

## **“A Good and Perfect Gift”**

1. Introduction
2. Read the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-24) I have the perfect gift suggestion
  - A. Gifts Given
    1. Money
    2. Robe
    3. Ring
    4. Sandals
    5. Fatted Calf
  - B. Gift not Given except by God (Luke 15:25-32)
    1. Forgiveness
      - a. The older brother didn't really know the Father as well as he thought.
      - b. The older brother didn't recognize his need for forgiveness.
      - c. The older brother never knew or received his Father's forgiveness.
  - C. What will enable us to give this gift?
    1. Forgiveness, we need to possess the gift ourselves before we can give it away. In Europe.....
    2. There is only one way to acquire the gift
      - a. We need to know the Father personally.
      - b. We need to know the depth of our own sin.
      - c. As we receive God's forgiveness we are empowered to forgive others.
  - D. Invitation and close; The Father pleaded, the son was angry with deep seated wrath. His inability to forgive was based on the fact that he didn't understand his own need to be forgiven and for that never obtained entrance into the celebration.

## A Mighty Fortress

Based on Psalm 46

### I. The Structure of the Psalm

#### A. The premise stated

1. The focus is on God.
2. God's people are secure under his protection.
3. Three things are said of Him: refuge, strength, help.
  - a. Our Father – a refuge
  - b. The Son- strength
  - c. The Holy Spirit – very present help
4. Particular emphasis is on time of trouble.

#### B. The premise supported.

1. The emphasis is on God.
2. God is with us.
3. The refuge idea is restated in verse 7

#### C. The premise summarized.

1. Verse 11 repeats verse 7 as a summary of Psalm.
2. "Lord of hosts"—God of universe; "God of Jacob"—God of the individual, lonely wanderer.
3. It stresses the role of God in the world (or in our lives)

### II. The Stresses of the Psalm

#### A. The sovereignty of God.

1. The power of His word (v. 6b "He uttered His voice, the earth melted.") —Same word spoken in creation and by Christ in His earthly ministry.
2. His power—(9) *He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire.*)—both war and peace are His to control and dispense.
3. His exaltation (v. 10b)—*"I will be exalted."*

#### B. The provision of God.

1. Refuge - place to which we can escape. (Father)
2. Strength - Christ in us —character /divine nature (Son)
3. Help - wisdom guidance assurance. (Spirit)
4. Presence indwelling—closer than our troubles.

C. The expectations of God.

1. The control of fear (v. 2).
  - a. “Therefore” because of this.
  - b. “We will not fear”—statement of fact.
  - c. No matter what may happen (uses most extreme scenario possible).
2. Observing His greatness (v. 8).
  - a. See what God has done.
  - b. See God in what has been done.
  - c. Never forget what God has done in the past.
3. Silence before Him (v. 10).
  - a. “Be still”—let down, relax.
  - b. Forego arguing with God.
  - c. Wait for Him to speak and act.

Conclusion:

Psalm 46 was written for a nation but tailored to individuals. It has a powerful message for us today. God is to us what He was to Israel and more so. This fact should attack fear, should cause us to be silent before Him, and should cause us to let God be God.

“God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.”

Wood, C. R. (1994). Sermon Outlines on Great Doctrinal Themes (63–64). Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications.

# A Tale of Two Gardens

Whose Will Yours or Gods?

## 1. Two gardens

- A. Eden – Genesis 2:1-9
- B. Gethsemane – Matthew 26:36-38
- C. Circumstances
- D. Relationships
- E. Choices – both life altering
  - 1. Genesis 3:1-5 in Eden
    - A. Knowledge of good and evil
    - B. Good and Evil is contained in one tree so the struggle wasn't between them
    - C. The choice made was between God's will and self will which can manifest itself in good and evil.
    - D. Not about competence and ability, rather about allegiance and loyalty
  - 2. Matthew 26:39-42 in Gethsemane
    - A. Jesus like Adam understood the full ramification of His choices, suffering and salvation
    - B. Acted not out of self interest but love for the Father and His children.
    - C. Full dependence on God throughout the trial.

## 2. Application for us

### A. Circumstances (which God orchestrates are ever changing).

- 1. Bountiful or precarious?
- 2. Often times we do better under pressure

### B. Relationships impact decisions

- 1. Intimate or casual?
- 2. Faithful in least or generally self directed?

### C. Choices

- 1. Self will (Adam and Eve)
- 2. God's will (Jesus Christ)

## **An Evil Heart of Unbelief - Hebrews 3:12-19**

### **1. Wilderness Experience**

- A. Occurred with the Promised Land in sight on the heels of a great victory
- B. High percentage of deaths 600,000 in 40 years
- C. Characterised by unrest, aimlessness and unsatisfied longing
- D. Psalm 107:4,5
- E. 2 types of scourges
  - 1. Sandstorm constant annoyances and petty irritations - life's problems
  - 2. Mirages persistent expectation of earthly blessings - trying to reach from one oasis to the next.

### **2. Major cause of the wilderness experience is unbelief which leads to murmuring**

- A. Exodus 16:2,3 looking back to what we used to have.
- B. Exodus 17:2,3 discontent with circumstances
- C. Numbers 13:27-33 future challenges and failure to rely on God
- D. Psalm 106:21-25 forgotten blessings and deliverance in times past
- E. Jeremiah 2:13 relying on other sources than God

### **3. How can we avoid falling in the wilderness**

- A. Hebrews 3:12 unbelief is a heart issue not a head issue.
  - 1. Examine your heart to see whether you are in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:4,5)
  - 2. Guard your heart against ungodly influences (Proverbs 4:23)
    - A. Ungodly companions
    - B. Ungodly entertainment
  - 3. Strengthen your heart
    - A. Reading of God's Word Read Hebrews 4:12
    - B. Fellowshiping with Spirit filled believers Read Hebrews 10:24,25
    - C. Keeping the Promised Land in sight. Read Philippians 3:13,14

### **illustration**

#### **Man Ignores Answer to Prayer**

A businessman was late for an important meeting and couldn't find a parking space. As he frantically circled the block, the man got so desperate that he decided to pray.

Looking up toward heaven, he said, "Lord, take pity on me. If you find me a parking space, I'll go to church every Sunday for the rest of my life, and not only that, I'll give up drinking." Miraculously, a parking space appeared.

The guy looked up again and said, "Never mind. I found one."

Submitted by John Beukema, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania

## Are You Born Again?

### Coming to Jesus by Night

#### 1. Introduction:

- A. *Nicodemus was initially attracted to Jesus because of the miracles He did.*
- B. *Nicodemus was a Pharisee, which meant he lived by the strictest possible religious rules.*
- C. *Though he came by night, Christ bade him welcome Jesus knew the heart of men John 3:23-25*
- D. *How many today are like Nicodemus? (John 3:3-7)*

#### I. The Necessity for the New Birth

- A. *It is necessary to see (experience) the kingdom of God (v. 3).*
- B. *It is necessary to enter the kingdom of God (v. 5).*

#### II. The Nature of the New Birth

- A. *The new birth is a spiritual birth*
- B. *It is a mysterious birth*
- C. *It is a real birth (vv. 11–13).*

#### III. The Basis for the New Birth (3:14–21)

- A. *Christ had to die (vv. 14–17).*
- B. *Sinners have to believe ( not just initially but continually) (vv. 18–21).*

## **Being Part of the Family- What Exactly Does it Mean to You?**

### **1. Introduction:**

### **2. Jesus chose to be born into the human family in order that we might become part of God's family.**

#### A. His Birth into the Human Family

1. Requirements John 3:13-16
2. Reality John 1:1-5,14
3. Results John 10:10

#### B. Our Birth into God's Family

1. Requirements John 3:5,6
2. Reality John 1:12
3. Results 2 Corinthians 6:18

### **3. It is our family identity that inspires us to be holy not conformity to a standard of conduct that defines Christian morality.**

A. It is in strengthening our identity that we allow God to conform us to His standards, not the world's preconceived notions of what we should be or what we should do. Read 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

B. We strengthen our family ties with Gods family by;

1. Prayer
2. Fellowship
3. Communion

## Faith is the Victory that Overcomes the World

Purpose of the message is to;

“Exhort Christians to face their fear of failure and move forward by faith into the victorious life that God has promised”

Based on Joshua 3:1-17

### Introduction

1. God’s people had to face their fears in spite of their failures
  - a. For forty years they had lived in the light of failure.
  - b. Moses had died.
2. God’s people knew that even after their entrance into the Promised Land there would be battles to fight.
  - a. Crossing into a new land seemed impossible because of the immediate obstacles
  - b. Camping in view of Jericho reminded them that even after crossing over there would be battles to fight.
3. God’s people had to submit to His appointed leadership under Christ
  - a. Joshua was appointed to do what Moses could not
  - b. Even under Joshua all eyes were to be on Christ *Joshua 3 - Crossing the Jordan*
4. What are we to learn by this passage
  - A. WE are Camping by the Jordan: We must face up to our own utter helplessness to accomplish what is set before us.
  - B. We must realize that it is our faith that caused us to fail in the past –disobedience results from unbelief –
  - C. WE must face our fears in order to move forward
  - D. WE must get our eyes off of ourselves and our past failures, lack of faith and inadequacy and fix our eyes on Jesus.- The ark of God will lead the way.
  - E. The priests were carrying the ark We must trust the spiritual leaders that God has placed in our lives.
  - F. Sanctify yourselves:
  - G. WE must take that step of faith into the Victory that God has ordained for us

## Going Fishing with Jesus

A Sermon Based on Luke 5:1-11

### **Introduction;**

#### **1. Expectations Denied**

- a. While fishing
- b. While living our Christian life.

#### **2. Expectations Realized**

- a. While fishing
- b. When encountering Jesus

#### **3. Read Luke 5:1-11 “Victory by Surrender” Luke 5:1-11**

**S**tep out of Life’s Agenda (Vs 1-4)

**U**nderstanding comes after obedience (vs 5)

**R**esistance will come from within self (vs 5)

**R**emember Who you are dealing with (vs 5)

**E**xpect the unexpected (vs 6)

**N**ever keep to yourself (vs 7)

**D**ie to self (vs 8)

**E**xperience the miracle (vs 9)

**R**est in His Lordship (vs 10,11)

## Going to Church with Jesus

Read Matthew 5: 1-16

Introduction

1. Jesus saw (the multitudes, not the disciples- first ten verses are in third tense- they not you.)
2. Jesus gathered and separated or congregated (“to bring together in a crowd, body, or mass; assemble; collect.”)
3. Jesus taught
4. Matthew 5:3-10

(3) *Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*To be poor in spirit is to know one’s deep spiritual poverty before God. To be poor in spirit is not to lack courage but to acknowledge spiritual bankruptcy.<sup>1</sup>*

(4) *Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.*

*We often weep in this life, for our own sin and for the sin around us that harms so many people. But there is comfort in the gospel, and we look forward to the day when sin will be removed forever and God “will wipe away every tear from [our] eyes” (Rev. 21:4).<sup>2</sup>*

(5) *Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.*

*A better word for meek would be gentle, but even this has to be explained. It is the gentleness of love, good manners, self-discipline, and, above all, quietly trusting and submitting oneself to God.<sup>3</sup>*

(6) *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.*

The people described in this verse are those who want to be righteous, to do what is right, and also long to see upright actions by other people and in other places.

(7) *Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.*

Therefore, we are to be merciful in our dealings with others. Jesus promises that if we do, we will receive mercy upon mercy, constant mercy.

(8) *Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.*

(9) *Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.*

(10) *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

1. We have to see the need around us - people are hurting –who would God have us “see”? Who does He “see” in our circle of acquaintances ?

2. We have to congregate in churches for fellowship with like-minded believers.

3. We have to be exhorted, encouraged, and enlightened in the ways of God through His Living Word

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## “Have You Seen This Woman?”

*Luke 7:37-50*

### Introduction

### The Story

#### Read passage and comment

1. What the Pharisee saw and passed judgment on;
  - a. The sinner.
  - b. The intrusion.
  - c. The disgraceful behavior and unbridled grief.
  - d. The extravagant offering.
2. Jesus looked at the Pharisee and asked the question
3. What the Pharisee didn't see;
  - a. A fallen but beautiful daughter of God created in His image.
  - b. Her pain from all that she had been through.
  - c. Her grief over personal failure.
  - d. Her fragile hope.
4. What did Jesus saw;
5. a. He saw the woman
  - b. Her pain
  - c. Her potential
  - d. Her brokenness

### Who is Jesus? (John 14:6-9 NKJV)

#### Who is the Woman?

1. We are the woman.
2. We includes our neighbor, our co worker, our spouse, our children.

#### Who is the Pharisee?

1. The religious leader who doesn't see me as a new creation.
2. I am the Pharisee in my critical judgmental heart.

#### The Admonition – To see others as Jesus sees us

1. Read Philippians 2:1-5
2. Substitute “since” for “if”

The Goal – to be humble like Jesus in order to know true peace Read Matthew 14:26-29

## How Will You Respond to God's Call?

Romans 12:1 (NKJV)

*"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."*

Paul is begging, imploring, imploring, beseeching, appealing,

By the "mercies" of God.

A. What mercies? Those spoken in the first 11 chapters of Romans

1. Calling us out of darkness (Romans 9:23-24 NKJV)
2. Saving us from sin and death (Romans 6:17-18 NKJV)
3. Sanctifying us (Romans 5:6-10 NKJV)

B. What is God asking me to do?

1. A Living Sacrifice Read Ephesians 2:1-5 NKJV
2. Holy, Acceptable - Consecrated Read Hebrews 10:10-12 NKJV
3. Hungry Heart Devotional 2/5/12

C. My Initial question is, "How Will You Respond to God's Call?"

1. Two types of Vessels Read 2 Timothy 2:20-21 NKJV

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## Humility – The Essence of Christian Unity

### Introduction;

Christ prayed for unity above all else in His departure from this world.

Read (John 17:9-11

Paul stressed the need for unity among his followers when he was imprisoned in Rome

Read Philippians 1:27

. Simply trying to be more humble proves ineffective because humility is not about what you do, but really about who you are! It's an identity issue.

Let's consider the earthly life of our Savior to better understand this character trait.

Read John 13:1-5

### 1. What did Jesus know?

- A. Jesus knew that "His hour was come." Jesus lived on a "heavenly timetable"
- B. Jesus also knew that Judas would betray Him.
- C. Jesus knew that the Father had given Him all things (John 13:3).

### 2. We all have, according the Word of God, the mind of Christ, so what do we know?

- A. Read 1 Corinthians 2:11
- B. Read 1 Corinthians 2:16
- C. *"You and I as believers know that we have been born of God, that we are one day going to God, and that in Christ we have all things;"*

### 3. WE have Christ living in us;

- A. WE need to live by a heavenly timetable
- B. We need to accept that we have opposition but so did He
- C. WE need to know that because we are in Christ the Father has give us all things

### 4. Read from the Manhood of the Master page 149

### 5. Foot washing/ humility like communion is not an empty ritual or something to put on our "to-do" list. It is an opportunity to allow Christ to manifest His righteousness through us for the Glory of God the Father.

# I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life

## 1. The Way

A. The Way of Salvation Acts 4:12

1. For unbelievers this is their means to be saved
2. For believers this the way to Victorious living as well

B. The way of Holiness Read Isaiah 35:8,9

1. The Spirit's ministry within is the displacement of the old man, and the emplacement of the New Man.

C. The Way into God's Presence Read Hebrews 10:19,20 amp

## 2. The Truth

Truth is demanded of man as his response to God in obedience to the law (Ps. 119:151) and in his inmost nature (Ps. 51:6), and is the bedrock of all human relationships (Ex. 20:16; Dt. 5:20).<sup>1</sup> (foundational)

## 3. The Life

Truth in the absolute sense of that which is real and complete as opposed to what is false and wanting (Mk. 5:33; Eph. 4:25). The Christian faith in particular is the truth (Gal. 2:5; Eph. 1:13). Jesus claimed that he was truth personified (Jn. 14:6; *cf.* Eph. 4:21). He mediates the truth (Jn. 1:17) and the Holy Spirit leads men into it (Jn. 16:13; *cf.* 14:17; 1 Jn. 4:6), so that Jesus' disciples know it (Jn. 8:32; 2 Jn. 1), do it (Jn. 3:21), abide in it (Jn. 8:44), and their new birth as God's children rests upon it (Jas. 1:18). This truth is more than a credal formula, it is God's active word which must be obeyed (Rom. 2:8; Gal. 5:7).<sup>2</sup>

The Gospel of John builds on the ot understanding that God is true or real (John 3:33; 7:28).

Christ reveals God and thus reveals truth (John 8:26, 40; 18:37).

Since Christ shares in God's truth, he is himself full of grace and truth (John 1:14, 17).

# Identity Crisis – Solved!

## A Study on Ephesians 2:1-10

### Introduction

- A. Basic Need for all men
- B. Evident in the way we try to establish it through work, cars, sports teams
- C. Who we are is not determined by what we do, instead what we do is determined by who we are!

### 1. Who we were

- A. Dead (verse 1)
    - 1. Sinners are dead in state,
      - a. being destitute of the principles, and powers of spiritual life;
      - b. cut off from God, the fountain of life: and
      - c. they are dead in law, as a condemned malefactor is said to be a dead man. Matthew Henry
  - B. Spiritually dead; that is, he is unable to understand and appreciate spiritual things
  - C. Disobedient (verse 2-3a)
  - D. Depraved (verse 3b)
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- 2. Who we are in Christ – our identity (Verse 4)
    - A. Alive
    - B. Alive together with Christ
    - C. His workmanship
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- 3. Who we will be – our future or purpose (verse 10)
    - A. Created to do good works.
    - B. Works that were prepared beforehand.

Who we are is not determined by what we do, instead what we do is determined by who we are!

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV)*

When you truly understand who you are in Christ it will be impossible to live like anyone else including your old self.

## Identity Crisis - Solved!

Main Points:

1. We must be certain of our identity if we are going to move forward in our lives.
  2. It is only in knowing our Creator that we can truly know ourselves.
  3. Jesus came not just to die, but to live, briefly of earth and presently in us.
1. We must be certain of our identity if we are going to move forward in our lives.
  - A. The term “identity crisis” was coined by the psychologist Erik Erikson.<sup>[1]</sup>
  - B. “I've always wanted to be somebody, but I see now I should have been more specific.” Lily Tomlin in Jane Wagner, The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe
  - C. In *The Mask Behind the Mask*, biographer Peter Evans says that actor Peter Sellers played so many roles he sometimes was not sure of his own identity.
    - D. *Read Max Lucado Greatest Moments pages 92, 93*
2. It is only in knowing our Creator that we can truly know ourselves.
  - A. Begins with Salvation
  - B. Continues throughout our earthly life
  - C. Will only be completed when we leave this life
3. Jesus came not just to die, but to live, briefly of earth and presently in us.
  - A. It is only the Holy Spirit in us that reveals true knowledge of the identity of Christ.
  - B. We need to ask God to reveal Christ in us

## ***Moral Integrity-What's Love Got to do With It?***

### **Genesis 39:1**

1. He wasn't in control of his circumstances, nor were they favorable
2. Gods favor or his opinion of who God is wasn't dependent on his circumstances.

### **The Favor of God**

There is no question that one of the main emphases of the account of Joseph is the favor of God in his life. In fact, the news that God was with Joseph is repeated eight times in chapter 39 alone:

- “the Lord was with Joseph, so he became a successful man” (39:2)
- “the Lord was with him” (39:3)
- “the Lord caused all that he did to prosper in his hand” (39:3)
- “the Lord blessed the Egyptian’s house on account of Joseph” (39:5)
- “the Lord’s blessing was upon all that he owned” (39:5)
- “the Lord was with Joseph and extended kindness to him” (39:21)
- “the Lord was with him” (39:23)
- “whatever he did, the LORD made to prosper” (39:23).

### **Genesis 39:9**

1. Relationship was more important to Joseph than physical gratification.
2. Ultimately all relationships are subordinate to our relationship with God
3. Moral failure is an emotional process rather than just physical gratification

### **Genesis 39:6**

1. Joseph's responsibility to God superseded his accountability to man.
2. Joseph had a reason to feel sorry for himself and rationalize his need for comfort in the flesh.

### **Genesis 39:10**

1. Sexual temptation happens over a prolonged period of time and culminates with an intense encounter

### **Genesis 39:11-12**

1. Moral failure is self gratification with one person seeking to please themselves. (lust)
2. Moral integrity seeks the best interest for another. (love) absence of self interest.

### **Genesis 39:19**

1. Sin is intrinsically a lie
2. Consequences of integrity can be unfair
3. Gods favor supersedes the favor of man

# Tolerance or Truth - Your Choice

**MAIN IDEA:** Contrary to current public opinion, there is such a thing as absolute truth, and it is found in the Bible.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. the post-modern notion of “Tolerance” (moral relativism) leads to intellectual and moral bankruptcy.
2. God’s Word is the foundation of absolute truth.
3. Give an answer to those who reject Biblical truth must be addressed.

**INTRODUCTION** - bumper stickers

**Moral relativism:** The prevailing philosophy of our day that teaches there is no absolute truth, and that all philosophies, all religions, all opinions, are EQUALLY VALID, with no way to distinguish one as being morally superior to others. It’s also known by the name “tolerance”.

**Biblical Roots**

**READ** Genesis 3:1-5 NKJV

**READ 2** Thessalonians 2:9-13 NKJV

**In this message I aim to help you with the following 3 objectives:**

1. Think critically about the whole notion of moral relativism.
2. Commit to following the Bible as your sure source of moral absolutes.
3. Learn how to deal with those who reject Biblical truth.

**A. WHY IS MORAL RELATIVISM INTELLECTUALLY AND MORALLY BANKRUPT**

1. **If there is no absolute truth in spiritual matters, we are forced to accept contradictory “truths”.**
2. **If there is no absolute moral truth, there is no basis for morality.**

**IF ABSOLUTE TRUTH EXISTS, WHERE CAN IT BE FOUND?**

If you want to find truth that doesn’t change, you’ll want to limit your search parameters:

1. Only look at things that have **stood the test of time.**
2. Only look at things that have **worked for all segments of society** (rich, poor, educated, uneducated, western, eastern, and everywhere in between)

At the risk of sounding intolerant...I believe that absolute truth can be found in 3 places.

1. In Jesus. (John 14:6)
2. In Jesus’ teachings. (John 8:31-32)
3. In the Bible (John 17:17, 2 Tim. 3:16-17)

## **C. HOW CAN I DEAL WITH PEOPLE WHO REJECT THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE?**

### **1. Treat people with gentleness and respect**

**Read 1 Peter 3:15-16 NKJV**

### **2. Demonstrate God's kindness toward people.**

**READ 2 Timothy 2:23-25 NKJV**

**READ Romans 2:3-4 NKJV**

CONCLUSION

# Quenching the Thirsty Soul with Living Water

*Ministering the Gospel to the Addicted*



## Introduction

- A. *What can we learn from Jesus?* (John 4:1-9 NKJV)
  - 1. We must go where they are. (into the neighborhood)
  - 2. We must engage them in conversation not speak down to them.
  - 3. We may initially need to address physical needs.
  
- B. *What do we need to help them understand?* (John 4:10 -24)
  - 1. We need to lead them into an understanding of the fact that they have spiritual needs as well as physical.
  - 2. They associate God with religion; we need to introduce them into a relationship.
  
- C. *Where must we lead them?* (Read John 4: 25- 34)
  - 1. We have to dispel distorted images of God.
  - 2. We have a thirst that no experience can satisfy
  - 3. When they have a true encounter with the Living God their thirst will be quenched and their hunger satisfied.
  
- D. Ministering to believers with addiction
  - Jesus came not just to deal with the penalty of sin but also the power of sin
  
- E. Testimony
  - Example of a religious believer to a relational believer
  - Brief explanation of the exchanged life.
  
- F. Challenge to the Church – We cannot take anyone to a place where we have not been.

# Standing in a Victory Already Won

Based on Ephesians 6:10-18

## I. Introduction

### ***A. The Christian life is one of constant conflict***

1. This is discouraging to some
2. Had hoped to move on to heaven with ease
3. We are locked in conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil
4. A spiritual battle is raging all through the believer's life
  - a. The struggle with Satan
  - b. The battle against demonic powers

### ***B. This conflict can be one of victory after victory***

1. The victory of Christ at the cross
2. We are equipped to win

1. We must have enough faith in the victory that was already won by Jesus Christ to stand in it.
2. We Must Accept the Fact That There is an Enemy
3. We Must Acknowledge His Superior Strength

## II. Body

### ***A. The girdle of truth***

### ***B. The Breastplate of righteousness***

### ***C. The Preparation of the Gospel of Peace***

1. After placing the plate on the table, he will turn and face the congregation and invite everyone to partake of the Bread together by saying something like, "do this in remembrance of Him."

## Standing on Holy Battle Ground

### Introduction

#### 1. Spiritual Battles must be fought with spiritual weapons.

- A. Addiction recovery is synonymous with sanctification
- B. It is not a physical issue as the world around us would like to define it.
- C. We cannot fight a spiritual battle with carnal or fleshly weapons
  - 1. Drugs
  - 2. Behavior modification techniques - positive thinking, peer pressure, hypnosis.

#### 2. There are strongholds that must be demolished.

- A. Those strongholds are barriers that oppose God and keep Him from granting us the Victory that we are longing for.
- B. Definition of a stronghold "A mindset impregnated with hopelessness which causes me to accept as unchangeable something that I know is contrary to the will of God."
- C. Examples of strongholds (not just a passing thought but a mindset)
  - 1. I am beyond God's help
  - 2. Once an Addict, always an addict
  - 3. I am past the point of being forgiven
  - 4. God doesn't care what happens to me
  - 5. I will never be able to do this.
- D. We must understand the imperative need to pull down strongholds

### **3. Our weapons must be spiritual**

1. Prayer
2. Meditation, study and memorization of God's Word
3. Solitude and Silence
4. Fasting
5. Worship

### **4. Conclusion**

**“Stepping out into Fellowship”**  
**Hebrews 10:19-26**

**1. Introduction**

**2. Fellowship with our Father God**

1. **With a true heart. (*Sincerity*)**
2. **In full assurance of faith. (*Assurance*)**
3. **Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. (*Salvation*)**
4. **And our bodies washed with pure water. (*Sanctification*)**

**3. Fellowship with one another**

## Sudden Surrender on the Road to Damascus

1. Introduction;
2. Read Acts 9: 1-9
  - A. **Paul's religion**
    1. He was doing everything right.
    2. We all concoct our own individual religion according to our experience and beliefs.
    3. What Paul wholeheartedly believed was right was in reality a personal offence to the risen Lord.
  - B. **Paul's questions**
    1. **Who are you Lord?**
      - A. His allegiance changed immediately when he understood the truth about Jesus
      - B. His religion changed – for Paul it was doctrine then duty so as soon as his doctrine was corrected his duty changed.
    2. **What do you want me to do?**
      - A. His allegiance changed immediately when he understood the truth about Jesus
      - B. His religion changed – for Paul it was doctrine then duty so as soon as his doctrine was corrected his duty changed.
3. Application for us concerning surrender utilizing the two questions Paul asked and his own answers to those questions.
  - A. **Who are you Lord?** (Philippians 3:7-11)
    1. (verses 7 and 8) The surrendered life puts **knowing Jesus** as its' first priority
    2. (verse 9) The surrendered life causes us to **put aside our own righteousness.**
    3. (verses 10 and 11) The surrendered life is synonymous with the resurrection life meaning that **we have died and it is Him living through us**
  - B. **What do you want me to do?** (Romans 10:1-4)
    1. (Verses 1,2) The surrendered life recognizes that our self fashioned religion though zealous **may not be pleasing to God, but perhaps even offensive.**
    2. (Verses 3,4) The surrendered life **puts aside its' own standard** of righteous living.
    3. (Verse 4) The surrendered life realizes that no amount of good works will earn more of God's favor

# The Crucified Life – The Ultimate Living Sacrifice

## 1. Consecration:

1. What is meant by the term bodies?
2. Who is it that determines whether a sacrifice is acceptable?
3. How is it that we that we present our bodies as holy?

This presents a paradox for most of us because most of us have tried to do that and have failed miserably. That is clearly described in Romans 7

## 2. Crucifixion

1. One who has been born again has died to sin, but has been enslaved to the law.
2. Now in order to become a spiritual man rather than a carnal man we have to die to the law (or our futile self effort)
3. Notice the two types of fruit that are mentioned fruit to God when we are married to Christ or fruit unto death when we are still dependent on our old self effort.
4. The problem is that as living sacrifices tend to crawl off of the altar we keep attempting to take our self will back and be made perfect in the flesh.
5. This can only result in utter frustration as anyone caught in the bondage of habitual sin can attest to.

## 3. Conclusion

1. Walking in the flesh not only fails to produce righteous it is enmity against God.
2. Your choice is to continue to try harder to improve your old self or to die to self and allow God to do through you that which you could never accomplish alone! The crucified or exchanged life means that we allow Christ to live His life through us.

***“Which Life is it that you are presenting to God – the self life or the crucified life?”***

# The Gospel – God’s Answer for Addiction

## Introduction

1. The society we live in, which is the world of which Satan is the ruler, perceives addiction as an incurable disease.
  - A. Hereditary, so it isn’t my fault.
  - B. Behavioral issue, so we must modify our behavior
  - C. Incurable, so we must treat the symptoms.
2. As the Body of Christ we must understand God’s perception of addiction as sin, and the Gospel as God’s solution to the problem.
  - A. God does not keep one out of heaven for physical illness. (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10)
  - B. Physical diagnosis removes responsibility and hope.
  - C. Spiritual diagnosis allows us to utilize biblical solutions. (2Timothy 3:16, 17)
3. God’s Word identifies it as sin.
  - A. I have free will , so I can choose to glorify God  
*Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin. (James 4:17 NKJV)*
  - B. Free will causes addiction to be heart issue which God has the power to change  
*“For they shall eat, but not have enough; They shall commit harlotry, but not increase; Because they have ceased obeying the LORD. “Harlotry, wine, and new wine enslave the heart. “  
(Hosea 4:10-11 NKJV)*
  - C. God alone can change the human heart.  
*Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God. (Ezekiel 11:19-20 NKJV)*
4. God’s method of changing the human heart is through the Gospel (Luke 4:18 NKJV)
5. Jesus personally commissioned the Apostle Paul to carry on His ministry of proclaiming liberty to the captives in the form of the Gospel
6. Paul has passed that commission on to us.
7. Ministering to the Addicted means proclaiming the Gospel as the means of bringing them into a victorious relationship with Jesus Christ

"THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

1. Define the Gospel of Christ
  - a. *Motivated by love* (John 3:16)
  - b. *Enabled by grace* (Ephesians 2:8, 9)
  - c. *Empowered by God's righteousness in the person of the Resurrected Christ*
  - d. The righteousness of God is *revealed in the gospel*.
  - e. It is God's righteousness, not ours that is revealed in the gospel (verse 17)
  - f. So it logically follows that it is God's righteousness that will be displayed in us not our own through the exchanged life.
2. We must define salvation as not just future but also present tense.
  - a. Salvation is misconstrued or limited by some as life in heaven after we die
  - b. Those of us that desire to live in victory must understand it as the resurrection life available to us immediately.
  - c. Believers are saved not only from God's condemnation and eternal perdition, but also from their natural life and self.
3. We must identify the *necessity of belief or faith* as ongoing not just once and done to appropriate blessing
4. What is received by faith (righteousness) is also appropriated by faith not by works or trying harder
5. Resurrection life (victorious life) is motivated and empowered by God not self and appropriated by faith.
6. Conclusion
  - a. Salvation doesn't end when you are saved, it begins
  - b. Righteousness is not something that we achieve by trying or working harder, but rather by believing or having faith that we have received God's righteousness because of Jesus' shed blood at Calvary.
  - c. "The Just Shall Live by Faith" is God's prophecy of the exchanged life in the Old Testament.

2. What is received by faith (righteousness) is also appropriated by faith not by works or trying harder

a. As it is written. Hab 2:4. The Old Testament had predicted this system of righteousness by faith, for the prophet had said, The just shall live by faith. (The People's New Testament (1891) by B. W. Johnson)

3. Resurrection life (victorious life) is motivated and empowered by God not self and appropriated by faith.

4. Conclusion

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." (Romans 1:16-17 NKJV)

a. Salvation doesn't end when you are saved, it begins

b. Righteousness is not something that we achieve by trying or working harder, but rather by believing or having faith that we have received God's righteousness because of Jesus' shed blood at Calvary.

c. "The Just Shall Live by Faith" is God's prophecy of the exchanged life in the Old Testament.

## A New Creation - What exactly does it mean?

Introduction - *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."* (2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV)

### 1. The Big Lie -

- A. We have two natures at war within ourselves and we have a choice as to which one I will submit to. The white dog and the black dog theory.
- B. We are both good and evil, righteous and sinful.
- C. Living in this Conflict causes us to focus on ourselves and strive endlessly to win the war like a car stuck in the ruts of a dirt road.
- D. We are preventing Christ from living His life through us and denying the freedom that we received at Calvary.

### 2. The Truth

- A. Two trees in the Garden
- B. The first choice was either or, not both
- C. The second choice is also either or, not both
- D. Our Identity and our nature changed when we confessed Jesus as Lord

### 3. The real choice lies in whether we live in the spiritual realm or the physical realm.

- A. Unbelievers cannot choose to walk in victory because it is not according to their true nature
- B. Believers on the other hand are able to walk in victory, not because of what they do but rather because of who they are

### 4. Conclusion

- A. You cannot and do not have a dual nature
- B. Our choice of masters/husbands/natures is either or not some of each. You can only have one Father.
- C. If you have confessed Christ as Lord you are free from the power of sin.
- D. Faith in your true identity is the victory that overcomes the world.

E. What you do or have done does not determine your identity, it is who you are or your identity that will determine what you will do!

F. There really is no question at all:

*“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”*

(2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV)

# The Ultimate Discipline

Scripture: Mt. 4:1-11

Introduction:

## I. The Elements of the Marathon

A. The Prize - motivation

B. The Initiative – Holy Spirit was giving Him initiative.

C. The Resource – Holy Spirit was His strength

D. The Setting

1. The desert: a sterile, hostile environment where he could find nothing to satisfy himself with or take refuge in except God.

2. Contrast Adam who fell while in the Garden, having everything and yet coming to possess nothing. Jesus had nothing and yet thru discipline came to possess everything.

3. Many of God's people went thru a time in the desert: Abraham, Joseph, Moses, the children of Israel, the prophets, David, John Baptist, and now Jesus. And spiritually, many of us.

E. The Adversary

1. Satan, the tempter himself. This was no low rank demon but the prince of the power of the air. One on one.

2. This was spiritual warfare in its fullest form, but the finest hour was yet to come upon the cross. In fact, there would be two more confrontations in time.

F. The Duration

1. Jesus was tempted constantly for 40 days as he went the limit of human endurance physically, mentally and spiritually.

2. God told Noah he would bring rain for 40 days to wipe every living creature from the face of the earth. Moses was 40 days on the mountain with God. Elijah was on a 40 day trip with God. Both without food and Moses without water. The Israelites were 40 years in the desert just as Moses had been before them. God declared a woman ceremonially unclean for 40 days after the birth of a son (80 days in case of a daughter). Forty lashes was considered the limit of punishment. Forty is a complete biblical number.

3. To be tempted is to be tested. The context of Jesus first response to Satan is in Dt. 8:1-5 where Israel's testing is "to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands." It ends with an affirmation in God's purpose of discipline.

#### G. Discourse on Temptation

1. *Temptation is common but not fatal:*
2. We are to be on guard against temptation:
3. *We are to have a healthy respect for temptation:*
4. *We have victory over temptation:*
5. *We have a source of help in temptation:*
6. *We cannot blame God for temptation:*
7. *We must see that temptation is possible only because of our sinful flesh:*
8. *Jesus showed us the way to victory over temptation:*

#### G. Questions and Illustrations

### II. The First Contest in the Marathon

- A. The Temptation
- B. The Discipline

### III. The Second Contest in the Marathon

- A.** The Temptation
- B. The Discipline

### IV. The Third Contest in the Marathon

- A. The Temptation
- B. The Discipline

### V. The Victory

## Up the Down Staircase

### **Introduction**

1 Peter 5:6 NKJV “ *Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,*”

This morning we are going to consider the story about a man named Naaman who nearly lost his life learning the critical necessity of humility.

### **1. Humility means acknowledging Your Need.**

a. What is your Need?

Matthew 5:3

Philippians 4:19

**Read 2 Kings 5:2-3 NKJV**

### **2. Humility means confessing your sinful attempts to have that need met somewhere besides in Christ.**

Isaiah 55: 2

Psalms 107:5-9

**Read 2 Kings 5:4, 5, 9 NKJV**

### **3. Humility means preparing to have that need met by God.**

Psalms 51:16-17 NKJV

Romans 12:1 NKJV

**Read 2 Kings 5:9-14 NKJV**

### **4. Humility means being obedient where you are to receive God’s blessing**

## ***Victory by Surrender***

*(2 Chronicles 20: 1-29)*

Introduction

- 1. Recognize God's power and your own insufficiency.**
- 2. Remember God's faithfulness from past crisis.**
- 3. Rest in God's presence as your protection.**
- 4. Reason with God**
- 5. Rely completely on God rather than self.**
- 6. Reaffirm your faith in the face of the enemy**
- 7. Realize the blessings of God**

## What is Keeping You from the Promised Land?

The Christian Life is a journey to be entered into not a free ride not simply a ride to take at our own leisure.

### 1. Introduction

Why is it that when a believer is getting ready to or has already died we are so quick to usher them into the next life; Read John 14:2-3 NKJV

My question to you today is, "if you are looking forward to the next life just what is it that is keeping you from entering into the new, abundant, victorious life that God has for you today?" *And at the conclusion of this message I am prepared to show you what that is!* But for now it is sufficient to say that we are admonished as believers to walk in newness of life. Read Colossians 2:6-7 NKJV

### 2. Paul entered into the New Christian life with deliberate effort (1 Corinthians 9:24-27 NKJV)

1. The incorruptable crown awarded to the saints by the Lord was in addition to salvation depending on how they ran the race. Paul was running here and in Philippians 3:12 - 14.

2. He finished in 2 Timothy 4:6-8.

### 3. Most of his brothers fell before entering into the Promised Land 1 Corinthians 10:1-5 NKJV

1. The cloud typifies the Holy Spirit that is with believers who accept Christ as their Passover Lamb to lead and guide them. (W. Lee)

2. The Red Sea that believers pass through typifies the baptism of New Testament believers (W. Lee)

3. The spiritual food refers to manna in their day and Jesus Christ as the Bread of Life in ours.

4. The rock that was smitten was the rock that Moses struck to bring forth water. The Rock that was smitten in our day is Jesus Christ Who was struck that He might pour forth Living Water into our lives empowering us to live the new abundant victorious life that He holds out for us.

### 4. Why do some Succeed and others fail?

Just as the Israelites were delivered from bondage to slavery in and told to enter into the Promised land so were we delivered from bondage to sin and told to enter into the abundant, victorious Christian life.

### 5. Conclusion

So my final question, one that I myself and many others involved in Christian Recovery ministry is simply this: Why do some make it and others fall by the wayside? The answer is relatively simple; faith in the personal presence and promises of God or stubborn unbelief. "Faith is the victory that overcomes the world!"

## Who Do You Love?

### 1. Introduction

#### A. Illustration

### 2. Three statements

- A. Love is defined by the choices that you make!
- B. Love is not always received in return (by us, or God)
- C. Resisting Temptation is not about trying harder it is about being faithful to the one you love the best
- D. Read (1 Corinthians 10:12-14)

### 3. Why do we define addiction as idolatry?

- A. Who is Paul speaking to? – believers
- B. What is the temptation? – to be unfaithful when God is faithful
- C. What is the idolatry that we must flee from? – that which captures our affections more than God.
- D. Addiction has been called a “worship disorder”
- E. Idolatry is defined as loving something, or someone more than God
- F. Jesus sums up the law covenant with the admonition to love God more than anything else the world has to offer. So I return to my original question to you today and ask “who do you love?”
- G. Another way of asking it is what is it in this life, apart from God that you could never do without?
- H. illustration

### 4. God desires to be the primary object of our affections

- A. Quote from Charles Spurgeon
- B. Deuteronomy 32:16-20
- C. The first century church live in constant expectation of Christ’s eminent return because that was the healthiest mindset they could have.
- D. Returning to Pauls words to the Philippian believers we read in 1 Corinthians 10:15-17

## Will You Walk in the Promised Land or Fall in the Wilderness?

Introduction:

### 1. The Need for Discipline or Temperance

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

- a. Some feel that salvation is their ticket into heaven and everything that happens is irrelevant
- b. The carnal Christian is self-driven and primarily concerned about what he can get from God- self focused rather than God focused.
- c. In becoming a spiritual Christian we become willing to set aside our desire for comfort as our first priority and cultivate the soil of our hearts that our spirit may be enriched and our life glorifying to God.

### 2. The Need for Spiritual Nourishment

1 Timothy 4:8-9

- a. Today all believers (those who are truly born again) are “under the cloud” in that we are under the care and guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- b. Passed through the sea is significant because like the Jews who had come out of bondage in Egypt by passing through the Red Sea, we as believers have come out of the world( or sea of mankind) and bondage to sin.
- c. That being said, Paul says that they were baptized into Moses.
- d. "They all ate the same spiritual food.
- e. Our spiritual food as born again believers is Christ;
- f. Next there was the spiritual drink.

### 3. The Need to Finish the Race

1 Corinthians 10: 5-6

- b. Paul identifies four specific ways in which Israel displeased God:  
BY IDOLATRY (VV. 6, 7).  
BY SEXUAL IMMORALITY (V. 8).  
BY TESTING HIM (V. 9).  
BY GRUMBLING (v. 10;) )

The basic reason for God’s displeasure, however, was their failure to see the spiritual significance of their spiritual privileges which pointed to the Israelites’ proper dependence upon God. Instead they set their hearts on evil things (v. 6; cf. Prov. 4:23).

Prime, D. (2005). Opening up 1 Corinthians (87–88). Leominster: Day One Publications.

# You Must Be Born Again - Not Merely a Change of Destiny but a Change of Identity

Based on John 2:23 -3:21

Main point - New birth means more than eternal life after death but new life NOW.

## 1. Introduction

## 2. Man's Perceived Need when coming to Jesus (John 2:23- 3:7)

- a. Physical needs -
  1. Water into wine
  2. Men who wanted a sign were rejected by Jesus - He couldn't commit Himself to them.
  3. Men who didn't understand their need to be forgiven were turned away
- b. Knowledge about God - Nicodemus
  1. Saw Jesus as a great teacher for self improvement
  2. Jesus knew he needed divine life.

## 3. Man's Actual need

- a. Divine Life
  1. Without divine life one cannot see or enter into the kingdom of heaven, not merely in the future but now meaning we cannot comprehend spiritual realities or partake of spiritual blessings.
  2. This was apparent by Nicodemus' response in verse 4
  3. In verse 5 Jesus points out his need to be born of water and of the Spirit referring to Matthew 3:11 where John the Baptist said, *"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit (eternal divine life) and fire (eternal damnation in the lake of fire .)"*
  4. Witness Lee puts it this way, "Regeneration is the termination of people of the old creation with all their deeds, and the germination of people in the new creation with divine life."
- b. Reconciliation through His Life in Us
  1. Enemies need reconciliation
  2. Given the Ability to walk in Newness of Life