

Reflections

Reflecting Daily Upon Jesus Christ.

**"For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face."
I Cor. 13:12**

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Jan 1

What is Christianity?

Of all of the numerous passages that could be presented as a short definition of Christianity, perhaps the best one is found in Colossians:

Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Col 1:27)

Christianity is CHRIST IN US, or if you prefer, Paul often speaks of US being IN CHRIST. These are the same Truth. There is certainly much that could be added as to how Christ comes to dwell in the believer, and of the Christian walk that emerges from His presence in us. But in the end, our personal Christianity is founded upon whether Christ dwells in us. If Christ is in us, we are a Christian. We are saved. We are on a great spiritual journey. Everything about our Christianity – indeed, everything about the hope of eternal glory – depends upon Christ in us and our growing to know Him.

Jesus Christ did not come to give us a new, or better, form of religion. He did not come to replace law with grace. Neither did He come to begin a movement. Rather, Jesus came to give us HIMSELF. “Christ in you,” is, “the mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.” (Col. 1:26)

“Christ in you,” is Christianity, the new birth, and the essence of the New Covenant. God has made Himself ONE with human beings through His Son, Jesus Christ.



Jan 2

I Am the Life

In Him was life. (John 1:4)

If I put my faith upon Jesus Christ, I do not merely receive a THING called, “eternal life.” I receive Christ Himself -- IN WHOM there is all life. Jesus Christ is THE LIFE. (John 14:6) Thus, if Christ is in me, I am alive – in Him. If He is not in me, then I am spiritually dead.

Many professing Christians limit salvation to what amounts to a new legal classification. Yes, the doctrine of justification by faith rightly states that because Christ died for us, that if we put our faith in Him, then not only are all of our sins imputed to Him, but all of His righteousness is imputed to us. This is legally correct. But there is more. If we place our faith in Christ, yes, God legally IMPUTES to us His righteousness. But

more than this, God IMPARTS to us Christ Himself – Christ in us is why we are alive -- He IS our life. Likewise, because Christ is righteous, He is our righteousness. In short, Christ in us is ALL to us.

Christ is our life – this is not merely some legal classification or doctrinal position. Indeed, the saint is to learn to live from out of Christ, instead of from out of themselves. Paul said, “The just shall live FROM OUT OF faith.” (Rom. 1:16) There is no life from God except it be received and lived out from the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ.



Jan 3 All in Christ

Christianity is, “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Col. 1:27) And IN CHRIST God has freely given us all things:

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? (Rom 8:32; see also Eph. 1:3)

It is so easy to chop up Christianity into THINGS or doctrines. But in the end, Christianity is the Living Jesus Christ in us. Thus, Christian growth is the revelation of Christ to us, and the forming of Christ in us. Indeed, God has given us ALL things freely in Christ – in Christ is all that God HAS to give. As we grow to know Christ – and He is formed in us – all that God has given to us IN HIM unfolds.

Here we find the essential place of doctrine: Christ does not emerge from a list of teaching. Rather, teaching must emerge from Christ – the living Christ Who is IN US. This is exactly what scripture teaches, and the Bible will always agree with God’s revelation of Christ in us. Much error in Christianity is the result of departing from Christ as being the source of all for the believer.



Jan 4 Crucified WITH Christ

Paul, the apostle certainly knew that Jesus Christ was crucified FOR him. The fact that Jesus died FOR us – tasted death for every person – is an absolute fact and the foundation of the redemption. But it is precisely because Christ died FOR us that Paul was able to make this statement:

I am crucified WITH Christ. (Gal. 2:20)

If Jesus merely died FOR us, then we could be legally forgiven. But our old man in Adam would not be crucified in Him. The body of sin would not be destroyed. (Rom. 6:6) That means we would remain in bondage to the old. And there would be no new life possible.

Only if I am crucified WITH Christ does a death take place in ME regarding my old man in Adam. Otherwise, His death has no impact upon me other than a legal means of forgiveness.

Because Jesus died for us, we can DIE IN HIM. And only if we die in Christ can we be raised in Him. This is the basis for all freedom from sin, and victory over Satan. True faith will therefore embrace this Truth and realize that, yes, Christ died FOR us, but we are also, “crucified WITH Christ.” It is finished.



Jan 5 How Christ Dwells in Us

How does Jesus Christ dwell in a person? Not physically, but spiritually. Paul says:

He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit (with Him). (1 Cor. 6:17)

A Christian is a person in whom Christ dwells – one who is, “joined to the Lord.” The Greek word for, “joined,” could rightly be translated, “glued, or cemented.” We are being told that Jesus Christ has made us one with Himself – our human spirit has been joined with His Spirit. This is HOW Christ is IN US; it is HOW we are in Christ.

If we are joined to Christ, then we are joined to all that is in Christ – we are joined to LIFE HIMSELF. This is why we are alive. We are not given a THING or a classification called, “life.” No. We are given Christ, who IS our life.

Once we are joined to the Lord, the Christian life is then a matter of growing to discover Him; of having Him formed in us. It is a matter of the Living Person of Christ coming to govern us and manifest Himself through us. But none of that is possible unless we are first joined to the Lord and He is our life.



Jan 6 Redemption

Redemption is the restoration of all things under God – central to which is the restoration of MAN back to God. God finished this restoration in and through His Son, Jesus Christ.

The way back to God is not by adopting a body of teaching. It is not by finding a religion with which I can be comfortable. It is not by finding the right spiritual guru and submitting myself to him. The only way back to God is through THE WAY – Jesus Christ. I am restored back to God only if Jesus Christ makes Himself one with me personally – only if Christ dwells in me; only if I am joined to Him spiritually.

Do not confuse the words, “redemption,” and, “restoration,” with the word, “repair.” Jesus did not come to repair, cure, or fix the old creation. He did not bring the Adam race back to life AS the old Adam race. Rather, Jesus came to put a final end to the Adam race and the old creation, and thus, He ushered in a NEW creation. If any man be IN CHRIST, he is a NEW creation. Old things are passed away....all things have become NEW. (II Cor. 5:17)

I'm not sure there could be any statement that more fully expresses the finality of the Redemption. Death and resurrection are unto a new creation. Old things have been left behind in death – making it possible for us to be restored back to God.



Jan 7 Light Is Come

Any gospel that does not tell the Truth about the lost condition of man, and his need to be saved from it, is a false gospel. Any gospel that denies the sin nature denies the need for the Cross.

John wrote:

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us.” (I John 1:8)

The Truth will expose our lost condition. God exposes the Truth about us so that we might see the Truth about HIM – that He is our only Savior. God is redemptive God and all that He does is towards that end. Yet it is possible for people to refuse the Truth. John writes:

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hates the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. (John 3:19-20)

The basis for condemnation is the refusal of light – a refusal to see and confess the Truth about myself – about my evil nature, and thus, my need for Christ. Refuse to confess the Truth about your need, and you will NOT value the Truth about the Savior.

Today confession of sin and repentance are considered to be deterrents to our self-esteem. But in God's mind, they are an embracing of the Truth about ourselves, and about the One who saved us from sin. You cannot begin with God unless you begin in Truth. Confession is the result of standing in the light and Truth of Jesus Christ.



Jan 8 It is Finished

God never tells us to win any victory. He tells us to hold fast, and stand in, by faith, the finished victory of Jesus Christ. This Truth is not only fundamental to faith, but is the basis for all spiritual warfare. It is because it is finished, and God gives it all freely in His Son, that we need not fight to win. Rather, we must fight to stand.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord...that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil...that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore...(Eph 6:10-14)

Note that we must stand IN CHRIST. In other words, God does not give us a THING called power or victory apart from Christ Himself -- such that we can go around exercising or manifesting His power. Rather, we must grow to manifest Christ -- who IS the power. Only then is there any practical victory possible. IN CHRIST is all power and authority.

The victory of Christ is only in His resurrection life -- and never in our natural life. Thus, never think that victory is possible while holding onto our own lives. No. That is actually a guarantee for defeat. Victorious life is His life, and He is my life only if I first relinquish myself to Him. Thus, all victory, and therefore overcoming through Him, is a matter of personally coming under Him as Lord. Overcoming in Christ is only possible if Christ has first overcome us.

It really IS finished -- we have no victory to win -- we have only a victory to which we must surrender -- and then in which to stand.



Jan 9 Repent and Believe

“Repent and believe,” were the first three words of the gospel, coming from John the Baptist, and then Jesus. (see Mark 1:15) Indeed, they capture that which is necessary to be saved.

Ask: Repent of what? Repent primarily of the sin of unbelief – we must repent of the sin of not believing. And if we do repent of unbelief then we will believe.

Since Jesus already died for all of my sin, then the one sin that can keep me from Him is the sin of refusing to come to Him. Thus, the one sin we must repent of in order to come to Jesus is this same sin of neglecting to come to Jesus. This is the sin of unbelief. And if we do repent of unbelief, then we will – BELIEVE.

Likewise, if we believe, we are doing so only because we have repented of unbelief. Repent of unbelief and come to Christ and all of your other sins find resolution in Him.

Repentance is a change of moral mind and heart towards God. I repent of the sin of standing aloof of Christ, and in doing so, turn to Him by faith. I am then in touch with the One who died for all of my other sins.



Jan 10 Made Unto Us Sanctification

One of the greatest errors among Christian people is the notion that sanctification is the result of God acting upon us to make us, “look like Jesus” -- or that sanctification is the result of US building in ourselves a Christ-likeness. No. Both are error.

WE will never, “look like Jesus.” Rather, WE are to come under the work of the Cross so that the Christ who dwells in us might be made manifest through us. Note the distinction – this is not US looking like Jesus. It is Jesus manifested through us.

Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live. Yet not I -- but Christ." (Gal. 2:20) He also said, "Always bearing about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus, so that the life also of the Lord Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal bodies." (II Cor. 4:10) It is never that saints are to be molded to look like Christ. It is always Christ Himself being seen in the saint.

Paul said:

But of him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glories, let him glory in the Lord." (1 Cor. 1:29-31)

What is sanctification? Sanctification is NOT us being made to look like Christ. Rather, sanctification is Christ -- being seen in and through a saint. The Treasure in an earthen vessel never makes the earthen vessel to be a treasure. No. The Treasure remains the Treasure and the earthen vessel remains the earthen vessel. But the earthen vessel is privileged to be broken so that the Treasure might be seen: "He that glories, let him glory in the Lord."



Jan 11 Forming of Christ Within

My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." (Gal 4:19)

The word translated, "formed," means, "to inwardly realize or express." In short, Paul desired for saints to inwardly realize and express the Christ who dwells in them.

Paul TRAVAILED that Christ might be formed in the saints. This reflected God's mind in His inspired Word. Thus, we might ask: Is this our travail? The travail of the churches? To the contrary. Many saints today are completely blind to the reality of Christ in us.

Paul also said, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." (Rom 8:29) The Greek for, "conformed," ought to read, "formed together." Thus, we are not made into a copy of Christ. But rather, as Christ is formed in us, we are more and more formed together with Him -- changed so that can we live in our oneness with Him.

If saints would grasp these few Truths – that Christianity is Christ in us, and that God's purpose through Christ is to bring into an inward realization of Him, so that He can form us together with Him -- then our entire concept of Christianity would change. No longer would it be about us, or about us doing things for God. It would be about Christ, and us growing to know Him. Thus, in turn, would change everything about our lives.



Jan 12 Freedom from Self

Scripture tells us that Christ must be formed in us. (Gal. 4:19) This means God wants us to inwardly realize and know Christ. But it is vital to also grasp what it does NOT mean. To have Christ formed in me is not SELF-realization. The goal of God is not to bolster self-esteem, help me find the, "real me," or to enhance my focus on MYSELF. Actually, the more Christ is formed in me, the more I will be set free from my obsession with myself. I will leave myself alone. Why? Because I will see HIM. He is just that great.

Christianity is not self-knowledge. It is Christ-knowledge. Neither is Christianity a matter of God making us to look LIKE Jesus – so that we can take pride in ourselves, or finally be at ease with ourselves. No. Christianity is Christ IN US, manifesting Himself through us. In a word, it is exactly what Paul said, "Yet NOT I, but CHRIST." (Gal. 2:20)

But what I am describing is utterly contrary to our natural make-up. We barely even have a frame of reference for this Truth. Yet all of it is accomplished, not by fixing what ails us so that we look like Jesus. It is accomplished if we DIE, and if we are raised – then come to realize HIM. Once we begin to know the Truth, we will be set free from our continual fussing with ourselves. We can walk with HIM.



Jan 13 All the Fullness of God

For in him dwells all the fullness of Deity bodily. And you are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power. (Col 2:9-10)

The epistle to the Colossians is about Christ as the fullness of God for the saint. Read the first two chapters. Again and again we read, "In Him; through Him; by Him, etc." Indeed, in chapter 2 we are warned against

believing that there is anything, or anyone, that God has given in addition to His Son. We are warned against being drawn to another source. We are later told, "Christ, who is our LIFE." (Col. 3:4) If Christ is our life, then in Him is ALL for the saint.

Paul also writes, "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col. 2:3) As Christ is formed and unfolded to the believer, the wisdom and knowledge, indeed, all that is in Him, is likewise unfolded. These are all HIDDEN in Him – He must first be realized and known and experienced.

God has wrapped up all that He has for man in Christ. This is why Paul says, "You are complete IN HIM – and in Him the fullness of God dwells." (Col. 2:8-9) (The word, "Godhead," is a mistranslation, the word is DEITY.) Note that: In Christ is ALL THE FULLNESS of God -- and Christ is IN US. Does that sound like there is something in addition to Christ that God has for man? No. Again -- much of Colossians 2 is a warning against the error that God has added something to Christ.



Jan 14

How God Speaks Today

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son. (Heb 1:1-2)

How does God speak today? Through signs and wonders? By the means of voices in our head? By leading us around to do this or do that? According to the Bible, God today is primarily speaking to us by His Son. Look up the Greek and you will see that Heb. 1:1-2 really reads, "God is speaking to us Son-wise."

We are being told that God is revealing to us Himself and His will by revealing to us Christ. Primarily, this is not a matter of messages and information sent from heaven. Rather, it is a matter of forming Christ in us – of us coming to realize the Person of Christ. Realize Christ and know Him and you are going to know His will. God can lead in many ways. But this is the way God usually works -- by revealing in us His Son.

Imagine what a shallow Christianity it would be if God simply gave us directions and information -- but we were completely blind to the Person of His Son – who dwells in us. No. God wants us to KNOW HIM. He is today primarily speaking to us, "Son-wise," that is, revealing all things to us through the inward realization of His Son IN US.



Jan 15

Revelation vs. Information

When we are in great difficulty and suffering, it is natural for us to appeal to God for information – what we ought to do, or not do, in order to get out of the suffering. We would at least like to know the reason for our suffering. But almost all of the time when we make this appeal to God He is silent about these matters.

The purpose of God is not to give us information – not even information ABOUT Christ. Rather, God wants to give us a revelation OF Christ. Even more, according to scripture, the purpose of God is to reveal Christ IN US. Paul said, “God revealed His Son IN ME.” (Gal. 1:16) His prayer for the saints was that God, “may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.” (Eph. 1:17-18)

This was the purpose for which Job suffered. He says it outright at the conclusion of his ordeal:

Then Job answered the LORD, and said, “I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withheld from You...therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not....I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye sees You. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”
(Job 42:1-6)

Job never saw the answers he wanted. But He saw God. His suffering was the means by which God built the faith in him so that he was able to see God Himself. We should ask God to do the same in our lives. Instead of asking God for answers, we should ask Him for a greater revelation of Christ. Then as we know Christ, any answers that God has for us will become clear in His Light.



Jan 16

Governed by the Spirit

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.
(Rom 8:14)

Paul is not here talking about LEADINGS. He is not saying that if you are a child of God that God is going to continually feed you information and directions. It isn't that God never speaks to us, or that God doesn't

lead us, but this isn't what Paul is talking about. The translation should be, "For as many as are GOVERNED by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

To be governed by the Spirit of God is to be governed by the life and knowledge of Jesus Christ – for that is what Jesus said the Spirit would do: Testify, glorify, and lead us into the Truth of Christ. If I am governed by the Christ through His Spirit, I will know His will -- and will know what is the Truth and what is error.

It would be a shallow Christianity if we merely got directions from God but did not know God Himself. And yet a focus on leadings often leaves us shallow. God may lead us. But His real purpose is that we know Jesus and live FROM out of Him by faith as our very life.



Jan 17
The Gospel Concerning His Son

**Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God...concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.
(Rom 1:1-3)**

The gospel is a proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ. Included in the proclamation of Christ must be, Christ crucified, Christ raised, and Christ as Lord. Omit any of these and it is not the true gospel. In addition, the gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ IN US, the hope of glory. In short, the gospel is the whole Truth of Christ.

These might seem too simplistic to mention. But there have always been subtle substitutes for the true gospel. For example, there are those who teach that our faith must be in the Cross – that it must be in the historical act of redemption that Christ finished on the Cross. But this is not the Truth -- although certainly that is included. Our faith is to be in the Person of Christ – in the One who actually died on that Cross, and who dwells in us NOW.

Faith in the living Christ NOW does not omit or diminish what He has done. But it is faith, not merely in the work He did, but faith in the One who did that work – and who today is the embodiment of all that it means. Jesus Christ IS Christ crucified. Jesus Christ IS Christ raised. Faith in Christ that is according to the Truth includes faith in what He has done. But it is faith in HIM.

Our faith is to be in the living Christ who dwells in us NOW. He IS our resurrection and life. He contains the fullness of these realities – and He

dwells in us. You cannot separate the Person of Christ from what He has done.



Jan 18 True Ministry

True ministry is not things we do for God, or things we do in the name of Jesus. Rather, true ministry begins when God works in US. One who would minister must allow God to form Christ in them; we must allow God to reveal Christ TO us and IN us -- and the result will be that the life of Christ will be manifested THROUGH us. That is true ministry. It is also God's purpose for this age: That His people might come into an inward realization of Christ and manifest Him.

Without this, there can be little true ministry. Much ministry today is natural man performing religious works. That is why there is no real spiritual power, but only soul power. That is why much ministry ends up being man-centered, with earthly goals.

Paul said:

We have this ministry.....always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death works in us, but life in you. (2 Cor. 4:1,10-12)

"Death works in us, but life in you." That is ministry. It is not merely study or training or the giving of sermons. Rather, it is a person who is under the work of the Cross -- through whom God can manifest Christ.

The life of Christ in one believer will always build up other believers in Christ. In other words, all ministry that is of the spirit of God is going to have as the goal the very same purpose of God in this age: That Christ might be revealed TO people, IN people, and THROUGH people. All of this, of course, is unto the glory of God. But it also holds for us all eternal value: "Christ in us, the hope of glory." (Col. 1:27)



Jan 19

Overcoming

Jesus Christ has already won every victory there is to win. Consequently, when the Bible speaks of the necessity for a saint to overcome, it is not talking about overcoming that which Christ has already defeated. Christ defeated Satan, and bore every sin ever committed by every human being. But if this is the case, then what must a believer overcome?

It should be obvious to any believer that despite the finished and full victory of Jesus Christ that we do not initially seem to be able to live in much of that victory. If Christ has won all victory, and has freely given us all, then why aren't we automatically living in that victory? Well, herein is the need to overcome. We are called to overcome – not the forces that Jesus already defeated – but we are called to overcome the UNBELIEF that would keep us from standing in His finished victory. And there is only one way to overcome unbelief: By believing. That is why John is able to say, "For whoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. "(1 John 5:4)

"The world," includes all that is of the earthly realm – which is the ground of Satan, and the realm to which belongs the old man in Adam. We are to overcome, not by turning and fighting Satan, but we are to overcome by relying and relinquishing our entire selves to the One in whom there is all victory.



Jan 20

Victory in Christ

Death is swallowed up in victory....thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 15:54-57)

Victory is not handed to us merely BECAUSE of Christ – as a THING. No. Rather, all victory is IN the Person of Jesus Christ. In short, God doesn't give us a victory – He gives us Christ – whose very presence in us is the victory.

The only real victory in all of God's creation is that of the resurrection life of Jesus Christ. And the victory of that life is total. The good news is that if I am a believer, Jesus Christ dwells in me. His resurrection life is my life - He is my life.

It is a fact that when we are saved, we are fully in His victory. But how do we come to live in it? Well, if His life is victory, then He must become

our life, or to put it another way, we must, by faith live FROM OUT OF Christ as our life. But we must lose our lives in order to find HIM as our life – and if we do, we are finding that victorious resurrection life.

Victory is a not a matter of finding the right, “how to,” or the right religious principles. It is a matter of faith – losing ourselves in order to find Christ as our life.



Jan 21 One Mediator

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. (1 Tim 2:5)

A, “mediator,” is a proxy; one who connects two parties. Jesus Christ is the sole Mediator between the believer and God. If Christ is in us, then by His very presence in us, we are joined to both Him and the Father.

Now, notice what this means: It means that there must NEVER be anyone or anything introduced into our relationship with God who acts as ANOTHER mediator. There are no mediators in addition to Christ – there is no one who can enhance our personal access and relationship with God. In short, our access to God is NOT dependent upon our relationship with another. We do not have to, “submit,” to another in order to maintain access to God. We do not have to belong to the right group, or the right church, or be under the supposed authority of the right leader, to be right with God. Anyone who teaches otherwise is a false teacher. This is basic Truth.

Christianity is CHRIST IN YOU. Get that: Christ IN YOU. Thus, the very definition and meaning of Christianity – the very definition of Christianity reveals that you are already personally and individually ONE with God through Christ. Your access is personal and complete – through the very presence of our one Mediator in us. All ministry that is of God will teach this and help people to grow in their personal relationship through Christ.



Jan 22 A Personal Indwelling

These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abides in you, and

you need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, ye shall abide in him. (1 John 2:26-27)

John was not against ministry, indeed, he is here speaking AS a minister. All true ministry will get people into business with Jesus Christ for themselves. This will not foster division and independence, but will result in true unity. True unity is the result of EACH believer abiding in the Vine in a personal way. Then, as the result of that, they can abide in each other according to Christ.

This Truth is so vital that John says he is writing it, “concerning them that seduce you.” Indeed, if we look down through Christian history, one of the oft-repeated errors is the notion that we cannot keep right with God unless we belong to, or submit to, someone who claims to be our authority under God. No. All of the branches are to abide in the same Vine – individually. Then, because EACH of the branches are all abiding in the same Vine, there will be unity. And real ministry will teach believers how to abide in Christ in a personal, living way – thus edifying the entire Body IN HIM.



Jan 23
I Am the Vine

I am the Vine, you are the branches: He that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. (John 15:5)

Christianity, at the basis, is Christ in us. This begins with the individual. The individual has a personal and one-on-one relationship with Christ – Christ dwells first in the individual.

All unity, and all the functioning of the Body of Christ, is dependent upon the relationship of Christ with the individual. There have always been those who would corrupt this Truth by saying that the believer’s personal relationship with Christ is dependent upon whether they are first right with the Body – i.e., abiding in the other branches – submitted, etc. The word, “interdependent,” is sometimes used. This is a lie and the stuff of which cults are made.

We see the Truth in these simple words of Jesus. He is the ONE VINE. We are the MANY BRANCHES. He does not address the branches as a body at this point. No. The individual is a branch – and the branches are not to first abide, i.e., live in, the other branches. No. Rather, each branch is to live in a personal, one-on-one relationship with

the one Vine. This is the only way in which the branches will have a relationship with each other in the unity that is according to Christ.



Jan 24
Edification in Christ

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. (Eph. 4:11-12)

To EDIFY in Christ is to BUILD UP in Christ. This speaks of ministry that serves as spiritual food for the forming of Christ in us.

It is folly to think that this can somehow happen only on a group level. It cannot even begin to bring greater life on a corporate level unless it is first happening on an individual level. Christ is first in the individual. If Christ is formed in the individual first, then this will increase the spiritual health of the entire Body of Christ.

Ministry is not a matter of studying books and passing on the information. To be edified in Christ is not a matter of absorbing that information and increasing in theological knowledge. Rather, ministry is a matter of a person giving themselves personally over to Christ so that His life might be made manifest. This can then take the shape of teaching, etc., but the spiritual fabric will be much different than mere information – it will carry the very life of the One of Whom it speaks.

Edification in Christ is a matter of being built up IN CHRIST – through the personal inward revelation of Himself to me. All ministry that is of God is unto this end.



Jan 25
A New Covenant

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. (Heb 8:10-11)

What constitutes the New Covenant? The New Covenant is essentially CHRIST IN US – it is Jesus Christ in the individual. He is the personification of God’s law; the righteousness of God in a Person.

Jesus is the Mediator of the New Covenant. (Heb. 12:24) This speaks of much more than a work He accomplished. Rather, it speaks of His very life and presence in us. In short, if Christ is in us, we are in the New Covenant. If we are joined to Him through His Spirit, we are joined to God.

The New Covenant is not merely a covenant of grace – although certainly, grace is a fundamental characteristic. Rather, the New Covenant is the covenant of new life in Jesus Christ; that of a new creation in Him. Through Christ, God has not given us a new or different religion. He has given us new life in His Son.



Jan 26
Another Gospel

How would you define, “legalism?” The Bible uses the term, “under the law.” It speaks of trying to maintain my righteousness before God through law-keeping, or really, on the basis of anything about myself.

The essential of, “righteousness,” is all through the NT. But don’t think of the Truth about righteousness as merely a theological tenet. No. Righteousness speaks of relationship with God. It must be addressed and resolved. But legalism falsely resolves the need for righteousness by finding the solution in man – there is something found in man that is presented as that basis of righteousness – my works, my theological beliefs, the church I belong to, my sincerity, my character, my serving, etc. But the Bible calls all of this ANOTHER GOSPEL. (Gal. 1:6-7)

Note that. Legalism is not merely, “Christianity with a little too much law.” It is not Christianity with a little false teaching. No. Rather, legalism is a false Christianity. It is ANOTHER GOSPEL – in other words, a FALSE gospel.

Believers need to take these things seriously. Paul said, “Christ is of no effect for those who are under the law.” (Gal. 5:4) He said, “If righteousness comes by law-keeping, Christ died in vain.” (Gal. 2:21) Have we realized that legalism – this false gospel – is actually a subtle religious denial of Jesus Christ?



Jan 27
Adjusted to the Truth

No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. (2 Pet 1:20)

Roman Catholics teach that the church has the right of interpretation for the individual. But that is not the meaning of this verse. Peter is simply saying that I cannot adjust the Truth to fit myself personally. Rather, I must be adjusted to fit the Truth. And the fact is, we are ultimately going to do one or the other.

All of us have fallen into the trap of accepting whatever feeds us – we think that if something feeds us, then this must be the Truth. No. Error feeds the flesh. Thus, only God can convict a person of the Truth.

There are many examples of cults and false movements that are built upon the violation of this one verse: All of them say that God has revealed the Truth through only THEM. No. Anyone who makes such claims is a heretic. Some of them claimed special visitations from angels, or even Jesus Himself. They are deceived by their own unbelief and have deceived others.

The doctrines that emerge from these deluded men differ as to error. But each of them in some way deny the identity of Jesus Christ as God Incarnate; as the only Savior of the world. They have taken the Truth and adjusted it to fit themselves. There is no end to the possibilities of spiritual disaster once we do this.

Truth cannot come from out of man. Truth comes through revelation from God. I have no right to interpret scripture according to myself -- if I do I create God in MY own image. No. Truth is a Person. I must allow God to adjust and change ME so that I might manifest and be one with Him.



Jan 28
The Other Side of Travail

A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow...but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembers no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. (John 16:21)

When we are suffering, our attention is upon the suffering. But Jesus is reminding us that something is being birthed that will change our perspective. He is talking about a new revelation of Himself through

suffering. “You cannot see the Truth now. But you will. Hold fast by faith until that day.” In one sense of the word, the fullness of what suffering will birth will never be fully evident here. But in the eternal ages it will be released into the fullness that God intended.

It is a fact that much of what God is doing in our lives during this age is not merely for this age, and in fact, not only for us. Much of what God is doing in this age is establishing us in Christ in preparation for the next age. In addition, He is building up the body of Christ as a whole – as He builds up the individual in Christ, the entire body will be benefited. There will be some fruition and benefits in this age. But it is in the next age that there will be the full realization.

We cannot, in this age, always see or understand reasons WHY God does or allows certain things to happen in our lives. These are, “birth pangs.” But something is being birthed – something in Christ. If we will give ourselves to Christ for His will there will come a day when, “the hope of glory,” will be resolved in, “the realization of His glory.”



Jan 29
Faith Comes by Hearing

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
(Rom 10:17)

Paul says, “Faith comes....” Note the implication: Faith must COME – faith must come to be IN ME. That means that it is not in me to begin with. Faith is not of ourselves – there is nothing in a human being, by nature, that can engender faith, as God defines faith.

This ought to tell us that it is futile to try to muster up faith from out of ourselves. Many of us do this to try to please God. But we cannot do it – true faith must come to be in me. Faith must COME.

How does true faith come to be in me? By hearing the Word of God. “The Word of God,” is any revelation God gives us of Jesus Christ – all of which will, of course, agree with scripture. God today is primarily, “speaking to us in His Son.” Once we recognize that God is speaking to us, and we then, “hear Him,” that is, embrace and surrender to what He is speaking, this will give birth to faith. That is how faith comes, and it is the only way it comes to be in a person.

The ramifications of this Truth are immense. If the Truth God speaks to me is that which gives birth to faith, then the faith that is engendered can be only for the Truth that engendered it. In short, I cannot have true

faith for anything other than the Truth. Faith in error, or faith that is of myself, is not true faith. It is deception.

It is a great comfort to know that it is not up to us to engender faith. Rather, it is up to us to HEAR. Thus, rather than ask God for more faith, we ought to ask Him for more of the Truth in Christ Jesus. Hear that, and faith will come.



Jan 30 **The Trial of Faith**

It is possible to believe God for certain things – if He has promised them -- but primarily, all faith comes back to reliance upon God Himself – that He is faithful. That one Truth – that God is faithful to us personally – is going to be tried and proven over and over again. (see I Pet. 1:7)

What is called, “a trial of your faith,” is also a proving of the Truth upon which faith is built. If the Truth upon which my faith is based is proven to BE TRUE, then my faith will be strengthened.

God is building us in Christ. But to accomplish this, He must tear down all that would hinder or substitute – He must expose and demolish all faith that is based upon ourselves or any other object. Then our faith will be pure.

God is a redemptive God. All that He does is unto that end. The trial of faith is never to trip us up – although Satan may try to use it for that purpose. No. God’s intention in any trial of faith is to build faith by proving the Truth upon which it is based. And the primary Truth of all is that of the faithfulness of God through Jesus Christ. If that is proven, the building of our faith will follow.



Jan 31 **Guided Into All Truth**

Jesus Christ promised that when the Holy Spirit was given that a primary purpose would be to guide believers into all the Truth. (John 16:13) But we must not limit this to merely an understanding of Bible verses, or the ability to develop a correct theology. No. Jesus Christ is the Truth. In short, being guided into all Truth means that we will be guided into a knowledge of Jesus Christ that will set us free from all error.

To be guided into all Truth will eventually result in BEING MADE TRUE UNTO GOD. I will know the Truth and that Truth will alter me so that I can walk in the Light as He is in the Light. This is THE true relationship. It sounds funny, but the Truth makes it possible for us to walk with the Truth in the one True relationship.

But again – this is not a matter of being fed true information. Indeed, if I am to be guided into all Truth, it will be necessary to have all of the untruth about me exposed. Do you want to be made true unto God? Then expect that all that is untrue about you – false faith, attitudes, motives, and unbelief – must be exposed for what they are.

All God wants to do is tell the Truth about us so that we can, in turn, say the same Truth back to Him – which is the meaning of confession. This will make us true unto Him – not because of anything about us – because we will have then been adjusted to, and set free by, the Truth Himself.



Feb 1
Flesh vs. Spirit

Unless a man is born again (from above), he cannot see the kingdom of God....that which is born of the flesh IS flesh. And that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (John 3:6)

To be born from above does not mean that, “we turn over a new leaf,” or that we merely alter our conduct according to a list of laws or Bible principles. These things can be done purely out of the flesh – and be incredibly religious. Yet they are not of God.

The new birth happens when I receive His life from above – I received Christ from the outside of myself INTO myself. It does not originate from this world. It is not of the flesh. It is from above – brought into my spirit from the outside. Jesus Christ joins us to Himself and we become a new creation.

People can imitate the new birth in many ways. Religious forms of the flesh can be quite persuasive, but they are still of the flesh. In the end, unless Christ is in us, we are not born from above, indeed, we are not saved. We cannot SEE.

It is one thing to be blind and WANT to see. But it is entirely another to be blind and not know it – indeed think you DO see. Jesus says the key is: The birth from above.



Feb 2 **A New Creature**

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (2 Cor. 5:17)

We are saved when Jesus Christ joins us to Himself. Since He is THE LIFE, then when we are joined to Him, we are ALIVE in Him. We are planted together with Him in His death -- and then what is birthed through His resurrection is the new creature in Christ Jesus. (see Rom. 6:5)

If it were possible to mechanically draw a circle around our resurrection union with Christ – inside that circle would be the new creature; the new man; the inward man – it would include all that is saved and born from above. But what is outside of that circle would remain natural. Herein is the division or separation between soul and spirit that is within each believer.

You will note that when a person is united with Christ that his natural man is not obliterated – the natural man does not cease to exist in this age. “We have this treasure IN an earthen vessel.” (II Cor. 4:7) But as it pertains to the purpose of God, and that which is eternal, this outward man is in the process of perishing. Only that which is Christ, will, in the end, remain.

During this age, the natural man is to become governed by the new creature that is inside of this imaginary circle. But the natural man will never be LIKE Christ. Rather, the natural man will come under the work of the Cross so that the Christ who is within might be seen through natural man. The natural must be made weak, that He might be strong in us. (see II Cor. 12:9-10) Christ is evermore the power of God. (I Cor. 1:24)



Feb 3 **Received From Above**

**A man can possess nothing, except it be given him from heaven.
(John 3:27)**

John the Baptist was, of course, referring to the things of God. It is certainly possible for people to possess much through their own efforts,

and to possess things that are outside of the will of God. John is saying that what is of God must come from God.

Paul the apostle said the same thing: "Don't you know your own selves that unless Christ is in you -- you are a reprobate?" (II Cor. 13:5) A reprobate is a person who is of no use, and without value. Add this up and it means that there is no inherent greatness in man. All that is of value is found in Christ -- and therefore, all that is of value is received only when we receive Him.

Many Christians define their Christianity by what they have to offer to God. God defines it according to what we have RECEIVED – and if we are to truly receive, we will have to see that we have NOTHING to give. This is basic and it is the Truth of grace.

Christianity is not a matter of God tapping into, and bringing out, our potential. It is not a matter of God enhancing us with Christ. Rather, it is a matter of receiving from above the One in whom dwells ALL the fullness of God – and in whom is ALL that God has to give.



Feb 4 Denying Self

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. (Matt. 16:24-25)

In this passage, Jesus tells us what we must do in order to, "come after," Him. Do we want to follow Christ? Then we need to read and obey this verse. Otherwise, we are deceiving ourselves.

The first thing Jesus says a person must do is, "deny himself." This is not so much about denying ourselves THINGS. No. People have tried that -- religious asceticism cannot please God because it is often nothing more than a, "work," we do to make ourselves right with Him.

No. To deny self means to deny my right to myself -- it means to relinquish my self-ownership. The place to start is by telling GOD himself to do whatever it takes to bring me into the fullness of Christ. That is relinquishment. It means I take my place in His death. Then when God does do whatever it takes we come along with Him by faith -- this is our carrying of that Cross.

We are to lose ourselves to Christ not merely to obey a religious principle. We are to do it because we have seen there is no life in us --

and because we want to live in Christ. In other words, there is no other outcome of embracing the Truth that is possible except that we will lose ourselves to Christ in order that He might become our life. It is what we will voluntarily do if we see and embrace the Truth in Christ.



Feb 5 Taking Up the Cross

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. (Matt. 16:24-25)

If I am saved -- if I am raised in Christ -- it is only because I have taken my place in His Cross. That is a once and for all and forever reality. But here we see the working out of that finished reality. We have to commit to progressively relinquish all that is contrary to Christ to find true life in Him. In order for this to take place, we have to bear the Cross God brings into our lives. This will look different for each believer but accomplish the same purpose. And God Himself will initiate our Cross -- He alone can do this.

The Cross is the instrument of death, and because it is death to the only life we have ever known, it will seem like a terribly negative proposition. But in reality, the Cross works freedom from all that keeps us from experiencing Jesus Christ. God's goal is not to deprive us. It is to make us able to receive and live in all that He is.

God never tells us to fix ourselves. He never tells us to cure what ails us. But He does tell us to do one thing -- the only thing we can do: He tells us to bring ourselves, with all of our sin and failures to the Cross. In short, we are to relinquish the one thing we do possess -- ourselves -- which is dead and corrupt.



Feb 6 Losing Our Lives

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. (Matt. 16:24-25)

Millions today are being taught that God wants to bless their lives, and they are being given instructions as to how to get Him to do it. Yet

Jesus states here that we are to LOSE our lives for His sake. How likely is it that God will bless a life that we are told to lose?

To LOSE your life for Jesus' sake means to relinquish your right to yourself; to abandon yourself to God; to leave yourself alone; to actually embrace the Truth that you are no longer your own. In short, lose yourself to God and let Him determine the outcome. We can do this all at once as a commitment. But then God must work it out through the work of the Cross – and we must believe and obey.

If we want Christ to be formed in us -- if we want to come into the realization of the Son of God in an inward way -- we have to lose our lives into the hands of God. This is not merely a religious principle to follow. It is because of the nature of things -- we cannot live in Christ from out of the Adam life. We have to find Him as our life, and learn to live by faith from out of Jesus Christ. Lose your life and find Christ as your life and you will be finding the One in whom God has given ALL blessing.



Feb 7

Suffering the Loss of All Things

I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them as dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness...but the righteousness which is of God by faith. (Phil. 3:8-9)

If you read Philippians 3 you will discover that Paul lists those THINGS that he lost for the sake of Christ. (see Phil. 3:4-6) You will not find any SINS on that list. Nor material possessions. Rather, Paul said he lost everything about HIMSELF that he had been using to make himself righteous before God. In short, primary to what Paul lost, was his self-righteousness.

Anyone of us can easily read and memorize the doctrines of the Bible. We can become experts on the doctrines of justification by faith and law vs. grace. But Paul is not talking about a doctrinal realization. He is talking about what happened to him when he encountered Christ. He saw the Truth. And seeing the Truth meant that he saw that, yes, he was a sinner. But more than that, Paul saw that his self-righteousness was a lie. So he relinquished it.

Losing self-righteousness is so vital and central that Paul was able to say that it enabled him to, "win Christ and be found in Him." But notice HOW Paul was found in Christ: He was found -- no longer with a self-

righteousness -- but with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. This was the pivotal point in Paul's walk with Christ. Paul had not come into a doctrinal realization. He had come into a realization of Jesus Christ.



Feb 8
Self-Righteousness

I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them as dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness...but the righteousness which is of God by faith. (Phil. 3:8-9)

Self-righteousness is not merely a Christian walk that has a little too much law. It is actually a lie; it is deception. In fact, self-righteousness is SIN -- based in unbelief. Ultimately, if we are not careful, it is a position that can deny Jesus Christ. It is a false Christianity.

The epistle to the Galatians addresses this matter directly. Paul warned them, "Christ is become of no effect unto you who would be justified by law. You are fallen from grace." (Gal. 5:4) That is a false Christianity; a deception. Indeed, he is able to also state, "If righteousness comes by law-keeping, then Christ is dead in vain." (Gal. 2:21) That is a denial of Christ. Indeed, Paul says that legalism is ANOTHER GOSPEL.

Self-righteousness is also a SELF-deception. Paul said the Galatians were actually, "bewitched," or, "mesmerized." (see Gal. 3:1) They were deceived -- but comfortable in that deception.

According to Paul, this matter of righteousness is central to our freedom in Christ. It is central to the gospel. We must see the Truth and relinquish our own righteousness in order to, "win Christ and be found in Him -- not having our own righteousness, based on law, but that which is through faith in Jesus Christ." (Phil. 3:9) We must get this matter of righteousness settled in the Truth. We will not get far in knowing Jesus Christ otherwise.



Feb 9
Christ, Our Righteousness

I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them as dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own

righteousness...but the righteousness which is of God by faith. (Phil. 3:8-9)

Paul is not here describing a doctrinal shift in his life. Neither is he describing a religious hoop through which he jumped to please God. No. He is describing what happened to him when he encountered Jesus Christ. He saw the TRUTH about his own righteousness – and thus, he counted it as dung. He found that Christ was the only true righteousness.

Paul said that he WON Christ and was found IN HIM -- not having his own righteousness, but was found in Christ with the righteousness of God. What does he mean? He tells us elsewhere. To the Corinthians he writes, "Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us....righteousness." (1 Cor. 1:29-30)

Jesus Christ IS our righteousness. Thus, when Paul won Christ and was found in Him, he discovered that the Christ who was living in him was the righteousness of God in him. That was all he needed.

Through faith, God imputes to us the righteousness of Jesus Christ. But what this really means is that God imparts to us Christ Himself, who IS our righteousness. This is the result of winning Christ and being found in Him -- He is our righteousness.



Feb 10 Whatever It Takes

I beseech you, brethren, because of the mercies of God, that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. (Rom. 12:1)

There is no other place God will bring us -- if we want to walk in the Truth and come into the fullness of Jesus Christ -- except the place that is described in Romans 12:1. However, you will note that the tone is not morbid or depressing. Rather, it is positive -- Paul's appeal is, "because of the mercies of God." This is not a threat of punishment if we don't obey. Paul is describing in practical terms the means of losing our lives in order to find Christ as our life.

If we were to take this verse and restate it as a prayer to God, it might read, "Lord, do whatever it takes to bring your will to pass in me -- do whatever it takes to bring me into the fullness of Christ." This really is, "presenting yourself as a living sacrifice." Do we want the glory of God and His purpose in Christ enough to ask God, "to do whatever it takes to bring it to pass?"

There is nothing we can do to bring the will of God to pass for ourselves -- except one thing: Give ourselves unconditionally to Christ. Of course, we won't even know how to do that, but that is why we are asking God, "to do whatever it takes," to bring us there.

What will it take? The details will vary with the individual. But the basis will be the same -- it will take a work of the Cross and the loss of myself to Christ -- that I may find Him. This is the altar upon which I am to present myself. This is a prayer God will always answer. I must then believe and obey when God does begin to answer.



Feb 11 The Great Transition

Jesus Christ makes the believer one with Himself at salvation. This union -- which could be called, "resurrection union," IS the new creature in Christ Jesus. All that is outside of that union or new creature remains of the natural. Both exist within the born again believer.

God is not working out His purpose through the old creation. He is not working upon our natural man to make him Christ-like. He is not seeking to bring out some inherent greatness in our natural man. Rather, He brought an end to the Adam race through the death of Christ. In Adam all die. In Christ, all are alive. (I Cor. 15:22) God is doing all things through Christ -- everything God is doing in our lives is according to, and by the means of, the Living Christ who dwells in us.

We might say that there is a great transition going on in the believer, and ultimately, in this world. It is a transition from the old Adam race to the new creation in Christ Jesus. Christ did not come to fix the old. He came to put it to a final death so that what could emerge is life in Himself. Believers are in the process of this practical transition -- that is why we must, "bear in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus, so that the life also of the Lord Jesus might be made manifest through our mortal bodies." (II Cor. 4:9-10)



Feb 12 Treasure in Earthen Vessels

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. (2 Cor 4:7)

This is another picture of, "Christ in us, the hope of glory." (Col. 1:27) But it is a picture that stresses the distinction between ourselves and Christ. He is the Treasure and we are the earthen vessel. We will never be the Treasure. Indeed, even while Christ is in us, and we are one with Him in spirit, He remains distinct. He carries all of the value. We are privileged to receive and experience Him.

If you read this passage from II Corinthians 4, you will discover that it was never God's purpose to make the earthen vessel look like Jesus. Neither was it ever God's purpose to take the earthen vessel and bring out some latent greatness from in it. No. We are told in this verse that the VALUE (excellency) of the power is never of us, but of Christ. In fact, Paul goes on in the passage to say of the earthen vessel: Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. (II Cor. 4:9-11)

This clearly tells us that the earthen vessel is to be broken by the Cross so that the life of the Treasure might shine through. In other words, rather than be made to look like Jesus, we are to be broken so He can manifest Himself through us. We must be made weak so that Christ, the power of God, might live through us. We must lose our lives for His sake in order to find true life in Him.



Feb 13
Who Do Men Say That I Am?

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" And they said, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." He said unto them, "But whom say ye that I am?" (Matt. 16:13-15)

In the final analysis, it does not matter -- to OUR relationship with God -- what other people say about Jesus Christ. It does not matter even if they give the right answer. What matters is what WE say and believe about Jesus. Relationship with God is never by proxy. In the end, what will matter is who Jesus Christ is to us, and who we are to Him.

It is a fact that once God reveals to us His Son, and we have embraced the Truth about Christ, that it is not possible to confess that He is anything other than the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Why? Because it is the TRUTH. If we are distorting the identity of Jesus -- then

either God has yet to reveal Christ to us, or we have refused to hear Him.



Feb 14
Personal Revelation

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. (Mat 16:16-17)

Peter saw and confessed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God – not because of brain power, emotions, or study. He saw it because God the Father had personally revealed to him this Truth. And the fact of the matter is, each of us have to receive the Truth about Christ in the same way. We cannot base our faith or knowledge of Christ upon what other people say about Him. We cannot base it upon any, “flesh and blood,” source. It must be revealed to us by the Father from heaven.

You cannot be saved, or come to know Christ, merely because you have been raised in a Christian family. Neither can it happen because you attend a good church. Those things can rightly point us to Christ, but none of them can engender life in us. The source of new life is ABOVE – we must be born from above. God must initiate our calling to Christ. (John 6:44) But then we must decide whether to hear and believe.

Christianity is CHRIST IN YOU – it is Christ in the individual. This is the basis of not only Christianity, but even of the Body of Christ. We are in the Body only because we are first in Christ individually. Any teaching that undermines our personal access to God through Christ as our personal and only Mediator is a lie. Peter saw the Truth because God revealed it to him personally. God wants to do the same for us all.



Feb 15
Upon This Rock

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Mat 16:16-18)

What is the Rock upon which the church is to be built? Peter? No. The Rock is Jesus Christ – but note: The Rock is the personal revelation of the Christ to the individual. It is that personal revelation of Christ in an inward way that constitutes the Rock upon which the church is built.

You will note that Jesus is not talking about organizations or buildings. He is talking about PEOPLE -- individuals who comprise the Body of Christ. Christ is first in the individual. Gather together many to whom Christ has been revealed and in whom Christ dwells, and you have the church. It is those individuals, and by extension, the body, who are to be built -- they are to be built in Christ by an on-going personal and inward revelation of Him.

This also tells us that the ministry of the church is to teach people that Jesus Christ dwells in them, and is to be revealed IN them. Ministry will, "teach Christ." That is edification -- to build up in Christ. It is the ministry of the spirit of God, and thus, all who minister by the spirit of God will have this purpose.

Jesus Christ does not, "build His church," by increasing members, money, and buildings. He builds it through the revelation of Himself to individuals. The church is built upon the Rock only to the extent that the individuals in it are built -- not built up upon themselves -- but built upon the Rock.



Feb 16
Jesus Christ is God

There are professing Christians today, including entire churches, who deny that Jesus Christ is God. Of course this means they must also deny the virgin birth, His resurrection, and deny that He is the ONLY WAY to the Father. But the Bible does not mince words on this matter:

Whosoever transgresses, and abides not in the doctrine of Christ, has not God. He that abides in the doctrine of Christ, he has both the Father and the Son. (2 John 1:9)

The, "doctrine of Christ," includes all of the essential Truth about Him. Primary to this would certainly be His identity.

Don't misunderstand. John is not saying that God demands that you believe in a list of doctrines. He is not saying that if you do not believe certain doctrines that God will punish you by withdrawing from you. No. He is saying that if you do not believe in the Truth of Christ that your

unbelief is evidence that you are still blind to Him, or have refused the Truth.

The Truth of Jesus is received by revelation from God. And there are outcomes of having received God's revelation of the Truth -- just as there are outcomes of having rejected it. If we have truly received the revelation of Jesus Christ from the Father then we are going to believe the Truth about Him -- and live in Him. It is not possible to receive the Truth and remain in error. There is only ONE Truth because there is only ONE Person. Thus, if we do remain in error, then again, we are either blind to the Truth or have rejected it.

The Truth of Christ is not merely a mandated doctrine of a belief system. Rather, it is the Truth that I WILL SEE if I see HIM -- if I see the PERSON. You cannot embrace the Truth Himself and continue forever to believe lies about Him.



Feb 17
The Only Way to God

I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except by Me. (John 14:6)

Jesus did not say, "I am A way, A truth, and A life." This is proven by His next words: "No one comes to the Father except by Me." He could not have been more clear. Now, (pardon me as I borrow an argument from C.S. Lewis) either Jesus Christ was liar, totally insane, or He was telling the complete Truth about Himself. Thus, those who say He was a good man or prophet have no basis for their claim. He continually made claims that no sane person could make about himself unless He were actually the Son of God.

People object to Jesus as the only way to God because they say that this demands that only Christians are saved. That is absolutely correct. But the fact is, God invites all people to come to Christ and become Christians. Christ as the only Way is a narrow Way, but God invites all to come that Way.

Jesus is the only Way to God because He alone is the only begotten Son of God become man – and He alone died for us and was raised. He alone is Lord of all. This is not merely a matter of theology. It is not a "belief system." Nor does it cater to human demands for political correctness. It is simply THE TRUTH -- based on the identity of Jesus Christ and the fact that He has redeemed humanity.



Feb 18 The Virgin Birth

The virgin birth is an absolute Truth and necessity if Jesus is God Incarnate. For if Jesus had two human parents -- was the product of human reproduction -- then He did not pre-exist, and was therefore not God. It would mean He was born OF this world.

Every human being since Adam has been born OF this world. But Jesus continually claimed that He CAME INTO this world from the outside – indeed, He is the only person to ever be born into this world from the outside. This required a virgin birth so that He could be supernaturally implanted into Mary's womb – thus maintaining His identity, individuality, and divinity. Thus, those who deny the virgin birth are denying that Jesus was God, denying the Bible, and calling Jesus a liar. It is just that serious.

To deny the virgin birth is to deny GOD BECAME MAN. But this, in turn, is an actual denial of Jesus as Savior, and thus, of the redemption He accomplished. In addition, it is a denial that Jesus Christ comes to dwell in humanity NOW. Only if Jesus was God become man, and lived a sinless life, could these realities be the Truth.

When God reveals to a human being His Son, these Truths come along. They are not merely doctrines of a belief system. They are the Truth of God having to do with the One who was given to redeem all of humanity.



Feb 19 The Son of Man

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. (Phil. 2:6-8)

Jesus was the only begotten Son of God. But He entered into this world from the outside through the womb of Mary and became God Incarnate. The name by which He referred to Himself as, "God become man," was, "The Son of Man." Of course, the Son of Man is also the Son

of God – one hundred percent God and one hundred percent man. “For in him dwelt all the fullness of Deity bodily.” (Col. 2:9)

The Son of Man is also referred to as The Last Adam. (I Cor. 15:45) These names accent the humanity of Christ but also point us to the reason He had to become a human being. Jesus became The Last Adam in order to live a sinless life to God’s glory, and thus bring to a fullness and a consummation all that God originally wanted in the Adam race. Then, once that was accomplished, He presented Himself as the perfect man – the Lamb without blemish – to bear the sin of the Adam race -- indeed, to bear the Adam race collectively -- on the Cross. Thus, when Jesus died on the Cross, the Adam race died IN HIM. His death ENDED the Adam race – that is why He is called The Last Adam. Through His resurrection, God began a NEW creation – a NEW race.

In Christ, God has not reversed death upon the Adam race. Neither has He repaired the Adam race. No. In Christ, the Adam race died. But through the resurrection there is now a NEW race -- a new humanity -- the new creation in Christ Jesus.



Feb 20

The Last Adam

Jesus Christ, who is called, “The Last Adam,” (I Cor. 15:45) is given that name because He brought to fullness in His Person all that God originally intended for the Adam race. But then, having done that, He bore the sin of all on the Cross – indeed, He bore that Adam race on the Cross. This ENDED the Adam race – His death was the death of all that was contained in the Adam race. Thus, He was the LAST Adam – the consummation and end of the original Adam race. Now, in Christ risen, God has made a NEW MAN.

Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, God was not merely reversing the death of the Adam race. The resurrection did not fix humanity, or cure what ailed the Adam race. No. The Adam race ENDED at the Cross, and was left in the grave. What emerged through the resurrection was a brand new race – a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Paul says, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (II Cor. 5:17) The new creation in Christ Jesus is not a reformed, renovated, or fixed up old creation. No. The Cross of Jesus Christ has set us completely free from the power of the old man in Adam. Through the resurrection, we are raised IN CHRIST JESUS as new creations. This fact is the key to all

freedom from sin and power over the enemy that is found through faith in the Person of Jesus Christ.



Feb 21 Resurrection Life

Resurrection life is not a THING or a POWER that God somehow gives to us. No. Jesus said, “I AM the resurrection and the life.” (John 11:25) Resurrection life is a Person. And for us, resurrection life is CHRIST IN US.

If we are one with Jesus Christ, then not only is His life ours, but He IS our life. Paul said, “Christ, who IS our life.” (Col. 3:4) Thus, to the extent that we have LOST OUR LIVES, we will be able to live in a oneness with Him as our resurrection and life.

The ramifications of this Truth are staggering. The resurrection conquered the last enemy, death – it defeated forever Satan. Through the Cross, the entire Adam race was ended, and thus, the ground upon which Satan works is no longer the basis for our life if we abide in Christ. Through the resurrection there was a new creation in Christ – which provides no ground for Satan, indeed, gives us Christ as our life.

This is why Paul is able to say, “Christ, the power of God.” (I Cor. 1:24) In His very Person is all resurrection life. But in order to live in His power, we must be made WEAK in ourselves. (II Cor. 12:9-10) We have to stop living from out of ourselves as the source, and begin living from out of Him by faith. This does not happen automatically. But if we will abide in Him by faith, we have power over the old creation and over Satan himself.



Feb 22 Victory Over Death

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.
(Heb. 2:14-15)

The victory of Jesus Christ over death, and over Satan, was not merely a legal victory. It was a living victory – accomplished through actual death and resurrection.

When Adam sinned he put the entire Adam race under the sentence of death. But Jesus did not come to provide a way for God to lift this sentence of death from the Adam race. Rather, Jesus came to satisfy that sentence of death – in Christ the Adam race died – not just legally, but actually. Jesus actually bore the body of sin – the Adam race – on the Cross. (Rom. 6:6) And when Jesus died, the Adam race died. The justice of God and the sentence of death was satisfied. It really WAS finished.

Because of Adam's sin, the Adam race was spiritually dead – no longer one with God in spirit. This meant that the fallen Adam race, with all of its aspects – the flesh, the psychic, and the natural –was then the ground of Satan. Satan had access to man through his natural makeup.

When Jesus Christ died, the Adam race died in Him. What was raised up out from the old race was a new race – a new man in Christ Jesus. Thus, through the death and resurrection of Christ, the ground of Satan is undercut – and there was then, "a new man," born of resurrection life. This is the key to victory over all sin and death: The resurrection life of Jesus Christ. If we are in Christ, we are a new creation.



Feb 23
Baptized Into His Death

Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? (Rom. 6:3)

Jesus Christ died FOR us – He tasted death for each of us. Jesus died as our substitute. This means that if we come to the Cross and take our place in His death that we will never have to taste real death. But having said that, we do have to DIE IN HIM.

Paul says that we are, "baptized into the death of Christ." We are buried together with Him. Indeed, elsewhere he says that we are, "crucified with Christ." (Gal. 2:20) In other words, because Jesus died FOR us, we died in Him. Of course, the, "we," that dies in Christ is our old man in Adam – "the body of sin." This is precisely why, through the death of Jesus Christ, we are set free from the old man in Adam. It is why IN CHRIST we are set free from sin.

Being baptized into the death of Christ certainly has LEGAL implications. But this is not merely a legal Truth. It is a living Truth. Because Jesus died for us, we can die in Him, and be set free, not only from the penalty for sin, but set free from sin itself – due to the fact that if we are dead in Him, we have been raised unto newness of life.



Feb 24

Engrafted Into Christ

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. (Romans 6:5)

Christianity is not a religion ABOUT Christ. Neither is salvation merely a new legal classification. No. Christianity is, "Christ in us" (Col. 1:27) -- and therefore salvation is also Christ in us. When we are saved we are joined to the Lord and made one spirit with Him (I Cor. 6:17) – we are joined to the One who said, "I am the resurrection and the life." (John 11:25) In short, the reason we have eternal life is because we are one with Life Himself.

Note that we are made one SPIRIT with Jesus Christ. We are not made one FLESH with Him. In this age, Jesus unites the spirit of the believer with Himself -- but natural man, that is, soul man, remains outside of that spiritual union. This creates in each believer, "the separation of soul and spirit."

This separation is key to understanding Romans 6. In Romans 6:5 Paul says the believer is, "planted," or, "engrafted," into the death of Christ. Thus, His death means death to our old man -- death to our natural life or soul man; death to that which is not united with Christ in this age. In this age, there is no place for soul man in the new creation. Rather, our natural soul man is under the Cross.

But if we are planted into Christ we are likewise planted into His life -- we are one with Him in spirit. He doesn't just GIVE us life -- HE IS our life; He is THE LIFE. This is not mere theology. It is the Truth. It is what it means to be a Christian – it is the only kind of Christianity there is: Christ in us; Christ our life.

Paul said, "The body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness." This is a description of the believer. Because we are united with Christ in spirit, our soul man is dead in HIS death. But because we are united with Christ in spirit, our spirit is alive with HIS life. It is therefore folly to try to make what is dead, "look like Jesus." Rather than try to make our soul man look like Jesus, the soul

man is under the work of the Cross so that Christ Himself might be manifested through the believer -- without the corruption of soulish, religious flesh. Christ is our life and it is from out of Him that all life, Truth, and righteousness proceeds. Nothing of value proceeds from natural man -- natural man is merely the vessel through which Christ is manifested.

In Christ, God became man in order that man could become one with God. Jesus Christ died and was raised for us so that we could die and be raised in Him. That spells freedom from the old creation -- from the power of it in this age -- and new life in His life.



Feb 25 Freedom From Sin

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. (Rom. 6:6-7)

Freedom from sin is never the result of following a, "how-to," list. It is not accomplished by gathering together a bunch of Bible verses and obeying them. Indeed, this is exactly what leads to legalism. Legalists always follow Bible laws and rules. The Galatians followed them. But Paul said they had, "fallen from grace," and were under, "another gospel."

Freedom from sin is only possible if we lose the life in which all sin is rooted -- the old man in Adam. This old man is the seat of the sin nature and the access point for Satan. We must relinquish ourselves -- our entire selves -- to Christ by faith -- and ask Him to do whatever it takes to bring us to the end of this old life. Only if we make that relinquishment by faith can we begin to learn what it means to live from out of Christ as our life. All the doing in the world will get us no where until we lose our lives and find Him as our life.

Rather than lose our old life many today are given programs as to how to fix up that old life and make it behave like a Christian. This is deception. Again, Paul gives one solution for sin: Death -- taking our place in the death of Jesus Christ.

Neither does Paul say, "For he that prays for deliverance from sin is freed from sin." Christians pray for deliverance from sin, when in fact, we ought to pray for deliverance from unbelief. It is because we do not believe that we hold on to the old life in which sin is rooted. Real faith will always lead us to lose our lives for the sake of Christ.

The old man of sin is already dead in Christ. It is only if we take our place in Christ in a relinquishment of both sin and self that we will realize our death in Him, and begin to walk in the newness of His life in us.



Feb 26 Death and Resurrection

Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. (Rom. 6:8)

Jesus Christ accomplished a complete and final redemption through His death and resurrection. There are no victories left to win. There is no forgiving left to do. There is no greater defeat to be brought to Satan. But there is one thing left to do: Believe. We must believe – which means to fully embrace and surrender to Jesus Christ.

The primary way in which I believe that, “It is finished,” is by losing my life for Jesus’ sake – by picking up the Cross daily. If I do, then, and only then, will I find true life in Him. (Matt. 16:24) But this will not make what is finished by Christ to be more finished. It will not make what is true to be truer. No. Rather, it is a matter of me believing what is already true -- that the old is dead in Him -- and a matter of me abiding in the One in Who is the resurrection and the life.

Death to the old must always precede resurrection unto the new. I must relinquish my life – which is to relinquish my right to myself – to Jesus Christ crucified. What will happen is that I will, “live with Him,” that is, Jesus won’t give me my life, He will give me His.

God does not give us A life, or give us a, "thing," called life. Rather, He gives us Christ, Who IS the life. Therefore, our surrender to the Cross is not a negative thing -- it leads to a positive eternal realization of Christ Himself.



Feb 27 Faith and Victory

Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he lives, he lives unto God. Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus

Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof. (Rom. 6:9-12)

The basis for all faith, and thus, all victory, is the finished work of Jesus Christ. It is finished. There is nothing left for us to finish. What is left for us to do is believe and live like it is finished: We are dead and our life is hid with Christ in God.

Religion would teach us that the way to overcome sin is to stop sinning. Laws and rules – usually right from the Bible – are usually provided. But it is folly to tell someone who cannot stop sinning that they simply need to stop sinning. They can't. That is the problem. Of course, some sins are subtle – such as the sin of self-righteousness. It usually takes a work of God to bring us to see our complete inability to stop sinning.

God has not given us some POWER to stop sinning. It won't take long for us to discover that. No. Rather, God has given us Christ, Who, Paul says, IS the power of God.

The way to stop sinning is not through any human effort. I can stop sinning only if I start believing and abiding in Christ. Faith will motivate me to lose my old life to Christ – lose the life that provides the basis for all sin. Only then can I find freedom. Freedom from sin is the result of oneness with Christ in His death and resurrection. All other efforts are futile. In a word, all real obedience in the Christian life will be the outcome of faith in Christ.



Feb 28
Strength Thru Weakness

My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. (II Cor. 12:9-10)

When we are born from above, Jesus Christ joins us to Himself and we become one spirit with Him. (I Cor. 6:17) But our natural makeup is not joined to Him. This remains OUTSIDE of our spiritual union with Christ. Indeed, the natural is contrary to the One who is in us.

It is the goal of God to form Christ in us (Gal. 4:19). In other words, God wants to bring us into an inward realization of the Christ with whom we are one in spirit – such that He will govern us. Note that this is not a

matter of God working upon our natural man to make IT, "look like Jesus." No. This is a matter of the Christ who is in us being manifested both in and through us.

The only way this can be accomplished is if our natural man is crucified – shown to be corrupt and empty – reduced and brought down to nothing. We must be shown that there is absolutely nothing in our natural man that can walk with God. We must learn to STOP being preoccupied with ourselves -- learn to leave ourselves alone -- and begin abiding in Christ by faith. But this does not happen as part of a religious system or doctrinal construct. No. It happens only if God reveals in us the Truth in Christ.

Again -- none of this is possible unless the Truth is revealed in us. But once we do see the Truth about ourselves in the light of seeing HIM - - we will WANT to lose our lives and we will WANT to live from out of Christ by faith for all things. Christ will then be our spiritual strength. As Paul said, "For when I am weak, I am strong (in Him)."



Feb 29 Purpose of God's Law

Now we know that what things that the law says, it says to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. (Rom. 3:19-20)

The purpose of the law was never to give man a standard he was expected to keep. Rather, the purpose was to reveal the righteousness of God in written form, and to prove to man that he could never righteous enough for God. In short, the law exposes what we ARE. Stand face to face with the holy, just, and good law of God, and you will be exposed as unholy, unjust, and bad.

If a person has Truth IN THEM they will eventually stop talking about the possibilities of their own righteousness through works. The Truth revealed by the law will shut their mouth. For the more we try to keep any law of God, the more that law will probe and expose us as hopeless.

What ought to be our response to seeing the Truth about ourselves? UNBELIEF will lead us to come under condemnation. We may become self-occupied -- always trying to fix ourselves; always lamenting over ourselves. Or we will simply try harder to be good enough for God through works. Perhaps we will, "sin because grace abounds." Or we

may delude ourselves into thinking that we have indeed made ourselves right for God through works. Unbelief manifests in many ways. It is possible to live in such unbelief for years.

Paul said, "Christ is become of no effect unto you who would try to be justified by law-keeping. You are fallen from grace." (Gal. 5:4) He is stating outright that to try to walk with God on the basis of works is OUTSIDE of grace, and OUTSIDE of living from out of Christ as my life by faith. He is stating that even those who are saved -- even those who have Christ in them -- can nevertheless live on a basis that is other than Christ. If I live by my works then Christ might as well not be in me -- He will be of no effect for me. My works have taken His place.

Legalism is NOT merely a form of Christianity with, "a little too much law." No. Legalism is ANOTHER GOSPEL. (Gal. 1:6) It is unbelief -- it is deception and error. And it is SIN. It is ultimately a denial of the Truth of Jesus Christ. (see Gal. 2:20)

But while the purpose of God's law is to utterly and completely show us the Truth about ourselves -- that we are DEAD -- that is not the end of the purpose of the law. The law was intended to bring us to where we will fall to our knees and put our faith in the Person of Jesus Christ. This is how we will respond if we both SEE the Truth and EMBRACE the Truth. It is at that point that we will understand and want to live in God's grace and Truth by faith.

The reason so many folks do not see the Truth about the grace of God is because they have not come to the end of themselves. But to the end of ourselves is the ONLY TRUTH and the only OUTCOME of the law -- it is the ONLY outcome of coming to know Jesus Christ. It is then that we will echo with Paul, "Yet NOT I, but Christ." That is freedom.



Mar 1

Two Effects of Being Under Law

For the hearers of the law are not just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. (Rom. 2:13)

Take this verse out of context and you have "proof" that we are justified by works? But IN context, not so. We must see that Paul is asking, "Do you want to be justified by your works? If so, then realize that hearing the law is not enough. You have to DO the law perfectly to be justified by works." That is impossible -- which is his whole point.

If we are not justified SOLELY by faith in Christ, then we ARE trying to be justified by law -- whether we call it that or not. If we continue to base God's attitude towards us, and thus, our righteousness, upon our works, performance, condition, efforts, body of religious beliefs, church, or temperament, we are, "under a law." We are deceived. For we are justified FULLY and SOLELY, "by grace through faith," in Jesus Christ.

There are basically two types of professing Christians who are under law. The first type is the Pharisee. They actually think that they are keeping themselves right with God through their works. The second type are those who are trying to keep themselves righteous, but see that they are failing. We are all a mixture of the two, but BOTH of these types are guilty of the SAME sin of unbelief. They are both trying to do for themselves what is already done for them in Christ.

To be under any law as the means of keeping myself right with God is unbelief, and as unbelief, it is sin. It is also deception. If I am under the law I am walking in error. We would be hard pressed to find an issue that is addressed more in God's Word.



Mar 2

Rewards and Punishments

It is an amazing contradiction that most professing Christians rightly proclaim that we are saved, "by grace through faith," but then many put much of their Christian life AS a saved person under law. This is what the Galatians did. Paul answered, "Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?" (Gal. 3:3) Note that the issue here is NOT their salvation. It is their means of living the Christian life. They were living by law rather than by faith from out of Christ.

One subtle way Christians err on this matter is to try to earn a reward from God – either for now or the eternal ages. But if grace IS grace there are no rewards or punishments based on works. All is freely given in Christ. Thus, I am either believing or not believing; I am abiding in Christ by faith, or I am not. And if I am believing, then my reward is Christ Himself – making me a joint-heir with Him; HE IS MY LIFE. And if Christ is my life, what further reward can God give me? What could I earn to add to Christ?

God has freely given us all things in His Son. (Rom. 8:32) If we would grasp this it would transform our entire Christian life over to the Truth.



Mar 3

Is Faith Our Contribution?

Calvinism, which is heresy, teaches, “faith BEFORE salvation.” This teaching states that a person must FIRST be regenerated or saved – solely by God’s election -- SO THAT they can believe. This teaching denies that we must believe SO THAT we can be saved. To a Calvinist, if we must believe in order to be saved, then our faith would be our, “contribution to our own salvation.” This they say, would deny that salvation is wholly a work of God. But this notion is based on a misunderstanding of both faith and conversion.

Faith is not our contribution to the work of Christ. Rather, faith is the outcome of seeing that I have NO contribution to make whatsoever. So I fall to my knees and believe by placing full reliance solely upon Jesus Christ and what He has done.

It is true that none of us can believe until God takes the initiative to reveal to us the Truth of Christ. But that revelation, while it does not compel us to believe, does make it possible to believe. It also opens the possibility to refuse to believe. Once light is given, faith is possible – the light opens the eyes enough so that a person can choose light or darkness. This ability to believe – once God brings light – is fundamental all through the Bible.

Faith does not contribute to what Christ has done. His finished work would still be finished if not a single person ever believed. But faith is the result of seeing the Truth God brings – that I have nothing to contribute, but must receive all through Christ.



Mar 4

Substance and Evidence

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (Heb. 11:1)

Note that faith is not merely belief IN what is hoped for, nor is faith merely belief IN what is not seen. No. Rather, faith IS the substance and evidence of those things. And in a practical sense, faith is the substance and evidence IN ME of those realities. In short, faith is the Truth revealed and come alive IN ME through Christ.

Paul wrote that ,”Faith comes by hearing the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17), i.e., faith comes TO BE IN ME by hearing the Word of God. Combine that with Hebrews 11:1 above, and we see that the faith that comes to be in me is actually the living evidence and substance of that Word or revelation that God speaks -- if I will hear.

What this tells us is that faith is not produced out of myself. I cannot muster up the faith of Jesus Christ from out of myself. Faith is not the result of my speaking to God. It is the result of my HEARING God. God takes the initiative to reveal some dimension of Christ to me, and if I will hear, faith will come to be in me – because Christ will be formed in me. And that Christ who is formed in me, and the faith that is based in Him, will be a living substance and evidence of the Truth -- the faith of Jesus Christ.



Mar 5 By Grace Through Faith

For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:8-10)

The relationship between grace, faith, and our works, is given in this passage. In short, we are saved BY grace, THROUGH faith, UNTO good works. If we alter this relationship we are in danger of creating a false gospel; a false Christianity.

It is a fact that faith would be in vain unless all that God has given is by His grace in Christ. For if everything is not given freely by grace, then what good would faith be? What would there be for us to rely upon and rest upon? For if not freely given, we would have to bypass faith and earn everything by works. No. The fact that God has given us all things freely in His Son is exactly why faith is necessary and of the Truth.

Unless our relationship with God is based on, “by grace through faith,” our works will not be good works. Works that are performed in order to keep right with God are not good works because they are out from unbelief. They are, in fact, works that deny Christ. “For if righteousness comes by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” (Gal. 2:21)



Mar 6

The Galatian Error

Received you the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh? (Gal. 3:2-3)

What is the basis of the Christian life? The basis is Christ – His life in us. This not only means that we were saved by grace – by the free gift of His life – but it also means that we are to live FROM OUT OF Christ as our life. His life is to be the source of all for us. His life is to be the basis of our relationship with God. He is the righteousness of God in the saint.

This is not a matter of doctrine. It is a matter of who is the object of our faith. Is Christ our life, or have we created another life out of our own works?

Paul's rhetorical questions always reveal much Truth. He asks, "Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made mature by the flesh?" Begun what? Clearly, life in Christ. But now they were trying to bring life in Christ to a maturity through human effort and good works. Paul's answer was, "I travail until Christ be formed in you." (Gal. 4:19) Again – this isn't a matter of doctrine. It is a matter of Christ in us AS our life.

The issue in Galatians is NOT salvation. Rather, it is the means of the Christian life for those who ARE saved. The issue is the means of righteousness, and the object of our faith. The issue is whether we are governed by the Truth or under the delusion of another gospel. The issue is LIFE or faith in dead works.

Paul gave the solution to the Galatian problem in Gal. 4:19: "I travail until Christ be formed in you." The word, "formed," means to come into an inward realization. This is what Paul travailed for as an answer to their legalism. Abiding in Christ, and living from out of Christ is always the result of Christ being formed in us. Good works will be the outcome. But to try to create in myself a religious life through my works is, "another gospel." That is serious business.



Mar 7

Grace Always Abounds

Shall we continue in sin because grace abounds? God forbid. (Rom. 6:1)

This rhetorical question from Paul actually reveals much Truth. Paul would not be asking this question unless it was a fact that grace DOES abound when we sin. Can we see that? He is asking whether we should continue in sin BECAUSE grace abounds – a question that is based upon the Truth that grace always abounds -- even when we sin.

Really, there are only two possibilities on this matter of grace and sin. One: Grace abounds EVEN when we sin. Two: Grace abounds EXCEPT when we sin. But note: If grace abounds EXCEPT when we sin, then of what value is grace? Indeed, there would be NO grace. We need grace to abound precisely when we sin! (And even when we don't!) That is the whole point. The only answer is that the grace of God always abounds – is eternally in place for us – EVEN when we sin.

Note that even though grace always abounds -- even when we sin -- that this does not mean the people are going to embrace the grace of God. The Redemption of Jesus Christ is finished. But we DO have to believe or it will do us no good.

Once we realize this, then Paul's question makes sense: Should we continue in sin because we know that grace abounds EVEN when we sin? He answers, "God forbid." Then he goes on to tell us WHY we should not continue in sin even though grace abounds when we do: Because we are dead to sin. Because we have been baptized into the death of Christ. The result is that if we have repented of sin, and are growing to know Christ, we will still have our struggles, but we will not want to sin; we don't have to sin.

Grace abounds EVEN when we sin. But if we have repented of sin, we will not want to continue in sin because we know grace abounds. This is at Truth that is vital to see.



Mar 8

The Finality of Forgiveness

The finality of God's forgiveness is as complete as the finality of the death that paid for it. If Jesus is done dying, then God is done forgiving – that is, God has completely forgiven, and is finished forgiving, the entire human race for all sin.

This means that saints are not merely people whose sins are forgiven. Rather, saints are forgiven people. You and I are as forgiven as we are ever going to be. We cannot add to that, and we cannot subtract from that. Thus, our responsibility, once God brings light, is to believe and fully rely upon Jesus Christ and His finished work.

Practically speaking, this means that God will never put any sin between Himself and us – for Jesus was the Lamb of God who took away all of the sin of the world -- except for ONE sin. Jesus did not die for the sin of refusing His death. God cannot forgive the refusal of His forgiveness. That is impossible – it would render the death of Christ meaningless.

But that aside, Jesus did die for every sin that has been, or will be, committed by any member of the human race -- and the finality of that forgiveness stands regardless of whether even one person believes. It IS finished. Our personal salvation is therefore based upon whether we will believe and embrace the finality of His work for us. Jesus died for ALL -- but only those who believe can be saved.

The finality of God's forgiveness is an eternal Truth. It is not only a basis of our salvation, but because it reveals the heart and intent of God towards us, it reveals much about the God with whom we are to live and walk through His Son.



Mar 9 Confession of Sin

**If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,
and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)**

Confession of our sin to God is essential because we must tell the Truth about ourselves and about our Savior. "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (1 John 1:10) Thus, confession of sin is the confession of the Truth about ourselves, and about the One who has won our forgiveness.

But never say that confession of sin GETS us forgiven. That has been taught from 1 John 9, but it is impossible, and not the meaning. For if we must confess sin in order to GET forgiven, then until we confess sin, we are NOT forgiven. That would mean that we pop in and out of God's finished forgiveness, and ultimately, in and out of salvation, based on whether we confess. What if we die with even ONE unconfessed sin? Do we die unforgiven? Are we lost?

We aren't forgiven because we confess. We are forgiven because of Jesus Christ. Our confession is the outcome of seeing that it is finished in Him, and that we are free to confess the Truth about our sin and about His finished Redemption for us. In short, either the forgiveness of God is finished for us or it is not. The fact that it IS finished is a foundational Truth of Christianity. Thus, John is NOT telling us that we must confess to GET forgiven. He is telling us that we will confess if we believe we ARE forgiven.

Confession is the result of light; of conviction of sin: I confess the Truth about sin in the light of the Truth that I am forgiven. The Greek in this verse could be translated, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to have forgiven our sins, and to have cleansed us from all unrighteousness." God's forgiveness is already final and in place. I John is describing what happens if we see and believe it: Confession of the Truth.



Mar 10

The Unpardonable Sin

Jesus Christ died for every sin ever committed by all. We receive the fullness of this finished work by grace through faith. But wait. There is actually one sin that Jesus did NOT die for, and consequently, that cannot be forgiven. Holiness demands this. This sin is often referred to as, "the unpardonable sin." What is the unpardonable sin?

"The unpardonable sin," is the refusal of God's forgiveness. God cannot forgive the refusal of His forgiveness. He cannot forgive the sin of refusing the death that paid for sin. If God did any of this, He Himself would be denying Jesus Christ.

"The unpardonable sin," is exactly the same as, "the sin that has no forgiveness," spoken of by Jesus to the Pharisees. There He called it, "the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit." This has been much misunderstood. The Pharisees were attributing the works of Christ to Satan. But Jesus was getting at something deeper -- their refusal to see the Truth was merely the symptom. The Pharisees were in danger of the one sin that cannot be forgiven because there was presently no place in them for the Truth -- they would not be convicted of the Truth by God's Spirit. Instead, they took God's clear conviction of the Truth and adjusted it to fit their personal interests. The sin was therefore not a mistake, lack of discernment, an emotional condition, lack of education, or ignorance. The sin was a heart that was so hardened against the Truth -- in favor of their own interests -- that when the Son of God stood before them they called Him a devil.

The issue is the heart -- the issue is whether we are open to light, or whether we love darkness rather than light. No one is guilty of the one sin that cannot be forgiven by accident. No one need worry whether they have committed this sin. For, "the unpardonable sin," is only unpardonable if we refuse to repent of it. The sin that has no forgiveness is only without forgiveness if we refuse God's conviction.

God's has forever opened the door to Himself through Jesus Christ -- and no sin we commit can ever close it. THE SIN is that people will not walk through the open door. They shut -- not the open door -- that is impossible -- but they shut themselves off from that open door. The door remains open at all time. But people WILL NOT repent and walk through it.

It is precisely because God has offered all by His grace, and never withdraws that offer, that God is just in eternally condemning the people who are eternally condemned. In the end, the judgment of God is that He gives us exactly what we choose. The penalty for rejecting light is darkness. The penalty for refusing life is death. We see this NOW -- how much more it is true on an eternal plane.

God does not blame us for being born in Adam. He does not blame us for having a sin nature. He does not blame us for ignorance. But once God does bring light we are accountable -- not for fixing ourselves - - but for surrendering to Him. THE SIN is if we will not. The Pharisees had the greatest witness possible -- Jesus Christ. He was THE Light. Yet they refused the conviction of God's Spirit regarding Him -- in favor of their own religious agenda. Jesus said, "If you persist in shutting out the conviction of the Spirit it equals blasphemy. And if you continual to refuse -- over the course of your lifetime under the conviction of the Spirit -- the only One who can save you, there are no other options. God cannot forgive the refusal of His forgiveness; He cannot forgive your denial of His Son."

God has done everything He can do to save each of us. And through the conviction of His Spirit, God continues to do all He can do. All He requires is that we surrender ourselves to Him. That offer stands open forever -- no matter how many times we may have neglected or refused. The sin without forgiveness is when people finally and deliberately refuse that offer of His free grace in Jesus Christ.



Mar 11
The Sin Bearer

Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.
(John 1:29)

What did Jesus bear on the Cross? Peter writes, "Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness. (I Peter 2:24) Jesus bore our sins on the Cross – in doing so, Jesus took away the sin of the world. Contrast this over and against what many of us have believed: That Jesus merely bore our punishment FOR sin, and thus, Jesus took away our punishment.

Now, don't misunderstand – Jesus did die for us – and if He bore sin then He certainly bore the judgment FOR sin: Death. But this is much different than saying Jesus came to bear our punishment so that God could then lift that punishment from us. No. Jesus came to bear our sin, so that we could die IN HIM and be delivered from our sin.

Jesus did not die for us so that death could be lifted from us and we could live on as members of the Adam race. No. Jesus died so that the Adam race -- our old man in Adam -- could die in Him -- God saw the death of the Adam race fulfilled in Christ. In the death of Christ, the old creation in Adam ended at the Cross.

So when John the Baptist said that Jesus Christ was the Lamb of God who TAKES AWAY the sin of the world he meant exactly what he said: Jesus Christ bore sin and took it away -- all sin -- the Adam race -- died in Him. That is why He is called The Last Adam.

This is, of course, still being worked out. When we are saved, we are joined to Christ and made one with Him in spirit. Our spiritual union with Christ is that which is raised in Him -- made possible by His resurrection. But we continue to carry the old nature; the natural man. It is this body of sin that died in Christ. Yet at the resurrection of the body -- when Christ returns, we will finally discard that old body of sin -- that remnant of Adam -- and be fully released into the fullness of Christ Jesus that we now possess in spirit.



Mar 12

Saved By His Life

For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. (Rom. 5:10)

Most Christian teaching states that we are saved only by the death of Jesus Christ. But His death alone saved no one, because, well, it was DEATH. Rather, we are actually saved by His life – we are saved when Jesus Christ comes to dwell in us. He IS the Life, and when we receive Him, He becomes OUR life. Christ in us is our salvation.

Jesus Christ died on the Cross for all sin. At that point, all sin was paid for. This was a finished and final work. Paul says, "...that if one died for all, then were all dead." The Adam race died in Jesus Christ. All of us were included.

But despite the fact that Christ did die for all, only those who by faith embrace His death and take their place in His death, are united with Him in His death – and only those united with Him in death are those who are raised in Him to newness of life. In short, Christ died for all, but only those who believe are saved – saved by being raised in Him; saved by being joined to Him through His Spirit in us; saved by HIS LIFE.



Mar 13

The Work of the Spirit of God

But when the Comforter is come, which I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, shall testify of Me. (John 15:26)

What is the purpose and work of the Holy Spirit of God? It is to testify of Christ, glorify Christ, and edify in Christ. The purpose of the Spirit of God is to form Christ in us. (see Gal. 4:19) That word, "form," means, "to inwardly realize and express." Thus, the Spirit of God is to reveal Jesus TO us, and IN us, and THROUGH us. The result is that we will BE evidence of Him – we will BE His witnesses.

The purpose for which God gave the Holy Spirit was not to create a following or a movement centered around the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit never brings attention to the Holy Spirit – but always glorifies the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

This ought to tell us that there is going to be a clear evidence of where the Holy Spirit is freely at work – it is where Jesus Christ is predominant over all things. In a personal life, the person is obsessed with Jesus Christ. Christ is being formed in them. In the church life, it is all about Jesus Christ – knowing Him and being built up in Him. Ministry is about edification in Christ. These impacts are not theories or merely possibilities. They are what God does – and solely what He does -- through His Spirit. Christ is the Rock and the foundation upon which all must be built that is of God.



Mar 14 **A Permanent Habitation**

If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. (John 16:7)

The Holy Spirit dwelt IN no one before Acts 2. Jesus clearly stated that the Comforter could not come until He ascended. Of course not. Jesus had to ascend before He could come back down through the Spirit and dwell within His people. Acts 2 also began the New Covenant of, "Christ in us," and began the church. All of these were the result of a permanent habitation in people of Christ through His Spirit.

How about John 20:22, where, after the resurrection, but BEFORE the ascension, it says, "(Jesus) breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive you the Holy Ghost."? Did they not receive if Jesus said to receive? The meaning here is explained by an earlier statement of Jesus, "The Spirit of truth...dwells WITH you, and shall be IN you." Before Acts 2 the Spirit of God was only WITH people – this was an ongoing visitation, but not a permanent habitation within people. Also note that in John 20:22, Jesus didn't breathe IN them, but ON them – He was assuring them that the Spirit was still WITH them.

Again -- Jesus said that the Spirit could not yet been given until He ascended. Jesus had been with people, but would later be IN them. But then there would be a permanent habitation: Christ in us.



Mar 15 **The Spirit of Truth**

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that will abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth. (John 14:16)

The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Truth. Jesus also said, “I am the Truth.” But there is only ONE Truth. Thus, here we see the work of the Spirit: To reveal to us Jesus Christ.

Jesus promised that the Spirit of God would guide us into all Truth. (John 16:13) But now we know what that means: It means to reveal Jesus, who IS the Truth. The Spirit does in accordance with who Jesus IS. Jesus is to be revealed TO us, IN us, and through us.

Truth is expressed in doctrine and teaching. But Truth is a Person. Thus, to be guided into all Truth really means to be conformed to the Christ who dwells in us – it is an inward realization of Him that conforms us TO Him. This will not only agree fully with scripture, but it is what scripture itself says that Spirit of God does. In the end, each of us are either going to be conformed to the Truth in Christ, or we are going to conform the Truth to fit ourselves. Yet God’s goal will always remain the Truth in Christ.



Mar 16
God With Us Always

I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. (John 14:18) I am with you always. (Matt. 28:20)

These are not merely sentimental promises meant to stir emotions. Rather, they are concrete promises of God based on the reality of Christ in us.

The idea that God is floating around, comes and goes, is with us one day, and far away the next, is contrary to the Truth. We may FEEL like God is that way, but the Truth is not determined or apprehended by how we feel. Indeed, even if we feel like God is with us, He is not with us because we feel like He is. He is with us because Christ is forever IN US. HE is faithful who has promised.

If I am in despair and cannot seem to escape the sense, indeed, the fear, that Christ has abandoned me, or is indifferent to me, what I feel is contrary to the Truth. If circumstances seem to lie about God, the circumstances may be real, but I am misinterpreting them. The point is, that it is normal and expected that our flesh, emotions, and soul life will not behave in accordance with the Truth. We will be impacted by our outer life. But if Christ is in us, HE is the Truth, and HE is faithful, no matter how off the track our temperament may be.

The certainty that God is with us is sealed by fact that He has bought us with the price of the Blood of Christ. If God were so much as indifferent to us, He would be indifferent to His Son. God is always with us because Christ is permanently in us.



Mar 17 **Joy From Out of Pain**

A woman when she is in travail has sorrow because her hour is come. But as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembers no more the anguish for joy that a man is born into the world. And you now therefore have sorrow. But I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man takes from you. (John 16:21-22)

Jesus said these things to His disciples right before He was arrested and crucified. They had hoped for an immediate kingdom with Jesus as the Messiah, and it was all about to come crashing down. But there is a principle in this for us – if what we expected God was doing dies, there is something being birthed out of that pain.

The pain of a woman in travail is all consuming. She cannot ignore it in most cases. Most pain and suffering is like that – we tend to focus upon what we are losing, or upon what we are suffering. We want out. We want relief. Usually God is silent.

This passage tells us the usual reason WHY: There is a birth taking place. It may not be a literal birth, but it is a birth in type. It requires that we lose our own life and our self-ownership. Then the life of Christ will find a great release in us. Christ will be formed in us. If we lose our life, we will find Him as our life.

This is necessary because of the nature of things – because of the place to which Adam brought the human race. It is actually a Truth that is veiled in the judgment God pronounced upon Eve regarding the necessity of her pain in childbirth, and is repeated in the NT by Paul. The way to life in Christ requires that we undergo an experience – as a woman in travail. But once the purpose of God is birthed, we will see that the pain and suffering was not to be compared to His glory revealed in us.



Mar 18

The Right Approach to Prophecy

And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, you might believe. (John 14:29)

People are sometimes obsessed with the foretelling of future events, especially to the extent that these affect them personally. There are people that have constructed Bible prophecy charts and have practically cataloged the Bible into a list of future events that will take place in a definite order. All we supposedly need to do is check off the chronological list of events as they happen and we will be ready for the next event on the list.

All that being said, history has proven that Christian people are rarely correct about these matters. We ought to remember Israel: The prophesied Messiah, for whom they were waiting, stood right in front of those very religious experts who knew those prophecies, and they called Him a devil.

Anyone can read what the Bible says. But only by the spirit of God can we know what it MEANS. Jesus gives us the right approach to prophecy – hold your interpretation loosely and wait for God to bring it to pass, THEN you will know what God meant -- and then you will know He is faithful. Thus, much prophecy is not given to benefit us BEFORE it is fulfilled -- but will benefit us AFTER.



Mar 19

The Journey to Galilee

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. (Matt. 28:16)

Jesus told the disciples that after His death and resurrection that they were to meet Him on a mountain in Galilee. Jesus had said, "But after I am raised again, I will go before you into Galilee." (Matt. 26:32) He repeated it a number of times (Matt. 28:9), and they were even reminded of it by the angel at the tomb. (Matt. 28:7) It was so important that even when they went into hiding instead of obeying this command, Jesus appeared to them and saw to it that they made this journey to Galilee.

But why Galilee instead of Jerusalem? Because Jerusalem represented all of their temporal expectations of an immediate kingdom. It was at Jerusalem that this kingdom was to be established with Jesus as Messiah, and it was at Jerusalem that all of these hopes were dashed

to pieces when Jesus died on the Cross. But Galilee was the place the disciples were to come to receive the TRUE kingdom of God that Jesus made possible through His resurrection.

Galilee represents union with the risen Christ – we journey to Galilee once we are willing to LOSE all that Jerusalem held for us – our life -- our RELIGIOUS life. All of that must be left in the Cross. We come out of that old life in abandonment. We journey to Galilee where we find Truth and new Life in the risen Christ.



Mar 20 Life From Death

If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. (Matt. 27:40)

Natural thinking insists that in order to LIVE we must come down from our Cross. But the Truth is, in order to LIVE we must die on the Cross and be raised. Jesus said as much “Whoever would save His life will lose it. But whoever would lose His life for My sake will find it.” (Matt. 16:24)

Grasp this Truth and your entire Christian life will be changed. You will stop asking God to help you save your life for yourself – you will stop trying to do what you think will get God to bless YOUR life. No. God is not going to bless the life He tells you to lose. Instead, you will ask God to do whatever it takes to bring you into the Truth of these things. You will eventually want to lose your life because you will know that it is contrary to His life -- and losing it the pathway to resurrection life in Christ.

Of course, it is so easy to focus on LOSS. It is easy to fear that some terrible thing is going to happen if you trust God. But faith is never a mistake. If we lose our lives for Jesus’ sake, initially it will not be enjoyable to our religious flesh and self-righteousness – death never is – but what we will find is Jesus Christ and all that is in Him.



Mar 21 Pressed Out of Measure

For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the

sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raises the dead: (II Cor. 1:8-9)

Paul was pressed to where there was nothing left in himself by which he could deal with this situation – emotionally, spiritually, or in any other way -- he was completely at the mercy of God.

This was, of course, a good thing, not a bad thing. But it never seems like it when we are going through it. Paul even admitted that he, “despaired even of life.” In other words, there was a sense of helplessness in himself. There was a sentence of death except it be for God.

Paul was human. Circumstances can press any of us to where we get caught up in them and begin to be greatly pressed by them. This happened here with Paul. But he came to see the Truth. All of this despair and helplessness – the sentence of death in himself – was not a sign that God had deserted him. Rather, it was the TRUTH about himself. But more importantly, it was a pathway to a new dimension of faith and reliance upon God.

God shows us we are weak so that our faith might be built and strengthened IN HIM. Paul had faith in God. But through this great trial He discovered a deeper knowledge of Jesus Christ. He concluded that the reason for his trial was, “That we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead.”



Mar 22 Perplexity Before God

Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with questions. I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me. (Job 23:3-5)

This is Job in the midst of his great trial. He is seeking God for answers. He desires to know the reason for his suffering. But God is silent.

In a trial, we think that if God simply explained Himself to us that we could believe. Or if God would just tell us what He wants us to do. Indeed, even if God would show us our sin that would be acceptable. But as was the case with Job, there is usually no explanation, nothing God tells us to do, and not even conviction of sin. Just silence.

If we read the conclusion of Job's trial we find out the reason for God's silence: Job did not need information or answers. He needed a revelation of God Himself. Such is the case with us: God wants to reveal Christ in us. Information and doctrinal knowledge will never accomplish that. And the revelation of Himself that God gives will last far beyond the trial that was used to produce it -- it will be eternal.



Mar 23 **The Unseen God**

Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he does work, but I cannot behold him: he hides himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: But he knows the way that I take: when he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold. (Job 23:8-10)

The words of Job aptly describe what we can expect in any trial of faith. We will not be able to see God. We won't be able to find Him. We may appeal to God to show us how to find Him. But God remains silent. And it seems like this is evidence that somewhere along the line we have missed the boat: God is not with us.

In this passage, we see a turning point in the suffering of Job. Despite his despair, he is honest. Despite his admission that he cannot see God, he now realizes that he doesn't need to see God – for God sees HIM. And that is not only sufficient, but it is, in fact, the place God will bring every one of us so that we might have a more pure faith.

When I cannot see God, I can rest in the fact that God sees me – that is a principle that stands under so very much. When we were yet sinners, God loved us and Christ died for us. When we are ignorant, God takes the initiative to guide us into the Truth. When we don't know to seek God, God seeks us.

Our faith must ultimately be based upon the faithfulness of God – it comes back to this every time. God can be trusted to act on our behalf even when we don't know He needs to act. We need not lean upon our own understanding or ability to see God. God sees us and understands us -- and is faithful to do right by us in His Son.



Mar 24

Seeing God

I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye sees You. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. (Job 42:5-6)

Here we find the reason for Job's trial. He had not sinned against God – God Himself had called him a good and upright man, who loved good and hated evil. But no matter how much we are walking in the light, there is always more light. There is always more of Jesus to see. And this is made possible if we trust God through a trial of faith.

Job had apparently known much TRUE teaching about the Lord – in fact, he taught others that true teaching. But this is never the same as actually seeing the One about whom our teaching speaks. Facts ABOUT God are not God. Doctrines are good, but they are not a Person.

Job had been blind -- but he did not know he was blind. That is true blindness -- to be blind but to think you see. This is the same with us. God puts us through suffering so that we might realize we are blind -- but then so that we might come to see Jesus Christ. Then we, "repent in dust and ashes," as to how much we thought we knew! It is at that point that our doctrines give way to the Person.

Anyone can study the Bible and develop a theology. But Christianity is not merely a correct list of Biblical doctrines. Rather, Christianity is Christ in us, and the ongoing revelation of Him. Only when Christ begins to be revealed in us do we see. And only when we begin to see Him do we have what is necessary to discern the Truth regarding all else.



Mar 25

Spiritual Blindness

I was blind, but now I see. (John 9:25)

Spiritual blindness is not primarily a blindness to doctrines or tenets of truth. No. That is secondary. Spiritual blindness is a blindness to Jesus Christ. He is the Light. If we don't see Him, and if we don't know Him, we are blind. But usually when that is the case, we don't know we are blind. We are actually blind to the fact that we are blind. Folks who are blind -- but do not know it -- are the truly blind.

There are millions of truly ignorant people in this world – those who have never received light. They don't even know that they need to see – indeed, some of them think they DO see. Thus, the first step to freedom for them is a realization that they ARE blind. For even though a person who knows they are blind cannot give themselves sight, they at least can turn to God and cry out, "Lord, that I may see!"

There is, of course, a self-imposed blindness – which is the result of closing one's eyes to the Truth that a person has been given. This is unbelief. The solution for them is to open their eyes to the light they have already been given.

There are also many Christian people who are blind to Jesus Christ because they have been given false light – i.e., darkness that appears to be light to them -- they are deceived.

Unless we have a revelation of Jesus Christ in a growing inward way, we have no light. And if that is the case, it doesn't matter how smart we are, or how sincere we say we are, or how religious we are. We will be blind. Christ alone is the Light and the Truth.



Mar 26 Spiritual Discernment

But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (Heb. 5:14)

Discernment is not merely the ability to compare teaching against scripture, and from that, to determine whether it is the Truth. Of course, that is not without value -- because all true teaching will agree with scripture. But all cults and heretics and false teachers claim to do this. The problem is a person's heart – a heart that cannot see Jesus Christ. Unless we see Jesus Christ and have a single eye to Him, we may be able to read what the Bible says, but we will not get far in seeing what it means.

All true discernment is the by-product of knowing and seeing Jesus Christ. If Christ is being formed in me (Gal. 4: 19) – which means I am inwardly realizing Him – I am going to grow to know what is OF Him and what is not of Him. He is the LIGHT – and we can know nothing for what it is unless we are in the Light as He is in the Light. He is the Truth and it is only by seeing Him that we can see what is of Him.



Mar 27 **Spiritual Counterfeits**

When the government trains people to spot counterfeit currency, they don't spend all of their time studying the various counterfeits – although that is included as a secondary focus. The primary tool for training is genuine currency. If a person is thoroughly acquainted with genuine currency they will be able to spot a counterfeit in a moment.

The genuine article for a believer is the Person of Jesus Christ. If we know HIM, we will know what is OF Him. And we will also recognize a counterfeit. Indeed, if we know Him, this will even enable us to understand -- according to Him -- what the Bible means by what it says. But if we do not know Jesus Christ in an inward way, then we are pretty much left to the futility of our own mind and wits to try to sort out Truth from error.

It is possible for smart people to logically determine meanings of Bible verses, and to make some application of them. It is also possible for highly intelligent people to be totally deceived. Why? Because brain power will not enable us to see. If we remain blind to the person of Jesus Christ, we will, in one way or another, be subject to our own bias and weaknesses. Eventually this will lead to deception. The key to seeing Christ is an eye that is single to Him. It is by knowing Him that we are able to discern all else.



Mar 28 **A Single Eye**

The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, your whole body shall be full of light. But if your eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! (Mat 6:22-23)

In Greek, the word, "single," means, "free of folds or creases." So we can see what Jesus means by the term, "single eye" -- if we compare, His term, "the body," to a piece of paper. If we hold a piece of paper up to a light, the light will hit every part of that paper if it has no folds. That is what happens if we have a SINGLE EYE the Lord. But if we fold the paper, it will shut out the light, and part of it will be in darkness. That is an "evil eye."

Jesus is saying that if your heart – if your focus in life and of your faith – is single to God -- that your whole life will be filled with light and Truth. To be open to God in that way requires only that we say to God, “Lord, do whatever it takes to get your full will in Christ in my life.” And then we must continue to have a single eye when God does do whatever it takes. But in contrast, if we fold part of ourselves away from God, there will be darkness.

Jesus also tells us that it is possible to shut out God to the point where you become so deceived that you actually think that the darkness in you is light. In other words, you think you have found the Truth, when in fact, you are deceived and in error. There are people who say, "I was in darkness but now I am free" -- when in fact, they have rejected the Truth in favor of something that feeds their religious flesh. They think they are free. They feel great. But they are self-deceived. And yet, the cause is not a lack of brains, or only a lack of teaching. No. The cause is that they did not keep their eye single to God. The cure is clear: Turn to God NOW with a single eye. If you do, He will bring light.



Mar 29 **Spiritual Enlightenment**

Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: that the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know.... (Eph. 1:16-18)

Ephesians is filled with teaching, doctrine, and exhortation. Yet Paul didn't say that he prayed that the Ephesians would memorize his teaching. He didn't pray that they would merely know doctrine. Rather, he prays that God would open their eyes – to a revelation of JESUS CHRIST.

Why? Because only then could they understand his teaching. The fact that Paul prayed for them along this line ought to tell us our need: That we need to have our eyes opened to see Jesus Christ. Mental understanding of teaching, or an emotional reaction to it, is NOT spiritual sight.

Notice what Paul is actually praying for: That God may give them, “the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.” This is Paul's great prayer; along with his travail that, “Christ be formed,” in believers. (Gal. 4:19) The question for us is therefore, “Is this OUR great prayer and travail?” Is this the goal of OUR ministries today?

There are many people today who have brought things like contemplative prayer, the gospel of self, extra-Biblical revelation, and eastern mysticism, into the church. And in reaction to these errors, there are many others who suggest that the only revelation God gives today is doctrine. Both are wrong. Paul wrote part of the Bible. And yet He is telling us IN THAT BIBLE that his prayer is that we might receive from God, "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." All God reveals will be in the Bible. But it will be of a revelation of that Living Person who is the Living Word.



Mar 30
Light is Judgment

And Jesus said, "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind."
(John 9:39)

Light is judgment. That is because light exposes the Truth about all. When God brings light and I see, I cannot go back. I cannot say I have not seen. I am now accountable.

Words like, "accountable," sound negative. But God does not bring light for the purpose of condemnation. He brings it for illumination and the freedom of knowing the Truth.

Jesus is pointing out that once a person sees, he will either be changed by the Truth, or he will change the Truth to fit himself. He will ultimately do one or the other. There cannot be neutrality because though a person tries to be neutral, they cannot -- they HAVE seen.

If I love light rather than darkness, I will be set free. But if I love darkness rather than the light God has given me, I will close my eyes to the light and live in a self-created darkness. My blindness will no longer be because I could not see. It will be because I refused to see. This may happen over the course of much time. God never gives up on people. But people are capable of giving up on God.

Jesus promised to guide us into all Truth. This is great news. For humanity doesn't even know that it is blind -- we are blind to our blindness. Indeed, we think we see. Thus, accountability to God -- because we have seen the Truth -- is not a cause for fear. It is an opportunity for faith and freedom. Knowing the Truth is a matter of knowing the Person who is the Truth -- and this is the only path to true freedom.



Mar 31
Ignorance vs. Unbelief

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. (Heb 3:12)

True ignorance is an inability to believe because I have not been given light. I cannot see because I was born blind. For this I am NOT to blame.

Unbelief, on the other hand, is not the inability to believe. It is the refusal to believe. Unbelief is the result of having received light, but of loving darkness rather than light – because it satisfies something in my heart. We might say that unbelief happens once I receive light, but close my eyes. My darkness is therefore self-created. I am not blind. I have simply shut out the light.

God's will never changes – He wants all men to be saved and to come into the knowledge of the Truth. He wants all men to see. Thus, it is always possible once God brings light to embrace the Truth. (1 Tim. 2:5) Also, if I have been truly ignorant, I can embrace the light when God brings it. And if I have been guilty of unbelief, I can always repent and open my eyes to the light God has given. The sin is when I won't.

Christians are capable of unbelief – not in the sense of losing salvation – but along the lines of our inheritance. It is possible to stop short of God's purpose and forfeit some of what He has freely given us in Christ. God has better intentions for us -- He brings light to set us free in Christ.

The many warnings and admonitions of God along this line are not threats by God. Rather, they are statements of good news -- intended to wake us up to our blindness and to God's provision in Jesus Christ.



Apr 1
Judgment vs. Discernment

Jesus said, "Judge not that you be not judged." (Matt. 7:1) It is never God's will for us to judge another person. But it is always God's will for us to discern the Truth – even if it means we see wrong in another person. We need to grasp the difference.

“To judge,” in the way God forbids, means that we play God and decide what someone deserves. We are pronouncing a sentence against them. We are assuming that we know their heart. This is prohibited because there is no way for us to know a person’s heart the way God knows it. We have to leave room for God.

To discern, however, is to be able to distinguish right from wrong. It is to be able to know the Truth vs. error. This is essential. Indeed, the more I come to know Jesus Christ, the more discernment is going to be a by-product. Thus, to call evil by its name is not wrongly judging. It is discerning. God WANTS us to do so.

Godly discernment – a product of knowing Christ – will always carry the heart of God towards even those in whom I discern evil. I will desire what God desires – that they might be saved and come into the knowledge of the Truth. The goal will always be redemptive.



Apr 2

Chastisement vs. Punishment

For whom the Lord loves he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives. (Heb 12:6)

The Father in heaven NEVER punishes his children. But the Lord does chastise us. There is an immense difference.

Punishment – under the normal use of the word – tends to be vindictive in nature. Punishment is not merely the satisfying of justice, and it is not necessarily redemptive. It is really the exacting of suffering as a payment. But such motives are not the Truth pertaining to God. God never punishes -- these definitions are not the Truth about the character of the Father in heaven.

God does CHASTISE. The word, “chastise,” means, “to train a child.” It speaks of God’s intervention into our lives for the purpose of our good and His purpose. So even though we, like most children, may despise the chastening of the Lord, it is nevertheless because God loves us. He is doing it to guide us into all Truth and to form Christ in us. Indeed, even eternal separation from God is not His punishment. Rather it is a matter of God giving people the separation from Himself that they have continually chosen.

Look up the word translated, "punish," or, "punishment," in the original languages. It really does carry the meaning of CHASTISE. God is a

Redemptive God. All He does is for the good of those with whom He is dealing.

God scourges every son He RECEIVES. The word could be translated, "positions." God is positioning us in Christ – building a relationship with Christ -- for an eternal inheritance. He knows better than we know and is working out His purpose for us.



Apr 3
Love vs. The Wrath of God

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. (Rom. 1:18)

The Bible speaks of the wrath of God, but it also reveals that God is love. (I Jn. 4:8) But if God IS love, then that means that love is His nature, not just His action. Thus, we must reconcile the fact that God IS love to the fact that there is a wrath of God.

The wrath of God IS His love -- the only possible expression of it -- towards those who refuse Him. If a person refuses the Light God reveals to them, God will continue to bring that Light. God will never stop bringing Light and never close the door to Redemption. He cannot. There is only ONE Truth and ONE Savior. But if that person continues to love darkness rather than light, God will have to ultimately give them over to exactly what they have chosen: Darkness. This is justice. And of course, in that darkness, there will be many other consequences. This is the wrath of God – He gives us what we have chosen – even if we have rejected the Truth.

How is this love? It is love because the intent is redemptive. God never stops being faithful to even those who reject Him – He continually seeks their redemption. But the same light God intends for our redemption, will absolutely judge us if we refuse it. This is His wrath. It is not a temper tantrum, or an angry outburst. It is not vindictive. Rather, it is a perfect justice that must be if God is God, and if Jesus Christ died for us.



Apr 4

Agape Love

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (I John 4:10)

What is the love of God? – “agape” -- in the original Greek? In practical, livable, terms? We might define the agape love of God as follows: The agape love of God is God’s commitment to His highest for the one loved, regardless of personal cost to Himself, or to us.

You will note that the key here is GOD’S HIGHEST. Not human goals. And you will also note that God has already paid the ultimate personal cost – His only begotten Son. It must also be noted that people are free to reject God. But God’s love never changes -- it is they who have chosen their own way.

This explains much about how God works. God speaks the TRUTH in love. But He does speak the TRUTH! It is NOT love to lie to people about their condition before God, or to help them to destroy themselves. Yet today this is exactly what is being passed off as Christian love.

Preach the Truth today – and even if you do it in agape love – often you will be considered mean spirited and judgmental. Sure -- it IS possible to preach the Truth void of love -- in a wrong spirit. But this does not change the Truth itself.

You cannot love another if you are not telling them the Truth. Agape love is a commitment to God’s highest for the individual loved, regardless of cost to them, or to us. It is redemptive and Christ centered. This is how God loves us and how we will love others if we know Him.



Apr 5

Because He First Loved Us

We love him, because he first loved us. (I John 4:19)

Read in the Bible the many commands to love one another. Then try to do it. You might want to do it. That is good. And you might convince yourself for awhile that you have succeeded. But left to yourself you cannot do it. You cannot love with the agape love of God. The best you will muster up is a human love.

Indeed, the commandment to love one another has often been turned into just another LAW by some Christians – something we must do to

keep right with God and with others. The suggestion is, we must love others to be loved by God.

The only way in which to love another with the agape love of God is to first realize -- and then receive -- God's love for you. Indeed, we cannot even love God Himself until we first experience His love for us.

Everything in Christianity works according to this principle: It is always vertical FIRST – from God down to us by His grace – and only then will we have to give to others out of what God has given to us -- horizontally. No one has ANYTHING of value except they have received it from God in Christ.

How could we somehow generate the love of God from out of ourselves, unless we first have received, and been changed, by the love God has for us? I must abide in the Vine as an individual branch – and then I can have to give to the other branches. Reverse this and you will have a religious love that is produced from out of the flesh – and which caters to the flesh.

Much error in the Christian church is the result of trying to bring to pass what we read in the Bible in a way other than through the Person of Christ. Jesus Christ has not given us things or power. Jesus Christ -- His very Person and His presence in us -- is the power of God and God has freely given us all things in Him. Fundamental to this is AGAPE.



Apr 6
Vertical then Horizontal

A man can possess nothing, except it be given him from heaven. (Jn. 3:27)

This statement by John is a basic principle. Our relationship with God must be FIRST, and it will determine our relationship with everyone else. And the fact is, this is going to happen whether we realize it or not.

This relationship between God and ourselves, and then, between ourselves and others, could be pictured in the following way: The basis for everything is our personal, one-on-one, VERTICAL relationship with God. God gives us all things freely from Himself down to us VERTICALLY. But then, because of this, we are able to have HORIZONTAL relationships with others as the outcome of our VERTICAL relationship with God.

Of course, this is just a mechanical way of saying that we, as individuals, are to live from out of the Christ who dwells in us – we are to live from out of Him towards others. He is the Vine and the rest of us are branches. How we abide in Him personally will impact our relationship with the other branches. If we have freely received, freely give.

This also gives us direction. We love others because we have experienced God's love for us. We forgive others because God has forgiven us. A person has nothing of value except if first be received from God. Only then can we freely give to others.

God has freely given us all things in Jesus Christ. This is why NONE of these realities are possible to experience unless they are found and realized in the Person of Jesus Christ who dwells in us. Try to love, try to forgive, or try to experience anything that is of God in any other way and, at best, what you will have is legalism, and at worst, you will create a soulish Christianity influenced by false spirits.



Apr 7
Freely Received and Given

Freely you have received, freely give. (Matt. 10:8)

God has given all things freely in Jesus Christ. (Rom. 8:32) Therefore, how could we do otherwise? This is an especially revealing question once we realize that Jesus gave the above instructions as He sent His disciples out into MINISTRY for the first time. Have most Christian ministries ever operated in this great Truth? Do most ministries -- because God has freely given us all things -- offer freely all that they say is of God? No.

There is nothing confusing or complicated about the word FREE, or the word GRACE. That which is of Jesus Christ, by very nature and character, can only be offered by grace. To offer the things of God in Jesus Christ in any other way is to lie and distort not only the gospel, but Jesus Christ Himself.

What does it mean to FREELY receive? It means that you have received solely by grace. You did not earn, merit, or do anything, for what God has given to you. The foundation of the gospel is that all things in Christ are, "by grace through faith."

What does it mean to FREELY give? Jesus said that we are to freely give BECAUSE we have freely received – i.e., what we have received IS free -- it can never be anything else but free. Thus, we are to freely give

from OUT OF what we have freely received. This makes it certain: We are to give in the same spirit that we have received: FREELY, without cost.

If we are saints, we do not belong to ourselves, but to God. Freedom to receive and give is based on this Truth – based on the fact that everything belongs to God. How could we possibly charge a cost for that which we have received freely?



Apr 8 No Condemnation

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. (Rom. 8:1)

Either this verse is the Truth or it is a lie. And if it is the Truth, then it is entirely the Truth: There is never any condemnation – never any judgment of God against – those who are in Christ Jesus.

Here are the only two options: There is no condemnation EVEN when we sin. Or: There is no condemnation EXCEPT when we sin. If it is the latter – if we are never condemned EXCEPT when we sin – then when we sin we ARE condemned. But then we are right back under the law -- our works determine whether we are condemned.

The Truth is: There is no condemnation for the saint EVEN when we sin. That is good news because if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves. But does this mean we are to continue in sin because grace abounds? No. And if we have repented of sin and come to Christ, Paul tells us why we will not want to continue in sin because we know grace abounds: We have died to sin in Christ.

None of this would make sense if all we were talking about were doctrinal issues and legal truth. But we are really talking about what happens when a person is born from above and has Christ in them. These are living Truths of a changed nature.



Apr 9 Conviction vs. Condemnation

(The Spirit of God) will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. (John 16:8)

There is NO condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. (Rom. 8:1) God never condemns the redeemed. But God does convict of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

Conviction from God is never condemnation. While BOTH condemnation and conviction do carry a sense of hopelessness within ourselves – and that is the Truth -- we are hopeless if left to ourselves -- condemnation leaves us there without resolution. Conviction, on the other hand, will always carry a realization of God's forgiveness and restoration through Jesus Christ.

Condemnation makes me feel like the door to God is closed. Conviction carries the realization that the door to God is always open in Jesus Christ.

If I do not believe and rely upon Christ there really isn't any alternative but to live in an unresolved cycle of guilt and condemnation. But if I do put my faith in Christ, I will see my sin, but I will see the One who is the answer.



Apr 10 Godly Sorrow vs. Worldly Sorrow

**For godly sorrow works repentance to salvation not to be repented of:
but the sorrow of the world works death. (2 Cor 7:10)**

Godly sorrow is the result of seeing and embracing the Truth about my sin against God -- and really, the result of believing the Truth about God Himself. It leads to repentance – which is a change of moral mind and intent towards God. Sure. If I embrace the Truth this will MAKE ME TRUE UNTO GOD. That is repentance.

Paul also says that TRUE REPENTANCE is, "not to be repented of." In other words, TRUE repentance (as opposed to a religious one) is never recanted or taken back. It is a one way street and permanent. If repentance were merely a human exercise this would not be the case. But true repentance is the result of seeing and embracing Jesus Christ. It is of God, and is therefore supernatural in nature.

We do repent of SINS. But at the core, true repentance is of UNBELIEF. The result is that we lose ourselves unconditionally to Jesus Christ. This is not to say we will never sin again, or repeat sins again. But it does mean that we will not want to sin. We will want to be free of the sin. Our moral mind and hearts will have changed towards God regarding the sin. We will be seeking Him for true freedom.

Worldly sorrow is not the result of embracing the Truth about my sin. It is based on a desire to be free of the consequences FOR sin. I am sorry because sin makes me feel bad and hurts my sense of self-righteousness.

Anyone can be sorry if they know they are going to pay a penalty for sin. But Godly sorrow is the result of seeing that I have violated the One who paid that price for me. This truly does require a conviction of the Spirit of God.



Apr 11 Repentance and Faith Toward God

...the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God. (Heb. 6:1)

Repentance and faith are TOWARDS GOD HIMSELF. These are the only kind of repentance and faith that are real. They are not moods or emotion conditions unto themselves. They are not religious exercises. They are the result of seeing the Truth, and speak of our relationship with God.

The primary sin of which I must repent is unbelief. All other sins can, in one way or another, be traced back to unbelief. Unbelief is rooted in my right to own myself. Thus, I must repent of that core sin.

If I do repent of unbelief -- then I will BELIEVE. But ultimately the result of real faith is that I will LOSE my life into the hands of Jesus. I cannot say I believe and trust Christ all the while I continue to own myself. Faith lets go -- but not as an exercise under fear. Faith voluntarily lets go to Christ because we want Him no matter what it takes.

All "sins" are rooted in the core sin of, "my right to myself." Thus, if I renounce that old life, and lose it through true repentance towards God, the old life in which all "sins" are rooted will lose its power, and I will begin to experience freedom from those "sins." It is folly to try to overcome sins all the while I hold on to the old life in which they are rooted.

Romans 2:4 says that the GOODNESS of God leads us to repentance. Thus, rather than think of repentance as a choice we make under threat of punishment, we need to realize that true repentance is the result of seeing the Truth about ourselves towards God, and the

result of seeing that God offers it as a gift of freedom back to Himself through His Son.



Apr 12
God's Gift of Conviction

God's kindness leads us to repentance. (Rom. 2:4)

God does love us, and repentance is His will for all people. But our repentance is not FOR God – it is for US. God already knows what we are, and what we need. We are the ones who are lost and blind.

Repentance is the result of God bringing light, and us embracing the Truth. We confess our sin -- i.e., we say the same thing about our sin as God already says – this is confession. And we do so because we know that God is faithful to have forgiven us in Christ Jesus.

Conviction of sin may shock us. We might be appalled at the possibilities of sin in our own heart. And not just outward sins. The core of sin is inward -- we all tend to own ourselves. The depth of possibility in the human heart for sin is beyond our ability to know it. However, the Redemption of Jesus Christ reaches deeper than the deepest sin – even to the possibilities we don't know about.

If we are shocked about the possibilities in our own heart, God would say to us, "You are now seeing what I have known all along. You are now seeing what Jesus already died for. I have shown you the Truth about yourself so that you might confess it and move forward in freedom, rather than continue in blindness." Again, repentance is not for God, but God's gift to us unto freedom. It is an initial step from out of ourselves into Jesus Christ.



Apr 13
God is Light

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you: God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5)

God is light. That is so simple, and yet so profound. It is apparently also vital to grasp because despite the many ways THE MESSAGE could be expressed, in this case John the apostle says, "This IS the message: God is light and in Him is no darkness at all."

What does it mean, “God is Light?” Certainly it echoes what Jesus said about Himself: “I Am the Truth.” (John 14:6) We are touching here on the very nature and character of God. God is light – He is clear, transparent, honest, and never foggy. There are no gray areas. God is not the author of confusion. God is holy and true and utterly faithful.

If God is Light then this also means that in His presence, indeed, in His presence in US, all things are exposed. If you and I want fellowship with God we will be in His light. Light and fellowship with God go together.

If we need to see the Truth, we need to see the Person of Jesus Christ. And our responsibility is to make our eye single unto the Lord. Jesus promised that if we do, our whole body will be filled with Light. (Matt. 6:22) An eye that is single to the Lord is one that will not settle for less than the Truth, and is willing to allow God to do whatever it takes to reveal it to us in His Son.

Light is not merely a doctrinal construct. No. God Himself is Light -- the doctrines follow as an explanation of God. As the Psalmist says, “The Lord IS my Light.” (Ps. 27:1)



Apr 14
Knowing Jesus Christ

That I may know him... (Phil. 3:10)

What does it mean to KNOW Jesus Christ? -- according to the Bible meaning? It means to inwardly realize Him. Paul said that he travailed until, “Christ be formed in you.” (Gal. 4:19) He used a Greek word, translated FORMED, that means, “to inwardly realize and express.” This is a true knowing of Jesus Christ – it is a knowing that comes from experiencing and realizing Him in an inward, spiritual way.

This knowledge of Jesus is received. And then we experience the renewing of our minds -- and it will impact all of us. But Truth is different than any theological or academic knowledge. You cannot study your way into the true knowledge of Jesus Christ. Neither can you drum it up by some form of meditation. And it is NOT emotional. We may react emotionally -- but we cannot know by emotions or believe with emotions. No. Truth comes by revelation. It is spiritual. It cannot be accounted for by anything naturally born into a human being. It is the product of being joined to the Lord, and of the Christ who dwells in us being revealed in us. The source is Christ. We are the recipients.

Paul also said that the work of the Cross is the means by which we lose ourselves and come to be found in Him – “that I may know Him.” If we want Christ formed in us we must decrease that He might increase. We have to bear about in our natural life the dying of the Lord Jesus, so that the life of Jesus might be made manifest TO us, IN us, and then THROUGH us.

Jesus Christ is both LIFE and LIGHT. Thus, if we lose our lives and find Him as our LIFE, then we are going to know Him – we will see LIGHT. All of these matters are simply another ways of saying that Christ must be formed in us – we must come to realize Him in an inward, spiritual way.



Apr 15
Grace and Peace

Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord. (II Peter 1:2)

How do we come to have grace and peace? By controlling our emotions? Only if God does something TO US? No. Grace and peace are the result of knowing the Truth about God and His Son Jesus Christ.

Think about that. Knowing God produces peace. Doesn't that tell us a lot about the God we are to know? And doesn't that tell us that the knowledge of God, as the Bible means it, is an inward realization?

People get nervous when they hear such terms as, “inward realization.” They express worries when you tell them that God must reveal Christ IN US, and that He must be formed IN US. They fear that you might mean that what God reveals can contradict scripture. No. Not only does the Bible itself tell us that God wants to reveal Christ IN US, but the Christ God will reveal is the same One shown IN scripture. But He will be a Living Christ – Living in You. Paul said, “Christ IN you,” “Christ...formed IN you.”

The grace and peace that comes from merely reading the Bible may last for a little while, but it cannot stand when a big crisis comes. Only if our grace and peace is based in an inward knowledge of God in Christ will we be able to stand against the big storm.



Apr 16
The Peace of God

Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you. Not as the world gives do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (John 14:27)

What is the difference between the peace of God and the peace of this world? The peace OF God is the result of peace WITH God as the basis – but then it is multiplied through a growing knowledge of God Himself. To the degree that we know God, we will have the peace of God.

The peace of the world is the result where there is no conflict. If I have won a battle I will have peace. Or if I run away from a battle I will have peace. If I have gotten what I wanted -- become satisfied with myself; even religiously -- I will have peace. The peace of this world has nothing to do with relationship with God. It occurs when circumstances agree with my old life in Adam.

It is entirely possible for a Christian person to have peace – but for it to be deception, i.e., the peace of this world. It is a facade. There are Christians who are walking in the light of their own mind, and totally in the flesh. They can have a worldly peace – to the extent that their circumstances are at one with what inwardly binds them.

God wants the love of Christ to bind us – and if we are one with Him, and know Him, we will have His peace. This is the peace that passes, or is beyond, understanding. It is not based on circumstances, or upon anything about ME. It is not emotional at the core. It is not a human peace that God gives us. Rather, it is based upon being one with Jesus Christ. It is the peace OF God.



Apr 17
The Christ of Division

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. (Matt. 10:34)

Unity in someone or something other than Christ is not Christian unity, and is therefore a LIE. Thus, Jesus Christ will bring division to every unity that is not based in Himself. He will do this so that by breaking up false unity He can establish true unity.

For two thousand years, professing Christians have tried to create and impose unity. Unity is often imposed by rules supposedly taken out of the Bible. "You must belong to our church or submit to our authority;" "You must believe and do as we believe and do." Well, this CAN create a unity – a unity in heresy. Again, it is a LIE. Most cult-like groups have strong unity – the people all believe and practice the same error. But this is only proof of agreement -- NOT of Truth.

The NT teaches us to KEEP the true unity that is in Christ – in other words, we don't CREATE unity, but can KEEP it -- by abiding in the One who is the center of all true unity. And since HE is the Vine, each branch needs to first abide IN HIM as an individual. That is how we KEEP unity. We don't keep unity by first abiding and agreeing in each other. No. We first individually abide in Christ. For if each branch individually abides in the One True Vine they will automatically be one in Christ – automatically be one with each other – unified IN Christ.

Jesus Christ is against all unity in error and heresy -- and He is against all forms of Christianity that are the product of law or religious flesh. He is against unity that is created or imposed by man. Christianity is CHRIST IN YOU and the true unity of the faith is found where Christ Himself is the common life of each individual. That is communion. And it is the only unity that is the will of God.



Apr 18
One Mind

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 2:5)

The church has always made the mistake of trying to create and impose Christian unity through laws, rules, and even tactics of fear. There are groups today that warn their members that if they break unity by disagreement, or leave the group, that God will punish them. This kind of thing is NEVER of God.

True Christian unity is never imposed. It is the by-product of EACH member knowing Jesus Christ for themselves. If I am walking in the Truth and you are walking in the Truth, we are united in the Truth. Likewise, if I have the mind of Christ, and you have the mind of Christ, then we both have HIS mind – and we have unity in Christ.

Contrast this over and against the attempts to create unity in the church through the power of the flesh – especially through some authority system. Believers are told to adopt the mind of the leader or of a religious system. Then this is proclaimed as unity because everyone

has the same mind. They do. But this same mind is not the mind of Jesus Christ. All that has been achieved is unity in error.

Christian unity is NEVER a goal. Christian unity is never achieved by gluing together through principles, mandates, and peer pressure a group, church, or organization. Christian unity is a RESULT. It is the result of EACH member growing up into Christ. Christians are to have ONE MIND – not the mind of each other, or of the leader -- but that ONE MIND is the mind of Christ. Jesus Christ IS the unity among believers.



Apr 19
Equipping the Saints

Till we all come in the unity of the faith. (Eph. 4:13)

According to Jesus Himself, as recorded in John 14-16, the present work of the Holy Spirit is to reveal Christ to us, in us, and through us. This revelation of the same Christ in separate individuals is the only means by which there can be unity of the faith for all. This is how we KEEP -- not CREATE -- unity that is in Christ.

Any unity that is imposed by law or religious system is NOT unity in Christ. Rather, it is a unity in that law.

We need to see that unity is a matter of sharing a common LIFE – His life – and thus His mind. It is the result of all knowing the same Jesus. An authority system of law cannot do this – law is NOT life. In fact, it is absolutely contrary to the life of Jesus.

The job of NT ministry is to edify each member in Christ. This alone fosters unity. We might even say that unity could result without unity ever being mentioned as a goal. Sure. Why? Because unity isn't the goal. Christ being formed in each member is the goal. If that happens, unity will be there. Christianity is Christ in YOU – the individual. Edify Him in individuals and you are KEEPING unity.

Any person who makes unity with Christ, or being right with God, dependent upon whether you submit to them, or agree with them, is a false teacher. The responsibility of a faithful steward is to help individuals into a relationship with Jesus Christ for themselves. True ministry is unto THAT end – to build up individuals in Christ -- unity in the faith being the by-product.



Apr 20
Knowing God

"You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God"... "Flesh and blood has not revealed this unto you, but my Father who is in heaven....upon THIS ROCK I will build My church." (Matt. 16:16-18)

Jesus Christ in us is the Rock upon which God builds His people. It is upon the revelation of Jesus in believers that God builds all of His purpose. Knowing God in Christ is a primary purpose of God – it is a central outcome of the Redemption, and it is the foundation for all that God does.

In fact, knowing God is presented as an ultimate goal of the New Covenant. God says:

For this is the covenant that I will make...I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people...for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." (Heb. 8:10)

The New Covenant is CHRIST IN US. (Col. 1:27) Everything God does is from out of Christ. God intends to reveal Christ, not only TO us, but IN US. This is, "the mystery hidden from generations past, but now revealed to the saints." (Col. 1:26) It is the purpose of God – that the individual believer be joined to the Lord – and as a result come into a realization of Jesus Christ – have Christ formed in them. (Gal. 4:19) Again -- this is the foundation and Rock.

Anyone can read about God and accumulate theological knowledge. But the knowledge of God spoken of in the Bible is an experiential knowledge that is the result of being joined to Him in resurrection union. It is actually an inward realization, not of SELF, but of the Person of Jesus Christ.



Apr 21
Christ Revealed In Us

But when it pleased God...to reveal his Son in me...immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood. (Gal 1:15-16)

Surely God wants to reveal His son TO US. But there is something beyond that: God wants to reveal His Son IN US. God wants to form Christ IN US – which will result in an inward realization or knowing of Him. (Gal. 4:19)

Does that seem strange? Perhaps bizarre? Today Christian people easily accept ridiculous signs and wonders and say they are of God. We easily rejoice in miracles whether they are real or of God. People say that the Holy Spirit is moving here and there and doing this or that. But tell them that God wants to reveal His Son in us, and they will think you are talking about some kind of extra-biblical revelation. Or, they will simply yawn and move on. Well, God does want to reveal His Son IN US -- it is all through the Bible as God's purpose and the primary work of the Holy Spirit. This is not extra-biblical – it IS Biblical.

How did the apostle Peter know Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God? Jesus explained: “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” (Mat 16:17) Flesh and blood did not reveal Christ to Peter, and Paul said when God revealed Christ in him, that he did not confer with flesh and blood. The fact is, this is the only way to receive the revelation of Jesus Christ – directly from God IN US.



Apr 22
Forgiveness vs. Deliverance

Jesus Christ won forgiveness for every one of us by dying as our substitute. But forgiveness merely takes away the penalty for sin. It alone does nothing to change the sinner. Can you imagine what would happen if God forgave sin by ONLY removing the death penalty, but did nothing to address the nature of sin that is behind it? We would have a race of people who were fully forgiven, but who were still in bondage to sin. This could never be.

We need to understand what Jesus actually did. Jesus Christ did not die so that God could merely lift the death penalty from the Adam race. No. Jesus died so that the Adam race could die IN HIM and be raised IN HIM a new creation. Thus, the death penalty, rather than be lifted because Christ died, was actually fulfilled by the death of Christ. Jesus paid the price of death and tasted death for everyone of us. God's justice was satisfied.

So when we are joined to the Lord and are saved, we are planted into His death. That means death to our old man in Adam. The power of the old creation is broken. We are also planted into His resurrection. That means Christ becomes our life and we are a new creature IN HIM. This is not merely forgiveness, but full DELIVERANCE from the Adam race through death and resurrection.

Thus, Jesus is called, "The Lamb of God who TAKES AWAY the sin of the world." (John 1:29) In effect, Jesus not only won forgiveness FOR all of our sins by dying as our substitute, but He took away and delivered us from sin itself through His resurrection.

How is this experienced? By losing our old life under the Cross, and by abiding in Jesus Christ as our life. It takes a lifetime for this growth.



Apr 23

Accountability to God

God has never blamed any of us for being born in Adam with a sin nature. We were not responsible for that. But He does hold us responsible for refusing deliverance from the Adam race through Christ – once we see the Truth.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh." (John 3:6) When a person is born in Adam they born of the flesh and are void of the life of God. We did not choose that birth. In addition, we all develop different versions or manifestations of the flesh. This is greatly impacted by our upbringing, environment, and of course, personal choices -- whether we realize what we are doing or not.

All of these issues go into making us the "version" of the Adam race that we are. Some people end up with terrible baggage through abuse or exposure to evil. Great bondage to different sin can result. Others turn out self-righteous and religious – that is their version of the flesh. It is no less a bondage and damaging.

The point is this: All of us can spend our time assigning blame for what ails us, and in many cases, some of that blame would be justly assigned. (abuse, etc.) But in the end, no matter why we have the baggage we have, and no matter what our bondage to sin might be, the SOLUTION is the same: Deliverance through Jesus Christ. And once we see this Truth, we ARE responsible for turning to Him by faith.

If you and I want to be delivered from sin, bad habits, addictions, or bondage, we can seek the methods of the world, many of which are used by Christians with the name of Jesus pasted on them for validation. And there can be some help in these -- if we define, "help," as feeling better about ourselves, or if we define it as simply taking bad flesh and making it look and act good. But if we want TRUE FREEDOM there is only ONE MEANS: Death and resurrection in Christ. If we want to be free of sin we must lose and relinquish the old life in which all sin and addiction is rooted: The Adam life. But if we do, Christ will more and more become

our life. Christ is THE RESURRECTION LIFE. That is the only true freedom that there is -- the rest is a facade.

Once we see the Truth, we ARE responsible -- not for mustering up out of ourselves will-power, or a program that will cure what ails us. We are responsible for losing our life to Christ through His Cross. That is the ONE thing we can do, and the ONE thing we must do: Surrender ourselves fully to Christ for, "whatever it takes," for God to bring us through to His purpose. In short, we are responsible -- once LIGHT IS GIVEN -- for believing and giving ourselves to Jesus Christ.



Apr 24
The Sin of the Human Race

Jesus Christ died for all – for every human being that ever lived. Thus, all sin is taken away. The slate is clean. There is no sin keeping any human being from God because all sin died in Christ -- except one sin: The sin of refusing to come to Christ.

The only sin that can keep me from Christ is the sin of refusing to come to Christ. This is the sin of unbelief.

Here we see that despite the fact that Jesus died for each human being that has ever lived or ever will live, only those who believe are saved. The responsibility upon us once we hear the Truth is FAITH.

If we must believe in order to be saved, then it means that it is possible to refuse to believe. And therein is the one sin that can keep us from being saved: Unbelief. Unbelief is the neglect or refusal to turn to Jesus Christ -- once God brings light. If I fully and finally refuse Christ -- then I have deliberately refused the One who died for me. There is nothing left that God can do to save me if I refuse Christ. I have committed a sin that has no forgiveness.

Jesus never died for the sin of refusing His death. God cannot forgive the sin of refusing His forgiveness. God cannot forgive the sin of refusing the death that paid for sin. This is why this sin is the unpardonable sin. Any other outcome is morally impossible.

The sin that cannot be forgiven only remains unforgiven if we continue in it. At any time we can turn from unbelief to faith. Then we are no longer in unbelief. It is never too late to repent and turn to Jesus Christ.



Apr 25
The Wages of Sin

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom 6:23)

Note the distinction between WAGES and GIFT. Wages are what you earn. A gift is freely given -- it has nothing to do with earning.

If we do not freely receive the gift of Christ then we will be left with only our wages -- wages we earn through sin and unbelief. You will note that Paul does not at this point state that we earn this wage of death from GOD. Ultimately, of course, we do. God will ultimately judge each of us worthy of death. But sin and unbelief carry their own wage -- sin and unbelief KILL. Just as abiding in Christ results in fruit NOW, so does abiding in Adam -- so does unbelief. Sin and unbelief corrupt the person -- the person carries their effect -- even if that fruit is self-righteousness or religiosity. We can, of course, always turn from such a path and be restored in Christ.

Jesus Christ is the LIFE. Thus, if I am joined to the Lord and made one spirit with Him I am ALIVE, indeed, He IS my eternal life. But if I will not abide in Christ as my life, then I will die -- not because God gets mad and adds death as a punishment -- but because death is the only thing we CAN reap if we refuse The Life. Unbelief always results in sin, and sin kills. Judgment means God gives people exactly what they chosen -- death. There can be no other outcome.

Of course, none of these terrible outcomes are necessary. God has fully dealt with the sin question in Jesus Christ. The wages of sin are death, but the GIFT of God is eternal life in Christ. There is no sin so deep that the Redemption of Jesus Christ has not reached it. A GIFT means you cannot earn it. You must believe and receive, not on the basis of anything about yourself, but solely on the basis of the One giving. This is grace. And God is no respecter of persons.



Apr 26
The Provision of God

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things

do the Gentiles seek:) For your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. (Matt. 6:31-33)

Jesus is saying that the provision of God for His children is so certain that we can actually afford to set aside all anxious thought. There would be no basis for refusing to take anxious thought otherwise. If God's provision were in question we should take anxious thought because we are left to ourselves.

All through scripture God tells us to trust and rely upon Him for provision – and despite the essential of spiritual provision, there is no question that God includes material provision. Jesus is doing that right here. He is talking about food and clothing – basic human needs.

This leads to a conclusion: If God tells us to trust Him for provision -- then He desires to provide. Sure. God would not tell us to trust him to provide if He didn't desire to provide. That would be dishonest. Can you imagine if a human being did that?

But there is a caveat: "Seek you first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Mat 6:33) Provision from God is only within the will of God -- it is automatically added as we seek Jesus Christ. Indeed, we might even say that if Christ IS our life (Col. 3:4) then IN CHRIST is all that we need, as it suits God's present purpose for us. That may be little, or it may be much -- whatever works God's purpose. But it will be the present will of God. The provision of God happens only under the Lordship of Jesus. Anything else would undermine His purpose.



Apr 27
Provision in Christ

But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (Phil 4:19)

If you read this verse in context you cannot escape the fact that Paul is talking at least inclusively about material provision. But what he says once again points out a basic principle as to how God works. God has wrapped up everything He has for man in His Son, Jesus Christ. Thus, neither material or spiritual provision is a matter of God just handing us THINGS -- apart from any relationship to Christ. Rather, as a general rule, material provision comes along as we live from out of Christ as our life; as the source of all spiritual provision.

Never think that a person cannot prosper outside of Christ, or provide for themselves. They can and do. Serving mammon can be quite profitable in this world. But we are here talking about the will of God and HIS provision. A believer should ask God to provide for them exactly what HE wants -- no more and no less. We should be content in Christ and in what He knows we need.

This is the same principle as when Jesus said, "Seek you first the kingdom and all that you need will be added." (Matt. 6:33) This is not a matter of earning God's provision by our seeking. Rather, it is a matter of us seeking Christ for Himself, and finding all that we need in Him, including material provision. If Christ IS our life – and we are living from OUT OF HIM by faith – material provision will be in the flow of His life.



Apr 28
When God Doesn't Provide

And he humbled you, and suffered you to hunger, and fed you with manna, which you knew not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make you to know that man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD does man live. (Deut. 8:3)

Despite all of His promises to provide for His sons and daughters, there are going to be seasons wherein God does not provide – where they may even be lack. But this is not because God is unfaithful or indifferent. Neither is it necessarily because we are doing anything wrong. It may be because God has to chastise us as those whom He LOVES – to bring us to where He can freely bless us materially for our spiritual good.

God has wrapped up all things He has for us – material and spiritual – in His Son. Generally, material provision comes along as we live from out of Christ as our life; as the source of all spiritual provision. But who among us has any idea what that really means – at least in the beginning? If God simply provided for our material needs abundantly we would never know anything about spiritual life in Christ. We would not truly rely upon God – and might even come to expect and demand from Him. Thus, God may, "suffer us to hunger," so that we may come to know what it really means to seek first His kingdom and live from out of Christ.

For thousands of years the church has fabricated various ways and means to get God to provide for His people. Errors like, "tithing," and, "planting a seed," and, "buying indulgences," and, "positive confession,"

are examples. But in the end all of these things are nothing but another form of LAW. They are a substitute for surrender and faith in God. Worse, false teachers get rich off of these errors -- at the expense of those they teach. The people of God have been made merchandise. What a grief to the heart of God!

God wants to provide for His children. But He will only do it IN CHRIST. He will not do it as an affirmation of error. People look for, "whatever works." No. Seek CHRIST and all that you need will be added. Fall in love with Jesus Christ and all of these matters will be quickly resolved into a LIFE that is walking in Christ -- and God will be free to add to us whatever suits His purpose for the present season. (Matt. 6:33)

God is seeking for bring us into a knowledge of His Son. Do we really want Jesus Christ for Himself and His glory -- or are we simply seeking Christ for the bread He can create? If we can live from Christ and trust God even when His material provision is not flowing -- if we can live NOT by bread alone, but on the basis of His life -- then God can eventually provide for us and it will not undermine His spiritual purpose.



Apr 29 True Humility

True humility does not result in putting oneself down. Rather, true humility is only possible if I see the greatness of Jesus Christ. In short, true humility is the outcome of seeing the Truth and of rejoicing in Him.

Human thinking tells us that we must have either high self-esteem or low self-esteem. And much Christian teaching today is geared to enhancing high self-esteem in Christian people. Indeed, many are teaching that God wants us to discover OURSELVES and OUR value to God. This has gotten to the place where believers are being taught to, "confess over themselves," their true identity and value to God -- so that it will eventually take hold.

Rather than realize our value to God, we need to realize God's value to us. Rather than realize our true identity in Christ, we need to realize His true identity in us. The fact that Christianity is more and more being turned into a self-centered lie is evidence that the antichrist is at work and that the apostasy is presently taking place.

God's goal is not that we have high self-esteem OR low self-esteem. In fact, if we only realized it, low self-esteem is nothing but a frustrated desire for high self-esteem. Through Christ, God wants to deliver us

completely from SELF. Human beings don't need more self-love. We are cursed with it.

Spiritual pride is an epidemic among Christians. We still think God wants to make US into something. We still think that there is greatness in us that God wants to bring out. It is even possible to take pride because I think I am manifesting Christ. This is deception.

Those who manifest Christ the most are the least aware of it. That is because their preoccupation is not with themselves or their spiritual growth. They are occupied with Him and with abiding in Him. But of course, none of this is possible through human effort. Rather, it is the result of being brought to the end of ourselves. It is then that we will see Jesus Christ. True humility will be the outcome.

To know Jesus Christ does not make us feel good about ourselves. But neither does it make us feel bad about ourselves. It delivers us out of needing to feel ANYTHING about ourselves at all. We are free to stop fussing over ourselves and to abide in Jesus Christ.



Apr 30
Not With Words of Wisdom

To preach the gospel, not with words of wisdom, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of no effect. (I Cor. 1:17)

Today the market is saturated with an array of supposedly Christian books, devotionals, and programs that are geared to appealing to the sentiments, self-esteem, and emotional needs of God's people. Some of them are written in first person, as if they are from God Himself, as a love letter. These apparently make people FEEL as if God loves them. But can emotions replace faith?

Today, many believers are being taught to believe based on how they feel -- to believe WITH their emotions. Some are trying to contact God through their emotions. Many think God is speaking to them through their emotions. Of course, such teaching is subtle -- the lies of the enemy are always wrapped in Bible verses and glowing testimonies. But all of this is deception. It is not of the spirit of God, but of the psychic, or soul realm -- or worse.

Emotions are the REACTING agents of natural man. You react based on what you believe is the Truth, and often you will believe based on how you react. But all of this operates in each one of us completely independent from Jesus Christ. We are not joined to the Lord through

our emotions. We are joined to Him through His spirit. Thus, He is completely outside of emotions.

Jesus Christ is completely, "other than us." Christianity is CHRIST IN US -- we have the Treasure IN an earthen vessel. We never become the Treasure. The Treasure never becomes the earthen vessel. Rather, we have to grow to know the Treasure and to lose our lives to Him. Then the earthen vessel will become broken. The Treasure can then be seen in and through that vessel.

In the above verse, Paul is telling us that what satisfies our natural man in a religious way can often be contrary to the Cross of Jesus Christ. Why? Because much of what is taught in the church is geared to fixing, enhancing, and building up the earthen vessel. It is really geared to saving and strengthening what Jesus Christ told us to LOSE by picking up our Cross. Never think that because something makes people feel good, or seems to satisfy them, that it is of God. No. You can achieve similar results in the secular world. None of it is of Jesus Christ.

People need to get back to the basic Truth of Jesus Christ crucified. The goal of God is not to make us feel better about ourselves -- NOR is it to make us feel bad about ourselves. Instead, God wants to make us want to be delivered from ourselves through the work of the Cross. He wants to bring us into an inward realization of Jesus Christ. He wants to reveal Himself IN US, and to become our life. If that is happening, then the earthen vessel -- natural man -- will reap many benefits. But God does not use the methods of men. He uses death and resurrection in His Son. "Words of wisdom" -- the best that the natural mind can come up with -- cannot result in life from above. Life is in THE SON.



May 1 The Gospel

I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that valled you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel. (Gal. 1:6)

What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news, "concerning His Son, Jesus Christ." (Rom. 1:3) The gospel, therefore, is a proclamation of the Truth about a PERSON. The good news is the proclamation of Jesus Christ -- yes, what He has done, but essentially, about who He IS - today IN US.

The gospel is the message of salvation. But the gospel is not merely a message of how to be saved. Repentance and faith are obviously

essential. But salvation is a Person. The gospel therefore includes all of the Truth of life in Christ.

Paul warned the Galatians, “You have deserted HIM that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.” Can we see that Paul considered life in Christ AFTER salvation to also be the gospel? He affirms that the Galatians church had been saved through the gospel, but then he states, “having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?” (Gal. 3:3)

If my Christianity is not based on the Christ who is in me – Him as my life and Truth – then I am under another gospel. In short, the salvation message must be the Truth – but this Truth results in a life in Christ -- LIFE in is a Person that dwells in me. I must not only believe the message, but I must live in the One who IS the living message.

Any presentation of Christ that distorts or omits any part of His redemptive work is a false gospel. But this is because such error distorts Christ Himself. Christ dwells IN US NOW: “Christ in you, the hope of glory -- whom we preach.” (Col. 1:27-28)



May 2 The Mystery of God

The mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints -- to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Col. 1:26-27)

In NT times, a, “mystery,” was exactly what Paul describes here: A Truth previously hidden, but which is NOW revealed. According to Paul, the great mystery of previous ages and generations, which was THEN being revealed was, “CHRIST IN YOU, the hope of glory.”

Paul directly states that this Truth was, “hid from ages and generations,” past. Sure. Jesus Christ did not, and could not, dwell in anyone until after He completed His redemptive work, and ascended to the Father. Jesus said so – He said, “The Comforter has been WITH you, but SHALL BE IN YOU. I must go, for the Spirit cannot be descend down from heaven UNTIL I ascend up to heaven.” (see John 14:17 and 16:7)

Jesus Christ dwells in us through His Spirit -- the Spirit of God. We are not indwelt by TWO spirits -- but ONE. If you read this passage, and

if you read Romans 8:9, you will see that Jesus Christ is in us via the spirit.

Contrary to some Christian teaching, Jesus Christ came to dwell in people for the very first time in Acts 2 when His Spirit did descend. Acts 2 began the New Covenant – which IS CHRIST in you. Acts 2 began the church – which consists of those in whom Christ dwells. The day of Pentecost was fulfilled in Acts 2 -- and the mystery unveiled.

In the church today, we have made the church age the age of the Holy Spirit. This is off center, and has led to much error. The very purpose for which the Spirit of God was given -- the purpose which Jesus stated in John, chapters 14 thru 16, and which is taught all through the epistles -- is to reveal Christ TO us, IN us, and THROUGH us. Indeed, so that we would not misunderstand, Jesus even stated that the Spirit of God would never speak about the Spirit of God -- that is, the work of the Spirit would never result in a focus upon the Spirit. The Spirit of God would absolutely always focus upon the Person of Jesus Christ -- the Spirit of God would bring us into an inner realization of the Person of Jesus Christ.

The number one indication that the Spirit of God is working in my life is that I am becoming more and more preoccupied with the Person of Jesus Christ. I am losing my life -- and Jesus is becoming my life. This is what it really means to be guided into all Truth. It is Christ in us, the hope of glory -- not merely as a theological concept -- but as a living experience of the Person whom has come to dwell within us.



May 3 The First Sermon

**Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ.
(Acts 2:36)**

The first sermon given through the indwelling of Jesus Christ via the Spirit of God was given by Peter in Acts 2. And if you read that sermon, it is indeed all about Jesus Christ. But some like to point to what they think happened on that day as a justification for some things that are going on today – people acting like animals, drunk, etc. – but Peter quickly gathers all that was happening into a message about the Person of Christ -- and what God now desires to do through Him.

Peter ended his sermon with the above verse. (Acts 2:36) It carried the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Acts records, “Now when they heard,

they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said unto them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you INTO the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

What was the conclusion of the events of that day? People being convicted of their lost condition and then being told to REPENT and be baptized through the spirit of God INTO Jesus Christ. That is the Greek meaning: Immersed INTO Christ (Rom. 6:35); joined to Him spiritually. (I Cor. 6:17) In other words, the outcome of the gospel message is supposed to be, yes, faith in all that Christ has DONE for us -- but what He has DONE for us is all unto this end -- Christ Himself NOW, IN each of us. This is what began on Pentecost in Acts 2: "Christ in YOU, the hope of glory." (Col. 1:27)



May 4 Joined to the Lord

But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. (I Cor. 6:7)

This verse tells us HOW Jesus Christ dwells in us: He joins our human spirit to Himself – to His Spirit. This is CHRIST IN US.

The word translated, "joined," could be translated, "glued," or, "cemented." We are ONE with Jesus Christ through the union of our human spirit with His Spirit. This agrees with the pictures that God gives us of our spiritual union with Christ – baptized INTO Christ; baptized INTO the name of Christ; crucified WITH Christ; planted into the likeness of His death and resurrection; and of course, "Christ in us, the hope of glory."

The spiritual union of our human spirit with Jesus Christ is the new creature in Christ Jesus. This is what is born through the new birth. It is the new man; the inner man. Furthermore, it tells us how we have eternal life. Jesus Christ IS the resurrection and the life. Thus, when we are joined to Him, we are not joined to a THING called life, but joined to a Person who IS THE LIFE. We are eternally alive because we are joined to the One who is the resurrection and the life.

God has given us all things freely IN HIS SON. And the saint is joined to Him. This is why, "we are complete in Him." (Col. 2:9)



May 5
Life From Above

You are from beneath; I am from above: you are of this world; I am not of this world. (John 8:23)

Jesus told Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit....You must be born again." (John 3:6)

All who are born in Adam are born of the flesh. In Adam, flesh is all we can ever be – and all that is built into the flesh is all we can ever possess. In addition, all that we are in Adam was permanently ruined through the sin of Adam. But Jesus never suggests that the Adam race is going to be fixed. He never suggests that there is any destiny for the Adam race except the destiny that God originally judged: Death. The solution, therefore, for all who are born in Adam, is a NEW BIRTH – we must be born FROM ABOVE.

Being born from above is not a matter of God fixing me, or of Him drawing from out of me some latent potential. No. The new birth is the result of receiving -- from the OUTSIDE of me INTO me FROM the outside -- a new life – HIS LIFE. I am born from above when I am joined to the One who is FROM above -- joined in spirit to the One who IS life. New life is Christ in us.

If ALL is received IN Christ, and we receive Him from above, then obviously, the dimensions of new life in Christ are not of the earthly. Yet most of us still think that emotions, soul power, and the natural mind are the spirit of God in us. The only solution is to come into an inward realization of Christ. Then not only will His spirit grow to govern us -- govern what used to govern us -- but we will be able to see that what is of the flesh is NOT of the spirit, and we will grow to discern the difference. This is not an academic or theological solution. It is not a, "how to." It is a matter of knowing One who is, "other than," ourselves; "other than," the flesh. It is a LIVING solution.

Many of us try to define our Christianity by what we have to give to God, or by what we do for God. But God defines our Christianity by what we have RECEIVED: Jesus Christ from above.



May 6

The Spirit of Christ

You are...in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.... and if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in you. (Rom. 8:9-11)

In God's Word, different terms are often used to refer to the same Truth. Such is the case in this passage. Paul is here using terms that all refer to the indwelling of Christ in us through the Holy Spirit. He uses the terms, "in the Spirit," "the Spirit of God," "the Spirit of Christ;" "Christ be in you..the Spirit is life;" the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus;" and, "His Spirit that dwells in you."

Since Paul states in Ephesians that there is ONE SPIRIT (Eph. 4:4), this means that all of these descriptions refer to that ONE Spirit and that ONE indwelling. This allows us to conclude that, "Christ in you," means that we are joined to Him in by that same Spirit – i.e., our human spirit is joined to His Spirit – which is elsewhere named, "the Holy Spirit," or PARACLETE.

Why is this important? Because so often when we read that we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, or that the Spirit dwells in us, we tend to focus upon the Spirit as something separate from, or other than, Christ. We might even think of TWO indwellings. No. This blurs and clouds the fact of the Person of CHRIST IN US -- that is, Christ dwells in us by the means of the Spirit of God. Indeed, the very purpose of the Spirit of God is to reveal Christ TO us, IN us, and THROUGH us.



May 7

The Man From Above

You are from beneath; I am from above: you are of this world; I am not of this world. (John 8:23)

Before Jesus Christ joins us to Himself spiritually, we are 100% natural. We are born OF this world and made of the materials of the Adam race. There is absolutely nothing in us that is from above – we are fully from beneath. But when we are joined to the Lord, and He dwells in us through the Spirit of God, there is introduced into our makeup HIS life – which is from above. At that point there occurs a separation -- our soul

life from the presence of Christ in us. This is the separation of soul and spirit.

Notice that each believer has TWO natures within. We have received Christ from above. But our earthly nature remains -- it remains from below. This will never change in this age. Thus, the goal of God is to form Christ in us so that He -- and not our old nature -- can be our life; will govern us.

You will notice that when Christ joins us to Himself the natural or flesh is not obliterated. No. Christ is ADDED, so to speak, to the person we already are. But then there begins a work of the Cross whereby the power of the old man in Adam -- the soul life that is outside of union with Christ -- is broken. We must work this out by losing our old life and finding Christ as our life. This takes time and experience. The old nature in Adam has its power broken as we learn Christ -- the power is broken, but not the presence or possibility. We can still sin. But we can also, by faith, learn to obey Jesus Christ.

The goal of God will be to bring all that is of the natural under the work of the Cross so that Christ in us might govern, and so that Jesus Christ might be manifested through us.



May 8
The Dividing of Soul from Spirit

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit.
(Heb. 4:12)

The dividing of soul from spirit is not something that happens because God acts upon our inner makeup and divides it into two sections. No. This separation happens, and is only possible, when our spirit is joined to the Lord Jesus. The introduction of the spirit of Christ into our inner makeup automatically creates a separation between that which is joined to the Lord in us, and what is not joined to the Lord in us. In short, His presence in us automatically creates the separation.

Once we are joined to the Lord in resurrection union, we are born a new creature in Christ -- "If any man be in Christ He is a new creature." (II Cor. 5:17) So what is the new man in Christ? The resurrection union of our human spirit with the Spirit of Christ. Draw an imaginary circle around union with Christ and this is the new man. But everything out side of that circle remains natural -- remains the old man.

God is not working to bring life to the old man in Adam – to what is outside of that circle. No. He is actually working to bring death. If we would grasp this, we would recognize that all the modern teaching about self-esteem, self-improvement, and God bringing out the best in us, is error. What is outside of that circle – the old life – is under the Cross. Rather than give us OUR old life, God tells us to LOSE that life. He is working in the new creation in Christ. God has given us all things freely in His Son. Christ is to BE our life.



May 9

The Living Word

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. (Heb. 4:12)

The Word of God is not merely the Bible – although the Bible is certainly the written Word of Truth. But Jesus Christ is the Living Word of Truth. But since there is only ONE Truth, then the Living Word will always agree completely with the written Word. As God reveals Christ to us we will always find this fully affirmed in scripture.

That being said: God is speaking to us today IN HIS SON; He is speaking, "Son-wise." (Heb. 1:1, Greek) God is revealing Christ TO us and IN us. Jesus said the revelation of Himself in us would be the purpose for which the Spirit of God was given.

Jesus Christ in us IS the testimony of Jesus Christ. He is God's Living Word -- intended by God to govern us to the point where we can become living evidence or living testimonies of the Risen Christ. A living witness of Christ is not someone who points to themselves, or is always focused on themselves. Rather, a living witness points to One other than themselves as the source of all; as the object of their faith. Again -- we are living testimonies of HIM. Not of anything about us.

People ask for evidence that Jesus Christ exists, and mock when God provides none that satisfies them. But God is not concerned. Jesus Christ IS the evidence of God. (see I John 5:9-11) And when Christ comes to dwell in us, His very presence becomes a living testimony to God Himself in us, and through us. This is what it means to become a witness for Christ. We have the evidence in us, and HE is seen by others -- "For you are dead and YOUR life is hid with CHRIST in God. When Christ, Who IS our life....." (Col. 3:4)



May 10
The Preaching of the Cross

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. (I Cor. 1:18)

In Jesus Christ, the Adam race was brought to an end on the Cross. In this age, God is not interested in fixing up the Adam race, or in bringing anything out of it that He can use. This is why we are told that if want to follow Jesus, we must pick up our cross and LOSE our lives for His sake. (see Matt. 16:24) God is interested only in His Son, and if we are united with His Son in spirit, we are a new creation in Him. Jesus is not united with the old creation in Adam.

Most ministry today wrongly focuses upon our old man in Adam -- fixing him; bringing out his supposed potential. There is little true teaching today about God's purpose to form Christ in us, and certainly almost nothing about the necessity of the Christian person losing their life under the work of the Cross in order to discover true life in Christ. You may hear that Jesus bore our sins on the Cross. Instead, you may even hear such terms as, "spiritual formation," wherein people are taught how to form Christ in themselves, or taught how to make their old man look like Jesus -- through various techniques and programs.

But where the reality of the personal Cross is omitted, the Truths of Christ can only be applied to the OLD LIFE -- and brought down to an earthly, natural level. It may look good and will be very religious. But it isn't of new life -- it is the old life practicing religion -- because the means of new life is omitted: The Cross.

The personal Cross means our the old man in Adam is shut out through death. Only the new man in Christ matters. It is a sure sign of apostasy when few Christians know the difference, or think this Truth to be foolish.



May 11
Evidence of Spiritual Death

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness. But unto us that are saved, it is the power of God. (I Cor. 1:18)

Paul does NOT say that if a person thinks the Cross to be foolish (unnecessary or of no value -- Greek) that God is going to punish them -- by causing them to perish. No. Rather, he is saying that if a person thinks the Cross is foolish that it is evidence that they are ALREADY in the process of perishing.

There is a reason for his conclusion: The Cross is the first step to life in Christ. Thus, if we think that the first step to life is foolishness, then we have obviously not taken it. We are perishing.

On the positive note, evidence that Christ is in us is that we have a growing realization and experience of the Cross. We know that despite the fact that it does not please our flesh, that the personal Cross is the means of freedom -- it is the means by which Christ comes to be made manifest.

When someone consistently and deliberately says that we do not need to repent in order to be saved, or that we do not need to come to the Cross -- is it possible that they are presently saved? No. That is not a judgment. It is simply a fact that you cannot deny what is necessary to be saved -- and then say you are saved. People can always turn and repent of such nonsense. But according to Paul, if I presently think that the Cross is unnecessary this is evidence that I am presently perishing.

Now, of course, there are many ways to deny the Cross. I could actually preach it, but push it aside as to experience. I could side step it and develop a Christianity focused on my works. Or, I could become a proponent of, "the gospel of ME" -- turn Christianity into a self-improvement, belief system. These are all ways of, "saying," that the Cross is unnecessary or foolish. I may not use the words, but it is nevertheless what I am, "confessing."

God has better intentions for people. Even if I have been the greatest enemy of the Cross, I can turn at any time and take my place in the Cross of Jesus Christ. I can pick up my cross daily. God is a redemptive God. The door is always open to Him -- that Door being His Son.



May 12 **God's Only Solution**

To preach the gospel, not with words of wisdom, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of no effect. (I Cor. 1:17)

We cannot be delivered from sin by merely being forgiven FOR sin -- because forgiveness removes only the penalty for sin. That is wonderful

and essential. But forgiveness alone does not remove the sin itself. There is only one way to be delivered from sin: The source of sin must die. There must come deliverance, through death, from what Paul calls, "the body of sin," and, "the old man in Adam."

This was accomplished by Christ once and for all on the Cross for all of us. The way in which it becomes experiential for us is if we take our place in the Cross, pick it up daily, and come under its power. His Cross is our death so that we might live in newness of life in Christ Jesus.

"Words of wisdom," cannot substitute for the Cross. "Words of wisdom," include anything that comes out of man as a solution for sin. I cannot, "sweet talk," someone into being a Christian. I cannot logically corner them through argument into picking up the Cross. I cannot give them twelve step programs. I cannot give them any form of religion. I cannot, "confess," into existence deliverance from sin. Neither can I substitute for the Cross by memorizing scripture, attending church, or by trying my best to live for Christ. No. I have to pick up the Cross and become conformed to HIS DEATH – and this is exactly the Truth that I must preach to others. It is the ONLY Truth and the ONLY solution for sin.

All sin -- all bondage and addiction -- is rooted in the old nature. Thus, I will not get free from sin -- not TRULY free -- by turning in upon a specific sin and trying to defeat it. No. Rather, I must LOSE the old life in which that sin is rooted into the hands of Jesus under the Cross.

Even unbelievers can change some habits through psychology and will power. But this is not true freedom -- for even the freedom they achieve is still within the old nature. No. Only if I will relinquish myself to Christ in an unconditional abandonment to Him of my right to myself -- only then -- will all of the sin that is rooted in that self; in that old life -- only then will it have no power in my life. This will take time to learn, but it is the only way to freedom. The suggestion that I can overcome sin that is rooted in my right to myself without relinquishing my right to myself is nonsense.

Omit the Cross and you have a false gospel. Offer people the victory of Jesus Christ or the grace of Jesus Christ -- without the necessity of the Cross -- and you are preaching another gospel. Paul said, "When I came to you, I came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." Lots of people can give good sermons, and sway the crowds with emotion or logic. But people must be shown the dreadful creature that they are in Adam -- they must be shown how much they NEED Jesus Christ. Only then will they voluntarily come to the Cross -- and thank God that Jesus has died for them on it. This is the ONLY path to freedom.



May 13

The Cross is the Power of God

The cross is...the power of God. (I Cor. 1:18)

The Cross is the power of God because Jesus Christ died upon it. But in what sense? The Cross is the power of God over the old creation because the Cross brought an end to the old creation through death -- thus breaking its power over those who are raised anew in Christ.

The Cross is not new life. But it ended the old life. The Cross broke the power -- not the presence or possibility -- of the old man of sin. But not as an end unto itself. It is through being raised in Christ -- joined to Him in spirit -- that we receive His life. If we abide in Christ by faith, this Truth is proven true: The power of the old nature is broken. In Christ there is the power of His resurrection.

When Adam sinned, the earth was brought under a curse -- this means that the earthy or natural realm fell under that curse. The god of that earthly realm is Satan. But that part of man's makeup which is earthly is also part of that fallen realm. This is why Satan has access to man since the fall through the earthly or natural in us all.

When Jesus died on the Cross He bore in His body the Adam race. Thus, Adam died in Christ. So if I come to Christ and take my place in His death -- I am also raised in Him. Thus, I am spiritually raised up out from the old earthly realm over which Satan rules -- but I am joined the Lord in spirit; born anew of the Spirit -- a new creation. Thus, the death and resurrection of Christ delivers us from the power of the realm of Satan -- the earthly -- UNTO the new. The Cross is the gateway -- it is the first step and the power of God unto that end.



May 14

The Broken Power of Satan

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. (Heb. 2:1)

When Adam sinned and forfeited life from God, he not only died spiritually, but the entire earthly realm over which God had given him dominion was put under a curse. (Gen. 3:17) From that point, nothing

could be produced out of the earthly realm that was spiritual. And even the physical that was produced required a great deal of struggle. In addition, Satan was cast down to the earthly realm. He is the god of this world, with access to all that is earthly.

Jesus Christ became a human being and lived a sinless life. He brought the human being into the fullness of what originally intended for Adam. Then He offered Himself to bear the sin of the world – really to bear the Adam race itself. "One died for all, and thus, all were dead." (II Cor. 5:14) What was raised was a new man in Christ. Death had severed the old creation, and resurrection in Christ had birthed the new.

So what we see is that those who are in Christ -- those who are joined to the Lord spiritually -- have His life inside of them -- along side of their earthly nature. We have both. Satan does not have access over resurrection life -- because resurrection life in Christ IS victory over Satan in every way. But Satan does continue to be able to approach the natural man -- the "soul man" that continues to exist in us. Satan will appeal to emotions, intellect, and to whatever pleases the flesh -- including religious flesh. Our protection is to KNOW CHRIST and abide in Him by faith.

The point is this: The ground of Satan, or his point of access, is the earthly nature. But spiritually we have been joined to the Lord. Thus, the Christian life is therefore one of living FROM this new ground -- from His victory of resurrection life -- rather than from the earthly nature. God makes this possible as we learn Christ through the work of the Cross. The only power that remains for Satan is that of deception. This is why we must know Truth.



May 15
Dead to Sin

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness. (I Peter 2:24)

Jesus Christ did not only bear the judgment for sin – He died – but He also bore sin itself. This was a supernatural identification wherein the entire Adam race was gathered together in Jesus Christ – and thus, His death on the Cross was the death of the Adam race. When we come to Christ and are joined to Him, we are by faith taking our place in that His finished death, and as a result, we are raised in Him a new race; a new creature.

You will notice that the Bible never says that sin is obliterated. It never says the sin is dead. No. It says that we are dead to sin. Sin is still present as a possibility in our natural man.

The foundation of freedom from sin is the finished work of Jesus Christ. But this means two things: First, we can do nothing about ourselves. Second, He has done it all. It is only through trials and a work of God that He brings us to where this is more than doctrine. We must see it in Christ. The result is that we will leave ourselves alone and put all of our faith in Christ.

Most of us make the mistake of focusing upon sin and of trying real hard NOT to obey it. Our lives become entangled all the more in the sin we are trying to overcome. However, in the Bible we are told that we ought to leave ourselves alone -- and put our entire faith in Christ. This is the key to walking in victory. But we will never do it until we come see the Truth -- until we see Him.

If we are dead to sin then it means that in order to come into the experience of this we have to declare ourselves dead -- we have to lose our lives to Christ. We have to lose the life in which all sins are rooted, so that in Christ we must live as those dead to sin and alive to God.



May 16
Glorying In the Cross

**God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.
(Gal. 6:14)**

Paul is using the tool of irony in this verse. He knew that the Cross had cut off every thing about himself on which he could stand before God, and therefore in which he might glory. But rather than lament this fact, Paul is thankful for it. He says he will glory in the fact that he has nothing to glory in. The Cross did this. In short, he will glory only in Christ.

Do we realize what a freedom this is? To have nothing to protect about myself? To have nothing to promote about myself? To have nothing that I need to prove to anyone, including God? To be able to leave myself alone to God? To know that Jesus has already satisfied all? To be able to LOSE the life that is corrupt in order to find Christ as my life? To simply rejoice in the fact that that Christ is in me -- and that God has given me all things freely IN HIM?

Paul is, “glorying,” in the fact that he is free from needing to seek glory. He is saying that he knows that all that is of value in him he has received from above -- in Christ -- solely by the grace of God. It is the Cross that made this possible -- that has made life in Christ possible -- a reality for him.



May 17 Crucified to the World

**God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.
(Gal. 6:14)**

Crucifixion means death – and so Paul is stating that when he was baptized into the death of Christ he was severed from this world or earthly realm -- when Paul was joined to Christ in His death, he was severed from this earthly realm and made a citizen of the heavenlies.

Paul is referring to the fact that we are all born of this world as members of the Adam race. We are natural; of this earthly realm. Indeed, we are controlled by this realm – it is all we know. The Adam race is an earthly race that is very much at one with this earthly realm.

But when Christ died on the Cross and was raised from the dead, what emerged in that resurrection was a life that is not of this earthly realm. Indeed, it is a life that is completely severed from this earthly – in fact, has victory over it.

Resurrection life is not of this earthly realm. It is the life of Christ Himself. Thus, those in whom Christ dwells are no longer OF this world. They are of HIM – and because we are planted in His death and resurrection we are severed from this earthly realm. We no longer belong to it and can learn to live free from its control -- we can learn to live as those who belong to Christ. This is what it means to, “walk in the Spirit.” We are no longer governed by the earthly, but only by Christ who is in us via the spirit of God.

Now, of course, even though we are not OF this world, we must still live IN this world. But in Christ it is possible to live IN this world without being controlled by it -- but to be governed by Christ. This begins in an inward way, as we grow to know Him. But over the course of time, it translates into an outward life that is lived for God, and not according to man.



May 18
A New Kind of Life

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (II Cor. 5:17)

Have we realized that resurrection life in Christ is not merely the result of a reversal of death? No. It is the result of tasting the fullness of death and conquering it, and of passing through death into NEWNESS OF LIFE. The life that results is a different KIND OF LIFE than what originally died. It is life that has conquered death and can die no more.

God has raised other people from the dead. But in each case, death was reversed and they were brought back to the same life as before. Not so with Jesus Christ. When He emerged out of the tomb He ushered in a new KIND OF LIFE that had never before existed – life that is eternal and the product of victory over all.

A person who has, “eternal life,” is not a person who possesses the same life as before – only now his life is without an end. No. The term, “eternal life,” is translated from words that speak, not so much of an unending life in the sense of time, but they speak of a KIND OF LIFE that is timeless. Eternal life in Christ is the kind of life that is timeless, incorruptible -- and infinitely more. Sure. It is the life of Christ Himself. Thus, a new creature in Christ Jesus is actually a new kind of human being – redeemed humanity – a different kind of human being -- because they are joined to the Lord.

God really has done a NEW THING. He has closed out the old Adam race and birthed a new race of redeemed human beings in Christ.



May 19
Two Kinds of Humanity

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (I Cor. 15:45)

There are only two kinds of humanity on the earth: Those who have been born in Adam -- and those who have died to Adam and been born from above in Christ. We are each one or the other – you cannot have one foot in Adam and one foot in Christ.

How does a person die to Adam? By faith he repents or renounces his old life, and takes his place in the Cross of Jesus Christ. How does that person come alive in Christ? Exactly the same way – for if, and only if, we are crucified in Him, we are raised in Him. "For if we are planted together into Him in His death, we shall be planted together into Him in His resurrection." (Rom. 6:5)

The human being that is raised in Christ is a different kind of human being than one born in Adam. The difference is Christ -- we are IN HIM – Christ is our life. (Col. 3:4)

So much teaching in the Christian church today amounts to how to fix Adam -- how to salvage, prop up, and make Adam look like Jesus. But God has only one destiny and purpose for the Adam race: Death. And yet this death is freedom. It is freedom FROM Adam, but likewise, freedom UNTO new life in Christ.



May 20 Abandonment to God

**How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?
Thou fool, that which you sow is not quickened, except it die. (I Cor.
15:35-36)**

This verse contains a principle about resurrection that is applicable to our Christian walk: Abandonment to God includes a relinquishment of knowing the specific outcome of our abandonment. We are merely to sow -- we are to lose ourselves by faith into a death into the hands of Christ -- but we don't determine what is raised. We cannot know in what, "body," that which dies is raised. In other words, we cannot know specifically what is on the other side of death and resurrection -- at least not until we actually experience it.

We know generally that if we lose our lives that we will find true life in Him – but until this actually happens, it is all expectation and not yet realization. It is foolish to think we can actually see until our eyes are opened. We cannot. We can only be told what we will see. We must experience Christ in order to truly know Him.

The other side of abandonment to God may, or may not, be a change of circumstances. But there will be a change IN US. And because there is a change in us, our perspective, and ultimately, our reactions, will be altered according to the Truth. We will see Jesus Christ -- and because we do, we will see everything else in His light. That is freedom.

Abandonment to God is the outcome of faith -- really the only outcome. But the full outcome of abandonment is never realized HERE in this age. That is because the full outcome is full glorification in Christ. Thus, what seems like a little faith HERE may carry great life within that is only released THERE -- in the next age. God may be forming Christ in us NOW, but the fullness of what He has formed will be released in the resurrection THEN.



May 21

The Work of Christ Today

For he must reign, until he has put all enemies under his feet. (1 Cor. 15:25)

This verse describes what Christ is doing today – He is building His kingdom by putting all of His enemies under His authority. His enemies once included US: “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” (Rom 5:10)

The Greek word translated, “reconcile,” means, “to exchange enmity for friendship.” This is HOW Jesus prefers to put all enemies under His feet: By saving them. And then by driving out all that is at enmity to Christ from out of the lives and makeup of His people.

There is only one way in which God builds the kingdom of God. He does it by first building His kingdom -- which is His sovereignty – IN US. This is done by forming CHRIST IN US. Jesus is the King. His life is His sovereignty or realm of God. Jesus will not return until He has filled up His purpose this age, fundamental to which is forming of His Body – which is the people in whom dwell the kingdom or realm of God.



May 22

The Inward Kingdom

And when he was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God does not come in a way that you can see. Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. (Luke 17:20-21)

The Jewish concept of the kingdom of God of that day was a physical kingdom headquartered in the Jerusalem temple, ruled over by the Messiah. This was also the concept of the disciples – and because of that -- every time Jesus spoke of the kingdom of God they interpreted it along those lines. But here Jesus tells us the kind of kingdom He is talking about all through His ministry: Not one you can see, but a spiritual, inward kingdom.

The kingdom of God is the rule or realm of God. It isn't merely a certain place over which God rules, but rather, it is God's rule itself – over any person or place. In the OT, God used the idea of a kingdom as a type and shadow -- to convey to them what He wanted to reveal to them during that time.

But in the NT, there is a great mystery finally unveiled that was not revealed to prior generations: Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Col. 1:27) WE are the temple of God in which He rules as Lord. Thus, the picture of a kingdom is the picture of the indwelling of the Person of Christ: Christ in you, the hope of glory, is the essence of the kingdom in this age.

Jesus Christ in us equals the kingdom of God in us. Jesus is Lord and King -- and the sovereignty that extends from His Person and His Life is the kingdom of God. As for a coming reigning and ruling in the eternal ages, God will only put in His kingdom those whom have the kingdom in them -- through the indwelling of Christ.



May 23 **Baptized for the Dead?**

Otherwise what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead? (1 Cor. 15:29-30)

There have been a number of silly interpretations given to this passage -- including the Catholic nonsense of purgatory, and some other ideas that suggest that people can actually be baptized into water for the salvation of those who have passed away. But we must read the context: Paul is talking about Jesus subduing all of His enemies under His feet so that when He returns all of the dead in Christ will be raised. That is the context and opens to us the meaning.

"The dead," for whom we are baptized are, yes, those saints who are asleep. But we are not baptized so that they might be saved. They are already saved. That is WHY they are saints. The baptism of which Paul speaks is not water baptism -- but it is baptism into the death of Christ --

through trials, etc. But this ultimately results in a greater release of the life of Christ -- yes, in us personally, but it also adds life to the Body of Christ. In short, we are all part of the ONE body, and as we give ourselves to Jesus Christ, the entire body benefits -- including ALL who have ever been in Christ or will be in Christ. That is because this is all for the eternal ages.

Paul wrote, "Death in us, but life in you. (see II Cor. 4:12) This is the same principle. Paul also referred to this same work in Colossians: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church." (Col 1:24) There is much that occurs in the life of the saint that is not merely for that saint -- it is also for the body as a whole. The fruition of this, of course, will be not be fully realized in this age only among the living saints. Rather, the fullness of what God is working in His Body will be realized only when we are all raised together at the Second Coming.

Paul said that, "we are members of one another." Thus, as we lose ourselves to Jesus and take our place in His death by picking up the cross, His life will result -- and there will be a fellowship in His life for ALL who are in Him. This is how we are, "baptized for the dead." Most of it is unseen in this age. But it will all be released when we see Him as He is at His coming.



May 24
Witnesses of Christ

But you shall receive power because the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

What did Jesus say, in John chap.14-16, would be the work of the Holy Spirit? The work of the Holy Spirit is to reveal Jesus Christ TO us, IN us, and through us. In other words, once Christ dwells in us by joining us to Himself through the Holy Spirit, the work of that Spirit is to form Christ in us. (Gal. 4:19)

To have Christ, "formed," in us means for Him to be, "inwardly realized or expressed." And as Christ is formed in us, we are changed and adjusted so that we can be, "formed together with Him." (Rom. 8:29)

Paul described to the Corinthians a little more about how Christ is formed in us. He said, "Always bearing about in our body the dying of the

Lord Jesus, so that the life of the Lord Jesus may also be made manifest in our body.” (II Cor. 4:10)

Well, if Christ is formed in me and I begin to manifest Christ, then I am a witness to Him. In other words, I am EVIDENCE of the risen Christ.

You will note that the purpose of the Holy Spirit was never to take hold of us and make us to look like Jesus. No. The purpose was to crucify us so that Christ Himself might be seen. That is a witness of Christ – a living evidence of HIM.



May 25
The Fruit of the Vine

I am the vine, you are the branches: He that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. (John 15:5)

To ABIDE in Christ means to live FROM OUT OF HIM as The Life. It is to live drawing upon His life. Of course this is done by faith. But it also requires that I lose MY life. Christ cannot be my life if I am still alive in myself.

Jesus said that if we would abide in Him in that way – as a branch abides in the Vine -- that we would bear much fruit. Now let's ask: What effort does a branch have to put forth to bear fruit? None. A branch does not have to grunt real hard, or become all self-conscious as to whether it is bearing fruit. No. In fact, all of that effort has to come to an end. To bear fruit, the branch need only abide in the Vine.

But note something vital to see: If a branch abides in the Vine, then it's fruit is not the fruit of the branch, but OF the Vine. The fruit is the product of the life that is in the Vine flowing through the branch.

Christian people cry out to God, "Oh, Lord, change me. Make me like Jesus." God will never answer such a prayer because it runs counter to the Truth. God will never make us, "look like Jesus." But God will crucify us -- so that Jesus might be made manifest in and through us.

There is a huge difference between the mistaken notion that we are, "to look like Jesus," and the Truth of losing our lives so that Jesus might BE Jesus in us. We think that God wants to build us up into strong spiritual

giants. In reality, God wants to reduce us down into dependent children. But He wants to do that so that Christ might become our life.

Christian people do not need to develop programs designed to, "build character," "find their true identity," or, "achieve inner healing." We do not need to find a method to cure what ails us. What we need to do is abide in Christ by faith.

If we abide in Christ, then all of HIS fruit will be the fruit of each branch. Spiritual fruit, and even the spiritual gifts, are all of the same Christ within -- these are not from another source or a different experience -- they are of Christ. He is the Vine and we are the branches -- indeed, sanctification is Christ being made manifest -- it is not US being changed to, "look like Jesus."

Someone once said that those who bear the most spiritual fruit are those who are the least conscious of it. This is a fact because abiding in Christ comes out of a realization that we can do nothing of ourselves -- and are more and more becoming preoccupied with HIM. We will leave ourselves alone in Him and the fruit will come. But it won't be our fruit. It will be HIS. Our lives will testify, "Yet not I, but Christ."



May 26
Extensions of the Vine

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you. (John 15:7)

You will note that this promise begins with the word, "IF." Jesus promised that, "IF we abide in Him, and HIS words abide in us, THEN, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you." This means that if the words of Christ abide in us -- which means His Truth is living in us -- then we will ask according to the Truth; according to His will. We will, in effect, ask using HIS WORDS. We will ask from out of His words that abide in us. All of our asking will be the by-product of our fellowship and life in Christ.

The saint who knows Christ is going to ask Him to do HIS will, rather than our will. Would we seriously want to ask God to do something He does not want to do? Do we actually think that we know the beginning from the end, such that we want God to do our will? Would we actually want Him to answer that? No. The saint wants God to do HIS will, and only HIS will. And we will likewise want God to give us HIS MIND on any matter.

The purpose of God here is clear: We, as a branch, are to grow to where we are extensions of the Vine. As extensions of the Vine – or we might say members of His Body – we are going to grow to where we know Him and have HIS MIND, and then, out from that, ask Christ to do His will. Indeed, we will grow to where we BECOME His will.

To, “ask,” comes out of a readiness and desire to embrace. Genuine ASKING is the result of having my will swallowed up in faith in God. And God will do His will because He always desires to do His will – that is WHY it IS His will. There is no picture of struggle here. It is a branch growing to be so much one with the Vine that the Vine can do His will in and through the branch. The branch will become the will of God and be an extension of Him.



May 27 **The Shadow of Christ**

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. (Heb. 10:1)

If you were standing outside next to a friend on a sunny day and their shadow was being cast on the sidewalk beneath you, would you try to carry on a relationship with their shadow? Nope. Why not? Their shadow is a true representation of them, isn't it? It is actually only there because they are there. So what is the problem? Well, the shadow isn't alive. It isn't the person themselves. You cannot know a shadow or have a relationship with it.

When it comes to Jesus Christ, His shadow cannot give YOU life. The Old Covenant was a shadow of Christ. It truthfully represented Him. But it was not alive. Under the OT, His Spirit could be WITH people. But His Spirit could not be IN people.

The New Covenant is not the shadow, but the reality of Christ Himself -- indeed, the New Covenant is CHRIST IN US. This is why, all through the NT, we are told that to try to live under the law is actually death – Christ will be of no effect to us – it will be as if He isn't even in us. It will be like trying to live in a relationship with the shadow of Christ. Christ is not a shadow. He is a Person. Jesus Christ is THE LIFE Himself -- He is our life. The New Covenant is Christ in us.



May 28
Reconciled to God

God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing
their trespasses unto them. (II Cor. 5:19)

Reconciliation is the bringing of two parties together – the Greek word means, “to exchange enmity for friendship.” But take note: You will NEVER read in the Bible that God needed to be reconciled to man. No. God was never at enmity against man. Rather, it is man who is at enmity against God, and thus, it is man who needed to be reconciled to God.

Jesus Christ reconciled the world to God by His finished work. But not by changing God. No. Rather, He changed the human race -- by making a new creature. Everything that stood between God and man was IN MAN – and Jesus took that old man upon Himself on the Cross and died. Reconciliation is therefore FINISHED.

Jesus not only did that Redemptive work that reconciled man back to God, but HE IS that reconciliation IN each believer. Believers are one with God through Jesus Christ -- His very presence and life IS our reconciliation to the Father.

Now, you will also note: Paul says that Jesus reconciled the WORLD to God -- He completed this work of reconciliation for the entire world – not just for believers. But this does NOT mean that people are saved regardless of whether they come to Christ. No. What it DOES mean is that reconciliation is finished and in place IN CHRIST for all human beings -- but now only those who DO believe will be saved -- raised in Christ unto newness of life.

Herein we see a completely finished work. But we also see that it is possible to refuse to believe – possible to refuse reconciliation to God. In that case, there is nothing more God can do for us -- He has already done all in Christ. And God offers all freely by His grace.



May 29
The Finished Work

God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing
their trespasses unto them. (II Cor. 5:19)

God has already forgiven the entire human race because of Jesus Christ. Because Jesus Christ has FINISHED His redemptive work, God

is finished forgiving. And His forgiveness is total for every sin ever committed, or that will be committed, by every human being.

Our faith does not contribute to this finished work. Nor can our unbelief undo it. It is a finished reality for the entire human race in Christ -- regardless of whether even one person believes it or not. But it is only those who DO believe that are saved -- only those who believe are joined to the Lord and made one with Him in His death and resurrection; in His finished work.

Faith doesn't convince God to forgive us. Rather, by faith we embrace the reality that He already has. In short, faith doesn't finish what is already finished. Rather, faith believes, embraces, and surrenders, to the One in Whom there is redemption.

No one is really going to believe and embrace God's finished forgiveness for them unless they know they need it. This is why we must be convicted of that need and brought to repentance and to the renunciation of the old life. Faith in Christ is not merely a religious tenet to follow. It is the outcome of seeing the Truth of God in Christ.

The gospel of Jesus Christ states that in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself -- completely apart from our faith or works. That forgiveness is full and final in Christ. God offers Christ freely by grace. But only those who believe will be joined to the Lord and be saved by His life.



May 30
Christ of No Effect

Christ is become of no effect unto you, whoever of you are justified by the law; you are fallen from grace. (Gal. 5:4)

The words, "of no effect," actually mean, "as if you are separated from Christ," in NT Greek. This is the result of living the Christian life on the basis of my own righteousness -- using rules, laws, and standards -- of living on the basis of anything about MYSELF. I may be saved and Christ may be in me. But because I am not living from out of Christ by faith, He is of no effect to me -- He may as well not be in me. That was the result of the Galatian error.

Christian people endlessly debate the doctrines of law vs. grace. Those under the law accuse everyone else of license, and those in license accuse everyone else of being under the law. Two-thousand years of this has accomplished nothing. Paul said that the solution to the

error of the Galatians was, "that Christ be formed in you." (Gal. 4:19) This is the only solution for any of us. It is not a matter of finding a, "balance," between law and grace. It is a matter of coming into an inner realization of Christ Himself.

Paul states this same Truth in a positive way elsewhere: "I suffered the loss of all things, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of law, but that which is through the faith of Christ." (Phil. 3:8-9) We have to lose all righteousness based in anything about ourselves – through the work of the Cross -- we have to lose our religious lives into His hands -- and only then will Christ within be manifested as our life. Then Christ will not only be of effect for us, but He will, in a practical, victorious way, be our life.



May 31 The Galatian Solution

Christ is become of no effect unto you, whoever of you are justified by the law; you are fallen from grace. (Gal. 5:4)

If Christ is of, "no effect," to us, then from a practical standpoint, we may as well be separated from Him. In that case, Christ will not be our life. We will be preoccupied with ourselves --- we will have carved out another life, based on our natural, religious nature. This is what happens when we are blind to CHRIST IN US as the means of living the Christian life. What could be more serious an error?

If we try to live on the basis of ourselves or our works, then we are deceived – and by definition Christ cannot be formed in us, because we are forming ourselves according to our law. Law takes many forms. It does not have to be THE law of God. It may simply be the standard or the means by which I try to make myself into a Christian; the means by which I make myself to, "look like Jesus." But all of this is futile and must come under the Cross.

This Galatian error had only one solution. Paul said to them, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you!" (Gal. 4:19)

The phrase, "formed in you," here could read, "inwardly realized and expressed." This is God's purpose in His people and the solution to ALL error. It is NOT the product of religious works, or of any human effort. It will, however, RESULT in a life motivated by a desire to obey God. If we come into an inward realization of Jesus Christ then by faith we will learn to abide in Him; live from out of Him.



Jun 1

Righteousness Apart from Law

But now the righteousness of God completely apart from law keeping is manifested. (Rom. 3:21)

There are thousands of professing Christians today who believe that grace is the desire and power to do God's will – i.e., they believe that grace is a POWER that God gives to keep right with God through their works. But unwittingly, they are really saying that grace puts them back under law -- they are saying that we must keep right with God through works, and that grace is what enables us to do those works. That is nonsense. For what about when we sin? Then where is grace? This confusion keeps many under condemnation, fear, and guilt.

The grace of God is not given as some power to keep God's law -- so that we can stay right with God by OUR works. No. We are right with God solely by His grace through faith in Christ -- completely apart from OUR works, or anything else about us. That is because the grace of God is not a power, a thing, or a classification. The grace of God is a Person – Christ Jesus. He is the One who is, “full of grace and Truth.” (John 1:7) And if Christ is in us, then because He is in us, and ONLY because He is in us – we are right with God completely independent from any law-keeping.

Jesus Christ IS our righteousness. (1 Cor. 1:30) There is no such thing as righteousness by works. It doesn't exist. It is a lie; a deception. Christ alone is the righteousness of God. And He is in the believer. He is the righteousness of God APART from works.



Jun 2

What the Law Says

Now we know that what things the law says, it says to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. (Gal. 3:19)

What does the law say to those who are trying to keep right with God by obeying it? It says, “You are guilty. In fact, you are dead. So your mouth had better stop speaking about the possibilities of your own righteousness.”

The more we try to obey God's law, the more we are exposed as dead. Why? Because that is the TRUTH. The fundamental problem with man is not simply found in what he does or does not do. The problem is what man IS. The Adam race is spiritually dead – dead to God. You cannot cure a dead person by giving them laws to keep. You have to give him life. Christ IS the Life -- He must give us Himself.

God's law was given to expose the Truth about us. It was given to show us our dead condition -- but not to leave us in that condition. It is God's intent that we would finally realize that it is only through the grace of God in Jesus Christ -- and through NOTHING about ourselves -- that we have any hope.

God does not give us some power to keep His law. He gives us Christ, who is the power of God -- and He alone is our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. (I Cor. 1:30) The growing result will be Christ manifested through us: i.e., "faith working through love." But what folly it is to continue on, "under the law." To do so is, according to Paul, ANOTHER GOSPEL.



Jun 3 Rewarded According to Works

There are a number of places in scripture that SEEM to say we are, "rewarded according to works." But isn't that contrary to grace? Does God save us solely, "by grace through faith," only to then put us under another law – a law of earning rewards? Do you want to spend the rest of your life trying to be good enough to merit a bigger reward from God? A Christian life geared to earning a bigger eternal reward is just as much under the law as one geared to trying to earn salvation. Practically speaking, they are the same.

Let's realize what it would mean to be rewarded according to our works: It would mean that our eternal reward is based upon -- not some of our works; not only upon our good works; but upon ALL of our works – both good and bad. But included in these works must be, yes, outward works, but also inward thoughts, intents, and attitudes. It would mean that for every good work -- both inward and outward -- our reward goes UP. For every bad work -- both inward and outward -- our reward goes DOWN. If we are rewarded according to our works -- ALL of our works must be figured into the equation. Now ask: How much of a reward do you think you will receive?

But in addition, ask: What is a good work? And how good is good enough? Do we realize that every imperfect attitude is a, "bad work?"

Every sin of omission is a, "bad work?" Every hint of unbelief is a, "bad work?" But perhaps the bigger question is this: Do we actually believe that God could ever be so grateful to us for anything we do that He will REWARD us for it?

The word translated, "reward," in the NT more properly means, "wages," or, "recompense." Paul directly states, "The WAGES of sin is death, but the GIFT of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:23) Note the contrast: Death is earned, but life is a GIFT. In fact, scripture says that God has FREELY GIVEN us all things in His Son. If that is true, then what reward is left to EARN?

Yet the question remains: What does God mean in those places where it says we will be, "rewarded according to our works?" A short answer to this question is found in John 6. There Jesus said, "THIS IS the work of God, that you believe...." (John 6:29) This is a play on words -- Jesus is saying that FAITH is like a work -- it certainly is a choice -- it is the one, "work," that pleases God because faith puts aside our works and rests in Christ; rests in His finished work. In other words, if we LOSE all thought of walking with Christ for a reward and simply freely give ourselves to Him without conditions attached, we will FIND Christ -- and find all that is freely given in HIM. In short, through faith Christ, we discover Him, and all that is IN HIM. Christ is our, "reward."

The work of God, according to Jesus, is faith. This means that all of the works in the world cannot earn a thing from God. Yet if we believe and give ourselves to Christ, then all that God has given in Christ will be possible for us -- indeed, Christ Himself will be our, "reward."



Jun 4

The Reward of the Saint

Most of us easily agree that we are not saved by works. But many believe that once we are saved, that the amount of our eternal reward is based upon our works. Yet do we realize that the Christian life that would emerge from such thinking is one that would be, "under the law?" Sure. Instead of trying to earn salvation by works we would be trying to earn our eternal reward through works. Both are the same - and outside of the Truth.

We find the key to this question in the words of Jesus. He said, "He that would save His life will lose it, but he that loses his life for My sake will find it. (see Matt. 16:24) What is included in this LIFE that we ought to lose? Everything -- everything that we would try to earn, own, or hold to ourselves -- including any question of reward. In fact, we could rightly

substitute the word REWARD in Jesus' statement in place of the word LIFE – and be absolutely correct in doing so, for LIFE includes any thought of reward. In that case it would read, "He that would try to save his reward will lose it, but he that loses his reward for My sake will find it." This is, in fact, the principle of Truth that governs everything having to do with this thought of reward.

God promised Abraham a son. Abraham waited 26 years for this promise to be fulfilled -- making many serious mistakes along the way. But once God fulfilled His promise to Abraham, He then required Abraham give that son back to Him. That is the only way in freedom. The spirit of ownership, even over the things of God, is death. There can be NO, "mine," "me," in Christ. We belong to Him. So does all that He has given us.

God has freely given us all things in Christ. Indeed, Jesus said, "Freely you have received, freely give." It is God's will that we do good works. But if we love Him, we will do them without any strings attached – we will leave any rewards to God. That is what it means to LOSE your life for Christ's sake. And it is what it means to FREELY GIVE.



Jun 5 Revealed By Fire

Now if any man build upon this foundation (of Christ) with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he has built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. (I Cor. 3:12-14)

In the picture Paul gives, what determines the, "reward?" Is it what the person DID? No. The, "reward," is based on whether what he BUILT -- the finished product -- is able to abide through the fire. At that point the DOING -- the works -- have faded into history. It is what is BUILT by the DOING that is tested by fire. And whether it is able to abide through the fire has a direct relationship to the picture of a reward or recompense.

It is possible to do many, "good works," but to do them, not by faith, but because I am trying to make myself righteous. In that case, is what is BUILT by those works going to abide through the fire? No. What is built is earthly. It is not of Christ.

Remember again that the term, "reward," as we understand it today, isn't precisely what is meant by the inspired Greek word. The word really

means a RECOMPENSE -- or to receive that which corresponds. The sense in which God means this is not that we EARN or MERIT -- but that we are either in the Truth or we are not. In other words, if you walk in the light, you have fellowship with God. If you walk in darkness, you don't. It isn't a matter of merit or earning -- not a matter of earning fellowship with Christ. It is a matter of TRUTH and REALITY -- am I being built into a person who can live and fellowship with God? If I am, then my, "reward," is that I have eternal fellowship with God. The fire will prove that I am.

In the picture Paul is giving, what is built is divided into two categories: That which is of Christ -- gold, silver, and precious stone -- this is built by God in us -- as opposed to that which is of man (wood, hay, and stubble.) This is built by man for God. What is of Christ cannot be burned up, indeed, it is all the more purified by the fire. What is of man will be burnt up -- although the person himself is still saved.

Note that works do NOT pass through the fire. No. The PERSON passes through the fire. Again -- what is built -- the materials out of which we are made -- pass through the fire. In other words, is Christ formed in us? Is He our life? This is the question, because in the end, that which is of Christ is all that will remain -- and our, "reward," will be an eternal fellowship and experiencing of Him.

Paul is picturing what is going to happen at the last judgment. But what he is picturing is also going on right now. What we are building NOW is being put through the fire. What is not of Christ is being burnt up, and what is of Christ abides. May we learn to let go into the fire that which is NOT of Christ, so that in the end, all may be to His glory.



Jun 6

The Free Gift of Grace

God doesn't merely give us a THING called, "grace." God gives grace in that He gives HIMSELF. Grace is really God's heart attitude towards all -- grace is an expression of LOVE. There is actually no basis upon which God deals with us today except grace and Truth in His Son.

One of the greatest ironies of all is that God must bring us to the place where we can freely receive what He freely gives. So -- rather than make us strong, He shows us we are weak. Rather than empower us to be good, He gives us Christ within -- He gives us grace whether we are good or bad. All the while most of us are trying to be righteous, God is seeking to show us that we will never be, but that Christ is our only righteousness.

God saves us solely by His grace in Jesus Christ because that is the only way in which He could save us. Indeed, God created humanity to be recipients of His grace in Christ. There was never any other basis upon which God intended to fellowship with man.

Grace is not merely a doctrine or a dispensation. Grace is God -- God has given us grace and Truth in the Person of His Son.



Jun 7

The Sovereignty of God

“The Sovereignty of God,” speaks of God’s power to put His hand on anything or anyone and to bring to pass His will. But that same sovereignty means that God can take His hand OFF and allow human beings to make their own choices. This is what God has done during this age -- WITHIN His sovereignty. God has ordained that WITHIN His sovereignty that people be allowed to reject Him.

A weak God would have to make sure things come out His way. But an all-powerful, indeed, a loving God, will allow people to reject Him. He will nevertheless have His will, with them, or without them. But He will have it.

Within His sovereignty, God had to give man a free will, including the freedom to reject Him, in order for God to have what He really wants – a voluntary love and worship. To get a voluntary love God must risk a voluntary rejection.

Faith that is pre-programmed is not real faith. Love that is pre-programmed is not real love. By definition, all of the values that God is seeking to build in man are voluntary. And the only way they can become voluntary is if we grow to know Him. Thus, God must take the initiative in all of these matters – not to pre-program man – but to bring light and conviction so that we may choose. We will love Him only to the extent that we see -- and embrace -- His love for us and the Truth in Him. (1 John 4:19)

What God is doing is an amazing thing. He is bringing humanity, through Christ, back to the original design and relationship of a voluntary love and fellowship.



Jun 8
By the Grace of God

Paul said, "I am what I am by the grace of God." (I Cor. 15:10) In other words, except for the grace of God, Paul would be NOTHING. In this short statement, Paul states what is repeated throughout the NT: All that is of value in a Christian is of Christ -- received from above -- but now of Christ IN US. No value is of us.

Sure. If you are born from above, you have life from above -- Christ within you. And IN CHRIST -- the Christ who is in us -- is all that God has to give; in Christ remains all that is of any value whatsoever. Thus, anything we have, and anything that we are -- anything that is of value to God -- it is OF and IN Christ. We did not contribute anything from out of our old man in Adam.

Paul also said, "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (II Cor. 13:5) A reprobate is, "one who is of no use." So again -- for the believer, all that is of value is in the Christ who has come to dwell in us.

True Christianity is not about who I am, or what I have to offer God. Neither is it about God bringing out some latent greatness in me. No. It is about who HE IS -- even as He dwells in me NOW. This is a foundational Truth.

Today, this Truth has been pushed aside in favor of teaching about ME, MYSELF, and I. The church is filled with self-help, psychology, and with teaching about, "finding," or, "building," the real YOU. No. If we receive the grace of God, then who we are will be BY that same grace of God -- we will be recipients. Paul said, "Yet not I, but Christ." (Gal. 2:20) That one small phrase, "Yet not I, but Christ," is the Truth -- it is the ONLY place to which God will bring us in His Son.



Jun 9
Born of the Flesh

That which is born of the flesh is flesh. (John 3:6)

In the final analysis, we are all made of the same flesh -- that which belongs to the old creation in Adam. Built into that nature is the same potential for sin. But because each of us are born into a different family, into a different environment, and exposed to different situations -- with differing temperaments -- we each develop our flesh uniquely. Our personal choices also mold and shape our flesh, but in the end, it IS

flesh. We each have a unique version of the SAME fallen man or flesh nature. And this is all we can ever have and ever be, as to nature, if left to ourselves.

There are those who are born into a terrible family. They are abused. Perhaps they have a unhealthy gene pool. Maybe they are born with a strong tendency towards this or that manifestation of the flesh. Others have willfully indulged themselves in those tendencies – they know it is wrong. But the question is NOT whether our, “version,” of the flesh is worse than another. Nor is the question HOW we got there. The question is what we are going to do about it. No matter what damage life has dealt us, and no matter how unfair it is, no matter how much others have damaged us, and no matter how much to blame we are for what ails us, the solution is the same: New life in Jesus Christ.

God offers us the opportunity to renounce the old life -- no matter how it got into the shape it is in. It is never too late, and it does not matter what has happened -- it is always possible to relinquish the old life and to embrace Jesus Christ. The ONLY solution is ALWAYS offered, and freely given.

One of most lame excuses today is that, "I am the way I am because I was born that way" – leading to the conclusion that I should just accept it and indulge myself. No. We are all, “born that way,” in the sense that we are all born with a sin nature and have SOME version of the flesh. Jesus came to deliver us from the old creation -- from EVERY manifestation of the flesh. All of us need to be BORN AGAIN. None are excluded.



Jun 10

The Nature of Love

We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar. (1 John 4:19-20)

We do not make ourselves disciples – “a taught one” – by loving others. Rather, if we are disciples – i.e., someone who has learned Jesus Christ – we are going to want to love others. We will love others because we have first received the love that God has for us. There is no other way we can love others. We can only give that which we have first received from God.

The love of God is redemptive in nature. It is a commitment to God's highest for all. It is not emotional. It is not a matter of making people feel good about themselves. No. AGAPE is an unconditional commitment to

them for God's highest -- no matter what it takes. I am available to God on their behalf -- even if that means that I do nothing but pray.

The very nature of the love of God that we receive in Christ is that we will desire that others likewise receive His love, grace, and Truth. If God desires all men to be saved and come into the knowledge of the Truth (1 Tim. 2:4), then His love in US will desire the same.

The love of God is redemptive in nature. But it is never a compromise with the Truth. It is a commitment to God's highest for all -- that Jesus Christ might be known and revealed.



Jun 11

Legalism, License, or Liberty

You will often hear that life in Christ is a balance between legalism and license. This is patently false. The Truth is outside of both. Life is Christ is exactly what the word suggests: It is LIFE. But most folks are blind to the fact that Christ is in us, and that He is to be our life -- that is, that we are to live from out of Him by faith. And frankly, if I am blind to that I can practice either legalism or license until I am blue in the face and it will avail me absolutely nothing.

Paul said exactly that: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." In other words, what I am in the flesh means NOTHING. It is Christ who is in me that matters.

Circumcision was the OT sign that you belonged to God -- saved under the Old Covenant. Thus, in Paul's time, it represented those who were under the law. In contrast, the uncircumcision were those who were NOT under the law. You will note that Paul states that both avail NOTHING.

There are lots of folks around who define their Christianity by law. There are others who live in license. Both will claim they are walking in the Truth. Neither are walking in the Truth. The Truth is a Person -- we have to walk by faith from out of Him. Christ must BE our life and our means for living.

Christianity is not a, "life-style," patterned after the teachings of Jesus. Neither is it an "anything goes," religion -- "because God is love." Rather, Christianity is a NEW BIRTH. It is a matter of coming to the Cross and losing my life so that Christ can be my life. This will result, not in a life under law, or license -- but in a life of holiness governed by a growing knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is neither legalism or license, but liberty.



Jun 12
The Power in Preaching

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. (1 Cor. 2:4-5)

Picture Paul, rather weak and trembling, standing before the Corinthians speaking to them the Truth of Jesus Christ. Paul was not faking weakness in order to appear humble. Neither was his weakness "a ploy" that Paul adopted so that God could be powerful through him. No. This was real. Paul WAS weak. But this did not weaken God.

The power of God is not found in the words used. It is not increased by any emotionalism – or the lack thereof. Neither is it increased by brain power. God doesn't need our marketing techniques. He doesn't need, "the wisdom of words." In fact, God exposes our weakness so that we might step out of the way and let Him work. The Truth is the Truth, and the gospel of Truth is the power of God unto salvation to those who believe.



Jun 13
The Power of God Unto Salvation

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes. (Rom 1:16)

The gospel of Jesus Christ certainly includes everything Jesus has done for us. Without that, we have nothing. But the gospel of Jesus Christ is the good news of who Jesus Christ is TODAY. And who He is today is, "CHRIST IN US, the hope of glory." (Col. 1:27) Christ -- the Christ who dwells IN His people -- IS the good news. But today, He has been pushed aside, or redefined, in favor of many other things.

Why is there so little power today? Again -- because Jesus Christ is not living in and through people. Paul said, "Christ, the power of God..." The resurrection life of Jesus is the power of God -- but this resurrection life is the outcome of the CROSS at work in people's lives. The Cross is not preached. And even where it is mentioned, the Cross is not preached as personal in the lives of people. Rather, it is merely a doctrine. What is preached is usually some form of dead religion or emotionalism.

Today, people have come up with gimmicks to convert people and to grow churches. We have, "the seeker friendly churches," and, "the purpose driven movement." Many pastors -- thank God not all -- have become, "church marketers," "professional cheerleaders," and in many cases, champions of the latest fads in the body of Christ. Millions of dollars are being poured into the systems of error that you see on Christian TV. There are those who use emotionalism to try to convert people, and there are others who use fear and condemnation to try to stampede people to the altar. Thus, many of the, "conversions," that we see are not conversions to Christ, resulting in a new birth, but rather, they are conversions to a movement, to a cause, or to a particular ministry. There can be great SOUL power in such things. But there is NOT the power of God in Christ.

Read Acts 2. Peter gave the first sermon in Acts 2 to the SAME mob that crucified Christ seven weeks prior -- but nevertheless three thousand people received Christ. This was not because Peter was persuasive or stirred their emotions. It wasn't because He had come up with a new idea on how to spur church growth. He did not promise them that if, "they planted their seed in his ministry" -- i.e., gave him money -- that God would respond by blessing them. No. It was because the power of God is in the Truth of Christ -- and Peter preached Jesus Christ -- Christ crucified and raised. And he made it personal.

The Truth of Jesus Christ is more than a theological message -- it is a revelation of Christ that carries the convicting power of God -- it is the life of Christ Himself working through the person in whom Christ dwells by the Spirit of God. That power is not of us. It is Christ, WHO IS the power of God. This is the power of the gospel. It is the power vested in the PERSON of Jesus Christ.



Jun 14 **Living From Out of Faith**

For therein (the gospel) is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." (Rom 1:17)

The words in the original language here are much more profound than are reflected in the English translation. Paul actually says, "The just shall live from OUT OF faith." Of course, this is the same thing as saying, "The just shall live from OUT OF Christ -- BY faith."

What does that mean? It will only make sense if we realize that Christianity is CHRIST IN US -- that Jesus Christ has joined us to Himself in resurrection union. This means that CHRIST IS OUR LIFE. Thus, "to

live from out of Christ by faith,” means to rest upon, abide in, and to draw from Christ His life -- for all that I need and all that I am.

Note that the primary means by which we live from out of Christ is BY FAITH. Not by emotions. Not by signs and wonders. Not by circumstances. Not by feelings. None of these are trustworthy. In fact, there are going to be many times, even though we are abiding in Christ by faith, when it seems like nothing is happening. But if we are born from above we are joined to Jesus Christ through His spirit. He is our life -- this is not emotional or intellectual. At the core, this is spiritual. He never changes. He is faithful.

Note: I will never draw from Christ by faith if I am still clinging to, and trying to hold onto -- MY life. God must bring me to the end of MY LIFE -- to the end of a life governed by feelings and emotions or brain power. Those dimensions of our makeup will still be there -- but rather than govern, they will be governed -- by a growing knowledge of Jesus Christ. This is the outcome of the work of the Cross -- the Christ might be manifested to us and in us.



Jun 15 **What Really Matters**

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. (Gal 6:15)

During Paul's time, there was a contention as to whether converts to Christ ought to be circumcised. Under the Old Covenant, circumcision was the sign that you belonged to God. Paul often used circumcision to represent the works of man – anything we could do TO the flesh, or IN the flesh, that would supposedly make us look like we belonged to God -- that could supposedly FORM us according to the will of God.

We must read this verse with that in mind. It does not matter what you do, or what you refuse to do. It does not matter how you take the natural man and try to form him to look better, act better, or to be a better Christian. No. That which is born of flesh IS flesh. You cannot MARK the flesh, do something to the flesh, or even refuse to do -- because in the end it will still BE flesh. Nothing that man can produce avails anything because in the end you must be born AGAIN.

It is deception to think I can form myself according to Christ by doing something to my natural man. Or by doing something for God through natural man. No. This is nothing more than self-righteousness -- whether I think I am succeeding or not. Rather, I must renounce all of that through

the Cross, and become a new creature. A new creature in Christ is a person who has no righteousness of his own – but Jesus Christ is his righteousness. Rather than try to form my natural man according to Christ, Christ Himself must be formed in me through the spirit. This was the real cure for the false gospel that had bewitched the Galatians.



Jun 16

Reverence vs. Being Afraid

“The fear of the Lord,” as stated in the Bible, is never, “being afraid of the Lord.” No, being afraid of God is the wrong kind of fear of God. The true, “fear of the Lord,” is a REVERENCE of God.

All of the wrong kind of fear of God goes back to somewhere that I have embraced a lie about Him. The Truth about God is, “God is love.” Furthermore, “there is no fear in love.” (1 Jn. 4:18) So there can be nothing about God that could make us afraid. Indeed, perfect love casts OUT fear – and so that means that the presence of God, knowing God, and believing God, will cast OUT fear – rather than bring into us the wrong kind of fear. If I know God in Truth, I will REVERE Him -- but will never BE AFRAID of Him.

Paul wrote, “For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” (2 Tim 1:7) Fear is not merely an emotion – although it can affect our emotions. Fear is a spirit – a spirit that is of the kingdom of darkness.

What this means is that no matter how strongly we FEEL AFRAID of God -- those feelings are LIES. Many do not understand how we can be controlled by such feelings -- the feelings are REAL and the feelings are strong. But the feelings are LIES. They are not the Truth -- Jesus Christ is the Truth. Here we see the need for an inward realization of Jesus Christ that will cut through emotions and govern us -- despite emotions -- in the Truth.

The first impact upon Adam of his sin and alienation from God was fear – he was afraid and hid himself from God. Being afraid of God makes us want to hide from Him. But reverence for God makes us want to draw near to Him.

Paul is saying that the spirit of fear is never from God. Thus, if I am afraid of God, I believe a lie about Him, or I have let in the spirit of fear.



Jun 17
The Testimony of Jesus

And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See you do it not: I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. (Rev 19:10)

The testimony of Jesus is evidence of Jesus – it is the living manifestation of Him. We are told that the saints have the testimony of Jesus. This means much more than having a story to tell about Him. “Christ in us,” is that testimony – provided that He has come to be manifested in us and through us. If Christ is being formed in us, and being manifested through us, He is our testimony -- and we are His living witnesses.

This tells us what Jesus meant when He said, “But you shall receive power, because the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto Me.” (Acts 1:8) A witness unto Christ is one who IS a true testimony of Christ. This is the work of the Holy Spirit – to form Christ in us so that we might be living epistles – people who ARE evidence of the Risen Christ.

It also says here that, “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” – not prophecy in the sense of foretelling the future -- but prophecy in the sense of proclaiming the Truth. A life of a saint is supposed to be DEFINED by their devotion to, dedication to, and their dependence upon, Jesus Christ. The spirit of prophecy is a proclamation – through such a life of faith – of the Person of Jesus Christ.



Jun 18
Living Epistles

You are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart. (2 Cor. 3:1-3)

What is the testimony that God is writing in and through us? Is it a testimony about US -- or about all WE have done for God? Is it a testimony about all of our potential greatness -- about what a wonderful specimen WE can become? No. A living epistle of Christ is about HIM – and all HE has done for us.

The Spirit of God is writing living epistles – that tell the Truth About Jesus Christ. Christian people are supposed to be living evidence of the Risen Christ -- evidence of HIS life and grace.

Often when we hear such things we despair because we know our failures. But a living epistle of Christ is not someone who is so, "spiritual," that they never fail. Rather, a living epistle of Christ is someone, who **DESPITE** their continual failures, is a testimony to HIS grace and redemption.

But in order for this to be genuine, that living epistle must be **MADE TRUE TO GOD**. This is just another way of saying that we must be changed by the Truth so that we can be evidence of Jesus Christ without the corruption of our own bias, agenda, or flesh.

God writes living epistles through the work of the Cross. The result are people who are, "always bearing about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus" -- but unto **THIS PURPOSE** -- "that the life also of the Lord Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal bodies." (II Cor. 4:10) That is how God writes His living epistles. The result is a life that gives evidence to the Treasure, Jesus Christ -- but not to the earthen vessel in which He dwells. This is how we are to be witnesses to Him.



Jun 19
The Evidence of God

If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God that he has testified of his Son. He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself...and this is the record that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. (1 John 5:9-11)

In this passage, the words, "witness," "testified," and, "record," are all from the same Greek word. We could replace each of them with the word **EVIDENCE**.

Some skeptics demand evidence that Jesus was God and rose from the dead, but God answers them with silence. Have you ever wondered about that? Well, God has a, "secret" – He wants to form the evidence of Christ **IN HIS PEOPLE**. Jesus Christ **IN US** is the evidence of God, and if He is formed in us, then we will become His living witnesses of that evidence.

Paul says this directly. He says, "If Christ is in you through faith then you have the evidence of God IN YOU. The evidence of God is CHRIST IN YOU."



Jun 20
Overcoming by the Blood

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. (Rev 12:11)

These are not three methods by which we overcome. They are all the same Truth. They all point to the fact that we overcome, not by fighting Satan, but by coming under the One in Whom is all victory, Jesus Christ.

Practically speaking, this key to all victory in the Christian life is the losing of my life for Jesus' sake in order to find Him as my life. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." (Mat 16:24-25) This verse from Revelation is this same Truth. Victory is HIS resurrection life. I have to lose MY life in order to live from out of HIS life.

This verse tells us that overcoming must be based upon the foundation of the Cross; the Blood of the Lamb. Indeed, we are to abandon ourselves to Christ -- to, "not love our lives unto death." This is the Truth of the personal Cross. It is not a matter of merely believing the doctrine -- rather, it is a matter of picking up my cross daily. The access point of Satan is natural man -- indeed the seat of all sin is self-ownership in natural man -- and the Cross crucifies natural man, completely disarming Satan. We overcome in Christ by losing the life in which the root of all sin resides -- and by living from out of His life -- in which there is all victory.

If I ask God to do whatever it takes to bring me into the fullness of Christ, and then believe and obey when He does, I am standing upon the One in whom there is already the eternal victory. I have overcome through faith in Christ. And the progressive result of this overcoming is that, "the word of testimony" will be alive in us. "The word of testimony," in the saint is CHRIST IN US -- Christ will be manifested in and through those who have given themselves to Him through the work of the Cross.



Jun 21

His Victorious Life

Jesus Christ has finished every victory that will ever need to be won for humanity. This finished victory, however, is not given to us as a THING. It is not merely a legal status. No. God gives us the finished victory IN the Person of the risen Jesus Christ Himself. All victory is found IN HIM – it is HIS LIFE. And if we are born from above, Jesus Christ is IN US.

God has given us all things freely IN Jesus Christ. (Rom. 8:32 and Eph. 1:3) Notice: IN CHRIST. God has not given us separate or additional, "things," BECAUSE of Christ – that is, God has not given us, "things," added to Christ. No. God has given us Christ Himself -- IN WHOM are all things. Indeed, God has given us NOTHING in addition to Christ or apart from Him. Again -- God has freely given us ALL things IN HIS SON.

Fundamental to what we receive in Christ is HIS resurrection life. But again -- we do not receive a THING called, "resurrection life." No. We receive Christ Himself Who IS resurrection life. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life." (Jn. 11:25)

How has God given us life in Christ? By making us One with Christ in spirit. At salvation, Jesus Christ freely joined us to Himself – making us one spirit with Himself. (1 Cor. 6:17) Thus, if we are joined to Christ; if Christ is in us, then we are alive IN HIM -- for He IS the resurrection and the life.

But note: Spiritual union with Christ does not obliterate our natural man. Rather, it creates a separation between that natural man and our union with Christ. This is the separation of soul from spirit. It likewise creates the need for the work of the Cross upon our natural man making it possible for us to be delivered from the control of the natural man -- so that Christ in us might be realized and manifested.

So what is the Christian life? What is the overcoming life? It is Christ manifested and expressed. It is a Christian holding fast by faith to what God has freely given -- against all that is contrary to Christ -- including all that is contrary to Christ in ourselves. The Christian life IS Jesus as Lord over us -- His resurrection life becoming our life; the life that governs us. In His resurrection life there is all victory.

It is a waste of time to continually cry out to God for victory, or to go around claiming, proclaiming, or declaring victory. Rather, we need to BELIEVE. Christ alone is the victory. And it is only as we live in, and out

from Him, by FAITH that His resurrection victory is realized and manifested.



Jun 22
Jesus Christ is Victory

For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. (1 John 5:4)

New life in Christ is victorious by nature – it is life that was raised out of death, having conquered it. A person in whom Christ dwells has His life in them. Thus, if we are in Christ, we have victory over death IN HIM – over all that is earthly.

This is why to overcome, we need NOT to fight death or the earthly. No. We need to forsake it – by losing our lives to Christ. Victory is never the result of turning in on ourselves and fighting sin – indeed, this could be unbelief -- it could be because we do not believe there is victory in Christ. No. Rather, victory is a matter of abandoning myself to God and, by faith, losing myself fully into the hands of the Victor.

One of the greatest errors is to believe that Jesus has given US power or authority to win victory. No. Jesus has NOT given us a power to win victory -- He has given us Himself -- Christ IS the power of God. Victory in the Christian is the result of the believer being brought down to a complete weakness in Himself, that we might learn to live from out of Christ by faith. This is strength, and it is the only means of victory.



Jun 23
Victory Through Surrender

But thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 15:57)

Once we receive Christ as Savior -- and He joins us to Himself -- we are united with Him in both in His death and resurrection. (Rom. 6:4-5) Our resurrection union with Him is the basis for all victory. For through His resurrection He has destroyed the last enemy – death. Thus, it is in HIS LIFE -- in HIM -- that His victory is finished for us.

Christ is in us -- through the joining of our spirit to His spirit. (I Cor. 6:17) This resurrection union is the new creature in Christ. But when we are joined to the Lord this automatically creates a separation IN US between our union with Christ, and all that is outside of that union. If we were to draw an imaginary circle around this union -- this NEW creature - - all that is OUTSIDE of that circle would remain our natural man -- the OLD man. This distinction is the separation between soul and Spirit within each believer. But it is also the separation between victory IN CHRIST -- which resides in our union with Him -- and our natural man in which there is no victory.

Here is see why we must LOSE our lives -- hand over our natural man to the Cross -- in order to experience the victory Jesus has won. We cannot find victory on the basis of the life Jesus tells us to LOSE. No. Neither is victory in Christ simply handed to us as a THING to use. No. Victory REMAINS in Christ -- REMAINS in His life that is distinct from ourselves. Thus, we must LOSE our life in order to find Him as our life. It is only as we are living by faith out from Christ that victory is possible. The potential for this is already in each saint. But in order to experience it, we must pick up the Cross and be unconditionally surrendered to Christ.

We need not win any victory. Rather, we must abandon the life in which there is no victory and find Christ as our victory. This is not impractical. It is an experience that will grow to govern. Victory comes through surrender to Jesus -- surrender to the Victor.



Jun 24
Normal vs. Abnormal

Before we see Christ, we know only darkness; blindness. Imagine being born into a race of beings that are naturally blind. You would not even know you are blind, because you would not know what it is to see. Blindness would be all you have ever known -- and because you are the same as everyone else -- to you -- blindness would be NORMAL.

Look around you at your fellow man. Look at the world -- indeed, look at many who profess Christ. Is this NORMAL? To most people it is. And yet, in the eyes of God, fallen man is absolutely ABNORMAL. Thus, what is NORMAL to us, is ABNORMAL to God. And what is NORMAL to God, is ABNORMAL to us.

Jesus is God's NORMAL – He is the Truth of God. And when we begin to see and know Him, all that is ABNORMAL begins to be exposed -- because we now see the NORMAL -- the Truth -- Jesus Christ.

God wants us to SEE. But for person who is truly blind to Christ, God's first step is to reveal to them that they ARE blind. Ironically, to realize that I am blind is, in a sense, "a seeing." Then that person can cry out, "Lord, that I may see." What we will see will include teachings, doctrines, etc. But ultimately, we must see a Person -- Whom God wants to reveal IN US.

One reason why we often do not understand God is that when He begins to open our eyes we are for the first time seeing the NORMAL. We can read about what we WILL see in the Bible. People can tell us about it. But only once we DO see will everything will find definition and clarity. Thankfully, once we are born from above, there is nothing God wants more than to bring us into a knowledge and realization of Jesus Christ -- who is the Truth, and God's, "normal."



Jun 25
Seeing Jesus Christ

But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Cor. 2:14)

Natural man cannot receive the things of God – he has no frame of reference -- because natural man, left to himself, does not know Jesus Christ. All discernment in the Christian life is the product of knowing and seeing Jesus Christ. HE is the Light and the Truth.

Left to myself, my natural man will instead accept as the Truth whatever my makeup tells me is the Truth -- I will accept God only in a way that reflects my own makeup -- either in a positive way or a negative way. This is why there are so many people, including many professing Christians, who believe some of the most blatant errors. It is why there are so many versions of, "natural Christianity." These are the product of natural, religious man. People read the Bible, and use themselves -- their reasoning and brain power -- to mirror what they think is Christianity. But these are spiritually dead. They are deception because they are the product of man using himself as the basis to determine the Truth. The problem is not a lack of brains – but of spiritual darkness. We need to see Christ.

Jesus said, "Unless you are born from above, you CANNOT see." (see John 3:3) Note that: You CANNOT see. Thinking, studying, arguing, reasoning, and even the best religion possible labelled with the name of Jesus, cannot give us sight. We must be BORN -- born from above. We must have CHRIST IN US. This means death and resurrection. It a LIFE -- born out of our taking our place in the Cross and being raised in Christ. Only then can we begin to see Jesus -- and because we see and know Him, can we have a growing discernment regarding all else.



Jun 26
What is the Mind of Christ?

But God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God...we have the mind of Christ. (1 Cor 2:10, 16)

Assuming we have a single eye to God and embrace the Truth, the result of the Spirit of Christ revealing to us the Truth is that we will, "have the mind of Christ." Sure. The purpose of the Spirit of God is to form Christ in us, and if Christ is being formed in us, surely His mind is being formed in us.

But what is, "the mind of Christ?" It is not the brainpower of Christ. No. It is both the perspective of Christ and the intent of Christ. The mind of Christ is the result of Christ being formed in us -- as Christ is formed in us, and we grow to know Him, we gain His perspective and have His intent -- His mind is formed in us.

The mind of Christ knows the Truth. However, knowing the Truth requires that you be made true unto God. In other words, to know the Truth we must repent of all untruth that is in our hearts. The mind of Christ is based in a heart that is made true to God.



Jun 27
Learning Christ

Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law does he meditate day and night. (Ps. 1:1-2)

Christ in us, the hope of glory, (Col. 1:27) is the essence of Christianity. Thus, God has given us an infallible counselor in His Son – who dwells in believers through the Spirit. “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. (Is. 9:6) Jesus is the Truth. If you know Him, you will know the will of God.

There can be many deceitful counselors in our lives. But perhaps the most deceitful counselor of all is our own natural man. Natural man does not necessarily offer sinful counsel, in the conventional sense of the word. But natural man may offer religious advice that will side with our own interests, rather than the interests of God.

The OT, of which Psalms is a large part, often uses the law – which was a shadow of Christ – to represent the NT reality of Jesus Christ in us. Such is the case in this Psalm. We are not to live according to natural man. Rather, Jesus Christ is to be our life, and thus our counsel. We ought to seek to meditate day and night upon Him. We need to learn Christ.

It is God's purpose for this age to form Christ in us. He wants to bring us into an inward realization of Christ so that we might be His living witnesses. But in order for this to happen, we have to have our hearts open to God. We must be willing to embrace the Truth that God brings. The Spirit of God in us will always center us in Jesus Christ. This is the counselor that God has given us – the very indwelling of His Son by the Holy Spirit.



Jun 28
The Futility of Natural Man

How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? Forever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? (Ps. 13:1-2)

This Psalm is the cry of a person who, in the midst of a trial of their faith, is operating out of the natural man. God never forgets us, or hides His face from us. But to natural man, it will sometimes SEEM like it.

If I am in Christ, my spiritual union with Him does not eliminate the possibilities of the flesh or natural man. Rather, Christ in me – received from above; received from the outside of me INTO me from the outside at salvation – exists along side of my natural man. The new creation in Christ Jesus is the result of Jesus Christ joining us to Himself. (see I Cor.

6:17) But all that is outside of that spiritual union remains natural – it remains the old man in Adam.

We cannot walk with God – we cannot fellowship with God – on the basis, or by using, the assets of natural man. Indeed, God allows trials of faith to set us free from trying to do so. Rather, God wants us to learn to abide in Christ as our life. But in order to achieve this, we usually have to be shown the futility of trying to live from out of natural man. We must see the Truth: There is NOTHING in natural man.

While we are in this learning process we will do as this Psalmist did: Take counsel in his own soul – using our own natural mind and natural man to try to figure things out; to try to find God. This won't work. But even our failure is unto the end that we might learn Christ – and see that through Christ alone we can walk with God and discern His will. Jesus is to be our Light and our Truth – there is no other for us.



Jun 29
Fake Faith

Wherefore let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. (1 Cor. 10:12)

Paul is not exhorting us to make sure we are strong enough to stand by faith. No. He is telling us to make sure that our faith is in Jesus Christ -- rather than in ourselves, or in something else. This means that real faith, rather than be born out of our strength, is born out of our weakness. We have come to the place where we see that only in Christ is there any hope -- and we are rejoicing in this Truth.

If your faith is in yourself, you may for a time think you stand -- because nothing has come along to expose it as false. But your faith is NOT real -- it is fake; a facade; natural; perhaps merely emotional or intellectual. The only real faith is faith in Jesus Christ, because He is the only One who is faithful and true.

Real faith is not an emotional state of mind that WE create. Neither is real faith mustered up out from ourselves. No. Faith must COME to be in me. Faith COMES to be in me if I, "hear," that is, embrace, the Truth that God reveals -- "faith comes by hearing." All other "faith" is not real, but merely human and natural.

God is faithful. Therefore, if our faith is fake – not in Christ – God will be faithful to expose us. He will let the crisis come – and the storm will

topple our facade. This might seem terrible, but it is God's faithfulness to show us the Truth. It is the only way in which real faith can be built anew upon the solid Rock.

The trial of faith is like gold tried by fire. (1 Peter 1:7) When gold is tried by fire, all of the impurities come to the surface and can be discarded. What remains is a purer gold. In like manner, if our faith is fake, or not pure, God will let a crisis come that is beyond what that fake or impure fake can bear. It will collapse. But thankfully, God is showing us the Truth so that we can escape the lie and begin resting in His Son.



Jun 30
The Way of Escape

There is no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it. (1 Cor. 10:13)

What is the purpose of, "the way of escape," within a trial of faith? This, "way of escape," is not usually a way OUT of the trial. Indeed, the verse says that the way of escape is so that, "we may be able to BEAR IT." Does that sound like the way of escape is a way OUT of the trial? No. This, "Way of escape," is a way to abide by faith in Christ DESPITE the trial. God will teach us how to BEAR the trial by faith so that we can live above the intent of the enemy -- and find life in Christ.

Jesus Christ – our life in Him by faith – IS our Way of escape. He is our HIDING PLACE. God does not remove the trial from us. Rather, He removes us from the trial – not circumstantially – but by revealing to us His Son in a way that enables us to live in Christ by faith ABOVE the trial. In short, we ESCAPE the work of the enemy in a trial through resurrection life of Christ.

Our flesh doesn't want to hear this, but we need to ask: What is the greater victory -- to escape every problem? Or to be able to stand by faith in Christ despite every problem? Obviously, the latter -- if I can live through a trial without allowing that trial to come between myself and God -- because I am giving myself to God -- then there is true victory. Victory is when God gets HIS GLORY in us through Christ. It is never achieved by running away from the enemy. It is realized by facing the enemy head on and seeing victory in Christ.

Is this not what it means to, “overcome?” We don’t overcome in Christ by avoiding trouble. No. Neither do we overcome by surrendering to the trouble, or to the trial. We overcome by, “coming under,” Jesus Christ, i.e., despite the trial. We lose ourselves to Christ within the trial and find Him as our life and victory. He is our WAY of escape -- and this is how God uses trials to form Christ in us.



Jul 1
The Power of His Resurrection

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death, If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. (Phil 3:10-11)

What is the power of His resurrection? It is the power of His Life over death. And the fact is, He is our life. His resurrection life in us is a life that has already conquered all death.

That is why, in order to overcome and be in His victory, we have to be living from His life. But in order to be living from HIS life – we have to lose our life.

How does a person have power over death? From where do we get power over sin? By developing a religious system based on Bible principles? By law keeping? By plugging into the right church, group, or accountability system? No. The power over death and over sin is found in HIM – in His resurrection life.

We must see the Truth that Jesus Christ in us is THE LIFE – He is our life. This isn’t merely a poetic way of saying we are saved. No. Jesus Christ IS the power of God – the living Jesus Christ who dwells in us NOW. Thus, we must learn to live, by faith, from OUT OF HIM as our life. But this cannot happen unless we are, “made conformable to His death.” His life comes only through our death – we must lose our lives in order to find HIS. Only then can we live in the power of His resurrection.



Jul 2

The Essential of True Doctrine

We must believe, stand for, and preach, only true doctrine. But why? What makes doctrine true? The easy answer is that the Bible makes it true, that is, if doctrine is taught in the Bible, then it is true doctrine. Good. But then we must further ask, "What makes doctrine that is taught in the Bible true?"

True Bible doctrine came out of the Truth Himself. He breathed it. God gave the Bible as a written revelation of Himself. Therefore, true doctrine IS true doctrine because it tells the Truth about God – right from the heart of God Himself.

Of course, God also wants to reveal Himself to us through Christ in an INWARD way – He wants to reveal to us the Truth by His Spirit. But since there is only ONE Truth, what God reveals to us about Jesus Christ through His Spirit is always going to agree one hundred percent with what He has revealed in His written Word.

I am not a Christian because I believe the doctrines of the Bible. I am a Christian because my faith is in the Person of Jesus Christ, and I have received Him from above. But the point is, true doctrine will tell the Truth about this -- and about the Person whom I receive.

If true doctrine tells the Truth about God, then false doctrine lies about Him. Whatever I say the Bible teaches I am saying about the God who breathed it. Whatever I say God has revealed, I am saying about the God who revealed it. This is why holding to true doctrine is absolutely essential: I am describing God Himself – His plan and purpose through Christ.



Jul 3

There Must Be Heresies

For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are genuine may be made manifest among you. (1 Cor. 11:19)

God never creates or is pleased with heresy – for heresy is a lie about God. Paul is simply saying that there are going to be heresies, and that God must allow them. Why does God allow heresy, heretics, and false teaching in His church?

He tells us: In order that the genuine article might be proven or built. For example, how do you know two plus two equals four? Probably because you were taught that it does -- and you accepted it. But if someone comes along claiming that two plus two equals five, now you are going to have to prove two plus two equals four. Because you are faced with error, you must prove the truth -- and if you do, your knowledge and faith that two plus two equals four will be strengthened. Being faced with error was therefore an opportunity to prove the Truth.

When a person who believes the Truth is faced with error -- or when a person who believes error is faced with the Truth -- they have a choice. Do we want to know Jesus Christ? If so, God will give us more than information. He will give us revelation. He will not only expose any error we believe, but He will expose the unbelief that is in our hearts that gave place for it. We will be made genuine -- made true unto God. And if we already believed the Truth, our faith will be strengthened all the more because the Truth upon which it is built will be proven all the more. There must be heresies -- they are allowed by God so that we might be given cause to seek the Truth in Christ.



Jul 4 True Revival

The term, "revival," means, "to come alive again." But that suggests that there was once life, which died, but now must be revived. Of course, we can include those who were never alive in Christ, but need to come alive in Him. Having said that, what is REVIVAL? Revival is the bringing in of Jesus Christ -- as the Life. (John 14:6) During a real revival, Christ becomes OUR life, and thus, we become alive in Him.

But note: True revival is must begin with JUDGMENT. If God is to reveal Christ, then all that is contrary to Christ must be exposed and renounced. Jesus isn't going to simply show up and affirm what WE have been doing. Repentance, and a forsaking of all that has hindered Christ, will always be at the forefront of any revival. Thus -- repentance is the first result of encountering Jesus Christ. And then once repentance is real -- then revival will become a growing revelation of Jesus Christ IN people. CHRIST IN YOU becomes real.

Of course, we tend to think of revival as a big special event -- with signs, wonders, and miracles. No. History has proven that such things do not draw folks to Jesus Christ, but draw them to the signs and wonders. Neither is revival something that God wants to do only once in awhile. If the Truth of Jesus Christ were being preached in season and out of

season, and the church were manifesting Him, revival would be continual. People would encounter Jesus Christ and come alive in Him.



Jul 5 False Revival

For false revival to be able to deceive, it has to "look" like true revival. Indeed, it is a terrifying fact that the end time apostasy is going to look -- to many people -- like a great end time revival. The Bible never promises an end time revival. But there is plenty said about an end time apostasy.

Since God is not in any false revivals, there must be a substitute that will deceive people into thinking that God is in it. That substitute is usually supposed signs and wonders -- people getting all worked up because they believe God has done something TO them. No. The fact is, signs and wonders are never evidence of true revival. God doesn't merely want to do something TO us -- He wants to reveal Jesus Christ IN US.

The long term fruit of any work of the spirit of God, including revival, is that Jesus Christ been revealed IN people. Using this as our guide, we would be hard pressed to find many revivals of the 20th century that could pass the test. Most of the eventual outcome of these revivals have been to minimize Jesus Christ in favor of something else that is a substitute for Him.

The purpose of the enemy is to blind people to the Person of Jesus Christ as our life and offer a substitute for Him. The most common substitute in a revival are psychic experiences, emotionalism, and frankly, a bunch of empty cheerleading. The purpose of God in any revival is always repentance and a coming to the Cross -- that God's people may have Christ formed in them.



Jul 6 Signs and Wonders

"An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah." (Mat 12:39)

People most often seek after signs and wonders because they do not believe and trust God – they are always needing God to prove Himself to them. In fact, Jesus says that this can be spiritual adultery – people put faith in experiences through signs and wonders rather than in Christ Himself. They want things FROM God -- or they want to "feel good" but they do not want God Himself. In fact, I think that most folks do not KNOW to want God for Himself -- we don't know what that means.

The Pharisees of Jesus' day were waiting for the Messiah. They knew all of the Bible verses that spoke of Him. They continually prayed that God would send Him. But when God Incarnate stood right in their midst they called Him a devil. They did not recognize Him – despite the fact that He did MANY signs and wonders in front of them. Did those miracles change them? No. The problem was that they did not want God or want the Truth. They wanted a Messiah who would affirm their religion, affirm them, and exclude everyone else.

The solution is never an outward sign or miracle. The only solution is CHRIST IN US. You will note that even the disciples, who had seen all those miracles, and heard all the teaching, were not permitted to go out and teach UNTIL they received Christ through the Holy Spirit -- in an INWARD way. This happened in Acts 2.

There are a number of ways to seek signs and wonders – this is not limited to seeking some fantastic miracle. I could continually nag God to prove to me He is there. Otherwise I won't believe Him. But if Christ is being formed IN me, and I have a growing inward knowledge of Him, HE will be all the evidence that I need. If I am raised in Christ, then the sign of Jonah – resurrection -- is the only evidence I will need from God. This will take time. But Jesus Christ in us is THE evidence of God.



Jul 7

True Prophecy from a False Prophet

If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder comes to pass, whereof he spoke unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which you have not known, and let us serve them; You shall not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proves you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. (Deut. 13:1-3)

The most obvious mark of a false prophet is that what he says does not come true. Yet here we see the possibility that what a false prophet

might say DOES come true – and that a sign or wonder that is done by a false prophet might be REAL. But we are being told that NONE of this proves that the person is speaking for God.

The evidence of a true prophet is that he speaks the Truth – but also that He gets you into a personal relationship with the Truth Himself. That is the purpose of all true ministry. It is what the Holy Spirit does. The work of God by His Spirit is that we are brought into an inward knowledge of Jesus Christ, and that He eventually manifests Himself in us, and through us. Thus, it does not matter what miracles a person might work, or what they predictions they make, all that matters is that there is EDIFICATION IN CHRIST.

Note that God allows such deceptions to PROVE US. I Cor. 11:19 says the same thing: "There must be heresies among you so that those of you who are genuine might be made manifest." If we really want the TRUTH IN CHRIST we may make mistakes along the way, but we will grow to recognize Him -- and not be led astray. God allows heresy so that in seeking Him for the Truth we might have our faith strengthened and hearts purified.



Jul 8

The Faith Once Delivered

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. (Jude 1:3)

What is, "the faith," once delivered to the saints? It is the fullness of the revelation that God has given in His Son. "The faith," is a Person, Jesus Christ -- and includes all the Truth that is found in Him.

"The faith," is to be understood here as a noun, not a verb. "The faith," is, in effect, Christianity. Thus, doctrines and teachings are included in, "the faith" -- but at the core it is the Person to whom these point that constitutes THE FAITH.

Scripture speaks of, "obedience to the faith." This is not merely obedience to a system of theology, or to a list of principles. Rather, it is a life that is lived abiding IN, and living OUT FROM Jesus Christ -- by faith. Works and conduct alone are never THE FAITH. Rather, works and conduct emerge from living in Christ as the object of our faith.

THE FAITH once delivered to the saints was not delivered merely in the form of teaching and doctrine. Scripture absolutely can, "make us wise unto salvation." It is inspired of God. But THE FAITH was once delivered to the saints in Acts 2 -- when the PERSON who is the Living Word and the Living Truth came to INDWELL God's people through the spirit of God. CHRIST IN US is the fullness of, "the faith," once delivered -- and all that God has freely given us of Truth and Life is found in HIM.

Jesus also said, "I AM THE WAY." This is equal to Jesus as THE FAITH. Jesus Christ is THE WAY. Jesus Christ is to be our LIFE, our faith, our Way -- that is, we are to be governed by the true knowledge of Him, and by His life.



Jul 9

Works Without Faith

How much more shall the blood of Christ....purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Heb 9:14)

Faith without works is dead -- because faith without works is not real faith. But likewise, works without faith are dead. That is because the source is not faith in Jesus Christ.

All good works in the Christian life are supposed to be the outcome of being rightly related to Christ by FAITH. It is to be, "by grace, through faith....UNTO good works." (see Eph. 2:8-10)

It is entirely possible to do many works that look good -- that even help others -- but to do them, not from faith, but from unbelief. What are works that are done from out of unbelief? They are works I do to keep myself right with God. Many of us do good works, not because we believe -- but because we don't. We do works, not because we love -- but because we don't. The true nature of such works may not be immediately evident. But if such a life matures, the fruit produced will show that all of these works were of the flesh -- the unbelief will eventually be made evident.

If my works are from out of unbelief, God will be faithful to get to the root -- He will expose, not my works, but my unbelief. The Galatian church surely had MANY good works. But Paul said that, "Christ is of no effect for you who are under the law." In short, even though Christ was in them, He may as well not have been -- they were in unbelief, and thus, their works were DEAD. The motivation was not, "faith working through love."

These matters of faith and works, or law vs. grace, are not merely theological matters. This cannot be resolved by memorizing the right Bible verses. Rather, it is a matter of seeing the TRUTH -- and repenting of self-righteousness. Only then will we come into the right relationship with God through Christ by faith.



Jul 10
The Law is Not of Faith

But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith, but, "The man that does them shall live in them." (Gal. 3:11-12)

There have always been teachers who insist that faith is nothing more than the means by which we are enabled to be justified by works -- that is -- they teach that our faith makes us able to do the works necessary to keep right with God.

Many have taught that grace puts us right back under the law. Indeed, GRACE has often been wrongly defined as, "The desire and power to do good works." This is not the Truth. GRACE is God's acceptance of us solely on the basis of Christ -- completely independent and apart from any of our works. (see Rom. 3:21-22)

"Justification by faith," is a doctrine that states that if we put our faith in Christ that God will IMPUTE to Christ our sin, and likewise, will IMPUTE to us the righteousness of Christ. This is Paul's LEGAL explanation of how God is morally and legally able to justify the sinner because of Christ. But Paul goes further. He shows that God not only IMPUTES to us the righteousness of Christ, but if we put our faith in Christ, God IMPARTS to us Christ Himself. We are made ONE with Christ in spirit -- Christ is in us and we are in Him. This is salvation and it is Christianity at the core -- indeed, Jesus Christ IS our justification. (1 Cor. 1:30)

What we see is that the Person of Jesus Christ -- dwelling in us through the spirit of God -- IS -- by His very presence in us -- our justification. We are not justified by ADDING works to Christ, and our works cannot SUBTRACT from Him. We are complete IN HIM -- and solely BECAUSE of HIM.

But what of works? Works are the outcome of being IN JESUS CHRIST -- works are the outcome of already being justified in Christ by faith. But they are not the means -- works did not get us saved, nor can

they keep us saved. The law is not of faith, and neither is faith of the law. Faith is completely apart from the law or of works. Christians obey God because we love Him -- the spirit of God in us is His HOLY Spirit.



Jul 11 The Advocate

Christianity at the core is, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Col. 1:27) Christ dwells in a saint by the means of the Spirit of God, or, "the Advocate." The translation, "comforter," is not the best. ADVOCATE -- that which, "comes along side of," for the purpose of being FOR someone -- is a much more accurate translation of the term PARACLETE.

The work of the Spirit or Advocate is, "to form Christ in us" (Gal. 4:19) -- the Greek means, "to inwardly realize and express." Another description is Romans 8:29, where it says that it is the purpose of God, "to conform us to the image of His Son." The Greek there means, "to form together with" -- (rather than just make us look like Jesus). This is the positive work of The Advocate -- the very purpose of God for which His spirit has been given. The end result will be that Christ is manifested IN us as individuals, but then by extension, God will have a body that is a corporate manifestation of His Son. This is all UNTO the fullness of God's purpose in the eternal ages, where Christ is to be all in all.

We see that this is the purpose of God as executed through His spirit all through the Bible. In John, chapters 14 thru 16, Jesus affirmed these things as the work of the Advocate. In summary, the work of the Advocate is to reveal Christ TO us, IN us, and THROUGH us. Likewise, Paul would teach that the gifts of the Holy Spirit would be to edify believers IN CHRIST. (Eph. 4:12-16) And as noted, Paul's travail for the churches was that, through the Spirit, "CHRIST might be formed in you." (Gal. 4:19) Indeed, Jesus even went out of His way to point out that the work of the Holy Spirit would never be about the Holy Spirit. (see John 16:13) Note that: The Holy Spirit will guide us into all Truth, but will never do this by turning attention to the Holy Spirit -- but rather do so by the revelation of the Person of Christ in each believer. Jesus Christ IS the Truth.

All that being said, this is not taught in most places. You generally do not see it taught that the work of the Holy Spirit is to reveal Christ IN US. Rather, other purposes are given. The reality of, "CHRIST IN US," is an almost completely unknown Truth in the vast majority of churches today. Yet CHRIST IN US is the essence of Christianity.

Paul prayed, "I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." (Eph. 1:16) The desire of Paul, inspired to be recorded in scripture, is the desire of God. Indeed, it is the purpose for which the Advocate was given: To reveal Christ TO us, IN us, and THROUGH us.

When we were saved, Jesus joined us to Himself by making us one with His Spirit. (I Cor. 6:17) Therefore, we are IN CHRIST, and Christ is IN US, by this joining; by the means of the Holy Spirit. God has also given us ALL things freely in His Son. (Rom. 8:32) This means once Christ dwells in us we have ALL that God has to give -- there is nothing left over that we must receive through some other means. We must simply discover the Christ with whom we are joined in spirit -- which is this same purpose. His Spirit carries all that is of Christ -- which is the fullness of God. And if Christ is in us, then we are complete in Him. He is our Alpha and Omega. This is what God has given us through the outpouring of the Spirit of God, which is The Advocate -- He has given us all of Himself -- He is be our eternal inheritance.



Jul 12

Obedience to the Faith

By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name. (Rom 1:5)

"The faith," is the full revelation of the Person of Jesus Christ, not only to us, but in us -- and then all of the Truth that is found in Him. Thus, "obedience to the faith," means that my life becomes governed by this revelation -- I walk according to the Christ who is being revealed in me via the spirit of God.

All good works in the Christian life are supposed to be the product of faith in Christ. Another way to say this is that all good works are supposed to be the product of seeing the Truth in Christ and being governed by Him as Lord.

But what are, "good works?" Even unbelievers can do what look like, "good works." In fact, people who are trying to be justified before God by their works do, "good works." In short, it is possible to do, "good works" -- not from out of faith, but from out of unbelief. It is possible to, "obey God" -- not because I believe Him -- but because I don't. In that case, I am not being, "obedient to the faith." I am not motivated by faith at all.

Real good works are works done without strings attached. They are FREELY given because I have already FREELY received. I do them because I know and believe -- because I love God. There is no earning and there is no bargaining. Good works are the result of seeing and knowing Jesus Christ. That is, "obedience to the faith." It is LOVE. And only God can make this possible.



Jul 13
The Righteousness of God Manifested

But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe. (Rom 3:21-22)

Verses like this one are so familiar, it is easy to embrace them as merely doctrine, and forget that they speak of Truth that forms the basis of new life. Righteousness is a matter of being right, not only WITH God, but FOR God. That necessitates a LIFE – a new creature in whom there is a righteousness that can fellowship with God. Such life is found only in Christ.

Jesus Christ IS our righteousness. He does not merely declare us righteous -- He IS our righteousness. Simply put, when we were saved, we were, "joined to the Lord and made one spirit with Him." (I Cor. 6:17) But since Jesus Christ is righteousness, then we became one with Righteousness Himself.

Human beings need more than a righteousness that is legally imputed to us. Rather, we need a righteous life to be IMPARTED to us. When we were joined to Christ – God imparted to us Christ Himself. Christianity IS Christ in us, the hope of glory. (Col. 1:27) Christ IS our life – our righteous life. (Col. 3:4) Christ in us is the reason we are justified – He is the reason we are RIGHT FOR GOD. The righteousness of God that is manifested – apart from the law – is Christ Himself in the believer.

Herein we see why our works cannot change the fact that we are righteous IN HIM. It is because neither good works or bad works can change, add to, or subtract from, the ONE in Whom we dwell, and Who IS the righteousness of God in us.



Jul 14
Abiding in the Vine

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me.
(John 15:4)

“To abide,” means to, “live in,” or, “to live from.” If we abide in the Vine, we are abiding in His life; living from out of Him. His life is resurrection life, which is the power over all death and sin. And note that He said, “I AM the Vine.” He is that, right now, IN US.

What this tells us is that we don’t have to obey God in order to abide in Christ. Rather, we must abide in Christ in order to obey. To put it another way, we abide in Christ through obedience to the faith. We cannot abide in Him through obedience to the law.

The question here is not one of works. It is one of LIFE. The means of obedience to God is the LIFE of Christ – we have to live out from His life that is in us by faith. The notion that we must obey in order to keep in that life is contrary to the gospel of grace.

The picture of bearing fruit is certainly a great one. Does a branch bear fruit so that it can continue to abide in the Vine? No. The branch first abides in the Vine SO THAT it can bear fruit. Thus, fruit, including works, is the outcome of abiding in Christ by faith.

Everything of value in the Christian life, including works, fruit, and the character of Jesus Christ, is the result of abiding in Christ by faith. That is because we must first abide in Him for His LIFE to produce these results through us.

We start abiding in Christ by surrendering OUR life. As we do, our minds are renewed and we begin to come into an inward realization of Christ. We bear HIS fruit -- in other words, what is produced is not US, or a better version of us. A branch always produces the fruit OF THE VINE.



Jul 15
Full Assurance of Faith

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith...let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised.) (Heb. 10:22-23)

A full assurance of faith – without wavering -- is NOT possible if such a faith is based on anything about ourselves. Faith is in One who is, "other than," ourselves. Faith that does not waver is therefore the result of knowing that the Person whom we trust never wavers or changes – He is always true and faithful -- and upon the fact that He alone is our basis for access to God.

Emotions waver; temperament wavers; and moods waver. But those things are all OF US; of our natural makeup. Faith in God is not emotional, temperamental, or the outcome of a mood. Faith comes by hearing and embracing the Truth that God reveals – and fundamental to all Truth is the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ never changes. We change. But then, in ignorance we project our wavering upon Christ and think it is Him. It is not. It is us. This alone ought to tell us how blind we are to Christ. If we are to have real faith then we must come into an inward realization of Jesus that will cut through all of this and set us free.

Full assurance of faith is the result of knowing that HE IS FAITHFUL that has given us all of His promises. It is not about US being faithful. We hold fast to HIM.



Jul 16 Through the Veil

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh. (Heb 10:19-20)

When Jesus died, the actual veil in the temple in Jerusalem was rent from top to bottom. This showed that the way to oneness with God was opened through Jesus Christ. No one and nothing can sew the spiritual veil back together and close our access to God.

Sins -- but more importantly -- "the body of sin," i.e., the sin nature, is what separated us from God. That was the original veil. This made it impossible for us to be one with God. But on the Cross, Jesus bore in His body the body of sin. (Rom. 6:6) Thus, figuratively speaking, He became the veil -- and therefore when He died -- when His body was rent -- the veil which separated us from God was, "torn," from top to bottom, and the way was permanently opened into the presence of God through Christ.

Access to God is permanently opened IN Christ. Nothing can sew that veil back together and come between ourselves and God if our faith is in Christ. Not even our sin – because sin is what was already taken away and torn asunder by the death of Christ.

The only sin that can come between humanity and God is the sin of unbelief -- in which case we are refusing Christ. Yet, as Hebrews says -- The Way is OPEN. It is always open -- even to those who had previously refused. The sin that condemns is that we will not believe and enter in solely, “by grace through faith,” in Christ.



Jul 17
A New and Living Way

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh. (Heb. 10:19-20)

The temple veil that was rent when Jesus died stood for body of sin that was rent when Jesus died. This opened up a new and living Way -- Christ in us IS The Way. Thus, we don't merely receive the legal right to enter the holiest because of Jesus. We receive Jesus Himself – He is our High Priest -- already in the presence of God. We are ONE with Him in spirit, and thus, because He is ONE with the Father, we are there IN HIM.

Note the phrase, “A new and LIVING way.” It is a LIVING Way, not a dead one. The veil is rent by the death of Christ. We are reconciled to God by the death of His Son. But note: We are SAVED by His life (see Rom. 5:10) – we are saved because He has joined us to Himself and He IS our Life.

As Paul said, “One died for all, and therefore, all were dead.” (II Cor. 5:14) But it is all unto being a NEW creation in Christ Jesus by being RAISED in Him. We must embrace His death by faith in order to be raised in Him unto newness of life.

Resurrection life IS Jesus Christ in us. This was a NEW and LIVING Way -- there had never been such a Way before. Jesus Christ did not merely show us the way to God. He IS THE WAY -- in Him there is personal, individual, and unchangeable access to God.



Jul 18
Elementary Faith

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (Heb. 11:6)

This is a description of the faith at it's root: A person must believe that God exists, that is, can and will reveal Himself. A person must also believe that if we seek God we will find Him – the person must believe that God is a, “responder to them that seek Him out.”

You will notice that the focus is upon the faithfulness of God. The faithfulness of God is ALWAYS the basis for our faith. Thus, this is usually what is tried in any trial of faith. Is God really there for me? Is God indifferent to me? Will God respond to me as I seek Him? This verse proves that He will respond – in fact, at the root, faith believes that God is a RESPONDER to those who diligently seek Him.

True faith is never, “faith in my faith,” that is, it is not reliance upon my ability to believe or find God. Rather, faith is based on nothing more complicated than the faithfulness of God to find me; abide with me. God is faithful in that He will always respond to those who seek Him out – He will reveal Himself through Christ and take us on into His purposes.



Jul 19
Strangers and Pilgrims

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. (Heb. 11:13)

THE promise of the Father is Jesus Christ -- who dwells in the believer through the Spirit. All of God's other promises, indeed, all that God has for man, is found in the Person of His Son. And Christ is IN US. If Christ is in us, we are complete in Him. (Col. 2:9) The Christian life is then not a matter of getting more of Christ, but rather, a matter of discovering Him, and having Him formed in us.

But in this age it is impossible for us to practically experience all that we have received in Christ. We continue to live in physical bodies with a soul to contend with. There is the limitation of time. Experiencing Christ takes eternity because Christ is eternal. That is why the Spirit of God – through which Christ dwells in us – is said to be, “the earnest of our inheritance.” (Eph. 1:14) The word, “earnest,” means, “down payment.” So despite all of the wonderful possibilities HERE, the real fruitage will be realized THERE.

This is the Truth wrapped up in the above verse, Heb. 11:13. A stranger and pilgrim will never feel at home in this age. We live here but don't belong here. We will always be longing for another home – something beyond here. But this is all because we are a new creation, born of the Spirit. HERE we can see only from afar – as through a glass darkly. And we can see plenty. But THEN we will see Him face to face. (1 Cor. 13:12)



Jul 20
Because of His Mercy

I beseech you therefore, brethren, because of the mercies of God, that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (Rom. 12:1)

Because there is no true knowledge of God in man by nature, indeed, the carnal mind is at enmity against God, we tend to view God as One who is angry at us and wants to deprive us. So we read verses like the one above that talk about the necessity of the work of the Cross, and we cringe. In fact, many tend to think of the Christian life as a more of a reluctant resignation to the fact that we must surrender to God – it is something we do because we must -- in order to stay on God's good side and avoid His wrath.

But you will note the preface of the above passage is, “I beseech you because of the MERCIES of God.” Paul is NOT appealing to us, “by the wrath of God,” There is no demand here under threat of punishment. In fact, Paul says that if we really knew God, we would run to Him. We would present ourselves to God as, “our well-reasoned out choice.” That is the Greek meaning. In short, God is for us, and not against us, and what He commands here is for our good, our freedom, and unto His purpose in Christ.

A primary reason why we don't want to lose our lives to Christ is because we don't see our real condition. We still think there is something

in us to salvage -- and Christianity today is filled with programs to help us to do exactly that -- usually for a few dollars. Neither do we know what it means to find Christ as our life. But Paul is saying that once we begin to grasp this Truth that our well-reasoned out choice will be obvious: We will want to get on the altar and give ourselves fully to Jesus Christ.



Jul 21
True Holiness

I beseech you therefore, brethren, because of the mercies of God,
that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto
God, which is your reasonable service. (Rom. 12:1)

Holiness means that I belong to God – and not to myself – the Greek word means, “to be set apart for God’s use.” We are told multiple times in scripture that, “we are not our own; we are bought with a price.” (I Cor. 6:19) Indeed, the very word translated, “saint,” means, “holy one.” Thus, the very name God Himself inspired to refer to person in Christ carries the meaning, “one who belongs, not to themselves, but to Christ.”

The above verse is built upon that Truth of holiness. Note that the root of holiness is not good works -- but rather a continual faith relationship with God. Yes, we are to DO holy, but we must also BE holy -- which is accomplished only by getting on this altar by faith and giving ourselves fully to Christ. A practical way of doing this is to ask God to do, “whatever it takes,” to bring to pass His purpose in us. We can do this no matter who we are, or where we are in Christ.

This abandonment to God; this commitment, equals losing our lives to Christ – and is a way to express true holiness – “present your bodies a living sacrifice -- the act of which is HOLY and acceptable unto God.” This will be our well-reasoned out choice if we understand our need and are growing to know Christ.



Jul 22
A Living Sacrifice

I beseech you therefore, brethren, because of the mercies of God,
that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto
God, which is your reasonable service. (Rom. 12:1)

In the OT, animals did not volunteer to be sacrificed. But here we see that we are to, “present ourselves,” as a LIVING sacrifice. Certainly this means we must voluntarily present ourselves on the altar – i.e., pick up our Cross.

The fact is, unless we are voluntarily giving ourselves to God -- it is not really of faith. Faith is not of law – real faith isn't the result of being forced to believe by a law. No. Real faith is the result of believing because I KNOW. I believe because I have heard and embraced the Truth of God's faithfulness.

Ironically, if we present ourselves a living sacrifice to God, we will be, “always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.” (2 Cor 4:11) But this ought to make us want to get on that altar all the more -- because even though it is death to the old -- it is really DELIVERANCE through Christ. We will find true life in Christ.

You will never find any suggestion in the Bible that God is going to force surrender upon us. Coerced faith is not faith. Now, God WILL take the initiative to show us the Truth; He will chastise us because He loves us. But ultimately we must choose voluntarily, by faith, to get on the altar as a LIVING sacrifice. If nothing else, we can simply present ourselves to God by asking Him to do, “whatever it takes,” to get His purpose in Christ in us.



Jul 23

The Light in the Life

Present your bodies as a living sacrifice....and be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.
(Rom 12:2)

Do we want to know Jesus Christ – and know His will? Most of us have this notion that in order to KNOW the will of God, we need INFORMATION – we need God to tell us facts. Certainly God is able to do that, and sometimes does. But this is not the way in which God usually reveals His will. Rather than give us INFORMATION, God wants to give us REVELATION.

Now, what does that mean: “revelation?” Revelation is not merely information about God or His will. Revelation is of Jesus Christ Himself.

If you read the above verse, revelation of the will of God -- and of Jesus Christ -- is found as we lose our life and find Him as our life. Sure. Jesus is a Person – an individual -- and He is both Life and Light. If you lose your life getting on the altar; by, "presenting your body, a living sacrifice," you will find His life. But along with His life is going to come LIGHT – a greater revelation of the One who is both Life and Light. Simply put, if we receive a revelation of Jesus Himself, we are going to more clearly know His will – because He will be our Light.



Jul 24

The Renewal of the Mind

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Rom. 12:2)

Here we are told that in order to know the will of God, we need more than just NEW INFORMATION. Rather, we need a new or RENEWED MIND. We are not transformed by information – we are transformed by the renewing of our minds according to the TRUTH. Or, to put it another way, our minds are renewed only if we begin to KNOW JESUS CHRIST.

This is why when we cry out to God, "If you would only tell me what to DO!," He is often silent. It isn't about DOING, it is about seeing the Truth -- and then believing from out of a mind that has been renewed according to Christ. In short, we most often don't need INFORMATION. We need REVELATION.

A renewed mind will know the will of God -- because a renewed mind will be God's mind. We often want God to speak to us His mind. But God has something greater: He wants to give us His mind. The mind of God is only possible through a revelation of His Son.



Jul 25

Suffering Without Cause?

And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that fears God, and escheweth evil? and still he holds fast his integrity, although you moved me against him, to destroy him without cause." (Job 2:3)

What was the purpose of the trial of Job? God's own words prove that it was NOT because Job had sinned. In fact, God Himself says what happened to Job was, "without cause." In other words, Job did not deserve what happened to him based on his conduct before the Lord.

Of course, the fact Job was suffering, "without cause," is the conflict of the entire book -- Job was trying to figure out the cause. He could find none. Job was convicted of no sin. God was silent to him. But nevertheless he was suffering. Isn't this often our conflict in any trial as well? Perhaps we have believed and obeyed God. Yet things go bad. And God gives no answers.

It is entirely possible for you and I to be IN the will of God, and to be obeying and believing God as far as we know, and yet encounter great trial leading to great loss. Unless we get this settled we are going to be forever trying to control our lives -- to control God -- with our conduct. This is nothing more than a disguised self-righteousness based on law. God doesn't tell us to control our lives -- He tells us to LOSE them.

Job was suffering according to the will of God -- but not because he had sinned. He discovered the reason at the end of the book: He said, "I uttered that which I understood not; things too wonderful for me; which I knew not....I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye SEES YOU. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." Job was being CHASTISED -- as a son -- by God's love. And although Job never saw answers -- he saw GOD HIMSELF. This was the purpose.

Herein we see a type of NT Truth: God allows suffering so that IF we surrender to Him -- a big IF -- we will come to see Jesus Christ -- Christ will be formed in us. Suffering is a vehicle wherein we are able to take our place in His death by faith -- lose our lives to Him -- and thus find Him as our life. Thus, God allows suffering because He is faithful to keep His promises -- to guide us into all Truth and to bring us into a inward realization of His Son. If we give ourselves to Christ through suffering, our hearts will be purified: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.



Jul 26
Transformed by the Truth

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. (Rom. 12:2)

How are we changed, or transformed? By the renewing of our mind. How else could we see the Truth and be changed by it? But our minds are not renewed by increasing brain power through academics. Rather, we are renewed in our minds by knowing Jesus Christ.

The true knowledge of Jesus Christ might be called an inward realization of Christ. Paul said, "I travail until Christ be FORMED in you," (Gal. 4:19) – the word, "formed," means, "to inwardly realize or express."

Anyone can study Bible teaching and pass it on to others, but God wants us to know the One about whom the Bible teaches. In short, we are TRANSFORMED as He is FORMED in us – i.e., we are FORMED TOGETHER with Him – which is the original root meaning behind the verse, "conformed to the image of His Son. (Rom. 8:29)

Paul says, "Put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." This is simply another way of saying, "You shall know -- in an inward spiritual fashion -- the Truth -- who is the Person of Jesus Christ -- and the Truth -- your realization of the Truth Himself -- shall set you free -- from all darkness and unbelief." (John 8:32)



Jul 27
Yet Not I, But Christ

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (Gal. 2:20)

Paul knew, and taught, that Christ was crucified FOR him. But the fact that Christ is crucified FOR us made something else possible: We are able to be crucified WITH Christ. Christ died for us, so that we might die in Christ. This one possibility is the key to freedom from sin, and is the only gateway to resurrection life. And the end result is this: YET NOT I, BUT CHRIST.

There is no other place to which walking with Jesus will bring us other than, "yet not I, but Christ." Any other result and I am NOT walking in the Truth. Christianity is NOT, "Yet not Christ, but I." This is another gospel.

Note that the reason we must pick up our Cross to follow Christ is not because this is not finished. No. Christ HAS been crucified. Indeed, we HAVE been crucified WITH Him. All of that is finished. But we must pick

up our Cross so that we might actually be made conformable to His death, and walk in the power of His resurrection.

Paul says, “nevertheless, I LIVE, yet not I, but Christ.” But note: We do not merely live BECAUSE of Christ. No. Christ lives IN US – that is – He IS our life. Eternal life is not a THING God gives us. No. God gives us Christ, in whom there is all life. Eternal life is CHRIST IN US. He is our life. Christianity is Christ in us. Eternal life is the result of our being joined to the One who is life.

This verse shows that in order for us to live with Christ as our life, we have to walk in the reality of being, “crucified with Christ.” Thus, Gal. 2:20 is an expansion on the words of Jesus, “If any one would find his life he must lose it.” (Matt. 16:24) We lose our life by being, “crucified WITH Christ.” But then we find -- not ourselves -- but Christ. “Yet not I, but Christ lives in me.”



Jul 28

Christ Lives in Us

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. (Gal. 2:20-21)

Many professing Christians walk as if CHRIST IN US is nothing more than some power to keep God's law. Many believe we are kept righteous by the works Jesus Christ does through us. But this is still righteousness through works. Unwittingly, they have put themselves right back under law as the basis for relationship with God. This is NOT faith.

Righteousness is a basis of relationship with God. But Paul says that this righteousness is not created, maintained, or based in law-keeping -- for if it were, then Christ died in vain. In short, the only righteousness we have is Jesus Christ in us – HE IS the righteousness of God. (1 Cor. 1:30) But He is not our righteousness because of any works – not even the supposed works that He does through us. No. He is our righteousness because He IS righteous – period – and we are joined to Him. In short, we are righteous in Him completely apart from, and without any connection to, works of any kind.

The life Jesus lives in us is a righteous life because HE IS righteous. Any works, therefore, do nothing to create or maintain Him AS our

righteousness. Rather, they are the product of His righteousness living in and through us. Good works are one outcome of Christ in us, sealed forever in His Blood.



Jul 29
A Denial of Christ

For if righteousness comes by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.
(Gal. 2:21)

In one sense of the word, righteousness is the basis of relationship with God. But not just a legal righteousness, but a living righteousness – in other words, righteousness is more than DOING, it is a matter of BEING IN HIM. We must be made right for God. We must be a partaker of His nature.

But DOING cannot accomplish this -- DOING cannot accomplish BEING. BEING is accomplished only through a new birth, wherein we receive Christ from above -- and then HE IS our only righteousness. HE IS our life.

This is the Truth behind Paul's statement, quoted above: If righteousness were possible through our law-keeping, then Christ did not need to die. In that case, it was always possible for us to BECOME righteous through works. His death was unnecessary. All we ever needed was a good list of laws and principles to follow. DOING those us would make us to BE righteous.

Most church-goers know DOCTRINALLY that we cannot create or maintain righteousness through our law-keeping. But most of us still function as if we can. The reason is usually not rebellion – but ignorance. We are blind to the Person of Jesus Christ -- and thus -- our faith is really not in Him, but in our works. The result is that Christ of, “no effect,” for us. (Gal. 5:4) He may as well have died in vain.

Righteousness that is based upon anything about US is unbelief. It is SIN. It is a denial of Christ -- even if we don't realize it. Can we now see what Paul directly states that it is ANOTHER GOSPEL?



Jul 30
Standing Aloof from Christ

I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel. (Gal. 1:16)

The Galatians were trying to maintain their righteousness by law-keeping. But Paul said they were, “standing aloof” – from Jesus Christ. Why? Because Christ was not their righteousness; He was not their LIFE. They were trying to live the Christian life using their natural man -- keeping laws and principles. They were bewitched by a false gospel.

Note that the Galatians were fully content that they were right with God. But in fact, Christ was of no effect for them. They were happy, but deceived. This is often the state of the deceived.

Paul said the solution to this error was, “that Christ be formed in you.” (Gal. 4:19) Note that if the solution to deception is that Christ be formed in us, then a Christian life based on my works must certainly mean He is NOT being formed in us.

Paul wrote to the Philippians that it was not until he lost his own righteousness, and found Christ as His righteousness, that he was able to truly, “win Christ, and be found in Him.” (Phil. 3:8-9)

The problem here is not theology. It is faith in Christ and the life that emerges. Most often, those who teach error are not merely teaching a few false things about Christianity – they are teaching a false Christianity. This was the case with the Galatians and their legalism. They are teaching a Christianity wherein Christ died in vain. (Gal. 2:21)



Jul 31
Learning the Grace of God

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ. (Titus 2:11-13)

If we have seen the Truth of grace, and embraced it through Christ, as the basis of our life, what will be carried in that Truth? What will the grace of God teach or reveal to us? Not that we are free to sin because

grace abounds. This is NOT what grace reveals -- even though when we sin grace always DOES abound.

No. The revelation of grace in Christ will not only teach us, but motivate us by faith, "to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts." We will want to live, "sober, righteous, and godly," lives. In short, the true grace of God never leads to license. If I am in living in license, I have not embraced the Truth of His grace, but rather, I have denied it.

This is because of the nature of conversion to Christ: In order for a person to be saved, the conviction of God will have brought them to a, "Godly sorrow that works unto repentance not to be repented of." (II Cor. 7:10) Thus, if a person has repented of sin, they will no longer want to sin. Thus, they aren't going to embrace license. They will, despite sin and failures -- and we will have plenty of those -- WANT to obey God; want to be free of sin. This is the impact on a person who has seen and values the grace of God.

Repentance is a change of mind. It is a change of motivation and desire towards God. At the core, a person -- although they will sin -- will not want to sin. This is because the Truth of grace has shown them their great need for the One who died for them.



Aug 1 Turning Grace Into License

For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. (Jude 1:4)

God has given us all things FREELY in His Son by grace. He gives us the TRUTH by grace. But the Truth of grace cannot be turned into license and remain the Truth of grace. It will be LASCIVIOUSNESS. That word, "lasciviousness," comes from a Greek word that means, "without restraint." Thus, lasciviousness will not only lead to conduct without restraint, but it will lead to a belief system without restraint. Truth will become whatever suits me. I will ultimately deny Jesus as my personal Lord -- there will be no inward knowledge of Him in Truth that governs me.

This error is everywhere today. Let's ask: If a person denies the need for repentance, how likely is it that he, himself, has repented? If a person considers the Cross needless, then how likely is it that he, himself, has

come to the Cross? Clearly, this person has not repented, has not come to the Cross. How could they possibly be saved? It is impossible to DENY the very Truth that you must EMBRACE to be saved -- and then SAY you are saved. You are denying the Lord -- turning who He is into a Christ that suits you.

Jude says that there are people within the church who have, "crept in unawares." The Greek means, "to enter in by a side door." The picture is striking. The church is filled with teachers of license, legalism, and fables. But the problem is not merely a theological mistake. It is unbelief and a denial of Jesus Christ as Lord. This may not be a verbal denial. But people have denied Jesus as THEIR Lord -- He has no access to them personally.

Thankfully, Jesus Himself told us that He, personally, by His Spirit, would guide us into all the Truth. God has not been ambushed by false teachers. He is telling us -- in this same epistle of Jude - the solution: "Earnestly contend for the faith once delivered." We are to do that personally, and as the church.



Aug 2

Legalism, License, and Liberty

The solution for legalism is not license. The solution for license is not legalism. The solution is not a balance between legalism and license. No. They are two sides of the same coin of unbelief. The solution for both is faith in Jesus Christ -- as our only means of life and of righteousness.

Christianity is, "Christ in us." (Col. 1:27) The Christian walk is the outcome of faith in Christ as our life and our righteousness. Legalism bypasses Christ as our only righteousness and attempts to maintain our righteousness through works. License bypasses Christ as our righteousness and denies the need for righteousness altogether.

God never intended for man to create or maintain his own righteousness. Yet righteousness is essential. Thus, we must be made one with God on the basis of a righteousness NOT our own. Merely being IMPUTED with a legal righteousness does nothing to actually MAKE us righteous. But when Jesus Christ joins us to Himself, His life becomes ours, and thus His righteousness is IMPARTED to us. Liberty in Christ is a faith in Christ as our righteousness. We recognize Christ is made to be unto us righteousness (I Cor. 1:30) -- and that this is the basis of a life and faith before God.



Aug 3
Naked but Not Ashamed

And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed. (Gen. 2:25)

This is God's description of humanity BEFORE Adam's sin. Thus, it is His original design. Therefore, man was CREATED to be, "naked but not ashamed."

To be naked is to have NOTHING of yourself as a resource for life. Now note: This was not a bad thing, but a God-ordained and created condition. Man was MADE to have nothing in himself for life – God created man to BE naked. Why? Because man was created to be one with God – and thus all resources for life were to be found by man in God Himself.

But Adam was not only naked of all resource for life in himself -- he was also, "not ashamed." In other words, Adam found all that he needed in the Person of God -- he was created to be one with God, and created to abide in God by faith. Adam was fully at home without any resource in himself – he was fully alive and complete in God. There was no shame – no consciousness of lack; no sense of emptiness. All of this was BEFORE his sin.

When we come to Christ, we are joined to Him in spirit and made one with Him. (I Cor. 6:17) We are therefore COMPLETE IN HIM. (Col. 2:9) He IS our life. (Col. 3:4) Thus, what we see is that the new birth is, in many ways, a restoration (actually much MORE) of what Adam lost through his sin and rebellion against God. In Christ, we are absolutely naked of anything in ourselves -- naked of all life and Truth. But we are likewise, "not ashamed." We rejoice in our nakedness because in Him there is all life -- He is our all.



Aug 4
Naked and Ashamed

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked....and Adam said, "I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." (Gen. 3:7-10)

BEFORE his sin, Adam was naked but unashamed. God created him to BE naked but unashamed. But AFTER his sin, Adam was naked but ashamed. Thus, the sin did not change the nakedness. Rather, the sin changed Adam – he was no longer unashamed -- but ashamed, and afraid.

The reason for Adam's fear was that he was no longer one with God. God had been the source of all life for him before the sin – thus, despite being naked, he was unashamed. He was fully completed by God and without fear. But after the sin, Adam was all alone in his nakedness. He had declared independence from God and that is exactly what he got – he was alone and afraid, without resource for life. Or, to put it another way, Adam was now spiritually dead. He was utterly self focused and preoccupied, indeed, tormented, by his condition.

This is man in Adam – naked and ashamed – without realizing what is actually wrong with himself: He is separated from God. Ever since, the human race has tried to do exactly what Adam tried to do: Fix ourselves, cover ourselves, and make ourselves presentable -- with some form of FIG LEAVES. Fig leaves come in all shapes and sizes: Addictions, self-help, and even religious self-righteousness. Fig leaves are whatever we use instead of Jesus Christ. But the only solution is that we must once again be made one with God as our life. Jesus Christ has restored this relationship in Himself.



Aug 5 The Fig Leaves

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. (Gen. 3:7)

Before his sin, Adam was naked but unashamed. After his sin, he was naked and ashamed. The reason for the change from unashamed to shame was that Adam was no longer one with God. God was no longer His life. Adam was dead.

Adam immediately tried to fix the damage. He was naked -- but without God as his source for life -- and so he tried to cover his nakedness. He used fig leaves.

Fig leaves represent any means we use to try to fix what sin has done. One of the most common fig leaves is that of our own

righteousness. We try to make ourselves righteous by covering up our barren condition with good works.

Fig leaves are what WE create to cover our real condition -- and for most people, they don't even realize what they are doing. Fig leaves can be quite pretty. Or they can be ugly. Sometimes they can be fig leaves that express humility, joy, or supposed love. But fig leaves are lies. They are not of God, but of ourselves; of the flesh. They are covering the real Truth about ourselves: We are absolutely naked and barren without God.

Note that nakedness is NOT sin. No, God made us to be naked. The sin is that we cover it with something of ourselves. Indeed, our nakedness is not news to God -- even though it may shock us. Thus, in order to bring us into the Truth, and show it to us, He must strip off our fig leaves. He must expose our barrenness and corruption. When He does, it is our responsibility to confess the Truth about ourselves in agreement with God. Then we will embrace Christ as our only source of life.



Aug 6

The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. (Rom. 8:1-2)

Can Jesus Christ be condemned? There was never anything in Jesus Christ that could possibly be condemned. He was the Lamb of God without blemish. This is exactly why He was able to bear OUR sins and OUR condemnation on the Cross. And in doing so, He completely satisfied all justice, all requirements of the law, and all holiness.

This is why if we are IN CHRIST -- there is no condemnation. All justice has already been satisfied. Jesus Christ has died for every sin ever committed by every human being who has ever lived, or will ever live. (Except the sin of refusing His death.) Therefore, if we are IN CHRIST, there can never be even the slightest condemnation upon us from God.

This is a Truth that is so complete -- and yet there is even more: We are RAISED in Christ as new creations. We are not merely restored back to the old creations we once were, merely pronounced, "forgiven." No. We are new creations IN HIM. We are joined to Him in Spirit and one

with Him in RESURRECTION life. In other words, we have died in Christ, and then been raised OUT FROM the old creation in Him as new kinds of human beings -- as new creations.

Newness of life in Christ is a NEW NATURE -- this is, "the law (nature) of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus." This new nature in Christ, "has set me free from the law of sin and death" -- from the law that would condemn me. Note that the law hasn't change -- I have changed. I am now IN CHRIST. And in Christ, there is no possible condemnation.

We asked, "Can Christ be condemned?" The answer is NO. But note: We are IN CHRIST. He IS our righteousness. He IS our life. Thus, HE is the reason -- our oneness with Him in Spirit -- why we cannot be condemned. "There is NO condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, because the nature of the spirit of His life has set me free from all that could possibly condemn me." Condemnation upon the believer is never from God. It was left in the grave when Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. And now we are raised in Him.



Aug 7 In The Flesh or the Spirit

**So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.
(Rom. 8:6-9)**

If I am born from above, I am joined to the Lord and one spirit with Him. (1 Cor. 6:17) This spiritual union automatically creates a division in me between what is within that spiritual union with Christ, and what is outside of it. This is the separation of our soul from our spirit. (Heb. 4:12) What is within our union with Christ is the new creature in Christ; the new man. What is outside of it is, "the flesh; the natural; the carnal; the earthly." Thus, we have the warfare of flesh vs. spirit. (Gal. 5:17)

The carnal mind is a mind that is of, "natural man." It operates from the knowledge and perspective -- really from the LIFE -- of that which is outside of our union with Christ. The carnal is governed by the earthly realm or environment. Worse, it is defined by the SELF principle: Everything and everyone is defined and valued by their relationship and effect upon ME.

Those who are, "in the flesh," or, "walking according to the flesh," are those who are governed, not by Christ as their life, but by what is outside of their union with Christ -- even if they are saved. They are governed by

their own interests, their own desires, and their own pride. They have not lost their life for Jesus' sake. This is why those who are in the flesh cannot please God. They are walking contrary to all that Christ IS.

By natural birth, all that we can do is walk according to ourselves. But once the Lord joins us to Himself, Christ will begin to be revealed in us. Then we will have a new, "government" -- a growing knowledge of Him. Those who walk according to Christ are those who walk according to the spirit of Christ; governed by the life of Jesus.



Aug 8 One of Two Minds

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. (Rom. 8:5)

Jesus said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the spirit is spirit." (John 3:6) Those who are born of the flesh will do all things, "after the flesh." It is all they know. But those who are born from above can mind the things of the Spirit -- but ALSO the things of the flesh. Why? Because despite the fact that Christ is in us, we continue to have a natural, flesh man.

The word, "mind," is not limited to thoughts or imagination. It includes the will or intent. A growing saint is supposed to have a mind that is the result of being joined to the Lord. Paul says, "the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." However, the opposite is still possible -- Paul also says, "If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." These exhortations would be senseless if a saint could NOT set their mind on the earthly.

If we go on with God, He will bring us to the place where Christ is revealed in us -- and we will be able to more and more know what is of Christ, as opposed to what is of the natural mind. We will then, not so much need to turn and fight the flesh and natural -- to try to make it go away or be silenced -- but we will be able to dismiss these as lies, and that which belong to a dead creation. We will not obey the flesh -- we will rather reckon ourselves dead to it -- i.e., leave it alone -- and walk according to Christ. As Paul also said, "Walk in the Spirit and (if you do) you will NOT obey the lusts of the flesh." (Gal. 5:16) This is impossible unless Christ is in us. But in Christ there is a growing freedom.



Aug 9
The Carnal Mind

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. (Rom. 8:6-9)

The carnal mind is not limited to what we call, "a dirty mind." No. The carnal mind is an earthly mind, but more specifically, it is the SELF mind – it is the mind that operates from the SELF nature that is outside of our union in spirit with Christ. It is the perspective that views and defines all things according to myself -- how it affects me, what I desire, what I think, my pride, my interests, and my emotions. The carnal mind is not merely a wrong or sinful mind. It is a DECEIVED mind. It is all we have to work with if Christ is not in us, or if we do not know Him.

There are many ways to be carnally minded. But for the believer, the most common way is to develop an earthly, self-centered Christianity. An earthly Christianity is one that emerges if -- instead of losing our SELF-ownership to Christ, we seek to save it -- but then try to get God to help us save it. The result is a unending pattern of trying to improve self, fix self, try to make self look and behave like a Christian. This is a denial of the Cross, and consequently, new life in Christ becomes an unknown, buried beneath an avalanche of substitutes.

Jesus said we must LOSE our SELF under the work of the Cross if we are to find true life in HIM. This is the only way in which the earthly, carnal mind, can become renewed through a growing knowledge of Jesus Christ. The work of God's Holy Spirit will always be to make Jesus Christ our life, and will seek to govern us by the knowledge of Him.



Aug 10
The Spiritual Mind

To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (Rom. 8:6)

The spiritual mind is the mind of Christ -- everything is governed by knowing Him -- not by facts about Him, but by inward realization of Him. Thus, all discernment is the result of knowing Jesus Christ. All direction is the result of knowing Jesus Christ. All motivation is the result of knowing Jesus Christ. These possibilities are NOT separate experiences. They are the result of Christ in us.

The Bible speaks of, "the true knowledge of God in Jesus Christ." This is only possible through an ongoing revelation. It is NOT mustered up out from us. It is not a matter of using my imagination to bring alive Bible verses. It is NOT the product of study -- although God's revelation will always agree with scripture. Neither is it emotional. No. The knowing of Christ comes out from Christ -- it is OF Christ -- all things are found in Him. Nothing is found in us.

Jesus Christ is the Truth -- and the believer is joined to Him in spirit. Thus, as God reveals Him in us, our minds will be impacted. We will grow to discern and realize Him. Our minds will be renewed through this knowledge of Him -- IF we embrace the Truth. Thus, a truly spiritually minded person is not one who merely claims all kinds of leadings, experiences, and feelings. No. A spiritually minded believer is one whose mind reflects what Jesus said would be the work of the spirit -- to reveal and glorify Jesus Christ. To make HIM to be our life.



Aug 11 Knowing the Truth

And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (John 8:32)

Jesus did not come to affirm us, or to affirm what we believe. The words, "You SHALL know the Truth, and the Truth SHALL make you free," indicate that man in Adam does NOT know the Truth, and is NOT free. He must become free -- and can only become free by knowing the Truth, who is a Person, Jesus Christ.

Man in Adam is born spiritually dead; without a shred of light or life in Him. That is because he is severed from God, who is the source of both. We are in this condition of death and darkness until we are saved. Christ is the only Light and Life. We are set free, not merely by knowing facts or teaching ABOUT Him. We are set free by knowing HIM -- this is an inward realization and experience.

Herein we see that the Truth is not merely a true theological belief system. Neither is error an incorrect theological belief system. No. Rather, Truth or error -- and ignorance -- are IN US -- and then the theology and doctrines either emerge or find a home.etc. The solution, therefore, is not merely true theology. Rather, we must BE MADE TRUE UNTO GOD in Christ. We must be made ALIVE to God in Christ. Otherwise, our doctrine, even IF true, will be dead religion.

Jesus promised that the spirit of God would work to guide us into all Truth -- which would necessitate exposing not only our doctrinal errors, but the errors that are IN US. God has promised to bring us into the Light of the Truth Himself. This is the only way to true freedom.



Aug 12
Governed by Christ

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.
(Rom. 8:14)

The Greek word translated, "led," and the context of this verse in Romans 8, makes it clear that Paul is not talking about LEADINGS. Rather, the children of God are ones who are GOVERNED by the Spirit of God.

This means more than simply being, "led by God." It would be a rather shallow Christian life if all God did was give us LEADINGS. No. Rather than simply give us leadings, God gives us Christ. He is seeking to form Christ IN US. If we come into a inner knowledge and realization of the Christ who is in us, we will not only be governed by Him, but we will be able to discern what is of Him.

Many of us want God to speak His mind to us. But God wants us to HAVE His mind. (Phil. 2:5) This is not simply a matter of knowing what to do. Rather, it is a matter of having God's goals, attitude, and purpose IN what we do. This is possible only if we know CHRIST -- in an inward way.

God can speak to us anytime He sees the necessity. But primarily in this age, God is speaking to us IN HIS SON. (Heb. 1:1-2) In other words, the inward revelation of Jesus Christ is the, "language," in which God is speaking to believers. If we SEE JESUS and HEAR this revelation -- we will most often know the will of God.

Jesus Christ is the Living Word. He is the Truth. He is the Way. God doesn't want sons and daughters who claim they are LED by God to do this or that -- all the while we otherwise walk in darkness -- all the while we are ignorant or in error regarding His Son. No. We are to be GOVERNED by the spirit -- the spirit of Truth, which is the spirit of Christ. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him." (1 Cor. 6:17)



Aug 13
Joint-Heirs With Christ

The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. (Rom. 8:16)

A child of God is one who is born of God. This is the birth from above. It happens when Christ joins us to Himself and we become one spirit with Him. (1 Cor. 6:17) We are SONS of God solely because we are IN THE SON. This is why John is able to say that the spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are SONS of God -- this is possible because we are one in spirit with THE SON.

God's purpose is inheritance in Christ for every child in Christ. But you will note that every aspect of this purpose is accomplished IN Christ; and JOINTLY with Him. In other words, we do not get a piece of the inheritance, or have a throne of our own. No. We are joint-heirs WITH Christ, and we sit WITH Him IN HIS throne. (Rev. 3:21) In short, only as we are partakers of Christ, we become partakers of all of His inheritance. To the extent that Christ governs IN US, we will govern WITH Him. Again -- we are sons and daughters of God only because we are IN THE SON.

There is nothing God that has for humanity outside of the Person of His Son. But in Christ, God has freely given us ALL things. Indeed, God's plan of inheritance is: The Father, the Son, and all who are IN the Son.



Aug 14
Suffering With Christ

We are....joint-heirs with Christ if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. (Rom. 8:17)

A saint suffers WITH Christ if the suffering is the result of the forming of Christ in us. (Gal. 4:19) This suffering is what the Bible calls, “suffering for Jesus’s sake;” “suffering with Christ,” or, “the fellowship of His sufferings.” (Phil. 3:10) Another way to describe, “the fellowship of His sufferings,” is that it is the result of, “losing one’s life for Jesus’ sake,” so that we might find true life in Him for God’s glory. (Matt. 16:24-25)

According to Paul, we cannot function as joint-heirs with Christ except it be the outcome of, “suffering WITH Him.” Sure. The suffering crucifies our life, but releases HIS life through us. His life IS inheritance. Thus, we see that even now there is a suffering that produces an inheritance in Christ -- in which we are joint-heirs.

When we, “bear about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus,” such that, “the life also of the Lord Jesus might be made manifest” (II Cor. 4:10), Christ is being formed in us -- and this means that NOW we are joint heirs in Christ. But there will yet be a greater release in the eternal ages. Note the words: “Christ in you, the HOPE of glory.” (Col 1:27) This is HIS glory, not ours. “Christ in us,” during this age is a down payment -- limited by our natural frame. But this, “hope of glory,” will become, “the realization of His glory” -- when the fullness is released at the resurrection for the eternal ages.



Aug 15 The Inward Groaning

We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. (Rom. 8:23)

The saint groans because until the redemption of our body, we are encumbered by the flesh. Paul groaned, “Who will deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Rom. 7:24-25)

Imagine being set free from the natural man and being in fellowship with Christ completely free and unhindered by YOU. This is the future of the saint: “Now we see through a glass darkly. Then face to face.” (I Cor. 13:12) Our natural man comprises much of the, “dark glass,” which often keeps us from clearly seeing the Lord. We will be free of it.

Of course, it is possible to NOW have a taste of what lies ahead. Christianity is, “Christ in you, the HOPE of glory.” (Col. 1:27) We can experience and see Christ NOW through His spirit -- but even this present experience is but a HOPE of an eternally greater fullness.

There are a number of passages in the Bible that speak about the future redemption of the Body. Some have misinterpreted these verses as meaning that our salvation is not eternally secure. But all of these passages are explained once we understand that in this age we are saved only in our spirit by being joined to the Lord -- our body and our soul makeup is not yet saved -- they cannot be because they are not yet RAISED. Many of those verses are speaking of the redemption of our body which is yet to come, but which has not yet come.

In this age, Christ dwells in us -- He is our life, and Christ is our HOPE OF GLORY. But at the resurrection, He will be the REALIZATION of glory -- He will be able to fully manifest HIS glory in and through His people. Corruption will be swallowed up by His incorruptible life.



Aug 16 **The Redemption of the Body**

We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. (Rom. 8:23)

What is salvation? Salvation is not a THING God gives us, sort of like, "a helping," of eternal life. Neither is it merely a new legal classification because of Christ. No. Salvation is life -- it is HIS LIFE in us. Christianity is Christ in us. (Col. 1:27) And if He is in us, then Life Himself is in us. Thus, He is our life (Col. 3:4), and we are alive in Him. Even in the OT we read continually, "The Lord is my salvation." (Ps. 27:1)

We are saved when Jesus Christ joins us to Himself and makes our spirit one with His Spirit. (1 Cor. 6:17) This union is the new creature in Christ -- it is where and how we are now saved. But this also means that every part of us that is outside of that union with Christ is NOT presently saved. It remains natural. This is why you are saved, but your body isn't saved. Your emotions, soul life, temperament, and brain isn't saved -- they are all natural.

God wants the natural body and the "soul man" to come under the governing life of Christ -- this is sanctification. But in this age they are not OF that eternal life, that is, they are not yet the product of death and resurrection. That is yet to come when Christ returns. The redemption of the body is yet to come -- and yet all of it is assured because right now Christ dwells in the believer.



Aug 17
Our Flesh Will Not Behave

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. (Rom. 7:18-19)

A saint is one who has been joined to the Lord, and is therefore one spirit with Him. (I Cor. 6:17) That union IS the new creature in Christ. The very presence of Christ in us creates a separation in us -- between spirit and soul. Our union with Him is in spirit. What is not in union with Him remains the flesh.

When Paul said that in his flesh dwelt no good thing, Paul was talking about what is outside of resurrection union in Christ -- his emotions, temperament, body, and all is of the human soul realm. These do not act like a new creature in Christ. Despite Paul's desire to make them obey God, they simply will not always behave. Why? Because they are not raised in Christ. Only his spirit is raised in Christ. The body and soul man remain of the natural. It is a fact that over the course of time, the natural is to be brought into subjection to the Christ Who dwells in us. But in this age, the body and soul man, even if subject to Christ, are not yet spiritual or eternal. They remain natural even if sanctified.

What this tells us is that our faith in Christ must not be moved by the fact that our flesh will not behave. Our faith is not to be based on whether our flesh behaves. It is based upon Christ whether our flesh behaves or not. The faith of a saint is to bypass their flesh and rest solely upon the Christ with whom they are united in spirit.

Standing and resting upon this Truth is not a license to sin. Rather, it is a key to freedom FROM sin -- Christ in us is made to be unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. (I Cor. 1:30)



Aug 18
The "Wretched Man"

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom. 7:24)

This is not Paul's description of himself only before his conversion. No. Actually, Paul began to discover this Truth after his conversion -- he could not discover it without Christ in him -- and it continued to be true

about himself after his conversion -- and is a description of each one of us in Christ. If we go on with the Lord, we are going to more and more discover the wretchedness that is in our, "body of death." But this will be all the more reason why our faith will not be in ourselves, but in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Jesus Christ is IN US. And He is the Truth. Thus, the more we come to know Him, the more we will see just how UNTRUE to God we really are in ourselves. But rather than bring us into condemnation over ourselves, the Truth of Christ will set us free. The Truth about Christ will show us the absolutely futility of putting any faith in this, "wretched man" that we are in ourselves. But you will note that Paul did not lament over himself -- rather, he rejoiced in Christ.

Paul was able to say, "O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death?," but then three verses later say, "There is therefore NO condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." How could he say both? Because of a verse in between. He gives the answer: "Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ." Christ in us IS our deliverance -- deliverance isn't just a THING He did for us -- Christ in us IS our present deliverance from the body of this death. He IS our life.



Aug 19
The Battle of Faith

Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that you cannot do the things that you would. (Gal. 5:16-17)

Paul is telling us the solution for the lusts of the flesh is to, "walk in the Spirit." Note that he does NOT give as the solution: To try to KEEP THE LAW.

Most of us have thought that the warfare in the Christian life is for obedience to the law. In fact, we think faith in Christ will somehow give us a POWER to obey God's law. But do we realize that when we make keeping the law THE GOAL of the Christian life that we have put ourselves right back under the law -- even if we ironically think that faith will enable us to keep it?

No. Paul says, "the law is not of faith." (Gal. 3:12) Faith does not put us back under the law. Faith sets us free to live from out of Christ through the Spirit. This is what it means to, "walk in the Spirit."

It is virtually impossible to make someone see the Truth on this matter if they are still under the law. They will accuse you of teaching license. They just don't see and cannot see – they will not see unless they are brought to the end of their self-righteous delusion by failure.

The warfare in the Christian life is one of FAITH. The issue is not what I do, but the issue is in Whom I am putting my faith. All obedience in the Christian life is to be the outcome of faith in Christ. But rather than make law-keeping the GOAL, this means that faith is the goal -- obedience to God being an outcome of resting in Him.



Aug 20

A Work of the Flesh

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings. (Gal. 5:19-21)

Most of these works of the flesh on this list are not surprising. But among them is listed, "heresies." Heresy is OF the flesh. The Greek word denotes, "a choosing."

That might seem odd, but think of this in terms of a person choosing for themselves what will be the Truth. In other words, heresy is a work of the flesh because it is the result of a person deciding for themselves what the Truth will be – based on their lusts, bias, ignorance, and unbelief.

Anytime I adjust the Truth to fit myself, believe a teaching because it fits me, or try to produce the Truth from out of myself, I am choosing what Truth will be – it is a work OF my flesh – and it is heresy.

There are always reasons why you and I believe lies and heresy: We will tend to believe a lie -- if it fits a susceptibility -- that is already in us; in our hearts. Where there is no real true knowledge of Christ, a person has only themselves and their flesh to draw upon -- out of which to form what they believe. Or, to put it another way, we will believe a lie if there is not Truth in us. This need not be conscious. Many folks are simply ignorant. But it is why people are deceived.

Real Truth comes only through a revelation of the Person of Jesus Christ. Thus, the real question is what we do when presented with the Truth Himself, Jesus Christ? Will we discard that which is of the flesh and be set free? Or will we hold to the flesh and adjust the Truth to fit ourselves and our agenda?



Aug 21
The Real Person

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yes, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (II Cor. 5:16-17)

To know someone, "after the flesh," is a two-way street. First, we know them after OUR flesh – we interpret them according to US -- based on our perceptions, bias, and agenda. Second, we know them after THEIR flesh -- based on their personality and outward nature. But Paul said that the flesh should no longer be the basis of how we know we each other. We should know each other according to Christ.

But embedded in this verse is another great Truth: God does not know us after our flesh. No. He knows us in His Son. That ought to be good news. Our flesh is not taken into account with God -- He has already put our old man under the Cross. God looks at the real person – who we are to Christ, and who Christ is to us. In the end, this is all that is going to matter -- it is going to determine eternity.

Today the church is filled with programs to help people fix up the very flesh that God has put under the Cross. We think it is God's goal to make us, "look like Jesus," through religious personality development and self-help. This is a lie. God doesn't want us to look like Jesus. He wants Christ to be free to manifest Himself through us. Today we have no clue as to the difference.

God inspired, "all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." (Heb. 4:13) God looks at our heart and at our faith – the real us. The flesh is but a facade. God wants to expose the religious facade for what it is and bring forth the very life of His Son. This is His purpose for the church.



Aug 22
Knowing According to Christ

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh....therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. (II Cor. 5:16-17)

What constitutes the new creature in Christ Jesus? It is spiritual union of Jesus Christ -- by His spirit -- with our human spirit. That is the new man. But all that is outside of that union – our natural man or flesh – is not the new creature. It remains of the old.

Most Christian people, however, do not recognize this distinction between spirit and their soul. We do not know Jesus Christ in an inward way. Thus, we do not know each other by the means of Christ. Rather, we do know each other according to the flesh. We define others according to OUR flesh, and we define them according to THEIR flesh. We look at personality, temperament, and even outward talents, and based on those, we think we know someone. But we do not know anyone until we first know Jesus Christ.

How often those with outgoing personalities are mistaken for spiritual people! In contrast, how often those who do not have good social skills are considered to be lacking in Christ! In the Body of Christ today, it is often about personality. It is about friendliness. It is about feigned love and charisma. But all could be out from the natural man as the source. According to Paul, these things do not matter to God. What matters is the life of Christ in us. We can know nothing except we see through a knowledge of HIM.



Aug 23

I Never Knew You

Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in Your name have cast out devils? and in Your name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity. (Matt. 7:22-23)

Most of us realize that we need to know Jesus Christ. Obviously, these people did not know Jesus. But Jesus said something else to them – He said that HE did not know THEM. In fact, this was the basis for His judgment upon them.

What does it mean for Jesus to KNOW US? It means that we have fully opened ourselves to Him -- and allowed Him to make Himself at home in us. We are in the Light -- as He is in the Light. We have real fellowship with Him.

Of course, Christ already does know us – completely. But Jesus is speaking of a person's willingness to allow Him access. These people gave Him no access – they were hiding behind all of the things they had done FOR Him. They were evidencing a self-righteousness. It is amazing

that these people rehearsed all the good things they did for Jesus -- but they did not mention anything He had done for THEM.

Note that Jesus called them, "you that work iniquity" -- despite all the things they had said they did for Him. The point is that it does not matter what we think we do for God -- Jesus Christ wants US. He wants us to lose our entire selves to Him -- to open ourselves to Him for whatever it takes for Him to have His will IN US.



Aug 24

Dominion Over Your Faith?

Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand. (II Cor. 1:24)

People who wrongly have dominion over the faith of other people all have common traits. First, all of them claim to have God-given authority to do so. Thus, often they claim to speak for God -- to you. In short, they claim to hear from God FOR YOU -- you cannot hear from God directly. They may not say it that directly, but that is the bottom line in practice. Second, based on this claim of authority, they determine for others what to believe and how to live -- all, "in the name of love." Third, they claim that if you refuse to obey them and submit to them, you will face consequences from God.

If you can convince people that you speak for God you can get them to do almost anything -- you can get them to knowingly drink Kool Aid with poison in it. People who demand dominion over the faith of others are spiritually sick people. They are never servants of Jesus Christ. This is the kind of thing cults are made of -- but it is also practiced under other names in the Body of Christ -- "shepherding," "the umbrella of protection," "accountability groups," "apostolic authority," etc.

The purpose of all true ministry is NEVER to have dominion over the faith of another, not even, "for their good." No. The purpose of true ministry is to get people into their own relationship with Christ so that HE can have dominion over them as their only Lord. Being available to teach, and to give counsel, is much different than thinking you are God's authority over them in His stead. There is ONE Head of the Body. And there is ONE Mediator between God and man. There are NO sub-heads. There are no sub-mediators. No one who knows Jesus Christ will violate these basic Christian Truths.



Aug 25
Edification, Not Destruction

For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed. (II Cor. 10:8)

There have always been those in the body of Christ who have claimed to have authority from God over the lives of others. In most cases, they will teach that you need to submit to them in order to keep in God's will – and in many cases, it doesn't matter if they happen to be wrong -- they claim that God will nevertheless back them up as His authority. In short, it is your job to submit to them. It is their job to hear from God FOR YOU. Such teaching is not the Truth; not freedom in Christ. It is, in fact, heresy.

Paul was an apostle, and as such, the highest authority in ministry. Yet he told those he taught that his authority over them was the authority of TRUTH – his ministry was to preach the Truth, and thus EDIFY each believer in Christ. How is this done? By being a vessel through whom Christ could minister life – and thus establish each person fully mature in Christ FOR THEMSELVES.

Paul said he had NO authority to tear down the relationship another person had with Jesus. But this destruction is exactly what happens if a leader makes relationship with God contingent upon a person's submission to THEM. This cuts off the believer from direct access to God and tears apart the very fabric of Christianity – Christ in the individual.

A sure sign of spiritual destruction is when unity is imposed through law – a law that requires submission to a leader -- if we are to keep right with God. In contrast, a sure sign of edification is when unity is the result of LIFE -- EACH believer established in Christ for themselves, resulting in a voluntary and automatic unity with each other in Him.

Unity in the body of Christ is only possible if EACH branch is abiding in the Vine. This is the job of true ministry -- to make Christ the head of each believer, and then because of that, the body as a whole.



Aug 26
Spiritual Guides

Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. (Heb. 13:7)

This verse from Hebrews is a woeful translation. No spiritual leader in the Body of Christ has the, "rule over you." Paul emphatically states that elsewhere. (see II Cor. 1:24 and II Cor. 10:8) This verse could accurately be paraphrased, "Allow yourself to be persuaded of the Truth by those who are your spiritual guides. Follow them as an example only as they follow Christ in Truth -- which will be evidenced by their lives."

Leadership must take strong action to protect the church from heresy or open sin. But this is much different than leadership imposing their authority on the personal lives of others -- because they think they have such authority from God. No. True ministry is the outcome of the work of the Cross in the minister -- so that LIFE might be ministered to others. Paul said, "We have this ministry....so then death works in us, but life in you." (II Cor. 4:1,12) That is true ministry, and it is the only way in which true ministry is from out of Christ.

Try to impose unity, obedience, submission, or even so called, "love," through law and what you will create is death. You will undermine the personal relationship people can have with Christ, and you will destroy true unity, not only in Christ, but even in families. All ministry that is of God EDIFIES the believer, personally, and individually, in Christ. Truth in Christ, and Truth in Christ alone can edify. And because this is first individual, then there is a basis for true love and unity with others.



Aug 27
This is the Work of God

Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." (John 6:28-29)

The, "work of God," is faith. That is obviously a play on words. But there is a great Truth behind this statement. That Truth is that there is absolutely nothing we can do to merit anything from God -- no work we can do will make us righteous, or maintain our righteousness before God. But once we realize this fact -- and ONLY if we realize this fact -- and then embrace it -- is true faith possible. In short, since, "faith comes by hearing" -- I must hear the Truth of my utter barrenness before the Lord, and if I do, then faith will come to me IN ME -- but it will be a faith in One, "other than myself" -- Jesus Christ. Jesus simply likens this to a WORK because, once God brings light, this is a choice.

Faith does not just happen. It is not in us by nature. We cannot muster it up out of ourselves. No. God must initiate by bringing light --

revealing in us His Son. Then once we awaken to the Truth God brings, we can either love light rather than darkness, or love darkness rather than light. The light God brings makes this choice possible. If we choose to embrace and surrender to God, then a greater faith comes to be in us. This is, “the work of God.”

Herein we see another Truth about faith: Faith is never a meritorious work that I do. It is never my, “contribution,” to my salvation. No. Indeed, true faith is the outcome of seeing that I have no merits, no works, and no righteousness, and no contribution possible in myself. Faith is the, “work,” I do to rest in HIS finished work for me. This is what Hebrews means when it says, “Let us labor (work) to enter His rest.” (Hebrews 4:11)

If I have seen the Truth of God in Jesus Christ, it is simply not possible for me to continue trying to maintain righteousness or grace by my works, or by anything about myself. The Truth will set me free from that error, and bring me into the life and reality of Jesus Christ – from out of which all righteousness and good works emerge.



Aug 28 The True Sabbath Rest

There remains therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own works, as God did from his. (Heb. 4:9-10)

God created the first creation in six days, including man himself on the sixth day. He rested on the seventh day, not because He was tired, but as a celebration of His finished work -- God rested because it was finished. There was nothing left to add, nor left to improve. But that first creation fell into the realm of darkness when Adam sinned against God.

Through Jesus Christ, rather than repair or resuscitate the old creation, God has made a brand new creation. Jesus Christ ushered in this new creation in HIMSELF by being raised from the dead on the first day of a new week – showing that His life would be a brand new start of a brand new creation – one that had never existed before. Indeed, if we want to consider the resurrection to have occurred on the eighth day, eight is the number for resurrection in scripture.

In the new creation, the sabbath rest is not a day, but a Person. We, “remember the sabbath and keep it holy,” by entering into Christ, the Rest of God -- by ceasing from all of our labors, and resting in His finished work. It is finished in Jesus Christ. To continue to keep an

actual seventh day, or any day, does nothing. We are to rest in Christ as the only sabbath rest that remains for the people of God.



Aug 29
The Seed of Abraham

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He said not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ....and if you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Gal. 3:16, 29)

There is only ONE seed of Abraham: Jesus Christ. He IS the Promise of the Father, who joins His people to Himself by His Spirit. But if we are IN Christ, then through that oneness with Him, we are likewise the seed of Abraham, and joint-heirs with Him. In short, we are the seed of Abraham only if we are IN THE SEED -- Jesus Christ. God has freely given all that He has to give us IN His Son. There is therefore nothing outside of Christ that God has to give. Thus, to the extent that we are partakers of Christ, we are partakers of the eternal inheritance.

The eternal purpose of God can be stated as such: The Father, the only begotten Son of God, and then, all who are in the Son.

Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." (John 14:2) "The Father's house," is a term that always represents inheritance – in this case, Christ Himself.

Jesus said He was preparing an place of inheritance for us in Himself. Hebrews affirms, "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loves he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives. (Heb. 12:5-6) The word translated, "receives," means, "positions." Jesus Christ is positioning us in Himself as the Father's house – that we might receive in Him an inheritance. This is the destiny of the Seed of Abraham.



Aug 30
Heavenly Places in Christ

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. (Eph. 1:3)

The way to receive blessing from God is not by keeping laws, rules, or principles. It is not by anything we do whatsoever. It is not the result of practicing the right religion. ALL of the blessings of God are found solely in His Son. Thus, it is through experiencing Christ that the blessings of God come into our experience.

If we are born from above, Christ is already in us – He has joined us to Himself in spirit. Thus, “heavenly places,” are not places in heaven. No. “Heavenly places,” are in Christ – the same Christ who dwells in us NOW. Thus, because Christ is in us, those, “heavenly places,” are in us. This means that right NOW, in Christ, we have been blessed with all spiritual blessings from the Father.

Everything that God has to give to us is found only in His Son -- and freely given in His Son. (Rom. 8:32) NOTHING of value is found elsewhere. But the work of the Spirit is to form Christ in us, and as this happens, the blessings that are in Christ will be likewise unfolded.



Aug 31
The Basis of Christ in Us

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. (Eph. 1:3)

When we are born from above, Christ joins us to Himself and we become one spirit with Him. (I Cor. 6:17) But the natural man remains. Thus, we have the separation within each believer of soul vs. spirit. We have the new creation – our resurrection union with Christ in spirit – but we also have all that is outside of that -- body and soul, which remains natural in this age.

All that God has for us is found in Jesus Christ – and is ministered to us through the very life of Christ that dwells in us. Nothing of value is found in natural man. Yet because we do not understand this Truth, many of us continue to try to live from out of the old life – try to live on the basis of the natural man. We try to make our natural man, "look like Jesus," through religious effort. We think that we must make our flesh behave to earn blessings. We think that Christ has come to dwell in us to, "bring out the best in us." No. Rather than fix up the natural man, God wants to crucify our old life – which is why Jesus told us that we must pick up our Cross daily and LOSE our lives in order to find Christ as our life. It is futile to try to walk with Jesus Christ on the basis of our old nature. We must put all of it aside -- lose it -- and leave it alone, and

realize that God is forming Christ in us and bringing us into the reality of new life in His Son.

A great description of one who has been crucified with Christ and raised in Him is found in Gal. 2:20. Paul said, "Yet not I, but Christ." This is freedom and it is God's purpose.



Sep 1 The One Elect

According as he has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. (Eph. 1:4-5)

There is only ONE elect of God – Jesus Christ. You will note that everyone else is chosen IN HIM – and that this election is unto, not salvation -- but unto a purpose FOR the saved: "that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."

The notion that God elects some to salvation, and others to damnation, and that this was settled before any of us were born, is not only nonsense, but heresy. It is another gospel, and misrepresents the character and purpose of God through Christ.

The meaning here is that we are chosen, not – to BE in Him – but chosen BECAUSE we are in Him. Jesus Christ is the ONE chosen or elect of God. Thus, once we are IN HIM -- then because He is the ONE elect -- we are also the elect because we are IN HIM.

All that God has for humanity is found only IN CHRIST. HE is the DOOR. Thus, it is only as Christ is received, and then experienced, that all that is IN HIM can be received and experienced. Thus, we are CHOSEN IN HIM.

All that God has given and is doing is IN CHRIST. As the only begotten Son, He is the one elect of God. The Father, the Son, and all who are in the Son – this is the plan of God in terms of inheritance.



Sep 2

Complete in Christ

For in him dwells all the fullness of Godhood bodily. And you are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power. (Col. 2:9-10)

In Christ dwells ALL of the fullness of DEITY bodily – this is the correct translation, and a direct statement to the effect that Jesus Christ, The Son of Man, is fully God. But Paul not only says that in Christ dwells all the fullness of God, but He also tells us that Christ dwells in US. Thus, we are COMPLETE in Him, and He is completely God.

To be complete in Christ is not the same as being mature in Christ. Just as life received must mature, so it is in Christ. In other words, the Christ in Whom we are complete must now be formed in us (Gal. 4:19). We have all of Him, and all in Him, but we must go on to discover Him. None of that could happen unless we were already complete in Him.

Those words, “you are complete in Him,” carry tremendous ramifications. Indeed, most of Colossians 2 is a warning against those who would suggest that we are NOT complete solely in Jesus Christ. This Truth means that the moment Christ comes to dwell in us we have ALL that God has to give. Paul affirms by saying, “God has freely given us all things in Christ.” (see Rom. 8:32) Thus, despite the fact that we must grow to discover what we have received, it means that there is NOTHING left to receive. If we are complete in Christ we do not need to receive some other gift, or dimension of life, or have an additional experience, in order to come into the full purpose of God. No. IN CHRIST dwells the fullness of God – and Christ is IN US. Now, He simply needs to be unfolded TO us, IN us, and then THROUGH us.



Sep 3

The Fullness of God in Christ

For in him dwells all the fullness of Godhood bodily. And you are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power. (Col. 2:9-10)

Christianity is, “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Col. 1:27) This is because IN CHRIST dwells the fullness of God, and in the believer dwells Christ. This makes us complete in Christ – not incomplete, or lacking, in any resource that God has for us.

So much error in the Christian church is the result of neglecting or denying this one Truth – that the believer is complete SOLELY in Christ. Instead, we have added additional experiences to Christ, saying only then do we have all that God intends. Or we have mandated that believers belong to a church or to a group – saying only then can they be complete. Or we have demanded obedience to laws and rules as the means of completing the believer. No. If Christ is in us, we are complete – in HIM.

It is only because we are already complete in Christ that it is possible for Christ to be formed in us. And since we are already complete in Christ, it is possible to discover, “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” that are, “hid in Him.” (Col. 2:3) You will note that there is nothing ADDED to Christ. No. All these things are FROM HIM -- because He is all.



Sep 4 **Hid With Christ in God**

You are complete in Him...for you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with him in glory. (Col. 2:9, 3:3-4)

Christ has not merely given us a new life because He died, but He has given us HIMSELF. In other words, if we are in Him, HE IS our life. This is how we are complete in Him. Everything is within His life, and nothing is outside of it – and the Person of Christ constitutes the very life of the believer.

It is difficult for most of us to get away from the idea that because of Christ we are given a THING or classification called LIFE. Or that because of Christ, we are given a THING called, “forgiveness.” But in reality, we are given CHRIST HIMSELF. We are joined to Him and have become ONE with Him in spirit. (I Cor. 6:17) Thus, it is IN HIM that we have life – HIS LIFE – indeed, in Him we have all things freely. (Rom. 8:32)

If Christ is our life then, “we are dead and our life is hid with Christ in God.” Practically speaking, this means that we are dead to living from out of ourselves unto God. We are no longer the source of anything. But rather, we are alive because we are living by faith FROM OUT OF Christ – He is our resource for all things spiritual and material. Much of the work of the Spirit of God is geared to showing us we are dead and that Christ is our life, and in teaching us how to live by faith in this reality.



Sep 5 **If Christ Be in You**

And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. (Rom. 8:10)

This is another way of describing the separation in each believer between the new creature in Christ and all that remains outside of that new creation -- and remains carnal. We are joined to the Lord and made one spirit with Him -- that is the new man. All that is outside of that union remains of the old. This is the separation of soul and spirit in the believer.

When we are joined to the Lord we become with Him in His death and His resurrection. This means we are dead to the old body of sin, and yet alive to Christ. This is finished. But we will spend the rest of our lives discovering Christ and coming to experience this finished Truth. That is Christian growth and sanctification.

Note that all of this is the result of CHRIST IN US. Until Christ is in us, there is no separation between life and death in us -- but there is only death. Until Christ is in us, there is no means by which we can be set free from untruth, because there is no Truth in us. In Christ are all things that are of God, because all of the fullness of God dwells in Him.

This is why Jesus tells us to lose OUR life in order to find Him as our life -- we are to lose possession of that old, natural, soul life -- LOSE that which is DEAD -- in the sense of complete relinquishment to God for whatever it takes to set us free. Then the Christ to Whom we have been joined in spirit can be manifested in us and through us.



Sep 6 **The Family of God**

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. (Eph. 3:14-15)

God is not a family. But God has a family.

Note that this means that God is NOT reproducing Himself by making us all, "little gods" -- and that these, "little gods" constitute a family who

IS God. No. That is the basis of some terrible heresy. Rather, believers will never be God, little gods, or divine. We are partakers of Divine nature -- not because we have been given a divine nature of our own -- but because we are joined to the Lord. In short, we are partakers of Divine nature only if we are partakers of Christ.

The Family of God consists of the Father, and then His only begotten Son, who became God incarnate, and finally, all who are IN the Son. Note how God uses family names: The Father, The Son, and sons and daughters IN THE SON. Again, we are in the family of God because we are in the Son, and the Son is in the Father.

The phrase, "ye are gods," (John 10:34) must be taken in context from where it is quoted, Ps. 82:6-7: "Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High. But ye shall die like men." Clearly, this is just an expression -- and the context shows it means, "children of God." This is verified by the rest of scripture.

Frankly, anyone who thinks that they are a, "little god," is deluded, and does not know the Truth. A child of God is not a little god, but exactly as stated above -- one who is a child of God IN CHRIST -- He is the only begotten Son, and we are children of God only if we are IN HIM.



Sep 7

The Living Word

And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. You search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. (Jn. 8:38-40)

Jesus always spoke of the Bible as the inspired Word of God. He repeatedly stated that the scriptures -- which at that time were only the OT -- He said the scriptures spoke and testified to HIM. Christ is everywhere in the OT -- in prophecy, and in type and shadow. The Pharisees also believed that the Bible was the Word of God. Indeed, they believed that in the study of the law, and in good works, were found the way to salvation. And yet they did not even recognize the very Messiah of which the scriptures foretold, and whose arrival was supposedly their passion. They personally saw Him and yet called Him a devil. Why? They did not have the Word -- the Living Word -- abiding IN THEM.

Jesus puts His finger on a terrible possibility in this passage -- the possibility of knowing Biblical doctrine, but of not having a heart for God.

This leads to a condition that is common even today -- that of mistaking faith in doctrine for faith in Christ. It is possible to know every doctrine of the Bible and yet to never come to Christ. This possibility has deceived the church for the last two-thousand years.

Professing Christians disagree on some of the most basic of Christian doctrines. The problem is not that the Word is difficult. The problem is that they hold to the written Word, but have never come to see the Living Person -- and thus, they are left to their brain power, bias, upbringing, and natural man to interpret the Word. They construct statements of faith, and some appoint themselves as defenders of that faith. But they are defenders only of their own belief system and self-importance. There is no life in it.

It is possible to hold to sound Biblical doctrine, but to do it in an unloving or even militant way -- to condemn others who don't see the Truth you see. It is likewise possible to be in great error, but to be a smiling heretic -- one who has learned how to manipulate others with a charismatic personality. None of this is life or Truth. All of it must come under the Cross along with the old man to which it belongs. What needs to emerge is Jesus Christ -- the Christ who dwells in His people. Christ cannot be seen in His people until people, "come to Him," that is, completely surrender and lose themselves to Him. Then Christ will be our life, and the written Word that tells the Truth about Him will likewise come alive.



Sep 8

The Light of Men

In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. (John 1:4)

How does a person receive LIGHT -- which is the true knowledge of God in Christ JESUS? John says that the LIGHT is in His LIFE. Sure. Jesus is a Person who is both the LIGHT and the LIFE. He said so. Thus, BOTH are found in Him alone. Or, to put it another way, if Christ is in us, He is our life -- but this is why it is then possible to grow to know Him -- because He is likewise the personification of all light and Truth.

Paul used a phrase that captures Jesus as both light and life in the believer: He said, "I travail until Christ be FORMED in you." (Gal. 4:19) In the original language, the phrase, "formed in you," means, "to be inwardly realized and expressed." That shows that if Christ is in us as our life that this is only the beginning of a life process -- God then wants to bring us into a realization of Christ. But if that happens, the Christ who is

our life will be made manifest to us -- we will grow to know Him -- and HE is THE LIGHT.

Resurrection life in Jesus Christ is not a static life. When we receive Christ we receive ALL that God has to give. But now we must discover and experience IN CHRIST what God has given in Him. Primary to this will be LIGHT -- the light that is within the life -- the Truth that is found in the Person. This is really how the Spirit of God, "guides us into all Truth." Christ is formed in us and we come to know God in Christ.



Sep 9

The Light of His Life

In him was life; and the life was the light of men. (John 1:4)

The Light of the world, Jesus Christ, is also THE LIFE. Since Jesus Christ is a Living Person, then it is correct to say that His Life and the Light are ONE. If you want the Light of God you have to have Jesus Christ as your LIFE: "This is LIFE eternal, that they might KNOW thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ." (John 17:3)

Contrast this to a heresy called, "Gnosticism" -- which infiltrated the early church, and which is alive everywhere today. The Gnostic heresy stated that knowledge -- knowledge that could be found in each of us by nature -- was the means of getting you closer to God. Just know YOURSELF, or find the key to unlock this latent knowledge and potential that is already in you -- and you could find your way to God.

Today we hear, "Discover the Champion in You," and, "Be All that YOU Can Be," taught everywhere as if this is true Christian teaching. It is not. It is disguised Gnosticism. In Gnostic teaching, Jesus was made to be an illuminator who came to show us how to know ourselves, and how to find this hidden knowledge in ourselves.

"Gnosticism," comes from a Greek word that means, "knowledge." Gnosticism turned knowledge into the means by which we draw close to God and cure what ails us. And that knowledge was found in man as the source. Jesus came to help us find it in ourselves.

The Truth is, we have NO Truth or light in us by nature. Truth must come to us from the outside into us from the outside by revelation -- by the means of the indwelling of Jesus Christ. Scripture makes it clear that, "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid IN Christ." (Col. 2:3) Thus, in order receive light, we must FIRST abide in Christ by faith. Then, as we abide in Him for all our life -- He will also be our light. IN HIM

is life – and that life IS the LIGHT of men. All that God has for us is found IN HIS SON. And God has freely given all things in Jesus Christ.



Sep 10
Jesus Is Come in the Flesh

Hereby know you the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof you have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. (1 John 4:1-4)

The Bible as a whole is the written standard for Truth. But in the Bible there are given several direct tests for Truth. This passage is one of them: Paul says, "Jesus is come in the flesh." This test for Truth is actually equal to, "Christ in us." (Col. 1:27) This is Christianity. The work of God's spirit will always be, yes, to preach that Christ is come to dwell in us, but more so, will be to actually reveal Him in us.

Gnosticism, the heresy against which this test is given, taught that Jesus did not become a real human being – the Word did not BECOME flesh. He merely appeared like He did. Gnosticism taught that God would never have anything to do with the material world, let alone actually become one of us.

John writes against this heresy because it is a denial of the very definition of Christianity: Christ in us. If the Word never became flesh, then He does not come today to dwell in flesh and blood humanity. If Jesus did not become flesh and dwell among us, then today He does not come to live IN humanity. It is this reality of Christ in us, that, according to John, divides error from the Truth; Christ from antichrist.

There are many substitutes today for Christ in us as our life. Christianity is filled with teaching geared to fixing the old man in Adam; of putting the emphasis upon US, rather than upon Christ as the source of all. But once we realize that the purpose of God is found solely in Christ -- and worked out only through Christ in us -- then all of these other answers are exposed for what they are: They are indirect denials that Jesus Christ, right now, IS COME in the flesh -- to dwell in flesh and blood human beings. They are denials, either of the fact, or they are denials of what it means for Christ to dwell in us. And John says, "This is antichrist."



Sep 11

The Spirit of Anti-Christ

...and every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist... (I John 4:1-4)

The spirit of antichrist will always distort or deny the Truth of Jesus Christ IS come in the flesh. "Jesus is come in the flesh," is equal to, "Christ in us." (Col. 1:27) This is the foundation of Christianity, and the spirit of antichrist will either redefine what it means, or believers will simply be blinded to the reality of Christ within.

One common ploy of the enemy is blind Christians to the fact that Christ in us -- is NOT us. The enemy will blind us to the Truth of the separation of spirit and soul in the believer -- to the distinction between the Christ who is in us and our natural man. And once that happens, Christians will spend their energy trying to fix up, improve, and enhance their soul-man -- and try to make themselves, "look like Jesus."

Despite the fact that we are joined to the Lord and one spirit with Him (I Cor. 6:17), we are never Christ, and Christ is never us. Rather, "we have this Treasure IN an earthen vessel." The two remain distinct. Christ is the source of all -- we are not the source of anything.

There are many teachings today that suggest that Christ died to bring out OUR greatness. No. Jesus Christ is not an enhancement to our natural man. Rather, God wants US to come under the work of the Cross so that CHRIST might be made manifest through us. (II Cor. 4:10)

The spirit of antichrist will offer a substitute for Christ, or addition to Christ -- usually one contributed by natural man. The spirit of Truth will always glorify Christ alone -- not the vessel through whom Christ is manifested.



Sep 12

Is Jesus Accursed, or Lord?

...that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. (I Cor. 12:3)

Paul is referring to heathen religion and idol worship -- which would have been familiar to the Greek Corinthians. In those heathen religions, an "accursed," sacrifice was devoted to destruction by the worshiper -- into the hands of a pagan god. This sacrifice bore the wrath of the angry

god as a substitute for the worshiper – in other words, once the pagan god accepted the blood of the accursed sacrifice, any wrath or punishment could be lifted from the worshiper.

Now, if you are honest, you recognize that this is exactly the kind of redemption that many Christian people believe – except they paste on it the names of Jesus as the sacrifice, and the Father as the wrathful god. Many believe that Jesus was the accursed sacrifice, devoted to the wrath of God as a substitute for us, so that God could then lift from us that wrath, and forgive us. And yet this is precisely what Paul says is NOT the Truth – indeed anyone who teaches it cannot be speaking by the Spirit of God.

The Bible says, "God so LOVED the world that He gave....." The Bible does not say, "God was so angry with the world...." The issue here is not merely theology. It is the nature and character of God -- and of His Son. Was Jesus merely the recipient of God's wrath in our stead? Or was He the Lamb of God who bore our SIN -- so that by conquering it, and death, He would become LORD of all?

The Truth is that Jesus was NOT, "accursed" -- but LORD, in His Redemption. Jesus did not become an accursed object, given to bear God's wrath -- so that God's punishment of death could be lifted from us. Rather, Jesus bore OUR SIN – indeed, He bore the Adam race itself -- so that we could be delivered unto newness of life. Yes, He did bear the judgment for sin for us -- death -- but this is much different than saying He bore an angry punishment.

Why is this important? Because if Jesus died to merely appease the wrath of God -- as an accursed sacrifice -- then the Adam race did not die in Him. Rather, the Adam race is merely, "reclassified," as forgiven -- because God is now appeased. Thus, there is no new creation. What would emerge is a Christianity that is not NEW life – but one that is the old, natural life preserved – because Jesus, "bore the punishment." Rather than LOSE our life by picking up our Cross, we could simply hold onto it -- and live a, "natural man Christianity." Thus, "Jesus is accursed," represents a distortion of the Truth about the CROSS, and of Christianity itself.

Obviously, no one is going to go around preaching, "Jesus is accursed." But where the Cross is distorted, this is the meaning behind it -- whether or not people realize it. Paul is talking about -- not the outward facade of false teaching. He is talking about the real core and spirit behind it: A denial of the Cross and a denial of Jesus as Lord.

"Jesus is Lord," means that He bore death and conquered it – not by fixing up the Adam race – but by taking it down into a complete death – and then by being raised to NEWNESS of life. Paul is telling us that any

revelation or manifestation of the Spirit of God is going to carry the Truth of the Cross – the full meaning of it in His people.



Sep 13 **Spiritual Gifts vs. Natural Gifts**

Natural gifts are of our natural birth – that which is born of flesh IS flesh. (Jn. 3:6) But spiritual gifts are out from the birth from above. That which is born of spirit IS spirit.

It is good and right to take a natural gift and offer it from ourselves up to God -- and let God use it to His glory. But a spiritual gift is not given from ourselves to God. It is given of God to us. God GIVES spiritual gifts. They are not of the natural makeup. They are of Christ.

Now, of course, when a gift operates through a saint, it operates THROUGH the saint. The Spirit of God does not BYPASS us. But this is why there is often confusion. In fact, there are many today who are operating from out of their SOUL -- and this is mistaken for the spirit. It is not of God, but of man. Again -- the SOURCE of any spiritual gift is the spirit of Christ. The source is NOT the soul or emotions of man.

The spiritual gifts are outward expressions of the life of Christ through us by the spirit of God. Their purpose is always to build up others in Christ – the purpose of the Spirit of God, according to Jesus, is to testify, glorify, and bring us into the knowledge of HIM.



Sep 14 **Stewards of the Mysteries of God**

Let a man so account of us: As the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. (I Cor. 4:1-2)

In the first century, a steward owned nothing. But he was in charge of his master's possessions. A FAITHFUL steward would be therefore be faithful to his master by treating those possessions according to that fact -- all belonged, not to him -- but to his master.

FAITHFULNESS, before it means anything else, speaks of a RELATIONSHIP. I am first faithful to a PERSON. Thus, a minister who is a, "faithful steward of the mysteries of God," is one who is first faithful

to God Himself – everything he does emerges from that -- and this results in that steward never taking ownership over what belongs to God, but does with them what God would do.

A faithful steward has freely received. Thus, he freely gives to others – as God directs -- of that which God freely gives to him. He does this, not so much to merely keep a principle, but because he knows he owns nothing. He simply freely gives what he has freely received. His faithfulness to his master is the reason.

Faithfulness, as noted, is never taking personal ownership over that which belongs to God and using it for myself. To say that positively, faithfulness is allowing what always belonged to God to continue to belong to Him – I treat His possessions accordingly with reverence. This definition of faithfulness is also the definition of holiness. A faithful steward never puts the hand of flesh to that which belongs to God.

Scripture tells us that we do not even belong to ourselves. (I Cor. 6:19) Therefore, the faithful steward will not take ownership over even himself. This is the RELATIONSHIP with Christ which ought to govern all – I am faithful over THINGS because I am faithful to the One who is Lord of all.



Sep 15
Wrath Will Praise Him

The wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath You shall restrain. (Ps. 76:10)

Some people have made this verse to mean that if God allows evil then evil is God's will -- they say that otherwise, if it were not His will, He would restrain evil. That is error. Evil is never God's will. But in order for God to have His ultimate will, He may temporarily allow that which is NOT His will. It does not take much intelligence to see that most of what has gone on in this age, indeed, most of what has gone on in the church, is NOT God's will. It is the will of man, and of the enemy.

Why does God allow evil? Because He allows free will. God also allows evil so that it may be proven to BE evil. Often it is only if God allows evil to come to full maturity that people will learn. It is only if people experience the consequences of choosing the evil will some turn to God -- or at least be left without the excuse of ignorance for refusing Him.

A sovereign God can put His hand to anything and make it to be His will. But likewise, a sovereign God is perfectly free to take His hand off and allow that which is against His will. In this age -- generally speaking - - God has taken His hand off. He has purposed to work only through Jesus Christ by bringing His people into His will through the indwelling of His Son. The free will of humanity, and the eternal purpose of God, demands this.

God allows sin. But by definition, sin is AGAINST the will of God. Therefore, it is folly to say that sin IS the will of God -- even though He allows it. God is simply allowing people to reject Him -- this is not a contradiction to the sovereignty of God -- rather, God is allowing sin WITHIN His sovereignty. He is allowing free choice.

Psalm 76:10 is simply declaring that God will have the last word. He will eventually make even wrath or rebellion against His will to praise Him -- even if it does nothing more than prove the evil of sin, and that the full evil of sin cannot defeat His purpose in Christ. God is proving that the will of God is the ONLY Truth, and the only way to life.

The wrath of man may seem to reign. But God is allowing the cup of iniquity to be filled against Him so that all that He has done in Jesus Christ may face and defeat it -- and that Christ may be shown to be all in all.



Sep 16
Christ Made Unto Us All Things

That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glories, let him glory in the Lord. (1 Cor. 1:29-31)

Passages like this one are intended by God to show us that Christianity is not a matter of us being made to, "look like Jesus." Rather, it is a matter of us being crucified so that the Christ who is in us might be seen. Thus, God does not make us, or give us, THINGS like wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. No. God gives us Christ, who is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

This is so certain that Paul says, "He that glories, let him glory in the Lord." In short, this is Christ in us -- it is not us trying to be like Jesus.

Religious man always tries to do in himself what only Christ can BE and DO through Him. Why? Usually because he has side-stepped the Cross, or is blind to it. The Cross will crucify ALL of that – as Paul also said, "Yet not I, but Christ...."

Obedience will be the natural outflow of Christ as our life – as opposed to trying to make ourselves look like Him through human effort. The person through whom Christ is manifested is not TRYING through human effort to look like Jesus. Rather, the person has left themselves alone, and is abiding in the Vine by faith.

Those who manifest Christ the most are aware of it the least. This would always be the result of losing one's life to Christ – we would no longer be trying to be something – we would be obsessed with HIM.



Sep 17

What is Sanctification?

Sanctification is Jesus Christ in us, coming to be seen through us. (I Cor. 1:30) It is NOT us made to act like Jesus. Sanctification happens only as the outcome of our choice of faith to lose ourselves to Christ. The result is not human effort, but His life flowing through us.

Sanctification is, of course, holiness. But the word, "holiness," means that I belong to God, and not to myself. I belong to God even with regard to His own purpose in me. Thus, holiness is not a matter of me taking ownership over myself in an attempt to, "be like Jesus." No. That is of the flesh even if I convince myself that I am doing it FOR GOD. Rather, true holiness is the result of leaving myself – indeed, losing myself – to Christ, in order that He might be in me all that He desires.

Sanctification begins when I take my hands off of myself and ask God to do whatever it takes to bring me into the fullness of Christ. One of the greatest hindrances to real sanctification is not sin, but religious man alive and well, trying to sanctify his own life. Sanctification is not a human work. It is the outcome of Christ in us -- Jesus Christ in us is the only holy life.



Sep 18

Holiness vs. Unholiness

“Holiness,” “sanctification,” and the name, “saint” -- all of these come from the same Greek root -- HAGIOS. That root means, “to be set apart for God’s use.” In more modern terms, this simply means TO BELONG TO GOD.

The spirit of God -- the PARACLETE -- is the HOLY Spirit. Thus, put the two terms together: HAGIOS and PARACLETE. If the spirit of God is in you, then by definition, you are in Christ, and thus, set apart for God. You are HOLY. Not because of anything about YOU, but because you are baptized into Christ by His, "spirit that sets apart" -- the Holy Spirit.

The SAINT is a person who belongs to God – we are not our own, but are bought with a price. (I Cor. 6:19) The every term SAINT means exactly that. Of course, "belonging to God," would mean we should not sin. We should not use ourselves for anything that is contrary to the will of God. But whether we realize it or not, it also means that we must not belong to ourselves at all -- not even for our own RELIGIOUS purposes. This means that self-righteousness is UNHOLINESS. It means that to worship God my way, or to use the things of God for my purposes, is likewise UNHOLY.

Jesus told us we must lose our lives to Him – this would mean we belong to Him and are therefore holy IN HIM. In fact, it is the only way to be HOLY. But this also means that if we do not lose our lives fully to Him that this would be unholiness.

The ramifications of this Truth are immense. It means that a Christian -- or a SAINT -- is, by very definition, one who belongs to God, and who does not belong to themselves. That is the very identity of those in Christ. It is not something added to Christ in us, or something one has and that another does not have. No. If you are IN CHRIST you are not your own. You belong to God. You are HOLY.



Sep 19

Religious Natural Man

Religious, natural man, owns himself – and it is out of that self-ownership that he tries to live for God. Then he laments when God won’t help him. Indeed, it is even possible to offer to God a faith, simply because we think doing so will get something from Him. None of this is Christianity. Indeed, it is the outcome of being blind to the Cross; of neglecting the Cross; or of refusing it. The Cross applied in the personal

life will absolutely expose and bring to an end all of the attempts of natural man to live for God.

Jesus told us that there is only one thing we can do with our natural lives: LOSE them by picking up the personal Cross. Then abide in Christ. Until we do we are going to try to live for God on the basis of ourselves. But if we will lose our lives for the sake of Jesus by picking up our personal Cross, then we will find, and be able to live from OUT OF, Jesus Christ as our life.

The blindness of the church to the essential of the personal Cross, coupled with the blindness to the fact that Christianity is CHRIST IN US – the two always go together – this blindness accounts for much of the spiritual sickness of the last two-thousand years.



Sep 20
Walking in the Spirit

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. (Gal 5:25)

What does it mean, “to walk in the Spirit?” It means to live from out of Jesus Christ as my life – drawing upon Him for all things.

If we are saved, we are joined to the Lord and made one spirit with Him. (1 Cor. 6:17) But since Jesus Christ is THE LIFE, then if I am one with Him in spirit, then I am alive with HIS life – indeed, Christ IS my life. (Col. 3:4) Thus, to walk in the Spirit is to walk in that spiritual union with Him, living from OUT OF HIM by faith.

Jesus Himself said that the purpose of the Spirit of God was to reveal HIM to us, in us, and through us. His words to that effect are all through John, chapters 14 thru 16.

The purpose of the Spirit was never to create a Christianity, or a movement, centered around the Spirit. (see John 16:13) Doing so has minimized the Person of Jesus Christ, and has blinded millions to the fact that Christianity is Christ in us (Col. 1:27), and that the purpose of God is to, “form Christ in us.” (Gal. 4:19)

Paul stated, “Now the Lord (i.e., Jesus Christ) is that Spirit...” (2 Cor 3:17) All of this is important because many today have made, “walking in the Spirit,” a matter of something other than walking in Christ. They have made it a matter of following leadings, signs and wonders, and what amounts to psychic sensations. No. The Lord IS that spirit, and to walk in that spirit is to walk in Christ – living from out of Him as our life.



Sep 21
The Spirit of His Life

Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. (Gal. 5:16)

How do we, "NOT fulfill the lusts of the flesh?" Not by turning in upon the flesh and beating it down. Not by coming under laws intended to keep us from walking in the flesh. Not through emotions, intellect, or any human effort. The only way to NOT fulfill the lusts of the flesh is by, "walking in the Spirit."

Note that we step out of the flesh by stepping into the Spirit – rather than try to defeat the flesh. This is because the victory is already won in Christ -- we are already dead to the flesh, and alive in God. The Spirit in which we are to walk is, "the Spirit of LIFE in Christ Jesus."

Most of us limit, "the flesh," to that which is obviously immoral or unclean. But, "walking according to the flesh," really means to walk according to ME -- to walk governed by my emotions, intellect, bias, preferences, and desires. It is a life governed by SELF. This can be done religiously. Perhaps the worst example of, "walking according to the flesh," is religious self-righteousness.

Paul also said, "If Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit IS LIFE because of righteousness." (Rom. 8:10) Note: The body is dead because Christ died, but the Spirit is LIFE – because Christ is IN US. Thus, to walk in the Spirit rather than the flesh means to step outside of ourselves – our natural self life – and into His life that is in us by His Spirit.

Only God can show us how to do this -- and the key is to KNOW CHRIST. He will show us how to abide in Christ, and thus, live from OUT OF Him as our victory.



Sep 22
The Lusts of the Flesh

Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. (Gal. 5:16)

In scripture, the phrase, "the lusts of the flesh," refers to the expression of self-ownership and control found by nature in my natural man, which results in a life that is lived, not according to the Truth, but according to ME.

If you and I do not know Jesus Christ, then even as professing Christians we are going to walk according to ourselves -- according to the lusts of the flesh. We will not even realize what we are doing. We may, in fact, develop a religious pattern -- seemingly moral or spiritual -- but which is fully according to ourselves. That is really all we can do without knowing Christ. For example, self-righteousness is a walk according to the flesh. It is a religious walk out from myself -- an attempt to make natural man righteous .

Professing Christians by the thousands walk, not according to Christ, not governed by Christ, but they walk according to themselves. They are governed by their emotions, desires, fears, religiosity, bias, and temperament -- i.e., governed by the LUSTS of natural man; governed by soul. This is so common place that it has been redefined as a, "walk in the spirit." It is deception.

The, "glue," that holds this kind of deception together is self-ownership. The spirit of self-ownership and control is built into our soul/natural man and it is the ground of the enemy and his deception. Therefore, the key to victory over this lust is to LOSE the old life in Adam. Lose your SELF to Christ by faith, pick up your Cross, and His Life will come to govern you. Over the course of time the power of lust that comes from the old nature it will be broken.

When Jesus Christ joins us to Himself by making our human spirit one with His Spirit, the old nature is not eradicated or subtracted. No. Rather, there is introduced HIS LIFE into our makeup. Every believer has these TWO natures -- this is the separation of soul from spirit. Thus, as we lose our old life, Jesus Christ will grow to govern us. All of His finished work in His Redemption will be proven in us -- proven to be true and experienced.

If we want the lusts of the flesh out of our lives, then we have to LOSE the life in which those lusts are rooted, and draw their power. This is the key to victory. We never get free of sin by trying to win the victory of Jesus Christ all over again. We get free by losing the life in which sin is rooted under His finished Redemption, and then operating FROM victory by abiding in Him by faith. God will guide us into this Truth and reveal to us how to do so.



Sept 23

The Message of the Cross

The message of the Cross is NOT that I put my faith in the Cross. It is not that I put my faith merely in a WORK Jesus finished two-thousand years ago. The message of the Cross is about the One who died on the Cross and finished that work – and Who is alive IN ME NOW. My faith is to be in Jesus Christ NOW – faith that will abide in Him as my life.

Jesus Christ IS Christ crucified. Jesus Christ is the Risen Christ. Thus, if we put our faith in the Person of Christ, we are putting our faith in all that He has done. Indeed, today Christ Himself embodies the Truth and power of His death and resurrection.

The death of Jesus Christ ENDED the old creation. His death was our death. When Christ died, all that separated us from God died in Him. But that alone did not make anyone alive. We are indeed, “reconciled to God by the death of His Son” – and any gospel that omits or minimizes the Cross is a false gospel. But we are, “saved by His life.” (Rom. 5:10) Christianity is CHRIST IN US – now. Christianity is new LIFE.



Sep 24

The Essential of His Life

If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. (Col. 1:3-4)

If I omit or water-down the Truth of the Cross – whether it be the Cross of Christ, or the personal Cross -- I am preaching a false gospel. But if I omit or water-down the Truth of the resurrection I am also preaching a false gospel. So which should I emphasize? Neither. Paul said, "The gospel concerning HIS SON...." Thus, I should preach Jesus Christ. My faith is never to be in the Cross, nor is it to be in the empty tomb. My faith is never to be in either of those two historical events -- nor merely in what they accomplished. Rather, my faith is to be in the One who died on the Cross, and who walked out of the tomb. My faith is to be in the Living Person of Jesus Christ who, if I am a believer, lives IN ME.

Christianity is, “Christ in us.” (Col.1:27) Paul says, “Christ, who is our life...” (Col. 3:4) Paul travailed, “until Christ be formed in you.” (Gal. 4:19) Paul said, “We are saved by His life.” (Rom. 5:10) This is Christianity.

All of this was made possible by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was made possible by our being personally planted into His death and resurrection. But the Christian life is not a faith in the Cross, or a faith in what Jesus did on the Cross. Christianity is faith in Christ now -- and results in a walk in His RESURRECTION life.

The Cross **MUST** be preached. But not as a thing unto itself, or as the object of our faith. Rather, Paul said he preached, "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." In other words, the core of the gospel, and the object of our faith, is a PERSON -- Jesus Christ. But if our preaching is Christ, we will certainly realize that He is, "Christ crucified," and that He is, "Christ risen." There is no other Jesus Christ. But our faith will be in the PERSON who carries these finished realities in His very Person, and who lives in us, and who Paul says is our very LIFE.



Sep 25

The Essential of the Cross

The Cross was the end of the old creation, and thus, the end of the Adam race. But then through His resurrection, Christ birthed a new race in Himself. Thus, once we neglect or deny the Cross, we also deny the resurrection. There is no resurrection without the Cross. Therefore, in minimizing the Cross, we open the way for a false Christianity that is built upon and implemented by that old Adam race.

Most professing Christians would never directly deny the historical fact of Cross of Christ or the resurrection. Rather, there is often a redefining of, and blindness to, the personal Cross in the life of the believer. Believers are not taught that all that is of the old creation must come under the Cross. Such teaching will absolutely keep us on the ground of the old creation. This will result in a Christianity that is based, not upon Christ in us, but upon our natural, soul man -- a religion that is earthly, but which looks spiritual.

God is not salvaging anything of the old man in Adam. Jesus did not come to bring out our greatness, to enhance what we are, or to tap into our potential. Jesus came to die so that we could die in Him. Paul said, "Yet not I, but Christ." Today's Christianity is more along the line of, "Yet not Christ, be ME." May God give us eyes to see this deception and the heart to turn to Christ as our life.



Sep 26
Willing to Do His Will

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. (John 7:17)

If we want to know the will of God, we must be willing to do it. Therefore, it is the heart of man – our willingness for God – that will either open the door for light, or keep us in darkness.

There are other ways to say the same thing. If we truly want God and His will, we can say, “Lord, do whatever it takes to bring to pass Your will and purpose in my life.” In other words, some of us may doubt whether we are willing to abandon ourselves to God, and we may have little idea as to how to do that. But despite our doubts, we can, “be willing to be willing;” we can be willing to allow God to make us willing. This might seem like a very risky prayer, but it is not. The alternative is a conditional relationship with God, which is really unbelief.

Jesus also said, “The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Matt. 6:22) This is the SAME Truth. Once God takes the initiative to bring us light – that same light will enable us to choose. That choice does not begin by choosing a THING or choosing a PATH. It begins by choosing a PERSON. This is faith – a reliance upon God to be faithful if I am willing to abandon myself to Him.

In the final analysis, the way to know the will of God is to know Jesus Christ. Being willing to do God’s will results in an openness -- not just to know things -- but to know God Himself. Thus, besides some obvious moral guidelines for guidance, and a general Biblical framework, there is no HOW TO in finding the specific will of God for ourselves personally. We must come to know Christ personally, and then out of that will come a realization of the will of God.



Sep 27
The Grapes of Eschol

And they came unto the brook of Eschol, and cut down from there a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bore it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs. (Num. 13:23)

Jesus Christ is our inheritance. But there is a huge difference between, "spying out Christ," and actually giving ourselves to Him. There is an immense difference between eating the grapes of Eshcol, and actually entering the land by faith, and living there.

This is a principle for those who are already saved -- but also to those who are not saved. God's light is UNTO salvation. Light is conviction of the Truth so that we might have a choice before us -- between that light and the darkness. But note that light is NOT salvation at that point for the unsaved -- no, for light that is given does not equal light that is embraced -- either for the saved or for those who are unsaved. Indeed, those, "who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift..." (Heb. 6:4-6), are NOT those who were saved -- but then lost their salvation. Rather, these were enlightened and tasted, but refused salvation. They, "tasted," salvation -- but would not enter in.

You must have SOME light to be accountable for refusing it. You must taste to be accountable. This is a fact taught all through the Word of God. God beckons us to, "taste and see that the Lord is good." But to be saved, we must, "eat and drink," of Christ -- that is, He must live in us.

This principle is true for salvation, but it also continues to be true once we have Christ in us. Christ is not a theory or a theological system. He is not a religion. Christ is Lord and wants to be our personal Lord. God wants to bring us into a personal, experiential, realization of the Living Christ who is in us, and who is to be our life.



Sep 28

The Perfecting of the Saints

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints...(Eph. 4:12)

The KJV often uses the word, "perfect," or, "perfecting," in a way that is today outdated. Usually the Greek word means, "mature." But the Greek word in this verse occurs nowhere else in the NT. It actually means, "the setting of a bone in place for the purpose of mending." See also Heb. 12:12 for a similar picture.

If a bone needs to be set in place so that it can mend, then that is only because it is already OUT of place. Thus, the purpose of ministry is to discern this and set it back in place.

But what does it mean for ministry to set the spiritual bones of the Body of Christ back in place? Colossians 2:19 tells us the problem that this will correct: "And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increases with the increase of God." Believers in Christ are out of place when they are not each, "holding fast to the Head" -- not individually and personally living from out of Christ, walking with Him, picking up their Cross daily, looking to Him alone as their personal Mediator unto God. Thus, it is the job of ministry to get those folks back into adjustment with Jesus Christ as individuals -- which will result in the whole Body being brought back into place under Him as the Head.

You will note the suggestion in this picture -- the entire Body is not adjusted to compensate for a bone that is out of place. No, individual bones must be put back in place. In short, ministry is first to individuals -- that they might hold fast to Christ. Then, if they do, the collective individuals that are holding fast to the Head will comprise a healthy body.



Sep 29 **The Unity of The Faith**

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. (Eph. 4:13)

One of the tenets of the modern, "latter rain movement," is based on the phrase, "till we come in the unity of the faith." Their error is to take this as a promise that all will unite in Christ -- under modern day apostles and prophets. Indeed, they say Jesus cannot return until we do. But this is NOT what the verse is teaching.

First of all, Paul does not say, "unity of faith." No. He says, "unity of THE faith." In other words, the only real unity is unity in Jesus Christ -- in the true knowledge of Him. That is, "THE faith" -- and only that is, "THE faith." All other unity is unity in error. Secondly, this unity will not be achieved through the unity of believers with each other -- or UNDER some self-appointed apostles -- but is achieved ONLY through the unity of EACH believer to Christ Himself. The unity of the Body is fully dependent upon EACH member being individually and personally united with Christ by faith -- and walking in the Truth.

It is possible to have great unity in error. People can celebrate error, agree in error, and even develop an entire religious walk in the soul realm -- and call it a walk in the Spirit. No. The work of the Spirit of God is to govern our lives with CHRIST -- and Him alone. Thus, this is the

work of any ministry that is OF the Spirit of God. And if this does not begin and work out in the individual, there is no basis of unity for the Body.



Sep 30
Every Wind of Doctrine

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. (Eph. 4:13-14)

The reason believers remain children who are easily swayed and taken in by every new teaching that comes along is stated in this passage: There is no knowledge of the Son of God. The only means by which we can discern error is if we know the Person who is the Truth. If we don't know the genuine article, we will never recognize the counterfeit when it comes along. That is why it is the job of ministry to preach the Truth of Jesus Christ.

Christianity is, "Christ in us." (Col. 1:27) The purpose of God is to, "form Christ in us." (Gal. 4:19) This is essentially behind what Paul is talking about in this passage. But today many believers have never once heard about, "Christ in us." Many are completely blind to what it means for Christ to be formed in us. Thus, they are easily swayed by some new angle that makes them feel closer to God, or that makes them feel good about themselves. You have, "seeker friendly churches," "purpose driven churches," "contemplative prayer," "getting back to our Jewish roots," and whole movements like Word of Faith. Challenge these and you will be labeled a negative trouble-maker. But if we realized that Christianity is Christ in us, and began to know Him, all of these would be exposed for the error they are. The Truth in Him is the solution for these problems.



Oct 1
Learning Christ

But you have not so learned Christ; If so be that you have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus. (Eph. 4:20-21)

Some professing Christians are like walking encyclopedias of the Bible. They practically have it memorized. Yes, it is great to know scripture. But some of those same folks are, "ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." (II Tim. 3:7) It is possible to learn all of the doctrines about Jesus Christ right from the Bible, but to never LEARN CHRIST.

Do we realize that Satan knows every fact and every doctrine found in the Bible? Satan quotes scripture. But he is opposed to all of it.

Scripture is the written Truth. But Jesus is the Living Truth. There is only ONE Truth -- therefore all that we learn in Christ will absolutely agree with scripture. But again -- to LEARN CHRIST is to, yes, possess facts and doctrines in complete agreement with scripture. But to truly LEARN CHRIST we must have an inward revelation of HIM. God wants to form Christ in us -- to bring us to where we inwardly REALIZE Him. (Gal. 4:19) And He wants us to be, "formed together with Him." (Rom. 8:29) This is what it means to LEARN CHRIST and to become governed by Him.



Oct 2 Taught by God

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (John 14:26)

The Greek words translated, "teach," in this verse, carries the meaning, not only of conveying information to the one taught, but carries the meaning of SHAPING the one taught by what is conveyed. In other words, to know the Truth means to be created in Christ Jesus -- because we know Christ. To know Christ means He is formed in us, and is eventually manifested through us.

The true knowledge of God in Jesus Christ is not merely intellectual knowledge. Neither is it an emotional experience. It is a REALIZATION of the Person of Christ, who dwells in us, in a way that adjusts and shapes us to be able to manifest HIM.

This shaping through an ongoing revelation of Christ IN US is the work of the Spirit of God. If we truly see Jesus Christ, and we are open to what we see, we will be shaped by what we see. But not shaped in the sense that we will, "look like Jesus." No. We will never look like Jesus. Rather, Jesus will look like Jesus in and through us. We are crucified out of the way -- we are HID in Christ in God -- so that Christ can be seen in

us and through us. Paul said, "Yet NOT I, but Christ." Only God can do this miracle. It is the power of Christ in us through death and resurrection.



Oct 3 Itching Ears

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. (II Tim. 4:3-4)

If I have been deceived, there are REASONS – there are reasons why people believe error rather than the Truth. And the primary reason is that we are blind to the Truth Himself.

Jesus Christ is the ONLY Light and ONLY Truth. Thus, if we do not know Him, we are going to be susceptible to the UNTRUTH that is already in our own hearts. We will more easily fall for any lie that happens to appeal to us from the outside, because it will play upon the LIE that is in us. But don't think of this merely in terms of doctrine or theology. It is entirely possible to have a sound theology, and yet have a fake relationship with God, based on my own righteousness. Deception is anchored by unbelief, just as Truth is anchored in faith. This is first about relationship with Christ Himself.

There are many people who have no light; no knowledge of Christ. They are unable to believe the Truth because they have yet to be given light. These people are truly blind or ignorant. But there are others who could believe -- but refuse to believe. They have enough light to at least turn to God for Truth. But instead, they turn to what satisfies something in their own heart. This is unbelief.

The only solution to blindness is first, to realize you ARE blind -- to realize you have been in error and unbelief. And then to repent of the unbelief. But we cannot turn from unbelief unless WE BELIEVE. We must see Jesus Christ. Even if we are one who has, "turned their ears from the Truth," we can now turn our ears from error, and back to the Truth Himself.



Oct 4

Believing Fables

They shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. (II Tim. 4:4)

There was once a girl who had a foundational knowledge of the Truth in Christ. Then, at a point in her life, she went through a great emotional trauma. But instead of seeking God for His will; for Truth, she got entangled in the writings of false teacher. This false teacher claimed he had been visited by angels and even bodily by the Lord Himself. He also claimed that he was the only source of true Christianity. His writings were complete fables; right from the spirit of the enemy. But his writings made this girl feel good about herself. And because of that, she believed God felt good about her. Thus, she got exactly what she wanted -- so she thought she had found THE answer.

This girl did not realize the difference between HER soul, and Christ in her. That is because she did not know Christ. She had shut out the light and now everything was in darkness. God would not give up on her. But presently she was content, happy -- and totally deceived.

Can error do that to a person? Can error make us feel free and happy? Absolutely it can. Error can satisfy our natural man -- and in doing so substitute for God. No one is deceived by error unless the error satisfies something in them -- error will seem to give us what we think we want. The problem is -- ANYTHING -- no matter how good or bad it might seem -- anything other than Jesus Christ Himself will bring us into bondage. Why? Because anything other than Christ is ERROR. Only if we know the Truth in Christ can we be set free.

The worst bondages are those that keep us happy -- AWAY from Christ. In such cases, we will be completely blind to our condition. Thankfully, Jesus Christ promised to guide His people into all Truth. But He won't force us. Rather, He will give us enough light so we will at least know to TURN. But in the end, we are either going to be adjusted to CHRIST, or we are going to adjust Christ to suit ourselves. It is possible to do the latter and think you are happy. But you will be living, not in Christ, but in a religious fable. We need not be deceived by fables. We can turn back to God for the Truth at any time.



Oct 5

Our Redemptive God

If we believe not, yet he abides faithful: he cannot deny himself. (II Tim. 2:13)

This is an encouraging verse because it shows that the faithfulness of God to us is not dependent upon US. It is dependent upon Him. In short, God is always the same towards us, even if we are never the same towards Him.

Thankfully, God will never react as a man does towards us. He will never deny – depart from – His purpose or His own character. That means that no matter what we have done, or where we have erred, the intent and purpose of God towards us remains the same. We can turn back to Him through His Son.

God moves and acts ONLY on the basis of His Son -- NEVER on the basis of US, or upon anything but His Son. Thus, to be in God's purpose, our faith must not only be in Christ, but Christ must become our life. This is fantastic because it means that whatever is built upon Christ will remain forever, and whatever is built upon natural man will eventually perish. God is a Redemptive God. But IN CHRIST alone will He work eternal redemption.

If we stray into darkness through unbelief, the goal of God will always remain the same – to guide us back into the Truth. If we slip into unbelief, the goal of God will be to restore our faith. God is a redemptive God. There are always new beginnings in Christ.



Oct 6

The Futility of the Flesh

Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. (Eph. 2:3)

Man without Christ is at the mercy of his fallen nature – he must, “make do,” with the resources found in himself. Each of us has a different version of, “the flesh” – formed over our lifetime by our family, upbringing, temperament, and our own choices. But in the end, “that which is born of the flesh is flesh.” (John 3:6) And flesh is all it will ever be.

The only solution and deliverance is CHRIST IN US. But even if Christ dwells in us, we have these possibilities of the flesh. Being joined to the Lord in spirit does not obliterate the flesh. Christ is simply joined to us, and there is then a separation between our flesh and His Spirit -- and the warfare begins.

How is it possible to know what is of Christ vs. what is of us – that is, what is of our natural make-up? The solution is NOT to develop a, “how-to list,” for being able to discern what is of God, and what is of us. No. The solution is to know Jesus Christ.

Note that Christ in us is NOT US. In other words, God is not making US to look or feel like Jesus. He is not making us into carbon copies of Jesus. Christ is not some secondary power that God gives to bring out our potential. No. Christ in us IS the life and IS the Truth. Rather than make us look like Jesus, we must come under the work of the Cross so that the Christ who is already in us might be manifested through us.

If we are abandoning ourselves to Christ He will be formed in us. We will come into a realization of Him; a knowledge of Him. He will be manifested. And this will make it clear to us what is of our soul, and what is of His spirit – this is the separation between soul and Spirit within us. He is the LIGHT and He is the Truth, and all things are known only if we know HIM.



Oct 7
Words of Spirit and Life

The disciples said, “This is a hard saying; who can hear it?”...Jesus said, “It is the spirit that quickens; the flesh profits nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. (Jn. 6:60-64)

All through the ministry of Jesus, He spoke to His disciples of spiritual Truth, and they interpreted Him on a natural level. This was not because they were stupid or uneducated. No. It was because they were not yet born from above – the Spirit of God was not yet IN THEM to quicken. It was not until Jesus ascended to heaven, and came back down through the Spirit to dwell in them that they understood much of anything.

Jesus directly told them that the Spirit had been WITH them, but was not yet IN them. (John 14:17) Get that: The Spirit of God had NEVER dwelt IN people until Pentecost. If we would simply believe this one verse it would completely change much Christian error today. But that aside, their lack of discernment about the things of God shows that a

person could actually be in the physical presence of Christ Himself, and yet still not understand, because they are not yet born from above. Such is the absolute essential of CHRIST WITHIN through the Spirit of God.

Why do people fail to understand God, misinterpret God, or live in confusion? Sometimes it is rebellion. Often it is simple inexperience or ignorance. But often people simply need to be born from above. Unless you are born from above you CANNOT see. (Jn. 3:3) The key to all discernment and understanding is to be born from above and have CHRIST IN US. We must KNOW HIM.



Oct 8
Wrestling With God

Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. (Gen. 32:24)

Jacob was promised his inheritance from God. But he did not abandon himself to God and allow God to bring it to pass. He represents ourselves – and the efforts of religious flesh – not to directly rebel against God – but to try to wrestle from God what God has already promised to freely give.

God has made many promises in His Word. It is good and right for us to believe Him. But if we are continually trying to wrestle out of God what He has promised to freely give, then we don't really trust Him to keep His Word without our wrestling.

Abraham basically committed the same error. He believed God for Isaac. But then erred a number of times trying to make sure the promise would come to pass – the worst error of which was to birth Ismael. Abraham came into full faith only once he offered back to God the very son God had promised. Abraham relinquished ownership over the fulfilled promise and fully surrendered it to God.

God not only wants to give us promises – He wants to give us a relationship with Himself. In short, we ought to never separate the promises of God from the One who gave them. "All of the promises of God IN HIM are yes, and IN HIM amen." (II Cor. 1:20) Believe God for His promises. But realize that all of the promises of God are meant to be realized through a relationship with Him through Christ.



Oct 9
Freely Receiving the Inheritance in Christ

Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the
breaking of the day. (Gen. 32:24)

Jacob is a type of religious, natural man – who tries to wrestle from God what is already freely given in Christ.

Often we focus upon the PROMISES and THINGS that are freely given in Christ. God has promised them and we want them. But we often want them as THINGS apart from Christ Himself. As did Jacob, we try to receive and live in the promises of God -- but we try to do that on the basis of the old life. We often corrupt even what God intends for good. The, "Jacob in us," will always tend to use what God intends for His purpose in our lives to satisfy OUR purposes -- we will use the things of God for SELF.

This is why Jesus said we must LOSE our lives in order to find true life in HIM. Only if we die to our purposes and come to the end of our natural strength -- often through the experiences of failure -- will we fully embrace by faith Jesus Christ as our very life. Until then we will not value the promises that are in Christ because we will not value Christ Himself. Instead, it will all be religion to us; a condition of emotion or mind; it will be us trying to wrestle from God His promises. We don't have to wrestle -- we have to surrender. Only then can we lose our lives and find Him as our live. This is death and resurrection.

Thus, we have a great irony: We want to wrestle the promises from God and have them for ourselves in our old life. But God tells us to LOSE our lives – by faith – in order to find the promises that are freely given in Christ. How contrary is the Truth to the natural mind of humanity!



Oct 10
The Yes and Amen

For all the promises of God in him are yes, and in him Amen, unto the
glory of God by us. (II Cor. 1:20)

All the promises of God are found in Jesus Christ. Thus, we cannot separate the promises that are IN Christ FROM Christ. In other words, God is not going to give us the fulfilled promises apart from the Christ who is in us. Rather, it is as Christ is formed in us (Gal. 4:19) that the promises that are in Him emerge into our experience. If we lose our lives

and find Christ as our life (Matt. 16:24-25, Col. 2:3) then we will find the promises that are IN Christ -- as we find Christ as our life.

God has given us all things freely IN HIS SON. (Rom. 8:32, Eph.1:3) But this also means that He has ultimately given us nothing through any other means. Even when God does bless people otherwise, He does so to with the intent of leading them TO Christ as their life; as their ALL.

If I am saved, I am joined to the Lord. I am one spirit with Him. (I Cor. 6:17) I am therefore joined to the One in whom are all of the promises. Thus, can we see the folly of trying to wrestle from God – on the basis of our natural man; on the basis of something about US – the promises He has already freely given in Christ? No. God is working only on the basis of Christ -- He will never work on the basis of ME. I have to LOSE myself in order to find the One in whom are the promises. I have to abide in Christ by faith for my life. This explains much as to why God works the way He does in the life of the believer.



Oct 11 Letting Go to God

Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. (Gen. 32:24-25)

Jacob would not let go – he would not abandon himself, or lose himself to God by faith. He relied on his natural strength. So God broke his natural strength.

It is our nature to try to wrestle from God -- with natural strength -- in order to win what is already freely given in Christ. We do this in many ways: Self-righteousness is a primary way. We wrestle to become good enough for the inheritance. We wrestle to merit what we can never merit. The solution is never to wrestle harder. The solution is to have that natural strength broken so that we will see that wrestling with God is unbelief. It is not only futile, but it is contrary to the Truth. It is sin.

God has completely set aside -- through the Cross -- our natural man. Thus, we cannot walk with God on the basis of anything about ourselves -- we are not accepted by God because of some imaginary good in us, and we are not rejected by God because of some bad in us. Rather, we are accepted through faith in Christ, or rejected because of unbelief. In short, WE are not in the picture. We can walk with God only upon the basis of His Son, Jesus Christ. The way we begin to do this is

by putting ourselves aside and abiding in Christ by faith. This alone is a walk in TRUTH.

But God must bring us into this Truth. The necessary path is usually through failure. We are going to wrestle -- and He is going to allow us. He will allow us to try to wrestle from Him that which is freely given -- and for a time we may think we are winning, and in the will of God. But as was the case with Jacob, the more we plead with God to bless us, the more He will say, "Let go. Lose yourself into My hands." Indeed, God will bring us to the place where our natural man is permanently crippled. This is not a bad thing. It is a good thing. It is the mercy of God that He will touch us in a way that will result in us walking by faith and dependence in Christ, rather than by our own strength.

God has never promised to make us strong. He has promised to make us weak. Why? First, because we ARE weak. Thus, God is simply showing us THE TRUTH. But secondly, God must show us we are weak so that we will stop wrestling and put our faith in His Son.

God will allow whatever it takes to bring us to the end of our rope. And when we come to the end of our rope, God is not going to give us the strength to grip our rope tighter. No. He wants us to LET GO of our rope -- to God. God wants to cripple our natural man to the point where we no longer try to walk with Him on that basis. And then if we are made weak, then Christ in us can BE our strength.

Are you one who wrestles to come into the blessings of God -- only to be disappointed time and time again? The key is not to ask God for strength. The key is to come to the end of your wrestling and simply believe and rest in Christ. In Christ alone is all that God has for humanity.



Oct 12
Victory From Surrender

And he said unto him, "What is thy name?" And he said, "Jacob." And he said, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince has thou power with God and with men, and has prevailed." (Gen. 32:27-28)

The name, "Jacob," means, "supplanter" -- in other words, the name Jacob speaks of one who is always struggling to take what belongs to another. But once Jacob surrendered to God, then God named him, "Israel," which means, "one who prevails WITH God. Jacob never prevailed OVER God by wrestling with God. No. Jacob prevailed WITH

God -- because Jacob stopped wrestling with God and surrendered to Him.

The battle and warfare in the Christian life is not primarily with the enemy, and it certainly isn't with God. The primary battle is with our own unbelief. The moment we stop struggling and unconditionally surrender to God the warfare is over. We have surrendered to the One in Whom there is all victory.

Surrender by faith to Christ puts us into the victory of Christ. Therefore the enemy will seek to play upon our unbelief -- usually through deception. But again -- we need not fight the enemy. We need only turn to the One Who already has all victory over him. Faith is the victory -- faith is a rest and a stand in His victory -- in the victory already finished in Christ.

Jacob tried to wrestle the inheritance from God for decades -- culminating with this event in Genesis 32. But ironically, he was trying to wrestle from God what had already been freely given to him. Why? Because he did not believe it -- he did not believe it was freely given. Thus, God had to wear him down and break his natural strength. Only then could he see the Truth of God's grace and willingly surrender. It was at that point -- at the point of Jacob's surrender to God -- that God said to him, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince has thou power WITH God and WITH men, and has prevailed."



Oct 13
Faith is Never a Mistake

When God delivered Israel from Egypt and took them out into the wilderness, they were unable to care for themselves -- and God did allow them to go through seasons of lack. Over and over again, they accused God of leading them out only to abandon them. In effect, they were saying that their faith in God was a mistake -- and now that they had supposedly made that mistake, they lamented that there was no way back.

When we make choices of faith in God we are apt to assume that it is going to immediately result in blessing. But often the opposite happens -- and if the opposite does happen then it is easy to assume that we have made a mistake to trust God.

Faith in God is never a mistake. But faith begins, not by trusting God for things or circumstances, but by giving ourselves to Him. Often when we give ourselves to God He must first change us in order to bring us

into His purpose -- indeed, this is essential if He is to fulfill His promises. Remember Abraham, David, Joseph, and many others. This necessity was there. God knows what He is doing. Life in Christ isn't merely about getting things from God. It is about Christ living in and through us. In Christ are found all the promises of God.

Besides, what is our alternative to trusting God? Should we NOT trust Him? -- because we think that He won't do what we think He ought to do? That is unbelief. In the end, we will either believe God or we won't. We will either lose our lives into His hands, or will seek to save them for ourselves. God will bring us to these choices. He will give us light. But eventually we must choose.

When our faith in God seems to be a mistake, God is using this trial as the means to lead us into a greater revelation of Himself. God won't forget about our needs. But knowing Him is the greatest need.

God wants to form Christ in us. He will use circumstances as tools. God will get around to working out His will in circumstances. In the meantime God wants us to, yes, trust Him. But if faith is real it is always going to bring us to where we surrender ourselves to God -- lose our lives into His hands. If we do, God will override many of our mistakes of judgment. God is REDEMPITIVE. But our faith itself is never a mistake. It is exactly what God wants.



Oct 14
Called According to His Purpose

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed (formed together) in the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (Rom. 8:28-29)

The better translation of this verse should be, "God works good INTO all things for those who are called according to His purpose...to be formed together in the image of His Son." God may work good into bad circumstances. But none of that will be of any real value unless God works into our lives His real purpose: That we might, "be formed together with His Son."

We are being told that the purpose for which God works good into all things is to form us together with His Son. Paul describes the same purpose in Galatians 4:19 as, "being brought into an inner realization of Christ." That is the Greek meaning of FORMED in that verse. We might

even say this purpose of God through Christ IS the good that God will work into all things.

Contrast this over and against the common notion that God works all things together for good – that is, that God will always make circumstances turn out in our favor. No. Circumstances will not always go well for us. There ARE trials in the Christian life! It is when circumstances are terrible that the greatest spiritual good is often accomplished. But God is working His good of forming Christ in us INTO them and THROUGH them – IF we yield to Him.

We are being told that the purpose of forming Christ in us IS the good that God is working into ALL THINGS. Thus, even though God does fully care about our temporal lives and our needs -- He is our life -- this eternal purpose is the governing Truth. There is nothing God does in the Christian life that is unrelated to Jesus Christ. But in Christ is God's provision for all that we need, both materially and spiritually.



Oct 15 Galilee or Bethlehem?

Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Shall Christ come out of Galilee?" Has not the scripture said that Christ comes of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? (John 7:41-42)

Many who said they rejected Jesus as Messiah said they were doing so because they thought He was from Galilee. They knew that the Bible said that the Messiah had to come from out of Bethlehem. But there was one fact they didn't know: Jesus did come from Bethlehem. He was born there.

Think about this: You are standing in the presence of God Incarnate. He has worked many undeniable miracles. He speaks only the Truth. He is a perfectly sinless man -- full of grace, Truth, and love. But you reject Him as a fraud. Why? Because you think He is from Galilee -- and the Messiah is to come from Bethlehem?

What is the problem here? That you have your facts wrong? Is the problem intellectual? Emotional? Did these folks reject the Messiah Himself because merely because they had their facts wrong? No. You do not hear the true words of Christ because there is no place for them in you. You do not see Jesus is the Messiah because you are spiritually blind. The problem is moral and spiritual. It is a problem of the heart. The problem is unbelief.

Some of these people had no heart for God. But you will note that others DID have a heart for God -- they said, "This is the Christ." Were some of these people smarter than others? No. They were more open to the Truth.

God prepares the soil for the reception of the Truth by PLOWING. He digs in and opens the soil to the light. In other words, God prepares the heart. Israel had centuries of preparation for the Messiah -- they had the Word of God and all of the types and shadows of the Old Covenant. In this age, we have much more. But when God plows do we allow Him to remove the rocky places? Or do we demand that He plow around them - - so that we can maintain ourselves and our religion -- and be Christians at the same time?

You and I cannot muster up out of ourselves a heart for God. But neither are we at the mercy of our upbringing, temperament, and natural inclinations. We are not even at the mercy of wrong facts. God can plow through all of those and prepare our heart for the Truth of Jesus Christ. Will we allow Him? Will we allow God to do whatever it takes to bring us into the fullness of His Son? In short, God must bring the Truth. But in the final analysis, we will either allow that Truth to adjust our hearts for Christ, or we will adjust the Truth to fit ourselves.



Oct 16 The Carpenter's Son

And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, "Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?" (Matt. 13:54-56)

Accounts like this one tell us that for the first 30 years of His life, Jesus maintained a low profile -- He did not teach and He did no miracles. He simply lived the routine life of the carpenter's Son. The life of Jesus was, in fact, so normal-looking, that those among whom He lived for those 30 years were utterly astonished -- some were offended -- that He would now begin to teach and refer to Himself as the Son of God.

But despite living a life in relative obscurity, it was a sinless life to God's glory -- indeed those 30 years in obscurity prepared Him, not only for His ministry, but for the work of eternal Redemption.

There is a lesson in this for US. Do we think that the only way in which God can achieve His purpose in us is if we are living some dramatic life? That we need to be in ministry? That He must use us to build churches? To heal the sick? To convert thousands? That we must work signs and wonders? None of these things were necessary for Jesus, the Son of God. He developed His relationship with His Father by being the carpenter's son -- unto God's glory.

What God is doing in us through Christ is not merely for this age. Ultimately, it is for the ages to come. Thus, whether God uses me in this age in a big way, or simply lets me live a rather mundane life, the issue is whether Christ is being formed in me. Every **THING** that God uses to form Christ in me will pass into history. But what will remain and will be taken into the ages to come is only that which is **OF CHRIST**.



Oct 17 **The Hard Saying**

This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? (John 6:58-60)

There were many things that Jesus said and did that offended people. Sometimes they understood and were offended. Other times they misunderstood and were offended. Jesus simply did not satisfy their expectations of a Messiah. But in John 6 He claimed to be God Incarnate. It was this claim that offended His critics the most.

His words, "I am the Bread that **CAME DOWN** from heaven," are inescapable. First of all, this was one of the times Jesus said, "I AM...." The Jews understood the meaning of that phrase -- it was the name of God. But He also said that **HE CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN** -- i.e., **FROM GOD**. He was claiming that He came into this world from the outside of this world -- in other words, He was saying that He existed before He was born.

There are many teachings that, "thinned the crowd," of those who followed Jesus. But the one that offended people the most was His claim to be the Son of God.

The identity of Jesus Christ is not a conclusion that we are to arrive at merely through a theological study of the Bible. No. Indeed, the Bible itself tells us how each of us must come to see and know Jesus Christ:

By revelation. This revelation will, of course, always fully agree with scripture. But knowing Jesus Christ in an inward, life-changing way is the result of Jesus asking us this question, "Who do you say that I am?" - and of us giving the answer, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Flesh and blood cannot reveal this to us, but only the Father who is in heaven.



Oct 18
Jesus is God

The two events in Jesus' human life that people most often reject are the virgin birth and the resurrection. This is because BOTH prove He is God. You cannot deny either one if you believe the true gospel or true Jesus Christ. And you don't have to belong to a cult to deny Christ. You will stand or fall upon your personal faith.

C.S. Lewis presented an argument about Jesus Christ that is logically airtight. This argument proves that Jesus Christ could not have been merely a good man, or a prophet. He was either a deliberate liar, a mad man, or in fact, the Son of God. For example, all of His, "I AM..." statements were claims to be God. When a person stands up and publicly proclaims, "I AM the Way the Truth and the Life" -- but is NOT -- can this person be a good man? Can he be a prophet of God? If a person openly claims, "He that believes on Me has everlasting life" -- and this is a false claim -- can that man be a mistaken, yet GOOD man? No. Indeed, when Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I AM," and was accused of claiming to be God, He did not deny it. He embraced it.

Jesus made Himself the center of God's universe. He directly claimed to be the Son of God, and the Messiah, and stated outright that He existed before His human birth. Those are either the claims of a deliberate liar -- because He knew those claims were absurd -- OR -- they were the claims of a mad man -- because He, Himself, believed them -- OR they were the claims of One who actually was God Incarnate -- the Son of God and Messiah. You cannot put Jesus on a list of good teachers that God has used. His claims make it all or nothing. Indeed, the same can be said about the Bible -- for it records and affirms those claims.

People either want the Truth or they do not. Many say they want the Truth, but they want THEIR Truth -- they want a God and a Christ they can create in their own image. This is exactly why those who rejected Jesus did reject Him -- He did not come affirming THEM. Rather, He came to reveal Himself -- and with that revelation of Himself came all the Truth of God.

Knowing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is not the product of a theological study -- although such a study will lead you to that academic conclusion. Neither is it the product of emotionalism or intellectualism. You cannot see that Jesus is God by mustering something up out of yourself. Rather, this Truth comes only by revelation. God must reveal Jesus Christ to us, and then in us. Our part is an openness in wanting the Truth -- no matter what it takes and no matter the cost. The question remains: "Who do you say that I AM?"



Oct 19
All Things Are From Out of God

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God. (II Cor. 5:17-18)

When Paul said, "All things are of God," he used Greek words that could have been translated, "all things are OUT FROM God." He is stating that everything having to do with the new creation in Christ is OF God, and is OUT FROM God.

This statement is based on the fact that the new creature in Christ is what is born from above when Jesus Christ joins Himself to us -- His Spirit becomes one with our human spirit. Our oneness with Him makes us a new creature -- not because of anything contributed by ourselves -- but because of our oneness with HIM. All that is contained in new life from above is FROM OUT OF GOD through Christ.

This is important to see because if, "all things," that speak of new life in Christ are, "from out of God," then this likewise means that NOTHING is from out from US. Christ is the Treasure -- all the value is IN HIM. We are merely the earthen vessel -- recipients by His grace of the Treasure.

Most Christians tend to define their Christian life by what they have given to God. But true Christianity is defined by what we have RECEIVED -- Christ in us. Likewise, in this day and age, it is often taught that Jesus has joined Himself to us to bring out OUR greatness -- to enhance our potential. Christ is made to be an adjunct power that is given to satisfy our desire for self-worth. These things are lies.

Jesus Christ did not come to enhance our sense of self-worth. Neither did He come to destroy self-worth. If I am living in either of these delusions, I am still a prisoner of SELF. Rather, He came to deliver us from self altogether. One who knows Christ is learning to leave

themselves alone. They will know they are nothing. But it will not matter because they will be living from out of Christ as their ALL.

This is absolutely impossible to accomplish through human means. You can take psychiatry, drugs, or intoxicate yourself with religion. But in the end, all you will have to deal with is YOU. It is only if we lose ourselves to Christ and leave ourselves alone into His hands, will we begin to realize Him -- and through the Truth of knowing Him be delivered. And then we will see that as new creations in Christ that ALL things are out from God. Jesus Christ has given us life, yes, but more importantly, Jesus Christ IS our life. (Col. 3:4)



Oct 20
Ziklag

And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire. (I Sam. 30:1-2)

David had been told he would be king, and yet he had spent years in the desert fleeing from Saul. But at least he had been given the city of Ziklag. Ziklag had been David's last refuge -- a place given to him by God.

David and his army had left Ziklag to fight with the Philistines. But when he got back he found that Ziklag was burned -- and all of their families and all of their possessions were taken captive.

How could God allow this to happen?

David and his men, "lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep." David himself was, "greatly distressed." Not only had David lost everything, but now his own people, "spoke of stoning him." It would have been easy for David to accuse God, or to assume God had forsaken him. Ziklag was everything David had. Now it was gone. Where would David go from here?

It says, "David encouraged himself in the LORD." David stepped outside of himself and put his faith in God. Despite his present distress, he did not look at the situation, and he did not believe his own emotions. He knew that no matter what had happened in the past -- he knew that in the will of God there was still a future.

In David's case, it says, "David recovered all...." But more importantly, within three days Saul was dead and David took his place as king.

One of the oft-repeated Truths in the Bible is that in order for God to bring us on into His purpose, He must often bring us down to ZERO. He must tear down -- even those things we thought were once of God -- in order to build us up in Christ. We have to LOSE in order to FIND. We have to DIE in order to LIVE. This is not merely a religious tenet or a mysterious pattern. Rather, it is so that Jesus Christ might be Lord, not only over our situation, but over US and in us.

David encouraged himself in the Lord at the point of his greatest distress -- not because he wanted to be religious, but because he knew the Truth. If I can trust God when I have nothing, I can trust God if He blesses me. If I believe God when circumstances, and even my own nature, call Him a liar, I have overcome by faith. And that is an ETERNAL victory. David became king. We will reign and rule with Christ to the extent that He reigns and rules in us.



Oct 21 A Spiritual Union

For he has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (II Cor. 5:21)

When a person is saved, the reason they are saved is because they, "are joined to the Lord and made one spirit with Him." (I Cor. 6:17) Our spiritual union with Christ constitutes the new creation. It is WHY we are saved -- we are joined to the One who IS life -- and thus, we are alive in Him.

This spiritual union is described in many ways in the Bible. Paul says in Romans 6 that we are, "baptized into Christ," and that this means we are, "baptized into His death." He says that this is necessary if we are to be RAISED in Him. Indeed, Paul likens our spiritual union with Christ to an engrafting. He says, "If we are planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." (Rom. 6:5)

Note that we are united with Christ -- our human spirit with His Spirit. Our physical body is not united with Him in this age, and neither is our SOUL or natural man. No. These remain OUTSIDE of our spiritual union with Christ. God has put them under the work of the Cross. As we bear about in our body and "soul man," the dying of the Lord Jesus, the

life of Christ will all the more be made manifest in us and through us.
(see II Cor. 4:7-12)

But it is essential to see that we are united with Christ and what this means -- for this is the essence of Christianity itself. For example, can we see that, yes, Jesus Christ died FOR us -- but that because He died FOR us that we are united with Him IN HIS DEATH -- which means that, "our old man is crucified with Him?" In fact, unless this is true -- unless, "the body of sin is destroyed," we have no freedom from sin. Can we also see that because we are united with Christ in His life that HE IS our life, and that everything that God has given us is wrapped up in the Person of Jesus Christ who dwells in us? That abiding in HIS life by faith is the key to all in the Christian life? These things are basic, but today this Truth has been pushed aside.

All of this leads us to Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified WITH Christ. Nevertheless I live, YET NOT I, BUT CHRIST..." Christianity is CHRIST IN US -- a spiritual union with Jesus Christ. The result is NOT that I emerge in all of MY supposed potential and greatness. No. Rather, the result is that I decrease that He might increase. "Yet not I, but Christ," is a description of both the attitude and life of one who is being set free by the Truth through this spiritual union of Christ in us.



Oct 22
The Word of Reconciliation

And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (II Cor. 5:18-19)

The phrase, "has committed unto us the word of reconciliation," according to NT Greek, ought to read, "has LODGED in us the word of reconciliation." Reconciliation is not merely a legal condition God has given us. Neither is it just a message with words that we can give. No. CHRIST IN US is our reconciliation to God -- our spiritual union with Him is our spiritual union with God. He is that living reconciliation; a living, "Word," of reconciliation.

Of course, if we are truly reconciled to God through Christ, the same Truth will be IN US to give out, and live out, unto others. Paul says that this Truth is that God has reconciled ALL humanity to Himself, not imputing to us our sins. Therefore, by faith come to Christ and in Him enter into that finished redemption and reconciliation.

Note that God never needed to be reconciled back to man – rather, man needed to be reconciled back to God. Christian people spend much time and energy trying to keep God reconciled to them. This is error. God has never withdrawn Himself from us -- it is WE who need to be reconciled and drawn back to God. The problem here is unbelief and the need to see the Truth of God's grace.

Also note that any reconciliation between believers must be based in Christ -- it must be anchored in the Truth and edify all involved. Often, believers reconcile to simply keep a religious principle, or to, "be nice." There is nothing of Christ in it. No. If all believers would be reconciled to God on the basis of the Truth in Christ, this would automatically lead to reconciliation between each other. Only if the branches EACH abide in the Vine can they be rightly related to each other. Paul's word is, "Be YOU (personally) reconciled to God." This is a foundational Truth that ought to govern all.



Oct 23 Marks of True Ministry

Therefore seeing we have this ministry....but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God...so then death works in us, but life in you. (II Cor. 4:1-2,12)

Gather up what is stated in this passage and it is clear that true ministry is never to be used for self-gain – neither materially, or for pride, or for any of man's goals. True ministry is HIS LIFE ministered to others.

The Life and the Truth in Christ does not belong to any of us. Ministry is Christ in us being manifested through us. Ministers are to be regarded as nothing more than faithful stewards of God. (I Cor. 4:1)

The outcome of true ministry ought to be that Jesus Christ Himself is being formed in people – the ministry is an instrument of edification unto that end. There is no work by the Spirit of God except that Christ be magnified, glorified, revealed -- and that people come into an inward realization of Him.

The indication that the Spirit of God is a work is never that people become carried away with the Spirit of God itself, or obsessed with THINGS that God is doing. The true testimony of the Spirit of God is Jesus Christ Himself. If I am embracing God's work in my life then I will decrease and Christ will increase. I will become more and more hungry

for Christ. And because this is the work of the Spirit of God, it is going to be the eventual outcome of all ministry that is OF God. Ministry is His life, and builds up His life in others.



Oct 24
Then Face to Face

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. (I Cor. 13:12)

The glass through which we NOW, “see darkly,” is natural man. Not necessarily sinful man, but natural man. Even though Christ dwells in the believer, and this equips us with the capacity to grow to see Jesus Christ, in this age, and in this body, we will never be completely free from our natural man. To one degree or another, we will see through this glass darkly -- dark in comparison to seeing Him face to face.

The last phrase of the verse says it all: “THEN I shall know even as also I am known.” During this age, there are times when I cannot see God. There are other times when I do not see Him clearly. But regardless, God sees me. Right now, I am known by God. We are being told that there will come a point -- at the resurrection -- at which all of the natural will be transformed and we will know God and His Son, Jesus Christ, face to face -- we will know God as He already knows us. And that is a complete, unhindered knowing.

Little children will often cover their eyes if they are shy -- somehow they think that if they cannot see you, that you cannot see them. But note: In their innocent attempt to keep you from seeing them, they block their ability to see you. It is like this with God -- whatever we do to try to keep Him from seeing us is really keeping us from seeing Him. If we step into darkness it does not hide us from God -- it hides HIM from US. This is why coming into the light and confessing our sin and our need is vital -- if we open ourselves to God it does nothing to help Him see us. But it makes it possible for us to see Him.

There will always be limitations in this age. But God is working on that -- by dealing with the natural man; by dealing with our hearts, and by bringing us into an inward revelation of Christ. God wants us to open to Him NOW, for it this present work that will enable us to see Him THEN, face to face.



Oct 25
Seeing Him As He Is

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear
what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be
like him; for we shall see him as he is. (1 John 3:2)

According to Greek scholars, this verse could be paraphrased, "It has never yet been made manifest what we shall be, but we know that when what we are is manifested, that it will be out of His likeness, and that this will enable us to see Him as He is."

This is based on the original Greek (Vincent), and affirmation from other passages. It is an awesome thought. This is saying that when we meet Christ face to face that we will be is a person in whom Christ can be fully manifested without the limitations of the natural man. In other words, we will be able to fully realize and experience Christ, and because of that, fully manifest His glory.

This is already happening in this age if we are in the purpose of God - even though it is greatly limited. God is not acting upon us to make us LOOK LIKE JESUS. No. All that we are is from OUT OF HIM. Christ wants to be manifested through us. Christ is in us, and God is working a purpose where Christ is to be manifested in us and through us -- i.e., all that is of God in us is out from HIS LIKENESS. Humanity is the source of NOTHING. But we are recipients of all that He is, and earthen vessels through whom the Treasure wants to be seen.

This is the same Truth as found in I Cor. 13:12: "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." And in I Cor. 2:9, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." This is not about religion. It is about God making Himself one with humanity through Christ in us -- and the eternal purpose of inheritance and sonship. All that we are is from OUT OF HIM: Christ in us; Christ through us.



Oct 26
Love One Another

This is my commandment, That you love one another, as I have loved
you. (Jn. 15:12)

What is the AGAPE love of God? It is an unconditional commitment to God's highest for the one loved, regardless of cost to them, or to us. It is fully Christ centered – a desire and commitment for others -- which is equal to God's desire and commitment for them.

It is not possible to love another person with the agape love of God unless I am growing to realize the love of God for me personally. The love of God is solely from out of God to us -- and then through us to others. Love is a FRUIT of the Spirit of God. It is the result of personally abiding in Christ, the True Vine. Only if we personally receive His love can we love Him, and then, love others.

We are not the source of the love of God. At the root, it is not emotional. It is not theological. It is not merely outward. Rather, the root of AGAPE is within the life of Christ in us – realized and received.

There is something that happens once a person comes into a realization of Jesus Christ: They are set free by love. Thus, they want the same for everyone else. Because they know that they have been freely given by grace a priceless relationship with God, they are able to freely, and without strings attached, desire this for others.

Jesus said we were to love others AS He has loved us. That is impossible if we try to call upon the resources of natural life. No. It is possible only if it is the outcome of His life and love IN US – free to flow through us unto others.



Oct 27
Love as Evidence

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loves not his brother abides in death. (1 John 3:14)

John is not saying that if we love others, that this will enable us to pass from death to life. Nonsense. Neither is John talking about human, emotional, love. Rather, he is saying that if we love others – with the REAL love of God in Christ Jesus – that such a love is EVIDENCE that we have already passed from death to life.

The capacity to love with the love of God is within in HIS LIFE – it is only if Christ is in us, and we have realized His love for us, that we can truly love others. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." (Rom. 5:5) Agape love does not generate out from US as the source. God is love, and God is the source of all agape.

Christianity is, "Christ in us." (Col. 1:27) One evidence that Christ is in us is that we love with the love of God flowing through us. We are the branches and He is the Vine -- and thus, the fruits of the spirit, one of which is LOVE, is NOT of us, but of HIM.

It is through the work of the Cross that God sets us free from a human love that is according to the flesh. Human love is self-centered and for human goals. God's love will always be committed to GOD'S highest for all. Only a person who has passed from death to life can love with the love of God.



Oct 28 Unfeigned Love

Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that you love one another with a pure heart fervently. (1 Pet 1:22)

The, "love of the brethren," is the outcome of something -- Christ in us. It is the outcome of having embraced the Truth in Christ -- of having "purified your soul in obeying the Truth through the Spirit." AGAPE love purifies our motives and desires and wants only what God desires. OUR agenda, and OUR interests, are put aside. That is AGAPE -- it is an unconditional commitment to God in the life of the one loved regardless of cost. This is freedom and results in a pure heart through which the love of Christ can flow.

Note that Peter uses the term, "unfeigned love." The word here means, "unpretentious." Among Christians there should not be a fake love. Fake love is not the result of seeing, and abiding in Jesus Christ. Rather, it is a religious substitute that people generate from themselves. Fake love is emotional, motivated by the interests of natural man. Oppose such a fake love and it will eventually show it's true colors.

The goal of fake love is not the will and purpose of God -- although those who practice it will say that it is the goal. No. Instead, the goal of fake love is usually to make people feel good about themselves, or to manipulate them into a desired religious pattern. Fake love compromises with the Truth and ultimately results in a denial of the Cross.

Love is a FRUIT. This means that it is an end-product of a growth process. It is not the outcome of religion. It is the outcome of LIFE -- His life in us. The love of natural man is likewise a fruit -- the outcome of our own life asserting itself, even if along religious, sentimental lines. The

love of God is an expression of Truth -- a manifestation of Jesus Christ.
The love of man is an expression of error -- a manifestation of Adam.



Oct 29
The Key to Freedom

Truth is not a theological construct. Truth is a Person: Jesus Christ. It is therefore a fact that even if I know many true theological facts about Jesus Christ, that unless I know Him personally -- unless I have come into an inward realization of Him -- I really do not know THE TRUTH.

The enemy has an alternative to knowing Christ: Know YOURSELF. Of course, this will always be presented as, "God's will," and the outcome of knowing His love for you. It will be presented as a great and wonderful discovery. Indeed, today more and more people are suggesting that the key to freedom is for you and I is to realize our true identity in Christ. This is a lie. The key to freedom is to realize Christ Himself. And if we realize Christ, then we will realize our true identity -- and that identity will be that we are recipients of His grace. No one who knows Jesus Christ in Truth is going make self-realization their goal or focus. It is simply impossible if we see Jesus Christ.

In the first century, a heretical system that we have named, "Gnosticism," began doing great damage to the church. That term comes from a Greek word meaning, "knowledge." One of the many tenets of Gnosticism stated that there is a spark of life and light within man through natural birth -- a potential greatness -- and that Jesus Christ came to bring out that greatness. In other words, Jesus Christ came to illuminate us to our true identity -- He came to bring us into a self-knowledge. This self-knowledge would then enable us to work our way back to God.

Why do we suppose God spends the time He does in the works of John the apostle writing against such heresy? It is because all of the heresies of the first century are with us today -- they are simply called by different names, and presented in different packages. But the desire of the enemy has never changed. He wants to get people focused on themselves. He wants to get us to try to save our lives for ourselves -- and to think that God wants to help us do so.

By nature, we focus on ourselves -- we are absolutely in bondage to doing so. Therefore, if we are presented with a Christianity that facilitates doing so, we are easily deceived. But Jesus Christ did not come to help us save ourselves, or to bring out our greatness. No. Rather, He came to make a way for us to lose ourselves unto His hands,

and to find Him as our life. This is contrary to our Adam nature, but that is exactly why it is freedom.

God did not design man to live in the knowledge of himself. Rather, He designed man to live in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. And Jesus said that the work of the spirit of God in this age would be to guide us into this knowledge of Christ -- to guide us into all Truth. The key to true freedom is NOT to merely realize our identity in Christ. We could have no theological knowledge of that whatsoever, and yet if we knew the Person of Jesus, we would be free indeed.



Oct 30
Gifts vs. Fruits

Spiritual gifts are GIVEN. Spiritual fruits are the outcome of a growth process. But both are of Jesus Christ. Neither are of natural man.

Spiritual gifts are given for the purpose of edification in Christ. Spiritual fruits are the outcome of edification in Christ. Both the gifts and the fruits are HIS LIFE through His Spirit. Or to put it another way, the gifts are the, "plant food," and the fruits are the growth, which in turn, produces a greater maturity of gifts unto a greater maturity of growth, etc. In this there is a continual working of God in many cycles of growth.

All spiritual gifts that are of the Spirit of Truth will tell the Truth about Jesus Christ. Any supposed spiritual gift that in any way misrepresents Jesus Christ – whether it be in word, action, manifestation, or direction – is not of God. It does not matter how supernatural it seems, or how moved people are over it. Agreement in error; excitement over error – this cannot make error the Truth.

Again – the purpose for which God has given the gifts of the Spirit is to edify the church in Christ – to build members IN HIM. (Eph. 4:4) If this is not happening, then what is happening is not of God.

All true spiritual fruit will manifest Jesus Christ. The fruit that comes from a branch abiding in the Vine is of not of the branch, but is of the life of the Vine.

According to Jesus, all of the work of the Holy Spirit will be unto a revelation of Christ TO us, IN us, and THROUGH us. There is much that passes today for spiritual fruit, or spiritual gifts, which are wholly of natural man. The foundational Truth of, "Christ in us, the hope of glory," has been replaced with an earthly substitute that appears spiritual.



Oct 31

God's Love in the Redemption

**In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.
(1 John 4:9)**

The fact that God's love for us was manifested through His Redemption in Christ shatters two falsehoods. First, it shatters the core of Calvinism. Calvinism teaches limited Atonement – saying that Christ died only for, “the elect,” and never intended to die for the non-elect. But if God manifested His love by sending Christ to die for, “the elect,” then what did God manifest towards those for whom Christ did NOT die? Are we to believe, this being the case, that God so loved the non-elect that He did NOT send Christ for them? God IS love and is no respecter of persons. Calvinism is an amazing blindness to God, and a terrible misrepresentation of His nature and character.

Secondly, it exposes as error the notion that Christ died in order to save man from God's wrath. No. God's sent Christ to save man from sin. “For God so loved the world that He gave...,” not, “for God was so mad at the world that He gave...” Again – love.



Nov 1

Does God Harden the Heart?

He has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardens. (Rom 9:18)

We are accountable before God only for the light and Truth that He gives us. But make no question about it – we ARE accountable for the light given. Once we see the Truth, we cannot ever be the same ever again – we will either receive it and be set free, or we will harden our hearts against it and be in greater darkness. We cannot go back.

This principle explains much – and clears up some confusion in a number of cases in scripture. For example, the Bible says, “God hardened Pharaoh's heart.” (Ex. 9:12) This statement, and the discussion in Romans 9, have been used to try to prove the false doctrine of unconditional election – that God elects many to damnation, and thus, wills the hardening of their hearts. No.

God desires that all men be saved and come into the knowledge of the Truth. (I Tim. 2:4) But if a person, like Pharaoh, keeps refusing that light, his heart will become hardened against God. Yet God will not stop trying to convict that person. Rather, God will keep convicting. In a sense, it can be said that God is hardening them, because God will not stop convicting them even if He knows they will harden themselves.

The Truth will judge us if we refuse. The grace God intends to soften our heart will act as the agent that hardens them – if we refuse. Indeed, final condemnation is the result of a continual refusal of the Truth that God brings. What is the solution, that God not bring it? No. God is going to push and push and push until each person decides one way or another. There is not going to be any fence-sitting. Thus, God brings the Truth. But He doesn't choose for us. We must choose.



Nov 2

Pharaoh and Judas

For the scripture says unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised you up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. (Rom 9:17)

Does God deliberately harden the hearts of some people so that they might be condemned? Does God ordain some to salvation, and others to damnation -- before any of us were born? Heresies like Calvinism would answer YES. Often, Romans 9 is used as the supposed proof. But this is not what Paul is saying. Calvinism is heresy, and the god of Calvinism is a false god.

God knows all things. He knows who will accept light and who will reject it. But God will nevertheless give light to those whom He knows will reject it. Does that make Him unjust? Does that mean He has ordained them to reject the Truth? No. For what else does God have to give except the Truth? God is faithful. He is no respecter of persons. He may know who will accept the Truth, and who will reject it. But He must bring the Truth regardless.

Pharaoh -- or even Judas for that matter -- may have blamed God for their condemnation, saying that unless God had given them light that they would have not been in the position to refuse light. They may have said, "God, you knew I would reject the Truth. But you gave it to me anyways. Therefore, YOU are to blame for my condemnation. I was better off in the dark." Romans 9 addresses this argument. The answer is that God must judge the world by Jesus Christ. There is only ONE Truth. God is not responsible for our choices. He must reveal the Truth.

God does not ordain some to accept Christ and others to reject Him. Rather, God must reveal Christ to all -- sooner or later. How else could God judge the world? God knew Pharaoh and Judas would reject Him. But the fact that He revealed to them the Truth was not unjust. It was, in fact, God's faithfulness. And the fact that God used their rejection for His purpose does not make them less responsible for that rejection. It simply means God can make even the wrath of the enemy for His own purposes.



Nov 3

About Extra-biblical Revelation

From a child you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. (2 Tim 3:15-16)

Knowing what the Bible says – that alone cannot save us. Indeed, it cannot form Christ in us. But the Bible can make us, “wise unto salvation” – directing us to the, “faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

There are Christian folks who are under the delusion that if they know all the right doctrines that this will make them right with God. There are those who think that if they learn teachings about Christ that this is equal to learning Christ Himself. But despite the fact that Paul taught MUCH doctrine, note what was his prayer for the Ephesians: “I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. (Eph 1:16-18) In short, Paul wanted them to read what he wrote. But he knew only God could show them what it meant through an inward revelation of His Son. This is not extra-biblical revelation. It is revelation that the Bible itself tells us God wants to give us.

More and more people today are claiming extra-biblical revelation. Some of it is preposterous, and some is demonic. But there is no revelation God will ever give, and nothing that He will ever do, that is not in the Bible – at least in principle. Thus, even though Paul is here talking about revelation from God to a person, that revelation is fully at one with what is found in His Word.



Nov 4
The Baptism of John

For John truly baptized with water; but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. (Acts 1:5)

There are a number of times in the NT where the baptism of John is contrasted against the baptism with the Holy Spirit – thus, they are not the same. John's was a baptism in water under the Old Covenant for the remission of sins – in anticipation of the One who was yet to come. But during the time of John's baptism no one was born from above -- for Jesus said until He ascended that the Spirit of God would never been IN anyone, but only WITH them (Jn. 14:17). Thus, until Jesus ascended there could be no new birth -- Jesus Christ could dwell in no one by the Spirit of God.

It was after the ascension, in Acts 2, that the baptism of the Holy Spirit took place for the first time. The baptism with the Holy Spirit IS the baptism into Christ – through which Jesus Christ comes to dwell within the believer as our salvation, and through which the believer comes under the power of all that Jesus is, and all that Jesus has done.



Nov 5
Is the Kingdom Taken by Force?

From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. (Matt. 11:11-13)

The kingdom of God is the rule of God. It is not a place over which God rules, but is the rule of God itself. Jesus is the King. Today His life is in us – and all that He governs in us and through us is His kingdom.

The above is a much misunderstood passage, mostly because we have assumed that to, “take the kingdom by force,” is a good thing. It is not. For the kingdom of God cannot be taken by force. It is the rule and sovereignty of God. It is cannot be TAKEN at all. It is RECEIVED solely by the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

You will note that Jesus said that the time frame wherein people were trying to take the kingdom by force was, “from days of John the Baptist until now.” Thus, these attempts were entirely BEFORE Jesus died, was raised, and ascended. Jesus is not talking about those who are born from above. He was referring to all of the human effort to bring to pass God's kingdom.

The Pharisees were those who tried to, "take the kingdom by force." They tried to take it through their own works. But in addition, they thought that the kingdom of God was political. For a time, even the disciples thought that their kingdom would be established by overthrowing the Romans and installing Jesus as king in the temple. Again -- any human effort to bring to pass God's kingdom is the violence and force to which Jesus is referring.

To take any kingdom by force means you must overthrow and defeat the King of that kingdom. But who is the King of the kingdom OF God? Jesus. You would therefore have to overthrow Him to take the kingdom by force. In short, this is not a good thing, but a terrible thing. The kingdom of God is IN US -- it is Christ in us, and all of the reign and rule and extended from Him. Thus, rather than try to take the kingdom of God by force, we must surrender to Christ and His kingdom. We must RECEIVE all in Him by grace.



Nov 6

Crossing the Jordan

Behold, the ark of the covenant of the LORD of all the earth passes over before you into Jordan....As soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap.
(Josh 3:11,13)

Israel came OUT of Egypt through a body of water. The parting of the Red Sea required a miracle. There was no other escape for them. Israel also entered INTO the promised land through a body of water. But although the parting of the Jordan was a miracle, they could have crossed over the Jordan easily without a miracle. The Jordan was not that wide. But God forbade it. Crossing the Jordan had to be by HIS hand.

God is showing us that He must lead us into the inheritance, that is, it is by His working in us through Christ that we are in the inheritance. But it is also possible to enter into the land, and try to live in there, through human effort. We can try to take possession of the things of God for ourselves through unbelief. The result will be deception.

Christianity is, "Christ in us, the hope of glory," and the Christian life is a matter of coming into an inward knowledge and realization of Him -- and of living from out of Him for all. All else that God is doing is built upon life in His Son. He is our inheritance -- God has freely given us all

things in His Son. (Rom. 8:32) But where we are blinded to Christ, we will accept an earthly substitute -- and we will be told that we can come into this substitute through human effort.

Paul said, "Christ in us, the hope of glory," whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present everyman mature in Christ." (Col. 1:28) He also said, "I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." (Gal. 4:19) But in today's church, "Christ in us," is either ignored or redefined. And there is no travail whatsoever that Christ be formed in us. Rather, people are trying to walk with God on some other basis -- usually an earthly basis. Instead of allowing God to raise us up in Christ through the miracle of resurrection - - as typified by the parting of the Jordan -- we have dragged down Christianity to an earthly level. This is why there is so much deception today. Earthly Christianity is not Christianity at all. It is like trying to live in the Promised Land through human effort.



Nov 7 Into Trouble by Faith

Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baalzephon: before it shall you encamp by the sea. (Ex. 14:2)

On the morning that Israel departed from Egypt, Pharaoh pursued them and trapped them by the Red Sea. They had no way out. Often lost in this story is the fact that they found themselves in this impossible situation -- one that required a miracle of God -- NOT through disobedience, but through obedience. Israel had OBEYED God. God had given them specific instructions as to where to encamp and they had obeyed Him. That is why they were trapped.

Faith in God will very often lead us into such situations. We will obey Him thinking that it will help us avoid trouble. Yet sometimes obedience to God guarantees trouble. God will lead us into situations that are too much for us. But He does this so that we might lose ourselves to Him in faith.

There is an obvious difference between trouble that is the result of disobedience and trouble that is the result of obedience. But the solution to both is the same -- turn to God by faith. Paul said, "For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves,

that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raises the dead.“
(2 Cor. 1:8-9)

The essential thing to see is that when we encounter trouble through circumstances, God is not so much after the circumstance. He is after US. Thus, we can surrender the circumstance to God, but we really need to surrender ourselves to God. If we do that, then God will be free to change us -- to use the trial to form Christ in us. And if it suits Him, He can then change the circumstance. God uses that which is temporal to do an eternal work in His people.



Nov 8

The Solution for the Impossible

And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will show to you to day. For the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. (Ex. 14:13-14)

What are God's instructions to His people in an impossible situation?
“Fear not, stand still, see salvation, and then move forward.”

We, “fear not,” by believing and trusting the Lord. We, “stand still,” in that faith against all the might come against it, or try to cast doubt upon God's faithfulness. And if we do, we will, “see the salvation of the Lord,” which to say, is to see Jesus Christ Himself. And under the power of all of this, “we move forward and walk with God.”

If we examine this, we will see that it is all about losing our lives to Christ -- about unconditionally trusting the Lord, so that God can work first, IN US, and then for us. If you desire to know Jesus Christ it is necessary to lose your life to Him.

Israel never had to lift a hand to save themselves from Pharaoh. In fact, God deliberately led them into a situation where doing so would have been useless. But once they obeyed God and trusted in Him, the victory was as good as finished.

Many think that it is God's desire to make us strong. It is not. God will absolutely make us weak -- really, He will expose the fact that we already are weak. But He does this so that through faith Jesus Christ might be our strength. This principle is all through the Bible – it is not a matter of what I do or whether I have strength. It is a matter of having my faith in the One who already has won every victory.



Nov 9
Christ, the Power of God

Christ, the power of God. (1 Cor. 1:24)

God does not give us power. He does not give us strength. He gives us Christ, who IS the power of God – and who dwells in us. Thus, the key to all power is faith in the One who is the power of God.

Strength is never found in our natural man -- nor is strength to our natural man. In fact, strength is only possible by faith in Christ if we are weak in our natural man. Thus, God will be at work to expose us as utterly weakness and powerless in ourselves -- so that we might trust in Christ. To the extent that we are weak in ourselves, and put our faith in Christ, He will be our strength.

Power is not found in what we do, or in what we do not do. You can obey laws, rules, principles, jump through religious hoops, and study the Bible until you are blue in the face, but in the end, there is only one key to power – faith in Christ.

This is certainly the Truth regarding any sin. If you ask the average believer what is the solution to bondage to sin they will tell you, "obedience." But we cannot obey. That is the problem. That is why we are in bondage.

Human beings have no power over sin -- sin is our nature. And Jesus Christ did not come to give us a THING called power so that we could stop sinning. Rather, we must be brought to the place where we are absolutely convinced that we cannot obey God; cannot overcome sin. Only once we become weak in ourselves, without confidence in ourselves, will we finally realize that the solution is found in One other than ourselves.

That solution is Christ, the power of God. But we cannot simply ask Him to, "act upon us," and set us free from sin. Rather, we have to give our entire self to Him. We must lose the life in which all sin is rooted -- we can start by asking God to do whatever it takes to bring us into victory. Christ must become our life -- not simply, "on paper," but truly, by faith. As we abide in Christ as our life, the sin that is rooted in the old life will find no place.

Jesus Christ IS the resurrection and the life. He IS the power of God. He died so that we might be free FROM sin, and free UNTO God. These are not theories. They are realities of the new creation.



Nov 10
Living From Christ

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places. (Eph. 1:19-20)

Christianity is, "Christ in us." Jesus dwells in us by virtue of the fact that we are made one with Him in spirit and raised in Him. (I Cor. 6:17) But when the believer is joined in spirit with Christ, this automatically creates a separation in each believer between that spiritual union with Christ and that person's earthly nature. The Bible describes this as the separation between soul and spirit.

Thus, there are two natures -- two kinds of life -- in each believer: Our natural man, and Christ. One is natural and one is spiritual. One is corrupt and one is eternal. One is in Christ and the other is outside of Christ. The two are contrary to one another. But we are going to live from out of one or the other.

People who are not in Christ live fully within the earthly nature -- for the earthly nature is all that they are. And since this is all that they know, they don't even realize that they are blind, lost, and living within a fallen nature. On the other hand, for a believer, Paul said, "Christ, who is our life." (Col. 3:4) We are to live from out of Christ. Yet many believers are blind to Christ. Thus, they continue to live according to their earthly nature. And because they are blind to Christ, they are trying to walk with Christ according to their earthly nature. They live in an earthly -- a soulish -- Christianity.

This is why the work of the Cross is necessary -- the earthly nature must be broken and exposed for what it is. God will create one situation after another in the life of the believer that presses us out of measure -- that exposes the lack of life in our natural man. Our choice is whether to lose that old earthly nature so that the life of Jesus Christ might be released to a greater degree in our actual experience.

If Christ is in us, we are spiritually sitting with Him in heavenly places. Note: Our earthly nature is NOT sitting with Him in heavenly places. No. Rather, in spirit we are united with Christ and seated IN HIM. Again -- we must come under the work of the Cross so that the power of the earthly nature might be broken. Then all of the power of God will come into our experience because we will come into an inward realization of Christ Himself -- who IS the power of God.



Nov 11
The Ages to Come

Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he has purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.
(Eph. 1:9-10)

This passage is telling us that it is the purpose of God to gather all things together in Christ – in the Person of His Son. Indeed, nothing can be within the will of God in any other way. And primary to what God wants to gather up in Christ are believers. This, "gathering together," has already begun.

God also intends to dismantle all else. Everything that is not of Christ is going to be shaken so that only that which is of Christ will remain. None of it will pass through to the next age. For Jesus Christ came, not to bring peace on this earth to what man has built -- not even to man's religion -- but division and destruction. He came to divide and destroy all unity that is not in Himself -- so that God can rebuild and bring true unity in His Son.

We will not see much of the fruitage of this in this age, but only bits and pieces. Since the beginning, God has been building His kingdom -- but He has been doing it in pieces -- here a little and there a little -- a believer here, and a church there. But never in this age has God been in great movements. Yet when the next age begins, God will gather up all of the pieces -- He will gather together all who are already one spirit in Christ.

The Body of Christ is the first fruits of this purpose in this age. Not a body that is now all in one place, or in one time. But a body that is scattered across time and space. This Body of Christ is going to be gathered together in Christ. It will serve as an instrument in Christ unto God's greater purposes in the next age: "That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:7)



Nov 12

Asking in Prayer

Ask, and it shall be given you. (Mat 7:7)

What does it mean to ASK God? There are many times when God is silent -- we ask and we don't actually receive what we ask. Why?

Of course, we must ask, "according to His will," (I Jn. 5:14) But it also raises another question: If we are, "to ask according to His will," then aren't we asking God to do what He already wants to do? Yes, we are. Then why do we need to ask at all? Why doesn't God just do His will without us needing to ask?

God does plenty without us needing to specifically ask. But TO ASK -- according to God's will -- suggests that I fully WANT the will of God -- and God sees I am ready to receive it. In other words, my asking is not out of emotion, or fear, or pride, or personal bias. I am opening myself to, and asking for, the will of God.

Jesus said, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:7) Note that we will ask from OUT OF the words of Jesus that abide in us. Or to put it another way, we will ask according to the Truth; according to Christ. He is simply saying that our asking, if it is according to the will of God, will be out from our relationship in spirit and in Truth in Christ.

When we have a need, God is not indifferent. He is not impractical. But God also has greater purposes than to simply give us what we need. He wants to reveal in us His Son. Thus, God will often use our need to draw us into His will and purpose. Along with our need, God will bring us into a greater revelation of Himself -- for in the end, Jesus Christ is our answer -- in Him is all that God has to give.



Nov 13

In the Name of Jesus

If someone stole your credit card and spend thousands of dollars, "in your name," would you feel obligated to pay for those items? No. And neither would the law hold you responsible. That is because despite the fact the thief purchased those items, "in your name," you never gave them authority to do so.

That is a key when it comes to using, "the name of Jesus." We have no right using the name of Jesus for anything except His will. Not only

that, but we must use it in the right spirit and motivation. Believers are members of Christ, and therefore, extensions of Him. We can use the name of Jesus as authority to do ONLY that which Jesus would do.

God has not given us the authority to randomly go around doing things for Him, "in the name of Jesus." No. If you have tried that, you will know it does not work. Read Acts 19:13-15. Certain Jews tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus to cast out evil spirits. It was a disaster. Why? The evil spirits themselves gave the answer: "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?"

The name of Jesus is used today for everything under the sun. But it means nothing if Jesus Christ is not at home in the one using it.

Jesus said, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:7) When the words of Jesus are freely AT HOME in us -- then there is nothing in us that will use His name for our own purposes or glory. We are then safe. We can be extensions of Christ. Christ can work through us by His name if He is at work in us.



Nov 14 The Anointing

These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which you have received of him abides in you, and you need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, ye shall abide in him. (1 John 2:26-27)

Today many are teaching about, "the anointing." They claim that this, "anointing," is TRANSFERABLE. In other words, if you want to be touched by this anointing, you must come to them, or support their ministry. They claim that God's blessings flow down to THEM -- and then out to US.

But according to John, the anointing is, "received of HIM." It is not transferred to you from any person. And this anointing is not, "a power." It is not a visitation of power that enters a TV studio, or church service -- and then does things -- only to then leave. You don't have to hurry up and plug into the anointing of God by calling a ministry or by writing a check -- so that you can be blessed before it leaves. No. This is a lie.

The name CHRIST means, "anointed one." And Jesus Christ is God's ONLY ANOINTED ONE. Thus, if I want the anointing of God, I

have to receive Christ through the Spirit. Any manifestation of an anointing from God is therefore not a THING, or an EVENT. It is a manifestation of Jesus Christ through the spirit of God.

You will note that John says, "the anointing abides IN YOU." – i.e., "Christ in YOU." In other words, the anointing is not a visitation. It is a permanent habitation -- the permanent habitation of a PERSON, Jesus Christ, in you.

John specifically states that he is writing so that no one can deceive us by claiming that the anointing is otherwise. But his words have been ignored. This is exactly the error that is often taught today on Christian TV. The anointing is made to be almost anything but Christ in us. And it is taught that it is, "transferrable." It is about time that Christian people started reading the Bible and taking it seriously, instead of listening to people who directly contradict it.



Nov 15 Spirit and Truth

The hour comes and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:23-24)

What did Jesus mean when He said that God must be worshiped, "in Spirit and in Truth?" Actually, He was answering a question. The woman at the well had just asked Him which was the, "right place," to worship: Samaria or Jerusalem? (John 4:20)

Jesus answered that there is NO, "right place." There is no, "right group." There are no gurus. Despite the fact that there are ministry gifts to help us be edified in Christ, there is no hotline to God through any person to God. Jesus Christ alone is our Mediator unto God. Unless He is established in us as the basis of our lives before God, we are not worshipping God in Spirit and Truth.

Christianity is Christ in us. Christ alone is our mediator unto God. We have personal, direct, one-on-one access to God through Christ, not only because of what He has done, but because of who He IS, right now -- IN US.

Worship that is, "in Spirit and in Truth," is worship from the heart by faith -- rather than through soul power and emotions. It is worship of God without the aid of material items, and without the aid of flesh and

blood. Worship in spirit and Truth is the outcome, and the ONLY outcome, if we are truly growing to know Jesus Christ.

If we read this passage it should make us realize that we have no business worshipping God on our terms, and according to what we think is best. For the only way to worship God in spirit and Truth is if we ask God to bring us into the Truth of Christ, "no matter what it takes." Truth is a Person, not a religious construct.



Nov 16 Of God or Man?

This people draws near unto me with their mouth, and honor me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. (Mat 15:8-9)

I wonder if we realize the seriousness of these words of Jesus. He is contrasting what is OF MAN over and against what is OF GOD. He is saying that if what we believe and teach is OF MAN -- and we present it as the Truth of God -- we do it because our heart that is far from Him.

Why? Because if our heart is CLOSE to God we will know God and He will guide us into the Truth. Therefore what we believe and teach will be the Truth. In the final analysis, what I believe about God, and teach others, is going to be a reflection of my personal faith and relationship with God.

Don't misunderstand. We are all in a process of growth. Jesus is not talking in this passage about ignorance. He is talking about whether we have an open heart towards God. In this passage, He is talking about those like the Pharisees -- who have taken leadership positions but who are teaching error. They have hardened hearts. And it is from out of these hardened hearts toward God that the error they teach springs.

In the final analysis, once God brings light -- and ONLY once God brings light -- we are either going to allow God to adjust us to Jesus Christ in Truth, or we are going to adjust the Truth to fit ourselves -- by substituting for the Truth with what is of man. An open heart will be able to learn Jesus Christ. A closed heart will sidestep the Cross and alter the Truth to what suits man.

Why is there so much false teaching today? Is it because people are stupid? No. Is it merely because they have a false theology? No. Rather, they have a false GOD. They have a false gospel. And that false gospel has found a home in people -- and is read INTO scripture --

because of a heart in them that gives it a home. Many are unwilling to be broken.

The same grace that God intends to soften our hearts will harden them if we resist that grace. God is faithful. But we must choose.

Jesus said that if we teach what is from out of man as if it is the Truth of God that we worship Him IN VAIN. Again, this is not a description of ignorance. It is a description of hardness. We cannot worship God out of an untrue heart in that which is contrary to Christ. We MUST worship God in spirit and in Truth. And Jesus Christ promised to guide us there if we would open to Him.



Nov 17
Justification by Faith

The apostle Paul goes to great lengths to explain how God is able to justify – declare as righteous – the sinner through Jesus Christ. He discusses the moral and legal issues involved. But all of this teaching leads to one Truth: Jesus Christ IS our righteousness. He is the only righteousness we have.

Jesus Christ dwells in the believer -- and because He is righteous, He IS our righteousness. Or, as Paul says, "We are the righteousness of God IN HIM."

Righteousness and life go hand in hand. God does not simply declare me righteous. That alone would impart no life. Rather, God unites me in spirit with Christ Himself. He IS the life of the believer, and thus, He IS the righteousness of the believer.

The doctrine of justification by faith rightly states that because Christ died for us, that if we put our faith in Him, that all of our sins are imputed to Him, and all of His righteousness is imputed to us. This is legally correct. But it is only LEGAL imputation. It does not actually impart LIFE.

In reality, if we place our faith in Christ, yes, God legally IMPUTES to us His righteousness. But more than this, God IMPARTS to us Christ Himself. His presence in us constitutes OUR life, and OUR righteousness.

God never created human beings to have their own righteousness, any more than He created them to have their own life. No. From the start man was to be one with God – living from out of God as his source for all. Jesus Christ in us is the means.

Righteousness is a Person. And the believer is united with that Person in spirit. Thus, rather than continually try to be righteous, we need to believe and abide in Christ as our righteousness. This is the only way in which good works can follow in the Christian life and be the outcome of faith.



Nov 18
God's Redemptive Desire for All

Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. (I Tim. 2:5)

The desire of God for all men is salvation – but more. He wants all men, if they will embrace Christ and be saved, to come into the knowledge of the Truth. The knowledge of the Truth is an inward knowing and realization of this same Jesus Christ, who said, “I am the Truth.” (Jn. 14:6)

There are those who would suggest that the knowledge of God can be mustered up out of natural man – that we all have it in us through birth. But nothing could be more contrary to the Truth. Truth is received from above – as is the Life in which the Truth abides. Jesus Christ is both The Life and The Light, and the only way to receive Him is from the outside of us into us from the outside. Then we are made alive because He is THE LIFE. From that point, the Christian life is the forming of Christ within (Gal. 4:19), as God guides us into all of the Truth of Christ. The One whose presence in us constitutes eternal life is the same One we must come to know in Truth.

God's desire is for ALL to be saved. Not some. Not a few called, "the elect." The Calvinistic idea that Jesus died ONLY for a few, "elect," and that God has already ordained specific persons to hell, as well as specific persons to heaven -- and that we are simply choosing according to God's predestination -- is a horrible heresy. It is heresy, not only because it is theological error, but it is heresy because of the false god and false Jesus that it presents. No. God desires that ALL be saved and that ALL come into the knowledge of the Truth. And He sent His Son to make salvation possible for all -- for WHOSOEVER will believe.



Nov 19
The Seed of Abraham

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He said not,
And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is
Christ. (Gal. 3:16)

Jesus Christ is the, "seed of Abraham," to which the promises of Abraham pertain – which includes the promise of eternal inheritance. Paul emphasizes that there is ONE seed of Abraham -- not two, or many. Jesus is that one seed, and there are no others.

But note: If we are in Christ, then because He is THE seed of Abraham, then we are likewise the seed of Abraham because we are one with Him. Note that we are not ADDITIONAL seeds of Abraham. No. Christ alone is that seed but if we are joined to Him in spirit -- we are the seed of Abraham IN HIM.

Paul explains, "For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3:26-29)

God has wrapped up ALL that He has for human beings in His Son -- and there is NOTHING God will give to us outside of Christ. Thus, it is only as we come into the fullness of Christ that eternal inheritance is possible for us. He is the seed of Abraham, and it is only as we experience HIM, that all that is in Him, i.e., eternal inheritance, can come into our experience.

The plan of God as to inheritance is: The Father, The Son, and all who are IN the Son. Thus, there is ONE seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ. But all who are IN Him are one with Him – and thus all that God has for Him pertains also to US -- through union with Christ.



Nov 20
The Circumcision

For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and
rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. (Phil. 3:3)

Paul is bringing out the spiritual Truth that God was illustrating through the OT rite of circumcision. He is saying that NT saints are to be,

“the circumcision,” because we have had, “our flesh,” cut off – through the Cross of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we do not worship God through, or by the means of, the flesh – we do not walk with God on the basis of anything about ourselves -- but only through Jesus Christ.

“No confidence in the flesh,” means no FAITH in ourselves, or in anything about ourselves. Indeed, the cutting off of the flesh from that particular body part illustrated that the Adam race was cut-off. The Adam race could birth nothing of value. Indeed, the Adam race was ended in the Last Adam, Jesus Christ. Through Christ there is now a NEW race – the new creature in Christ Jesus.

“The circumcision,” are those who have seen the Truth. They take no confidence in their flesh because they know that there is nothing there in which to put their faith. This results in a rejoicing in Christ because we know we are alive unto God because of Him.



Nov 21

How to Know Jesus Christ

How does one receive revelation from God? Does reading the Bible impart to us revelation from God in a way that will transform us into the image of Christ?

Reading the Bible is essential – because it contains God's written revelation of Himself to man. But that alone isn't the way, for some of the biggest heretics read the Bible. It is entirely possible to memorize the Bible and yet have no faith in Christ.

How about praying? Also essential. But people in cults pray and remain deceived.

How about meditation? Can we sit in a trace, clear our minds, and chant something to God over and over to discover Jesus Christ? Is, “contemplative prayer,” the answer? Nope.

Other suggest worship. It has been wrongly stated that it is during a worship service that God shows up and reveals Christ. But some of the biggest errors are present today among those who have the biggest worship services.

These are all WAYS people use to try to know Jesus. But Truth cannot be dragged down from heaven through any efforts of men. It cannot be absorbed from the pages of the Bible, nor from another

Christian. Neither can we muster up Truth from out of our natural man – there is no Truth in natural man.

There is no WAY – in the sense of a how-to or religious rite -- to know Jesus, because Jesus Christ IS The Way. If you are saved, Christ is already in you – and if Christ is in you, then the embodiment of all Truth is already in you. Thus, you can begin to know Jesus Christ.

But the question remains: How to we grow to know Him? The answer is that we must lose our lives in order to find them in Him.

Here is how Paul said he came to KNOW JESUS: “I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” (Phil. 3:8-11) Paul came to know Jesus by renouncing his own life – suffering the loss of himself – and being brought down to nothing. But when this happened to Paul he did not merely grasp true doctrines. No, his mind was renewed according to Christ.

If we want to know Jesus -- if we want true LIGHT -- then we have to be living from His LIFE. But in order to have HIS LIFE, we must lose OUR life. In other words, if we want to know Jesus Christ we must unconditionally give ourselves to Him. This begins when I ask God to do whatever it takes to bring me into the fullness of Christ.

People say they want LIGHT. But the first thing the light will expose is our true condition -- it must because light always brings TRUTH. And if the light exposes us, and we embrace this Truth, we will voluntarily lose our lives to Jesus Christ. We will want to pick up our Cross daily and lose our life in order to find His. And in His life we will see light -- we will grow to know Him. Prayer and Bible study are not substitutes for faith in Jesus Christ. They are OUTCOMES. Indeed, both will absolutely direct us to the Cross as the gateway to life and light in Christ.



Nov 22
Eating and Drinking Without Reverence

For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. (I Cor. 11:29-30)

The question here is not whether WE are worthy – that would be contrary to everything about the grace of God. Rather, the issue here is whether we ascribe worthiness to Jesus Christ, and what He has done for us, and for the others in the Body. The reverence we have for Christ always governs all other relationships.

In the first century, gathering for a meal carried a meaning lost today. Breaking bread together WAS human fellowship to people of that time. Thus, when the early believers gathered, they did include an entire meal as expressive of communion in Christ – but the meal did not create their communion in Christ. Rather, they were celebrating the fact that they were already in communion with Christ based on what He had done for each of them.

In I Corinthians 11, Paul is using the literal meal – and the way the Corinthians handled it -- as an example of spiritual communion among those in Christ. The real spiritual communion is among those who, by faith, solely in Christ, “eat His flesh,” and, “drink His Blood,” – i.e., have internalized Christ; He is IN THEM. The outward meal is merely representative of this inward reality.

"To eat and drink," in a way that does not ascribe worthiness to Christ is to outwardly go through the motions of communion with Christ, but inwardly not be in communion with Him. It is a lack of reverence for what Christ has done for us, and for who He is to us today.

The Corinthians were extremely irreverent with regards to the outward meal. But this was merely representative of an inward condition. The spiritual communion they had with each other was not IN CHRIST. It was for their own purposes. Thus, it was a false communion. And Paul is taking them to task for it. They needed to discern the Lord's body, that is, they needed to realize what Christ had done for each of them through His Redemptive work. The true bread is His body, and the true wine is His blood. They needed to EAT of Him, ascribing to HIM all reverence. This would then govern their communion with each other.



Nov 23
Judging Ourselves

For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. (1 Cor. 11:31-32)

The meaning of JUDGMENT is found in the root Greek word, which speaks of discernment, or of a, "finding out." Judgment is LIGHT – God always begins to judge by telling the Truth about us – so that we may say the same thing about ourselves (confess) as He says. He must bring the judgment of light in Jesus Christ – so that, having been judged by the Light, we can renounce sin and unbelief and be set free.

Judgment is finished in Christ. But now believers must experience Christ -- experience what it means to be made one with Christ in His death and resurrection. Believers are forever forgiven in Christ. But now we must be actually set free forever from our sin and unbelief so that we might live in and experience the finished Redemption as new creations in Christ Jesus.

Just as Jesus said we must pick up our Cross daily and lose our lives if we want to follow Him, so it is that God will continually judge all that is of the old nature in us so that Christ might be experienced and manifested. This is not because our salvation is not finished. No. Rather, it is our finished salvation being worked out in us -- it is the believer actually experiencing Jesus Christ. He IS our redemption. He IS our sanctification. The judgment of God is nothing more than God setting us free through showing us the Truth, about ourselves, and about the Christ who dwells in us.

Paul also stated that if we would judge ourselves -- that is, agree with the Truth of God's judgment -- that there would no need to be further judgment. God is faithful and has only one purpose -- to present each person mature in Christ. Thus, He is not going to stop bringing the Truth. He cannot because there is only ONE Truth. If believers will not embrace the Truth God brings -- Truth that would judge their unbelief and set them free -- then the same Truth God intends for our freedom will harden our hearts. We must choose.

Judgment is a great thing. It is a wonderful thing. We should ask God to judge in us all that is contrary to Christ -- indeed, this is the ONLY possible way to walk in the Truth -- for in Jesus Christ God has already judged all sin and unbelief, and so there is no other Truth and path in Christ that is possible within God's will and purpose.

These statements by Paul are given within the, "communion chapter." He is telling us that we must, "eat and drink," Christ in a way

that ascribes reverence to Him and His Body. Allowing God to judge all that is in us that is contrary to Christ is exactly what this means. If we are in true communion with Christ it is going to result in our seeing the Truth and allowing God to do whatever it takes to make us mature in His Son.



Nov 24

Judgment vs. Condemnation

But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. (I Cor. 11:32)

Judgment begins with LIGHT – God exposes all about us and tells the Truth about us. We then confess, or say the same thing in agreement with Him. Jesus Christ IN the saint is THE Light. If Christ dwells in us, then His presence is going to slowly expose everything about us. But this is all so that we might lose ourselves to God and have Christ formed in us. (Gal. 4:19)

When we hear the word, “judgment,” we often confuse it with, “condemnation.” Indeed, even the KJV translators sometimes confuse the two. But they are not the same.

As noted, “judgment,” is a matter of God exposing and calling someone who they are to Him. It is really DISCERNMENT -- and it is all for the purpose of redemption. Thus, if the person responds to judgment by confessing what God reveals and puts their faith in Christ, then this would fulfill the purpose for which God judges: Freedom.

“Condemnation,” on the other hand, is actually -- according to the Greek word -- “a judgment AGAINST.” Condemnation is the only possible result once redemptive judgment is refused. God cannot forgive the refusal of His forgiveness. Jesus did not die for the sin of refusing His death. If a person will not be judged in Christ then they will be condemned for refusing Him -- this is condemnation.

God has finished forgiving sin because Jesus has finished dying for sin. The finality of forgiveness through the redemption of Jesus Christ is a foundation of Christianity. That is why, despite the fact that God will judge sin in His people, that the people themselves are not condemned. There is no condemnation for those who are in Jesus Christ. (Rom. 8:1)



Nov 25
Judgment vs. Affirmation

For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God:
and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the
gospel of God? (I Pet. 4:17)

Jesus Christ did not come to affirm us. People need to get it settled once and for all that by the time God is finished only that which is of Christ is going to remain. There will be no exceptions. The entire Adam race, indeed, the old creation, was crucified in Christ. A new creation was raised. In the eyes of God, the old is passed away, and all things are new IN CHRIST. It is just a matter of time before this is fully worked out.

For believers, this has begun to be worked out right now in them. This is that judgment that has begun. God must judge under the Cross all that is not of Christ in each of us. Otherwise His death is meaningless. But just as we are united with Him in His death, so we are united with Him in His resurrection. This is not just theory. It is reality in spirit -- and is now being worked out. This alone will enable us to fellowship and live in Him forever. Thus, we must lose our lives to Him under the Cross, and if we are not, we are not only walking contrary to the Truth, but we are in unbelief.

God affirms only His Son. But that is great news for the saint. It means that if we are in Christ then we are in the One whom God unconditionally affirms. This is nothing but another way of stating the Truth of God's grace -- that God deals with us only on the basis of Jesus Christ.

People tend to look upon these Truths as negative -- as if God is going to do something bad to us. No. It is freedom and redemption. But it is so utterly foreign to us we think it is abnormal. It is not. It is God's normal. Judgment has begun now in the people of God so that God might have a Body of sons and daughters to whom He can give all things in Christ.



Nov 26
Under the Mighty Hand of God

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he
may exalt you in due time. (I Peter 5:6)

Each believer has personal, direct access to God in His Son, Jesus Christ. This means that our relationship with God is NOT determined by whether we submit to people or to circumstances. Rather, it DOES mean that our relationship to people and circumstances is determined by, and to be governed by, our relationship with God Himself. We FIRST humble ourselves under the hand of God -- and from this relationship with God we live regarding all else.

There have always been false teachers who have demanded that we must submit to authority -- usually THEM -- before we can be right with God. This is a lie of Satan. We submit to God, and then as it constitutes HIS WILL, we submit to people and to circumstances. We must obey God rather than man.

Thus, if we are in difficult circumstances, we are not to surrender to the circumstances. We are to surrender to God while in them -- for HIS purposes. If we are dealing with a difficult person -- even one in authority -- we are not to merely submit to them to keep some, "authority principle." No. We are to submit to God -- and our relationship with God will govern what our relationship with them is to be.

The key here is FAITH in God. Real faith in God, based in the Truth, will not turn me into a militant rebel. Neither will it make me a puppet of others. Real faith in God results in a life that is from out of Christ. That will rightly adjust me to others. He is the Vine, and as a branch I first abide in Him. That, in turn, adjusts me to rightly relate to all other branches. This is true regarding all human relationships.

This principle is the same as losing your life to find Christ as your life. To, "humble," yourself under the mighty hand of God is nothing more than abandoning yourself to Him so that He might have HIS will -- but not just in the circumstances. He wants His will IN YOU. Those who lose themselves to Christ need not be controlled by anyone or anything. They will be exalted to reign and rule with Christ. Christ Himself will govern them over all things.



Nov 27

Casting Your Care

Casting all your care upon Him; for He cares for you. (1 Pet. 5:7)

This could easily read, "Throw the whole of your life, with it's care, upon Him."

Jesus also told us we must LOSE our lives to Him if we wanted to find true life. (see Matt. 16:24-25) Practically speaking, this would include losing our problems into His hands. But note: It is actually quite impossible to cast your cares upon the Lord -- in real faith -- without eventually casting the whole of your life upon the Lord. Why? Because God will always seek to bring me to where I cast my entire life upon Him. Always. Thus, if I come to God to merely find a solution to my problems, but withhold myself from Him, I am going to eventually find myself resisting His purpose.

It is easy in this life to become ANXIOUS over much. In the NT Greek, the word translated, "anxious," comes from a word that means, "to be pulled in two different directions." That says it all. As a believer, if I am anxious, it may be because I have not yet decided whether I believe and trust God. Or maybe I have not yet decided whether to lose my life to Him. So I am being pulled in opposing directions. But if I unconditionally surrender to God -- my emotions may remain -- but they will not be able to greatly move me from faith -- the basis of their power to control us will be undercut.

Ask God, as Paul asked for the church, "to give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." (See Eph. 1:16) Then believe and begin to walk. Despite the fact that the Truth about Himself that God reveals will be tested, it is nevertheless a fact that all fear for a believer goes back to somewhere that I have embraced a lie about God. If we believe the Truth about Him fear will be progressively cast out.



Nov 28 Resisting the Devil

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 5:8-10)

This passage from 1 Peter makes it perfectly clear that God will allow the enemy access to us for the deliberate purpose of giving us the opportunity to resist by faith. This is the way in which we are brought to the end of ourselves, and how we learn to wholly rely upon Christ. This is the meaning of, "humble yourself under the mighty hand of God." God's hand is there -- under which we might humble ourselves by faith.

That is overcoming -- we overcome the enemy by coming under Jesus as Lord.

In this we also see that we are not to surrender to, or resign to, the circumstance or trial. No. We are to surrender to God. There is a big difference. We are to surrender to Him so that, "when you have suffered for awhile," God can complete the work in us of revealing Christ.

"TO HIM be the glory and dominion forever and ever." The way in which we reign and rule with Christ is if He reigns and rules IN US. The way in which we have dominion is if He has dominion over us. This is what God is seeking to accomplish under His hand through these many trials.



Nov 29
To Christ Be Dominion

To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (I Pet. 5:11)

Jesus Christ, through His Redemption, has won every victory that there is to win, including victory over the ultimate enemy, death. Thus, Jesus Christ has all dominion – over all things. This reveals to us the Truth about any possible victory that we could experience in the Christian life: In order to OVERCOME the enemy, we must COME UNDER Jesus Christ as Lord. In short, we have to surrender to the winning side.

Do you want victory over some sin? You will never find it by fighting that sin. Rather, you must surrender to the One who already has that victory. Indeed, in order to have victory over sin, you have to lose your entire self to Jesus. Lose your life to Christ and all the sin that is rooted in that life will slowly lose its power.

When we, "humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God," we are coming under the hand of eternal victory. Thus, rather than win His victory all over again, we live from out of His victory – standing by faith. The Christian life is never one of winning ground. Rather, it is one of holding ground by faith. The battle is faith.

Jesus Christ said that ALL authority had been given to Him. We have NO authority. This is why Peter is able to say, "Resist the devil in the faith," rather than say, "Defeat the devil." No. We are in the victory of Christ by faith and need only resist the Devil by standing by faith in HIS finished victory.



Nov 30

Jesus Destroyed the Work of the Devil

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3:8)

When we are joined to the Lord in spirit, that union IS the new creature in Christ. But everything outside of that union -- our soul and body -- remains the old natural man. Thus, our union with Christ in spirit automatically creates in each believer TWO natures -- a separation between soul and spirit; flesh and spirit.

You will note that the old nature is not obliterated by our joining to the Lord. Neither did Jesus blast out of existence the works of the Devil. Rather, Jesus put all of that completely aside under the Cross and He made a new creation -- in Himself.

The entirety of the power of Satan is rooted in the old creation -- Adam relinquished that to Satan. In this age, by virtue of the Cross Christ, we are spiritually dead to that old man in Adam, but by virtue of His resurrection, we are spiritually raised out of it in Christ as a new creation. But since both natures exist in a believer, there is the possibility that Satan could get to us through our old nature -- through our soul life, emotions, bias, and desires. The only solution is to LOSE that old life in which the power of Satan is rooted -- and to begin to abide in Christ as our life. Then our minds can be renewed according to the knowledge of Jesus.

You cannot fix the old creation in this age. But it can come to be governed by Jesus as Lord -- if we lose it to Him and believe and abide in Him by faith. Our old nature is under the Cross -- but its death is worked out as we pick up our personal cross. Then the life of Christ will be manifested in us and come to govern us.

Note John's words: "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." That is a finished work -- but believers, while spiritually saved in this age by virtue of our spiritual union with Christ, are not yet physically saved. That will happen at the resurrection. It is then that the finished destruction of the works of the Devil will be fully experienced by all of those in Christ.



Dec 1

Purpose of the OT Sacrifices

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then they would have ceased to be offered because the worshipers once purged would have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. (Heb. 10:1-3)

What was the purpose of the OT animal sacrifices? Was it to temporarily appease God with the blood of bulls and goats until Jesus Christ could come and forever appease God with His own Blood? No. In fact, if you read this passage, you will see that the sacrifices of the OT did absolutely NOTHING to contribute to real redemption. We are told that they could NEVER make the worshipper perfect. That ought to make sense, for how could the sacrifice of an animal do anything to contribute to the salvation of humanity?

The animal sacrifices were not an appeasement of God any more than the Blood of Jesus was an appeasement of God. In fact, we are told outright the purpose of those animal sacrifices: They were a reminder of sin. But ask: WHO needs to be reminded of sin? God? No. We do. Thus, if I brought a sacrifice I was, by my actions, confessing that I was dead in sin and that I couldn't be saved except through the death of a substitute. Thus, I was putting my faith, by anticipation, in the One who was yet to come.

In addition, by my continual sacrificing I was also confessing that animal blood could not set me free from my sin. Jesus Christ had to once and for all and forever die for me so that I could be saved. Thus, the OT sacrifices, while they pointed to Jesus Christ, were not to appease God, but to remind man of his sin and need for a Savior who would -- not appease God -- but deliver man by bearing our sin and being raised from the dead.



Dec 2

Old vs. New Covenant

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers...for this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts:

and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. (Heb. 8:8-12)

There are a number of ways to describe the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. Some people would say that the Old Covenant is one of law, while the New Covenant is one of grace. There is some Truth to this. But if you gather up all of God's Words on this matter, perhaps the best way to say it is this: The Old Covenant was a shadow of Christ. The New Covenant is Christ Himself – IN US.

All through the OT we see Christ in type and shadow. Circumcision pictures Christ crucified. The Passover Lamb is a type of Christ. All of the offerings and sacrifices show Christ, in one dimension or another, in His Redemptive work. The High Priest is a type of Christ, as are the Levites. The Tabernacle is Christ. The Holy of Holies is Christ. The moral law itself was a written expression of the righteousness of God through Christ. Indeed, Hebrews says, "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things...", (Heb. 10:1). And Paul affirms, "which are a shadow of things to come; but the substance is of Christ." (Col. 2:17)

All of these types and shadows were gathered up into John the Baptist -- the last prophet of the OT -- and were collectively represented in him as, "a voice crying in the wilderness," preparing the way of the Lord. (Is. 40:3) The law, "was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." (Gal. 3:24-25) What this means is that the shadow of Christ has now given way to Christ Himself. We are no longer UNDER the OT. Rather, Christ is IN US.

If you read the above passage from Hebrews you will note that the distinction that is given between the Old and New Covenants is that of the OUTWARD under the Old vs. the INWARD under the new. This agrees with Jesus' words to His disciples before His ascension. He said, "The Holy Spirit has been WITH you, but shall be IN you." (John 14:17) Under the Old Covenant the Spirit of God made many visitations. God was WITH people by His Spirit. But under the New Covenant, Jesus Christ, through the Spirit of God dwells IN US -- this is a permanent habitation.

This New Covenant is Christ in us – (Col. 1:27) -- in Christ we are birthed a new creature in Jesus Christ. It is the Covenant of full Redemption for those who will embrace Christ, and it is the full restoration of all creation under God. Christ will be all in all.

"Christ in us," was not possible before Acts 2 -- because Christ had to first ascend. It was only in Acts 2 that the New Covenant began -- it was then that the shadow fully gave way to the reality of the Person. Paul affirms: "Even the mystery which has been HID from ages and from generations, but NOW is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."



Dec 3 **The Times of Ignorance**

And the times of this ignorance God winked at (Gk: overlooked), but now commands all men every where to repent: Because he has appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained; whereof he has given assurance unto all men, in that he has raised him from the dead. (Acts 17:30-31)

According to Paul, "the times of ignorance," were those centuries wherein God overlooked unbelief because those people had not been given the Truth. This is clear because he then states that since Christ Truth has been given, and there is a change: BUT NOW God commands men everywhere to repent – the Truth of Jesus Christ is now preached.

Now note what this means: The people who lived during, "the times of ignorance," had no Truth. Thus, if they had no Truth they were never saved. But neither were those same people condemned. If they had no Truth, they had nothing to reject. They had not rejected Christ – they were ignorant of Christ. Indeed, the fact that God overlooked their unbelief -- the fact that there is such a era as, "the times of ignorance that God overlooked" -- proves that these people were neither saved or condemned. No. They were IGNORANT. They had no Truth.

This raises a question: What becomes of someone who lived during, "the times of ignorance that God overlooked?" They never heard the Truth. They were never saved. But they never rejected Christ.

The answer is found in the final verse of the passage: God will judge all by Jesus Christ. In other words, God will ask, "What have you done with Jesus Christ?" The answer for those people is, "Nothing. We did not reject Him or accept Him -- because we have never heard of Him." That is the Truth. It is why God has overlooked the times of ignorance.

Here we see a strong indication that God has not yet judged untold millions who lived and died – because they had no light. Light is the

basis for judgment – for the Bible says, “This is condemnation – light has come...” (see John 3:19)

I’m not talking about, “second chances” -- but of the one and only chance that God Himself is saying these people never had – which is why He is overlooking their ignorance. God desires for all to be saved. (1 Tim. 2:4) I would submit that means He will see to it that all have light. That will be the basis of their salvation or condemnation -- just as it is ours. That may disturb some folks, but in fact, it ought to make us rejoice.

There are those who claim that conscience and the evidence of creation is enough to make people accountable. But these ancient people had BOTH -- and yet God said they lived in, “the times of ignorance,” that He will overlook. Furthermore, Jesus said, “No one can come to Me except the Father who sent Me draw him.” (John 6:44) If conscience and creation were enough to make people accountable to God for salvation, then the Father would not need to draw anyone to Christ. They would already have in themselves what they need to come. No. But the Father must draw. He must convict of sin by His spirit.

Universal salvation is not the Truth. Limited atonement is not the Truth. The Truth is that Jesus Christ died for every human being who ever existed or will exist. Yet only those who believe can be saved. That demands that light be given -- to ALL. For God is not a respecter of persons.



Dec 4

Death and Judgment

As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.
(Heb 9:27)

What is judgment? Judgment is God telling the Truth about the person He is judging -- and then passing sentence.

You will note that in the above verse there could be an indeterminable time between death and judgment. There is nothing in this verse that says that judgment comes immediately upon death. It simply says that after death will come the judgment.

There are many human beings who have never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ -- millions of them going all the way back to the creation of Adam. How will God judge them? He will judge them by Jesus Christ -- which means He will tell the Truth about what they did with the light of

Christ they were given. And the Truth is that they were never given any light. Thus, they are not saved and they are not condemned. They must yet be given light and Truth. Jesus Christ is the only basis of judgment. There is no other.

God is perfectly just. No one falls through the cracks. After death comes judgment -- and judgment means LIGHT.



Dec 5 Hold Fast

Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end....for we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. (Heb. 3:6,14)

The context of Hebrews 3 is not salvation – but of taking possession of our inheritance in Christ. Hebrews 3 is actually God's own commentary on the events of Numbers 13 and 14, when Israel would not enter or possess the land.

You will note the words, "hold fast." Those words prove that our inheritance is ALREADY given to us in Christ. Just as God said to Israel, "This is the land that I HAVE given you," so it is if we are in Christ -- our inheritance is already freely given in Him. We must HOLD FAST by faith.

Notice that we are to, "hold fast by faith UNTO THE END." The end of what? Some folks might think that we are to decide what God ought to do in our lives, and then hunker down and hold fast until He does it. No. The word behind, "end," could be rendered, "completion." We are to HOLD FAST by faith unto the completion of God's purpose in us -- GOD'S purpose -- not ours.

Israel was told the lands was ALREADY theirs, and then they were told, by faith, to enter in and take possession. Indeed, Jericho was the blueprint – and they took possession of it without a shot being fired. So it is with us. By faith we are to operate from victory. We are to ask God to do, "whatever it takes," to complete His work in us. This doesn't mean we will be passive. But as we respond to what God does do, we will be living FROM a finished victory – rather than trying to win it. In short, we are to walk with Christ HOLDING FAST to Him -- by faith standing in Him and in what He has done.



Dec 6

The Way to See

The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell from where it comes, and where it goes: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. (John 3:8)

The conversation Jesus had with Nicodemus is one with a man who had no frame of reference for the spiritual realm. Jesus tried to tell him, "Unless you are born from above you cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3) But Nicodemus even interpreted this on a natural level. Finally, Jesus gives the above description to him of the nature of the new birth: It is a life you cannot see with the natural eye. In fact, you have no access to the spiritual realm whatsoever unless you are born from above.

The great danger, however, is that people would enter into experiences that are of the psychic or soul realm, and mistake these for the spirit of God. This is happening on a wide scale today. People are operating entirely within the natural, soul realm, with all manner of feelings, sensations, and psychic phenomena -- REAL experiences -- but which are NOT of the spirit of God. God has given people much teaching and warnings in His Word on these matters. But today they are almost universally ignored. Instead, people crave signs and wonders and experiences that they can FEEL. But none of these are of the new birth in Jesus Christ.

The new birth from above is the result of Jesus Christ, through the Spirit of God, joining us to Himself -- His Spirit to our human spirit. This is the new creature in Christ Jesus. Thus, the new birth is CHRIST IN YOU. The capacity to see is therefore BIRTHED into us through our joining to Christ. Therefore, the way in which we grow to see anything that is of God is by seeing Christ -- we must be brought into an inward realization of the One who said, "I am the Light....I am the Truth." Otherwise, we cannot see.

All discernment for a believer is the outcome of seeing and knowing Jesus Christ in an inward way. ALL of it. "Unless you are born from above, you CANNOT see." There is no use arguing about it. You CANNOT see unless you are joined to the Lord and are growing to see HIM. In Christ as our Light, all else is illuminated.



Dec 7
Born of Water and of Spirit

Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3:5)

Physical baptism saves no one. It is merely a picture – of death. Indeed, death cannot save anyone because it is DEATH, and not LIFE. Only resurrection can save people from OUT of death. When Jesus said we must, “be born of water AND of the Spirit,” He was telling us that we must die and be raised if we want to be born from above.

Paul taught exactly the same Truth. He says that we were baptized into the death of CHRIST – he says that this means we were planted into the likeness of His death. He then says that we were raised IN Christ, i.e., planted into the likeness of His resurrection. Note the ONENESS with Christ. Being baptized or planted INTO Christ is different than simply being baptized BECAUSE of Christ. Sure. We are actually, “joined to the Lord,” and now, “one spirit with Him.” (I Cor. 6:17) That is what it means to be BAPTIZED into Christ -- it is what it means to be, "born of water and of spirit."

Believers have been birthed OUT of the Adam race through baptism into the death of Christ -- i.e., through the Cross of Christ. And we have been birthed INTO the new race by being raised in Christ. We are born again from above as a new creature in Christ Jesus. This results in, “Christ in you,” which is the core definition of Christianity.

Salvation is LIFE -- being joined to Life Himself. But this cannot happen unless we first renounce the old life through the Cross – be baptized into the death of Christ. Then we are not merely given a new life. Rather, Christ IS our life -- our salvation is because we are forever joined to Him.



Dec 8
Wheat or Tares

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (John 3:6)

Jesus might just as well have said, “That which is born of the flesh cannot birth that which is born of the Spirit, and that which is born of the Spirit will never birth that which is of the flesh.” He is giving a distinction here that is as certain as the distinction between the old and new creations.

Only God can birth that which is of the Spirit. Obviously, this primarily pertains to people. But it also pertains to churches, ministries, and movements. That which is of God is birthed of God. That which is of man is birthed of man. And in the end, things always grow up to BE what they already are – through birth – and will show evidence of the source of life.

The parable of the wheat and tares affirm this Truth. Both look the same before they mature -- it is impossible to tell them apart. But when they do mature and grow, the difference between them is evident -- again, things always grow up to be WHAT THEY ARE. As it pertains to people, of course, this can be changed through coming to Christ. In that case, you can be birthed anew.

By the time God is said and done, all that will remain is that which is born of Himself through His Son. That which is born of the flesh is already under the Cross. In this age, believers are joined to the Lord and being brought into a realization of Him -- into a realization of Him as the source of their very life.



Dec 9

Faith and Truth

If we are to believe God, there must be a revelation of God. If we are to believe and know the Truth, there must be a revelation of the Truth. Thus, rather than ask God for faith, we ought to ask Him for revelation of the Truth. Then we will have something TO believe.

Paul writes, "Faith comes (to be) by hearing, and hearing comes by the Word of God." (Rom. 10:17) He is not saying that God acts upon us and causes us to hear. Rather, He is saying that that unless God speaks a Word – or gives a revelation – there is nothing TO hear. But once God does speak, and we do hear – the meaning of which is to embrace – then faith comes to be in us.

God does not expect us to muster up faith from out of ourselves. No. He expects us to hear the Truth He reveals. And once faith comes to be in me through my hearing of the Truth, then my faith IS the evidence and substance IN ME of the very Truth I have heard. (see Heb. 11:1)

Faith is not emotional – we cannot believe with our emotions. Neither is faith intellectual – we cannot believe merely with our brains. Faith is a relationship – it is a trust and reliance upon God, based on the revelation of Himself to me.



Dec 10
Contributing Life to His Body

Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church. (Col. 1:24)

There can be suffering in the life of the saint that is not for that saint alone -- and none of it is for this age alone. To the extent that we are allowing God to use our sufferings to form Christ in us, we are benefiting the entire Body of Christ.

How? Paul said in II Cor. 4: "For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death works in us, but life in you." (II Cor. 4:11-12) This is TRUE MINISTRY. If I carry my personal Cross it will result in LIFE -- His life being released, not only in me, but available to His Body as a whole -- for we are all one IN CHRIST. Words and teaching may follow. But what matters most is the manifestation of Christ and His LIFE.

The members of the Body of Christ are, "connected spiritually," with each other ONLY through the Vine. Thus, the members cannot edify each other by merely abiding in each other. No. Only if I abide in Christ as my personal Vine, and you abide in Christ as your personal Vine, do we have, "communion," IN CHRIST -- and the life that He makes manifest in me can then impact you, and visa versa.

Sufferings for Christ's sake NOW do contribute to the life of the Body NOW. But there is more to His Body than only the saints who are alive NOW. All who have been in Christ down through the ages constitute the Body of Christ. Thus, all the sufferings in them that produced the life of Christ contribute to ALL who are in the Body of Christ -- the Body that God has been building for the eternal ages.



Dec 11
A Weight of Glory

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. (II Cor. 4:17)

There is a big difference between suffering for Jesus' sake and suffering for other reasons – such as a wrong doing, or as one who has rejected Christ. But our Redemptive God can use even those sufferings to turn us to Christ.

The suffering that is for Jesus' sake is that which produces His life in us – ministering life to others – all unto God's glory for the eternal ages. The phrase itself, “for Jesus' sake” (II Cor. 4:5-11, John 12:9), ought to tell us that it is possible to suffering WITHIN THE WILL OF GOD -- and yet not seem to benefit much from it much personally. But actually, if the life of Christ is being manifest in us, we ARE benefiting eternally -- but to our flesh, and to our natural life, it often may not seem like it. Clearly, to LOSE our lives for Jesus' sake (Matt. 16:24-25) is a LOSS to our SELF. It is a death. But what we FIND is of infinitely greater value – Christ as our life.

If you examine God's Word on this matter, you will see that despite all of the wonderful freedom of knowing Christ NOW, that the real fruit will not be fully experienced NOW. Rather, it is all for THEN. NOW is the age wherein Christ is being formed in His people through, “light affliction” – through a temporal weight of affliction. But THEN is the point at which all that has been formed in us comes into full release – an eternal weight of glory.



Dec 12

The Unseen Eternal

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. (II Cor. 4:16-18)

Life in Christ is received from above through the Holy Spirit. His life is not life that is of this world. But we do receive Him IN an earthen vessel. And despite the fact that our life is not OF this world, we do live in this world. We have to deal with our environment.

Once we receive Jesus Christ within, there is automatically created a conflict. All that He is in us stands contrary to all that we are in Adam. All that He is in us stands contrary to all that is around us in this world. This conflict will make our lives a battlefield. To the extent that we stand by faith in Christ we will suffer for His sake. If will, “bear about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus,” then, “the life of the Lord Jesus will be made manifest in us.” (see II Cor. 4:10)

What Paul is telling us in the above passage is this: All of our suffering will pass into history – and all of the circumstances over which we suffered will pass into history. But what will remain is what has been formed in us of Christ. It is for this purpose that God deals with us as He does: The eternal things not yet seen.



Dec 13

The Work that Abides

For no other foundation can a man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he has built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. (I Cor. 3:10-15)

By the time God is done with us, all that is going to remain is that which is OF CHRIST. You will note in this passage that the works done TO build do not pass through the fire. No. Works done are in the past. What passes through the fire is the temple that is built by those historical works. Only that which is built of eternal materials abide – only what is OF CHRIST abides. All that is not of Christ, but of man, is obliterated.

Now ask: How do I build that which is of Christ? -- in myself, let alone do it in others? Paul said, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death works in us, but life in you." (II Cor. 4:10-12) This is how: That which is OF CHRIST cannot be built out of the materials found in man. Instead, that which is OF CHRIST is built through the dying of what is of man, that His life might be released in ourselves and others.

The life of Christ that is formed in us is the basis for all ministry – all else will be, "burned up." Thus, the starting point is the personal Cross: "Death in us, and life in you." This is how ministry builds the temple of God, which is ourselves personally, and His Body as a whole.



Dec 14
The God of all Grace

For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. (John 1:17)

God doesn't simply give grace as a THING, nor is grace merely descriptive of how He works. Rather, God gives us Himself. God IS, "the God of all grace," i.e., the God whose nature is that of all grace. (I Peter 5:10)

When God gave us Jesus Christ, He gave us the One who is the sum of all of that He is – the sum of all grace and Truth. "Grace and Truth came IN Jesus Christ." (John 1:17) In fact, Christ dwelt ALL the fullness of God. (Col. 1:19)

How God works in Christ is therefore going to be characterized by grace and Truth. All that God reveals is going to show that He is the God of all grace. All that the Holy Spirit manifests is going to reflect both the grace and Truth of the One the Holy Spirit always manifests: Jesus Christ. These are absolutes, for God cannot deny Himself. God is telling the Truth about Himself to us through His Son -- God is speaking to us IN His Son. (Heb. 1:1-2)



Dec 15
The Crossroads

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son – so that we might live and not perish. (see John 3:16)

Everything that God does is motivated by love – unto His eternal purposes in Christ. Indeed, Paul said, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31) There is nothing negative about God. He desires that all men be saved and come into the knowledge of the Truth. (I Tim. 2:4) In short, God is a redemptive God. That is His nature. He is the God of ALL GRACE.

This is the GOOD NEWS. This is the Truth. So why would anyone reject it? Paul told the Galatians the Truth about their false gospel of legalism. He was trying to deliver them from a terrible path they had chosen of legalism, and yet he wondered if they had become his enemy because he told them the Truth. What is the core issue here?

John the apostle told us why people will not accept the good news. He wrote, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd." (John 3:19-20) The reason why people will not accept the Truth is because they refuse to accept what the Truth reveals about themselves. When God brings a person light – even if it is the elementary light of the good news – He must tell the Truth about us. Jesus Christ IS the Light, and there is simply no other way to come to Him for salvation, or for freedom from error, unless I embrace what His light exposes. And for man in Adam, the Truth about us is that we are all dead sinners.

For the Galatians, the Truth was that they had embraced another gospel – under which Christ was of no effect for them. We have to agree with God about ourselves if we are to enter into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship...." (1 Jn. 1:7)

Is that a bad thing? No. It is redemption. It is freedom. But, as John says, if I will not allow my sin to be exposed AS sin, then I am choosing darkness. I am choosing to continue with my facade – only now no longer in ignorance -- and some of the greatest facades are religious facades.

We therefore see in this passage that when God brings light, we have reached a crossroads. We cannot go back. This is of GOD. And it is the pivot point that will determine which direction our lives will take. I must either love the light of Jesus Christ and all that He exposes, or I will choose to love the darkness that will keep me living in the delusion of my own righteousness. God wants only freedom for us, but at some point, we must confess our bondage in order to be free.

Do we want the Truth? We cannot want it more than God wants it for us. But the Truth – which is found only in Jesus – will expose all UNTRUTH. But not only the untruth that we believe – it will expose all of the untruth that is in our hearts. Loving the light will make us true to God. Loving darkness will simply make us all the more untrue to God.

Thankfully, God is a redemptive God. What that means is that if we have loved darkness rather than light, we can still turn back and choose light rather than darkness. It is never too late to come into the light and confess the Truth to God. He is ever more open to us through Christ. The sin is when we will not do so and choose to remain hidden from Him.



Dec 16
The Day Abraham Died

“For now I know that you fear God, seeing thou have not withheld
your son, your only son from Me. (Gen. 22:12)

God had promised Abraham a son – one who would not only be his heir, but one through whom, “shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” (Gen. 22:18) Isaac would be Abraham's son, but wrapped up in Isaac was the promise of a Messiah.

Abraham had to wait 26 years for the fulfillment of this promise. He made many mistakes along the way. But Isaac was born to him – long after it was possible for Abraham or Sara to have a child. He was a miracle of God that was given to be Abraham's heir -- and Isaac began a blood line that would lead to the Christ.

Abraham had received the fulfillment of God's promise. But in Genesis 22, God says to Abraham, “Take your only son Isaac and offer him as a burnt offering.” (see Gen. 22:2) And Abraham obeyed God. He offered Isaac back to God.

Notice: At this point, Abraham had already received the promise of a son. Thus, he was no longer trusting that God would give him a son. Rather, he was trusting that God would allow him to keep his son. It is one thing to believe God will keep his promise. It is another, having received that promise, to trust God to the point where you offer it back to Him.

We tend to focus on things we can receive from God. God focuses on our relationship with HIMSELF. If God simply gave us things to the disregard of our relationship with Him, in the end it would be our undoing. Thus, even though God will keep His promises, He must spend much time and effort bringing us into a relationship with Himself that will enable us to both receive the promises, and live in them once we do receive them.

You will note that it was only once Abraham offered back to God his son Isaac that God changed his name and that the full release of God's purpose began to be realized. Abraham had received the promise -- he took possession of his son -- but his son never took possession of Abraham. Isaac always belonged to God -- as did Abraham. This is true freedom.

Here we see an example of Abraham, "losing his life," in order to find true life. He lost all to God -- in his heart -- he offered back to God even the promise God had fulfilled. This is true faith, and it was a very real

death to Abraham's self interest. God will keep His promises. But in the meantime, we must lose ourselves to Him, so that we might receive all.



Dec 17
Walking in Circles

See, I have given into your hand Jericho....and you shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times. (Josh. 6:2-4)

Jericho was the FIRST city taken by Israel upon entering the promised land by faith. As the FIRST – it stands as God's template. Israel took this city without a shot being fired. It was all God. They were simply along for the ride – in faith and obedience.

Jericho was a defeated city because God had given the city to Israel. It did not become more defeated because Israel circled it 13 times. No. That did nothing to win this victory. But it was a WALK in faith that proclaimed that victory -- even before it was actually realized.

Have you ever felt as if you were walking in circles in your Christian life? With no results?

If you are living by faith from out of Christ, you are proclaiming His victory. Strongholds will eventually fall, not because you have wrestled to win victory, but because you have wrestled to hold the victory already given to you. Sometimes that wrestling seems like you are walking in circles. But it is not. It is a wrestling that will eventually prove that Jesus Christ is Lord of all.



Dec 18
The Only Solution for Sin

The solution for sin is not to muster up your strength and to try to start obeying. You cannot start obeying. That is the problem. Rather, the solution for sin is to start believing – to begin putting our reliance upon the One in whom is the power of the resurrection. Then, as God gives grace and Truth, you may start obeying by faith.

There is this idea among Christians that God will somehow give us a THING called power, or give us a stronger will. No. God gives us Christ. We need a stronger faith in HIM. In fact, if we want to know how to exercise our power of free choice it is this: To put our faith in the One who dwells in us. Christ is the power of God.

There is another side to this Truth. It is a fact that we are going to try to obey God through human, religious strength. We will do so -- it is our nature to try. Thus, in order to strengthen our faith in Christ, God must expose the weakness in ourselves. In other words, God must show us the TRUTH. It is often only when we are fully exposed as empty and weak that we will truly put our faith in Christ. In short, when we are shown to be weak, it is then that we see that Christ alone is the power of God.

Human beings have no power in themselves to call upon that can overcome sin. Thus, freedom from sin is dependent upon ANOTHER -- One who is other than themselves -- in Him is all the power of God. Therefore, the only solution to sin is to abide by faith in Christ.



Dec 19

A New Generation

Over the last decade, there has been offered yet another false cause for what ails Christian people: "Generational curses." It is taught that somewhere in the past, if one of our ancestors dabbled in the occult, or sinned in some terrible way, that they came under a curse that WE have inherited from them. This curse is supposedly embedded in our family -- almost like it is part of our, "spiritual gene pool." We are told that this could account for any present sickness, financial failures, emotional damage, inability to obey God, temperament problems, etc. Just about anything is blamed upon these curses.

Ok. Let's play along. How far do you want to go back? Is any family free from sin? In fact, let's go all the way back to Adam. We are all born in Adam. That alone puts us all under the ultimate curse of death. I would submit that blaming problems on some additional, "generational curse," is the result of a blindness to just how bad we are in Adam. Indeed, all other sins are the outcome of being born in Adam. All sin goes back to that one curse and to the fact that the Adam race is spiritually dead. That is the one problem that needs to be solved -- and WAS by Jesus Christ.

You and I can spend a lifetime doing an, "autopsy" on our old man in Adam. We can list out sins, and try to find causes. But when we are all

done with that routine we are going to discover that regardless of the sin and regardless of the cause, the solution is the same: Jesus Christ. Do we seriously believe that the Redemption of Jesus Christ is of no effect for us unless we figure out the ancient causes of what ails us? Do we seriously believe that unless we dig into this terrible creature that we are in Adam and analyze him that there is no deliverance through Christ? Our ignorance is as terrifying as is the sin which binds us. God NEVER tells us to do any such thing -- for we cannot imagine the depth of sin. What God does tell us to do is to LOSE it all into the hands of Jesus Christ.

Losing our lives to Jesus Christ means to come to Him and unconditionally take our place in His death on the Cross. In Christ on the Cross, the entire Adam race died -- and included in this would be ALL sin and ALL curses. Do we think that Jesus died on the Cross -- but that SOME sin and SOME curses fell through the cracks -- such that now, as believers, these supposed curses continue to plague us? Can we see that such doctrines as, "generational curses," are actually a denial of the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Christian people are no longer in Adam. We are in Christ. We are raised in Him to NEWNESS of life. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (II Cor. 5:17) So even if you want to believe there in such nonsense as generational curses, they could NOT be upon the NEW race or creature in Christ.

This Truth is the basis of Christianity itself. Christ is in us -- and we are now of HIS GENERATION. What this means is that the entire Adam race upon which any curse could be put was ended in Christ. Jesus Christ bore all sin and became a curse for us. It is finished. The ground of Satan is removed. It is solely through faith in Christ that we gain freedom from sin and all else that ails us.

So rather than have someone pray that we would be free of some generational curse, we need to get free from UNBELIEF -- the unbelief that blinds us to the Truth of the finished work of Christ. We need God to show us the Truth that we might BELIEVE -- that we might put our faith solely in Christ.

False doctrine is never built upon the foundation of the Truth in Jesus Christ. Rather, it is the product of in some way bypassing the foundation and building upon ANOTHER. So it is on this matter of generational curses. Once we realize that in Jesus Christ the Adam race is dead and buried in Him, and that believers are raised a new creation, this false teaching cannot stand. For regardless of what has happened in our ancestry, we now have a new beginning -- as a member of a new race in Christ Jesus.



Dec 20 **Apprehended by God**

I follow after that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. (Phil. 3:12)

Most believers spend an enormous amount of time and energy trying to apprehend God. We encounter problems and experience great need, and we understandably seek to bring God into the situation. It may have never occurred to us that God wants to apprehend US – or that our problem may actually be because He is apprehending us.

Note the words: “I am apprehended of Christ.” That tells us that God is not sitting in heaven waiting for us to decide what the purpose of our lives ought to be – and only then if we apprehend Him for that purpose will He move. No. God already has a purpose in Christ for each believer. If we are saved, we are already being apprehended for that purpose. In short, we must apprehend -- not God for our purpose -- but we must apprehend His purpose for us. How? By giving ourselves to Him.

What is that purpose? “To be conformed to the image of his Son” – which in NT Greek reads, “to be formed together in the image of His Son.” (see also Gal. 4:19) God wants to form Christ in us, so that through the revelation of Him, we might be formed together with Him, and become living witnesses to God.



Dec 21 **The Hope of Glory**

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Rom 8:17-18)

There are a number of expressions in the Bible that seem a little odd to our way of speaking. For example, Paul says we are, “in Christ.” He also says there is life, “in Christ Jesus.” (John 1:4) These seem odd to us because we tend to think of things in physical terms. But Paul is speaking spiritually – when he says we are, “in Christ,” he is referring to our spiritual oneness with Him. And when he says that life is, “in Christ Jesus,” he is talking about Christ being the living source of all life.

In the above passage is another one of those expressions. Paul speaks of the glory that will be revealed IN US. What does that mean? Well, it goes back to the fact that the core of Christianity is, "Christ in us, the HOPE of glory." (Col. 1:27) In other words, Christ already dwells in us. Thus, Christ in us -- the PERSON of Christ who is in us -- is the hope of the glory spoken of by Paul in this passage from Romans 8.

Note that it is not WE who are given glory. No. But we are glorified together with Christ -- that is, this is HIS glory revealed in us. In short, when we are changed at the resurrection, we will be loosed from this natural body and be able to realize the fullness of His life IN US -- and will manifest His glory through us. This is the great purpose of God in Christ unto the ages yet to come.

The great purpose of God for HIS age is to FORM Christ in us -- to bring us into an inward realization of His Son. (Gal. 4:19) But if Christ is being formed in us, then we will be formed together with Him (Rom. 8:29) -- that is, who He is will adjust us to Himself. This will then set the stage for the time when, "we may be glorified together," with Him. In other words, He is creating IN US a spiritual union with Himself that will be released to His glory in the eternal ages.



Dec 22
Captain of the Host of the Lord

And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. (Josh. 5:13-14)

Joshua wanted to know on whose side this angel would be -- who he would fight for. But he said, "Neither side. I'm here to fight for the Lord's interests."

This is true in any case we might consider. God is not on our side. He is not on anyone's side. So the real question is whether we are on His side, with His purpose in mind.

When Paul says, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31), he is talking from the perspective of God doing what is best for us -- God is for us in that He will be faithful to accomplish His purpose in us.

Many of God's people talk, live, and even pray, as if God is on their side -- as if God's purpose is to bless anything their hand touches. No.

God only blesses what His hand touches. Again, the question is whether we will come under HIS hand.

God tells us to lose our lives. Will He bless the life he tells us to lose, making it all the more difficult to lose it? Nope. Again – God only blesses His purpose in Christ. We need to lose ourselves to Him and ask Him to do whatever it takes to complete that purpose for Himself in us. We need to be on God's side – it is the only side that will ever, "win," God's purpose.



Dec 23 Sound Doctrine

The reason that sound doctrine is essential is not merely because it rightly represents the Bible. It does. But the real reason sound doctrine is essential is that it rightly represents God Himself. In scripture, doctrine is not merely right or wrong theology. Rather, it is ERROR or the TRUTH.

False doctrine means bondage. But bondage to what? Not merely bondage to the false teaching. Rather, it is bondage to, "another Jesus," and to a God who doesn't exist. My false doctrine will keep me in bondage to the false God it creates -- but will also keep me in bondage AWAY from the Truth Himself.

When all is said and done ALL doctrine is a representation of the nature and character of God Himself, and it gives commands and directions as to how to live and walk with Him. Thus, what makes false doctrine to be false is that it LIES about God and His Son, Jesus Christ. What makes true doctrine true is that it tells the Truth about the Truth Himself. The ramifications of basing my walk with God upon LIES ought to be obvious -- if I walk in darkness I cannot walk with The Light Himself. But it is knowing the Truth that will set me free.

Perhaps one of the biggest lies of all is the one that suggests that Truth doesn't matter, or that Truth is unknowable. This is a lie because Jesus Christ has already promised to guide us into all Truth. Our part is to keep our heart open and allow God to do whatever it takes to keep that promise. But God will not necessarily guide us into the Truth by merely giving us insights into scripture -- although that will be included. To be guided into the knowledge of the Truth will usually involve life lessons and experiences. But in the end, the Truth is a Person -- this is about knowing the Person, Jesus Christ. If we know Jesus Christ we will see that the written Word of God agrees completely with Him.



Dec 24
The Resurrected "Soma"

So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. (1 Cor 15:42-44)

There seems to be a common misconception that at the resurrection we are going to have our natural bodies REPLACED with a spiritual body. But the Bible indicates that rather than replace our natural with the spiritual, the natural will be CHANGED to a spiritual body. In other words, there is a one-on-one correspondence between the natural body and the resurrected body. It is the SAME body.

But we must understand the meaning of BODY. The word for, "body," in the Greek NT is SOMA. It can mean the physical body, but often is used to denote some of the immaterial dimensions of man's makeup. For example Paul write, "If Christ is in you, though the body (soma) is dead because of sin, the spirit is life...(Rom. 8:10) Well, your PHYSICAL body obviously isn't physically dead if Christ is in you. So "body," or, "soma," must be more than just the physical body. Paul also talks of, "the body (SOMA) of sin." (Rom. 6:6) These and other usages suggest that the more complete definition of SOMA, as used in the NT, would be, "the sum of man's earthly nature."

This opens up passages like the one above. It tells us that our entire earthly nature – physical body included – is going to be changed to that which is spiritual. Indeed, we are told elsewhere, that it is going to be changed so that it can both contain and manifest the fullness of Jesus Christ.



Dec 25
Emmanuel

Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. (Matt. 1:23)

At the very birth of Jesus, the angels announced what had already been prophesied for centuries: The One that was born was GOD

INCARNATE. He is called, “Emmanuel,” which means, “God with us.” For the NT saint, this means more than just the fact Jesus was born 2000 years ago. It speaks of the present reality of, “Christ in us.”

John wrote, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” (John 1:1, 14) But again, the Word was made flesh – He was made a man -- so that after He finished His redemptive work and ascended, He could come back down through the Spirit and make man one with Himself. God is truly with us in Christ, and it is all unto the fact that we will be living in Christ forever throughout the eternal ages.

Jesus was given an additional name at His birth that the Bible specifically says means, "God with us." He was God in the flesh and the salvation of those who come to Him depends upon it.



Dec 26
For God So Loved

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. (John 3:16-17)

Here we see the heart of God. The motive of God in giving us Christ was love. Jesus Christ came to SAVE us from our sins – not condemn us for our sins. But you will note that this Truth of the gospel will be nonsense to me if I don't believe that I NEED to be saved from my sins – or if I think I can do something to save myself. This is why the good news of Jesus Christ must always contain the Truth of our condition before God. The sinner must see his need or else the gospel will be to him nothing more than a religion.

So often, the gospel is presented as, “a threat of punishment.” The mantra is often, “believe in Jesus or be sent to hell!” But this is silly because we are already dead spiritually – we might even say that we are already in a hell of sorts -- because in Adam we are separated from God. So it is not so much a matter of God punishing us if we don't believe. It is a matter of us refusing life and sealing our death: “He that believes on him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:18)

If we won't believe, God will simply judge us to be worthy of our choice. God is not the author of death. Jesus Christ is the life, and the refusal of him is death. But none of that is necessary. Jesus Christ has already finished everything necessary for each of us to be saved. He died for all – not just an elect few. Why? Because God so LOVED the world – this is why He gave His only begotten Son.



Dec 27
The Necessity for a Savior

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. (Rom. 5:19)

The necessity for a Savior is predicated upon the fact that man, as a race, is spiritually dead – and that there is nothing he can do to save himself. This is why where people deny the sin nature of man the Truth of the Savior and His Redemption are always distorted. Such error is even possible among those who profess Christ. There are many who profess Christ but continue to try to salvage the old man in Adam. There are many who continue to believe that there is some potential greatness in us. These are denials, based in blindness, that man is beyond hope in himself. One wonders why such folks think Christ needed to die. That is why these things are a distortion of Him as Savior.

Paul wrote: “I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” (Gal. 2:21) A righteousness that comes by law is self-effort to meet any standard. But if my relationship with God is based upon anything about myself, I am really suggesting that Christ did not need to die for me, because I always had the solution in myself. I just needed to be given the correct standard -- and I could meet it. Some might even suggest that God will help us to do so. Most people who are in bondage to self-righteousness deny that they are living in self-effort. Rather, they say God is empowering them to keep their law. But such self-deception always comes with the package.

No. We must be saved by One other than ourselves. God has saved us by grace because that is the only way in which He could save us. Much of the work of the spirit of God in this age is to bring us to the place where we see our utter and complete emptiness without Jesus Christ. It is only then that we will finally embrace the Truth and fully receive all that God has given us in Christ solely by His grace.



Dec 28
The Purpose of God in Christ

My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you. (Gal. 4:19)

That, “Christ be formed” in believers was Paul heart travail. It was His solution to self-righteousness through works – the Reality and Truth that answers all error. It is, in fact, the purpose of God in His people for this age. But if this was Paul’s travail, written as part of God’s inspired Word, why is it not OUR travail? Instead, most of God’s people are blinded to the reality of Christ in us. He has been replaced with all manner of religion.

The word, “formed,” in the NT Greek, means, “to be inwardly realized or expressed.” This is really what it means to KNOW Jesus Christ; to come into the true knowledge of God in Jesus Christ. It is really what it means to, “know the Truth.” It is CHRIST IN US -- now being realized.

Note that this is NOT a matter of mustering up knowledge from out of ourselves. No. It is a matter of receiving Him from above and having Him revealed in us. And as Christ is formed in us, we will, “be formed together with Him” – which is the meaning of Romans 8:29, where Paul says we are to be, “conformed,” to His image. This is the purpose of God in His people for this age.

Christianity is, “Christ in us, the hope of glory.” (Col. 1:27) The impact of Christ in us, if we are walking in God’s will, is that Christ would be formed in us, and then, we together with Him. This is what it means to become His witnesses – living evidence of Christ through the manifestation of Christ in and through us. But then for the eternal ages, God wants His people to be released into the fullness of Christ, and reign and rule in fellowship under Him as joint heirs.



Dec 29
God Himself Shall be With Them

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. (Rev. 21:3)

Jesus Christ is the tabernacle of God. He is the means – Christ in us – by which God Himself dwells with us. He is the means by which we become His people, and He becomes our God.

The Body of Christ is also called, “the temple of God” – and the individual believer is likewise, “the temple of God.” (I Cor. 3:16) Jesus Himself is the primary temple of God – “For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.” (Col. 1:19) But the church is His Body in which He collectively dwells, and He dwells in the individual saint. So we have God in Christ and Christ in us – Christ, the true temple of God has come and made His dwelling place in us. Revelation provides a spiritual picture of this as it is NOW, and shows it to be the eternal purpose towards which God is working.



Dec 30 A Better Country

But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he has prepared for them a city. (Heb. 11:16)

Jesus said, “You are from beneath; I am from above: you are of this world; I am not of this world.” (John 8:23) But when Christ comes to dwell in us, we are joined to Him in the Spirit -- we are BORN FROM ABOVE. This makes us to be, “from above,” IN HIM. The presence of Jesus Christ in us makes us citizens, no longer of this earthly realm, but of the heavenlies. Just as He is of the heavenlies, so are we then of the heavenlies -- because of His presence in us.

If you are born from above, you are a new creature in Christ. (II Cor. 5:17) Thus, your new citizenship isn’t simply a matter of a new label. It is a matter of the life that is in you – you are a NEW creature whose very constitution is that of the heavenlies. You haven’t merely been given a new citizenship – you ARE a citizen of the heavenlies because you are joined to Christ, and thus, you have been raised up and seated in spiritual places in Christ. (Eph. 2:6)

If this is the TRUTH, then obviously God is going to be working along that line with His people. It is why the flesh is contrary to the Spirit. It is why we must not live according to this world. It is why God tells us we must lose our lives in order to His life. It is why God is not going to continue to affirm the goals of our natural life. We have a new citizenship – which carries all of the blessings of God in Christ Jesus. This is the better country.

The city of God is not a literal city; not a literal country. It is a spiritual relationship. It is entered through The Door and The Way, Jesus Christ.



Dec 31
New Beginnings

There was a man who had fought in WWII and had, by his own admission, committed a number of terrible atrocities. He had killed women and children, etc. He was haunted by what he had done. As a result, at a Bible study, when the subject of salvation came up, he said, "I could never be saved. My sins are too great."

There was a mixed reaction from the people who were there. Some rightly told him that it didn't matter how great his sins were because Jesus Christ died for Him. But there were others who sympathized with him. They actually commended him because he realized his sins were great. Somehow said, "Isn't it wonderful that this man is so conscious of his sins that he doesn't think he can come to Christ? Now that is conviction!"

Is it conviction? Not the conviction of the spirit of God. The real problem with this person was not that he thought his sins were too great to come to Christ. Rather, he had never seen just how bad his sins really were. If he had, he would have wanted deliverance, and would have realized that Jesus Christ was his ONLY hope. But more than his war crimes, he was guilty of an even greater sin: The sin of unbelief -- the refusal or neglect to come to Christ for ANY reason.

Unbelief is always the reason why people do not come to Christ. But if we were truly convicted of the spirit of God -- which is equal to saying that we now see the TRUTH -- we would indeed have some sense of our true condition before God -- we certainly would have some sense of just how horrible our sins are before God. But along side of that we would see the grace, love, and mercy of Jesus Christ DESPITE our sin. We would realize that there is no hope for us except by His love and grace that is freely given and always offered to the worst sinner.

Jesus Christ has died for every sin ever committed by every human being who has ever lived or will live. Thus, to say that my sins are too great to be forgiven is unbelief. And unbelief never comes from accepting the Truth. It comes from refusing it. We cannot know the extent to which a person has been truly convicted of God. But God knows.

When God calls a person to Jesus Christ, the initial impact will be that LIGHT will come into that person's heart -- light regarding their condition -- but also the light of Truth in Christ Jesus. The light itself makes it possible to believe. There is not a single reason ever given in

scripture as to why a person cannot come to Christ -- for God offers Christ to all by grace.

God offers a new beginning to those He is presently calling. Old things are passed away and all things have become new in Christ Jesus. And God is no respecter of persons.



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