is occupied and the more seats occupied the better job

we're doing filling seats! What does it matter what they dragged in and plopped down below the surface!

Look the other way; no empty seats is the objective here. It's all about the numbers. It's the seeker friendly church, and God needs us to compromise in order to find seekers. Evangelism is so much easier when you ignore the sin. So, don't say a word, the refuse under the seat is fine, as long as they keep coming.

LEARN TO FEAR YAHWEH!

SERMON RESOURCE: [Learn to Fear Yahweh!](#)

Fears—everyone has them. The very thing I'll be doing immediately after Dr. Jeff's introduction is the number one fear I found when I researched "things people fear the most." Yes, public speaking is considered a "social phobia" and it tops the list of things that people fear the most. It's hard to imagine considering the competition: death, poverty, loss of a loved one, sharks, etc.

Interestingly enough however, is that nowhere on the list of things people fear the most is the "fear of the Lord." Sure, not everyone surveyed was a professing believer, but since the study was conducted in the United States, where the majority of people still claim

Christianity as their faith, it should have had some influence on their responses. I pray “fear of the Lord” missed the list because of a proper understanding of what it really means, awe and reverence for a holy God; may it always be.

But I have a strong suspicion that is not the case at all, especially if we observe the lives of most church attendees. If what is easily observable is any representation of how most “professing Christians” really feel about Yahweh, then I’d say self-deception is much more prevalent than awe and reverence. A sad commentary for sure, and I shudder when I think about what God views as lip service. Y’shua said this of religious hypocrites, as He affirmed the words of the prophet Isaiah; “These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.” Self- deception is much more common than we would like to admit and, as you can see, we are not alone; both the children of Israel and first-century leaders suffered from the same character defect.

One of the hardest things to do in our daily walk with Christ is to recognize the areas in ourselves that require attention. These are classically things we like to avoid, often painful things. Unfortunately, these are the sins in our lives that ought to be addressed promptly, but instead we oftentimes minimize them, saying, “I’m not perfect; I’m just a human.” Of course you are human!

But that should be no excuse for Christians, as you are no longer “just human”. You are now human with a heart possessed by God. My prayer for you today is you put aside your defense mechanisms and let God’s word be the spiritual scalpel He designed it to be, one that is “sharper than any two edged sword.”

MARRIAGE MATTERS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Marriage Matters](#)

Marriage Matters? Yes, and marriage matters! Over the last few decades, those matters, or what we might say are the key ingredients that marriage is composed of, and what makes marriage complete in the way God designed it, have been spoiled. Maybe they have even approached being completely decimated.

It is the Christian community who must defend this institution! No, not defend it with shouting and screaming in the face of a deaf culture, however necessary that might seem to be at certain times. Instead, we must defend it **NOW** by how we handle marriage matters.

Since marriage was part of God’s created order, we have the instruction manual, with step-by-step directions on how to enjoy and to fully reap the rewards of a Holy Spirit led marriage. Does this sound too ethereal to you?

If so, you've started off with the wrong mindset. The Bible reminds us that God is the head of man and that man is the head of the woman; put on that mind and now you are on the correct playing field. We need to straighten out these marriage matters because "Marriage Matters!" And as the Church, we have a huge problem on our hands if we cannot reverse the current trend.

So, whether you are married, not married, or never want to be married, these marriage matters should matter to you just the same. "Why?" you might be thinking. Because, as a Christian, no matter in which category you fall, one day you might have to speak to someone who desires to be married, and just because you are not looking to walk down that isle yourself, it doesn't mean you should not be fully cognizant of "Marriage Matters." Why? Because as has been said over and over, "Marriage Matters!"

GOING UNDER

AVAILABLE!

SERMON RESOURCE: [Available!](#)

August 15, 2022: I was dreaming and I was somehow aware I was dreaming. And in the dream there were two of me. I saw myself in the dream and I was also in the dream seeing myself, so I guess there were three of me. I was in heaven, and one of me was dead. He was the one sitting at the desk, and the other me was watching from a short distance. It was an ethereal scene with puffy white clouds. It was heaven, but all three of me knew it was allegorical, more like a movie version of heaven.

The me being observed was sitting at a desk being interviewed by an angelic being. The interview had only one exchange, and it was not a question, but rather a directive. It was a simple, yet profound request; “Describe your entire life with one word.” The two observers, the me in the dream watching and the me dreaming were completely aware of the magnitude of what he was asked to contemplate. We became excited and curious. What word would he choose? We truly didn’t know.

What we did know is that long ago I identified five core values that animated my life: virtue, integrity, justice, innovation, and influence. Each word had deep

significant meaning; each, if unpacked, explained an essential element of what I held most dear. Those five words guided my character and commitment. Which word would he choose? Or, would he choose another? We were fascinated as we observed the dead me answer the challenge.

I sat there at the desk. It was a sober moment, a watershed moment. Both onlookers pondered, as the dreaming me laying in bed, and the observing me who watched inside the dream, could feel our racing heart escalate. It pounded with such anticipation. He stared at his angelic Interrogator and without hesitation offered one word with complete confidence... “Available.” Available? And then I woke!

I sat straight up in bed, my beautiful bride in a deep restful sleep next to me, and I instantly wrestled with the idea. Available? Immediately, in a sober, self-reflective moment, I sought the Lord. No, not three of us, not the man at the desk, and not the man observing from a short distance, but me—awake, and completely aware of the transaction that just occurred. I confessed, “O God, if you required this of me at this very moment, if I had to give You one word right now, I could not do it. I can’t describe my life with one word; I need two words Lord.”

I was disappointed in myself, but not in a self-condemning way. It was the type of disappointment that

inspires a steadfast resolve to change something, the type that comes when you look in the mirror and admit the unadulterated truth. “Mostly available!” That’s what I confessed to the Lord that morning; that’s what I confessed to myself. “I love You Lord, and I love Your people, and I want to serve you with reckless abandon! Yet, there is still some small part of me that is holding onto something for myself.” God does not want most of me, even if it’s 99.99%. He wants all of me.

Something else happened that day. I made a decision that when I die, when I sit at that allegorical desk, alone, with no observers—just me, I will say to my Interrogator, “Available.” That’s the one word I can use to describe my life Lord. “I am...available!” Let the journey begin!

SCORCHED EARTH

SERMON RESOURCE: [Scorched Earth](#)

Each week I enter in the same way. I sit to read and contemplate the weekly scriptures and on my heart is one burning desire. “Speak to me Father; show me what You want to teach Your children. Highlight the message in Your Word God.” And then I begin to read. I carefully examine each word, each sentence, each

concept, all while asking and listening—“Are these the verses? Is this the message?”

I collect the verses and jot down ideas and themes and cross references that flood my mind. I think about what Y’shua might have taught on the subject and Paul, and the gospel writers, and Peter, and James, and the prophets, and David, and Solomon, etc. It’s a lengthy process; it takes many hours. And, it’s the same every week; it has been since Kingdom Embassy Ministries began in 2019... every week, until this week.

I began by opening the Bible and a blank document side-by-side. I do that every time. But the moment I did that this week, everything changed. Immediately, this overwhelming thought burst into my mind before I could read a single word of the Torah portion. It was like a loud angry scream intruding into my brain, as clear as if God was yelling in my ear. “Scorched earth!” I wrote it down at once, and then I paused to wrestle with what it means.

First I prayed; “Yahweh, is this the message? Is it possible you’ve already revealed what I will find in this week’s reading, before I lay my eyes on a single word?” Even then I did not open the Bible. I sought instead to discover the meaning. “What does scorched earth mean?” I had some ideas swimming around in my head, but wanted to be certain. These were my thoughts. This

is what I wrote down in my blank document before I did any additional research:

[1. to absolutely annihilate something, to burn it to the ground, leaving only a pile of ashes, like what God did to Sodom and Gomorrah. 2. what we do to others when we kill them with our words, hurt them so badly that they are too battered and bloodied to even mount any defense. 3. Examples: God went “scorched earth” on Sodom, or Jack went “scorched earth” on his ex-girlfriend.]

What I found upon researching was its literal meaning and a few other applications. We won't go into all the history behind it; I suggest you do a little searching for yourself and discover the horrors of it all.

[1. Scorched earth is used to describe a military policy in which all the houses, crops, factories, buildings, valuable goods, roads and infrastructure, etc., are utterly destroyed, so that your enemy cannot use them. Anything of any value is obliterated! **2.** the act of taking every legal method you have at your disposal to cause maximum disruption to those around you without regard for potential social repercussions. **3.** At the end of a relationship and knowing how much you despise the person, you ensure that there is never any hope of getting back together by letting everyone know what that person did to you.]

I wondered...is there any semblance of this concept in this week's Scripture reading? I wondered, but at the same time I didn't wonder; I was certain there would be. You come to trust God in these matters after years of hearing His voice and knowing His faithfulness. His word never returns void. Then, I opened the Word of God and this is what I read:

“The Lord would not spare him; for then the anger of the Lord and His jealousy would burn against that man, and every curse that is written in this book would settle on him, and the Lord would blot out his name from under heaven.” (Deut. 29:20)

“The coming generation and the foreigner would say, when they see the plagues of that land and the sicknesses which the Lord has laid on it: ‘The whole land is brimstone, salt, and burning; it is not sown, nor does it bear, nor does any grass grow there, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, which the Lord overthrew in His anger and His wrath.’” (Deut. 29:22-23)

Scorched earth... need I say more?

If you wish to sign the Scorched Earth Declaration, we have included it here. If you wish to share it others, you can download the PDF by searching for the [Scorched Earth Declaration](https://www.KingdomEmbassyMinistries.org) on [KingdomEmbassyMinistries.org](https://www.KingdomEmbassyMinistries.org)



KINGDOM EMBASSY MINISTRIES
 Remembering our Roots. Restoring Authority. Maturing Disciples. Advancing the Kingdom.

Scorched Earth Declaration and Seal

- *You raised me up Yahweh, from the ashes. And for that I owe you my complete and uncompromising gratitude.*
- *Today I declare I am available to You, to be Your mouth, Your hands, Your feet, Your every resource, even Your blood, if that's what it takes.*
- *Even if I spend the rest of my days suffering to bring You glory, it could not touch the magnitude of my appreciation.*
- *I can't even imagine what it will be like to enter into Your glorious presence and worship you forever, to dance before You, and to stand in awe of You.*
- *I will spend every day of my life, from this day forward, pursuing what it takes to live a life worthy of such honor.*

Initial & Sign if you agree...

____ No more compromise (I will no longer rationalize my sin)!

____ No more holding back (I am all-in with God)!

____ No more regrets (I will look ahead and not back)!

____ No more comparison (My eyes are on God and off others)!

____ No more options (God's way is the only way)!

A seal of Affirmation in His Blood, this Date _____.

Name Printed: _____

Signed: _____ Seal:



POST MORTEM IMPERATIVE

SERMON RESOURCE: [Post Mortem Imperative](#)

It's a moral imperative, one that does not expire upon death. What could possibly be so crucial, so vitally important, that even death cannot relieve its obligation? We often think in terms of inheritance, succession and legacy, when we think of such things, the stuff left behind after our decease. I wonder what comes to your mind as you contemplate this idea. I'd guess for most of you, it would concentrate somewhere in the subject matter of estate planning and business succession.

Those are important for many reasons, but not the topic of this discussion. And although important, could they ascend to the lofty heights of vital, indispensable, or critical for life and death? I'd say not, and maybe you'd argue. And I suppose we could still return to succession and legacy in search of meaning, with one caveat; remove estate planning and entrepreneurial endeavors from the topics of your probing.

What else is there? What might be the moral imperative; what is so vital, so indispensable, so critical that you must not leave it out of your quest for succession, your pursuit of legacy? I pray that the very fact that we are studying the Bible would give you a

clue. And if you take your faith seriously enough and you are willing to take your cues from scripture, you just might see the immeasurable value of leaving this behind for those who will travel this road long after you are gone.

Let's practice it together. In education it's called repetition, repetition, repetition. Why? Because repetition contains the DNA of understanding; it's the matriarch of learning. And if something is so vital, so indispensable, so critical (there goes repetition again), as to effect life and death, I want to "ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease."

What could be so important to designate as a moral imperative that does not expire upon death? Here it is: "That you may hear, that you may learn to fear, and that you may carefully obey." These are so imperative for life and death that I call heaven and earth to witness against you regarding such matters. Now, if that warning does not move these priorities to the lofty top in your succession and legacy plan, I think we ought to check your pulse. You might be dead already!

THE END OF THE BEGINNING

SERMON RESOURCE: [The End of the Beginning](#)

It's time to go over the wall." Those were his words after I explained what had transpired over the past six weeks. The whole thing seemed to climax on the previous Friday night after I presented "Scorched Earth." And when I woke on Saturday morning it felt like the first day of Summer vacation. The pressure was off and I was relaxed for the first time in more than a month. I instantly had a vision of a sprinter running through the finish line, breaking the tape. "You run through the tape, not to the tape," I heard. And then the thought settled in, "Now I can slowly glide to a stop over the next few weeks as we complete this year's cycle, like a sprinter who slows down gently, so he does not hit the wall." Run through the tape, not to the tape, and then ease up slowly. This is what I thought would happen, until I woke up on Sunday morning. Summer vacation was over.

"It's time to go over the wall." My dear brother's words at dinner that night, just days after my vision of the sprinter, had vibrated my eardrums, but not instantly reached my brain. I shook loose from my momentary vacant stare. "Maybe you have to climb the wall, not stop at the wall." His clarifying words testified to what I already knew to be true. Between those two moments,

the vision Saturday morning and dinner the following Thursday night, I had already composed the first of the final two messages, and there was no indication that anything was slowing down. Naturally, the only possibilities would be to climb over or break through, but stopping at the wall was clearly not an option. Something new was coming!

Friday evening I delivered “Post Mortem Imperative.” Then, Saturday morning God gave me yet another vision, this for the young adult study that morning—W. A. R. (Warring Against Repentance). It’s about the internal war against our own repentance, the craving we have to erase our repentant hearts, just so we can cycle back to our lustful sins—cycle back. I woke again Sunday morning to begin preparation, this time for the final chapter in the saga, this very message. As usual, I had great anticipation that the Lord would speak. Although, I have to admit, what He was about to reveal far exceeded anything I could ever imagine.

This short introduction will not suffice; you will need to listen to the message in its entirety. However, I will say this; the plan of cycling through the Torah portions, year-after-year, ending with Deuteronomy 34 and beginning immediately again with Genesis 1, is a double-edged sword. On one edge, by repeating the cycle we learn to recognize and rehearse the amazing patterns from the Torah that inspire New Testament

teachings again and again. And, on the other edge, it seems to have engrained something ominous into mankind's psyche. Why? Because just when it's time to cross the Jordan into the Promised Land, we learn to STOP! Go back to the beginning and start all over again.

And isn't that precisely what all of mankind has done, repeatedly? It's the story of man: command, fail, repent, forgiven... repeat. What are the possibilities if we just keep going? Instead of Deuteronomy and back to Genesis, let's march straight ahead into Joshua. Let's go over the wall! Let's break free of this earth's gravitational pull. Gravity is a natural phenomenon by which all things with mass are brought toward one another, the force of attraction between any two masses. One mass is mankind, the other is sin! In other words, we are strongly attracted to the gravitational pull of being a sinful human; but what if we just went forward? What if we accepted that we are no longer just human? What if we brought an end to the beginning? Let's dare to cross the finish line, accelerate a little, and scale that wall. What's on the other side? I think it's what we've all been looking for. Dare we believe? Might we look in the mirror one day and see the glory of the Lord staring back at us? Dare we believe?

BAPTISM ON DRY GROUND

SERMON RESOURCE: [Baptism on Dry Ground](#)

A herald is going out to the Church calling all Christians to radical, grace-empowered, faith-based obedience—obedience to God that will overtake every aspect of your life. The time has come to answer this mysterious prophetic question. What will it take to become perfect, to reach the stature and fullness of Christ? Asked another way: how will Christ become fully formed in you? Unraveling this mystery has been a problem avoided for centuries—and when any attempt is made to solve it, the most common solution is death. We must literally die to become like Christ!

We have become convinced that the only way to reach Paul’s lofty goal, “Imitate me as I imitate Christ,” to emulate the perfect life of Christ, is to die. That strange doctrine alone is responsible for more Christians living excuse-filled lives than any other. In other words, being alive is the perfect excuse to sin. This has become ingrained into Christian thinking; “Why even consider Christlike perfection when I have the perfect excuse to remain imperfect? Since sin is a forgone conclusion, while I live and breathe, I can’t be expected or responsible to truly become like Christ. There is no practical plan for humanity to exercise complete power

over sin on this side of eternity. There's no way for me to stop sinning until I'm dead. Therefore, to become like Jesus is reserved for the afterlife, or more precisely, it is an after-death experience."

King David did something 3000 years ago that few other men in history would dare to do. His approach should shed some light on God's heart to change those erroneous assumptions about sin! Maybe there is an actual plan for humans to achieve what Christ commanded. "You shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect." What did David do? He anticipated what God desired and was bold enough to declare it out loud, before we see any evidence that God told him to do so! Might we do the same?

Let's get personal! What could you accomplish for God if you could foresee His divine plan—in advance, and if you were willing to act on that plan, regardless of how crazy it might seem or how risky it might be? You see, something else happened once David proved he was willing. It was astonishing, and it would not have happened otherwise. God downloaded the blueprints of His plan to the king! Might He do the same for you?

This year we will answer many questions, as we examine the magnificent prophetic framework of the Bible. As we download God's blueprints and decode His plan, we will learn to decipher the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven—Christlikeness heading the top of

our list. On our voyage to the edge of the promised land, we have thus far journeyed from captivity, through the wilderness, and now we find ourselves standing on the bank of the Jordan. It is time to cross over into your inheritance.

What is Christianity's ultimate inheritance, its promised land? And, what will it take for you to cross your Jordan? It's going to take unshakable faith, the faith of a giant slayer with the heart of David, infused with grace and moved by the Holy Spirit. Are you willing to proclaim the unthinkable with the faith of a man after God's own heart? What you will uncover is the secret that holds back the waters. Then, you can step into the river and cross over on dry ground!

You must, at this moment in history, consider your duty and calling. What is your job description in the prophetic journey of mankind? What is your role in bringing the Kingdom of Heaven to earth? For 2000 years we've prayed, "On earth as it is in heaven." But now, the time is urgent... "For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God." You are about to be revealed!

What is Christianity's promised land? It's Christlikeness; it's that on this side of the grave you no longer live in your body, but Christ lives in you, the hope of glory. And that at some prophetic moment in time, it

will be the fullness of Christ in you—perfection. That is the promised land and that is where we are going.

Come—let’s go on a journey together to unlock extraordinary mysteries. Discover that the impossible is possible. Step into the dry riverbed and walk over to your ultimate destiny. Then, take part in the most exciting events the world has ever known. “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.”

SPIRITUAL VIOLENCE

SERMON RESOURCE: [Spiritual Violence](#)

I have no doubt that the words themselves will invoke strong emotions, and you may not like them. They often settle in your soul in a certain place, very likely in the location reserved for where negative feelings go to dwell. The words are ‘violence’ and ‘violent.’ ‘Violence’ describes a type of behavior, often involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or even kill. It is an unpleasant or destructive force used for intimidation, oftentimes unlawful. Synonyms that describe ‘violent’ include brutal, savage, cruel, sadistic, barbarous, murderous, bloodthirsty, ruthless, inhumane, heartless, and merciless. These certainly reside in the home

reserved for negative emotions. Even its antonyms prove where violence undoubtedly lives in your soul: gentleness, kindness, and mildness.

Today, I will also include a few other thoughts to help add to your frame of reference. I wish to reframe violence in your mind, not to eliminate the above, just add to it. And, I'll use this bible passage to show both sides of the violence coin, how it's actually a double-edged sword. "THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN SUFFERS VIOLENCE, AND THE VIOLENT TAKE IT BY FORCE." How I defined it above certainly conveys the proper understanding of "violence" in this verse; the Kingdom of Heaven is being violated by destructive forces. But "the violent", who take it by force, is something different. It best describes the necessary actions of spiritually violent men who **MUST** use violence to fiercely defend the Kingdom against destructive forces, those who also wrestle ferociously to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Yes, proper descriptors for these men live in positive emotions territory. Think ferocious, intense, vehement, fervent, ardent, zealous, and fierce. Spiritually fierce men defend the Kingdom; ferocious men take the Kingdom by force.

These warriors protect the Kingdom and then overtake it! How? The Scripture says... by force! What kind of force? It's not what you think. It's not brute force. It's not physical force. It is spiritual force! Sure, at times it

appears like fire from heaven; but other times it overcomes the unlawful violence against the Kingdom by turning the other cheek. And then there is the intense violence of meekness, the most ferocious spiritual force of all. This is the power to do nothing when you have the power to do everything.

UNDERWATER SWIMMING

ET TU, JOSHUA?

SERMON RESOURCE: [Et tu, Joshua?](#)

Friends don't do that. It's one of those labels that has been used and abused, like love. I love my car; I love my job; I love my house; I love my dog; I love football, etc. And, I have a friend; I know a friend; I can introduce you to a friend; my friend online, etc. Every acquaintance in your social circle is your friend? And every contact in your device is a friend? And every social media follower or followed... are friends? Guess what? They are NOT your friends.

Friendship is so deep, so intimate, so binding, that it alone sits next to love on our journey to divineness. God is love; Y'shua said that. And here we have the path to that love. To your faith add virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, and brotherly kindness. Only then do we arrive at love, His divine nature. Did you catch it? Brotherly kindness is friendship; and you must add friendship to godliness before you can love! Friends know one another, understand one another, trust one another, believe in one another, and are faithful to one another. Friendship describes a closeness so close that it would surrender itself for another.

As such, you might now agree that you don't have any friends on your social media platforms; you aren't following actual friends in your "friend list." Neither are you being followed by friends! Maybe you have a friend or two in your thousands of device contacts, maybe, but that's about it.

All this, and yet Y'shua calls us friends. Abraham was called God's friend; Moses too was a friend of God. That is some pretty exclusive company. Y'shua kept Peter, James and John in His inner circle. That is why they alone were on the mountain with Him when He revealed what the future held for mankind; very exclusive company! All such deep intimacy, and still Y'shua includes us in His inner circle; He calls us friends.

And if friendship is such an exclusive binding relationship, how much does it hurt when a friend betrays you? How painful is it when the one who should know you best forgets who you are, has a lapse in memory about your history together, loses trust in you, or purposely separates from you? It's an awful thing to slip into the endless list of those "friended" online, those who don't really know you—those who NEVER knew you.

Joshua had an extensive history with Yahweh. He was there for it all. He stood by Moses' side. He spied out the land and returned with the good report. He witnessed every indescribable miracle during Israel's

deliverance from Egypt, and every supernatural provision in the wilderness. He was the single man anointed to carry the torch into the promised land, and through him God orchestrated holding back the flood waters of the Jordan, so His people could pass over on dry ground. Joshua certainly had a victorious entry! The walls of Jericho had fallen and he was on the way to Israel's next conquest.

Then, there was one small setback and Joshua goes completely sideways! He sinks right to the bottom and joins the faceless list of those who have no history with God; he goes utterly blank. It feels like an absolute betrayal and Yahweh will have NO part of it. "Get up Joshua, and stop your sniveling! Of all people, you should know better. We have an extensive history together! How can you forget My personal guarantee? 'Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for Yahweh your God is with you wherever you go.' Plus, you know very well how much I hate whining. Grumbling and complaining will get you nothing but a giant slap down. Get up, pull up your pants and be a big boy. Figure out what went wrong and fix it, or I will. Oh, and if I have to do it, it will be much, much worse for everyone!"

A RELAXED VOICE

SERMON RESOURCE: [A Relaxed Voice](#)

I could not think of a better way to introduce this subject than to pepper you with a spray of soundbites. Generally I am against Christian one-hit-wonders, or should I say one-verse-wonders? But, this compilation of platinum singles really amalgamated like a precision missile strike.

Why have you deceived us? Because you did not ask counsel of the Lord. You fight and war, yet you do not have because you do not ask; you ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss. Then Joshua spoke to the Lord; ‘sun, stand still,’ and the Lord heeded the voice of a man. Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord had said; then the land rested from war. We are more than conquerors through Him who loves us. Come to Me and I will give you rest. Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you; everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us; and whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. Whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments

and do what is pleasing in His sight. You will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Peace, be still! And the wind ceased. And most inspiring of all: “Lazarus, come forth! Loose him from those graveclothes, and let him go.”

After that barrage you might be left wondering, “Who is foolish enough to not ask? And who is stubborn enough to not follow the strict guidelines of asking? In other words, what parameters ensure that asking is met with a favorable response?”

The Bible is replete with examples of natural phenomena set on a collision course with the supernatural. Mountains get tossed into the sea; oceans separate; raging rivers hit invisible barriers; gale force winds cease; and the sun stands still in the sky, motionless, at the sound of a man’s voice. How does this happen? And could you duplicate such cataclysmic authority? “I believed and therefore I spoke.” Maybe you can and maybe you can’t, but one thing is for sure, you can’t unless you ask.

So, we are left with just two options: do not ask the counsel of the Lord, or speak to the Lord and witness the sun stand still! I don’t know about you, but I will simply ask these two questions again. “Who is foolish enough to not ask?” And, “Who is stubborn enough to not follow the strict guidelines of asking?” Oh,

and when you do get around to asking, do it with a relaxed voice!

THE PROMISE REMAINS

SERMON RESOURCE: [The Promise Remains](#)

Why do you call me Lord and not do things that I say? It's a great question! In modern vernacular we might even call it a reality check. And they can range quite a bit, these reality checks, from mild reminders and friendly nudges to harsh warnings and hostile shoves. It all depends on you. Are you receiving the message? Is reality getting through to you?

Now, there is a word that needs some clarification—reality. We can't just assume. I mean, maybe we could at another time in history. But in a universe in which we cannot even distinguish between a man and a woman, I can't safely assume anything. Reality should be simple to define, but it isn't. Reality has become relative. Now, if there was EVER an oxymoron it is that...reality is relative.

Relative: existing or possessing a specified characteristic only in comparison to something else; not absolute; a fair degree of; comparative, qualified, modified... Impossible! Reality CANNOT be some degree of something. Reality is absolute. Reality is truth.

So, I will again ask; is reality getting through to you? Is absolute truth getting through? Well, when it is not, we get gentle reminders, and if we still remain dense we get disturbing and uncomfortable reminders. Then, at some point we must pick a side—definitively. The Master has gone away, but blessed is the servant whom his Master finds doing what he is supposed to be doing when the Master returns. Oh, and if you didn't catch that, what the Master expects you to do is the **ONLY** reality that matters! But, there is **ANOTHER** reality you should wholly avoid, not another as if there is an alternative truth, but another as in the other side of the same coin.

Yes, the Master has gone away and is returning soon. One reality is this; “Blessed is the servant whom his Master finds doing what he is supposed to be doing when the Master returns.” And the “alternate reality?” “Cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites!” Can we all agree that you'd be better off letting those mild nudges that sometimes become brutal shoves do a work in you. Why? Because the “alternate reality” is sharper than a two edged sword and it will shred you to ribbons!

APOSTOLIC FOOTPRINTS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Apostolic Footprints](#)

He has done so much for you already. Are you permitted to feel dissatisfied? I guess it depends on why? There is a very fine line between ungrateful discontentment with what the Lord has already provided and knowing that He has more for you. I am 100% convinced that the Bible teaches this, so you must be able to determine when you ought to feel satisfied—completely fulfilled, and when you ought to press into Yahweh for something more.

Distinguishing which attitude is appropriate at any moment has everything to do with God’s plan for mankind, and for you personally—your specific purpose and dreams. To abide in the Lord, to immerse yourself completely in His will, means you must expand your imagination beyond human limitations. I like to think of it like this; if you can imagine it, then Yahweh has even more for you. Paul says, “Be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God, and glorify Him who is, with His power working in us, able to do immeasurably more than all we ask, think or imagine.”

I like that! But, what does “immeasurably more” even mean? Are you supposed to let your imagination run wild—demand satisfaction for every desire? No, it

always hinges on knowing God's will and His promises. It's worth repeating a thousand times! To your faith, first add virtue! If your first step forward in any decision or desire is not virtuous, seeking the Lord's heart, will, direction and approval, then your next step will always be into the abyss.

However, when you seek God's heart and hear His voice, and you willingly submit to His direction and approval, you are then free to be as bold as imaginable. Take down a giant, lay down with lions, strangle a bear, open an ocean, hold back a raging river, and occupy a mountain. Sometimes God wants you to take more land, occupy higher ground, maybe even seize more authority.

However, once you are certain God is waiting on you, before He releases more, it's time to go boldly before His throne to ask for it, even at the risk of seeming dissatisfied. "Thank you Yahweh, what You've provided is amazing, but it's not complete; I'm certain there is more." Trust me, at times that is exactly what you ought to pray. However, following your bold request, it is critical you apply two safeguards. First, when Yahweh grants more, "**Take it!**" Even if you have to work for it, or it looks scary, or it looks impossible; take it because it's a guarantee. And secondly, when Yahweh grants more, take "**It!**" Stop asking; don't you dare request something different!

PICK A VOWEL

SERMON RESOURCE: [Pick a Vowel](#)

It's encouraging when God's people get it right. It doesn't happen very often—unfortunately. In fact, it's more common in biblical narratives to witness God's people make foolish choices, rather than wise decisions. And sometimes it is the smallest nuance that separates the will of God from the will of man.

We might even say that the biblical narrative continues today. Really, other than that the reports are not being written in a book, THE BOOK, can't we say that there has been one continuous story since creation—our story? It's easy to overlook, but the Bible does seem to support this idea; “You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly you are an epistle of Christ.” And might we even agree that we still get it wrong more times than not? Look around at how common it is for God's people to ruin their testimonies. It's so predictable that worldly onlookers have come to expect it from Christians—many using the apparent hypocrisy as fuel to stay far away from the Church.

What separates a good witness from the bad is often just one small thing: a jot, a tittle, a yod, an iota, a small stroke of the pen—one letter. It's easy to alter

things, to change them in subtle ways that make them sound the same, but they're not. One small letter transforms the Altar into an alter. And for Christians there's only One Altar. "We have an Altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat." Are you eating from that Altar or another?

It's not always easy to tell, but I can tell you it's easy. It's as easy as reading a letter and recognizing letters. "You are an epistle of Christ known and read by all men." And all it takes to alter your Altar is to exchange one small vowel in one small word with one small stroke of a pen—a jot, a tittle, a yod, an iota. Ask the right questions and it will be easy to tell if someone is worshipping the alter or at the Altar.

There was a song popularized in 1969 about worshipping the "alter of self." Its title—My Way. Its most famous letters screamed of self; "I did it my way!" It's what happens when you alter letters. Apparently, those who worship at the true Altar sing a different song—His Way. Its letters sing... "What is His name, and what is His Son's name, if you know? Every word of God is pure; do not change one letter, lest you be found worshipping at the wrong alter."

INTERSPECIES MARRIAGE

SERMON RESOURCE: [Interspecies Marriage](#)

You feel like you're all in. You use all the words and you sport the tidy little package called modern Christianity. You live in the world but are no longer part of the world, at least that's the party line. Yet, you cannot overlook the obvious, you are here... "in the world." It's all around you; they are all around you. They live among you; that is an unavoidable fact. Among you, yes, but in you? That is the part that is completely optional.

There's the rub; that is the choice. You are in the world, but is the world in you? The scriptures teach, nay they warn, do not intermarry—do not consummate with those who live among you who are not of you. If you do, they will get in you and you will get in them. It will be as if your thin fragile parchment became bonded with theirs, glued over every square inch to one another. Just try to separate them, to tear them one from the other, and all you will produce is fragments of both, still laminated together.

It only gets worse when one tampers with their witness. What might that look like? Oh, it's likely much more common than you notice on any regular basis. Included in this species are all those who would swear that they are following the Lord. But, they're not. And,

you might not easily notice them because they work tirelessly to look good on the outside. Survival instincts prevail when animals are desperate to stay alive. This species will do anything necessary to appear like they are committed to the Lord, even though they happily consummate their relationship with the world daily.

Are you using your animal survival instincts to substitute a sin that is harder to recognize, for one that is obvious, just so you can remain undetected among those who care about sin? It's just like sowing tares among the wheat. It's all kosher on the packaging; it's facon bacon. If you are hiding, only one question remains—are you simply struggling with sin, or do you not care? God has no problem dealing with your sin, as long as you do! It's when you don't struggle with your sin, when your sin does not bother you, that God's anger burns. If you are wrestling against entanglements with the affairs of the world, tempted to carry a label that makes you appear right with God, like imitation crab, then there's good news—when you are weak, He is strong. But, if you feel no regret or guilt about your sins and addictions, you may sadly discover that both pieces of parchment were cut from the same animal all along.

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR

SERMON RESOURCE: [Best Supporting Actor](#)

They had reached the edge of the river. On the other side lived all the promises of the Father. All they had to do is step in and cross over. In your mind, no doubt, this imagery paints the Israelites at the bank of the Jordan looking over at the promised land. Yet, for Christians there's more, so much more. Crossing over means finding rest, and rest means you have come to live in such a place that faith, and I mean complete faith, has become the blood that flows in your arteries and veins. Your faith is the lifeblood that is pushed around by your every heartbeat.

In Christian vernacular rest means Christlike perfection, and perfection means that the Kingdom of Heaven has become the pulse bounding from your beating heart. In other words, God's heartbeat has become your heartbeat. And nowhere is the heartbeat of God better felt than in the Gospel narrative of Matthew—reading it is as if you are pressed against God's bosom. I “fear” the Gospels! They are His Holy Ground! Dare we step on that soil with dirty feet. Dare we echo His words with unclean lips. Cross over, yes, take a strong stand on the land He has promised, but do so with reverence, awe and extreme gratitude, for such

privilege would be unimaginable, had He not synchronized our hearts with His.

Dare you step over? The best way to keep your heartbeat synchronized with God's is to listen and obey, regardless of what you hear. Dare you go to that place? It's scary, but maybe it's okay, for a while, to feel like a wounded bird, flying in circles, searching for a perch on which to land, knowing you won't find one just yet, at least not now.

This comes to mind if we stay with the imagery of our wounded bird—imagine a homing pigeon. They are locked onto from where they came and they are trained to return, to end up at their origin, no matter how far the journey—no matter how long it takes. You were crafted in God's image and you are being trained to return to that image, no matter how far the journey—no matter how long it takes. What does that training look like? Listen for His voice; it's calling you home! And, obey immediately, or your journey will take so much longer than necessary, and might even end in tragedy.

The early chapters of Matthew demonstrate this perfectly. Joseph was pressed into God's bosom, locked onto His voice; and had he not been or had he not obeyed immediately, history altering tragedies would have ensued at each stage of his instruction. Everything, and I mean everything hinges on your ears to hear God's heart and your willingness to obey—and I mean

everything! So, home in, even if you have to fly in circles for a while!

TIME NEVER FAILS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Time Never Fails](#)

Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. There are so many critical prophetic ideas stirring, as we are introduced to the essential ministry of John the Baptist, and as we witness him baptize the Son of God. It's a moment in time that will change everything. We simply must take pause to appreciate how this event amalgamates so many prophetic concepts. If you try to integrate them all at once in your brain, it will likely make your head spin. But let's try it anyway.

It's an inflection point in history, let's call it a prophetic moment, when time folds in on itself and we are permitted to see the past, present and future together in an instant. John doesn't have a clue, although you would think he would; he's well-aware of the prophecies about his life. He came in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the way, and to turn hearts. But, he doesn't really grasp it. He takes one look at the Christ, the lamb of God, the savior of the world, and immediately he feels to shrink away. "I can't baptize You;

I'm not even worthy to touch Your sweaty feet and Your filthy sandals."

Time stands still in that moment; Y'shua pauses to correct John, and you. You? Yes, because you would have made the same error. He must reset the prophetic clock, because time never fails, like love never fails. To John, and to all who will ever read these words: "Permit it to be so NOW, for thus IT is fitting for US to fulfill all righteousness." Permit "it," permit it "now," and permit it for "us," because time never fails and because if you don't, all the prophecies, past, present, and future crumble into dust. What is "it"? It is time to baptize the Christ, so the Father might affirm from heaven, "This is My Son...He is the One." And why "now"? Because it is time to punctuate Y'shua's ministry. It's time to congeal all the prophecies concerning the coming Kingdom into one concise moment. And why "us"? Because John is not the only one who comes in the spirit and power of Elijah.

Y'shua opens John's eyes, and ours; John, you are here to prepare the way in the wilderness, and I am about to go there for My preparation test. You started it when you said, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" And I am going to finish it the same way. But, this time the whole world will know what that Kingdom is, because I will be staring at them right in the face! To

John, and to everyone in the future who reads these words: “It is time, and time never fails.”

ON COLLISION COURSE!

SERMON RESOURCE: [On Collision Course!](#)

If I say “Law,” you most likely recoil. Humans don’t really like rules and regulations and laws. Let’s be honest, it’s much more instinctual to do what we want, to satisfy our own thoughts and desires, without being restricted and constricted by a set of parameters. Nobody wants to be told what to do, at least not naturally. It’s something we must grow into, before we can become good at it, if ever.

And to further complicate the matter, as Christians, we have been taught, for the better part of two thousand years, that Christ fulfilled all the requirements of the Law, thus relieving us of our obligation to be bothered with such legalism. In other words, the burden of obeying rules and regulations is covered by the blood of Jesus, and we are freed from any concern we might have about adhering to those outdated laws.

Furthermore, as a free religious people, we have engaged in every type of mental gymnastics to reconcile a few dozen verses in the Bible, to insure this “freed

from the Law” theology would be propagated all throughout Christian history, and its now tens of thousands of denominations. Here is the slogan which best unites nearly all Christian brands: “Grace good; Law bad!”

And yet, if we peek just below the surface of this religion-wide theological treatise, we find it is built on very shaky ground, loose soil at best, and quicksand at worst. Disturb the ground a little and the whole house of cards crumbles, and fairly easily at that! Keep fighting and struggling to defend it, and you will be swallowed up in the soupy sand all around you. And still, Christians everywhere argue passionately to find loopholes to God’s commands, at every turn. I call it “Loophole Christianity.”

I often ask, “Why are you so intent on finding creative ways to not obey God? Why are you wrestling to figure out reasons to avoid doing what God requires? Was not Y’shua’s sacrifice enough to make you want to obey God, no matter what He asks of you? Why do you believe God’s desire was to free you from the requirement to obey a handful of Biblical laws after you were born-again, when every other law in the universe that God created still applies to you?” If you don’t think so, just toss yourself off a cliff and see what happens!

It’s really nuts; the one people group on the planet who should be racing to do whatever God asks,

no matter what, is the same people group who fight and argue and search for every excuse to avoid doing so. Oh, we are very happy to comply with all sorts of other requirements, the ones our man-made denominations uploaded to the new-and-improved version of Christianity, But, obey the Laws of God, that's legalism!

We are not going to dismantle every poorly parsed verse in the New Testament in this study, no. What we will do is recognize this. Y'shua made the standards much harder than any set of Laws written down by Moses. He has set our human nature on a collision course with the Kingdom of Heaven. Another way to look at it is this; He requires us to do every sort of thing that is the exact opposite of our human instincts. No, He did not, could not, change His Father's commands; but He did do two things. He revealed what were the deeper and even more difficult requirements of His Father's Laws, and then He empowered us to obey them! In other words, the cliff is much higher than you ever imagined, and when you fall off, He provides wings, and if your wings fail, a parachute. Oh, and it does not end there. After you hit bottom, you get free transport back to the top of the cliff, so you can try, try again.

TOMORROW NEVER COMES

SERMON RESOURCE: [Tomorrow Never Comes](#)

Reckless Abandon... that's what comes to mind. If you knew this was all you had, this one last day, twenty-four hours, how would you live? What would you do? Would you check tomorrow's weather? Would you be obsessed with your 401K or your long-term investments? Would you be focussed on the security of your retirement? "Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be?" That is what Y'shua thought of such concerns.

Reckless Abandon... without care or regard for consequences, living with a rash, unrestrained impulsiveness, enthusiasm, or zeal. It combines the sense of carelessness with the idea of yielding oneself to an action or impulse without restraint. Jump in wholeheartedly, perhaps impulsively, and with no concern for consequences or danger; that's reckless abandon.

Okay, that sounds a bit, well, reckless! So, let's add wise biblical guide-rails before anyone listening skydives without a parachute or decides to skinny dip with piranhas. Temper the concept of living with reckless abandon by removing certain negative thoughts that display a lack of wisdom. Remove rash, impulsive,

careless and without restraint from the life we ought to live. And then reframe consequences and danger as permitted only if the cause is for God. Taking unnecessary risks, those that could not possibly produce fruit for the Kingdom, is both senseless and foolish. And then reinsert restraint by qualifying every choice with first seeking God's heart on the matter—if He approves, then go for it without restraint. What remains is a life of unrestrained enthusiasm and zeal for the things that matter most to God. It's a life yielded wholeheartedly in service to God and others, with no concern for the consequences or danger, as long as you are advancing His Kingdom.

Now, design your life of reckless abandon for God. It would look something like this. "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow can worry about itself. Sufficient for today is what today brings." Today is all you have; you don't need to worry about tomorrow today; tomorrow's worries can irritate you and occupy your thoughts tomorrow. And the greatest benefit about putting off your worries until tomorrow is that... tomorrow never comes.

It's time to face the dominant source of your preoccupation. It's obvious if you'll be honest with yourself, although it might be painful to admit. And if you overthink this exercise, you're at high risk of catching

what's going around in the rationalization and self-deception pandemic, and the truth will remain elusive.

Here's the assignment. There are only two options: things of the world and things of God. To which do you dedicate most of your efforts—your time, resources, thoughts, and energy? Is your major concern for the provisions of the world and that is what dominates your efforts? That, according to Christ, is the pagan way of life. Or, is your main focus on the priorities of God, the things of the Kingdom of Heaven? If your rationalization and self-deception immune system defense was triggered, you already know the answer. There is no treatment for this disease if you ignore the proper diagnosis.

We learn from Christ that assessing one's accomplishments in life should never be measured by the abundance of the things he possesses. Why? Because he who accumulates earthly treasures as a measure of success and security, is not rich toward God. And in the end, concern about such worldly things should be designated to the proper time—never!

SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION

SERMON RESOURCE: [Six Degrees of Separation](#)

I don't decide what is true; I just report it. And quite frankly, it does not matter if you like it or not. Truth does not bias itself; and it has no allegiance to anything, other than itself. And maybe the worst part about the truth is that it hurts sometimes. You've heard that phrase, haven't you? Here's why it hurts. The truth exposes pretense, everything that isn't right, real and authentic; and unfortunately for many of us, gentle Jesus is a specialist in truth.

“Truly, truly I say to you...” Y’shua said that twenty five times in John’s Gospel. And that leading phrase with a single “truly” appears fifty additional times in the other three Gospels. “Truly” is the word translated as Amen, from both the Greek and the Hebrew, and when it inaugurates an idea, it claims something about the nature of the truth that follows. It asserts that the claimant has intimate, personal, and firsthand knowledge about, and authority over the subject matter. When repeated, as in “truly, truly,” it is an almost audacious claim from Y’shua that the truth that follows is His own original idea. Y’shua is saying that He is not merely aware of these truths, He is the originator and author of them. That itself was revolutionary! Why?

What is so rattling about Y'shua staking claim to those original ideas? Sure, claiming that an idea is original is both radical and presumptuous. But, it becomes even more tortuous when we overlay Y'shua's assertion that He also said nothing, other than what His Father told Him to say. Think about the implications of His claim; "This truth originates from Me, and I only echo My Father's words." So, how could all those ideas have originated from Him, unless... unless He was also boldly proclaiming that He and His Father are ONE? This too is a radical paradigm-shifting revelation, truth worthy of, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM; and He who has seen Me has seen the Father."

It's time to grab the shovel! Dust off the archeologist's pick. Sharpen the scalpel; we are about to do some exploratory truth surgery! We are going to unpack the truths that literally separate God's people from everyone else. Are you willing to square off with reality; to become completely vulnerable to truth? If you dare submit yourself to this experimental procedure, first sign off on the release of liability—because someone is going to get hurt. Yes, too often the truth hurts.

Let's get started, but to participate you must be willing to measure your temperature by each of these six degrees of separation. Truly, truly... (1) submit yourself to an intense sober self-examination; (2) expose your deepest inner desires; (3) pick the gate that leads to

either the wide or narrow road; (4) let others taste the fruit that grows on your tree; (5) look into the mirror and face your real identity; (6) and choose the foundation on which to build your life. Oh, and if you think you can fake any of it, know this: “Truly, truly, no one can hide from the Originator of truth; all things are naked and exposed to Him, and you will be held accountable to everything He sees, which is, well, everything—truly, truly.

LET THE DEAD BURY THE DEAD

SERMON RESOURCE: [Let the Dead Bury the Dead](#)

Water finds the path of least resistance. Want proof? Just place a barrier into any stream, and the water will simply find the easy way around it. It won't first choose to climb over the barrier. It would only do that if its path is blocked completely, otherwise it takes the way of least opposition. Pour water on any flat surface and it seeks to descend into every crack and indentation. Water would rather go lower than sit on top.

Disciples, unfortunately, cannot take the same easy way around as does water. When obstacles block their progress, disciples must choose to stay on top, to take the high ground; they must opt for the hard road. In fact, Y'shua often separated Himself and moved to higher ground, or to the other side of the sea, or He delivered

an impossible message, just to separate who would follow from those who would take the path of least resistance. The journey of a disciple begins with some miraculous encounter with the Lord and then moves to this phase; “Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.” And then Y’shua challenges your offer with some version of this; “Okay, let’s get started! Here is what you can expect as one of My followers; it will be a life of zero possessions, zero comfort, zero security and zero certainty. Still want to follow?”

And, as soon as it does not appear to be all sunshine and rainbows, too often the would-be follower reacts with some form of excuse: I’m coming, but let me go check my work schedule first; or let me get the approval of my wife; or let me calculate the current valuation of my stock portfolio; or let me evaluate the condition of my business ventures, so I can determine if it’s a good time for me. Note to self: it’s NEVER a good time!

Other times the disciple-to-be bypasses the “I’ll get back to you phase” altogether, and just fast-tracks his excuse, conceding quickly to his wind-blown thinking, “Thank you, but no thank you; I changed my mind.” It’s a life of excuses that fuels the easy way around, rather than a life of reasons; reasons to energize a leap over the barrier; or reasons to empower knocking it down; or

reasons to simply exercise the patience necessary to wait in front of it, until it crumbles before your faith.

Then there are those who do jump right in, but when it gets challenging, that is when they change their minds; their past life starts to look so good again. As such, they return to their old ways and never look back. Others have even convinced themselves that they really did choose to follow, only to realize when pressed that they never actually joined in the first place. They are easily exposed as being completely unprepared when asked, “Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?” Such a question leaves them speechless. If that is you, things will end very badly.

I guess the question remains, “Which type of ‘disciple’ are you?” When He says, “Follow Me into a life of zero possessions, zero comfort, zero security and zero certainty!” do you tell Him you will get back to Him after you check your schedule; that you might have some dead bodies to bury. Or do you say, “Lord, to whom else shall I go? You are the only One with the words of eternal life.” And for good doctrine’s sake, let’s make this clear; the only true disciple is the one who sees “zero” as a perfectly acceptable option!

PRACTICUM

SERMON RESOURCE: [Practicum](#)

Let My people go! Those words were made famous when Moses echoed the heart of God in the presence of an obstinate king. At first, Moses was resistant; He was not an eloquent man. “What could I say? I don’t speak well. The best I can do is mutter and stutter a few words, certainly nothing a king would take seriously.” It would seem Moses was somewhat correct, as seven times he made that demand, each falling on deaf ears. But in the end, God did release His people to go, and the journey began for those who would soon become His bride at Mt. Sinai.

Everything that led up to the moment of their release is recorded in the catalogue of miracles, signs and wonders. God’s supernatural involvement continued as they headed toward the sea and then across. And His supernatural intervention kept coming as they wandered. In a sense, Israel was conditioned by supernatural encounters. They had witnessed ten plagues and the protection of a lamb’s blood. They watched a wall of darkness rise to hold back the most powerful military in the world, while the same cloud gave them light. They stood still to observe a small stick held over an ocean—powerful enough to part the

waters, leaving a dry ocean bed. Yes, you could say they had become conditioned by the supernatural. And it didn't end there. They drank water from a rock, ate bread from heaven, and wore shoes that never got old. And that strange cloud that protected them by the sea guided them on their journey, both day and night, its fiery glow lighting their way in the darkness. And it all began with four words, "Let My people go!"

Many generations later, our blessed Savior gathered His original twelve disciples, who had also been conditioned by witnessing the supernatural, and He conferred on them an apostleship; "Be My sent ones!" But, instead of making demands of an obstinate king to "Let My people go!" He now was the King making demands of His people; "Let's go My people!" Maybe He was even more direct; "Go My People!" Perhaps He took a more informative approach, "I let my people go." Or possibly He chose to be more instructive, "My people are let go." Irregardless of which technique He implored, we know this... He was not demanding something from a king; He was the King demanding something from His people.

This was His sentiment... "You were introduced to the Kingdom of Heaven; you learned the truth about what your faith was always meant to be in My lengthy sermon on the mountain; and then you witnessed the supernatural in action—now it's your turn to go and do. I

am commissioning you, giving you the authority to perform all the miracles you've witnessed in Me. And I am certain you will feel just as Moses did, completely ill-equipped to speak on My behalf. But, don't concern yourself one bit. You are not there to speak your own words anyway. My words will fill your mouth at the moment you need them."

"And I am certain you are wondering if you will face pushback, rejection and persecution in the company of your own people, your own family, and also when you face secular leaders. Let Me put a rest to your wondering—you will! But, don't worry; if someone could steal your soul, then I'd say you should be concerned, but it's only your body they can harm, and for that you need not fear. And I am certain you are concerned about provision—food, clothing, shelter and money—don't be. "Don't worry; pagans worry about such things. And your heavenly Father knows what you need." Just go, build your faith muscle; it's time to transition from witness to participant, from taker to giver, from someone who sees and hears, to someone who does!"

PILLOWS OF DOUBT

SERMON RESOURCE: [Pillows of Doubt](#)

How long have you identified yourself as a believer, a child of God, a Christian? One month? One Year? Five years? Or, five minutes? I don't know that it really matters, because regardless of how long, undoubtedly you have had doubts. Someone or some thing, people and circumstances, have challenged your belief system—rattled your faith.

In Scripture, we see the very same doubts that show up in our own lives working even in the lives of the most steadfast of Bible characters. These doubts are often fueled by gossip or someone's personal opinion. What a shame it is to be influenced by another's wrong assessments, false reports or any form of gossip, when likely they gained their information from mostly erroneous assumptions, baseless allegations, and downtrodden misrepresentations. Taking cues from someone living in a world of unmet expectations, a person carrying their own bag of doubts, is unwise. And you can be sure they feel they are accurately portraying truth and reporting facts, when in reality they are just passing on bad information.

Today we witness the solid and steadfast John the Baptist, very likely acting on information that fluffed

up pillows of doubt, causing him to question the very thing he had been preaching. The prophet sent by Yahweh to make the crooked paths straight—raised up to prepare the way for the King of kings and Lord of lords, had himself become rattled.

We often read today's passage and what immediately catches our attention is that John has sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus if He is really the One, or should he look for another? Yes, John, the same John who proclaimed, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" was now asking, "Are you really the Lamb of God?" Bizarre, right? Yet, it happens all too often.

If we assess John's question, we might come to a few different conclusions. One is that John was changing course on Jesus altogether; He's not the coming Messiah. Another could be that he was just having some "doubts" based on frustration, or impatience, or discomfort. He was, after all, locked up in a nasty prison. It is also possible that he had hopes, as most Jews at the time, that the Messiah would be a powerful military figure, arriving to free Israel from their oppressive captors. Or, maybe he was simply afraid that his days were numbered, and he was just confirming that his certain death was for the right reason.

Setting aside the need to know exactly why, we must still conclude John doubted Jesus. It is also very

likely he didn't get there on his own. He certainly had plenty of help from his own disciples who had their own erroneous conclusions that the coming Messiah would be a "warrior and reigning king." Their unmet expectations and wrong assumptions caused them to pass on bad information, casting pillows of doubt over John, not the best type on which to lay his imprisoned head, one soon to be separated from his shoulders.

Sadly enough, John did not get to see the fruits of his own ministry. And by and large, that too forms the bedrock of our very own pillows of doubt. Not tasting the fruit of your labor, or seeing an immediate return on your investment into the Kingdom of God, can be very destabilizing to your faith. Does this happen to you? Are you resting your head on such pillows—pillows of doubt? And worse yet, are those doubts being fueled by the baggage and bad information from fellow believers?

Today's section of scripture is packed with personal and prophetic subject matter. Jesus, as always, is so masterful at bringing His disciples to the place where they recognize the correct answer to the one question He asks that matters most to every human; "Who do YOU say that I am?"

RELIGIONSHIP or RELATIONSHIP

SERMON RESOURCE: [Religionship or Relationship](#)

People love systems and procedures. There is nothing inherently wrong with that. In fact, God designed humans with a built-in recording system, one that can be programmed to memorize systems and procedures to your great advantage. The recording mechanism is the nervous system, with countless interconnections between nerves throughout the body. One property of the system is that the more often you send signals down a certain path, messages that jump in a specific order from one nerve to the next to produce a desired action, the more locked-in that pathway becomes. It's like the busiest roadways in the largest cities; have you seen them? The endless passing tires carve out grooves in the roads. Or, like a river that cuts a channel into a mountain because it has flowed there for a thousand years.

However, what's even more stunning about the nervous system is that if the pathway is not efficient, it will grow new connections, novel pathways that are shorter and straighter, which are then memorized to run on automatic. What advantage does this serve? Well, just think about tying your shoelaces. Or better yet, don't think about it! And that's the point; you don't have

to think about it. You have repeated the pattern so often that now all you have to do is initiate the path and it seems to run on autopilot. You can do just about anything and tie your shoes at the same time. People that play musical instruments learn patterns and eventually their fingers do the walking with what appears to be no conscious effort. In both cases it did not start out like that. It was a repetitive step-by-step process, until it became “natural.” The pattern of message transmission has, in a sense, carved efficient paths, like tire grooves in a road or river channels through a mountain. And there are so many other examples in which these efficient patterns of message transmission are advantageous: typing, sports, dancing, driving, professional skills, etc. The nervous system learns efficient pathways, builds new connections as needed—then the nerves fire on autopilot to produce consistent reproducible actions—in other words, methodical duplicatable patterns that seem unconscious.

We humans seem to use this type of system-building in just about everything, and most times it is beneficial. However, when we apply these system-building tendencies to relationships, things don't go so smoothly. It seems that humans don't respond well to their connections with loved ones being overridden by an oblivious system that requires no conscious effort, no

thoughtfulness. No one wants to be in a mechanical relationship that is built on autopilot—human connections nurtured by “methodical duplicatable patterns that seem unconscious.” And let me assure you, nor does God.

When we build our relationship with God into a system of rules and procedures—that is called religion. And when we insist others adhere to our preferred system of rules and procedures—that is called legalism. Legalism is equivalent to strangle-ism. It’s the way we choke the life out of our relationship with God. God is not interested in your legalism or your religion; He is, nevertheless, interested in a relationship. Don’t turn your relationship with God into a religionship with God. If you do, you will actually be worshipping a God of your own creation, one who would command you to sit back and rest on the Sabbath, while you watch a man suffer. You will have created a God who would prefer you to strictly adhere to Sabbath rules, rather than heal a man who had been suffering his whole life. Trust me, if you think that the Father of our blessed Savior Y’shua would choose Sabbath prohibitions over a man’s life, you are in a religionship with Him, not a relationship.

RISING TO THE SURFACE

ALL THAT WILL BE ALREADY IS!

SERMON RESOURCE: [All That Will Be Already Is!](#)

Do you enjoy riddles? They can be both fun and frustrating, and most people find them entertaining, as long as the answer is forthcoming after sufficient effort is exerted. It may be that you solve the mystery yourself, or possibly the mystery-bearer rewards you with the meaning because of your honest effort. Either way, everyone involved can celebrate that what was once mysterious or misunderstood has now been made plain to see for all.

What is common in the riddle game, and because it is a game, is that the participants are all voluntary. Do you want to hear a riddle? If not, you are happily permitted to turn down the invitation. Maybe you are just not willing to invest the mental energy; perhaps you don't have the time, or it could be that you're just not interested—or not good at riddles. Some people find the challenge exhilarating—others irritating; no worries, it's voluntary anyway.

But, what if the riddle-solving was mandatory, part of your job description? And what if you were never given full disclosure when you took the job? And what if quitting the job is literally impossible? Literally! Suddenly the game is no longer voluntary and not at all amusing.

You are not a volunteer, but are instead being volunteered, or better said “voluntold!”

It looks something like this; “It has been given to you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.” What does that even mean? There are three parts to this riddle. First there’s a part that is very easy to miss, and quite contrary to how it looks. “It has been given...” This piece appears a bit like a gift, and isn’t accepting of a gift voluntary? Yes it is. But, this is NOT actually a gift; it’s a demand. Read it this way; “You are required to...” Ah, the gift that keeps on giving, or should I say taking. Then there is “...to you...” Who is the “you” in the riddle? This is the obvious part that anyone can solve, even those not good at riddles. You might not like the obvious, but nonetheless, the you is you! And finally, the third part, which has all the makings of a classic, almost impossible-to-solve riddle; “...to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.” What is that? And where do you even begin? And why do you suddenly have a pit in your stomach?

Let me explain. The pit is because knowing the answer is not at all voluntary; it’s required of every Christian. When you took the job as a Christian, no one told you that this was part of the job description. There are two common reasons for that. First, you wouldn’t have understood, and God designed it as such. Then, it’s likely no one around could accurately explain

anything intelligible about the mysteries of the Kingdom anyway, even those who had been in your same job for many years. That part is sad, but true. So, let me help you out. You have been voluntold to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.

You must begin by defining the Kingdom. And that is why Y'shua spoke in parables; and that is what you must learn. Let's do a practice run before we begin. Parable: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like immortal fish that multiply in the ocean..." Think it through like this: If all the fish in the sea never died, would they eventually multiply so much that they raise the level of the ocean? The answer is no! Why? Because everything that makes a fish is ALREADY in the ocean! In other words, everything that will ever be, already is! That is what the Kingdom of Heaven is like. Meditate on that and then think about how Y'shua fed thousands of people with a few morsels of food, and had an excess left over. You won't ever be relieved from your job requirement to know the mysteries of the Kingdom; but, as you become skilled at unraveling those mysteries, you will get relief from that pit in your stomach.

MAY I BORROW YOUR HANDKERCHIEF?

SERMON RESOURCE: [May I borrow Your Handkerchief?](#)

First you listen and learn; then you watch what you've learned in action; then you do it with the person from whom you've learned it; then you do it alone while you are watched by the person who taught you; then you do it alone without being watched; then you teach while someone else listens and learns; then they watch you do what they learned from you; then they do what they learned with you; then they do alone what they learned while you watch; then they do alone what they learned without being watched; then they teach what they learned to the next person who will listen.

Paul says it concisely: "The things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

Wash, rinse, repeat—it should be that simple.

Nevertheless, there are a few diagnoses that describe why this does not happen nearly as often as it ought: "daft-disciple-disorder," "self-serving-syndrome," and "greedy-gain-gangrene."

These illnesses can be found on two sides of the same counterfeit coin. One side... they just don't get it.

The other side... they do get it, but want it just to serve their own selfish desires. Yes, they sit on either side of the same counterfeit coin, separated only by the thin margin that makes the coin's edge. And in the end, they all point in the same direction; go back to square one—back to where you started, because clearly no progress has been made.

As children, we played the game Red-Light-Green-Light 1-2-3. The objective of the game is to reach the finish line without any movement being detected. From the starting line, you move forward only when the arbiter over the participants is facing away. As he calls out the game's name, you strategically advance and when the last "eeee" of the number "three" loses its audible sound, he whips his head around to catch all those trying to squeeze in one last step. If busted for moving while in his field of vision, you must go back to square one, back to the starting line, while everyone who has adhered to the rules of the game continues forward.

Paul tells us to imitate him as he imitates Christ. You imitate me as I imitate Him and others will imitate you: wash, rinse, repeat. Christ gave lesson after lesson, demonstration after demonstration. He was in the boat with them and calmed the storm; He asked them to feed thousands of hungry people and then showed them how. He sent them on the boat without Him, and then walked out on the sea to meet them, and again calmed

the storm. He presented a second occasion to feed the multitudes and yet they still asked, “Where would we get enough food in this remote wilderness to feed such a huge crowd?” And throughout it all, He healed the masses of every imaginable disease and promised us we’d do greater things one day!

If you are flipping a coin and it keeps coming up: heads you lose—tails... you lose, then you are suffering from an undiagnosed disease. I suggest you take a look at Y’shua’s playbook and learn from Him. And start living on the edge of the coin. That is where, although narrow, the seas become calm, bread forms out of thin air, and the masses are healed by simply touching your garment or the handkerchief you once held, or maybe even because they passed through your shadow. It will happen as long as you lose your daftness and stop making it all about you!

SIGN ME UP!

SERMON RESOURCE: [Sign Me Up!](#)

We are a few months into the new calendar year, but it’s not so distant that you don’t remember that feeling. You know, that “New Year’s Resolution” feeling that so many of you had. Maybe the most common tingly inspiration was the one to get in shape.

So, what did you do? You hopped in your car and went gym shopping. Keep that sentiment in mind! Try to recall exactly what that felt like.

You arrived at your first “test facility” and an eager staff member showed you the ropes. You were just as eager to look around the place because you wanted to see if it was the right fit for your fitness goals. After your tour, the way-to-enthusiastic staff member went right in for the close! And rightfully so, it’s not just their job; they believe in what they sell! “Are you ready to sign up?”

At this point, there are only three main options on the table: yes, no, and maybe. You’ve had a little taste of the facility, seen the potential advantages and benefits, maybe even watched a few gym-devotees in action and they were looking pretty good. And you eagerly respond to the pitch; “YES! SIGN ME UP!” Or maybe it a clear “no” for you. There is nothing about the place or the offer that inspires a bite or even a lick. Then there is the standard, “I think I need to think about it a little. It’s got some of what I am looking for, but I did not see exactly what I had in mind.” Welcome to modern-day Christianity!

Many people in Christendom today view following Christ the same way they look for the perfect fitness facility. If they don’t see exactly what they are looking, everything that meets their expectations, they

pass on the offer. Or, maybe the cost is a bit steep, or the people they encountered were not their “type,” so they just keep shopping around. If it’s not completely obvious this is for them, they will assuredly walk away to look for something else, just like they would in search of the perfect fitness facility, one to “fit their personal flavor and needs.”

In today’s study, Jesus calls those looking for a sign of their “perfect flavor Messiah” an “evil and adulterous generation.” This is precisely how so many modern believers either onboard and off-board their relationship with Christ. They are looking for a relationship flavor based on God’s performance in their lives, one that tastes more like a genie in a bottle. A gym membership with a holy and majestic God named Yahweh, well, that seems like way too much work with way too expensive membership dues! If they don’t see exactly what they are looking for, it’s okay to just bail, right? I want to challenge you today with these sentiments from Jesus; “Are you ready to deny yourself, lift up your cross and follow Him?” Are you ready to say, “Sign me up!?”

CLIMB YOUR MOUNTAINS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Climb Your Mountains](#)

Caracas, Venezuela is nestled in a valley, surrounded by mountains. As a Boy Scout, I was involved in some physical training that included excursions in basic mountain climbing. At first, our adventures lasted a few hours and took us only up into the lower altitudes. That's where we became acclimated to the terrain and to the lower oxygen concentration in the air. As we became stronger climbers, able to navigate more difficult landscapes and our bodies adapted to less oxygen, we were able to climb higher and higher. The summit on the coastal mountain range in Caracas, known as "The Avila," is called "Pico de Naiguata," and is situated on the border between the Venezuelan states of Miranda and Vargas.

I had no idea that what I was learning at that time in my life would play such a significant role later on. It seemed then that I was simply enjoying myself learning about nature and hanging out with my friends away from the immediate grasp of my parents. That was good enough for me! Think about it; it was an easy way to get outdoors, while at the same time having very little parental oversight. There was no way for me to know back then, at eleven years old, that God would use those experiences in nature, climbing mountains, to help craft a message decades later about the skills needed to do essential spiritual mountain climbing. The parallels are astounding!

When we read Matthew 17, it's easy to zero in on the amazing and magnificent "transformation" moment on the mountain. "And He was transfigured before them, and His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became white as light." Beyond any doubt, what this represents, and the conversation that ensues during and immediately afterwards, is the most critical topic in the chapter. Yet, don't get so transfixed that you miss something significant, the climb up the mountain itself.

How does the "climb" play out in your life as a Christian today? Is there anything significant about the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual effort it takes to climb the mountain with our Blessed Savior? At minimum, we must assume there is some effort required. And borrowing from the words that Christ Himself used so often to preface a statement, "Most assuredly I say to you," a significant effort is demanded. How significant you might fear? Allow me to use a bit of an "artistic license" to reword and combine certain pre-existing biblical concepts. Maybe in this case we will call it a "pastoral license!" "If anyone chooses to climb up the mountain with Me, he must deny his own desires and self-interests, and make significant sacrifices every day in order to follow Me."

And let's acknowledge that more often than not, it is easier to achieve things in the natural realm than in the spiritual. Climbing to the top of the mountains in your

spiritual life is significantly (there's that word again for the seventh time!) harder than strapping on a pair of boots, loading a backpack, and heading out on the trail. Let's sort out what is so significant about what it will take for you to be victorious as you "Climb Your Mountains!"

LEGAL MATTERS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Legal Matters](#)

It's a double entendre. Don't you just love how that flows off your tongue? A double entendre is when something has a twofold or double meaning. That's the simple explanation. Here it is used to describe when a single phrase is intended to amalgamate two ideas that seem to compete for precedence, into one unified concept. And as you contemplate what that means to you, and what is meant by "compete," avoid the temptation to believe that those thoughts must "oppose" one another, and rather consider that they are two lofty ideas connected to one another, yet difficult to think about simultaneously.

Double entendres birth two independent thoughts in one moment, thoughts that require intense focus and concentration, demanding the expenditure of abundant mental energy. You must discipline your mind to instantly switch between two ideas again and again,

until they blend. Maybe it's the sentence structure that changes the potential meaning, depending on how you read it, necessitating a double-take like:

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord...” or, “I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God...” or, “I say to you today you will be with Me in Paradise...” or, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God...” or, “If you've seen Me you've seen the Father because I and My father are one, and you are one just as We are One.”

Think hard! Is the voice shouting in the wilderness or is the preparation in the wilderness? Is He drinking the wine and then waiting to drink again, or is He not drinking until? Is He telling the man today about paradise or will the man be with Him in paradise today? And, are they calling Him good because only God is good and He is God, or is it that only God is good so they should not call Him good? It must be because He is one with God which makes Him both the same as the Father, but also separate and equally yoked, and so are you! So much to think about—so many double meanings that it makes your brain hurt!

Or imagine a double entendre as a phrase that might be both a noun and a description, character trait, or directive of that noun at the same moment. Consider a noun phrase like “The Narrow Road.” Yes the road

itself is narrow, plus the path traveled is less frequented because those on it are a rarer breed who must choose to do the less popular thing, because the more popular thing is the wrong thing which is more attractive.

And then there is the double entendre that inspired this message...”Legal Matters.” Any matter of law is a legal matter and all matters of law really matter. As you will soon discover, Y’shua utilized the law to navigate the rough terrain of first century legalism and to reveal just how to apply His Father’s commands in everyday life circumstances. In other words, He took the law out of the Book and used it to rule on specific legal matters, thereby turning law into case law. And He did that in two ways: the first was during actual events, like the woman accused of adultery. The second was by displaying in a fictional story how He would rule; we call those parables. Yes, parables are meant to establish case law. In both ways He operated as the chief justice of the Supreme Court of Heaven, thus setting precedent for all who would follow. Will you follow?

DILATING THE PUPILS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Dilating the Pupils](#)

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? Undoubtedly

you've heard this verse used to explain all sorts of poor decisions and bad behavior. Oftentimes it hovers over both the believer and unbeliever alike, serving to excuse, or even dismiss, what would otherwise be unacceptable. The assertion is that the heart of the redeemed person is really no different than that of the unredeemed. You know it's true. No, not that the hearts are the same, but that the verse is used so indiscriminately. Let's correct the record; you should not be surprised when a pagan acts like a pagan, but you should be very disappointed when a Christian does.

Everyday-life circumstances are very effective at exposing what's in a man's heart. Y'shua often taught His disciples lessons that would reveal their heart condition. He performed cardiac stress tests, here and there, by inserting parables about the heart into His teaching schedule. If we return to the infamous verse and read what comes next, this is what the Lord told Jeremiah: "Yahweh, searches the heart—tests the mind. And He gives every man according to his choices, according to the fruit of his actions." A few things jump off the page here. First that the heart is actually the mind. Elsewhere we learn that the Word of God exposes the thoughts and intents of the heart. It should be obvious to all that thoughts and intentions are functions of the mind. It is also apparent that we can discern what

is in a man's heart by observing his activities; let's say both his words and his actions.

But again, the challenge is about the heart of a Christian. Are we really no different? Are we no more equipped than the average pagan? Are we only equally capable? You'd think that was so each time a Christian commandeers that verse, "The heart is deceitful above all things..." and feels to use such to justify or excuse his or another's words and actions. "Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing? My brethren, these things ought not to be so."

May this be the last day, as a follower of Christ, that you erroneously lean on Jeremiah's words about a deceitful heart. Instead grab onto these from Ezekiel; "You have been given a new heart and a new spirit; your heart of stone has been removed and replaced with a heart of flesh."

Y'shua will test your heart as He does all those who sit under His teachings. And, He poses this question to every one of us. "Has My goodness uncovered any wickedness lurking in your heart?" Now, let us contemplate two additional paradigm-shattering questions. Pretend you are sitting at the feet of the King on His throne in heaven. Maybe even picture a judge's bench in a courtroom. Or, to make it more intimate, imagine sitting on God's lap, warmed by His loving embrace. I can only imagine! The King has a few

questions for you—two questions, essentially the same. “What do you wish?” And, “What do you want Me to do for you?” But two very different answers... What do I wish? I wish to be exalted above all others—very Luciferian. “What do I want You to do for me?” Lord, open my eyes that I may follow You. Two similar questions; two very different answers.

Sight is a function of the eyes and when all you can see is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, you are truly blind. Vision, however, is a function of the heart and when you understand with a pure heart, you will see what all the prophets and righteous men of old desired to see. This exercise can cause your mind to wander in a few very different directions, but one thing is certain. Your answers say everything about what’s in your heart. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. Sell all you have to follow Him and you will be His true disciples.

GOING ON THE OFFENSIVE

SERMON RESOURCE: [Going on the Offensive](#)

We often emphasize the “gentle as a dove” side of Jesus: His gripping compassion, undeserving forgiveness, admirable meekness, authentic humility, unmerited mercy, never-ending grace, and His uncanny

ability to understand everything about us and to touch our hearts exactly the way we need at the precise moment we need it.

But there's another side to Jesus, the "wise as a serpent" side. It's the in-your-face side that says it like it is—not that He had completely avoided confrontation before; He had His moments. He rebuked a few cities, addressed controversies over the Sabbath, referred to religious leaders as hypocrites and called their doctrine hypocrisy, and even rebuked them when their manmade traditions caused violations against God's laws. But now we are just four days from His crucifixion, and gentle Jesus has begun the final phase of His earthly ministry. Suddenly He does not seem so measured in how He deals with the religious elite. In fact, He seems to have gone on the offensive.

Can you recall what happened after King David committed that atrocity with Bathsheba and then schemed to cover it up? He would do anything to hide his mistake, even murder. He could have taken any available woman he desired. Instead, he impregnated a married woman and had her poor husband killed to hide his sin. Immediately the Lord sends Nathan, David's prophet, to tell him a story. It's a parable but David thinks it's real. It's the type of story you tell someone to show him something about himself. Nathan describes a poor man who owned one little lamb, a lamb his entire family

treated like one of the children. He also depicts a rich man who refused to feed a hungry traveler from his many flocks and herds, so he confiscated the poor man's only lamb. David was infuriated that anyone could do such a thing—a man like that should be put to death. Yes, a man who owns many and takes from a man who has just one deserves death, after he restores the poor man four-fold. David is being more than a bit obtuse here, don't you think? Nathan then fills in the blank; "David, you are that man!

Y'shua uses the same approach towards religious hypocrites, for whom He has grown increasingly intolerant. He tells a story of two sons, one who says he won't obey, but does, and one who says he will obey, but does not. Then He shares an elaborate parable about a business owner and the operators who run his vineyard. The end of the story has the operators rejecting and killing THE SON of the owner, somehow believing they can usurp his inheritance and get away with it. They can't and they don't.

After the story the Pharisees, listening nearby, looked at one another and said, "I think He is talking about us!" You think? Earth to religious hypocrites—He is! Their reaction: No worries, we're not offended; it taught us a valuable lesson. NOT! Their true sentiment: Let's get this guy and take Him out, so we don't have to give Him what is rightfully His: our obedience, loyalty,

thanksgiving, and praise! Hey, wait a second; that's exactly what the parable exposed! Brilliant, simply brilliant. Gentle as a dove AND wise as a serpent!

MIC DROP

SERMON RESOURCE: [Mic Drop](#)

A lot has happened to bring us to this point. I suppose that even the world itself could not contain enough books to account for the life of Y'shua, His significant contribution to mankind and His impact on human history. But there was a moment when He finally quieted His detractors once and for all—the ones who would dare question Him openly. He made a public spectacle of them, silencing all those who craved to use His words as an indictment against Him with the multitudes watching.

Of course we know what is coming and, although, never again would they attempt to entrap Him in public with questions so easily smacked aside, exposing the true motives of His interrogators, they will soon descend into treachery and blatant deception, debased minds propagating abject lies leading to spiritual and moral bankruptcy. After this, they will need someone on the inside to betray Him because no one on the outside is a match for His brilliance, grace and meekness. Oh, they

will keep coming at Him just to procure the indictment and conviction of an innocent Man, without regard for legal decorum or truth. They simply won't be able to ever again question Him publicly—lest they also be exposed publicly.

We might say there were three defining moments in Y'shua's ministry before His execution and resurrection. His baptism in the Jordan: The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand; Behold! The Lamb of God; this is My beloved Son! Then His triumphal entry into Jerusalem: Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! And His choice in the garden to remain a bondservant: not My will but Your will be done, the choice that allowed Him to keep His bride for all eternity. That's us!

But, in order to ensure His private betrayal, He had to publicly dismantle His detractors, every last one of them questioned and found wanting. No, these religious leaders will not feel convicted, nor will they reverse course and repent. They are willing to pave the way to their own destruction with deception and by the shedding of innocent blood, scarlet droplets that will ultimately punctate their hard hearts and seal their fates. What about you? Do your words indict Him or betray Him? Oh, it's not Him I am concerned for, it's you—because if you insist, His words will leave you speechless

THE HYPOCRATITUDES

SERMON RESOURCE: [The Hypocratitudes](#)

If you do not believe Moses' writings, how will you believe My words? If the Lord says that to you, be certain you are missing something important from Moses' words. The disconnect comes easy when you spend enough time doing your own thing, while convincing yourself you are doing the Lord's thing. Even worse is if you teach others to do the same. The end of that game is a disaster. You will fall so far down the rabbit hole that you can't climb out. Before that happens, before you are convicted of always saying, but never doing, or doing, but doing the things of men and calling them the things of God, stop! Take pause while it's not too late.

The whole of this attitude towards God is hypocrisy—bending His words to say what you want them to say, so you can do what you want to do, while claiming moral superiority over those who don't follow your ways. Another form of sanctimony is to say one thing and practice another, while judging others for practicing one thing and saying another. Do this often enough and you will become as helpless as a greased egg trying to climb up a waterslide. There are a few guarantees in store for such practitioners. Everything

covered will be revealed; everything hidden will be known. And, you will not escape the judgment of God!

The entire outcome hinges on your attitude. If you have a “beatitude,” it will afford the blessings bestowed upon those whose hearts are fixed on the Kingdom of Heaven—those who know what the Kingdom of Heaven is like and endeavor to live as such. If you have a “hypocratitude,” it will afford the woes bestowed upon those who live in hypocrisy and sanctimony—those who say and do not do, while judging others who do the same.

You choose: blessings—bliss, ecstasy, exaltation, supreme happiness, and heavenly joy. Or, woes—sorrow, distress, wretchedness, sadness, heartache, despondency, desolation, despair, trouble, difficulty, tribulation, burden, misfortune, disaster, and tragedy. Know this, when the Lord speaks to you, if it sounds anything like this: “Woe to you...,” instead of “Blessed are you...,” rethink your approach immediately. Realign your attitude towards the words of Moses and the words of Y’shua. How, you might ask? First believe Moses’ words, if ever you hope to believe the words of Christ! And newsflash—Christ’s words were written about you!

PROPHETIC EDUCATION

SERMON RESOURCE: [Prophetic Education](#)

It's all right here, all in one place. And we can be sure that Y'shua's timing was perfect. Everything He did was exquisite. He had two days of interactions in the temple that began when He entered Jerusalem and the multitudes publicly acknowledged that He was indeed the anticipated Messiah—an inflammatory start to His visit, to say the least. And on the first day He initiated a total cleanse of God's house. It followed with a day of interrogation, at least that's what the religious leaders intended, those who were convinced they had the upper hand. It turned out, instead, to be a complete indictment of a religious system that had fallen far away from the God they claimed to worship.

The cleanse ended with Y'shua's final verdict, a scathing report: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees... you are loaded down with hypocrisy, lawlessness and pretense; motivated by extortion and self-indulgence; and painted on the outside to look good. But, you are really no different than a painted tomb. Although it might look clean and pretty on the outside, inside the coffin is a pile of dead men's decaying bones. Other descriptors that come to mind to round off My opinion of you are: blind guides, fools, serpents, and brood of vipers. You

would travel long distances, over land and sea, to convert even one person to your faith, who you then make into twice the son of hell as yourselves.” This assessment allows no room for interpretation of how Y’shua views man’s religion.

Then He leaves the temple and heads out east of the city, through the Kidron valley and up onto the Mount of Olives. Once situated there with His disciples, He looks back toward the temple and reveals that the whole hypocritical religious system is coming down. It won’t happen instantly; there are prophetic patterns to fulfill—a framework to understand. And quite frankly, God’s people are very behind on their prophetic education, obviously because their teachers were more concerned with building their own kingdom than preaching about the Kingdom of God.

That is all about to change. These disciples have been walking through a Kingdom education from the moment they heard, “Repent, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand,” all the way to this significant prophetic moment on the mountain. Now, Y’shua will teach them all that must happen from this moment forward—all the way to the very end of the age! It would seem an impossible task in such a short sermon, but nothing is impossible with God. And it’s not only possible, but Y’shua does so in what can be read today in ninety-seven verses—2028

words in a popular English translation. Two thousand words to describe the rest of history!

Since that’s the case, I think any serious student of God would make understanding those words a priority of critical importance. Minimally, put it on your bucket list—but don’t place it down near the bottom, lest you be the servant who hears, “Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you. Cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

FINAL FOOTSTEPS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Final Footsteps](#)

There is more to say than could be said with words. Really think about it. There are only two days remaining until He takes His last breath on this side of eternity. “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.” And having said this, He breathed His last. It all comes down to this and the number of significant things—history-changing things, personal life-changing things that are about to take place in the span of less than forty-eight hours.

The Sermon on the Mount of Olives was complete. It was finished late afternoon, close to sunset, the day after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Think

about all that happened in those preceding two days, most of those events taking place on two visits to the temple. Technically, it's less than two full days. He rode into Jerusalem in the morning, left the city that night, went back the next morning, and that evening He left the city again and went up onto the Mount of Olives to deliver that sermon. There He taught about the coming end to a dying religious system and about the signs of the end-of-the-age and how to be prepared. If we think about the timing of Passover, which takes place as the sun is setting, we get a clearer picture of when He completed that sermon. When He was finished teaching, He said to His disciples, "You know that Passover is just two days from now, and I will be handed over to be crucified." This places the timing of that sermon late in the day on Monday—forty-eight hours before Passover.

The next day, Tuesday morning, He is in Bethany being anointed for His burial with expensive perfume, and that evening, the night before the Passover, is when Jewish men would traditionally make their final preparations. It's called the preparation day and on that evening Y'shua will share His last meal, the Last Supper, as He delivers His final preparation remarks to His closest disciples. To get ready, He sends His disciples ahead into Jerusalem to secure a room in which to prepare.

After the meal that night, He is off to the Garden of Gethsemane where His life as the Passover Lamb will be traded for the lives of all mankind. Subsequently, a court case takes place in the cover of darkness, mitigated that night by hypocritical religious leaders at the helm. And we know the timing because Peter is waiting overnight in the courtyard of the High Priest for a verdict, when the morning rooster crows, but not before he had denied his Lord three times.

That morning Y'shua is passed off to the Roman courts because the Jewish leaders display the worst brand of cowardice imaginable. They want Him dead, but they need someone else to do the dirty work. By noon Y'shua is beaten, bloodied, His flesh is torn from His body, and He is there hanging on a cross innocent, but crucified in humiliation for all to see.

The question for you is this; are you willing to go there with Him? Would you walk in His final footsteps? The journey through those final moments are unmatched in intensity and significance by any other span of hours in the history of humanity. Will you go there? Will you walk like He walked?

THE GREAT CONSPIRACY

SERMON RESOURCE: [The Great Conspiracy](#)

It's the Great Commission. It's your main focus when you open the last chapter of this epic Gospel, but there's so much more. "Go therefore..." ends our journey that began at His birth. In between, we witnessed His baptism in the Jordan and heard the delighted voice of His Father from heaven. We watched His release into the wilderness to be tempered by fire, and had a front row seat at the launch of His ministry—the Kingdom of heaven was indeed at hand.

It wasn't long before His ragtag collection of students were assembled, His would-be disciples, some of whom we come to know quite intimately on their travels. And Matthew's Gospel is stippled throughout by prophetic moments, each seemingly marked by a grand sermon, mysterious parable, deep lesson, supernatural encounter, or stiff admonishment. Along the way, we realize we are all Kingdom scribes getting a Kingdom education, but some don't like it! It's undeniable, yet somehow people in certain positions do deny it. Extraordinary miracles occur, so outrageous that they can only be explained one way. Y'shua is the Son of God, the Christ!

We learn that He has a plan; He is going to pass His ministry onto others! But why? Is He going somewhere? He tells them over and over again that He is; but they don't like it, so they avoid it, even deny it. But, it's inevitable! He makes many enemies as He moves about, but really there is one most relevant; a power-hungry class of religious hypocrites. They still exist today and they're not who you think. You can spot them because they build their own kingdoms. Then and now there is one satanic antichrist spirit at work. It hates what He is doing and that His reputation is growing. You'd think religious leaders would be thrilled; He's the Messiah. But they're not! He's stealing the spotlight; attracting their donors; exposing the induration of their dark hearts; calling them hypocrites; and the majority of these religious elite are not ready to relinquish power, to surrender their man-made religious system.

As time goes on, He further clarifies who He is and what He will be, and what we will be in Him. And the clearer it becomes, the more resistant are those who have the most to lose—power, fame, fortune and control. And Y'shua meets their escalating denial and aggression with a move of His own—He becomes more brazen, more pointed, more intolerant. Gentle Jesus gives way to a full exposé on hypocrisy. Then, He seals the deal with His final two lessons. One is about the end-of-the-age, who to be and how to prepare—from the

Mount of Olives. The other is about the age-to-come, what it will be like and how to get there—at His last meal.

Finally, the powers that be have had enough and they conspire to murder Him, to do whatever it takes to eliminate Him. Nothing is off limits; lies, false witnesses, unproven accusations, even the willingness to partner with a pagan Roman system to get what they want; it's all on the table. Then they kill Him. They capture Him, and indict Him, and convict Him, and torture Him, and they murder Him. But it does not end there! The truth cannot be denied. Or can it? Even after He resurrects from the grave, even after the stone is rolled away and He is not there—He is risen; they conspire to tell yet another lie. “He has not risen; He’s been stolen.”

I take a deep breath and try to imagine the level of hatred; the level of self-righteous, self-serving narcissism; the vile incessant vitriol; the acid tongues and acid hearts that would not only deny the final obvious fact—He has risen; He is the Christ, but that they would instead master-mind the greatest coverup in human history. Humans can deny the obvious; that itself is obvious! Just tell more lies, spread more deceit, offer more bribes—hatch one more conspiracy. To this very day some people still believe it was all just a conspiracy. That is why we must go make disciples; preach that He

has risen, and preach that we must become different because of it. We are meant to become just like Him!

TO BE CONTINUED...

SERMON RESOURCE: [To Be Continued...](#)

Have you ever heard the forward-looking phrase, “You can’t get there from here.”? I’m sure you have. But let’s say we turn it around into a backward-looking version; “You did get here from there!” And that will make much more sense as soon as we define ‘here’ and ‘there’ and ‘where,’ especially when you recognize how critical it is to get to the correct ‘here!’ In other words, if ‘where’ we are right now is the incorrect ‘here,’ it must be because we didn’t know ‘where’ the proper ‘there’ was. And when we travel into the past and look back ‘there,’ you must consider this all-important truth: our ‘there’ was their ‘here.’

‘Here’ is ‘where’ they were in the first century, shortly after Y’shua ascended into the clouds. But, how did they get ‘there,’ if ‘there’ is ‘where’ they were supposed to be at that prophetic moment in history? And maybe even more critical than that, if that is even possible, is this. ‘Here’ we are two thousand years later in our ‘here.’ How did we get ‘here’ and are we ‘where’ we are supposed to be? And that brings to mind another phrase I’m sure you’ve heard; “You don’t know ‘where’

you're going, if you don't know 'where' you've been." In other words, you can't get proper directions if you don't know where you are! Framed as a question it sounds like this; "How can you know 'where' to go if you don't know 'where' you are or even 'where' you've been?"

Here is some data to plug into the mishmash of 'here' and 'there' and 'where.' In the first century the 'here' was "It was Pentecost and they were all in one place in one accord." The 'there' was, "Three times per year you must make your way to Jerusalem for the feast," and this was one of those times. The 'where' was, "Standing near the Temple waiting for a promise to be fulfilled." Today oftentimes, the 'here' is, "Everyone follows the dictates of his own heart." The 'there' is, "You do err not knowing the Scriptures." And the 'where' is that, "You have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition."

What must happen now, in order to change the 'here' we are right now, in order to arrive 'where' we are destined to go, which is "there is one body and one Spirit"? That is the question we must answer today as this ongoing story continues...

A PROFOUND CHALLENGE

SERMON RESOURCE: [A Profound Challenge](#)

Do you recognize an opportunity when it presents itself? Are you the first to volunteer? Are you the type who accepts a challenge easily? Do you jump in enthusiastically? Don't think impetuous when you hear "jump in"; think instead eager, fervent and passionate. Here am I, send me! You want me to represent you? I'm in awe; I'm humbled; I'm stunned, but I'll do it! It seems that the more obvious it becomes that we are called to something magnificent and undeniable, the more some will dig in their heels and deny. Others respond instantly, not with denial but acceptance, wonderment, appreciation and utter amazement. Which type are you? Do you run towards or away from challenges?

Here is a grand recommendation for when you encounter a profound truth. Don't dip your toe—rather, immerse your whole body, soul and spirit! Suck the marrow from the moment. Extraordinary things happen when you do; your eyes open to possibilities not previously noticed—some of which match the magnitude of the profound truth staring you in the face with profound challenges that stand between you and the expression of that truth! Challenges have a way of pressing us through a cheese cloth, until there is hardly

a bead of moisture left, like being squeezed from all sides until even taking a sip of oxygen seems elusive. But once you see it, you can't unsee it!

That is what it is like, at times, when your eyes open to the mysteries of God and the herald screaming in your brain becomes so loud, so clear, and so pervasive that it is impossible to imagine the plain message was a hidden secret just moments ago, but it was. You just might be a special agent assigned to the earth for such a time as this, to understand these Kingdom mysteries. And, that is one of those things that fits the sentiment of this message; don't dip your toe—immerse your whole body, soul and spirit! Seize the opportunity! Suck the marrow out of it!

Do you want to know a secret? It's about your role in the earth at this moment in history. "In your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed." You were most certainly taught that was the unique role of Abraham. And when you suddenly discover it is not unique, that you too are called as such, it represents one of those profound truths that comes with many profound challenges. But that's okay, because great challenges are met head on with great grace, the divine power necessary to turn a challenge into a reality!

DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGY

SERMON RESOURCE: [Disruptive Technology](#)

It's completely disruptive; but, not rude or inappropriate. It's innovation that simply attracts an under-serviced market. And, unfortunately for those who are used to dominating the field, it quickly supplants its incumbent competitors. It operates in such a way that significantly alters how consumers view the product they have come to expect and opens their eyes to something far better. Suddenly, it sweeps away the current entrenched systems and replaces them, because its attributes are recognizably superior.

Yes, "suddenly" also seems to be a character trait of disruption. It suddenly comes on like a five-hundred-mile-per-hour tsunami! And it seems to be energized by the same types of forces: earthquakes, landslides, volcanic eruptions, or other massive catastrophic disturbances. And just like a tsunami, it arrives with an overwhelming force that both crashes into objects and then consumes their broken debris as it is sucked back into the ocean.

And both the existing system and the new system share a set of characteristics which guarantee that an immutable force will impact an immovable object. But, in practice, the seemingly immovable object will turn out to

be quite vulnerable in the end—it’s just that the collision is so astronomical, so mammoth, so colossal that it takes some time to let the smoke, dust and debris settle. Then you can evaluate the devastation. Inevitably, the once entrenched, long-established, deep-rooted system will have given way to the new superior force.

The only variable that remains are the people caught in the waves. There are really only two sides here. One is the side of profound wisdom, erudite judicious perception. The other side is foolish obstinance—self-serving, power-hungry pride. The sage advice is this: If the immutable force is authentic, you can’t stop it anyway, and if you try you will find yourself in a fight against God, and unless you think fighting God is a good idea—you should reconsider your position. However, if this whole disruption is a manmade farce, it will soon dissipate and fade into oblivion on its own, like a ripple in a lake caused by a small stone. So, take a step back and take a deep breath. Trust me, you don’t want to be on the wrong side of history here.

ALL USED UP FOR GOD

SERMON RESOURCE: [All Used Up for God](#)

One moment you’re being selected as one of the few men, hand-picked to serve. It’s a complete

honor and you humbly accept. Your reputation is without blemish and your commitment to God is obvious. The next moment God is working great miracles through you. A tick later, they are lying about you and you're being publicly accused of things that could never be true, but you are indicted anyway. Blink your eyes and you're standing at trial, the charges levied are beyond the pale, outside the limits of acceptable behavior or the judgment of any civilized person. These accusations are only possible because they are being corroborated by false testimony, lying witnesses who have no conscience, and obviously no fear of the Lord. How did you go from being picked for a grand purpose to standing accused before this council so quickly?

Maybe this nightmare will end. The man in charge inquires, "Are these things true?" Ah, finally! Someone wants to know the truth. Does he? At this point, you don't even need to speak on your own. God promised that when you get arrested and brought to trial because of Him, you need not worry beforehand about what to say; the Spirit will assemble your words. And it happens. For ten solid minutes you give the most lucid defense imaginable. Your testimony is exculpatory; it's clear that nothing they've said about you is true—you're acquittal is imminent. You've presented everything the man in charge needs to hear to exonerate you.

You could rest your defense in that instant, but you don't. Rather, you seize the opportunity; you look at your accusers, and all the members of the should-be-honorable court; and you tell them without hesitation, "You are the guilty ones. You have committed the crimes I've been accused of here, and worse. You murdered the Just One who the prophets said would come. You missed the Messiah because you resist the very Spirit that has inspired my defense today. You are all guilty."

That does not go over well. What started as a good day is about to end in tragedy. What began as a moment of honor is about to be terminated with an execution. You are dragged out of the court and you are executed in a brutal onslaught. You are smashed with stones until your skull is crushed, your bones are broken, and your blood has spattered over the surrounding dust. And even then, with your last dying words, you ask your dear Lord, the very Messiah these murderers rejected, to let it pass. "Don't hold this against them; they are just ignorant religious people." And then you breathe your last breath.

There are moments in life when you must come face-to-face with the purpose for which you were placed here on earth. You have an assignment and you can't go back to what you were doing before. It's true, even if in one moment you feel honored to have been selected for such a purpose, and in the next you are being stoned to

death. You can't control everything that happens between the bookends of your life, the dash on your gravestone, be it a few days or many years. But you can control this... Will you say yes!

INSTANT...

SERMON RESOURCE: [Instant...](#)

When is instant a good thing? “That’s the \$64,000 question.” And ironically, the use of that colloquialism is the perfect object lesson to explain the nuances of “instant.” I’m sure you’ve heard the phrase... “That’s the \$64,000 question.” It’s not formal or meant to be literal, but certainly typical and used often, recognizable by just about everyone in the conversation. But where did it come from? The expression originated in 1941 on the CBS quiz show, “Take It or Leave It.” A contestant could choose to take a small prize or bet everything on a bigger prize, the largest being \$64,000. If he opts for the immediate smaller payout, he’d satisfy his desire for instant gratification. But hold out, and he can win the ultimate prize. Maybe 64K does not seem so ultimate in 2023, however, that amount in 1941 equates to a much larger pile of cash today. Hold out, get the answer right, and in 2023 you’d take home nearly \$1.5 million!

I took one of my sons to dinner about twelve years ago when he was eleven years old. I slid a twenty dollar bill across the table and told him he could have it right away. His eyes were wide with excitement. Twenty bucks is a big deal for an eleven year old. But, before he could slip it out from under my fingers, which pressed it firmly against the table, I offered him this: you can take the twenty dollars now, or you can wait one year and I will give you one hundred dollars instead. For everyone listening, you know that any investment that can yield five-fold returns in twelve months is breathtaking. But, for an eleven year old, those calculations were not dominating his thoughts. What was alluring was the instant benefit of the twenty dollars. That evening, my son somehow figured it out and chose wisely; he held off for the hundred. But, more important was the lesson, especially in this instant-gratification-instant-satisfaction world in which we live. Instant or immediate gratification is simply the urge to satisfy a craving right now, without considering its long term effects or the bigger picture. Fast food; point of purchase sales; substances to change your mood; ordering out instead of cooking at home; procrastination instead of immediately doing what's necessary; and hijacking the benefits of marriage without the commitment of marriage, like premarital sex and cohabitation, are all driven by desires for instant gratification.

The entirety of our culture has gone the way of...in an instant! Just add water; no assembly required. I want it, I want it now, and I want it easy. Do it to me or for me! It's the microwave lifestyle. It's instant coffee, oatmeal, yeast, rice, soup, mashed potatoes, and pudding. Remove from the freezer; remove from the package, and bake at 400 degrees for 40 minutes. Don't let it thaw out first—place it directly from the freezer into the oven. And, get over it; it's not the end of the world if you must preheat the oven first!

Moreover, instant gratification and instant satisfaction do not end with food-stuffs. That's just surface tension. Below "just add water" is: instant access, instant results, instant answers, and instant messenger. It's an Instagram world. And when there's a problem to solve, it's instant cures, instant relief, and instant repair.

But, when is instant a good thing? "That's the \$64,000 question." If we turn it around and see it from God's perspective, God wants instant obedience; instant action; instant transformation; and an instant change in direction, worship, attitude, mindset, beliefs, and choices... Yes, you have instant access to God, so when you look for results, answers, cures, relief, and satisfaction, the only way to be truly gratified is by instant obedience to Him, as demonstrated by your

actions. God speaks and you say, “Here am I! Send me. What do you want me to do?”

PREPARED BEFOREHAND

SERMON RESOURCE: [Prepared Beforehand](#)

Peter is not the only one you know. It’s the human dilemma—obstinance, stubbornness, resistance. It’s difficult to alter engrained thoughts, persistent tendencies and incessant behaviors. You might think you can just relax. All it takes to change the old man into the new man is to be born again. However, there is ample evidence that is far from real. The truth is that being born again grants you access to all the resources necessary to root out enmeshed beliefs, break old habits, and make better choices. Yes, access granted but transformation denied, unless you are willing to do the work.

That is why we are instructed to take every thought captive, to make them obedient to Christ. That is why we are told to renew our minds—it’s where the transformation begins. Actions follow mindsets. And that is why Paul was open about his struggles, and by inference we are cautioned about the challenges we all face. At times, I still do what I shouldn’t and I don’t do what I should.

No, Peter and Paul are not the only ones, but in Peter we have the perfect example, the quintessential case study. Even as a man who enjoyed walking in the inner circle of Christ, one who witnessed His persecution, torture, and then crucifixion at the hands of the religious elite with all their hypocrisy, and had himself faced persecution as their captive—Peter still had erroneous religious beliefs baked into his psyche. He was sure that he would have nothing to do with Gentiles because Yahweh wanted nothing to do with Gentiles. He definitely did not inherit that mindset from his Jewish Scriptures; they teach quite the opposite. Peter, however, is about to become the pioneer of the proper perspective; you will not avoid the Gentiles, rather you will go to the Gentiles with this message; “Yahweh is not prejudice; Y’shua is for everyone!”

Peter was holding on to his engrained thoughts, persistent religious tendencies and incessant behaviors. And he would have never ministered to the Gentiles if Yahweh did not intervene. God initiated Peter’s transformation by first exposing his enmeshed beliefs. That helped him break old habits and make better choices. And God used prophecy to soften his sclerotic mentality... “Old men shall dream dreams; young men shall see visions.” Yahweh gave Peter a vision and this was its ultimate fruit. “I’m God’s work of art. I’ve been created by God and empowered in Christ to obey His

Word and the specific calling on my life. This calling was prepared for me beforehand with the expressed purpose that I walk in it.” And so he did; he went to the gentiles and told them, “Yahweh is not prejudice; Y’shua is for everyone!” God has prepared dreams and visions for you as well—it is time for you to walk in them!

CHRISTIAN IDOLATRY

SERMON RESOURCE: [Christian Idolatry](#)

Maybe it’s happened to you before, both applause and persecution, celebration and suffering. Can you imagine the successive occurrence of these polar opposites? One moment you are being extolled, the next you are being stoned. And quite frankly, it is easy to understand that perseverance in the midst of persecution is an admirable quality. But, what may be even more difficult, and therefore more commendable, is when you don’t become a victim of your own fame. When the whole world wants to applaud you, how do you respond? When praise, acclamation, admiration, adulation, compliments, and tribute are forthcoming, do you accept the worship, draw attention to yourself, soak it up, or deflect it away?

Maybe you are the one offering worship. Do you turn leaders into idols? Do you bow in the wrong

direction, worshiping the worship? Are you applauding the worship, the one who worships, or the One being worshiped? Are you involved in Christian idolatry or the Christian faith. Is Y'shua the Lord of your life or one of the many objects of your idolatry, your religion? That's a scary thought. Are you addicted to the truth or are you addicted to the experience.

The journey never turns out the way you've planned. You can certainly be confident that you are called and you can certainly be sure of your destination, but the road you will travel has many questions strewn along the path, many roadblocks, a myriad of twists and turns. There will be victories and some losses along the way; there will be persecution and there will be many things to tempt you, maybe none worse than the temptation to become full of yourself, imagining, "I'm all that!" Or possibly you tempt another by fostering that idea about him, "He's all that!" Don't do either, but rather, bow your knees only to the Father of your Lord Y'shua the Messiah, from whom the whole family of mankind receives breath. And, if you are ever tempted to boast or to feed someone's boasting, do this instead; boast in the Lord. For it is not someone who commends himself that is approved by God, but the one whom the Lord commends. That says it all!

A SCHISM IN THE MAKING

SERMON RESOURCE: [A Schism in the Making](#)

Try this on for size! Your whole life you've been told that in order to have any chance of eternal life, you have to obey very specific rules and regulations, and not just obey, but to do so with bulls-eye exactitude. And, doing your very best will only prove that you will never be good enough to accomplish this daunting task.

Now... introducing the Gospel of Jesus Christ! In the presentation of Y'shua to the masses, one could come to the saving grace of Yahweh by simply believing in this Rabbi, Y'shua. Believe He willingly died on a cross after being beaten, mocked, spat upon, and having a crown of thorns placed on His head. Believe that after all that, He was buried in a cave with a massive two-ton stone placed to seal the entrance. Why? There is no way for an ordinary person to pass in or out without some plan to move a huge rock, unless of course you have access to an angel whom can roll away the stone. And, to add a few additional incredible details to the story, this dead Rabbi resurrected from the dead, walked out of the grave and mingled with His disciples and many others for forty days, and then He floated away into the clouds, while His disciples simply stared in amazement!

In Acts 15, certain men were not buying into this simplistic message of Christ crucified! They perverted the message of salvation by adding some dependency on a system of religious acts necessary to perform in conjunction with the work of Christ, in order to be born-again. It's likely they felt as if they got ripped off and had to previously work for something that now anyone could freely receive. They were not having it! And, they were making it known in no uncertain terms.

These, not so small dissensions, became a schism in the making. They marked the beginning of doctrinal differences that morphed themselves into all sorts of views throughout human history. These mutations have caused schisms, time and time again. Instead, why not just work harder at learning, believing, and trusting the simplistic message of the Gospel of Salvation, rather than, add to it or adjust it to our man-contorted ways, just because it sounds too good-to-be true?

A MAN ON A MISSION

SERMON RESOURCE: [A Man on A Mission](#)

He's a man on a mission. It was not easy the first time; in fact, it almost killed him. But he's willing to do it again, and this time it will be longer and further

than before. It's inspired and will be directed by visions from God. "I want to examine the fruit of my work. Was it all worth it? I want to strengthen those who've been touched by God and I want to touch many more people with the truth. I want to go whenever and wherever God directs!"

But, it almost killed him the first time. Actually, those that wanted him dead thought they had killed him. But he got right up when they were not looking, bloodied and broken, smashed and dented by stones, bruised and beaten, and he kept on going. What would be different this time? This predictably is how man reacts when you challenge his long-held beliefs. But he's a man on a mission and nothing is going to stop him. What about you?

The times have changed; a few thousand years have passed, but man, not so much. Challenge a belief system, expose lies to the truth, and man will oftentimes become violent. It's still happening today; it's all around us. Speak truth to the establishment and you will be censured and censored; lied about and attacked; charged and charged at; apprehended and incarcerated; and removed from the public square or removed from life itself.

It's a different time, but have times really changed? Has man really changed? Paul was a man on a mission and the call for each of you, in your own

special way, is to be a people on a mission, even if those within the sound of your voice become violent—even if you are censured and censored; lied about and attacked; charged and charged at; apprehended and incarcerated. Yes, even if there is an attempt to remove you from the public square or remove you from life itself, will you accept the mission?

LESSONS ON SALVATION!

SERMON RESOURCE: [Lessons on Salvation!](#)

Ten weeks ago, during our introduction, I used 2 Corinthians 5:17 as part of my opening lines. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” Every week thereafter, I have opened up our time together by briefly expanding on each individual attribute of the fruit of the Spirit. Given the opening lines of our scripture reading today, I believe God desires we dig deeper into the subject. In today’s study, Acts chapter 19 begins with the Apostle Paul asking certain disciples, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” Do you find this question odd? Does it make you wonder why it is that the apostle Paul asked the question in the first place. The more I

thought about the reason why he would ask the question, the more I kept coming back to the thought that he would probably be equally aghast if he was to visit most congregations today! In today's study, let's make sure we know who the Holy Spirit is, lest we be found guilty of the same indictment! As basic as this part of our doctrine is, I would not want to be held accountable for assuming everyone within the sound of my voice can answer the question properly, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

FORGIVEN... YET LIABLE

SERMON RESOURCE: [Forgiven... Yet Liable](#)

If you are born-again, you will not be held accountable for your sins on judgment day; Y'shua has all of them covered. However, that does not blot out the consequences of your sinful behavior here on earth. Simply put, "You can escape eternal condemnation for your sin, but you cannot escape sin's earthly ramifications." Said another way, "You may not be punished for your sins, but you will be punished by your sins!" words that represent both a sigh of relief and sober warning. And let's be clear; there can be no relief without Christ. Absent a contrite heart and genuine

repentance, your sins destine you to eternal condemnation and earthly suffering.

So, what is the subtle nuance here? When one comes to Christ, the born-again encounter is a result of a heart-change inspired by the gift of grace through faith and evidenced by repentance and confession. A contrite heart is proof of true repentance and God’s promise to all those in Christ—you are forgiven! He covers all the eternal consequences of your transgressions and you are permitted to live with God forever! In other words, “You will no longer be punished for your sins.”

However, you are not relieved of the potential devastating consequences that sin causes in this life, even when you are forgiven by God. Think of it this way; in God’s economy there are no small sins and no big sins. Any sin not covered by the blood of Y’shua will land you in eternal damnation. However, here on earth, the more serious the sin, the more serious the consequences. And here’s the rub. This is true even if those sins have been erased into eternity because you’ve repented and been forgiven.

On earth your sins have a cost. Steal bubble gum and you are condemned to hell without Christ, but here on earth, nothing will happen. Commit adultery, repent through Christ, experience His forgiveness, and your marriage is still devastated. Plus, you just might bring a child into a very damaged situation. The sin itself is the

consequence. In other words, “You are punished by your sins.”

Why such a dire warning? Because although God wants you to experience the significant relief, and confidence, and certainty that in Christ your sins are forgiven, He also wants you to be horrified by the prospect of continuing to sin. And if you are a Christian, don’t see the consequences of sin on earth as God’s condemnation, nor is it necessary to carry the burden of those sins for which you have been forgiven. That is not the point! It’s best to rest in God’s forgiveness, even when sin has caused difficulties and struggles and turmoil on this side of eternity, and rather see this as a sobering warning of sin’s consequences! As a Christian, you will not be punished by God for your sins, but here on earth, your sin itself is the punishment!

GREAT PURPOSE

SERMON RESOURCE: [Great Purpose](#)

Be of good cheer. Has anyone ever said that to you? Well, maybe not using that specific wording, which is more biblical in nature. But, perhaps something more like, “Look up; look on the bright side; think positive; put your chin up; it will all work out; this too shall pass; cheer up, it’s not that bad, etc.” You all know what that feels

like, as there is not one of you who has not been at rock bottom when some chipper person, with all the best intentions, comes along and loses one or more of those affirmations in your presence. And you all thought the same thing. “It’s easy for you to say; you’re not the one with the problem.” Or, possibly you pondered something not quite as nice as that, a thought that would be completely inappropriate to record here! Either way, you know the feeling.

But, what if it was the Lord speaking and you were altogether confident it was true; you could, should, “Be of good cheer!” He does tell us precisely that you know. “You will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” He makes this promise so we can experience supernatural peace in the midst of dreadful circumstances. And sometimes we receive this word even before we are in such circumstances, as preparation for the inevitable.

You are called to a great purpose in the Lord and undoubtedly that calling will be fraught with dangers and difficulties. But along with that calling He says, “Be of good cheer!” Sure, the Holy Spirit may say to you one day, “In every city chains and tribulations await.” But His calling always comes with a promise, “All things work together for good to those who love God and are the called according to His purpose,” and a guarantee, “If God is for us, who can be against us?” Now, if God

promises that when you love Him and follow His purpose for you as one of “the called” it will always work out in your favor, and He guarantees to be on your side every time, then certainly you can “Be of good cheer!” even when chains and tribulations await.

INFLUENCE THE INFLUENCERS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Influence the Influencers](#)

You will be brought before governors and kings as a testimony. Very interesting words from our Lord, predicting very interesting times. One may believe that Y’shua meant those words for other disciples, for another time in history. But, I’d argue they are prophetic for more than the twelve He addressed that day. The simple fact is that Paul was not one of them and he was actually the first to literally be “brought before governors and kings.”

I don’t believe it was the legal issue Paul faced that was the primary reason for being put on display in the presence of the governing authorities and royalty, nor his main motivation for his formal request to go before Nero, Caesar of Rome, the supreme leader of the day. I am convinced that Paul’s readiness to present before governors and kings and his boldness to go before Caesar was based on this principle: if you cause

the head to turn, the body will follow. And he was ready, willing, and able to do so. Are you?

In his last communication, a letter written to Timothy from Rome, the location of his final imprisonment and death as a martyr, Paul summarized the philosophy of his entire ministry. Preach the word of God, be ready whether it is convenient or not. Reprimand and rebuke as necessary, but also use plenty of encouragement. Do it all with absolute patience and by being an excellent teacher, using clear instruction. Be willing to be vaporized into a mist for God, as if your life is a cool glass of water being tossed into a blazing fire. And fight for the faith until your last dying breath, like a sprinter straining for the tape. This is the attitude in which Paul faced the most prominent leaders of the day. He was an influencer of people of influence. What about you?

To influence people of influence. That is an idea close to my heart. Long ago, when I moved away from my professional life and into full time ministry, those were the words that God impressed upon me. Quite simply, the more you can touch the lives of those who can touch so many more lives, the more lives you can touch. It's been a passion of mine ever since. I pray you too will desire to touch many lives with the truth of God's word, regardless of your calling or profession. One thing

is for certain, to do so you must be ready and bold whether it is convenient or not.

STAY IN THE BOAT!

SERMON RESOURCE: [Stay in the Boat!](#)

Final musings of Paul: Too much information to integrate into a single thought. Too many inflection points and interconnections to assimilate. It all led to this one moment when all that God's been doing congealed in an instant, into one single reason: "For the hope..." Picture in your mind how it might be portrayed in a movie. It's the culmination of the entire narrative, the climax of the story that both reveals the final missing piece and settles every issue at once. Every question is answered when the main character rewinds every memory in ten seconds, reliving in his mind all the events you just spent two hours watching. It takes place in a single moment that amalgamates all the pieces, and the confusing twisted story of seemingly unrelated scenes suddenly all makes sense.

I wish I could make that happen for you. Maybe I can. God created man in His own image and then Adam sinned in the garden and creation went into a tailspin. It looked really bad and seemed to ruin everything. Man had departed from God and death was introduced. And

somehow that horrible event must end with a better outcome than had Adam never tasted the fruit. The long twisted history of mankind ensues: murder and selfish desires; intrigue and greed and rebellion; prophets and judges and kings; the birth of a child called to save us all; rejected and crucified by more Adam-like men, as if nothing will ever change; those who believe and those who torture those who believe; and somehow the purple thread that weaves throughout the entire story, and holds it all together, never breaks. Zoom in and you can see the writing woven into its fibers. It says “Hope!”

And what is most fascinating of all is that I had this burning desire in my heart to somehow get to Rome, but I could never have imagined how God would make it happen. It’s another of those purple threads. First there was the desire; then a prophecy ensuring I would one day be here; in between I was stoned and persecuted and ridiculed and rejected; then one day I was rescued by a Roman soldier as I was being beaten by Jews in Jerusalem; he sent me to testify in the Roman courts and I witnessed before governors, a king, and many prominent people; then I was asked if I’d prefer to return to the Jewish courts for a final ruling and I appealed my case to Caesar instead, right here in Rome. But it gets better. On my way here I almost died in a shipwreck in a storm, except God spoke to me again and reminded me of His promise that I must testify in Rome, so all I had to

do was trust Him and stay in the boat. It's what Jonah would have done had he obeyed the Lord in the storm. It's what Peter would have done had he truly understood the Lord in the storm. And it's what you need to do. Stay in the boat in the storm and be saved!

All that has happened has brought me here, to this very moment, "For the hope!" I was born a Roman citizen; I was trained in the law by the most prestigious scholar; I became the worst persecutor of all; I had the most dramatic conversion; my journey was filled with fruit and torture; and all along I was desperate for this one thing. I would do anything to get to Rome just to tell you this... "For this reason, for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain." You see, it all looked lost when Adam ate from the forbidden tree and he introduced death into creation. But that Adam could die was there all along and we know this because he did. What I have to tell you now is that Adam's sin can work to your advantage. That is why I am in chains. Better than Adam had, who always faced the risk of dying, there is a greater promise, a promise of life everlasting without any risk. You don't have to die; you can live forever. All you need is Y'shua, the long awaited hope. All you need to do when the storm is raging is to stay in the boat!

FOR YOUR FEASTING

THE FEASTS OF YAHWEH

Throughout the ancient Torah reading cycle that we followed to format this devotional, there would normally be weeks in which we would divert from the regular reading schedule to give our attention to the Biblical Feasts that are celebrated in the Spring, Summer and Fall. In the Spring we have Passover, Unleavened Bread and First Fruits. In the Summer we have Pentecost. And in the Fall we have Trumpets, Yom Kippur and Tabernacles. It is a worthy separate study for you to explore the Feasts, how they actually represent God's calendar, and their immense prophetic significance. Visit the [Feasts of Yahweh](#) section of our website for teachings about the the Feasts of the Lord.

For our purposes and to keep continuity as you worked your way from Genesis through Deuteronomy, we decided to save the Feast portions to the end. The annual Torah cycle is not the same every year for a number of reasons that we will not explore here. Some years in God's reckoning of time there is a thirteenth month added to the calendar. To create a 52-week devotional, we used the Torah reading schedule, for the year, without the Feasts portions inserted, which was 49 weeks. Then we added three Feast devotions at the end.

THE HAGGADAH—THE TELLING

SERMON RESOURCE: [The Haggadah—the Telling](#)

When your children ask, what will you tell them? What happens when an entire generation separates from its roots, forgets their heritage, and has no recollection from where they came? Yahweh built reminders into the culture of His people to deter that from happening, but unfortunately it has. God’s people disconnected from the original roots of their faith, surrendered to common culture, and adopted the traditions of the world around them. In other words, they detached themselves from their true roots and attached themselves to the fake roots of this world.

Do not love the world or the things of the world, John the disciple warned. Are you guilty of committing the same crimes Y’shua accused the religious hypocrites of, in His day, “making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down?” I fear, if asked, like those religious hypocrites, too many Christians could offer no defense!

“How so?” you might be thinking. Look around, especially during the holiday seasons, and you will see the majority of Christians flocking to celebrate manmade holidays, steeped in pagan traditions. But when their children ask, “What do you mean by this service?” Or,

“What is the meaning of the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which the Lord our God has commanded you?” Or, “What do these stones mean to you?” They will have no biblical answer because they have been carried away in “making the word of God of no effect through their tradition which they have now handed down to their children.”

It’s sad that if Y’shua was walking the earth today, He’d be asking the same question of religious leaders that He did two thousand years ago. “Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?” John warned us about loving the things of the world, “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life...” May we, as the Body of Christ, run from such things. And the next time your children ask, this is what you will answer; “It’s the Passover; we were slaves and now we are free; let your children tell their children, and their children the next generation. It is a memorial forever.”

Or, you can say, “Go find your painted eggs and chocolate Easter bunnies. Fill your baskets; this is now how we remember the death, burial and resurrection of our blessed Savior.” It’s sad we have fallen so far. I don’t know about you, “But as for me and my house, we will serve Yahweh!”

PASSOVER—WHO ARE LEGITIMATE SONS?

SERMON RESOURCE: [Passover—Who are Legitimate Sons?](#)

Asking questions is one of the most powerful ways to engage people on a deeper level. When I was younger, and much more impetuous, I thought arguing with people was an effective way to convince them they were missing something. I was very wrong and it was a tough lesson. But, as I've grown older, and my hair has become filled with silver, I've come to realize there's a much better way.

Paul used this rabbinic technique and has stirred the imagination of Christians for the past two thousand years. If we consider just his letter to the Romans, his greatest theological treatise of all, he asks at least 92 different questions! Here are a few:

- “What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision?”
- “Do we then make void the law through faith?”
- “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?”
- “How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?”
- “Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?”

☞ “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?”

Check out a few of his many in I Corinthians 9:

☞ “Who ever goes to war at his own expense?”

☞ “Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit?”

☞ “Do I say these things as a mere man?”

☞ “Does not the law say the same also?”

Y’shua also used questions quite effectively.

“Who do men say that I am?” challenged Peter to come to a Spirit-inspired conclusion; it was a provocative question for sure. “The Son of God...the Messiah,” he was forced to confess. “Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but by the Spirit,” Y’shua offered in return. It’s a classic and a lesson for us all. This was posed to Peter to bolster his understanding of sonship; “From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?”

However, what might be the most provocative question of all is one that Y’shua leaves the conclusion for you to discover. “Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season?” I want you to contemplate the answer to this question, but not before you consider His prior remarks earlier in the same sermon. “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.”

Before we go, I would like to ask you a few provocative questions of my own. They are both mysterious and challenging to consider, while also pondering Y’shua’s riddle: “Who then is the faithful and wise servant?”

- 🕒 “What is the Gospel of the Kingdom?”
- 🕒 “What is the end?”
- 🕒 “What exactly has been witnessed by all nations?”
- 🕒 “Whom does the Father chasten?”
- 🕒 “What does it mean to be a legitimate son?”
- 🕒 “What does it mean to be a firstborn?”
- 🕒 “Who was at risk at the first Passover; and what did it determine?”

These are not simple questions, so please don’t be too hasty to reply. Give it some serious thought. Consider that I’d not likely be asking if the answer was so simple. And lastly, consider the subject matter of this sermon and—think Passover. I can, however, promise you this; if you make searching for the answers a priority on your devotional journey with the Lord, when you do discover the truth, it will change everything!

REFERENCE NOTES: THE FATE OF FIRSTBORNS AND NON-FIRSTBORNS

- (1) The Story of Two Firstborns:
 - (a) Firstborns who applied the blood and lived: They had faith to believe and applied the blood of the

lamb to live. (faith + blood = temporal salvation and eternal redemption)

- (b) Firstborns who did not apply the blood and died: They had no faith to believe and did not apply the blood of the lamb to live. (no faith + no blood = temporal and eternal damnation)
- (2) I'm not a firstborn. I was never at risk; what about me? A mixed multitude left Egypt with Israel.
- (a) Non-firstborns who came out of Egypt with Israel and lived: They had faith to believe, but did not require the blood of the lamb. (faith + no blood = temporal salvation but no eternal redemption)
 - (b) Non-firstborns who stayed Egypt and died: They did not have the faith to believe and no blood of the lamb (no faith + no blood = temporal and eternal damnation)
- (3) As you can see there are three potential destinies.
- (a) faith + blood = temporal salvation and eternal redemption
 - (b) faith + no blood = temporal salvation but no eternal redemption
 - (c) no faith + no blood = temporal and eternal damnation

ONE ACCORD IN ONE PLACE: PENTECOST

SERMON RESOURCE: [One Accord in One Place!](#)

Why are so many of God’s children perfectly content to celebrate Hallmark holidays and, with complete dedication, willing to commemorate pagan man-made traditions, while completely ignoring the Biblical Festivals gifted to us and commended to keep by Yahweh? In this devotion we will explore the relevance and magnificent imagery of Pentecost. It would seem that while we live in a world inundated with lies and wrapped in chaos, the Church has bowed to a lower authority.

Have church leaders been deceived because they are prophetically ignorant and untrained about the times and seasons? And how has this evolved into other and increasingly bad doctrines? Paul strongly urged Timothy to stay behind to handle “church affairs” in the prominent Greek city of Ephesus. Keep the doctrine pure and unadulterated, he insisted! Paul had planted a church in this most important trading center in the Mediterranean region, and he was certainly concerned that pagan Greek influence could shipwreck the burgeoning church plant.

Fast forward into the present day and might I admonish you in the same way? I strongly urge you to pay close attention to church affairs and that you don't stray from purity in your doctrine. The complication, I fear however, is that this warning comes too late. The modern-day church has already suffered inculturation. Pagan influences are endemic in the church, so much so that what would have, in the past, been considered an abomination, has become status-quo. Let's try to restore a bit of sobriety in a church that seems drunk on cultural acceptance, bent on political correctness, and intent on "Can't we all just get along?". Let's take a deep dive into the Festival of Truth and Spirit.

SOBER AND WATCHING: THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS

SERMON RESOURCE: [Sober and Watching: The Feast of Trumpets](#)

Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years. It's easy to miss. The cycles of the sun and the moon are given for seasons, and for days and years. But, what are the signs? Y'shua rebuked religious leaders for not

knowing. “Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times.” Can you discern the signs of the times? Paul assumed you could; “But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night... We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.” For what signs should you be watching?

The yearly cycle of Biblical Feasts is precisely to which Yahweh, Y’shua, and Paul are referring. The Feasts are God’s prophetic calendar for mankind’s history and future. However, if you don’t prioritize their prophetic significance, tragically, you won’t be able to tell what time it is; you won’t be capable of recognizing the signs of the times. Worse yet, you won’t even know what signs to watch for. Let’s take a sobering journey through the yearly Biblical Feast cycle, so you can synchronize your calendar. Then, you will know perfectly what day it is!

BEHIND THE VEIL: YOM KIPPUR

SERMON RESOURCE: [Behind the Veil: Yom Kippur](#)

Once and for all means once and for all, doesn't it? If there is one Feast of Yahweh, more than any other, that Christians believe no longer has any relevance for them, it has to be Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. "The blood of Christ has paid for our sins past, present, and future. So, why do I need to pay attention to a holiday that foreshadowed the sacrifice needed to cover the sins of the world, when that sacrifice is already finished?"

It's a worthy question and one worth exploring, especially in light of these difficult to explain scriptures written decades AFTER the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. They present a problem for those who hold to the belief system that the Feasts are no longer relevant.

- 🗣️ *"The Feasts of the Lord are shadows of things to come."*
- 🗣️ *"Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come."*
- 🗣️ *"The Law, has shadows of the good things to come."*

Again, because these passages were written decades AFTER the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, to simply dismiss Yom Kippur, or any other Feast

for that matter, seems a bit premature. Or, might I say immature?

The Feasts, the High Priest, and the Law, all cast shadows of good things yet to come, even decades after Christ. But, hadn't they already come? How is it remotely possible they hadn't, decades after Christ's death, burial and resurrection? These are mysteries worth exploring, essential to unlock. They hold secrets with discoveries relevant to every Christian serious about discipleship and the future of their faith. And it is precisely why the Feasts of the Lord are commanded to be practiced each year, so those hidden secrets can be discovered.

NOT OF THIS WORLD: TABERNACLES

SERMON RESOURCE: [Not of This World: Tabernacles](#)

The Word became flesh and pitched a tent among us. He tabernacled with us and we beheld His glory. Yet He was here for what seemed like just a vapor of time and that is because He was never meant to stay. "I am in this world but not of this world," He would say. Y'shua's life bears the striking symbolism of God's people after their exodus from Egypt, as they ventured into freedom and tabernacled in the wilderness. Pitch a tent, but be sure it's built as a temporary structure because you

won't be staying very long. This is not your land; you are just sojourners passing through and your permanent home is elsewhere.

It was true for the Israelites in the wilderness; it was true for Y'shua when He was born into this world; and it is true even for you. This is not your permanent home and the body in which you live is not your permanent body. In this world you will have trials, but He has overcome this world. In your permanent body and in your permanent home there will be no more trials, no more tears, no more pain. There will be only righteousness, peace and joy.

The imagery in the Feast of Tabernacles is striking. But that should come as no surprise because that is what all the Feasts of the Lord offer. The stories are real and knowing about the historical events and their prophetic significance is both important and profitable. God makes promises and we should never settle for less than what He has guaranteed. Had Israel settled in the wilderness, built permanent housing and walled cities, they would have never inherited the fullness of God's covenant; they would have fallen short of God's destination. Do you do that? The implications for such are staggering, both personally and prophetically.

What does it look like personally? "This world is all there is and the things of this world are what I am

after to satisfy my soul.” Yet, it is after those very things the Gentiles seek; don’t! For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—are not of the Father. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God will tabernacle forever. And that is precisely the prophetic implication, to tabernacle forever. This is not your land; you are just sojourners passing through; your permanent home is elsewhere. Your ultimate citizenship is in heaven; here on earth you have no permanent city, so you must seek the one to come. You are heading for a permanent place to dwell in permanent glorified dwellings! Knowing this is to your great advantage!

WEDDING DAY: THE LAST GREAT DAY

SERMON RESOURCE: [Wedding Day: The Last Great Day](#)

It was a betrothal and today we have all but lost the dense significance of such customs. Once the image was diluted it did not take long before the tradition was replaced by something much less meaningful. Marriage today is most often preceded by engagement, an offer of marriage and loose promise between two people, if accepted, to get married one day. And why would that event be anything significant when all the benefits of marriage are readily available outside of marriage and

shared already—including sexual intimacy and cohabitation. Gone are the binding commitments and isn't that most obvious by how often marriages end, as if they are disposable inconveniences that have run their useful course. Why own when you can rent? Why buy when you can use someone else's property for a while and just walk away when something breaks or upkeep becomes too much work?

Betrothal is different, but in order to even begin to grasp why, you must learn to see marriage differently. Marriage was the one institution, the only institution, designed by God to indicate mankind was created in His image. Adam was created and even before Eve was pulled from his bones, Adam already had within him everything that represented God—man, woman, and child. But we could not see the woman and child, so God extracted the woman and presented her to Adam, really to all of us. That is when we recognized the family that was inside of him all along—God's image. And then came marriage. God instructed, "Let Me assure you that even though I took her from you, she is still one with you." Marriage is simply, but profoundly, God's way of telling us, we are one with Him, created in His image, forevermore.

When you consider this idea, does it not make so much more sense now when we read in the Scriptures that marriage is about Christ's oneness with His bride,

the church? Yes, His bride but yet to have arrived at the altar of marriage. His bride, but presently His betrothed, bound in a covenant as strong as marriage, but not married. All the permanence minus two things, sexual intimacy and cohabitation. Think back when Joseph thought that Mary had been unfaithful, having been found with child. Did he not consider divorce, even though they were only betrothed? That is the binding nature of betrothal. Do you see how much more powerful this is than the idea of engagement? And do you see how harmful it is to engage in the things reserved ONLY for marriage, OUTSIDE of marriage? It cheapens marriage, weakens it. It has diluted the meaning of marriage so badly that we've arrived at a cultural crossroads; marriage is unnecessary. Marriage is an outdated institution, and by extension, so is the family. In other words, seeing the human family as the expressed image of God has become obsolete; it's a relic best designated to the museum reserved for all things no longer needed.

And all of this is to bring us to one point. The Eighth Day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the Last Great Day, has been the rehearsal dinner for the marriage supper of the Lamb for thousands of years. The bride, that's you, must make herself ready by putting on her pure white wedding garment because the wedding day is approaching and the Groom is on His way. It will be a

holy convocation, a sacred assembly. It's a day designated "The Joy of the Law." Maybe that's because when the Groom arrives and after He takes care of some much needed business, we will be legally transitioned from His betrothed to His wife. Could there be anything more joyful than that?

CLOSING SALUTATION

*“The living, the living man, he shall
praise You, as I do this day; The
father shall make known Your truth
to the children.” Isaiah 38:19*

“Think in Bible”

VOLUME TWO
KINGDOM EMBASSY
MINISTRIES
DISCIPLESHIP DEVOTIONAL

“He must increase, but I must decrease.” John 3:30

“Now godliness with contentment is great gain.” I Timothy 6:6

